

III.

DOMESTIC CANDLESTICKS FROM THE FOURTEENTH TO THE END
OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY. BY ALEXANDER O. CURLE,
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Of all household relics of a bygone age, the candlestick has perhaps received the least attention from the connoisseur. As antique brass candlesticks are desirable objects of decoration, they attract the attention of the collector, but as they are also somewhat inconvenient objects of which to form a collection, few enthusiasts have amassed a sufficient number to provide them with material for research. Consequently, the literature dealing with the subject is of small extent. *The Dictionary of English Furniture*, vol. ii., by Percy Macquoid and Ralph Edwards, has an article containing much interesting information on candles and candlesticks, while *Lys og Lysstet i Norske Kirker og Hjem*, by Fredrik B. Wallem, is a more exhaustive treatise published by the Norsk Folkemuseum.

The sources of information for the following notes are, besides literary matter, (1) collections in certain museums, notably the Victoria and Albert, and the Guildhall Museums in London, the Musée Cluny in Paris, and the Ryks Museum in Amsterdam; (2) the study of paintings and engravings by old masters representing interiors or still-life groups; (3) a card-index, compiled over a number of years, of illustrated advertisements of dated hall-marked silver candlesticks; and lastly, a collection of specimens picked up in the course of travel here and abroad.

The Romans used candlesticks, and at a more remote period so also did the Egyptians,¹ while candles are of frequent mention in Jewish literature; but with the ancient history of the subject I do not intend to deal. I have taken as my starting-point the fourteenth century, for in that century the socket candlestick seems first to make its appearance in Europe for domestic use in the form from which we can trace its subsequent development.

Throughout our period candlesticks were made of various materials—silver, copper, bronze, brass, iron, pewter, wood, earthenware, enamel, and glass; but as the materials principally employed have been silver, and alloys of copper, such as brass and bronze, I shall confine myself to candlesticks in these materials, with a casual reference to some possibly of wood.

¹ Evans, *The Palace of Minos*, vol. i. p. 578.

In the early centuries of our period silver domestic candlesticks cannot have been plentiful, and none have probably come down to our time of earlier date than the seventeenth century. From references, however, in accounts of Royal households, etc., we know that they did exist. From the fourteenth century to the end of the seventeenth the material most generally employed was brass in one form or another, and thus during that period the brass candlestick developed with an individuality of its own; but when with an increase of wealth silver came more into vogue towards the end of the seventeenth century, from that time onwards the silver candlestick took the lead in fashion, and the brass candlestick in great measure was merely a copy in base metal of its richer prototype. During the eighteenth century some forms of candlesticks peculiar to brass still appeared, and later on developed into the somewhat graceless styles of the nineteenth century.

It is quite usual to hear vaguely described as brass, latten, gun-metal, and bell-metal, according to the colour of the metal, the actual material of which brass candlesticks are made. For this differentiation there is, however, no real justification. Brass consists of copper two parts, and zinc one part, for fine brass, and varies to copper eight parts, zinc two parts, for tough brass. As zinc was not known as a metal until the beginning of the sixteenth century, early brass was produced by melting copper in contact with a zinc ore called calamine. A close scrutiny of the surface of early candlesticks will show that they are vesicular to a considerable degree—a result probably of the high percentage of copper in the body, as copper when melted absorbs large quantities of gases, with the result that when the metal cools these gases are released and a very spongy casting is produced. In early times both bells and cannon were made of copper and tin—that is to say, bronze; so the terms bell-metal and gun-metal as applied to brass candlesticks are probably quite erroneous. Latten, which was chiefly employed for sepulchral brasses, was simply brass formed in the usual manner in vogue at the time, that is to say from copper in contact with calamine.

As the form and certain features of the candlestick are intimately related to the nature of the candle, it is necessary to furnish a little information about candles. In the early period, in which our survey commences, candles were being made of one of two materials, wax or tallow; the former either vegetable or animal wax, and the latter the fat reserved for the purpose in domestic kitchens. From the manner of their manufacture both might be "dips"—that is to say, a wick formed from the pith of a rush, and later on from a strip of rag, was

dipped repeatedly into a vat of melted material until the resultant coating had attained the requisite thickness; but in the case of wax the candle might also be produced by softening a lump of the material by heat until it was sufficiently plastic, and then applying it to the wick and rolling it into shape.¹ Wax being of harder consistency produced the best candles, but such candles being expensive, they were probably confined in use to churches and to the houses of the wealthy. Owing to their firmness they would be better adapted for fixing on a pricket than the softer tallow candles.

In the fifteenth century the principal market for wax candles was Venice, and to this connection with that great centre of Eastern trade was probably due at an early date the introduction of an Eastern type of candlestick of which I shall have something to say later on. Moulded candles of tallow, as wax did not lend itself to moulding, were introduced, it is said, in the fifteenth century by the Sieur de Bries of Paris, but it is believed that they did not come much into vogue till two centuries later. To almost modern times belongs, however, the most important development in the manufacture of the candle, the plaiting of the wick. Plaited wicks were introduced by Cambacères in 1820, his object being to do away with the necessity of snuffing. Through the twisting of the plaited wick, the protruding end as it burns is kept just outside the flame and consequently is consumed to ash by the surrounding air. Previous to this improvement, simple twisted cotton wicks had been used for candles of all sorts.

It is generally admitted that the earliest candlesticks with a socket for the candle date in Europe from the fourteenth century; though occasional examples usually in the form of an animal bearing a socket on its back, the reputed product of Dinant in Belgium, may possibly date from the previous century.

Hoardings of candlesticks must be of very rare occurrence, and of records of such I have discovered only two. One of these, found at Yebléron, France, in 1844,² consisted of three candlesticks and a prick spur. Two of the candlesticks were of types which I would assign to the fourteenth or early fifteenth century, while the third was in the form of an animal, probably intended for a deer, carrying a socket on its back. Each of the two first-mentioned candlesticks represented a separate type. In the one case (Type I.), from the centre of a base on a tripod rose a plain circular stem bearing the socket at the top; in the other case (Type II.), from the centre of a base in the nature of an inverted cup, or of a trumpet mouth, surmounted by a wax-pan, rose a stem

¹ Alder Wright, *Oils, Fats, Waxes, etc., and their Manufactured Products*, p. 388.

² Cochet, *La Seine Inferieure*, p. 297.

with a lenticular knob in the centre and a socket at the top. The first type is represented by fig. 1, No. 3, the second approximately by fig. 1, No. 5.

Let us consider Type I. In the Guildhall Museum in the city of London¹ there is a pricket candlestick formed of three rods or thin bars of iron welded together in such a way as to form a tapered end rising from a tripod (fig. 1, No. 1). Such a candlestick, as it is of the simplest form, was probably that most commonly in use in the thirteenth and preceding centuries. What brought about the production of a candlestick with a socket is not apparent, but one may assume that the reason had some connection with the manufacture of tallow candles. A candlestick (fig. 1, No. 2) in the Musée Cluny, Paris, shows very clearly the first step in development. The tripod base is still maintained, the stem is still tapered upwards, while the socket with its open sides appears as an obvious addition to a pricket. This candlestick is attributed to the fifteenth century, but I incline to assign it to the previous century. The next step in evolution is represented by fig. 1, No. 3, a candlestick in the National Museum of Antiquities and found in Wigtownshire. The three feet derived from the pricket still remain, but now project from a wide disc which forms the base. The stem is devoid of knob or moulding, as indicating the pricket origin, and the socket is still open at the sides, such openings being obviously necessary for the removal of the end of a tallow candle, which would adhere readily to the rough cast sides of the socket. In the course of our survey we shall find that there is a chronological development in these perforations continuing until their final supersession by another method of effecting the purpose which they served. A candlestick, said to be of bronze, presenting a slight variation but obviously of the type and period, was found with two others in a cauldron at Loges, Normandy.² This candlestick only differs from the last-mentioned example in having a larger straight-sided socket and with a correspondingly larger aperture. The basal features and the stem are the same. Characteristic of nearly all the candlesticks of this type and period are short arms projecting from either side of the socket, sometimes notched at the ends, as in the example illustrated. In the case of a specimen in the Musée Cluny, the arms project from the stem below the socket. A candlestick of the type in the Guildhall Museum (fig. 1, No. 4) lacks the arms, but has a socket with a considerable expansion towards the mouth. One can only conjecture as to the use of these arms, which are confined to this type. I do not think they were for hanging snuffers from; I have seen none of these objects of

¹ Catalogue, part lxxv. No. 6.

² Cochet, *La Seine Inferieure*, p. 207.

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this period, and I hazard the suggestion that, owing to the primitive and inefficient methods of lighting, it was customary to have the candle-

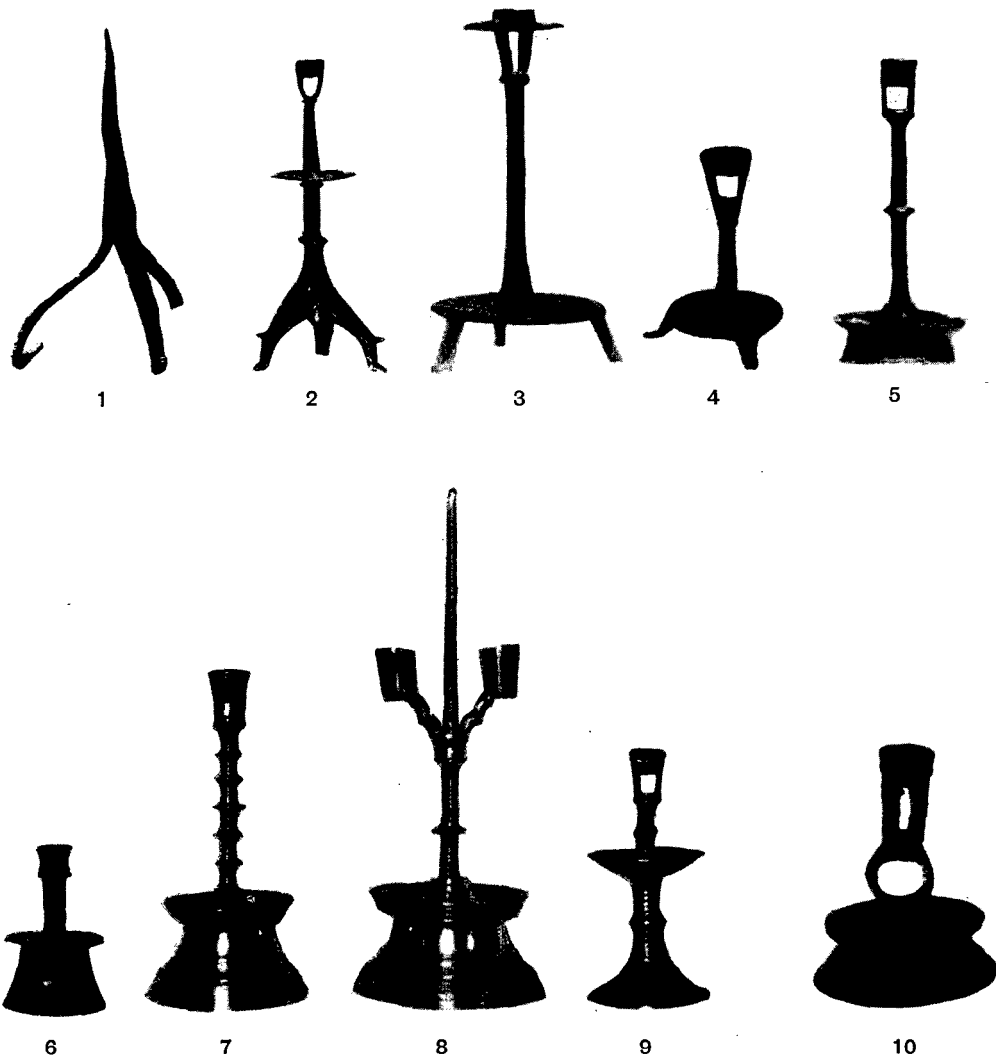


Fig. 1. Candlesticks of the 14th, 15th, and 16th Centuries.

