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“Art Furniture in the Old English Style”¹

The Firm of Collinson and Lock, London, 1870–1900

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The London-based art furnishing company Collinson and Lock was established in 1870 and quickly became a significant and successful business for over twenty-five years. Despite the absence of archival material, an investigation into the success of the firm can be undertaken by using a form of business analysis in combination with contemporary printed sources. By looking at the firm’s business strategy and processes, the characteristics of the products, and the nature of the client base and the marketplace, a successful analysis can be made to chart the significance of the firm and its products in the late nineteenth-century furnishing trade. The article therefore interprets the contemporary material with an emphasis on the marketing and reception of their products to chart the significance, rise, and fall of this once successful partnership.

A leading London furnishing enterprise, Collinson and Lock was part of an elite group of businesses that met the demand for high-class furniture, interior decoration, and complete house furnishing and equipment in the later nineteenth century.² Established in 1870 and formally trading until 1897, they quickly became known as makers and suppliers of “art furniture,” but their repertoire later extended across a number of stylistic tendencies.³ Despite their contemporary importance, we still do not know much about their undoubted success.

To determine how Collinson and Lock rapidly become a major player in the later nineteenth-century furniture and decoration world, and further to consider what the reasons for their success and eventual collapse were, we can use a model based on an organizational life cycle which follows a sequence of start-up, development, maturity, and decline.⁴ Within this we can consider the firm’s business strategy and processes, the characteristics of the products, and the nature

of the client base and the marketplace, so that despite the lack of surviving archival records, an assessment of the firm can be made.

The Business

Frank G. Collinson and George J. Lock were originally employees of the prestigious firm of Jackson and Graham, Oxford Street, London, but in the 1860s they left it to work for Herring and Company, an old, established furniture company with premises in 109 Fleet Street, London. They eventually succeeded to this business in 1870 and turned it into their partnership⁵ and advertised themselves that same year as

Collinson and Lock (Late Herring) Est. 1782

Old English Furniture: Reproductions of simple and artistic cabinet work from country mansions of the XVI and XVII centuries.⁶

During the start-up period of the business, the partnership quickly established itself as a new force to be reckoned with in the London furniture trade, with a particular eye for fashionable furniture sporting a distinctive aesthetic that appealed to a new and discerning market. Within the first year of business they had produced a prestigious selling catalogue and entered their work into a

Fig. 1
Left James Findlay, view of Herring shop front, 109 Fleet Street, ca. 1820 (Reproduced by permission of City of London, London Metropolitan Archives).

Fig. 2
Right St. Bride Street premises designed by T. E. Collcutt (*Architect*, 10 May 1873).

major international exhibition. Part of their strategy was to make their business distinctive and individual, and this included the design of their premises. In 1873 they expanded the business into nearby St. Bride Street, in a building designed by T. E. Collcutt,⁷ as well as maintaining the Fleet Street premises and a factory in Pear Tree Court, Farringdon Road.

A contemporary critic described Collcutt’s work: “A shop and showroom [in St. Bride Street] for Messrs. Collinson & Lock, and notwithstanding here and there a touch of over-quaintness, as for example in the affected design of the iron hinges and the restless treatment of part of the wood-work, it must on the whole be admitted to be one of the best domestic works of the year.”⁸ A primer on plasterwork later noted the modified artistic exterior of the original Fleet Street property: “A notable instance [of pargetting] is to be seen in the front outer walls of a house in Fleet Street . . . which was erected a few years ago by Messrs. Collinson and Lock, though not now (1892) occupied by them.”⁹

Development was clearly rapid as the scope of the company’s workload expanded. From being cabinetmakers initially, by 1882 they were described as “upholsterers, decorators, paperhangers, manufacturers of artistic furniture and constructive woodwork for interiors and paper hangings of special design and colour.”¹⁰

Following a sustained period of successful and developing trading, in March 1885 the partnership amalgamated with their former employees Messrs. Jackson and Graham and moved their business to their Oxford Street premises. This move was important as Oxford Street was home to many elite furnishing companies. Initially they advertised the business as “Collinson and Lock and Jackson and Graham,” clearly a wise move, considering Jackson and Graham’s stellar reputation.¹¹ On 25 June 1886, the newly expanded concern held a private viewing of the recently refurbished Oxford Street premises with a revised stock, which offered “striking evidence of the advance which decorative artwork has made in England in the last twenty years. Especially noticeable is the wood carving and inlaying.”¹² This praise demonstrates the business in its prime as a leader in the arts of furnishing and decoration, located in one of the premier retail streets of London.

Another aspect of their business astuteness was evidenced in this private viewing. This was their relationship with their employees. The *Pall Mall Gazette* commented upon “the revival of artistic furniture . . . [that] cannot but be of interest to the average intelligent citizen, but when it is intimately connected with the re-establishment of a great art industry hitherto practically dead in England, and with the development of an extremely remunerative employment for ‘women who work,’ it appeals to the commercial as well as the callaesthetic [that is, relating to perceptions of beauty] instincts of the community. This was made evident yesterday when a ‘private view’ of Messrs. Collinson and Lock’s new premises was held.”¹³ It is no surprise to read that women earned fifty shillings a week for producing marquetry “through the medium of simplified machinery,” as marquetry was a major feature of many of the firm’s products. This kind of work was not cheap. Jane Panton wrote in her advice book, *From Kitchen to Garret*,

“Could we afford it of course, I would employ Morris or Smee’s people or Collinson and Lock, with their delicious arrangement of ‘fittings,’ but we cannot.”¹⁴

Furthermore, in a table prepared by the Consumers’ League in 1887, Collinson and Lock were listed as an employer who paid fair wages to workers.¹⁵ The sweating of labor in this period was an explosive issue for the furniture trade and not usually associated with firms such as Collinson and Lock. However, they did not escape mention in some of the evidence to the Select Committee, which was set up to examine unscrupulous “sweating” practices.¹⁶ Nevertheless, in an 1888 review of stores in London, the *Pall Mall Gazette* noted, “All their [Collinson and Lock’s] furniture is made by Englishmen, who are paid ten pence and a shilling an hour, and not by Jews in the East End for threepence or fourpence.”¹⁷ A few years later, in 1891, Collinson and Lock were listed among a number of employers who conceded to demands for a forty-seven-hour week and a minimum of 10d per hour for their carpenters and joiners.¹⁸ These examples of a mature business strategy where the company is at its fittest and healthiest reflect this stage of the business cycle for the partnership.

The partners were also clearly concerned to maintain their prestige image in their showrooms by being up to date in terms of display. In 1886 the *Electrical Review* reported that “Messrs. Collinson and Lock, of Oxford Street, intend lighting their establishment with the electric light . . . and we are informed that after a trial of the Wenham gas lights these have been rejected in favour of electricity.”¹⁹ The installation was complete by 1887: “The Silvertown Telegraph Works Company has just completed the electric lighting of Messrs. Collinson and Lock’s show rooms at 76 to 80, Oxford Street.”²⁰

The electrical connection demonstrated a clear aptitude by the partners for spotting a trend: the Electrical Engineer commented, “This firm early recognised the importance which the electric light is destined to have upon the interior design of English mansions, having organised a special department for electric light fitting and have for some time engaged an electrical engineer of their own to superintend and carry out their work in this direction.”²¹ This is a great example of the firm’s response to a new and profitable market.

However, the seeds of decline were being sown, when in 1893 the partnership was incorporated as a company. Three years later, on 17 June 1896, George Lock withdrew from the company (taking his £20,000 capital with him) and set up on his own in temporary premises at 17 Berners Street, London, as a decorative art specialist. Within a year he had established new premises in the New Art Galleries, 38 Conduit Street. Collinson could not successfully continue after the massive withdrawal of capital, and in 1897 the company went in to liquidation. However, this was not the end of the name Collinson and Lock since the business was merged later that year with Waring and Gillow.

