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SURREY HILLS
AND OF THE
SUSSEX
DOWNS AND FORESTS

EDWARD LOVETT

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Folk-Lore & Legend
OF THE
SURREY HILLS
AND OF THE
SUSSEX DOWNS & FORESTS.

By Edward Lovett

(of the Folk-Lore Society),

and author of "Magic in Modern London," &c.

CATERHAM VALLEY :

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1928

Folk-Lore & Legend

SURREY HILLS

SUSSEX DOWNS & FORESTS

By Edmund Selous

Edinburgh: W. & A. K. Johnston, 1881.

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PREFACE.

IN my Book "Magic in Modern London" 1925, I confined my records to the London area, and any reference to Country Folk-Lore was due to the fact that the people who told me had formerly lived in the country. There is really no such thing as a pure Folk-Lore of London, but it is a sort of compendium of the superstitions of the whole world.

In regard however to the Folk-Lore of Surrey and Sussex the case is very different.

My first records of chats with the country-folk of these two counties date back sixty years! I remember, as a schoolboy, in 1865, I made my first rough record of two things which I may call my first impressions of Folk-Lore. One was a game of knuckle-bones being played with pebbles by some boys in the Caterham Valley where I now live. The other was a mandrake root, just like a little man, which I saw in a herbalist's shop in Croydon.

Later in life I was able to devote more time to my favourite study and for the last few years I have been able to gather a good many records. This is not easy work owing to the fact that the more superstitious people are the less they are inclined to talk about it.

This little book is really very "little," but it represents a lot of work, spread over a long time. The early people have left with us many customs which still exist, though few know it, but many of the beliefs and customs of Surrey and Sussex are "as old as the hills" or even older, for as regards Moon

Legends, we may quite logically believe that they are as old as the moon itself and that is saying a good deal.

All these Records were obtained by me direct from the peasants themselves and not from other sources. They are somewhat short, for the reason that they are simple statements of facts devoid of all comment.

Again, it is obvious, I think, that these Surrey and Sussex legends are of great antiquity, though not necessarily confined to these two counties. On the contrary a few of them are found practically all over Europe.

In expressing a hope that my Records may prove of much interest to my readers, I sincerely wish that anyone who may be so interested will kindly make any suggestions as to obtaining further notes.

EDWARD LOVETT,

**13 Godstone Road,
Caterham Valley, Surrey.**

WEATHERCOCKS.

IT is stated that by a papal enactment made in the middle of the ninth century, the figure of a cock was set up on every church steeple as the emblem of St. Peter. The emblem is in allusion to his denial of our Lord thrice before the cock crew twice.

Another—rather remarkable—record says “The manner of adorning the tops of steeples with a cross and a cock is derived from the Goths who bore that as their warlike ensign.”

A lady friend of mine who was born at Dorking tells me that the country folk in that part of Surrey insist that the weathercocks there are all “five claws” which is the peculiarity of the Dorking breed of fowls.

I gather the following curious record from “The Year Book” on the 25th March, 1672—Mr. Evelyn states—“observing almost every tall tree to have a weathercock on the top bough, and some trees half-a-dozen. I learned that on a certain holiday the farmers feast their servants, at which solemnity they set up these cocks as a kind of triumph.”

The association of this custom with Lady Day is interesting!

BUYING A PIG IN A POKE.

ONE day I was talking to a man in the Surrey Hills about some potatoes I wanted. He said: "I'll bring you a few in a poke!" Upon my appearing surprised at his using this word, and in reply to my further questions on the subject, he told me that a poke was a bag made just like a little sack and that in the old days, if a man wanted to sell a sucking pig, he would take it to market in one of these pokes. A purchaser would often buy it without looking inside, as the presence of the pig could be felt.

It is said that sometimes a man would deceive a simpleton by selling him a cat instead of a pig, also that in its struggles the animal sometimes escaped! In other words, the seller "let the cat out of the bag."

Also: seeing that the purchaser frequently did not see what he was buying—such a transaction was termed "Buying a pig in a poke," and even to-day this term is often used to describe a deal in which the purchaser has to take a good deal on trust. It is also interesting to note that as a poke was a small sack, our word pocket seems to mean a little poke.

PIGS "BEWITCHED."

AT certain times and under certain conditions, pigs behave in a wild and erratic manner, which has given rise to the popular opinion that they are bewitched! Also that rough weather is coming because "pigs can see the wind."

