HERE is a veritable patrician amongst the styles, chaste, refined and possessor of character and distinction. An Adam dwelling is in fact but expression in the concrete of inward feeling refined, artistic and intellectual. Even in its hour of dilapidation, decadence and neglect, there is an air of gentility about it. The Adam style, therefore, whether in architecture or furnishings is one for the few rather than for the many. The appreciation of it implies some measure of cultivated feeling.

The product of a mind classically trained, of an eye sensitive to beauty of line and mass, of excellent judgment in the field of decorative endeavor, in the Adam style we have a most successful adaptation of ancient classic form to modern needs. It found favor with the cultivated Englishman of the latter half of the eighteenth century, as it
also did with our own Colonials. The New England builders of the last quarter of the eighteenth century and first decade of the next were in large degree influenced in their operations by the publication in seventeen hundred and seventy-eight of the Adam work on architecture. The fine old dwellings—of which fortunately many still remain to us—in Salem and Boston most admirably reflect the Adam taste. For this reason Chestnut Street in Salem, and the Beacon Hill district of Boston, are in aspect essentially English.

It is not however my present purpose to consider the purely architectural side of the style. The brothers Adam while distinguished architects and best known in that capacity, also designed carriages, sedan chairs, balustrades, ceilings, plate, firegrates, furniture, and usually succeeded in beautifying everything they touched. As they published a book of designs in seventeen hundred and seventy-eight and reprints are now to be had, the character of the furniture for which they were responsible is easily established. The sketches which illustrate this article however were made from a private collection of prints from copperplate some quarter of a century old.
Robert Adam was the second of the four sons of William Adam and was born in Kirkcaldy, Scotland, in seventeen hundred and twenty-eight. He came of a family of excellent social standing and condition. Early exhibiting a marked talent for drawing, and deciding to be an architect, he went to Italy and France in order to get a full grounding in the classic orders. At the expiration of four years, with a full notebook he returned to his native land and formed a partnership with his brother James. The names of Robert and James are usually coupled in published works; it is generally understood, however, that the quartet of brothers were in partnership, though perhaps not all draughtsmen or designers.

The Adam architectural influence was destined to be widespread and important. Among noted buildings that at present stand to the credit of the talented Scots is the Adelphi in London which was built in the year seventeen sixty-eight. It consists of the Terrace overlooking the river and neighboring streets, the names of which are respectively, John, James, Robert, William and Adam. Thus is the family name and those of the four brothers perpetuated.

To be adequately viewed, and appreciated at true worth, the Terrace must be taken in from the embankment, or better still, by a boat trip on the river. The haunting beauty of the Adam ceilings and mantelpieces has been testified to by many. They can of course only be correctly judged by a survey of the noted interiors which should not be difficult, considering that the buildings, many of them, are now devoted to business purposes.
While the Terrace has fallen somewhat from ancient estate, there are still many distinguished people domiciled there, among the number being James M. Barrie, George Bernard Shaw, John Galsworthy, and Granville Barker.

Coming down to a consideration of the Adam examples which I herein have the pleasure of submitting, I would remark that the nearest the Adam brothers came to a sideboard is shown in our illustration the “Sideboard Table.” In the center space, resting upon the floor, was sometimes placed the cellarette, in which, while diners were in action were kept the wines. In designs of sideboards by Chippendale, Hepplewhite and Sheraton the cellarette is in evidence.

In regard to the sideboard as a piece of dining-room furniture there are several in the South Kensington Museum that may pass for such, being catalogued under the name of dressoir or dressoir de salle à manger. They are small cupboards and would be called cabinets but for the drawers half way down and the rows of shelves at the top. In the Middle Ages the dressers were but covered boards or shelves against a wall on which plate was set, and were made three or more stages according to the splendor of the occasion. The cupboarded dresser of more modest pretensions was considered a piece of dining-room furniture. It was ordinarily covered with a piece of embroidery.

In this year of grace in the face of these easily ascertainable
historical facts our western furniture makers have transferred the name "dresser" to the ordinary American bureau with looking-glass attachment.

Figure three shows another beautiful and characteristic specimen of the style. In the arrangement of parts it would be difficult to improve on it. The legs are especially graceful, full of variety and altogether well thought out. "Repetition with variety" is the legend the Adam brothers ever kept in the foreground.

To more fully exemplify the beauty of Adam ornament I have in figure four submitted an enlarged drawing of a section of the framework of this table. The honeysuckle ornament is intended to be an inlay of wood which may be either lighter or darker than the ground.

Seats (and sofas of the kind with backs) after the manner of the one shown in figure six were designed by the Adam brothers, but in the Empire style are also to be found seats with similar scroll arms. This is not to be wondered at when we consider that the basis in both

FIGURE SIX: ADAM SEAT SHOWING EMPIRE INFLUENCE.

FIGURE THREE: A SECOND EXAMPLE OF THE BEAUTIFUL SIDEBOARD TABLE.
RARE EXAMPLES OF ADAM FURNITURE

instances was classically the same. Empire seats however were beautifully embellished with ormolu mounts. In the present instance the only brass is in the terminals or toes of legs. The woods used are mahogany and satinwood.