This made good commercial sense. In an effusive account of a grand dinner held in late 1897 for the now combined staff of Waring’s, Gillow’s and Collinson and Lock, S. J. Waring Jr. was reported as saying, “The amalgamation with Warings of the famous houses of Gillow and of Collinson and Lock has

been effected primarily with the object of combining in one spirit of enterprise two houses of the greatest eminence where work of the highest class shall be produced.”²²

Indeed, the company of Collinson and Lock was still trading under that name after this change of ownership. Articles still appeared in the press after 1897 extolling the qualities of the Collinson and Lock name. A piece by Esmé in the *Country Gentleman* dated 1898, full of gushing praise, included a note that “At this house [i.e., Collinson and Lock’s showrooms] one is able to see the men at work and to admit to skill and wonder at the artistic perception displayed; for each man is in his line a veritable artist.”²³

In the autumn of 1898 a sale of goods at the Oxford Street premises was advertised and discussed in the press. In an insightful article published in *The Graphic* discussing the noteworthy dispersal, “West End Flaneur” wrote about the peculiar benefits accruing from such a genuine sale. “There is this distinctive characteristic about Collinson and Lock’s sale: it is composed of furniture and fabrics that mark an epoch in artistic manufacture.”²⁴ He went on to say, “A few years hence these Collinson and Lock examples will unquestionably have acquired an historic character: and the prices at which they are offered today will be considered altogether inadequate to represent their true commercial value.”²⁵ A further final sale of “antiques” took place between 2 and 5 May 1899 on the premises of Collinson and Lock.²⁶

The reputation of the firm was such that the very dropping of their name continued to indicate significant kudos to an interior. For example, Dearman Birchall, a wealthy clothing manufacturer who was a collector of blue and white porcelain and a patron of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, noted in his diary how “we called on Mr Muir in Holland Park—furnished by Collinson & Locke [*sic*], and the Alexanders at Aubrey House, their guiding spirit being Whistler.”²⁷ Interestingly, it was only a little later that an estate agent also noted the firm’s work as a selling feature in the same house. The 1900 sale particulars of 42 Holland Park included “a reception room fitted by Collinson and Lock with woodwork of the finest workmanship in the Queen Anne style.”²⁸

For some time, the Waring and Gillow business astutely kept the trading name, as they did for other companies which they had recently taken over.²⁹ Nevertheless, after more than twenty-seven years of successful trading, the firm gradually slipped into oblivion. It was not until the mid-twentieth century that the firm’s products were once again recognized as serious and important contributions to the development of later nineteenth-century design.³⁰

Products and Design Issues

In terms of product characteristics in relation to a successful retail business, careful consideration of issues around differentiation, originality, technical quality, and perceived value are essential. These features are found in Collinson and Lock’s association with the “art furniture” movement.³¹ The term “art

Fig. 3
Sheet from artistic furniture
catalogue, 1871 (private
collection).

furniture” was in use by the late 1860s to make distinctions between the products sold by the general furniture trade and the furniture made by firms who engaged artists and architects to design for them.³² However, it was by no means a guarantee of success. The *Building News* suggested that the failure of art furniture businesses was due to a lack of commercial energy, goods that were too expensive, and a missing “love of art” that ensured the demise of a business.³³

Juliet Kinchin points out the significance of Collinson and Lock in achieving success where others had failed: “The importance of Collinson and Lock lay in providing a framework for the realisation of such reformers’ [Eastlake, Shaw and Webb] ideas and spreading them to a wide public through their commercial success and efficiency.”³⁴ Clearly, their long experience in the trade as well as their skills as entrepreneurs and the vitality of their new designs ensured success immediately when they opened the new business.

In 1871, their *Artistic Furniture Catalogue* was published, with designs by architects J. Moyr Smith and Thomas Collcutt. The trade press received it warmly and suggested why success came so swiftly to the partnership. The *House Furnisher* noted that “the cabinets do not look like miniature cathedrals nor Brobdingnagian reliquaries, and the general repose is not disturbed by sensational effects in the form of catherine wheels, or wafers such as have lately been too common, nor by Egyptian fleurons à la Dr. Dresser.”³⁵

These swipes at recent design practice that pilloried designs that were far too removed from middling public taste were to a degree justified. Collinson and Lock cleverly took existing styles and reworked them into objects that were not

only aesthetically pleasing but also possessed sales appeal. Moyr Smith, looking back to their early innovative catalogue, considered the impact that it had at the time:

Shortly after the appearance of [Bruce] Talbert’s book, [i.e., *Gothic Forms Applied to Furniture, Metal Work and Decoration for Domestic Purposes*, 1867] the firm of Collinson and Lock, which was about the first to recognise the vitality of the new style, brought out their catalogue. The subjects were treated in a much plainer, simpler manner than those by Talbert, and in some cases were as bare of ornament as it was possible to be; but there was practical knowledge displayed in the selection, and the work was simple enough to be easily wrought, so that the examples given in the catalogue were imitated all over the country and helped greatly to extend the influence of the new style.³⁶

Early on, their work was also singled out for praise. The architect Gervase Wheeler, in *The Choice of a Dwelling*, published in 1871, noted that

Since the Great Exhibitions, a decided improvement is evident in the articles exposed for sale in the warerooms of the leading manufacturers of furniture; they are all, however, of so expensive a character, that the man of moderate means is driven to buy the usual inartistic goods in ordinary use. Specially designed furniture, cheap and good, is a thing still to be sought, although a few cabinet-makers profess to supply it. Amongst these Collinson and Lock should be mentioned, because they have sought to produce simple and cheap articles in a better taste, and invite original designs to that end.³⁷

In 1872 Collinson and Lock were already referred to as “eminent upholsterers of London . . . [for] it is mainly to this firm we are indebted for the re-introduction of the style known as old English, which so admirably suits our British homes.”³⁸ All these comments, although supportive, also indicate something of the future fate of innovators who are often superseded by later entrants to a field, and therefore find themselves having to reinvent or decline.

Charles Perkins, editor of the 1874 second American edition of Charles Eastlake’s *Hints on Household Taste*, made a footnote to Eastlake’s general comment about the lack of good artistic furniture in London stores, which was not wholly supportive of art furniture: “Some of the ‘Sketches of Artistic Furniture’ published by Messrs. Collinson and Lock are in good taste, while others have that common defect in what is called artistic furniture, viz. the apparent intention to attract attention to special prettiness. This is in violation of the rules of good breeding.—Ed.”³⁹ These thoughts were picked up by the English trade press: “We have had a surfeit of ‘Early English’ lately, with its everlasting turned balusters, bits of bevelled glass, art tiles and the rest. ‘I know,’ the writer adds, ‘it is rank heresy to say a word against the soi-disant “art furniture.”’”⁴⁰

Although it was in 1873 that E. W. Godwin designed a cottage range of furniture for Collinson and Lock, where the designs borrowed features such as handles and strap hinges from his Dromore Castle designs,⁴¹ he was soon to complain

that they were “declining to work out medieval furniture & so meet the demand that is made by clergy and others on this style.”⁴² These comments may reflect a certain arrogance on the part of the firm based on the success of their new designs. Nevertheless, the editor of *Harpers New Monthly* Magazine was quite happy to use cuts from Collinson and Lock’s publication (along with images from Talbert’s *Gothic Forms* and interiors by Kimbel and Cabus, and Pottier and Szymus) to illustrate an academic article by Harriett Spofford, entitled “Medieval Furniture,” published in November 1876.⁴³