A man I know in the Surrey Hills to whom I was talking about pigs, surprised me very much by informing me that when pigs were bewitched, the best thing to do was to put a small piece of the stem of a plant called Hellebore through a hole made in the pig's ear! Now I know the plant to which he referred, but I was very much surprised that he should know its correct name as he was a field labourer.

When I got home I looked up my book "The Folk-Lore of Plants," by Thiselton Dyer, and on page 314 I found the following "In addition to guarding the homestead from ill, the Hellebore was regarded as a wonderful antidote against madness and as such is spoken of by Burton, who introduces it among the emblems of his frontispiece in his "Anatomie of Melancholy"!

Could better evidence be quoted?

LEGENDS OF THE FIRE-PLACE.

THE subject of Fire is a very large one, and the legends and superstitions connected therewith almost unlimited.

The hearth as we know it, is a small, but useful, survival of a real religion of fire worship which was the natural outcome of the terribly mysterious thing which even to-day we know so little about. In this paper I am dealing with the simple fire-place as an interesting survival of the friendly aspect of fire in the family circle.

In ancient Greece, we read of the gathering of the family at meal-times around the "Hearth, the Holy place of the House, devoted to Hestia, the all preserving goddess." Also, that "The worship of Hestia united all the inhabitants of the house, free-born or slaves; nay, even strangers."

In Russia, the peasants believe in a sort of house god called "Domovoi," who lives in the ashpit below the fire. When a peasant goes to another home he always takes some ashes of the fire with him, and of course Domovoi comes too!

And now to Surrey and Sussex! We must bear in mind the overmantel, or (as we call it) the mantelpiece, was in all probability used for votive gifts which were really offerings to bring good luck, which means prosperity. (I must here point out that all this record of man's work is really for his own benefit). To-day these things are gradually dying out, but there are many interesting survivals in a casual and perfunctory sort of way. In my records are the following, and they are to be found in both Surrey and Sussex.

An old shoe hung up at the side of the fire-place "for luck." This a very common practice!

Upon the mantel-piece, used to be placed two large West Indian cowrie shells "for luck!" These were very abundant, but the reason was not altogether obvious! I have seen natural flints, in shape of a man, also put on the mantel-piece for luck. On the coast only, I have seen in the houses of fishermen, toy ships so placed to bring good luck in fishing.

I have also seen small metal spades, picks, shepherd crooks and such like over the fire-places of men whose work meant the use of such things.

NATURE TOYS.

IN my previous chapter "Legends of the Fireplace" I tried to point out how the toy was probably evolved from the votive offering. The modern toy as we know it is really very modern indeed for I can well remember what children had to play with seventy years ago. There were no splendid toy shops as we know them! We had little oval chip boxes of wooden soldiers, ditto toy trains, also farm animals and Noah's arks galore, also crude little leaden soldiers.

The Lowther Arcade opposite Charing Cross was the child's "Mecca," but the ordinary village shop where toys could be got, was a sundries shop where they also sold buttons, tapes, pins, sweets and, of all things, birches for beating children! This is not a huge joke as I can testify from personal experience,

We have unfortunately very little record of toys much older than these, but my interesting experience of Surrey and Sussex seems to help my opinion that the child's toy was originally some natural object which by its shape appealed to the child.

In my researches in the hills I have had many chances of seeing village children at play with toys. On one occasion I came upon a party of youngsters sitting on the ground in a circle round an arrangement of flints, snail shells, broken crockery, small "tins" and so on. Upon enquiry I was told that this was a "tea party," and a very suggestive water-worn flint was introduced to me as the cat!

This flint which was very like a cat sitting up, is now in my museum and all the organisers of the tea party were quite pleased with the "deal."

The following is a list of the Nature Toys which I have found in Surrey and Sussex! I do not think that many of them are to be identified with any special locality.

Figures of men made of fir cones, birds, ditto, birds in nests of larch cones, owls made of fir cones, pigs made of teazle heads, men made of whelk shells and bladder weed. And many small objects such as doll's chairs, etc., made of feathers, bones, nuts, and others.

THE GAME OF KNUCKLE BONES.

