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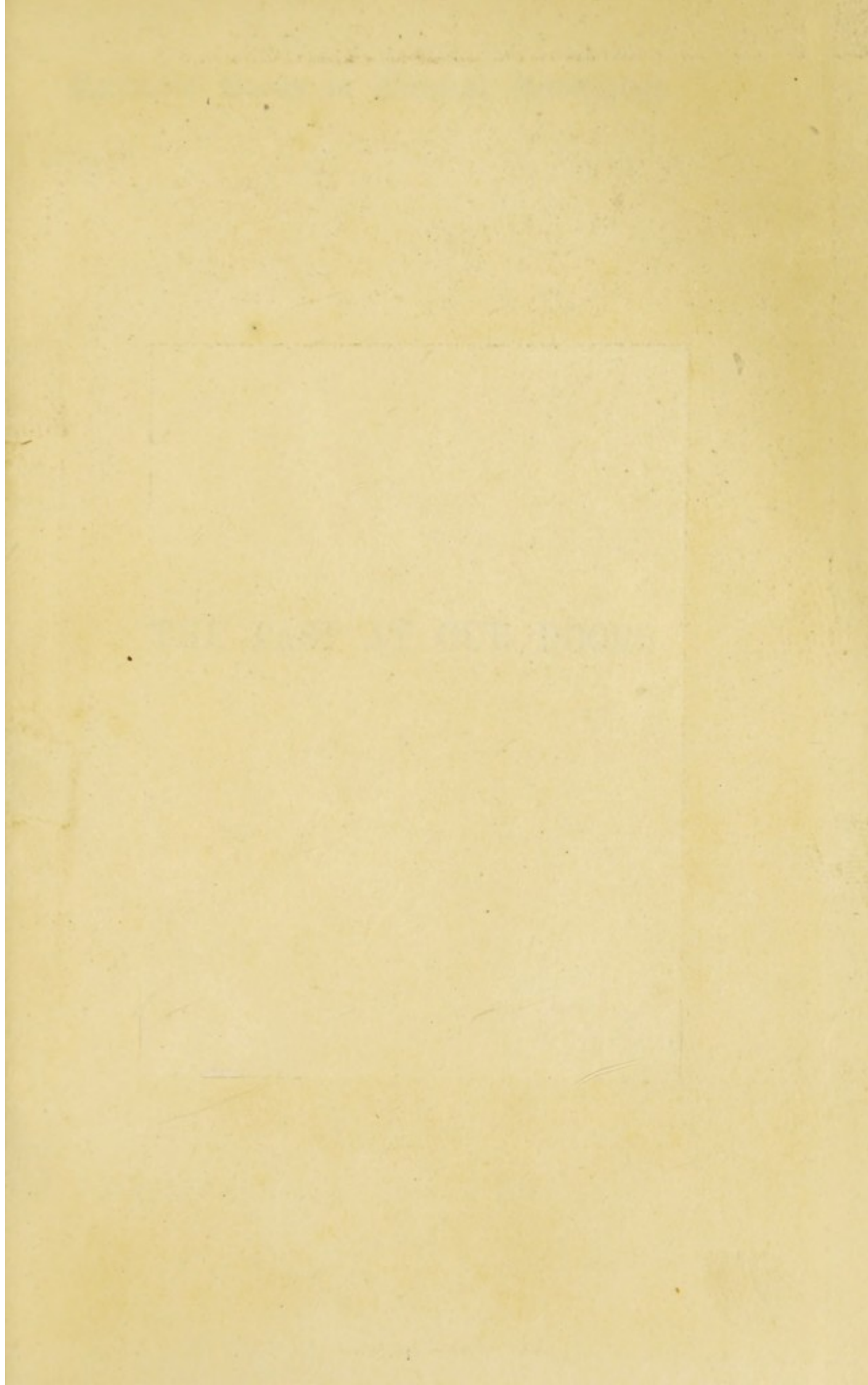
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THE PAST AT OUR DOORS





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GARIBALDI'S 'RED SHIRT,' WHENCE CAME THE MODERN BLOUSE.  
A Fashion that was brought from South America.

(See pp. 62, 83.)

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# THE PAST AT OUR DOORS

OR

THE OLD IN THE NEW AROUND US

BY

WALTER W. SKEAT, M.A.

SOMETIME SCHOLAR OF CHRIST'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,  
FORMERLY OF THE F.M.S. CIVIL SERVICE,  
AND FELLOW OF THE ROYAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE

"Time hath endless rarities and shows of all varieties ; which reveal old things in Heaven, makes new discoveries in earth, and even Earth itself a discovery."—Sir T. BROWNE, *Urnburiat*, I. § 1.

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS

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1911



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TO MY  
FATHER AND MOTHER  
ON THEIR  
GOLDEN WEDDING-DAY  
NOVEMBER 15, 1910



## AUTHOR'S NOTE

IN presenting this little book to the reader, the writer must content himself with the warning that what we call "civilisation" or "culture" is by no means to be taken as any criterion whatever of the mental power of a race. Of this fact the survivals here recorded from Ireland and Scotland in themselves are proof. On the other hand, the vast mass of ancient usage incorporated in the daily life, even of the most up-to-date Londoner, would surprise many lifelong students of such matters if they had never happened to consider the subject as a whole, and this must be an apology for any incompleteness. The difficulties are increased by the almost incredible fact that there is no adequate Folk Museum in this country where the development of the national life can be studied. Yet we may find in this research some of the "little things we care about," that deep soil of common usage into which the roots of our common patriotism strike.

In conclusion I may be permitted to offer my

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very grateful thanks to the many friends who have assisted in collecting much valuable information or illustrations, and above all, not only for unfailing help, but also for the stimulus of a great example, to my father the Rev. Professor W. W. Skeat, upon whose work the linguistic part of this book is largely founded.

W. W. SKEAT.

ROME LAND, ST. ALBANS.

1911.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE STORY OF OUR FOOD

IN the present little book an attempt will be made to show that though most of us are wont to consider many everyday objects by which we are surrounded "common" and therefore mean and uninspiring, yet if we trace back their history we shall find it full of a hidden romance, which will raise it in our eyes till it grows as inspiring as the story of the stars. And this history we can, every one of us, "*ascertain*" (in the oldest sense of the word, that is make sure or "*certain*") in these days of cheap and good and freely accessible books.

We shall find in the course of the following pages many things about which we have probably never thought, because they were part of our everyday life, and therefore appeared too simple and obvious for us to consider. A very little trouble on our part will convince us that the opposite is the case, and that just *because these things are part of our everyday experience*

*they are especially important for us to understand.* If this endeavour is successful it will, we hope, be admitted that the subjects here dealt with are in no way mean or common-place, and that their real history is often vastly different from anything that we might have been able to guess.

Whether we choose to make use of such opportunities as we have rests with ourselves alone. The world will always be made up of those who wish to understand the real meaning of what is around them, and those who do not care. It will therefore always be possible to say of these two classes that—

Two men stood looking through the bars,  
One saw the mud, the other the stars.

Surely the vault of heaven, "that majestical firmament fretted with golden fire," is in the end better worth our attention than the golden dross for which the world principally contends, so soon trampled into the mud of the market by the feet of the selfish and reckless crowd.

We shall begin by giving examples to show how much we may learn of the ancient racial groups from which the main stock of the nation is built, through an inquiry into our modern food-words; how much too of historic survival is to be traced in the story of such humble implements as the plough and the reaping-machine, in the common customs connected



with our meals, and in the national and international circumstances which have affected the introduction of some of our habitual articles of food.

### A MATTER OF MEALS

The idea of breakfast in historic times in England did not usually correspond in the least to what we now understand by the word. It partook rather of the nature of a mere snack, such as is still customary on the Continent and in the East, its purpose being merely to afford some trifle of food to sustain the strength, and in this way actually to "break" the long "fast" which continued from overnight till the principal meal was served.

We shall perhaps understand this the better if we realise that our ancestors in the fourteenth century used to dine at an hour but little later than our own breakfast hour, at nine or ten o'clock in fact, though it gradually became later until it was fixed at noon, with supper, the other principal meal of the day, at five or six. To put the matter in another way, the "dinner-time" of the Normans at first roughly coincided with the Anglo-Saxon time for "breakfast." But the original sense of the French word "dinner" was actually to "*unfast*," or "break fast," so that there was every reason why both names should have been applied to the earliest



meal of the day. And the thing itself survives in the labourer's early morning "*dew-bit*."

In the last century the dinner-hour grew rapidly later, until as at present it has even taken the place of the last meal of the day, the old-time "supper," or "sop" of bread soaked in gravy or broth, which now survives as a plainer and simpler meal than dinner, among all but the wealthier classes.

"Lunch," a modern abbreviation of "luncheon," was in its original form "lunchin" nothing but a big slice or lump of bread or other eatable. This would be particularly applicable to the big lump of bread or cheese off which a labourer still makes his midday meal. Gay, in 1714, wrote, "I sliced the *luncheon* from the barley-loaf." The sense of the word was in course of time easily extended to that of the "light" meal we now eat at noon.

On the other hand, "lunch" or "luncheon" has been much confused with "nuncheon," which latter, in its original form "noon-shenk," was applied not to food but to drink, "shenk" being an old word, traces of which survive in Shakespeare in the sense of pouring out liquor. And nuncheon is still also called "bever"—the exact Norman equivalent of the English word. Thus the original sense of luncheon was a (noonday) slice or lump of bread or cheese, and that of nuncheon a noonday drink.

It may be worth while mentioning here that



the now familiar "sandwich," which so frequently forms part of an outdoor lunch, gets its name from the fourth Earl of Sandwich (d. 1792), who, being a confirmed gambler, invented it in order to remain at the gaming table without interruption.

The same clear blending of Saxon and Norman influences that appears, as is well known, in the names given to the various forms of meat food, occurs in regard to the appliances made use of at meals. For table, chair, and plate or platter are of Norman origin, whilst the words board, settle, stool, glass and tray, are Saxon. The first of these was given both to the round table and the *table dormante*, that is, "sleeping," or fixed (Norman) table as distinguished from the Saxon "board." Low tables, on which bread was set in baskets of British work, were also sometimes used by the Britons.

The round table, was at least as old as the square table, and when private rooms for the family were first introduced, became the recognised form of table for the parlour, a fact which no doubt accounts for the relatively large number of cases in which it was so employed down to the latter years of the nineteenth century.

In old-fashioned farm-houses it was long the habit, and still is in some parts, for the master and his servants to dine together in the same room, the servants at a long table or "board," in strict



order of seniority, while the master and his family sat at a small round table near the fire.

We all know how ill-mannered it is considered, even at the present day, for a guest to sit out of his place at table, and even in early Britain the question of precedence was held so important that by a law of Cnut any one sitting in his wrong place might be pelted out of it with bones thrown by the company, without privilege of taking offence.

Our apparently modern fancy of two lovers eating off the same plate has come down to us from a chivalrous old custom, which was once an act of courtesy between friends, especially between knights and ladies. It gradually fell into disuse, though as late as 1752 the Duke and Duchess of Hamilton in accordance with the ancient custom, ate off the same plate at the head of their table.

Trenchers, whence our modern expression "a good trencherman" is derived, were like "platters," occasionally to be seen in actual use in the reign of Queen Victoria, and they are yet used for certain meals<sup>1</sup> by the seventy scholars in *college* hall at Winchester. They were of clean white wood, usually maple, and were often hollow on both sides, so that meat could be served on one side and then pudding on the other.

<sup>1</sup> For bread and butter at breakfast, and also for tea and supper, though not now for dinner. Like Fr. *tranche*, the word once meant a slice of bread on which meat was served.



The only kind of wooden "trencher" now in general use is that on which bread is cut, and this is now called a "platter," its earlier name of "trencher" having died out. Both were long used for fruit served up at the "banquet," which latter term in Shakespeare's time was given, not as now to the feast itself, but to the dessert. At this time, too, Harrison says that "old men of his village still spoke of the exchange of treen or wooden platters into pewter, and wooden spoons into silver or tin."

Gentlemen in those days used to bring their own knives with them to table, and these in Anglo-Saxon times were shaped so like our modern razor that on at least one occasion they were identified as "Roman razors," under which strange designation they once came to be labelled in a museum!

The knives then were laid by the spoons, which were of silver, bone, or wood. "Spoon" really means, in fact, a wooden chip, as in the common expression "spick and span" or (more fully) "spick and span new," where "span" has its original sense of a newly-split "chip," a meaning which usefully recalls the most ancient form of spoon. Even then, however, the full force of the expression is hard to see, unless we may perhaps conjecture that "spick" in this case has the sense of a wooden "spike," such as we know to have been employed from the remotest ages for holding the meat at meals, before



the invention of the fork. If so, both "spike and spoon" would have to be always *new*, for in order to have them clean, they would be cut fresh, like the fork itself in early times,<sup>1</sup> for every meal.

The fork (which was at first two-pronged, like our modern carving-forks) is one of those obvious implements which have no doubt been "invented" over and over again in almost every part of the world. In its application to our food, however, it seems to have been an oriental idea, introduced into Europe by the Venetians. For in the eleventh century we read of a certain princess of Constantinople, who had married a Doge or Duke of Venice, and who was thought to be "luxurious beyond all belief" simply because, "instead of eating like other people, she had her food cut up into little pieces and ate the pieces by means of a two-pronged fork."

For cooking purposes, forks were used by the Anglo-Saxons, yet Edward I. kept a crystal fork as one of his jewels, and Piers Gaveston, the favourite of Edward II., had three silver forks "for eating pears." Dessert forks of this kind continued to be treasured by our rulers (as, for instance, by Henry IV., Henry VII., Henry VIII.) down to Elizabeth.

The dinner-fork was not introduced into common use in England till 1608, when Thomas Coryat

<sup>1</sup> An early traveller, in 1253, says the Tatars then used for eating their meat the point of a knife, or little fork, *made for the purpose*. The usual explanation of "spike and chip" misses this point.



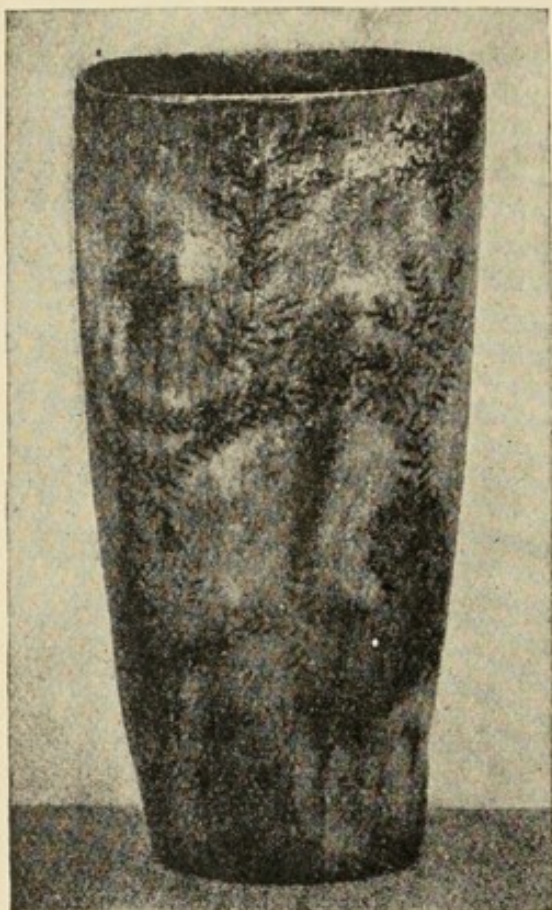
observed it in Italy and started the custom at his own table in England. Naturally he was much laughed at, the novelty being described by one over-excited person as "an insult to Providence, Who had given us fingers!"

Little by little, however, this much-ridiculed invention made its way. But even now (such a strange thing is custom) the two great branches of the English-speaking race differ in their use of it, for, as a rule, in the United States the usual British fashion of eating with knife and fork is said to excite much amusement. For the custom prevailing there (as in most parts of Europe) is to cut the meat up into small pieces and then to lay the knife aside, the eating being done with the fork in the right hand—showing what trivial distinctions may come to be regarded as national peculiarities. The French, to give another example, still eat cake with a spoon!

The "salt-cellar" or (more properly) "sall-er," that is, *salt*-holder, was in those days one of the most important things on the board, because the station of a guest was indicated by offering him a seat either "above" or "below the salt," as the case might be. It was often of great size, and of precious metal. Edward III. had one "inamelled all over with baboons and little birds," and they were sometimes made like a ship or else like a chariot on wheels, to make it easier to pass them

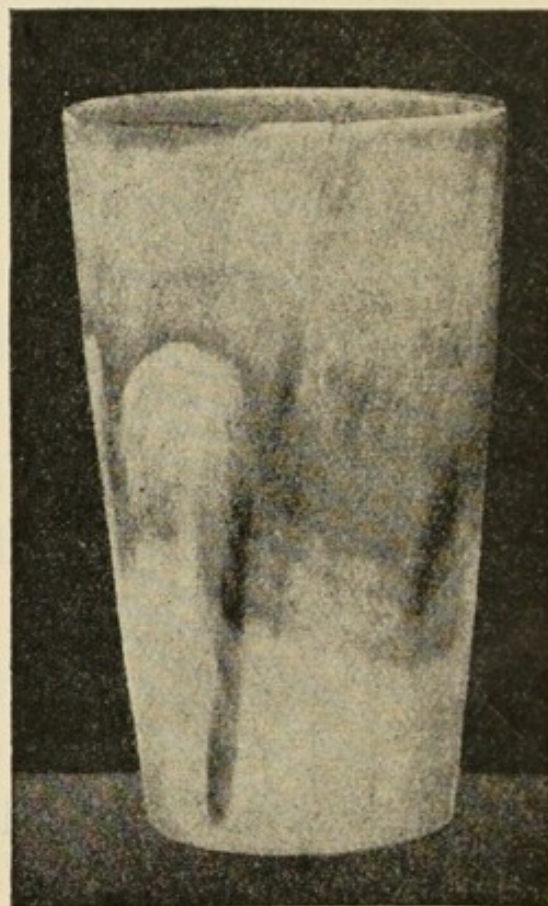


down the table. In India and many other parts of the world the eating of a man's salt still forms a bond that cannot be broken, but in England such phrases as "above" or "below the salt" and "worth



*By courtesy of Mrs. Stallard-Penoyre.*

FIG. 1.—Home-made Horn Cup, or "Drinking-Horn," still used by field labourers near Stockton (Worc.), Bewdley, and elsewhere.



*By courtesy of Mrs. Stallard-Penoyre.*

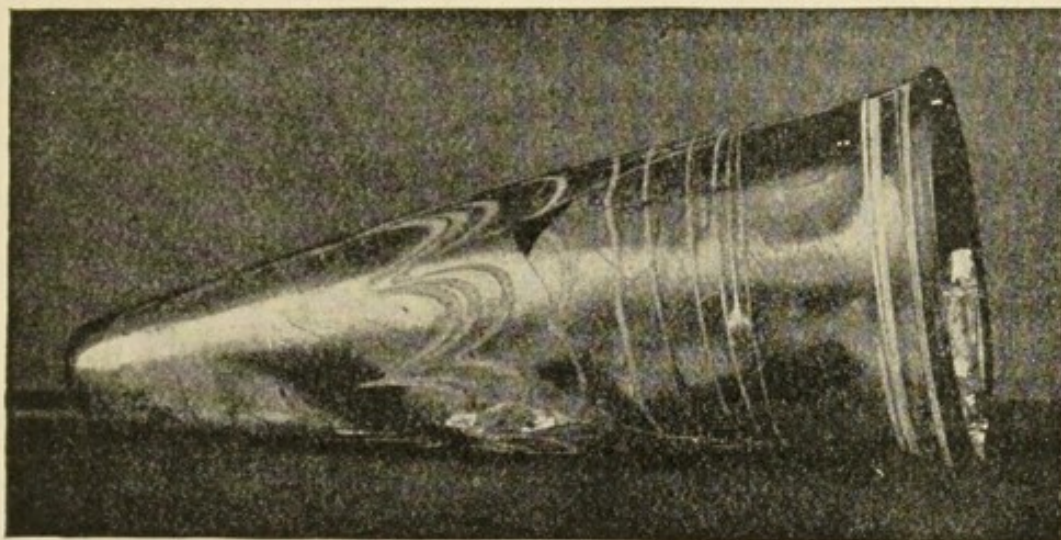
FIG. 2.—Modern factory-made Horn Glass or Drinking-Horn from Bewdley.

his salt" alone recall the honourable place once filled by the salt-cellar at the tables of our ancestors.

As is still the case on the Continent, there were no salt-spoons on the mediæval table. Glasses were rare, the usual drinking-cups being large wooden mugs or goblets, wooden bowls, or drinking

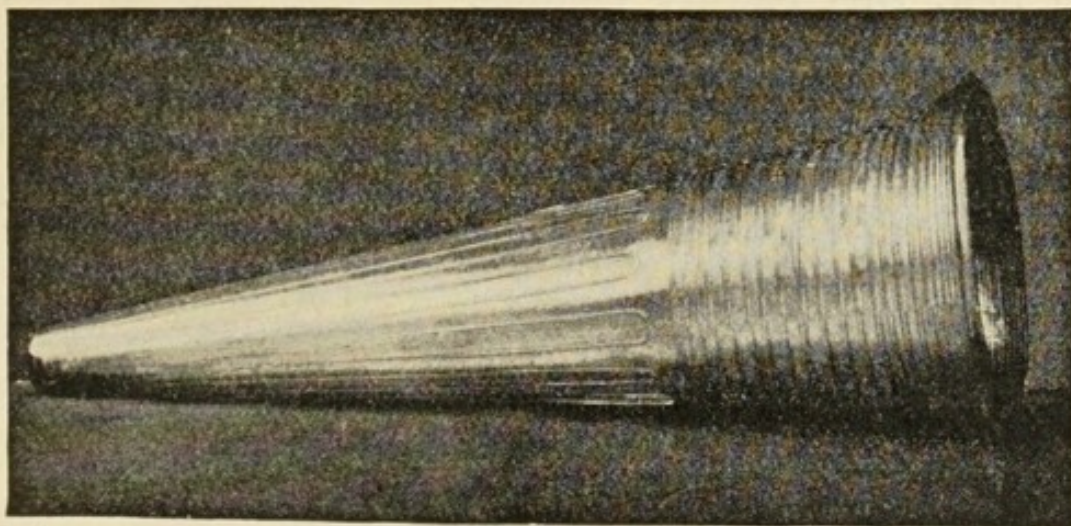


horns, which last survive in the West for beer and cider. The Anglo-Saxons filled their cups from pails, which differed entirely from the vessels of the Britons and the Romans; they were bucket-shaped,



*Brit. Mus.*

FIG. 3.—“Feathers” on a Glass Cup, of the Anglo-Saxon type, found in Bedfordshire.



*Brit. Mus.*

FIG. 4.—Similar Cup of the Frankish type, found in the Charente.

elaborately made with rings and hoops of metal, wood or leather; these were often highly ornamental and were buried by the Saxons in the graves of their owners. It is remarkable that a large proportion



of the prizes given at school sports are made in the shape of old English drinking-vessels, such as these very goblets and bowls and tankards we have just described. Some Saxon glasses were literally "tumblers," not made to stand, and these, no doubt, suggested the Jacobean self-righting round-bottomed cups, whence our modern *tumblers* derive.

These earlier forms of drinking-vessels long persisted; even King Henry III. had but one glass cup, which was a present from Guy de Rousillon. And both pewter and glass drinking-cups, such as we now use, were not in anything like general use before the sixteenth century.

As has been said, the Saxon glasses at first had no foot, this feature coming, no doubt, from their



*From Journ. R. A. Inst.*

FIG. 5.—Prehistoric Water-vessel, showing zig-zag pattern.

being made to resemble the tip of a bullock's horn, which formed the ancient drinking-horn of the Norsemen. Markings similar to the feathers that adorn many of our modern drinking-glasses are in some cases quite plainly to be traced on the conical drinking-glasses of the Anglo-Saxon period.

They can, indeed, be traced yet further back through intermediate forms to a sort of running zig-zag (or



“dog’s tooth”) pattern, found on bowls and other drinking-vessels of the Anglo-Saxons, as on those of many other races from prehistoric times onwards in most parts of the world.

But the oddest story of all is perhaps the history of our word hamper, which derives its Norman name “hanaper” from a basket meant to hold an Anglo-Saxon stemmed drinking-cup of a particular kind called “hnap.” The older form of this word *hanap-er* actually survived till 1832 in the title of one of the officers in the English Exchequer who was called Clerk or Warden of the Hanaper, the hamper or hanaper in this case being a large basket in which writs were deposited. In Ireland election writs still go to the “Clerk of the Hanaper.”

In the most ancient days, the table-cloth was the skin of a wild beast spread upon the ground, but from a very early period in Britain a cloth was used, as in the peaceful picture of a family meal in England, described in one of the ancient Icelandic books called Eddas, “Mother took a broidered cloth of bleached flax and covered the table. Then she took thin loaves of white wheat and covered the cloth. She set forth silver-mounted dishes of . . . old [well-cured] ham, and roasted birds. There was wine in a can, and mounted beakers. They drank and talked while the day passed by.”

In some ancient records of Glastonbury, about



the year 1250, it is laid down that the lord of the manor should find his men "in food on Christmas day," but that the man "shall take with him a plate, mug and napkin, *if he wishes to eat off a cloth*, and a faggot of brushwood to cook his food, unless he would have it raw."

The most significant fact, however, connected with the use of food by our ancestors, is that our modern titles of honour—lord and lady—are both founded upon the Saxon name for a loaf. For the word "lord," originally stood for "loaf-ward," and had the meaning of loaf-keeper, whilst "lady" meant "loaf-kneader," two simple facts which tell us volumes with regard to the honour in which such work was held by the Anglo-Saxons. Hence "lord" seems to have arisen as a term of respect used by servants to their master, like the German expression "brotherr" or "bread-lord" now applied to an employer of labour, and the Swedish and Danish title "meat-mother," also given by servants to their mistress.

"Dairy," like "lady," was first associated with bread-making, "day" in this sense being a lady's bread-making help (or "kneader"). Thus the "dairy" or "day-ery" was the place where bread was kneaded. And the pantry (in old French) was the "bread-room" where the loaves were kept when baked. The larder, on the contrary, was the place where the bacon or "lard" was kept.



The bread when made was doled out to the retainers and dependants of the "loaf-ward" or lord in portions fixed by edicts,<sup>1</sup> which in Norman-French were called "assizes." And as the expression "loaves of assize" by a wrong division of the words became "loaves of a size," this last word (size) came in course of time to express the idea of magnitude which it retains in modern English.

The adulteration of bread which is now treated as a comparatively slight offence, was in those days punished with extreme severity. The fraudulent baker, if not stripped and whipped at the cross-roads, was drawn on a hurdle with the offending loaf round his neck, and pilloried, or else for repeating the offence a third time, had his oven destroyed, and was himself forced to forswear the trade for ever. A special offence was putting iron in a loaf to make it heavier.

Though "bread" was Saxon, "leaven" (better spelt "leven") is from a Norman word which means "lightening," and though "yeast," too, is a Saxon word, we may yet be sure the bread consumed by the Saxon peasantry was chiefly unleavened.

The making of good cheese (an art introduced, as the history of its name shows, by the Romans) was considered in the time of the Saxons quite as

<sup>1</sup> Called, like the Assize of Clarendon, after their place of issue, or like the "Assize of Bread and Ale" (the one here signified), after the articles thus regulated.



much a part of good housewifery as the making of bread (or indeed any other form of housework). We even read of a Countess of Chester, who, though married to a cousin of Henry II., kept a herd of kine "and made good cheese," three samples of which she presented to the then Archbishop of Canterbury. The making of cheese is a very ancient industry, as appears in the Bible.

Ale and beer were anciently regarded in England almost as food and drink, and were hence taken even at breakfast. Ale was for a long period made without hops, the term "beer" being generally, though not regularly, reserved for liquor made from hops. Both were for centuries of excellent quality.

Indeed, in curious contrast to our own times, the Saxons were so attentive to the quality of their national drink that at Chester any one brewing bad ale was put into a ducking stool, either to be dipped into a muddy pond, or at the best let off with a substantial fine. And in 1434 the brewers of Oxford were compelled to swear by the Evangelists in the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, that they would each hereafter "brew ale that was good and wholesome so far as his ability and human frailty" allowed! Although they have always been described as great drinkers, it was nevertheless the Saxons under their King Edgar who adopted the peg-tankard, as it was called, one of the

earliest attempts to check the evils of excessive drinking.

The ale of those days was often brewed either by women called "alewives" or "brewsters," whose industry survived down to comparatively recent times, or in connexion with monasteries, like that at Burton-on-Trent, in very much the same way that certain cordials are now sometimes connected with religious houses abroad. This fact is held by some authorities to account for the marking of beer barrels with X. This they take to have represented the sign of the Cross (which it is said to have once more closely resembled) employed by the monks as a solemn guarantee that the ale was of good quality. Others, however, hold that the X stood for ten, and indicated ale of a certain quality on which ten shillings duty had been paid.

## CHAPTER II

### THE STORY OF OUR FOOD (*continued*)

#### ENGLAND

EVER since Saxon times the English were noted on the Continent for living upon a generous and varied diet, and early in the sixteenth century had the reputation of being the greatest eaters in Europe,



as contemporary records show. With regard to the quality of their food, some Spanish visitors to this country in the reign of Queen Mary declared that in this respect they "fared as well as the King."

More than 200 years earlier, as we learn from a significant passage in *Piers Plowman*, even the poor would

eat no bread | that beans came in,

but only the better sorts

or else of clean wheat

Nor no piece of bacon | but if it be fresh flesh

Or fish fried and baked.

