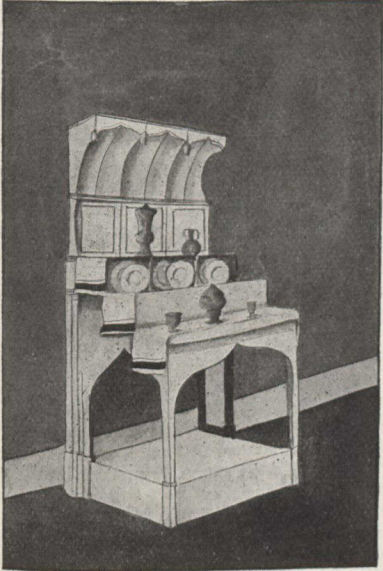


are made into bigger rafts and sent to a loading port.

It was the Dutch who first established oak as one of the leading furniture woods, but its advantages were soon recognized by the architects and cabinet-makers of other countries. It is a hard wood, very durable, and of good figure and texture, and, like mahogany, grows more mellow and beautiful in tone with increasing age. Over forty kinds of oak are native to the American continent, about ten being found in Canada, of these white oak, black and red, are best suited to interior finishing and furniture. These all take a handsome finish, but the black and white oak are preferred to the red as the wood is less porous.

So many different finishes have become popular in oak that it is difficult to keep the distinctions between them



DRESSOIR OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY, WITH "CARPETED" SHELVES

in mind, but none are more beautiful than the quarter-cut, or even the plain oak, in the natural finish, when the grain is well brought out. Quarter-cut oak, as its name implies, is obtained by sawing the log in quarters, and then sawing the boards from these across the grain, thus securing the beautiful cross-grained figure which gives it its charm. Fumed oak has an advantage over most of the finishes as the result is not attained by a stain, but by fumigation from chemicals, hence the color is in the wood and improves with time instead of fading or wearing off. The color is a rich nutty brown. Golden oak has been very popular. In the lighter shades it makes up prettily, but the deeper tones are not so good. It is a brownish color with a golden tint, the markings showing lighter than the ground. Weathered oak is not really a finish—it is little more than a stain, and lacks durability, as does the Flemish. It was an attempt made by modern designers to achieve by means of a stain the depth and softness of coloring of the antique oak furniture, and for this reason is more suited to the heavy old-fashioned styles. Early English is a finish, but it begins with a filler, and preserves the character of the wood. Malachite and Tyrolean oak are both finishes, with a shade of green. But any alteration that only gives variety without adding materially to the beauty of the wood, rarely has a lasting popularity.

The supply of oak comes mainly from the United States, and as this is diminishing while the demand is increasing, it seems likely that the gradual rise in price will continue.

Bird's-eye maple is used to a limited extent for bedroom and other furniture, and sometimes for interior finish. In many of our forest trees certain individuals have a tendency to produce curly, wavy, and irregular fibres. In the maple this curly grain is distributed uniformly throughout the wood of certain trees. The reason for this is difficult to determine, but it is possible that differences in soil and the amount of obtainable nutrition may be responsible.

Birch was little used either in the manufacture or furniture or in interior trim, until the increase in value of the better grades of oak, walnut and mahogany made some substitute a necessity, but it quickly found a place for itself, and rarely masquerades under the name of mahogany, as it so frequently did at first. When properly stained, filled and finished, it is quite as handsome as plain mahogany, and the sheets of veneer when the grain is convoluted or curly, are not excelled

in beauty by any other wood. It holds its finish well, and is as substantial as mahogany. It is found in plentiful supply throughout Canada.

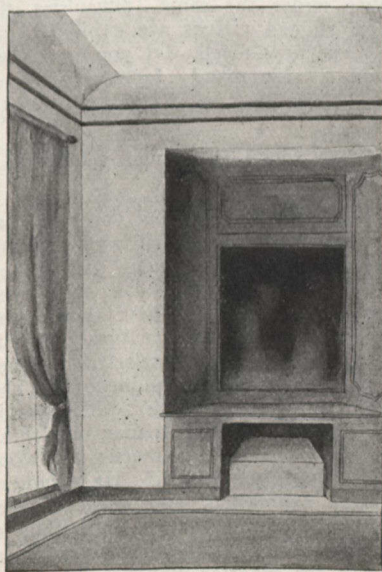
Red gum, or "satin wood," as it is sometimes called, has also found a place as a cabinet wood from much the same reasons as birch. Some of the manufacturers speak most highly in its favor.

The sideboard, though it did not appear under its present name until the eighteenth century, has in varying forms been one of the most important features of the dining hall or apartment since the earliest times. When we first read of the buffet it was often merely a temporary erection—a framework of the simplest kind without any ornamentation, but covered with the richest materials and decorated with elaborate gold and silver plate. It was sometimes placed in the inner space of the table, which was spread in the shape of a horse-shoe, the guests sitting on the outside, while the servants waited inside the circular space.

A little later we find the buffet provided with drawers and cupboards, and the dressoir come into use. This differed from the buffet in being intended solely for the display of the plate, and was provided only with shelves which were arranged as a series of steps. The number of these was regulated by etiquette—royalty might have four or five, the nobles three and others only two. The old-fashioned kitchen dresser, with its shelves holding plates and dishes set upright against the wall, was a direct descendant of this dressoir.

During the Tudor and Jacobean period the sideboard was known as the court cupboard, and was often most beautifully carved, and later, decorated with inlay of ivory or ebony. The livery cupboard of this same time, which has sometimes been confused with the court cupboard, was not a sideboard, but a sort of temporary pantry from which the food might be arranged and served. During this period, too, porcelain became more common, and cups and vases are frequently mentioned as being displayed with the gold and silver plate.

In the early part of the eighteenth century we find the sideboard table, a simple table standing on four legs with a straight side against the wall, and the front usually curved or rounding. These were decorated with either carving or inlay. Chippendale shows a number of drawings of these sideboard-tables in his book of designs, and Heppelwhite first introduced a type very similar to this, but provided with drawers, and having a knife box at either



EMPIRE SIDBOARD, 1816

end and a mirror above. A Sheraton sideboard of 1793 has a cupboard as well as drawers, and has pedestals at either end, with conveniences for heating plates. Another Sheraton design of 1803 has a simple arrangement of shelves above and cupboard below, and suggests a combination of the buffet and dressoir of mediæval times.

The Empire sideboard was fitted into a special niche in the wall, and was very simple in construction, having a large mirror above, and the sideboard proper consisting of two pedestals and a top. The wine cooler was placed in the space below, and similarly decorated.

The modern sideboard really dates from these designs of the latter part of the eighteenth century, as no important changes have been made in its style or use since that time. Those in use at the present time are either reproductions or variations of these styles.



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