SIXTY years ago when I made my first visit to the Surrey Hills as a fourteen years old schoolboy, I well remember seeing children playing this game in the open country roads and village streets which in those peaceful days were safe! This, together with many other interesting games of skill and interest are now practically extinct! Gone down before the motor car and the "bike"! This game of knuckle bones, so called because the original type consisted of five astragalus bones of the sheep, is of great antiquity dating back to eight hundred years before Christ.

Beautiful terra-cottas illustrating the game at this period may be seen in the British Museum.

The game is not only of great antiquity, but consisted of many variants: the "bones" too were often made of bronze, also of ivory, and in all probability they were the parents of dice!

The way in which the game was played varied enormously but the main feature consisted in throwing up the five bones and as they fell, catching them on the back of the hand.

Some of course fell off, so what were caught were again thrown up, those on the ground quickly picked up in time to catch those in the air.

It can easily be seen that this involves a considerable amount of skill, and such games of skill were really of value in the education of children. This game has been called by a large number of names. The classical name is of course

Astragals: the English of that is Knuckle Bones! Then in Surrey and Sussex they were called Dibs, Five-bones and Chuckies!

In other localities I have heard them called Five-stones, Jacks, Fivies, etc. A very poor variety of the game was brought out some years ago, called Marbles and Dubs, but as a game of skill is not worth mentioning.

SWINGING THE CAT.

THERE is an old saying which I have heard in my early days in Surrey, to the effect that in describing a very small room in a house the speaker would say "why there wasn't room to swing a cat."

It was a long time before I could find out what this meant!

When I did come across it I got—as is often the case—two or three records.

It is a well known fact that cats are more attached to the house than to the people who live in it. So that when a family moves to a new house and takes the cat with them, the latter will go back to its old home as soon as possible.

One way to prevent this is to butter the cat's feet! This is a good plan, as my cat proved when I brought it here from Croydon.

But the best plan of all is to take the cat into an empty room in the new house seize it firmly by the end of its tail and swing it round and round horizontally.

It is said that a cat will never leave that house!

Whether this is out of gratitude or for fear of another dose in a fresh house, I cannot say.

A MOLE'S FOOT.

THERE is a quaint form of superstition which has been described as sympathetic magic as for example the carrying of a knuckle bone (or astragalus) to cure rheumatism, or the tying round a baby's neck of a little bag containing one of its mother's lost teeth to assist the infant in cutting its own teeth and so on. Examples of this superstition are very common in Surrey and Sussex amongst the country people and perhaps no object is so widely used as is the mole's foot as a cure for cramp.

It is the front feet, or digging feet as they are called, which are selected, and it will be seen how strongly they are curved for this purpose! Indeed it is astonishing how quickly a mole will put himself out of sight if alarmed in the open.

Now this permanent curve is regarded by the folk as due to cramp and therefore as "like cures like" it must be a cure for cramp if carried in the pocket. A somewhat cruel practice in some parts of Sussex, which I have heard of was a cure for toothache by applying to the spot a foot cut from a *living* mole.

There are a few old beliefs that if, in summer, moles forsake their trenches and creep about on the surface of the ground, it is a sign of hot weather, but if by chance they forsake the valleys and take to the high ground it is a sign of floods.

A FEW BIRD LEGENDS.

I HAVE not yet found any legends about Birds in Surrey or Sussex which may be said to be *peculiar* to these two counties. In other words they are to be met with nearly all over the British Islands and even further afield!

These few legends are however worth recording as they really are very pleasing and even romantic.

As already stated, I am dealing with them as briefly as possible and without comment except to say how much pleasure it gave me to collect them.

The Magpie.

“One means anger, two brings mirth,
Three a wedding, four a birth,
Five is Heaven—six is Hell,
But seven's the very Deil's ainsel.”

The Swallow and Martin.

It is very lucky to see the first swallow or martin. The legend of the stone brought from the seashore by swallows, being capable of restoring sight to the blind has almost died out now.

It is unlucky to destroy martin's nests on a house. The birds *never* build on that house again! This I know from long experience.

The Robin.

When you see the first robin of the year you must wish!
The red of a robin's breast is, by an old legend associated
with the blood of Christ.

An old belief is that:

“The Robin and the Wren,
Are God's little cock and hen.”

The Wagtail.

This pretty little bird is here called a *dishwasher*. I
wonder why!

The Cuckoo.

All good Surrey folk, when they hear this bird for the first
time in spring, turn what money they may have in their pocket
with the idea that it may thus be doubled!