Above all they avoided rye bread ("black bread"), which was the staple food of the peasants of France. Even in quite recent years, at harvest suppers it was the custom to serve up an immense number and variety of dishes, almost every one of which would be partaken of in turn by each of the guests. Indeed even the usual market-day dinner, or "ordinary" as it is called, attended by farmers, can often show a wonderful record in regard to the amount of food there devoured. There is good old English precedent for customs of this sort, since from the earliest times in England an extraordinary profusion of all kinds of meat, wild game, fish, flesh and fowl covered the tables of the rich, and helped to vary the diet even of the poorest.

The English word "hunt" and the Norman "chase" have the same meaning; and both races were expert at this method of obtaining a supply of fresh food for their table. But the Normans, when they came into power, appear to have carried out their operations upon a yet more royal scale, and in a more organised way than the Saxons.

Of all the animals hunted, the deer was the highest in repute, and even in Saxon times had already obtained pre-eminence in this respect, as is proved by the very meaning of its name, "*the animal*," that is, the *one* animal (above all other beasts of the chase). After Norman times, so closely was the notion of hunting still associated with the chase of *the deer*, that in course of time the word "venison" came to mean deer-flesh alone, though in old French (as in our own Bible version of the story of Esau) the word still meant the flesh of any animal hunted.

Other Norman metaphors which form part of our language were borrowed in the first instance from expressions used in the chase of the deer. The common phrase "in the toils," is taken from the name given to the great rope nooses suspended at a short height above the ground from a cord stretched across the path of the deer. Again, the familiar "tryst" or "trusting place," is a term now known to have been taken from the Norman name for the



fixed stations appointed to the spearmen who took part in the deer-drive.

Also, though "hound," like "deer," was English, the expression "at bay" is a literal translation of the picturesque Norman phrase *aux abois*, where *abois* signified the barking of the hounds surrounding a deer who has been run to a standstill, and has turned upon his pursuers in the last stage of the desperate struggle.<sup>1</sup> To take yet another phrase relating to dogs, "relay" was in the beginning a Norman hunting term, which meant a supply of released, or rested dogs, but came to mean a set of "rested animals" of other kinds as well.

"Quarry," which is now applied indefinitely to the object of any kind of pursuit, comes from the old French *cuiree*, a heap of skins or hides (from *cuir* = skin or leather), and hence, as used by the Norman huntsmen, a heap of slaughtered game.<sup>2</sup> The reason for its adoption was that the portions given to the dogs were wrapped in the skin of the slain animal: indeed, an early hunting book actually explains that "the hounds shall be rewarded with the 'neck' and other parts . . . and they shall be

<sup>1</sup> It is perhaps worth noting that this word *abois*, which is no doubt of imitative origin, is very near indeed in form to the Greek *bau bau*, to the German *wau wau*, and even to our own familiar nursery name for a dog.

<sup>2</sup> This word in old English took the form of *querrè*, and eventually turned into "quarry," through the same kind of modification as that by which "cleric" became "clerk."



*eaten under the skin, and therefore it is called the quarry."*

Among words used by trappers, "springe," like "spring-gun," is of course connected with "spring," in the sense of "rebound" and is of English origin, as are also "snare" (a twisted cord or loop) and the word "trap" itself, the last word meaning "step" or "footprint"—in this case something upon which the animal stepped or set its foot. English, too, is certainly the familiar expression stalking-horse, at first a real trained steed, from behind which the huntsmen used to shoot the game, and then (as in Shakespeare) a wooden or canvas "horse" on wheels, behind which fowlers, down to quite recent times, used to hide whilst stalking wildfowl, a practice which gave rise to the modern use of the phrase.

Of Norman or old French origin, are the words "gin," short for "engin"—with the accent on the last syllable, as it was at one time pronounced—in the sense of "mechanism," and "trammel" which is now used in the sense of impediment or hindrance, but formerly meant a great net, usually a drag-net, employed first for fish and then for wild-fowl, especially partridges. And in addition to the existence of so many hunting and trapping terms in the language, the high places once occupied by the master of the buckhounds and the hereditary grand falconer in the royal household, show still further



the very high esteem in which the pursuit of game was formerly held in Great Britain.

We shall now take some examples of our chief modern articles of food, whose names are yet more closely connected with the blending of the elements in the history of our nation. Thus, as is well known, beef, mutton, veal, pork, bacon, and poultry were the names given by the Norman butcher, who killed the meat, to the ox, sheep, calf, pig and fowl, which were the names employed by the Saxons, who most commonly attended the animals while alive. But, on the other hand, bread, ham, eggs, honey, and the common products of the cottage gardens, such as peas and beans, to this day retain their Saxon names, and certainly formed a substantial part of the food of the Saxon peasant.

Next to the question of hunting and of domesticating animals, we have to speak of the food grown upon the soil, and the implements used in growing it.

Of the various forms of grain it is remarkable that the words "corn," "oats," "rye," "wheat" (the "white" grain), and "barley," as well as the verbs "sow," "reap," "thresh," "mow," and the names of nearly all the chief agricultural implements, the "spade," "scythe," and "rake," and even the "ridge," and "furrow" itself, are one and all of pure English derivation. This is proof—if any were needed—



that the Normans, as a race, stood aloof from field-work, which they left to the Saxon peasantry.

Of the various agricultural implements used by the Saxons we will first take the plough, a word which strangely enough seems to be of an uncertain continental origin, the true old English name ("sool" = "furrow-er") being only represented—as "zool"—in the local speech of Somerset and the adjacent counties.

If we want to ascertain the pedigree of the plough, we must first trace it back from its modern types to the rudest forms of plough still known, or recently known, in Great Britain; we can then the more satisfactorily compare these simpler forms with those used by our Anglo-Saxon forefathers.

The now fast disappearing old-style English plough, of which there were a hundred different kinds, is in actual use in more than one part of the Sussex Downs, where it is drawn, as at Chyngton near Seaford,<sup>1</sup> by a team of oxen. In Sussex the

<sup>1</sup> The present owner of the magnificent black ox-team of Chyngton (Mr. E. J. Gorringe, J.P.), courteously sent me the following information: his father and he had between them worked oxen in the neighbourhood (though not on the same farm) for upwards of sixty years, the farm at Chyngton being very hilly, and the gradients very steep, and oxen being better at a dead pull than horses. Half a century ago, upwards of twenty oxen were being worked on Chyngton Farm, rollers being very dear, and the treading of the oxen therefore more necessary to break up the ground; they are not now shod, as was then the rule. The breed now kept is a South Wales mountain breed of black cattle called "runts," which have more



oxen are always worked in the yoke, but elsewhere in harness; they are also still used, or have been so in quite recent years, at Southover and Waldron, in Sussex, in Berkshire, the Cotswold district of Gloucestershire, Shropshire, Herts, near Cranbrook, Kent,<sup>1</sup> and in other parts of the country.

The old-style plough used with a team of oxen is itself of local evolution, the result of the experience of generations of Downland ploughmen. But the most remarkable fact about it is, that when, on reaching the end of a furrow, the oxen "jack round," as it is called, and start on the return journey, the plough throws the sods of the second furrow, not in the opposite way, but in the *same* way as those of the first. This gives a perfectly level field, which is better for reaping. The modern factory-made steam-driven plough is made upon the same principle.

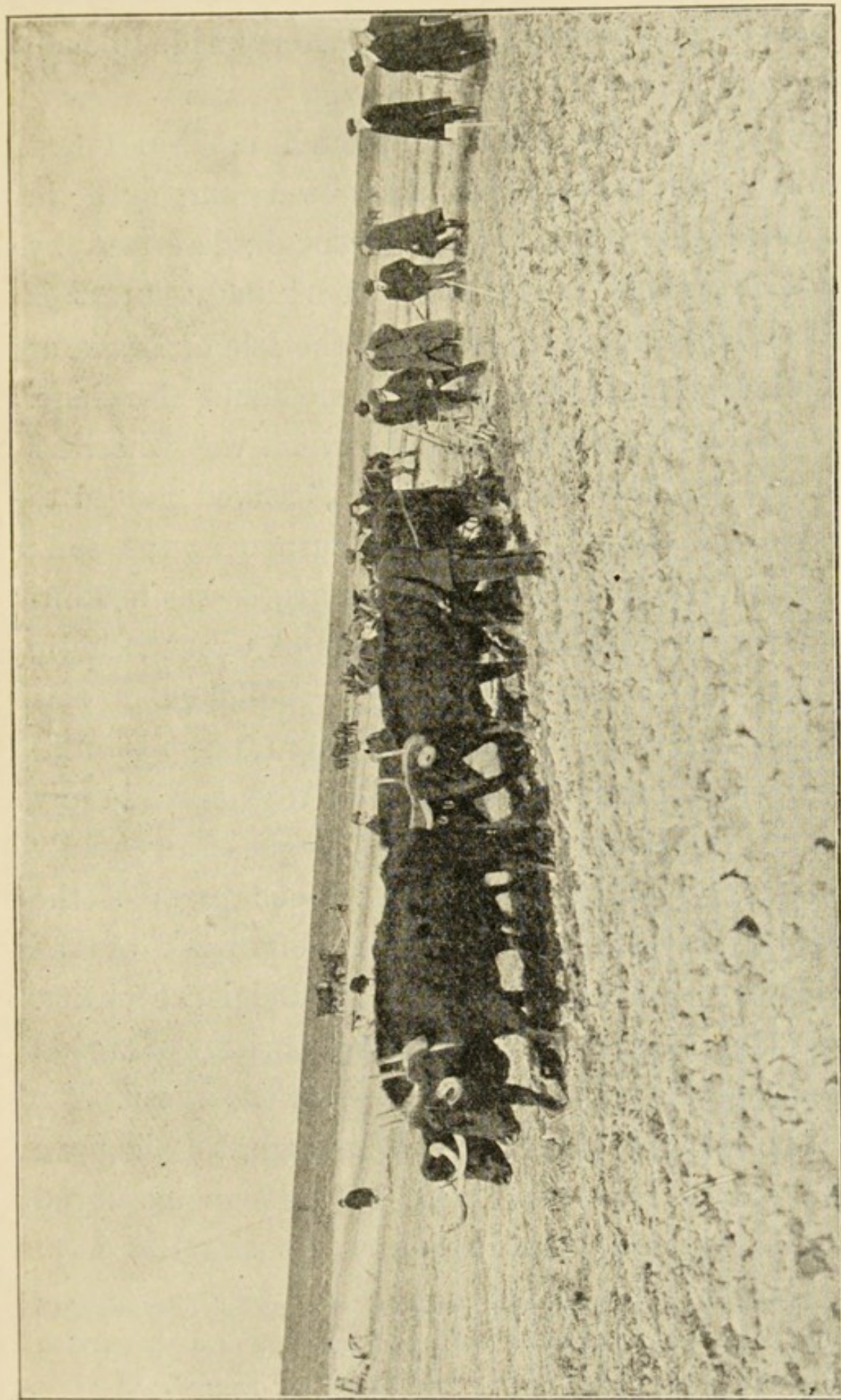
Ploughs of the old-fashioned type, the work of the village wheelwrights, still survive, and several of them are employed at Chyngton alone, whereas

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pluck than most breeds, the ancient Sussex breed having become too valuable and too much of a fancy breed for the work, though they used to be employed and were very good. Mr. Gorringe added that the team here (like the plough) is an undoubted survival, and that he knew of but one other ox-team in the county, "so we may look forward to a time when the ox-team will be a thing of the past."

<sup>1</sup> By Lady Mildred Hope, whose fine team of the North Wales breed is very curiously marked.





*By courtesy of Mr. Charles Breach.*

FIG. 6.—Modern Form of Ox Plough, as still worked in England.  
(Mr. E. J. Gorringer's famous Black Ox-team ploughing at Chyngton, Sussex.)



in the valleys and plains the factory-made plough has carried all before it.

But of all the forms of plough used in Great Britain, the rudest that has been employed in modern times is the Shetland plough, described by Sir A. Mitchell on the occasion of his visit; it is still employed in Sutherland, in the Isle of Lewis, at Cunningsburgh in Shetland, and no doubt elsewhere.

This early Scottish plough, which was wheelless and had but one handle or "stilt," served indeed to scratch the ground, but did not turn over the soil; by a singular but barbarous custom, it was not unfrequently drawn, in various parts of Great Britain, by attaching it to a horse's tail. A plough of this form is certainly of vast antiquity, and it is sufficiently amazing to find it in such recent use in any part of the British Isles, though ploughs of an equally simple type are still used in various parts of the Continent, for instance on the left bank of the Rhine, between Kreuznach and the Belgian Frontier. Even simpler ploughs, constructed entirely of wood,<sup>1</sup> are yet employed in remote parts of the world.

The Scottish or "Shetland" plough, to which we have referred, is a link with the plough employed by the Anglo-Saxons, which in its simplest form

<sup>1</sup> In the South Kensington Museum is a model of a Siamese plough, which is all of hard wood, and consists of a share, with long curved handle, to which a curved pole is attached in front, to enable it to be drawn.

was also wheelless, and possessed but a single handle. It was drawn by one or more oxen in a yoke, and the ploughman guided the cattle with a goad.

A yet more remarkable implement of husbandry was the Scottish "foot-plough," the Gaelic name of which signifies the "crooked foot," it being a kind of bent V-shaped stick with a short blade, and furnished with a peg at the bend for the right

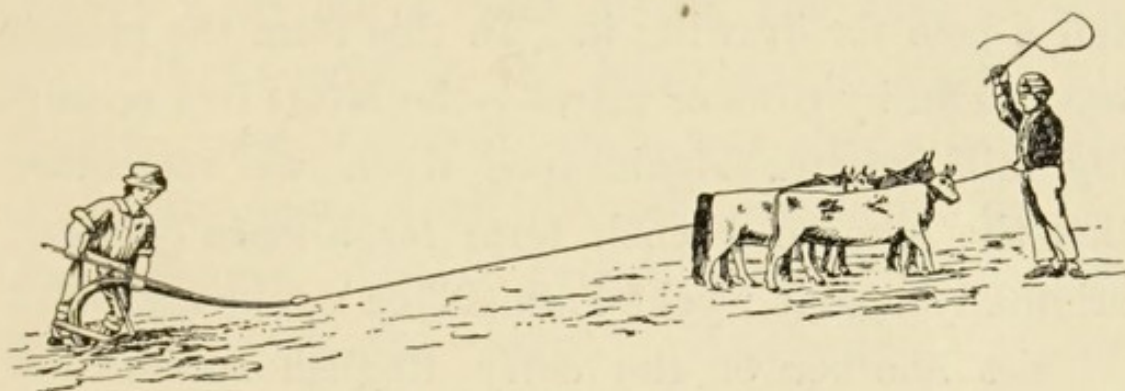


FIG. 7. -Ox Plough, with one "stilt" or handle, as employed in Shetland (1822) and still used. The driver or "caller" walks backwards and leads or "calls" his cattle.

foot. This curious instrument could be employed on mountain-sides where the ordinary plough was useless, and although its action was that of a spade, it was strangely enough of a shape closely resembling a V-shaped hoe (like that of the ancient Egyptians, from which latter the old Egyptian plough is known to have been derived).

With the help of some rude agricultural implements used in Sweden, we can now reconstruct the earlier stages in the history of the plough. First came the pointed digging-stick of hard wood, then



a pick, consisting of a digging-stick with a peak to it (the "hacker" of Southern Sweden), then a heavier pick which was *dragged through the ground by hand to cut a furrow*, whence it came to be called a furrow-crook. This furrow-crook was eventually shod with iron, and lastly (owing to the substitution of animal labour for that of man) came the "plough-crook," which consisted of a share with a handle, and a pole for drawing it. In this form the plough was drawn by cows or mares—the latter fact acquiring still greater significance when we remember that the modern French term for a mare (*jument*) originally meant "yoke-animal" or "yoke-cattle."

Yet another of the early English agricultural implements, the "spade," was also, in the first instance, merely an improved digging-stick, specially selected for its breadth at the foot, which enabled it to be sharpened and used as a *blade*. Indeed, this general sense of blade receives striking confirmation when we find that the word "paddle" is a mere abbreviation of "spaddle," a diminutive blade, used to clean the share when it got clogged with mould.

We have thus seen that the earliest form of the plough was nothing but a hoe or spade dragged through the ground to cut a continuous furrow. We have seen also that the hoe and the spade were merely improvements upon the primitive digging-sticks used in the earliest times by nomad races



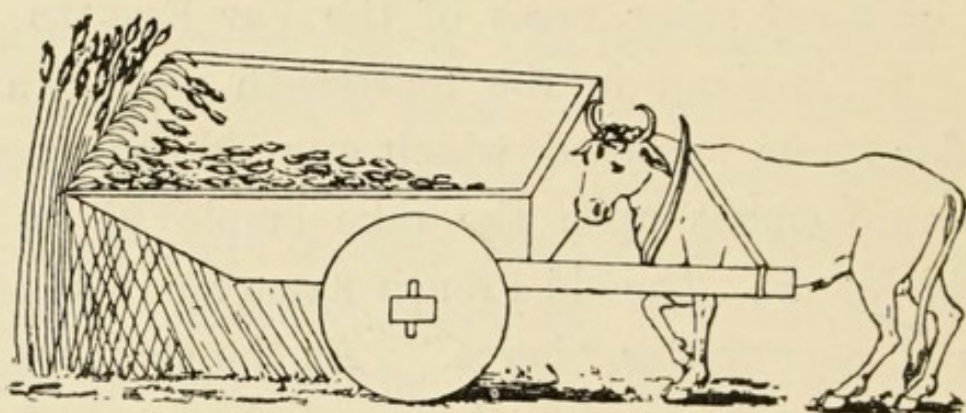
(even before the simplest kind of agriculture was thought of) to unearth the edible roots and tubers of the forest, upon which they lived. Thus were developed, by successive fusion of many elements, the complex steam ploughing-machines of to-day.

The story of the harrow is no less curious. Its original form was nothing but a huge rake, such as is used for the purpose by the Siamese and Malays, and by many other races of the Far East to this day. In England in the fourteenth century a triangular frame was used, which was after all merely an improvement upon the rake employed by the Anglo-Saxons. The old French name for this simple form of harrow was "herce." As the shape of the "herce" was triangular, the name was transferred to a three-cornered frame stuck full (like the harrow) of iron pins, upon which candles were fixed on certain holy days in the Church, and especially, as time went on, at funeral services. Bishop Gardiner, Privy Councillor to Henry VIII. and Mary, had a "herse of four branches, with gilt candlesticks." Eventually, from close association between this peculiar arrangement of lights and the framework over the bier, the name came to be transferred to the bier itself, one of the strangest developments that has happened to any word in the language.

When the ground is prepared the seed is sown, and even this apparently simple operation has



something to teach us. For the seed which was at first thrown "broadcast," or by means of a tube called a drill, is now sown by a machine fitted with a row of such drills, arranged like the pipes of an organ, a plan which is believed to have been suggested to its inventor, a Berkshire man named Jethro Tull, by the fact that he was himself a musician, and played the organ.



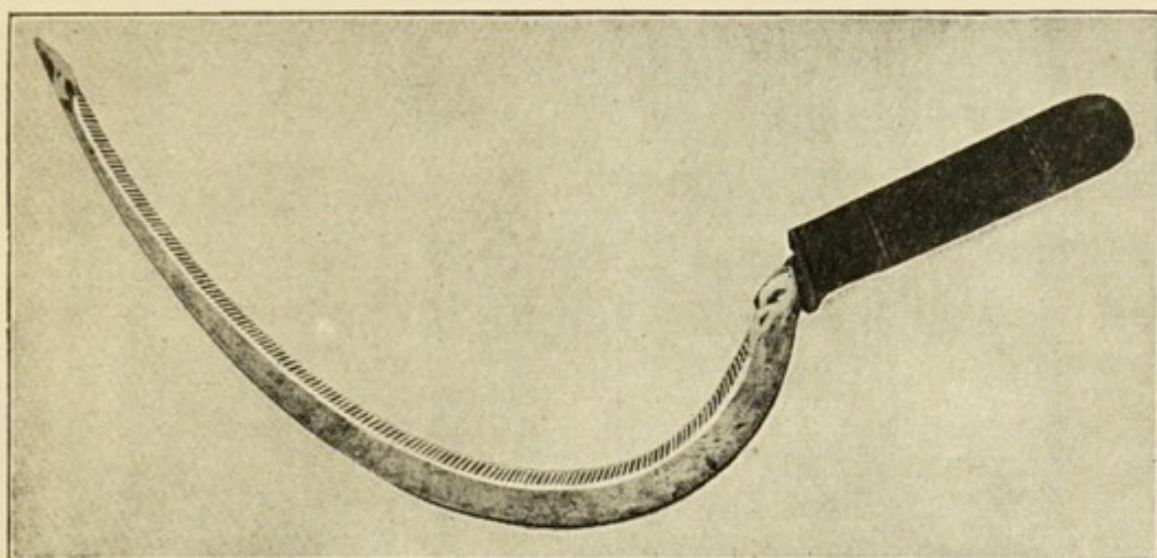
*By courtesy of the London Library.*

FIG. 8.—Early Form of Reaping-Cart, as used in ancient Gaul. The indented edge cuts the ears, which fall into the cart, the machine being pushed from behind by a bullock.

We now come to the reaping, and here we may remark that the idea of employing a special machine for this purpose goes back at least so far as the days of the Roman historian (Pliny), who wrote, that "in the vast plains of Gaul [or ancient France] very large wooden machines, armed with teeth on their edges and mounted on two wheels, are forced through the standing corn by an animal propelling them from behind. Thus are the ears cut off; they fall into the machine." This description is confirmed,

and a much more detailed account of this strange old-world contrivance is given by another Roman writer.

After this it certainly is a very startling thing to find that machines of this kind have been used in France in quite recent years, and that a similar



*By courtesy of the Supt. Glasgow Museum and Art Gallery.*

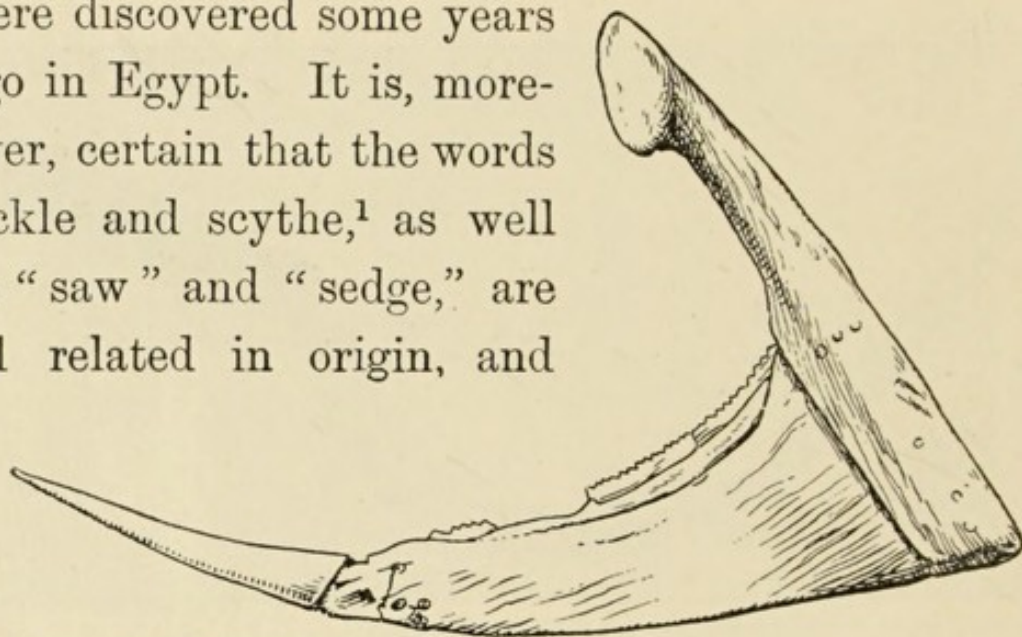
FIG. 9.—Toothed Sickle (or “Heuk”) as recently used in Scotland.  
The teeth were cut with a hammer and chisel on an iron anvil.  
A Toothed Hook (“No. 00”) is still in common use in Shetland.

machine, called a “header” (from its merely stripping the ears off the straw), is still used, and is, moreover, considered one of the cheapest machines to work, both in some of our own colonies and in the United States. Even the plan of yoking the cattle at the back of the machine, described by the Roman writers, has had its counterpart in several of our modern reaping-machines, which were made to be propelled by two horses harnessed to a pole at the back. In



passing we may notice that it was by an indented or toothed edge like that of the early English sickle that the grain was "headed."

This early English sickle may therefore be fairly compared with the curiously curved prehistoric sickles, with toothed-flint blades set in wood, which were discovered some years ago in Egypt. It is, moreover, certain that the words sickle and scythe,<sup>1</sup> as well as "saw" and "sedge," are all related in origin, and



*By courtesy of the R. Arch. Inst.*

FIG. 10.—Prehistoric Toothed Sickle of 18th Dynasty, found in Egypt by Professor Petrie, showing saw-like flints set in wooden socket.

all have as their root-sense the idea of a sharp-edged and generally saw-like blade.

Many other tilling- and reaping-machines are equally good examples, showing how the most simple and ancient principles survive under a modern and sometimes complete disguise. A horse hoe or rake is furnished with a set of small hoes or rakes, all working in a row. In one of the early

<sup>1</sup> Originally spelt "sithe" as by Milton, the "c" having been inserted by a mistake.



reaping-machines (invented by Bell) the cutting was done by a row of giant scissors, or double-edged shears, which were soon replaced, however,



*From the "Shepherd's Calendar" (1499).*

FIG. 11.—Reaping with a Toothed Sickle in the fifteenth century. It was used till quite recent years in E. Anglia (Norfolk), and the grain was "lifted" by handfuls by the inpull of the hook.

by the more modern "teeth." And a particular kind of hay-"tedder" or hay-tossing machine was even invented, in which the hay was thrown by a row of six pitchforks working simultaneously, with



a kicking motion that imitated the action of the wrist, as seen in a pitchfork used by hand. Take again the modern steam thresher, invented by Meikle, which is really built upon the principle of the flail. It consists, in fact, of a number of beaters, which beat out the grain just as the flail formerly did, and are made to revolve by machinery within a hollow drum.

The earlier form of threshing-machine, superseded by Meikle's improvement, was invented by Kinloch in 1784, and was based upon the equally simple, though more damaging principle of rubbing the ears against the inside of the drum, a process which was too often destructive of the grain.<sup>1</sup>

Here we have yet another example, showing how even our wonderful modern machinery is the work of many hands and many brains, and how (like many other things that are made by men) it progresses by gradual steps from the simple to the complicated, from the partially effective to the thoroughly efficient. Thus, even in the midst of the clanging belts, the whirring wheels, and the oscillating trays of the modern thresher, we may still find a clue to the labyrinth of its machinery in the single, elementary principle of the flail,

<sup>1</sup> How elementary these principles are we shall realise if we recall the fact that two of the easiest ways of separating the ripe grain from the husk are by rubbing it between the palms of the hands, and tapping the grains with the thumb-nail.

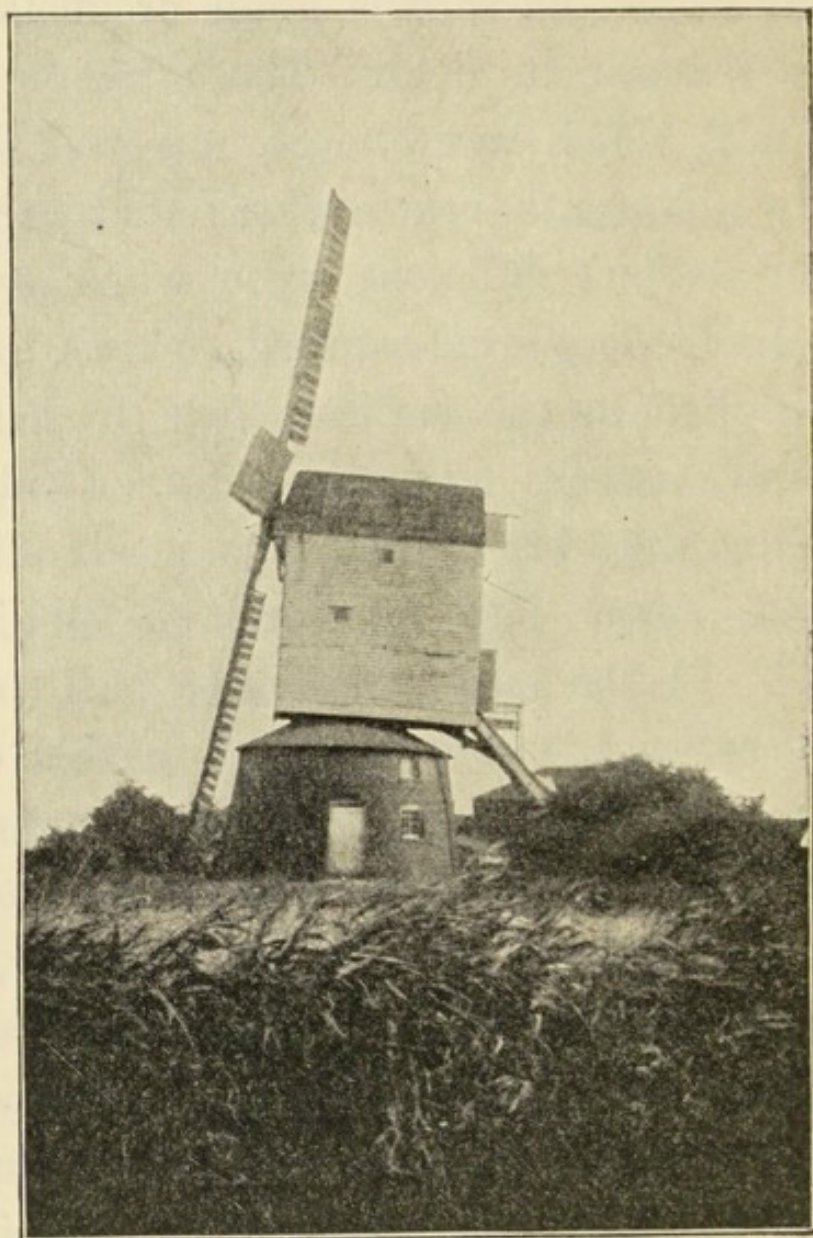


which gives utility and unity to the whole machine.

