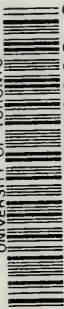


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**THE ELIZABETHAN PEOPLE**

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

SHAKESPEARE'S  
LONDON

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*Representation of a grand SHOOTING MATCH by  
the London Archers in the Year 1583.*

ARCHERY MATCH.

*The Elizabethan  
People*

By

HENRY THEW STEPHENSON

Associate Professor of English  
Indiana University

ILLUSTRATED



NEW YORK  
HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY  
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*Published February, 1910*



TO  
MY WIFE



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# THE ELIZABETHAN PEOPLE

## CHAPTER I

### THE ELIZABETHAN CHARACTER

THE result of the prolonged and often superficial consideration of Shakespeare's plays during the nineteenth century has resulted in an idealisation of that dramatist which places him in an incorrect relation to his time and to all other literary artists. To assume, as some recent critics have done, that we appreciate Shakespeare truly only when we are able to prove that every detail of his work is perfectly planned and executed is equivalent to a denial of the fact that, during twenty years of writing, Shakespeare made any progress towards perfection in his art. To assert that an early play of Shakespeare's is as excellent as a later is to assume that he began his literary career a finished artist, unhumanly god-like in his perfection—a man who does, not having learned. Yet Shakespeare is of supreme value to us to-day mainly because he is so human, human in his feelings, and human in his faults. To me, one of the most delightful elements of the contemplation of Shakespeare is the recognition of that steady progress which is the result of a persistent profit-

ing by each mistake till he attained the splendid degree of skill which enabled him to produce the series of great tragedies. Is it not time, then, to accept Shakespeare as a man? to look upon him in the rational way in which we look upon Thackeray or Browning, as men who produced some works better than others,—above all, as great men, the value of whose great work is not marred by the fact that at times their writing is not to be judged by their own high standard?

One of my own critics once asked me why I directed so much attention to matters connected but indirectly with the text of Shakespeare's plays. It was fortunate, as suggestive of an answer, that we had attended the evening before a class-day exercise at a college where my questioner was a stranger. By way of reply I asked him why every one in the hall except himself had been immensely amused by the local allusions. Of course he excused himself on the score of unfamiliarity rather than as lacking a sense of humour. It is my belief that conditions of life have so changed in three centuries, that, unless one can in some way get into the Elizabethan state of mind, view a play, so to speak, from the Elizabethan point of view, many parts of Shakespeare's dramas will be unappreciated to the same extent as were the class-day allusions by my friend.

Not only may portions fail to be understood, but also many may be understood awry. In an open discussion that followed the reading of a paper on the teaching of Shakespeare's plays, I was once attacked by an elderly lady who informed me and my hearers that she was old enough to be my mother. It soon transpired that my crime consisted of attributing to the bold, designing, unbashful Juliet a degree of delicacy and refinement that was prejudicial to the tender morality of the pupils in my care—and all this because Juliet had kissed Romeo on the first night of their acquaintance. I must, however, do my critic justice by saying that her point of view changed when I told her that kissing, under the circumstances, was a common mode of salutation. She was ill-informed, but she was liberal-minded. "I have maligned Juliet's character for thirty years," she said, "but I shall do so no longer."

Amusing as the incident has always seemed, I, nevertheless, took it seriously. If ignorance of a small detail of social usage could result in blackening the character of one of the loveliest heroines in literature, is it not fair to suppose that numerous other and similar errors could be, nay, are, made daily by critics more familiar with the text of Shakespeare than with the conditions under which those texts were written.

Shakespeare was wholly a man of the hour. Artist though he was, he never lost sight of the fact that the productions of his art were to appeal to his own people. I can hardly fancy that he thought much of posterity; but, if he did, I cannot believe that he ever catered to the understanding of later generations at the expense of his own. Doubtless, had Shakespeare lived to-day, he would have omitted the closing lines of *Hamlet*. But I fancy that the people who first saw that play upon the boards considered the entrance of Fortinbras and his followers not as an anti-climax but as a most ingenious device for gracefully ridding the stage of the dead bodies preparatory to the coming jig.

In the following pages I have continued an attempt, already begun, to lay before the modern reader a wide view, not too much hampered by encyclopædic detail, of how the Elizabethans lived and what they thought about things in general, hoping that this knowledge will help to set the scenes of Shakespeare and his fellow playwrights before the modern audience in a more consistent and rational simplicity.

It may be true that human nature changes but little in its fundamental characteristics from generation to generation, from century to century;

yet it cannot be denied that certain changes do take place, and, whether or not they be considered fundamental or superficial, a knowledge of them materially influences our conception of a piece of literature. We should certainly consider rag-time interludes between the acts of *Hamlet* as, to say the least, a manifestation of bad taste; yet the buffoon scenes of the miracle plays, the admixture of serious and comic incidents in the Elizabethan drama, the jig with which a tragedy was neatly finished off, were quite in accordance with the spirit of the age. To criticise, with our own as a standard, and to conclude that such an element of an early play is in bad taste is to mistake the situation. Unity, the violation of which is one of the first points of modern attack, was, in Elizabethan times, an unknown quality, or, at least, an unnecessary if not an embarrassing one. It is easy to comprehend the reason for this state of affairs. The Elizabethans, as a nation, though brilliantly intellectual, were in many respects immature,—as if the characteristics of childhood were set in a body of manhood. Their delight in rapid changes of scene, in rapidly succeeding varied emotional sensations, above all, in their dislike of long and continuous mental strain—these are qualities peculiar to them as a nation. It was sympathy with rather than an intentional attempt

to cater to this quality that produced in the individual play (the form of literature most directly addressed to the people at large) a variety of motive and emotion so different from our present conception of unity.

If one attempts to characterise the present nations of the earth, one instinctively thinks of those qualities generally shared by most of the individuals and that mark them as different from the individuals of other nations. In the present chapter there is no attempt to describe those qualities that are to be found practically unchanged in other periods of English development; rather to describe characteristics that were shared by the majority of the nation then, and not, or, at least, not so significantly, at other periods of national life. I find thus three peculiarly national characteristics: 1, Credulity; 2, Savagery; 3, Imitation.

Since the first step taken by Henry VIII. in the religious reform of the English ecclesiastical system, change had followed change with kaleidoscopic contrast. The result of the divorce of Katharine, of the destruction of the monasteries, of the new rôle played by "The Defender of the Faith" was, perhaps, secondarily religious, primarily political. The most far-reaching effect upon the people of these changes is to be found in

the lesson it taught them regarding the extent of their own strength. Not only was the incubus of mediæval monasticism removed; it was removed in such a way that England realised herself sufficient to cope, strength against strength, with the mighty power of the Papacy. This was a great and a new idea.

The lesson taught by Henry VIII. was re-taught on a far grander scale when all the influence of Rome and all the power of Spain combined in the "Invincible Armada." William the First conquered England. He superimposed upon the soil a new nation and a new language. By the time of Chaucer, however, England had swallowed up the invader and his language. England had emerged from the gloom of the long contest triumphant. May we not safely fancy a similar result had Philip II. triumphed over Howard and Drake? Again, the victory of 1588 is important politically only in the second degree. Its lasting effect is recognised to-day in the fact that by making continental travel safe, tourists were enabled to bring home precious manuscripts and a knowledge of older and more perfect learning that, when published and conned, directly gave birth to Shakespeare and his fellows.

England had learned her own strength. She was becoming master of the ancient learning with



its variety of ideas. The defeat of Spain gave her time to reflect, to study, to produce. The whole intellectual horizon was crowded with the fleeing clouds of mediæval ignorance. The earth had become round. Its face was daily growing more familiar. A new map was published with "the augmentation of the Indes." Blood had begun to circulate in the veins of Harvey. All these new ideas were tending to increase the extent of the plain bounded by the mental horizon to a degree unheard of before, and with astounding rapidity.

Equally rapid and dazzling was the accession of new literature daily fed to the people. Homer appeared as a new book in English. The publication of Holinshed, together with numerous historical poems and plays nourished the growing patriotism. Epic and lyric poetry delighted mankind. Novels appeared in great numbers. Every tavern group was entertained by marvellous tales of oysters that grew upon trees, of manlike monsters, and so forth,—tales brought home by the man before the mast in the ships of Frobisher and Hawkins.

Trade, both export and import, had outgrown the fondest fancy of a generation before. The lost art of gardening had been rediscovered. Fruits and rare vegetables were being introduced



from all parts of the world. New drinks, new foods, new table manners, as well as improvements in house-building and domestic conditions were imported and developed with a rapidity suggestive of the recent development of electricity.

This much has been said in order to suggest the multiplicity of new ideas thronging upon the people. Not in one but in every direction were people daily astonished by something new. Nothing was too unthought of to appear, nothing too impossible to be believed. It was this condition of affairs that gave rise to the national credulity. One needed but an imagination and an audience to obtain followers of the most intangible will-o'-the-wisps. A gull gives his name to the earliest of our Elizabethan comedies, and he remains a stock character, significant of the times, till the end of the period. A book was written for his instruction by Dekker, and Iago wound him about his finger at the suggestion of Shakespeare.

This credulity manifests itself again in the national attitude towards superstition, to be dealt with more at length in later pages. No country-fair or horse-fair is to-day a more profitable field for the operation of quacks and fakirs than were the streets of London from January to December. Let me once again suggest the danger of inferring that an Elizabethan writer lacks skill and ac-

curacy in the drawing of character because he makes an intelligent man subject to a foolish credulity. Or, may we not more profitably say, that credulity was not then so foolish as it is to-day?

“The nature of an Englishman,” says Sir Thomas Smith in 1621, “is to neglect death, to abide no torment; and therefore he will confess rather to have done anything, yea, to have killed his own father, than to suffer torment; for death, our nation is free, stout, haughty, prodigal of life no place shall you see malefactors go more constantly, more assuredly, and with less lamentation to their death than in England. The nature of our nation is free, stout, haughty, prodigal of life and blood; but contumely, beating, servitude, and servile treatment, and punishment it will not abide. So in this nature and fashion, our ancient princes and legislators have nourished them, as to make them stout hearted, courageous, and soldiers, not villains and slaves.” (P. 97, ed. 1621.)

“The nature of Englishmen is to neglect death.” That is Sir Thomas’s way of expressing disregard of life. To one of us, who may live a lifetime without seeing a man die a violent death, nothing is so difficult to comprehend as the Elizabethan callousness to bloodshed. Life with them

was a rough, rude game of broil and turmoil. Every man wore commonly a sword by his side in public. When justice failed the individual did not scruple to take the law into his own hands. Here are a few illustrations taken from the old records, illustrations that show how quick every one was to shed blood upon small provocation.

“In Nottingham, a man, attacked by another with a stick, drew his knife upon him and stabbed him.”

“In Sussex, a man was pursued by his enemy with a bill till stopped by a garden wall, whereupon he turned and stabbed him with a dagger.”

“In Cornwall one, armed only with a knife, slew his pursuer, armed with a sword, for want of breath to run any farther.”

“And in London itself, in Fleet street, a citizen who was at feud with a neighbour, waited about his door, armed with a sword and buckler. When his enemy at length emerged (by a happy chance similarly armed) he found himself violently attacked; and, being impeded in his retreat by a crowd, faced his enemy and slew him in self-defence.”

No man went abroad without arms; if it was after nightfall, he was accompanied by servants with arms and torches if he could afford a retinue; if not, he stayed at home, or walked quickly with

his sword drawn. This fair fighting, however, this killing your man in self-defence, was not the only sign of the savagery of the time.

“A girl named Miriam, in Northamptonshire,” an old record tells us, “maid-servant to a farmer, was leading a pair of horses with a harrow, walking in front of them. Her master, who was ploughing in the next field, observing that the harrow progressed slowly, stole behind the horses and suddenly belaboured them; with the result that the horses and the machine passed over the body of the unfortunate girl, inflicting a horrible death. The provocation pleaded was the lazyness of the girl, a plea that was held sufficient.” (Quoted from Hubert Hall.)

It was the English archer with his cloth-yard shaft that contributed most largely to the renown of the mediæval armies of England. By the time of Elizabeth, however, archery had degenerated into a mere sport or pastime. The state passed various laws whose intent was to encourage yeomen to use the bow with their old-time skill and energy. Among these laws we find the following:

“In case any person should be wounded, or slain in these sports, with an arrow shot by one or other of the archers, he that shot the arrow shall not be sued or molested, if he had, immediately before the discharge of the weapon, cried

out 'fast,' the signal usually given upon such occasions." (Stow, Strype's ed., vi. p. 250.)

For further illustrations turn to *Romeo and Juliet*. The opening situation, which contains the rallying cry of the London 'prentices, "Clubs, clubs!" describes such a scene as every auditor in the Globe play-house had often witnessed in the streets of London. When we come to the brawl that culminates in the death of Mercutio and Tybalt, we may pause to reflect that in such a brawl died Shakespeare's only rival for dramatic fame, Christopher Marlowe.

There are two other manifestations of this spirit of the age that are particularly illustrative. One is the severity of the laws, and the cruelty of the punishment inflicted; the other concerns certain sports and pastimes.

"The greatest and most grievous punishment used in England," writes Harrison in 1587, "for such as offend against the state, is drawing from the prison to the place of execution upon an hurdle or sled, where they are hanged till they be half dead, and then taken down, and quartered alive; after that, their members and bowels are cut from their bodies, and thrown into a fire provided near at hand and within their own sight, even for the same purpose."

In spite of Smith's testimony thirty years later,

this is evidence of very brutal torment ; but it must be remembered that this punishment was inflicted for treason, and for the very reason that it was repugnant to the national spirit. There were, however, other cruel punishments. If the man was guilty of murder, his right hand was cut off near where the murder was committed, after which he was dragged to the place of execution where he was allowed to hang quietly till he was dead. The common punishment for many petty violations of law was hanging. Below is a partial list of crimes so punished.

Escape from prison—hunting by night with painted faces and visors—embezzling of goods over and above forty shillings—carrying of horses and mares into Scotland—conjuring—witchcraft—digging up of crosses (i.e. stones that marked the boundary of real estate)—departure of a soldier from the field—mutilation of coins—articles taken from dead men by their servants—stealing of cattle—letting out of ponds—housebreaking—picking pockets—counterfeiting coins, etc., etc.

Pirates, and those who had committed robbery aboard ship at sea, were hanged by the water's edge at low tide and left there till three tides had washed over them. The site of Hermitage dock east of the Tower of London, was, in all probability, the place where pirates were frequently so

executed. There was an element of poetic justice in such a penalty, which shows itself again in the Halifax punishment, thus described by Harrison.

“Witches are hanged or sometimes burned; but thieves are hanged generally on the gibbet or gallows, saving at Halifax where they are beheaded after a strange manner, and whereof I find this report. There is and has been of ancient time a law or rather, a custom at Halifax, that whosoever does commit any felony, and is taken with the same, or confesses the fact upon examination, if it be valued by four constables to amount to the sum of thirteen pence halfpenny, he is forthwith beheaded upon one of the next market-days (which fall usually upon Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays), or else upon the same day that he is so convicted, if market be then holden. The engine wherewith the execution be done is a square block of wood of the length of four feet and a half, which does ride up and down in a slot . . . between two pieces of timber, that are framed and set upright, of five yards in height. In the nether end of the sliding block is an axe, keyed or fastened with an iron into the wood, which being drawn up to the top of the frame is there fastened by a wooden pin (with a notch made into the same, after the manner of a Sampson’s post) unto the midst of which pin also there is a long rope

fastened that cometh down among the people, so that, when the offender hath made his confession and hath laid his neck over the nethermost block, every man there present doth either take hold of the rope (or putteth forth his arm so near to the same as he can get, in token that he is willing to see true justice executed), and, pulling out the pin in this manner, the head-block wherein the axe is fastened doth fall with such a violence that, if the neck of the transgressor were as big as that of a bull, it should be cut asunder at a stroke and roll from the body by a huge distance. If it be so that the offender be apprehended for an ox, oxen, sheep, kine, horse, or any such cattle, the self beast, or other of the same kind shall have the end of the rope tied somewhere unto them, so that they, being driven, do draw out the pin, whereby the offender is executed. Thus much of Halifax law, which I set down only to show the custom of that country in this behalf." (P. 243.)

Felons who, when apprehended, refused to speak at their arraignment were pressed to death. A sharp stone was placed under the back, and heavy weights placed upon the breast, one after another till the victim was dead. If one man poisoned another, he was boiled to death in brine or lead; but if a woman poisoned her husband she was burned alive. Heretics were also burned at



the stake. "Finally, such as having walls or banks near the sea, and do suffer the same to decay (after convenient admonition), whereby the water entereth and drowneth up the country, are, by a certain ancient custom, apprehended, condemned, and staked in the breech, where they remain forever as parcel of the foundation of the new wall that is to be made upon them." (Harrison, p. 245.)

Thus, though there was no torture in the characteristic sense of the word, crimes, great and small alike, were requited by death, inflicted in the most brutal manner. There were, however, lighter punishments quite as savage. Rogues and vagabonds often lost one or both of their ears; the letter P was burnt into the forehead of perjurers, who also had to stand in the pillory. The pillory and stocks were to be found in every village throughout the kingdom, and were frequently used on market days as punishment for disorderly conduct. Kent was put in the stocks for beating Osric; had he done so in Stratford-on-Avon in Shakespeare's time he would have met with the same punishment. The "cucking" stool was equally a part of the equipment of every village and town. Scolding women were always ducked in order to sweeten their tempers.

Whipping was one of the commonest punish-

ments and carried to a cruel extreme. Every town and hamlet was provided with a whipping post; frequently the criminal was tied to the tail of a cart and lashed while it drove slowly through the town. This was the common punishment for vagrancy, and was often continued till the victim could stand up no longer.

“The 18th of December (1656) J. Naylor suffered part: and after having stood full two hours with his head in the pillory, was stripped and whipped at a cart’s tail, from Palace Yard to the Old Exchange, and received 310 stripes; and the executioner would have given him one more (as he confessed to the sheriff) there being 311 kennels, but his foot slipping, the stroke fell upon his own hand, which hurt him much.” (Sewell’s *History of the Quakers.*)

It was considered proper for a man to flog a grown daughter; and youths in the university were often whipped by their tutors. “You’ll ne’er lin [cease],” says Mudlin, “till I make your tutor whip you; you know how I served you once at the free-school in Paul’s Churchyard?” (*A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, III. ii. 151.) Chamberlain, in a letter to Carleton (Feb. 12, 1612), writes:—  
“I know not whether you have heard . . . that a son of the Bishop of Bristol, his eldest, of nineteen or twenty, killed himself with a knife to

avoid the disgrace of breeching, which his mother or mother-in-law (I know not whether) would need have put him to, for losing his money at tennis."

To learn the manners of the Elizabethans one must read the contemporary plays. Nothing more clearly indicates the cruel temper of the people than the incidents they tolerated in these plays. Hired murderers are common adjuncts, not alone in plays of an early setting, but in such a play of contemporary crime as *Arden of Feversham*, where the murderers wrangle over the amount paid, which is specified in definite terms. *Titus Andronicus* affords a beastly illustration of brutality. Lear's eyes are gouged out in the presence of the audience. Piero's tongue is plucked out in *Antonio and Mellida*. (Part 2, act V. sc. ii.) Charles is hired to kill Orlando in the daintiest of comedies; and few Elizabethans could have felt that the mad-house treatment of Malvolio was even a serious joke.

This callousness to what we should call the finer sensibilities was manifested also in the popular sports. One such pastime was bear-baiting. So popular, in fact, was this sport, that one of the objections urged against the growing vogue of the theatre was that the new sport drew the crowd away from the exhibitions at the bear-garden—the first sign that the attractiveness of baiting had

begun to wane. Hentzner, who visited England in 1598, thus describes the sport.

“ There is a place built in the form of a theatre, which serves for baiting of bulls and bears; they are fastened behind, and then worried by great English bull-dogs; but not without risque to the dogs from the horns of the one and the teeth of the other; and it sometimes happens they are killed on the spot; fresh ones are immediately supplied in the places of those that are wounded or tired. To this entertainment there often follows that of whipping a blinded bear, which is performed by five or six men standing circularly with whips, which they exercise upon him without any mercy, as he cannot escape because of his chains; he defends himself with all his force and skill, throwing down all that come within his reach, and are not active enough to get out of it, and tearing the whips out of their hands and breaking them.”

One can imagine the circular enclosure, the rough board seats, the intent and breathless crowd. Perhaps we condemn all this as wanton brutality; but the Elizabethans enjoyed the sport and appreciated its finer parts. Here is another description, written in 1575. “ It was a sport very pleasant to see the bear, with his pink eyes leering after his enemies, approach; the nimbleness and wait of the dog to take his advantage;

and the force and experience of the bear again to avoid his assaults if he were bitten in one place, how he would pinch in another to get free; that if he were taken once, then by what shift with biting, with clawing, with roaring, with tossing, and trembling, he would work and wind himself from them; and, when he was loose, to shake his ears twice or thrice with the blood and slaver hanging about his physiognomy.”

A few additional details of the sport are given in the following contemporary description of a bull-baiting. “They tie a rope to the foot of the ox or bull, and fasten the other end of the cord to an iron ring fixed in a stake, driven into the ground; so that this cord, being 15 foot long, the bull is confined to a sphere about thirty foot diameter. Several butchers or other gentlemen who are desirous to exercise their dogs, stand round about, each holding his own by the ears; and when the sport begins, they let loose one of the dogs; the dog runs at the bull; the bull immovable looks down upon the dog with an eye of scorn, and only turns a horn to him to hinder him from coming near; the dog is not daunted at this, he runs round him and tries to get beneath his belly, in order to seize him by the muzzle, the dewlap, or the pendant glands. The bull then puts himself into a posture of defence; he beats the ground with his feet, which

he joins together as closely as possible, and his chief aim is not to gore the dog with the point of his horn, but to slide one of them under the dog's belly (who creeps close to the ground to hinder it) and to throw him so high in the air that he may break his neck in the fall. This often happens. When the dog thinks he is sure of fixing his teeth, a turn of the horn, which seems to be done with all the negligence in the world, gives him a sprawl thirty foot high and puts him in danger of a damnable squetch when he comes down. This danger would be unavoidable if the dog's friends were not ready beneath him, some with their backs to give him a soft reception, and others with long poles which they offer him slantways, to the intent that sliding down them, it may break the force of the fall. Notwithstanding all this care, a toss generally makes him sing to a very scurvy tune and draw his phis into a very pitiful grimace. But, unless he is totally stunned with the fall, he is sure to crawl again towards the bull, with his old antipathy. come on't what will. Sometimes a second frisk into the air disables him forever from playing his old tricks. But sometimes, too, he fastens upon his old enemy, and when he has seized him with his teeth, he sticks to him like a leech, and will sooner die than leave his hold. Then the bull bellows and bounds and kicks about to shake off the dog; by

his leaping the dog seems to be of no manner of weight to him, though in all appearance he puts him to great pain. In the end either the dog tears out the piece he has laid hold on, and falls, or else remains fixed to him, with an obstinacy that would never end, if they did not pull him off. To call him away would be in vain; to give him a hundred blows would be as much so; you might cut him in pieces joint by joint before he would let loose. What is to be done then? While some hold the bull, others thrust staves into the dog's mouth, and open it by main force. This is the only way to part them." (Quoted in Ashton's *Fleet*.)

This, however, was not a sport confined to the vulgar commonalty. The following is from Strype's edition of Stow's *Survey of London*.

"Anno 1604, June 3. King James taking with him the Duke of Lenox (with divers Earls and Lords) went to see the lions at the Tower. And here he caused two of them, a He lion and a She, to be put forth. And then a live Cock was cast to them: which being their natural enemy they presently killed it, and sucked the blood. Then the King caused a live Lamb to be put to them; which the Lions out of their Generosity (as having respect to its Innocency) never offered to touch, altho' the Lamb was so bold as to go close to them.



Then the King caused the Lions to be taken away, and another Lion to be put forth, and two Mastiffs to be turned to him. The Mastiffs presently flew upon the Lion, and turned him upon his Back; and tho' the Lion was superior to them in Strength, yet it seems they were his match in Courage.

“There was a Spanish Dog, for some Offence or other, cast into the Lion's Den. But the Lion did not attempt to hurt him. And this Dog continued in the Den with the Lion several Years, and there died.

“This story may be subjoined. In the month of June, 1609, a Resolution was taken to make Trial of The Valour of the Lion; Which should be by turning him loose to a Bear. Which Bear had killed a Child; for which it was thought convenient he should suffer death. The Bear was brought, and turned loose in an open Yard: Then a Lion was turned out of his Den to him; but he would not assault him, but fled from him. And so was it done with other Lions, one after another; and lastly, Two together were turned to him. But none set upon him, but rather sought to return to their Dens. A stone Horse was soon after put into the Yard with the first Lion and the Bear. The Horse fell to grazing between them, after he had gazed a little upon them. Two Mas-



tiff Dogs were let in, who boldly fought with the Lion. Afterwards Six Dogs more were let in; who flew upon the Horse, most in sight at their first entrance; and would soon have worried him to death had not Three stout Bearwards entered in and rescued the Horse, and brought away the Dogs, while the Lion and Bear stood staring upon them. At this sight were present, King James, the Queen and Prince, and divers great Lords. But tho' the Bear had so escaped this Bout, the King gave command he should be baited to Death with Dogs upon a Stage; and so he was." (Bk. 1, p. 118.)

Badgers were also baited. Cock-fighting was common, a sport to which Ascham was much addicted. A favourite boy's sport was cock-throwing. This consisted of tying a cock to a stake and throwing small billets of wood at him till he was dead. If, perchance, his legs were broken before he was killed, his body was propped up with sticks so as to prolong the amusement. A cock was often suspended over the middle of a street in an earthen vessel with open ends, and thrown at till he was killed.

Do not fancy that these are isolated instances of sports practised as rarely as cricket in this country. We read of travellers who, when they struck bargains with the post-riders who con-

ducted them about the country, inserted a clause in the contract that enabled them to stop over in any place where there was going to be a cock-fight. Every town of any pretension possessed its bear and bearward. The occasion of an entertainment of this sort was made the subject of elaborate advertisement. When a bear-baiting was to take place, the same was publicly made known, and the bearward previously paraded the streets with his bear, to excite the curiosity of the populace, and induce them to become spectators of the sport. The animal on these occasions was usually preceded by a minstrel or two, and carried a monkey or baboon upon his back.

Another game for children was to balance one piece of wood upon another like a sea-saw. A toad was placed upon one end, the other struck sharply with a stick. Then the children ran and struggled to catch the toad as it came down, often killing it in their eagerness. In the matter of practical jokes, the Elizabethans went far beyond the limits of our time. Dun is in the Mire, a game referred to in *Romeo and Juliet*, provoked no end of fun. Dun was a heavy log. One player tried to lug it away, but, finding himself unable to do so, he called another to his assistance. When the latter came up the former dropped the log on his companion's toes—if he could do so, for that

was the game. Good, old-fashioned quarterstick was nothing more nor less than fighting with staves till blood flowed from the crown of the head. The first to draw blood won.

We are not surprised after considering all this, to find that the Elizabethans considered insanity almost as a joke. The Elizabethans were not hard-hearted; they merely did not understand the malady. It puzzled them. They believed that an insane person was possessed of a devil; literally that an evil spirit had taken up his abode in the house of clay, and that the only way to drive him out was to make his dwelling uncomfortable. Hence the frequent maltreatment of the sufferer. The treatment of Malvolio in *Twelfth Night* is a good example of the current usage. "We have but two sorts of people in this house, and both under the whip; that's fools and madmen." (Middleton's *Changeling*, i. 2.) Another illustration: "Shut the windows, darken the room, fetch whips; the fellow is mad." (Marston, *What You Will*, v. 1.) The patients were starved sometimes, and subjected to many other inhuman punishments.

Yet, when all is said, there is still something to be said. Cruel, callous to the sufferings of beasts, quick to draw blood, used to the sight of mutilated convicts, and corpses dangling in the gallows'

chains—all this the Elizabethans were beyond a doubt. But this is only one side of the picture. The English of that age were a God-fearing people, chivalrous to women, kind to the stranger, hospitable, devoted to the Queen, and willing to die for their country. This extract from a letter written by Sir Henry Sidney to his son is typical of the high-born English gentleman of the time.

“Let your first action be the lifting up of your mind to Almighty God in hearty prayer, with continual meditation and thinking of him to whom you pray. . . . Be humble and obedient to your master [Philip was at school at Shrewsbury]; for unless you frame yourself to obey others, yea, and feel in yourself what obedience is, you shall never be able to teach others how to obey you. Be courteous of gesture and affable to all men; with diversity of reverence according to the dignity of the person. . . . Be modest in each assembly, and rather be rebuked of light fellows for maidenlike shamefastness; than of your sad [serious] friends for pert boldness. Think upon every word you shall speak before you utter it; and remember how nature hath rampered [walled] up, as it were, the tongue, with teeth, lips, yea, and hair without the lips; and all betokening reins or bridles for the loose use of that member.

“Above all things tell no untruth. No, not in trifles . . . for there cannot be a greater reproach to a gentleman, than to be accounted a liar.”

Take the nation through and through, this feeling of honour and reverence pervaded it high and low. In July, 1626, an Englishman, a common sailor of Tavistock, was captured by the Spaniards. After a long series of marvellous adventures and miraculous escapes, he reached England. He published an account of his perils; this is how the narrative ends:—

“And thus endeth my Spanish pilgrimage. With thanks to my good GOD, that in this extraordinary manner preserved me amidst these desperate adventures.

“On my knees I thank Thee! with my tongue will I praise Thee! with my hands fight Thy quarrel! and all the days of my life serve Thee!

“Out of the red sea have I escaped; from the lion’s den been delivered, aye rescued from death and snatched out of the jaws of destruction, only by Thee! O my GOD! Glory be to Thy Name for ever and ever! Amen.”

This from a common mariner saved from the perils of the Inquisition!

Nor did these Elizabethans neglect the poor. An account tells us that during the great frost

which lasted from before Christmas till the end of January, 1608, many persons would have starved to death or have perished from cold had it not been for the relief houses temporarily established by the corporation of London. Christ's Hospital was originally a home for the poor and fatherless; St. Thomas' and St. Bartholomew's were hospitals in our sense of the word. London was noted for its charity. Throughout all England laws were in force that provided relief for the helpless and worthy poor.

Bring what charges we may, Englishmen can look back upon this age, cruel and half-savage as it was in many respects, and thrill with pride, for it was the greatest age of modern times. There was good Queen Bess and her land; there were Sir Francis Drake, and John Hawkins, and Martin Frobisher, and Walter Raleigh, and Lord Howard of Effingham. There were the poets and the playwrights. And there was Gresham, who built the Exchange, and laid the foundation of England's commercial supremacy.

Now, leaving ancient quotations, let us come down to writing of our own time, and read a paragraph from the best recent picture of Elizabethan life and times; Kingsley's *Westward Ho!* Amyas Leigh, the hero of the novel, has sailed around the world with Drake, and has come back

readers and their feelings for many things

to Bideford after a three-years' absence. The time is Sunday morning.

“And what is it,” says Kingsley, “which has thus sent old Bideford wild with that ‘goodly joy and pious mirth,’ of which we now only retain traditions in our translations of the Psalms? Why are all eyes fixed, with greedy admiration, on those four weather-beaten mariners; decked out with knots and ribbons by loving hands; and yet more on that gigantic figure who walks before them, a beardless boy, and yet with a frame and stature of a Hercules, towering, like Saul of old, a head and shoulders above all the congregation, with his golden locks flowing down over his shoulders? And why, as the five go instinctively up to the altar and there fall on their knees before the rails, are all eyes turned to the pew where Mrs. Leigh of Burrough has hid her face between her hands, and her hood rustles and shakes to her joyful sobs? Because there was fellow feeling of old in Merry England, in country and in town; and these are Devon men, and of Bideford . . . and they, the first of all English mariners, have sailed round the world with Francis Drake, and are come to give God thanks.”

Merry England he calls it; Merry England has become a by-word, but it applies to a time long ago, before the Puritans swept away the Maypole



and the Christmas revels. After all, despite the cruel punishments, the baiting of bears, cock-fighting, and the branding of criminals, the England of Elizabeth was a merry, wholesome England, hardly even to be fancied in these prosaic times.

To this credulous people, whose savage nature was undergoing a rapid progress of refinement, must be attributed the open mind and the willing heart. Not only were they ever ready to believe, but they were also always quick to do what others were doing. The very nature of their national life and character bred in them an aptness of imitation.

We find this quality illustrated in the literature of the time. Whether or not one accepts Mr. Sidney Lee's theory of regarding Shakespeare's Sonnets, one cannot deny the long array of facts cited to prove that the sonnet literature of the age of Elizabeth, taken as a whole, is a narrow mass of plagiarised imitations of foreign models. Not only is the form copied, at least so far as it was understood, but also the ideas, the mode of expression, even, at times, the very words are but a stolen translation, with no credit given to the original writer. The same facts are true, to a certain extent, of the drama. Shakespeare himself



was the most persistent copyist. He borrowed his plots. In many cases he borrowed the details of his dramatic technique. This is but another way of saying that when Shakespeare saw a clever device cleverly worked out upon the stage he immediately made use of it; in general, however, displaying greater skill in the manipulation. He was quick to grasp the advantage of a heroine's part played by a boy in his own clothes. Greene set an example of the merry conceit of a man falling in love with a boy disguised as a woman. Shakespeare merely turned the situation end for end when he gave us the love affair of Olivia and Viola.

The Elizabethan fondness for fads goes beyond anything known to-day. The modern linguistic imitation of certain fables in slang so familiar to us of this generation is a mere bagatelle in comparison with the imitation of the more ponderous and often meaningless phrases derived from Lyly's novel. The innumerable sonnets that go to fill up Mr. Lee's large collection were the offspring of a fad that necessitated each and every man of the time to drivel sonnets at a moment's notice in honour of his sweetheart. The sonnet cycle was itself a separate vogue to be distinguished from that of the individual sonnet habit of domestic life. And both lived the short span of life usually allotted to a fashionable fad.

In dress the Elizabethans were equally imitative. They borrowed fashions from the continent and developed them at home. A glossary of terms connected with dress would reveal instantly the continental origin of many of the most used garments.

Along with all this was a youthful exuberance of spirit that may be considered as a fourth national characteristic—or, perhaps, the one characteristic that involves all the others. We may liken it to youthfulness, to the opposite of that enervated state we name blasé. England for centuries had remained practically unchanged, or had followed the slow and ponderous march of mediæval civilisation. Suddenly, at the introduction of the new learning, England awoke with all the ardour of young blood, all the eagerness of childhood.

They were lusty wooers, those Elizabethans. They believed, with a naïve effort to outdo one another in accepting without question the new and the strange. They discovered a delightful habit—as the writing of a sonnet, or the wearing of a ruff—and proceeded to carry it to an extreme almost unthought of. They fought fiercely, and they played with terrible energy. Even hospitality and philanthropy existed to a degree, certainly the former and possibly the latter, unknown even to-day in London, that city of free givers to the

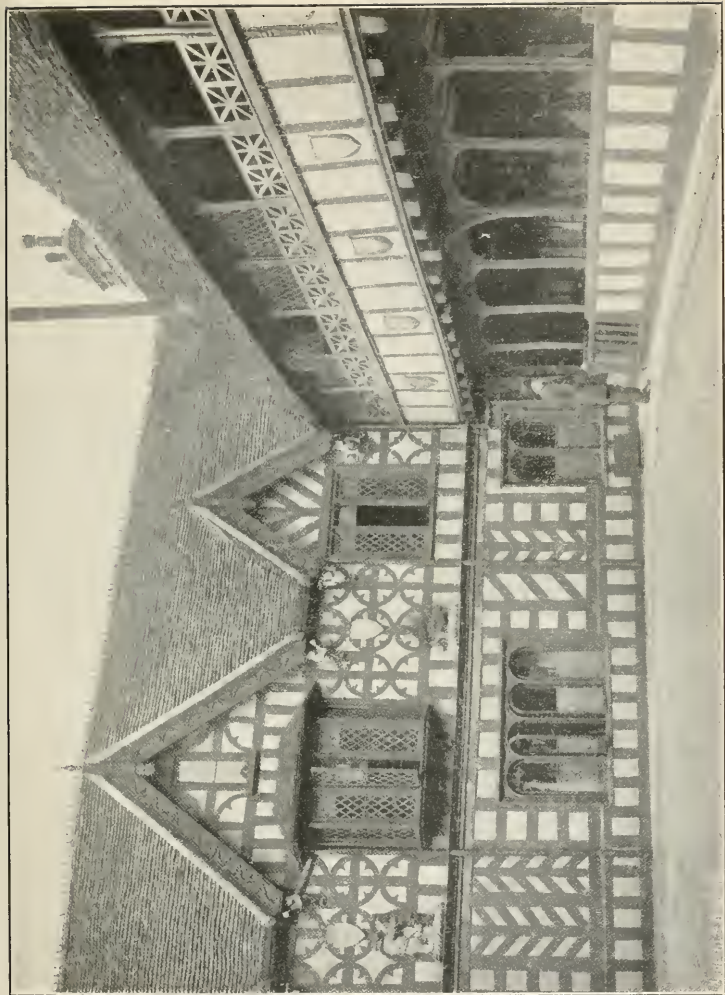
helpless of the nation. This is a delightful characteristic. It is a noble characteristic. It is because of this that we forget and forgive the disagreeable and the savage, and, for we sometimes meet them, the foolish characteristics of the Elizabethan. We forget and forgive all this and express our idealisation of the country of Queen Elizabeth by the phrase "In Merry England." Our recollection is not of the tavern wherein Marlowe fought and died but of the tavern wherein Keats received his inspiration.

*more  
psychology*

## CHAPTER II

### COUNTRY LIFE AND CHARACTER

**T**HOUGH the population of England during the reign of Elizabeth was not increasing rapidly, it was undergoing a change of distribution. The number of inhabitants which, though not definitely known, was probably not far from 5,000,000, was slowly and steadily increasing; more rapid, however, was the change in ratio of country to city residents. The notable decrease in the population of many of the larger towns was at the time the occasion of much alarm. The uneasiness caused by this recognised but misconstrued condition of affairs, it is now easy to see, was unjustifiable. The change was due not to the decrease of the total number of inhabitants but to an exodus from town to country. It was a shift rather than a change of population. Nor is the cause far to seek. Roads, bad as they were, were gradually being improved, thus rendering intercommunication easier in some places, possible in others where before at certain seasons of the year it had been altogether impossible. Even more accountable for this change was the general safety of conditions due to the firm hand and settled policy of the



THE QUADRANGLE, LEICESTER'S HOSPITAL, WARWICK, ILLUSTRATING TIMBER AND PLASTER FRAME-  
WORK; ALSO COURT WITH GALLERIES.



Tudors. It was no longer necessary to seek shelter and security within the fortifications of a walled town. A thick population of considerable magnitude already occupied the immediate neighbourhood without the wall of London. The same is true of other cities throughout the country. Far and wide people of substance were removing to pleasanter and now safe retreats in rural England. Nor was it longer considered necessary to continue building mansions on the older plan of a hollow square in which beauty and convenience were sacrificed to the exigencies of fortification.

There was also, during the reign of Elizabeth, a remarkable rearrangement of the social scale. The latter half of the sixteenth century, more than any other period in the history of England, marks the rise to affluence and importance of the middle class. Not only was the small merchant becoming wealthy, but also his position and that of his class was becoming one of greater dignity. England at large began to recognise the importance of these people and the stability their order contributed to the realm. It is hardly too much to say that their assistance contributed so largely as to be almost responsible for the great naval victory over Philip of Spain. Thomas Gresham, a typical representative of the merchant class, built the Royal Exchange, was recognised

throughout the land as a public benefactor, and became the Queen's trusted adviser in matters of finance. In consequence London became the money centre of the world, a distinction it has retained without intermission to this day.

There had never been in England a marked line of separation between nobleman and commoner; the distinction was drawn, rather, as Mr. Trelvyan puts it, between gentle and simple. The relation between the two was generally that of master and servant as we associate it with the better form of patriarchal community. There was greater freedom of manners between lord and tenant, the family and domestic, than is found to-day. At certain seasons of the year, as Yule Tide, all social barriers were thrown down, master and servant dancing and feasting on terms of equality in the same hall of merriment. The old rivalry between town and country was vanishing before the same causes that produced the shifting of population, assisted not a little by the strolling minstrels and travelling players, among whom we find Shakespeare himself.

Another element that contributed largely to this confusion of old lines of separation was the Queen's habit of making progresses. A progress was merely a visit of Elizabeth to the country seat of some favoured nobleman. The visit was



planned in advance. When the time came, the Queen and all her court, accompanied by numerous dignitaries, trains of baggage, and hosts of curious wayfarers, made "progress" through the land. In spite of the improvements in the roads they were oftentimes in such poor condition that this ponderous parade could move but a dozen miles a day. Thus the progress ostensibly occasioned by a single royal visit would eventually involve a score, with, in addition, elaborate civic receptions in honour of the Queen whenever she approached the vicinity of a city of her realm.

The streets of London were poorly paved, many not paved at all. The Strand was a mud lane. On the occasion of a queen's progress through the city, Cheapside and other streets traversed were copiously strewn with gravel. In going from east to west the people avoided as much as possible the unruly streets and resorted to the great popular avenue of travel, the river Thames. The river was not then the filthy race it is to-day. "Silver-streaming" is Spenser's epithet, and Barnfield alludes to "Thy christal billowed waves." "That lady of fresh waters," as a writer of 1608 calls the river, abounded in beds of beautiful water flowers and in flocks of snow-white swans. Used as it was as a thoroughfare, it swarmed with watermen. Their wherries were

hailed from the shore by the familiar cries of Eastward Ho! or Westward Ho! and their ranks furnished at least one writer who has been designated by the courtesy of time a poet.

Though I have referred to the improvement of roads they were still in many parts of the country little better than uninclosed tracks, frequently rutted by the lumbering wheels of the recently introduced coaches, muddy, and full of holes. Travel was often altogether prohibited by flooded rivers. Besides the new coaches, horse litters and carriers' carts were occasionally to be met upon the road. In general, however, goods were transported upon pack-horses, and people fared from place to place in the saddle. A man accompanied by wife or daughter carried her behind him on a pillion. Travel, too, was unsafe, for the road was likely to be infested by robbers. Men rode together in parties for mutual protection, each accompanied by one or more domestic servants, all the party fully armed and ready to draw at a moment's notice. On arrival at an inn each person had to look with care to the provision of his horse and the bestowal of his luggage; for only too often the drawers and other domestic servants of country inns were in league with the neighbouring highwaymen.

From an account published about 1610 (see

Rye, p. 131) we learn that riding "post from Dover to Canterbury costs three English shillings; from Canterbury to Sittingbourne the same; from Sittingbourne to Rochester about two shillings and sixpence." To this large expense (for money was then worth about eight times its present value) must be added the discomfort of sitting upon hard, awkward saddles. Further annoyances of post riding were due to the almost universal maltreatment of the post horses; for, as Taylor the Water Poet writes, "For poor hackneys England is a hell." Those of a sensitive temperament might wish to avoid travel altogether, not alone because of hardship and danger, but also because of the repulsive sights seen by the wayside. The account quoted above continues with a typical illustration: "Just before coming to Sittingbourne you will see a robber hanging on a tree; he treacherously killed the messenger sent from the Elector Palatine to the King of England; the body is surrounded by chains and rings that it would be likely to last a long time." Possibly enhanced for the sake of stage effect is the finery of the following description of a post-boy's habit.

"Gallus comes in first, attired like a post in yellow damask doublet and bases; the doublet with close wings, cut like feathers; a pouch of carna-

tion satin, wherein was his packet hung in a baldrick of the same; a pair of yellow boots; spurs with one long prick like a cock; a little hat of yellow damask, with a plume of red feathers like a crest." (Stage directions, *The Masque of Flowers*, 1614.)

The introduction of coaches into England is thus recorded by Taylor the Water Poet.

"In the year 1564, one William Boonen, a Dutchman, brought first the use of coaches hither, and the said Boonen was Queen Elizabeth's coachman; for indeed a coach was a strange monster in those days, and the sight of it put both horse and man into amazement; some said it was a great crab shell brought out of China, and some imagined it to be one of the Pagan temples, in which the cannibals adored the devil; but at last those doubts were cleared and coach-making became a substantial trade." (Works, ed. 1630, p. 240.) As late as 1598 this vehicle was still looked upon as a novelty. "Now to diminish and cut this charge, as well of horses as of men, there is a new invention, and that is, she must have a coach, etc." (From a black-letter pamphlet by W. W., 1598, quoted by Rye, p. 196.)

So popular, however, became the "new invention" that in 1601 an act was introduced into the House of Lords "to restrain the excessive

and superfluous use of coaches within this realm. The act, however, was rejected on the second reading.

Coaches soon came into very general use. They are frequently mentioned in contemporary plays. They were not for the use of noblemen alone. In *Eastward Ho* one belongs to the wife of a knight. A "lady" owns one in *The London Prodigal*. "Coaches are as common nowadays as some that ride in 'em." (Middleton, *A Mad World*, etc.) "As the nobleman's coach is drawn by four horses, the knight's by two, and the cuckold's by three." (Dekker, *The Devil's Inn*.) The latter is a facetious allusion to the carting of lewd women, and neither two nor four horses were necessarily appropriate to knights or noblemen. We often read of six and eight horses attached to a coach.

These were crudely-built conveyances with heavy wheels and without springs. In 1568 the Queen complained to the French ambassador of "the aching pains she was suffering in consequence of having been knocked about in a coach which had been driven a little too fast a few days before." "A coach!" contemptuously exclaims a character in Dekker's *Westward Ho*, "I cannot abide to be jolted." For all that, they were gorgeously decorated. "They strangle and choke

more velvet in a deep-gathered hose than would serve to line through my lord what-call-ye-him's coach." (Middleton, *The Black Book*.) Shortly after the death of Shakespeare Lady Compton writes to her husband, Lord William, "I will have my two coaches, one lined with velvet to myself, with four very fair horses, and a coach for my women, lined with sweet cloth, one laced with gold, the other with scarlet, and laced with watchet lace and silver, with four good horses. Also, I will have two coachmen, one for my own coach, the other for my women. Also, at any time when I travel, I will be allowed not only carroches and spare horses for me and my women, but I will have such carriages as shall be fitting for all orderly; not pestering my things with my women's nor theirs with either chambermaids. . . . Also, for that it is indecent to coop myself up with my gentleman usher in my coach, I will have him to have a convenient horse to attend me either in city or country. And I must have two footmen. And my desire is, that you defray all the charges for me." (Quoted by Drake, Vol. II., p. 145.)

In spite of the fact that it took a sturdy frame to escape from a long ride in a coach uninjured, or, at least, without aching bones, it was considered a sign of effeminacy for a man to ride in a coach, and is often referred to in terms of





THE GATEWAY, LEICESTER'S HOSPITAL, WARWICK, ILLUSTRATING ORNAMENTAL WOODWORK AND PLASTER CONSTRUCTION.





contempt. For instance, "They that were accustomed on trotting horses to charge the enemy with a lance, now in easy coaches ride up and down to court ladies." (Lyly, *Campaspe*.)

There were numerous characters to be met with constantly on the road. Next to the dangerous highwayman was the pestiferous sturdy beggar. Some were cheats, Abraham-men, or Tom-o-bedlams. "An Abraham man is he that walketh bare-armed, and bare-legged, and feigneth himself mad, and carrieth a pack of wool, or a stick with bacon on it, or such like toy, and nameth himself poor Tom." (Awdeley, *The Fraternitie of Vacabondes*, 1565.) Others were more respectable, for they carried a royal license to beg throughout the realm. It will be remembered that with such a license King James rewarded the plea for help from the age-stricken historian, John Stow. Gipsies are often referred to as consorting with rogues and vagabonds. A poor living these beggars must have earned if we are to believe the line spoken by one of them in a play of Heywood's, "I scarcely earn me three pence by the day."

Pedlars were frequently met upon the road. They usually stopped at the porter's lodge, where they unbound their packs. This contained a miscellaneous assortment of articles, always with full provision of articles for needlework, cloths, and

garments. They also peddled ballads. These doggerel verses commemorated the events of the day, and are the forerunners of the modern newspapers. Pictures and almanacs, the latter full of prognostications, political as well as meteorological, were a part of the pedlar's stock in trade. The retired, often bankrupt soldier, strolling jugglers, wandering minstrels, and troupes of traveling actors were plentiful during the summer months, and were always sure of a warm welcome in the baronial hall.

As illustrative of life in a country town let us glance for a moment at the birthplace of Shakespeare. Stratford in early times possessed a famous guild, so famous that people from all parts of England were glad to become members of the Holy Cross. Not Stratford merchants alone, but nobles and even kings, were part and parcel of this time-honoured institution, from whose records we derive much of our information concerning ancient Stratford. If one can dissociate mountains and the sea from one's idea of natural beauty, Warwickshire leaves nothing to be desired. "The heart of England," as Drayton calls it, lies in the centre of the lowlands. It is a flat country, but not monotonously flat, the roads bordered with hedges, and the fields teeming with wild-

flowers. In the immediate neighbourhood are Warwick with its great castle and its associations pertaining to the King-Maker, and the hospital founded by Leicester; Kenilworth is but a step beyond; and Guy's Cliff, one of the most splendid palaces of country England; and Coventry, which played such an important part in the ancient struggle for civic liberty; not to speak of the numerous Shakespeare associations.

Now that the restorations of the Stratford church are complete, it appears much like the church of Shakespeare's day. Before the death of John of Stratford in 1348, the church was a small and incomplete though substantial structure of Norman architecture. John of Stratford provided for the building of several chapels, notably those to the Virgin Mary, and to Saint Thomas à Becket. He remodelled the tower, and probably added the wooden spire that existed in the time of Shakespeare. In 1332, with the permission of the Bishop of Winchester and of Edward III., he formed a chantry out of some of the chapels that he had built, and dedicated it to Saint Thomas the Martyr, and endowed it with some neighbouring lands for its support. There were five priests, one of whom was to be warden. "Among those whose souls his masses were expected to free from purgatory were, besides him-

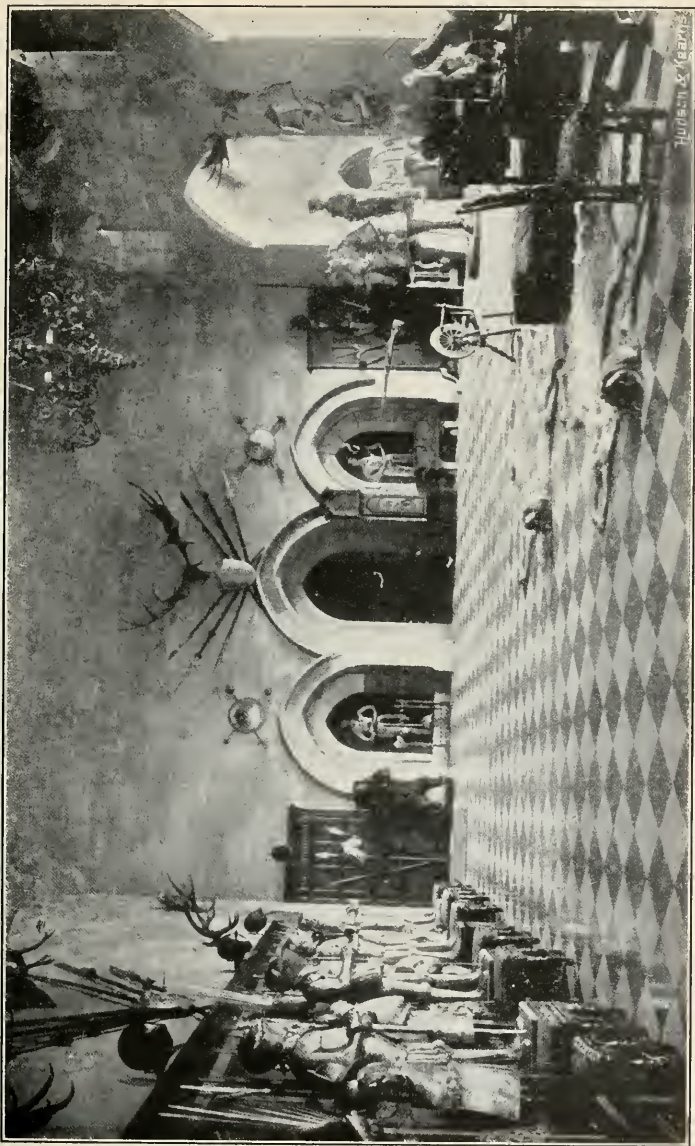
self, and his brother Robert, his father and mother, the Kings of England and the Bishops of Worcester." \*

In 1351 Ralph of Stratford built for his uncle's chantry priests a stone house in the churchyard that was known in Elizabethan times as the College of Stratford. Many others followed these men in beautifying the local church. In the time of Edward IV., the warden of the college "added a fair and beautiful choir, rebuilt from the ground at his own cost," which still exists.

Ralph Collingwood, the warden at the close of the fifteenth century, renewed the north porch of the nave. "The low, decorated clere-story was removed, the walls pulled down to the crowns of the arches, rude angels (by some 'prentice hand) were inserted to carry the pilasters, and the walls were panelled with huge lantern windows, with a flattish roof." (Knowles.) He also improved the service by the introduction of a boy choir, placing them under the rigid supervision of the college priests.

The Stratford guild in the Middle Ages was known by the name of the Guild of the Holy Cross, the Blessed Virgin, and Saint John the

\* Sidney Lee, *Stratford on Avon*. To this book I am indebted for many of the facts of history in the following sketch.



Hudson & Kearns

THE GREAT HALL, WARWICK CASTLE.



Baptist—a name that may indicate its origin in three separate organisations. This guild, and others like it, should not be confused with the livery companies of later date. The Stratford guild was at once religious and social; only later, as a secondary matter, did the idea of trade regulation become a part of its government. Its membership was open upon the payment of an annual fee to persons of both sexes. Besides the importance derived from membership, and the enjoyment of annual feasts and merrymakings, the members were sure of substantial help if they fell into financial trouble, provided always that they were honestly helpless. They were also sure of a good and stately funeral, with a numerous following of the corpse. Orphans and widows were provided for, as well as confirmed spinsters.

In the reign of Edward I., John of Stratford built for the guild its chapel, dedicated to Saint John the Baptist, and almshouses adjoining, which, together with the hall, were probably situated in Church Street, where the Guildhall subsequently stood. In 1332 Edward III. gave the guild a charter; and the following description of its customs is taken from the report on the ordinances, set forth by a commission of Richard II.

“These are the ordinances of the brethren and



sisters of the Guild of the Holy Cross of Stratford.

“First, each of the brethren who wishes to remain in the guild, shall give fourpence a year, payable four times in the year; namely a penny on the feast of Saint Michael, a penny on the feast of Saint Hilary, a penny at Easter, and a penny on the feast of Saint John the Baptist. Out of which payments there shall be made and kept up one wax candle, which shall be done in worshipful honour of our Lord Jesus Christ and of the Blessed Virgin and of the Holy Cross. And the wax candle shall be kept alight every day throughout the year, at every mass in the church, before the blessed cross; so that God and the Blessed Virgin, and the venerated cross, may keep and guard all the brethren and sisters of the guild from every ill. And whoever of the brethren and sisters neglect to come at the above-named times shall pay one penny.

“It is also ordained by the brethren and sisters of the guild, that, when any of them dies, the wax candle before named, together with eight smaller ones, shall be carried from the church to the house of him that is dead; and there they shall be kept alight before the body of the dead until it is carried to the church; and the wax candles shall be carried and kept alight until the body is buried,



and afterwards shall be set before the cross. Also, all the brethren of the guild are bound to follow the body to the church, and to pray for his soul until his body is buried. And whoever does not fulfil this shall pay one halfpenny.