Adam chairs and sofas were in general light and graceful but nevertheless substantial, the material mahogany or satinwood, the ornament inlaid, and perhaps a little carving. When painted, lacquered or gilded, birch or cherry were employed. Painted or enameled chairs were embellished by ornament done in oils by the most celebrated artists of the day. Painted decoration after the Greek manner, depending on outline for effect, is to be commended for this class of work. There is little beauty in some decoration to be found on Adam chairs where the work is treated in a broad manner, the colors being jumbled and outlines scarcely noticeable.

In figure seven are two exceedingly graceful and withal substantial examples in the designers’ daintiest mood. Cane was quite extensively employed, not only for seats and backs of chairs and sofas but for decorative purpose also.

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Panels of intricate design are to be found done in cane in Adam casework.

A very beautiful and characteristic example in the form of a drawing-room cabinet is submitted in figure eight. It would be difficult for the most accomplished modern designer to improve on this. Admirably spaced and proportioned, the distribution of ornament leaves nothing to be desired. Even in the hands of the most skilled, the pen is a clumsy instrument compared with the tool of the copperplate engraver, hence at best the drawing but inadequately renders the spirit of the original.

No article on this subject would be complete without some reference to the Adam mantelpieces of which the talented brothers are credited with a large number. It was their custom to design the firegrates also, and many fine examples in that line are today to be found. From the art point of view these steel grates are far above the ordinary effort in that direction.

In figure nine is shown a very beautiful example in statuary marble. The drawing, made from a photograph, cannot of course convey any impression of the beauty of modeling in the Flaxman plaques. Some idea may be gained of the qualities of such work by examination of the decorations of Wedgwood ware.

Figure ten exhibits another Adam mantel of greater simplicity but equally as meritorious. The original is in the Geffrye Museum, London.

To Robert and James Adam is no doubt credited much that is fine which in all fairness should be assigned to others. In figure eleven are shown specimens of the product of eminent architects contemporary with the brothers. Without a doubt such designs
would, in nine cases out of ten, be credited to the latter. Nor could the work be much bettered by anyone. The example of the designing skill of W. Thomas is particularly pleasing. To improve on it would be difficult.

Mantels, too, of an earlier period, save for a certain flamboyance in ornament, might pass for Adam product. The early Georgian work made use of the “five orders” but engrafted upon it was ornament of a naturalistic order. Early Colonial examples in this country are of this “Free Classic” order and just as beautiful and desirable as the product of Adam. Robert Kent (sixteen eighty-five to seventeen forty-eight) has left designs of some fine mantels. His outlines are as severely classical as are those of Adam, but the carving is of the school of Grinling Gibbons.

Adam furniture has been little known in this country which may be ascribed to the fact that the brothers worked for a clientele essentially aristocratic. Made for the nobles and gentry, it became a fixture in the homes of the great until the breaking up of collections made it known to the public. A survey in the shops of antique dealers disclosed but very little furniture of the Adam stamp.

How little indeed was Adam furniture regarded, may be judged from the fact that in “Art Decoration Applied to Furniture,” a book published by the Harpers in eighteen seventy-seven, the author being Harriet Prescott Spofford, there is no mention of it. “After exhausting the resources of the Congressional Library in the preparation of this book” the distinguished author devotes but a single paragraph to description of a looking-glass which after all seems to have been the work of another but equally skilled hand. From the naturalistic style of the carving, the frame obviously was not the work of Adam brothers. B. Pastorini and Pergolisi, contemporaries of Adam, were responsible for a lot of fine work of this character. The latter in seventeen seventy-seven published a book of designs of ceilings, looking-glasses, sconces, etc., which are characterized by felicity of line and airy grace. The fact is, that many talented compeers of Adam have been lost sight of in the shadows of a greater name.

Everything of English eighteenth-century production that resembles
the work of the Adam brothers has been forthwith assigned to them. Our cabinetmakers are today turning to the Adam style for inspiration. The charming center table shown in figure two when shorn of the elaborate running ornament around the frame, would come nearest of the submitted illustrations to the Adam furniture as at present offered in the American market.

Robert Adam has been acclaimed a genius. He was at least a most skilled adapter. Out of complex materials of a bygone age he erected a fabric that was new. Many another has attempted to do as much and failed. It is not given to all designers to know what to avoid. Robert Adam had the capacity to choose wisely. Delicacy and restraint are always in evidence in his work. It is the same qualities that supply the charm in our Colonial style. Once we begin to add ornament of a flamboyant kind the charm vanishes.

EXERCISE

EMMY brought in an armful of wood for the fire. "My dear," said her husband, "you shouldn't do that."
She lifted the heavy case of berries to the table and sat down to look them over.
"I'd help you if I wasn't waiting for Bates to come over and look at the new filly."
The grocer's boy deposited a dollar's worth of sugar on the floor and Emmy took it up and put it in the sugar pail on the lower pantry shelf.
"You really shouldn't," said her husband.
Finally she lugged the iron preserve kettle to the sink for the last time and went out for another pail of water.
"I hate to see you lift so, Emmy. My, how many glasses have you got? It's my favorite jam. I'll get you a case of cherries tomorrow."
Emmy went on getting up a hearty supper.
"Seems as if you didn't eat much," commented her husband.
"Don't you want to walk down with me to-night while I finish that rubber with Stetson? The exercise will do you good."

GERTRUDE RUSSELL LEWIS.