It now only remains to mention the principal means by which the various grain products of the field are reduced to flour. The principle of the ancient mill, which was almost universal down to the early nineteenth century, was that of a fixed lower (or nether) millstone, upon which an upper one revolved, the power required to turn the latter being supplied in the earliest stage by hand (and in subsequent stages by cattle, wind, or water), the grain being thus broken up into meal of various sizes, and sifted into one or two qualities or "grades." In the modern machine mill (invented in Hungary, and first established in this country at Bilston in 1879), metal rollers are substituted, enabling each quality to be produced by a separate process. This improves the look of the flour, which, however, is less wholesome than stone-ground flour. In the older, or "German" form of windmill, the whole building being very small, turns round on a post below. Such "post-mills," still seen in East Anglia, can be traced back to the fourteenth century, and probably much earlier. The "Dutch" form, with movable top or dome, and wings attached, was not invented till 1550. Both were at first turned by a long pole or lever outside, the "tail-wheel" being substituted in the nineteenth century.



The Dutch fifteenth-century flood-mills, which were at first immovable, and were only worked when the wind was in one quarter, were an intermediate



*By courtesy of Mr. H. S. Kingsford.*

FIG. 12.—Post-Mill at Leverton, Lincs.

form. Later, they were placed in water on floats, which could be “jacked” round to catch every wind.

Both wind-mills and water-mills are extremely old, the simplest forms of the latter in Great Britain

being represented by the so-called "Norse" mills of Northern Scotland, and the "Danish" mills of ancient Ireland, which will presently be described.

### WALES

In a scene in Shakespeare's *Henry V.*, the swaggering Pistol, having threatened to make Fluellen, that is, Llewellyn, eat the leek (the honourable badge assumed by certain brave Welshmen, who "did good service in a garden where leeks did grow") has the tables turned upon him, and is forced to eat it himself. Nevertheless the leek, so long recognised as the Welshman's emblem, was once his favourite food, and when, by ancient custom, the Welsh farmers met to help in ploughing each other's land, each brought a leek for the common meal. Indeed, as the deer to the Saxon became "the *animal*," so to the ancient Welsh the leek was "the *plant*." And "garlic," which is formed from leek, means simply "spear-plant."

### SCOTLAND

How closely the peasantry of the Scottish Highlands have kept in touch with some of the customs once practised by the Stone Age peoples, will be evident from the most casual consideration. In Scotland and even the North of England, as well



as on the continent of Europe, oat-cakes (the making of which by the Scots, was described by Froissart) and girdle- (or "griddle") cakes are still made, as in ancient Wales and England, by baking unleavened dough, spread out thin, on a *bake-stone*, as it is still to this day called, even though now of iron.

In Scotland itself real baking or "toasting" stones of a highly ornamental character were used within living memory, as we are told by Sir Arthur Mitchell; but these stones were used for an open fire, on an old-style hearth, and not for a grate.

Such stones are curious survivals of the Stone Age, like the kindred custom of heating liquor by plunging a hot stone into it, which to this day is employed in the Isles, or the rough hand-made clay pots (called "craggans"), ruder even than some really made by prehistoric men, which are still used now and then in the same localities.

A simple and ancient form of the water-mill was also seen and described by the same writer during his tour in the Orkneys and Shetlands. These so-called "Norse" mills, which are simply mills of a very antique local character and are in no way due to Scandinavian influence, were, in fact, merely an early improvement (by the substitution of water- for hand-power) of the yet more antique hand-mill or "quern." That this was the case seems to be



proved by the fact that their shaft is upright and the wheel horizontal (as in the hand-mill itself).

Yet another very ancient custom, which continued among the Scots at least down to the seventeenth century, was that of boiling the flesh of the animals they killed "in the skin of the beast, filling the same full of water." So far back as the fourteenth century, Froissart says that they "cared neither for pots nor for pans, but seethed beasts in their own skins" (stretched on four stakes)—the skins no doubt being filled with water as related above. What closer parallel could be found to this custom of cooking an animal in its own skin than the favourite modern "haggis" of our northern neighbours, which is a hash of the liver, heart and lungs of a sheep, minced in its own maw?

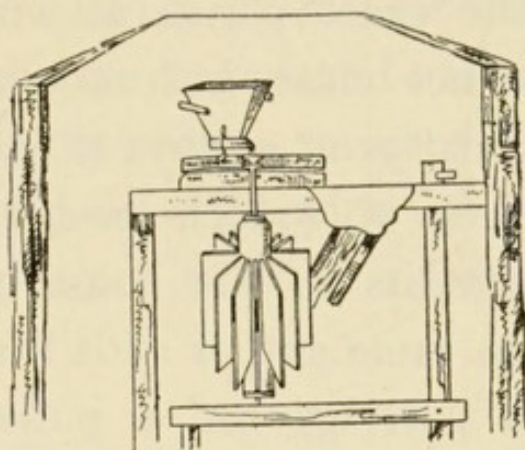


FIG. 13.—A form of the so-called "Norse" Mill of Scotland, with horizontal wheel.

The far-famed porridge of Scotland was not in ancient times made of oatmeal alone, as is shown by the history of the word itself, which is a corruption of pottage or potage. The name originally signified the liquor of the cooking-pot, usually broth made by stirring vegetables, herbs, or meat,



the soup being frequently thickened with barley or some other grain. Hence, what we now call porridge is merely thickening, such as was originally put into the pot along with the other ingredients. The exact period at which this change took place is not clear, but at all events we read, in 1617, that "*great platters of porridge*, each having a little piece of sodden meat," were brought in by the servants in the house of a Scottish knight. And the same author adds that the "upper mess, instead of porridge had a pullet with some prunes in the broth." The servants sat down with their master and his guest, who observed that "they had no art of cookery, nor furniture of household stuff, but rather rude neglect of both."

A very ancient Scottish custom, originally prevailing throughout Great Britain, consisted in reserving certain specified joints of a slain animal for the chief and lesser officials. In the Western Islands of Scotland in 1703, whenever the chief of an island killed an animal, he reserved certain parts for his dependents, according to their duties.

In the latter part of the eighteenth century (1773), Dr. Samuel Johnson himself described this custom as still prevailing in the Hebrides. "When a beef was killed for the house, particular parts were claimed as fees by the several officers or workmen . . . the head belonged to the smith,

and the udder of a cow to the piper, the weaver had likewise his particular part; and so many pieces followed these prescriptive claims that the laird's was at last but little." In this case we have improved upon the original custom, at all events (it may be supposed) from the laird's point of view. For the only reservation made nowadays, consists in offering the best cut of the joint, the wing of a fowl or gamebird, and so forth, to a guest or a lady.

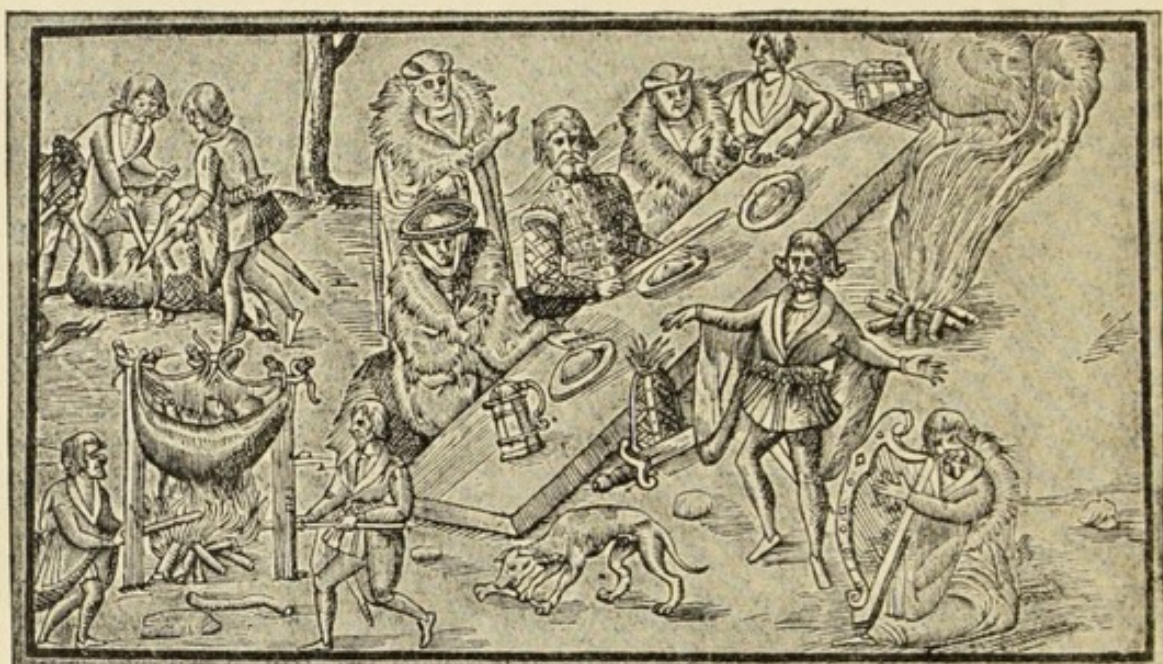
### IRELAND

The history of the food of the people in Ireland affords many close parallels to that of Scotland. Thus an English physician in the reign of Henry VIII. wrote that the Irish would "seethe their meat in a beast's skin," the skin being "set on many stakes of wood, and then they will put in the water and the flesh. And then they will make a great fire under the skin betwixt the stakes, and the skin will not greatly burn. And when the meat is eaten, they, for their drink, will drink up the broth." A woodcut in the next reign (1581), of an Irish chieftain at dinner in the open air, shows meat cooked in this very manner at the camp-fire.

The custom of reserving certain parts of an animal, already described as anciently prevalent



in Scotland, also continued at least down to the middle of the nineteenth century in Ireland, where the farmers in some parts of the country, on killing an ox or pig, always sent the head to the smith, whose kitchen was often decorated with great numbers of the heads thus obtained.



*From a print of 1581.*

FIG. 14.—An Irish Feast in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, showing the “meat” killed and cooked in skins.

The present fondness of the Irish peasant for pork goes back to extreme antiquity. Indeed, an ancient legend, relating how a certain king of the fairies tried to induce a mortal to enter Fairyland, includes among the other inducements mentioned, that in Fairyland there was plenty of fresh pork. In a later age a member of one John O'Nele's household, being asked by a companion whether beef were preferable to pork, replied, “That is as



intricate a question as to ask whether thou art better than O'Nele!"

The baking was done on a hot stone, at least down to the end of the nineteenth century.

The grinding of corn in Ireland was no doubt originally effected, as in Scotland, by means of the small hand-mill above mentioned. The oldest form of water-mill, described as a "gig" (or, by a popular error, a "Danish mill") had its wheel fixed at the foot, so that it "ran horizontally among the water," the millstone, fixed at the top of the same shaft, turning round with the wheel.

In England, as has been shown, the name given to the wheat plant is connected with its *white* colour. But in Ireland its name signified "blood-coloured," the Irish wheat, now becoming rapidly extinct, being distinguished by its red or sanguine hue. It is this fact which gives so dramatic a touch to the description of an historical event which is known to have taken place in connexion with one of these ancient Irish mills.

In A.D. 651, two Irish princes, fleeing from the men of Leinster, who had determined to kill them, escaped and hid themselves among the works of the mill in question. The Leinster men, however, forced a woman who controlled the mill-sluice to start the mill again, the result being that the princes were crushed to death in the works. This



event was described by a poet of the time in the following sombre but powerful passage :—

O mill, what hast thou ground ? Precious is thy wheat !  
It is not oats thou hast ground, but the offspring of Kervall.<sup>1</sup>  
The grain which the mill has ground is not oats but *blood-red wheat* ;

With the offshoots of the great tree,<sup>2</sup> Mailoran's mill was fed.

This mill stood near the bridge over the small stream that runs from Lough Owel to Lough Tron, and Mailoran was the name of its owner. The place is called Mullenoran, and the mill which stood upon this very site as late as the end of the eighteenth century, has actually been seen at work by the grandfathers of people who are now living.

If, as is certainly the case, the assignment to a guest of his proper place at table is considered a matter of high importance to-day even among ourselves, it was regarded as a yet more vital matter in olden Ireland. Indeed, at the present day not every guest, debarred from his due place of honour, would be able to rise to the height of the famous Irish harper, Arthur O'Neill, who, on receiving an apology on that account from the host at a public dinner in Belfast in the eighteenth century, replied, " My Lord, an apology is unnecessary ; wherever an O'Neill sits, *that is the head of the table !* "

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* the two princes.

<sup>2</sup> *I.e.* the princes, as before, the great tree being Kervall.

## FOOD FROM ABROAD

In the early days when sugar, which seems to have come into Europe through the Arabs after the crusade, had not been introduced, wild honey from the woods was used instead. Even when introduced (in the form of the violet- and rose-coloured sugar, for instance, which reached England from Alexandria in the reign of Henry III.) it long continued to be regarded as a rare and costly spice, and remained so up to the time of the discovery of America at the end of the fifteenth century. It was first refined and made into loaves by a Venetian, the "loaves" being mentioned in the reign of Henry VIII.

To take another article commonly obtained from the grocer (or "grosser," a name originally applied to traders who dealt in the "gross," but who would be better described as "monopolisers"), what we now call currants were till about one hundred years ago generally termed raisins of Corinth, or Corinths (as coming from the Levant). And currants are still called "Corints" at Tenby, in Wales.

The fresh currants of our gardens, on the other hand, are not really "currants" at all, but a sort of dwarf gooseberries, and when introduced into England in 1533, were called "beyond-sea gooseberries." They are still termed "gooseberries" in France.



Coffee, an article introduced from Turkey, is first mentioned in about 1600, and in 1650 the first coffee-houses in England were opened in Oxford and London respectively.<sup>1</sup> The London coffee-house was set up by the servant of a certain Mr. Edwards, a merchant trading to Turkey. This servant, a youth named Pasqua Rosee, had accompanied his master home from Smyrna to prepare his coffee for him in the mornings. This excited so much public attention that the servant was allowed to open a coffee-house, the sign-board of which represented the head of Pasqua Rosee himself.

We know from the rhymes of Pope and other writers, that "tea" was formerly pronounced "tay," as it still is in Scotland and Ireland and on the continent of Europe. The reason for this (to English people) old-fashioned pronunciation, which is perfectly correct, was that tea first came to us from Amoy, in the south of China, where the word was actually pronounced "tay," instead of "cha" as in other parts of that country.

Tea was sold in 1651, by one Garway or Garraway in London, and when introduced cost as much as ten sovereigns a pound. It was the Earl of Arlington who set the habit of drinking what

<sup>1</sup> Evelyn, in 1636, mentions one "Nathaniel Conopios, out of Greece," as the first whom he "ever saw drink coffee."



was then called a "dish of tea" at court (in 1666), after which it soon became the height of fashion.

Marmalade is now usually, though not invariably, made from Seville oranges, but, as its name shows, it was at first made like the Portuguese "marmelada," from the "marmelo" or quince, or rather, perhaps, from a particular kind of honey-apple which was grafted upon a quince tree. And "marmelo" comes from the Latin *meli-melum*, of which the English "honey-apple" is a translation.

In 1514, we read of a "box with preserve of quince and marmelade," and later "marmalade of quinces." But two and a half centuries elapsed before "orange marmalade" was mentioned in 1769.

But the most astonishing history of all is that of the word "treacle." In the seventeenth century the "Venice treacle," which was especially famous, was sold by an Italian who kept a small shop in Venice, not far from St. Mark's Cathedral. But this was not in the least like what we should call treacle nowadays. It was an extraordinary mixture, composed of many strange and some revolting ingredients, which was also called "viper-wine," and was sold as an antidote against snake-bite, something on the principle of the proverbial "hair from the dog that bit you."

Its ingredients included "vipers steeped alive" in white wine (whence its name of "viper-wine"),



opium, spice, licorice, red roses, the juice of rough sloes, "seeds of the treacle mustard" and many others, to be mixed with honey into a sort of drink. The vipers themselves gave it the name of treacle from an old Greek word *theriaké*, which at first became "triale" both in French and English.

This Greek word was employed to describe anything belonging to a *therion* or "little wild beast." As this was the expression applied in a verse of the New Testament to the viper that came out of the fire and fastened upon the hand of St. Paul, *theriaké* came to be used of viper-wine too.

An old writer, More, who lived in the seventeenth century, used the word in its original sense when he wrote of "a most strong *treacle* [or antidote] against those venomous heresies," and this is what was meant too, by the poet Waller when he wrote the (to us strange-sounding) line :

Your vipers treacle yield, and scorpions oil.

To conclude this extraordinary history, Henry III. had a great spit of gold (such as was used in place of a fork at that date) in which an alleged petrified "viper's tongue"<sup>1</sup> was set. This was a remarkably early example of a custom surviving in the island of Malta, where certain small stones,

<sup>1</sup> In the original Latin *lingua serpentina* or serpent's tongue ; no doubt he used it as a charon against the poisoning of his food. Such stones have been identified as fossil sharks' teeth.



coloured like the eyes, tongue, heart, or liver of serpents, found in the clay of the traditional cave of St. Paul, are still steeped in wine and drunk by the natives as an antidote against poison.

To take a few more examples of names given to articles of food : tapioca which is Brazilian, and sago which is Malay, tell us plainly enough from what countries those products first came. Again such words as maize, which is of West Indian origin, but modified by the Spaniards, and chocolate, a Mexican word which also reached us (about 1604) through the Spanish, tell us not only what country they came from, but the nationality of those who introduced them.<sup>1</sup> In another way the potato, a plant native to Peru, and described by Harrison in 1587 as "one of the roots brought from Spain, Portugal and the Indies," may recall to us the discoveries of our great Elizabethan navigators ; one of the most famous of these (Sir John Hawkins) gave an account of it in his *Voyages* in 1553, whilst its actual introduction was (though unwarrantably) long attributed to Drake or Raleigh.

It has always been the fashion to decry the

<sup>1</sup> In the French word nicotine (to mention as a parallel an article which, though a stimulant, is not an article of food) is preserved the very name of Jean Nicot, French Ambassador to Portugal, Lord of Villemain and Master of Requests of the French Royal Household, who, in 1559 having bought the seeds from a Flemish merchant trading to Florida, introduced tobacco into France.



present, and to regret the "good old times" that are "gone beyond recall." But in the matter of our daily food, a student who inquires as to the progress of our race may speak—to those who wish to hear—with a more than usually clear and certain voice. For if we compare with our own comfortable surroundings the meals of the ancient Britons—who had for their seat the ground, whereon they spread a carpet of rushes, or the hides of dogs and wolves—we can hardly fail to see in how many ways our own lot is better than theirs. And this feeling is deepened when we learn that their manner of eating was "rather after the fashion of lions"; that they would "take up the joint and gnaw at it," using, if they could not get the meat off, their "little bronze knives." In yet more ancient times "the strongest man would seize the joint, and defy the company to mortal combat."

### CHAPTER III

#### THE STORY OF OUR DRESS

THE object of dress, which is not only to clothe but to adorn, will easily be remembered if we reflect that "garment" really means a garnishment or adornment. The word "robe" throws a yet

stranger light on the subject, since it is connected with an old German term which meant "to rob," a fact which reminds us that "robes" were originally the spoils stripped from the slain enemy, in which the victor masqueraded. This is the old-world custom alluded to in a splendid passage in the song of Deborah (Judges v. 30): "Have they not sped? have they not divided the prey? to Sisera a prey of divers colours, a prey of divers colours of needlework, of divers colours of needlework on both sides, meet for the necks of them that take the spoil?"

Coming to the study of dress we shall find it from an historical point of view more fruitful in results than almost any other of the arts of our modern civilised life. For in the first place fashion, far from being the supreme and absolute Dictatress that we have doubtless imagined, is herself subject to certain general principles or laws. And many, if not most, of the supposed innovations of to-day are simply revivals or modifications of ancient, and in some cases immemorial, custom.

To give a single instance (pointed out by Mr. Andrew Lang) of the extraordinary age of many of our modern fashions, it may be remarked that the wearing of a separate body or "corslet" and skirt is traceable so far back as the "archaic" or "primitive" age of Greece.

This "archaic" skirt had a semicircular piece



cut out at the foot, a custom that prevailed even among prehistoric "stone-age" races. Moreover, as worn by the ladies of ancient Crete, it was generally "flounced." Again, a kind of small ladies' boot, or "bottine" was worn by ladies of rank in Crete upwards of three thousand years B.C.

How, and to what extent women have copied the dress of men, and to a less extent men have imitated that of women; how the dress of servants is frequently that which has been worn by their master's class in preceding generations, and is also the source from which our modern uniforms are derived; how the dress of quite small children is copied from that of their elders, and frequently perpetuates features of that dress which would have otherwise quite disappeared; these principles and others will be obvious to all who look for them.

Most important of all, however, is the fact that by comparing the present and past attire of all sections of our community, we may obtain some idea of the main *general resemblances* in the dress worn by the ancient races that settled in Great Britain. For thus only shall we be able to see what is behind the many and great differences of detail, and therefore fully realise the remarkable strength and persistency of the influences that have lasted a thousand years, and have by slow



degrees moulded us into a nation, in place of a welter of warring tribes.

### THE DRESS OF MEN

Men's dress in Great Britain, as in other parts of the world, is continually varying, though much more slowly and within narrower limits than that of women. In some cases the outer dress comes to be made larger and fuller, either for display or in order the better to protect the wearer, or the garments beneath it; in others the garment is reduced to the furthest possible extreme, usually in order to allow more freedom of movement.

One of the most frequent rules is that the garment last adopted is worn over the rest. Thus the topcoat, greatcoat, or ulster now covers the frock, or morning-coat, or jacket, all of these latter having been outside coats when first adopted. And these under-coats themselves in their turn cover the waistcoat (which was also an outside garment by origin), while the waistcoat again covers the shirt, the latter itself derived from the ancient tunic.

The modern greatcoat (top-coat or overcoat) was till quite recent years considered effeminate at most of our public schools, and was formerly considered unhealthy for any one to wear, except for long journeys by coach, or on horseback. This may actually have been the case, as the ancient over-



coat was of vast weight and size, and had layers of capes, such as are now only worn of reduced dimensions, by professional coachmen, or drivers.

The long brown overcoat called a petersham, as well as the chesterfield and others, took their names from the noblemen by whom they were introduced. Lord Spencer, who lived in the reign of George III. and was called the Red Earl, also invented the sleeveless short jacket which bears his name.

This latter, according to tradition, was suggested to him either by an accident in the hunting-field (by which his coat tails were torn off), or in a still more alarming and humiliating manner by his having them burnt off upon an occasion when he had fallen asleep too near the fire.

Whatever may have been the occasion, the "spencer" received his name, and along with the "sandwich" (already mentioned as the invention of another well-known nobleman) gave rise to the lines :

Two noble earls whom, if I quote, some folks might call  
me sinner,  
The one invented half a coat, the other half a dinner.

The coat, which was in very early times worn indifferently both by men and women, has a curious history, several stages of which we may still actually see in use if we look about us. For the ordinary single-breasted round "reefer" or "lounge" coat without tails is a cut-down form of the morning



or "cut-away" coat; and the cut-away coat is, as its name implies, an abridged form of the older full-skirted coat, the shape of which is retained in the modern black frock-coat and in some liveries.

The older form of the coat first took the shape of a simple, long, loose horseman's coat, reaching to the knees, and with buttons all down the front, which was worn by hackney-coachmen and others in the reign of Charles I. The "cassock," a coat of this kind, was worn with the vest introduced by Charles II. in October 1666, as recorded by Pepys, and (as we shall presently see) was subjected to much ridicule in that connexion. Yet this coat (with the long and full skirts) was popular in the reign of James II., and under William III. it became the national garb.

In the course of time, for the sake of convenience in riding, a much commoner method of conveyance then than now, the skirts of this coat came to be habitually turned back, and secured by fastening their corners to a button in the centre of the skirt tail at each side. When this looping-up became permanent, in accordance with a French fashion of 1793, the looped-back part being no longer required was cut away, and a garment somewhat after the style of a "cut-away coat" resulted. This cut-away coat, frequently of a scarlet colour, was fashionable for gentlemen in the reign of George III.



In the army, however, the old form of looped-up skirt was long retained, and was actually worn as late as 1820, even by the Grenadier Guards. We



*By courtesy of United Service Inst.*

FIG. 15.—Dress of “Guards’” Officer, early nineteenth century, showing the looping back of skirt-lapels, which led to the “cut-away” form of morning coat.

see, therefore, that the description of the “British Grenadiers” in the stirring old song as those “who carry sword and musket and wear the loopèd clothes” rests upon fairly recent historical fact.

The modern evening-dress, or “swallow-tail” coat, which is worn not only by gentlemen but also as a species of uniform by waiters, exhibits this coat in a still

further stage of mutilation. As originally worn in Paris, the swallow-tail coat had three pairs of buttons at the back, and the tails reached to the ground. Many of us will remember that Uncle Sam, in the pages of *Punch*, also wears a coat of



this "swallow-tail" shape, and that the tails are very much longer than is ever now usual with us.

The above mention of buttons leads us to the question: "What was the origin of the two buttons at the back of so many of our modern men's coats, which now serve no apparent purpose?" The usual answer is that they were meant to support the sword-belt, as in the modern policeman's uniform.

But if we examine the prints of this period we shall find, after looking at a sufficiently large number, that the sword<sup>1</sup> was then habitually carried inside and not outside the coat, and hence the explanation suggested above cannot be the true one. Other explanations have also been given, but if we look for examples, we shall find that these buttons probably arose in quite a different way.

The very same kind of development which led to the looping back of the coat tails, also led to the turning over both of the cuffs and of the edges of the skirt at the back of the tails. And the coat-tails being once turned over, were fastened back by a double row of buttons. But when, as before, the turning back became permanent, the number of buttons was reduced first to three pairs, which may still be seen in many modern livery coats and in the French coat mentioned above; then to two pairs at

<sup>1</sup> Except, of course, when slung from a bandolier or shoulder-belt, in which case the non-connexion is obvious.





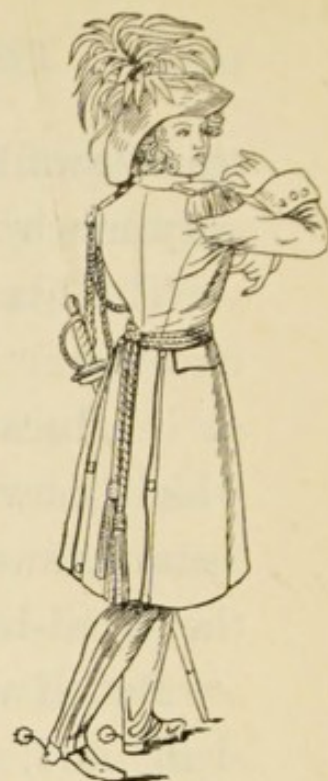
*From B. M. Print.*

FIG. 16.



*From Frontispiece to Tristram  
Shandy (Vol. II.)*

FIG. 17.



*From B. M. Print*

FIG. 18.



*From French Print in  
B. M. (about 1812).*

FIG. 19.



FIG. 20.



FIG. 21.



FIG. 22.

FIG. 16.—French Court Dress of 1722-23, showing two rows of button-holes left after turning back coat-lapels. FIG. 17.—Coat with Turned-Back Lapels in 1759, showing retention of three button-pairs only. FIG. 18.—Coat with three Button-Pairs only; a Russian Gentleman in Paris (early nineteenth century). FIG. 19.—Coat with two Button-Pairs only. FIG. 20.—Footman in Navy-blue Livery Coat (1910), with four pairs of buttons. FIG. 21.—Footman in Navy-blue Livery Coat (1910) with three pairs of buttons. FIG. 22.—Footman in Green Livery Coat (1910), showing retention of two pairs of buttons.



the top and bottom, which may also be occasionally seen in liveries; and lastly to a single pair at the top alone, these last two buttons being retained, as in the case of our modern cuff buttons, even when all other marks of their former purpose had disappeared.

Even the V-shaped nick which still survives in the front of our modern coat collars, and has come down to us from this same period, was at first cut in order to allow the collar to stand up properly round the neck, as we may see in the portraits of Nelson, although it is now frequently cut, in ignorance of that fact, in a way that would effectually prevent it from doing so.

The waistcoat, as has already been said, was originally an outer coat, and must have been at one time practically indistinguishable from the man's petty-coat, a short-waisted but usually long-sleeved coat, in which form the waistcoat is worn, actually still as an outside coat, by the modern railway porter! The short white jackets worn by Highlanders in undress, as well as by the Guards, are still called "waistcoats" and are of the same pattern.

From the time of Henry VIII. at least, down to the reign of Queen Anne, the waistcoat was a fashionable dress for English ladies. In Henry's reign we read of "two waistcoats for women, being of cloth of silver, embroidered, both of them having sleeves." And a special kind was worn on



horseback ; for in 1663 old Pepys the Diarist, saw King Charles II. "riding in the Park, with the Queen in a white laced *waistcoat* and a crimson short petticoat, and her hair dressed *à la négligence*, mighty pretty."