“It is also ordained by the brethren and sisters, that if any poor man in the town dies, or if any stranger has not means of his own out of which to pay for a light to be kept burning before his body, the brethren and sisters shall, for their souls’ health, whosoever he may be, find four wax candles, and one sheet, and a hearsecloth to lay over the coffin till the body is buried.

“It is further ordained by the brethren and sisters, that each of them shall give twopence a year, at a meeting that shall be held once a year; namely, at a feast that shall be held in Easter week, in such manner that brotherly love shall be cherished among them, and evil speaking be driven out; that peace shall always dwell among them, and true love be upheld. And every sister of the guild shall bring with her to this feast a great tankard; and all the tankards shall be filled with ale; and afterwards the ale shall be given to the poor. So likewise shall the brethren do; and their tankards shall in like manner be filled with ale, and this shall also be given to the poor. But, before that ale shall be given to the poor, and be-

fore any brother or sister shall touch his feast in the hall where it is accustomed to be held, all the brethren and sisters there gathered together shall put up their prayers, that God and the Blessed Virgin and the venerated cross, in whose honour they have come together, will keep them from all ills and sins. And if any sister does not bring her tankard, as is abovesaid, she shall pay a halfpenny. Also, if any brother or sister shall, after the bell has sounded, quarrel or stir up a quarrel, he shall pay a halfpenny.

“It is also ordained that no one shall remain in this guild unless he is a man of good behaviour.

“It is moreover ordained, that when one of the brethren dies, the officers shall summon a third part of the brethren, who shall watch near the body, and pray for his soul, through the night. Whoever, having been summoned, neglects to do this, shall pay a halfpenny.

“It is ordained by the common council of the whole guild, that two of the brethren shall be Aldermen; and six other brethren shall be chosen, who shall manage all the affairs of the guild with the aldermen; and whoever of them is absent upon any day agreed among themselves for a meeting, shall pay fourpence.

“If any brother or sister brings with him a guest, without leave of the steward, he shall pay



THE STRATFORD PORTRAIT OF SHAKESPEARE, ILLUSTRATING THE SOFT BAND.



a halfpenny. Also, if any stranger or servant, or youth, comes in, without the knowledge of the officers, he shall pay a halfpenny. Also, if any brother or sister is bold enough to take the seat of another, he shall pay a halfpenny.

“ Also, if it happens that any brother or sister has been robbed, or has fallen into poverty, then so long as he bears himself well and rightly towards the brethren and sisters of the guild, they shall find him in food and clothing and what else he needs.”

The annual banquet was the chief social event of the year. “ The receipts,” says Mr. Lee, “ under the various headings of ‘ light-money,’ rents, and fines, increase with satisfactory regularity, and the expenses grow correspondingly. Candles both of tallow and wax, repairs of house and property, the setting up of hedges, form large items of expenditure, but in each year’s balance sheet the details of the food and drink provided for the annual feast occupy more and more extravagant space. The small pigs and large pigs; the pullets, geese, veal, and ‘ carcasses ’ of mutton; the eggs, butter, and honey; the almonds, raisins, currants, garlic, salt, pepper, and other spices were gathered in from all the neighbouring villages in appalling quantities. Gallons of wine and bushels of malt for brewing ale were alike provided

in generous measure. Horsemen were often equipped at the guild's expense to bring in the supplies. After the feast was done there came the settlement for such items as washing the napery, rushes for the floor of the dining hall, coal and charcoal for the kitchen, the cooks' and other servants' wages. At times the feast was enlivened by professional minstrelsy. Thirty pence was paid to minstrels from Warwick in 1424, and a single performer was often engaged at a fee of fivepence."

The fee for admission to the guild was from four shillings eightpence to four pounds, and the souls of the dead could be admitted upon payment of the entrance fee. Often those who were unable to pay, worked out their dues: some by cooking the annual dinner, others by labour bestowed upon the carpenter work and masonry; still others gave materials instead of money.

The grammar school of Stratford, which Shakespeare attended, was built in 1427. Attendance was free, and the schoolmaster was forbidden to take anything from his pupils.

The last notable pre-Shakespearean benefactor of Stratford was Sir Hugh Clopton. About 1480 he came from a neighbouring village to make his home in Stratford. In 1483 he erected a large house of brick and timber at the corner of Chapel

Street and Chapel Lane. The house became known as New Place, and was bought in 1597 by Shakespeare, who resided there at the time of his death. Clopton built the nave of the Guild-chapel and decorated it with numerous paintings. His chief contribution to the welfare of Stratford, however, was of quite a different kind.

Leland, the antiquary who visited Stratford about 1530, wrote that "Afore the time of Hugh Clopton there was but a poor bridge of timber, and no causeway to come to it, whereby many poor folks either refused to come to Stratford when the river was up, or coming thither stood in jeopardy of life." It was to destroy this evil that Sir Hugh Clopton built a freestone bridge of fourteen arches with a long causeway "well walled on each side at the west." He also left much money to be distributed annually to the deserving poor of the village.

From a structural point of view Stratford was now practically complete, but the organisation of its municipal government had not yet come into existence. At the time of the Dissolution of the Monasteries, Stratford suffered greatly. The College was finally suppressed in 1547, as was also the guild. The latter had exercised civic control, and its suppression left the city without any organisation whatever. At the end of six years, af-

fairs were in such a state of confusion, that a petition was signed by all the principal men of Stratford and forwarded to the King. Happily, it received favourable consideration. The Guild was reconstituted under the name of the Corporation and given full municipal power. The grammar school was again opened, and a new era for Stratford began.

This, then, is the Stratford in which Shakespeare spent his youth. "It is essential for the student of the social history of Stratford," says Mr. Sidney Lee, "to grasp clearly the leading differences between life in the sixteenth and in the nineteenth centuries, and of the first importance is it to realise how little personal liberty was understood in Elizabethan country towns. Scarcely an entry in the books of the new council fails to emphasise the rigidly paternal character of its rule. If a man lived immorally he was summoned to the Guildhall, and rigorously examined as to the truth of the rumours that had reached the bailiff's ear. If his guilt was proved, and he refused to make adequate reparation, he was invited to leave the city. A female servant, hired at a salary of twenty-six shillings and eighteen pence and a pair of shoes, left her master suddenly in 1611. The aldermen ordered her arrest on her master's complaint. Her defence was that 'she was once



frightened in the night in the chamber where her master's late wife died, but by what or when she cannot tell'; but this plea proved of no avail, and she spent some months in the gaol by the Guildhall. Rude endeavours were made to sweeten the tempers of scolding wives. A substantial 'cucking stool' with iron staples, lock, and hinges, was kept in good repair. The shrew was attached to it, and by means of ropes, planks, and wheels, was plunged two or three times into the Avon whenever the municipal council believed her to stand in need of correction. Three days and three nights were invariably spent in the open stocks by any inhabitant who spoke disrespectfully of any town officer, or who disobeyed any minor municipal decree. No one might receive a stranger into his house without the bailiff's permission. No journeyman, apprentice, or servant might 'be forth of their or his master's house' after nine o'clock at night. Bowling alleys and butts were provided by the council, but were only to be used at stated times. An alderman was fined on one occasion for going to bowls after a morning meeting of the council, and Henry Sydnall was fined twenty pence for keeping unlawful or unlicensed bowling in a back shed. Alehouse keepers, of whom there were thirty in Shakespeare's time, were kept strictly under the council's control. They were not al-

lowed to brew their own ale, or to encourage tippling, or to serve poor artificers except at stated hours of the day, on pain of fine and imprisonment. Dogs were not to go about the street unmuzzled. Every inhabitant had to go to church at least once a month, and absentees were liable to penalties of twenty pounds, which in the late years of Elizabeth's reign commissioners came from London to see that the local authorities enforced. Early in the seventeenth century swearing was rigorously prohibited. Laws as to dress were always rigorously enforced. In 1577 there were many fines exacted for failure to wear the plain statute woolen caps on Sundays, to which Rosaline makes reference in *Love's Labour's Lost*, and the regulation affected all inhabitants above six years of age. In 1604 'the greatest part' of the population were present at a great leet, or law-day, 'for wearing their apparel contrary to the statute.' Nor would it be difficult to present many other like proofs of the persistent strictness with which the new town council of Stratford, by the enforcement of its own orders and of the statutes of the realm, regulated the inhabitants' whole conduct of life."

Between the years 1557 and 1577, John Shakespeare, the poet's father, filled at one time or another, all the principal offices of the corporation

from ale-taster to chief alderman. Stratford, during the period of his prosperity, was a thriving commercial town. The trading companies represented skinners, tailors, shoemakers, saddlers, glovers, tanners, collar-makers, chandlers, soap-makers, ironmongers, and bakers. Pewterers, butchers, brewers, drapers, grocers, carpenters, painters, were numerous in the town. Tradesmen's shops were usually the downstairs part of their dwellings. A man frequently carried on trade in a number of different wares at the same time. Adrien Quiney, for instance, dealt in ginger, red-lead, Southwich cloth, lime, salad oil, and deal boards.

“Trade was maintained,” says Mr. Lee, “at a normal rate of briskness by the weekly markets and the half-yearly fairs, the chief of which fell in September. The town council strictly regulated the procedure of the fairs, and appointed to each trade a station in the streets. Thus, raw hides at markets and fairs were to be laid down at the cross in Rother Market. Sellers of butter, cheese, and all manner of white meat, wick yarn, and fruits, were to set up their stalls by the cross at the chapel. A site in the high street was assigned to country butchers, who repaired to the town with their flesh, hides, and tallow. Pewterers were ordained to ‘pitch’ their wares in Wood

Street, and to pay for the ground they occupied fourpence a yard. Saltwains, whose owners did a thriving trade in days when salted meats formed the staple supply of food, were permitted to stand about the cross in Rother Market. At various points the victuallers were permitted to erect booths. These regulations were needful to prevent strife, and fines for breach of the rules often reached as large a sum as five pounds. The townsmen were anxious to secure for themselves all the advantages of these gatherings, and the council often employed men armed with cudgels to keep Coventry traders out of the town."

In 1547, 1500 people regularly took the sacrament at the Stratford church; and it may be inferred from the householders' reports in 1562 that the population at that time was about 2000.

The majority of the houses were constructed of timber, a heavy framework, of which the squares and triangles formed by the wooden braces were filled with lath and plaster. The roofs of the better houses were of tile; but thatch was the more common material. If the front did not rise in steep gables, the slope of the roof was sure to contain dormer windows peeping out of the thatch. Porches invariably sheltered the door; and, if the house were that of a trader, a pent-house formed a covering beneath which he set up

his stall. The better houses of the main streets in the village were built of timber and brick instead of timber and lath and plaster. Shakespeare seems to have rebuilt New Place of stone, a material of which the College was wholly constructed. Often the timber framework in front of a house was elaborately carved. Barns and office buildings were constructed like the smaller dwelling houses, of timber, lath and plaster, and always thatched.

The gardens were usually separated by mud walls that were thatched on top as a protection against the rain. These walls were in constant need of repair, easily broken down, and, consequently, offered little or no real protection. The gardens about the houses were generally planted with fruit trees. Flowers, vegetables, and medicinal herbs were grown by almost every householder. Trees were a common feature of the smaller country towns. Stratford was especially noted for its elms.

Once inside of a smaller Elizabethan house one found few of what we now call comforts. Chimneys were rare till towards the end of Elizabeth's reign. The fire was built upon the floor, often on the bare clay, and the smoke found its deliberate way out of a hole in the wall or roof. Frequently the lower story was not partitioned off, the single

room, or "hall" serving as kitchen, dining-room, and general living-room. The second story contained the sleeping-rooms, or, perhaps, the sleeping-room, for it, like the floor below, was sometimes unpartitioned.

The furniture of such a house as that in which Shakespeare was born was indeed meagre. From an inventory made in 1592 of the effects of one of John Shakespeare's friends we learn what to expect in the way of furnishing. In the hall was "one table on a joined frame, five small joint stools, a wainscot bench, and painted cloths." There was evidently a fireplace and a chimney, since the list contains and-irons, fire shovel, tongs, pot-hooks, and pot-hangers. In another room was a small table on a frame, two joint stools, two chairs, a press, a joined bed, and a small plank. "Item, three painted cloths (a cheap imitation of tapestry), one feather bed, one flock bed, two bolsters, one pillow, one bed cover of yellow and green, four old blankets, and one old carpet." A chest contained coarse sheets, table cloths, dusters, and napkins. In another were three pairs of flaxen sheets, a pair of hempen sheets, a flaxen table cloth, half a dozen napkins of flax, one of hemp, two diaper napkins, and four pillow cases of flax. In the buttery a small assortment of dishes, platters, etc., among which

were a few pewter vessels. There were three brass pots, a pan, six skimmers, a basin, a chafing dish, a frying pan, and a dripping pan. In another room on the ground floor were a truckle bed, an old coverlet, an old bolster, an old blanket, a little round table, and two old chests. In the kitchen were six barrels of beer, five looms, four pails, four forms, three stools, one bolting hutch, two skips for taking up yeast, one vat, a table board, two pairs of trestles, and two strikes (bushel measures), an axe, shovels, and a spade. In an upper room were more beds and bedding, a cheese crate, malt, malt shovels, a beam with scales, two dozen trenchers, and one dozen pewter spoons. In the yard were bundles of laths, loads of wood, buckets, cord and windlass for the well, and a watchman's bill. This list of articles represents the whole possession of a man in well to do circumstances.\*

Cleanliness was unknown in the Elizabethan house, whether great or small. The most pretentious palace boasted nothing better as a covering

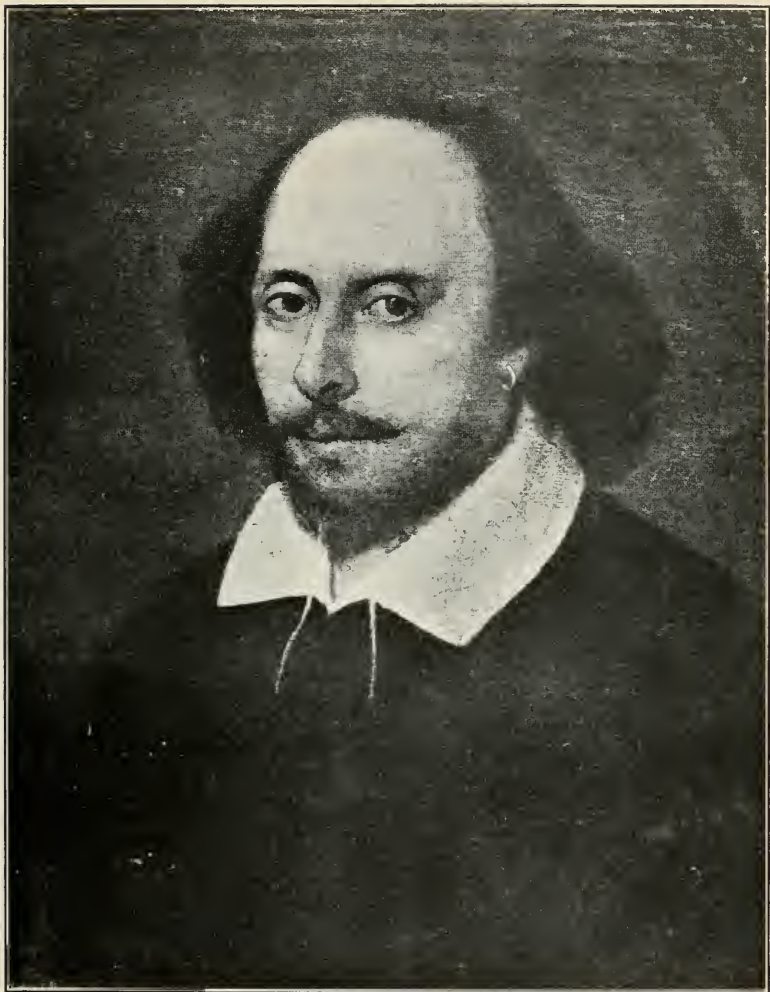
\* The substance of this inventory is given in Mr. Sidney Lee's *Stratford on Avon*, page 137, and in a similar description of the goods of a wooldriver on page 142. The appendix to Hall's *Society in the Age of Elizabeth* reprints a number of inventories of the goods of people in different social ranks of life. A number of Elizabethan inventories were privately printed by Halliwell-Phillipps. The volume contains the Kenilworth inventory.



for the floor than a layer of rushes.\* In the smaller houses of such a town as Stratford even rushes were dispensed with. The floor of the hall was the bare earth, sometimes sprinkled with sand, but seldom swept or cleaned. Water was plentiful, but not in demand. Woodwork was hardly ever scrubbed, and water upon the person is seldom referred to in contemporary writings. We hear very little of baths, but much of dirty fingers, unkempt hair, and general neglect of personal cleanliness. It was customary to let refuse lie about. When it became too foul it was swept out of the front door into the gutter, or left in a pile against the house wall. Shakespeare's father was fined for such a nuisance. There were several public muck heaps near the edge of town, but far too near the habitations for safety. Pigs and other animals ran loose in the streets, notwithstanding the fact that there were laws against the custom. In 1611 the town council issued an order "that no swine be permitted to be in the open street of the town unless they have a keeper with them, and then only when they are in driving within this borough, upon pain for every strayer of fourpence." The town itself provided for cleaning the bridge, the market place, and the

\* The word carpet, so often met in the old writings, usually refers to a table cloth.





THE CHANDOS PORTRAIT OF SHAKESPEARE, ILLUSTRATING THE SOFT BAND



spaces in front of the Guildhall and of the Chapel. Cleaning the streets was left to the individual householder who, however, seldom performed the duty till, like the poet's father, he was compelled by law.

Such a town of filth and thatched roofs was particularly liable to the double danger of disease and of fire. The plague was a regular visitant at Stratford every ten or twenty years. In the summer of 1564 this dread sickness swept away one-seventh of the population. The town was frequently devastated by fire, and several times nearly ruined.

Stratford has been chosen to illustrate the Elizabethan small town. Its manners and customs, government, trade, etc., are typical. It was slightly off the beaten track, however, therefore lacking in that element of bustle, of men of all sorts and conditions passing through on their way to somewhere else, that was characteristic of such a town as Coventry. Stratford also lacked what Coventry had, and York and Chester still have, a city wall.

## CHAPTER III

### LIFE IN THE CAPITAL

AS I have elsewhere made an attempt to describe topographically the city of London, I shall now merely suggest the appearance of the town, dwelling more at length upon a few features of the social life that I have not treated elsewhere.

London was then not only the capital but also the only influential city on a large scale in the kingdom. It was the guiding centre at the time, and exerted a far more dominating influence over the country at large than it does to-day. An Elizabethan could not grow up happily unless he was able to make the acquaintance of the great city. One went there and only there to try one's fortunes; and one frequently came home ruined in body and soul, for London was, indeed, in those days, a monstrous den of vice.

Yet it was an attractive city; not too small, nor yet so large as to preclude a general knowledge on the part of one individual of the private affairs of his neighbour. We should not overlook the fact, when contemplating the Elizabethan drama, that both actor and audience, meeting day by day,

grew familiar with one another, almost on speaking terms of acquaintance.

The city was circled by a wall, in fact, had grown a little beyond it on the three landward sides. And a large settlement at Southwark across the river extended from the only bridge that spanned the stream.

The streets were narrow, filthy, and ill-paved. The houses were built mostly of wood, with overhanging gables, were covered with red tile, thus giving the city a distinct colour when seen from a distance. As important as any of the great streets as a thoroughfare was the river, then a clear stream of fresh water. Thousands of boatmen plied their clumsy little skiffs, or wherries, for the service of passengers.

In spite of the narrowness and the filth of the poorly paved streets, London possessed many beautiful buildings and several fine prospects. Traders still clung together, venders of one kind of article living in one street, those of another in another. In general they set up their shops in the lower front rooms of their dwellings.

The reign of Elizabeth was a time when the merchant was becoming more and more influential, both in a business and in a social way. Though Sir Thomas Gresham is a figure of magnificent proportions, there is reason to believe that the

average petty trader was about as dishonest as the confidence man now met with at the racetrack.

Oftentimes the wares for sale were exposed in a lean-to or booth outside the house, encroaching upon the narrow street. The apprentices took turns standing to attract customers whose attention they solicited by the well known cry of "What do ye lack? What do ye lack?" People then as now often haunted shops for the purpose of satisfying curiosity rather than for the purpose of buying. Such people earned the contemporary title of "stall-troublers." The replacing of an apprentice by an alluring wife or daughter was a common trick of the trade and frequently led to much scandal. Thus Field in *Amends for Ladies* (ii. 2) refers to "some decayed tradesman that doth make his wife entertain those for gain that he not endures."

Numerous passages in the Elizabethan plays refer to "false lights." The phrase applies to the placing of windows and other sources of light so as to defeat their own ends; in other words, an intentional effort was made to darken the shop rather than to render it light for the easy and just examination of goods. Thus:

"Fool that hadst rather with false lights and dark  
Beguiled be than see the ware thou buyest."

(*Nero*, ii. 2.)

“Though your shop wares you vent with your deceiving lights.” (Middleton, *Anything for a Quiet Life*, ii. 2.)

“Faith, choosing of a wench in a hugh farthingale  
Is like the buying of ware under a great penthouse;  
What with deceit of one and the false lights of the  
other.” (Middleton, *Women beware Women*.)

Dekker, in *Westward Ho!* says that the shop of a mercer or a human draper is as dark as a room in Bedlam.

The apprentice was a person of considerable moment. Yet he was one whose position was not always well defined. Nominally he was to learn the trade or profession of his master. A bond was executed between them: the master agreeing to teach and to provide, the apprentice to serve and to learn. At the end of his term of years the pupil was supposed to be qualified to set up in business on his own account. He often succeeded to his master's business and frequently married the daughter of the house. Though this equality existed, the apprentice was expected to perform many miscellaneous acts of domestic service not referred to in the bond. He must run errands, frequently serve at table, follow his master or mistress when abroad in order to carry bundles or to lend protection. Apprentices were attracted to each other as a class by ties of very sympathetic fellowship. Though they were permitted to carry

no weapons other than staves, the cry of "Clubs, Clubs!" would rouse a whole neighbourhood with disastrous results. Scott has accurately described such a scene in *The Fortunes of Nigel*.

There were two shops, that of the barber and of the tobacco man, that merit special notice, for they were, in a way, Elizabethan institutions. The barber shop was recognised outwardly by the pole and the basin. The latter sign was symbolical not only of the bowl in which the barber mixed his lather but also of the vessel in which he caught blood when performing his office of surgeon, a profession that went hand in hand with hair-cutting. The barber often rented his basin for use in making the general hub-hub that accompanied the carting of a bawd. "Let there be no bawd carted that year, to employ a basin of his." (Jonson, *The Silent Woman*.)

It is, however, the inside of the barber shop that interests us particularly as an Elizabethan institution. It was the place above all for the manufacture and the dissemination of gossip. Here the young gallant came, incidentally to be trimmed and shaved, primarily to spend a social hour. The shop was well fitted out for his amusement. Just as a newspaper is handed one to-day who is compelled to wait his turn at the chair, so a musical



instrument was given to an Elizabethan with which to beguile the time.

The instruments most frequently in use were of the lute or cittern order. Thus Dekker in *Match me in London* speaks of a cittern with a man's broken head "so that I think 'twas a barber-surgeon." The allusion is to the grotesquely carved end of the instrument. In one of *The Merry Jest*s of Peele, when a lute is needed, haste is made to borrow one of a barber. The barber himself should also be a performer. "Have you any skill in song or instrument?" cries one in Dekker's *Wonder in a Kingdom*. "As a gentleman should have," is the reply. "I know all but play on none. I am no barber." A passage in Ford's *Fancies Chaste and Noble* (ii. 2), shows that the barber was also, upon occasion, expected to instruct the lasses both in song and dance.

Reed gives the following graphic sketch note of the interior of a barber's shop with waiting customers:

"A lute or cittern used to be part of the furniture of a barber's shop, and as Sir John Hawkins, in his notes on Walton's *Complete Angler*, p. 236, observes, answered the end of a newspaper, the now common amusement of waiting customers. In an old book of enigmas, to

every one of which the author has prefixed a wooden cut of the subject of the enigma, is a barber, and the cut represents a barber's shop, in which there is one person sitting in a chair under the barber's hands, while another, who is waiting for his turn, is playing on the lute; and on the side of the shop hangs another instrument of the lute or cittern kind."

A passage regarding the barber shop occurs in *Measure for Measure* and has given rise to much comment.

"laws for all faults,  
But faults so countenanced, that the strong statutes  
Stand like the forfeits in a barber's shop,  
As much in mock as mark."

"In order to enforce some kind of regularity in barber shops," says Dyer (p. 533), "which were places of great resort for the idle, certain laws were usually made, the breaking of which was to be punished by forfeits." A list of such rules is given by Nares, who, however, doubts their authenticity. Warburton suggested a different interpretation. Barber shops were continually crowded with irresponsible persons "who would be perpetually handling and misusing" the barber's instruments. "To remedy which, I suppose, there was placed up against the wall a table of forfeitures, adapted to every offence of this kind;

which it is not likely would long preserve its authority.”

An interesting sidelight is thrown upon the Elizabethan barber shop by Mr. H. C. Hart, the latest editor of *Measure for Measure*, who seems to have discovered the correct interpretation of the above passage. After giving a list of passages referring to barbers and their shops, he says:

“Many other votaries of St. Cuthbert (Cutbeards) might be mentioned, but nowhere is there even an illusion, that I have met, that could be construed into a reference to any kind of by-laws. . . .

“But there is one kind of forfeit which the barber took possession of from his customers and hung up as part of his insignia in his shop, and that was their *teeth*. For the barber was the dentist of the time. These were the innocuous forfeits that could mock, not mark. In the first act (I. iii. 19) these neglected statutes have already suggested the metaphor: ‘We have strict statutes, and most *biting* laws. . . . Which for this fourteen years we have let sleep.’ If it be objected that these shop fittings cannot be called forfeits, since the idea of penalty is not present, no doubt Cutbeard would reply if the sufferers had visited him earlier their teeth would have been

saved by proper treatment, and they forfeited them from neglect. But Shakespeare would have made nothing of that point in his choice of a word to express a bold idea. He often paid slight heed to the exact verbal signification, and left it for others to discover his meaning. And he uses forfeit (verb) absolutely in the sense of to lose several times.

“With reference to the custom a few examples will prove it. We learn from Jonson’s *Silent Woman*, iii. 2 (430b), how the decoration was fixed: ‘Or draw his own [Cutbeard’s] teeth, and add them to the lutestring.’ In Beaumont and Fletcher’s *Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1611), Act III., the string is confirmed: ‘Lo, where the spear [barber’s pole] and copper basin are! Behold the string on which hangs many a tooth, Drawn from the gentle jaw of wandering knights!’ And in *The Woman Hater*, iii. 3 (1607), by the same authors, is another reference: ‘I will break my knife, the ensign of my former happy state, Knock out my teeth, have them hung at a barber’s, and enter into religion.’ Shakespeare has referred a number of times to toothache and raging teeth. It is not therefore an unlikely fancy to occur to him. One passage is indeed a remarkable parallel to the thought in the text. It is in *2 Henry VI.*, IV. vii. 16-19:

‘Away, burn all the records of the realm: my mouth shall be the parliament of England. *Holl*. Then we are like to have biting statutes, unless his teeth be pulled out.’ So that Shakespeare compared the ‘biting statutes’ already to teeth that should be extracted, then to become a mockery, and hung up as a badge of ornament.”

Tobacco was usually sold at the apothecary’s shop and our interest lies rather in the material than in the shop. The use of tobacco, which had recently been introduced into England, was rapidly becoming general. Stow tells us that it was taken by most men and by many women. “In these days,” says Harrison in his *Chronology*, “the taking of the smoke of the Indian herb called tobacco, by an instrument formed like a little ladle, whereby it passeth from the mouth into the head and stomach, is greatly taken up and used in England against *Rewmes* (colds) and some other diseases ingendered in the lungs and inward parts, and not without effect. This herb as yet is not so common but that for want thereof divers do practice for the like purpose with the *Nicetian* . . . or the yellow henbane, albeit not without great error; for, although that herb be a sovereign healer of old vices and sores reported incurable outwardly, yet is not the smoke or vapour thereof so profitable to be received.”

We find in Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* (ii. 1) the following allusion to the adulteration of tobacco. "Three pence a pipe full, I will have made of all my half-pound of tobacco, and a quarter of a pound of colt's foot mixed with it to [eke] it out;" and in *The Alchemist* (i. 3) is another allusion to the practice.

"This is my friend Abel, an honest fellow,  
He lets me have good tobacco, and he does not  
Sophisticate it with sack lees or oil,  
Nor washes it in muscadel, and grains,  
Nor buries it in gravel, underground, . . .  
He has his maple block, his silver tongs,  
Winchester pipes, and fire of juniper, etc."

In a note on this passage, Gifford says: "It should be observed that the houses of druggists were not merely furnished with tobacco, but with conveniences for smoking it. Every well frequented shop was an academy of this 'noble art,' where professors regularly attended to initiate the country aspirant. Abel's shop is very graphically described, and seems to be one of the fashionable kind. The maple block was for shredding the tobacco leaf, the silver tongs for holding the coal, and the fire of juniper for the customers to light their pipes. Juniper is not lightly mentioned: 'when once kindled' Fuller says, 'it is hardly quenched;' and Upton observes, from Cardan,

that 'a coal of juniper, if covered with its own ashes, will retain its fire a whole year.' ”

It is hard to understand how a habit in such general disrepute as “tobacco taking” could have grown so rapidly among the people. To be sure, John Davies wrote the following praise, though doubtless ironically:—

“It is tobacco, which doth cold expel,  
And clears the obstructions of the arteries,  
And surfeits threatening death digesteth well,  
Decocting all the stomach's crudities:  
It is tobacco, which hath power to clarify  
The cloudy mists before dim eyes appearing;  
It is tobacco, which hath power to rarify  
The thick gross humour which doth stop the hearing;  
The wasting hectic, and the quartan fever,  
Which doth of physic make a mockery,  
The gout it cures, and helps ill breaths foreve.,  
Whether the cause in teeth or stomach be.”

Though there are many serious allusions to the virtues of the new drug, a greater number express the contrary opinion. King James in his *Counterblast* calls it a “custom loathsome to the eye, hatefull to the nose, harmfull to the brain, dangerous to the lungs, and in the black stinking fumes thereof, nearest resembling the horrible Stigian smoke of the pit that is bottomless.”

Above all, the plays abound in allusions expressive of contempt. Jonson in *Bartholomew Fair* makes Overdo exclaim “Hence it is that

the lungs of the tobacconist are rotted, the liver spotted, the brain smoked like the back side of the pig-woman's booth here, and the whole body within black as her pan you saw e'en now without."

In Dekker's *Shoemaker's Holiday* we read, "Oh, fie upon it, Roger, perdy! These filthy tobacco pipes are the most idle, slaving baubles that ever I felt. Out upon it! God bless us, men look not like men that use them."

"By my little finger, I'll break all your pipes, and burn the case, and the box too, and you draw out your stinking smoke before me." (Dekker's *Westward Ho.*)

Beaumont and Fletcher are equally contemptuous. "Fie, this stinking tobacco kills me! Would there were none in England." (*Knight of the Burning Pestle.*) Middleton mentions the goldsmith and the tobacco seller as the two extremes; and Field, "Her fortune, O my conscience, would be to marry some tobacco man." (*Amends for Ladies*, iii. 1.)

The tobacco sold in that day must have been very dark if we may draw an inference from "faces far blacker than any ball of tobacco" a line from Nash's *The Terrors of the Night*, i. 139. It was the custom to hand one a pipe of tobacco already filled; and the phrase, "Will you take a



pipe of tobacco?" was the customary equivalent of "Have a drink?" In fact, the phrase "drinking tobacco" was in use.

"I did not as you barred gallants do,  
Fill my discourse up drinking tobacco."  
(Chapman, *All Fools*, ii. 1.)

Dishonest tradesmen, gossiping barbers, and adulterating tobacconists were not the only evil elements in the popular London life.

More than once in the present volume attention has been called to the credulity of the Elizabethans, and its effect on the national character. It was the tendency to believe in the marvelous that made the age one of fortune telling and prophecy. Palmistry, alchemy, and astrology were probably then more popular than they have ever been before or since. The fact that the practice of these professions was frowned upon by the authorities, coupled with their mysterious nature, tended to make them dear to the Elizabethan heart. The very nature of these so-called arts was especially tempting to dishonest people. London swarmed with quack astrologers and alchemists who have become through lineal descent the bunco men of to-day.

It is not the purpose of the present chapter to set forth an exposition of the serious beliefs per-

taining to either of the allied arts; but rather to tell in the words of those who, at the time, were sharp enough to see through the deceitful practices, what was really done by the Elizabethan quacks. On the other hand, it should not be forgotten that there were honest and sincere devotees to each of these arts who practised for the love of science what they believed to be truth.

Whatever can be said of certain false astrologers, there can be no denial of the fact that they were believed in implicitly by the people, from the Queen down. The popularity of alchemy is sufficiently attested by the fact that no less than 113 books on the subject were published between 1595 and 1615. It was the Queen's patronage that contributed most largely to this popularity. At bottom, the whole thing rested on the belief in magic which we shall see was the mainstay of witchcraft. In the following words, Nash bitterly attacked the belief in sorcery:

“Purblind London, neither canst thou see that God sees thee, nor see into thyself. . . . Therefore hath He smitten thee and struck thee because thou wouldst not believe He was present with thee. . . . His hand I may well term it, for on many that are arrested with the Plague, is the print of a hand seen, and in the very moment it first takes them, they feel a sensible blow given

them, as it were the hand of some stander by. As God's hand we will not take it, but the hand of fortune, the hand of hot weather, the hand of close, smouldy air. The astronomers [astrologers] they assign to the regiment and operation of planets. They say Venus, Mars, or Saturn are motives thereof, and never mention our sins, which are his chief procreators. The vulgar meniality conclude, therefore, it is like to increase, because a heronshaw (a whole afternoon together) sat on the top of Saint Peter's church in Cornhill. They talk of an ox that tolled the bell at Woolwich, and how from an ox he transformed himself to an old man, and from an old man to an infant, and from an infant to a young man. Strange prophetic reports (as to touching the sickness) they mutter he gave out, when in truth they are naught else but cleanly coined lies which some pleasant sportive wits have devised, to gull them most grossly. Under Master Dee's name, the like fabulous divinations have they bruted, when (good reverend old man) he is as far from any such arrogant prescience, as the superstitious spreaders of it are from peace of conscience."

In that age it was not unusual for a scholar or philosopher, by entering all fields of thought, to lay claim to well nigh universal knowledge. So it was with the quacks. Though all the

sciences were to a degree, medicine was the one most closely linked to astrology. Jerome Cardan, perhaps the greatest physician of the day, was also one of the most famous astrologers. Forman, who has left an interesting astrological diary, as a physician diagnosed wholly by the Ephemerides.

“On the basis of medicine and astrology,” says Mr. Hathaway, “it was easy for the would-be general fakir to rear his structure. Conjuring up spirits, telling fortunes, locating lost property, or hidden treasure, preparing love philters, seemed to the people but an extension of the practices of the scientists and physicians of the times. There was a difference in degree, but not in kind. The base of it all was magical. This attitude of wise and simple alike made imposters of the Forman type not merely possible but inevitable. The law of supply and demand applies at once. The people believed that such operations could be performed. They wished them to be performed. It remained but to select the person to perform them. Economic law presented him in a large assortment of varieties. The demand still exists in a lessened degree, and the supply meets it amply. The truth of this, for verification, needs but reference to the advertisements of any large daily paper. Clairvoyants, quacks, patent-medicine

men abound. Their only dangerous competitors are the founders of new religions. This latter is to-day, perhaps, the most profitable and easily operated swindle in the world.”

Closely allied to the astrological practice of medicine were the arts of palmistry and physiognomy, which Nash bitterly attacks in *The Terrors of the Night*.

“Just such like impostures as is this art of exposition of dreams are the arts of Physiognomy and Palmistry: wherein who beareth most palm and praise, is the palpablest fool and Crepundio. Lives there any such slow, itch-brained, beef-witted gull, who by the riveld bark or outward rind of a tree will take upon himself to forespeak how long it will stand, what mischaices of worms, caterpillars, boughs breaking, frost bitings, catel rubbing against, it shall have? As absurd is it by the external branched seams of furrowed wrinkles in a man’s face or hand, in particular or in general to conjecture and foredoom his fate.

“According to every ones labour or exercise, the palm of the hand is wrythen and pleyted, and every day alters as he alters his employments or pastimes; wherefore well may we collect, that he which hath a hand so brawned and interlined, useth such and such tools or recreations; but for the mind or disposition we can no more look

through it than we can into a looking-glass through the wooden case thereof. . . .

“My own experience is but small, yet thus much can I say by his warrantize, that those fatal brands of physiognomy which condemn men for fools, and for idiots, and on the other side for treacherous circumventors and false brothers, have in a hundred men I have known been verified in the contrary.”

Nash is one from whom we shall quote often in the following pages; for he, together with Robert Greene, profligate and debauchee himself, were most energetic in exposing the abuses of this time. The same pamphlet from which the above is quoted furnishes the following relative to the conjurors or “cunning” men of the time:

“Shall I impart unto you a rare secrecy how these famous conjurors ascend by degrees to tell secrets as they do. First and foremost they are men that have had some little sprinkling of grammar learning in their youth; or at least I will allow them to have been surgeons or apothecaries prentices, these, I say, having run through their thrift at the elbows, and riotously among harlots and makeshifts spent the annuity of half-penny ale that was left them, fall a beating their brains how to botch up an easy gainful trade, and set a new nap on an old occupation.

“Hereupon presently they rake some dunghill for a few dirty boxes and plaisters, and toasted cheese and candles’ ends, temper up a few ointments and syrips; which having done, far north, or into sume such rude simple country they get them, and set up.

“Scarce one month have they stayed there, but what with their vaunting and prating, and speaking fustian instead of Greek, all the shires round about do ring with their fame; and then they begin to get a library of three or four old rusty manuscript books, which they themselves nor any else can read; and furnish their shops with a thousand *quid pro quos*, that would choke any horse; besides, some waste trinkets in their chambers hung up, which may make the world half in jealousy they can conjure.

“They will ever more talk doubtfully, as if there were more in them than they meant to make public, or was applicable to every common man’s capacity; when God be their rightful judge, they utter all that they know and a great deal more.

“To knit up their knaveries in short (which, insooth, is the hangman’s office and none’s else) having picked up their crumbs thus pretty well in the country, they draw after a time a little nearer and nearer to London; and at length into Lon-

don they filch themselves privily; but how? Not in the heart of the city will they presume at first dash to hang out their rat banners, but in the skirts and outshifts steal out a sign over a cobbler's stall, like aqua-vitae sellers and stocking menders.

“ Many poor people they win to believe in them, who have not a barreled herring or a piece of poor John that looks ill on it, but they will bring the water he was steeped in unto them in an urinal, and crave their judgment whether he be rotten, or merchant and chapmanable or no. The bruit of their cumming thus travelling from ale-house to ale-house, at last is transported into the great hilts of one or other country serving-man's sword to some good tavern or ordinary; where it is no sooner arrived than it is greedily snatched up by some dapper Monsieur Diego, who lives by telling news, and false dice, and it may be hath a pretty insight into the cards also, together with a little skill in his Jacob's staff, and his compass: being able at all times to discover a new passage to Virginia.

“ This needy gallant with the qualities aforesaid, straight trudgeth to some nobleman's to dinner, and there enlargeth the rumour of this new physician, comments upon every glass and viol that he hath, railed on our Galenists and calls



them dull gardners and hay-makers in a man's belly, compares them to dogs, who, when they are sick eat grasse, and sais they are no better than pack or malt horses, who if a man should knock out their brains will not go out of the beaten highway; whereas his horsleach will leap over the hedge & ditch of a thousand Dioscorides and Hippocrates, and give a man twenty poisons in one, but he would restore him to perfect health. With this strange tale the Noble-man inflamed, desires to bee acquainted with him; what does he but goes immediately and breaks with this mountebanke, telling him if he will divide his gains with him, he will bring him in custome with such and such States, and he shall be countenanst in the Court as he wold desire. The hungrie druggier ambitious after preferment, agrees to anything, and to Court he goes; where being come to enter-view, he speaks nothing but broken English like a French Doctor, pretending to have forgotten his natural tong by travell, when he hath never been further than either the Lowe Countries or Ireland, inforced thether to fly either for getting a maid with child, or marrying two wives. Suffiseth he set[s] a good face on it, & will swear he can extract a better Balsamum out of a chip than the Balm of Iudaea; yea, all receipts and authors you can name he syllogizeth of, & makes a pish

at in comparison of them he hath seen and read: whose names if you aske, hee claps you in the mouth with half a dozen spruce titles, never till he invented them heard of by any Christian. But this is most certaine, if he be of any sect, he is a mettle-bruing Paracelsian, having not past one or two Probatums for al diseases. But case he be called to practise, he excutheth it by great cures he hath in hand; & will not encounter an infirmity but in the declining, that his credit may be more autenticall or els when by some secret intelligence hee is thoroughly instructed of the whole process of his unrecoverable extremitie, he comes gravely marching like a Judge, and gives peremptorie sentence of death; whereby he is accounted a Prophet of deepe prescience.

“But how come he to be the divells secretarie, all this long tale unrips not. In secret be it spoken he is not so great with the divell as you take it.”

Possibly the strictures of Nash will seem more believeable when reinforced by the record of an actual case. Dr. John Dee,\* born in 1527, died 1608, was one of the best known and influential astrological-chemists who flourished during the reign of Elizabeth. He graduated from Cam-

\* I have drawn my facts largely from Mr. Hathaway's excellent biographical sketch of the astrologer.

bridge, where he took both the B.A. and M.A. degrees. He early showed genius as a mathematician, and planned a reformation of the calendar that received the government's serious consideration. He was always held in high favour by the Queen, who visited him in order to see spirits in his crystal globe at Mortlake, a relic now preserved in the British Museum. He had been imprisoned by Queen Mary on the charge of enchantment with malicious intent. He calculated an auspicious day for the coronation of her successor. It was he who was called in to counteract the bad effects of the waxen image of Elizabeth picked up in Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1577. The next year he was required to charm away pains in the teeth of the Queen. Subsequently, on the appearance of a comet in the heavens, Dr. Dee was sent for to explain its portentous significance.

Up to this point there is nothing to show that Dee should be associated with Forman among the abusers rather than the true but mistaken disciples of an absurd science. Whether he should be ever so classed it is now hard to say; but his proceedings have a doubtful look from the time of his association with Edward Kelly. This man was a knave to the inmost marrow. He had had his ears clipt for coining counterfeit money. He became Dr. Dee's "seer," that is, he saw the spirits

invisible to the saner or more honest man ; and thus they began together their joint career of public deception. Dee's diary is full of references to the spirits seen by Kelly, and of the remarks and messages he reported from them. To continue in the words of Mr. Hathaway:—"The repute of Kelly and Dee was so high in alchemy that, in 1583, Albert Laski, a Polish nobleman of large property, but considerably involved, took them to Poland with him to build up his fortunes. Before they went Kelly and the crystal got in their work magnificently. Laski spent many hours in their study, and Kelly got messages predicting great things for Laski. The spirits were very hopeful while they were in England ; Laski was to have dominion, perhaps over all of Europe. But the judicious spirits changed their messages when Kelly got to Poland and found that the count was not so rich as he had supposed, and saw that some result from the money spent on Dee and Kelly was expected. After some years in various parts of Germany, dealing with sovereigns, scholars, and alchemists, after many wonderful adventures, after several transmutations made (?) by Kelly, they separated, Dee returning to England, and Kelly remaining confined by the Emperor, Rudolph II. of Germany. He died in 1595 of a broken leg incurred in an attempt to escape from his prison

by a window. Dee, it is highly probable, in addition to his scholarly activity, had acted as a political agent for Elizabeth abroad. In 1589 he returned to England to find that his house had been sacked by a mob and most of his books burnt. The mob cursed him for a magician while wrecking the house. Dee's reputation as a magician had far outgrown the fame of his scholarship. He complains several times during the rest of his life of this evil repute."

Though the testimony of Nash has been quoted to the effect that Dee was a good old man, he certainly failed to keep clear of the company that justified his later reputation. The affair with Laski is typical. If he was not, his professional colleagues were frequently guilty of the pretended manufacture of gold. The usual practice was to smelt quicksilver before the dupe's eyes. When the process was well advanced the alchemist laid on the crucible a bit of coal with silver filings in holes plugged up with wax. Sometimes by sleight of hand, a lump of gold or silver was substituted for one of copper. At any rate, the dupe was the one who was allowed to fish the precious metal out of the fire. They all repaired to a goldsmith who, after sufficient trial, pronounced it fine. This transmutation was a valuable secret indeed. Could one not immediately

grow rich by the possession of it? The victim was willing to pay a great sum for the precious drug that wrought the transformation. Needless to say, he never again saw the vender.

Both Nash and Greene are outspoken in their attack on alchemy. The former says:

“If they see you covetously bent, they will tell you wonders of the philosopher’s stone, and make you believe they can make gold of goose-grease; only you must be at some two or three hundred pounds cost, or such a trifling matter, to help set up their stills, and then you need not care where you beg your bread, for they will make you do little better if you follow their prescriptions.” He even goes so far as to make the usurer in *The Groat’s Worth of Wit* condemn it most heartily. “Multiply in wealth, my son, by any means thou mayest, only fly Alchemy, for therein are more deceits than her beggarly artists have words; and yet are the wretches more talkative than women.”

In spite of the complimentary prose concerning Dr. Dee, Nash grows enthusiastically poetical when he upholds the opposite side.

“Sky measuring mathematicians;  
Gold breathing Alchemists also we have,  
Both which are subtle-willed humourists,  
That get their meals by telling miracles,

Which they have seen in travelling the skies.  
Vain boasters, liars, make-shifts, they are all,  
Men that removed from their inkhorn terms,  
Bring forth no action worthy of their bread."

In *The Terrors of the Night*, he says:  
"They [the cunning men] may very well pick  
men's purses, like the unskillfuller kind of al-  
chemists, with their artificial and ceremonial kind  
of magic, but no effect shall they achieve thereby,  
though they would hang themselves."

Though Dr. Dee was well educated and a Cam-  
bridge master of arts, there were many of his  
class who deserved the condemnation of Nash,  
pronounced in the following words: "How many  
be there in the world that childishly deprave  
alchemy, and cannot spell the first letter of  
it."

The evil effects of professional astrology were  
almost equaled by its disastrous effects upon pri-  
vate fortunes. It was frequently followed merely  
as the hobby of a gentleman. Thus, in Middle-  
ton's *Anything for a Quiet Life*, one entreats  
"that you would give ore this fruitless, if I may  
not say this idle study of alchemy; why, half your  
house looks like a glass house. . . . And the  
smoke you make is a worse enemy to good house-  
keeping than tobacco. . . . Should one of your  
glasses break, it might bring you to a dead palsy.

. . . My lord, your quicksilver has made all your more solid gold and silver fly in fume."

With all these attacks on a subject held in such popular esteem, with the mildest satire of Lyly's *Galathea*, with the more serious exposure contained in Jonson's *Alchemist*—with all these facts in mind, is one not likely to ask oneself, What did the master writer think of it all? As I have already pointed out, Shakespeare's writings, more than those of any contemporary dramatist, abound in allusions that show his familiarity with all the varied mass of superstition. Yet, throughout these plays Shakespeare has artfully concealed the feelings of his own heart. The only inferences that can be drawn are due to the fact that he sometimes presents one side of a case with more apparent sympathy than the other. Shakespeare's serious allusions to the subject are not infrequent. Thus, in *Julius Cæsar*,

"The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,  
But in ourselves that we are underlings."

And in *King Lear*,

"It is the stars,  
The stars above us govern our conditions."

And in *Pericles*,

"Bring in thy daughter, clothed like a bride,  
For the embracement even of Jove himself:



At whose conception, till Lucina reign'd,  
Nature this dowry gave, to glad her presence,  
The senate house of planets all did sit,  
To knit in her their best perfections."

Yet *King Lear*, which furnishes one of the above quotations also furnishes the following piece of ridicule which in sense, though not in quality, is quite of a piece with the quotations from Nash and Greene:

"This is the excellent foppery of the world, that when we are sick in fortune—often the surfeit of our own behaviour—we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars: as if we were villains by necessity, fools by heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves, and treacherous by spherical predominance; drunkards, liars, and adulterers, by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on; an admirable evasion of whore-master man, to lay his goatish disposition to the charge of a star! My father compounded with my mother under the dragon's tail, and my nativity was under Ursa major; so that it follows that I am rough and lecherous. Tut, I should have been that I am, had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my bastardizing."

One can hardly over-estimate the shocking prevalence of venery among the Elizabethans. Per-

haps no more positive attestation of the fact can be cited than the careless way in which it was made the subject of public consideration. Middleton may be called the bawdy playwright, frequently selecting his heroines from the stews. *'T is Pity She's a Whore* is almost a deification of the class. Furthermore, references and allusions to the practice crept in everywhere, shamelessly, as a part of current speech. One is surprised to count the number of allusions to cuckolds in the plays of Shakespeare, the cleanest of all the Elizabethan dramatists.

There are frequent allusions in the contemporary literature to the great number of courtesans in England—London especially. Dekker tells us that all the loose women of Italy fled to England. "Our soldiers are like glovers, for one cannot work well nor the other fight well, without his wench." (Middleton, *Father Hubbard's Tales*.) Many other passages attest the fact that loose women in great numbers followed English armies to the field. They also hung about the theatres, and so pestered London during the court term that "termer" became a familiar name for whore. They became, says Dekker, "as common as lice in Ireland, or scabs in France." (*Westward Ho*.) A consideration of the whole body of contemporary plays and pamphlets impresses one

with the gullability and the lecherous tendency of the average Elizabethan.

Certain portions of London were the special resorts. Stow graphically describes the stews in Southwark near the theatres. The suburbs in general were so notorious that, to be called a "suburban" was an insult. The suburbs were places of "sixpenny sinfulness," says Dekker, who has written so much about the seamy side of Elizabethan London life. Turnbull Street was a sort of Elizabethan Burlington Arcade, but Shore-ditch, Whitefriars, and Westminster were almost equally notorious.

The Elizabethan dramatists frequently describe the dress and appearance of these women. Taylor, *The Water Poet*, write: "Commonly most of the shee-bauds have a peculiar privilege more than other women: for generally they are not starveling creatures, but well larded and embossed with fat, so that a baud hath her mouth three stories of chimes high, and is a well fed emblem of plenty; and though she be of but small estimation, yet is she always taken for a great woman amongst her neighbours." In fact, there seems to be in the writing of this time a recurrence to this typical picture of a fatted prostitute which reminds one of the national incarnation to-day of some type as we see it in the comic papers. The double

chin, in particular, was a favourite point of reference. "The boy, he does not look like a bawd, he has no double chin." (Dekker, *Northward Ho.*) "With her fat, sag chin, hanging down like a cow's udder." (Middleton, *The Black Book.*)

Prostitutes of the lower order frequently wore loose bodied gowns in the street, a form of attire that was not then, so far as we know, ever worn by respectable women.

Sir John Davies thus describes a bawd:

"If Gella's beauty be examined,  
 She hath a dull dead eye, a saddle nose,  
 An ill-shaped face, with morphew overspread,  
 And rotten teeth, which she in laughing shows;  
 Briefly, she is the filthiest wench in town,  
 Of all that do the art of whoring use:  
 But when she hath put on her satin gown,  
 Her cutlawn apron, and her velvet shoes,  
 Her green silk stockings, and her petticoat  
 Of taffeta, with golden fringen around,  
 And is withal perfum'd with civet hot,  
 Which doth her valiant stinking breath confound,—  
 Yet she with these additions is no more  
 Than a sweet, filthy, fine, ill-favour'd whore."

Though the meaning of the word is not clear the association of taffeta with whoredom is very common. A courtesan would not leave the house without a fan; but, perhaps, the most distinguishing mark of her dress was her ring—a death's

head, which she wore upon her middle finger as a sign of her profession. In the house of correction she was compelled to wear by way of punishment a blue gown.

Street walkers were innumerable. They were frequently preceded by a "squire," made assignations in the theatres, and in St. Paul's, where "every wench takes a pillar."

Brothel houses and their inmates were made the subjects of many writings. In Middleton's *Five Gallants*, a pack of courtesans and their house are imposed upon a gull as a music school. Such houses were fitted out with expensive fittings and furniture. Refreshments, such as stewed prunes, muscadine and eggs, and other aphrodisiacs were furnished gratis. Kept mistresses were also common; and the following is probably not exceptional as illustrative of the manners of a large portion of the substantial middle class:

"The woman crying her ware by the door (a most pitiful cry, and a lamentable hearing that such a stiff thing as starch should want customers), passing cunningly and slyly by the stall, not once taking notice of the party you wot on, but being by this some three or four shops off, Mass, quoth my young mistress to the weathercock her husband, such a thing I want, you know: then she named how many puffs and purls [fringes] lay

in a miserable case for want of stiffening. The honest, plain-dealing jewel husband sent out a boy to call her (not bawd by her right name, but starch woman): into the shop she came, making a low counterfeit courtesy, of whom the mistress demanded if the starch were pure gear, and would be stiff in her ruff, saying she had often been deceived before, when the things about her have stood as limber as eelskins. The woman replied as subtilely, Mistress, quoth she, take this paper of starch of my hand; and if it prove not of your mind never bestow penny with me—which paper, indeed, was a letter sent to her from the gentleman her exceeding favourite. Say you so? quoth the young dame, and I'll try it, i'faith. With that she ran up stairs like a spinner [spider] upon small cob-web ropes, not to try to arraign the starch, but to conster [construe] and parse the letter (whilst her husband sat below by the counter, like one of those brow bitten catchpolls that wait for one man all day, when his wife can put five in the counter before him), wherein she found many words that pleased her. Withal the gentleman writ unto her for a certain sum of money, which no sooner was read, but was ready to be sent: wherefore laying up the starch and that, and taking another sheet of clean paper in her hand, wanting time and opportunity to write

at large, with a penful of ink in the very middle of the sheet writ these few quaint monosyllables, *Coin, Cares, and Cures, and all C's else are yours.* Then rolling up the white money like the starch in that paper very subtilely and artificially, came tripping down stairs with these colourable words, Here's goodly starch indeed! fie, fie!—trust me, husband, as yellow as the jaundice; I would not have betrayed my puffs with it for a million:—here, here, here, (giving her the paper of money). With that the subtile starch woman, seeming sorry that it pleased her not, told her, within few days she would fit her turn with that which should like [please] her; meaning indeed more such sweet news from her lover. These and suchlike, madam, are the cunning conveyances of secret, privy, and therefore unnoted harlots, that so avoid the common finger of the world, when less committers than they are publicly pointed at." (Middleton's *Father Hubbard's Tales.*)

Space forbids any further enumeration of the sins of London; but there is a plentiful supply of material from which one can reconstruct such a picture of the times as will lead one to believe that the above suggestions as to the foul condition of the public morals is not in the least overdrawn.

## CHAPTER IV

### AMUSEMENTS IN GENERAL

THE American in Paris often asks himself the question: What do they all do for a living? At first sight, every one, whether high or low, seems to be wholly bent on pleasure, a bent the Parisians have developed into a fine art. One is also likely to contrast the slow-moving, business-like Londoners of to-day with their mercurial neighbours by the Seine. This, however, is a contrast wholly of modern times. London, in fact all England, in the time of Shakespeare was in a state of transition, undergoing a rapidity of change, an enlargement of horizon, that has not been equaled before or since. Their increasing importance created in the Elizabethans a feeling of self-satisfaction. Since 1588 they had been care free. The development and diversity of fun-producing sports and customs reached a climax at the end of the sixteenth century. Inasmuch as space-limits prevent a complete enumeration here of the amusements of the time, it is interesting to note a partial list of games, which, though written long before the Elizabethan age, is



quoted by the contemporary Stow as illustrative of his own time.