sticks suspended in forks projecting from the walls, so that they could be easily carried from place to place as required, and yet serve their

purpose in the general illumination. To some extent torch-holders that project from the walls of Italian palaces supply an analogy.

In the Musée des Antiquaires at Caen in Normandy is another example of the type, which is interesting as showing a slight diversion from the simple forms already dealt with. The difference consists in the stem being hexagonal and being divided in the centre by a hexagonal knop. This central knop is a step in the direction of the moulded stems which eventually develop into complex baluster forms.

Candlesticks of metal were not easily destroyed by rough usage, and many examples must have survived from one period to another; yet, in view of this fact, it is significant that thus far I have not found a single representation of a candlestick of the foregoing type in any picture of the fifteenth or sixteenth century. And in this respect it may not be out of place here to state that in pictures by Renaissance artists from the middle of the fifteenth century onwards, and in those of the Dutch School of the seventeenth century, representations of candlesticks are by no means uncommon. It has been stated, and frequently repeated, that though the socket candlestick was introduced for domestic use in the fourteenth century, it did not become common for another two hundred years. This statement is not borne out by the evidence, for in almost every case the candlestick represented in a domestic interior from the middle of the fifteenth century onwards is of the socket variety. A number of these representations are illustrated throughout the text and are referred to hereafter.

From the candlestick with the discoid base resting on three feet was derived, I suggest, the candlestick with a flat base and no feet, such as is shown in fig. 2, No. 2. This is a late fifteenth-century form, and in contrast with the earlier examples it will be noticed that the stem has a series of alternating lenticular and vase-shaped mouldings, and that the aperture in the socket is no longer vertical and extending almost the depth of the socket itself, but is an oblong horizontal cut in the lower part of the socket. A further development is revealed by such a candlestick as is represented by fig. 2, No. 5, from Auvergne, which, though showing a similar base and socket to that last mentioned, differs in having a baluster stem. If a comparison is made between this stem and that of a candlestick in the National Museum of Antiquities (fig. 2, No. 9), which is said to have come from St Magnus' Cathedral, Orkney, it will be observed that in design the stems are practically identical, indicating that they belong to the same period. One distinction between them is, however, noteworthy—namely, that whereas in the Auvergne candlestick there is a horizontal oblong perforation near the base of the socket to facilitate the extraction of the candle-end, in the Orkney

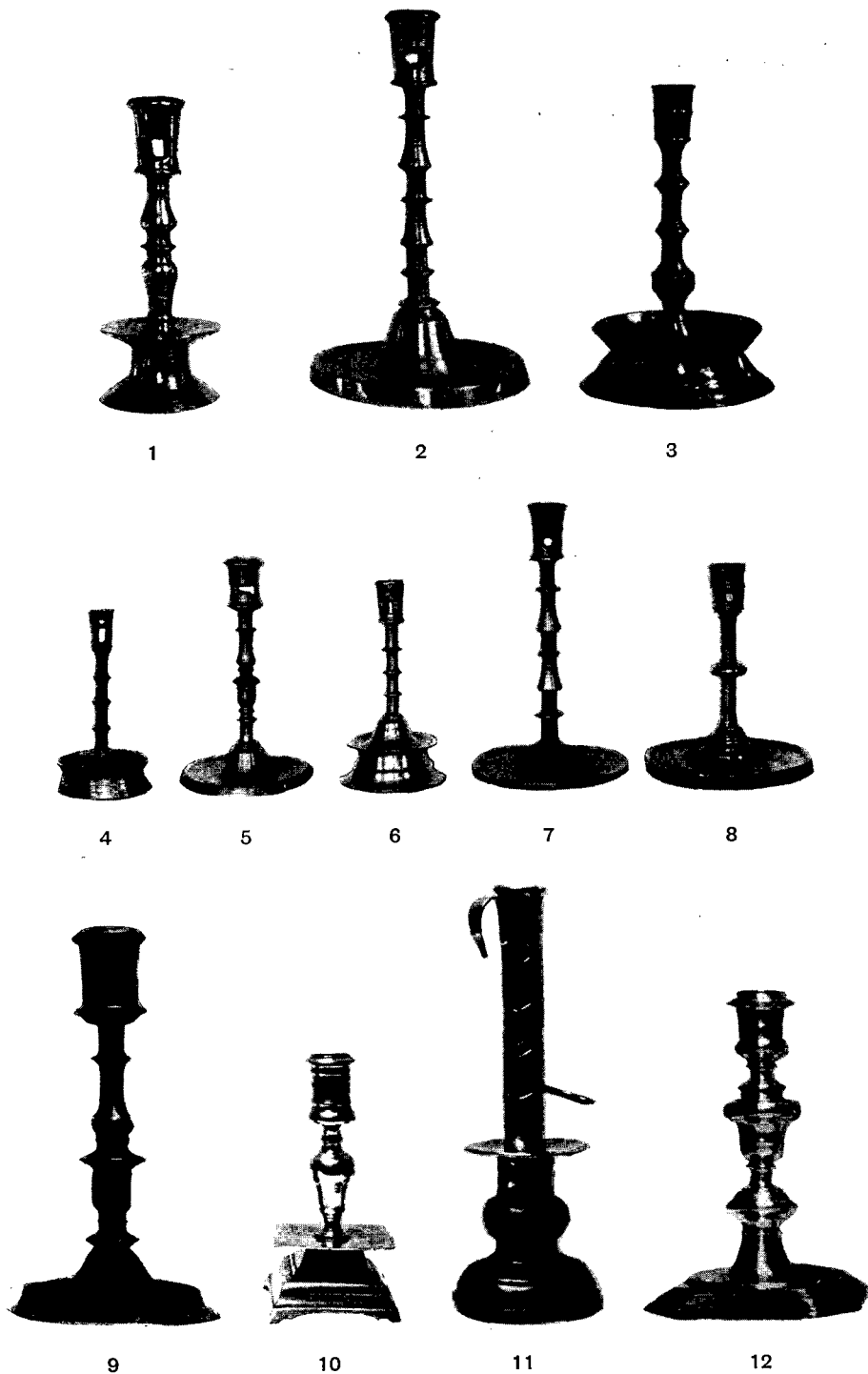


Fig. 2.¹ Candlesticks of the 15th, 16th, and 17th Centuries.

¹ Nos. 4-8, the property of Mr James Curle, LL.D., were obtained in Auvergne, France.

example the perforation consists of a small round hole on opposite sides not above $\frac{3}{8}$ inch in diameter. This circular perforation rarely, if ever, appears alone in fifteenth-century candlesticks. It is almost universal, however, in those of the seventeenth century. We will therefore be justified in attributing both these candlesticks to the

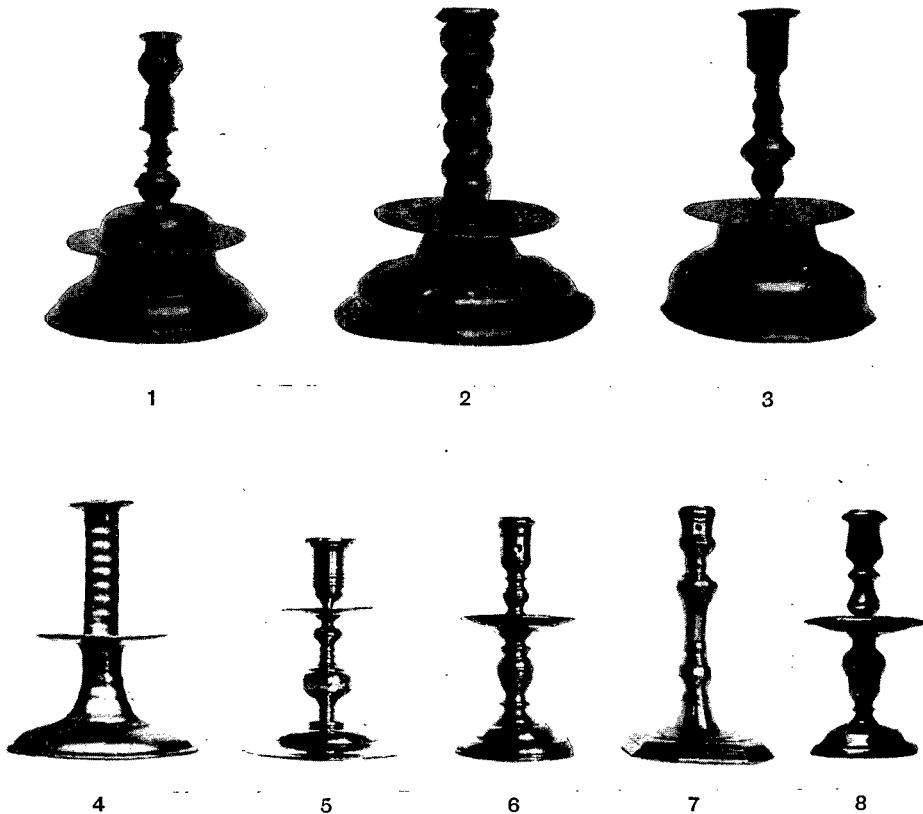


Fig. 3. Candlesticks of the 17th Century, except No. 3, which is of the 18th Century.

sixteenth century. For the same reason Nos. 7 and 8 of fig. 2, also from Auvergne, may likewise be given a similar attribution. The simplicity of the stem of No. 8, and the character of that of No. 7 in its resemblance to the late fifteenth-century form noted above (fig. 2, No. 2), suggest that their date, however, is early in the century.