The *Furniture Gazette*, 1879, discussing art furniture, described Collinson and Lock as the pioneers of the “Backward Ho” movement,⁴⁴ in that they were continually adapting their styles to meet the demand for modern Gothic, Jacobean, and the Renaissance revival styles. The company’s own advertisement of 1881 explained the particular approach: “Collinson & Lock, modellers, wood-carvers, and decorators . . . [who make] modelled plaster work, wood carving, painting & decorating for Ceilings, Wall Panels, and Friezes, as in the best Old English Manor Houses in the style of the Renaissance and used constructively in the enrichment of Interior Woodwork and furniture of an artistic kind.”⁴⁵

These historic connections were picked up (and lampooned on occasion) by commentators in the trade press. A piece in the *Cabinet Maker* noted, “Here is a group of sundries from the boxes and smoking room that will be more readily recognised as Messrs. Collinson and Lock’s usual class of work. It seemed to me that the furniture was doing its best to comply with the appeal of Lady Saphir—“O doo be Early English.” Some equally quaint and comfortable forms, emanating from Renaissance sources, might, I think, have been employed in this case.”⁴⁶

Despite this, critics were generally most supportive of the work produced by the firm. A columnist in the *British Architect* wrote, in 1886, “It is, however, almost in the light of a school of carving that we view Messrs. Collinson and Lock’s show-rooms, for nowhere else have we seen in such uniform excellence, a large and varied display of Renaissance carving. In the why and the wherefore of carved enrichments no more instructive lesson could well be found. Some of the marquetric work, too, is of the greatest excellence, and here and there are pieces of quite striking elegance of drawing and sparkle of colour.”⁴⁷ It was also suggested that the displays in their showrooms were of educational value. An article in the *Pall Mall Gazette* praised the firm, which was “on the right track and cannot fail to influence the public’s taste for good.”⁴⁸

More specifically, J. Moyr Smith wrote, in the section on drawing rooms in his *Ornamental Interiors Ancient and Modern*, 1887, about the interior design work of the firm:

Some very fine drawing-room decorations have been executed by Messrs. Collinson and Lock; the ceilings are in plaster, of Italian design, graceful and flowing in line, and beautifully modelled. At various points in the ornament, jets of electric light are introduced; these not only light the room with fine effect, but show to advantage the exquisite delicacy of the

ornament. The stiles are of delicate raised ornament in enamel white; the frieze and dado are in agreement with the design of the stiles and ceiling; the wall spaces are covered either by solidly gilded leather of Italian design, silk of beautiful colour, or papers which reproduce the Genoese or other Italian fabrics of the Renaissance. The furniture used is sometimes enamel white, which shows the delicate carvings with fine effect, or it is ebony or some other dark wood inlaid with engraved ivory.⁴⁹

To achieve this level of aesthetic quality the firm often employed first-rate designers as well as skilled artists and craftspeople. T. E. Collcut was responsible for the majority of designs in their first brochure, published in 1871, and in 1872 E. W. Godwin signed an exclusive contract with the firm worth £450 per annum plus 3 guineas per drawing in 1872. Others associated with the firm’s designs included Bruce Talbert, H. W. Batley, and, later, Stephen Webb.

These relationships were crucial to the success of businesses like Collinson and Lock, though at the time there were ongoing concerns related to designers’ professional recognition. The issue was raised by *The Builder* in 1881: “We see a good design, and we are told it is by ‘Messrs.— & Co.’ We do not understand what is meant by a ‘company’ designing. Artistic design is an individual act. We want to know the name of the man who did the thing, and not the name of the people who paid him to do the thing under their name.”⁵⁰

This argument was a significant concern for the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society. In an 1888 article entitled “The Arts and Crafts Exhibition: What Is It and What Is It For? A Chat with Mr Walter Crane,” Crane condemned the anonymity of artist/designers employed in the trade. When asked, “Do the names of any important art producers appear in your Black List?” Crane replied, “the chief are Gillows and Collinson and Lock.”⁵¹

This issue did not go away, so that in 1890 *The Spectator* wrote a piece about that year’s Arts and Crafts Exhibition noting that “By some change of policy the Committee have admitted this year the outer shopkeeper like Messrs. Liberty and Messrs. Collinson and Lock, and have allowed them in some cases to leave the names of their designers and craftsmen in a decent obscurity. This seems to reduce the Society to the ordinary exhibition terms; but that is their affair, and not ours. It must be said, however, that the exhibition gains little by the change.”⁵²

The firm was not concerned about such criticism because they had built up a formidable clientele based on product differentiation, originality, technical quality, and perceived value. Juliet Kinchin has suggested that the appointment of Stephen Webb, around 1885, as principal in-house designer marked a distinct departure from the firm’s previous practice of employing independent designers, and thereby developed a new approach to furniture design that revealed Webb’s Arts and Crafts tendencies.⁵³ Although at this time the firm was in its prime, Webb’s approach, including the rejection of machinery, was not helpful to the firm’s continued development and reflected an increasingly insular and specialized approach within the market that was ultimately to prove terminal.

Marketing and the Marketplace

Apart from prestigious retail premises, for many high-quality businesses in the later nineteenth century, a presence at the international exhibitions was essential to showcase their work. Collinson and Lock were clearly aware of the benefits of displaying their work to these audiences, both as a method of general promotion and as a means of specifically acquiring export orders. This marketing strategy was evident a year after they had formally established their business.

London Exhibition 1871

The architect and designer T. E. Collcut was responsible for Collinson and Lock’s interesting entry of an ebonized cabinet with painted decoration for the 1871 London Exhibition. The cabinet was very well received. Indeed it was purchased by the government and displayed at the Bethnal Green Museum from 1872 as a stimulus for the local furniture-making trades.⁵⁴ In his official report on the exhibition, Hungerford Pollen was effusive about the cabinet: “It is full of ingenious little drawers, shelves and receptacles reminding us in this respect of the quaint devices of Japanese cabinet makers. . . . These are panelled and the panels occupied by classical figures painted in white on vermilion and with birds all admirably drawn. The dark wood (mahogany stained black) is covered with arabesque painted ornament and the supports at the angle turned on the lathe. They have delicate strings and neckings but no violent lumps or protuberances.”⁵⁵ This description explains the novelty of the entry, with its Japanese influences combined with a refined version of the “Old English” style.

Vienna Exhibition 1873

In 1873 Collinson and Lock exhibited at the Vienna International Exhibition. Their stand (and five pieces of furniture)⁵⁶ was designed by E. W. Godwin. The frieze of the dark wood-paneled display room was described by the Amtlicher Bericht as being an “extraordinary effective, stylistic fashion of Japanese art.”⁵⁷ The *Morning Post* commented upon “the extreme neatness of everything [Collinson and Lock] exhibit . . . already sufficiently well-known as manufacturers of substantial and what is generally known as useful household furniture, but all their work, if solid and sometimes a little heavy, is executed in good taste and with accurate workmanship. Mr Edward Godwin and Mr Burne-Jones are the principal artistic designers employed by the firm.”⁵⁸ The firm’s impact on influential clients was evident. Another version of their successful 1871 cabinet, which this time had an upper panel painted by Edward Burne-Jones, was bought by the Prince of Liechtenstein, who gave it to the Österreichisches Museum für angewandte Kunst, Vienna, in 1881. Another Austrian commission came via Prince Esterhazy’s order for a chair and a ceiling from Godwin through Collinson and Lock.⁵⁹

Philadelphia Exhibition 1876⁶⁰

With two international exhibitions completed in Europe, and already doing business with some American clients, the firm then showed at the important Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition in 1876. British furniture was well received at this exhibition, and Collinson and Lock’s exhibits were particularly noted:

Messrs. Collinson and Lock, of London, are represented, in one of our engravings of English furniture, by two very elegant parlor-cabinets. These are of high merit in design, and certainly in manufacture, for it has been the special study of this firm to unite durability with elegance; and by no less an authority than Mr. Eastlake, we believe, they are recognized as among the skilful and artistic cabinet-makers of Great Britain. The larger cabinet is of satinwood, inlaid with ivory and various woods. The other is an angle cabinet, of plain red-walnut wood, the panels of the door being painted in decorative figures. Both of these productions are original in composition, arrangement, and finish. They cannot be said to belong to any style, and are in no way borrowed from the past, although thoroughly of the old English in manner. It is a style that Messrs. Collinson and Lock have, in great measure, made their own, and which more or less characterizes all their work. The larger of these cabinets was offered at one hundred and fifty, the smaller at ninety pounds sterling; and they were certainly, for their value, very reasonable.⁶¹

The critic for *Harper’s Weekly*, commenting upon the satinwood cabinet, wrote that it was “one of the finest specimens of the furniture designer’s art. The closest scrutiny can detect no blemish in its mechanical finish, whilst the general design is strikingly beautiful and effective.”⁶²

A further complimentary view of their work was expressed by Walter Smith, onetime director of the Massachusetts Schools of Design, who wrote of Collcut’s rosewood cabinet, “the chief feature of the whole are the figures in the doors . . . painted by the artist Murray who stands at the head of his profession for this kind of work . . . altogether the work is an extremely satisfactory one, and an admirable example of correct taste in design and ornamentation.”⁶³ Clarence Cook in his *House Beautiful* also wrote about painted cabinets and the Renaissance tradition. He commented that “it is only in England that we see a return to the charming old fashion. . . . In the Philadelphia exhibition there was a piece of furniture with panels painted by Mr. Murray.”⁶⁴

Despite these commendations, the taste for this type of painted furniture was quite exclusive and ephemeral. On 12 September 1878 Lock wrote to Murray, “I have pleasure to send you a cheque for £10 but just ask you to look upon it as the last advanced for some time to come, as we have come to the conclusion that it will be really most indiscreet of us to add a Sovereign’s worth to our Stock for some months.”⁶⁵ Furthermore, the comment that suggested the firm had successfully made the “Old English” style their own was also evidence of their vulnerability to the inevitable changes in interior fashions. <Image 4>

Fig. 4
Collinson and Lock
exhibit, Philadelphia
Centennial Exhibition,
1876 (Print and Picture
Collection, Free Library
of Philadelphia).

Paris Exhibition 1878

Collinson and Lock exhibited the interiors of a house in the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1878, perhaps indicating their growing emphasis on interior work as well as furniture. The catalogue of the British section noted the display: “The fifth house, erected by Messrs. Collinson & Lock, of Fleet Street, was designed by Mr. T. E. Collcutt. It is in the style of an English country house of the reign of King William III.”⁶⁶ The *Journal of Society of Arts* noted that “the construction and furnishing of this excellent specimen of a little known epoch are entirely the work of Messrs. Collinson and Lock, of London.”⁶⁷ The commercial marketing success of the exhibition is evident in this commentary from a regional newspaper: “Admission [to the house] was by address card and over 100,000 persons have left their cards with a clerk. Foreigners seem to have been specially impressed as upwards of 80 per cent of the orders which the firm has received

have been given by them. The house and contents have been purchased by the Baroness Rothschild for erection at [Château de] Ferrières [Paris].”⁶⁸

Discussing the furnishing of the show house, the *Morning Post* notes a particular item: “The principle object in the hall is a cabinet constructed from the celebrated Catalpa tree, which lately grew in the Temple gardens in the City and which, like its old friend Temple Bar, could no longer be endured by modern innovators.”⁶⁹ The history of this particular cabinet was recorded by Charles Worsley in his 1910 *History of the Middle Temple*, where it was recorded that in 1877 the timber from the tree was used to make the “handsome cabinet which stands in the Benchers’ corridor [that] was made by Collinson and Lock.”⁷⁰ The invoice for the cabinet describes it as “a fine Catalpa wood cabinet, and walnut stand, with handsome repoussé metal hinges, lock plates etc. £84. 10. 00.” In addition there were charges for hiring a van to fetch the tree, a payment for “sawing up and desiccating wood” and for painting crests on the panels of the doors.⁷¹

The trade press were clear that Collinson and Lock’s display in the Paris exhibition was an important turning point: the *Furniture Gazette*’s reviewer said, “We have, without doubt, once more a national style which possesses true principles and affords endless scope.”⁷² The display included a fine example of the well-known octagonal table designed by Godwin and the famous Godwin-designed “Lucretia” cabinet.⁷³

Robert Edis, in his *Decoration of Town Houses*, 1881, also discussed the Paris exhibition and noted an archetypal aesthetic scheme:

The drawing-room in Collinson and Lock’s house, being especially noticeable for delicacy of colouring and harmony of general effect. In the latter, the walls were finished in soft, delicate tones of yellow and yellowish pink, the woodwork being tinted a delicate blue colour; the mantel-piece, of good and characteristic design, being set off by tilework of red lustre ware by Mr. De Morgan; the windows hung with light curtains of Crete muslin, printed in light shades of yellow pink; the floor covered with Indian matting, and Persian rugs of exquisite design and colouring scattered over it here and there; the furniture of satin and rose woods, with painted and inlaid panels, appropriate and good in design, but eclectic in character. All gave a pleasant, home-like air of comfort and suitability, combined with harmony and elegance of general effect.⁷⁴

Although this indicates a nod toward the aesthetic taste, and therefore a recognition of changes in fashion, there were still murmurs of dissent. *The Artisan Reports on the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1878–1879* noted that

Messrs. Collinson and Lock, of Fleet Street, show a very extensive assortment of mediaeval furniture, which is of an altogether different character to the objects just named. They have a house furnished throughout in the international façade, as well as a large space in the Exhibition proper. Their goods are doubtless of first-class quality, both as to workmanship and design, but there is very little carving in them, and what there is, is of

a thoroughly mechanical nature, which avails nothing if it is not very accurately and carefully done. It is tolerably well done in this case.”⁷⁵

George Smalley, writing in the *New York Daily Tribune*, contrasted the display of another London furniture company, William Watt and Company, with that of Collinson and Lock. His comments reveal the loss of the “leading edge” image which the firm held initially, indicating a period of less excitement but effective stability: “Unluckily the commercial feeling seems too often to have elbowed the artistic feeling aside . . . of late years some of the sobriety of decoration which distinguished this firm [Collinson and Lock] has departed. You may see cabinets of extremely elaborate form and extremely elaborate ornamentation; panels filled with gaudily colored figures and the touch of the chisel and knife far too frequent.”⁷⁶

Whether there was too much or too little carving, other critics continued to praise the firm and its display: “Messrs. Collinson and Lock, who have perhaps done more towards the introduction of good taste in furniture than almost any other firm, maintained their reputation by building and completely fitting and furnishing the country house.”⁷⁷

Further Exhibition Work

Business promotion was sustained with a display at the 1881 Exhibition of Works of Art Applied to Furniture, held in the Albert Hall, London, and sponsored by the Society of Arts. One commentator considered that “If the exhibition is a protest against the new Aesthetic Decorative Societies, from whose prospectuses one would imagine that true taste and workmanship are not to be found in the showrooms of high class firms we sympathise to a certain extent with it.”⁷⁸ Collinson and Lock were singled out for the quality of their display of a mantelpiece and cabinet in deep red mahogany, with a silver medal being awarded to the designer, Webb.

