

SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY STYLES 51

moved as slowly. Half a century after certain styles were the vogue they crept imperceptibly into country use. In speech and song the transplantation is more rapid, but in craftsmanship, the studied work of men's hands, the use of novelty is against the grain of the conservative mind of the country cabinet-maker. Therefore throughout the entire field of this minor furniture it must be borne in mind that it is quite usual to find examples of one century reflecting the glories of the period long since gone.

Solidity of English Joiners' Work.—The love of old country furniture of the seventeenth century is hardly an acquired taste. Old oak is at once a jarring note in a Sheraton drawing-room with delicate colour scheme of dainty wall-paper and satin coverings. But as a general rule, when it is first seen in its proper environment, in an old-world farm-house with panelled walls, and mullioned windows, set squarely on an oak floor and beneath blackened oak beams ripe with age, it wins immediate recognition as representative of a fine period of furniture. It is admitted by experts, and it is the proud boast of possessors of old oak, that the joiner's work of this style—the seventeenth century at its best—stands unequalled for its solidity and sound practical adhesion to fixed principles governing sturdy furniture fashioned for hard and continued usage. Of course, there were no screws used in those days, and little glue. The joints dovetailed into each other with great exactness and were fastened by the wooden pins so often visible in old