Let us now turn to a consideration of Type II., that with the trumpet-mouth base.

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As early as the thirteenth century, we know from dated examples which have survived, that there was in vogue in Persia a form of candlestick fashioned in bronze, usually encrusted with silver, and with a high circular base surmounted with a thin, flat circular wax-pan, a short circular stem, and a socket of somewhat larger diameter with mouldings at top and bottom. The resemblance to the base of the European fifteenth-century candlesticks is obvious, and as the type antedated in the Near East its appearance in the West by probably a century, it is more than likely that the style came hither from Persia. In Persian literature there are sufficient references to show that candles in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were of wax, the summer heat in all probability rendering the use of tallow impossible. Thus the more simple extraction of the wax candle-end obviated the need for any perforation in the socket, and the greater firmness of the wax, with a diminished liability to gutter, rendered unnecessary a lengthened stem and a saucer-like wax-pan.

Owing to its trade with the East, Venice, as already stated, was the central market for the supply of wax candles. Therefore it is not improbable that through this gateway the Persian form of candlestick arrived. We know that Arab craftsmen settled in Venice and practised their metal industries in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and a type of bronze candlestick differing from the true Arab or Persian candlestick only in certain slight details of decoration and technique was manufactured by them there. Such a candlestick is that in my possession, represented by fig. 1, No. 6. The base and wax-pan are both highly ornamented with foliaceous designs in the Persian style, the pattern being traced in finely chiselled lines which have been inlaid with silver and gold, of which metals, however, merely the slightest traces now remain. Only in respect that on this and other examples of the class the decoration includes an heraldic shield, does it differ from that on the actual Persian specimens. On comparing this candlestick, which is believed to date from early in the fifteenth century, with a specimen attributed to the latter half of the century, such as that shown by fig. 1, No. 7, it will be observed that in the former the angle of the slope of the base is less acute. And as one would expect, in the European candlesticks of this type the closer they conform to the lines of their prototype in the more vertical outline of the base the earlier they are. Similarly also in the earliest specimens the stem is plain, the first divergence from this simplicity being the formation of a knop in the centre. As the candlestick further developed during the fifteenth century, the stem was increasingly elaborated by the addition of lenticular mouldings or knops, possibly with the intention of retarding the flow

of the tallow, while at the same time, with a similar end in view, the wax-pan on the top of the base was deepened.

Of fifteenth-century date are also probably Nos. 4 and 6 of fig. 2 from Auvergne. It will be observed that in the socket of No. 4 there are two perforations, the one above the other, the lower oblong and vertical, the upper a small circular hole. The two perforations are not uncommon in early sockets. Fig. 1, Nos. 7 and 8, show two candlesticks dating from the end of the fifteenth century. No. 8 is a rare example, having a bold spike rising from the trumpet base, with a screw in the centre on which works a collar supporting two cusped arms with candle-sockets at the ends. The sockets are tubular, thus affording an easy method of pressing out the candle-end. No. 7 is a characteristic example, such as might have been in use in Britain or the Low Countries.

In all these candlesticks the stems are solid, and have been turned on a lathe. The holes in the sockets have evidently been produced by the application of a file.

So much similarity is there among the early candlesticks found in different countries, that one is tempted to wonder whether many of them had not a common origin. That a large traffic in objects of brass emanated from Dinant on the Meuse is well known, and probably many fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century candlesticks in France and the neighbouring countries came from that source. That there were importations into Scotland we gather from entries in the *Ledger of Andrew Halyburton* (1492-1503): "Account of the Duke of Ros. Item bocht in Handwarp (Antwerp) 12 Candylstekis veand 29 li. ilk li. cost 5½ gs. Som of thir candylstekis 13s. 4 gs." So also Roger of Moray in 1495 is supplied with eighteen candlesticks weighing 38½ pounds at the price of 5 guelders the pound; while the Archdeacon of St Andrews and the Dean of Dunkeld are similarly provided. Though the inference from the status of the customers is that these were Church candlesticks, there is every likelihood that the trade extended to domestic candlesticks as well.

From the end of the fifteenth century onwards evidence from paintings comes to our aid, and we are thus enabled to get authentic information of the styles in vogue from time to time. The pictures previous to 1500 that show representations of candlesticks are few in number, for the pictorial arts were still strongly under the influence of religion, and, except in conventional scenes, such as "St Jerome in his Study" and the "Annunciation," interiors are not often represented. In the "Annunciation," by Carlo Crevelli (1485),¹ there is a candlestick (fig. 4, No. 1) with straight-sided base and a long aperture in the socket having a double

¹ In the National Gallery London.

expansion at the upper end. A copy of a lost Van Eyck by Petrus Cristus, illustrated in the *Burlington Magazine*,¹ shows a candlestick with what appears to be a series of simple spherical knobs on the stem, a high base, and an upright oblong slot in the socket. Ghirlandaio (1449-94), in his fresco of "St Jerome in his Study," has supplied the saint with a candlestick on a shelf. In this, the mouldings on the stem are more developed (fig. 4, No. 2). Carpaccio (1450-1522), in his painting of the same saint in the chapel of S. Giorgio degli Schiavoni at Venice, has likewise represented a candlestick on a shelf. It, too, has the high base with the wax-pan on the top, which has by this time become the prevailing type, while the mouldings of the stem are further varied. In "The Misers" at Windsor Castle, by Quentin Matsys, painted about 1500,

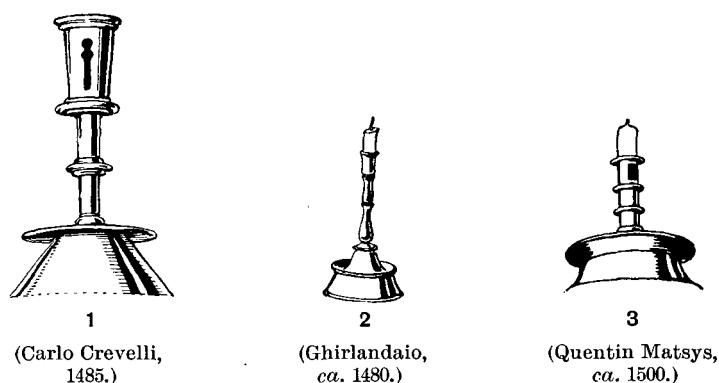


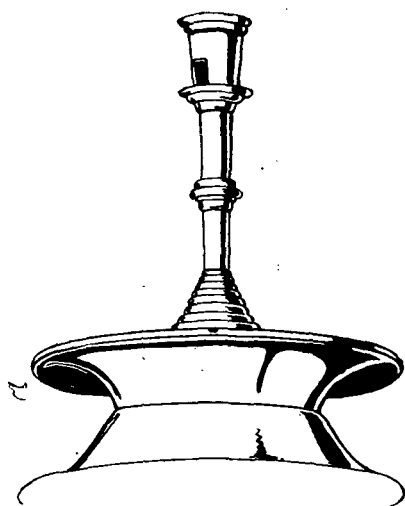
Fig. 4.

there is a candlestick (fig. 4, No. 3) of a rather different type. It seems larger than the foregoing, and the wax-pan projects further from the base. The stem is furnished with a series of lenticular mouldings, and in the socket there are long upright slots. A candlestick (fig. 5, No. 1) of the same general character, though with slightly different stem, the lenticular mouldings being gathered into groups, is to be found in a picture in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence by Joos van Cleef (1485-1540); and a very similar example (fig. 5, No. 2) may be seen in the painting by Marinus van Reymerswael (fl. 1521-58) in the Musée Stibbert at Florence. Another candlestick, painted by Carpaccio about the year 1505, in his "Birth of the Virgin" at Bergamo, resembles in style those that appear in his other pictures, though differing slightly in detail. Albrecht Dürer, in 1510, in "The Death of the Virgin," shows a specimen (fig. 5, No. 3) closely resembling that used by Carpaccio in his picture of

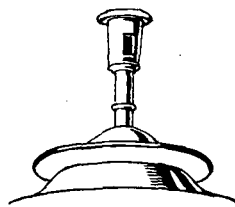
¹ Vol. xliii. p. 14.

St Jerome; and not greatly dissimilar, though simpler in its stem, is a candlestick in an "Annunciation" painted by Giovanni del Sega in 1513.¹ The points to observe about all these, except such as are represented by the Flemish masters, is the straight-sided base and the varied mouldings on the stems which have succeeded to the simpler mouldings of the previous century.

Early in the sixteenth century a variety emerges which anticipates for a short time a much later development belonging to the seventeenth century. This type is well represented by a specimen (fig. 1, No. 9) recently acquired in Holland. The characteristic feature is the position of the wax-pan, not at the base as in most of the early candlesticks, but half-way up the stem. A comparison of fig. 1, No. 9, with mid-seventeenth-century examples (fig. 3, Nos. 4 and 6) will show how close is the resemblance, and also wherein lies the difference. In the early specimen the stem is in two distinct parts — the lower portion short



1
(Joos van Cleef, 1485-1540.)



2
(Marinus van Reymerswael, fl. 1521-58.)



3
(Dürer, "Death of the Virgin," 1510.)

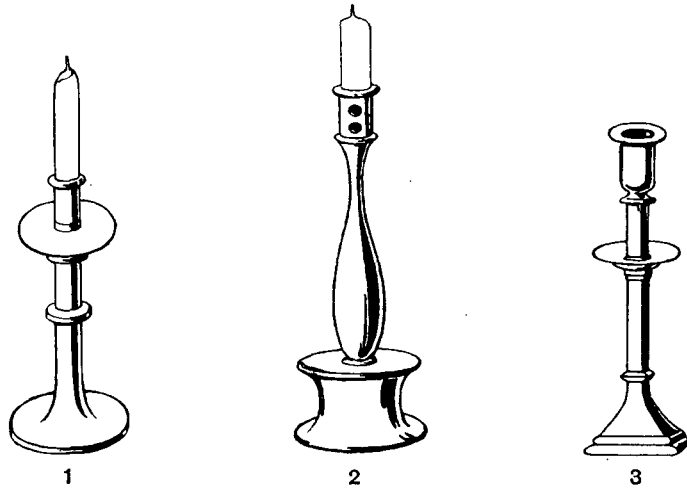
Fig. 5.

and corrugated rising out of a conical base, the upper portion of less diameter with one lenticular moulding, and set in a deep wax-pan. The socket is of early form, widening to the mouth and pierced by rectangular openings.