“ But London, for the shows upon theatres, and comical pastimes, hath holy plays, representations of miracles, which holy confessors have wrought, or representations of torments wherein the constancy of martyrs appeared. Every year also at Shrove-Tuesday, that we may begin with children’s sports, seeing we have all been children, the schoolboys do bring the cocks of the game to their master, and all the forenoon they delight themselves in cock-fighting: after dinner all the youths go into the fields to play at the ball.

“ The scholars of every school have their ball, or baston in their hands; the ancient and wealthy men of the city come forth on horseback to see the sport of the young men, and to take part of their pleasure in beholding their agility. Every Friday in Lent a fresh company of young men comes into the field on horseback, and the best horseman conducteth the rest. ‘Then march forth the citizens’ sons and other young men, with disarmed lances and shields, and there they practice feats of war. Many courtiers likewise, when the King lieth near, and attendants of noblemen, do repair to these exercises; and while the hope of victory doth inflame their minds, do show good

proof how serviceable they would be in martial affairs.

“In Easter holidays they fight battles on the water; a shield is hung upon a pole, fixed in the midst of the stream, a boat is prepared without oars, to be carried by the violence of the water, and in the fore part thereof standeth a young man, ready to give charge upon the shield with his lance; if so be he breaketh his lance against the shield, and doth not fall, he is thought to have performed a worthy deed; if so be, without breaking his lance, he runneth strongly against the shield, down he falleth into the water, for the boat is strongly forced by the tide; but on each side of the shield ride two boats, furnished with young men, which recover him that falleth as soon as they may. Upon the bridge, wharfs, and houses, by the river’s side stand great numbers to see and laugh thereat.

“In the holidays all the summer the youths are exercised in leaping, dancing, shooting, wrestling, casting the stone, and practicing their shields; the maidens trip in their timbrils, and dance as long as they can well see. In winter, every holiday before dinner, the boars prepared for brawn are set to fight, or else bulls and bears are baited.

“When the great fen, or moor, which watereth the walls of the city on the north side is frozen—

many young men play upon the ice; some, striding as wide as they may, do slide swiftly; others make themselves seats of ice, great as millstones; one sits down, many hand in hand do draw him, and one slipping on a sudden, all fall together; some tie bones to their feet and under their heels, and shoving themselves by a little piked staff, do slide as swiftly as a bird flieth in the air, or an arrow out of a cross-bow. Sometimes two run together with poles, and hitting one the other, either one or both do fall, not without hurt; some break their arms, some their legs, but youth desirous of glory in this sort exerciseth itself against the time of war. Many of the citizens do delight themselves in hawks and hounds; for they have liberty of hunting in Middlesex, Hartfordshire, all Chiltron, and in Kent of the Water of Cray."

The above passage from Fitzstephen's early account of London was quoted by Stow as characteristic in 1598. Within a few years of the latter date another authoritative list of sports was published, a list that should be carefully noted, for it was written by no less a person than the King of England, who hoped that his utterance would at once stamp out all sports that did not have the royal hall-mark of respectability.

"Certainly," says King James, "bodily exer-

cises and games are very commendable, as well as banishing of idleness, the mother of all vice; as for making the body able and durable for travel, which is very necessary for a king. But from this court I debar all rough and violent exercises; as the foot-ball, meeter for laming, than making able, the users thereof; as likewise such tumbling tricks as only serve for comedians and balladines to win their bread with: But the exercises I would have you to use, although but moderately, not making a craft of them, are running, leaping, wrestling, fencing, dancing, and playing at the catch, or tennis, archery, pelle-melle, and such-like other fair and pleasant field games. And the honorablest and most recommendable games that ye can use on horseback; for, it becometh a prince best of any man to be a fair and good horseman; use, therefore, to ride and danton great and courageous horses;—and especially to use such games on horseback as may teach you to handle your arms thereon, such as the tilt, and the ring, and low-riding for handling of your sword.

“I cannot omit here the hunting, namely with running hounds, which is the most honourable and noblest sort thereof; for, it is a thievish form of hunting to shoot with guns and bows; and greyhound hunting is not so martial a game.

“As for hawks, I condemn it not; but I must praise it more sparingly, because it neither resembleth the wars so near as hunting doth in making a man hardy and skillfully ridden in all grounds, and is more uncertain and subject to mischances; and, which is worst of all, is therethrough an extreme stirrer up of passions.

“As for sitting or house pastimes—since they may at times supply the room which, being empty, would be patent to pernicious idleness—I will not therefore agree with the curiosity of some learned men of our age in forbidding cards, and suchlike games of hazard: when it is foul and stormy weather, then, I say, ye may lawfully play at the cards or tables; for, as to dicing, I think it becometh best deboshed souldiers to play at on the heads of their drums, being only ruled by hazard, and subject to knavish cogging: and as for the chess, I think it over fond, because it is over-wise and philosophic a folly.”

The Elizabethans were very quick to take advantage of any mirth-producing opportunity. The Thames which had not been frozen over since the fifth year of Queen Elizabeth's reign was again frozen in the fifth year of King James. In a moment the people were out upon the bosom of “that Lady of Fresh Waters” as a contemporary writer calls the frozen river. The people turned out *en*

*masse* to enjoy the unusual phenomenon. There was a "tavern that runs upon wheels on the river, as well as a thousand have done besides."

"This cold breakfast being given to the city," continues a contemporary historian of the subject, "and the Thames growing more and more hard-hearted; wild youths and boys were the first merchant-adventurers that set out to discover these cold islands of ice upon the river. . . . As the ice increased in hardness . . . both men, women, and children walked over and up and down in such companies, that, I verily believe, and I dare almost swear it, the one half, if not three parts of the people of the city have been seen going on the Thames. The river showed not now, neither shows it yet, like a river, but like a field, where archers shoot at pricks [targets] while others played at the ball. It was a place of mastery, where some wrestle and some run. . . . Thirst you for beer, ale, or usquebaugh, &c., or for victuals? There you may buy it, because [in order that] you may tell another day how you dined upon the Thames. Are you cold with going over? You shall ere you come to the midst of the river spy some ready with pans of coals to warm your fingers. If you want fruit after you have dined, there stand costermongers to serve you at your call. And thus do people leave their houses and the streets; turn-

ing the goodliest river in the whole kingdom into the broadest street to walk in.”

So much for the generality of all sorts of fun. Rich and poor, in town and country alike, looked upon or took part in the pageants connected with progresses and days of festivity. The dramatic productions which the popular mind readily recalls to-day as the most characteristic form of Elizabethan amusement, have been described elsewhere by the present writer and are therefore omitted from the following pages. Doubtless hawking and hunting, the most popular rural sports of the time, lent more colour to the language than all the other sports combined. In the hey-dey of Elizabeth's reign it was as incumbent on the fashionable gentleman to be able to speak with facility the technical language of venery as it had been a few years earlier to be able to mimic the elaborate phrases of Lyly's *Euphues*. Yet, in the long list of diversions that follows, there are many others that claimed an almost equal share of the attention of Shakespeare's people.



## CHAPTER V

### RURAL SPORTS

**H**AWKING. The sport of hawking as a fashionable and popular pastime reached its zenith about 1600. It was practised at the time by every one who could afford the luxury, and it was considered to be, beyond all others, the proper sport for a country gentleman. The difficulties, and, in fact, the personal danger encountered in capturing wild birds, for no hawk reared in captivity was considered fit for hunting, and the tiresome treatment necessary during the subsequent period of training for the field—all these together rendered the amusement expensive in the extreme. So valuable, indeed, were a hawk and her accompanying trappings that the gift was considered a fit present for a king to make or to receive. The members of the nobility were seldom seen abroad without their hawks and hounds. In earlier times, when bishops as well as lords followed the birds afield, the presence of the hawk was considered almost equivalent to a badge of nobility. One would die rather than give up his hawk, his especial privilege. By the time of Shakespeare, however, a mere gentleman found



life hard if it had to be lived without a hawk. The sport was also, upon occasion, enjoyed by women.

The hawks, of which only the females were used in hunting, were caught wild when young. The female was used because, as Turberville tells us, "The female of all birds of prey and ravin is ever more huge than the male, more venturous, hardy, and watchful." There were many kinds of birds in use; and, though this chapter is headed by the term now best known in connection with the sport, the Elizabethan never lost sight of the distinction between the short-winged "hawk" and the long-winged "falcon." The "falcon towering in her pride of place" is a higher order of animal than a "fine hawk for a bush." It is scarcely necessary to enumerate here the different varieties of birds in use for hunting save to say that the female peregrine falcon has given her name to the art of falconry; for, says Turberville, "The falcon doth pass all other hawks in boldness and courtesy, and is most familiar to man of all other birds of prey."

The young of the wild hawks were, when captured, immediately put through a severe and cruel course of training in order to fit them for the field. Now that this sport has gone out of fashion, and with it our familiarity with its terms, one is likely to overlook the technical significance

of the word "taming" in Shakespeare's play, *The Taming of the Shrew*. In this roaring farce, the character of Katharine is conceived throughout as a human embodiment of the spirit of a hawk. She is tamed as hawks were tamed; and the sudden and complete change in her character from extreme shrewishness to extreme docility was exactly similar to the familiar change that took place as the result of very similar treatment in the life of every hawk. This idea, though no Elizabethan could fail to see it, is explicitly set forth by Petrucio:

"Thus have I politickly begun my reign,  
'And 'tis my hope to end successfully.  
My falcon now is sharp and passing empty;  
And till she stoop she must not be full-gorged,  
For then she never looks upon her lure.  
Another way I have to man my haggard,  
To make her come and know her keeper's call,  
That is, to watch her, as we watch these kites  
That bate and beat and will not be obedient.  
She eat not meat to-day, nor none shall eat:  
Last night she slept not, nor to-night she shall not;  
As with the meat some undeserved fault  
I'll find about the making of the bed:  
And here I'll fling the pillow, there the bolster,  
This way the coverlet, another way the sheets:  
Ay, and amid this hurly I intend  
That all is done in reverend care of her:  
And in conclusion she shall watch all night:  
And if she chance to nod I'll rail and bawl  
And with the clamour keep her still awake."

This passage is full of technical allusions to the process of training a hawk. In the first place, there was but one thing to be done to a wild hawk, namely to break her wilful spirit; but there were many ways in which it could be done. One was to keep her hungry to the verge of starvation, tantalizing her by the show of food. This is one of the methods resorted to by Petrucio. Another common mode of training was to keep the hawk awake till exhausted for want of sleep. The Elizabethan word for waking was watching. The word is used in this sense in the passage quoted above—he will watch (keep her awake) as we watch these kites. The word is similarly used in *Othello*, where Desdemona says, “I’ll watch him tame.” She means that she will keep Othello awake, give him no peace, till he is more tractable. Another even more cruel procedure consisted of sewing up the eyelids of the hawk for a time. This was called *seeling*. It suggested the line in *Othello*,

“To seel her father’s eyes up close as oak.”

This kind of cruelty can almost be forgiven as sometimes a necessary step in the training of a hawk; but it is painful to record that *seeling* was sometimes performed by Elizabethans on harmless doves for the mere sport of witnessing their frantic and helpless misery. We are told in Sidney’s

*Arcadia*, "Now she brought them to see a seeled dove, who, the blinder she was, the higher she strove to reach." In an explanatory note to a passage in Ford's *The Broken Heart*, Gifford says: "It is told in *The Gentleman's Recreation* that this wanton amusement is sometimes resorted to for *sport!* The poor dove, in the agonies of pain, soars like the lark, as soon as dismissed from the hand, almost perpendicularly, and continues mounting till strength and life are totally exhausted, when she drops at the feet of her inhuman persecutors."

We have, however, not yet exhausted the allusions to falconry in Petrucio's speech. "I have a way to man my haggard," he says. "To man" was the technical term for gaining the mastery. An unmanned, that is, an untrained hawk, was called a haggard.

"If I do prove her haggard,  
Though that her jesses were my dear heart strings,  
I'd whistle her off and let her down the wind  
To prey at fortune."

Thus, in his suspicious moment, Othello compares his wife to a haggard hawk. Oftentimes a hawk that had not been properly trained would turn aside while in the pursuit of prey in order to follow something else. This turning aside of a haggard was called checking, and is referred to in

Marmion's motto, "Who checks at me to death is dight." And in the words of Viola:

"To do that well craves a kind of wit:  
He must observe their moods on whom he jests,  
The quality of persons and the time,  
And, like the haggard, check at every feather  
That comes before his eye."

Until the hawk had learned to fly properly at the game she was constantly "reclaimed," that is, drawn back by a long string after having been started. The falcons were cared for and trained by the falconer and his assistants, the falconer's boys. When the bird was injured in the hunt it was the falconer who proceeded to imp the wing. This process of mending required the broken wing to be carefully trimmed, and the feather of another bird matched to the broken one. One end of a wet iron needle was thrust into the quill of the new feather, and the other end into the quill of the feather to be imped. The joint was then bound up and the bird kept quiet till the whole had rusted together. Shakespeare refers to the custom literally in *Richard II.*, in the phrase "imp out our country's broken wing," and figuratively in *Coriolanus*, "Imp a body [*i.e.* cure,] with a dangerous physic." It was furthermore part of the falconer's duty to understand all ailments of the hawk, and be able to apply the proper remedy. He also accompanied his master and

superintended the flying of the hawks in the field. Favourite hawks were often kept in the great hall; but many, and all, during the period of moulting, were penned in their proper stable called the mews. Hence the terms to mew and to enmew. In later times, however, the name came to be applied to a stable for horses, a change in meaning due to the fact that the King's stable for horses happened to be built upon the site formerly occupied by the mews.

The hawk when not following the game was kept covered by a hood that completely blinded her. This headdress was made of silk or of leather, often exceedingly dainty and ornamental. It bore upon its top a little tuft of feathers that served as a handle by which it could be easily and quickly removed. The hawk was carried to the field hooded and perched upon the falconer's wrist, or upon his fist. If many hawks were taken at once they were carried upon the cadge borne by the cadge-boy. To each of the hawk's legs were attached thongs of leather or of silk, called jesses. They were used to bind the bird tightly to the wrist or to the cadge: hence the meaning of Othello's cry of despair:

“Though that her jesses were my dear heart strings.”

The jesses passed between the falconer's fingers, and were tied below to a swivel called a tyrrit,



HAWKING.  
(From Strutt's "Sports and Pastimes.")





which in turn was fastened to the lines or leather straps that were wound about the wrist. There was a tiny silver bell of sweet tone attached to each leg of the falcon, but the notes of the bell were such as to jangle a discord, thus more usefully serving their purpose as an aid in tracking a bird that had strayed or hunted out of sight. These bells were attached by leather straps called bewits. To one of the bewits was fastened the creance, or long thread, used in reclaiming the hawk before she was fully trained.

When the game appeared in sight the hood was removed quickly from the head of the hawk. Then she was started, or whistled off, in the direction of the game that was at the moment passing before her eyes. For an instant she bated, that is, flapped her wings, then began her flight. The height reached during the flight was called the pitch. When she swooped down upon the prey she was said to stoop. Some breeds of hawks possessed the characteristic of soaring, technically termed towering. A bird was disedged when she had lost her keenness of appetite. Sometimes a hard substance was given the hawk to gnaw upon in order to disedge her; this process was called tiring.

If the hawk was loosed in the direction of the wind she was not likely to return, hence the cus-

tom of always choosing one's position so that it was possible to loose the hawk against the wind. This fact explains an oft-disputed passage in Hamlet. "When the wind is southerly I know a hawk from a handsaw [heronshaw.]" A spectator watching a hawk loosed in a southerly wind would be looking away from the sun; consequently he could easily distinguish one from the other. If the wind were in the opposite direction the spectator's eyes would be towards the sun and the two birds be hard to distinguish.

The sport was usually pursued in the open country on horseback; in rough country or in the woods on foot. In the latter case the hunter carried a short pole to assist him in vaulting over the petty streams that he encountered in following his bird. Such game as ducks, herons, geese, pheasants, quail, partridge, plover, woodcocks, etc., were followed with hawks.

Frequently a day's hunting with the hawk was an elaborate affair. Every one would appear on horseback, following the falconer who had charge of the birds. They were carried to the field on such great occasions perched upon a frame called a cadge; and while upon the cadge the hawks were kept hooded and were in charge of the petty official named the cadger. When the dogs had located the game, the falconer took the hawk he

wished to use from the cadge and mounted her, still hooded, upon his wrist. The dogs were then slipped and the game started out of cover. As soon as the game bird appeared in sight close at hand, the falconer unhooded his hawk, slipped the jesses that bound her to his wrist, and whistled her off. She rose at once to her full height, or pitch, then, taking careful aim, stooped, that is, darted down upon her prey. If the hawk missed her aim she had to rise to her full pitch and stoop again. A few, however, of the smaller kind of hawks pursued the game immediately, but the larger hawks and the falcons always followed the game after the above fashion.

When the hawk caught the bird she began to tear it to pieces. It was necessary for the falconer to be close at hand in order to rescue the bird from its pursuer, the hawks always being taken to the field hungry, a condition that improved their hunting qualities. The falconer usually rewarded the hawk with the head of the bird that had been caught; then he would re-hood the hawk and replace her upon the cadge till the dogs had aroused more game.

There are many terms connected with the art of falconry which space prevents from insertion here. Madden has much to say on the subject, and there are numerous contemporary handbooks

pertaining to the art, one of which has recently been reprinted in facsimilie: *The Boke of Saint Albans*.

HUNTING.—Of all outdoor games the Elizabethans best loved the great stag hunt. This grand occasion was generally made the excuse for festive merry-makings on a large scale both before and after the day's sport. The preliminary and formal process of locating the position of the stag before he was hunted took place either during the night in advance of the hunt or in the early morning hours of the hunt day itself. Not every animal, however, was suited to the occasion. The beasts of the chase were divided into two classes, thus: On one hand were the beasts of the forest, including the hart, the hind, the hare, the boar, and the wolf, who fed by night and lay in cover during the day; on the other hand were the beasts of the field, who lay secret at night, including the buck, the doe, the fox, the marten, and the roe. The hart, therefore, being a beast of the forest, must be harboured, or located while he was abroad in search of food at night.

It was the duty of the forester and of the huntsman to scour the country during the night before the hunt in order to discover the stag while he was feeding, and to follow him unper-

ceived to his cover. This task was sometimes accomplished by actual sight of the stag, sometimes by observation of his tracks alone, and sometimes by the use of a hound. A thorough knowledge of woodcraft was necessary to the forester, as well as of the habits of the hart and of the topography of the surrounding country, which might not only determine the position of the chosen cover, but also the course taken by the stag when roused upon the morrow. The hound used in this delicate process of harbouring was variously called the liam-hound, the slot-hound, the limer, or the lym. His peculiar quality was that he followed the trail in silence. As soon as the first glow of dawn appeared, the forester and the huntsman would set out for the wood where the stag they had been tracking through the night had sought refuge. Before long the hound would discover the trail, and, though he would strain with might and main to free himself from the liam with which his master held him back, he would remain perfectly silent as they drew near the cover. The sharp eyes of the huntsman next discovered the "entry," or broken branches that indicated where the stag had entered the wood. A few additional branches were broken so that the place could be more easily found again. Being a beast of the forest the stag remained in cover,

unless molested, throughout all the day. But there would be the possibility that he had changed his cover since the harbouring at night. So the huntsman's next task was to ascertain whether the stag had remained in this particular wood. In all likelihood he had, but, in order to make sure, the huntsman would make several circuits, or "ring-walks," about the wood. If the hound did not pick up the scent on any of these except at the original "entry," it was to be inferred that the stag had remained in the wood, or that he had left it at exactly the same point where he had in the first place made his entry. The likelihood of the latter contingency was practically reduced to nothing by making ring-walks at different distances both within and without the wood. If by this time it was broad daylight, the huntsman could rest secure in the belief that he had correctly harboured the stag, who would not of his own accord stir from the position he had chosen for his daytime bed till night. This practice of searching for the hart at night, and the finishing details at dawn, are thus referred to by Shakespeare in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*.

"I with the morning's love have oft made sport,  
And like a forester the groves may tread,  
Even till the eastern gate, all fiery red,  
Opening on Neptune with fair blessed beams,  
Turns into yellow gold his salt green streams."

The unharbouring, or actual hunting of the hart, began with the "assembly," a sort of picnic, where hunters and guests met for an open air meal at some point not far from the place where the hart had been harboured, yet so far away that no sound of the assembly revels could reach his ears. When all was ready the entire hunt set out for the cover, accompanied by the hounds. The technical term for the pack of hounds was the cry, the kind and number of the hounds being chosen so that they "cried" a chord of music. "If you would have your kennel for sweetness of cry," says Markham, "you must compound it of some large dogs that have deep solemn mouths, and are swift in spending, which must, as it were, bear the base of the consort; then a double number of roaring and loud ringing mouths which must bear the counter tenor; then some hollow, plain, sweet mouths, which must bear the mean or middle part; and so with these three parts of music you shall make your cry perfect; and herein you shall observe that these hounds thus mixed do run just and even together, and not hang off loose from one another, which is the vilest sight that may be; and you shall understand that this composition is best to be made of the swiftest and largest deep-mouthed dog, the slowest middle-sized dog, and the shortest legged slender dog;



amongst these you may cast in a couple or two of small single beagles, which as small trebles may warble amongst them: the cry will be a great deal more sweet."

With this quotation from the practical writer upon domestic affairs in mind, one realises how far from figurative are the allusions to the music of the hounds contained in this well known passage from *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*:

"Go, one of you, and find out the forester;  
For now our observation is perform'd;  
And since we have the vaward of the day,  
My love shall hear the music of my hounds.  
Uncouple in the western valley; let them go;  
Dispatch, I say, and find the forester,  
We will, fair queen, up to the mountain's top  
And mark the musical confusion  
Of sounds and echo in conjunction."

By means of the cry the stag was dislodged or roused. The hunt approached with a great clamour, the pack in full cry, the people shouting and singing "The hunt is up! The hunt is up!"

"The hunt is up, the morn is bright and grey,  
The fields are fragrant and the woods are green."  
(*Titus Andronicus.*)

"Some say the lark and loathed toad change eyes;  
O, now I would they had changed voices too!  
Since arm from arm that voice doth us affray,  
Hunting thee hence, with hunts up to the day."  
(*Romeo and Juliet.*)





TRAINED BEARS.  
(From Strutt's "Sports and Pastimes.")



The next moment the stag broke cover with the whole pack hard upon his heels. The hardest and most enthusiastic hunters followed the hunt in all its windings, encouraging the hounds, ridiculing false moves, and in every way assisting as far as possible in turning the stag towards some difficult piece of country where he could be more easily tired out and brought to bay. It was at this point that a knowledge of the topography of the surrounding country, of the animal's habits, of artificial obstructions or toils, etc., often enabled one to tell in advance where the stag would find himself, compelled to stand at bay. To this point less hardy riders and the women, for hunting was a sport often enjoyed by women, would repair to await the critical moment of the finish.

Through fatigue, or through being cornered, the panting stag would at last be brought to bay. This moment was always one of extreme danger to the hounds, for many of them were often maimed or even killed outright by the infuriated stag. Note how Shakespeare, who was keenly interested in all matters pertaining to the hunt, describes in *Venus and Adonis* this fatal moment:

“Here kennel'd in a brake she finds a hound,  
And asks the weary caitiff for his master,  
And there another licking of his wound,  
'Gainst venom'd sores the only sovereign plaster;

And here she meets another sadly scowling,  
To whom she speaks and he replies with howling.

“When he hath ceased his ill-resounding noise,  
Another flap-mouthed mourner, black and grim,  
Against the welkin volleys out his voice;  
Another and another answer him,  
Clapping their proud tails to the ground below,  
Shaking their scratch'd ears, bleeding as they go.”

The huntsman, in order to save the lives of his dogs, customarily dashed in from behind and killed the stag with a short sword or dagger. All those who were present with horns blew the “mort” of the deer, and the hunters were then ready for the last ceremony.

The “assay,” which followed next in order, is thus described in *The Noble Art of Venery*: “Our order is that the prince or chief (if so please them) do augur and take assay of the deer with a sharp knife, the which is done in this manner: The deer being laid upon his back, the prince, chief, or such as they shall appoint, comes to it; and the chief huntsman (kneeling, if it be a prince), doth hold the deer by the fore foot, whiles the prince or chief cut a slit drawn amongst the brisket of the deer, somewhat lower than the brisket towards the belly. This is done to see the goodness of the flesh, and how thick it is.”

The office next performed was the breaking up

of the carcass, thus inveighed against by Erasmus: "When they have run down their game, what strange pleasure they take in cutting it up. Cows and sheep may be slaughtered by common butchers, but what is killed in hunting must be broke up by none under a gentleman, who shall throw down his hat, fall devoutly on his knees, and drawing out a slashing hanger (for a common knife is not good enough) after several ceremonies shall dissect all the parts as artificially as the best skilled anatomist, while all that stand round shall look very intently, and seem to be mightily surprised with the novelty, though they have seen the same an hundred times before, and he that can but dip his finger and taste of the blood shall think his own bettered thereby."

The custom mentioned in the last line is also referred to by Shakespeare in the following words: "And here thy hunters stand, Signed in thy spoil, and crimsoned in thy lethe." In a note to this passage, Mr. Madden says: "Lethe is a term used by hunters to signify the blood shed by a deer at its fall, with which it is still a custom to mark those who come in at the death." This ceremony ended the stag hunt, save for the afternoon and evening spent in all sorts of merry-makings and festive games indoors, besides eating and drinking to a late hour.

A passage in Shakespeare, namely:

“If this poor trash of Venice, whom I trash  
For his quick hunting, shall stand the putting on,  
I'll have our Michael Cassio on the hip,”

has been a source of bother to many commentators. It was necessary, both for the purpose of effective hunting, and in order that the sound of the pack be harmonious at a distance, that the hounds, while running, keep close together. A hound who was guilty of running ahead of the pack “overtopped” the rest. Though it has long been known that the prevention of this habit was performed by “trashing,” the exact nature of the cure was not so plain. One way was to impede the hound by hanging “clogs,” or weights, about his neck. Mr. Madden’s note, however, throws much additional light on the subject. He says in substance as follows. It [trash] is used as a substantive by Gervase Markham in his *Country Contentments*. He mentions trashes with couples, liams, collars, etc., among articles commonly kept in a huntsman’s lodgings. Mr. Madden quotes from an earlier writer to the following effect: “A hound that runs too fast for the rest ought not to be kept. Some huntsmen load them with heavy collars; some tie a long strap round their necks; a better way would be to part with them. Whether they go too slow or too

fast, they ought equally to be drafted." Mr. Madden continues in his own words: "However the trash may have been applied, it clearly appears, from Beckford's words, to have consisted of a long strap, kept by the huntsman, according to Markham, with collars, liams, and other articles of the same kind. When the hound was running, this long strap, dragged along the ground, handicapped the overtopping hound." Shakespeare further alludes to the subject in *The Tempest*.

"Being once perfected how to grant suits,  
How to deny them, who to advance and who  
To trash for overtopping."

It is interesting to note further how the sport of hunting flavours the language of Shakespeare. To give a complete list of references would fill many pages; but the following, chosen at random, are sufficient to illustrate the point:

"That instant was I turned into a hart;  
And my desires, like fell and cruel hounds,  
E'er since pursue me."

"Here wast thou bay'd, brave hart;  
Here didst thou fall; and here thy hunters stand,  
Sign'd in thy spoil, and crimson'd in thy lethe.  
O world, thou wast the forest to this hart;  
And this, indeed, O world, the heart of thee.  
How like a deer, stricken by many princes.  
Dost thou here lie."

“Match'd in mouth like bells,  
Each under each. A cry more tunable  
Was never holla'd to, nor cheer'd with horn.”

“Souter will cry upon 't for all this, though it  
be as rank as a fox.”

“How cheerfully on the false trail they cry,  
O, this is counter, you false Danish dogs!”

“I do follow here in the chase, not like a hound  
that hunts, but one that fills up the cry.”

“You common cry of curs! whose breath I hate  
As reek o' the rotten fens.”

“And then to sigh as 't were the mort o' the deer.”

“Why do you go about to recover the wind of me  
as if you would drive me into a toil?”

“Do not cry havoc, where you should but hunt with  
modest warrant.”

THE HORSE.—The horse in Shakespeare's time was a necessary belonging to a man even of modest circumstances. The country roads were then so bad as to be quite unfit for the rapid movement of any sort of wheeled vehicle. People travelled in the saddle; or on the pillion; and most of the transport of goods was done by pack-horse.

The best horses of Tudor times were far different from the thoroughbred of to-day, an animal that derives his best blood from the Arabian breed, which was not seen in England before 1616, the year of Shakespeare's death. Neither the race



horse, the carriage horse, the cart horse, the hack, nor the hunter as they are to-day was then in use. There were instead, as Blundeville tells us, "the Turk, the Barbarian, the Sardinian, the Neapolitan, the Jennet of Spain, the Hungarian, the High Almaine, the Friezeland horse, the Flanders mare, and the Irish hobby." The same writer informs us that the hobby was "a pretty fine horse, having a good head and body indifferently well proportioned, saving that many of them be slender and pin-buttocked, they be tender mouthed, nimble, light, pleasant, and apt to be taught, and for the most part they be amblers, and therefore very meet for the saddle and to travel by the way." They were, however, "somewhat skittish and fearful, partly, perhaps, by nature and partly for the lack of good breeding at the first." There were also many kinds of home-bred horses of great popularity, the best of which were reared in Yorkshire. Though Gervase Markham asserts that "the true bred English horse, him I mean that is bred under a good clime, on firm ground, in a pure temperature, is of tall stature, and large proportions," it is true that most of the native breed had degenerated in size to such an extent that they were little better than ponies. "The great decay of the generation and breeding of good and swift and strong horses" is deplored

in some of the statutes framed in the latter part of the reign of King Henry VIII. "The altitude and height prescribed by these statutes, thirteen handfulls for mares, and fifteen for horses, tell their own tale, and even this standard for horses was afterward lowered to thirteen hands in regard to certain 'marishes, or seggy grounds in Cambridgeshire and elsewhere.'" (Madden.) "The horses are small but swift," said Hentzner, who published a description of his journey through England in 1598; and Rathgeb, in 1602, wrote, "Horses are abundant, yet, although low and small, they are very fleet."

Little, however, was accomplished towards improving the breed, either by statute or by public agitation. "Master Blundeville's appeal," says Mr. Madden, "to the noblemen and gentlemen of England to turn their enclosures into practical use in improving the breed of horses, and the statutes which I have quoted, lead to the conclusion that horse breeding in England was in his time generally conducted after the haphazard fashion still in use in open and unenclosed countries."

The great horse market of London was West Smithfield, where the English showed themselves more proficient in selling a bad than in raising a good breed of domestic animal. Shakespeare in



TRAINED ANIMALS.  
(From Strutt's "Sports and Pastimes.")



*Venus and Adonis* gives a list of points pertaining to a perfect and marketable horse that is transferred almost word for word from a similar list expressed in prose by Blundeville.

“So did this horse excel a common one,

In shape, in courage, colour, pace, and bone.

Round hoof'd, stort-jointed, fetlocks shag and long,

Broad breast, full eye, small head and nostril wide,

High crest, short ears, straight legs, and passing strong,

Thin mane, thick tail, broad buttock, tender hide:

Look, what a horse should have he did not lack.”

It is interesting to note that the quack physiological beliefs of the time were held to be as true of horses as of human beings. “He [the horse],” says Blundeville, “is complexioned according as he doth participate more or less of any of the iiij elements. For if he hath more of the earth than of any of the rest, he is melancholy, heavy and faint-hearted, and of colour a black, a russet, or a bright or dark dun. But if he hath more of the water then is he phlegmatic, slow, dull, and apt to lose flesh, and of colour most commonly a milk white. If of the air, then is he sanguine, and therefore pleasant, nimble, and is of colour commonly a bay. And if of the fire, then is he choleric, and therefore light, hot, fiery, a stirrer, and seldom of any great strength, and is wont to be of colour a light sorrel. But when he doth

participate of all the four elements, equally, and in due proportion, then is he perfect, and most commonly be one of the colours following," among which he mentions roan as the most desirable.

Another detail in the selection of a horse is of interest because it affords an explanation of several passages in contemporary dramatic literature that have been occasionally misunderstood. It was considered not only an ill omen for a horse to have no white upon its body, but "it is an excellent good mark also for a horse to have a white star in his forehead. The horse that hath no white at all upon him is furious, dogged, full of mischief and misfortune." (Markham.) The usual expression used to describe a horse that had no white spot in his forehead was "a horse with a cloud in his face." Hence, in reply to the observation "He has a cloud in's face," Eno-barbus remarks, "He were the worse for that were he a horse."

Of the horses exposed for sale in Smithfield Market, the place of first importance should be given to the "great horse" or "horse of service." He was useful in the wars and in the tourney at a time when it required an animal of great strength to bear the weight of his own and his master's armour. Armour was going out of fashion in the time of Elizabeth, but this kind of horse was

still in great demand. The High Almaine or German horse was, perhaps, the most highly prized breed for this purpose. He was strongly made, according to Blundeville, "and therefore more meet for the shock than to pass a carrierre, or to make a swift manage, because they be very gross and heavy." The Flanders horse was also desirable, which was like the other, "saving that for the most part he is of a greater stature and more puissant. The mares also of Flanders be of a great stature, strong, long, large, fair, and fruitful, and beside that will endure great labour." Of the Neapolitan horse Blundeville says, "In mine opinion, their gentle nature and docility, their comely shape, their strength, their courage, their sure footmanship, their well reining, their lofty pace, their clean trotting, their strong galloping, and their swift running well considered (all which things they have in manner by nature) they excel numbers of other races, even so far as the fair greyhounds the fowl mastif curs." With the complete disuse of armour disappeared the demand for the "great" horse, yet he was not doomed to extinction, for his descendent is the draft horse of to-day.

The horse of next importance was the roadster. The proper animal for the purpose in those days was not a trotter, but an ambler. This

name applied to a particular pace in which the fore and hind leg on each side moved simultaneously. When a horse was taught to amble his legs were geared together by means of trammels. Some horses were hard to train; others, by nature, learned the pace with great ease. Notable in this respect was the Irish hobby, which was, therefore, the most popular riding horse.

The foot-cloth horse was a staid trotting horse used for show. He was so called from the long, ornamental hanging, called a foot-cloth, that was always used as a decoration on state occasions. "Three times to-day my foot-cloth horse did stumble," occurs in *King Richard III*. A dignified mount for a venerable person in civil life was a mule. It was thus Lord Burghley took his daily exercise, riding about his private grounds. Such an animal, we learn from Shakespeare, was, upon state occasions, also dignified with the covering of a foot-cloth.

"Obscure and lowly swain, King Henry's blood,  
The honourable blood of Lancaster,  
Must not be shed by such a jaded groom.  
Hast thou not kiss'd thy hand and held my stirrup?  
Bare headed plodded by my foot-cloth mule  
And thought thee happy when I shook my head."

The horses most frequently used in hunting and hawking were the tiny native breed. Inasmuch,



however, as these sports were usually followed on foot, any wiry, swift animal was sufficient for occasional need.

“The pack-horse, with his pack-saddle laden with merchandise, was a familiar object not only on the highway, but on numerous tracks known as pack-horse roads, which are still pointed out in numerous parts of the country. His pace was neither to trot nor amble, but a fast walk known as a foot-pace.” (Madden.) “If you will choose a horse for portage, that is, for the pack or hampers, chose him that is exceeding strong of body and limb, but not tall, with a broad back, out ribs, full shoulders, and thick withers, for if he be thin in that part you shall hardly keep his back from galling.” (Markham.)

Of races and race-horses nothing need be said beyond the fact that, though horses were often matched in speed against each other, and though there were a few great races every year, as that at the Cotswold games, there was no special breed of horses for the sport. In fact, racing in Tudor times was so occasional as scarcely to merit consideration.

The Elizabethan trained his horse, especially the horse of service, with the greatest care. Much space is devoted to this subject by Blundeville.

He describes seven stages in the regular course of training. First, the horse was paced, that is, taught to amble. "Secondly, you must teach him to light at stop. . . . Thirdly, to advance before, and yerk out behind." Markham advises one to train his horse to "yerk out behind, yet so as it may be perceived it is your will and not the horse's malice." Blundeville's fourth stage is "to turn, readily on both hands with single turn and double turn." The fifth is "to make a sure and ready manage." The sixth and most important stage refers to the *carrierre*. "When your horse is perfect in the manages aforesaid, then you may pass a *career* at your pleasure, which is to run a horse forthwith at his full speed, and then making him stop quickly, suddenly firm and close in the buttocks." Brevity of duration and the sudden termination were the essential qualities of a good *career*.\* Into the seventh class of things taught to a horse, Blundeville puts all such fancy but useless accomplishments as the curvet, which he describes as "a certain continual prancing and dancing up and down, still in one place, like a bear at a stake, and sometimes sidling to and fro, wherein the horse maketh

\* The difference between this meaning and the modern connotation of the word *career* has led to some misunderstanding of the text of Shakespeare. An interesting discussion of this subject is to be found in Madden, page 297.

as though he would fain run, and cannot be suffered." \*

The limit of the present work precludes a more detailed reference to the art of horsemanship and of farriery, arts, however, that were so intimately associated with the daily life of the Elizabethans that references to them are found continually in the dramatic literature of the time. The reader who would follow the matter further will find a chapter titled "The Horse in Shakespeare" in Mr. Madden's *The Diary of Master William Silence*, where are gathered together all the poet's allusions to the horse. The best source, however, is the contemporary treatises. Blundeville, so frequently quoted above, wrote *The Four Chiefest Offices of Horsemanship*. Gervase Markham wrote several works upon the subject, namely: *A Discourse of Horsemanship; How to Chuse, Ride, etc., a Horse; Cavelerice, or the English Horseman; A Cure for all the Deseases of Horses; and Masterpiece*, a treatise on farriery.

Let us end this brief note on an interesting subject with a quotation from one of the best descriptive writers of the Elizabethan time—William Harrison: "Our horses, moreover, are high,

\* The spur, bit, saddle, and the riding-rod, as the whip was called, were then in use in a manner similar to the practice of to-day, save that the kinds of bit were more numerous.

and, although not commonly of such huge greatness as in other places of the main, yet, if you respect the easiness of their pace it is hard to say where their like are to be had. Our land doth yield no asses, and therefore we want the generation of mules and somers, and therefore the most part of our carriage is made by these, which, remaining stone [ungelded], are either reserved for the cart or appointed to bear such burdens as are convenient for them. Our cart or plough horses (for we use them indifferently) are commonly so strong that five or six of them (at the most) will draw three thousand weight of the greatest tale with ease for a long journey, although it be not a load of common usage, which consisteth only of two thousand, or fifty foot of timber, forty bushels of white salt, or six and thirty of hay, or five quarters of wheat, experience daily teacheth, and I have elsewhere remembered. Such as are kept also for burden will carry four hundred weight commonly without any let or hindrance. This, furthermore, is to be noted, that our princes and the nobility commonly have their carriage made by carts, thereby it cometh to pass that when the Queen's majesty doth remove from any one place to another, there are usually four hundred carewares, which amount to the sum of two thousand four hundred horses,



TRICK HORSES.  
(From Strutt's "Sports and Pastimes.")



appointed out of the countries adjoining, whereby her a carriage is conveyed safely unto the appointed place. Hereby the ancient use of somers and sumpter horses is in manner utterly relinquished, which causes the trains of our princes in their progresses to show far less than those of the kings of other nations.

“Such as serve for the saddle are commonly gelded, and now grow to be very dear among us, especially if they be well coloured, justly limbed, and have thereto an easy ambling pace. For our countrymen, seeking their ease in every corner where it is to be had, delight very much in these qualities, but chiefly in their excellent paces, which, besides that it is a manner peculiar to horses of our soil, are not hurtful to the rider or owner sitting on their backs, it is moreover very pleasant and delectable in his ears, in that the noise of their well proportioned pace doth yield comfortable sound as he travelleth by the way. Yet is there no greater deceit used anywhere among our horse-keepers, horse-courers, and hostellers; for such is the subtle knavery of a great sort of them (without exception of any of them be it spoken which deal for private gain) that an honest-meaning man shall have very good luck among them if he be not deceived by some false trick or other.

“There are certain noble markets wherein great plenty of horses and colts are bought and sold, and whereunto such as have need resort to buy and make their necessary provision of them, as Ripon, Newport Pond, Wolfpit, Harboro’, and divers others. But, as most drovers are very diligent to bring store of these into these places, so many of them are too-too lewd in abusing such as buy them. For they have a custom, to make them look fair to the eye, when they come within two days’ journey of the market to drive them till they sweat, and for the space of eight or twelve hours, which being done they turn them all over the backs in some water, where they stand for a season, and then go forward with them to the place appointed, where they make sale of their affected ware, and such as by this means do fall into many diseases and maladies. Of such outlandish [foreign] horses as are daily brought over unto us I speak not, as the jennet of Spain, the courser of Naples, the hobby of Ireland, the Flemish roile and the Scottish nag, because that further speech of them cometh not within the compass of this treatise, and for whose breed and maintenance (especially of the greatest sort) King Henry the Eighth erected a noble studdery, and for a time had very good success with them, till the officers, waxing weary, procured a mixed brood



of bastard races, whereby his good purpose came to little effect. Sir Nicholas Arnold of late hath bred the best horses in England, and written of the manner of their production: would to God his compass of ground were like to that of Pella in Syria, wherein the king of that nation had usually a studery of 30,000 mares and 300 stallions, as Strabo doth remember, lib. 16.”

## CHAPTER VI

### CELEBRATION OF THE CALENDAR

**I**N a description of manners and customs such as this, the writer's main difficulty after the material is at hand is that of selection and arrangement. An absolutely complete survey of the field, even if such a survey were possible, would in no way fulfil the purposes of the present volume, which, the author hopes, sufficiently describes the times without, on the other hand, presuming either to the tediousness or volubility which is the peculiar birthright of the technological dictionary. In treating, then, of the Elizabethan celebration of the calendar, a few of the most important feast days and their customs have been described in detail as typical; the remainder is left to the dictionary or to the imagination, according as one or the other is at hand.

Yet a word may be said to advantage concerning the omitted portion of the calendar. It is well for Americans to bear in mind that in this country to-day the days of the calendar are not nearly so familiar to the people at large as they

are to Englishmen. New Year's Day, St. Valentine's Day, Easter, the Fourth of July, and a score of others would be known to every school child; yet many a person of education might pause over the location of Epiphany, or even Shrove-Tuesday, and how often would a book of names be called to the assistance when it is a question of St. George and the Dragon or St. Crispan; and few of us know that so much of our daily conversation at an afternoon tea is but a tribute to the influence of St. Swithin. All this is different in England. Yet the difference in this respect between our familiar associations and those of Englishmen is no greater than the difference between the association of Englishmen of to-day and the Englishmen of three centuries ago.

Shakespeare lived at a time when the Roman Catholic calendar had not gone altogether out of fashion, and scarcely at all out of memory. All its days were still remembered, and some that were the distinctive property of the Roman Church were still observed in Protestant England as of old. There were numberless others common to both churches, and yet others, associated wholly with the new, making altogether a total of which we have little conception.

The reader of the present volume will probably find its main value in the assistance it lends to the

appreciation of Elizabethan literature. What such a reader should constantly bear in mind is the Elizabethan familiarity with all these proper names. The student of to-day who pauses over an enthusiastic passage in *Henry V.* to look up St. Crispan meets with a delay that, had it been possible three hundred years ago, would have caused Shakespeare to omit the allusion. Richard III., in swearing by St. Paul, is using the name of a very familiar saint and friend. The mention of Shrove-Tuesday meant to the Elizabethans far more than pancakes; and St. George's Day was to them like the Fourth of July. Elsewhere a similar change in the popular relation to superstition and folklore belief is called to the attention of the reader. In both cases we should remember constantly that many of these allusions that have passed completely out of our ready and every day memory were still fresh and vital to the common audience of Shakespeare.

The year was ushered in and ushered out by the same set of festivities, for the Yule-Tide celebration began long before Christmas and extended to Twelfth Day. Both this and New Year's Day, as falling within this period, are described below at the end of the chapter. Though several days of minor importance were connected with annual celebration early in the year, a sort of popular

relaxation manifested itself after the Christmas sports which was, however, boisterously brought to an end by the merry-making of Shrove-Tuesday. Since the time of the Reformation Shrove-Tide was no longer of such importance as a time for shricing and general confession of sins. The Protestant Elizabethans seized upon the carnival element of the Roman Catholic celebration and made the period before Lent one of the jolliest of the year. Collop Monday followed Shrove-Sunday; and was so-called as being the period when the people reluctantly bade good-bye to slices of meat called in some parts of the country collops. The next day was Pancake Tuesday, commemorating an article of diet that has not yet passed out of fashion as distinctively associated with the observation of Shrove-Tuesday.

Thomas Tusser, a chorister of St. Paul's, later joined the court as musician to William Paget, first baron Paget. He farmed, wrote poetry, and in 1557 (expanded in 1570 and 1573), published *Hundreth Good Pointes of Husbandrie*. One of his stanzas concerning Shrove-Tide is worth quoting:—

“ At Shroftide to shroving, go thresh the fat hen,  
 If blindfold can kill her, then give it thy men:  
 Maids, fritters, and pancakes, now see ye make,  
 Let slut have one pancake, for company sake.”

Concerning one of the customs alluded to above, Mr. Hilman says: "The hen is hung at a fellow's back, who has also some horse-bells about him; the rest of the fellows are blinded, and have bows in their hands, with which they chase this fellow and his hen about some large covert or small enclosure. The fellow with the hen and bells shifting as well as he can, they follow the sound, and sometimes hit him and his hen; at other times, if he can get behind one of them, they thrash one another well favour'dly; but the jest is, the maids are to blind the fellows, which they do with their aprons, and the cunning baggages will endear their sweet-hearts with a peeping hole, whilst the others look out as sharp to hinder it. After this the hen is boiled with bacon, and store of pancakes and fritters are made. She that is noted for lying in bed long, or any other miscarriage, hath the first pancake presented to her, which most commonly falls to the dogs' share at last, for no one will own it their due." \*

In the prologue to Hawkin's *Apollo Shroving*, printed in 1626, we find this quatrain:—

"All which we on this stage shall act or say,  
Doth solemnise Apollo's shroving day;  
Whilst thus we greet you with our words and pens,  
Our shroving bodeth to none but hens."

\* Quoted by Drake, Vol. I, p. 142.

An answer in *All's Well That Ends Well* is "as fit as a pancake for Shrove-Tuesday;" and in *Pericles* this article of food is termed a flap-jack. There are numerous allusions to the pancake diet in the Elizabethan dramas; and of the pancake-bell Taylor, the Water Poet, has the following to say: "Shrove-Tuesday, at whose entrance in the morning all the whole kingdom is unquiet, but by that time the clock strikes eleven, which (by the help of a knavish sexton) is commonly before nine, then there is a bell rung, cal'd pancake-bell, the sound whereof makes thousands of people distracted, and forgetful either of manners or humanity." \*

By the time of Elizabeth the cock-fighting mentioned by Fitzstephen,† who wrote in the time of Henry II., was coupled with or supplanted by the less sportsmanlike amusement of cock-throwing. The practice is thus described by Strutt:

"In some places it was a common practice to put the cock in an earthen vessel made for the purpose, and to place him in such a position that his head and tail might be exposed to view; the vessel, with the bird in it, was then suspended across the street, about twelve or fourteen feet from the ground, to be thrown at by such as chose to make trial of their skill; two pence was paid

\* Works, fol. 1630, p. 115.

\* See chapter . p.?

for four throws, and he who broke the pot, and delivered the cock from his confinement, had him for a reward.”

The evening of Shrove-Tuesday was given up to dramatic entertainments. This was the custom both in town and country; at the court, in the halls of noblemen, and in the public theatres.

Shrove-Tuesday was considered by the apprentices as their particular holiday; and in the days of Shakespeare they considered it as their especial right to punish women of ill-fame, and to riot among the bawdy houses. Dekker, in *The Seven Deadly Sins of London*, says: “They presently (like prentices upon Shrove-Tuesday) take the law into their own hands and do what they list.” And Sir Thomas Overbury, speaking of a bawd, remarks: “Nothing daunts her so much as the approach of Shrove-Tuesday.” Says Ralph in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*:—

“Farewell, all you good boys in merry London!  
Ne'er shall we more on Shrove-Tuesday meet,  
And pluck down houses of iniquity.”\*

“Jerusalem was a stately thing, and so was Nineveh, and the city of Norwich, and Sodom and Gomorrah, with the rising of the prentices, and pulling down the bawdy houses there upon Shrove-Tuesday.”† “Ille beat downe the doore;

\* Act V., Scene iii.

† *Jouson, Bartholomew Fair*, Act V., Scene i.



and put him in mind of a Shrove-Tuesday, the fatal day for the doors to be broken open." \*

The theatres were also subject to these apprentice attacks, a fact alluded to by Middleton in *The Inner Temple Masque*. (ll. 170-175.)

“Stand forth, Shrove-Tuesday, one a’ the silenc’st  
bricklayers:

’Tis in your charge to pull down bawdy-houses,  
To set your tribe a-work, cause spoil in Shoreditch,  
And make a dangerous leak there; deface Turnbull,  
And tickle Cod-piece Row; ruin the Cockpit:  
The poor players never thrived in’t.”

Shoreditch and Turnbull were noted haunts of courtesans in London; Cod-piece Row, a name probably manufactured for the occasion. The Cockpit theatre was burned by the apprentices on Shrove-Tuesday, 1616. Dyce, in a note to this passage, points out that in the word leak there is an allusion to a bawdy house by Madam Leak, and quotes the following from Dekker’s *Owl’s Almanacs*: “Shrove-Tuesday falls on that day on which the prentices plucked down the Cockpit and on which they did always use to rifle Madam Leak’s house at the upper end of Shoreditch.”

Easter-tide, or the week following Easter, was a period of such exuberant merry-making that the people popularly imagined that their own mood was shared by the heavenly bodies, and believed

\* Dekker, *Match me in London*.

that the sun actually danced with joy on the day of the Resurrection. It was the common custom to go out early upon Easter morning to watch the sun rise; and it is not improbable that, if the observers looked persistently at the new-risen luminary without wincing, they were often rewarded with a sight of this phenomenon.

Another of the numerous customs connected with this feast was most frequently practised in the north. At Newcastle the Mayor, Aldermen, and many burgesses used regularly at Easter and Whitsuntide to visit the Forth, with the mace, the sword, and the cap of maintenance triumphantly borne before in procession.

The morris-dance, especially connected with the May-day celebration, was also occasionally an element in the Easter sports. The principal outdoor game, however, played upon this occasion was hand-ball. It was played in all parts of the kingdom by the youth of both sexes, and the distinctive prize at this season of the year was a tansy cake.

When Mercutio asked Benvolio whether he did "not fall out with a tailor for wearing his new doublet before Easter," he referred to the popular custom of wearing new clothes upon that day. It was, in fact, as necessary to wear something new on Easter in that time as it is to-day. Dyer

tells us that it is still the custom for young folks in East Yorkshire to go to the nearest market-town on Easter Eve, where they buy some new article of dress to wear on the morrow in order to prevent the rooks from soiling their clothes during the coming year; and he quotes from *Poor Robin's Almanac*:—

“At Easter let your clothes be new,  
Or else be sure you will it rue.”

Egg-Saturday concluded the period of egg eating before Lent, and Easter began the resumption of the use of this article of diet; hence eggs were a principal feature of the Easter celebration. Then as now it was the custom to colour the Pasche eggs, as they were called, from the pass-over. Such eggs were considered by the young people in the light of fairings and were highly esteemed. Egg-giving was so prevalent a custom that it gave rise to the popular proverb: “I’ll warrant you for an egg at Easter.”

May-day was one of the great periods of open-air festivities. So anxiously did people look forward to the day that, as Shakespeare says, they could not sleep.

“Pray, sir, be patient: ’tis as much impossible . . .  
Unless we sweep ’em from the door with cannons . . .  
To scatter ’em, as ’tis to make ’em sleep  
On a May morning.” (*Henry VIII.*)

The day was ushered in by going a-maying, a custom that is thus described in Stow's *Survey of London*: "In the month of May, namely, on May-day in the morning, every man, except impediment, would walk into the sweete meaddowes and green woods, there to rejoyce their spirits, with the beauty and savour of sweet flowers, praying God in their kind."

This sedate and simple enjoyment, however, was not sufficient for most people. Stubbes, in *The Anatomy of Abuses*, thus describes the more usual form of maying:

"Against May-day every parish, town, or village assemble themselves, both men, women, and children; and either all together, or dividing themselves into companies, they goe, some to the woods and groves, some to the hills and mountains, some to one place, some to another, where they spend all the night in pleasant pastimes, and in the morning they return bringing with them birche boughs and branches of trees to deck their assemblies withal. But their chiefest jewel they bring from thence is the maie-poale, which they bring home with great veneration, as thus—they have twentie or fortie yoake of oxen, every ox having a sweete nosegaie of flowers tied to the tip of his horns, and these oxen draw home the maie-poale, stinking idol rather, which they covered

all over with flowers and hearbes, bound round with strings from the top to the bottome, and sometimes it was painted with variable colours, having two or three hundred men, women, and children following it with great devotion. And thus equipped it was reared with handkerchiefs and flags streaming on the top, they straw the ground round about it, they bind green boughs about it, they set up summer halles, bowers, and arbours hard by it, and then fall they to banquetting and feasting, to leaping and dancing about it, as the heathen people did about their idols.”

It was also a custom of the time to deck the doors and porches with green sycamore and hawthorn boughs brought in with the May-pole. The habit of painting the May-pole in spiral lines of different bright colours, mentioned above, is also alluded to in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* where Hermia calls Helena a painted May-pole.

But the sport *par excellence* connected with the May-day revels was the morris-dance. “About the commencement of the sixteenth century, or somewhat sooner, probably towards the middle of the fifteenth century, a very material addition was made to the celebration of the rites of May-day, by the introduction of Robin Hood and some of his associates. This was done with a view to-

wards the encouragement of archery, and the custom was continued even beyond the close of the reign of James I. It is true that the May-games in their rudest form, the mere dance of lads and lasses round a May-pole, or the simple morris with the Lady of the May, were occasionally seen during the reign of Elizabeth; but the general exhibition was the more complicated ceremony we are about to describe." \* To these characters were soon added several others, till, at its highest development under Elizabeth and James, the *dramatis personæ* of the morris-dance included the following characters: Robin Hood, Maid Marian, Friar Tuck, Little John, the Fool, Tom the Piper, the Hobby-Horse, the Dragon, and from two to ten morris-dancers, or the same number of Robin Hood's men, with the painted May-pole in the centre.

Robin Hood was created King or Lord of the May, and sometimes bore in his hand a painted standard. His paramour, Maid Marian, supplanted the former Queen of the May. Her part, in the days of Shakespeare, was usually taken by a smooth-faced lad whose unbroken voice rendered him capable of taking the part of a woman effectively. This custom gave offence to the Puritans, one of whom wrote in the following words:

\* Drake, Vol I., p. 159.



THE QUINTAIN.  
(From Strutt's "Sports and Pastimes.")





