

THE
CAROLINE COLEMAN DUKE
COLLECTION OF
EARLY AMERICAN
FURNITURE
AND OBJECTS OF ART

THE MOST IMPORTANT
AND LARGEST COLLECTION OF ITS KIND
EVER GATHERED IN THE SOUTH

CONTAINING FINE PIECES IN WALNUT, PINE AND
MAHOGANY GATHERED IN VIRGINIA, NORTH CAROLINA
AND SOUTH CAROLINA, AND INCLUDING AN IMPORTANT
WILLIAM SAVERY DINING TABLE, MAHOGANY SIDBOARD
FORMERLY BELONGING TO MARY WASHINGTON, FINE SETS
OF CHIPPENDALE MAHOGANY CHAIRS, FINE WALNUT AND
MAHOGANY BUREAU BOOKCASES, HEPPLEWHITE SIDBOARD
ETC. ETC.

THE FIRST COLLECTION OF EARLY AMERICAN FURNITURE
GATHERED IN THE SOUTHERN STATES OFFERED BY AUCTION
AT THE ANDERSON GALLERIES

TO BE SOLD BY ORDER OF MRS. DUKE
OF RICHMOND, VIRGINIA
FRIDAY AND SATURDAY AFTERNOONS
DECEMBER FOURTEENTH, FIFTEENTH
AT TWO-THIRTY O'CLOCK

THE ANDERSON GALLERIES

[MITCHELL KENNERLEY, PRESIDENT]

PARK AVENUE AND FIFTY-NINTH STREET, NEW YORK

1923

THE SOUTH, AND SOUTHERN FURNITURE

THE ANDERSON GALLERIES have become a great market for early American furniture; yet the numerous collections offered by auction have practically all been gathered in the North, with only occasional additions of Southern specimens.

The Anderson Galleries have now the pleasure of offering by public auction the important collection of early American furniture gathered by Mrs. Caroline Coleman Duke, of Richmond, Virginia. Mrs. Duke is of an old and well-known Southern family. She has been active for years in every endeavor to preserve the traditions, historic reminiscences and art treasures of the South, individually and in connection with the various patriotic and historic societies of Virginia. She has collected antique furniture all over the South, going as far as Georgia. Her collection is typically Southern, and brings to the Northerner a distinctive flavor of an unknown land.

It is an unknown land indeed. Northerners go in increasing numbers southward. The South, before the Civil War a land of romance to the Northerner, has again become the land of romance; and, by a strange irony of fate, the Northerner tries to penetrate the spirit of this land and this romance, by patronizing the Hot Springs and White Sulphur resorts in Virginia, Pinehurst and Asheville in North Carolina, Augusta in Georgia, and in Florida the semi-tropical Winter resorts, efficiently run by Northerners in a Southern stage setting. The real South is veiled in a Fata Morgana, a mirage that conceals what it seems to make clear.

The explanation is not very difficult to find. The real South is really invisible. The casual visitor from the North who registers coldly, without any attempt to penetrate the unfamiliar, perhaps sees more, and sees it more distinctly than the desirous but disappointed seeker after Southern romance. A walk through the outskirts of Richmond, a glance over the James River, from Chimborazo Park, perhaps teaches the

Northerner more than the studied attempt to get in touch with Southern life. For Southern life is *sui generis*—of itself, alone. It is a matter of families, relationships, traditions, environment. Everybody's attitude changes automatically with the arrival of the outsider. Continuous movement is characteristic of the North,—the westward push, from Europe to New York, from New York to Chicago, from Chicago to the North-west, to Denver, to Los Angeles. The great stream of immigration passed through Northern gateways, from east to west, spreading fan-wise as it went. The Southern push westward reached Missouri, Arkansas, Texas, beyond the Mississippi; but it scarcely went further. In the North, family means little, opportunity much. The pushing immigrant has no past; he has only a future. The Southern population, not continually stirred up by the turbulent stream from Europe, is stationary, moving only in circles, circumscribed by both present and past.

The Northerner, always in a hurry, limits his conception of the South to a few traditional ideas. The women romanticize, while the men see in the Southland a country of large plantations, unindustrial gentlemen, cotton or tobacco growing, and leisurely life. The advertisements of a certain brand of Virginia tobacco harp almost with genius on these old strings.

Here again, a glance over Richmond, with its smokestack by smokestack, the interminable roofs of the Tredegar Iron Works of Civil War fame, teaches a lesson. The South, after all, must have had a good deal of industry to be able to keep large armies fully equipped with clothing, artillery, weapons and ammunition during a four-year struggle. A country of large landed properties only could not have held out for such a period: the backbone of a solidly established middle class in the towns was necessary to carry on, and the rows and rows of well-to-do houses in Richmond or Charleston show that these cities contain a prosperous middle class of long established city dwellers that parallels successfully Philadelphia and Boston.

Furniture from the South is therefore not only furniture coming from the landed gentry of the large plantations. It is also furniture of the well-to-do middle class citizens of the seaboard

towns. On the other hand, the agricultural districts lacked the "one horse" farmer. From mahogany and walnut there is only one step to the pine furniture of the pioneer. The maple and cherry of the well-to-do inhabitant of the small town in New England is almost absent. Another characteristic of much Southern furniture is its spaciousness, designed for the large rooms which, shut off from the glare of the sun, are to be kept cool during the hot season. I have never seen such gigantic beds as I saw in the South. In New York one would make a two-room-and-bath apartment out of such a bed.

Mrs. Duke, of course, did not send up North any of these monuments of a gigantic age. Her taste shows preference for the smaller and better-proportioned pieces whose charm transforms new interiors and conveys the subtle homelike feeling that every home-maker desires. It was also natural that within her circle of Southern life, she should feel particularly attracted by specimens that reflect Southern traditions. We may mention the oval mahogany Hepplewhite dining table, formerly in the home of Chancellor Creed Taylor of Needham, Va.; the Queen Anne mahogany side chair from Kenmore, Fredericksburg, formerly in the possession of "Betty" Washington, and the important Adam serving table, owned by Mary Washington, mother of George Washington.

Mrs. Duke found some of her pieces in quaint old places; especially in the tidewater counties of Virginia, the region of Jamestown, where America under the new dispensation first began, and of Yorktown, the real birth of the nation. One interesting example may be mentioned. Dumfries, on the Quantico Creek, an affluent of the Potomac, was once a busy place of shipping, reached by seagoing vessels. With the gradual drying up of the creek and the gradually increasing size of seagoing vessels, the place was almost deserted, and the traveller of to-day wonders why such stately houses were ever built in Dumfries, Va. The antiquarian does not wonder, but buys.—But we have not the right to direct a stream of Northern explorers to the Southern hunting grounds of Mrs. Duke. Therefore no more may be told.