King Charles II. himself wore his waistcoat long, reaching almost to the knees, that style of garment being known by the name of "vest," which name for the waistcoat is to this day almost invariably the term employed by tailors, who have retained in the "fancy vest" much of the ancient splendour once distributed throughout the costume.

The plain black form of waistcoat to which we are accustomed, was worn by King Charles II. to promote the use of a simpler and less extravagant attire. On the 17th of October 1666, Pepys wrote that "the Court is full of *vests*, only my Lord St. Albans not pinked<sup>1</sup> but plain black, and they say the King said this pinking upon white makes them look too much like magpies, and therefore hath bespoke one of plain velvet," probably a black one, like that of my Lord St. Albans.

But about this same time Pepys tells us that "divers courtiers and gentlemen gave the King gold by way of wager that he would not persist in this resolution." And "five weeks later the French

<sup>1</sup> That is, pricked or pierced with holes.



King, in defiance of the King of England, caused all his footmen to be put into vests."

After this it is amusing to learn that this insult, "the greatest indignity ever done by one Prince to another" (as good old Pepys hotly describes it!), was too late to affect the resolution of Charles II., which had changed, as had been foretold, before the end of the month arrived!

The difference between shirt and skirt seems to be that the former name is given to the shortened garment, and the latter to the part originally cut off in shortening it. The shirt, which acquires its name from being cut short (like the "shorts" of our modern running track), was a garment of the tunic kind, and was at first worn



*Brit. Mus.*

FIG. 23.—The "Cassock" or long Outside Coat, and the Vest or long Waistcoat, as worn by Charles II., showing an earlier stage in the development of our modern coat and waistcoat.



as an outside dress. A modern example of this was the red shirt uniform of the volunteers led by Garibaldi in his successful struggle for the union of Italy. This shirt was first worn, as is perhaps not generally known, by Garibaldi's followers in his campaign on behalf of the liberties of Monte Video in South America in 1846.<sup>1</sup> The shirt is now often worn with a turned-down cuff, like that of a coat-sleeve.

As to the cause which led to the revival of the trouser in its modern form, there seems to be some doubt. By some they are thought to have resulted from the lengthening of the knee-breeches worn in the Stuart period, and the London Chronicle of 1762 actually declares that owing to the "high-topped shoes and *long trouser-like breeches* with a broad knee-band" a leg "in high taste is not longer than a common council-man's tobacco-stopper!" This evidently refers to a kind of shortish trouser, reaching almost to the boot-top, a Dutch fashion first adopted in the reign of Charles I. On the other hand, our chief modern authority on matters of dress says that the modern trouser was popularised as the result of the popularity of the Cossacks on

<sup>1</sup> The original batch of these shirts were bought cheap from the local makers at Monte Video, who had intended them for use in the slaughter-houses for cattle in Argentina, their red hue having been selected for this purpose.



the occasion of their visit to London. No date is given, but it must have been General Platoff's visit after Waterloo (1816) that is meant. It certainly appeared much earlier, but came in very gradually. In 1812 we read that students of Trinity and St. John's Colleges at Cambridge attending hall or chapel in trousers were "considered as absent."

Even so late as 1823, tight-fitting trousers shaped to the leg were worn alternately with the full ones, and the former died out slowly. Again, it was not till that year that the white breeches and black gaiters of the Grenadier Guards, and the white gaiters with black buttons and garters of the Foot Guards, were exchanged for trousers.

At present, knee-breeches are worn, not only as a part of Court dress and for many liveries and games, but also, to a rapidly diminishing extent, as part of the regular dress of men in Ireland. With regard to the trouser itself, the partial return to the "shaped" leg and the permanently turned-up trouser hem of 1908 were late developments.

It may be thought that there is certainly no interest or romance in connection with boots, and little, if anything, to be learnt about them; but how many people know that the word boot, properly speaking, means a top-boot only, and that our ordinary boots are half-boots, as shoemakers correctly still call them? Yet this is the reason why shoes



(which are really half "half-boots") are called "low quarters" in America. Short boots or half-boots were worn by the Saxons, and the Conqueror's eldest son, "Court-hose," was so nicknamed from his habit of wearing "short boots."

The full boot or top-boot seems, on the other hand, to have grown in the course of centuries out of the "leather hose" worn by the Saxons as modified for riding. It now frequently has a broad band of colour at the top, which has a history of its own.

During the Stuart and Commonwealth period, these long boots, which were worn by Roundhead and Cavalier alike, had their monstrous tops turned either up or down, according as the wearer wished to ride or walk. Our Household cavalry at the present day still wear these boots permanently turned up for riding. In the course of time civilians' tops became permanently turned down (like the cuffs of our coat sleeves,) and the colour of the lining was then imitated by the broad band of colour (brown, buff, or white), which at the present day is all that is left of the turned-down "top."

The toe-caps of our modern boots and shoes are often decorated with a row of perforations forming various patterns, which sometimes take the form of a circle. This again is a survival of ancient custom, for we read even in Chaucer of a young and somewhat dandified priest, who had his shoes decorated



with a pricked design of circular shape, something resembling a diminutive rose window, on account of which he was described as having "Paul's windows carven in his shoes." We can, indeed, in some cases trace them much further back to similar shoe patterns employed by the Anglo-Saxons, who in turn copied them from the Romans themselves.

An amusing instance of misjudged criticism was provided by the comments once made on two lines in the play of King John, which were then thought to afford one of many instances of Shakespeare's ignorance or inaccuracy. These lines were :

Standing in slippers which his nimble haste  
Had falsely thrust upon contrary feet,

and the objection was that in Shakespeare's time there were no "rights" or "lefts" to shoes or slippers. As a matter of fact, however, the critics in this case showed their own want of knowledge, since not only were perfect "rights" and "lefts" worn in the time of Shakespeare, but even earlier still, in the fourteenth century, they were often so made to an extravagant degree. On the contrary, the ancient custom of having boots which might be worn indifferently on either foot, survives down to modern times in the boots worn by postilions.

To conclude with the mention of one or two special kinds of footgear, how many of us know that the word "pump," which is now applied to a



light kind of thin-soled shoe, used especially for dancing, has probably got its name from being first used for ceremony or "pomp"? In 1726 the Highlanders are described as wearing pumps without heels; and formerly pumps were worn not only by footmen, but also quite commonly by poor country people, both in France (for instance in Brittany) and England; and they were still worn, with the top-hat, by the boatmen of Deal in 1902.

Most extraordinary of all is the history of the "galoche" or "galosh." This word comes from the joining of two Greek words, meaning "wooden-foot," the term used for a "shoemaker's last." As time went on, by a slight change of meaning, it came to be applied to a wooden clog or patten, which was formerly worn by country people in England, and may still be seen in France and Holland. The galosh is of ancient use, and was not always confined to the humbler classes. For in the vision of *Piers Plowman* (1377) we find mention of the custom on the part of

a knight that cometh to be dubbed,

To get him gilt spurs, or galoches y-couped

(*i.e.* "cut"); "galoshes" being perhaps about the very last kind of shoe that we should expect to see worn by any one who now came to be knighted.

In the United States of America "galosh" rarely occurs, the word "gum" (for "india-rubber") being



employed instead. We can therefore sufficiently enter into the feelings of a British visitor to the States who was told that a young lady (occupied at that moment in drying her galoshes at the front door) was "rubbing her gums on the mat!"

Still more unpromising, if possible, may appear hats, and above all the silk hat, commonly called a "chimney-pot" hat or "stovepipe." Yet it has a history from which we can learn much. The top-hat of silk is a cheap substitute for a similar hat formerly made of beaver skin, which stood water and wore well enough, but was difficult to procure on account of its high price. In shape the typical French top-hat, especially during the last century, had a tendency to curve inwards at the top, and was in consequence much narrower at the crown than the English top-hat. Hence it was more like the steeple hat than the hat worn in England.

But the first public appearance of the top-hat in its shiny modern form was in London on 15th January 1797, and proved to be nothing if not sensational. The wearer was John Hetherington, a Strand haberdasher, and the unwonted sight of his new and shiny headgear caused such a turmoil in the street that he was charged with breach of the peace and "inciting to riot," and was bound over to keep the peace in the sum of £500.

The rudimentary bow, which now decorates the





*By courtesy of Messrs. Methuen and of Mr. G. Clinch.*

FIG. 24.—The Top-Hat as worn by Princess (afterwards Queen) Elizabeth. This hat is of a pattern which afterwards became very popular with dandies of the opposite sex in the reign of George II.



lining, is a vestige from the time when the lining was drawn together by means of a band passed through it, to make it fit more closely to the head, as in the tall hat still worn by huntsmen.



*Brit. Mus.*

FIG. 25.—The Top-Hat as worn by King Charles I. (taking the form of a short-crowned steeple hat). Notice the origin of the lace collar still worn by small boys, and the "points" on the back of the glove. (See pp. 73, 94).

The modern hard felt hat seems to have been the wear of an ordinary citizen in France during



the period of the French Revolution, when it appeared at Paris, and replaced the "cocked hat" of the gentleman. At the same time it differs so little from the hard round hat of the ancient Romans, which was worn in England in the Saxon period and still appears in the form of our modern "carter's hat," that it may reasonably be thought to have come from the ancient Roman headgear.

There also seems to be some affinity between it and the pot helmet, referred to by Oliver Cromwell when he wrote (in 1643), "I shall require a new pot, mine is ill set. Buy me one in Tower Street, a Fleming sells them." This would explain why the modern hard round hat is often actually called a "pot-hat" or "pot" to this day.

Of other hats and caps, it is interesting to know that the flat "muffin-cap" of the parish school-boy was worn by noblemen in the reign of Queen Mary.

Even the straw hat, the coils or plaits for making which are now imported from China and Japan, is an English institution of some antiquity. In 1592 an old writer, describing a countryman, said,

A strawen hat he had upon his head,  
The which his chin was fastened underneath.

And more than a century earlier a "black straw cap" (in 1442) and a "straw hat" in 1451



were left in wills by way of legacy, an indication that such hats were worth more then than now.

### BOYS' DRESS

We all know that the long blue coat, yellow stockings, bands and flat round cap of the Christ's Hospital (or Blue Coat) boys have survived from what was the boys' dress in London in the time of King Edward VI., the founder of the school.

In other parts of England there are similar Blue Coat schools (at Liverpool, Chester, Bristol, and Wells); in some blue stockings are worn as well as blue coats. At York there is



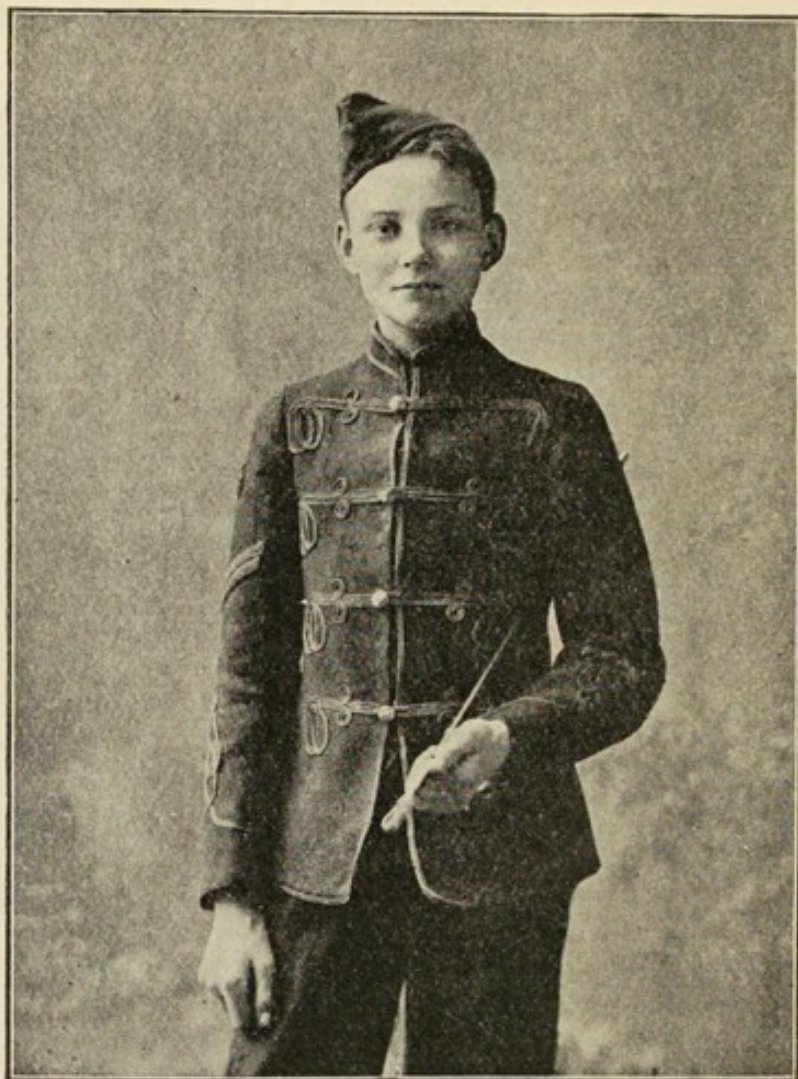
FIG. 26. —Blue Boys' School, Chester (blue uniform, blue cap, and "bands").

a Grey Coat school, as also in London, the latter of which was opened in the Broad Sanctuary, Westminster, in 1698, the boys being dressed like the



Christ's Hospital boys, but in dark grey, with flat caps.

The Duke of York's Military School, on the other hand (founded in 1803), furnishes a famous



*By courtesy of Major Dyke (Secretary R.M.S.).*

FIG. 27.—Duke of York's Royal Military School, Dover. Red coat of the School uniform, with the "facings" worn by the School band.

example of a "Red-coat" school, the only institution of its kind to possess military colours.

Take again, for instance, some of the details of the dress worn at our older public schools. At Eton

the former custom of leaving the last button of the waistcoat unfastened is explained as a survival of the time when the waistcoat was worn with a short flap to it. The straw hat, again, was once an Eton institution, and was worn, for instance, by the eleven in 1845, when the Winchester eleven, playing against them, wore white top-hats.

The dress of quite small children is (as has been said) often copied from that of their elders, either at the existing or some earlier date. The favourite "sailor suit," kilt, and other well-known forms of dress worn by small boys, are examples of the former. The knickerbockers, broad lace collars, knots of ribbon, and the wearing of the waistbelt below the waist, are examples of the latter.

Similarly the strings of a child's straw hat represent the ribbons used in very early times for tying on the hat or (at an earlier date still) the hood. So, too, the shoes of children were at one time made of the same shape for both feet, and the shoes of quite small infants are still so made.

It may be observed that the younger the child is, the less difference there is between the dress of a girl and a boy, and this tendency is reflected in the language, since "girl" in Old English meant either a boy or a girl according to circumstances.



## CHAPTER IV

THE STORY OF OUR DRESS (*continued*)

## LIVERIES AND UNIFORMS

LIVERIED servants, such as outdoor footmen and coachmen, who wear tall hats, top-boots, and doeskin breeches, derive their attire from the fashionable gentlemen's dress of the early eighteenth century. The groom's belt is known to be a relic of the time when ladies more often went on horseback and sat on a pillion behind a gentleman or servant, to whose belt they clung to avoid falling.

The cockade frequently seen on the hats of outdoor servants of the nobility, was worn by gentlemen as late as 1789, and is thought to have been chosen of a black colour to show allegiance to the house of Hanover. An old Scots song of Sheriffmuir has "the red-coat lads with black cockades" (meaning the British). The white cockade was adopted by the Jacobites because it was the colour of the King of France, who had taken up the cause of James II.

It may not originally have been a rosette, and there are several explanations of its origin, one of which is that it is a survival of the tie formerly used for cocking or fastening back the brim of the hat to the crown, an arrangement which may still

be seen, for instance, both in the looping back of the broad-brimmed bishop's hat and that of priests in various parts of the Continent. In the time of the poet Pope it was not only pronounced but written "cockard," an old French name—obviously connected with the cocking of the hat—for a Spanish cap. It should properly be used only by the servants of officers in the King's service, or those who by courtesy may be so regarded.

The scarlet cut-away coat, plush breeches, silk stockings, wig, and powdered hair of the footman belonging to the nobility, are taken from the dress worn by gentlemen in the reign of George III.

Again, the livery of a sheriff's coachman takes us back to the reign of George II., when the coat retained the earlier square-skirted coat-tails.

"Footmen," who were so called because they originally walked or ran *on foot*, to clear the way



FIG. 28.—Coat worn by a Sheriff's Coachman (1910), showing retention of original square skirt-tails dating from reign of George II.



in front of their lord's carriage, were also for this reason given a staff (which at first was a quite serviceable article) for chastising any who resisted. "Footman" also had once the sense of "foot-soldier." On the signboard of an old inn called the Running Footman, a footman was shown in the act of running, and carrying his staff. Sir Walter Scott tells us that even he himself remembered seeing, with the state coach of John Earl of Hopetoun, a *running* footman ("clothed in white and bearing a staff").

It is said that the Marquis of Queensberry, who died in 1810, used to put candidates for the post into his livery and make them run in front of his house in order to show their pace, he himself watching them from the balcony. On one occasion, he had just signified his approval by remarking, "You will do very well for me," when the man unexpectedly exclaimed, "And your livery will do very well for me," and promptly made off with it!

A question often asked is: What is the origin of the buttons on a page-boy's jacket? It has been suggested that the triple button-row on his coat was derived from the "Dutch Skeleton Dress," which in 1829 is said to have been a "very popular fashion for boys"; the idea being that three button-rows were invented in order to indicate the outline of the boy's ribs or "skeleton." This was first suggested by Dickens in his sketch "Private Theatricals."

But coats with converging button-rows in front were worn as English uniforms in the army much earlier than this "Dutch Skeleton Dress." And the scrutiny of several thousands of figures in prints



FIG. 29.



FIG. 30.

FIG. 29.—Dress worn by Achille Murat as a boy, showing the two button-rows produced by turning back of the front coat-lapels, a third row being afterwards added down the centre, which at first was "hooked."  
FIG. 30.—Dress of Page Boy (1910), showing the three button-rows as fully developed.

belonging to this period enables us to say that the two converging rows curving downwards from the shoulders to the waist really represent the two rows of buttons once used for fastening back the lining of the front coat-lapels, the two inner edges



of the turned-back coat being at first hooked together (as in uniforms of Napoleon's time), and afterwards replaced by a central row of buttons.



*By courtesy, United Serv. Inst.*

FIG. 31.—Uniform of Yorkshire Light Infantry in 1813, showing the three converging button-rows as then worn in the British Army.

Turning to the uniforms of our soldiers, the scarlet tunic, which gives its name to our "red-coats," was not definitely established (with the blue facings) as the uniform of the British army till the reign of Queen Anne. But then the scarlet and blue livery colours used by the English Royal family, and appearing in the Royal Arms, were those of the kingdom itself, not those of a House or dynasty. Hence our red military uniforms may be regarded as a sort of nationalised livery.

The popular term "red-coat" came in during the great Civil War. At the battle of Edgehill, red coats were worn by the troops on both sides, who were distinguished solely by their coloured scarves. And in 1645 the entire army, under Sir Thomas Fairfax, was dressed in red for the first time.

By degrees the term "red-coat" established itself, and in a poem of 1661 we read that—

'Tis not the black coat, nor the red,  
Hath power to make or be the head. . .  
But muskets and full bandileers ;

and again—

The gown and chain cannot compare  
With Redcoat and his bandileers.

It would seem that the red coat with blue facings must have gradually displaced a blue coat garded or trimmed with red. For in the reign of Elizabeth, in 1581, we read that the men levied for Ireland were to be dressed "in some dark colour, and not blue and red, which, heretofore, hath been commonly used." And in 1569 the musketeers, raised for the Queen at Salisbury, wore "red caps and blue coats," this being, no doubt, the uniform referred to in 1581.

A fuller description occurs under Henry VIII. (1545), when every soldier was ordered to wear "a blue coat garded with red, the right hose red, the left blue, and a strip three fingers wide on the outside of each," the forerunner of the broad trouser-stripe worn by so many of our regiments to-day.

It is here necessary to remember that the blue coat, which we have thus seen to have preceded the red coat in the army, was at an earlier period worn



by the citizens of London generally, but had gradually become a badge or mark of service.

We can thus understand why it should have been eventually adopted as a livery for the armed retainers of the King and the nation. Like green and white and red, also used at first for important liveries, it is still well represented in our army.

This subject of our military uniforms, however, is a vast one indeed, and, most fascinating as it undoubtedly is, it has been necessary to confine our present investigations to the history of the red coat alone, as typical of all the rest.

Well within living memory, the Thames watermen wore high beaver hats of a drab colour, knee-breeches, and pink stockings, and the King's Barge-men at present have a green coat, knee-breeches, and a sort of jockey-like cap; whilst at Deal, as has been said, so recently as 1902 the watermen still wore top-hats and pumps.

But some of the most obvious examples of survival in uniforms or liveries are to be seen in the dress worn by officers of municipalities, city guilds and companies, by inmates of some ancient almshouses—at Castle Rising, Winchester, the Charterhouse, etc.,—by soldiers, firemen, postmen, railway officials, and policemen, and that of bakers, cooks, costermongers, butchers, etc. The butcher's apron, by the way, was not always blue, but white

originally, a colour now more especially worn by a special class of butchers, pork-butchers, for instance, as well as by poulterers.

Other examples are grocers, cobblers, carpenters, and blacksmiths, the brown leather apron of the last mentioned, with the square bib above, being of exactly the same pattern as it was six hundred years ago. The "Masonic" or Freemason's apron, a rare and all but unique case of the apron being employed by men for ornament, may, however, represent, like the bishop's apron, the surviving skirt of a gown.

### THE DRESS OF WOMEN

It is certainly a very odd thing that most of the chief kinds of dress at present worn by women in England are copied from dresses first worn (so far as our own national records go) by men!<sup>1</sup>

Some of these dresses, which men once wore, are the gown, robe, frock, blouse, coat, jacket, and, strangest of all, the petticoat! The gown, for instance, rather more than a thousand years ago, was a robe of fur, worn by monks who had bad health, or had grown old and feeble, in order to protect them from the cold.

Even in the time of King Richard II. it still

<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, as has been shown by Mr. R. A. S. Macalister, the dress of the clergy was originally that worn by women in ancient Rome.



formed part of the dress of both men and women, but later it ceased to be usually worn by men, and is now only worn by clergymen or lawyers, or at our schools and universities.

Among ladies the name is now chiefly given to an elegant dress, such as a tea-gown or dinner-gown. Even the night-gown (or bed-gown) was formerly used as a sort of dressing-gown, and was actually worn in the streets, incredible as it may seem, as a sort of overall in which ladies went walking or shopping, in the reign of Queen Anne and even later.

The coat was also worn in very early times by men as well as by women, and at the present day a lady's coat is often made not only in the shape of a man's coat, but also by a man's tailor. The longer walking or driving coat is still more like a man's garment.

When we come to the frock, we may perhaps think that here at last we have a dress which was first worn by women. But as a matter of fact the frock, which was originally a long gown with large open sleeves, was the outer robe always worn both by monks and friars.

We shall realise this better when we reflect that the ordinary term still applied to a priest who is deprived of his priesthood is "unfrocked." Moreover, a particular kind of coat called a "frock-coat" is still worn by men.

Apart from these exceptions, "frock" is applied to the dress of women and children, as it was once to a man's armour. With the frock, in time, the Saxon smock was combined, and that is how our farm-labourers and shepherds, till quite recently, still wore what was called a smock-frock (p. 93), a kind of overall with a hole for the head to go through.

From the earliest times both smock-frock and smock were richly worked; a smock given to Elizabeth by Sir Philip Sidney was not, however, in the great queen's favourite design, which was a curious pattern of "oak-leaves and butterflies." This may explain the fact that oak-leaves are now the ornamentation of the civil court dress of the first class and on some naval and military uniforms.

The smock-frock we have just mentioned was called a *blouse* in France, where it was worn by the peasantry as an overall, just in the same way as it was worn in England. But its name was taken from that of an ancient silken overall formerly worn by knights over their armour to protect it both from the sun and the rain, and afterwards worn by ladies, no doubt in imitation of the knights themselves. There is still preserved the record of an order given by King John for a "blouse" of this ancient kind, "lined with fur for the use of the Queen." The modern lady's blouse succeeded the garibaldi, which was copied from



the red shirt, already mentioned, of Garibaldi's volunteers.

Another name for the upper part of a lady's dress is bodice or boddice. Queen Victoria, in 1868, wrote, "I and the girls (were) in Royal Stewart skirts and shawls, over black velvet bodies." This helps to illustrate the fact that our modern "bodice" really stands for "bodies," and that the word "bodices" is therefore nothing in the world but a plural formed twice over (like the "ghostses" and "pharisees," for "ghosts" and "fairies" that we sometimes hear spoken of by country people).

The reason why the upper part of a dress came to be called "bodies" (plural) was because in ancient times it was made in two parts (like stays), and laced together at front and back. It was, indeed, for a long time actually called a "pair of bodies" for this very reason. The mistake, however, of using "bodice" as a singular instead of "bodies," is so old that we even find it in plays of the time of Queen Elizabeth, wherein such phrases as "Eve's bodice" or a "ghost's bodice" occur. So, too, the phrase, a "pair of corsets," is common, though "corset" really means "a pair of stays."

Tight-lacing, by the way, is a very old institution, and even in the time of the Normans was represented by a satirist in a picture of Satan, who was drawn in the robes of a Norman lady. It is to

this same custom that the great poet Chaucer, in describing the wife of a carpenter, refers when he remarks of a lady "her body was genteel, and small<sup>1</sup> as a weasel!" Yet, in the time of Peter the Great, though worn in Germany, stays were still quite unknown in Russia, and even the Czar himself, after a dance at which some German princesses had been his partners, is said to have exclaimed, "What hard *bones* these German ladies have!" We shall all remember that tight-lacing was one of the means by which the wicked queen attempted to make an end of the life of little "Snow-White," in that most ancient and famous fairy story recorded by the brothers Grimm.

The jacket (which means a little "jack"), though still worn by men in such special forms as the Norfolk jacket, pea-jacket, pilot jacket, and so forth, is now principally worn by women and children. But both the jacket and jack were in ancient times first worn by men, and when the followers of Jack Straw and Wat Tyler burned and plundered the Duke of Lancaster's palace at the Savoy in London in 1381, they took his jack (described as "his most precious garment") and stuck it on a spear to shoot at, but finding that to destroy it in this way gave them more trouble than they expected, they chopped it to pieces with swords and axes!

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* slender.



These ancient "jacks" were made of a great many folds of cloth and a stag's skin, which, being hardened, became so tough as to form a complete protection against arrows and dagger wounds.

At the siege of Lord Gordon's castle in Scotland, that high-spirited princess, Mary, Queen of Scots, remarked that she "regretted nothing but that she was not a man, to know what a life it was to lie in the fields all night, or to walk about with a jack and a knapsack, a shield and a broadsword." Perhaps (as Planché suggests) her enthusiasm might have cooled if she had been offered one of the "great villainous English jacks" then customary.

The most distinctive part of a lady's dress, however, is her skirt, a word which is another form of "shirt," also part of a man's dress. The modern lady's skirt varies in shape and size, as we know, from what is called the "sheath-skirt" (owing to the fact of its fitting tightly like a sheath) to the old-fashioned bell-shaped crinoline, an absurd style of dress, invented apparently to display the rich materials of which the skirts of those days were made.

In the reign of King James I., Lady Wych, the wife of a special ambassador, who had been sent by King James to the Sultan of Turkey, went with all her attendants, dressed in the big hoop skirts which were then worn, to pay a visit to the Sultanness. No doubt this dress was worn to impress her



Imperial Highness; but instead of this, the sight being new to her, she merely inquired whether that remarkable shape of dress was due to the fact that Englishwomen were differently made from other people, and Lady Wych had to take much trouble to convince her such was not the case!

Fashionable modern skirts are sometimes made in the Greek style, and sometimes even in the Japanese style, but most of them are still made in the various French modes, the chief of which in 1909 were the *directoire* and the *empire* dresses. The *directoire* is so called because it was one of the principal fashions worn in Paris during the terrible French Revolution, at the time when a small committee of five men, called the “*Directoire*” or *Directory*, was administering the government of France. The *empire* dress, on the other hand, is named from one of the chief styles of dress worn during the first empire of Napoleon, at which time it was a favourite dress of the Empress Josephine.

The *Watteau* dress (so called after the name of a famous French artist of the time of Queen Anne, who used often to introduce it in his pictures) and the *polonaise*, or Polish woman’s dress, no doubt so called because it first reached France from Poland, are two other well-known French styles.

But the favourite “*Princess*” dress, with its simplicity and its easy grace, is one of our rare



English fashions, and it is believed that it received its name in honour of Queen Alexandra, at the time when she was Princess of Wales.

The petticoat, now often used as a symbol for woman in general, as distinct from man, was originally, as its name implies, a "little" or "short" coat (from the French word "petit," in the sense of "small"), and was first applied to the coat of a man. In several parts of England, as, for instance, in Kent, where it survives as "petty-coat," the word is still used with the meaning of a man's waistcoat. But the fisherman's oilskin "petticoat" is a skirt-like garb.

It was originally a man's outside coat; first a short coat worn as armour, and then a short close-fitting tunic worn under the coat. Even the warlike Henry V. had a "petticoat of red damask with open sleeves," and in a book of rules for officers of the King's household, there were instructions for warming the King's petticoat before he put it on!