Another idea with young people is that when you hear
your first cuckoo you stop and look on the ground under your
right foot and you will find a hair of the colour of that of the
person you will marry!

A SUSSEX THUNDERBOLT.

I CAN well remember my first thunderbolt! I was a boy at the time and a keen collector of fossils and such like.

I was spending my holiday at Brighton and soon discovered a shop where all sorts of "curios" were sold amongst others some nodules of iron pyrites which the owner told me were thunderbolts.

I remember how delighted I was and more especially when in reply to my further enquiries he explained how the thing worked.

When there was a thunderstorm, at every flash of lightning one of these things fell and if anyone was in the way it injured or probably killed them.

I bought one of these wonderful things and I still have it in my collection of *charms*. To-day all over Surrey and Sussex, there are thousands of country folk who still think that these nodules which are so common in our chalk-pits, are really thunderbolts; but they have no more to do with a thunder storm than a flint pebble has!

Talking of flint pebbles, here is another story.

Quite forty years later in my life I was at Brighton again; this time to give a lecture on "Charms and Amulets." A few days after my return home, I received by post a small water-worn flint; and a sheet of note paper upon which was written a short note—in a lady's handwriting (but not signed)—to the effect that this was a thunderbolt!

It had been picked up on the edge of the parade at Brighton after a severe thunderstorm and that it was *very hot!*

Of course this might have been a "huge joke," but I have met with queerer things than this which were not simply jokes.

I know of at least a dozen different things which are thought to be thunderbolts in different parts of the world and not a single one of them has anything whatever to do with thunder or storms of any sort.

THE LUCK OF AN OLD HORSE-SHOE.

FEW objects are so well known, or so full of popularity as the horse-shoe. They may be seen real, or copied, in all sorts of fanciful bits of decorative trifles of every day life. But before this age of bric-a-brac, there was an even stronger evidence of its hold on the minds of people, and this mental aspect can be traced back a very long way : for example, in the year 1612, Mason says it is good luck if a man find old iron, hence it is accounted a lucky omen to find a horse-shoe. Butler, in "Hudibras," says :

"Chase evil spirits away by dint of sickle, horse-shoe,
hollow flint."

In certain parts of London, in the year 1797, it is said that many horse-shoes were to be seen nailed to the thresholds of houses.

In my wanderings through Surrey and Sussex, I have seen a vast number of old horse-shoes fixed to the outside walls of cottages. Most of these (but not all), were fixed the right way up, *i.e.* points upwards, as the crescent was worn on the breast of Diana.

It is not surprising that the horse-shoe has such a record, for it is considered lucky for three reasons *viz.* : it is roughly in form of a crescent and as such, is a symbol of the new moon. Then it is made of iron, which is regarded as the most important of metals, for when man discovered iron, he

became a force to be reckoned with, and lastly: because a horse is liable to the power of the 'Evil Eye,' anything belonging to a horse is an antidote against that power. "Similia similibus curantur."

Now there are certain aspects of these old superstitions which are overlooked or disregarded to-day. For a horse-shoe to be really "lucky," it must have been an old and well-worn shoe, the more so, the better. Also, it must be found quite unexpectedly, but not searched for. To be of any "value," it may be *given*, but never when asked for, and on no account to be bought, sold or exchanged.

Here is an interesting bit of folk lore. During the war, I was talking to a man in South London, who kept a small fancy shop, in which were some mascot golliwogs for sale.

I went in and bought a few, although the owner of the shop told me that they were sold on behalf of a lady, as he himself, did not believe in such rubbish.

Changing the subject, I asked him if he had ever heard of an old horse-shoe, covered with red flannel, being hung at the head of a bedstead to guard the sleeper from night-mare. His answer rather surprised me.—"Oh yes! I do that, and nearly every one round here does the same! But that isn't superstition, for I know that it *does* keep away nightmare."

What could be more conclusive?

SHEPHERDS' LAMB TALLIES.

*As seen in use and recorded by me at Burpham
near Arundel about 1910.*

THIS method of recording numbers by notches on pieces of stick is still practised by a few shepherds of the old school, and I have obtained specimens of flock tallies as well as lamb tallies. These are cut either on squared lengths of wood about half-an-inch wide and eight or nine inches long; or on natural round sticks of about the same size, and with the bark left on. In the lamb tallies, used for recording the number of lambs born in the season, an ordinary notch denotes doubles, or twins, a short notch, or dot, a single: and perhaps an extra long notch, triplets.