“The abuses which are committed in your May-games are infinite. The first whereof is this, that you do use to attyre in woman’s apparrell whom you doe most commonly call *may-marrions*, whereby you infringe that straight commandment given in Deut. xxii. 5, that men must not put on women’s apparrell for fear of enormities. Nay, I myself have seene in a May-game a troupe, the greater part whereof hath been men, and yet have they been attyred so like unto women, that their faces being hidde (as they were indeede) a man could not discern them from women. The second abuse, which of all others is the greatest, is this, that it hath been toulde that your morice dauncers have danced naked in nets: what greater enticement unto naughtiness could have been devised? The third abuse is that you (because you will loose no time) do use commonly to run into woods in the night time, amongst maidens, to fet bowes, in so much as I have hearde of tenne maidens which went to fet May, and nine of them came home with child.” \*

Friar Tuck was Robin Hood’s chaplain. The Fool, Tom the Piper, and the dancers were mainly distinguished by their dress. Of the Hobby-horse and the Dragon, Drake speaks as follows: “The

\* Featherstone’s Dialogue agaynst light, lewde, and lascivious dancing, 1582. Quoted by Drake, Vol. I., p. 161.

former was the resemblance of the head and tail of a horse, manufactured in paste-board, and attached to a person whose business it was, whilst he seemed to ride gracefully on its back, to imitate the prancings and curvettings of that noble animal, whose supposed feet were concealed by a foot-cloth reaching to the ground; and the latter, constructed of the same materials, was made to hiss and vibrate his wings, and was frequently attacked by the man on the hobby-horse, who then personated the character of St. George." \*

The skilful management of the hobby-horse was a matter of great difficulty, and required considerable preliminary practice. A character who takes this part in Sampson's *Vow Breaker* is angry with his rival the mayor. The former calls out: "Let the mayor play the hobby-horse among his brethren, an he will. I hope our town lads cannot want a hobby-horse. Have I practiced my reines, my careers, my pranckers, my ambles, my false trotts, my smooth ambles and Canterbury paces, and shall master mayor put me besides the hobby-horse? Have I borrowed the fore horse bells, his plumes and braveries, nay, had his mane new shorne and frizzled, and shall the mayor put me besides the hobby-horse?" So important was the hobby-horse considered that the

\* Vol. I., p. 166.

proverbial expression "The hobby-horse is forgot" was equivalent to our *Hamlet* with Hamlet left out."

The music of the morris-dance was furnished either by the simple pipe, the pipe and tabor, or the bagpipe. That the latter instrument was rather preferred is implied in the words announcing the arrival of Autolycus. "If you did but hear the pedlar at the door, you would never dance again after a tabor and pipe; no, the bagpipe could not move you." One of Thomas Weilkes' Madrigals, printed in 1600, has the following:—

"Harke, harke, I hear the dancing  
And a nimble morris prancing;  
The bagpipe and the morris bells,  
That they are not farre hence us tells;  
Come let us all go thither,  
And dance like friends together."

The garments of the morris-dancers were adorned with bells which were meant to be wrung while dancing. They were fastened to the wrists, the elbows, and the ankles. They were of different sizes and tones and bore such names as the fore-bell, the second bell, the treble, the tenor or great bell, and double bells. The principal dancer was always superbly dressed. "He wants no clothes, for he hath a cloak laid on with gold lace, and an

embroidered jerkin; and thus he is marching thither like the forman of a morris."\*

Again, in Act iv. of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*: "Let Ralph come out on May-day in the morning, and speak upon a conduit, with all his scarfs about him, and his feathers, and his rings, and his knacks;" and Ralph says in his declamation:—

"And by the common council of my fellows in the Strand,  
With gilded staff and crossed scarf, the May-lord here I  
stand.

The morris rings, while hobby-horse doth foot it faeteously:  
The lords and ladies now abroad, for their disport and play,  
Do kiss sometimes upon the grass and sometimes in the hay;

And lift aloft your velvet heads, and slipping off your  
gown,  
With bells on legs, and napkins clean unto your shoulders  
tied,  
With scarfs and garters as you please, and 'Hey for our  
town!' cried.

Up, then, I say, both young and old, both men and maid  
a-maying,  
With drums and guns that bounce aloud and merry tabor  
playing."

The most complete and accurate description of the ancient morris-dance, though written in later times, is from the pen of the antiquarian Strutt.

\* *The Blind Beggar of Bednal Green, Day.*

It is quoted here entire from his romance *Queen-hoo-Hall*, vol. I., p. 13, etc.

“In front of the pavilion a large square was staked out, and fenced with ropes, to prevent the crowd from pressing upon the performers, and interrupting the diversion; there were also two bars at the bottom of the enclosure, through which the actors might pass and repass, as occasion required.

“Six young men first entered the square, clothed in jerkins of leather, with axes upon their shoulders like woodmen, and their heads bound with large garlands of ivy leaves intertwined with sprigs of hawthorn. Then followed,

“Six young maidens of the village, dressed in blue kirtles, with garlands of primroses on their heads, leading a fine sleek cow, decorated with ribbons of various colours, interspersed with flowers; and the horns of the animal were tipped with gold. These were succeeded by

“Six foresters, equipped in green tunics, with hoods and hosen of the same colour; each of them carried a bugle-horn attached to a baldric of silk, which he sounded as he passed the barrier. After them came

“Peter Laneret, the baron’s chief falconer, who personified *Robin Hood*; he was attired in a bright grass-green tunic, fringed with gold; and

his hood and his hosen were parti-coloured, blue and white; he had a large garland of rose-buds on his head, a bow bent in his hand, a sheaf of arrows at his girdle, and a bugle-horn depending from a baldric of light blue tarantine, embroidered with silver; he had also a sword and a dagger, the hilts of both being richly embossed with gold.

“Fabian, a page, as *Little John*, walked at his right hand; and Cecil Cellerman, the butler, as *Will Stukely*, at his left. These, with ten others of the jolly outlaw’s attendants who followed, were habited in green garments, bearing their bows bent in their hands, and their arrows in their girdles. Then came

“Two maidens, in orange coloured kirtles with white courtpies (a short vest); strewing flowers; followed immediately by

“The *Maid Marian*, elegantly habited in a watchet-coloured tunic reaching to the ground; over which she wore a white linen rochet with loose sleeves, fringed with silver, and very neatly plaited; her girdle was of silver baudekin, fastened with a double bow on the left side; her long flaxen hair was divided into many ringlets, and flowed upon her shoulders; the top part of her head was covered with a rude net-work cawl of gold, upon which was placed a garland of silver,

ornamented with blue violets. She was supported by

“Two brides-maidens, in sky-coloured rochets girt with crimson girdles, wearing garlands upon their heads of blue and white violets. After them came

“Four other females in green courtpies, and garlands of violets and cowslips. Then

“Sampson the smith, as *Friar Tuck*, carrying a huge quarter-staff upon his shoulder; and Morris the mole-taker, who represented *Much* the miller’s son, having a long pole with an inflated bladder attached to one end.\* And after them

“The *May-pole*, drawn by eight fine oxen, decorated with scarfs, ribbons, and flowers of divers colours; and the tips of their horns were embellished with gold. The rear was closed by

“The *Hobby-horse* and the *Dragon*.

“When the May-pole was drawn into the square, the foresters sounded their horns, and the populace expressed their pleasure by shouting incessantly until it reached the place assigned for its elevation: . . . and during the time the ground was preparing for its reception, the barriers of the bottom of the enclosure were opened for the villagers to approach, and adorn

\* The mole-taker replaces the fool.



it with ribbons, garlands, and flowers, as their inclination prompted them.

“The pole being sufficiently ornamented with finery, the square was cleared from such as had no part to perform in the pageant; and then it was elevated amidst the reiterated acclamations of the spectators. The woodmen and the milkmaidens danced around it according to the rustic fashion; the measure was played by Peretto Cheveritte, the baron’s chief minstrel, on the bagpipes accompanied with the pipe and tabour, performed by one of his associates. When the dance was finished, Gregory the jester, who undertook to play the *Hobby-horse*, came forward with his appropriate equipment, and, frisking up and down the square without restriction, imitated the galloping, curvetting, ambling, trotting, and other paces of the horse, to the infinite satisfaction of the lower classes of the spectators. He was followed by Peter Parker, the baron’s ranger, who personated a dragon, hissing, yelling, and shaking his wings with wonderful ingenuity; and to complete the mirth, Morris, in the character of *Much*, having small bells attached to his knees and elbows, capered here and there between the two monsters in the form of a dance; and as often as he came near to the sides of the enclosure, he cast slyly a handful of meal into the faces of the



gaping rustics, or rapped them about the heads with the bladder tied to the end of his pole. In the meantime, Sampson, representing *Friar Tuck*, walked with much gravity around the square, and occasionally let fall his heavy staff upon the toes of such of the crowd as he thought were approaching more forward than they ought to do; and if the sufferers cried out from the sense of pain, he addressed them in a solemn tone of voice, advising them to count their beads, say a paternoster or two, and to beware of purgatory. These vagaries were highly palatable to the populace, who announced their delight by repeated plaudits and loud bursts of laughter; for this reason they were continued for a considerable length of time; but Gregory, beginning at last to falter in his paces, ordered the dragon to fall back; the well-nurtured beast, being out of breath, readily obeyed, and their two companions followed their example; which concluded this part of the pastime.

“Then the archers set up a target at the lower end of the Green, and made trial of their skill in a regular succession. . . . Robin was therefore adjudged the conquerer; and the prize of honour, a garland of laurel embellished with variegated ribbons, was put upon his head; and to Stukely was given a garland of ivy, because he was the second best performer in that contest.

“The pageant was finished with the archery; and the procession began to move away, to make room for the villagers, who afterwards assembled in the square, and amused themselves by dancing round the May-pole in promiscuous companies, according to the ancient custom.”

Of all the year no period was looked forward to with an interest like that inspired by the approach of Christmas and the following days. The principal characteristic of the Yule-tide sports was general hospitality and the closely related unbinding of social ties. It was the one time of the year when there was practically no distinction of class, when lord, lady, and rustic met in the same hall, played the same games, and romped without stint as if they were social equals. The proper period for the Yule-tide sports was from Christmas Eve to Twelfth Day; but, especially among the lower classes, this period was extended in both directions. It was customary during this period to decorate the halls, houses, etc., with bay, laurel, ivy, and holly leaves, decorations which were kept in place to the end of the period of celebration. An allusion in Stow's *Survey of London* to this habit contains also an allusion to the extension of the period of celebration by the common people. “Against the feast of Christmas,” he says, “every man's house, as also their parish churches, were

decked with holm, ivy, bays, and whatsoever the season of the year afforded to be green. The conduits and the standards in the streets were likewise garnished. Amongst which I read, that in the year 1444, by tempest of thunder and lightning, on the first of February at night, Paul's steeple was fired, but with great labour quenched, and towards the morning of Candlemas day, at the Leadenhall in Cornhill, a standard of tree, being set up in the pavement fast in the ground, nailed full of holm and ivy, for disport of Christmas to the people, etc."

On Christmas Eve the people were wont to light candles, called Christmas candles, of prodigious size, and to stir the fire till it burned with uncommon brightness. In the midst of this extra illumination the yule-log was brought in. It was the special duty of the household carpenter to provide the Christmas block which was the massive root or trunk of a tree capable of remaining a part of the fire for a number of days. It was brought into the centre of the hall on Christmas eve amid great rejoicing, and, while still there, each member of the household would come forward, seat himself or herself upon it and sing a Yule-song and drink to a merry Christmas and a happy New Year. It was then rolled amid a great tumult to the fire-place and, when properly

set up and the material arranged about it for fire, the yule-log was actually ignited by the brand that had been expressively saved for the purpose from last year's Christmas fire. The whole household, including family, friends, and domestics then feasted to a late hour upon Yule-dough, Yule-cakes, and bowls of frumity, with much music and singing.

In Roman Catholic times special arrangements were made whereby the poorer people found it easy to collect money by begging, which was to be applied to the purchase of masses for the forgiveness of the excesses to which they went during the Christmas revels. In the time of Shakespeare this custom was still in vogue in the form of carols sung early on Christmas morning especially, as a regular custom, but also carols or songs of a more secular nature that were sung at all times during Yule-tide, with a collection to follow. This custom was frequently followed or accompanied by mumming where a number of persons went about together, from hall to hall, hoping for entertainment and gratuitous remuneration.

The dinner upon Christmas day was served with especial sumptuousness, with great attention paid to the "dishes for show," as Markham calls them, namely, fancy dishes representing objects, got up with great elaboration, but not meant to be eaten.

Not exactly conforming to the latter requirement, however, was the peacock pie, in which the cock was cooked whole, with the head projecting through the crust. The head of the cock would be beautifully decorated at the serving, and the bill gilded; and the tail set up in all its extended grandeur of coloured beauty. Though the following description of a Christmas dinner is from Nichols's accounts of the court, it is not more elaborate than that of many of the noblemen of the court, and differs but little from the celebration of even less wealthy people:

“On Christmas day, service in the church being ended, the gentlemen presently repair into the hall to breakfast, with brawn, mustard, and malmsey.

“At dinner, the butler appointed for the Christmas is to see the tables covered and furnished: and the ordinary butlers of the house are decently to set bread, napkins, and trenchers, in good form, at every table; with spoons and knives. At the first course is served a fair and large boar's head, on a silver platter, with minstralsye.

“Two ‘servants’ are to attend at supper, and to bear two fair torches of wax, next before the musicians and trumpeters, and stand above the fire with the music, till the first course be served in through the hall. Which performed, they, with

the music, are to return to the buttry. The like course is to be observed in all things during the time of Christmas.

“At night, after supper, are revels and dancing, during the twelve days of Christmas. The Master of the Revels is, after dinner and supper, to sing a caroll or song; and command other gentlemen then there present to sing with him and the company; and so it is very decently performed.”

In Middleton's *Father Hubbard's Tales* a number of distinctively Christmas sports are alluded to, among which are carols, wassail bowls, the dancing of Sellinger's Round, Shoeing the Mare, Hoodman Blind, Hot-Cockles, and playing the King and Queen at Twelfth Night. Sellinger's Round, or The Beginning of the World as it was also called, is alluded to in Heywood's *The Fair Maid of the West*. “I am so tired with dancing with these same black shee chimney sweepers, that I can scarce set the best leg forward, they have so tir'd me with their mariscoes, and I have so tickled them with our country dances. Sellinger's Round, and Tom Tiler: we have so fiddled it.”

Hoodman Blind is our Blind Man's Buff, and Hot-Cockles is a game still played under various names. One player was blind-folded and the



others struck him, he trying to guess who had dealt the blow. Shoe the Mare was another boisterous Christmas sport. "One of the players was chosen to be the wild mare, and the others chased him about the room with the object of shoeing him." (Bullen.)

The Lord of Misrule or Abbot of Unreason is familiar to all readers of Sir Walter Scott. Of this personage, who figured, but with less importance, in the rites of Whitsuntide, was one of the most important officers of the Christmas celebration. "In the feast of Christmas," says Stow, "there was in the King's house wheresoever he lodged, a Lord of Misrule, or Master of merry desports, and the like had ye in the house of every nobleman of honour, or good worship, were he spiritual or temporal. Amongst the which, the Mayor of London and either of the Sheriffs had their several Lords of Misrule, ever contending without quarrel or offence, who should make the rarest pastimes to delight the beholders. These lords, beginning their rule on Allhallow Eve, continue the same till the morrow after the feast of the Purification, commonly called Candlemas Day. In which space there was fine and subtle disguisings, masques and mummeries, with playing at cards for counters, nayles and points, in every house, more for pastime than for gain." And

Stubbes, in *The Anatomy of Abuses*, prints the following tirade:

“First, all the wilde heads of the parish, flocking together, chuse them a graunde captain (of mischief) whom they inrolle with the title of *my Lord of misrule*, and him they crown with great solemnities, and adopt for their king. This king annoynted, chooseth forth twentie, fourtie, three-score, or a hundred lustie guttes like to himselfe to wait upon his lordly majesty, and to garde his noble person. . . . Thus all things set in order, then have they their hobby-horses, their dragons and other antiques, together with their baudie pipers, and thundering drummers, to strike up the *Devils Daunce* withall: then march this heathen company towards the church and church-yarde, their pypers pypyng, their drummers thundering, their stumps dauncing, their bells jynghing, their handkerchiefs fluttering about their heads like madmen, their hobby-horses and other monsters skirmishing amongst the throng: and in this sorte they goe to the church like devils incarnate, with such a confused noise, that no man can heare his own voyce. Then the foolish people they looke, they stare, they laugh, they fleere, and mount upon formes and pewes, to see these goodly pagants solemnised in this sort. Then, after this about the church they goe agine and agine, and



so fourth into the church yard, where they have commonly their summer haules, their bowers and arbours, and banquetting houses set up, wherein they feast, banquet, and daunce all that day, and (peradventure) all that night too." This description, though it applies to the summer election of the Lord of Misrule, differs from the Christmas celebration only in the out-of-door element.

None was more familiar with the ancient customs of England and Scotland than Sir Walter Scott. The following from the introduction to the sixth canto of *Marmion* may well close this note on the celebration of the calendar:

“ And well our Christian sires of old  
 Loved when the year its course had roll'd,  
 And brought blithe Christmas back again,  
 With all his hospitable train.  
 Domestic and religious rite  
 Gave honour to the holy night;  
 On Christmas-eve the bells were rung;  
 On Christmas-eve the mass was sung:  
 That only night in all the year,  
 Saw the stoled priest the chalice rear.  
 The damsel donn'd her kirtle sheen;  
 The hall was dress'd with holly green;  
 Forth to the wood did merry-men go,  
 To gather in the mistletoe.  
 Then open'd wide the Baron's hall  
 To vassal, tenant, serf, and all;  
 Power laid his rod of rule aside,  
 And Ceremony doff'd his pride.

The heir, with roses in his shoes,  
That night might village partner choose;  
The lord, underogating, share  
The vulgar game of "post and pair."  
All hail'd, with uncontroll'd delight,  
And general voice, the happy night,  
That to the cottage, as the crown,  
Brought tidings of salvation down.

## III

The fire, with well-dried logs supplied,  
Went roaring up the chimney wide;  
The huge hall-table's oaken face,  
Scrub'd till it shone, the day to grace,  
Bore then upon its massive board  
No mark to part the squire and lord.  
Then was brought in the lusty brawn,  
By old blue-coated serving-man;  
Then the grim boar's head frown'd on high,  
Crested with bays and rosemary.  
Well can the green-garb'd ranger tell,  
How, when, and where, the monster fell;  
What dogs before his death he tore,  
And all the baiting of the boar.  
The wassel round, in good brown bowls,  
Garnish'd with ribbons, blithely trows.  
There the huge sirloin reek'd; hard by  
Plum-porridge stood, and Christmas pie;  
Nor fail'd old Scotland to produce,  
At such high-tide, her savoury goose.  
Then came the merry maskers in,  
And carols roar'd with blithesome din?  
If unmelodious was the song,  
It was a hearty note, and strong.

Who lists may in their mumming see  
Traces of ancient mystery;  
White shirts supplied the masquerade,  
And smutted cheeks the visors made;  
But, O! what maskers, richly dight,  
Can boast of bosoms half so light!

England was merry England, when  
Old Christmas brought his sports again.  
'Twas Christmas broach'd the mightiest ale;  
'Twas Christmas told the merriest tale;  
A Christmas gambol oft could cheer  
The poor man's heart through half the year."

## CHAPTER VII

### OUT-OF-DOOR SPORTS

THE Elizabethans were such fun-loving people that it is useless to attempt here to catalogue their amusements, either indoor or out. In the following chapter and the next a brief description is given of those sports that were the most popular and therefore most typical of the time.

Ale was the staple drink of our ancestors of this period and ales one of their staple amusements. An ale was nothing more nor less than a fair at which practically nothing of importance was sold except ale. There were many of them. Some took their names from the dates on which they were given as the Whitsun Ale; some were named from the place at which they were given, and might occur at any time, as the Church Ale. The Leet Ale was rather a dinner than an ale, given upon the occasion of the courtleet of a manor. The Bride Ale is mentioned elsewhere. The Clerk Ale owes its name to its purpose, namely, that of a benefit for the clerk. Of all these, the first two are the most important.

The Church Ale was a festival instituted sometimes in memory of the patron saint of the church at which it was given, but more frequently for the purpose of raising funds for the support of the church, for its decoration or repair. Every one was expected to go and to buy his share of ale. The enthusiasm that followed often led persons to contribute far more heavily to the good cause than they would have done had they stayed away and remained sober.

It was not an uncommon thing to have as many as six or eight of these ales annually. Drake quotes the following from a paper in Dodsworth's MSS. in the Bodleian Library: "The parishioners of Elveston and Okebrook, in Derbyshire, agree jointly, to brew four *Ales*, and every *Ale* of one quarter of malt, betwixt this (the time of the contract) and the feast of St. John Baptist next coming. And every inhabitant of the said town of Okebrook shall be at the several *Ales*. And every husband and his wife shall pay two pence, and every cottager one penny, and all the inhabitants of Elveston shall have and receive all the profits and advantages coming of the said *Ales*, to the use and behoof of the said church of Elveston. And the inhabitants of Elveston shall brew eight *Ales* betwixt this and the feast of St. John Baptist, at the which *Ales* the inhabi-

tants of Okebrook shall come and pay as before rehearsed. And if he be away at one *Ale*, to pay at the toder *Ale* for both, &c." \*

Though this document is dated before the Reformation, times had not changed materially in this respect by 1602 when Carew first published his *Survey of Cornwall*. In it he says: "For the church-ale, two men of the parish are chosen by their best foregoers, to be wardens; who, dividing the task, make collection among the parishioners, of whatsoever provision it pleaseth them voluntarily to bestow. This they employ in brewing, baking, and other acates, against Whitsuntide; upon which holy-dayes the neighbours meet at the church-house, and there merily feed on their owne victuals, contributing some petty portion to the stock; which, by many smalls, groweth to a meetely greatness: for there is entertayned a kinde of emulation betweene these wardens, who by his graciousness in gathering, and good husbandry in expending, can best advance the churches profit. Besides the neighbour parishes at those times lovingly visit one another, and this way frankly spend their money together. The afternoons are consumed in such exercises as olde and yong folke (having leysure) doe accustomedly weare out time withall." Stubbes, in the *Anatomy of*

\* Vol. I., p. 177.

*Abuses*, 1595, declares that "in certaine townes, where drunken Bacchus bears swaie against Christmas and Easter, Whitsunday, or some other time, the church-wardens, for so they calle them, in every parish, with the consent of the whole parish, provide half a score or twentie quarters of mault, whereof some they buy of the church stocke, and some is given to them of the parishioners themselves, everyone conferring somewhat, according to his ability; which mault being made into very strong ale, or beer, is set to sale, either in the church or in some other place assigned to that purpose. Then, when this nip-pitatum, this huffe-cappe, as they call it, this nectar of life, is set abroach, well is he that can get the soonest to it, and spends the most at it, for he is counted the goodliest man of all the rest, and most in God's favour, because it is spent upon his church forsooth."

"The church wardens shall not suffer any pedlar, or others whatsoever, to set out any wares to sale, either in the porches of churches, or in the churchyard, nor anywhere else on holy days or Sundays, while any part of divine service is in doing or while any service is in preaching." \*

\* Bishop Grindel's Injunction to the laity at York. 1571-2.

“Church or parish ales, revels, may games, plays and such other unlawful assemblies of the people of sundry parishes into one parish on the Sabbath Day and other times, is a special cause that many disorders, contempts of law, and other enormities are there perpetrated and committed to the great profanation of the Lord’s Sabbath, the dishonour of Almighty God, the increase of bastardy and of dissolute life, and of many other mischiefs and inconveniences of the commonwealth.” \*

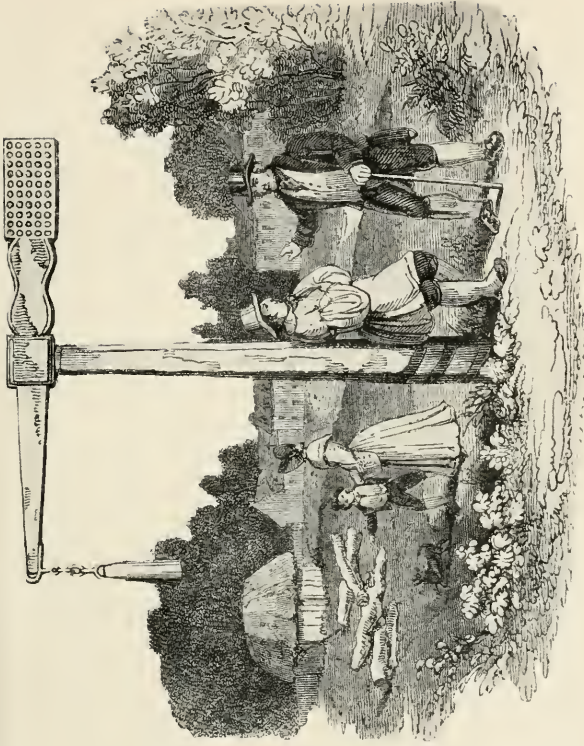
“In January, 1599, the justices took a long step further, and having discovered that many inconveniences ‘which with modesty cannot be expressed’ had happened in consequence of these gatherings, they ordered that parish ales, church ales, and revels should thenceforth be utterly suppressed. . . . An order of Easter, 1607, declares that church ales, parish ales, sextons’ ales, and all revels are utterly to be suppressed. Yet we find so late as 1622 that war against them was still being carried on.” †

Ballad singing in the streets was a common custom, as was the frequent hawking about from place to place of new ballads upon contemporary events. These sheets, which usually sold for a

\* Order of Justice, July, 1595.

† *Quarter Sessions, Elizabeth to Anne.*





THE QUINTAIN.  
(From an old print.)



penny and often contained a clumsy wood-cut at the top, were not the old English and Scottish ballads of good poetical repute, but, rather, verses of very mediocre quality that related for the most part, as has been said, to contemporary events of public and private interest. In fact, the ballads and short pamphlets of the day which were hawked about the streets in the same manner as the penny ballads, supplied in a measure the place of such publications as *The Spectator* of a later date and the newspapers of to-day. There was, for instance, a complete catalogue of the Marian Martyrs written in verse and peddled all over the kingdom by the ballad-mongers. The following examples serve to show how the ballads served the people with an account of current events in the capital. A picturesque presentation of the ballad-monger is to be found in the person of Autolycus of *The Winter's Tale*. On August 5, 1597, immediately after the appearance of *Romeo and Juliet*, a ballad on the story was entered in the *Stationer's Register*, and on August 27, T. Millington was fined for printing ballads on *The Taming of the Shrew* and on *Macbeth*. (Fleay.)

The following selection from an old ballad on the execution of a noted wizard in 1597 serves to show the character of these productions:

“Of late in Southwarke there was known  
Example of the same  
When God’s owne judgement fell upon  
Simon Pembroke by name.  
He was a noted conjurer  
Lived neare unto the Clinke;  
He was so famous in that place  
To him did folks resorte—  
Within the church the court was held,  
St. Saviour’s near the bridge,” etc.

A naïve use to which the pictures at the top of the ballads were put is thus alluded to by Jonson in *Bartholomew Fair*. “O, sister, do you remember the ballads over the nursery chimney at home o’ my pasting up?”

Ball games were played in great number and variety. Balloon ball, in its more commonly used variety, was played with a large ball, perhaps a bladder or foot-ball, but pushed about from place to place, either with the hands or with a sort of short wooden paddle. It is thus described by Strutt: “The balloon or wind-ball resembled the follis of the Romans; it was a large ball made of double leather, which being filled with wind by means of a ventil, was driven to and fro by the strength of men’s arms; for this purpose every one of the players had a round hollow bracer of wood to cover the hand and lower part of the arm, with which he struck the ball. The pastime

was usually practiced in the open fields, and is much commended for the healthiness of the exercise it afforded." It is of frequent mention in the Elizabethan plays, and is doubtless sometimes confused with foot-ball. (Cf. Middleton's *Game of Chess*, ii. 2; Ford's *Lover's Melancholie*, ii. 1; *Eastward Ho*, i. 1.)

The quotation above from King James's ultimatum in regard to sports rules foot-ball out because of its cruel nature, an objection that has not yet quite disappeared. The ancient game, however, was altogether different from the modern game played under the same name. It was then played without system, and because of the unequal numbers that frequently engaged upon opposite sides, there was far more opportunity for rough playing and accidents. The old way of playing the game is sufficiently described in the following paragraph from Strutt: "When a match at foot-ball is made, two parties, each containing an equal number of competitors, take the field and stand between two goals, placed at a distance of eighty or a hundred yards the one from the other; the ball, which is commonly made from a blown bladder, and cased with leather, is delivered in the midst of the ground, and the object of each party is to drive it through the goal of their antagonists, which being achieved the

game is won. The abilities of the players are best displayed in defending and attacking the goals; when the exercise becomes exceeding violent, the players kick each other's shins without the least ceremony, and some of them are overthrown at the hazard of their limbs." It is in the last sentence that Strutt gives the key to the difference between the Elizabethan game and our own. The game was often played with no attention to system or rule of play. In fact, the open street was often a common foot-ball ground, a mark taking the place of a regular goal. We also hear that it was a popular sport of the Londoners and was played in the courtyard of the Royal Exchange. It was a winter as well as a summer sport, and is mentioned as one of the games played upon the frozen Thames in 1608.

Stow-ball and Bandy-ball are both names for the game of golf which was played in Elizabethan times. Hand-ball was the great ball game to be played at Easter; a variety of which was called hand-tennis, which was also sometimes played under the name of fives. Tennis was a very popular game. It was played either out of doors, or indoors under the name of racquet. Tennis or racquet was a game for noblemen and princes as

well as for the common people. The contemporary plays are redundant with technical allusions to the games; perhaps nothing so well illustrates the popular familiarity with its play and rules as the numerous allusions to its technical details to be found in Middleton's play, *The World Lost at Tennis*. Many references show that the indoor game of racquet was most fashionably played in the forenoon.

Trap-stick, trap-ball, and Northern-spell were names given to a familiar game in which the ball was struck out of a sort of trap by means of a small paddle, and batted before reaching the ground. In some respects, it resembled the modern cat-stick.

Barley-break was a rural sport of great popularity, whose other and better known name was The Last Couple in Hell. It is thus described by Gifford: "It was played by six people (three of each sex) who were coupled by lot. A piece of ground was then chosen, and divided into three compartments, of which the middle one was called *hell*. It was the object of the couple condemned to this division to catch the others, who advanced from the two extremities; in which case a change of situation took place, and *hell* was filled by the

couple who were excluded by preoccupation from the other places; in this 'catching,' however, there was some difficulty, as, by the regulations of the game, the middle couple were not to separate before they had succeeded, while the others might break hands whenever they found themselves hard pressed. When all had been taken in turn, the last couple were said to be in *hell*, and the game ended."

This sport affords the key to so many allusions in the old plays that it is worth while to insert a description of the Scottish form of the game, which was called Barla-breikes: "This innocent sport seems to be entirely forgotten in the south of Scotland. It is also falling into disuetude in the north. . . . A game generally played by the young people in a corn yard. Hence called *barla-bracks*, *about the stacks*. One stack is fixed on as a dule or goal; and one person is appointed to catch the rest of the company, who run out from the dule. He does not leave it till they are all out of his sight. Then he sets out to catch them. Any one who is taken cannot run out again with his former associates, being accounted a prisoner; but he is obliged to assist his captor in pursuing the rest. When all are taken the game is finished; and he who is first taken is bound to act as catcher in the next game."



(Quoted from Dr. Jamieson by Nares.) The resemblance of this game to the modern "I Spy!" is evident.

Base was a rustic game also known by the name of Prison Base and Prison Bars, and gave rise to the common expression meaning to challenge, namely, bidding a base. It was played as follows: "The performance of this pastime requires two parties of equal number, each of them having a base or home to themselves, at a distance of about twenty yards. The players then on either side, taking hold of hands, extend themselves in length, and opposite to each other, as far as they conveniently can, always remembering that one of them must touch the base. When any one of them quits the hand of his fellow and runs into the field, which is called giving the chase, he is immediately followed by one of his opponents. He is again followed by another from the former side, and he by a second opponent, and so on alternately until as many are out as choose to run, everyone pursuing the man he first followed, and no other; and if he overtake him near enough to touch him, his party claims one towards the game, and both return home. Then they run forth again and again in like manner till the number is completed that decides the victory. This

number is optional and rarely exceeds twenty." (Strutt.)

The game of bowls was one of the commonest sports for gentlemen. It will be remembered that Drake, Hawkins, and other famous sea-captains were interrupted in a game of bowls upon the Hoe at Plymouth (a game that the sturdy and unruffled Drake wanted to play out), by the news that the Spanish Armada had been sighted in the Channel. In the country, or wherever space was sufficient, the game was played upon a close-cut turf called a green, hence the contemptuous term, green-men. An equally common variation of the game was like the modern nine-pins, and was played in alleys. The bowling alley was a common adjunct to the great house. The erection of such a place of amusement was one of the first tasks undertaken by Henry VIII. when he took possession of Whitehall. Stow is loud in his lamentations over the numerous public bowling alleys that took up men's time and "pestered" certain districts of London to the exclusion of more reputable buildings. There is not room here to describe the numerous terms that crept into the common speech from the game of bowls. One, however, is so frequently met with in Shakespeare as to warrant insertion. The bowl was

not always aimed directly at the Jack, or Mistress, but bowled so as to roll in a curve and approach from the side. In order to accomplish this irregular path with facility the bowl was weighted upon one side with a piece of lead called the bias. The name was also applied to the path traversed by the ball; hence the name came to denote any inclination out of the ordinary; and "against the bias" a figurative expression for any opposition to a steady tendency.

The Cotswold games consisted of a great annual celebration attended by people from all parts of the country. Cotswold, says Madden, "was then to coursing what Newmarket is to horse-racing, and St. Andrews to golf; the recognised home and centre of the sport." (For further details of this great celebration which included the practice of almost every kind of seasonable game, the reader is referred to Mr. Madden's volume, and to Vol. I. of Drake, p. 252-4.)

It is necessary to hurry over with a bare allusion a number of sports of great popular devotion. All public demonstrations were accompanied by displays of fireworks. Crackers, much like the modern plaything sold under the same name, are often mentioned in the old plays.

“There’s first crackers, which run into the air, and when they are at the top . . . keep a crackling and a crackling and then break and down they come.” (Marston’s *Fawn*, i. 2.) Squibs was another name applied to one of the varieties of crackers, often called squib-crackers. “So squibs and crackers fly into the air, Then, only breaking with a noise, they vanish In stench and smoke.” (Ford’s *The Broken Heart*, ii. 2.) “Squibs that run upon lynes,” are mentioned in *Northward Ho*. Coloured fires were of frequent use, and the discharge of all sorts of noise-producing weapons in the midst of such displays was common. (Cf. the numerous descriptions of public demonstrations in Nichols’ *Progresses of Queen Elizabeth*.)

The tales with which Othello beguiled Desdemona are a good illustration of a fondness of the Elizabethans that is to a large degree still a characteristic of the English nation, perhaps, however, not to so great extent as formerly: namely, the love of monstrosities. These tales of Othello are a fair example of a kind of tale often told by returning travelers apparently in perfect faith. The opening chapter of Kingsley’s *Westward Ho!* contains similar tales, and this, as has been elsewhere pointed out, is an almost literal

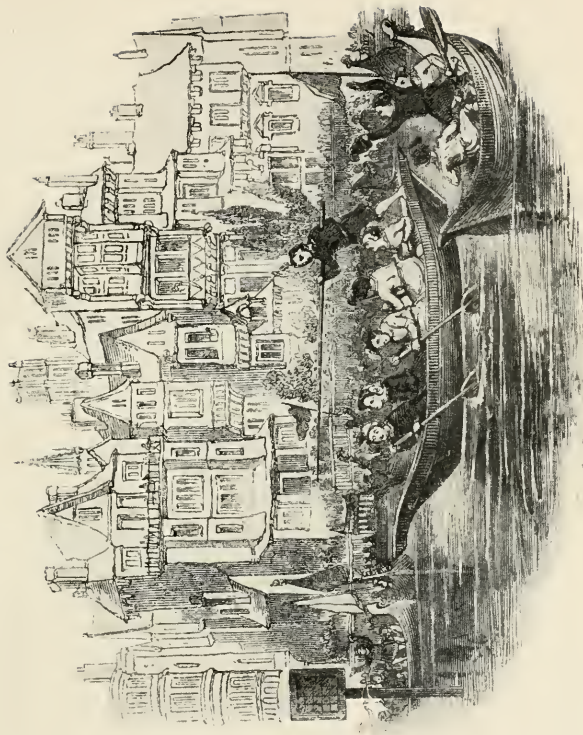
transcript of a contemporary pamphlet. Ben Jonson in *Bartholomew Fair* (iii. 1.) ridicules this love of his countrymen for monstrous objects. "You said, let's go to Ursula's, indeed; but then you met the man with the monsters, and I could not get you from him. An old fool, not leave seeing yet!" And every one recalls the line from the *Tempest*. "Were I in England now, as once I was, and had but this fish painted, not a holiday fool there but would give a piece of silver: there would this monster make a man: when they will not give a doit to relieve a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian. Legged like a man! and his fins like arms!"

Many amusing anecdotes about monsters are contained in Madden, and innumerable allusions are contained in the old plays. One especially popular kind of monster was the trained animal, which was then looked upon much more in the light of a monster than at present. Both Strutt and Drake have several illustrations of trained animals. Doubtless the most illustrious of all the Elizabethan trained animals, one which has become a veritable personage of history, was Morocco, the horse belonging to one Banks, who exhibited him for years in London. This horse could dance, keep time, do a world of tricks that were then considered of so marvellous a nature that

in the end both he and his master were considered to be in league with the evil one; and during an European tour were both burned to death on the charge of sorcery.

Nine Men's Morris: "In that part of Warwickshire where Shakespeare was educated, and in the neighbouring parts of Northamptonshire, the shepherds and other boys dig up the turf with their knives to represent a sort of imperfect chess-board. It consists of a square, sometimes only a foot in diameter, sometimes three or four yards. Within this is another square, every side of which is parallel to the external square, and these squares are joined by lines from each corner of both squares and from the middle of each line. One party or player has wooden pegs, the other stones, which they move in such a manner as to take up each other's men, as they are called, and the area of the inner square is called the pond, in which the men taken up are impounded. These figures are always cut upon the green turf, or leys, as they are called, or upon the grass at the end of ploughed lands, and in rainy seasons never fail to be choked up with mud." (James, Var. Shak., 1821.)

The quintain was originally a military sport whose purpose was to accustom pages and squires



THE WATER QUINTAIN.  
(From an old print.)





to the use of arms. The quintain was usually the wooden figure of a man with outstretched arm, pivoted so as to rotate freely. The young lancer endeavoured, as he rode by, to strike the quintain squarely in the breast. If he missed by ever so little, it dashed round, giving the unsuccessful adversary a sounding blow with its outstretched arm. There were many variations of the game. One of the most popular was the water quintain. Here one stood in the prow of a small boat. If he missed his aim he was likely, or almost certain, in fact, to fall headlong into the water.

So much space has been occupied with even these slight allusions and descriptions of the most typical Elizabethan sports for out of doors, that others must be passed over even more briefly. There were frequent wakes held in connection with the end of harvest time and the sheep-shearing. Shovel-board and wrestling were common. Marbles were frequently played. Tops were the delight of the boys. The tops were of the whipping variety, and a huge one was kept under the name of the parish top to exercise the muscles of the lazy and unemployed. "He turned me about with his finger and thumb, as one would set up a top." (*Coriolanus*, IV. v. 160.) "Enters a little boy with

his top and scourge” is a stage direction in the *Yorkshire Tragedy*. Several illustrative quotations concerning the parish top are to be found in Nares, including one from Evelyn that shows that these tops were made of willow wood.

## CHAPTER VIII

### INDOOR AMUSEMENTS

IT seems hardly necessary to say that gossip was then a matter of great indulgence. Not women so much as men were the prime spreaders of information by this process, and the barber-shop, we learn repeatedly from the old plays, was the centre and source of most of the gossip. Fancy needle-work was a chief source of indoor amusement to women who would otherwise not occupy their idle hours. Flirting, too, should not be winked at as belonging to this division of our subject. So common was this habit, especially among the citizens' wives of London, that "sitting in the bay-window" was an expression synonymous with catching the eye of a passing gallant. Women were fond of pets, especially birds. Squirrels were sometimes led about at the end of a chain. We find an allusion to this custom in Lyly's *Endymion*.\* "Fairholt informs us that the Tapestry of Nancy, found lining the tent of Charles the Bold, after his death at the siege of that place in 1476, contains a lady of rank seated with a favourite squirrel secured to her wrist by

\* Edition Bond, Vol. III., p. 37, and note, p. 508.

a chain."\* From *The Puritan* † we learn that monkeys, parrots, and musk-rats were occasionally used as lady's pets. This was a habit not unrelated to the more masculine habit of love for captive wild animals. There was a famous menagerie at the Tower of London, and in many of the country houses wild animals were kept from time to time as objects of show.

It is only the authority of Erasmus that suggests classing the national custom of kissing among the indoor amusements of the time. In many respects the manners of the Elizabethans were, judged by modern standards, very free and unconventional. Between equals, kissing was a form of salutation as common as hand-shaking is to-day. A French lady thus addressed Cavendish: " 'Forasmuch,' quoth she, 'as ye be an Englishman, whose custom it is in your country to kiss all ladies and gentlewomen without offence, and though it be not so in this realm, yet will I be so bold as to kiss you, and so shall all my maidens.' " ‡

"Item, when a foreigner or an inhabitant goes to a citizen's house on business, or is invited as a guest, and having entered therein, he is received by the master of the house, the lady, or the

\* Same, note, p. 508. † Act IV., Scene ii.

‡ Cavendish, *Life of Wolsey*, Temple Ed., p. 75.

daughter, and by them welcomed (*wilkommen heiset*)—as it is termed in their language—he has even a right to take them by the arm and to kiss them (*zu küssen*), which is the custom of the country, and if any one does not do it, it is regarded and imputed as ignorance and ill-breeding on his part: the same custom is also observed in the Netherlands.” (Written by Samuel Kiechel, 1585. See Rye, p. 90.)

“Another custom is observed there [England], which is when guests arrive at an inn, the hostess with all her family go out to meet and receive them; and the guests are required to kiss them all, and this among the English was the same as shaking hands among other nations.” \*

Erasmus in 1499 wrote a letter from England to his friend Fausto Andrelini, an Italian poet, exhorting him in a strain of playful levity to think no more of his gout, but to betake himself to England; for, he remarks, “here are girls with angels’ faces, so kind and obliging that you would far prefer them to all your Muses. Besides, there is a custom here never to be sufficiently commended. Wherever you come, you are received with a kiss by all; when you take your leave, you are dismissed with kisses; you return, kisses are repeated. They come to visit you, kisses again;

\* Leo von Rozmital, 1577. See Rye, p. 260.

they leave you, kisses all round. Should they meet you anywhere, kisses in abundance: in fine, wherever you move, there is nothing but kisses." \*

Rye (p. 225) quotes again from a letter by Chamberlain, 1625. "The Duchess of Richmond admitted him [at Ely house] with the proviso that he *must not offer to kiss her*; but what was wanting in herself was supplied in her attendants and followers, who were all kissed over twice in less than a quarter of an hour."

A kiss seems to have been the customary fee of a lady's partner in the dance:

"—————Sweetheart,  
I were unmannerly to take you out,  
And not to kiss you." †

The other Elizabethan plays contain numerous allusions to the custom. In *Arden of Feversham* Alice, in order to convince her husband that his jealousy is unfounded, says that she had done no more than to kiss the object of their dispute. "What favour hast thou had more than a kiss at coming or departing from the town?" ‡

"Wife, give entertainment to our new acquaintance; your lips, wife; any woman may lend her lips without her husband's privity; it's all allowable." §

\* See Rye, p. 261.

† Shakespeare, *Henry VIII.*

‡ See also I. i. 377; IV. iv. 93; IV. iv. 99.

§ Dekker, *Westward Ho*, p. 31.

It was a mark of favour to kiss another below one in rank (see Marlowe, *Edward II.*, I. i. 140); and a liberty, in cases amounting to an insult, to kiss one of higher rank. (See Middleton, *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, II. ii. 327.)

The Elizabethans were very fond of practical jokes. They were resorted to upon all occasions, and with very little provocation. Tossing in a blanket, for instance, is mentioned in *Satiromastix*. Dun is in the Mire, a game of this sort, is often referred to in the contemporary plays. It is thus described by Gifford: "A log of wood is brought into the midst of the room: this is *Dun* (the cart horse), and a cry is raised that he is stuck in the mire. Two of the company advance, either with or without ropes to draw him out. After repeated attempts, they find themselves unable to do it, and call for more assistance. The game continues till all the company take part in it, when *Dun* is extricated, of course; and the merriment arises from the awkward and affected efforts of the rustics to lift the log, and from sundry such contrivances to let the ends of it fall on one another's toes." Practical jokes of a more elaborate nature form the main substance of the plots of *Twelfth Night*, *the Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *The Silent Woman*, not to mention other well known plays.

The story-teller, especially in the country, was always in popular demand. It was a time when the common people of the rural districts read little. They would gather about the fire of a winter evening and listen credulously to the most outlandish stories of spirits, prodigies, and fairies. Desdemona was fond of hearing of "men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders." Even King Richard did not disdain to "Sit upon the ground And tell sad stories of the death of kings." Domestic servants often held their positions by virtue of their ability to tell a story with effect, a skill they utilised to amuse their master and his guests at meals. This personage merged into the professional story-teller, who was only a step removed from the juggler, the minstrel, and the musician—all common Elizabethan characters in both town and country.

There were in vogue a great number of parlour games such as are still played to-day. *A Thing and Who Did It* and *Substantives and Adjectives* are two such, fully described in *Cynthia's Revels*.\* The former is thus introduced by one of the players: "Why, I imagine a Thing done; Hedon thinks, who did it; Moria, with what it was done; Anaides, where it was done; Argurion, when it was done; Amorphus, for what cause it was done;

\* Act IV., Scene i.



you, *Philautia*, what followed upon the doing of it; and this gentleman, who should have done it better?" Then the thing is mentioned and each player must make good his answer already given in ignorance of the name of the thing. The latter game required each member of the circle to mention an adjective. Then some one suggested a substantive. It was then the duty of each player to explain how his adjective qualified the substantive. Thus:

"*Arg.* Humble!

"*Pha.* O yes, we must not deny it. 'And why barbarous, *Hedon*?

"*Hed.* Barbarous! because commonly, when you have worn your breeches sufficiently, you give them to your barber."

A number of games were played upon boards, some of which are elsewhere mentioned under dicing. The modern bagatelle was familiar under the name of *Troll My Dame*. A billiard table was a common piece of furniture. *Shovel-board* and *Shove-groat* were variations of the same game. The latter is described in the statutes of 33d Henry VIII. as a new game. The table necessary for shovel-board was an expensive piece of furniture. "It is remarkable," observes Dr. Ploot, "that in the hall at Chartley the shuffle-board table, though ten yards, one foot, and an inch

long, is made up of about two hundred and sixty pieces, which are generally about eighteen inches long, some few only excepted, that are scarce a foot; which, being laid on longer boards for support underneath, are so accurately joined and glewed together, that no shuffle-board whatever is freer from rubbs or casting." \*

The mode of playing the game is thus described by Strutt: "At one end of the Shovel-board there is a line drawn across, parallel with the edge, and about three or four inches from it; at four feet distance from this line another is made, over which it is necessary for the weight to pass when it is thrown by the player, otherwise the go is not reckoned. The players stand at the end of the table, opposite to the two marks above mentioned, each of them having four flat weights of metal, which they shove from them, one at a time alternately: and the judgment of the play is, to give sufficient impetus to the weight to carry it beyond the mark nearest to the edge of the board, which requires great nicety, for if it be too strongly impelled, so as to fall from the table, and there is nothing to prevent it, into a trough placed underneath for its reception, the throw is not counted; if it hangs over the edge, without falling, three are reckoned towards the player's

\* Quoted by Drake, Vol. I., 306.

game; if it lie between the line and the edge, without hanging over, it tells for two; if on the line, and not up to it, but over the first line, it counts for one. The game, when two play, is generally eleven, but the number is extended when four, or more, are jointly concerned." \*

Chess was frequently played by both men and women. It was a game so well known and understood by the people in general that technical allusion to its rules of play are introduced without stint into the contemporary plays. Middleton's *A Game at Chess*, a political satire, carries the idea of chess-playing throughout with far more fidelity than is observed in *Alice's Adventures Through the Looking Glass*. Its full appreciation must have required a knowledge of the game as complete and detailed as the average American audience possesses of base-ball.

A complete description of Elizabethan card games would fill a volume. The fantastic names of some of them have completely disappeared from our vocabulary: for instance, *Tickle me Quickly*, *My Lady's Hole*, *Whip her Jenny*, *Mack*, *Lodam*, *Post and Pair*, etc. The most popular games, however, were *Gleek*, *Maw*, *Noddy*, and *Primero*—the latter above all the others.

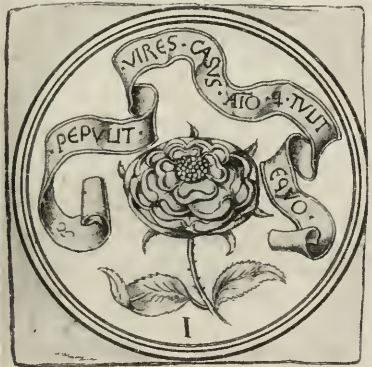
Gleek was a game for three persons, requiring

\* *Sports and Pastimes*, p. 264.

but forty-four cards. The two's and three's were thrown out of the pack. Each person received twelve cards, and eight were left upon the table. Seven of these could be bought by the players. The eighth, or turn up card, belonged to the dealer. The different cards had various nicknames. The ace of trumps was Tib, the knave, Tom, and the four, Tiddie. Each of these was paid for by the others to him who held it. The manner of counting was such that it involved upon occasion the payment of large multiples of the original stake. Thus, though a farthing or half penny was often the sum adventured, considerable money sometimes changed hands during a game. Some people, however, would not play for less than sixpence or a shilling; and a spendthrift in *Greene's Tu Quoque* played for the high sum of half a crown. In the time of Ben Jonson, gleek seems to have been an extremely fashionable game. "Nor play with costermongers," one says, "at Mum-chance, tray-trip—But keep the gallant'st company and the best games—Gleek and primero." \* The name gleek was applied to three cards of a sort. The laws of the game can be found in full in *Wit's Interpreter*, 1662, p. 365.

Of the game maw very little is known beyond the fact of its popularity. Sir John Harrington,

\* *The Alchemist*, v. 4.



PLAYING CARES.  
(From Strutt's "Sports and Pastimes.")



in one of his epigrams (IV. 12) speaks of heaving the maw. "This heaving," says Nares, "was clearly some grotesque bodily action performed in the game and deemed characteristic of it." Turberville, in his *Book of Falconry*, says:

"To checke at chesse, to heave at maw, at mack to pass  
the time,  
At coses or at sort to sit, or set their rest at prime."

It was doubtless the "heaving" that made the game unsuitable for pedants and people of great dignity. "Yet in my opinion it were not fit for them [scholars] to play at stool-ball among wenches, nor at mumchance or maw, with idle loose companions."\*

It has been conjectured that noddy is the same as cribbage. The identification, however, rests upon similarity of terms. In the same way it may be inferred to have been similar to several other games. Nothing is known of it beyond a few of its terms.

Primerò was the game of cards *par excellence*. Gardiner relates that he left the king playing at primerò with the Duke of Suffolk. Sir John Harrington speaks of "overwatching himself at primerò." It was also in general use as a gambling game. "Primerò, why I thought thou hadst

\* Rainoldes' *Overthrow of Stage Plays*, 1599.

not been so much gamester as to play at it." \* The following is one of the several quotations to be found in Nares:

"Each player had four cards dealt to him, one by one; the seven was the highest card in point of number that he could avail himself of, which counted for twenty-one; the six counted for eighteen, the five for fifteen, and ace for the same; but the two, the three, and the four for their respective points only. The knave of diamonds was commonly fixed upon for the *quinola*, which the player might make what card or suit he thought proper; if the cards were of different suits, the highest number was the *primero* [or *prime*]; but if they were all of one colour, he that held them won the *flush*."

The common name for a deck of cards was a pair of cards. In Heywood's *A Woman Killed With Kindness* Frankford calls to the drawer to bring "A pair of cards . . . and a carpet to cover the table." "Marry, I will allow you to sweat privately, and tear six or seven score pair of cards, be the damnation of some dozen or twenty bale of dice, etc." †

Cards were in common use as an amusement for the assembled audience in the theatre before the

\* *Greene's Tu Quoque*, vii. 24.

† Dekker, *The Gull's Hornbook*.



play began. "Before the play begins," says Dekker to the Gallant in his *Gull's Hornbook*, "fall to cards; you may win or lose, as fencers do in a prize, and beat one another by confederacy, yet share the money when you meet at supper: notwithstanding, to gull the ragamuffins that stand gaping aloof at you, throw the cards, having first torn four or five of them, round about the stage, just upon the third sound, as though you had lost."

Dancing was a favourite amusement for all, and a necessary accomplishment for the well bred. Dancing was extremely popular at court, the queen herself being a good dancer and very fond of the amusement. It is common tradition that Sir Christopher Hatton owed his advancement to his pleasing skill in this accomplishment. Whether the tradition is true or not, all who would appear well at court spent much time in learning to fashion their steps. Like card games, many of the old dances have gone altogether out of fashion. A list of dances taken from the old plays would include many names that were also the names of tunes which were sung by the dancer to accompany his steps. The following are mentioned in Heywood's *A Woman Killed With Kindness*: Rogero, Beginning of the World, John Come Kiss Me Now, Cushion Dance, Tom Tyler, Hunting of

the Fox, Hay, Put on Your Smock a' Monday,  
and Sellinger's Round.

It is hardly necessary to do more than to enumerate the most characteristic dances of the time. *Antic* was generally applied to any kind of grotesque dancing, made so either by boisterous behaviour or monstrous masquerade. The *brawl* was a wild sort of dance that seems, from the following couplet, to have been a rough imitation of a battle:

"'Tis a French brawl, an apish imitation  
Of what you really perform in battle." \*

A special form of this dance, called the French brawl, is thus alluded to in *Good Fellows*, a ballad published in 1569:

"Good fellows must go learn to dance  
The brydeal is full near-a;  
There is a brall come out of France,  
The fyrst ye heard this year-a."

Marston's *Malcontent* gives the following description of Bianca's brawl, a quotation not inserted wholly on account of its lucidity: "Why, 'tis but two singles on the left, two on the right, three doubles forward, a traverse of six round: do this twice, three singles side, galliard trick of twenty, curranto pace; a figure of eight, three

\* Massinger, *The Picture*, ii. 2.

singles broken down, come up, meet two doubles, fall back, and then honour."\*

The canary was a quick and lively dance. "A lady is taken out by a gentleman, and after dancing together to the cadences of the proper air, he leads her to the end of the hall; this done, he retreats back to the original spot, always looking at the lady. Then he makes up to her again, with certain steps, and retreats as before. His partner performs the same ceremony, which is several times repeated by both parties, with various strange fantastic steps, very much in the savage style."† The galliard was another similar dance with much leaping and capering among the steps. A third dance of this nimble character was the lavolta, to which Sir John Davies devotes the following lines:

"Yet there is one the most delightful kind,  
 A lofty jumping, or a leaping round,  
 Where arm in arm two dancers are entwined,  
 And whirl themselves, with strict embracements bound;  
 And still their feet an anapest do sound.  
 An anapest is all their music's song,  
 Whose first two feet are short, and third is long."‡

The two slow and dignified dances most in vogue were the pavin and the measure. "The

\* Act IV., Scene ii.

† Douce, *Illustrations of Shakespeare*, Vol. I., p. 221.

‡ Poem on Dancing, Stanza 70.