London provided the venue for yet another marketing opportunity in the International Health Exhibition held in 1884. The firm’s interior work on show was by now rather familiar. “In the class of fittings and accessories, and completely-fitted apartments, Messrs. Collinson and Lock . . . show two handsomely furnished model apartments. . . . One of the apartments, a drawing-room, is hung with a rich scarlet silk damask, the ceiling is panelled in fibrous plaster. A white chimney-piece in the corner, with hooded overmantel, and a white enamelled pianoforte in a rich Louis Seize style of decoration, besides some beautifully executed specimens of rosewood furniture, delicately inlaid with ivory.”⁷⁹

Apart from this typical work, they also showed an apparently new innovation in furniture—an “ingenious and complete system of furnishing.” The reviewer of the *Leeds Mercury* described this as “a bedroom floor designed by Mr Edis [Sir Robert Edis] where all the main articles of furniture are placed in recesses.”⁸⁰ This approach to “built-in” furniture was explained by Edis:

I wish particularly to advocate the greater use of plain fitted and designed furniture for recesses in various rooms, as they can be made at much less cost than the usual moveable furniture, can be adapted to the general character of the rooms, and if made as I shall hereafter describe will save much labour in dusting and cleaning, and will not form resting-places for the dirt and filth that accumulate, in most houses, on the tops of wardrobes and other pieces of furniture, the height of which prevents their being constantly dusted and kept clean.”⁸¹

Collinson and Lock advertised this system as suitable for “Bedrooms, Bachelors’ Chambers, Shooting Boxes and Yachts.”⁸² It was clearly well received, for in 1884, the Society of Arts awarded the Stacy Prize for the best exhibit in Class 30 (objects for Internal Decoration and Use in the Dwelling; Fittings and Furniture) to Collinson and Lock.⁸³ Two years later, this fitted furniture was praised by the author of “The Ladies Column” in the *Hampshire Advertiser*, who discussed the new showroom of Collinson and Lock, especially enthusing about the layout of the store with room settings and bedroom sets. Some were apparently “fitted up on what someone very disrespectfully called ‘the ships cabin principle’ rather did they resemble the showrooms of the great man milliner of Paris, M. Worth, where the oak panels of the wall slide back and reveal costumes.”⁸⁴ In an 1888 review of London stores the *Pall Mall Gazette* noted this “new” trend: “On the premises of the furnishers of Charlottenburg, Messrs Collinson and Lock, there are thirty specimen bedrooms. The furniture in these is of the new kind, in which everything—dressing table, wardrobe, washstand, bookcase, medicine chest, mirrors and dado—is all of one piece.”⁸⁵ This seems to demonstrate how the firm was still able to reinvigorate itself by introducing new product types, if thus regaining an initiative.

1890 Arts and Crafts Exhibition, London

Although Collinson and Lock were responsible for the interior decorations of the first Arts and Crafts Exhibition held in the New Gallery, 121 Regent Street, London, in 1888, they did not appear to actually exhibit until 1890.⁸⁶ One columnist explained, “By some change of policy the Committee have admitted this year the outer [*sic*] shopkeeper like Messrs. Liberty and Messrs. Collinson and Lock.”⁸⁷ This apparently created a “shoppy look” but was nevertheless well received by some: “Here [at the Arts and Crafts Exhibition in the New Gallery], while the firm of Morris and Company properly hold their own, the accession to the Gallery of firms like Collinson and Lock, Gillow, Gregory and Wilkinson—most of whom we think have hereto kept aloof—ensures a display of excellent work conceived upon a wide basis.”⁸⁸

Others were not so keen. The reviewer for *The Academy* critiqued Collinson and Lock, “who show a number of highly finished and ornamented tables, chairs, cabinets, &c., mostly designed by Mr. G J S Lock. The fault of most of these and other highly decorated pieces of furniture is that the decoration is over-done and the panels too crowded; but the inlay and marqueterie are beautifully executed, and the colour of the latter (mixed walnut and boxwood) is charming.”⁸⁹

Fig. 5
New Gallery interior, 1890
(Reproduced by permission
of English Heritage).

The *British Architect* was equally ambivalent. Apart from the “shoppy effect” their display created, the products were more “illustrative of elaborate and beautiful workmanship, than originality of design.”⁹⁰ The final cynical comment came in the London *Star* newspaper:

As for me (no other than Bassetto, dear reader),⁹¹ I have been asked to take his place on this occasion because I can be depended on to deal leniently with the exhibition, and to pass over in silence—or nearly so—anything that I cannot conscientiously praise. For instance, there is Messrs Collinson and Lock’s large exhibit in the North Gallery. If AU were on the job (pardon the expression) he would denounce such a bundle of furniture samples as an outrage on all artistic congruity, but, as for me, I simply say a smooth word on the WIDE RANGE OF STYLE covered by the specimens, and pass on.⁹²

These criticisms indicate a loss of direction for the business, which, although still able to command respect, was meeting a very particular and limited market. The

high praise received in the early 1880s was countered by the often quite half-hearted praise heard in the 1890s. The decline of the trendsetters had begun.

One of the last major exhibitions the firm showed at was the Chicago 1893 Exposition, where they displayed “specimens of dining- and bed-room fitted up with suitable hangings and appropriate furniture, china, art objects, and water- colours; furniture of various descriptions, examples of marqueterie, ivory inlaying, carving; repoussé work, including electrical fittings.”⁹³

This extensive exposure at international exhibitions over a period of twenty-five years was evidence of the firm’s attention to their marketing practice, which, augmented by a number of high-profile public commissions, proved to be valuable as promotional exercises as well as commercial propositions.

Clientele

Private commissions were crucial to the complete house furnishers and decorators who operated in major cities in the later nineteenth century, not only as high-quality orders but also as effective extensions of the showrooms. The selected examples listed in the appendix give some indication of the range and scope of the work. The firm also engaged in extensive contract work.

Among their early major works was the 1881 commission for fitting out the newly built Savoy Theatre in central London. The press release from Richard D’Oyly Carte stated, “I venture to think that, with some few exceptions, the interiors of most theatres hitherto built have been conceived with little, if any, artistic purpose, and generally executed with little completeness, and in a more or less garish manner. Without adopting either of the styles known as ‘Queen Anne’ and ‘early English’ or entering upon the so-called ‘esthetic’ manner, a result has now been produced which I feel sure will be appreciated by all persons of taste.”⁹⁴

The interior of the theater was described by *The Academy* journal:

The decorations of the theatre are by a firm of artists who, as far as we know, have not previously been engaged in the ornamentation and upholstering of a playhouse—Messrs. Collinson and Lock. These gentlemen are experts in chastened design and their work in colour is remarkable for its combination of sobriety and glow. Accordingly, it is not to be wondered at that the interior of Savoy is one of the most picturesque of the public interiors of London. Modelled plaster-work of delicate draughtsmanship and of carefully studied relief is adroitly employed. While the curtain is pale primrose or ivory, the fronts of the boxes are cream-coloured; gold is distributed only in large and important masses, its effect not frittered away; and there is a warm background of noble red.⁹⁵

These contemporary accounts from the firm’s heyday indicate their originality and obvious attractiveness to clients.

Fig. 6
Advertisement in theater
program, c. 1892/3 (private
collection).