It can thus be seen that a shepherd has a very rough, but ready note of his lambs as they arrive.

Later on when the lambs are old enough to leave the ewes, and the time has come for dividing up the flock, the "Flock Tallies" are used.

The animals are separated by twenties, or "by the score," and each twenty is marked by a *score* on the tally stick. Every fifth mark or score is an extra long cut, so the hundreds can be read off easily. At the end of a count, the odd lambs are marked by short notches, one for each, so that a tally with six extra long cuts followed by nine short notches means a flock of 609 young sheep.

One of the old shepherds made a very remarkable tally for

me, saying that his grandfather used one like it. It consisted of a piece of natural wood with the bark on, about one inch in diameter and six inches long. This was hollowed out and the ends stopped with two bits of cork. In this wooden bottle were placed very small stones, each one representing a score of sheep, and any odd sheep would be notched on the outside. Therefore in the case of the flock of 609, already mentioned; this wooden bottle would contain thirty little stones and would have nine notches on the outside.

HOP TALLIES.

A HOP Tally is a piece of wood about a foot long by an inch wide and $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick. It was split in two length ways; one being in the possession of the hop picker, and the other in that of the overseer, or owner, when picking began, a price was fixed, say for example a shilling for five bushels of hops.

When the overseers came round, he would come to say No. 34 man and putting his own half tally on to the picker's half, he would cut a notch through both halves and this represented a shilling. If however the picker had done say seven bushels he would have a notch and two small metal discs which went towards the next lot.

It is obvious that this old-fashioned way was remarkably safe and reliable for no one can rub out a notch, and if a notch were added by, say the picker, it would not appear on the overseer's half.

To-day the use of these Hop Tallies is practically gone. It is undoubtedly the oldest form of what we may term money records for at one time there were Exchequer Tallies and I have seen several which were found in the vaults of one of the large London banks.

This old method has left its mark to this day! A bill simply means a piece of wood: in French (Bille). Taille is also a cut notch! A first and second of exchange represent the two pieces of a wood tally and when the debtor saw that the notches were properly cut, he *accepted* his half in recognition of the debt. To-day he *writes* that across his paper bill.

THE OAK TREE.

ALTHOUGH the oak is confined to the clay districts on low ground, it occurs in many parts of Surrey and Sussex.

Many years ago what is now called Norwood was the Great North Wood which extended from Croydon right up to Forest Hill. In those days Croydon and London were connected by a canal which passed through the forest, and so dense were the trees that it is recorded that in many parts the sun never reached the waters of the canal. The soil being clay was most suitable to very big oaks, and many of these giants may be seen at Forest Row to-day.

Near Norwood, where four parishes meet, stood an ancient tree known as the Vicar's oak upon which mistletoe always grew, of great curative power.

The oak was regarded as the home of the Thunder God, and therefore the acorn is widely believed in as a charm against lightning.

I have seen hundreds of designs in form of acorns used with this motive, chiefly in respect of ornaments near windows to say nothing of articles of personal adornment.

Acorns, being astringent, are a remedy under certain conditions though curiously enough, worn round the neck for this purpose.

THE HALCYON.

This Greek name for the kingfisher is from two words which mean to brood on the sea.

It is recorded that the Sicilians believed that this bird laid its eggs and hatched them out before the winter solstice on the surface of the sea which remained calm during that period.

The poet Dryden writes :

“ Amidst our arms as quiet you shall be
As halcyon brooding on a winter's sea.”

Now if there be any connection whatever between this pretty legend and the following rather quaint custom which I have found in some parts of Surrey and Sussex I do not know, but considering that as regards this wind experiment—any bird (or really anything of even weight) would do quite as well, I am strongly of the opinion that the legend of the kingfisher was the origin of this “weather glass.”

It was at Arundel when I saw my first example of this interesting thing. The bird was a stuffed specimen and it was suspended by a piece of common string about two feet long, from the beam of a room in a small old-fashioned house; the string being fixed to the back of the bird so that it hung horizontally.

The owner assured me that the bird always pointed in one direction during fine weather, but turned and pointed the other way “when it rained,” or when it was going to rain.

This appeared to explain matters, so I moistened the

string, without being noticed, the weather at the time being warm and very dry.

In a comparatively short time the kingfisher turned round and pointed in exactly the opposite direction.