Three examples of this general type have come under observation in pictures. One, which closely resembles the specimen from Holland, occurs in "La Miracle du Tamis," a view of the interior of a kitchen by J. Mostaert (1499-1555) in the Museum at Bruxelles; another (fig. 6, No. 1) is shown in "The Mass of St Gregory," a work of the Spanish school, dating from about 1500, in the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge;

¹ Venturi, vii., fig. 71.

while the third example (fig. 6, No. 3) is in an intarsia panel on the back of one of the choir stalls in the Upper Church of St Francis at Assisi, dated 1501. This last-mentioned candlestick has indeed a strangely modern appearance, with the pyramidal base which, as will be shown later, is a feature of candlesticks of the late eighteenth century, while the flange around the mouth of the socket is also a comparatively modern characteristic. Another candlestick (fig. 6, No. 2), also shown in intarsia in the same church, more nearly corresponds to the contemporary type. The stem, however, which appears to be quadrangular in section, is of an elongated vase shape,



1
(Spanish School, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, ca. 1500.)

2
(Intarsia Panels, Assisi, 1501.)

3
Fig. 6.

while the perforations in the socket are two in number, small and circular, and placed one above the other. No brass candlestick with a stem of this form has been met with. On one of the intarsia panels in the sacristy in St Mark's at Venice, however, there is figured a specimen with an almost identical stem, a polygonal socket, and a base developed from the trumpet variety. To a greater extent than we have hitherto seen, the lower portion slopes inward, and from the wax-pan there rises an hexagonal cone forming a foot to the stem. The socket is pierced with two holes, one above the other, the lower upright and oblong, the other circular. There is no evidence that these two last-mentioned illustrations were meant to represent brass candlesticks, and it is quite possible that the originals were of wood; the somewhat solid character

of the stems, and the faceted form of the upper part of the base of the Venetian candlestick, seem to suggest such material. They are interesting, in any case, as late fifteenth- or early sixteenth-century types which show certain typical features.

Another peculiar detail in the mouldings of the stem appears in the first half of the sixteenth century. This is an inverted cone or pot-shaped feature at the lower end of the stem. An example is shown in a picture of the interior of a house by Fra Carnevale (1447-1510) in the Palazzo Barberini at Rome. Another may be seen in Holbein's "Family of Sir Thomas Moore," in the Museum of Basle, painted in 1528; while yet another (fig. 7) appears in a picture of "St Jerome in his Study," by Vincenzo di Biagio (d. 1531), in the National Gallery in London. A silver candlestick showing the same peculiarity is illustrated in

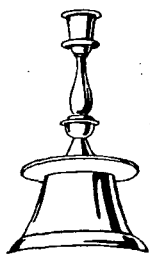


Fig. 7. (Vincenzo di Biagio (Catena), d. 1531.)

Harvard's *Dictionnaire de l'Ameublement*.¹ The exact date is not given, though the candlestick is stated to be of the sixteenth century; the bell-shaped form of the base, however, indicates that it belongs to a late part of the century.

A form of baluster stem, typical of the Renaissance style, is employed in the stems of candlesticks at the end of the fifteenth or commencement of the sixteenth century. This is a baluster formed of two vase-shaped figures placed base to base, with a simple lenticular moulding between them. The form is common in stonework of the time.

It is also found employed in the stems of Murano glass of the sixteenth century. A fine example of a candlestick with such a stem, dated to the end of the fifteenth century, is to be seen in the Bargello Museum at Florence. Fig. 2, No. 1, shows a small example in my own collection, and another is illustrated in a sixteenth-century woodcut in the "Cabinet des Estampes" reproduced in the *Dictionnaire de l'Ameublement*, etc.²

In fig. 1, No. 10, is illustrated a candlestick of another form from the Guildhall Museum, London. It consists of a base and wax-pan resembling two saucers, the one placed on the inverted bottom of the other, much in the form of the base of the Joos van Cleef candlestick (fig. 5, No. 1). The socket, which is longer than usual, is open at the base, and is set on a ring fixed to the wax-pan. On opposite sides are oblong upright perforations, each with a small circular opening above. Such sockets on rings date from the fifteenth century. They are used in Gothic candelabra of the period, such as are to be seen in various museums and

¹ *s.v.* Bougeoir, vol. i. p. 371.

² *s.v.* Cuisine, vol. i. p. 1130.

churches at home and abroad and with no very definite provenance. One on a branch candlestick in St Clement's Church, Wisby, in the Island of Gotland, Sweden, is illustrated by Emil Ekhoﬀ in *St Clemens Kyrka i Visby*, p. 188, fig. 128. The fashion may be seen in the nozzles of the chandelier, datable to about 1460, in the Temple Church, Bristol, and the style is also said to be Venetian.¹ Three candlesticks with similar sockets are illustrated by Dr Hefner-Alteneck in *Trachten Kunstwerke*, vol. v. pl. 297. In one example the socket is circular, as in the Guildhall specimen, in the other two they are polygonal. Each shows the long vertical slot with the small round hole above.

Sockets of this peculiar form were in general use in another type of candlestick belonging to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries not hitherto referred to. This consisted of a human figure, usually a man in armour, holding the socket in the hand, or of an animal with the socket on its back, or of a bird carrying it in its beak.

The candlestick illustrated by fig. 2, No. 3, purchased in Siena, illustrates an early sixteenth-century form, showing the characteristic base with a marked constriction beneath the wax-pan, and a stem slightly developed from the simpler style generally in vogue in the previous century. In calling it a "Medici" candlestick the dealer who sold it showed that he had some knowledge of the period to which it belonged.

Information concerning the forms in vogue in the latter half of the sixteenth century is more difficult to obtain. Artists at that period had ceased to introduce so frequently into their pictures, candlesticks, and other still-life features. Art had freed itself from religious conventions, and representations of "St Jerome in his Study" with the familiar surroundings, or of the "Annunciation" with the customary details, were seldom painted. Nor had paintings of domestic interiors or of still life, so much the fashion in the seventeenth century, yet made their appearance. Development had, however, been steadily progressing, and when the datable examples come to light again we find that considerable modifications have taken place in their shapes. One of the few late sixteenth-century pictures which does show a candlestick (fig. 8) happens to be another representation of St Jerome, by Marinus van Reymerswael. The details of the stem, and particularly the bag-shaped form of the socket, indicate a late date. An example of a similar form of socket occurs in a candle-

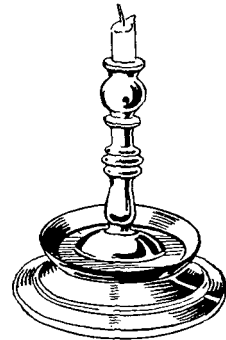


Fig. 8. (Marinus van Reymerswael, fl. 1521-58.)

¹ *Dictionary of English Furniture*, s.v. Chandeliers, fig. 4 and p. 18.

stick in my collection (fig. 3, No. 1). A curious feature at the base of the stem in the latter—a domical foot on the top of the wax-pan—indicates a date for this candlestick, as a candlestick with a similar foot from Ringebu, Gubrandsdal, Norway,¹ bears the date 1601.

The most noticeable feature of the development of this period is the increasing tendency for the wax-pan to part company with the base, and at the same time to diminish in size. Doubtless as the material of the candle improved and became more resistant, as tallow gave place, to a greater extent, to wax, the guttering became a matter of less concern, and the arrangement for the reception of the drip was consequently modified. Though the first step in the tendency of the two

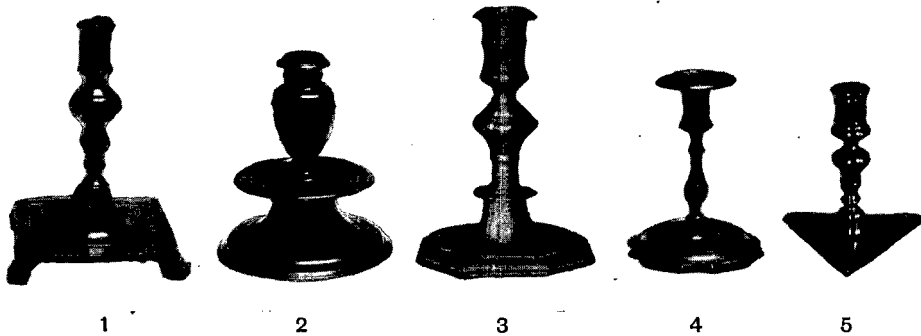


Fig. 9. Candlesticks of the 17th Century.

parts of the base to become detached is noticeable in candlesticks of the sixteenth century, the separation generally does not become complete and practically universal until the middle of the seventeenth century. A type of candlestick of Italian provenance (fig. 9, No. 2) shows the tendency far advanced, and is approximately datable, as such candlesticks are shown in a picture of the "Last Supper" by Leonardo Bassano (1558-1623) in the Church of Santa Maria Formosa in Venice. Another datable specimen with a similar base, but with a different stem from that of the Italian example, is to be seen engraved on the brass to Dr Liddel (d. 1613) in the Drum Aisle of St Nicholas' Church in Aberdeen (fig. 10, No. 1); and another in Gerard Dow's picture of himself at Dresden, painted in 1647 (fig. 10, No. 2), the same specimen appearing in the painting of "The Young Mother," by the same artist, preserved in the Mauritshuis at The Hague, and painted in 1658. In "The Kitchen" at Copenhagen, also by Dow, painted between 1645 and 1650, is an

¹ *Lys og Lysstel*, fig. 83.

excellent example (fig. 10, No. 3), introduced by him into a still-life study now in Dresden, painted in 1660; others may be seen in works by Gerard Honthorst (1590-1656), known as "Gherardo della Notte," in the Borghese Gallery at Rome, and in the Uffizi Gallery at Florence. In fact, in the candlesticks used by artists painting in the first half of the seventeenth century, this appears to be a common feature. The indestructible nature of brass candlesticks, however, makes it impossible to be certain that those forms reproduced in pictures are all of the date of the respective works of art in which they appear; but the introduction of a style cannot be of later date