We do not know exactly how the change of meaning came about, but it is thought most probable that the identity of the name, as applied both to the short jacket and the skirt, or underskirt, may be due to the fact that the "petticoat" was once a short tunic, which came to be divided into two parts at the belt for convenience in wearing it, as is the case with our modern frocks and gowns. At all



events, while the upper garment known as a "petticoat" seems to have been gradually identified with the man's "waistcoat," the lower garment so called became the richly decorated petticoat formerly worn as an outside skirt, but grew less ornamental in character when it ceased to be visible.

The outer petticoat is still worn as a skirt in some parts of Great Britain, for instance, in Scotland and Ireland. And it survives in a beautifully embroidered and often highly artistic form among the peasant girls of Norway and Switzerland.

The apron (which was originally called *a napron*, but by a wrong division of the words in rapid speaking was turned into *an apron*) was a very ancient part of an English lady's dress. It was also, until modern times, regarded as an honourable part of that dress, and was frequently worn by all ladies, from the queen downwards. In Germany aprons are still worn as a part of full dress, but in England they are now only worn by children and women of all ranks for household duties, though an ornamental one is still worn by barge-women. Aprons are also worn by men of certain trades, examples of which have already been given.

Yet another costume closely borrowed from that of men, is the dress worn by ladies in the hunting-field, which includes even the top-hat. But the most striking of all the effects of this tendency



is the disuse, by ladies, of the side-saddle, which had been employed in England since Saxon times.

What we call the "clock" of a stocking came from the seams of the gusset, a three-cornered piece of stuff let into the foot of the stocking under the instep, as had always to be done in the days when stockings were made of cloth. For although the modern clocks reach almost to the knee, those of two centuries back only reached to about half that height, being of the shape of an excessively long "V" turned upside down, with a sort of flourish at the point, and in the days of Queen Elizabeth we read of "clocks about the ankles."

This view is confirmed by the important fact that in some parts of Scotland the word "gusset" is still used for the clock of a stocking.

Muffs, sleeves, and gloves were all originally connected, for the oldest meaning of "muff" was a sleeve, especially a long hanging sleeve such as was worn by women, and in which the hands could be "muffled" in cold weather. And the earliest muff or muffler for the hands must have been suggested by the habit of placing the hands one behind the other and letting the long sleeve-ends flow over them till they met. Examples of this custom occur in the time of the Anglo-Saxons. It is represented at the present day by the practice of nuns and others, who have wide and

long sleeves, but are not allowed the use of gloves.

The Norman ladies in England actually wore curious glove-like hand-mufflers, with long hanging streamers, and the Anglo-Saxon ladies before that



*By courtesy of Mr. Arthur Beckett.*

FIG. 32.



*Brit. Mus.*

FIG. 33.

FIG. 32.—The Bag-Glove without Streamers, as worn by Saxon Shepherds under Norman Rule (thirteenth century). From wall-painting in Cocking Church, which represents the announcement of the Nativity to the Shepherds by an Angel (partially visible). FIG. 33.—Norman form of the Bag-Glove, with hanging ends or "streamers."

wore a simpler kind of hand-muffler without any streamer, which seems to have been invented by the Anglo-Saxons themselves.

Now these hand-mufflers are really a bag-glove with thumb but without separate fingers, such as very



small children wear even at the present day. Here, then, we have discovered the oldest form of glove, from which our modern gloves with fingers are descended, and which were worn as late as the reign of Elizabeth by Sir Philip Sidney himself.

This leads to one of our most interesting instances of survival, for while to this very day, in Iceland<sup>1</sup> and in other far countries of the frozen North, bag-gloves are universally worn by grown-up people, they are still commonly worn by small children here, and in country parts of England they are yet quite frequently worn by farm-labourers engaged either in hedging or in binding corn. The "house-maid's glove" is of the same character, and even a kind of motor-glove is of the bag-glove form.

Much the same story, curiously enough, belongs to the word "cuff," which in Anglo-Saxon meant a sort of half-glove or mitten, and did not come to mean the lower end of a sleeve till much later. One of the names of the glove itself in Anglo-Saxon was the odd word "hand-shoe," which is the same name as is given to the glove in modern Germany, the name showing, of course, that our shoes were invented first and gloves afterwards. There seems reason to believe that the three stripes of thread-

<sup>1</sup> A quaint fact about these Icelandic bag-gloves is that they are furnished with two thumbs, so that they can be the more rapidly put on. Bag-gloves are warmer than gloves with fingers.





*By courtesy of Miss A. L. J. Gosset.*

FIG. 34.—Modern Bag-Gloves, as worn by Hedgers (1910).  
The wearer is dressed in a Sussex “smock” (*see* p. 83).



work on the back of our modern kid gloves have come from the continual lengthening of the seams of the fork-like pieces between the fingers, to make the wearer's fingers look longer and more slim. These seams were first carried right down on to the back of the hand, almost to the wrist, and afterwards separated at the knuckles. This must have been in comparatively modern times, for the gloves worn in ancient times never had such stripes; at most they had a jewel, or other ornament, on the back.

We all know the important part that gloves have played both in love and war: to throw down the glove being the expression still used to describe a challenge to an enemy, or the favour granted by a lady to her lover. The reason for this seems to be that at first kings, knights and ladies wore the glove as part of their ceremonial dress. Thus it became the outward sign of authority over others, and when the knight threw down his own glove by way of defiance, it was equivalent to saying, "I am your master, and there is the sign of my authority over you." But when he wore his lady's glove in his helmet, he admitted her authority over himself. In this way some modern expressions may be explained by the customs of olden chivalry.

If we look at the shoes of a modern Frenchman or Frenchwoman, and compare them with our own, we shall see that the French shoes look noticeably



"longer" in the toe than the English. This will help us to remember that the fashion of wearing long pointed toes came originally from France, where they are said to have been invented by a Count of Anjou, to conceal his deformed feet.

Similarly the high heel has been traced back to the fashion set by King Louis XIV. of France, who, being very short himself, wore very high heels, to raise himself some inches above the ground, and so make himself look a more imposing figure.

This does not mean, however, that Louis invented the high heel, but only that particular kind of high heel still known by his name. For other forms of the high-heeled shoe were known long before he succeeded in 1643 as a boy of five. They were known to our own King Charles I., for instance, as we are told that when he went to meet Henrietta Maria (afterwards his Queen) at Dover, and cast his eyes down towards her (she seeming somewhat taller than report made out), she was able at once to show him her shoes, and replied: "Sir, I stand upon mine own feet, I have no helps of art; thus high I am, and am neither higher or lower."<sup>1</sup> It seems probable that the Louis heel was copied from the French by the courtiers of Charles II. during his exile, and brought to England by them at the Restoration.

<sup>1</sup> Queen Elizabeth, again, had shoes which are still extant, with heels  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inches high.



It is a remarkable fact that in 1670 the use of scents, paints, cosmetics, high-heeled shoes, false hair, and even artificial teeth were all forbidden by a British Act of Parliament, which enacted that all who offended against it should incur the usual penalty of the "laws against witchcraft, sorcery and of such like misdemeanours," and that in the event of any of His Majesty's male subjects being "betrayed" into marriage by any such arts as these, the marriage, in the case of a conviction, should itself be void!

The years 1908-10 were remarkable, amongst other things, for the vast size of the hats (commonly called cart-wheel hats) worn by ladies. These large hats are by no means a new idea, for they have been worn at various earlier periods of our history, and have indeed been known at least since the time of the marvellous hat which, in the year 1352, Blanche de Bourbon, the young Queen of Castile, ordered for herself at Paris. Composed of gold cloth from Cyprus, it was picked out with pearls, gems and enamel, and was decorated with ivory oak-trees bearing pearl acorns, which latter were being thrown to the swine below by children also carved in ivory. In the boughs were singing-birds, and the flowers in the grass below were being visited by bees that came to steal their honey!

The modern form of folding fan has been in use since the reign of Queen Elizabeth, who in a



painting of 1592 is shown with a fan of that shape suspended about her waist by pink ribands. A little later, ladies had immense fans with handles half a yard long, which they often used to "correct" their daughters, as the old accounts say. These fans were also carried in public by men of rank and fashion, as, for instance, by the Earl of Manchester, and by the great lawyer, Sir Edward Coke, who actually went on circuit with a fan of this kind.

At the end of the eighteenth century, a very large green fan, called a sunshade, was in use, and was intended to screen the face from the sun, when the owner was out of doors. This was the forerunner of the modern parasol. The umbrella, as its name suggests, was also a small sunshade in the countries where it was first invented.

The first umbrella used in England by a man in the open street for protection against rain, is usually said to have been that carried by Jonas Hanway, a great traveller, who introduced it on his return from Persia about 1750, some thirty years before it was generally adopted. Some kind of umbrella was, however, occasionally used by ladies at least so far back as 1709; and a fact not generally known is that from about the year 1717 onwards, a "parish" umbrella, resembling the more recent "family" umbrella of the nineteenth century, was



used by the priest at open-air funerals, as the church accounts of many places testify.

In 1752 General Wolfe (at that time lieutenant-colonel) wrote from Paris that people "there used umbrellas in hot weather to defend them from the sun, and something of the same kind *to save them from snow and rain.*" In mediæval times they were known at Venice, where a state umbrella, resembling the royal umbrellas so common in the East, was carried over the Doge or Duke, on the occasion of any great ceremony, just as the fan had been held over the Pharaohs of ancient Egypt.

In the Far East, as in Africa, to this day the umbrella is a symbol of high rank and royalty,<sup>1</sup> the round umbrella, made to open and shut, being linked up with sunshades of the "fan" type by the *flat* umbrellas, constructed from a single palm-leaf, but most ingeniously made so as to open or shut, which are still to be found in remote parts of Indo-China.

Rings, earrings, necklaces and bracelets all go back to the beginnings of our history, and were all worn by men at first. Finely worked bracelets or bangles of solid gold, loaded the arms of the Saxons, and were, moreover, worn almost universally by (and buried with) the principal men among them,

<sup>1</sup> A curious umbrella represented in an Anglo-Saxon MS. as being held by one man over the head of another, is probably a "royal" umbrella of this sort.



especially by their kings and princes. The latter were in the habit of presenting such rings to their friends or retainers, either as a favour or in payment, whence the old Saxon kings were called, in their national songs, "dispensers of rings."

The heathen Danes also kept a sacred ornament of the bracelet kind upon the altar of their gods, or worn by their priests, by which their most solemn oaths were taken, their usual oath being "by the blade of my sword," or, "by the shoulder of my horse."

It was on account of their strong belief in the sacredness of this bracelet that King Alfred made the Danes swear by it, when he had defeated them, a thing which they had never previously done to the king of any nation. And when Earl Godwin, to appease the Danish King, Hardicanute, presented him with a fine ship containing eighty soldiers with coats of silver mail, and gilded shields and helmets, it was a special feature of the compliment that every one of the warriors wore two golden bracelets, weighing sixteen ounces, upon each arm.

Rings were at first often worn for various magical purposes. In some cases, even in the present more enlightened times, they are believed (especially when made of coffin-handles!) to protect the wearer from cramp or rheumatism or (if furnished with a sapphire) to protect the eye-sight.



Formerly they were believed to be a safeguard against poison, as was the case with the ring given by Ruthven to Mary, Queen of Scots, as well as with the "snake-rings" of Malta, the stones of which, as already mentioned, are found in the traditional cave of St. Paul.

The "snake-rings" are, however, like many trinkets and other objects, worn for "luck" or for some supposed virtue, a survival of savage beliefs which have lingered on into Christian times, outlasting the order of things that gave them birth.

In very early times, the ring, like the glove, was an emblem of royal authority and formed part of the official dress. An early example of the thumb-ring of an English king is that of Athelwulf, father of King Alfred, and in one of the old English romances we read that at the hero's wedding there were present

Archbishops, with rings  
More than fifteen.

From which it appears that several rings were then worn on each finger.

To conclude, it may be pointed out that milliner was still written "milaner" in 1828 in Sir Walter Scott's *Fair Maid of Perth*. Its original meaning was a man of Milan, and it was employed at first to signify a pedlar who sold ribbons, bonnets, gloves, toilet accessories, such as looking-glasses, and mere



nick-nacks and trinkets, which were then chiefly exported from, and sold by natives of, Milan.

### GIRLS' DRESS

As in the case of boys, there are many old established girls' schools in England, where the dress still worn is an interesting link with our past history. At Bristol there is a Red Maids' School, one of the very earliest of such foundations for girls, founded in 1629, "for forty poor women children," whom the mayor and aldermen were to cause to



*By courtesy of Miss M. Webb.*

FIG. 35.—Dress worn at Red Maids' School, Bristol (founded 1627). Red dress, with bonnet, white cape, and apron.

"goe and be apparelled in redd clothe."

This school gets its name from the red frocks



in which the girls are dressed, a colour perhaps due to the fact that "Bristol-red" was, like "Lincoln Green" and "Coventry Blue," one of the most



*By courtesy of B. G. School, Chester.*

FIG. 36.—Dress worn at Blue Girls' School, Chester. Navy-blue dress, broad white falling collar, and apron.

famous of the city colours of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. An author of 1530 remarks that "at Bristowe is the best water to dye red." The poet Skelton, too, speaks of a kirtle of "Bristowe red," and another old

writer distinguishes it from the "London colour," which was scarlet.

The Red Maids at first had short sleeves and the long white elbow-gloves of the Stuart period.

At Chester again, and in London, there are a



Blue Girls' School and also a Grey Girls' School respectively, at which the colour of the girls' dresses and capes is (or, in the case of the London school, was till recently) a survival of their ancient uniform. The Blue Girls' School at Chester was founded in 1718, and most of the girls wear the short sleeves which have now been discarded by the Red Maids of Bristol. The Grey Girls' School of London was founded in the Broad Sanctuary, Westminster, in 1698.

Coming to dress worn by girls in general, the "pinafore" or "pinner" was originally worn by women as well as by children. It received its name from being "pinned afore," that is, in front of the dress.



*By courtesy of Miss E. Day.*

FIG. 37.—Dress worn by Girls at Grey Coat Hospital School, Westminster, from 1701 to 1875. Grey laced bodice, grey skirt, and old-fashioned cap.



It at first resembled an apron with a bib, but is now rather an overall than an apron.

Even the dress of the smallest children often contains interesting reminders of past history ; thus the short frock and long hair, either plaited or worn simply “down” and tied with a ribbon, takes us back to the far-distant periods when these features were characteristic of the grown-up members of their sex. In former times even queens were dressed—except as regards the length of their skirt—in the simpler styles now sometimes followed by the dresses of quite small children. Although the more usual custom was for the hair to be “put up” at marriage, Queen Eleanor, the wife of one of our greatest kings, Edward I., at times continued to wear her hair, as it grew naturally, down her back. The plaiting of the hair in long tails which hung down behind was an old custom of the Danish, as well as of the Saxon and Norman, women.

## CHAPTER V

### THE STORY OF OUR DRESS (*continued*)

#### ENGLAND

WE shall now see how, by tracing back and comparing the chief characteristics of dress now worn

by the inhabitants of these islands, we may learn something at all events as to the features of the ancient dress of Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and even of England. For although our ancient national costumes have in almost all cases for many centuries been continually overlaid by fashions imported from abroad, yet in the mere fragmentary survivals, which are all that remain, we may still find, as we work backwards, some of the marks of race.

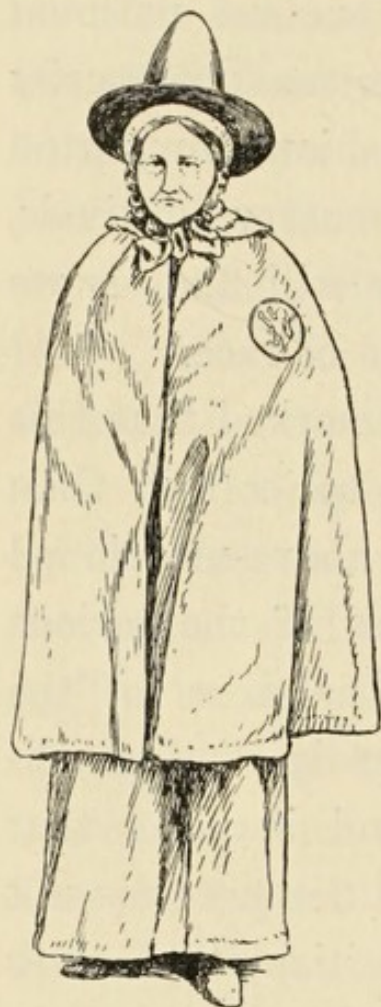
At the same time it must be remarked that this evidence is much more difficult to collect than might be expected, owing to the above-mentioned general similarity between the dress of the various races that settled in Britain. The dress of the ancient Danes, for example, is hardly distinguishable from that of the Saxons; and between that of the Saxons and Normans the difference was not substantial; whilst that of the British themselves was, after all, the same as that of the Saxons, only that it was worn very much longer and fuller. But we will discuss first the question of colour.

The scarlet colour, so often associated with witches in high steeple-hats, as well as with those nursery heroines, Mother Goose, Mother Hubbard, Little Red Ridinghood, and so forth, is still very popular for robes of dignity in most professions.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> St. Andrews, where it is worn even by students, is picturesquely called the "City of the Scarlet Gown."



It is still the official dress of the mayor and aldermen of many towns in various parts of the country; and it was also worn, for instance, at London, Hull, Nottingham, and York, during the fifteenth century; and at Oxford and Great Yarmouth in the sixteenth. And when the mayor was commanded to wear a scarlet gown, his wife was also ordered to wear a dress of scarlet, under penalty of a heavy fine for not doing so.



*By courtesy of the "Governess,"  
and Rev. H. Thursby.*

FIG. 38.—Dress of the Castle Rising Sisters. Red cloak (with Howard badge) and sugar-loaf hat, dating from James I.

The red cloak in England was an early Stuart fashion. At the "Howard" (or Trinity) Hospital of Castle Rising, founded by Henry, Earl of Northampton in 1614, the Sisters wear a red cloak in combination with the "sugar-loaf" hat of that period. At Clunn, in Shropshire, a "hospital" on the same foundation, a red gown is said to have been

worn by the men within living memory, though the steeple-hats have been replaced by modern "toppers."

Only fifty years ago a clergyman wrote: "I have preached in churches where the men, 'in the



rustic costume of white smocks,' sat apart from the women, all of whom wore red cloaks. . . . In my father's church at Saffron-Walden the nave was always filled with red cloaks."

To this day scarlet coats are still worn, for instance, by foxhunters and golfers, by certain liveried servants, such as the powdered footman of the nobility, the coachman of the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs of London, and many others.

Coming to the question of form, the Anglo-Saxon dress, which began to follow the Norman fashion, even before the Conquest, developed into a number of different garments as the result of the various ways in which the tunic and mantle were worn. Some of these have been already described. Even the coat was a tunic-like garment, and the waistcoat and petticoat probably had a like origin.

In England alone, as distinct from other parts of Great Britain, the wearing of the trouser or "trews," as a distinctive part of the national costume, was discontinued from about the beginning of the Saxon period, down to the nineteenth century. This does not, of course, mean that there were no examples of their use. They were (rarely) worn by Saxons and Normans,<sup>1</sup> and again from the

<sup>1</sup> The British trouser consisted of long loose trews, drawn tight at the ankle, like the trousers of bicyclists. Such trousers are still worn by the women of Turkey, and in other Oriental countries.



fifteenth century by labourers and "shipmen"; hence it is quite likely they may have been worn to some slight extent by other classes as well. In Ireland, the remoter parts of Scotland, and on the Continent, they were never quite given up.

The English steeple-hat, from one form of which our modern tall "silk hat" is descended, has appeared in a number of different forms in all ages of our history, and has been worn by the "Sisters" at Castle Rising, as already stated, since 1614.

This steeple-hat grew out of the conical hat worn both by the Anglo-Saxons and the Normans (and before their time in a looser form by the ancient British and Irish). It yet lingers on in northern France and other parts of Europe. That this Norman headgear was of the same origin as the English steeple-hat is proved by its side-wings, resembling the "great butterflies' wings" (as they were called) of the steeple-hats worn four hundred years ago by ladies of rank in Paris and London alike.

## WALES

The forms of the old Welsh tunic and trews, as they were worn in the twelfth century, have most fortunately been preserved for us in some twelfth-century church-carvings of Welsh knights, one of which is here figured.



They show no mantle, but that it was worn (and of a rich dark colour) we know from records of the same century.

There was even a Welsh "kilt," of which old stone monuments have preserved the record. This garment "is found delineated on an old figured stone preserved at the Knoll, near Neath." This is described as representing a "rudely carved human figure, in a short apron or kilt, reaching from the waist to the middle of the legs," consisting of a series of folds "radiating from a waistband" and resembling a "short and thickly quilted petticoat," exactly like "the Irish figures on the shrine of Saint Manchan." And another stone in Brecknockshire, ascribed to the eleventh century "at the very latest," also shows a "figure clothed in a similar short kilt." The famous scarlet cloak was not originally *Welsh*, but was copied from the red English cloak



*From Archæologia, XXX.*

FIG. 39.—Dress of a Welsh Knight in twelfth century. From a carved wooden figure in Kilpeck Church, built about 1134, showing the wearing of the ancient cap and long British "trews" or trousers.



of the Early Stuart period. As late as 1797 the scarlet cloaks of the Welsh peasant women led to their being taken for "red-coats" by the French, who surrendered to Lord Cawdor at Fishguard. The "Welsh" steeple-hat, which was regularly worn by women as late as 1870 in various parts of North Wales and Anglesey, was also due to the English steeple-hat dating from the time of the Stuarts.

#### NATIONAL DRESS—SCOTLAND

The "plaid" which was once ridiculed as "the many coloured mantle of the mountain savage," due to the substitution of wool for skins or linen, may be of high antiquity, but the kilt is usually held a modern abridgment of the belted plaid, and it has even been stated that the kilt has been proved to be the invention of "an army tailor attached to the English forces employed under General Wade against the Jacobite insurgents of Scotland."

Champions of the kilt claim, on the contrary, that a short skirt of the kilt description was worn in Scotland in the earliest times of which any record exists. They point, for instance, to several sculptured stones or monuments, the ages of which have been in each case assigned to the period covered by the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries. These include the well-known Dupplin Cross, a



monument at Forres, and a stone slab at Dull in Perthshire, all of which are said to show figures dressed in what is described as "the Highland garb," and a stone at Nigg, which is ascribed to the seventh century and is said to represent a "kilted Highlander wearing a sporran or waist-purse." In the twelfth century the seals of at least three Scottish kings are said to represent those sovereigns in the "Highland garb."

Between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries there are but one or two slight references to the Highland dress in literature, and it was on this account said to have fallen into disuse, at all events in the southern and more civilised parts of Scotland, and to have been readopted gradually during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The enthusiasm of the Highlanders for the ancient garb was reawakened, it is said, in the risings of 1715 and 1745, when it was assumed by Charles Edward, the Young Pretender. Certainly it is recorded in the sixteenth century that the "inhabitants of the western Isles [that is, of course, the Hebrides and other islands] delighted to wear 'marled' cloths, especially [those] that have long stripes of sundry colours. Their *predecessors* used short mantles or plaids of various colours sundry ways divided, and amongst some the custom is observed to this day, but *for the most part now they*



*are brown*, most near to the colour of the hadder [that is, heather] to the effect that when they lie among it the bright colours of their plaids shall not betray them."

The importance of this sixteenth century statement is not that it forms one of the earliest satisfactory notices of the plaid, but that the practice of wearing bright-coloured plaids even in the most out-of-the-way parts of Scotland, appears to have by that time almost completely died down, its revival in the Highlands occurring in the next century. Though its stripes and chequered patterns were of Celtic origin, the *name* of the "tartan" cloth (as distinct from its patterns and uses) was derived either directly from the old French, or perhaps more probably introduced from England.

As a garment the kilt,<sup>1</sup> according to the usual view, took its origin from the lower ends of what came to be called the belted plaid, apparently a substitute for the ancient Highland belted shirt worn as an outer garment, which was worn as a single undivided dress till about the end of the reign of James V. of Scotland. This dress, during the reign of the son of Queen Mary Stuart, became

<sup>1</sup> The fact that "kilt" meant "pleated" or "tucked up," as in the old song of Burns,

I'll kilt my coats aboon [above] the knee,  
And follow my love through the water,

has led old writers—odd as it seems to a modern reader—to speak of "Diana kilted to the knee," and even of a "kilted" Venus!



divided at the belt and developed into a skirt-like garb (the "little kilt" or "filli-beg" as it is called in Scotland), and a short-waisted coat worn under the plaid (much like the original form of the English sleeved waistcoat). It is said that the belted plaid, or fuller form of the dress, was especially employed by travellers and children, and that the little kilt was a light substitute for it, which was originally worn in the house.

Though the clan tartans were bright and varied (the Royal Stuart tartan having large red squares, and that worn for hunting having green and blue, whilst that worn for dress was mainly white), the checked plaid of the Scottish shepherd was often plain white and black, in keeping with the tradition that the wearer's rank was at one time indicated by the number of colours in his dress.

After the "mantle or plaid," an important part of the "Garb of old Gaul," was what was called the "trews," which were worn by the better class Highlander. These resembled what we should now call "trousers," though they were made of the "tartan cloth," and were usually close-fitting. They were sometimes fringed down the leg, and were properly made in two parts only, whereas the trouser has four pieces. "Trews of tartan" are mentioned as early as the fourteenth century, and were adopted as part of the dress by Charles



Edward, the Pretender, and again expressly named in the English Act of 1747, which was brought in to prevent the wearing of the Highland



*Brit. Mus.*

FIG. 40.—Charles Edward (the Young Pretender) wearing the “Plaid and Trews.”

dress by those who sympathised with the rebels. This Act commanded that “neither man nor boy, except such as should be employed as officers and



soldiers, should on any pretence wear or put on *the clothes commonly called the Highland clothes*, that is to say the *plaid*, ‘fillibeg’ or *little kilt*, *trouze*, [*i.e.* ‘trews’ or ‘trousers,’] *shoulder-belts or any part whatsoever of what peculiarly belongs to the Highland garb.*” The wearing of the trews is a strong link between the dress of the old Highlanders and that of other races of ancient Britain.

Shoes, like those worn by the ancient British of untanned cowhide, or deer, or sealskin, were lately common in the Orkneys and Shetlands, remaining as when described by Froissart six hundred years before. The cap is more doubtful. Planché remarks that the “flat cloth bonnet now worn in Scotland does not appear to have formed part of the primitive costume. “If ancient,” he says, “it is of Saxon or Norman or Danish introduction”; the ancient cap was leather, and conical in shape. That this was its Irish form too, we shall presently see. On the other hand, the great feather bonnet, still worn by Highland regiments, is not a recent invention, since it was worn by Montrose when he joined the Highland army in Athole in 1644.

### IRELAND

The similarity of the dress of the ancient Irish to the older form of the national dress worn by the



Scottish Highlanders was once so marked that the *identity of the two* was alleged by Captain Burt in 1726 as an argument for abolishing the national dress of Scotland, as that of Ireland had been. But

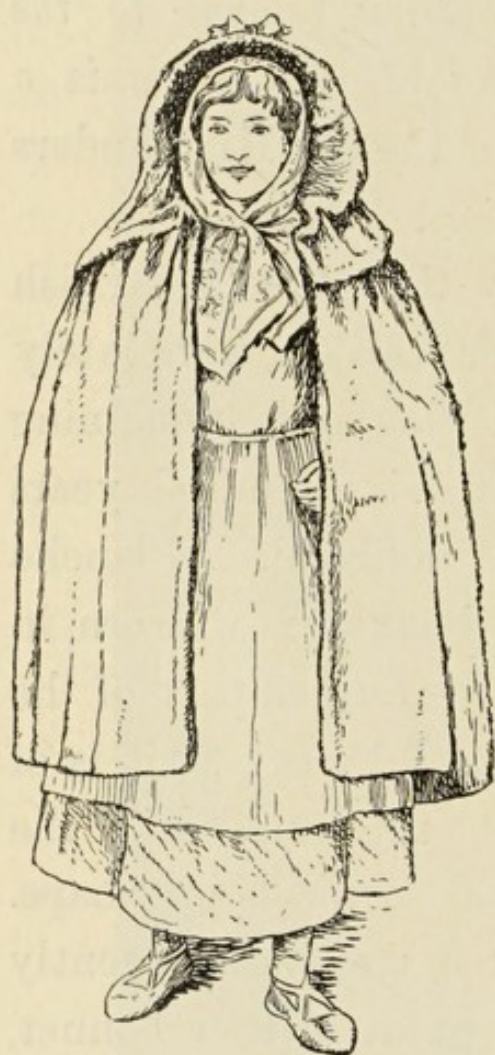


FIG. 41.—Girl with Hooded Cloak.

despite repression, some features of the ancient Irish dress still survive. Of these, perhaps on the whole, the most striking survival is the hooded cloak, worn to this day by Irish country-women in all parts of Ireland, which is of the same kind as that worn by figures of women on sculptured monumental crosses of the ninth century.

The familiar knee-breeches, which, when worn with the battered top-hat and ragged tail-coat of “Pat” or “Murphy” (so dear to the readers of *Punch* from the reckless and racy humour with which they are associated), if not copied from the costume formerly worn by Englishmen in Ireland, might have been derived from a short form of the “trews,” which, among the ancient Irish, sometimes



terminated at the knee. The "trews," long or short, which form a combined stocking and trouser may have been worn as an alternative to the kilt, since in all the *apparently* kilted figures, appearing in ancient

Irish manuscripts, on monumental crosses, and even on shrines of the eleventh century, the legs are bare. In the year 1200 the Irish dress resembled pretty closely, except with regard to the tightness of



*By courtesy of the Royal Arch. Soc. of Ireland.*

FIG. 42.—Ancient Irish Kilt, according to a group of figures on St. Manchan's Shrine, in Ireland. (See account in Joyce.)

the "trews," the costume of the ancient Gauls and southern Britons. Its main features consisted of a short-sleeved tunic or shirt, which was afterwards belted, a large mantle with cape and hood, and long close-fitting "trews." From the same account we learn that the clothes of the Irish were



of thin wool, "and mostly black, because the sheep of Ireland were in general of that colour."

