

**LITTLE BOOK ABOUT OLD
FURNITURE, ENGLISH
FURNITURE. VOLUME I.
TUDOR TO STUART**

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Little book about old furniture, English furniture. Volume I. Tudor to Stuart by J. P. Blake & A. E. Reveirs-Hopkins

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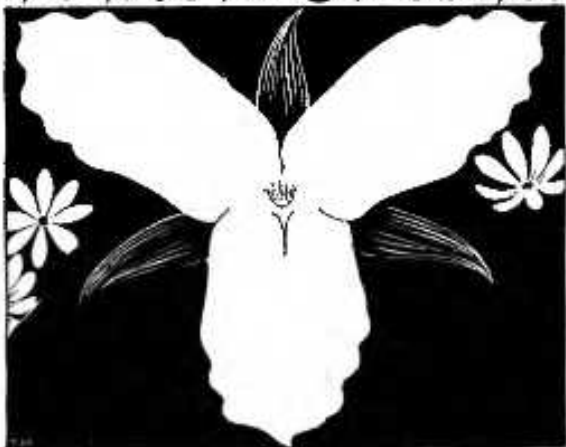
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J. P. BLAKE & A. E. REVEIRS-HOPKINS

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IN MEMORIAM



ROBERT HOLMES

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FOR MANY YEARS A TEACHER
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& A. E. REVEIRS-HOPKINS. VOLUME I

TUDOR TO STUART



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INTRODUCTION

THESE little books will probably not appeal to connoisseurs, nor will they interest advanced collectors. They are merely intended to offer suggestion and a certain amount of information to that large and increasing body of persons to whom old pieces of furniture are more interesting than new, and to show that no extraordinary income is essential to making a collection. For, as a fact, a simple eighteenth-century chair from farmhouse or modest city dwelling is historically as much an object of interest as the finest example of elaborate cabinet-making. It is, moreover, probable that the huge sums paid for fine pieces are occasionally more the outcome of a vulgar desire to possess than a genuine delight in the beautiful or a laudable interest in the historical aspects of old furniture. A person who purchases an old gate-leg table, a settle, or an oak chest for five pounds has an article of great utility and one which provides a tangible link with the past and is in itself a piece of history.

A collector's object should always be to acquire antiques, not dilapidations. A piece of furniture is not good because it is old. It may be interesting for this reason, but the first quality

which should be asked from any article is utility. As Bacon wrote "Of Building": "Leave the goodly fabrics of houses for beauty only to the enchanted palaces of the poets, who build them at small cost." Furniture, of course, should be pleasing and interesting, but if it is useless it should not escape rejection. It is by no means uncommon to find a broken-down relic of antiquity taken to the bosom of a family where it finds a resting-place without paying, as it were, for the cost of its keep. Therefore the present books are not guides for the collector who wishes to turn his house into a museum, but for him who desires to surround himself with useful household gods possessing historical and sentimental interest.

There are, of course, elaborate and expensive works which deal with the subject more exhaustively than can be hoped in little books of this compass. Such works inevitably describe and illustrate unique specimens of antique furniture which could have been constructed only for the wealthy few. Furthermore they can from their great rarity, apart from their extreme cost, scarcely be acquired even by the millionaire of to-day. In the present series, although we have illustrated fine specimens of furniture for purposes of comparison and historical interest,

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we direct attention in the main to simple and inexpensive articles.

The collecting habit is not confined to the wealthy. When the whole history of man comes to be written we shall read that he is a collecting animal. Acquisitiveness is inborn in the majority—it is only a matter of degree—and recognising this, together with the fact that there are little things worth collecting as well as great this series sets out to be a guide to the collector of moderate means. The first volume deals with the period from early times to James II., during which oak was the wood generally in use for the making of furniture.

To arrive at a representative list of illustrations we have gone both to public and private collections, as well as to the floating stocks of well-known London and provincial antique dealers. We should express our thanks to the Director and Secretary of the Victoria and Albert Museum for permission to reproduce a number of the exhibits, and especially for causing a number of pieces to be specially photographed for us; and also to members of the Museum staff (particularly Mr. Oliver Brackett and Mr. H. W. McReath) for various courtesies. Also to Mr. Walter Withall, of 18 Bedford Row, W.C., Mr. J. D. Phillips, of Slough, the Worshipful Master of