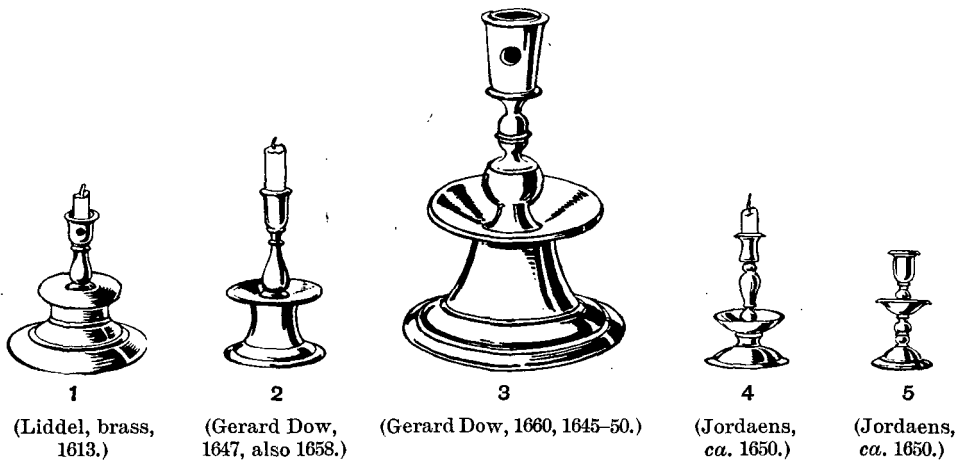


Fig. 10.

than that of the picture in which a specimen of that style is shown. And when a form is predominant during a given period, it is a fair assumption that that form was the one in common use at the time. Thus we may hold that those candlesticks with a rather flat wax-pan, set on a high base with incurving sides, belong principally to the first half of the seventeenth century. A candlestick in a picture by J. Koedyck at Brussels, painted about 1650, shows the style further developed; while one (fig. 10, No. 4) in Jordaens' "Wie die Alten Jungen" (ca. 1650), and another (fig. 10, No. 5) in the same artist's "Fest des Bohnenskönig" in the Museum at Kassel, of the same date, show the severance of wax-pan and base complete. This style, which became characteristic of the mid- and late seventeenth century, in northern and western Europe if not further south, appears, certainly in one picture of the first half, "The Village Barber" by Adriaen Brouwer (1605/6-1638), but I have found it in no other. Fig. 3, No. 6, shows a typical specimen

of the candlestick which, judging from the numbers to be met with, was probably that generally in use in this country, as on the Continent, from the middle to the end of the seventeenth century. Fig. 3, No. 8, shows another of a slightly different form.

We have seen how the architectural baluster of the Renaissance period was reproduced as the stem of a candlestick, as it likewise was for the stems of Venetian wineglasses. Similarly, in the seventeenth century we find a style of stem formed, as it were, of a series of superimposed spheres common both to candlesticks and wineglasses. A candlestick of that form (fig. 11) is reproduced by Judith Leyster in a picture painted between 1600 and 1605, and exhibited in the National Collection in the Corsini Palace in Rome. Osia Beet (1622-78) shows a wineglass with the same fashion of stem in a still-life picture reproduced in the Italian art magazine, *Dedalo*, issued in March 1924.

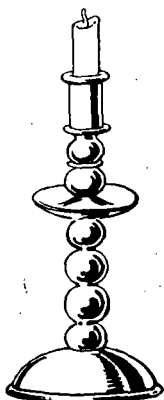


Fig. 11.
(Judith Leyster, 1600.)

Almost invariably the seventeenth-century candlesticks have, in place of the oblong or rectangular aperture in the base of the socket, a small circular perforation placed in the upper part in size of about the diameter of a pea. The continuous improvement in the quality of the candle, rendering it less liable to get firmly embedded in the socket, is marked by the development of this feature, until its disappearance, owing to a change of construction in the candlestick itself, towards the close of the seventeenth century. In the earlier forms we saw the aperture large and vertical, extending almost the whole height of the socket; later we found two openings, one vertical, the other circular and above it; sometimes, the same arrangement took the form of a cusped opening like a Gothic window; by setting the socket on a ring and leaving it an open cylinder, a still more effective method was adopted of evacuating the candle-stump. Up to the middle, at least, of the sixteenth century the arrangement in general use appears to have been the square or oblong rectangular opening in the lower half of the socket. By the end of that century this had given place to the round perforation in the centre or upper half of the socket, which prevailed until, as stated, a change in the manner of construction rendered such a method no longer necessary.

A variety, probably from the low countries, belongs also to the middle period of the century. It consists of a spirally fluted stem, a broad circular base domed in the centre and surmounted by a flat wax-pan—the latter and the base both decorated in repoussée with floral designs. Possibly the type was used in churches to some extent, and an interest-

ing example (fig. 3, No. 2), bearing the legend "A. L., Tundergarth, 1667," seems to have been in use in the Dumfriesshire parish of that name. An English variety of the mid-seventeenth-century type has a cylindrical corrugated stem. An example of this (fig. 3, No. 4) is in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Towards the close of the century the tendency is for the wax-pan to disappear from the stem, to become a mere feature of ornament in its former position, and as a functioning member to be transferred to the nozzle—a position which it henceforth occupies either as a flange or a detachable part.

But, as indicated above, another and more important change took place in the history of the brass candlestick. Hitherto the candlestick was formed with a solid stem, cast and turned, fastened to a base made independently by a screw, or more frequently, by a tenon hammered flat on the underside. Such candlesticks contained much metal in their composition, and, to save material and facilitate manufacture, a process was adopted whereby the stem and socket were cast in separate halves and thereafter brazed together and fastened into the base. This method left the stems hollow and afforded a better opportunity of expelling the candle-end from the socket than had hitherto prevailed. A pin or wire was run through the stem with a button on either end, allowing sufficient length to force the upper button to the mouth of the socket when pressure was applied to that projecting below. With the adoption of this method the hole in the socket finally disappeared as being of no further use, and with its disappearance there terminated a definite era in the development of the candlestick.

By the end of the seventeenth century greater differentiation of form took place, and characteristics peculiar to particular countries became more marked—a process which increased till, in the eighteenth century, the candlesticks of each country assumed a more distinct individuality. This was probably due, in some measure, to the candlestick becoming, with the increased use of silver plate, an object of luxury, and with the manufacture in precious metal the attention of the artist and expert silversmith was directed to the production of costly examples for their wealthy patrons. In the seventeenth century, for the greater part of its course, the candlestick of brass, unaffected by silver models, was still the humble furnishing of every home.

Up to this point we have seen that the candlestick of brass has developed in its own way, as the changes in the quality of the candle or the dictates of fashion might direct; but from now onwards, for reasons explained above, the brass candlestick becomes the poor relation of its silver cousin, and humbly follows the fashion of its leader. Thus, from

the end of the seventeenth and throughout the eighteenth century, though in some countries apparently older styles in brass survived, the forms of brass candlesticks are, for the most part, those which have originated or developed in the choicer metal and, at a late date, in Sheffield plate. One useful factor to our inquiry resulted from this change. By the hall-marks impressed upon them the silver candlesticks can be dated approximately, and so accordingly can their derivatives in brass. Fashion is peremptory in its demands, and it is probable that no long period elapsed before modifications in form were adapted to both materials. From the study of the card-index of all dated types of silver candlesticks as they have appeared in advertisements for a number of years, a means of observing the typical forms and their development has been obtained. Some of these forms have not, so far, been met with in brass, but as a general rule, characteristic features of each style are to be found in the specimens of the baser metal.

In the reign of Charles II. there was in fashion a candlestick made in silver, with a stem in the form of a clustered column with a square base.¹ From this was derived the type with an octagonal base which we shall meet with presently (fig. 17, No. 3). At the same time, another style, but in brass, was in use, deriving from the type exemplified previously by the specimen from Tundergarth. This had a spirally fluted stem, a flat circular wax-pan surmounting a base of trumpet or inverted cup form. A silver candlestick, dated 1683-4, in the Parish Church of Halton, Warwickshire (fig. 17, No. 1), illustrated in the *Burlington Magazine* for December 1921, has a square base from which rises a tapering boss ornamented by a square wax-pan, and a fluted stem surmounted with a square sconce—a feature now making its appearance for the first time. Towards the end of the seventeenth century the square base passed out of fashion, while the baluster stem, and for a time also the columnar stem with octagonal base, became popular (fig. 17, No. 2). So fashionable was this style, that of thirty-one examples card-indexed for different years between 1686 and 1718, all except four have such bases, and of the exceptions, two are hexagonal and two circular (such as fig. 12, Nos. 1, 3, and 5, and 2 and 4). Fig. 17, Nos. 2 to 7, show various types with octagonal bases.

A French example in brass (fig. 9, No. 3), purchased a few years ago in Blois, shows not only the octagonal base, but also a wax-pan, reduced to a mere rudiment surmounting a tapering boss. From these features as well as from the small hole in the socket a seventeenth-century date may be assigned to this specimen. An English example in

¹ In Holland, in the Municipal Museum at The Hague, practically the same model may be seen in delft-ware.

silver (fig. 17, No. 2), dated 1686, so closely resembles the French one as to suggest approximately the date of the latter; while another silver candlestick, showing the same rudimentary wax-pan but a round base, acquired by the Victoria and Albert Museum under the Bryan Bequest, bears in pierced work the date 1702.

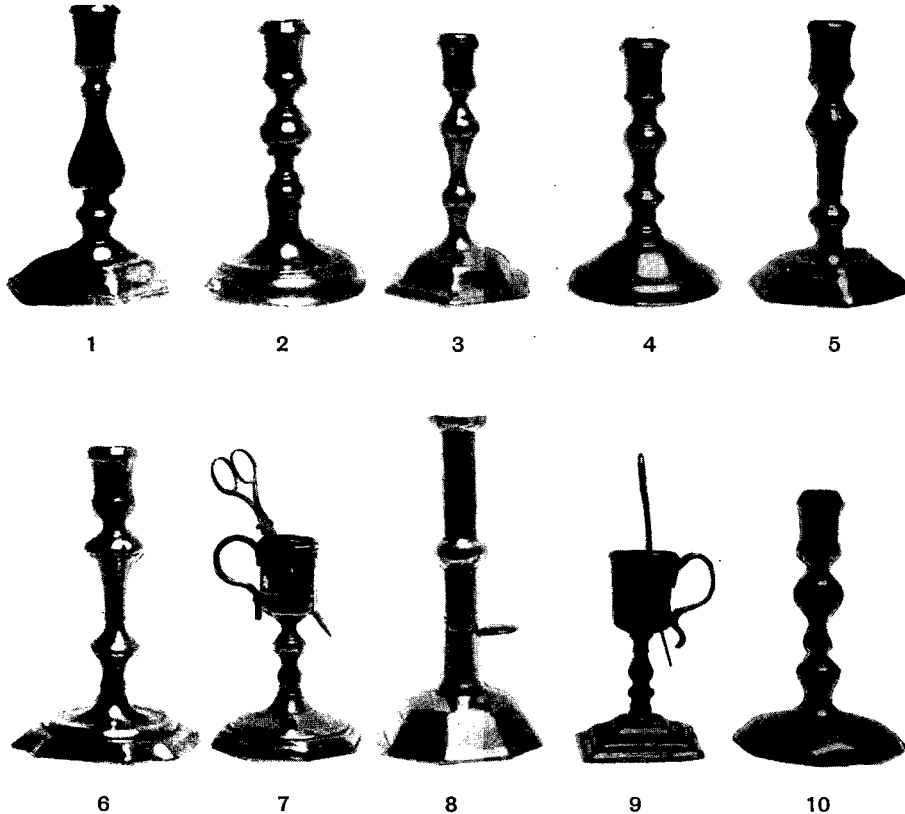


Fig. 12. Candlesticks of the late 17th and early 18th Centuries.