The owner was evidently puzzled and when I asked him if that was part of the performance he seemed almost alarmed and told me that he had never known his bird to do such a thing before !

SOME MOON LEGENDS.

ONE of the reasons why the moon comes in for so many popular superstitions and beliefs is that it is always changing!

To the ancients its monthly disappearance was a matter of sorrow and regret, or even fear. Its re-appearance as a lovely silver crescent—on the other hand was hailed with joy and thankfulness which continued until it became full. It is therefore very easy to understand that to the mind of primitive man so prone to associate cause and effect, the idea of sympathetic magic played so large a part in his actions and even survives to this day not only among peasants, but to some extent educated people. For example, at new moon, building is commenced; financial matters are arranged; seeds are sown; pigs are killed for bacon, for it is said that when pigs are killed at the waning of the moon, the bacon will shrink. Also at new moon money turned in the pocket will double itself, but only silver money, in sympathy with the silver moon.

Many people consider it bad luck to see the new moon through glass ("now we see through a glass, darkly"). But when a clear open view is obtained, women bow, saying "welcome, sweet moon."

One day a woman in the Surrey Hills said to me "You know, I don't believe in this nonsense, but somehow I always do it."

I was told by woodmen that in the old days timber was felled in the waning of the moon, sometimes in the last

quarter.

I have found the fable of the "Man in the Moon" generally regarded as a joke, especially as the cause of his punishment was the gathering of sticks on the Sabbath.

"And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the Sabbath day. And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation."—*Numbers xv, ver. 323.*

MANDRAKES.

IT was about the year 1863 that I first saw a mandrake in the window of a herbalist's shop at Croydon. I was then an eleven-year-old schoolboy and I remember that I was so struck with the grotesque thing that I verily believe it was the cause of my taking up the study of Folk-Lore.

The object itself was about nine inches long and represented a very crude figure of human form. Since that time I have seen very many roots of the mandrake, or more frequently the Briony, many of them so suggestive of the human form as to require very little, if any, "touching up." There are many very old legends about mandrakes. One was that when pulled up they "screamed." One old Surrey man assured me that he had often heard them scream! The reason is that the root is very like a parsnip, it grows in stiff, damp, clay soils and when pulled out the noise made is like rubbing one's wet finger on a pane of glass. Try it and see.

However to the primitive mind all this was full of mystery and so serious was it that dogs were employed to pull the roots out of the ground with, it is said, fatal results to the dog. Shakespeare in "Romeo and Juliet" has it "Shrieks like mandrakes torn out of the earth."

Again, in Genesis xxx ver. 14, we read "And Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest and found mandrakes in the field and brought them unto his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, 'give me I pray thee of thy son's mandrakes'"

I have several records of these curious roots being fixed at

the head of bedsteads as a charm to assist matters at the time of child-birth.

To-day one can buy small dried slices of mandrake to be taken medicinally !

Many old-time cures which were worn or carried are now-a-days swallowed ! I often wonder which way was the more efficaceous.

SUNDIALS OF THE SOUTH DOWN SHEPHERDS.

ABOUT twenty years ago I spent a few days at Burpham, on the South Downs, not far from Arundel. One of the interesting things I noticed was that some of the old time shepherds actually constructed sun-dials in the turf. They had learned to do this in the old days before watches were cheap.

This is how it was done.—Having selected a fairly smooth bit of turf, the shepherd marks a rough circle about eighteen inches in diameter. with a pointed stick, leaving the stick perpendicularly in the ground in the centre. Due south of this he fixes another stick, about twelve inches long, on the periphery of the circle.

The various land marks, and their bearings, are so well known to the shepherds, that they need no compass: and as a matter of fact, nearly every shepherd can tell the approximate time without any watch or dial and even on a dull day.

Having fixed the *South* stick, he places another due West, and still another due East, so that we get a sundial with the gnomons on the edge of a circle instead of being in the centre.

As the uses of this form of dial are connected with the tending of sheep, it follows that its use is not required at all late, for the collecting and folding for the night of a large flock of sheep, naturally takes time.

A very interesting reference to this custom—presumably—occurs in Shakespeare.

“ Methinks it were a happy life
To be no better than a homely swain,
To sit upon a hill as I do now,
To carve out dials quaintly point by point,
Thereby to see the minutes how they run,
How many make the hour full complete,
How many hours bring about the day ;
How many days will finish up the year ;
How many years a mortal man may live.”