Following the success of the theater, in 1889 D'Oyly Carte commissioned T. E. Colcutt to build the Savoy Hotel, Strand, London, with interiors by Collinson and Lock. Richard Dana, writing in 1900, explained the success of the enterprise:

The heart of the Savoy, to Londoners, at least, is the Restaurant, one of the favourite meeting grounds of “smart” society. Admirably, therefore, does the opulent, but by no means gaudy treatment of this adapt itself to the ordinary circumstances of its use. For this and for the decorative work generally, Mr. T. E. Colcutt [*sic*] is responsible; most of the work being executed by Collinson and Locke [*sic*], and Mr. George L. Locke being specially associated with the “Pinafore” room. . . . The “Pinafore” room is more modern in treatment. It has a high-panelled dado painted white, the upper panels being relieved by a series of heraldic devices painted in strong colours and gold. The frieze over has a rich raised design in gold on a background of cream colour. The ceiling is of panelled plaster, also treated in a light colour scheme of cream, gold, and buff, while the homeliness of this charming room is increased by the quaintly designed mantelpiece in one corner with an effective arrangement of coloured tiles.⁹⁶

More theater work followed the Savoy commission when Daly’s Theatre, Cranbourn Street, Leicester Square, opened in June 1893 with furnishings by Collinson and Lock.⁹⁷ The critics clearly liked the splendid interiors: “The theory that colouring and design in the body of a playhouse should be ‘kept down’ has been entirely abandoned; and instead of the half-tints and delicate tracer-ies of some theatres, we have great masses of ruby, Venetian red, dull silver and burnished gold. Additional warmth is given to the colour-scheme by the

Fig. 7
Pinafore Room, Savoy
Hotel, 1893 (Reproduced
by permission of English
Heritage).

marqueterie panelling with which the walls of the lower part of the auditorium are covered. The general effect of the scheme is powerful and impressive.”⁹⁸ The day after Daly’s Theatre opened, the *Daily Graphic* produced a description of the new building: “On entering the auditorium the first thing to impress the spectator is the bold originality of its outline and decoration. The general scheme of colour is a blending of red, gold, silver and bronze. The circle fronts and boxes

have been modelled in such a way as to represent boatloads of sea nymphs and Cupids in the act of blowing bubbles, which bubbles have been ingeniously converted into electric lights of many tints.”⁹⁹ This extravagant interior clearly contrasts with the more sober designs the firm originally began with in the 1880s and probably represents a mainstream approach rather than an innovative one.

Other important public commissions included supplying furniture designed by architect G. E. Street for his new Law Courts in London during 1880–1882.¹⁰⁰ The firm was not Street’s first choice, but their 1880 bid was substantially lower than the next and so was accepted. This commission was shared with Gillow and Holland and Company. Later, in 1887, the firm fitted out the Queen’s Hall of the People’s Palace, Mile End Road, London.¹⁰¹

As larger, more well-organized and well-financed businesses grew in size and stature, the competition for work became increasingly aggressive, and the firm looked more and more vulnerable. With many new operating and marketing challenges, with the withdrawal of capital, and a lack of direction in design and manufacture, their demise was probably inevitable.

Conclusion

The life cycle of the firm came to an end on 18 May 1897.¹⁰² This study has considered the firm’s business strategy, product characteristics, the nature of its marketplace and client base. The challenging changes in all these aspects of the business account for its decline. Within the company itself, there was the debt load, the deterioration in leadership and management, poor planning for the future, and a terrible factory fire, all of which were serious on their own but taken together were critical. In addition, external factors such as a dwindling customer base, competition from more aggressive companies employing new production techniques, and a lack of product innovation indicated an inevitable downturn in trade. London establishments such as Maples and Shoolbred took an increasing percentage of the middle-upper-class trade, as did some regionally based businesses. Although Collinson and Lock continued to promote themselves through international exhibitions, the focus of marketing had moved to the high street and the retail showroom. Other longer-established firms such as Gillow, Holland, and Trollope managed to maintain their client base, probably due to the loyalty of their clients, although others such as Wright and Mansfield also failed to adapt to changing circumstances.

Finally, the emphasis on arts and crafts ideals encouraged by Webb, although producing exceptionally crafted objects, had resulted in staleness in terms of design. Although originally innovative, the business had been unable to continue to reinvent itself or introduce any new products or indeed react to changes in fashion.

Despite their demise in 1897 they maintained a presence in the interior design world of the late nineteenth century until 1900 through their amalgamation

with Waring and Gillow. It was in that year that the newly constituted firm showed in the Paris exhibition. The Graphic discussed how the various elements of the new Gillow firm had furnished the “Englishman’s House” displayed there. Collinson and Lock had created the saloon, or reception room, with paneling and a molded ceiling, while Gillow completed the drawing room, and Waring and Sons, the hall.¹⁰³ *Country Life Illustrated* explained the layout:

This [saloon] has been fitted and decorated by Messrs. Collinson and Lock, and though it is more Tudor than Jacobean, it is nevertheless admirable in every respect. The walls are panelled with oak and the doors and spandrels are richly carved or inlaid. The mantel-piece is of carved oak with very elaborately-carved stone linings, and is a fine example of its kind. It is a worthy apartment in which to show the pictures of Burne-Jones at his best, for here are assembled his “Cupid and Psyche,” lent by Mr. Alexander Henderson, “St. George,” “Angel of the Martyrs,” [and] “The Sybil.”¹⁰⁴

This commentary, which links the “Old English” style furniture with Pre-Raphaelite works by Burne-Jones, is a graphic swansong both for the firm and for the nineteenth century. The exhibition in Paris was embracing the fresh Art Nouveau, so in comparison, the Collinson and Lock display and indeed Burne-Jones must have represented both the historic and recent past.

Collinson and Lock started out optimistically with a fresh approach to furniture and interior design. The firm grew to become a major player in the field, and then slowly diminished through an inability to manage change. Whether its failure relates to finance, management systems, marketing, or product design, any company that does not regenerate itself is destined to eventually fail. The classic sequence of business start-up, development, primacy, maturity, and decline was clearly played out by this once hugely significant beacon of the avant-garde art furniture movement

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Clive Edwards

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Appendix 1

Client	Date	Details
John Wingate McLaren, 69 Addison Road, Kensington, London	1873	The firm worked with E. W. Godwin for an Australian civil servant client. They made pieces for a drawing room as well as a Godwin-designed billiard table. ¹⁰⁵
William Randolph Hopkins, Grey Towers, Stokesly Road, Nunthorpe, Middlesbrough	1873–1874	Iron master who employed the firm with E. W. Godwin to redecorate interiors and supply furniture. ¹⁰⁶ “Most of this decoration consisted of hand stencilled paper in soft pastel colours with simple decorative motifs much influenced by Japanese design.” ¹⁰⁷
Captain Carpenter, Kiplin Hall, Northallerton, Yorkshire	1876	Bills from Collinson and Lock for the supply of oak paneling and painting and decorating and furnishings under the supervision of architect W. E. Nesfield, January to December 1876. ¹⁰⁸ Dining room (furnished as a study or library), Kiplin Hall, 1889 (Reproduced by permission of Kiplin Hall Mansion).
Duke of Westminster, Eaton Hall, Cheshire	1878	Duke of Westminster’s commission for furniture items, including billiard table and a rosewood cabinet.
Schloss Charlottenburg, Berlin	1886–1888	George Lock was presented to Queen Victoria by the empress in Berlin regarding work done for Schloss Charlottenburg. ¹⁰⁹ Further work in Germany was recorded by Baily’s Magazine of Sports and Pastimes in 1890: “Reciprocity is being shown by householders on the Rhine, where, at picturesque Bonn, our London upholsterers, Messrs. Collinson and Lock, are furnishing and decorating the residence that is to welcome Her Majesty’s granddaughter Princess Victoria, and the Prince Charming who has won her hand. This English patronage is some set-off to the many German and Austrian household goods that are fashionable in this country.” ¹¹⁰

Charles Kettlewell, St. Margaret’s Mansions, Victoria Street, London

Dec. 1888

Charles Kettlewell was a wealthy “gentleman of leisure” who had this London “pied-à-terre” furnished in a fashionable “eclectic” style by the firm.

Dining room, St. Margaret’s Mansions, 1888 (Reproduced by permission of English Heritage).

Leopold de Rothschild, Ascott House, Wing, Buckinghamshire

1888–1889

Rooms decorated and furnished for the banker Leopold de Rothschild.