Certain candlesticks with circular bases belonging to the end of the seventeenth century, chiefly to be found in brass, have in addition to a baluster stem a highly domed base (fig. 12, Nos. 2 and 4). This feature, which has descended from the mid-seventeenth-century types with solid stem and wax-pan half-way up, continued on into the first two decades of the following century, and is to be seen in some of those with hexagonal and octagonal bases (fig. 12, Nos. 1, 3, 5, and 8).

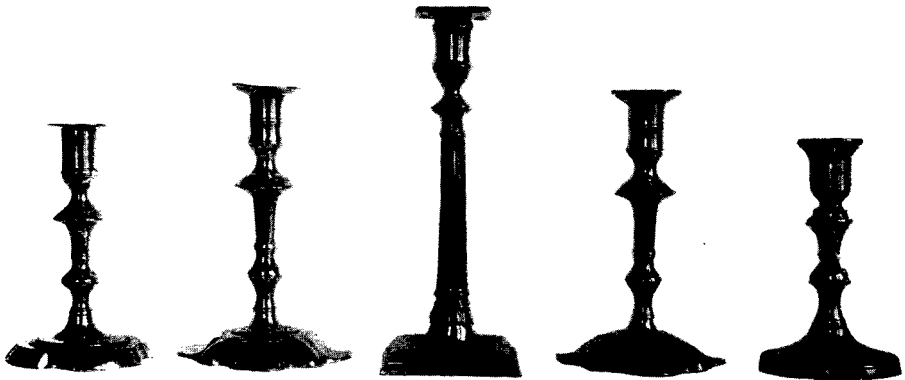
Though it has been assumed that the tendency of the wax-pan and base to part company produced the mid-seventeenth-century type (fig. 3, Nos. 4, 6, and 8) with the wax-pan in the middle of the stem, it must be noted that there was a form of candlestick with a bell-shaped base, a discoid wax-pan, and a baluster stem which continued in use right through the seventeenth century and up to, at least, the middle of the eighteenth. Fig. 3, No. 1, shows an example about 1600, and fig. 3, No. 3, shows one probably dating from the middle of the eighteenth century. A series is illustrated in *Lys og Lysstel*, p. 29, figs. 86-88. The type existed in the Scandinavian countries, but it was not confined to those regions, for I possess a late example acquired recently in Rome.

Some other forms of candlesticks of the seventeenth century may be noted here. A late seventeenth-century candlestick (fig. 3, No. 7), with an octagonal base, faceted stem cast solid, and a socket with a small circular hole in it, is from Belgium.

Fig. 3, No. 5, with the wax-pan immediately below the socket, was purchased on the quays on the left bank of the Seine at Paris. It probably also dates from the last years of the seventeenth century or the early years of the eighteenth, and shows the further upward movement of the wax-pan towards the mouth of the socket. Fig. 2, No. 10, with a pyramidal base, a square flat wax-pan, and a vase-shaped stem, is probably a Church candlestick of late seventeenth-century date, and came from Rome. Fig. 2, No. 11, is English, and of the same period. It consists of a notched and slotted brass tube through which a candle-socket on the end of a key is moved up and down, set on a turned domed base of walnut wood. The domed base is a characteristic of the feet of wineglasses of the same period, probably the result of Dutch influence.

Fig. 2, No. 12, is a typical late seventeenth-century candlestick of a form frequently occurring in silver. The acorn-shaped member of the baluster is fully developed; the socket, also with the half-round moulding at the base, is characteristic of the period.

In fig. 9 are some varied seventeenth-century specimens besides those already noted. No. 1, with a square base, is perhaps Spanish, as I have a record of an identical specimen purchased in Spain. Though the square base with four feet is unusual, the form of the stem with the large bulb high up on the baluster is typical of the period. A comparison may be made with fig. 12, No. 2, and also with fig. 12, No. 4, undoubtedly of the period. No. 4 is Italian, and has a shaped base similar to those on the well-known Tuscan brass lamps. No. 5, with the triangular base, is possibly also Italian. The shape of the socket closely



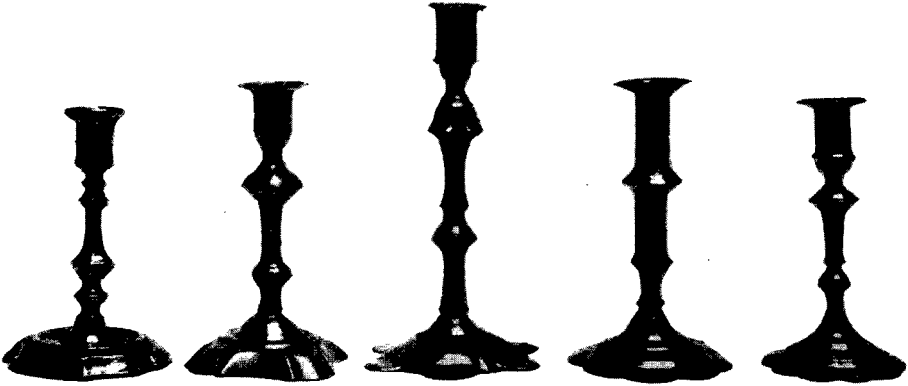
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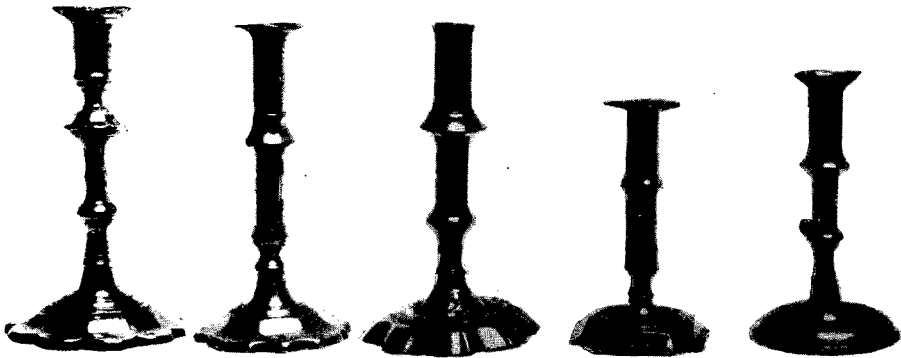
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Fig. 13. Candlesticks of the 18th Century.

resembles that of fig. 2, Nos. 10 and 12, of whose date there can be no doubt.

Before definitely leaving the candlesticks of the seventeenth century, attention may be directed to a minor feature which characterises the stem of many belonging to this period, and may even be regarded as typical of it. This feature, which constitutes a section of a baluster stem, is in the form of an inverted acorn in its cup. It may be seen in a mid-century specimen (fig. 3, No. 8), in a candlestick of the time of James II. or William and Mary (fig. 2, No. 12) in the National Museum of Antiquities, and in various silver candlesticks of the closing years of the century. It is a feature that, along with the solid stem, helps to date the pair of unusual candlesticks with triangular base (fig. 9, No. 5), for which I have found no silver analogy.

In studying the stems both of silver and brass candlesticks in the first half of the eighteenth century, we shall see that the acorn assumes a more and more elongated form, until eventually it becomes the lower portion of an inverted vase shape.

A style of brass candlestick which obviously originated early in the eighteenth century or at the close of the seventeenth with the introduction of the hollow stem, was that with a cylindrical stem, and a slot in one side up which could be moved a spur or button, to adjust the length of the candle exposed. An early example of this type, probably of Queen Anne's reign, is illustrated by fig. 12, No. 8, while fig. 13, Nos. 12, 13, 14, and 15, show others of a later date. The base of No. 14 suggests for it a date about 1720, while No. 13 may be some five years later, and No. 12 about the middle of the century.

Reverting to the card-index and silver analogues, and giving attention primarily to the bases, we find a new style in these making its appearance about 1714. This consists of a modification of the popular octagonal form brought about by counter-ranging the octagonal facets. An example, of date about 1714, illustrates it clearly (fig. 17, No. 6, also fig. 12, No. 10), as does also a snuffer-holder (fig. 12, No. 7). This style lasted but a short time, and was succeeded by another variation which also had but a brief vogue. The latter was produced by recessing alternate angles of the octagon, or, in other words, by forming a square with hollow angles. This style is exemplified by fig. 12, No. 6. The earliest dated example which my card-index shows has the date mark for 1720 (fig. 17, No. 8), and the form seems to have been in fashion for about ten years. The hollow angle was not confined to candlesticks, but was also used in silver salvers of the same period. A variant of this shows the sides of the square recessed and angles convex (fig. 13, No. 7, and fig. 17, No. 10, the latter dated

1733), also fig. 13, No. 1, and another, fig. 17, No. 11, dated 1735, also, with the angles of the square rounded and slightly recessed, fig. 13, No. 7. From these last there is evolved, about 1740, a lobated base (fig. 18, No. 2, also fig. 13, Nos. 2 and 4). Increased prominence given to the lobes, four in number to begin with, increased later on to six (fig. 13, No. 8), by grooving the surface and shaping the edge, produced a shell-like lobe (fig. 18, No. 3, dated 1751-2, and No. 5, dated 1758)—a feature likewise to be found in brass candlesticks. Though the popularity of this style evidently commenced to pass away after the middle of the century, it did not absolutely disappear, and eventually degenerated into a base formed with a continuous scalloped outline, as shown in fig. 13, Nos. 9, 11, and 12. The candlestick fig. 13, No. 6, belongs to this series apparently. It is of foreign manufacture, perhaps Dutch, as a similar specimen was recently observed in Dordrecht. It probably dates from about 1740.