Henry VI, Third Part, Act II, Scene V.

EARMARKING.

THE three following extracts, which I have casually selected as they came under my notice, serve to illustrate a very curious survival of an old Anglo-Saxon custom, which was practised by these interesting people when they lived in Sussex and reared their pigs in the Ashdown Forest area. The extracts are :

“South African Gold earmarked.”—*The Sunday Times*,
February 6th, 1927.

“More ear-marked sovereigns released.”—
The Evening Standard, December 17th, 1927.

“Ear-marked gold released.”—*The Daily Express*,
December 10th, 1927.

(From the money market reports of these papers.)

It is seldom that a modern usage is found to have such a curious origin as this.

Ashdown Forest, which is just a walk from where I am writing this, was an important place in Anglo-Saxon times! These interesting people, from whom we enjoy so much, cultivated pigs on a very large scale. These animals ran loose in the forest, and the value of a tree was determined by the number of hogs that could lie under it. We meet with records like this: “A wood for the pannage of fifty hogs.”

As thousands of pigs ran together in the forests it was of course necessary to identify them with their various owners, and this was done by earmarking! The following will help to

show how this was done, for it will be seen that as there were two ears to work upon, and that in addition to notches clipped in the edge of the ear, small holes were punched through the flaps of the ear itself, a much greater variety of ear marks was possible than would appear at first sight. Here is a very brief example of changes:

A's pigs have one notch in right ear.

B's pigs have one notch in left ear.

C's pigs have two notches in right ear.

D's pigs have two notches in left ear.

Now if this be worked out, even if only up to six notches, and then start on the punctures therewith, it will be found what a lot of different owners can be thus identified.

And that is the origin of earmarking.

ANGLO-SAXON CUSTOMS STILL WITH US.

IN the foregoing article on earmarking I pointed out how a simple custom gave the name to a much more important thing, and in this connection it is curious to find that our word penny was originally the Anglo-Saxon *penig*!

Now a great deal has been said against these people! It is recorded that they were great drinkers, and that "it was the duty of a host to offer liquor to every guest, and to make him drunk if possible." It is also stated that this extended even to the clergy.

It is curious to find, however, that great drinking bouts were invariably accompanied by music! The harp was passed round, and every guest who could not play or sing, was requested to leave the table. It is stated that the usual beverage was beer, probably a somewhat sweeter drink than that of to-day.

Reverting to the subject of pigs, there are many points of interest still surviving.

It formed the symbol on the helmets of Scandinavian warriors.

It is the common form of the *corn spirit* in Germany and the Baltic provinces.

Little pottery pigs were a common ornament (or *ex voto*) on the overmantels of the forest area of Sussex.

They still linger in our fancy shops, but few people know their origin.

The heads take off and will stand up to hold wine or spirits.

They are still regarded as lucky in this way, but I am not quite sure of the possible connection with a hogshead.

Talking of pigs reminds me of another interesting connection.

At the time of the Great Iron Works in Sussex, the ore was run from the furnaces into sand moulds. The larger moulds were for *sows* and the smaller one for *pigs*; hence the word pig-iron.

As a convivial conclusion I may mention that in their drinking matches, the Anglo-Saxons drank out of large double-handled tankards, fitted with pegs inside. If one drinker uncovered more pegs than the previous man he would say "Ah!" I've taken you down a peg." We still say this!

NIGHTMARE.

THIS curious thing which the Anglo-Saxons called Mara which means an incubus, is well known especially to those who eat injudiciously before going to bed which according to all accounts our Sussex Anglo-Saxons did.

"I do believe that the witch we call Mara has been dealing with you."—Scott "*The Betrothed*."

In my tramps about Surrey and Sussex I have found so many records of nightmare cures that they can be dealt with altogether. To begin with the charms are in most cases to be fixed or suspended over the head of the bed and are left there always.

The favourite objects for this purpose are horse shoes and natural perforated stones which latter, by the way, are quite common on the beach at Brighton.

The horse shoes are usually covered with a bit of red cloth or such material and mostly suspended with the points upwards which is said to be the correct way. The holed stones are in most cases on a loop of red ribbon, or string, etc., and are occasionally simply hooked on to one of the knobs of the bedstead.

I have seen other objects so used for nightmare, but they were usually some object which appealed specially to the individual who used it.

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