C. H. Stanford, 6 Carlton House Terrace, London

1889–1890

Furnished by Collinson and Lock as contractors via architect Sir Ernest George. The library “was panelled with Italian walnut in Francois Premier style, and part of the walls to the height of the panelling, had bookcases matching the dado. The walls above were covered with gilded leather, and the ceiling coffered with walnut inlaid in panels and framed with boxwood.”¹¹¹

“The dining room was fully lined with mahogany, its deep frieze of carved panels, partly gilt, was in Henry II style. The finish was expensive, the margins of the lower panels being inlaid with satin wood, and a wooden coffered ceiling with a central portion domed and decorated with finely modelled figures in ivory colour, on a gold background.”¹¹²

Dining room, 6 Carlton House Terrace, 1898 (Reproduced by permission of English Heritage).

Sir Ernest Cassel, 48 Grosvenor Square, London	1890	Sir Ernest Joseph Cassel (1852–1921) was a German-born British merchant-banker for whom the firm fitted out this house.
Sir Alfred Beit, Aldford House, 26 Park Lane, London	1894–1897	Alfred Beit (1853–1906) was a gold and diamond magnate of German origin. The house at 26 Park Lane, designed by Balfour and Turner in 1897, was criticized as “the incongruous transplant of an African lodge.” ¹¹³

		26 Park Lane, London, 1897 (Reproduced by permission of English Heritage).
James Beale and architect Philip Webb, Standen, East Grinstead, Sussex	1896	Marquetry furniture supplied for bedrooms. ¹¹⁴

¹ Advertisement in the *Morning Post*, July 23, 1873.

² Juliet Kinchin first published details of Collinson and Lock in “Collinson and Lock,” *Connoisseur* 201 (May 1979): 47–53. I gratefully acknowledge her article as a starting source for this paper.

³ The term “art furniture,” introduced in the late 1860s, initially referred to furniture characterized by ebonized woods, angularity of outline, bracket and spindle details, beveled glass, and painted or stenciled panels. However, art furniture could also include styles using historic references, such the “Old English.” See A. Jonquet, *Original Sketches for Art Furniture in the Jacobean, Queen Anne, Adam and other styles* (Batsford, 1877–1879).

⁴ See R. Daft, J. Murphy, and H. Willmott, *Organization Theory and Design* (Andover: Southwestern Cengage Learning, 2010), 356.

⁵ Frederick Litchfield, *Illustrated History of Furniture* (London: Truslove and Co., 1893), 246. Litchfield, discussing Jackson and Graham’s work, noted that “Collinson and Lock, who have recently acquired this firm’s premises and business, were both brought up in the house as young men, and left some thirty odd years ago [i.e., c. 1863] for Herrings, of Fleet Street.”

⁶ Advertisement in *Notes and Queries*, 4th Series VI, 10 Sept. 1870. Herring and Son were established from 1771 to 1783 at no. 96 Fleet Street, and from 1784 to 1870 at no. 109. At least until 1878, Collinson and Lock used the term “Established 1782” on their own bill heads.

⁷ *Architect*, 10 May 1873; see also Colcutt’s elevations and plans for the project, St. Bride Street (Nos. 9–13), “Warehouse for Messrs. Collinson & Lock. . . .” 10 Sept. 1873, COL/SVD/PL/01/0977, London Metropolitan Archives. At time of writing, these were too fragile to be inspected. See also Simon Bradley and Nikolaus Pevsner, *London 1: The City of London*, Buildings of England, vol. 1 (London: Penguin, 1998), 116.

⁸ *Architect* 10 (1879): 327.

⁹ Wilfred Kemp, *The Practical Plasterer*, 4th ed. (London: Crosby Lockwood and Co., 1912), 68.

¹⁰ *London Post Office Directory*, 1882.

¹¹ One example was from the *Pall Mall Gazette* 18 Sept. 1885: “These united firms will give special attention to the artistic draping of windows and have engaged an artist to superintend this branch of their business.”

¹² *The Times*, 25 June 1886.

¹³ *Pall Mall Gazette*, 26 June 1886.

¹⁴ Mrs. Panton, *From Kitchen to Garret*, 7th ed. (London: Ward, 1890), 37.

¹⁵ Clementina Black, Consumers’ League, *A Proposal That Buyers Should Combine to Deal Only with Employers Who Pay Their Workers Fairly* (London, 1888).

¹⁶ In particular in relation to cashing checks they had paid to suppliers at discounted rates, and putting their own name on goods made in other workshops. See *First Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords on the Sweating System; together with the proceedings of the committee, minutes of evidence, and appendix* (London, 1888), 216, 218, and 1017.

¹⁷ *Pall Mall Gazette*, 22 Dec.1888.

¹⁸ The London United Trade Committee of Carpenters and Joiners, *Eight Hours Movement*, 1892. (London School of Economics)

¹⁹ *Electrical Review* 19 (1886): 408. This is quite advanced as the first public electricity supply in the United Kingdom was created only in 1881.

²⁰ *Electrical Review* 20 (1887): 580.

²¹ *Electrical Engineer* 6 (1890): 449. See also a discussion about the “New Lamps” sold by the firm in *Le Follet: Journal du Grande Monde, Fashion, Polite literature, Beaux Arts &c &c*, 1 Oct. 1891, 393.

²² S. J. Waring, “On the Fusion of Art and Commerce,” *The Graphic*, 29 Jan. 1898.

²³ Esmé, “Inlaid Furniture,” *The Country Gentleman: Sporting Gazette, Agricultural Journal, and The Man about Town*, 13 Aug. 1898, 1063.

²⁴ *The Graphic*, 12 Nov. 1898.

²⁵ This prediction came true only in the latter part of the twentieth century.

²⁶ *The Standard*, 5 May 1899.

²⁷ Dearman Birchall, *The Diary of a Victorian Squire*, ed. David Verey (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1983), 89. Mr. Muir is likely to be Andrew Muir, residing at no. 42 Holland Park; see *London Post Office Directory*, 1895.

²⁸ *Morning Post*, 7 July 1900. Another similar reference was made in the *Pall Mall Gazette* 25 June 1900, referring to a house in Millfield Lane, Highgate.

²⁹ Advertisement in *The Times*, 16 March 1907, stated that under the banner of Waring and Gillow are S. J. Waring and Sons, Gillow and Co., Collinson and Lock, Jackson and Graham, Hindley and Co., and T. Bonter and Co.

³⁰ Nikolaus Pevsner mentions the firm briefly in his article “Art Furniture,” *Architectural Review*, Jan. 1952, p.49.

³¹ For “art furnishing,” see Nicholas Shaddick, “Art furnishing,” in *Encyclopaedia of Interior Design*, ed. Joanna Banham (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1997).

³² The Art Furniture Company, an architectural design partnership in business at 25 Garrick Street, Covent Garden, London, was “prepared to supply at ordinary trade prices, domestic furniture of an artistic and picturesque character, designs by C. Eastlake, A. W. Blomfield and W. Godwin and other

architects” (advertisement, *Illustrated London News*, 17 June 1867. Art furniture was also illustrated in the *Building News* (24 Dec. 1868) in a feature on the furniture designed by architects Walford and Donkin, which showed items with ebonized timbers, fretwork, and stenciling.

33 *Building News*, 5 June 1868, 375.

34 Kinchin, “Collinson and Lock,” 47.

35 *House Furnisher*, 1 Oct. 1871, 139.

36 J. Moyr Smith, *Ornamental Interiors Ancient and Modern* (London: Crosby and Lockwood, 1887), 62.

37 Gervase Wheeler, *The Choice of a Duelling* (London: Murray, 1871), 264.

38 George Wallis, “International Exhibition, 1871 Second Division,” *The Art-Journal Catalogue of the International Exhibition* (London: Virtue, 1872), 48.

39 Charles Eastlake, *Hints on Household Taste*, ed. Charles Perkins (Boston: Osgood and Co., 1874), 55.

40 *Furniture Gazette*, 1873, in R. W. Symonds and B. B. Whineary, *Victorian Furniture* (London: Country Life, 1962), 73.