*pavin*, from *pavo* a pea-cock, is a grave and majestic dance. The method of dancing it was anciently by gentlemen dressed with a cap and sword, by those of the long robe in their gowns, by princes in their mantles, and by ladies with gowns with long trains, the motion whereof in the dance resembled that of a pea-cock's tail. This dance is supposed to have been invented by the Spaniards.\* "The *pavin*," adds Drake, "was rendered still more grave by the introduction of the *passamezzo* air, which obliged the dancers after making several steps round the room, to cross it in the middle in a slow step, or cinque pace." †

There is an interesting passage in Middleton's *Women Beware Women* (iii. 2) concerning certain dances as danced by certain people.

"Plain men dance the measures, the sinquapace the gay;  
Cuckolds dance the hornpipe, and farmers dance the hay:  
Your soldiers dance the round, and maidens that grow  
big;  
Your drunkards the canaries; your whore and bawd  
the jig.  
Here's your eight kinds of dancers; he that finds  
The ninth let him pay the minstrels."

Dancing was the usual amusement to follow a

\* Sir J. Hawkins, quoted in Reed's *Shakespeare*, Vol. V., p. 407.

† *Shakespeare and His Times*, Vol. I., p. 174.

banquet. On such occasions the hall was cleared by turning the tables up, that is, laying the tops and trestles of the dining tables against the wall. "A hall, a hall!" is the cry generally met with in the old plays as the sign for this preliminary. Unless they were dancing the measure, or the equally slow and dignified pavin, it was customary for the men dancers to unhasp their swords and to give them to a page or to one of the torch-bearers. Prizes were frequently given at the end of an evening's dancing for the best dancer among the women, much as prizes are given at card parties to-day. Cavendish alludes to this habit. "And after supper and the banquet finished, the ladies and gentlemen went to dancing: among whom one Madam Fountaine, a maid, had the prize." \*

Elsewhere in the present volume something is said about the special kinds of cozenage so much more prevalent then than now in England. Here, however, is a more suitable place to speak of the almost universal custom of dice play and gambling. The following tirade dates from 1586:

"But there are in the bowels of this famous citie [London], farre more dangerous plays, and little reprehended: that wicked plays of the dice,

\* *Life of Wolsey*, Temple Ed., p. 80.

first invented by the devil, (as Cornelius Agrippa Wryteth,) and frequented by unhappy men: the detestable roote, upon which a thousand villainies grow.

“The nurses of thease (worse than heathenysh) hellish exercises are places called *ordinary tables*: of which there are in London, more in nomber to honour the devyll, than churches to serve the living God.

“I constantly determine to crose the streets, where these vile houses (ordinaries) are planted, to bless me from the inticements of them, which in very deed are many, and the more dangerous in that they please with a vain hope of gain. Inso-much on a time, I heard a distemperate dicer solemnly sweare that he faithfully beleevd, *that dice were first made of the bones of a witch, and cards of her skin*, in which there hath ever sithence remained an enchantment that whosoever once taketh delight in either, he shall never have power utterly to leave them for, quoth he, I a hundred times vowed to leave both, yet have not the grace to forsake either.”\*

The casual allusions contained in the old plays to the thriftless indulgence in gaming by people of all classes are innumerable. In Middleton's *Your Five Gallants* (iv. 1) there is a reference to

\* George Whetstone, *The Enemie to Unthriftinesse*, 1586.

one who staked away the very clothes on his back. The same stake is referred to again in Heywood's *Wise Woman of Hogsden* (i. 1). "Cloak, band, rapier, all lost at dice!" exclaims one of the characters in Middleton's *Spanish Gipsy* (ii. 2).

Not only was dicing common, but cheating at dice so frequent as to give rise to the proverbial expressions "false as dice," and "false as dicers' oaths." An anonymous manuscript of the time of James I. tells the following typical story: "Sir William Herbert, playing at dice with another gentleman, there rose some question about a cast. Sir William's antagonist declared it was a four and a five; he as positively insisted that it was a five and a six; the other then swore with a bitter imprecation that it was as he had said; Sir William then replied, 'Thou are a perjured knave; for give me a sixpence, and if there be a four upon the dice, I will return you a thousand pounds;' at which the other was presently abashed, for indeed the dice were false, and of a high cut, without a four." \* Indeed there were many kinds of false dice. Some were unevenly cut, others were hollow, and some were loaded by setting in pieces of lead upon one side. The Percy Society has published *A Manifest Detection of*

\* Quoted by Strutt, *Sports and Pastimes*, p. 272.



*the Most Vile and Detestable Use of Dice Play*, where a full description of methods of cheating at play is given.

The dice were usually made of bone. It was not uncommon, however, to make them of ivory. Occasionally even precious metals were used as the material for a "Bale of dice," the usual term for a pair. We learn from Holinshed's history \* that the wife of Arden of Feversham sent her paramour Mosbie a pair of silver dice as a present to patch up a quarrel. *In and In, Backgammon, Tick Tack, Tables, Passage, and Hazard*, were the popular dice games. The latter, which was one of the games played upon a board, was, perhaps, the most popular of all games in taverns and ordinaries. In it the players were accustomed to invoke the dice when they were thrown, as is the present habit in craps.

The sword, dagger, or rapier was a part of the regular every-day dress of the Elizabethan; and its proper use a necessary part of his education. In a letter dated from Leicester House, October 15, 1580, Sir Philip Sidney offers the following advice to his brother Robert:

"When you play at weapons; I would have you get thick caps and bracers [gloves], and play out your play lustily; for indeed, tricks and dal-

\* Vol. III., p. 1062.



liances are nothing in earnest: for the time of the one and the other greatly differs. And use as well the blow as the thrust. It is good in itself; and besides increaseth your breadth and strength, and will make you a strong man at the tourney and barriers. First, in any case, practice with the single sword; and then with the dagger. Let no day pass without an hour or two of such exercise."

Fencing schools were common and usually resorted to in the morning. In them persons received regular degrees as master, provost, and scholar, indicative of their skill. The degree was preceded by a prize contest, usually in public, hence the term, "to play a prize." Public fencing matches in the tavern yards and in the play-houses were a frequent means of popular entertainment. The three following entries in the *Remembrancia* (p. 351) illustrate this kind of spectacle:

"July 1, 1582. Letter from Ambrose, Earl of Warwick, to the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Sheriffs, requesting them to grant a licence to his servant, John David, to play his provost prize in his science and profession of defence, at the Bull, in Bishopsgate, or in some other convenient place to be assigned within the liberties of the City of London.

"July 23, 1582. Letter from Ambrose, Earl of

Warwick, to the Lord Mayor, complaining of the treatment and disgrace put upon his servant in not being allowed to play prizes, after the publication of his bills, wherein his (the writer's) name had been used, although others had been so permitted.

“July 24, 1582. Letter from the Lord Mayor to the Earl of Warwick, in reply. He had not refused permission for his servant to play his prizes, but had granted him a licence, only restraining him from playing at an inn for fear of infection, and had appointed him to play in an open place at the Leadenhall. Not having availed himself of the permission for fourteen days, and the infection increasing, it became necessary to prohibit the assembling of the people to his play within the City, but permission had been given him to perform in the open fields. No permission had been granted to any others. With the man's own consent he had appointed Monday next, and had allowed him liberty to pass openly through the city with his company, drums, and show.”

The city council of Cambridge feared that disorder would grow out of a public fencing match to be held January 20, 1579, and found it necessary to take especial precautions to prevent trouble. From fencing as an amusement to fenc-

ing in earnest was but a step. Duelling, in Elizabethan times, was very common. In fact, "points of honour" were matters of daily settlement. The least provocation was sufficient for a fight. Such matches were hedged about by many rules. There was also a sort of court, resident in London, consisting of four Ancient Masters of Defence, to whom difficult points of honour were submitted for judgment. How difficult of interpretation a point of honour might become is familiar to us all from the dissertation of Touchstone concerning the lie seven times removed. He was a sly fellow with a delightful sense of humour, but we cannot fairly accuse him of exaggeration. The book from which Shakespeare derived the information he put into the mouth of Touchstone was written by Vincentio Saviola, and printed in 1595. The full title is, *Vincentio Saviola his Practice. In Two Books. The First intreating of the use of the Rapier and Dagger. The second of Honor and honorable Quarrels.* In the second book is contained "A Discourse most necessarie for all Gentlemen that have in regarde their honors touching the giving and receiving of the Lie, whereupon the Duello & the Combats in divers sortes doth insue, and many other inconveniences, for lack only of the true knowledge of honor, and the contrarie: & the right understand-

ing of wordes, which here is plainly set downe, beginning thus." Then comes a treatment under the following heads: "Of the manner and diversity of Lyes"; "Of Lyes certaine"; "Of conditional Lyes"; "Of the Lye in general"; "Of the Lye in particular," and "Of foolish Lyes." One or two quotations may be of interest as a justification of Touchstone and his creed.

"Conditionall lyes be such as are given conditionally: as if a man should say or write these wordes. If thou hast saide that I have offered my Lord abuse, thou lye: or if thou saiest so hereafter, thou shalt lye. And as often as thou hast or shalt so say, so oft do I and will I say that thou doest lye. Of these kind of lyes given in this manner, often arise much contention in words, and divers intricate worthy battailes, multiplying wordes upon wordes, whereof no sure conclusion can arise." Furthermore, the reader is warned "by all means possible to shunne all conditionall lyes, never giving any other but certayne Lyes: the which in like manner they ought to have great regarde, that they give them not, unlesse they be by some sure means infallibly assured, that they give them rightly, to the ende that the parties unto whom they be given, may be forced without further Ifs and Ands, either to deny or justifie, that which they have spoken."

When one surveys the great field of Elizabethan Literature he finds that the body of lyric poetry produced in that age is scarcely less remarkable than the body of dramatic literature. The lyric note was in the air. Every one of any pretension to cultivation could write verses, generally with a fair degree of proficiency. Instead of a note to accompany a trivial gift, the sender would write a sonnet. Love lyrics were as frequent as love. And with it all went a popular pleasure and skill in music that has utterly passed away. Relative to this universal knowledge of music is the following paragraph in Chappell's *Old English Popular Music* (i. 59):

“ During the reign of Elizabeth, music seems to have been in universal cultivation, as well as universal esteem. Not only was it a necessary qualification for ladies and gentlemen, but even the city of London advertised the musical abilities of boys educated in Bridewell and Christ's Hospital, as a mode of recommending them as servants, apprentices, or husbandmen. . . . Tinkers sang catches; milkmaids sang ballads; carters whistled; each trade, and even the beggars, had their special songs; the base viol hung in the drawing room for the amusement of waiting visitors; the lute, cittern and virginals, for the amusement of waiting customers, were the necessary furniture of

the barber shop. They had music at dinner; music at supper; music at weddings; music at funerals; music at dawn; music at night. . . . He who felt not, in some degree, its soothing influences, was viewed as a morose, unsocial being, whose converse ought to be shunned and regarded with suspicion and distrust."

An interesting collection of songs, edited by William Byrd, and printed in 1588, has the following introduction:

"Reasons briefly set down by the author, to persuade everyone to learn to sing.

"1. First it is a knowledge easily taught, and quickly learned; where there is a good master and an apt scholar.

"2. The exercise of singing is delightful to Nature, and good to preserve the health of man.

"3. It doth strengthen all parts of the breast, and doth open the pipes.

"4. It is a singular good remedy for a stutt[er]ing and stammering in the speech.

"5. It is the best means to procure a perfect pronounciation, and to make a good orator.

"6. It is the only way to know where Nature hath bestowed the benefit of a good voice; which gift is so rare, as there is not one among a thousand that hath it: and in many, that excellent gift is lost, because they want Art to express Nature.



FROST FAIR ON THE THAMES.  
(From a print in Wilkinson's collection.)





“7. There is not any music of instruments whatsoever comparable to that which is made of the voices of men; where the voices are good, and the same well sorted or ordered.

“8. The better the voice is, the meeter it is to honour and serve GOD therewith: and the voice of man is chiefly to be employed to that end.”

Bands of musicians, consorts as they were usually called, were a regular part of the household of the Queen, and of all the great nobles, and even of lesser private gentlemen. In 1571 the Queen's musicians consisted of eighteen trumpeters, seven violins, six flutes, six sackbuts, and ten singers. King James's musicians numbered twenty-six in 1606, and twenty-two in 1617.

The word consort was properly applied to a group of musicians playing upon similar instruments: thus, a consort of stringed instruments, a consort of wind instruments, etc. Often, however, one or two instruments were introduced into a consort that differed from the others. A lute, bandore, base-viol, cittern, and flute constituted the instruments of a consort that played before the queen during an entertainment at Elvetham in 1591.\* The word noise, often applied generally to a group of anything, as a noise of horns

\* Lyly's Works, Ed. Bond, i. 450.



In setts which there were seene, the musick wondrous  
choice,

To shew that England could variety afforde,

The Cithron, the Pandore, and the Therbo strike;

The Gittern and the Kit the wandering fiddlers like.

So there were some againe, in this their learned strife,

Loud instruments that loved, the Cornet and the Phife,

The Hoboy, Sagbut deepe, Recorder and the Flute,

Even from the shrillest Shawm unto the Cornemute,

Some blow the Bagpipe up, that plaies the country  
'round,

The Tabor and the Pipe some take delight to sound."

The word "setts" in the above quotation refers to the fact that the instruments composing a consort were usually sold in sets: thus a chest or set of viols would consist of two trebles, two tenors, and two basses.

The lute was the popular instrument in use to accompany the voice. In one form it possessed eight strings and looked not unlike a mandolin. There were also other forms, one of which contained a number of unfretted strings. The fact that this instrument required retuning with every change of key gives point to many allusions, the following of which is a fair example: "If a lute player have lived eighty years, he has probably spent about sixty years tuning his instrument."\* The gift of a set of lute strings was a dainty and much-coveted gift in Shakespeare's time. A very

\* Mattheson, 1720.

unique use to which lute strings broken upon the instruments in the barber shops were put is alluded to by Ben Jonson, where he desires one "to draw his own teeth and add them to the lute string." \* Every barber shop provided lutes and zitterns for the amusement of waiting customers. Most barbers in those days were also surgeons on a small scale, whose chief surgical duty was the extraction of teeth. It was their habit to tie the successfully drawn teeth closely together upon lute strings, which were then hung out by way of a sign—a mode of display that in a slightly altered form has survived to the present day in London. Lute playing was often made the point of reference to imply a high degree of effeminacy. Thus Tamberlaine chides:

“ . . . Bewrays they are too dainty for the wars,  
Their fingers made to quaver on a lute,  
Their arms to hang about a lady's neck.” †

The virginals consisted of an instrument much like the piano in appearance, but smaller. When the keys were struck, small quill picks twanged the strings which gave out a high note without much volume. Virginal playing was a necessary accomplishment for young women. Elizabeth herself was an adept on the virginals, a fact that forms the subject of one of Melville's most

\* *The Silent Woman*, iii. 2.

† *The Second Part*, i. 3.

amusing illustrations of the Queen's inordinate vanity.

“The same day after dinner,” says the Scotch ambassador, “my Lord Hunsdon drew me up to a quiet gallery that I might hear some music (but he said he durst not avow it), where I might hear the queen play upon the virginals. After I had hearkened a while I took by the tapestry that hung by the door of the chamber, and seeing her back was towards the door, I entered within the chamber, and stood a pretty space, hearing her play excellently well; but she left off immediately so soon as she turned her about and saw me. She appeared to be surprised to see me, and came forward, seeming to strike me with her hand, alleging she was not used to play before men, but when she was solitary, to shun melancholy. She asked how I came there? I answered, as I was walking with my Lord Hunsdon as we passed by the chamber door, I heard such a melody as ravished me, whereby I was drawn in ere I knew how; excusing my fault of homeliness as being brought up in the court of France where such freedom was allowed; declaring myself willing to endure what kind of punishment her majesty should be pleased to inflict upon me for so great offence. Then she sank down low upon a cushion, and I upon my knees by her; but with her own hands

she gave me a cushion to lay under my knee; which at first I refused, but she compelled me to take it. She inquired whether my queen or she played best. In that I found myself obliged to give her the praise. . . .

“Then she asked what kind of exercises she used? I answered that when I received my dispatch the queen was lately come from the Highland hunting: that when her more serious affairs permitted, she was taken up with the reading of histories; that sometimes she recreated herself in playing upon the lute and virginals. She asked if she played well? I said, reasonably for a queen.”

## CHAPTER IX

### THE LOVE OF SPECTACLES.

ON the day before her coronation Elizabeth made the customary progress through the City from the Tower to Whitehall. This pageant, which was the regular preliminary to a coronation, is one of the most interesting that could be described in this chapter; but, as it is too long in its original account for convenient insertion here, and as the reprint of Arber's *English Garner* has put it within the reach of all, the circumstantial contemporary account is omitted.

A synopsis of *The Princely Pleasures of Kenilworth* is to be found in Strutt's *Sports and Pastimes of the English People*; and the same elaborate revels are fully described in Scott's *Kenilworth*, most of the local colour of which is taken directly from a contemporary account.

The present writer need offer no apology for continuing the narrative of this chapter as far as possible in the words of contemporary writers, usually so graphic and so full of the spirit of the time in which they were written.

“ (April 23, 1559.) The same day the queen

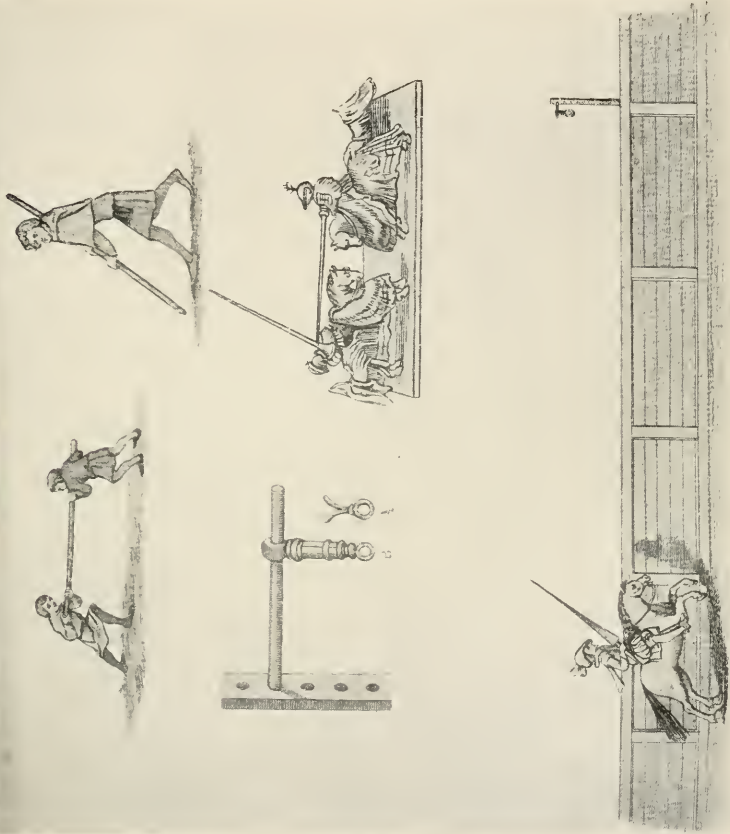
in the afternoon went to Baynard's Castle, the Earl of Pembroke's Place, and supped with him, and after supper she took a boat and was rowed up and down the Thames, hundreds of boats and barges rowing about her, and thousands of people thronging at the water side to look upon her majesty, rejoicing to see her and partaking of the music and sights upon the Thames; for the trumpets blew, drums beat, flutes played, guns were discharged, squibs hurled up into the air, as the queen moved from place to place." (Strype.)

"May 22d, the Bishop of London's Palace, and the Dean of Paul's House, with several other houses of the Canons and Prebendaries of the said church were taken up for the French Ambassadors and their retinue.

"The 23d they came and landed at Tower Wharf where many lords and nobles came to meet them, and conducted them to their said lodgings.

"The 24th they were brought from the Bishop's Palace through Fleet Street by the greatest nobles about the court to the queen's palace to supper. The hall and the great chamber of presence was hung with very rich cloth of arras and cloth of state. There was extraordinary cheer at supper, and, after that, as goodly a banquet as had been seen, with all manner of music and entertainments till midnight.





TILTING.  
(From Strutt's "Sports and Pastimes.")



“The 25th they were brought to court with music to dinner, and after a splendid dinner, they were entertained with the baiting of bears and bulls with English dogs. The Queen’s grace herself and the ambassadors stood in the gallery looking on the pastime till six at night.\* After that they went by water to Paul’s Wharf, and landed there to go to the Bishop’s palace to supper. It was observed of these ambassadors that they were most gorgeously appavelled.

“The 26th they took barge at Paul’s Wharf, and so to Paris Garden, where was to be another baiting of bulls and bears, and the captain with an hundred of the guard, kept room for them against they came, that they might have place to see the sport.

“The 28th the French ambassadors went away, taking their barge towards Gravesend, and carried with them many mastiffs given them for hunting their wolves.” (Strype.)

The following quotations illustrate the form and ceremony that accompanied the daily life of the Queen:

“The thirteenth day when she took her way

\* On such an occasion the dogs and animals to be baited were taken to Whitehall, where the exhibition was given. There is no evidence that Elizabeth ever attended in person the bear-ring in Southwark or the public theatres. The details of the sport of baiting are given elsewhere.

from [the Charter-House] by Clerkenwell, over the fields to the Savoy, to Mr. Secretary Cecil, where she supped.

“The next day she departed on her progress to Essex; and the chief streets of the city being renewed with fresh gravel for her equipage, she passed from the Charter-House through Smithfield, under Newgate; and also along St. Nicholas Shambles, Cheapside, Cornhill, unto Aldgate and Whitechapel. All the houses were hung with cloth of arras, and rich carpets, and silk; but Cheapside was hung with cloth of gold and silver, and velvets of all colours, all the crafts of London standing in their liveries from St. Michael the Quern as far as to Aldgate. The cavalcade was after this manner: first, serving men riding; then the Queen’s pensioners, gentlemen, knights, lords, the Aldermen in scarlet, the sergeants at arms, the heralds in their coat armour; then my Lord Mayor bearing the scepter; then the Lord Hunsden bearing the sword, and then came the Queen’s grace and her footmen richly habited; the ladies and gentlemen followed; after all, the lords’ and knights’ men; and at Whitechapel the Lord Mayor and Aldermen took leave of her grace; and so she took her way towards Essex, and I suppose lodged that night at Wanstead House in the forest.” (Strype.)

Tilting was one of the popular amusements of the day, carried on in harmless sport far different from the dangerous joustings of mediæval times. The following is a condensation of Holinshed's description of a famous tilting before the Queen on Whitsun Monday and Tuesday, 1581:

“The chief challengers in these attempts were these: The Earl of Arundel, the Lord Windsor, Master Philip Sidney, and Master Fulke Grevile, who, calling themselves the Four Foster Children of Desire, made the invention of the aforesaid triumph, in this order and form following:

“The gallery or place at the end of the tilt-yard adjoining her majesty's house at Whitehall, whereat her person should be placed, was called, and not without cause, ‘The Castle or Fortress of Perfect Beauty,’ forasmuch as her highness should be there included, whereto the said foster children laid title and claim as their due by descent to belong to them. And upon denial, or any repulse from that their desired patrimony, they vowed to vanquish and conquer by force who should seem to withstand it. For the accomplishing whereof they sent their challenge, or first defiance, to the Queen's majesty, which was uttered by a boy on Sunday, the sixteenth of April last, as her majesty came from the chapel, who, being apparelled in red and white, as a martial messen-

ger of Desire's foster children, without making any precise reverence at all, uttered these speeches of defiance from his masters to her majesty, the effect whereof ensueth."

There follows in the original account a long Euphuistic harangue that sets forth in part a description of the sports that are to take place on the morrow.

"The said day being come, the four foster children had made preparation to beseige the Fortress of Beauty; and thereto had provided a frame of wood which was covered with canvas, and painted outwardly in such excellent order, as if it had been very natural earth or mold, and carried the name of a rowling trench which went on wheels wherever the persons within it did drive it. Upon the top whereof were placed two cannons of wood, so passing well coloured, that they seemed to be indeed two field pieces of ordinance, and by them was placed two men for gunners, clothed in crimson sarcenet, with their baskets of earth for defence of their bodies by them. And also there stood on the top of the trench an ensign bearer, in the same suit with the gunners, displaying his ensign; and within the said trench was cunningly conveyed divers kinds of most excellent music against the Castle of Beauty. These things thus all in a readiness, the challengers ap-

proached and came from the stable toward the tilt-yard, one after another, in brave and excellent order, and the manner of their several enterings was as followeth:

“First, the earl of Arundel entered the tilt-yard, all in a tylt and engraven armour, with caparisons and furniture richly and bravely embroidered, having attendant on him two gentlemen ushers, four pages riding on four spare horses, and twenty of his gentlemen. All which afore-said were apareled in short cloaks and Venetian hose of crimson velvet, layed with gold lace, doublets of yellow satin, hats of crimson velvet with gold bands and yellow feathers, and yellow silk stocks. Then had he six trumpeters who sounded before him, and thirty-one yeomen that waited after him, appareled in cassock cloaks and Venetian hose of crimson velvet, layed on with red silk and gold lace, doublets of yellow taffeta, hats of crimson taffeta, and yellow worsted stockings.”

After the entrance of Arundel, the other challengers arrived in equal splendour of dress, and accompanied by an equal number of gaudily arrayed retainers. Then the boy who had previously addressed the Queen, as she was returning from chapel the day before, approached the balcony where she sat and made known to her that there was about to be made an assault by Desire

upon the Castle of Beauty. The rowling trench or artificial mound was then moved near to where the Queen sat. Music within played pleasantly and two songs were sung by pages, one bidding the Queen to surrender, the other exhorting the challengers to bravery.

“Which ended, the two cannons were shot off, the one with sweet powder, the other with sweet water, very odoriferous and pleasant, and the noise of the shooting was very excellent *consent* of melody within the mound. And after that was store of pretty scaling ladders, and the footmen threw flowers and such fancies against the walls, with all such devices as might seem fit shot for Desire. All which did continue till the time the defendants came in.

“Then came in the defendants in most sumptuous manner, with every one his servants, pages, and trumpeters (having some more, some less) on such order as I have hereunder placed them, with every one his sundry invention.”

After the entrance of twenty-one gentlemen and their attendants, came “Sir Henry Leigh, as unknown, and when he had broken his six staves, went out in like manner again.” For the rest of the day the gayly dressed courtiers rode backwards and forwards, each arriving in order before the Queen, where his page on the behalf of his



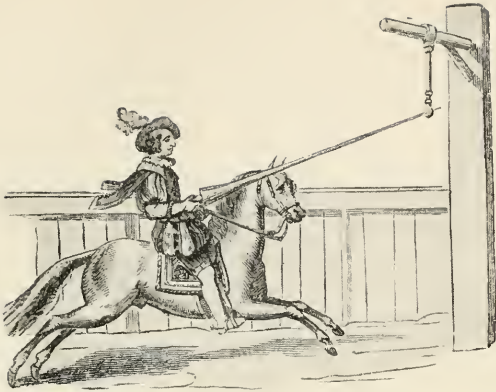
master delivered himself of a speech. The speeches were all alike, long and prolix, composed of fulsome compliments to the Queen, and full of lamentation on the part of Desire. "This said, and all the triumphal shows ended, the knights, in very comely and convenient order (as they came) departed.

"The next day's show was done in this order: The Four Foster Children of Desire entered in a brave chariot (very finely and curiously decked) as men fore-wearied and half overcome. The chariot was made in such sort that on top the four knights sat with a beautiful lady representing Desire whereunto their eyes were turned, in token of what they desired. In the bulk of the chariot was conveyed room for a full consort of music, who played still very doleful music as the chariot moved. The chariot was drawn by four horses according to four knights, which horses were appareled in white and carnation silk, being the colours of Desire. And as it passed by the upper end of the tilt, a herald of arms was sent before to utter these speeches on the knights' behalf to her majesty:

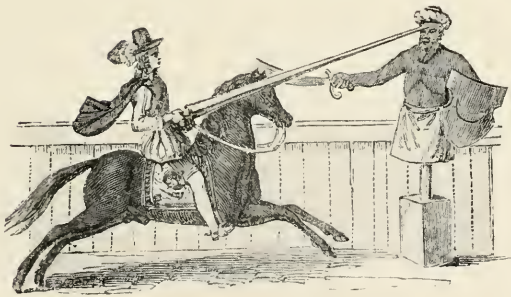
"No confidence in themselves, O most unmatched princess, before whom Envy dieth, wanting all nearness of comparison to sustain it, and Admiration is expressed, finding the scope of it

void of conceivable limits, nor any slight regarding the force of your valiant knights, hath encouraged the Foster Children of Desire to make this day an inheritor of yesterday's action; but the wing of memory, alas, the sworn enemy unto the woeful man's quietness, being constantly held by the hand of perfection, and never ceasing to blow the coal of some kindred desire, hath brought their inward fire to blaze forth this flame unquenchable by any means till by death the whole shall be consumed. And, therefore, not able to master it, they are violently borne whither Desire draweth, although they must confess (alas) that yesterday's brave onset should come to such a confession, that they are not greatly companied with Hope, the common supplier to Desire's army. So as now, from summoning this castle to yield, they are fallen lowly to beseech you to vouchsafe your eyes out of that impregnable fortress to behold what will fall out betwixt them and your famous knights; wherein, though they be so overpressed with other's valour, that already they could scarcely have been able to come hither if the chariot of Desire had not carried them; yet will they make this whole assembly witness so far of their will, that sooner their souls shall leave their bodies, than Desire shall leave their souls.'"

Thereupon the defenders of the day before re-



TILTING AT THE RING.  
(From an old print.)



TILTING AT THE QUINTAIN.  
(From an old print.)



enter the lists, and there is tilting and sword-play for some hours; after which a boy carrying an olive branch approaches the Queen to acknowledge on the part of Desire their mistake in not seeing that she was quite out of their sphere, and that the attack on the Castle of Beauty had proved an utter failure. The Queen then rose and thanked them for their entertainment and gave them praise, "which they esteemed so well, and thought themselves awarded according to their wishes; and so they departed, each one in order, according to the first coming in. And thus ceased these courtly triumphs."

On October 7, 1586, the proudest, finest specimen of an Elizabethan gentleman died at the post of duty on Zutphen field. "He was the great glory of his family," says Camden, "the great hope of mankind, the most lively pattern of virtue, and the darling of the learned world."

Sir Philip Sidney was sent by her majesty to the Low Countries where he was made Lieutenant of Flushing, at which place he arrived in the latter part of 1585. He was colonel of the Dutch regiment of Flushing, and captain of 200 English foot and 100 horse. "In September," says the curious old roll described by Thorpe, "at the relieving of Zutphen he charged the enemy thrice in

one skirmish, and at the last charge he was wounded by a musket shot, whereof he died at Arnham the 7th of October, from whence he was brought by water to Flushing, where he was kept eight days for his convenient passage." He was escorted to the harbour by an English garrison 1200 strong, "marching three and three, shot, halberds, pikes, and ensigns, all trailing, the burghers of the town following. His body being embarked, the small shot gave a triple volley, then the general ordnance," etc.

When Sidney's body reached London, it was landed at the Tower Wharf, whence it was transported to the church of the Minories without Aldgate. Here it lay for some time in state before it was carried with great pomp to St. Paul's Cathedral. The funeral was conducted by Robert Cook, Clarenceux King-at-Arms, an office afterwards occupied with such glory to the College of Heralds by William Camden.

Following are the details of the funeral procession: First came two conductors of the poor in short coats and buttoned close, deep-crowned hats, and large ruffs, swords by their sides and staves in their hands. They were followed by thirty-two (his age) poor men in long gowns. Then came the officers of his foot soldiers, trailing their pikes, the drums and fifes playing softly,

the instruments hung with black; next the ensign, the colours wound round the staff and trailed. Then followed all the officers of the horse fully armed, the banners, the steward of his house, sixty esquires chosen from his kindred and friends, twelve knights, the chaplain, and a gentleman carrying a pennon inscribed with Sidney's arms. Then came a footman leading the masterless horse, followed by a page trailing the useless lance. The heralds carrying his spurs, gloves, helmet, etc., came next, and then the King-at-Arms. He was followed by the gentleman usher in a long gown, bare-headed, his right hand upon his breast, his hat under his left arm. The corpse which followed was covered with black velvet and was carried by fourteen of his yeomen; the corners of the pall were held by four friends, and the banrols were carried by four of his near kindred. Sir Robert Sidney, his brother, followed as chief mourner, in a gown with a close hood, and his hands clasped. Then followed other mourners: Lords Huntington, Leicester, Pembroke, Essex, Willoughby, and North, all on horseback; representatives of the States of Holland to the number seven; the Lord Mayor, the Aldermen, the Recorder, and the Sheriffs of London riding in purple; the Grocers' Company in their livery to the number of one hundred and twenty. The procession was closed

by three hundred men chosen of the trained bands of the city, walking three and three.

The above details are from a roll drawn by Thomas Lant, 1587. The roll is thirty-eight feet and some inches in length, the figures executed with much grace and accuracy. The roll is fully described by the antiquary John Thorpe, from whose account this extract is borrowed. Preceding the picture of the funeral procession is a view of the interior of St. Paul's with the hearse ready to receive the corpse. It is covered with black velvet and decorated with escutcheons.

Descriptions of pageants and progresses could be repeated *ad infinitum*; but lack of space curtails the quotations. A very different kind of pageant, one that pertained to the common people rather than to the court, was the usual Midsummer Watch in London. The following description is from the inimitable pages of Stow:

“ Then had ye besides the standing watches all in bright harness, in every ward and street of the city and suburbs, a marching watch, that passed through the principal streets thereof, to wit, from the Little Conduit by Paul's Gate to West Cheap, by the Stocks through Cornhill, by Leadenhall to Aldgate, then back down Fenchurch Street, by Grass Church, about Grass Church Conduit, and up Grass Church Street into Cornhill, and through



it into West Cheap again. The whole way for this marching watch extendeth to three thousand three hundred and twenty tailor's yards of assize; for the furniture whereof with lights, there were appointed seven hundred cressets, five hundred of them being found by the companies, the other two hundred by the chamber of London. Besides the which lights every constable in London, in number more than two hundred and forty, had his cresset; the charge of every cresset was in light two shillings and four pence, and every cresset had two men, one to bear or hold it, another to bear a bag with light, and to serve it, so that the poor men pertaining to the cressets, taking wages, besides that every one had a straw hat, with a badge painted, and his breakfast in the morning, amounted in number to almost two thousand. The marching watch contained in number about two thousand men, part of them being old soldiers of skill, to be captains, lieutenants, sergeants, corporals, etc., whiffers, drummers, and fifes, standard and ensign bearers, sword players, trumpeters on horseback, demilances on great horses, gunners with hand guns, or half hakes, archers in coats of white fustian, signed on the breast and back with the arms of the city, their bows bent in their hands, with sheaves of arrows by their sides, pikemen in

bright corslets, burganets, etc., halberds, the like billmen in almaine rivets, and aprons of mail in great number; there were also divers pageants, morris dancers, constables, the one-half, which was one hundred and twenty, on St. John's, the other on St. Peter's Eve, in bright harness, some overgilt, and every one a jorret of scarlet thereupon, and a chain of gold, his henchman following him, his minstrels before him, his cresset light passing by him, the waits of the city, the mayor's officers for his guard before him, all in a livery of worsted or say jackets parti-coloured, the mayor himself well mounted on horseback, the swordbearer before him in fair armour well mounted also, the mayor's footmen, and the like torchbearers about him, henchman twain upon great stirring horses, following him. The sheriff's watches came one after another, but not so large in numbers as the mayor's; for where the mayor had besides his giant three pageants, each of the sheriff's had besides their giants but two pageants, each their morris dance, and one henchman, their officers in jackets or worsted or say parti-coloured, differing from the mayor's, and each from other, but having harnessed men a great many."

There is not room in the present volume to insert a complete description of the parade and pomp of Elizabeth's court. The following brief

description from the pen of the contemporary traveller, Paul Hentzner, must suffice to illustrate the formality that accompanied the daily life of the great Queen:

“ We arrived next at the royal palace of Greenwich, reported to have been originally built by Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, and to have received very magnificent additions from Henry VII. It was here Elizabeth, the present Queen, was born, and here she generally resides, particularly in summer for the delightfulness of its situation. We were admitted by an order Mr. Rogers had procured from the Lord Chamberlain into the presence chamber hung with rich tapestry, and the floor, after the English fashion, strewed with hay [rushes], through which the Queen commonly passes on her way to chapel. At the door stood a gentleman dressed in velvet, with a gold chain, whose office was to introduce to the Queen any person of distinction that came to wait on her; it was Sunday when there was usually the greatest attendance of nobility. In the same hall were the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London, a great number of Councillors of State, officers of the Crown, and gentlemen, who waited on the Queen’s coming out; which she did from her own apartment when it was time to go to prayers, attended in the following manner:—

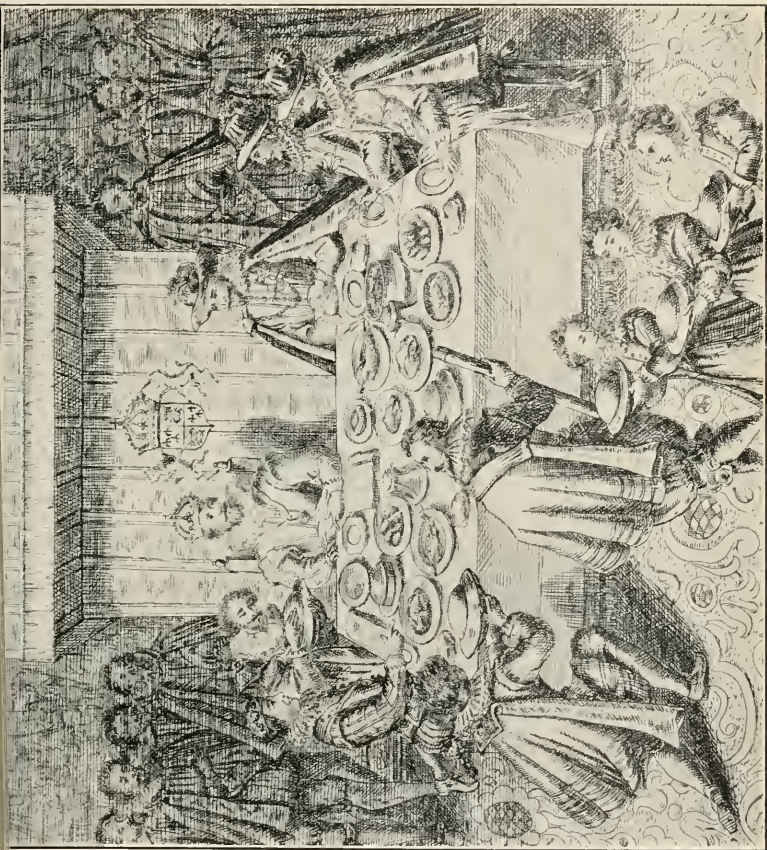
“First went gentlemen, barons, earls, Knights of the Garter, all richly dressed and bareheaded; next came the Chancellor, bearing the seals in a red silk purse, between two, one of whom carried the Royal sceptre, the other the sword of state, in a red scabbard, studded with golden *fleurs de lis*, the point upwards: next came the Queen, in the sixty-fifth year of her age, as we were told, very majestic; her face oblong, fair, but wrinkled; her eyes small, yet black and pleasant; her nose a little hooked; her lips narrow, and her teeth black (a defect the English seem subject to, from their too great use of sugar); she had in her ears two pearls, with very rich drops; she wore false hair, and that red; upon her head she had a small crown, reported to be made of some of the gold of the celebrated Lunebourg table; her bosom was uncovered, as all the English ladies have it till they marry; and she had on a neckcloth of exceeding fine jewels; her hands were small, her fingers long, and her stature neither tall nor low; her air was stately, and her manner of speaking mild and obliging. That day she was dressed in white silk, bordered with pearls of the size of beans, and over it a mantle of black silk, shot with silver threads; her train was very long, the end of it borne by a marchioness; instead of a chain she had an oblong collar of gold and jewels. As she went along in

all this state and magnificence, she spoke very graciously, first to one then to another, whether foreign Ministers, or those who attended for different reasons, in English, French, and Italian; for, besides being well skilled in Greek, Latin, and the languages I have mentioned, she is mistress of Spanish, Scotch, and Dutch. Whoever speaks to her, it is kneeling; now and then she raises some one with her hand. While we were there, W. Slawata, a Bohemian baron, had letters to present to her; and she, after pulling off her glove, gave him her right hand to kiss, sparkling with rings and jewels, a mark of particular favour. Wherever she turned her face, as she was going along, everybody fell down on their knees. The ladies of the court followed next to her, very handsome and well shaped, and for the most part dressed in white. She was guarded on each side by the gentlemen pensioners, fifty in number, with gilt battle-axes. In the ante-chapel, next the hall where we were, petitions were presented to her, and she received them most graciously which occasioned the acclamation of 'Long Live Queen Elizabeth!' She answered it with 'I thank you, my good people.' In the chapel was excellent music; as soon as it and the service were over, which scarce exceeded half an hour, the Queen returned in the same state and order, and pre-

pared to go to dinner. But while she was still at prayers, we saw her table set out with the following solemnity:—

“ A gentleman entered the room bearing a rod, and along with him another who had a table-cloth which, after they had both kneeled three times with the utmost veneration, he spread upon the table, and, after kneeling again, they both retired. Then came two others, one with the rod again, the other with a salt-cellar, a plate, and bread; when they had kneeled as the others had done, and placed what was brought upon the table, they too retired with the same ceremonies performed by the first. At last came an unmarried lady (we were told she was a countess), and along with her a married one, bearing a tasting knife; the former was dressed in white silk, who, when she had prostrated herself three times in the most graceful manner, approached the table and rubbed the plates with bread and salt with as much awe as if the Queen had been present. When they had waited there a little while the yeomen of the guards entered, bareheaded, clothed in scarlet, with a golden rose upon their backs, bringing in at each turn a course of twenty-four dishes, served in plate, most of it gilt; these dishes were received by a gentleman in the same order they were brought, and placed upon the table, while the lady taster gave





A COURT DINNER IN THE TIME OF KING JAMES.

(From an old print. Reproduced in Rye's "England as seen by Foreigners.")





to each of the guard a mouthful to eat of the particular dish he had brought, for fear of any poison. During the time that this guard, which consists of the tallest and stoutest men that can be found in all England, being carefully selected for this service, were bringing dinner, twelve trumpets and two kettle drums made the hall ring for half an hour together. At the end of all this ceremonial, a number of unmarried ladies appeared, who, with particular solemnity, lifted the meat off the table, and conveyed it into the Queen's inner and more private chamber, where after she had chosen for herself, the rest goes to the ladies of the Court."

It is interesting to set beside this a description of the more sociable kind of state dinner enjoyed by Elizabeth's successor, King James. The description is from the pen of Juan Fernandez de Velasco, Ambassador of Philip III. to England in 1604.\*

"The audience chamber was elegantly furnished, having a buffet of several stages, filled with various pieces of ancient and modern gilt plate of exquisite workmanship. A railing was placed on each side of the room in order to prevent the

\* The account is published by Rye, p. 118, and is preceded by an engraving illustrative of a similar banquet given by the king.

crowd from approaching too near the table. At the right hand upon entering was another buffet, containing rich vessels of gold, agate, and other precious stones. The table might be about five yards in length, and more than one yard broad. The dishes were brought in by gentlemen and servants of the King, who was accompanied by the Lord Chamberlain, and before placing them on the table they made four or five obeisances. The Earls of Pembroke and of Southampton officiated as gentlemen-ushers. Their Majesties with the Prince Henry entered after the Constable and the others, and placed themselves at their throne, and all stood in a line to hear the grace said; the Constable being at the King's side, and the Count de Villamediana on the Queen's. Their Majesties washed their hands in the same basin, the Lord Treasurer handing the towel to the King, and the High Admiral to the Queen. The Prince washed in another basin, in which water was also taken to the Constable, who was waited upon by the same gentlemen. They took their seats in the following manner: their Majesties sat at the head of the table, at a distance from each other under a canopy of state, the Queen being upon the right hand, on chairs of brocade with cushions; and at her side, a little apart, sat the Constable, on a tabouret of brocade with a high

cushion of the same, and on the side of the King the Prince was seated in like manner. On the opposite side of the table and on the right sat Count Villamediana, and next to him the Senator Rovida opposite the Constable; and on the same side with the senator, nearly fronting the Prince, were seated the President Richardot and the Audiencier; a space in front being left vacant owing to the absence of the Count d'Arembergue, who was prevented by the gout from attending. The principal noblemen of the kingdom were likewise at the table, in particular the Duke of Lenox," etc. Then follows a long list of noblemen and their titles who were present at the dinner. "There was plenty of instrumental music, and the banquet was sumptuous and profuse. The first thing the King did was to send the Constable a melon and half a dozen of oranges on a very green branch, telling him that they were the fruit of Spain transplanted into England; to which the latter, kissing his hand, replied that he valued the gift more as coming from his Majesty than as being the fruit of his own country; he then divided the melon among their Majesties, and Don Blasco de Aragon handed the plate to the Queen, who politely and graciously acknowledged the attention. Soon afterwards the King stood up, and with his head uncovered drank to the Constable the health of their Spanish

Majesties, and may the peace be happy and perpetual. The Constable pledged him in like manner, and replied that he entertained the same hope and that from the peace the greatest advantages might result to both crowns and to Christendom. The toast was then drunk by the Count Villamediana and the others present, to the delight and applause of their Majesties. Immediately afterwards the Constable, seeing that another opportunity might not be offered him, rose and drank to the King the health of the Queen from the lid of a cup of agate of extraordinary beauty and richness, set with diamonds and rubies, praying his Majesty would condescend to drink the toast from the cup, which he did accordingly, and ordered it to be passed round to the Prince and others; and the Constable directed that the cup should remain in his Majesty's buffet. At this period the people shouted out: '*Peace, peace, peace! God save the King! God save the King! God save the King!*' and a king at arms presented himself before the table, and after the drums, trumpets, and other instruments had sounded, with a loud voice said in English:—'that the kingdom returned many thanks to his Majesty for having concluded with the King of Spain so advantageous a peace, and he hoped to God it might endure for many ages, and his subjects hoped that his Majesty

would endeavor with all his might to maintain it, so that they might enjoy from it tranquility and repose, and that security and advantage might result to all his people; and therefore they prayed him to allow the same to be published in the kingdom and the dominions of his Majesty.' The King gave permission accordingly and the peace was forthwith proclaimed in that city, the proclamation being repeated at every fifty paces.

"The Constable rose a second time, and drank to the Queen the health of the King from a very beautiful dragon-shaped cup of crystal garnished with gold, drinking from the cover, and the Queen standing up gave the pledge from the cup itself, Don Blasco de Aragon performing on this occasion the office of cup-bearer as also interpreter to what was spoken by the Constable and the Queen, on whose [*i.e.* the Queen's] buffet he ordered that the cup should remain." In like manner the banquet proceeded, health after health being proposed in succession till the whole company adjourned to the neighbouring hall to spend the further time in dancing.

A form of dramatic entertainment has been reserved for description here because essentially a part of the pomp and circumstance of court life and of the life of the nobleman rather than a part

of those kinds of dramatic amusement that have been described in Chapter XIV. of the author's *Shakespeare's London*.

The masque, which reached its greatest glory during the reign of King James, had a very meagre beginning long before in England. In the beginning it was nothing more than a form of disguising indulged in by some of the regular guests who took part in a festive occasion where dancing was a part of the ceremony. These details must be constantly borne in mind. The masquers were of the regular and expected guests, there was always a dance to give rise to the masque, and there was a disguise. Bacon, in his essay *Of Masques and Triumphs*, says, "Let the suits of the masquers be graceful and such as become the person when the vizers are off; not after examples of known attires—Turks, soldiers, mariners, and the like." This allusion is to what constituted the next step in the development of the masque, namely the assumption of some costume that was so unusual as to require a word of explanation. It was customary to have this explanation of what the masquers represented spoken by a page, and it is such a speech that is referred to in *Romeo and Juliet* under the name "without-book prologue." When the page had spoken his piece he withdrew and left the masquers to choose their

partners for the dance from among the ladies present.

Out of this prologue grew the habit of prefacing the dancing by more or less elaborate conversation, written for the masquers beforehand and committed by them to memory. As soon as it was done with, they, as usual, chose their partners, and the dance which gave occasion for the masque began. This dramatic dialogue in turn developed to such an extent that it became more than an easy task for amateurs, and professional actors, often of the comic and vaudeville type, were called in to assist. They and their parts constituted the anti-mask. As was the case with the prologue, as soon as the anti-masque was over, or the whole dramatic entertainment which contained the anti-masque, was over, the professional actors withdrew, leaving the masquers proper to go on with their dancing. "Let the anti-masques not be long," says Bacon; "they have been commonly of fools, satyrs, baboons, wild men, antiques, beasts, spirits, witches, Ethiopes, pigmies, turquets [Turkish dwarfs], nymphs, rustics, Cupids, statuas moving, and the like."

This is the stage to which the masque attained during the height of its popularity in the reign of James. It was, however, a far more elaborate affair than has been hinted at above. The prepara-



ration of a masque occupied many days. The poet, the musician, the professional actor, and the stage carpenter were all called in to contribute, each his part, to the production of the entertainment. And of all these, the words of the poet were considered as the least important. It was not a drama but a spectacle in which the dramatic dialogue bore a very subordinate part. Jonson was the most skilful of Elizabethan masque writers and has born testimony to his chagrin at the fact that the poet's part of the labour was so slightly esteemed. The most skilled musicians were employed to compose music for the occasion; and such a famous architect as Inigo Jones did not consider it beneath his dignity to design and build the stage effects. The expense of a masque was so great as to completely rule such attempts at stage setting from the public stage, a fact that should be taken into consideration when the subject of scenery on the Elizabethan public stage is discussed. The magnificence of these masques is well illustrated by the following comments in the nature of stage directions that accompany the text of Beaumont's *Mask of the Inner Temple and Gray's Inn*:

“ This Masque was appointed to have been presented the Shrove-Tuesday before, at which time the masquers, with their attendants, and divers



others, gallant young gentlemen of both houses, as their convoy, set forth from Winchester-house (which was the rendezvous) towards the court, about seven of the clock at night.

“ This voyage by water was performed in great triumph: the gentlemen-masquers being placed by themselves in the King’s royal barge, with the rich furniture of state, and adorned with a great number of lights, placed in such order as might make the best show.

“ They were attended with a multitude of barges and gallies, with all variety of loud music, and several peals of ordnance; and led by two admirals.

“ Of this show his majesty was graciously pleased to take view, with the prince, the Count Palatine and the Lady Elizabeth their highnesses, at the windows of his privy gallery, upon the water, till their landing, which was at the privy stairs; where they were most honourably received by the lord-chamberlain, and so conducted to the vestry.

“ The hall was by that time filled with company of very good fashion, but yet so as a very great number of principal ladies and other noble persons were not yet come in, whereby it was foreseen that the room would be so scanted as might have been inconvenient; and thereupon his maj-

esty was most graciously pleased, with the consent of the gentlemen-masquers, to put off the night until Saturday following, with the special favour and privilege, that there should be no let as to the outward ceremony of magnificence until that time.

“ At the day that it was presented, there was a choice room reserved for the gentlemen of both their houses, who, coming in troupe about seven of the clock, received that special honour and noble favour, as to be brought to their places by the Right Honourable the Earl of Northampton, Lord-Privy Seal.

“ *The Device or Argument of the Masque.*

Jupiter and Juno, willing to do honour to the marriage of the two famous rivers Thamesis and Rhine, employ their messengers severally, Mercury and Iris, for that purpose. They meet and contend: then Mercury, for his part, brings forth an anti-masque all of spirits or divine natures; but yet not of one kind or livery (because that had been so much in use heretofore), but, as it were, in consort, like to broken music; and, preserving the propriety of the device,—for that rivers in nature are maintained either by springs from beneath or showers from above,—he raiseth

four of the Naiades out of the fountains, and bringeth down five of the Hyades out of the clouds to dance. Hercupon Iris scoffs at Mercury, for that he had devised a dance but of one sex, which could have no life; but Mercury, who was provided for that exception, and in token that the match should be blessed both with love and riches, calleth forth out of the groves four Cupids, and brings down from Jupiter's altar four Statuas of gold and silver, to dance with the Nymphs and Stars; in which dance, the Cupids being blind, and the Statuas having but half life put into them, and retaining still somewhat of their old nature, giveth fit occasion to new and strange varieties both in the music and paces. This was the first anti-masque.

“ Then Iris, for her part, in scorn of this high-flying device, and in token that the match shall likewise be blessed with the love of the common people, calls to Flora, her confederate,—for that the months of flowers are likewise the months of sweet showers and rainbows,—to bring in a May-dance, or rural dance, consisting likewise not of any suited persons, but of a confusion or commixture of all such persons as are natural and proper for country sports. This is the second anti-masque.

“ Then Mercury and Iris, after this vying one

upon the other, seem to leave their contention; and Mercury, by the consent of Iris, brings down the Olympian Knights, intimating that Jupiter having, after a long discontinuance, revived the Olympian games, and summoned thereunto from all parts the liveliest and activest persons that were, had enjoined them, before they fell to their games, to do honour to these nuptials. The Olympian games portend to the match celebrity, victory, and felicity. This was the main masque.

“The fabric was a mountain with two descents, and served with two traverses [curtains].

“At the entrance of the King,

The first traverse was drawn, and the lower descent of the mountain discovered, which was the pendant of a hill to life, with divers boscaiges and grovets upon the steep or hanging grounds thereof; and at the foot of the hill four delicate fountains, running with water and bordered with sedges and water-flowers.

“Iris first appeared; and, presently after, Mercury, striving to overtake her. Iris apparelled in a robe of discoloured [of various colours] taffeta, figured in variable colours, like the rainbow, a cloudy wreath on her head, and tresses. Mercury in doublet and hose of white taffeta, a white hat,

wings on his shoulders and feet, his caduceus in his hand, speaking to Iris as followeth:—

Immediately upon which speech, four Naiades arise gentle out of their several fountains, and present themselves upon the stage, attired in long habits of sea-green taffeta, with bubbles of crystal, intermixt with powdering of silver, resembling drops of water, bluish tresses, on their heads garlands of water-lilies. They fall into a measure, dance a little, then make a stand.

Five Hyades descend softly in a cloud from the firmament to the middle part of the hill, apparelled in sky-coloured taffeta robes, spangled like the heavens, golden tresses, and each a fair star on their head; from thence descend to the stage; at whose sight the Naiades, seeming to rejoice, meet and join in a dance.

Enter four Cupids from each side of the boscaje, attired in flame-coloured taffeta close to their body, like naked boys, with bows, arrows, and wings of gold, chaplets of flowers on their heads, hood-winged with tiffiny scarfs; who join with the Nymphs and the Hyades in another dance. That ended, Mercury speaks.