In other words they were the natural colour of the undyed (black) wool. But there certainly was then no general agreement to adopt for the cloak



FIG. 43.—Irish Dress of 1200, showing ancient Irish mantle, worn with close-fitting "trews."

any one universal colour. In the *Book of Leinster* some warriors in the Ulster army had red cloaks, others "light blue cloaks," yet others had "deep blue" cloaks, and others again wore them of a green or white or yellow colour, "all bright and fluttering about them; there

was a young red-freckled lad with a crimson cloak [no doubt the son of a chief or a young chief himself] in their midst." Yet once there were rules, no doubt varying from place to place, to restrict the use of colours. For many years B.C. a slave was to be dressed in garments of a single or "self" colour, a farmer in two, and so on up to a king or queen, who wore six. Red (as in the instance given above), with



green and brown were the colours prescribed for the sons of chiefs, and the natural colours black and white (or grey), varied by yellow, were for the inferior ranks. It is clear that the ancient Irish valued bright colours, though their selection and arrangement differed in various parts of the island. In many cases the colours were blended, especially in the dress of the chiefs. In the thirteenth and following centuries, however, the scarlet cloak seems to have become established gradually as a principal recognised colour for an Irish chief. The



FIG. 44.—Irish Dress of the Seventeenth Century, showing the scarlet mantle worn by chiefs, and the close-fitting "trews" and conical cap of their followers.

cloaks made by command of King John for the Irish chiefs who came to visit him are recorded to have been scarlet, and early in the next century, in the year 1313, among the spoils left by the



sons of Brian Rae, when they fled from Mortogh, were "shining scarlet cloaks." The scarlet mantle reappears in the portrait of an Irish chief, whose follower wears the close-fitting "trews" and the ancient Irish conical cap, in 1663.

The shoes of untanned leather, which were formerly worn as part of the Scottish and Welsh costume, were worn apparently from the earliest times in Ireland as well. It is recorded that a fox once stole St. Ciaran's "brogues" (as shoes of this kind were called) and proceeded to devour them, but was captured just as he had made a meal of the ears and the thongs. Brogues are still worn in the Aran Islands off the coast.

The present national Irish colour, green, is of modern origin, and was certainly not adopted before the battle of the Boyne (1690), for at that battle the Irish were distinguished by little strips of *white* paper, which they wore in their hats, and the English under King William, by small sprays of green: hence at that time green was obviously not the national Irish colour, which was in fact royal blue.

#### INTERNATIONAL TYPES

Having arrived at this point it is possible to take a yet wider survey. For we have seen that the dress of each of the races that goes to make

up a people (such as, for instance, the people of Great Britain), though differing in certain minor features, yet agrees to a remarkable extent with the dress of its immediate neighbours.

It could, indeed, easily be shown, moreover, that the people of Holland, Germany, Norway, Italy, Spain, Great Britain and France each dress in a style which not only agrees very largely with that of the other members of this group, but at the same time, in a way which, to some extent, helps to express their own national character.

Similarly the community of style which affects all these nations as a whole, also distinguishes the European fashion of dress from that of other continents. There is a vast difference in general appearance and effect between the dress of Europeans and that of even the most highly civilised Asiatic communities. In the case of the British Empire the dress of the governing or dominant race shows, on one hand, a strong tendency to become the national dress of all the races that fight under its banner. On the other hand, this rule is much qualified by local tendencies.

The facts already mentioned will suffice to show that even the most commonplace details of our everyday dress are fraught with problems of the highest possible interest, although not seldom also of very great perplexity. Although the Norman



fashions, first introduced at the Conquest, swamped for centuries what might have been the development of the older forms of English costume in particular, yet in many cases these very same older forms rose under various modern guises once more to the surface. The result is that it is now in any case imperative for those who would understand the full significance of the various aspects of our national dress at the present day, to approach the subject historically from a racial point of view. In fact it may safely be said that

Saxon or Dane or Norman we,  
Teuton or Celt, or whatever we be,

it is impossible quite to ignore these elements if we would unravel rightly the threads that compose this wonderful national web of ours, shot as it is throughout with these brilliant gleams of colour.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE STORY OF OUR HOMES

THOSE grandees of Spain, whom we have already mentioned as having praised the large diet of the English during their visit to this country in the reign of Queen Mary, upon the same occasion

qualified their praise of our national institutions by remarking that the English of that time made their houses of "sticks and dirt." The old chronicler who records this, evidently took this remark as a reflection upon the national honour, since he observes by way of comment that the Spaniards thus appear to "like better of our good fare in such coarse cabins, than of their own thin diet in their princely habitations and palaces." A more robust patriotism would probably have taught him, in the first place, that the statement, though made perhaps with something less than the vaunted Spanish courtesy of those "spacious days," probably went, nevertheless, to the root of the matter, and secondly that there was a reason, and that by no means a discreditable one, for the fact.

Let us read the contemporary accounts that have come down to us of the Englishmen of that age, drawn by the master-hand of Shakespeare, or the praises mingled with mordant criticism in that stirring picture of this "haughty, free, and democratic race," so dangerous to its foes, drawn by the French historian Froissart. We shall then no longer feel doubt that the roughness and plainness of the houses of the English in those days was not due to any incapacity on their part to build better ones, but simply to their inveterate contempt for soft lying and luxury, in other words to the lion-like



hardihood of the race. The historian Holinshed, indeed, definitely ascribes the fact that the lower classes were then content with straw, rather to an ignorant contempt for a pleasant bed and a soft pillow, than to lack of means to obtain them.

It will now be shown, first, that our modern forms of staircase, window and fireside are the result of the slow growth of many centuries, the originally central position of the fireside dating back to the time of prehistoric Britain. Next it will be shown how one of the chief forms of house in England at the Conquest, and for hundreds of years afterwards, was in fact the hall.

This was, at first, of the Saxon style, though modified as years went on by Norman improvements. Thus the hall, which was in fact the *only* original part of the building, and had rooms in the form of separate houses annexed to it, was developed into what we now call a "house."

We shall next show that the clock towers of our country churches were originally intended for watch-towers, and were not of especially religious origin. Again, the keep was first meant to be the dwelling-house of the Lord of the Castle, the manor-house taking the place of the castle at a later period. Also the plan of some of our most ancient towns is due to their being built upon the site, and indeed sometimes on the very lines of

Roman towns or camping-grounds. Finally, in the differences of form of even our private dwellings (as much as in our public buildings), we may find, if we look, persisting through ages, the unmistakable impress of race.

### ROUND ABOUT OUR HOUSES

One of the commonest sights on our railways is the box (as it is called) that is used for signalling, in many examples of which, if we stop to consider, we shall recognise the main features of the ancient pile-dwelling, which was approached by an outside staircase or ladder. If we further observe that these modern signal-boxes are frequently supported upon four or more posts which stand a good height above the ground, the space between them being sometimes left open and sometimes boarded in to serve as a storeroom, we shall have attained a fairly adequate idea of the most important features governing such old-world dwellings as were inhabited by some of our remotest ancestors.<sup>1</sup>

The ground-floor in early times was frequently a mere storeroom, which in some cases must have been produced by boarding or fencing in the space between the posts of a pile-dwelling—a process

<sup>1</sup> The posts or “staddles” of timber or stone upon which many of our barns or granaries are built, to preserve the grain from the onslaughts of rats and mice, represent the pile-dwelling principle.



which can still be seen going on in some parts of the world among pile-dwelling races. It did not,

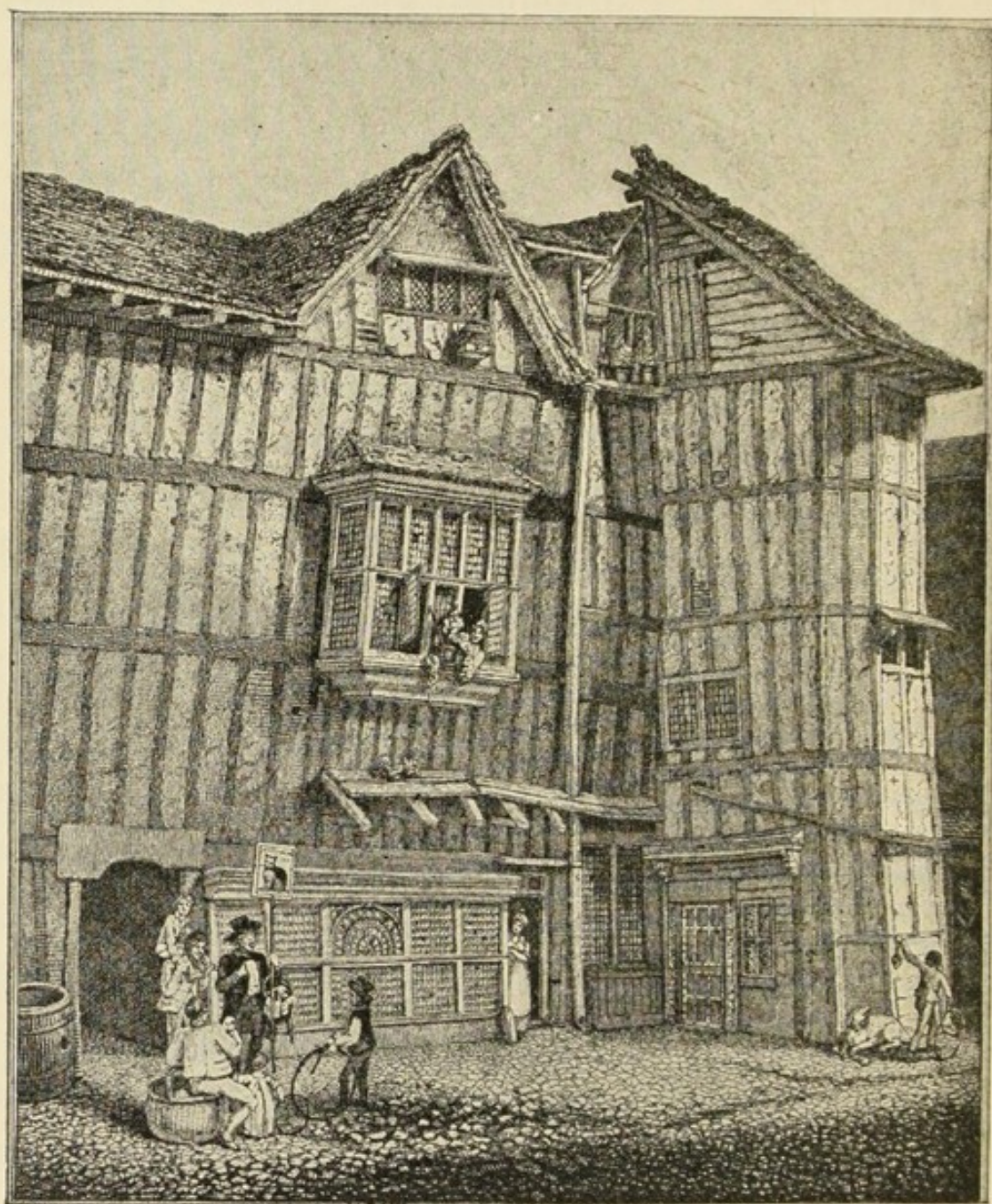


FIG. 45.—Old House in Sweedon's Passage, Grub Street, London (early nineteenth century).

“A singularly curious specimen of an external winding staircase.”

therefore, originally form a portion of the house or living-part of the building, a fact the more easily



remembered if we reflect that in every storeyed house in the country it is not the ground-floor, but the storey above it, which is called the "first" floor. Down to the reign of King Henry III. an outer stair of wood was much used for manor-houses, and as late as 1773, Dr. Samuel Johnson, travelling in the Hebrides, observed that one of the commonest types of house built in those parts had two storeys, a living-room upstairs, which was reached by an outer staircase, and a mere storeroom on the ground-floor, which could only be entered from above by an inner stair, descending within the building.

The inner staircase, like the outer one, was originally a mere wooden ladder.<sup>1</sup>

Even King Henry III. reached his chapel from his chamber at Clarendon by means of a "descending trap," and in some old-fashioned country cottages a ladder, with or without a trap, still forms the only means of communication between the two floors. In a majority of cases the use of a wooden ladder is still the only way of reaching the trap-door which opens into the loft. By gradual stages both the outside and inside ladders were made easier. Oaken or stone blocks, roughly hewn, took the place of the rungs, and in the course of a few centuries the "Tudor" staircase resulted.

<sup>1</sup> It is chiefly the steepness of the angle that makes a distinction between ladder and stair.



The early house-ladder had consisted of but a single set or flight of steps. Necessarily, however, as the "house" grew upwards and added storey to storey, the ladder grew too, and the stairs in many modern town houses have now so many flights that they are frequently replaced, or supplemented by lifts. Stairs in counting are reckoned either by pairs, or flights, the word "pair" in this connection meaning, however, not a couple of stairs, but a set. Thus a "three-pair-front" or a "four-pair-back" is a room at the back or front of the house, which is reached by three or four "pairs" or sets of stairs respectively.<sup>1</sup>

In concluding this matter of the stairs, we may note that the words "balustrade" and "baluster," of which "banister" is a corruption, are from an old Greek word (*balaustion*) meaning "wild pomegranate flower," which was at first given to railings carved according to a particular pattern resembling the double curve of the cup or "calyx" of that flower.

Another improvement which the Normans, if they did not invent it, at least did much to popularise, was the chimney, the older meaning of which was a "fireplace," for which (though in a slightly altered sense) we thus retain the Norman name.

<sup>1</sup> A similar expression once in use was a "pair of cards" (for a "pack"), and a pair of organs meant a set of organ pipes, and hence an organ.



In a hall of the Anglo-Saxon type, and no doubt at first in Anglo-Norman halls as well, the hearth was usually placed in the centre of the building, the smoke being allowed to escape through an opening in the roof called a louver (that is, "smoke-hole"), or in later times, when adapted for letting in the light, a "lantern." But of course this arrangement allowed the smoke to wander about the hall, and must at times have caused much discomfort to the guests.

Still, the size of the hall must frequently have lessened even this inconvenience, and the Normans soon improved matters by adding to the hearth a low back wall (or "reredos") with a funnel-shaped canopy or hood for catching the smoke, which, from its resemblance to a round cloak or "mantle," they called a *mantle-piece*.

But though, so far as is known, no "side-flue" or chimney in the side wall of Norman times remains, it is now thought certain that such chimneys were introduced at quite an early period, not in the hall but in other parts of the building. It was thus in use at the same time as the central fireplace, and explains the "chamber with a chimney" mentioned in *Piers Plowman*.

For the hall being open to the roof, there was nothing to obstruct the free passage of the smoke upwards. But the chambers at the side of the hall were built one above the other, so that the smoke



from the lower rooms would be obstructed by the rooms above them. Hence, from a very early period, side-flues were used, at all events in such chambers.

These early chimneys, however, did not lead into each other, and were very unlike our modern chimneys, being little more than a large gradually ascending funnel or cavity made in the thickness of the wall, a sort of elongation of the hood, in fact, with a vertical opening at the small upper end or "throat," towards which the flue rapidly diminished. An example of one of these strange funnels is in the castle wall at Hedingham in Essex.

The custom of the central hearth persisted for centuries, and in a few cases survived right down to modern times. The hall of Westminster School had a central fireplace down to 1850, and even within living memory a central fireplace was employed in the hall of Lincoln College at Oxford, and the great hall of St. John's College at Cambridge was warmed by the help of two lighted braziers, standing in the middle of the room.

As already stated, the older meaning of "chimney" was what we should now call a "fireplace," and the knowledge of this fact enables us to understand the real meaning of the expression "chimney-corner," of which our grandfathers were so fond. This old-fashioned "chimney-corner," which was also called the "ingle-nook" (from an



old word "ingle" which meant "fire"), was a corner of the fireplace in days not yet passed out of living memory. An open fireplace was then general, and this often of such a size that its sides were hung with hams and flitches of bacon, whilst the inmates of the house sat by, enjoying the cheerful blaze.

In many parts of the country these quaint chimney-corners are still to be seen, and with them the spacious old chimneys of former days, so wide that on looking up almost any one of them which happen to be out of use, we can see the sky, as well as the projecting bricks that stud their sides, arranged ladder-wise from top to bottom inside the flue, as foothold for the little sweep-boys who had to climb them.

It was in "old-fashioned" fireplaces such as those of which we have been speaking that there took place the silent and almost imperceptible revolution to which we owe our modern grate. The word "coal" was for centuries applied to burnt or glowing wood, as in the modern "char-coal."

Strange as it may seem, though we first hear of coal in England in the twelfth century (and though it has always been used locally since then, more especially in the coal-fields of the north of England), it was not till quite a late period (the reign of William III.) that coal-fires came into anything like general use. For this curious fact, popular prejudice seems to have been mainly responsible. For



it was believed previously that the fumes of coal-smoke were a deadly poison to all who had to breathe them, so much so that the burning of coal was made illegal, and it is recorded that in the reign of Edward I. (1306) a man was actually put to death for burning sea-coal in London.

Before this modern popularisation of coal, the customary fuel for many centuries past had been wooden billets, which were supported commonly upon a sort of iron trestles called "andirons" or fire-dogs, between which were placed some lower irons called creepers. The front ends of these were often much decorated. Shakespeare describes the andirons of Imogen's chamber as having

two winking cupids  
Of silver, each on one foot standing nicely,  
Depending on their brands.

These andirons, or, as they were later called, "cob-irons" upon the introduction of coal were connected by bars and thus transformed into a grate or basket (the word is a mere variant of crate) called "dog-grate," because formed from "fire-dogs." And these latter, named from their shape, appear in French in 1317.

The "back-plate" followed; a bright metal ornament or "fret," still to be seen especially on kitchen stoves,<sup>1</sup> was attached under the lowest bar;

<sup>1</sup> The word stove was originally a heated *room*, and is mentioned in 1627 as a "stove, or hothouse." In Germany the word *stube* still retains the meaning of a chamber.



the grate itself was "fixed" for convenience' sake by making the cob-irons fast to the back wall, and the open space at each side, where the chimney-corner had been, filled in with side-piers or "hobs." The latter name was transferred from the two raised stones at each side of the old-fashioned flat open hearth between which the embers were generally confined. The bent pieces of sheet-iron, still used in our kitchens, represent the earliest form of fender, intended to prevent the brands or cinders from falling out upon the wooden floor.

It remains to mention the development of our modern fire-irons, which naturally received a fresh impulse from the employment of coal. The introduction of a set closely corresponding to those still in use can be approximately dated by a list of wedding presents of the reign of King James I. In this we read of an *invention* consisting of a "fire-shovel, tongs, irons, creepers, and all other furniture of a chimney, of silver," with a "cradle," that is grate, "of silver to burn sea-coal." Although this assuredly does not mean that our present fire-irons were never used in any form before this date, it is certain that all of them, but especially the poker, must have become much more of a necessity when the use of coal became general.

We must remember that it was not every house in the old days that had a chimney at all, for in



about the year 1200, when chimneys were used, only one chimney was allowed to a castle-hall and one to a manor-house. Other houses were allowed a raised hearth, with a "rere-dos" or back-piece.

In later times, these back-pieces developed into the well-known and often beautifully designed iron "fire-backs" of Sussex. The privilege of having a private hearth was at this time highly valued, and it was not surprising to read that on many occasions, in 1516, for example, the right to use a fire was bequeathed by a dying man to his widow. The use of chimneys did not become at all general till the reign of Elizabeth, when we read of the "multitude of chimneys lately erected."

The curfew, of which we have all heard so much, was a large copper hood, which, upon the tolling of the curfew bell, was put over the fire as an extinguisher. It was not, as so often stated, a mark of subjection imposed by the Conqueror upon an unwilling country, though no doubt the law enforcing its use was at first harshly administered.

The curfew custom at the time of the Norman invasion was already established in France, Spain, and Italy, and even in Scotland, and had been enforced locally in England in the reign of King Alfred. It can therefore only be regarded as a perfectly reasonable and even necessary regulation of police, adopted as a precaution against fire,



at a time when nearly all houses were built of timber.

The curfew bell is still rung, without any compulsion whatever, in many country churches; and complete lists of all such churches have been compiled. One of the most curious cases is that of St. Mary-le-Moor at Wallingford in Berkshire where the bell was rung to welcome William the Conqueror on his arrival straight from the battle-field at Hastings. In return for this compliment—it can scarcely be called loyalty—to his cause, Duke William granted permission for the curfew bell to be rung at 9 P.M., and lights to be put out an hour later than in most other places, a practice which (it is claimed) has been kept up ever since 1066.

The word “window” originally meant “wind-eye”<sup>1</sup> and unlike “sky-light”<sup>2</sup>—a name which equally indicated its original purpose—was at first intended for ventilation rather than light. In the walls of barns, even down to the present day, we can see what these early windows were like, and

<sup>1</sup> “Windeye”: this is of old Norse origin. The Anglo-Saxon expressions were “eye-thrill” (where “thrill” means “hole” as in nostril=nose-thrill), or “eye-door.”

<sup>2</sup> The word “light,” as applied to what we should now call a window, is like “lattice” (a structure of crossed laths) of very ancient use, and this sense of the word survives in such an expression as that of “ancient lights,” an inscription often put on the wall of a building as a warning that the owner will have ground of action against any one who in any way attempts to obstruct the light given by his windows.



how closely they sometimes resembled the loopholes in a castle wall. In the earliest times they were often merely narrow vertical slits or perhaps a symmetrical arrangement of small round holes.

Before the introduction of glass, when windows, as we now understand the term, were employed for light-giving purposes, they were usually either covered or closed by shutters at night. In the former case they were covered with oiled linen or some other substitute for glass, such as horn, and it is a remarkable fact that horn panes are still to be seen in the windows of the ancient Talbot Inn at Oundle, which was built in 1626.

Glass was employed in England before the end of the seventh century, but this was in the form of stained church windows, and then the workmen for this purpose had to be imported (*e.g.* by Bishop Benedict at Wearmouth and Jarrow). It was not till some centuries later that it was used to any appreciable extent for private houses, and glass-making was not at all general in England till the reign of William and Mary, who may have encouraged the industry, long established in Holland.

Even the rich do not appear to have made use of glass windows in their mansions at all commonly before the days of Elizabeth, and the great and prohibitive cost even then made such windows a luxury beyond the reach of any one else. As glass



grew cheaper, the windows of the wealthy were made as large and as numerous as possible, for the purpose of display. Hardwick Hall, for instance, came to be described in an old rhyme as having "more glass than wall." In 1753 the window tax was first charged, and some idea of its burdensomeness can be inferred from the fact that, to take a single example, a tax amounting to fifteen shillings and sixpence levied in that year had risen, by 1817, to nearly ten pounds. Naturally this not only restricted the number of windows, but caused those already existing to be bricked up. This explains why, in old houses of this period, we often see so many bricked-up windows, and why many of those in existence were so small.

The hinged "casement," which had grown out of the ancient wooden shutter, was the immediate predecessor of our modern "sashed" window, and so precious were once the squares of glass of which it was composed that even people of rank sometimes carried them about in their carriages from one mansion to another, so as to make one set do for several houses, or else had them taken out whenever they left home, and laid up till their return.

We may at the same time note, that the word "pane," which is now applied to a window alone, originally meant a patch, rag, or piece of cloth. In the time of Queen Elizabeth it meant either an



opening or "slash" in a dress (intended for displaying the garments beneath or for inserting pieces of cloth of other colours); or the diamond-shaped markings made on a quilted coat by sewing it across in diagonal lines, whence it came to be used for the diamond-shaped panes of a casement window. The expression "paned with yellow" of a man's clothing occurs in 1592, and a "pane of glass" thirty-five years later. The diminutive form of "pane," which has much the same meaning, is *panel*.

Sashed windows, such as we now use, came in under Charles the First, and were general in the reign of Queen Anne. In the most modern times the general revival of interest in many old institutions and customs has led to the revived use of the casement window in many new buildings. This helps us the better to realise the descriptions in our poets, from the time of Shakespeare, who describes Juliet's "window" as a "casement," down to that of Keats, who almost within living memory wrote of

the song that ofttimes hath  
Charmed magic *casements*, opening on the foam  
Of perilous seas, in faëry lands forlorn—

an expression of the rarest felicity, as is the same poet's splendid description of the "casement high and triple-arched" in the *Eve of St. Agnes*.

A piece of furniture occasionally influencing the structure of the house is the bed, which among the



ancient Britons was usually of skins spread on the floor, for which the Romans of the occupation substituted rushes or heather. The Saxon beds among the poorer classes were sacks filled with fresh straw, which were laid upon benches, though actual bedsteads were enjoyed by people of rank. This use of straw continued for centuries afterwards; indeed it was employed even in the king's bedchamber, down to the earlier part of the fifteenth century. A quaint instruction to the royal bedmakers of that period was that "a yeoman with a dagger was to search the straw of the King's bed, that there be no untruth therein—the bed of down to be cast upon that." But in those early days (as has been said) our robust fellow-countrymen had a healthy contempt for a soft couch, and it was not usually therefore due to lack of means if their bed was a hard one. When bedsteads were used they commonly took the forms of what was then called the "standing-bed," and the "truckle" or "trundle-bed," the latter (which was used for servants and children) being a low flat bed on castors, that could be pushed underneath the big bedstead of the master or parents during the daytime, and pulled out again at night, if so wished, when required for use.

The name of the still familiar "tester" is taken from an old French word meaning "head," a tester-



bed being a bed with a large "head," commonly protected by curtains. The old-fashioned "four-poster" was a bed of this kind protected by curtains at the foot as well. Such beds were originally the privilege of rank, but like many other royal fashions, they were eventually copied, first by the nobles, then by people of lower degree.

A fact that may seem rather hard to realise at first is that the idea of having a separate bed for each individual was by no means universally prevalent in the Britain of our ancestors, and that it was often considered a mark of respect to set apart a separate bed for a guest. Of ancient Ireland it is recorded that certain poets, who were paying a visit to one of the Kings of Connaught, were so unreasonable as to insist that they should each have a separate bed. To this custom we may ascribe the employment of such huge old beds in England as the "great bed of Ware," which is said to have been twelve feet square, and big enough for at least twenty people. When Shakespeare speaks of "as many lies as will lie in this sheet of paper, though the sheet were big enough for the bed of Ware in England," it is to this bed that he refers.

In houses of the better class peasantry, the bed was frequently made in a cupboard, or built into a special recess, a fact which may help us to remember that in ancient England the "sleeping-



house " or " bed-house " was very frequently either a separate structure or an annex to the hall. In many country cottages to this day, particularly in Scotland, a special recess is made in the wall, into which is fitted a bunk, or perhaps even one of those wonderful contrivances described in Goldsmith's immortal poem as a " bed by night, a chest of drawers by day."

Down to quite modern times well-to-do people used to travel with their bed in their carriages ; and an instance of this, no doubt not the latest, was recorded in 1840. This custom now takes the form of travelling by sleeping-car on the railway.

At the foot of the bed, as we may see in many old pictures, was usually kept a large chest—of the kind made famous by the sad story of the " Mistletoe Bough"—in which money and articles of value, or family heirlooms, such as ladies' trousseaux, were safeguarded. These chests were formerly of massive workmanship, and sometimes most richly carved or painted ; examples of such chests may still be met with in England, as well as on the Continent, for instance in Norway, where beautifully decorated or carved chests of this kind are still quite common.<sup>1</sup>

The " wardrobe " of those days was, as a rule, not

<sup>1</sup> Sir George L. Gomme tells us that similar chests once held the joint property of the early village community.



a cupboard but a small room, fitted up with what we should now call "clothes-cupboards." In London the name of a church called "St. Andrew-by-the-Wardrobe" survives to show that the wardrobe, which in this case was that of the Queen, might even take the form of a separate building. In 1258 an order was given to make two "cupboards or armoiries" in the "King's upper wardrobe, in Winchester Castle, where the King's cloths were deposited." This record is of special interest as showing how the "cupboard" came to be used in the same way as the "armoiry" or "armoury," in which the Knights' gear originally hung.

In the fifteenth century, however, the original cupboard still survived as a kind of "side-board," that is, an arrangement of shelves or boards at the side of the hall, upon which the services of plate and gold and "cups," or other drinking-vessels were ranged.

Even in Elizabeth's reign we meet with the expression "thoroughly gilded, as the silver plate upon their cupboards." One such hall-cupboard, which was used at the wedding of Prince Arthur, son of Henry VII., contained plate worth £20,000, and was built in five stages or steps, which were covered with a cloth, and had the cups displayed upon them. So too abroad, in a German book of 1587 there was a similar picture of one of these ancient cupboards, which was used during



the ceremonies at Prague, when the Grand Duke Ferdinand of Austria invested the Emperor and the Grand Dukes Carl and Ernest with the order of



FIG. 46.—A Royal Hall of the fourteenth to fifteenth century, showing a "Dresser" or "Cup-Board" in five tiers, the prerogative of royalty, for display of plate.

[Note the use of the steeple-hat in all stages, and similarity of dress worn both by some of the men and women—the women's hats have veils.]

the Golden Fleece. This latter cupboard also had five steps, and this leads us to the fact that by a strange rule of etiquette, cupboards of five such



steps were at that time the exclusive mark and privilege of royalty ; the nobility of all grades might have cupboards built in from two to four steps only, according to their rank, and plain gentlemen might have cupboards of only a single step.