41 Susan Weber Soros, *The Secular Furniture of E. W. Godwin* (New York: Yale University Press for Bard Graduate Center, 1999), 59.

42 Soros, *Secular Furniture*, 60.

43 Harriett Spofford, “Medieval Furniture,” *Harpers New Monthly Magazine* 53 (1876): 318.

44 *Furniture Gazette* 11 (1879): 144.

45 *Building News* 40 (1881): 32.

46 *Cabinet Maker*, 1880, 194. A contemporary reference to the character of Lady Saphir in Gilbert and Sullivan’s operetta *Patience*, which lampoons the excesses of the aesthetic movement. The following lines explain, “Still, there is a cobwebby grey velvet, with a tender bloom like cold gravy, which, made Florentine fourteenth century, trimmed with Venetian leather and Spanish altar lace, and surmounted with something Japanese—it matters not what—would at least be Early English!”

47 *British Architect* 25 (1886): 656.

48 *Pall Mall Gazette*, 26 June 1886.

49 Smith, *Ornamental Interiors Ancient and Modern*, 93. See also p. 136.

50 *The Builder*, 18 May 18, 1888, p. 665, cited in Stefan Muthesius, “ ‘We Do Not Understand What Is Meant by a “Company” Designing’: Design versus Commerce in Late Nineteenth-Century English Furnishing,” *Journal of Design History* 5, no. 2 (1992): 113–119.

51 *Pall Mall Gazette*, 29 Sept. 1888.

52 *The Spectator* 64–65 (1890): 733.

53 Kinchin, “Collinson and Lock,” 53.

54 This cabinet, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum (MISC.127:1–9-1921), was listed in the official catalogue, p. 153, Class II, No. 3053. The cabinet is illustrated on plate CXXXVI of *Art Industry Furniture, Upholstery, and House-Decoration* (London, c. 1876), by G. W. Yapp, and his caption attributes the design of the woodwork to “Mr. Calcott” and the decoration to “Mr. Woolridge.”

55 J. H. Pollen, “Furniture and Metalwork,” in *Official Reports on the Various Sections of the Exhibition [London International Exhibition (1871)]*, ed. Right Hon. Lord Houghton (London: Johnson and Sons, 1871).

56 These included a bookstand or bibliothek by Godwin (PD E.229–1963/39, a pollarded sideboard in Jacobean style (PD E229–19863 /47), an Anglo-Japanese chair, and a table. See Soros, *Secular Furniture*, 73.

57 Cited in Soros, *Secular Furniture*, 73.

58 *Morning Chronicle*, 30 June 1873.

59 Soros, *Secular Furniture*, 76 and 111.

60 See Max Donnelly, “British Furniture at the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition, 1876,” *Furniture History* 37 (2001): 91–120.

61 G. T. Ferris, *Gems of the Centennial Exhibition* (New York: Appleton, 1877), 97.

62 *Harper’s Week*, Dec. 1876, cited in Donnelly, “British Furniture at the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition,” 97.

63 Walter Smith, *Examples of Household Taste* (New York: R. Worthington, 1877). See also W. Smith, *Masterpieces of the Centennial International Exhibition Illustrated* (Philadelphia: Gebbie and Barrie, 1876–1878), 167.

64 Clarence Cook, *The House Beautiful* (New York: Scribner, 1878), 249.

65 Ms. 1281/460–461, John Rylands Library, University of Manchester Library. See also M. Braesel, “Bilderzählung und Englische Möbel um 1860,” *Münchner Jahrbuch der Bildenden Kunst* 58 (2007): 209–38.

66 *Paris Universal Exhibition of 1878 Catalogue of the British Section*. . . . (London: Offices of the Royal Commission, 1878).

67 Royal Society of Arts, *Journal of the Society of Arts* (London, 1878), 550.

68 *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, Saturday, Nov. 2, 1878, p. 10.

69 *Morning Post*, 1 Aug. 1878.

70 Charles Worsley, *History and Constitution of the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple*, ed. Arthur Robert Ingpen (London, Printed at the Chiswick Press and published by order of the Masters of the Bench, 1910), 106.

71 Invoiced to the treasurer of the Middle Temple by Collinson and Lock, Aug. 1878 totalling

£93.18.00d. The cabinet is not now in the Middle Temple, and its present whereabouts are not known. Courtesy of the Archivist, Middle Temple, London.

72 *Furniture Gazette*, 7 Sept. 1878, 158.

73 Illustrated in Soros, *Secular Furniture*, CR240 and CR332.

74 Robert Edis, *Decoration of Town Houses* (London: Kegan Paul, 1881), 211.

75 Royal Society of Arts, *Artisan Reports on the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1878–1879* (London, 1879), 202 and 417.

76 George Smalley, “Household Decoration,” *New York Daily Tribune*, June 6, 1878, cited in E. E. Roberts, “A Marriage of the Extreme East and the Extreme West: Japanism and Aestheticism in Louis Comfort Tiffany’s Rooms in the Bella Apartments,” *Studies in the Decorative Arts* 13, no. 2 (2006): 2–51.

77 Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, *British Almanac* (London: Knight and Co., 1879), 71.

78 *The Academy* 19 (28 May 1881), 402.

79 *Building News and Engineering Journal* 47 (1885): 246.

80 *Leeds Mercury*, 26 May 1884.

81 Edis, *Decoration of Town Houses*, 92.

82 In a feature on a spree of boat building, the *Belfast Newsletter* reported that three boats were having cabins and saloons fitted out by the firm. These were Lord Dunraven’s Cariad, Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild’s *Rona*, and Baron Edward de Rothschild’s *La Flèche*. *Belfast Newsletter*, 30 Oct. 1896.

83 *Journal of the Society of Arts* (1884), 31.

84 *Hampshire Advertiser*, 3 July 1886, p. 2.

85 “Shows in London Shops,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, 22 Dec. 1888.

86 “Our Ladies’ Column,” *Wrexham Advertiser, and North Wales News*, 19 May 1888. Architect was E. R. Robson, with whom Collinson and Lock also collaborated on the Queens Hall, Shoreditch. (See below.)

87 *The Spectator* 64–65 (1890): 733.

88 *The Standard*, 4 Oct. 1890, 3.

89 *The Academy* 38 (1890), 425.

90 *British Architect* 34 (1890), 262.

91 Bassetto is Corno di Bassetto, G. B. Shaw’s pseudonym as an art critic. “AU” refers to “Artist Unknown,” the nom de plume of artist Joseph Pennell.

92 Cited in Antony Crane, “My Grandfather, Walter Crane,” *Yale University Library Gazette* 31, no. 3 (1957): 108.

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94 Walter Hamilton, *The Aesthetic Movement in England* (London: Reeves and Turner, 1882), 39. See also *The Times*, 3 Oct. 1881.

95 *The Academy* 20 (1881): 302.

96 Richard H. Dana, *Homes of the Passing Show* (London: Savoy Press, 1900), 77–79.

97 *Morning Post*, 12 June 1893.

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100 Judges’ chamber hall bar and entrance lobby, Messrs. Collinson and Lock, Work 12/43/3 and 4, 21 Feb. 1880 and 14 Feb. 1882, Office of Works and Successors: Public Buildings . . . , National Archives, Kew.

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110 *Baily’s Magazine of Sports and Pastimes* 54 (1890): 427.

111 Hilary Grainger, “The Architecture of Sir Ernest George and His Partners, c. 1860–1922” (PhD diss., Leeds University, 1985), 151.

112 *Ibid*.

113 Hermione Hobhouse, *Lost London* (London: Macmillan, 1976), 42. For a brief description of the original interior see G. S. Fort, *Alfred Beit: A Study of the Man and His Work* (London: Ivor Nicholson and Watson, 1932), 155–56.

114 Bill and letter from Collinson and Lock, STANDEN/355, 356, July 1896, West Sussex Record Office.