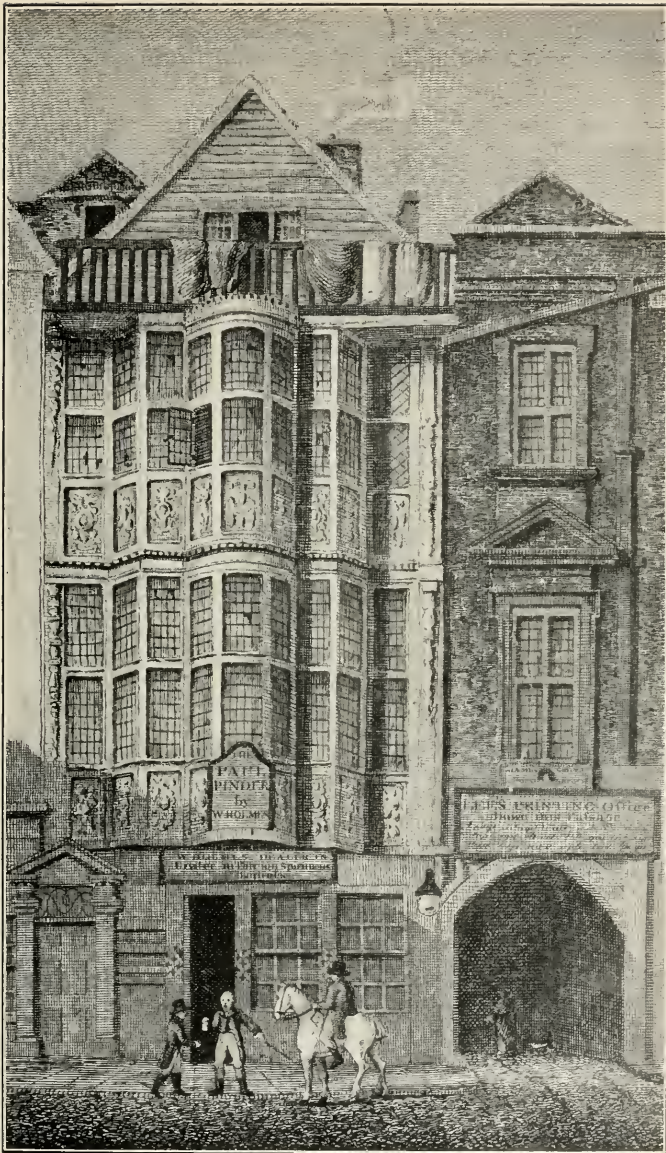
The Statuas enter, supposed to be before descended from Jove's Altar, and to have been prepared in the covert with the Cupids, attending their call.

“ These Statuas were attired in cases of gold and silver close to their body, faces, hands, and feet; nothing seen but gold and silver, as if they had been solid images of the metal; tresses of hair, as if they had been of metal embossed, girdles and small aprons of oaken leaves, as if they likewise had been carved or moulded out of the metal; at their coming, the music changed from violins to hautboys, cornets, etc., and the air of the music was utterly turned into a soft time, with drawing notes, excellently expressing their natures, and the measure likewise was fitted unto the same, and the Statuas placed in such several postures, sometimes altogether in the centre of the dance, and sometimes in the four utmost angles, as was very graceful, besides the novelty. And so concluded the first Anti-masque.

. . . . .

The second Anti-masque rush in, dance their measure, and as rudely depart; consisting of a Pedant, May-Lord, May-Lady, Servingman, Chambermaid, a Country Clown or Shepherd, Country Wench; an Host, Hostess; a He-Baboon,





CARVED EXTERIOR OF SIR PAUL PINDAR'S HOUSE, LONDON, ILLUSTRATING ORNAMENTAL EXTERIOR WOODWORK.

(From a print in Wilkinson's collection.)





She-Baboon; a He-Fool, She-Fool, ushering them in.

“ All these persons appavelled to the life, the men issuing out of one side of the boscage, and the women from the other. The music was extremely well fitted, having such a spirit of country jollity as can hardly be imagined; but the perpetual laughter and applause was above the music.

“ The dance likewise was of the same strain; and the dancers, or rather actors, expressed every one their part so naturally and aptly, as when a man's eye was caught with one, and then passed on to the other, he could not satisfy himself which did best. It pleased his Majesty to call for it again at the end, as he did likewise for the first 'Anti-Masque; but one of the Statuas by that time was undressed.

. . . . .

The Main Masque.—The second traverse is drawn, and the higher ascent of the mountain is discovered; wherein, upon a level, after a great rise of the hill, were placed two pavilions, open in the front of them: the pavilions were to sight as of cloth of gold, and they were trimmed on the inside with rich armour and military furniture hanged up as upon walls; and behind the tents there were represented in prospective the tops of divers other tents, as if it had been a camp. In

these pavilions were placed fifteen Olympian Knights, upon seats a little embowed near the form of a croisant; and the Knights appeared first, as consecrated persons, all in veils, like to copes, of silver tiffiny, gathered, and falling, a large compass about them, and over their heads high mitres, with long pendants behind falling from them; the mitres were so high that they received their hats and feathers, that nothing was seen but veil. In the midst between both the tents, upon the very top of the hill, being a higher level than that of the tents, was placed Jupiter's altar, gilt, with three great tapers upon golden candle-sticks burning upon it; and the four Statuas, two of gold, two of silver, as supporters, and Jupiter's priests in white robes about it. Upon the sight of the King, the veils of the Knights did fall easily from them, and they appeared in their own habit.

“The Knights' Attire.—Arming doublets of carnation satin, embroidered with blazing stars of silver plate, with powderings of smaller stars betwixt; gorgets of silver mail; long hose of the same, with the doublets laid with silver lace spangled, and enriched with embroidery between the lace; carnation silk stockings embroidered all over; garters and roses suitable; pumps of carnation satin embroidered as the doublets; hats of the

same stuff and embroidery, cut like a helmet before, the hinder part cut into scollops answering the skirts of their doublets; the bands of their hats were wreaths of silver in form of garlands of wild olives; white feathers, with one fall of carnation; belts of the same stuff, and embroidered with the doublet; silver swords; little Italian bands and cuffs embroidered with silver; fair long tresses of hair.

“The Priests’ Habits.—Long robes of white taffeta; long white heads of hair; the High-Priest a cap of white silk shag close to his head, with two labels at the ears, the midst rising in form of a pyramis, in the top thereof a branch of silver; every Priest playing upon a lute; twelve in number.

“The Priests descend, and sing this song following; after whom the Knights likewise descend, first laying aside their veils, belts and swords.

. . . . .

The Knights by this time are all descended and fallen into their place, and then dance their first measure.

. . . . .

The Knights dance their second measure.

. . . . .

The Knights take their ladies to dance with them galliards, durets, corantos, etc., and then lead

them to their places; then loud music sounds, supposed to call them to their Olympian games.

The Knights dance their parting measure, and ascend, put on their swords and belts; during which time the Priests sing

*“The Fifth and Last Song.”*

This running commentary to Beaumont's masque illustrates all of the parts of a masque as described above. It also serves to illustrate the magnificence of dress, music, and scenery necessary to the successful presentation of a masque at the height of the popularity of this kind of amusement. The fact that all the text proper, that is, the lines written by the poet, has been omitted, and yet so much remains, points out the relative importance of the poet's work to that of the other contributors to the entertainment. In this respect it may be well to notice that the splendid poetry of Milton's *Comus*, is a priceless heritage to us; but the very splendour and amount of the poetic verses are in reality somewhat against it as a masque. Who amid such splendour of accompaniment, the merriment of a great festive occasion cares to abstract his mind enough to appreciate the verse of *Comus*. Few will deny that the productions of Shakespeare lose much in the great spectacular presentations

that are now sometimes given during the London season. Conversely, a poet who designs and writes his verse to fit such a presentation need take no less care. The power expended upon *Comus* was unnecessary and not likely to be of value in its place.

## CHAPTER X

### POPULAR SUPERSTITION

IT is difficult for us to imagine the sincere quality of the faith with which people then accepted the articles of folklore superstition that were in vogue. People not only believed in ghosts, witches, wise women, fortune tellers, palmists, astrologers, and fairies, with implicit faith; they also believed in omens by the score and score, connected with numberless plants and animals, with days of the week and hours of the day, with natural objects on the earth, the sun, the moon, and the stars. This was not a matter of faith with the common people alone; it was a part as well of the belief of the most educated, the most refined, the most intelligent of people. Elizabeth was a firm believer in astrology. She once sent in great excitement for a magician to counteract the direful effects of a waxen image that had been picked up in one of the fields near London. One of the customary ways of bewitching people was to fashion a small image out of wax to represent the person to be bewitched. Whatever was done to the image happened without delay to the original. If

the model were stuck full of pins the person it stood for suffered sharp pains in all parts of the body. If the model were hung up before the fire and allowed to melt slowly away from day to day, the original would go into a decline and die simultaneously with the final disappearance of the waxen image. On another occasion Elizabeth sought the services of Dr. Dee, a noted astrologer, rather than consult a physician to counteract the effect of a toothache. The date of her coronation was determined by astrology with great success. Many intelligent people in the kingdom believed that Leicester's great influence over the queen could be explained only by taking into consideration the magical effect of the fact that they were both born at the same time, to the hour and day. Even the learned scholar John Stow in all faith explains the common accident of a church struck by lightning as the work of a personal devil who was actually seen entering the belfry window; and, furthermore, Stow himself had often examined the prints left by the claws of the evil doer, and had inserted a feather into them to the depth of several inches.

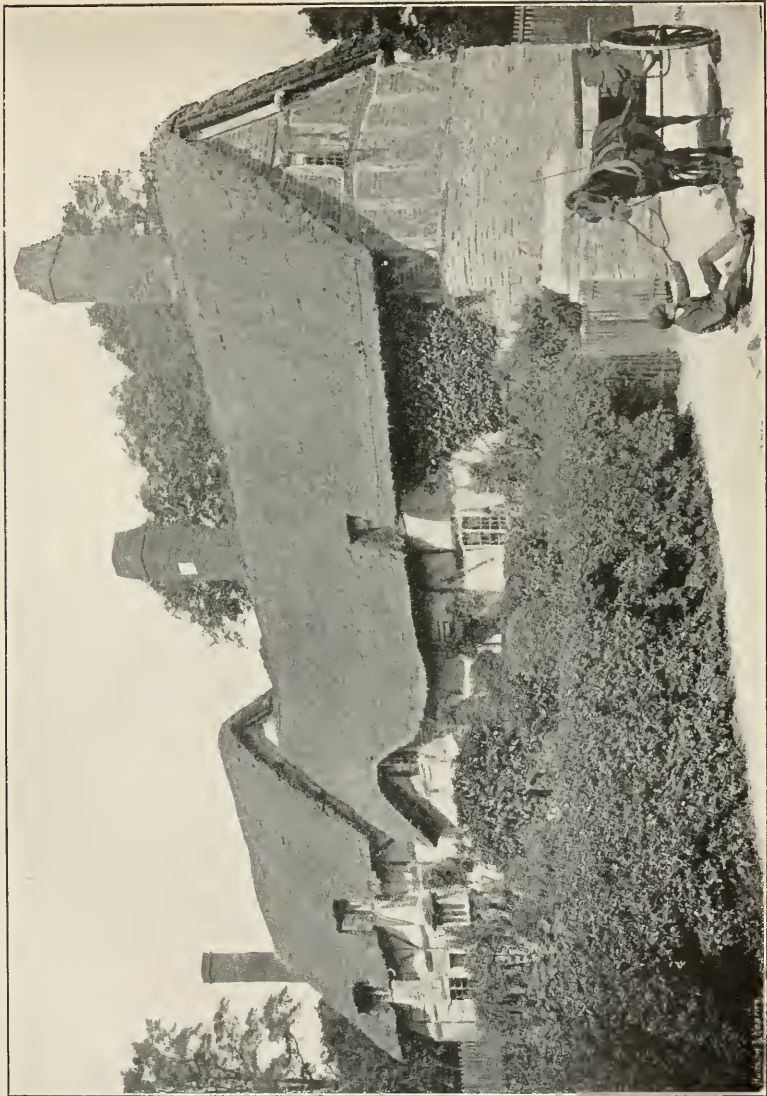
Laveterus who wrote a book, *De Spectris*, in 1570, which was translated into English in 1572, remarks that "if when men sit at the table, mention be made of spirits and elves, many times

women and children are so afraid that they dare scarce go out of doors alone lest they should meet with some evil thing; and if they chance to hear any kind of noise, by and by they think there are some spirits behind them: . . . simple foolish men imagine that there be certain elves or fairies of the earth, and tell many strange and marvellous tales of them, which they have heard of their grandmothers and mothers, how they have appeared unto those of the house, have done service, have rocked the cradle, and (which is a sign of good luck) do continually tarry in the house.”

The same writer also tells of a custom that helps to explain the generality of the credence of grown people, for it was bred in them from childhood.

“It is a common custom in many places, that at a certain time of the year, one with a net or vizard on his face maketh children afraid, to the end that ever after they should labour and be obedient to their parents; afterward they tell them that those which they saw were bugs, witches, and hags, which they verily believe, and are commonly miserably afraid. How be it, it is not expedient so to terrify children. For sometime through great fear they fall into dangerous diseases, and in the night cry out when they are fast asleep.”





ANNE HATHAWAY'S COTTAGE.



Reginald Scott further dilates upon the subject: "In our childhood our mother's maids have so terrified us with an ugly devil, having horns in his head, fire in his mouth, and a tail in his breech, eyes like a bason, fangs like a dog, and a voice roaring like a lion, whereby we start and are afraid when we hear one cry boo: and they have so fraid [frightened] us with bull-beggars, spirits, witches, urchens, elves, hags, fairies, satyrs, pans, fauns, syrens, kit with the can'stick, tritons, centaurs, dwarfs, giants, imps, calcars [astrologers], conjurors, nymphs, changelings, Incubus, Robin Good-fellow, the sporne, the mare, the man in the oak, the hell-wain, the firedrake, the puckle Tom-thumb, hob-goblin, Tom Tumbler, boneless, and other such bugs [terrors], that we are afraid of our own shadows: insomuch that some never fear the devil but in a dark night; and then a polled sheep is a perilous beast, and many times is taken for our father's soul, specially in a churchyard, where a right hardy man heretofore scant durst pass by night, but his hair would stand upright." (*Discovery of Witchcraft*, 1580.)

Addison tells us in *The Spectator* (No. 419) that "our forefathers loved to astonish themselves with the apprehensions of witchcraft, prodigies, and charms, and enchantments. There was not a village in England that had not a ghost in it; the

churchyards were all haunted; every large common circle of fairies belonging to it; and there was scarce a shepherd to be met with who had not seen a spirit."

Two other quotations are added from more recent writers that will help to fix in mind the generality of superstition in England in former times.

"In former times these notions were so prevalent that it was deemed little less than atheism to doubt them; and in many instances the terrors caused by them embittered the lives of a great number of persons of all ages; by degrees almost shutting them out of their own houses, and deterring them from going from one village to another after sunset. The room in which the head of a family had died was for a long time untenanted; particularly if they died without a will, or were supposed to have entertained any particular religious opinions. But if any disconsolate old maiden, or love-crossed bachelor, happened to dispatch themselves in their garters, the room where the deed was perpetrated was rendered forever afterward uninhabitable, and not infrequently was nailed up. If a drunken farmer, returning from market, fell from old Dobbin and broke his neck,—or a carter, under the same predicament, tumbled from his cart or wagon, and

was killed by it,—that spot was ever after haunted and impassable: in short there was scarcely a by-lane or cross-way but had its ghost, who appeared in the shape of a headless cow or horse; or clothed all in white, glared with its saucer eyes over a gate or stile. Ghosts of a superior rank, when they appeared abroad, rode in coaches drawn by six headless horses, and driven by a headless coachman and postillions. Almost every ancient manor house was haunted by some one at least of its former masters or mistresses, where, besides divers other noises, that of telling money was distinctly heard; and as for the churchyards, the number of ghosts that walked there, according to the village computation, almost equaled the living parishioners: to pass them at night was an achievement not to be attempted by any one in the parish, the sextons excepted; who perhaps, being particularly privileged, to make use of the common expression, never saw anything worse than themselves.” (*Grose’s Provincial Glossary*, p. 242.)

“Nothing is commoner in country places than for a whole family in a winter’s evening to sit round the fire and tell stories of apparitions and ghosts. Some of them have seen spirits in the shape of cows, and dogs, and horses; and some have seen even the devil himself, with a cloven foot.

“Another part of this conversation generally turns upon fairies. These, they tell you, have been frequently heard and seen; nay, there are some still living who were stolen away by them, and confined seven years. According to the description they give of them, who pretend to have seen them, they are in the shape of men, exceeding little: they are always clad in green, and frequent the woods and fields; when they make cakes (which is a work they have been often heard at) they are very noisy: and when they have done, they are full of mirth and pastime. But generally they dance in moonlight when mortals are asleep, and not capable of seeing them, as may be observed on the following morn; their dancing places being very distinguishable. For as they dance hand in hand and so make a circle in their dance, so next day there will be seen rings and circles on the grass.

“Another tradition they hold, and which is often talked of, is, that there are particular places allotted to spirits to walk in. Thence it was that formerly, such frequent reports were abroad of this and that particular place being haunted by a spirit, and that the common people say now and then, such a place is dangerous to be passed through, because a spirit walks there. Now, they'll further tell you, that some spirits have

lamented the hardness of their condition, by being obliged to walk in cold and uncomfortable places, and therefore desire the person who was so hardy as to speak to them, to gift them with a warmer walk, by some well grown hedge, or some shady vale, where they might be sheltered from the wind and rain.

“The last topic of this conversation I shall take notice of, shall be the tales of haunted houses. And indeed it is not to be wondered at that this is never omitted. For formerly almost every place had a house of this kind. If a house was seated on some melancholy place, or built in some old romantic manner; or if any particular accident had happened in it, such as murder, sudden death, or the like, to be sure that house had a mark set on it, and was afterwards esteemed the habitation of a ghost. In talking upon this point they generally show the occasion of the house’s being haunted, the merry pranks of the spirit, and how it was laid. Stories of this kind are infinite, and there are few villages which have not either had such an house in it, or near it.” (*Bourne’s Antiquities of the Common People.*)

With the fact of such widespread and deep-rooted notions of the truth of the folk-lore traditions in mind, one will not be surprised to find how hemmed about every-day life was by an in-



numerable miscellany of omens, good, bad, and indifferent.

Raven's eggs were good for the ague. A large house spider swallowed alive in treacle was a sure cure. The salamander's skin would keep one from sun burning. Tumours could be removed by stroking with a dead man's hand. *Cardus Benedictus* was called the Holy or Blessed thistle from its supposed virtue as an antidote for poison. The Thracian stone when touched cured grief and melancholy. Feeding on snakes was supposed to recover youth. Amulets were believed in and constantly worn. There were rings to counteract enchantments, charms against the evil effects of thunder—for it was the mysterious thunder-stone precipitated by a clap that the Elizabethan feared, not the lightning. There were waistcoats rendered shot-proof by charms. The carbuncle had the power of expelling evil spirits. It was a sign of excellent good luck to have the martlet build its nest about the house. Gerard, though a scientist, does not hesitate to record the following facts in his herbal (p. 147): "The roots of the garden angelica is a singular remedy against poison, and against the plague, and all infections taken by evil and corrupt air; if you do but take a piece of the root, and hold it in your mouth, or chew the same between your teeth, it doth most

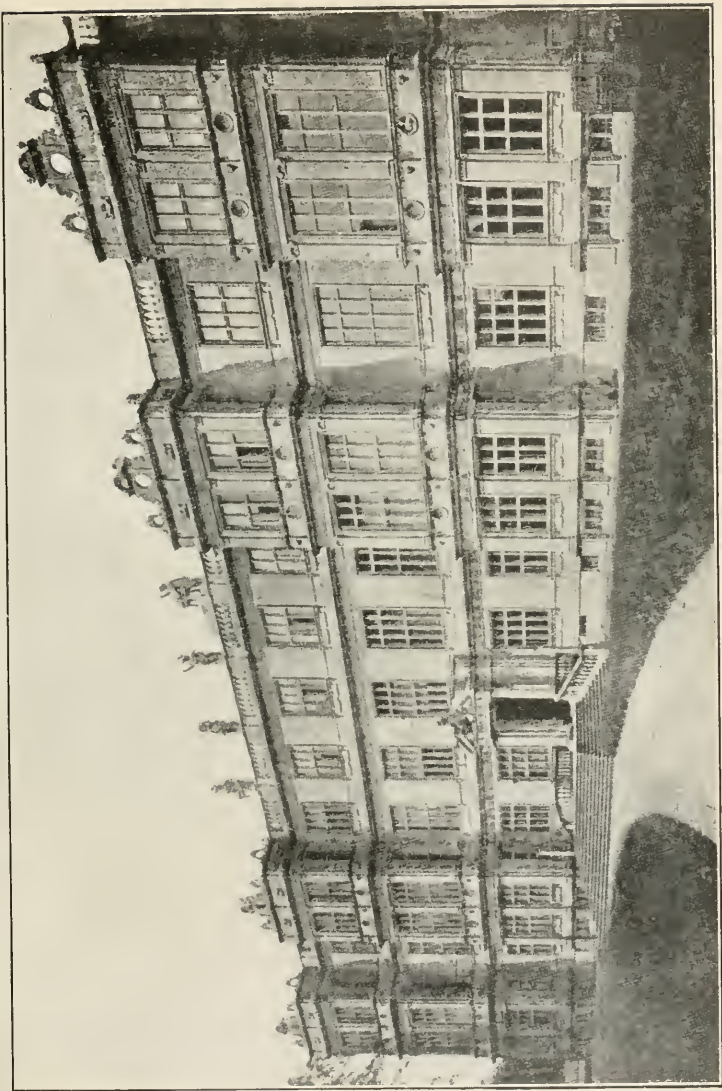


certainly drive away the pestilent air." This is but one of hundreds of the medical superstitions, some of them with more than a grain of truth, that clustered about plants or simples, in common use at that day.

This list of signs or superstitions with a favourable significance could be extended almost indefinitely; but omens of the opposite sort were even greater in number. It was ill luck to hear a toad croak, or the owl hoot. Mice only forsook houses before their fall. The withering of the bay tree was a sign of bad luck. Beasts of the field licking against the hair foretold a direful storm. Anything begun or finished during an eclipse was sure to turn out badly. It was a positive sign of an unlucky life to be born during the dog days. Friday was then as now, an unfortunate day on which to set out upon a journey, or on which to begin an important enterprise. It was a direful neglect if one passed a memorial cross without murmuring a pater noster. One who stumbled upon the threshold would certainly meet with trouble within. "He sleeps like a hare, with his eyes open, and that's no good sign." (Ford, *The Lover's Melancholy*, ii. 2.) It was bad luck to meet a splay-footed wench in the forenoon; so it was to sit at the foot of a sick bed. Anything out of the ordinary was inter-

preted usually as a bad sign rather than as a good one. Thus a ship painted black all over, without a white spot anywhere to be seen, raised great fear in the hearts of those who saw it. (See Heywood's *The Fair Maid of the West*, iv. 2.)

There were numerous indications that pointed directly at death. "It is an unlucky sign in the chamber of the sick to talk of marriages; for my mother sayeth that it foreshoweth death." (Lyly, *Sapho and Phao*, iii. 3.) One whose name was mentioned frequently on a death bed would not live long. Drake quotes the following list of signs that usually implied either death or some dreadful calamity: lamentings in the air, shaking and trembling of the earth, sudden gloom at noon-day, the appearance of meteors, eclipses of the sun and moon, the moon of a bloody hue, the shrieking of owls, the croaking of ravens, the shrilling of crickets, the night howling of dogs, the clicking of the death-watch, the chattering of pies, the wild neighing of horses, their running wild and eating each other, the cries of fairies, the gibbering of ghosts, the withering of bay trees, showers of blood, blood dripping thrice from the nose, horrid dreams, demoniacal voices, ghastly apparitions, winding sheets, corpse candles, night fires, and strange and fearful noises. Most of



LONGLEAT. ILLUSTRATIVE OF STRAIGHT LINES AS AN ELEMENT OF DESIGN.



these are referred to in the plays of Shakespeare alone.

Convulsions of nature on the grand scale were particularly apt of interpretation. They always heralded great events of world-wide importance, but were not always indicative of calamity. The births of great persons, Owen Glendower, for instance, were heralded by storms. "Every peer's birth sticks a new star in heaven." (Dekker, *The Whore of Babylon*.) A great storm with monstrous phenomena accompanying it preceded the murder of Cæsar and of Duncan. The madness of Lear occurred simultaneously with a tremendous upheaval of the elements. That such signs generally, though not always, foretold disaster, is expressed in the lines :

"For I have heard the meteors in the air,  
Of lesser form, less wonderful than these,  
Rather foretell of dangers imminent  
Than flatter us with future happiness."

"The sky is overcast, and there is a porspice [porpoise] even now seen at London Bridge, which is always the messenger of tempests." (Jonson, *Eastward Ho*, iii. 3.) Untimely storms were an indication of death.

People spoke of blood-drinking sighs, referring to the superstition that every sigh cost one a drop of blood. Sudden bleeding at the nose was an

ominous sign. "Ha, bleed? I would not have a sad and ominous fate hang o'er thee for a million: perhaps 'tis custom with you." (Heywood, *The Fair Maid of the West*.) Bloodshot eyes were cured by the pressure of a ring. The bloodstone hung about the neck would staunch a wound.

The juice of the mandrake would take away an artificial mole raised by magic. It was a matter of common belief that the mandrake gave a peculiar cry when torn from the ground. One who heard this cry was likely to go mad. "I have this night digged a mandrake . . . and I am grown mad with it." (Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi*.) This sound was also a sign of coming death and calamity. "Curses kill as doth the mandrake's groan." (*2 Henry VI.*, iii. 2.) "O hark, hark, The mandrake's shrieks are music to their cries, The very night is frightened, and the stars do drop like torches to behold the deed." (Heywood, *2 Edward IV.*)

Madmen were affected by the moon. The Elizabethans believed in the man in the moon, with a bundle of sticks on his back, and his dog following. Very sharp horns to the new moon indicated windy weather. The changeable nature of women was also attributed to the influence of the changing moon.

The raven was one of the most ominous of birds. It is mentioned in connection with Duncan's death. Ravens appear in *Edward IV.* before the battle of Poitiers. If ravens sat on a hen's eggs the chicks would be black. "O, it comes o'er my memory As doth the raven o'er the infected house, Boding to all." (*Othello*, iv. 1.) "Came he right now to sing a raven's note whose dismal tune bereft my vital power." (*2 Henry VI.*, iii. 2.) And again Marlowe, in *The Jew of Malta*, says:—

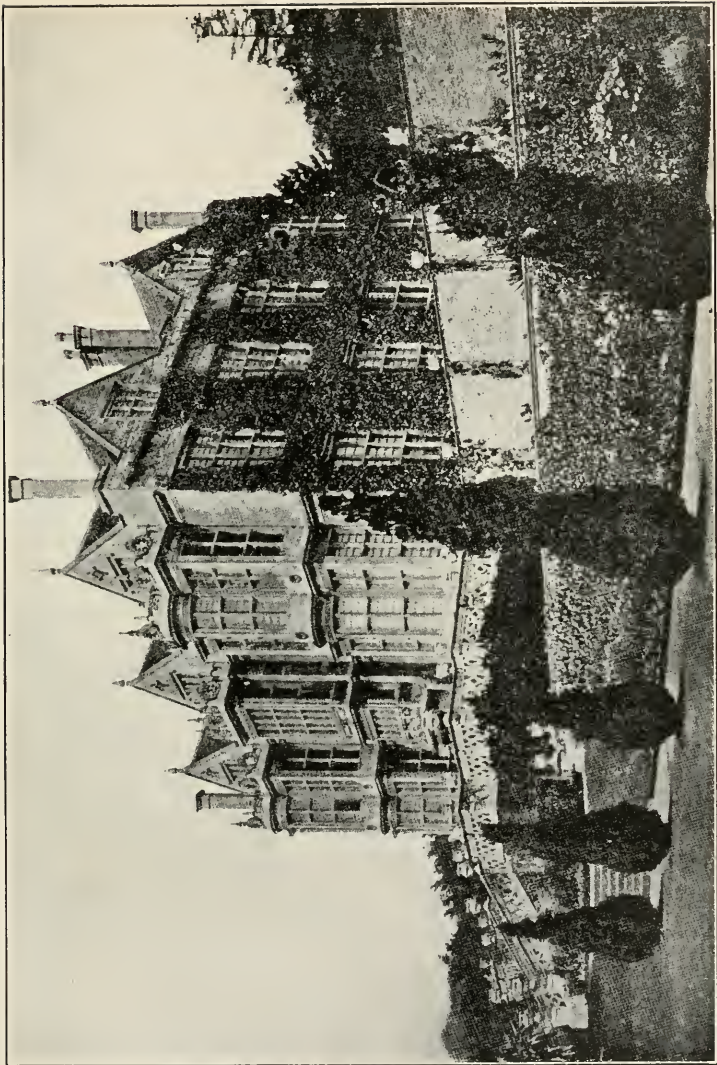
"Thus like the sad presaging raven, that tolls  
The sick man's passport in her hollow beak  
And in the shadow of the silent night  
Doth shake contagion from her sable wings."

Touching for the king's evil, so emphatically brought to our attention in *Macbeth*, was revived during the reign of James I. The interesting ceremony is circumstantially described in the following words by John Ernest, Duke of Saxe-Weimar, 1613: "When it [the service] concluded, his majesty stood up, his chair was removed to the table, and he seated himself in it. Then immediately the royal physician brought a little girl, two boys, a tall strapping youth, who were afflicted with incurable diseases, and bade them kneel down before his majesty; and as the physician had already examined the disease (which he is always obliged to do, in order that no deception



may be practiced), he then pointed out the affected part in the neck of the first child to his majesty, who thereupon touched it, pronouncing these words: 'Le Roy vous touche, Dieu vous guery,' and then hung a rose-noble round the neck of the little girl with a white silk ribbon. He did likewise with the other three. During the performance of this ceremony, the above named bishop, who stood close to the King, read from the gospel of Saint John, and lastly a prayer, whilst another clergyman knelt before him and made occasional responses during the prayer. Now when this was concluded, three lords—among whom were the earl of Montgomery and his brother—came forward at the same time, one bearing a golden ewer, another a basin, and a third a towel. They fell on their knees thrice before the king, who washed himself, and then went with the young Prince (who, with his Highness, walked before his Majesty) through the ante-room again into the apartment. His Highness, however, remained in the ante-room. This ceremony of healing is understood to be very distasteful to the King, and it is said he would willingly abolish it; but he cannot do so, because he assumes the title of king of France as well; for he does not cure as king of England, by whom this power is said to have been possessed, but as a King of France, who ever had





THE DUKE'S HOUSE, BRADFORD ON AVON, ILLUSTRATING THE IRREGULARITY OF EXTERIOR CONSTRUCTION.



such a gift from God. The Kings of England first ventured to exercise this power when they upwards of two centuries and a half ago had possession of nearly the whole of France, and when Henry VI. had himself crowned at Paris as King of France." (Quoted by Rye, p. 151.)

This miscellaneous list of omens could be continued indefinitely. It is the purpose, however, of the present chapter to illustrate the generality of superstition rather than to record a complete list of beliefs. The people believed in angels who guarded or pursued the individual to destruction. The time was especially well provided with devil lore. Numerous contemporary devils of more than local fame are referred to in the old plays. Scot is detailed in his attack upon devil worship. Magic of all sorts was practised upon every hand. Palmistry, sooth-saying, various kinds of fortune-telling and divining all had their staunch adherents. The publication of almanacs containing forecasts of the weather, medical advice, and prognostications of various other kinds constituted a lucrative business.

Though Nash in *The Terrors of Night* violently attacks the theory of interpretation of dreams then in vogue, he was somewhat in advance of his time. It was well enough for him to say that "Anie meate that in the day time we eat against

our stomackes begetteth a dismal dreame;" but his readers knew better than that what a dismal dream stood for. The Elizabethan plays abound in allusions to the fulfilment of dreams. Every one recalls Clarence's dream, and the dream of Calpurnia. Dreams were often significant in other ways. Maids hoped to dream of their future husbands on Saint Agnes's eve. "I dreamed mine eye tooth was loose, and that I thrust it out with my tongue . . . it foretelleth the loss of a friend." (Lyly, *Sapho and Phao*, iv. 3.) "They that in the morning dream of eating, Are in danger of sickness, or of beating, Or shall hear of a wedding, fresh beating." (Lyly, *Mother Bombe*, iii. 4.)

## CHAPTER XI

### BIRTH—BAPTISM—MARRIAGE—DEATH

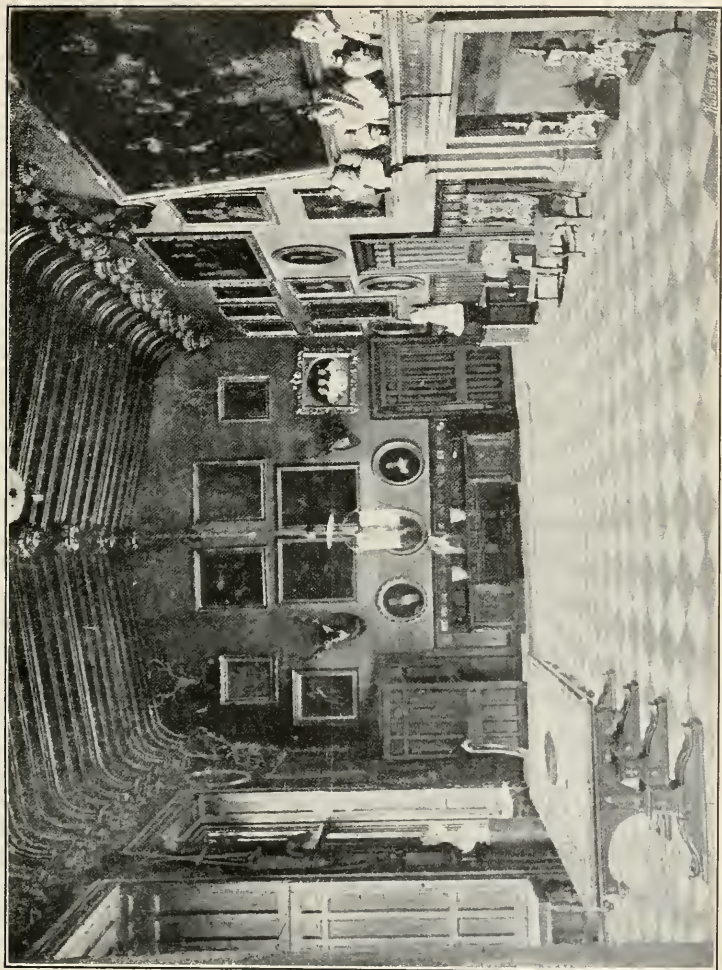
**M**ANY were the superstitious rites pertaining to birth, marriage, and death. The Elizabethans talked freely and without shame among themselves in a manner that has gone out of vogue in our more artificial age—hence it is not surprising that many of their superstitions related to the time preceding birth. Certain features of the body indicated the likelihood of children. An oily palm was thought to be a fruitful prognostication. A child got when drunk was certain to be a girl. An affectionate husband was likely to suffer from toothache during his wife's pregnancy. Pregnant women and women in child-bed were especially liable to be stolen by fairies either to nurse the fairy children or to nurse human children who had been stolen by the woodland folk. We are told that a piece of bread, or iron, or the Bible put in the bed in the time of labour was a protection against the malice of the fairies. The knowledge that one's wife was with child was often the occasion for building a bonfire in celebration of the fact.

Birth was also commemorated by the building

of huge bonfires, and by other public rejoicing. For a month or more the new-born infant led a strenuous life. Two dangers were immediately to be guarded against. The child might be overlooked, or it might be stolen by the fairies. Many people possessed the evil eye, a power that enabled them to overlook one, or bewitch one, with baneful results. Out and out witches by reputation would in no case be allowed in the neighbourhood of an unbaptised infant; but other people of ugly feature and darksome reputation might be guilty of exercising the power of the evil eye. This custom is the subject of frequent allusion. Overlooking, however, was not confined to the time of infancy. In *The Merry Wives*, Pistol cries out of Falstaff, "Vile worm, thou wast o'erlook'd even in thy birth."

More dangerous yet was the malice of the fairies. Only people of evil minds exercised the above-mentioned malicious practice, and, though fairies were on the whole a goodly kind of folk and well disposed towards human beings, there were fairies of malicious inclinations. Perhaps this was why their ill-timed acts were so hard to guard against, for they stole the human children out of love. Fairies were not only beautiful in themselves but notoriously fond of beautiful children. They stole such on every occasion.





THE GREAT HALL, CHARLECOTE.





Every mother who gazed for the first time upon a lovely child at her bosom felt a thrill not of joy alone but also of fear—secret fear lest his beautiful exterior should arouse the longing of the fairy folk, causing them to steal him, leaving behind in his place an ugly changeling. Equally certain was every mother whose offspring did not come up to expectation that it was a changeling, and that her own beautiful child had been stolen, perhaps at the very moment of birth. In a way, this was a comfortable belief and a useful sop to maternal vanity. Whether the child were merely ugly, or whether increasing years showed it to be dull, or idiotic, the cause was always the same—what more could one expect from a changeling! Then, too, as people believed more or less in the goodness of fairies there was always room for hope that repentance would lead to the return of the original child. Neither prince nor pauper was exempt from this terrible danger. Note the sincere exclamation that falls from the lips of King Henry IV.:

“O that it could be prov'd  
That some night tripping fairy had exchang'd  
In cradle clothes our children where they lay,  
And call'd mine Percy, his Plantagenet!”

Mr. Dyer is my authority for the following description of a practice so similar to the usual

treatment of insane people in the time of Shakespeare: "To induce the fairies to restore the stolen child," he says, "it was customary in Ireland to put the one supposed of being a changeling on a hot shovel, or to torment it in some other way. It seems that in Denmark the mother heats the oven, and places the changeling on the peel, pretending to put it in, or whips it severely with a rod, or throws it into the water. In the western isles of Scotland idiots are supposed to be the fairies' changelings, and in order to regain the lost child, parents have recourse to the following device. They place the changeling on the beach, below high-water mark, when the tide is out, and pay no heed to its screams, believing that the fairies, rather than suffer their offspring to be drowned by the rising water, will convey it away, and restore the child they had stolen. The sign that this has been done is the cessation of the child's screaming."

The surest protection against such dangers was baptism; hence the haste on the part of superstitious people to have the ceremony performed as soon as possible. The christening was the occasion of much rejoicing and public festivity. The child was often borne upon a costly and beautifully embroidered cushion, the child itself being covered during the ceremony with the bearing

cloth. "Here's a sight for thee," cries one in *The Winter's Tale* at the discovery of Perdita, "Here's a sight for thee: look thee, a bearing cloth for a squire's child! Look thee here; take up, take up, boy; open 't." "A yard of lawn will serve thee for a christening cloth," occurs in Middleton's *The Witch*. During the ceremony the priest laid on the child's face the face-cloth, or chrisom-cloth, of pure white linen, emblematic of purity. This was worn by the child till after the churching of the mother. Infants who died during the period allotted to the wearing of the chrisom were frequently alluded to in the records of deaths merely as chrisoms. The sweet innocence of infancy is implied by Dame Quickly in her well-known remark: "'A made a finer end, and went away an it had been any christom child."

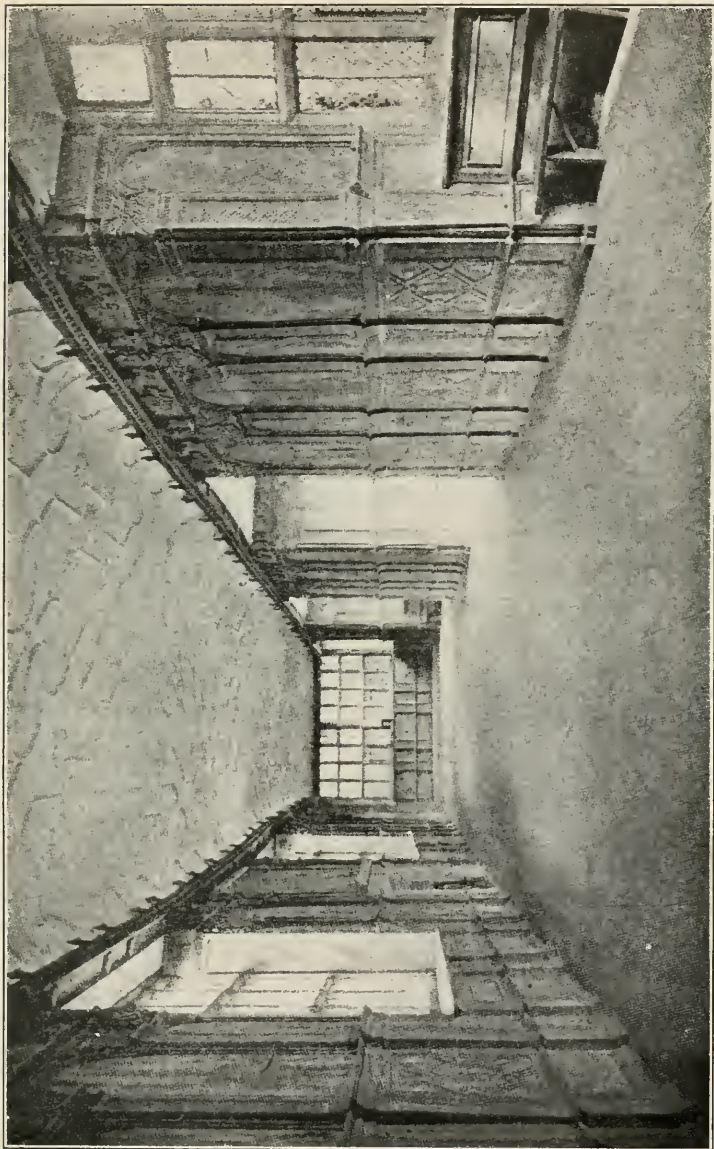
It was the custom to give presents at the christening. In Stow's *Chronicle* (Ed. 1631), we read that at about this time it is not customary "for godfathers and godmothers generally to give plate at the baptism of children, but only to give 'christening shirts,' with little bands and cuffs, wrought either with silk or blue thread. The best of them for chief persons were edged with small lace of black silk and gold, the highest price of which, for great men's children, was seldom above

a noble, and the common sort, two, three, or four, and six shillings apiece.”

A few years earlier, however, in the time of Shakespeare, it was indeed the custom to give presents of plate, often of great value, at christenings. Money, jewelry, and cups were common presents, but the form of plate considered necessary as a gift from the sponsors was one or more of the well-known apostle spoons. These were wrought with the handle terminating in a carved image representing one of the apostles. Sometimes one, two, or more were given; and the finest example of extravagant generosity on the occasion consisted in presenting the child with a full set of the twelve apostles. In *King Henry VIII.*, when Cranmer professes himself unworthy to be sponsor to the young princess, the king cries out: “Come, come, my lord, you’d spare your spoons.”

In a collection of anecdotes compiled by Sir Nicholas L’Estrange under the name of *Merry Passages and Jest*s (MSS. Harl. 6395) occurs the following amusing bits of repartee:

“Shakespeare was godfather to one of Ben Jonson’s children, and after the child’s christening, being in a deep study, Jonson came to cheer him up, and ask’d him why he was so melancholy. ‘No, faith, Ben,’ says he, ‘not I; but I have been



THE GALLERY AT HADDON HALL.



considering a great while what should be the fittest gift for me to bestow upon my godchild, and I have resolved at last.' 'I pr'y thee, what?' says he. 'I' faith, Ben, I'le e'en give him a dozen good Latin spoons, and thou shalt translate them.'" Latten was an inferior kind of metal resembling brass.

Following the christening was the gossips' feast. This was the occasion of much fraternal drinking and exchange of sentiment. *The Bachelor's Banquet*, published in 1603, and attributed to Thomas Dekker the dramatist, says in regard to the gossips' feast: "What cost and trouble it will be to have all things fine against the Christening Day; what store of sugar, biskets, comphets, and caraways, marmalet, and marchpane, with all kinds of sweet suckers and superfluous banqueting stuff, with a hundred other odd and needless trifles, which at that time must fill the pocket of dainty dames."

The falling off in generosity exemplified by the gradual cessation of the habit of giving presents of plate seemed to foster a notion that the gossips no longer deserved their feast. At any rate, we read the following in regard to the custom in *Shipman's Gossip*, published in 1666.

"Especially since gossips now  
Eat more at christenings than bestow.



Formerly when they used to troul  
Gilt bowls of sack, they gave the bowl;  
Two spoons at least; an use ill kept;  
'Tis now well if our own be left."

The birthday was annually commemorated by a great feast, often given at high noon. An interesting superstition concerning the time of infancy is thus alluded to in Dekker's *Westward Ho*. "I do assure you if a woman of any remarkable face in the world give her child suck, look how many wrinkles be in the nipple of her breast—so many will be in her forehead by that time twelve month."

Courtship in the time of Shakespeare was carried on in a more fearless though less refined manner than at the present time. Except for this people seem to have fallen in love then much as they have done at other times in the history of the race. It was the custom to send gifts and tokens to the sweetheart; and it was quite the fad to accompany the present with a set of verses which, at a period of several years either way from 1600, usually were couched in the form of a sonnet. Whether it was the sonnet vogue which produced such an appalling mass of worthless sonnet literature, justifying Mr. Sidney Lee's comparison of their authors to "mere wallowers in the bogs that lie at the foot of the poetic



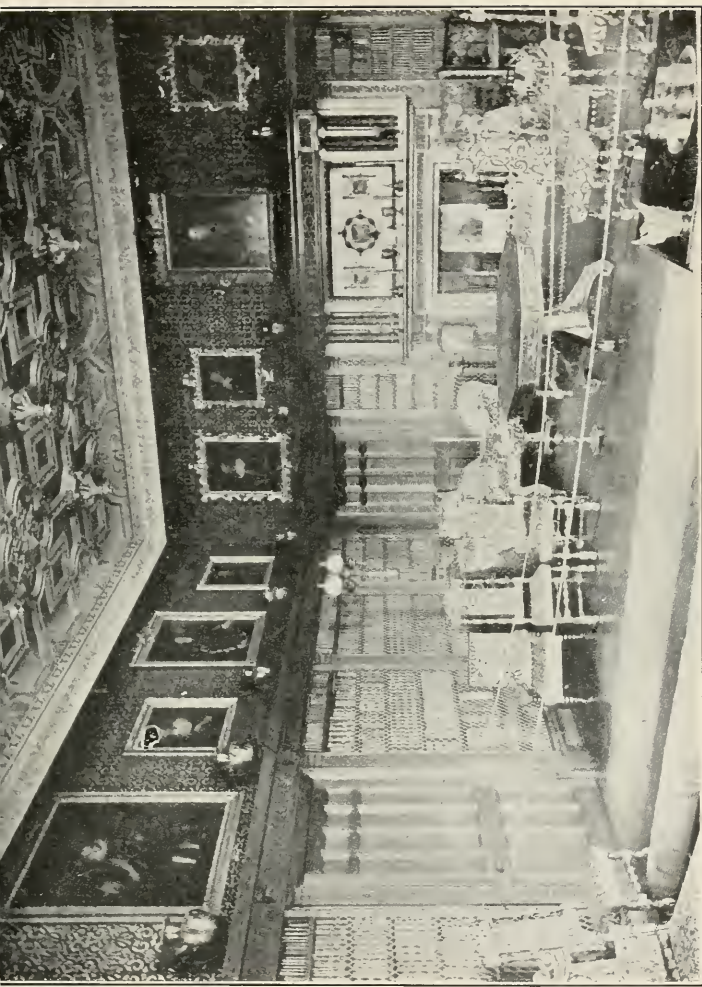
mountain,”—whether it was this that fostered the custom on the part of lovers, or whether their ill-advised but popular attempts accounts for the worthless character of so much of the production, it is hard to say. Certainly the two, to a certain extent, went hand in hand, for the wholly unpoetic lover had his literature “done out” by the professional verse writer.

It was customary for the sad lover, who went about “sighing like a furnace,” to drink his sweetheart’s health in public with a right hearty will. In fact, the vivacity of his toast and the length of his draught were a fair indication to his fellows of the depth of his passion. On such an occasion the sentimental lover was likely to be furnished with his lady-love’s favour, which he wore not upon his crest as in the former days of chivalry, but upon the more modern love-lock. Even when the hair was cropped fairly close, fashion decreed that one lock behind the ear on one or both sides should be left long. To this, the love-lock, was tied the sweetheart’s favour, much as we attach a blue ribbon to the braided mane or tail of the prize winner at a horse show. We are reminded of this by a line in *Edward II.* (ii. 2), “Where women’s favours hang like labels down.” Again, in Lyly’s *Mydas* (iii. 2), “Your love-locks wreathed with silken twist, or shaggie to fall on your shoulders.”

A sweetheart's picture as well as her bracelets were frequently in possession of her lover. In case of a quarrel all presents were immediately returned to the rightful owner.

It was not considered good form to propose to a girl until after the parents' consent had been obtained; and then it was as often they as the lover who submitted the proposition to the young woman for consideration. The old plays furnish us with more allusions to the need of the lover's endeavour to gain the aid of the mother in his suit than of the father. Gifts to the mother are of great service in Heywood's *The Fair Maid of the Exchange*. One necessity for this previous sanction of the parent was due to the fact that it would be a reckless lover indeed who forgot the marriage portion, no matter how deeply he was in love. The father's will for a marriage was all in all to the daughter, and few girls dared to express dissatisfaction with a marriage already planned. Neither of these facts is exaggerated in the following quotation from Lyly's *Mother Bombe* (i. 3):

“Parents in these days are grown peevish, they rock their children in their cradles till they sleep, and cross them about their bridals till their hearts ache. Marriage among them has become a market. What will you give with your daughter?”



THE LIBRARY, CHISLECOTE.



What jointure will you make for your son? And many a match is broken off for a penny more or less, as though they could not afford their children at such a price; when none should cheapen such ware but affection, and none buy it but love. . . . Indeed our parents take great care to make us ask blessing and say grace whenas we are little ones, and growing to years of judgment, they deprive us of the greatest blessing, and the most gracious things to our minds: they give us pap with a spoon before we can speak, and when we speak for that we love, pap with a hatchet: because their fancies being grown musty with hoary age, therefore nothing can relish in their thoughts that savours of sweet youth: they study twenty years together to make us grow as straight as a wand, and in the end by bowing us, make us as crooked as a cammock. For mine own part (sweet Candius) they shall pardon me, for I shall measure my love by mine own judgment, not my father's purse or peevishness. Nature hath made me his child not his slave."

How like a slave's was the treatment of an Elizabethan girl, who opposed her father's will in marriage may be read in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and in *Romeo and Juliet*. Though the scene in the latter play where Capulet abuses Juliet is doubtless introduced for comic effect, the

modern reader should remember that the scene was comic to the Elizabethan audience merely because Capulet was overdoing a natural and customary *rôle*. In a milder way Ophelia is responsible for much of the pathos in Hamlet's situation because of her unquestioning obedience to her father's arbitrary decree. Yet this was what a well bred Elizabethan girl should have done and the action should not be interpreted as an indication of the colourless character of the heroine.\*

Young women in Shakespeare's time were married at an earlier age than to-day, sometimes at such a tender age that it was necessary to wait several years before they were old enough to live with their husbands as man and wife. Juliet and her mother were brides at fourteen. Fifteen or sixteen was a common marriageable age. And the woman who reached twenty unmarried had justly earned the title of confirmed spinster.

\* Though Ophelia is not, literally speaking, an Elizabethan girl, it should be remembered that Shakespeare in common with his fellow dramatists interpreted their characters in accordance with his own times regardless of the local time or place represented in the story. Thus Hamlet and the grave-diggers both speak of current affairs in London. In almost any play allusions to the customs of Elizabethan England can be discovered mingled with what little local colour the original of the play furnished. The idea of accuracy in this respect was not yet familiar to the Elizabethans.

The marriage ceremony was often, if not generally, preceded by the ceremony of betrothal. The latter should take place in church and be performed by the priest; yet it was not always performed in church, and the presence of a priest was not deemed absolutely essential provided that a responsible witness were present. The following words constituted the oath administered on this occasion: "You swear by God and his holy saints herein and by all the saints of Paradise, that you will take this woman whose name is N. to wife within forty days if holy church will permit?" The priest then joining their hands, said: "And you thus affianced yourselves?" to which the parties answered "Yes, sir."

The ceremony was concluded by some sign or token of constancy, thus, a piece of gold might be broken, each retaining a portion. Exchange of rings was commoner. One kind of ring, the gimmel ring, was frequently used on this occasion. It consisted of three rings so closely wrought that they fitted together like one ring. One, however, who understood the puzzling structure could easily split them apart into three separate rings. One was given to each party to the betrothal, and the third to the priest or to the principal witness.

From the frequent allusion to this custom in

the plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, it is to be inferred that the betrothal was still of frequent occurrence. There is no reason, however, to believe that the limit of forty days as the period intervening between betrothal and marriage was regarded as binding.

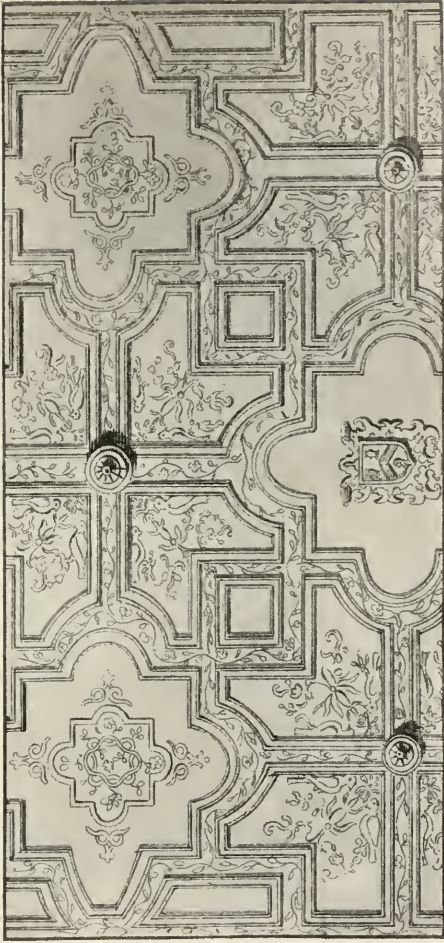
Such a ceremony is circumstantially recorded in *Twelfth Night* (iv. 3). Olivia says to Sebastian:

“Now go with me and this holy man  
Into the chantry by: there before him,  
And underneath that consecrated roof,  
Plight me the full assurance of your faith;  
That my most jealous and too doubtful soul  
May live at peace. He shall conceal it  
Whiles you are willing it should come to note;  
What time we will our celebration keep  
According to my birth.”

It will be noticed here and elsewhere that the terms husband and wife were usable after the ceremony of betrothal, notwithstanding the fact that the marriage proper had not yet taken place. Later, the priest, describing what had passed between the couple, says:

“A contract of eternal bond of love,  
Confirmed by mutual joinder of your hands,  
Attested by the holy close of lips,  
Strength'd by interchangement of your rings;  
And all the ceremony of this compact  
Seal'd in my function, by my testimony.”





A CEILING IN SIR PAUL PINDAR'S HOUSE, LONDON.  
(From a print in Wilkinson's collection.)



Recalling the first of the above quotations, one notes in Olivia's words the motive for the betrothal, namely that it was but little different from a secret marriage subsequently to be openly avowed. Though much evidence is lacking on the subject, it is generally supposed that betrothal carried with it the privileges of the marriage bed. Opposed to this view, however, are the words of Mr. Sidney Lee, who says: "Shakespeare's apologists have endeavoured to show that the public betrothal or formal 'troth-plight' which at the time was a common prelude to a wedding carried with it all the privileges of marriage. But neither Shakespeare's detailed description of a betrothal nor the solemn verbal contract that ordinarily preceded marriage lends the contention much support." (*Life of Shakespeare*, p. 23). On the other hand are the words of Leontes in *The Winter's Tale*:

"My wife's a hobby-horse; deserves a name  
As rank as any flax-wench, that puts to  
Before her troth-plight."

