



Domestic Interiors: The British Tradition 1500-1850

James Ayres

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Although the interiors of aristocratic homes have received much attention, there has been little written about how the interiors of middle-class homes evolved through the ages. In this study, James Ayres traces the development - in words and pictures - of vernacular British interiors from the 16th to the mid-19th century. *The Book of the Home*, and deals with a wide range of subjects, including heating and lighting, the use of colour and paint, details of doors, doorways and staircases, and much more. Ayres tells us, for example, that in Tudor England, glazed windows, door locks and floorboards were not simply considered to be fixtures in a middle-class home because of their expense, and it was only after such features became prevalent that these interiors grew more decorative and lavish. In pre-industrial Britain, textiles and printed wallpaper were used sparingly because of their cost, and colours and patterns were introduced through painted floors, ceilings, furniture and stencilled walls. People also took advantage of what was nearby; homes in the south-east, for example, made use of the cast and wrought iron products of Kent and Sussex, and those in Devon had locally-made earthenware fire-backs and firedogs. *Domestic Interiors: The British Tradition 1500-1850* dwells on the past. Embellished with early illustrations and the author's own line drawings and photographs, the work provides evidence for the treatment of historic interiors and inspiration for schemes of decoration today.

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