Under dates from 1683 to 1756 there does not occur in the card-index a single illustration of a silver candlestick with a completely square base. In 1756 this form makes its appearance (fig. 18, No. 4), and thenceforward for thirty years such is the prevailing type. Out of forty-four illustrations of silver examples in the index between the years 1756 and 1785, thirty-one are of candlesticks with square bases. At first the bases are flat, with a moulded or gadrooned edge (fig. 18, Nos. 4 and 8, in silver; fig. 13, No. 3, in brass); the brass candlesticks with the plain square bases (fig. 14, Nos. 1 and 3) belong also probably to a date in the middle of the century. When, later, in certain cases, the stem, a plain or fluted column, assumed a more developed architectural character, the base was stepped or rose in a dome (fig. 18, No. 6, 1759-60), until, finally, we find the architectural analogy complete with a plinth and capital (fig. 18, No. 6 (1759-60), No. 7 (1760), No. 9 (1762), and No. 10 (1766)). Although among the square-based silver candlesticks the architectural stem seems to have been preferred, there is also a handsome baluster-stemmed form which appears as early as 1756 (fig. 18, No. 4), and of which I have a record as late as 1770. In the last quarter of the century the styles in silver rapidly deteriorate. The simple lines that lent dignity and grace to earlier forms are vitiated by meretricious enrichment in the shape of swags, garlands, rams' heads, gadroons, etc., and there is a marked tendency towards clumsier shapes. Oval and oblong bases make their appearance and pass into the nineteenth century, where I do not propose to follow them.

In candlesticks of brass the main features of the silver models were closely followed, though the stems of the former were seldom, if ever, enriched with ornament. Certain styles of stem, moreover, had no silver

analogues, and appear to have belonged exclusively to the candlesticks of common use. Such are fig. 16, Nos. 1, 2, and 5, which show examples with round bases and baluster stems.

With neither hall-marks nor picture illustrations to guide us, it is

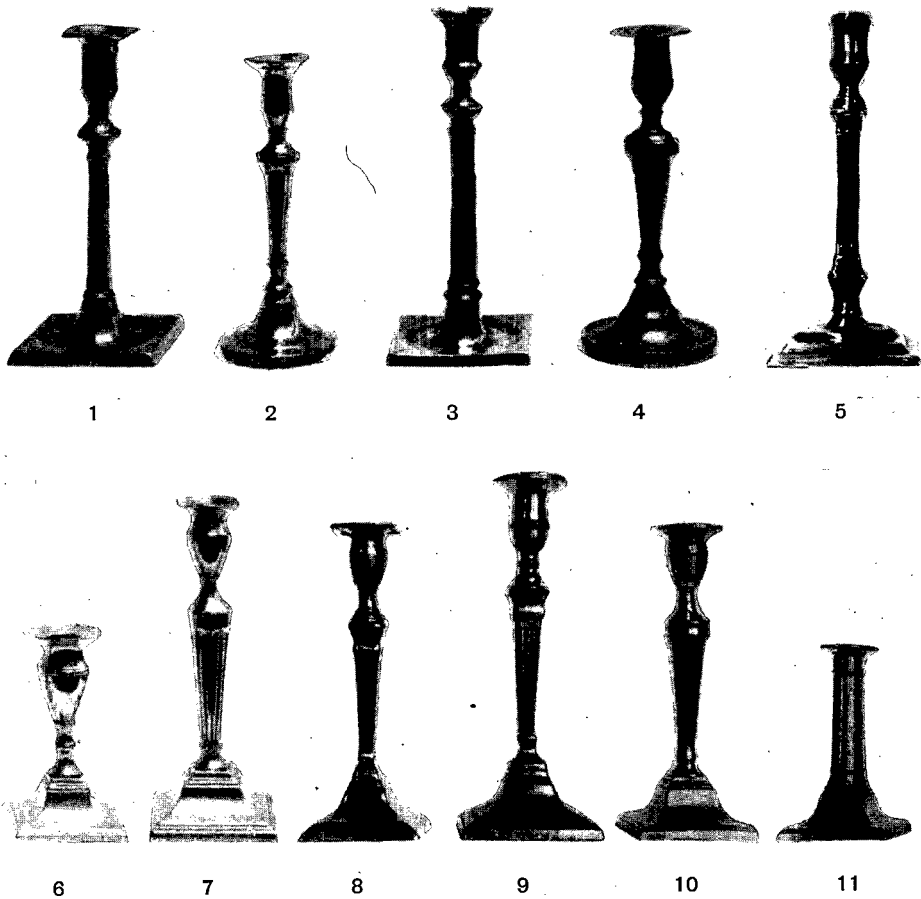


Fig. 14. Candlesticks of the 18th Century.

extremely difficult to date such specimens as those last mentioned with accuracy. There is, however, a constructive feature which affords a clue and permits a distinction to be drawn at least between those which belong to the last twenty or thirty years of the century and those of an earlier date.

Previously I have mentioned that in the closing years of the seven-

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teenth century a change was brought about in the process of manufacture from the production of a stem cast solid and afterwards turned

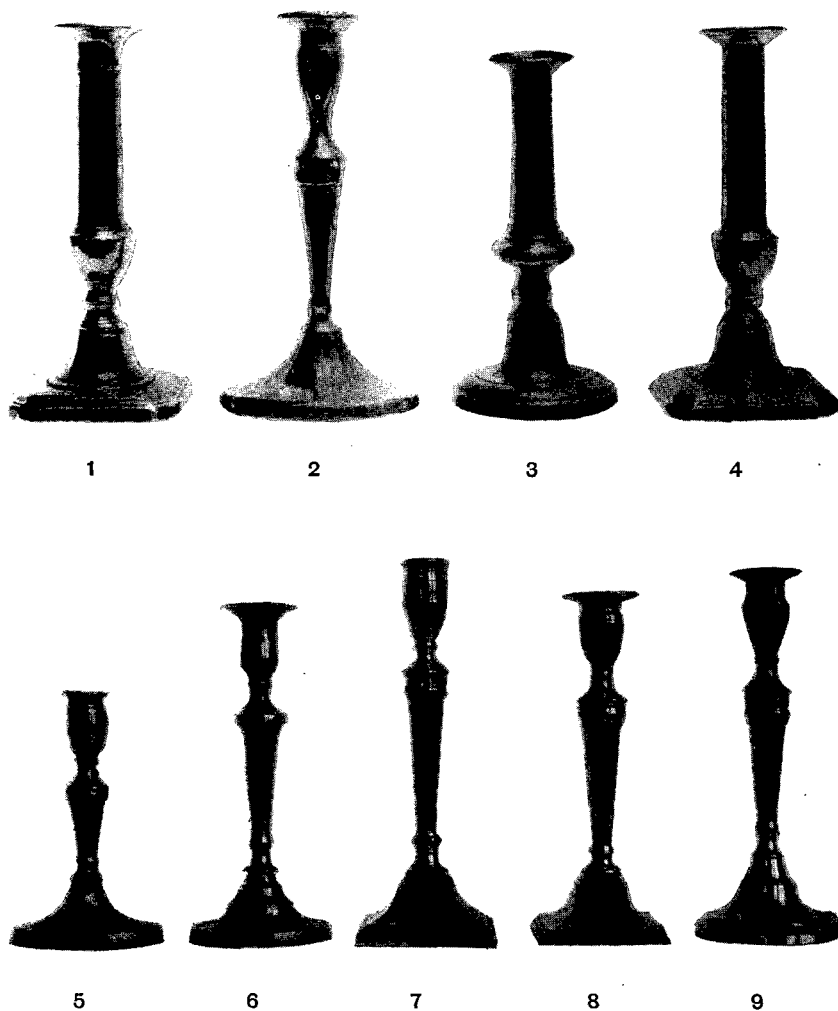


Fig. 15, Candlesticks of the late 18th and early 19th Centuries.

on a lathe, to that of a hollow stem cast in two halves which were subsequently brazed together. The change which we have now to consider is one from that bi-valve process to an ordinary core-casting, by which the stem and nozzle were produced complete in one. Once this

step was attained, the saving in labour must have been so considerable that any return to the former method was out of the question. I have not been able to ascertain actually the date when this change first occurred, but from the existence of specimens of brass candlesticks fashioned in both methods, which have analogies in datable examples in Sheffield plate, it is evident that it must have occurred about the year 1780. Such a Sheffield plate form, illustrated by fig. 14, No. 6, is dated 1775,¹ and is found in brass fashioned by either method, whereas the candlestick fig. 14, No. 11,² also a Sheffield plate form, dated 1778-88, I have only observed produced by a core-casting. Allowing for a slight precedence to the Sheffield plate over brass, 1780 cannot be a date very remote from that of the change. But this is not the only brass candlestick which is met with fashioned in both ways. Fig. 14, Nos. 2 and 4, and fig. 15, Nos. 6 and 9, show the type of candlestick which is the most prevalent of the eighteenth-century forms to be met with at the present day, and its introduction is approximately dated in 1774 by the silver analogue bearing the hall-mark of that year (fig. 18, No. 12). The features of the type consist of a shaft formed with a tall inverted cone on a high domed foot and a circular base. Of these, fig. 14, Nos. 2, 4, and 10, and fig. 15, No. 9, have been cast in two halves as regards the stems and nozzles, while fig. 15, No. 6, is a single core-casting for these parts, the base in both instances being of separate construction. A close scrutiny, however, of various examples of both kinds reveals certain distinguishing features of design, for whereas the earlier specimens show around the edge of the base almost invariably either an incised line or a single cavetto moulding, the latter are distinguished by multiple mouldings on the base and foot, showing the tendency so noticeable towards the end of the century to over-elaboration. I have only met with one oval-based candlestick cast in two halves (fig. 15, No. 5), and it is also of this type.

Another type (fig. 14, Nos. 7, 8, 9, and 10) shows a close affinity to the foregoing, but differing in being fashioned with a square base and a pyramidal foot, and a tapering shaft either square or round in section generally fluted. As the stem in this variety is always a single core-casting, we may assume its date to be well towards the close of the century. From the numbers to be met with there can be little doubt also that this and its analogous type had a vogue which carried it well into the nineteenth century. Fig. 16, Nos. 6, 7, and 10, show late forms of bases. The stem of each of these specimens is formed of a single casting and, consequently, they must be dated subsequent to 1780 or thereabout.

¹ Bradbury's *A History of Old Sheffield Plate*, p. 402.