Sunday was a common day for weddings. The bridal party assembled at the house of the bride whence the procession marched to the church. On one occasion the bride was "attired in a gown of sheep's russet, and a kirtle of fine worsted, her hair attired with a billement of gold, and her hair as

yellow as gold hanging down behind her, which was curiously combed and plaited, she was led to the church between two sweet boys, with bride laces and rosemary tied about their silken sleeves. There was a fair bride cup of silver, gilt, carried before her, whereon was a goodly branch of rosemary, gilded very fair, hung about with silken ribbands of all colours. Musicians came next, then a group of maidens, some bearing great bride cakes, others garlands of wheat finely gilded; and thus they passed on to the church." (*History of Jack Newbury*. Quoted by Drake, i. 223.) The above describes a rural wedding. In Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, the bride walks to the church through the streets of London masked. The bride-laces referred to were long ribbons of gay appearance distributed among the guests. They were used to bind up the rosemary twigs and other flowers carried, and after the ceremony used as ornaments in the hat or twisted in the hair.

The priest hastened on in order to await the bridal party with its lively music and joyous laughter at the door of the church. Here a bowl of wine was presented, out of which the happy couple quenched their thirst. It was brought forward again at the end of the ceremony when all the guests present likewise shared in the contents of the bowl. Among the household ordi-

nances of Henry VII. is one "For the Marriage of a Princess—Then pots of ipocras to be ready, and to be put into cups with sop, and to be born to the estates, and to take a sop and drink." The bowl of wine was used at the wedding of Queen Mary to Philip of Spain at Winchester. And few forget the exaggeration of the custom that is set down in *The Taming of the Shrew* (iii. 2):

Petruchio "stamped and swore,  
As if the vicar meant to cozen him.  
But after many ceremonies done,  
He calls for wine:—'A health!' quoth he as if  
He had been aboard, carousing to his mates  
After a storm:—quaffed off the muscadel,  
And threw the sops all in the sexton's face;  
Having no other reason  
But that his beard grew thin and hungerly,  
And seemed to ask him sops as he was drinking."

The same Petruchio "took the bride about the neck and kissed her lips with such a clamorous smack that, at the parting, all the church did echo." The act was customary, only the manner was an innovation.

Though the hair of the bride was braided in the wedding procession described above, it hung down her back; and the more frequent custom was to let it fall quite loose. At the marriage of Elizabeth Stuart she wore "her hair dishevelled and hang-

ing down her shoulders.” (Dyer, p. 353.) And from Heywood we quote the couplet:

“At length the blushing bride comes, with her hair  
Dishevelled 'bout her shoulders.”

Flowers were lavishly used at weddings. Rosemary, for remembrance, was especially suitable.

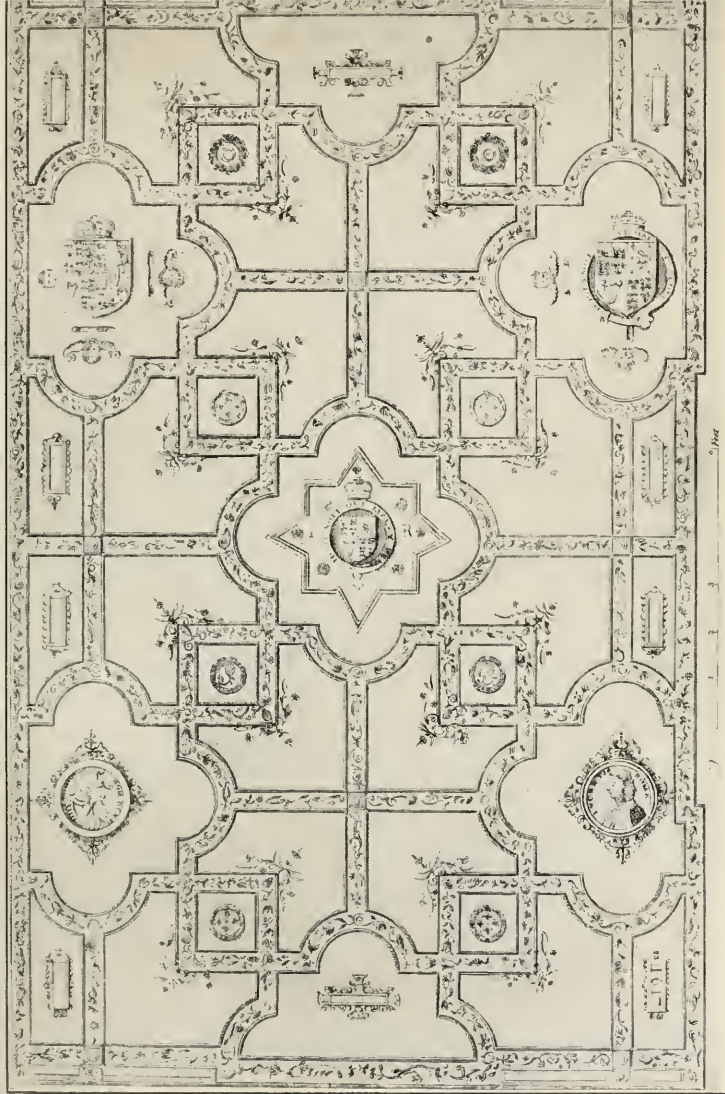
“Were the rosemary branches dipped, and all  
The hippocras and cakes eat and drunk off;  
Were these two arms encompass'd with the hands  
Of bachelors to lead me to the church.”

—Beaumont and Fletcher, *The Scornful Lady*.

Rosemary, however, was not the only flower strewed before the bride on her way to church or in the church itself. The following bit of verse is found in the fifteenth song of Drayton's unpoetic but interesting *Polyolbion*:

“Thus for the nuptial hour, all fitted point device,  
Whilst some still busied are in decking of the bride,  
Some others were again as seriously employ'd  
In strewing of those herbs, at bridals used that be;  
Which everywhere they throw with bounteous hands and  
free.

The healthful balm and mint, from their full laps do fly,  
The scentful camomile, the verdurous costmary.  
The hot muscado oft with milder maudlin cast:  
Strong tansy, fennel cool, they prodigally waste:  
Clear isop, and therewith the comfortable thyme,  
Germander with the rest, each thing then in her prime;  
As well of wholesome herbs, as every pleasant flower,  
Which nature here produced, to fit this happy hour.  
Amongst these strewing kinds, some other wild that grow,  
As burnel, all aboard, and meadow-wort they throw.”



A CEILING IN OLDBOURNE HALL, LONDON.  
(From a print in Wilkinson's collection.)





There are sufficient allusions in contemporary literature to establish the fact that the curious custom was then in vogue of brides wearing knives and daggers as part of their wedding costume. In the 1597 quarto Juliet is so provided when she attends the friar's cell, as well as at the time when she took the potion. A bride in Dekker's *Match me in London*, cries :

“See, at my girdle hang my wedding knives!  
With those dispatch me.”

And the *Witch of Edmonton* supplies the quotation :

“But see, the bridegroom and bride come; the new  
Pair of Sheffield knives fitted both to one sheath.”

Great and elaborate festivities followed the wedding; and though wheat was thrown upon the pair as we now throw rice, symbolical of fruitfulness, and though the old shoe was also thrown as a token of good luck, it was not customary for the groom and bride immediately to depart upon a wedding trip. On the contrary, they remained as the principal figures in the merry-making that followed—often lasting over several days.

The guests wore scarves, gloves, and other favours. The bride cake, which was first carried to the church, was, after the ceremony, distributed among the guests. Dancing was one of the im-

portant kinds of merriment. It was, in accordance with a tradition of long standing, incumbent upon the bride to dance with each and every guest present. In the *Christian State of Matrimony* (1543) we read: "Then must the poor bride keep foot with a[ll] dancers, and refuse none, how scabbed, foul, drunken, rude, and shameless soever he be."

Readers of *The Taming of the Shrew* recall how necessary it was to marry Katharine first so that her younger sister might decently and in order approach the bridal altar. In rare cases, however, a younger sister was permitted to marry first. On such occasions, the older unmarried sisters were compelled to mingle barefoot in the dancing that followed the ceremony. It is to this custom that Katharine refers so angrily in the words:

"She is your treasure, she must have a husband:  
I must dance barefoot on her wedding day,  
And, for your love to her, lead apes in hell."

If the elder sister refused to perform this ceremony, she would die an old maid; and for such the Elizabethans could imagine no more profitable occupations during the long years after death than to lead apes in hell. In weddings among those of great wealth and position the masque, which is elsewhere described, formed one of the principal

entertainments. But high and low, rich and poor alike made much of the wedding feast. All sorts of dishes were cooked in great variety, especially many kinds of highly spiced cakes and drinks.

As the festivities drew to a close on the evening of the wedding day the women present took off the bride and put her to bed. Later, the same was done by the men for the groom. The ceremony of blessing the bridal bed, which followed, is thus described by the antiquary, Mr. Jeafriſon (*Brides and Bridals*, i. 98): "On the evening of the wedding day, when the married couple sat in state in the bridal bed, before the exclusion of the guests, who assembled to commend them yet again to heaven's keeping, one or more priests, attended by acolytes swinging to and fro lighted censers, appeared in the crowded chamber to bless the couch, its occupants, and the truckle bed, and fumigate the room with hallowing incense."

Shakespeare had the custom in mind when he wrote the words for Oberon :

"Now until the break of day,  
Through the house each fairy stray.  
To the best bride bed will we,  
Which by us blessed shall be;  
And the issue there create  
Ever shall be fortunate."

"It is recorded in France," Mr. Dyer tells us,

“that on frequent occasions, the priest was improperly detained till midnight, while the wedding guests rioted in the luxuries of the table, and made use of language that was extremely offensive to the clergy. It was therefore ordained, in the year 1577, that the ceremony of blessing the nuptial bed should for the future be performed in the daytime, or at least before supper, and in the presence of the bride and bridegroom, and of their nearest relatives only.”

Early the next morning the couple were roused from slumber by a serenade, usually the “Hunt’s up,” or hunting song which so frequently preceded the great hunt that had been planned for the second day of merriment. However great the celebration during this period, all things usually went off decently and in order. In the country, however, the case was not exactly the same. There the merry-making often became exaggerated to boisterous buffoonery. So different was the appearance of a rural wedding from the more decorous ceremony in vogue in London that Leicester considered the representation of such a scene suitable for the entertainment of the Queen when she visited his castle. Laneham, who wrote a description in the form of a *Letter on the Queen’s Entertainment at Kenilworth Castle* in 1575, is so circumstantial in his narrative of the



ORNAMENTAL CEILING IN CROSBY HALL, LONDON.  
(From a print in Wilkinson's collection.)



preliminary procession that the interesting account is here set down entire :

“ Thus were they marshalled. First, all the lustie lads and bold bachelors of the parish suitably, every wight with his blue buckram bride-lace upon a branch of green broom (cause rosemary is scant there), and his alder pole for a spear in his right hand, in martial order ranged on afore, two and two in a rank : Some with a hat, some in a cap, some a coat, some a jerkin, some for lightness in his doublet and his hose, clean trust with a point afore : Some boots and no spurs, he spurs and no boots, and he neither one nor t’other : One a saddle, another a pad or a pannel fastened with a cord, for girths wear geason [were scarce]. And these to the number of a sixteen wight riding men and well beseen. But the bridegroom foremost, in his father’s tawny jacket (for his friends were fain that he should be a bridegroom before the Queen), a fair straw hat with a capital crown, steeple-wise on his head : a pair of harvest gloves on his hands, as a sign of good husbandry : A pen and inkhorn at his back ; for he would be known to be bookish : lame of a leg, that in his youth was broken at foot-ball : Well-beloved yet of his mother, that lent him a new muffler for a napkin that was tied to his girdle for losing. It was no small sport to mark this

minion in his full appointment, that through great schoolation, became as formal as his action, as he had been a bridegroom indeed; with this special grace by the way, that ever as he would have framed him the better countenance, with the worse face he looked.

“ Well, sir, after these horsemen, a lively morris-dance, according to the ancient manner: six dancers, maid-marian, and the fool. Then three pretty puzels (maids, or damsels from *pucelle*), as bright as a breast of bacon, of a thirty year old a piece, that carried three special spice cakes of a bushel of wheat (they had it by measure out of my lord’s bake-house), before the bride: Cicely with set countenance, and lips so demurely simmering, as it had been a mare cropping of a thistle. After these a lovely lubber woorts, a freckle faced, red-haired, clean trussed in his doublet and his hose taken up now indeed by commission, for that he was so loth to come forward, for reverence belike of his new cut canvass doublet; and would by his good will have been but a gazer, but found to be a meet actor for his office: That was to bear the bride-cup, formed of a sweet sucket barrel, a fair turned foot set to it, all seemly besilvered and parcel gilt, adorned with a beautiful branch of broom, gayly begilded for rosemary; from which two broad bride-laces of



red and yellow buckram begilded, and gallantly streaming by such wind as there was, for he carried it aloft: This gentle cup-bearer yet had his freckled physiognomy somewhat unhappily infested as he went, by the busy flies, that flocked about the bride-cup for the sweetness of the sucket that it savoured on; but he, like a tall fellow, withstood their malace stoutly (see what manhood may do), beat them away, killed them by scores, stood to his charge, and marched on in good order.

“Then followed the worshipful bride, led (after the country manner) between two ancient parishioners, honest townsmen. But a stale stallion, and a well spread (hot as the weather was), God wot, and ill smelling was she: a thirty-five year old, of colour brown bay, not very beautiful indeed, but ugly, foul, ill-favoured; yet marvellous vain of the office, because she heard she should dance before the Queen, in which feat she thought she would foot it as finely as the best: Well, after this bride came there two by two and two, a dozen damsels for bridemaids; that for favour, attire, for fashion and cleanliness, were as meet for such a bride as a treen ladle for a porridge pot; more (but for fear of carrying all clean) had been appointed, but these few were enow.”

Concerning death the Elizabethans entertained many superstitious notions and performed numerous superstitious rites. It was, doubtless, the earnest seriousness of the moment that prompted them to believe that people about to die were often for a moment on the borderland between life and death, thereby seeing beyond, a fact which found expression in the form of prophecy. "Methinks I am a prophet new inspired, And thus, expiring, do foretell of him," cries Gaunt in *Richard II.* ii. 1). And again, Percy, in *Henry IV.* (v. 4), alludes to the belief in the words:

"O, I could prophesy,  
But that the earthly and cold hand of death  
Lies on my tongue."

A sudden brightening of the spirits often preceded death and was frequently regarded as a sign.

"How oft, when men are at the point of death,  
Have they been merry! which their keepers call  
A lightning before death."

(*Romeo and Juliet*, v. 3.)

And again, in the last act, immediately before Romeo receives the news that prompts him to take his life, he exclaims:

"If I may trust the flattering truth of sleep,  
My dreams presage some joyful news at hand:  
My bosom's lord sits lightly on his throne;  
And all this day an unaccustom'd spirit  
Lifts me above the ground with cheerful thoughts."



PAINTED CEILING IN CROSBY HALL, LONDON.  
(From a print in Wilkinson's collection.)



Strange noises preceded death; so, in many cases, did direful storms, especially if the death were the result of a crime.

It was customary at that time to draw the pillow from beneath the head of dying persons in order to accelerate the passage to the world beyond. "Pluck stout men's pillows from below their heads" is a line from *Timon of Athens*. It was thought hard to die on feathers plucked from a dove. This is what gave rise to the above superstition, for there was always a chance of some of the tabooed feathers having got among the others used to stuff the pillow.

Agents of the deities that ruled the upper and the lower worlds waited upon a man at the moment of death. The Elizabethans were in ever constant dread lest on such occasions the agent of the devil should prove the more powerful of the two. Signing the cross, incantations, and many other rites besides earnest prayer were resorted to in order to drive away these evil spirits. Recall Henry's appeal at the bedside of Beaufort:

"O thou eternal mover of the heavens,  
Look with a gentle eye upon this wretch!  
O beat away the busy meddling fiend  
That lays strong siege unto this wretch's soul,  
And from his bosom purge this black despair!"

Perhaps the most popular and wide-spread superstition of this kind was that which related to

the appearance of corpse candles before death. When a person was about to die a pale flame would appear at the window of the room in which he lay. It would hover there for a moment, then disappear in the direction of the churchyard, traversing the same path along which the body would subsequently be carried. It would stop and burn more brightly for a while over the spot to be occupied by the grave. Sometimes this apparition took the form of a procession. Laveterius, who has already been quoted, says: "There have been seen some in the night when the moon shined, going solemnly with the corpse, according to the custom of the people, or standing before the doors, as if some body was to be carried to the church to burying."

Blue candles are often mentioned by those in the presence of death. This grew out of a superstition that the presence of unearthly beings changed the colour of flame. Thus, in *Richard III.*:—

"The lights burn blue—it is now dead midnight;  
Cold fearful drops stand on my trembling flesh.—  
Methought the souls of all that I had murdered,  
Came to my tent."

Less poetic but more specific is the following quotation from Lyly's *Gallathea* (ii. 3): "That's a stinking spirit. I thought there was some

spirit in it because it burnt so blue. For my mother would often tell me that when the candle burnt blue there was some ill spirit in the house, and now I perceive it was the spirit of brimstone.”

The place of interment was supposed to be ever after haunted by the spirit of the deceased except at such times as he was compelled to walk elsewhere in the way of penance. The presence of spirits in the neighbourhood of graves is the subject of frequent allusion.

“Now it is the time of night,  
That the graves, all gaping wide,  
Every one lets forth his sprite,  
In the churchyard paths to glide.”

(*A Midsummer-night's Dream*, v. 1.)

In another part of the same play (iii. 2) Puck says:—

“At whose approach, ghosts, wandering here and there,  
Troop home to churchyards: damned spirits all,  
That in cross-ways and floods have burial,  
Already to their wormy beds are gone;  
For fear lest day should look their shames upon.”

Those buried in cross-ways were those who had committed suicide. It was customary to dig the graves of such at the intersection of two public roads. The interment took place at midnight by torchlight, and part of the ceremony was the driving of a sharp wooden stake through the



breast of the corpse just before the grave was filled up. In the same line above there is a reference to the hanging of pirates and mutineers at the seaside in such a position that the waves at high tide would wash over the body.

It was a curious custom of the time to shave the head just before death. This custom is referred to in *Measure for Measure* (iv. 2). "O, death's a great disguiser; and you may add to it. Shave the head and tie the beard; and say it was the desire of the penitent to be thus bared before his death: you know the course is common."

The passing bell was originally tolled by the sexton at the moment of death as a help towards the driving away of the evil spirits. It was also expected that whoever heard the passing bell should meditate for a moment on his own sins, and breathe a prayer for the dying.

"No longer mourn for me when I am dead,  
Than you shall hear the surly, sullen bell  
Give warning to the world that I am fled  
From this vile world."

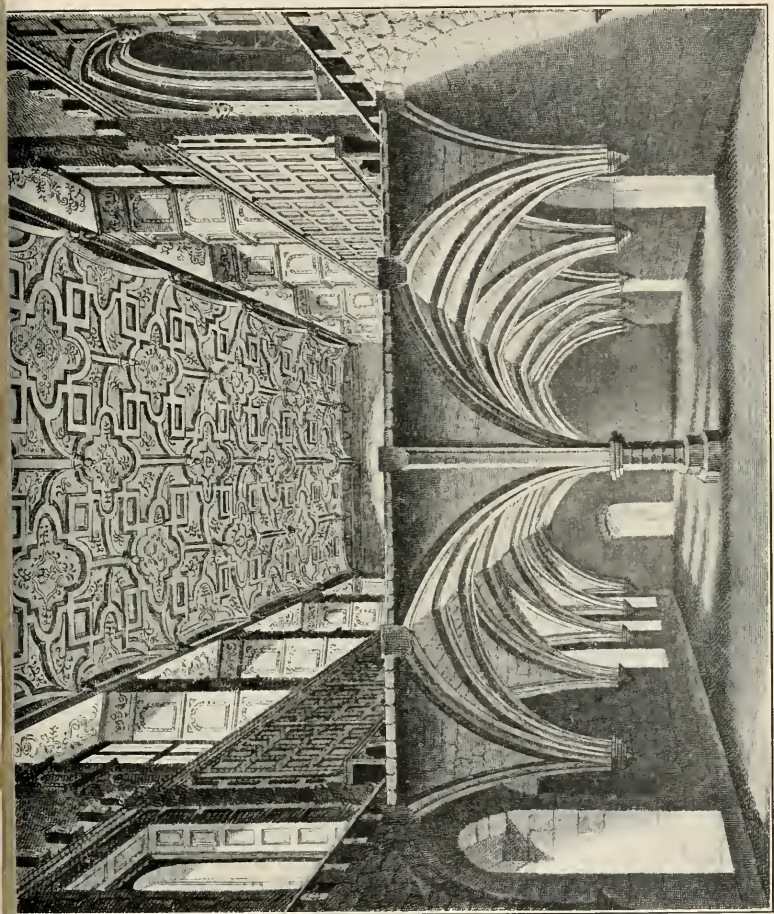
(Shakespeare, Sonnet 71.)

"And now his grief may be compared well  
To one sore sick that hears the parting bell."

(*Venus and Adonis*.)

Subsequently, however, the practice of ringing the bell at the moment of death was given up, though it continues to this day to be rung at





ORNAMENTAL CEILING IN THE NUNNERY OF ST. HELEN'S, LONDON.  
(From a print in Wilkinson's collection.)



burial. It is interesting to read in the Chamberlain's accounts for July 4, 1579: "For the bell and pall for Mr. Shaxper's daughter, 8d."—the highest fee on the list, as Mr. Fleay points out.

The bellman was a civic officer of no little importance. One of his chief offices, besides ringing the bell at deaths and funerals, was to visit condemned criminals the night before their execution and to admonish them of their sins.

"I am the common bellman  
That usually is sent to condemned persons  
The night before they suffer."

(*Duchess of Malfi*, iv. 2.)

I have elsewhere described in detail the elaborate performance of this officer when a prisoner was taken from Newgate for execution.\*

In the time of Shakespeare the putting on of the winding sheet was an impressive ceremony, accompanied by solemn and melancholy music. The following descriptive lines are taken from Webster's *White Devil*:

"I found them winding of Marcello's corse;  
And there is such a solemn melody,  
'Tween doleful songs, tears, and sad elegies;  
Such as old grandames, watching by the dead,  
Were wont to outwear the nights with; that, believe me,  
I had no eyes to guide me forth the room,  
They were so o'er charged with water.—"

\* *Shakespeare's London*, page 229.

[*Cornelia, the Moor, and three other ladies discovered winding Marcello's corse. A song.*

*Cor.* This rosemary is withered, pray get fresh;  
I would have these herbs grow up in his grave,  
When I am dead and rotten. Reach the bays,  
I'll tie a garland here about his head:  
'Twill keep my boy from lightning. This sheet  
I have kept this twenty years, and every day  
Hallow'd it with my prayers. I did not think  
He should have worn it."

The shroud, which was white, was often stuck with bits of yew. This practice is referred to in *Twelfth Night* (ii. 4): "My shroud of white, stuck all with yew."

The customary wake that intervened between death and burial, had changed somewhat with the passage of years. Originally the dearest friends and the nearest relatives met solemnly and sedately for the purpose of watching the corpse during the brief time it remained above the ground. The wake, however, soon degenerated into a feast of wild revelry and intoxication. Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it continued to be of this character. So unbecoming, indeed, was the behaviour of guests and relatives at this time that the celebration of the wake bordered upon sacrilege.

Before burial the corpse was amply decorated.

Flowers were used profusely, also fine clothes, usually the finest procurable, in which to dress the corpse. Burning tapers were also placed upon the coffin. A garland of flowers and sweet smelling herbs was carried before the coffin of a maid, and afterward hung up in the church as a symbol of virginity.

The burial, which often took place as soon as the day following death, was preceded by a procession, as ostentatious and as spectacular as the relatives, or, more usually, the deceased's provision, could manage. From the house to the church, thence to the grave, was the path of this procession. Relatives, retainers, and domestic servants formed a part of it. If the deceased were a member of one of the city guilds, the official pall would probably be pressed into service as a covering to the coffin. Either the entire fraternity or an official delegation followed, walking reverently, and bareheaded. Inmates of almshouses and hospitals supported by the guild also swelled the following. Oftentimes one provided in his will for the expenses of the funeral. Among these expenses one is likely to find black gowns and gold rings for each of the principal mourners. It was also customary to pin upon the coffin copies of memorial verses, written by admiring friends, or by professional verse writers. Flowers

and garlands in profusion, and much music characterised the funerals.

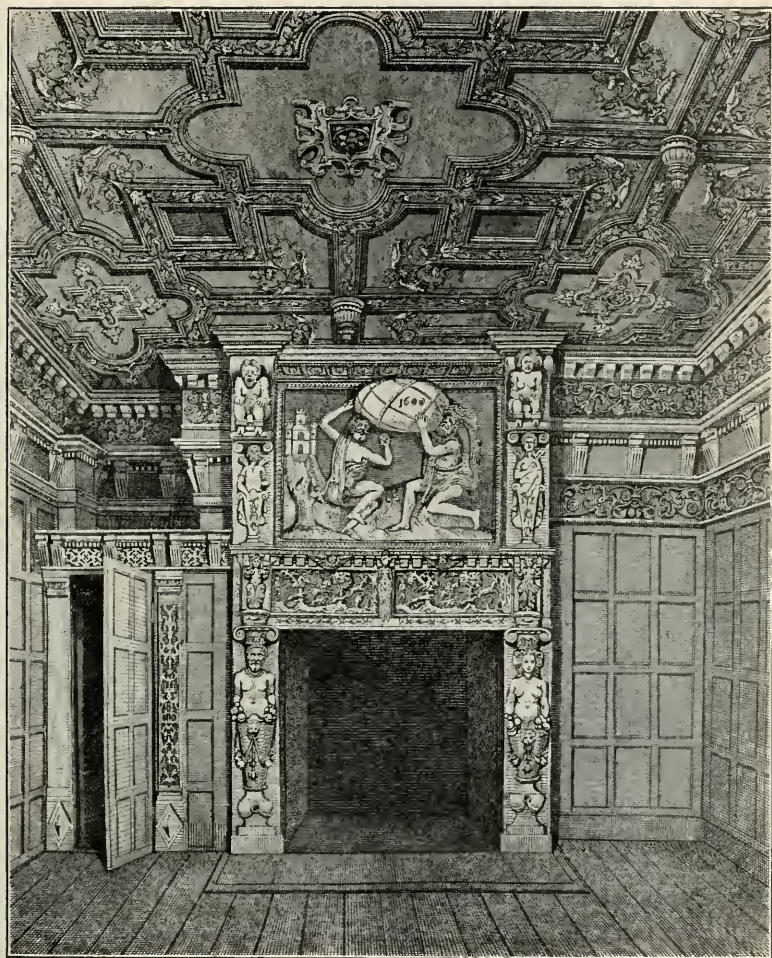
Following the funeral in point of time was the lunch at the house of the deceased, an institution made much of in those days. Oftentimes it was found upon opening the will that the deceased had left a great gift of money in order sumptuously to entertain the true friends who did him the honour to accompany him to the end of his last earthly journey. It is in *Hamlet* that we read (i. 2):

“The funeral baked meats  
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.”

And at the supposed death of Juliet, the wedding cheer was changed “to a sad burial feast.”

Immediately after the burial, if the deceased were a man of property, an official inventory of his goods and chattels was taken. These interesting lists give us many clues to the daily life and household furnishing of the Elizabethans that would otherwise be lost in the obscurity of the past.





ROOM IN SIR PAUL PINDAR'S HOUSE, LONDON.

(From a print in Wilkinson's collection. The chimney-piece to the top of the stag-hunt tablet is stone; above this, the cornice and ceiling are plaster; the rest is oak.)





## CHAPTER XII

### GHOSTS—FAIRIES—WITCHES

**I**N spite of the space devoted to popular superstition in the preceding chapter, three important classes of supernatural beings have been scarcely more than mentioned. To the average Elizabethan the ghost of his ancestor was a very real thing. Any ghost, in fact, might be met at almost any place, the time, however, usually being night. Perhaps no quality is so helpful to the would-be intelligent critic of Shakespeare as a genuine and vivid realisation of how important this matter was to the folk of that day.

Ghosts possessed not only the supernatural powers and qualities acquired by death, but also retained certain human qualities that were peculiar to them in life. Thus, when a ghost appeared he looked as he had looked in life, save for his pale and bloodless face, and, often, the expression of pain, sorrow, or remorse, dependent upon whatever way the fates were compelling him to work out his salvation in ghost-land. He retained his earthly voice, and generally appeared dressed as he was last seen in life, or in

some characteristic garb, such as the armour of a warrior, or the regal robes of a king.

The Elizabethans knew that they were all sinners of the first water, and believed that in most cases the "walking," that is, the appearance of a ghost, was in part penance for sins committed while in the flesh. This, however, was not always the case. Often the ghost returned to earth to make a revelation: sometimes of hidden treasure, sometimes to ease his conscience with a confession, sometimes to warn loved ones on earth against impending danger, perhaps more often, as in *Hamlet*, to demand revenge, to be enacted by those alive.

One need not go further than the accessible Elizabethan plays to learn almost the complete list of ghost traditions. *Hamlet* alone affords a score. From this play we learn that the appearance of a ghost implied something momentous; and that a ghost frequently spoke in Latin (though it is more than probable that this is not referred to in the line "Thou art a scholar; speak to it, Horatio"). Ghosts, in spite of their supernatural powers, were hampered by many limitations. Thus, the ghost of *Hamlet* could not speak till addressed by the right person, hence its silence in the presence of Horatio, the ghost's errand being to Hamlet. It was a current belief

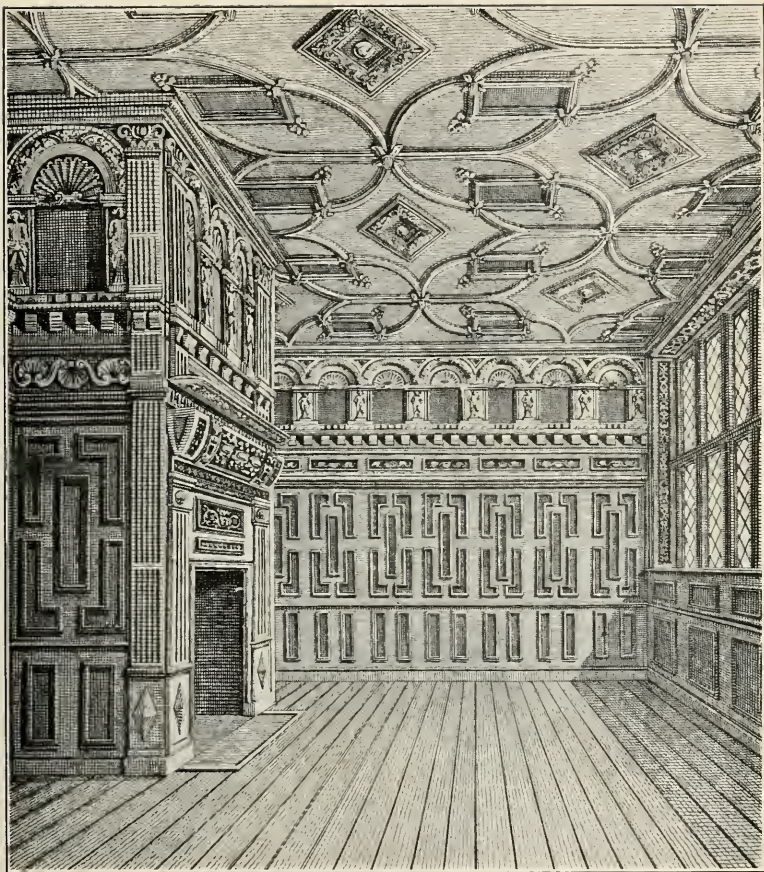
that a ghost could not speak till questioned about the subject on which he wished to talk, hence Horatio's attempt to unseal the ghost's mouth by guessing different purposes for its appearance. A similar belief was that the ghost could not speak till called by some particular name or form of address. Thus Hamlet, in the hope of hitting by accident upon the proper term, cries out: "I'll call thee Hamlet, King, father; Royal Dane, O, answer me!" In general appearance the ghost of the elder Hamlet was quite like himself as he had been in life. The play further tells us that people are safe from ghosts on Christmas eve; that ghosts are frightened home by the crowing of the cock, night being their only time to walk. The ghost appears, as usually, exactly at twelve o'clock. It recollects perfectly what happened upon earth; it can come and go at will, locks and walls are no impediment to it.

Some critics have attempted to make a discrimination between the actual ghost, if we can imagine such a thing, of the first act, and the imaginary vision conjured up by Hamlet's overwrought brain in the presence of his mother. However ingenious and psychological such a theory may be, I cannot believe that it can have anything to do with *Hamlet*. These two appear-

ances, I think, are of one and the same ghost, and they presented to the Elizabethan audience no such difference as is hinted at in the above subtle distinction. In fact, the Elizabethan ghost possessed the power not only of making himself visible or invisible at will, but also the power of rendering himself visible to some and invisible to others in the same room at the same time. In Act I. the ghost preferred to be seen by all the persons on the platform. At the later appearance he desired to remind Hamlet of his neglected duty, but did not wish to frighten the queen—hence he was visible to one and not to the other. This would be perfectly understood by the Elizabethan audience.

One could multiply the instances of ghost lore from the old plays *ad infinitum*. Ghosts figure in numerous plays by the older dramatists. From *Lochrine* we learn that ghosts are subject to vexation from malicious spirits quite after the fashion of human beings; also that they are frightened by the baying of dogs. In *Richard III.* ghosts have the power of prophecy.

The generality of the belief of ghostly revelation introduced a quality, or rather, a condition, into Elizabethan crime which has sometimes been overlooked in criticising the relations between Hamlet and Claudius. To-day one who would



INTERIOR OF A HOUSE IN CRUTCHED FRIARS, LONDON.

(From a print in Smith's collection. The cornice and ceiling are plaster; the rest oak.)





commit a murder considers his chance of safety from detection to be proportioned to the secrecy with which the crime is committed. But in the time of Shakespeare, every criminal had to reckon with the possibility of a supernatural revelation. However carefully he laid his plans he had to accept the likelihood of defeat through the walking of the ghost of his victim. Claudius must have thought of this before ever he poured poison into his brother's ears. When he is called upon to fathom the almost unaccountable extremity of Hamlet's sullenness, one of the first facts that would have been likely to occur to the king was the possibility of Hamlet's having learned the truth through a ghostly revelation. The play read with this idea in mind makes clear some things that have been otherwise interpreted.

One need but to recall *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to realise how important and how delicate and pleasing was the charm pertaining to fairy lore. Beauty was the most characteristic attribute of the fairies. Not only were they beautiful in face and form, but also beautiful in all their surroundings. When they rode abroad they were mounted on the best of horses, slenderly shaped and delicately prancing. None of such quality were ever possessed by mortals. In the fields the

fairies flew hawks superior in breed and training to the best that belonged to human beings. The furnishing of their abodes was of crystal, the precious metals, and brilliantly coloured gems. Their natural surroundings were chosen with care to procure a beautiful effect. The interior of gracefully shaped conical hills frequently contained their habitations. Only the loveliest and most romantic dells were inhabited by them. They emerged to the surface of the earth only on clear nights when the soft bright moon was shining. Whatever their amusements, whether they danced or hunted, their revelry was accompanied by the tinkling of silver bells and the harmonious strains of the sweetest music.

One of their favourite amusements was to come forth on a starry night to dance in the wavering moonlight. The places where they held these magic festivities were recognised in the daytime by the rings of grass of a brighter hue than the surrounding meadow, the marks left by their hallowed footsteps. Many interesting superstitions cling about these fairy rings; some of good, others of bad import. If one inadvertently stepped within the ring he immediately became liable to the fairy power. Maidens who gathered dew in the month of May, to be used as a face wash, scrupulously avoided that upon the fairy



rings. They feared that, out of revenge, the fairies would play tricks with the complexion.

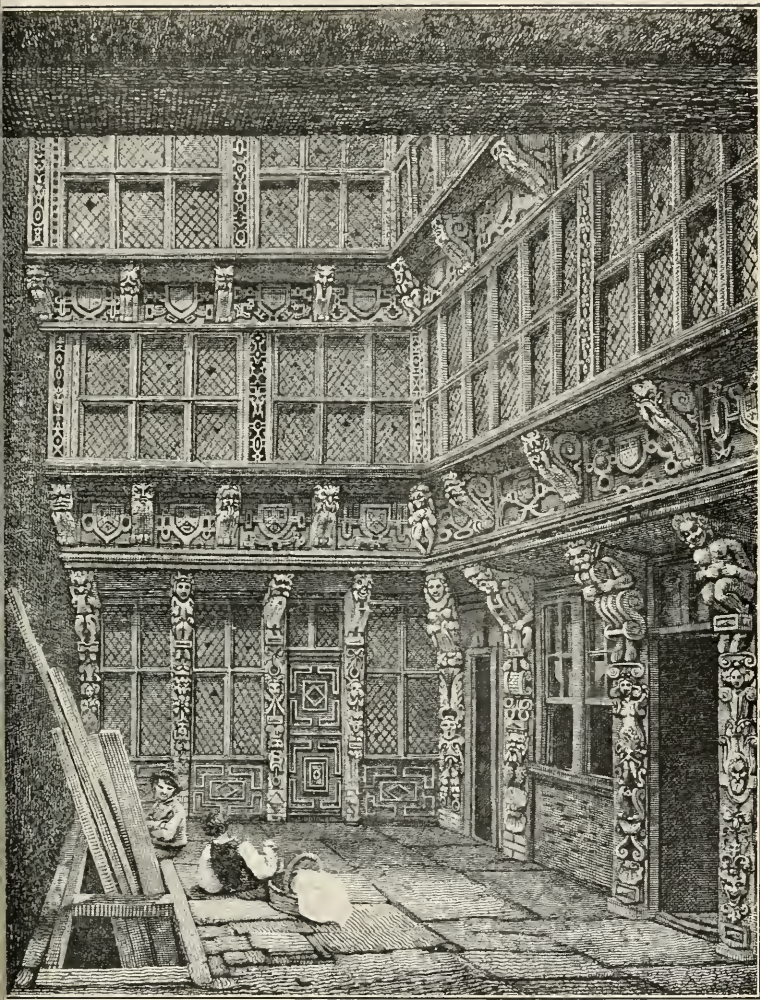
Fairies, of course, possessed many supernatural powers. They could change their form at will. They could make themselves invisible. They could move from place to place with marvellous velocity, far beyond the utmost speed of human mankind. Neither bolts nor bars nor solid walls hindered their passage. They were very diminutive in size. They were supposed to dress generally in green.

Fairies, as a rule, were good spirits. That is, they loved the human race and liked to do people kindnesses. A clean room and a bowl of water were likely to attract the well-wishing fairies. In fact, this class of beings was particularly fond of cleanliness and, as a rule, rewarded thrifty housemaids by dropping money in their shoes at night. Often a good fairy performed an energetic housemaid's tasks during the night. But sluggish maids were pinched as "blue as bilberry," by the same taskmasters.

Yet there were distinctly bad fairies as well as good: and many others, such as Puck, were harmlessly though tantalisingly mischievous. One attribute of even the good fairies was their fickle nature. The least failure to perform the rites due to them, or the least encroachment upon

their traditional privileges and liberties, was sufficient to change their love to malicious hatred—as when one stepped within their sacred rings. They were especially jealous of prying curiosity. Often one who came too suddenly upon them without heeding the tinkling of their warning bells, would be stricken blind. Sometimes even a worse fate attended him. “He that speaks to them shall die. No man their works must eye.” (*Merry Wives of Windsor*.) They also coveted the possession of beautiful earth-born children. So certainly did this trait overpower their humane characteristics, that every fond mother regarded an ugly infant or a dull child as a fairy changeling. So, too, was a child uncannily precocious accounted for.

To the beautiful, pleasing conception of the fairies was opposed the grotesque and malignant surroundings of the witches. A scarce tract by John Stearne, published at London in 1648, asserts on its title page “That there are witches called bad witches, and witches untruly called good or white witches.” The word “untruly” suggests the difficulty of drawing a line or defining a limitation between the two classes. If there was at the time a definite line of demarkation between black and white, it seems to have been at



GROTESQUE CARVING OF A HOUSE IN CRUTCHED FRIARS, LONDON.  
(From a print in Smith's collection.)



that point where the petty and harmless witcheries of a novice developed in magnitude and malignity sufficient to give her a claim for entrance into the true sisterhood of her order. Such harmless, or white, witches lived among their neighbours often upon terms of familiarity and good will. They told fortunes, exercised the arts and practices of palmistry and elementary astrology, dealt out simples for a substantial consideration, cast waters and furnished love potions to distressed and disappointed youths and maidens. We learn from *The Wise Woman of Hogsden* a list of the notable white witches then in fashion. Mothers Nottingham and Bombie were especially famous for casting of waters; Mother Hatfield in Pepper Alley was useful in finding lost things, a task in the performance of which she was especially famous. Those who suffered from weakness of back went to Mother Phillips in the Bankside. The good acts of several of these people cuts them off from the class of bad witches whose influence was always malignant. *The Wise Woman of Hogsden* thus enumerates her own accomplishments: "Let me see how many trades I have to live by: First, I am a wise woman, and a fortune teller, and under that I deal in physic and forespeaking, in palmistry, and in recovering of things lost; next, I undertake to cure mad

folks; then I keep gentle-women lodgers to furnish such chambers as I let out by the night; then I am provided for bringing young wenches to bed; and for a need, you see, I play the match-maker." The witch's shop was packed with the grotesque ingredients and materials used in her trade. Thus: "One would suspect it for a shop of witchcraft, to find in it the fat of serpents, spawn of snakes, Jew's spittle, and their young children's ordure." (*Duchess of Malfi.*) It is interesting to record one of the contemporary sure tests of the identity of a witch; namely, if her house was burned and she came running forth clamouring and crying, she was a witch. "This thatch is as good as a jury to prove she is a witch." (*The Witch of Edmonton.*)

Far more important and oftentimes far more dignified were the black witches who so often suffered the death penalty during the reign of King James. Scott in his *Discoveries of Witchcraft* tells us that there are three sorts of witches: "One sort can hurt and not help, the second can help and not hurt, and the third can both help and hurt. Among the hurtful witches there is one sort more beastly than any kind of beasts, saving wolves; for these usually devour and eat young children and infants of their own kind. These be they that raise hail, tempests, and hurt-



ful weather, as lightning, thunder, etc. These be they that procure barrenness in man, woman, and beast. These can throw children in waters, as they walk with their mothers, and not be seen. These can make horses kick, till they cast their riders. These can pass from place to place in the air invisible. These can so alter the minds of judges, that they can have no power to hurt them. These can procure to themselves and to others, taciturnity and insensibility in their torments. These can bring trembling to the hands, and strike terror into the minds of them that apprehend them. These can manifest unto others, things hidden and lost, and foreshew things to come, and see them as though they were present. These can alter men's minds to inordinate love or hate. These can take away man's courage. These can make a woman miscarry in childbirth, and destroy the child in the mother's womb, without any sensible means either inwardly or outwardly applied. These can with their looks kill either man or beast.

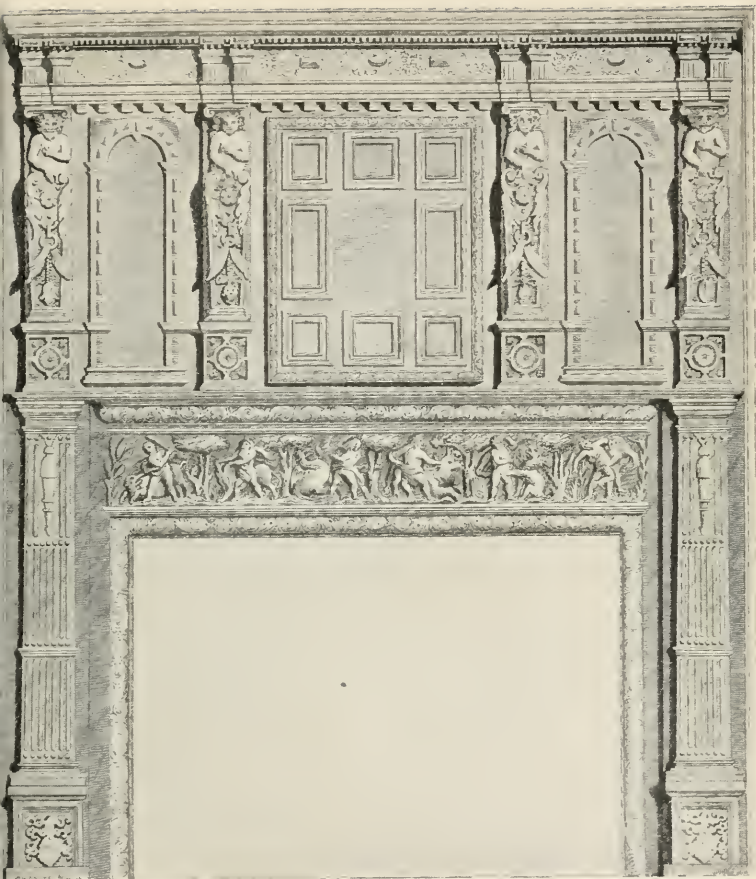
“Others do write that they can pull down the moon and the stars. Some write that with wishing they can send needles into the livers of their enemies. Some that they can transfer corn in the blade from one place to another. Some that they can cure diseases supernaturally, fly in the

air, and dance with devils. Some write that they can play the part of *Succubus*, and contract themselves to *Incubus*. Some say they can transubstantiate themselves and others, and take the forms and shapes of asses, wolves, ferrets, cows, horses, hogs, etc. Some say they can keep devils and spirits in the likeness of toads and cats.

“They can raise spirits (as others affirm), dry up springs, turn the course of running waters, inhabit the sun and stay both day and night, changing the one into the other. They can go in and out of auger holes, and sail in an eggshell, a cockle or mussel shell, through and under the tempestuous seas. They can bring souls out of the graves. They can tear snakes in pieces. They can also bring to pass that, churn as long as you list, your butter will not come; especially if either the maids have eaten up the cream, or the good wife have sold the butter before in the market.”

The appearance of these mysterious and usually bearded women is thus described by the same author: “The sort of such as are said to be witches are women which be commonly old, lame, blear-eyed, pale, foul, and full of wrinkles; poor, sullen, superstitious, and papists; or such as know no religion; in whose drowsy minds the devil hath gotten a fine seat; so as, mischief, mischance, calamity or slaughter is brought to pass,





FIREPLACE IN OLDBOURNE HALL, LONDON.  
(From a print in Wilkinson's collection.)



they are easily persuaded the same is done by themselves; imprinting in their minds an earnest and constant imagination thereof. They are lean and deformed, showing melancholy in their faces, to the horror of all that see them. They are dotting, scolds, mad, devilish, and much differing from them that are thought to be possessed with spirits; so firm and steadfast in their opinions, as whosoever shall only have respect to the constancy of their words uttered, would easily believe they were true indeed.

“These miserable witches are so odious unto all their neighbours, and so feared, as few dare offend them, or deny them anything they ask; whereby they take upon them, yea, and sometimes think, that they can do such things as are beyond the ability of human nature. They go from house to house, and from door to door for a pot full of milk, yeast, drink, pottage, or some such relief; without the which they could hardly live; neither obtaining for their service or pains, nor by their art, nor yet at the devil’s hands (with whom they are said to make a perfect and visible bargain) either beauty, money, promotion, worship, pleasure, honour, knowledge, learning, or any benefit whatsoever.”

To this description let us add the following vivid passage from Archbishop Harsnet’s *Decla-*

*ration*: " Out of these is shaped us the true *Idæa* of a witch, an old, weatherbeaten crone, having her chin and knees meeting for age, walking like a bow leaning on a shaft, hollow-eyed, untoothed, furrowed on her face, having her lips trembling with the palsy, going mumbling in the streets, one that hath forgot her *pater noster*, and hath yet a shrewd tongue in her head, to call a drab a drab. If she have learned of an old wife in a chimney's end: *Pax, max, fax*, for a spell, or can say Sir John of Grantham's curse for the miller's eels that were stolen: All you that have stolen the miller's eels, *Laudate dominum de calis*; And all they that have consented thereto, *benedicamus domini*: Why then ho, beware, look about you, my neighbours; if any of you have sheep sick of the giddies, or an hog of the mumps, or a horse of the staggers, or a knavish boy of the school, or an idle girl of the wheel, or a young drab of the sullens, and hath not fat enough for her porridge, nor her father and mother butter enough for their bread; and she have a little help of the *Mother, Epelepsie, or Cramp*, to teach her [to] roll her eyes, wry her mouth, gnash her teeth, startle with her body, hold her arms and hands stiff, make antic faces, grin, mow, and mop like an ape, tumble like a hedge-hog, and can mutter out two or three words of gibberish as *obus, bobus*; and then withal

old Mother Nobs hath called her by chance idle young housewife, or bid the devil scratch her, then no doubt but that Mother Nobs is the witch, the young girl is owl-blasted and possessed; and it goes hard but ye shall have some addle, giddy, lymphatical, illuminate dotrel, who being out of credit, learning, sobriety, honesty, and wit, will take this holy advantage to raise the ruins of his desperate decayed name, and for his better glory will betray the juggling drab, and cast out *Mopp* the devil.”

According to the popular superstition, witches were provided with beards; thus, in the words of Macbeth, “you should be women, And yet your beards forbid me to interpret That you are so.” “The women that Come to us for disguises must wear beards; And that’s to say, a token of a witch.” (Middleton’s *The Honest Man’s Fortune*.)

It was generally believed that witches met in a disturbance of the elements. This is the case at the opening of Macbeth. Terrible thunder and lightning accompany the raising of the spirits in *Henry the Sixth* (2d part, i. 4). So, midnight hours and desolate places were associated with witches. They were exorcised by charms often composed of a nonsensical succession of syllables, sentences (especially the Lord’s prayer), repeated

backward, foul images, most of their charms introducing the magic numbers three, and three times three. With witches were associated all sorts of loathsome objects: for instance, the articles that compose the magic broth in *Macbeth*.

*“First Witch.* Round about the cauldron go;

In the poison'd entrails throw;

Toad, that under cold stone

Days and nights has thirty one

Swelter'd venom sleeping got,

Boil thou first i' the charmed pot.

*All.* Double, double toil and trouble;

Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.

*Sec. Witch.* Fillet of a fenny snake,

In the cauldron boil and bake;

Eye of newt and toe of frog,

Wool of bat and tongue of dog,

Adder's fork and blinded-worm's sting,

Lizard's leg and howlet's wing

For a charm of powerful trouble,

Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.

*All.* Double, double toil and trouble;

Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.

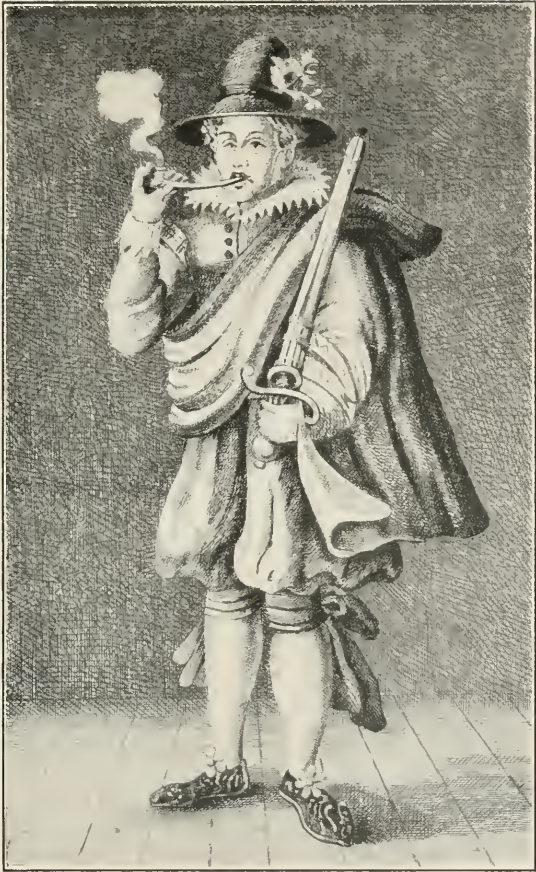
*Third Witch.* Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf,

Witches' mummy, maw and gulf

Of the ravin'd salt-sea shark.”

Later in this chapter something is said about the famous trial of witches in Lancashire in 1612. The following description of the compact with the evil one is taken from the confession of one of those so-called witches:

“Whereupon the said wicked spirit moved this



MOLL FRITH, "THE ROARING GIRL."  
(From an old print.)





examine that she would become his subject, and give her soul unto him; the which she at first refused to assent unto; but after by the great persuasions made by the said Demdike, she yielded to be at his commandment and appointment; whereupon the said wicked spirit then said unto her, that he must have some part of her body to suck upon; the which she denied then to grant unto him; and withal asked him, what part of her body he would have for that use: who said he would have a place of her right side near to her ribs, for him to suck upon; whereunto she assented.”

This form of sucking the blood was the act by which the witch swore fealty, so to speak, to the evil one. The instrument that thus partook of the spirit through the blood was thenceforth the witch's evil spirit, or familiar. It was this being, known by numerous names, in the likeness usually of an animal, that performed for the witch many of the tasks that are beyond mortal powers. It was currently believed, however, that the animal form of a familiar was always incomplete in one respect: it lacked a tail. This fact is referred to in *Macbeth* in the phrase, “Like a rat without a tail,” which means in the form or likeness of a rat without a tail. Contemporary writings give many lists of familiars by name,

some of which have acquired considerably more than a local or contemporary fame. Lucifer, Little Robin, Lightfoot, Makeshift, Hardname, Tiff, Ball, Puss, and Jake are among others mentioned by a writer, Bernard, in his *Guide to Jurymen*. The following interesting set of names is taken from Pitcairne's *Trials*: Robert the Jakis; Sanderis, the Red Rover; Thomas the Fairy; Swain, the Roaring Lion; Thief of Hell; Wait upon Herself; Mak Hectour; Robert the Rule; Hendrie Laing; and Rorie. Some of the names supplied by Harsnet's *Declaration* have almost become household words. Among them are Philpot, Smolkin, Lustie Huff-cap, Hob, Fraterette, Flibberdigibbett, Hoberdidance, etc. Even this long list could be lengthened to a considerable extent by drawing upon the pages of Shakespeare and his contemporaries in the drama. In Ford's play, *The Witch of Edmonton*, occurs the following allusion to familiars:—

“I have heard old beldames

Talk of familiars in the shape of mice,

Rats, ferrets, weasels, and I wot not what,

That have appeared and sucked, some say, their blood;

But by what means they came acquainted with them

I am now ignorant.”

The bond with the evil one alluded to above is thus more circumstantially described by Reginald Scot: “The order of their bargain or profes-

sion is double: the one solemn and public, the other secret and private. That which is called solemn or public is where the witches come together at certain assemblies [i.e. the well known witches' Sabbath], at the times prefixed, and do not only see the devil in visible form, but confer and talk familiarly with him. In which conference the devil exhorteth them to observe their fidelity unto him, promising them long life and prosperity. Then the witches assembled commend a new desciple (whom they call a novice) unto him; and if the devil find that young witch apt and forward in renunciation of Christian faith, in despising any of the seven sacraments, in treading upon crosses, in spetting at the time of the elevation, in breaking their fast upon fasting days, and fasting on Sundays; then the devil giveth forth his hand, and the novice joining hand and hand with him, promiseth to observe and keep all the devil's commandments.

“ This done the devil beginneth to be more bold with her, telling her plainly that all this will not serve his turn; and therefore requireth homage at her hands; yea, he also telleth her that she must grant him both her body and soul to be tormented in everlasting fire; which she yieldeth unto. Then he chargeth her to procure as many men, women, and children also, as she can, to enter into

this society. Then he teacheth them to make ointments of the bowels and members of children, whereby they ride in the air, and accomplish their desires. So as, if there be any children unbaptised, or not guarded with the sign of the cross, or orisons; then the witches may and do catch them from their mothers' sides in the night, or out of their cradles, or otherwise kill them with their ceremonies; and after burial steal them out of their graves and seethe them in a caldron, until their flesh be made potable. Of the thickest whereof they made ointment, whereby they ride in the air; but the thinner portion they put into flagons, whereof whosoever drinketh, observing certain ceremonies, immediately becometh a master or, rather, a mistress in that practice and faculty.