This is a point of much interest, since it helps us the better to recognise in this ancient hall-cupboard our modern kitchen dresser. Quotations show further that the former application of the word "dresser" was to a table in the dining-room or hall, from which dishes were served or on which plate was displayed. In a translation of the works of the French historian Froissart (1525) we read of "all the plate of gold that was served in the palace at the dresser." That the courtly practice was imitated by country-folk in a country manner is amusingly shown by the allusion in Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew* (iv. i. 166) and the remark of Harrison, in the middle of the same century, that there were farmers then who had "a fair garnish of pewter on their cupboards."

Thus the modern kitchen dresser represented the old hall cup-board or side-board of a single stage, the space under the step being filled in with a cupboard during the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries. Henry VIII. paid a joiner "for eight cup-boards, some with aumbreys [really *arms*-cupboards] and some without." And it was besides in the same king's



reign that the dresser or "dressor," as it was then called, was discarded from the hall or principal apartment, and the name was first applied, as now, to a piece of kitchen furniture.

Even the very "paper" on the walls will tell us something of its history, when we discover that the older name for wall-paper was "wall-hangings," or more simply "hangings." We even find in a Journal called the *London Gazette*, published in 1718, a reference to "paper painted or stained for hangings," and at a yet later date (1752) we find it still actually called "hanging-paper." So we see that "wall-paper" is merely a modern cheap substitute for the once beautifully figured and embroidered "hangings" of tapestry, first mentioned in Anglo-saxon times as "wall-clothing," and portrayed by poets of all ages in our history down to Keats, who gave us that vivid picture of an ancient mansion during a storm, in which

The arras, rich with huntsman, hawk and hound,  
Fluttered in the besieging wind's uproar,  
And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor.

The particular kind of tapestry, which went by the appellation of "arras," got its name from the town of Arras in France, where it used to be made, and the English material called "worsted," which was very much employed for wall-hangings in the fourteenth century, came from the village of



Worsted, near Norwich. These wall-hangings were anciently called "hallings," and were so valuable that they were frequently bequeathed in wills, an instance being the will of the Black Prince who left to his son Richard "a hall of worsted—that is, tapestry for a hall—embroidered with mermaids of the sea and a red and black border" vertically striped and "broidered with swans with ladies' heads" as well as a "hall of ostrich feathers, of black tapestry with a red border wrought with swans with ladies' heads" to the church at Canterbury, a "hall" embroidered with eagles and griffins to the Princess his wife. In Scotland it was, however, so rare that even King James V., when he travelled, had to carry tapestry, from one palace to another.

Down to the sixteenth century the ceiling was nothing but the under side of the floor above, which was often richly carved or panelled. Its name is corrupted from the Latin word for "heaven," which came to be used to express a similar idea, and traces of this Latin usage also survive in the modern French *ciel* and other modern languages; indeed even in the German name, the sense of "heaven" is preserved, though the form of the word is different. In 1350, the expression "a heaven of cloth of gold" is employed in the sense of a canopy, and so far back as the eleventh century such expressions as "house-heaven" and "heaven-



roof" were the Anglo-Saxon names for the ceiling of a room.

Both wall-hangings and carpets<sup>1</sup> were first used principally for churches—for which purpose carpets were specially made at Ramsey in Huntingdonshire. In the thirteenth century, however, Don Sanchez, Archbishop of Toledo, and half-brother of our own queen Eleanor, brought some rich carpets and hangings with him to England for his sister's rooms. This fact occasioned the criticism that the Queen was "having her apartments adorned with costly hangings *like a church* and *carpeted after the Spanish fashion*."

But nevertheless, the royal example was soon eagerly followed, and found its way even into the houses of well-to-do farmers, whence it spread gradually over the entire country.

In concluding these remarks we may note that there being no furniture-makers in those early days even the sovereign, as, for example, Henry III., had to order the purchase of "a great beech tree to be made into tables for the royal kitchens at

<sup>1</sup> Before the use of carpets, floors frequently consisted of the natural soil rammed down. Indeed, the floor of the hall, below the raised platform or "dais," was significantly termed the "marsh." The extreme rarity of boarded floors at this date appears from the fact that King Henry III. ordered a room on the ground-floor in Windsor Castle to be "boarded like a ship," the employment of such a metaphor showing how unfamiliar the idea must then have been.



Westminster." The "upholsterer" of later days was at this time an auctioneer, and got his name from being an "upholder" or "uphold-ster" of various articles of furniture; in other words, he "held them up" at auction. This is why we find in *Piers Plowman* "upholders on the hill shall have it to sell," the hill in question being the Cornhill in London. Even as late as 1750 at the Grey Coat Hospital in London, an order was given "to Mr. Goff, the upholder, for a bedstead, bedding and curtains," and in 1762 a further sum is again recorded as having been paid to Mr. Goff, "the upholsterer"; this was certainly the same individual. The Court Upholsterer or Tapissier, as he is called (from being at first a worker in tapestry), is to this day an officer of our own Royal household.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE STORY OF OUR HOMES (*continued*)

#### ENGLAND

THE vast majority of the people in these islands dwell in buildings which may be described either as a house (properly so called) or a cottage, the difference between the two types consisting in the fact that the house is almost always provided with

an entrance passage or hall, which is wanting in the cottage. Down to the fifteenth century, labourers' cottages or cabins in England still took the form of a single undivided room, with three apertures for window, door and chimney (often with no fireplace at all), and a hurdle across the centre to separate the children from the pigs, sheep and chickens. These cabins were for the most part extremely small, and till the reign of Henry II. were not only usually of wood, but of so slight a character that that king was able to issue a command for "the houses of heretics" to be "carried outside the town and burnt."

The practice of building in wood went back to Anglo-Saxon times, as is shown by the Anglo-Saxon words "to timber" and "tree-wright," which meant build and builder respectively. Even when stone was substituted for wood as the building material, the ancient methods of timber construction were still followed, as appears, for instance, very clearly in the tower of the church at Earls Barton.

Going back to a much earlier period, although a cabin or "square box" type of hut (either with or without holes for window, door and chimney) was certainly known as far back as the Stone Age, yet the general form which the hut then took was undoubtedly round, and of this there is plentiful proof in the remains that are found in the remoter parts



of Great Britain. Of the round type there are several survivals even at the present day. Among these are the round charcoal-burner's hut with its turfed walls, examples of which may be seen as



*By courtesy of Mr. S. Hazzledine Warren.*

FIG. 47.—Charcoal-Burner's Hut, Epping Forest. A modern representative of one kind of Prehistoric Round Hut, showing the upright form of door now taking the place of the inclined doors formerly cut in the slope of the turfed hut-walls.

near London as Epping Forest. There are also the bell tent of our soldiers and the round "*summer-house*," still to be found in many old-fashioned gardens, which are similarly built upon the plan of a round prehistoric cottage.



The use of the term "summer house" in the last instance, indeed, is significant, for the earliest summer-house was a rough temporary shelter erected in summer and for the use of the men who drove the cattle, as was then generally the case, to the upland pastures where they fed in summer. The opposite of this term was winter-house, which was similarly employed in reference to this most ancient and widespread custom of wandering peoples. In the Bible, in the book of Amos, we find "I will smite the winter house with the summer house; and the houses of ivory shall perish . . . saith the Lord."

The principal unit from which the English *house* was ultimately derived was, on the other hand, undoubtedly the hall. Most of us know that even down to the present day the front door frequently opens into what is still called the "hall"—most frequently the merest apology for an entrance or ante-room with rooms above it. This small confined passage, which still in most cases forms a connexion between the living-rooms of the family and the servants' quarters, is certainly the true though degraded survival of the once magnificent banqueting-room of our ancestors, at once in by-gone days the largest, most important, and, indeed, only original part of the ancient dwelling-house.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Westminster Hall, though not the oldest, is perhaps, out of many, the most illustrious example that yet remains to us.



Thus we see that, like so many other of the most important factors in our modern civilisation, the English house has been built up by the successive incorporation of several units in one, as a result of the slow but steady growth of centuries. This fact, if we reflect, may lend some interest even to the dullest and most forbidding in appearance of all our modern houses. It is, indeed, this old importance of the hall that explains why many old manor-houses and other mansions, both in town and country, coming down to us from a time when the hall was an even more prominent feature than in a castle, still retain "The Hall" as their simple designation—a term which is applied by a yet further extension, to the chief house in a parish, irrespective of its form.

The ancient Danes, Norwegians, Anglo-Saxons and Germans (and no doubt the Normans too) all built various forms of the hall. But though they each of them moulded it after their own ideas, and in accordance with their own requirements and materials, thus causing much difference of detail, yet the central idea of a joint living-room for the community, supported when large on a double row of pillars and open to the roof, was familiar to all of them. It can be traced to this day throughout Europe as the modern representative of the ancient *tribal building* of all the races that employed it.



In those far distant days the rooms of what we should call a "house" were not combined as a single building under one roof; the hall was, in fact, the primitive house, and any additions that were made to it at first took the form of separate structures, each of which was itself called a "house" as well.

This explains why in old records we find what would now be several parts of the same building described separately as the "bake-house," "larder-house," "spinning-house," "fire-house" or hall, and so forth, all of which were under separate roofs.

The royal manor-houses of Henry III. comprised an enclosure in which the buildings, still perfectly isolated, were dotted about at random all over the ground. For the sake of convenience, however, they were soon connected by covered ways, in order that, as is actually recorded, *the Queen might walk from her chamber to her chapel* "with a dry foot."

By gradual steps of this kind, the ordinary house, beginning with the hall, acquired private chambers in the form of an annex at the upper end, or side, of the hall for the family, and kitchens, storerooms, barns, and eventually servants' rooms, and other offices at the opposite extremity.

As time went on, the hall with these annexes came to be combined under a single roof. One fact that helped to make this development necessary was the gradual disuse and desertion of the hall,



which of course no longer required to be built of such a size, when the practice of sharing the common meal in it came to be abandoned.

In *Piers Plowman* (1360-1390) we read how this form of luxury gradually crept in, and we may readily guess how stoutly it must have been condemned and combated by those who (like the poet of the Vision) clung to the ancient fashions:

Now hath each rich a rule | to eat by themselves  
In a private parlour | for poor men's sake,<sup>1</sup>  
Or in a chamber with a chimney <sup>2</sup> | and leave the chief hall,  
That was made for meals | to be eaten in.

This stage in the history of the hall eventually left it as a mere entrance-room or passage, giving communication equally with the rooms occupied by master and servants. It also gradually helped to bring about a practice either of building the walls higher than before, so as to allow for the conversion of the higher part of the building into an upper storey or "sleeping-loft," or of adding fresh rooms at the side or end of the hall. The "up-floor," as the Saxons had called it, was afterwards lighted by a couple of dormer windows.

The hall part of the house usually stood with its long side to the front, the annexed buildings flanking it, usually at right angles, flush with the front.

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* to avoid the poor.

<sup>2</sup> Fireplace.

This general plan was often adopted for old manor-houses, rectories, and farm-houses, usually, of course, with farm buildings attached. In the towns, the houses were generally erected with the gable-end abutting on the street-front.

We have seen how the English hall was made into what we should now call a house, both by bringing together a number of small independent houses under the cover of one roof, and by building fresh rooms above them. Both these principles can be seen carried out, often on an extremely extensive scale, in our modern public buildings, and even in many private ones.

In some of the huge industrial cities of to-day, the greatly increased cost of building land has stimulated what may be called the "piling-up process," until the structure becomes in many cases a vast and overpowering mass of masonry of the kind often humorously styled a "sky-scraper."

Each successive storey is, usually, the monotonous counterpart of the one that went before, and if during our walks we look at the houses or shop-fronts in almost any large town, we shall even see some characteristic features that once formed a structural part of the first-floor or ground-floor (such as "floor" projections and columns or pillars), employed over and over again to decorate each successive storey, until the roof is reached.



The most picturesque of these characteristic repetitions is perhaps that of the projecting part of the first-floor, which was a development of the timber-built house.<sup>1</sup> In England it was called, in the time of Shakespeare at least, a "jutty" or "jetty," from its jutting forwards, this enabling it to protect the goods exposed for sale in the street below.

It seems clear from its name that the "solar," or sun-chamber, which was given to the upper storey in earlier times, and is still used on the Continent, was introduced into England by the Normans, who grafted it upon the typical English hall. In a famous old Norman poem of the thirteenth century, the subject of which is the life of St. Alban, a clerk upon arriving at Verulam (the old name of St. Albans) tells us that he there found "a stone Palace which was no cottage" (he means that it was a house of great size), "with solars and storeys, and great cellars below."

It is interesting to find the "sun-chamber" here coupled with the "cellar," because the Romans employed the arch for vaulting their cellars, and thus we are led to the fact that this form of construction, though adopted by the Normans, must have been originally derived, like the "solar," from the Romans themselves.

<sup>1</sup> See illustration on p. 188. It is absent from Norman churches and castles, in which the material used is stone.



With the softening of manners in England and the increasing desire for privacy, there had grown up, by slow degrees, the idea of having private rooms or "chambers" (as the Normans called them), designed for the various requirements of the family. These chambers, which by the thirteenth century were located on the upper floor and were reached by an outer staircase, included the parlour or conversation-room—the name of which is taken from an old Norman word connected with our own word *parley*, which properly means to "talk"—the drawing-room—which, down to quite modern times, still retained its early fifteenth-century name of "withdrawing-room," from its being the room to which the family, more especially the ladies, "withdrew"—and the dining-room or eating-room, which became necessary when the custom of eating in hall was abandoned by the family.

Coming to the present day, the gradual development of the hall, as a single large apartment with annexes into the house of later days, can perhaps best be studied from observing many of our older manor-houses and colleges, in which the hall still retains a prominent position. But a more familiar instance of this development may be seen in many of the ancient farm-houses which are still to be found in out-of-the-way parts of the country. A number of farm-houses are yet in existence which



consist of a dwelling-house, barn, and stables under one roof. In a few instances, even, there is a door or passage leading from the house to the barn, though such examples are rare.

Farm-houses consisting of a central part with two aisles and a dwelling-house at the upper end, though rare, are still to be seen in some parts of the country, as, for instance, at Upper Midhope in Yorkshire. The cattle in this case are stalled between the pillars in one of the wings or "aisles," whilst the remainder of the space, including the opposite "aisle," is occupied by the threshing-floor.

Here it is plain that the part of the building covered by the barn and the stalls corresponds in form to the ancient English hall, while the dwelling part answers to the family apartments, which in olden times were annexed to it. A yet more obvious development of farm buildings from the hall can be seen abroad, as, for instance, in Saxony, where a common type of farm-house consists of a long and broad building with two "aisles" in which the horses and cattle are stalled, the servants sleeping above these, and the family at the end of the building.

The better-class private country dwelling-houses in the fifteenth century consisted, as a rule, of a single large apartment with an earthen floor, and open to the roof, in which the entire family lived



and dined and slept. In London itself, where the houses frequently had a dug-out cellar, in addition to the ground-floor and first-floor, it was not unusual for the three large apartments thus provided to be each inhabited by a separate family, even in the case of the well-to-do, so that our modern flats are, after all, nothing more than a revival of this most ancient custom.

An observant writer has remarked that "in various counties we can scarcely fail to be struck with the differences in the forms of the cottages, as in the height of the buildings, the pitch of the roof, as well as the material." A proper survey of the country from this point of view would surely prove that such differences were to some extent due to the influence of race. The evidence of language, as the following examples will show, would materially assist such an inquiry.

As is well known, every little knot or group of Saxon houses—such as grew into the modern many-roomed house—standing in its own grounds, was called a *burgh* or *tun* (our modern "town"), a fact which sufficiently explains the reason for the vast number of places in England at this day, the names of which end in one or other of these terminations. Of these two words, *burgh* (also borough and bury) meant a place of protection or shelter, and is a mere variant of our modern English "burrow," an



expression which appears, oddly enough, in the first syllable of "*burglar*."

The corresponding Danish termination was *-by*. The Anglo-Saxon ending *-tun*, on the other hand, meant a homestead or "ham,"<sup>1</sup> such as was then frequently enclosed by a rampart of earth, usually formed of soil thrown up from a ditch and surmounted by a hedge,<sup>2</sup> in which we may see the forerunner of one of the usual forms of enclosure by which our farmers protect their fields. A fact which makes this clearer is that, originally, such hedges were properly employed to enclose *homesteads*, the system prevailing in England almost universally down to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries being that of open fields.

The British or Celtic form of "tun" was "dun" or "down," and as the British encampments were usually on a hill, "down" came to mean a hill.

From what has already been said, we can see how, in many cases, we may still roughly trace upon a map the limits of the settlements of each

<sup>1</sup> Frequently confused with the Friesland ending "*-hamm*," a *hemmed-in* place or enclosure. Both endings are common.

<sup>2</sup> A striking example is that of Bamborough, of which we read in the *Saxon Chronicle* that one Ida in A.D. 547 "built Bamborough, which was at first enclosed with a hedge, and afterwards by a wall"; but the real meaning of this is that the rock was *palisaded*, and the settlement thus became a "borough." So, too, Kingsbury near St. Albans got its name from being a royal "Burgh," and was once a stockaded palace of the Saxon kings of Mercia.



race, of which the nation was originally composed, by finding out the oldest forms of the place-names. For example, the common Saxon ending “-ing” occurs with very great frequency in Sussex, a country which we know to have been overwhelmingly Saxon; whereas the Danish “-by,” common in Lincolnshire, does not occur in Kent, Hampshire, or the Isle of Wight, all of which were peopled by Jutes. On the other hand, there are many place-names of Saxon or Norse origin, on and near the coast of South Wales, a part of the country where if we did not stop to reflect we should certainly not have expected to find them.

Before leaving the subject of domestic architecture, there are one or two features of certain public buildings, as, for instance, churches and castles, which stand in a more or less definite relationship to the “hall,” and therefore ought not to be left out of the discussion. At the same time, it can hardly be pointed out too strongly that it is quite beyond the scope of this book, in any way, to deal with even the chief features of the various “styles” in our church and castle buildings. Information of this kind has been very often published, and is readily accessible to all who are interested, though, in spite of the quite overwhelming proportion of attention given to it, it is probably not so important from our present point of view, as are



methods of house-building of the domestic sort. All that can be here attempted is to direct attention to one or two general aspects of these two forms of public architecture, which happen to illustrate some of the leading principles with which this book is concerned.

Both castle-hall and church have this in common, that they are alike intended as meeting-places for the folk of a particular village or district. Both afford examples of some of the principles that we have already seen at work in secular buildings (for example, that of the building up of the unit), and both alike are eloquent of the peculiar characteristics and surroundings of the races by which they were from time to time respectively built.

In the earliest times, the church was the common hall of the parish, and often served as a fort in time of attack; indeed it frequently stood on the very site of the stockade that had been built by the first settlers. Courts were held in it, as is still the practice in northern Spain. Corn and wool were stored in the nave, and the village feasts took place there; even dancing was permitted at Christmas, as late as the seventeenth century, in the churches of Yorkshire. Yet, in the case of our churches and cathedrals, the process of development was almost from the first profoundly modified and complicated by the domination of the religious idea, which affected the entire plan of the structure. During



what was called the Romanesque period of church architecture, "cruciform" or cross-shaped churches were built, and at one time this became the all but universal style, the Western Church following, as a rule, the shape of what is called the "Roman" cross, and the Eastern Church that of the Greek.

On the other hand, the churches of the early Christians were also very often erected in the form of a long "hall," supported by a double row of pillars, resembling that in which the Roman Governor held his Court. The usual opinion is, that in the early days of Christianity, "halls" of this kind were frequently converted to Christian uses, the *west* end of the building, corresponding to that at which the Roman Governor had formerly sat, becoming, as at Silchester, the Christian sanctuary.<sup>1</sup> Such a Roman hall was called a *Basilica*, from a Greek word meaning "royal," because it was copied from the "Royal" or King's Porch at Athens. This form of building came to be favoured greatly, no doubt from its simplicity and convenience, as well as for the reasons given above, by English church-builders, and the use of the church building as a court, as well as for many other purposes, continued in England for centuries. Perhaps we may sum up by saying that some forms, at least, of our earliest English churches

<sup>1</sup> This was about A.D. 300 ; the transference of the altar to the *east* end took place some centuries later.



were evolved from non-religious buildings in other lands, but that it was as churches that they appear to have been introduced into England.

A fact of supreme importance in the history of English church-building was the Norman influence, which, in the course of its own development in England, seems to have substituted stone for timber as the regular material for building, and having thus completely remoulded the architecture of the country, inspired and provided funds for our most active church-building period, which attained its perfection at Durham. This influence has stamped itself deep upon the language, witness such expressions as "nave," "arch," "chancel," "aisle," "tower," "porch," and many other words of Roman origin, that reached us through the Norman.

Hence, although the standard of building reached by the Saxons was itself a high one, yet the old writer, Aubrey, is not far from the truth when he remarks, with reference to the Conquest, "the Normans then came, and taught them [the Saxons] civility and building." The only thing here to guard against is the idea that the Normans brought their architecture with them "ready made" (as it were), instead of developing it gradually, as is now believed to have been the case, in England, before the middle of the twelfth century.

In some of our still existing churches, it is not



difficult to trace the steps by which, in order to develop the structure to the requisite size or grandeur, one unit or division of the building was added to another.

In some continental churches, indeed, as in those of Switzerland and Norway, these principles are exhibited with especial clearness.

An abbey differed from a cathedral in this, that it was built, as a rule, out of the offerings of pilgrims and other devout persons, and thus grew up gradually around the shrine of some famous Saint.

Round these abbeys and convents, as around many old castles, there developed a tendency, as time went on, for villages or even towns to spring up. There is a very good example of one of these convent-made villages in the north of Hertfordshire. On the very spot where a wayside cross was erected (in or about the year A.D. 1160), a convent was founded by the Lady Roise or Rohesia, and a priory was afterwards built by Eustace de Mere. This was at first called Roise Cross, and afterwards Roise Town or Royston.

Lastly, we come to the question of the church-tower. This, as we know, is often called a *belfry*, a name from which there is much to be learnt. The old spelling of the word was not "belfry" but "berfrey," and although this "berfrey" or "bierfrois" was used for a bell-tower as early as 1226, yet the



word had nothing to do with "bell" even when it happened to contain one, but simply meant, originally, a "strong place of refuge." The fact of its being also used for bell-towers no doubt helped to fix the form of the word as "belfry."

In its oldest form the "berfrey" was usually a movable tower of timberwork such as was used in the Middle Ages for besieging fortifications. When the French historian Froissart speaks of "two belfroys of great timber, with three stages (or stories), every belfroy on four great wheels," and adds that each "stage" contained 100 archers, it is this ancient siege-tower to which he alludes. From this usage the Norman "berfrey" came to mean a tower to protect watchmen, and hence a watch-tower, a beacon-tower, and so on.

Reminiscent of its ancient origin is therefore the fact that, like the body of the church itself, the church-tower was much used down to quite modern times for purely secular purposes. The tower of St. Clement Danes—erected in London on the very spot where the Danes, driven out of the city by Alfred, settled in the ninth century—was sometimes used for a beacon to guide the shipping on the Thames, sometimes as a station for guns to keep order among the proud churchmen and nobles who resided in and about the neighbourhood, and sometimes too as a protection against the pirates



who attacked and plundered those frequenting the river. The church-tower was, in a great many cases, actually employed as a watch-tower or look-out place in the country villages, and often stood quite apart from the church itself.

Some of these separate towers have indeed survived to this day. Even at Chichester Cathedral, at Evesham, Berkeley and elsewhere, the tower stands quite apart from the main building and its spire, as is the case in many of the cathedrals on the Continent. At East Dereham, Walston and Elstow the same kind of division may be seen. At St. Albans the town Bell-tower, or "clock-house," stands quite alone, having no church attached, and the tower here was remarkable for containing one of the most ancient horologes (the predecessors of our modern church-clocks), made by an abbot of St. Albans in 1326. This particular horologe was unique, being such as then was "nowhere else in Europe," and showed various movements of the heavenly bodies.<sup>1</sup>

Most of our old church-towers have four windows in the topmost storey, one looking towards

<sup>1</sup> Possibly it may have resembled the celestial globe (showing the movements of the sun, moon and planets, impelled by weights and wheels, which pointed out with certainty the hour, night and day) that was sent to the Emperor Frederic II. in 1232 by the Sultan of Egypt. The first mention of the clock as a piece of household furniture occurs in the *Roman de la Rose* (1305).



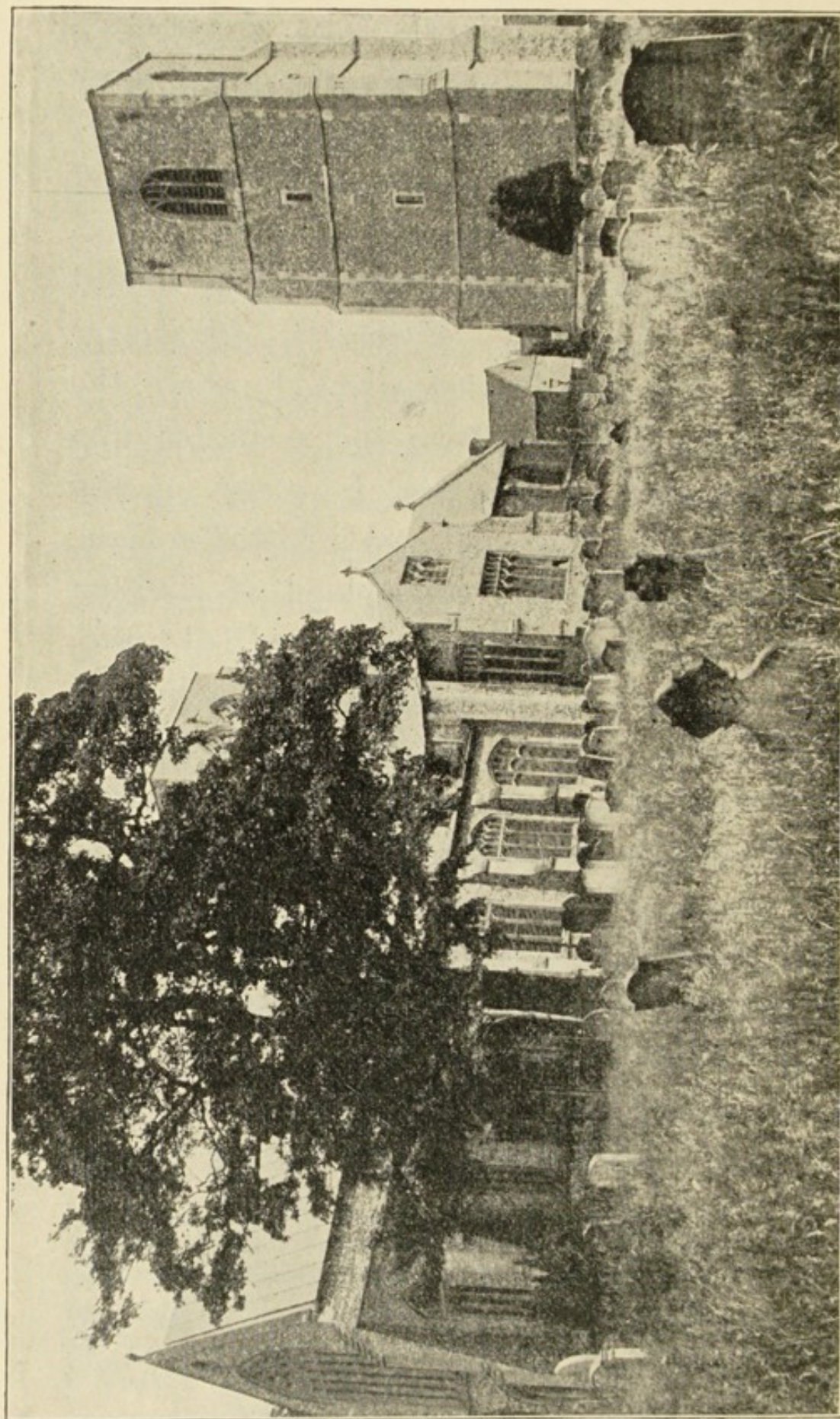


FIG. 48.—Parish Church of St. Werburgh or, more properly, "Werburh," East Dereham, Norfolk,  
taken from near St. Werburgh's Well.

Remarkable for having a belfry tower (to the right) in addition to the original tower attached to the main building, the belfry tower having been added because the original tower could not sustain the bells.



each point of the compass; this arrangement was, of course, originally made for the convenience of the watchman's work.

Many old towers were inhabited by watchmen, as was still in quite recent days the case in Germany, and some yet show traces of former habitation in the shape of fireplaces.<sup>1</sup> The tower of Bedale Church, near Richmond in Yorkshire, which was built for defensive purposes, was actually furnished with a portcullis. Again many of the churches on the East Anglian coast were regularly used as beacon-towers for the guidance of ships at sea. In other parts of the country, as at Newcastle, they were employed to give light to travellers on the then pathless moors. Hence we may see plainly that the original object of these towers was to serve as watch-towers, or for other non-religious purposes, and that they were also intended as a residence for the watchmen, and not merely to contain a peal of bells.

