





# IMITATION ANTIQUES

THE WAY CABINETMAKERS CAN COPY ANTIQUE FURNITURE.

Observe the following information that was obtained by an investigative visitor at a Little Shop in an English Country Village.

Sober, he is one of the most interesting men I know. Unfortunately he is sober only three days a week. When I ask him the reason he merely says "I don't know." Yesterday when I walked into his laboratory at the back of his little village shop he was a Band of Hope optimist.

"There's something you'll like," he said, exhibiting a small bureau, old Spanish mahogany within, new stained-wood veneer—so far unpolished—without. The public had not yet judged the accuracy of the jointing was wonderful, the finish perfect.

"You must come in again when I've stained and polished it," he went on, "and then you'll think it one of the best Queen Anne pieces extant."

"Don't your customers ever find you out?" I asked.

"Lord, no, sir! When you've pulled seventeenth century furniture to pieces all your life and learned the things the touch and mortises and the finish tell you, it's easy enough to get the right effect. The public have no judgment, and for that matter, many of the London dealers aren't much better."

"But this veneer—so very new," I hazarded.

"Ah, wait until you see it toned down and the drawers fitted with a set of old Boule handles and scutcheons I've got by me and a few little dents hammered here and there, especially about the feet, where they get kicked. You'll not know it's made of new wood. The black knot I've left on the third drawer? That knot would take in all Windsor street."

He is always frank with me about his tactics. He seems to take a pride in being able to deceive a trained eye and a satisfaction in explaining his dexterity.

I left the bureau and began examining a hoary looking oak settle gray with age and a satisfaction in explaining his dexterity.

"Looks ancient, doesn't it?" he observed.

"Looks!" I wondered. "Surely it's genuine?"

He shook his head with a wise old smile. "It's as genuine as dilute nitric acid can make it. Oh, you couldn't go by the panels. They're purposely warped with hot ammonia. The sun and rain do the rest—bleach it, you know."

"But the carving?" I argued. "It's almost effaced in places."

"It would be after half an hour with a sand blast, a little thing of my own contrivance. The worm holes I make with a very fine punch. Beginners use shot, but that's a clumsy way. Of course the timber is made of old, old oak. They are bits of a Charles I. table mostly. The hinges are ordinary trade copies that have lain in the wet all summer and got nicely rusted, and if you were to draw the screws that hold them you'd find they were rusty, too, and had no points. Those I filed off and then hammered the heads a bit."

"I didn't know you treated metal as well as wood," I admitted.

"Sometimes," he said. "I went to the scrap metal dealer and I could tell it was a beautiful specimen of hammer work bitten and worn by over two centuries of use, as its date, 1687, seemed to indicate."

"I bought a dozen of those of different dates from a man who makes them. They're only cast, but after they've had a bonfire over them in my yard for a week or two they get soft and look right enough, don't they?"

I admitted that they did, flinching a bit, though, at the adjective he used.

"There's a regular trade between the manufacturers of faked antiques and the country dealers. Well, then, the London ones? Why? Well, the manufacturers have discovered that people go into the country districts the things they pick up there must be genuine. The simple countryman inspires confidence. There's nothing hardy that can't be imitated," he went on. "It's merely a question of time—of course—and it's only by accident, or—well, I'm doing that, the fact's discovered. But when a man knows he can take in an expert, it's difficult for him to keep it to himself."

Do you think that Syrian gold work he had at the Lorient would have been known as a forgery if somebody hadn't talked? No, indeed! There's no suspicion, but you just look at those two china cows on the shelf there. One's genuine old Stafford. The other isn't. Can you tell the difference?"

I used a pocket magnifying glass this time, but at the end of several minutes I came to the conclusion that they were identical and said so.

"I gave one and nine for the imitation, but I can't tell which now," he admitted.

"And the selling price?" I inquired.

"Six guineas each. One of them's worth that. After all, it doesn't really matter, for there's no difference between them intrinsically."—London Mail.

A Big Saving.  
He said the man of middle age, who was bending over the palmist, whispering excitedly in her ear.

"Listen," he said again. "My wife is coming to you this afternoon to have her fortune told, and if you want to make some money on the side," he laid a bank note on the stuffed owl's head.

"I'll tell her on no account to buy a motor car, because you read in her palm that she is doomed to be killed in an automobile accident."—New York Press.

How He Remembered.  
Professor Huxley had a funny way of remembering certain anatomical details of the human heart. On the left side of the heart there is a valve with two flaps resembling a bishop's miter and known as the mitral valve. The corresponding valve on the right side which he could remember their respective positions, said Huxley, with his skeptic's humor, was by the resection that a bishop could never be in the right.

From Frying Pan to Fire.  
"Life is full of contrariness and non-payment of alimony," complained the woman as she took her seat reluctantly at her desk on the morning of the dance. "When I was married and the days were long and deadly, but now that I am free and life might be an endless dream of gaiety I have to work."—New York Press.

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Loving Kindness. My dog tried to bite me. I liked the dog, so I kicked him lovingly in the jaw. He understood that argument. My grocer tried to cheat me. I liked the grocer. I did not kick him in the jaw, but I told him lovingly that I would not deal with him again. He understood that argument. — Indianapolis News.

A Test For Eyesight. An interesting test for eyesight may be had by observing Ursa Major—the Great Bear—on a clear starlit night. Not every one is aware that Ursa Major, second star in the constellation, is a double star. To observe this double star, look up to the sky and see if you can discern it. If you do see it, you can rest content in the knowledge that your eyesight is not defective.

Safe. "Now, dear," said the hero of the "we are safe from pursuit." "And also," said the young girl radiantly, "made out starvation. Here's a check made out to your order." — Br.

Life is such a poor business that the strictest economy must be exercised in its good things. — Schopenhauer.



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