² *Ibid.*, p. 230.

Fig. 14, No. 5, cast in one piece, except the base, is a late example of a square-based candlestick, of which fig. 14, Nos. 1 and 3, illustrate the early forms.

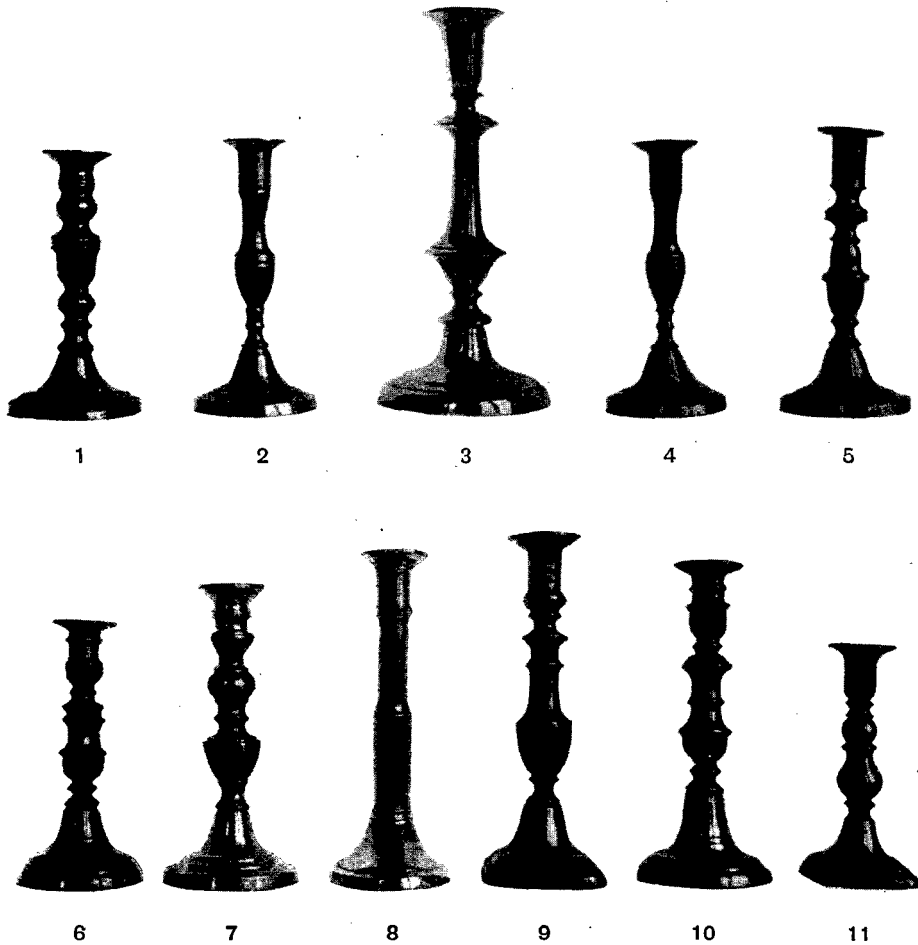
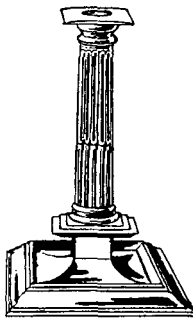
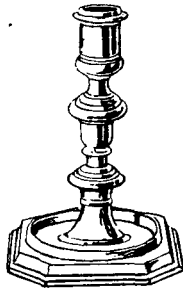


Fig. 16. Candlesticks of the late 18th and early 19th Centuries.

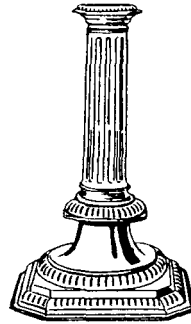
The pair of candlesticks, fig. 15, Nos. 1 and 4, both cast in the late method, seem to be clumsy derivatives of the form shown by fig. 16, No. 2, which probably dates from about 1760. The candlestick represented by fig. 16, No. 9, seems to be a similar derivative. It is a late casting and has an oblong base—a feature never found with the earlier



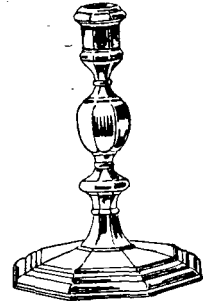
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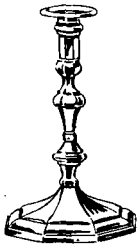
2. (1686)



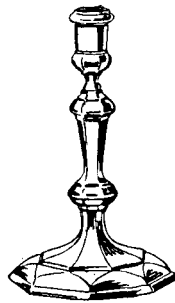
3. (1694)



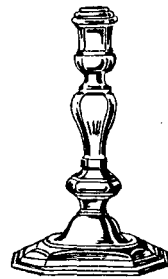
4. (1702)



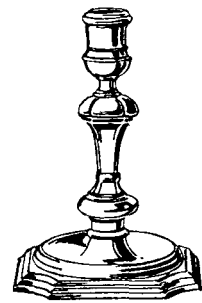
5. (1709)



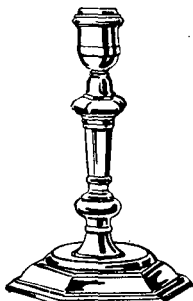
6. (1714)



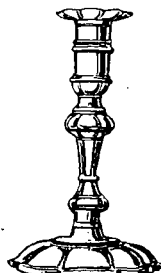
7. (1716)



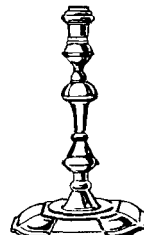
8. (1720)



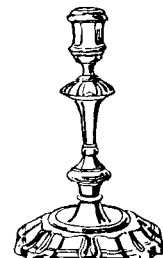
9. (1727)



10. (1733)



11. (1735)



12. (1737)

Fig. 17. Types of silver candlesticks, the dates given being those of the earliest hall-marks found applicable to each form.

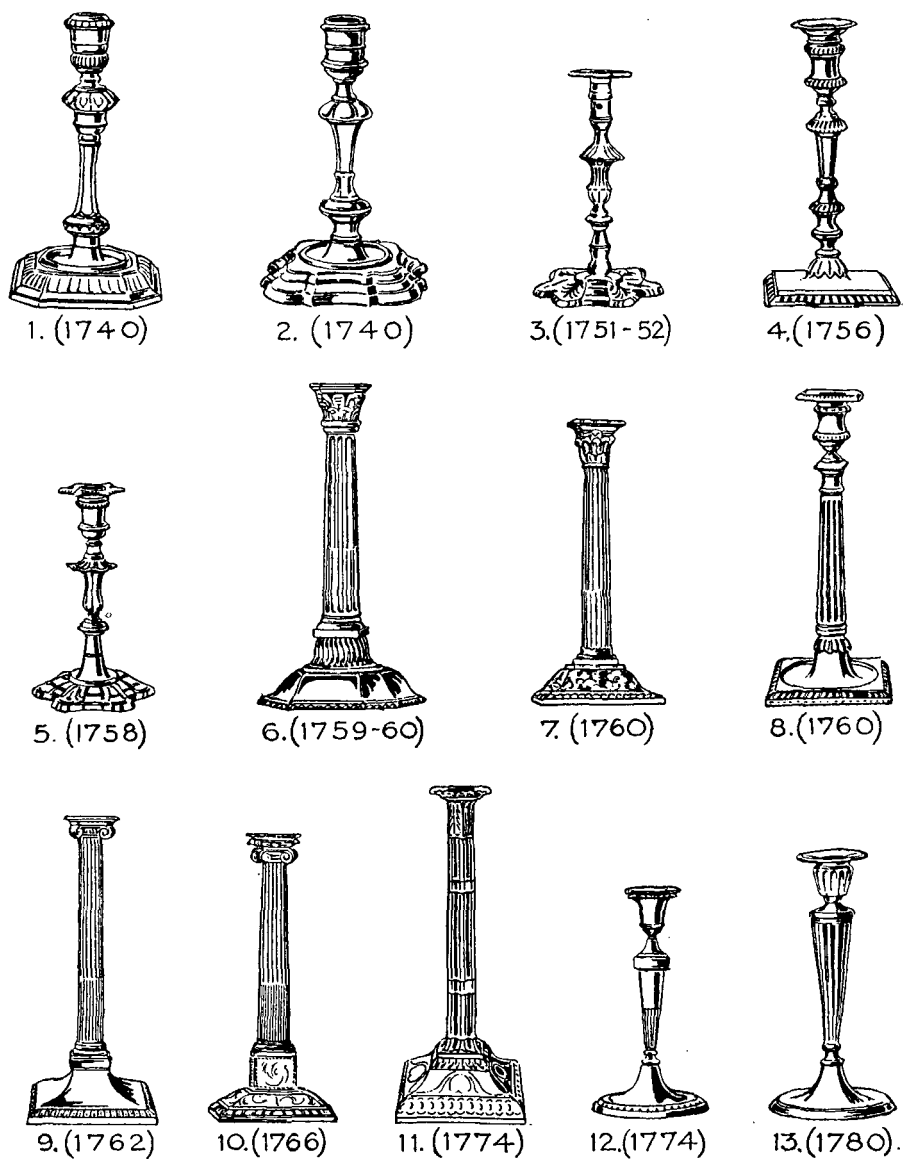


Fig. 18. Types of silver candlesticks, the dates given being those of the earliest hall-marks found applicable to each form.

style of manufacture. It and another with a similar base (fig. 16, No. 11) probably belong to the nineteenth century. Fig. 16, No. 3, is likewise a late production, and the form of its stem suggests that it, too, is a late derivative of fig. 16, No. 2, through fig. 15, Nos. 1 and 3. Fig. 16, No. 8, shows a telescope candlestick of a Sheffield plate form, and as such is datable to about 1810.

It gives me pleasure to acknowledge my indebtedness to the Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum for permission to reproduce a photograph of a seventeenth-century candlestick (fig. 3, No. 4); to the Director of the Musée Cluny in Paris for kindly supplying me with a photograph of the early socket candlestick (fig. 1, No. 2), and for allowing me to reproduce it; to the Librarian and Curator of the Guildhall Museum, London, for permitting me to reproduce photographs of two early candlesticks (fig. 1, Nos. 1 and 4) in that Museum; to Dr John Stephenson of the Zoological Department of the University of Edinburgh for valuable references from Persian literature regarding the use of wax candles; and to Mr Rowatt, Keeper of the Technological Department of the Royal Scottish Museum, for assistance in regard to technical details.