In many respects, therefore, the church-tower once served a purpose similar to that of the main tower, or "keep," as it was called, of a castle. The keep was, in the first instance, in particular the domestic part of the castle and contained a set of rooms

<sup>1</sup> It may be added that the term "luffer"-boards (louver-boards) often given to the open weather-boarding at the top of a church tower, probably goes back to the time when these boards were really used as "louver-boards," for the escape of the smoke.



built one above the other for the use of the owner and his family. Such early keeps contained, in addition to sleeping chambers for the family, a large room used as the dining-apartment, and in some cases a chapel as well. The best example that can be given is perhaps the famous "White Tower" of the Tower of London, begun by the Conqueror's order, which contains, in addition to many private chambers, a hall no less than 90 ft. long, as well as a chapel.

Besides the rooms we have mentioned, the keep of an ancient castle often contained in an upper storey a watchman's room. This was the case at the Peak Castle in Derbyshire, inhabited by two watchmen from the year 1158 onwards. Incidentally also the keep served, when occasion arose, as a place of refuge against attack, for all who lived within the castle precincts, and paid what was called ward-silver or castle-guard. In this respect the keep resembled the Northumbrian "peel"—originally a "palisaded" tower—or, to take a less familiar example, the watch-tower built beside a chief's residence in some parts of North-west India.

To conclude, the keep was often actually erected—usually upon a rock or other eminence—on the very site of an ancient watch-tower or look-out place, which has certainly in some cases existed since prehistoric times.



Indeed the circuit of its outer wall, or "curtain," as it was called, may from this point of view be regarded as the counterpart of the rampart of earth, crowned by a palisade, which defended the settlements of the early inhabitants of Great Britain. To put the matter in another way, the prehistoric castle, if the term may be allowed, consisted of a fort or earthwork, often of a circular plan, which contained and protected the huts of the defenders. Excellent examples occur in all parts of Great Britain, as well as on the continent of Europe. One of the best in England is perhaps the famous round fort at Grim's Pound on Dartmoor, which measures about 400 feet across, and still shows the round foundations of the defenders' dwellings.

We must therefore think of the castle not merely as a single building, but rather as a cluster of buildings, modified through being built and owned by a single individual for military purposes chiefly. Very commonly, in fact, it actually consisted in the most ancient times of a single watch-tower or citadel, surrounded by small lightly built houses, in which the lord's retainers lived.

Not until long after the Conquest did the castle become highly specialised and developed, to keep pace with the improved military science of the day. The earliest castles of the Conqueror were mere ramparts of earth, or at most, wooden structures,



the building of stone castles by the Normans not taking place till the middle of the twelfth century.

When at a much later period such buildings began to be designed as private residences, the keep long survived its early use, and was retained as an ornament to the building. In many cases the castle became a true residence, but it is, nevertheless, chiefly to the manor (in its original sense of "manor-house") that we must look to supply a link between the ancient military keep and the now old-style farm-house, as well as with the modern "house" properly so called.

We now come to the consideration of houses arranged side by side in rows, or, as we should nowadays say, in "streets," a common word which we habitually and heedlessly use, without ever recalling the fact that—like the name we give to the very *walls* of the houses we live in—it is of Roman introduction. Thus we may, if we stop to reflect, return in spirit to the far-off days when Britain was for about four centuries overshadowed by the wings of the Roman eagle.

In the far-off age, when London first became a town, each house must have stood, like the houses in modern Dutch towns, in its own enclosure. In the twelfth century the houses of London had only one storey above the ground-floor, but in the fourteenth century they began to be built with two



or even three floors, the upper storey being called a "garret," the meaning of which is "watch-tower."

This garret was made to project after the manner of the lower storey, though to a lesser extent, partly perhaps with the idea of giving, as has been said, a little more room and shelter to goods in the street, but chiefly, no doubt, from its being built as a mere repetition of the storey below. In houses of this type the garret was utilised as a storeroom or "loft," the first floor being the actual living-room of the family.

By studying the streets in almost any of our older towns we can often see clearly how the size and course of some of them have been affected by conditions connected with the old order of things long passed away. Where the successive upper stories projected—each in the direction of the house opposite—on both sides of the street, the effect in the very narrow streets of former times was to bring the top windows very close to each other, so much so, in fact, that people in them might, it is often said, shake hands across the street.

Certainly these projecting stories did much to narrow the streets in such old towns, but until the popularisation of the coach this did not much matter, since nearly every one rode on horseback—an idea still commemorated in such names as that of "Knightrider Street" in the City of London.



All that was then really wanted was a somewhat broader street for waggons, a feature which is preserved in such a name as "Wain Gate" or "Waggon Street," which is common in the north.

The remaining streets were frequently mere alleys, impassable to all but foot-passengers, horses and cattle. These were called by different names in various parts of the country, either by the Norman name "alley" or the English name "row."

Of these lanes there are numberless examples, many of them appropriated to particular trades, as in the case of Goldsmiths' Row, Butchers' Row, Carriers' Row, and Paternoster Row, in London. The latter was named from the turners of beads for rosaries, who lived there because of its nearness to St. Paul's, they being popularly called "paternoster-makers," because they manufactured the beads used for counting the repetitions of the Lord's Prayer ("Pater Noster").

In the same way certain parts of the town would often be associated with a particular nationality, as in the Jewry—a part commonly found in most large medieval towns—Little Ireland, Little Scotland, Little Britain, and even Petty France.

In some of our oldest cities, of which York is a type, the whole of the ancient part of the town was surrounded by a wall, and the four main waggon-tracks led to four principal gates, the rest of the



streets being for the most part the narrow rows to which we have referred, except where later improvements or alterations have been introduced. The reason for this is that York was laid out as a Roman

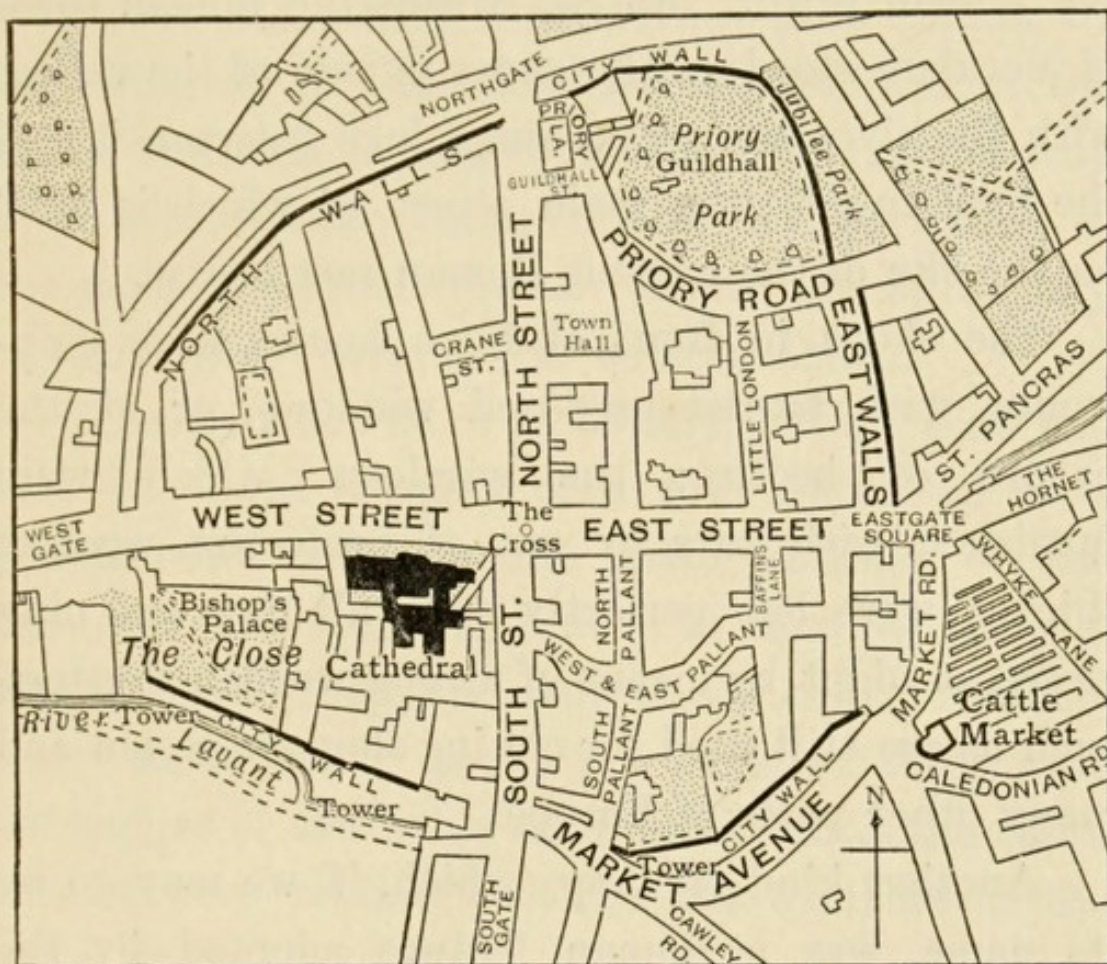


FIG. 49.—Plan of Chichester, showing how closely the modern city follows the lines of the Roman walled town, with four principal gates and streets (North, South, East, and West).

military station, and was therefore arranged as such a station would be. Indeed, in Saxon times, York was actually called York-“chester” (that is, “York camp”) or “Chester” only, whilst the present city of Chester was formerly called “West Chester” by way of distinction.



The plan varied, of course, according to the ground, and often followed the plan of some pre-existing British encampment;<sup>1</sup> and the modern city does not always stand upon the same site as the Roman town. At St. Albans the Roman town of Verulam stood on the opposite side of the valley, with the river Ver and a small lake between it and the modern city, the main street of which is built on the site of the ancient Roman race-course.

The shops in front of town houses were shop-fronts, with barred unglazed windows, or of the nature of booths; the windows, which were furnished with bars by way of protection against thieves, were left perfectly open all day, and only closed at night by means of strong wooden shutters, such as are still used for closing shops in Spain and many other parts of Europe.

Another kind of shop (which, if we may go by its name, was a Roman feature adopted by the Normans) was the "tavern." This was really a kind of cellar,<sup>2</sup> with a stair leading up into the street, something like the Italian wine-shops, some

<sup>1</sup> Both Pevensey and Verulamium were of an irregular oval; Silchester was of an octagonal form; Bath probably pentagonal; and the City of London an oblong. The latter (in 1300) possessed seven double gates, four facing the cardinal points, and three supplementary ones. The number of towns of Roman origin in the country is very great; it is now known that Oxford, like Cambridge, was a Roman station.

<sup>2</sup> The corresponding English name was "shade."



of which may be seen in London. These stairs at length became so numerous that they encroached seriously upon the street, and were forbidden in consequence. The result of this was, that in numerous cases they were turned into cellars, by the filling up of the stair-hole and removal of the stairs, and this is said to be the chief reason why there are so many cellars under the pavement in our modern English towns. There are still many of such town "taverns" to be seen abroad.

There is much more to be said, but all that can here be added consists of a few additional facts intended to complete the main outlines of the picture. The trade signs, such as then swung over almost every shop, are still to be seen in nearly every town in the country. Some of these were the badges of the noble families of which the shop-owners were retainers, others the symbols of the trades or guilds to which they belonged (as in many continental towns of to-day); a third class no doubt were house-marks.

The best existing examples of the first class of these signs occur in the signboards of our modern inns, the explanations of many of which are known. The "White Hart" is the badge of King Richard the Second, and the "Blue Boar" of King Richard the Third, and innumerable others might be given.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The tin-smiths alone had a live sign—squirrels in a cage with bells.



Of the second class, there are now very few that can be considered historic, the chief of these being the three golden (originally blue) balls of the Pawnbroker, which have been identified with the Arms of the Lombards, the first to engage in this form of business in England. Perhaps, too, we may add, the Highlander of the tobacconist, and the strange-looking barber's pole, the latter an emblem going back to the days when the Surgeon, who at first united the office of barber with his own calling, was required to distinguish his pole from that of the barber by adding to it certain emblems indicative of his craft. Even our common slang phrase "to hang out" came from the once general habit of hanging out a sign.

Examples of the third class are now but few, though we are told on good authority that a house, with what is called a "wool-stapler's" mark engraven upon it, and bearing the date 1584, is still to be seen at the village of Witney, in Oxfordshire, and that merchant-marks are common at Yarmouth and Norwich. In Denmark and other parts of the Continent house-marks are still used; they were, in fact, necessary before numbers were employed to distinguish the houses in the towns.

These house-marks formed part of the general system of marking all kinds of private property, and were to the yeomen what heraldic bearings



were to the noble ; indeed more than one knightly family in North Germany still bears its house-mark (*e.g.* the pot-hook or kettle-hanger) on its coat of arms. The yeoman's land, cattle, ducks, and implements all bore the same mark, which he drew when he attached his signature to a document, or else cut it upon a piece of wood. This last custom accounts for the knife or rod sometimes affixed as a guarantee to such old deeds. In the earliest times it usually represented some indispensable implement of the owner, such as a plough, scythe or sickle, a spade, or the tires of a barrow, as well as mere fanciful emblems, such as stars or anchors.

We can thus understand the true nature and origin of our modern trade-marks, as well as of the marks used by stone-masons, livery companies and similar bodies ; or the marks to this day placed upon swans at the periodical swan-upping, or "swan-hopping" as it is often wrongly called. Even the broad arrow-mark placed upon boundary stones (which the old Irishman supposed to be the fossil footprints of some large bird, the "trid of the aigle afore the flood," as he picturesquely put it) as well as on Government stores, the dress of convicts and so forth, is of similar origin, since in all these cases it is simply used as an assertion of the sovereign's paramount authority.

There are numberless other survivals and



reminders of the old *régime*, many of which will afford us pleasure, and some perhaps even regret. But it is necessary to remember that there was another side to the picture. For all the while, in open spaces in and near our ancient towns, there stood, as we may yet see, many dark and sinister blots on the civilisation of the "good old" days. Among these were the "cock-pit," the "bull-ring" (as at Ludlow), the "bear-garden," the pillory and the stake, the "cage," and even the gibbet with its ghastly clanking burden, the victims of which, whether man or brute, suffered things unspeakable, that have left their stains, indelible as the blood then spilt, upon the very metaphors of our language.

### WALES

In the year 1200, it is recorded that the Welsh were in the habit of sleeping on beds of rushes, with their heads to the circular wall and feet to the fire. It is clear, therefore, that their ordinary huts must have been of the round type with central fireplace. The stone foundations of circular huts of this kind, which must have been carried up either in stone or wattle-work, are still plentiful in Wales, as, for instance, in Carnarvonshire, at Penmaenmawr.

On the other hand, however, the old Welsh tribal house, or king's hall, was long-shaped, with



six pillars arranged in two rows down the centre of the building.<sup>1</sup> These pillars were formed of well-grown trees, apparently so selected and arranged that the forks on the inner side reached over to meet each other in the form of an arch. The low walls were of wattle-work, and the open fireplace (the live embers of which, called the "seed of fire," were banked up at night and never allowed to go out) was in the centre between the two middle pillars. There was a raised platform or dais at the upper end of the hall, where the king and his principal officers sat on chairs; this latter distinction being a privilege of office! The retainers slept on rushes in the aisles of this building, and the kitchen was under a separate roof.

Thus the old Welsh tribal hall in all main essentials very closely resembled the halls of the English and the Danes. Further, in the old Welsh laws the arrangements for the king's court were evidently taken from an outdoor court, since "the lord is to sit with his back to the sun or wind, lest he be inconvenienced by the sun, if hot, or by the wind, if high." Hence, the Welsh king's indoor court must have been copied from the courts held in the open air by the kings of the Britons.

<sup>1</sup> It may be remembered that in the well-known Welsh War-song of Dinas Vawr, the vanquished king "fled to his hall-pillars."



## SCOTLAND

In modern times the marked difference between the look of Scottish houses and those of England, with all that that difference may mean to a Scottish eye, has never been more happily described than by Robert Louis Stevenson. "One thing, especially (in England), continues unfamiliar to the Scotchman's eye—the domestic architecture, the look of streets and buildings; the quaint, venerable age of many, and the thin walls and warm colouring of all. We have in Scotland far fewer ancient buildings, above all in country places; and those that we have are all of hewn or harled masonry. Wood has been sparingly used in their construction; the window-frames are sunken in the wall, not flat to the front, as in England; the roofs are steeper-pitched; even a hill-farm will have a massy, square, cold, and permanent appearance. English houses, in comparison, have the look of cardboard toys, such as a puff might shatter. And to this the Scotchman never becomes used. His eye can never rest consciously on one of these brick houses—rickles of brick, as he might call them—or on one of these flat-chested streets, but he is instantly reminded where he is, and instantly travels back in fancy to his home. 'This is no my ain house; I ken by the biggin' (building) of it.' And yet perhaps it is



his own, bought with his own money, the key of it long polished in his pocket ; but it has not yet, and never will be, thoroughly adopted by his imagination ; nor does he cease to remember that, in the whole length and breadth of his native country, there was no building even distantly resembling it.”<sup>1</sup>

Much of this at the present day is true enough. But we must not be misled into thinking that the dwellings of the Scottish peasantry have always been so markedly superior to those of the English, or even that the former were always of stone, natural as the use of such a material may appear in a mountainous country like Scotland.

As late as the beginning of the eighteenth century there were “many wooden, mud, and thatched houses within the gates of Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Aberdeen ; and few of any other kind outside the gates, either there or in other parts of the country.” It is true that the famous round dwellings, called “Beehive” huts, were sometimes of stone. Yet so rare, in fact, were stone dwellings in earlier times that such phrases as *The Stone House*, even in such a town as Perth, not unfrequently occurred ; and stone castles were a wonder of the country-side where they were erected, and were often alleged to be the work of demons.

<sup>1</sup> [R. L. S., *Memories and Portraits*, pp. 6-7. Chatto & Windus, 1904.]



The usual material in those earlier days, both for houses and castles, was wood or wicker-work; but an old Norman-French poem describes a fortified dwelling, the material of which "was neither stone nor wicker-work; the *earthen* wall was raised on high, indented and embattled." This building stood upon a lofty rock, overlooking the Irish Sea, and, as was then usual, depended for its safety almost entirely upon the natural strength of the position. Its inmate, to use the very words of the poet who describes it, "need fear neither engineer nor assault; the rock was too lofty."

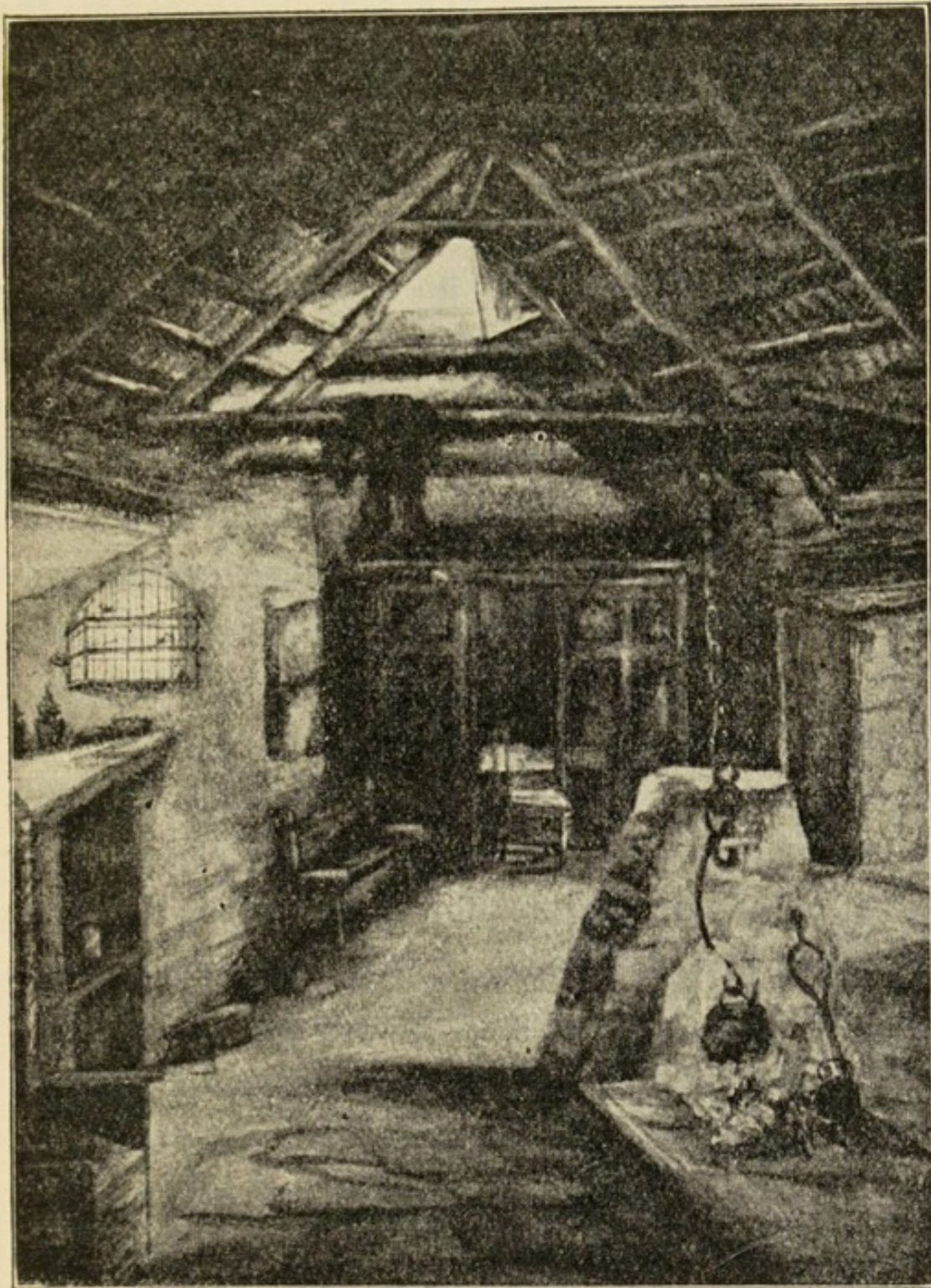
Coming to modern times, one of the most interesting Scottish survivals is the persistence of the central fireplace, which is still used, for instance, in a few cottages in Orkney and the Shetlands.

## IRELAND

The modern Irish "shanty," in having now usually two rooms, is to that extent an advance on the cabins in which the poorer classes of England lived down to the fifteenth century, the latter being undivided rooms without ceiling or chimney, in which the smoke was allowed to wander about at will, and in which the entire family lived, together with the pigs, sheep and chickens. The shanty—*lit.* "old-house"—has an extremely low



gable, in curious contrast to the ancient rectangular buildings of Ireland, whether of stone or timber.



*By courtesy of Mrs. Leslie Milne, from a Sketch by Miss Reid.*

FIG. 50.—Central Fireplace, as still used in an Orkney Cottage.  
The smoke escapes through the opening in the roof. One of the old-style  
cupboard beds is to be seen at the end of the room.



Before the Christian period, the wicker-work huts of the Irish peasantry, the forts and most other buildings, except the feasting-halls of the chiefs and larger dwelling-houses, were generally round or oval, with a central fireplace, and the custom of erecting round buildings survived in Ireland even down to the fifteenth century.

The homestead of an ancient Irish farmer is known to have contained, within a circular entrenchment, at least seven huts—the dwelling-house itself, the kitchen, a kiln for drying corn, a sheep-house and pig-house (all of which were *round*), and the barn and calf-house, which were long-shaped. Thus the general idea was not unlike that of the modern Zulu or Kaffir “kraal,”<sup>1</sup> in which the round huts of the inhabitants are protected by a circular stockade. Yet the better-class hall was a right-angled building, supported either by one or two rows of five pillars down the centre, with one large principal apartment in which the family lived, ate, and slept. It thus corresponded to the early halls of Scotland and Wales, and even of England.

### FOREIGN INFLUENCES

In comparatively modern times the chief influences affecting domestic buildings in this country have

<sup>1</sup> That is, “corràl” or “enclosure.”

been Italian, French, Dutch and Flemish. Italian, the first of these influences, which reached England for the most part either through Holland or France (from both of which it received some colouring), began in the sixteenth century, and lasted for about two hundred years.

At first it showed itself merely in the ornamentation of monuments, as in the tomb of Henry VII. in the chapel of that King at Westminster Abbey. Then for a considerable period it influenced merely the ornament of domestic buildings, but in the seventeenth century the Italian plan and outlines were adopted, ending in the copying of Italian buildings line for line. In the old-fashioned "formal" gardens of many ancient residences, to which the very name of "Italian garden" was given,<sup>1</sup> the resemblance was yet more easily apparent.

Modern French influence on domestic buildings, on the other hand, which is to be seen at Widcombe, near Bath, has been considered to be largely due to Henrietta Maria, the French queen of Charles I.; the French church built at Dover in that King's reign was one example. Certainly most of the plaster-work figures, which adorn a few old house-fronts in the country, date from the time of the

<sup>1</sup> A famous example of an old-fashioned *French* garden is to be seen at Chatsworth, the seat of the Dukes of Devonshire.



Stuarts, though it has also been suggested<sup>1</sup> that French Huguenot influence of an earlier date may have affected a few buildings of the mill type, such as the Pin-mill at Stroud.

The lofty gable and "pepperbox" turret of many



FIG. 51.—Figured Mouldings on projecting front of old House (the Rising Sun Inn) at Saffron-Walden.

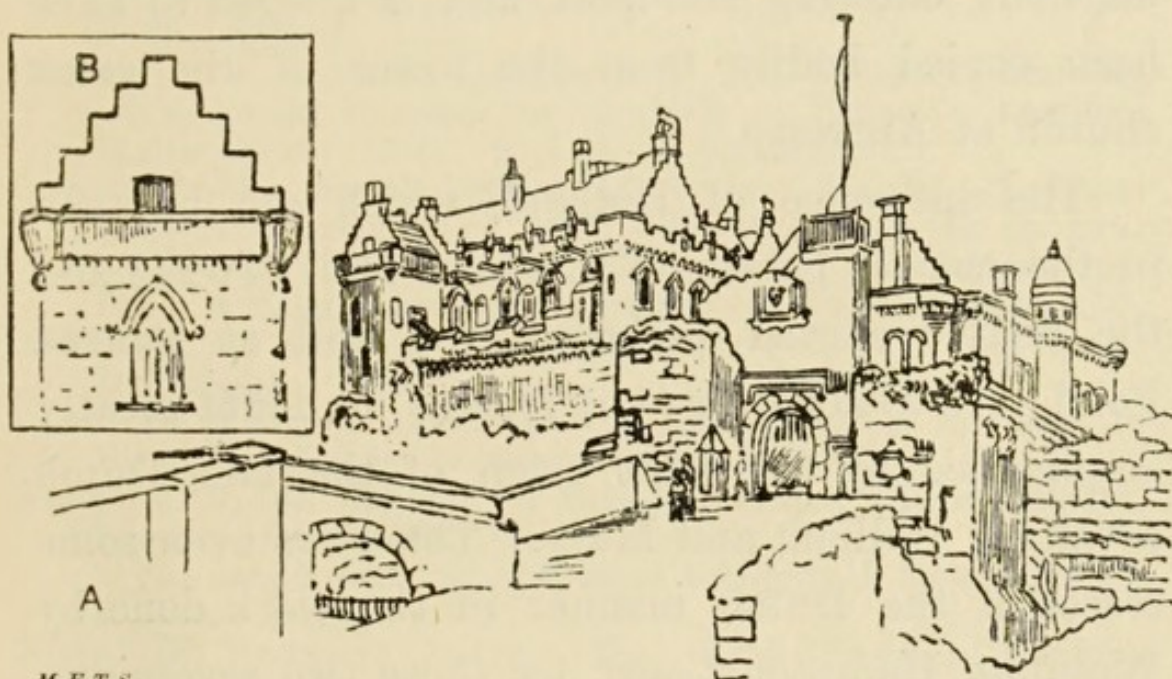
Scottish castles, which were domesticated in the sixteenth century, were also derived from France, and together with a strange-looking gable-end, built

<sup>1</sup> "The "Ancient House" at Ipswich of the Sparrowe family is a notable exception, dating from 1567.



in gradually ascending steps, which is called the "corbie" or "crow's step" gable, have been attributed to the effect of the ancient alliance between Scotland and that country.

Gables of this kind are chiefly found in Belgium and other parts of the Low Countries, but they are also common in many parts of France and



*M.E.T.S.*

FIG. 52.—A. "Corbie" or "Crow-Step" Gables, on the roofs of Stirling Castle (from a view about 1840). B. Detail of "Crow-Step" Gable, etc.

Germany, as, for instance, in Lübeck, and also in Denmark. As mentioned above, this style of gable was chiefly popular in Scotland, but it was also employed to some extent in the north and east of England. Examples, which are numerous, are at Brome Hall (Norfolk), and Reading Street (Kent).

Flemish influence also appears on the coast of



Kent, especially in the older buildings at Rye, Deal and Sandwich, the last-named town showing this influence so strongly that it is often said it might be taken for an old-world Flemish town.

But perhaps the best example of all is the well-known "beacon" tower of Boston Church in Lincolnshire, which was used for the guidance of mariners entering the port, and is alleged to have been copied bodily from the tower of the great church at Antwerp.

The influence of Holland, which can be seen in the curved gables of Rushton Hall (1627) and the double curved gables of the mill at Bourne Pond, near Colchester (1591), was no doubt greatly emphasized by the joint reign of the two Dutch royalties, William and Mary. There are even some traces of the Dutch manner in the work done by Wren at Hampton Court for those two sovereigns. Both curved and "crow-step" gables are extremely common in the newer shop-buildings in London.

At the present day Dutch influence is strongest in some of the east coast towns, as at Yarmouth, for instance, and King's Lynn, which latter town, owing to its geographical surroundings, has been called the Holland of the east coast. Dutch influence is also evident in many old houses in Guildford and its neighbourhood, and examples may be found elsewhere by students of the things around us.



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