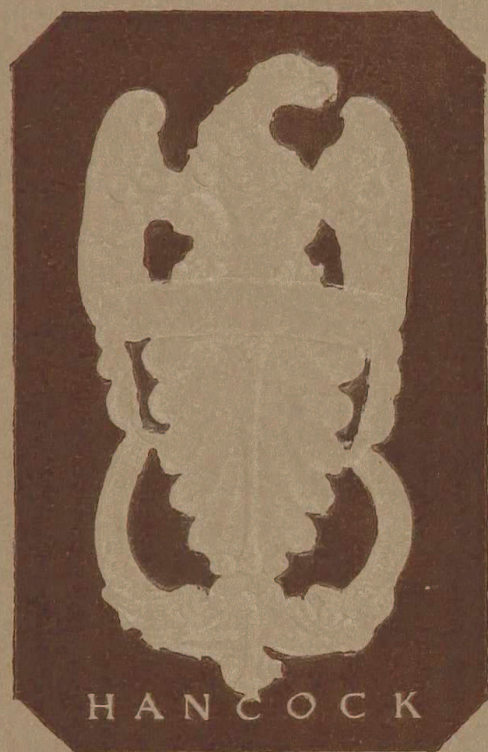


A History of Door Knockers



*Cast from original Knocker
on the Historic John Hancock House
Boston*

A History of



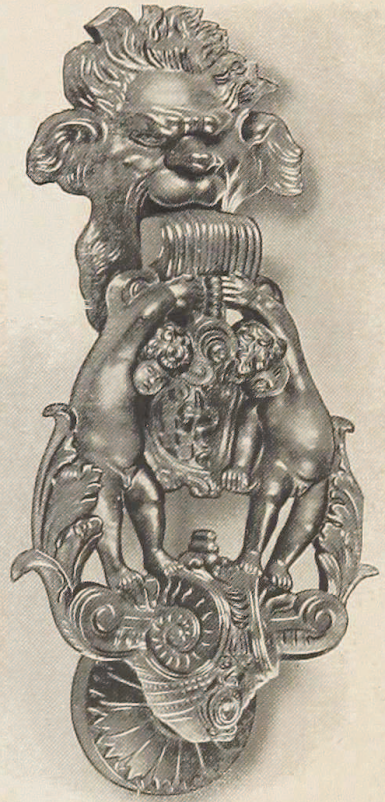
Door Knockers

THE origin of Door Knockers is almost lost in obscurity, and their development from mere articles of utility to objects of art has been a long, slow process of evolution covering centuries and antedating Western civilization by many hundreds of years.

The first general use of knockers that is positively known was among the ancient Greeks, who probably adopted it from the Egyptians. We are told that the Greeks considered it a breach of good manners to enter a house without warning the inmates, and that the Spartans gave this notice by shouting their arrival, while the Athenians announced themselves by using the knocker, its introduction doubtless being at the time when doors superseded hangings for the purpose of insuring greater safety or privacy.

In the Greek houses of the better class a porter was in constant attendance at the door to admit visitors. Slaves were usually employed in this capacity and were chained to the door posts to prevent their wandering and shirking the irksome monotony of this task. They often went to sleep while on duty, and in order to awaken them, a short bar of iron was fastened to the door by a chain, to be used as a rapper by those desiring entrance to the house.

It is said that this strictly utilitarian "rapper", as it was first called, was often wrenched from the door and used as a weapon of offence by visitors not friendly disposed toward the householder, and that one of the earliest developments



4040—"VENETIAN"—\$30.00
12½x6½ inches

When the Renaissance swept Europe the Italian metal workers first saw the sculptural possibilities in the treatment of knockers. Replica of above knocker on entrance gate of Hinchin Brooke Castle, England.