

Scottish Furniture

Treve Rosoman has found this quotation relating to Scottish furniture from George Robertson's Rural Recollections, 1829. Unfortunately, no further bibliographical details are available.

"Furniture Ben-the-House

The bedsteads, in general, were constructed wholly of wood, being enclosed on all sides, like unto close presses, and opening only in front, with two sliding doors. There was, however, a distinction betwixt those in the kitchen, or but-a-house, and those in the parlour, or ben-a-house: in the former they were composed of the plainest deal; in the latter they were generally ornamented with carved work; and being in better keeping, they were commonly glossy, and sometimes dark with age. There was also a small oaken table, with carved work on its four massy legs; some wooden chairs, decorated in the same style, on their long, upright unaccommodating backs; an easy-chair, for the repose of the gudewife at bairntime, (during pregnancy) or when she was nursing; and a good oaken elbow-chair for the gudeman. Besides all this, there was a plain clothes-press, set up against the wall; a three-sided cupboard, stuck up in a corner; also a chest of drawers, for the gudewife's napery; and in some cases a similar chest for the gudeman, but surmounted with a writing-desk or cabinet for depositing money or papers. There was generally a small looking glass. In one instance I met with a pair of ancient sconces, or metallic mirrors, so well burnished up as to afford a pretty clear reflection: they were each about fifteen inches long, and five inches broad; both were stuck up over the fire-place, directly above the chimney-jamb. The eight-day clock, which had very generally found its way by this time into the farm-houses, was also stationed in this apartment. But watches were not nearly so very common as they became afterwards. It was not every gudeman that had one: in carrying on their out-doors' work, they were seldom at a loss to know the time of day by the sun. Every farm-house had a certain known point in the horizon, over which it stood at noon and at six o'clock in the evening.

George Robertson, Rural Recollections, 1829 "