“Their homage, together with their oath and bargain, is received for a certain term of years, sometimes forever. Sometimes it consisteth of a denial of the whole faith, sometimes in part. And this is done either by oath, protestation of words, or by obligation in writing, sometimes sealed with wax, sometimes signed with blood, sometimes by kissing the devil's bare buttocks.”

Though the witches and their familiars possessed many supernatural qualities, their powers in this direction were limited. When the dog in



ROBE OF CIVIC DIGNITARY.  
(From the portrait of Edward Alleyn at Dulwich  
Gallery.)



*The Witch of Edmonton* is asked, "Why wilt not kill him?" he replies, "Fool, because I cannot. Though we have power, know it is circumscribed And tied in limits." Yet the supernatural acts that witches could perform were numerous. They could render themselves invisible, they could come and go at will, traversing long distances instantly. They could control the weather, and, as a result, they often drove a thrifty trade in selling winds to mariners. They could foretell and they could bewitch. Under the latter head one would group the thousand and one acts of malignant evil that were currently attributed to witches. Sudden illness, violent accident, misfortune in business, monstrous birth, etc., etc., were due, oftentimes, to witchcraft, and honestly believed to be so by all sorts and conditions of men. "Finally she said she would be even with me; and soon after my child, my cow, my sow, or my pullet died, or was strangely taken." (Scot.) "She came on a time to the house of one Robert Lathburie . . . who, disliking her dealing, sent her home empty; but presently after her departure, his hogs fell sick and died, to the number of twenty." (*A Detection of Damnable Drifts Practised by Three Witches*, 1759.)

One of the commonest means and withal one of the most feared instruments of witchcraft was

the clay or wax image, or picture, as it was called. Concerning the practice, Old Demdike, one of the famous Lancashire witches brought to trial in 1612, has the following to say in her *Voluntarie Confession*: "And further, this examine confesseth and sayeth, that the speediest way to make a man's life away by witchcraft is to make a picture of clay, like unto the shape of the person whom they mean to kill, and dry it thoroughly; and when they would have them to be ill in any one place more than another, then take a thorn or pin and prick it in that part of the picture you would fain so have to be ill; and when you would have any part of the body to consume away, then take that part of the picture and burn it. And when they would have the whole body to consume away, then take the remnant of the said picture, and burn it. And so thereupon by that means the body shall die."

In 1612 a famous trial, followed by a wholesale execution of witches, took place at Lancaster. The above quotation is taken from a very minute and circumstantial account of the trial written by one Potts, clerk of the court. Many interesting details concerning contemporary belief in witchcraft have been preserved in this Potts's *Discovery*. Also of great value is the introductory essay prefixed by Mr. Crossley, who edited



a reprint for the Cheltham Society in 1844. He has gathered together in his introduction a number of interesting quotations, all illustrative of this practice of picture or image witchcraft. Two are of especial interest as showing how seriously even the people in the highest rank of life looked upon this matter. The first is from Strype's *Annals of the Reformation*, where we are told that Bishop Jewel, preaching before the Queen in 1558, said: "It may please your grace to understand that witches and sorcerers within these last few years are marvellously increased within your grace's realm. Your grace's subjects pine away, even unto the death; their colour fadeth, their flesh rotteth, their speech is benumbed, their senses are bereft. I pray God they never practise further than upon the subject."

The second quotation is also from Strype, relative to the year 1589: "One Mrs. Dier had practised conjuration against the Queen, to work some mischief to her majesty; for which she was brought into question; and accordingly her words and doings were sent to Popham, the Queen's attorney, and Egerton, her solicitor, by Walsingham, the secretary, and Sir Thomas Heneage, her vice-chamberlain, for their judgment, whose opinion was that Mrs. Dier was not within the compass of the statute touching witchcraft, for

that she did no act, and spake certain lewd speeches tending to that purpose, but neither set figures nor made pictures.”

Allusions to this practice of image sorcery could be quoted by the score. It is enough to say that the current belief held that whatever the witch did to the image would happen to the person represented by it. Thus, a quill stuck into the wax image would eventually drain the blood of the victim as “dry as hay.” From *The Duchess of Malfi* we learn that “It wastes me more Than were't my picture fashioned out of wax, Stuck with a magical needle, and then buried In some foul dunghill.”

It was popular belief that the rowan tree was able to keep away witches; and the planting of it at the four corners of the house for this purpose is not yet wholly out of vogue in some of the wilder parts of Scotland. Drawing blood upon a witch also rendered her enchantments ineffectual, a belief illustrated by the following: “I'll have a bout with thee; devil or devil's dam. I'll conjure thee. Blood will I draw upon thee, thou art a witch.” (*First Part of Henry the Sixth.*) Firm faith was also depended upon as a protection against witches. “If my breast had not been made of faith and my heart of steel, She had transformed me into a curtail dog, and made me

turn i' the wheel." (*The Comedy of Errors*.)  
When Dromio says:

"Some devils ask but the parings of one's nails,  
A rush, a hair, a drop of blood, a pin,  
A nut, a cherry stone;"

he alludes to the frequent propitiation of witches by gifts. From Potts's account we learn that witches levied blackmail and that a constant annual tribute was not infrequently paid as a sure means of avoiding the baneful results of magic spells.

Ghosts and fairies are wholly supernatural. They are, so to speak, creatures of the imagination. The belief in ghosts and spirits is not yet wholly dead; but the tiny fairy folk are no longer with us. However the Elizabethans may have felt, we can say with confidence that none of them ever saw Queen Mab, or actually heard the tinkly music of the moonlight revels. On the other hand, witches were creatures of flesh and blood. They lived on earth among friends and neighbours. A witch could be remembered in her own reputable days before she had sold herself to the devil. An examination of the numerous acts attributed to witches shows how prone the Elizabethan mind was to jump at conclusions as a result of circumstantial evidence. One died suddenly and, perhaps, mysteriously. What was the

cause of death? None could say. Then he must have been bewitched. By whom? Yesterday he refused a penny to so and so, a chattering old hag. What more likely, etc., etc. Long before so many questions had been asked and answered, a case, perhaps of heart disease, had been fastened upon some local witch who did not deny the charge.

All this is but illustrative of that temper of credulity so superlatively characteristic of the Elizabethan character. Not only were the people ready to believe these tales of the supernatural acts performed by witches, but the witches themselves came to believe in them as ardently as did any of their disciples. It is a mistake to think that they were all fakirs through and through as were many of the professional swindlers described in a former chapter. Who has not at one time or another been startled by the merely accidental fulfilment of a wish? It is but a step further to him who opens the Bible at hazard and believes in the supernatural guidance to a selection of a text for the day, or to her who, having cursed her neighbour successfully, believes that the devil has supernaturally vested some of his power in her weak hands. Just as there were voices, like Reginald Scot's, occasionally crying in the wilderness against the folly of belief in witch-

craft, so there were occasionally witches that were imposters. Yet the fact to be remembered is that in general good faith was practised on both sides. The people in the playhouse shuddered with *Macbeth*, who upon so lonely a heath came face to face with three weird sisters of the forbidden clan. Doubtless the witches in *Macbeth* are such as might have been met with in flesh and blood. Doubtless, also, they believed in themselves. What did Shakespeare think?—not of his creations, but of his examples of the popular creation? Note how carefully he strips them of the power of prophecy in nearly every case, how all of what they say is just such as might have been uttered by Old Demdike of Lancaster fame; and withal, how emphatically he sets forth *Macbeth's* willingness to consider his own interpretations of ambiguous words as so many prophecies emanating from the supernaturally inspired witches. Whatever Shakespeare thought, he is here carefully following the workings of the contemporary credulity of his fellow men.

## CHAPTER XIII

### DOMESTIC LIFE

#### I

**S**TYLE in architecture is a term the significance of which develops long after the time to which it applies. What we now recognise as the characteristic style of building introduced by the Elizabethans was, of course, looked upon by the people themselves as an innovation, a novelty, and not in the least typical of the time. It is the purpose of this section, not to write of a distinct and new step in the development of architectural history, but rather to describe the houses in which the Elizabethans lived; consequently, more will be said of houses and buildings that from an architectural point of view belong in reality to an earlier period.

During the reigns of the Tudors life in country England had become comparatively safe. In London, and elsewhere throughout the kingdom, the city walls were allowed gradually to fall into a state of disrepair and dilapidation, for the fact was fully realised that they were no longer of any great use as a protection. In consequence

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of this increased safety of social conditions there was general shifting of population. Contemporary authorities lament the sad decay of the principal towns, and look upon the fact as an indication of the abatement of national prosperity. It is easy for us to see now that this was not at all the case. The decay of towns was but a natural result of this shift of population. The greater safety of life that obtained throughout the kingdom fostered in many persons the desire to move from the larger walled towns to the smaller unwalled towns, or to the rural districts. This change occasioned much new building, little of which, however, is associated with that distinctive "style" that characterises the larger manor-houses built later in the reign of Elizabeth. By this time national prosperity was so great that it affected everything. The decay of towns was arrested, and building began to go on in the cities as rapidly as elsewhere throughout the kingdom.

This fact brought about an interesting situation in London. To us, who are used to the great metropolis of which "The City" and "Westminster" are but integral parts, it is a difficult task to imagine the situation when London and Westminster were rival centers of population, separated by green hills and parks, and joined by but a single row of widely separated palaces.

Such, however, was the case throughout the greater part of the reign of Queen Elizabeth. At Westminster were the royal court and the chief courts of justice. There met the national Parliament. The Queen and Privy Council felt a decided jealousy of the walled town so near at hand that had so often closed its ponderous gates in the face of a duly constituted sovereign. Proud as Elizabeth was of her wealthy and beautiful capital, she felt a substantial jealousy of the amazing rapidity of its growth that took place during the later years of her reign. The attempt to stop this growth gave rise to a royal proclamation that intimately affected the building trade of the capital.

For some time the crowded condition of London had made it an unpleasant place for domestic habitations, and for the showy, spectacular daily life of the wealthy noblemen while in town for the season. This fact, coupled with the increasing safety of life in districts unprotected by walls, gave rise to an exodus from the city proper, and thus sprang into existence the long line of palaces fronting upon the river and extending backward as far as the Strand; and thus also came into existence the first travelled connection by land between London and Westminster. The city palaces thus vacated were turned to various uses;



mainly, however, into tenement houses capable of housing a score or more of families, thus providing room for the rapidly increasing population of London. Against the so-called evil of this rapid growth, Elizabeth directed a proclamation that forbade the living together of different families under the same roof. Of course, this proclamation was, in the main, ineffectual. The Tudors, despotic as they were, could not resist the tremendous wave of energy that their firm government had diverted from civil strife into the channel of mercantile and industrial development. Yet their resistance had some effect as a hindrance, and is a very significant indication of the temper of the time.

The crowded condition of London, furthermore, gave rise to the erection of many new buildings without the walls. So rapid was the progress of erection that the jealous Queen found it necessary to forbid, again by royal mandate, the construction of any building within three miles of any gate of the city wall. This proclamation likewise acted as a hindrance, and was likewise, in the long run, quite ineffective, even often openly disobeyed during the life of the Queen. So much for the general condition of building during her reign.

Of materials: most churches which were erected

at an earlier date were constructed of stone; as were also the larger private mansions of ancient origin in both town and country, and the huge public buildings, such as the halls and prisons. Stone was also used in the construction of many of the newer buildings. With the distinctly new type of large mansion that came into vogue during the later part of the reign, brick and tile were the favourite building materials. Taking into consideration all the houses, great and small, through and through, timber was probably the chief element of construction. A large majority of the London houses were constructed in a peculiar fashion of a massive timber framework with gable roofs. The squares and the triangles formed by the beams were filled in with lath and plaster. Each story projected some distance over the one below; and the wooden fronts were grotesquely carved and painted. Examples of this style of building may still be seen in Staple's Inn, London; Leicester's Hospital, Warwick; Shakespeare's birthplace, Stratford; and whole streets of modern imitations, both in form and decoration, at Chester. Smaller country houses were either built of small stone, often put together without cement, a habit still followed at Keswick, or consisted of poor clay hovels.

Roofs of churches and of many of the great

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stone mansions were generally covered with lead. In the latter case they were likely to be flat and much used by the household in hot weather as walks and places for recreation and exercise. Tile, however, was a more common roofing material which gave rise to the general red appearance from a distance of so many Elizabethan towns. Because of its inexpensiveness, thatch was a common substitute for tile in country districts, and was sometimes used in the construction of mansions of even considerable pretension. ✓

Windows were made of glass except in the most insignificant houses, where expense necessitated the use of open lattices, or closed board shutters when the inclement weather made the former impossible. The use of translucent horn in windows had practically ceased in Elizabethan times. The manufacture of plate glass was still in its infancy, and the secret of making large pieces quite unknown. Hence the characteristic small panes that were in use even when a large opening had to be thus filled by many subdivisions.

Floors of the meaner houses, especially in the country districts, on the first floor, were of bare earth, covered frequently with rushes; but oftentimes even this addition was dispensed with. Floors in the better houses were generally either of stone or of tile. The floors above ground were

generally of wood, the flooring often set edgewise for the purpose of producing extreme rigidity and durability.

Much iron and brass was used in construction, usually wrought in ponderous proportions, but often elaborate and delicate in design. Such were the ornamental brass knobs, knockers, and bells. Iron locks were huge, and so were the keys, a bunch of two or three frequently constituting a considerable handful. Hinges and huge ornamental hinge plates were bolted solidly to the weighty doors, and oftentimes of such wide and elaborate design that they covered most of the door. Hooks for hanging clothes out of the windows to air, and hooks beneath the eaves for the purpose of supporting hangings in time of street decoration, were important items in building construction. So were the iron extinguishers by the front doors into which links were thrust; and the highly ornate brackets from which street signs were suspended.

The ground plan of the Elizabethan mansion was variously designed, but usually falling into one of two classes: the house with a square court, or the house planned like an E. The latter is the characteristic form used mainly by the builders of the later part of the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

The house, in its plainer form, built in the

shape of a hollow square, but in its more developed style consisting of two courts placed end to end, is familiar to all from Bacon's description of the ideal type in his essay *On Building*. The main detail of such a structure is the grouping of the various buildings about the side of a square, one building closely abutting upon another and joined to it so as to complete the design. The form originated when the idea of defence had to be incorporated in the architectural plan. There was a large entrance to the court, and entrances to the various parts and buildings from the court itself. By the time of Elizabeth, however, this notion of defence was dropping out of consideration. This gave rise to a separation or isolation of parts. Sometimes a garden with a grotto and pavilion intervened between the two courts. At Kenilworth and many other mansions the lodge was separated by some distance from the main structure.

The courts were usually square and placed end to end. This was, however, not the universal custom. Both Kenilworth and the Charter House are extremely irregular; and Crosby Hall possessed two square courts placed corner to corner.

The E-shaped house was an innovation introduced during the reign of Elizabeth. In it the court is altogether absent, and offices, stables, etc.,

quite detached. The plan derives its name from three projecting entrances in the façade, each provided with a porch. These gave the ground plan the shape of an E, with, however, very short and stubby arms. The peculiar characteristics of this style of house were mainly details of outside appearance. Much more space was given up to bays and to ordinary windows than in the old style of house. Straight lines as an element of ornamentation were carried continuously from bottom to top of the façade. The usual material was brick and tile. Balustrades surmounted the porches and the roofs when flat. Gable roofs, however, were frequent, and numerous clusters of ornamental tile chimneys a characteristic feature. Such buildings may be studied at Charlcote, Longleat, and in the Duke's House at Bradford on Avon.

Numerous secondary buildings existed in connection with the great mansions, sometimes actually a part of, at other times quite distinct from it, in position. Such were the lodge, the stables, brewing-house, store-houses, servants' quarters, etc. Banquet was the common Elizabethan term for light refreshments, such as we serve at an afternoon tea, of coffee and wafers after dinner. Wherever practicable a banquet-house or pavilion for serving the banquet was

provided in the garden, to which the family and guests adjourned upon the occasion of the banquet.

The servants' quarters, though separate, were closely grouped about the central building. "Moreover," says Harrison, "the mansion houses of our towns and villages . . . are builded in such sort generally as that they have neither dairy, stable, nor brew house annexed unto them under the same roof . . . but all separate from the first and one of them from another. And yet for all this they are not so far distant in sunder but that the good man lying in his bed may lightly hear what is done in each of them with ease, and call quickly unto his many if any danger should attack him." Later in the reign, however, and in the reign of James, it became the custom to erect the offices, or servants' quarters, at a greater distance from the mansion proper. Moats were likewise in existence but no longer needful. Often they were drained and planted; and not constructed about new buildings.

The timber house that was most frequently met with in cities has already been alluded to. In such city houses as belonged to tradesmen it was the universal custom to keep shop in the front part downstairs, the rest of the house being occupied as a residence. It was also very common



to set up temporary booths for the display of wares about the doors and lower windows. The gradual solidification of these temporary stalls into permanent pent-houses that inconveniently encroached upon the narrow streets was often the subject of serious remonstrance.

The principal room in an Elizabethan house of any size or pretension was the hall. This, usually the largest room in the house, was in use for many purposes. All the merrymakings on annual feast days took place in the hall. Meals were served there upon movable tables that were laid against the walls between times. Though the women withdrew at the end of a meal the men remained in the hall to drink, tell stories, or to attend to a thousand and one articles of daily business. The hall, being also a sort of trophy room for weapons and articles of venery, formed a convenient workshop for imping broken hawks' wings, curing dogs, mending arrows, cleaning guns, polishing armour, etc., etc.

A withdrawing room, or bower, was always provided for the women, to which they withdrew at the end of meals, and where they practised the daily occupations of sewing and playing upon the lute, not to mention looking out of the bay-window after passing gallants—a habit which is the subject of frequent reference in Elizabethan



plays. A library and chapel were other necessary rooms, as was the long gallery.

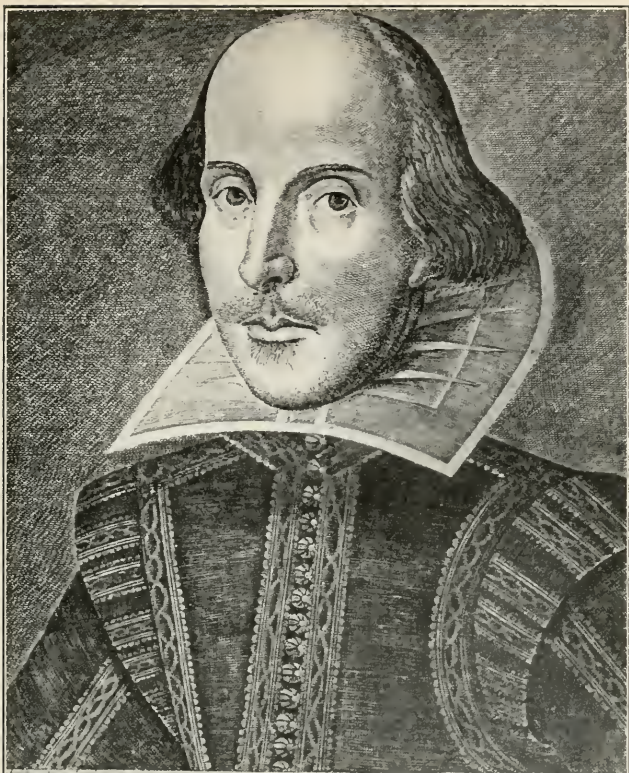
The gallery, a wide and long corridor, often extended across the whole side or end of a house, and was one of the essential features of the larger Elizabethan mansion. It, however, was not in reality utilised to advantage as a corridor in order to give access to rooms. It was rather a walk and place of exercise, where one could get the light and take the air in bad weather.

Closets and drawers were not then in general use; and though chests were common articles of bedroom furniture, they did not obviate the necessity of a wardrobe, or room where the garments were hung upon pegs about the walls.

One very inconvenient feature of Elizabethan houses is of interest. The people, even of the better class, seem to have had no conception of or desire for privacy of daily life at home. In consequence, separate entrances to rooms were almost undreamed of. One room opened into another, and that into a third. So arranged were they that often a series of half a dozen apartments were so connected that in order to reach one of them it was necessary to traverse several or all of the others; and this, too, in the case of bedrooms. Furthermore, it was not an infrequent custom to convert one large room into sev-

eral sleeping apartments by means of no other partitions than hastily-erected curtains.

There was much ornamental work in the Elizabethan houses, inside as well as out. Ceilings in the timber houses of the meaner kind were generally omitted altogether; and also in the halls of greater houses where the finish and decoration of the timber framework overhead was intended to show for beauty. All the other rooms, however, with the single exception of the hall, were ceiled, sometimes plain, but more often with elaborate fancy work in plaster or coloured frescos. A writer in *The Transactions of the London and Middlesex Archæological Society* thus describes the ceilings of Paul Pindar's house in London: "The primary arrangement of the mansion is entirely destroyed, but in several of the rooms there still exists some of the most glorious ceilings which our country can furnish. They are generally mutilated, in several instances the half alone remaining, as the rooms have been divided to suit the needs of later generations. These ceilings are of plaster, and abound in the richest and finest devices. Wreaths of flowers, panels, shields, pateras, bands, roses, ribands, and other forms of ornamentation are charmingly mingled, and unite in producing the best and happiest effect." Chimney-pieces were also the object of equal or-



### To the Reader.

This Figure, that thou here seest put,  
It was for gentle Shakespeare cut;  
Wherein the Grauer had a strife  
with Nature, to out-doo the life:  
O, could he but haue drawne his wit  
As well in brasse, as he hath hit  
His face; the Print would then surpasse  
All, that was euer writ in brasse.  
But, since he cannot, Reader, looke  
Not on his Picture, but his Booke

B. I.



amentation, either in plaster, tile, or carved wood.

Many rooms were panelled completely in wood—walls and ceiling. Pictures were often painted directly on the wood panel or firmly let into, as a part of, the wall. Heraldic devices, either painted or carved, were frequently a part of the permanent ornamentation. Wood floors were generally made extremely solid by laying the flooring boards on edge instead of on the side. The floors of the great hall, however, were frequently tiled.

It may be well to end this section with a quotation from Drake relative to the houses of the lower classes.

“The houses or cottages of the farmer were built, in places abounding in wood, in a very strong and substantial manner, with not more than four, six, or nine inches between stud and stud; but in the open champaine country, they were compelled to use more flimsy materials, with here and there a girding to which they fastened their splints, and then covered the whole with a thick clay to keep out the wind. ‘Certs, this rude kind of building,’ says Harrison, ‘made the Spaniards in queene Maries daies to wonder, but cheefelie when they saw what large diet was used in manie of these so homelie cottages, in so much

that one of no small reputation amongst them said after this manner: "These English (quoth he) have their houses made of sticks and durt, but they fare commonly as well as the king." . . . The cottages of the peasantry usually consisted of but two rooms on the ground floor, the outer for the servants, the inner for the master and his family, and they were thatched with straw or sedge; while the dwelling of the substantial farmer was distributed into several rooms above and beneath, and was very neatly roofed with reed." (Vol. I., p. 99.)

## II

One who would comprehend the style of Elizabethan dress must, for the time being, set aside all notion of simplicity or fit. In fact, the people of that time carried their idea of what was proper in wearing apparel to such a ridiculous extreme that they were made the subject of innumerable satires; and dress was the most popular point of attack by all the abusive writers on reform. Bright colours, elaborate trimmings, and excessive padding are the most notable characteristics of Elizabethan dress. Padding was so full that all outward semblance to the human form was completely lost, both to men and to women.

"There is not any people under the zodiac

of heaven," says Philip Stubbes, "however clownish, rural, or brutish soever, that is so poisoned with the arsenic of Pride or hath drunk so deep of the dregs of this cup as Alga [England] hath." Harrison, a contributor to Holinshed's history, wrote: "The phantastical folly of our nation (even from the courtier to the carter) is such that no form of apparel liketh us longer than the first garment is in the wearing, if it continue so long, and be not laid aside to receive some other trinket newly devised by the fickle-headed tailors, who covet to have several tricks in cutting, thereby to draw fond customers to more expense of money. . . . And as these fashions are diverse, so likewise it is a world to see the costliness and the curiosity, the excess and the vanity, the pomp and the bravery, and finally the fickleness and folly, that is in all degrees, insomuch that nothing is more constant in England than inconstancy of attire."

Stubbes was a satirist, and Harrison a plain historian; the following quotation is from Camden, the most learned scholar of the age:

"In these days [1574] a wondrous excess of Apparel had spread itself all over England, and the habit of our own country, though a peculiar vice incident to our apish nation, grew into such contempt, that men by their new fangled gar-



ments, and too gaudy apparel, discovered a certain deformity and arrogancy of mind whilst they jetted up and down in their silks glittering with gold and silver, either imbroïdered or laced. The Queen, observing that, to maintain this excess, a great quantity of money was carried yearly out of the land, to buy silks and other outlandish [foreign] wares, to the impoverishing of the commonwealth; and that many of the nobility which might be of great service to the commonwealth and others that they might seem of noble extraction, did, to their own undoing, not only waste their estates, but also run so far in debt, that of necessity they came within the danger of law thereby, and attempted to raise troubles and commotions when they had wasted their own patrimonies; although she might have proceeded against them by the laws of King Henry VIII. and Queen Mary, and thereby have fined them in great sums of money, yet she chose rather to deal with them by way of command. She commauded therefore by proclamation, that every man should within fourteen days conform himself for apparel to a certain prescribed fashion, lest they otherwise incur the severity of the laws; and she began the conformity herself in her own court. But, through the untowardness of the times, both this proclamation and the laws also gave way by



little and little to this excess of pride, which grew daily more and more unreasonable.”

The contemporary drama contains innumerable allusions to the extremity of fashion. “Apparel’s grown a god.” (Marston’s *What You Will*, iii. 1.) “Poor citizens must not with courtiers wed Who will in silks and gay apparel spend, More in one year than I am worth, by far.” (Dekker’s *Shoemaker’s Holiday*, ii. 1.) “O, many have broke their backs with laying houses on ’em.” (*Henry VIII.*)

This magnificent extreme obtained in all ranks of life, as Harrison says, from the courtier to the carter. The only difference was that the rich man dressed in more expensive stuffs; he wore diamonds and rubies where the poor man wore beads of coloured glass. He bought clothes oftener than the poor man; yet people were all alike in this; they dressed as fine and finer than their pockets would allow.

The kind of dress worn upon any occasion was not dependent upon the time of day. A man would appear at court in his gaudiest clothes, whether the time was day or night, morning or afternoon. The garments were stiffened and stuffed till the wearer could not move with any comfort. A man in full dress was laced from head to foot. His doublet was laced or buttoned in

front. The sleeves were often laced to the arm-holes. The doublet was laced to the hose. The hose was laced. Sometimes even the shoes were laced. A man could not dress himself without assistance. Fashionable dressing, or "making-ready," was such a formidable undertaking that, once accomplished, a man was glad to keep the same clothes on his back all day long. Women carried dress to an even greater extreme than men. They put on a complete framework of whalebone and wire before they began to assemble the outer garments. When the process was completed, all resemblance to a human figure had disappeared. Women were wide and round, stiff and rigid as if made of metal, and their dress abounded in straight lines and sharp angles.

What women achieved by means of wire and bone, men accomplished by means of wadding. Wool, hair, rags, and often bran, were used to pad out the doublet and hose. A writer in 1563 (Bulwer, *Artificial Changeling*) tells a story of a young gallant "in whose immense hose a small hole was torn by a nail of the chair he sat upon, so that as he turned and bowed to pay his court to the ladies, the bran poured forth as from a mill that was grinding, without his perceiving it, till half his cargo was unladen on the floor."

Holme in his *Notes on Dress* (Harl. 4375),

relates the following: "About the middle of Queen Elizabeth's reign, the slops, or trunk hose, with peascod-bellied doublets, were much esteemed, which young men used to stuff with rags and other like things to extend them in compass, with as great eagerness as women did take pleasure to wear great and stately verdingales; for this was the same in effect, being a sort of verdingale breeches. And so excessive were they herein, that a law was made against them as did stuff their breeches to make them stand out; whereas when a certain prisoner (in these times) was accused for wearing such breeches contrary to law, he began to excuse himself for the offence, and endeavoured by little and little to discharge himself of that which he did wear within them; he drew out of his breeches a pair of sheets, two table cloths, ten napkins, four shirts, a brush, a glass, a comb, and night-caps, with other things of use, saying: your lordships may understand that because I have no safer a storehouse, these pockets do serve me for a room to lay my goods in; and though it be a straight prison, yet it is a storehouse big enough for them, for I have many things more yet of value within them. And so his discharge was accepted and well laughed at: and they commanded him that he should not alter the furniture of his storehouse,

but that he should rid the hall of his stuff, and keep them as it pleased him.”

Female extravagance in dress was proverbial:

“Not like a lady of the trim, new crept  
 Out of the shell of sluttish sweat and labour  
 Into the glittering pomp of ease and wantonness  
     Embroideries, and all these antic fashions  
 That shape a woman monstrous; to transform  
 Your education and a noble birth  
 Into contempt and laughter.”

(Ford's *Lover's Melancholy*, i. 3.)

“The women,” says Stubbes, “when they have all these goodly robes upon them, seem to be the smallest part of themselves, not natural women, but artificial women; not women of flesh and blood, but rather puppets or mawmuts, consisting of rags and clouts compact together.”

Out of doors a woman wore little or nothing upon her head. There were several kinds of light hoods, some of which were attached to the collar of the gown, as the “French-hooded cloak.” The more common custom, however, was to throw a light scarf or veil over the head. Cypress, a light, gauzy material, was often used for the purpose. (See Middleton's *No Wit, No Help*, ii. 1.) “A cypress over my face, for fear of sun burning.” A mask was always worn by ladies. Masks were made of silk, as a rule, and

were either pinned or tied. They were of all colours: black, however, was most popular.

People of high social rank often built the hair into towering masses on the crown of the head; but as a rule the hair was dressed plain, though frequently covered with jewels. The Elizabethan women, as well as the men, dyed their hair, not to conceal the fact that it was turning gray, but to please a passing fancy. There was no attempt to conceal the practice, nor was the same colour always used. In fact, the colour of the hair was made to harmonise with the garments worn upon any particular occasion. Those who did not care to dye their hair wore wigs. The Elizabethans revelled in wigs. The Records of the Wardrobe show that Elizabeth possessed eighty at one time. Mary Stuart, during a part of her captivity in England, changed her hair every day. So usual was this habit, and so great the demand for hair, that children with handsome locks were never allowed to walk alone in the London streets for fear they should be temporarily kidnapped and their tresses cut off.

That was also a day of face washes and complexion paints. "The old wrinkles are well filled up, but the vermilion is seen too thick." (Middleton's *Old Law*, iii. 1.) "Thou most ill-shrouded rottenness, thou piece made by a painter and a

'pothecary!" (*Philaster*, ii. 4.) "But there is never a fair woman has a true face." (*Antony and Cleopatra*, ii. 6.) It was also common to paint the breast. (See Jonson's *Malcontent*, ii. 3; Middleton's *Anything for a Quiet Life*, v. 1; Marston's *Antonio and Mellida*, Part II. iv. 2.)

Men wore hats of all sizes, shapes, and colours. The most popular material was velvet. All sorts of feathers were used by men to decorate their hats; black feathers eighteen inches or two feet in length were in great demand. A common decoration was a twisted girdle next the brim, called a cable hat-band. Some hats, however, were perfectly plain, of soft felt. Others wore velvet caps with a jewelled clasp. Occasionally small mirrors were worn in the hat for novelty. The place for the hat was frequently upon the head; but quite as often the hat was worn dangling down the back at the end of a brightly-coloured ribbon. It was worn in either place, either within or without doors. The hair was usually cut short, with, however, a love lock left long behind one or both of the ears. It was adorned with pretty bows of ribbon. Men painted the face quite as frequently and as carefully as the women. The moustache was sometimes left very long. Hair, moustache, and beard were coloured as fancy prompted. The following from

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* is to be understood quite literally: "Either your straw-coloured beard, your orange tawny beard, your purple ingrain beard, or your French crown coloured beard, your perfect yellow." "Forsooth, they say the king has mew'd [moulted] All his gray beard, instead of which is budded Another of a pure carnation colour, speckled with green and russet" (Ford's *The Broken Heart*, ii. 1.) Harrison writes: "Neither will I meddle with our variety of beards, of which some are shaven from the chin like those of the Turks, not a few cut short like the beard of the Marquise Otto, some made round like a rubbing brush. . . . Therefore if a man have a lean, straight face, a Marquis Otto's cut will make it broad and large; if it be platter like, a long slender beard will make it seem narrower. . . . Some lusty courtiers also, and gentlemen of courage do wear either rings of gold, stones, or pearl, in their ears, whereby they imagine the workmanship of God not to be a little amended." Harrison does not mention the fact that gallants usually wore the love lock as an especial support for ladies' favours.

Stubbes writes in 1583: "They, the barbers, have invented such strange fashions of monstrous manners of cuttings, trimmings, shavings, and washings, that you would wonder to see." He

mentions the French cut, the Spanish, Dutch, Italian, the new, the old, the gentleman's, the common, the court, and the country cuts. He concludes with: "They have also other kinds of cuts innumerable; and therefore when you come to be trimmed they will ask you whether you will be cut to look terrible to your enemy, or amiable to your friend; grim and stern in countenance or pleasant and demure, for they have divers kinds of cuts for all these purposes, or else they lie." Is it, then, any wonder that such words as fool, wretch, ape, and monkey, were then used as terms of endearment! Motto, the barber, in Lyly's *Midas*, says to his boy: "Besides, I instructed thee in the phrases of our elegant occupation, as, 'How, sir, will you be trimmed? will you have your beard like a spade, or a bodkin? a penthouse on your upper lip, or an alley on your chin? a low curl on your head, like a bull, or a dangling lock like a spaniel.'"

When one thinks of costume in the age of Elizabeth one naturally thinks of three details as most characteristic: the ruff, the huge-padded hose, and the farthingale. Of these three, the first is the unique feature of the dress of that particular age. Ruffs of our own time convey no idea of what was meant by a ruff in 1600. During the time of the early Tudors, partelets, or





ILLUSTRATING FARTHINGALE AND HOSE.  
(From an old print.)



narrow collars of divers colours, generally made of velvet, were much worn by the nobility. These began to grow in size and popularity during the reign of Elizabeth. As was usual in those days, the new fashion was introduced by the men, but the women were quick to follow in the adoption of the ruff. Ruffs were made of linen, often decorated with gold and silver thread, and adorned with jewels. They were expensive garments, and could be worn but a few times. In 1564, a woman became the great benefactor of English society. This woman was a Mrs. Dingham, wife of a Dutch coachman in the service of the Queen. Mrs. Dingham brought to England the art of starching. The use of starch gave the ruff a new birth. It could now be worn more than once; and, in a trice, the garment was within the reach of all. Elizabeth wore her ruffs closed in front, extending close under her chin; most women, however, who had fairer skin and shapelier necks, preferred to wear the ruff open in front.

The ruff was made of linen, much plaited, and starched stiff, usually with white starch. For a while yellow starch was fashionable, but the fad was of short duration. Starch was also occasionally used of other colours. Stubbes tells us that the women used "a certain kind of liquid matter which they called *starch*, wherein the devil hath

willed them to wash and die their ruffs well; and this starch they make of divers colours and hues—white, red, blue, purple, and the like; which, being dry, will then stand stiff and inflexible about their necks.” In Middleton’s *The World Tost at Tennis* we find the following stage direction: “Music striking up a light, fantastic air, the five starches, White, Blue, Yellow, Green, and Red . . . come dancing in.” There was a great revival in the popularity of yellow starch in 1615 due to the fact that an infamous woman, a Mrs. Turner, wore bands so starched at her execution at Tyburn. A long and interesting note on this occasion is found in Hazlitt’s Dodsley, *Albumazar* (ii. 1). After having been washed, the ruff was got up with a hot iron and a “poking stick” till it stood out a marvel to behold.

What made the ruff so conspicuous was its size. When first introduced it was modest and unpretentious; but nothing upon which fashion in those days once took a fair hold could remain “confined within the modest limits of order.” We hear of ruffs that contained eighteen or nineteen yards of linen. The fashionable depth was one-fourth of a yard. Sometimes they were as much as one-third of a yard deep. Imagine the head of a man or woman, like the hub of a cart-wheel, firmly gripped in the midst of a mass of

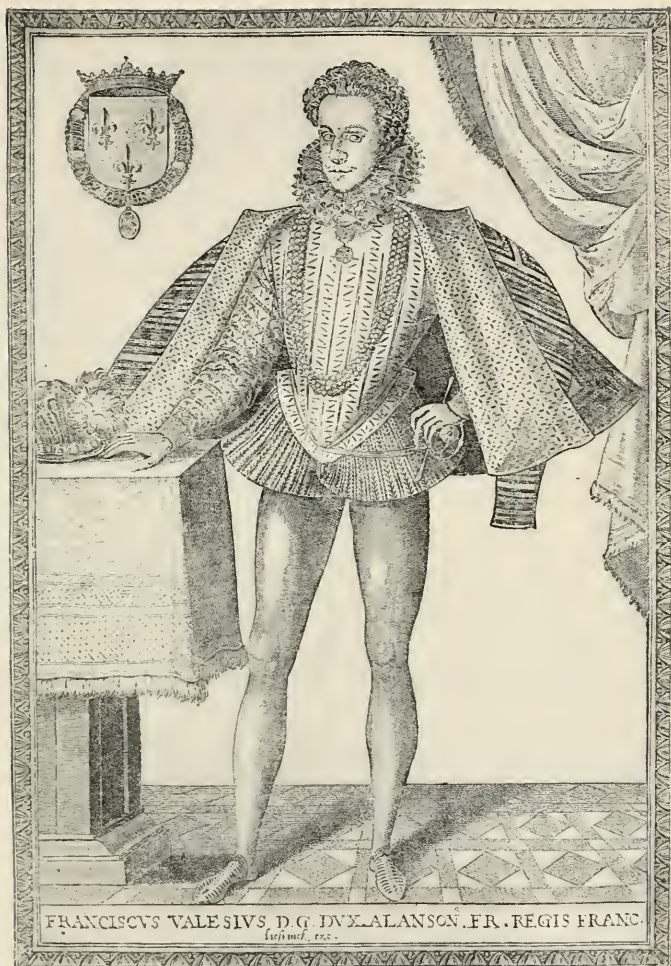
starched linen extending a foot on all sides! So cumbersome were these articles of dress that it became necessary to underprop them with a framework of wire to keep them from tumbling down of their own weight, and to prevent them from dragging their wearer's head down with them. What a stiff, unnatural carriage the habit of wearing ruffs gave to the upper half of the body is fully illustrated by the following: "He carries his face in's ruff, as I have seen a serving man carry glasses in a cypress hatband, monstrous steady for fear of breaking." (Webster's *White Devil*, ii. 4.) One's head in the midst of such a ruff was free to move, of course, only within limits. In fact, people found it most difficult to eat and to drink. In France, for this fashion was imported from Paris, where it was carried to an even greater extreme than in England, we read of a royal lady who found it necessary to take soup out of a spoon two feet long.

In the latter part of the reign of Queen Elizabeth the garment that ultimately supplanted the ruff became popular. The falling band, like the ruff, was made of linen, but less elaborate, not so large, and unstarched. Bands, as distinguished from falling bands, were often starched, as may be seen in the Droysheut engraving of Shakespeare. It was the lack of starch that gave rise

to the peculiar name of falling band. It fell close to the neck over the narrow collar of the doublet. A falling band that reached to the edge of the shoulder was unusually large. They were frequently made of, or decorated with, the finest lace. A reason for their popularity is glanced at in *The Malcontent* (v. 3): "You must wear falling bands, you must come to the falling fashion; there is such a deal o' pinning these ruffs, when the fine clean fall is worth all; and, again, if ye should chance to take a nap in the afternoon your falling band requires no poting [poking] stick to recover his form."

The upper part of a woman's body was cased in a neat, tightly-laced bodice, that followed the contour of the body with a fair resemblance to nature. This, however, was the only part of the figure that retained any of its native semblance. The bodice frequently projected downward in a long sharp point over the abdomen; and was often open towards the top to show the breast, or the stomacher of brightly coloured silk beneath crossed laces.

The corresponding garment for men was the doublet. It was usually padded and stuffed till quite twice the size of the natural body. The doublet was cut and slashed in front and sides so as to show the gay-coloured lining of costly



FRANCISCVS VALESIVS, D. G. DVX ALANSON. FR. REGIS FRANC.  
*Lesclapier, 1575.*

ILLUSTRATIVE OF SHORT HOSE AND CAPE.





material. It was sometimes laced, but was more frequently buttoned up the front. Two or three buttons at the top were left open and the shirt of delicate white lawn pulled out a little way. This has become the open vest and necktie of our own time. The doublet sometimes projected downward in front, when it was called a peascod belied doublet; sometimes it surrounded the hips like a short skirt. The sleeves were generally removable and laced to the doublet at the arm-holes. Working people, who, of course, wore doublets, or jerkins, that were but slightly padded, frequently did without the sleeves altogether, the arms covered by the sleeves of the shirt. A pair of drawstrings working in opposite directions at the small of the back enabled one to tighten or loosen one's doublet at will.

There used to be a punishment in use in the Colony of New York by which a man was compelled to walk about encased in a barrel; his head projecting from one end, his feet from the other. The Elizabethan women did not carry a barrel about their hips, but they carried a corresponding bulk. What would correspond to a skirt in our time was then called a farthingale. This name, however, was properly applied to the framework of whalebone and wire which the woman buckled on before she began to dress. It

clamped her tightly about the waist and was absolutely rigid. One style gave a curve from the waist-line downward; the other style extended level from the waist, and met the vertical line of drapery at right angles. In either case the nether garments were supported by this structure much as we support the week's wash on a rotary drier. The appearance of a fashionable woman when fully dressed was not unlike the colonial culprit in his humiliating barrel; save that the farthingale reached to the floor and was richly bedecked with jet, beads, strings of pearl, jewels, and gold thread. The women of that day thoroughly understood the art of tight lacing. Some of the old pictures of a woman with a wasp-like waist and a huge farthingale look very much like a tin soldier soldered to his base. In 1563 a law was passed in France to limit farthingales to an ell, about four feet, in diameter; and the satirists tell us that in this respect the English outdid their rivals across the Channel. The Scotch farthingale was a variety that was smaller and closer fitting. "Is this a right Scot? Does it clip close and bear up round?— Fine stuff, i' faith; 'twill keep your thighs so cool, and make your waist so small." (Marston's *Eastward Ho*, i. 2.) "Bum-rolls" were a sort of "stuffed cushions used by women of middling rank to make their petticoats

swell out in lieu of the farthingales, which were more expensive." (Nares.)

The nether garment for men was called the hose. Its size was likewise carried to a ridiculous extent. The man, however, laboured under an additional disadvantage. Instead of spreading himself out with whalebone, he gained his volume by padding. It was from this garment that the poor fellow, already described, took out his table cloths, napkins, sheets, and other household goods. The hose, which was laced to the doublet, was of different lengths. The French hose, or trunk hose, was short and full-bodied, reaching less than halfway between the hip and knee. The gally hose was long, and reached almost to the knee. The Venetian hose reached below the knee to the place where the garter was tied. "The French hose," says Stubbes, "are of two divers makings, for the common French hose (as they list to call them) containeth length, breadth, and sideness sufficient, and is made very round. The other containeth neither length, breadth, nor sideness (being not past a quarter of a yard side) whereof some be paned, cut, and drawn out with costly ornaments, with canions annexed, reaching down beneath their knees." Canions were ornamental rolls that terminated the hose above the knee, a fashion imported from France. They are

noted in Henslowe's diary among the properties of his theatre. Thus, under April, 1598, he pays for "a pair of paned hose of bugle panes drawn out with cloth of silver and canyons to the same." He also notes "a pair of round hose of panes of silk, laid with silver lace and canons of cloth of silver." Paned hose consisted of hose in which pieces of cloth of different texture or colour were inserted to form an ornamental pattern; or of hose slashed to show the lining or the garment beneath. "He [Lord Mountjoy] wore jerkins and round hose . . . with laced panes of russet cloth." (Fynes Moryson.) "The Switzers wear no coats, but doublet and hose of panes, intermingled with red and yellow, and some with blue, trimmed with long cuffs of yellow and blue sarcenet rising up between the panes." (Coryat's *Crudities*.)

A slop was the common name for a padded hose, and was also applied to wide loose breeches, as were the names, Dutch slop, gaskins, and gally-gascoyns. Gamashes was a name applied to a sort of loose outside breeches worn over the other garments, usually as a protection in travelling.

Stockings, or nether hose, were usually of silk and gartered at the top below the knee. They were worn of all colours, and were padded only when necessary to improve the shape of the leg.

The shoes of this period were of various shapes and of many colours. They were frequently slashed below the instep in order to show the colour of the stocking. At parting, Ralph, in *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (i. 1), gives Jane a pair of shoes "made up and pinked with letters of thy name." Hamlet speaks of "provincial roses in my razed shoes." "Provincial roses" refers to the habit of wearing roses, or rosettes, upon the instep. They were generally made of lace, and often decorated with gold thread, spangles, or even jewels. At times the roses were worn large—four or five inches in diameter. "Why, 'tis the devil; I know him by a great rose he wears on's shoe To hide his cloven foot." (Webster's *White Devil*, v. 3.) Corks, so often referred to in the old plays, were shoes with cork soles that increased in thickness towards the heel, where they might be two or three inches thick. Their purpose was the same as high heels, and, when more fully developed, became known by another name. "Thy voice squeaks like a dry cork shoe." (Marston's *Antonio and Mellida*, Part I. v. 1.) The chopine was a device used by women principally for the purpose of increasing their height, and to keep their embroidered shoes and farthingales out of the dust and dirt when they walked abroad. The chopine was an expansion of the high heel cork;

though, in its extreme fashion, it is better described as a short stilt. The shoe was fastened to the top of the chopine, which was frequently a foot high. The fashion came from Venice, where the height of the chopine corresponded roughly to the rank of the wearer. Persons of very high rank have been known to wear chopines eighteen inches high. The Venetian women so dressed could not walk alone, but required the assistance of a staff, or were led about upon the arm of an assistant, constable-fashion. There is a line in one of the old plays to the effect that when a woman walks on chopines she cannot help but caper.

Buttons were then in frequent use, but not so common as to-day. They were small when used upon the front of the doublet, but in female attire they were generally large. One of the most popular styles consisted of buttons covered with silk. They were also occasionally made of brass or of copper, and upon occasions, bore jewels set in gold. We even hear of diamond buttons.

The laces by which so many parts of the dress were fastened together were tagged at the ends with "points." These points were frequently of gold, handsomely engraved, and carved. Jewelry of all sorts was in common use, including earrings, hat and shoe buckles, brooches, gold chains,

rings, bracelets, garter-clasps, watches, etc. Rings especially were much worn by both sexes. It was a common custom to engrave on the inside a line or two of sentimental poetry, called the posy. It is to this fashion that Hamlet refers in the words, "Is this a prologue or the posy of a ring?"

Fans came into use in England for the first time in the reign of Elizabeth. They dangled from the girdle by a silk cord or a gold chain. They were often handsomely decorated with diamonds, rubies, emeralds, agate, and feathers. Fans were not used by men till later times. Gloves were worn, perfume was used, and handkerchiefs were elaborate and costly.

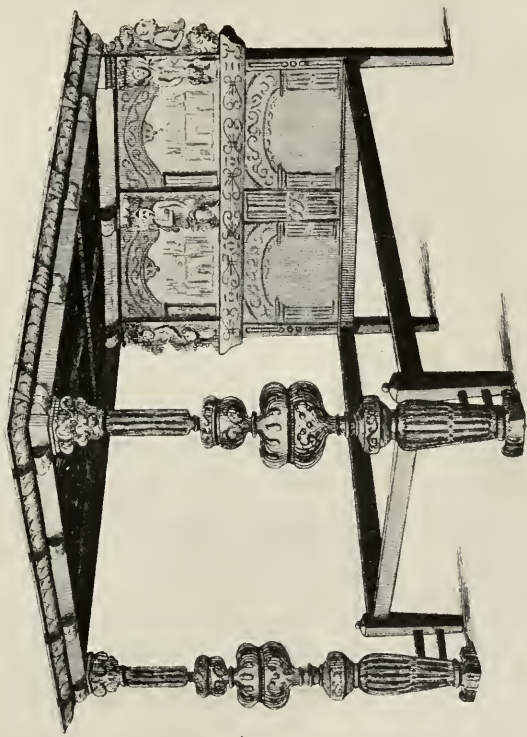
The dress of the common folk was like fashionable dress except that it was of cheaper material and did not run to such extremes. It was common then for persons of different ranks and of different trades to reveal the fact by the manner of their dress. Thus the long blue gown was the especial badge of a servant, and the London flat cap of the apprentice. Because of the Reformation, that swept away so many Romish customs, the dress of the clergy was less distinctive than in former times. The armour of this period was an attempt to copy in metal the ordinary fashionable dress. The helmet was decked with enormous

plumes. A ruff frequently surmounted a steel corselet. The plates of the body armour were grooved, embossed, and engraved from top to bottom in imitation of embroidery and folds of drapery. Liveries, too, were common. Many trades and societies of London possessed their distinctive dress. The retainers of the great noblemen always wore a badge containing their master's coat-of-arms. This badge, or cognisance, was worn upon the left sleeve.

### III

In another place I have noted the fact that Shakespeare's father was fined for keeping a muck-heap so close to his house as to be a nuisance to the public. This, however, is not an indication of a habit of uncleanness confined to those who lived in the humbler circumstances of life. Lack of ventilation, careless habits, and general inattention to sanitary conditions were so common that Cavendish tells us in the *Life of Wolsey* that a house upon continual use "waxed savoury." Perhaps what contributed more than anything else to this condition of affairs was the custom of matting or rushing the floors. No carpets in the modern sense of the word were then in use, except on the rarest occasions and late in the period here treated. Only the lower classes,





AN ELIZABETHAN BED.

(From N. Hudson Moore's "Old Furniture Book." By permission of Frederick A. Stokes Company.)



however, were content with bare wood floors or floors of earth. Something more elegant was needed. This material was found in the rushes that were plentifully strewn upon the floors. Every private garden possessed a portion laid aside for the growing of rushes. They were also sold in large quantities. These were strewn upon the floors, not only of sleeping rooms, but also of the dining room, in the great hall, and even upon the stage of the public theatre. They contributed slightly to the warmth of the feet; they were, in a small way, decorative; and, above all, according to the Elizabethan's light, they were elegant.

One of to-day may suppose that, when there was need of re-rushing a room, the old rushes were taken out and new ones brought in. Not at all. This was entirely too much trouble to people who had not heard of germs and who believed that magic was as good a remedy as was to be found against the plague. The Elizabethans merely carted in the new rushes and deposited them upon the old ones. And a room was not always thoroughly purged of its rushes more than once a year. The result was filth more or less absent to the eye but present to the nose. The latter condition gave rise to a whole profession, as necessary and as distinctive as that of the chimney sweep; namely, the perfumer. It was his business

to come, when a room had grown too foul to live in, in order to remove the stench by burning Juniper wood and other sweet-smelling herbs. Vermin flourished under such conditions, and many are the allusions that could be cited referring even to royal visits from which persons returned bitten from head to foot.

The furniture of these houses was plentiful, but, in the main, rude. The art of cabinet-making was practically unknown till Tudor times. By the reign of Elizabeth so much proficiency had been attained in this art that we occasionally find very elaborate and beautiful examples of handiwork. Much, probably most, of the cabinet work of the period was, however, of a simple character. The articles manufactured were chiefly chests, chairs, long seats, with here and there a pretentious cabinet. Stools and tables, of course, were common. Larger tables for the dining room were for the most part mere tops supported on trestles. The whole combination was taken down at the end of a meal and placed against the wall.

The cabinet work of the period was massive, and contained many straight lines. There was some carving, but usually of simple design and not overdone, as was so often the case in the carved exterior woodwork of the house frames. The fur-

niture was strongly made, for use rather than for show. The material used was generally oak.

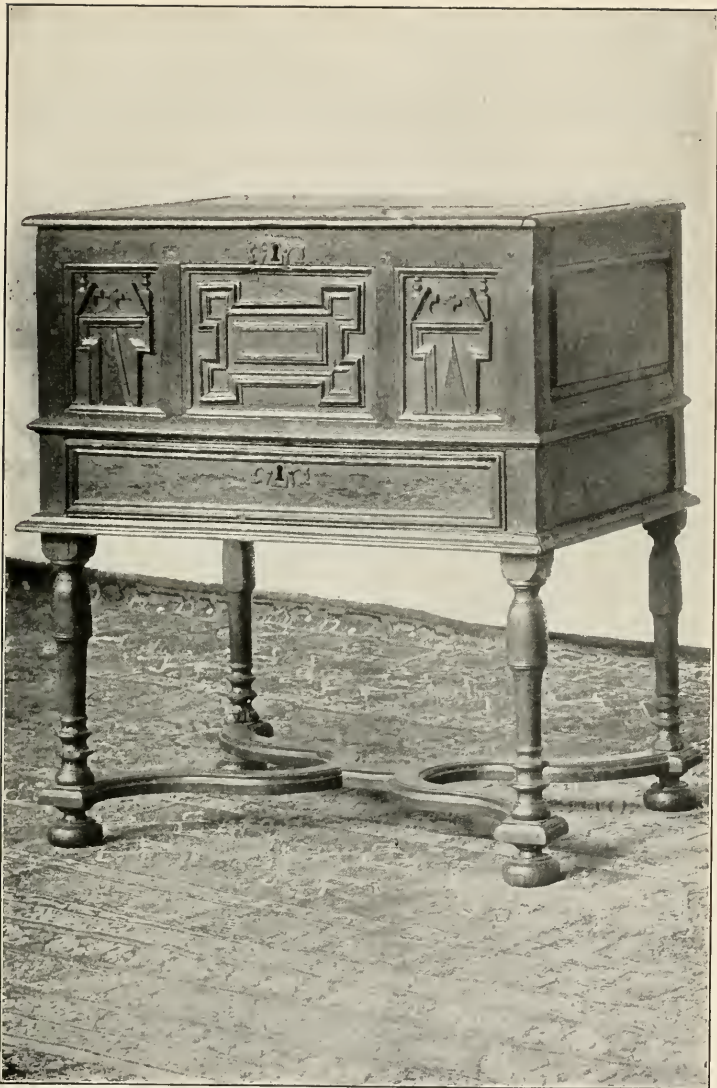
In the damp climate of England the people were hard-pressed to discover a means of decorating the stone walls of their buildings. The problem was solved by the use of arras and tapestry. These hangings were of costly material, bearing pictures that were sometimes painted, sometimes worked with the needle. The arras was hung upon frames that supported it about a foot from the wall. This frame device was to protect the expensive hangings from the mildew of the damp walls. The space behind the arras was a characteristic feature of Elizabethan domestic life. In the first place, it enabled the arras to move with the least breath of air, a fact that doubtless went far to convince many a person of the truth of those numberless stories so often told of household ghosts. Behind the arras was also a convenient place for hiding. Polonius was eavesdropping behind the arras when he met his death. It was a Mecca for assassins. One needed to examine the arras in those days as the more timorous of to-day look under the bed. There are contemporary references to "behind the arras" being a convenient place for courtship.

In the humbler ranks of life, painted cloth took the place of the more expensive tapestry of the

higher ranks. The habit of making pictures in series, and of adorning the pictures with proverbial and religious mottos, seems to have been commoner with this class of hangings than with the other.

Curtains were frequently in use. There are allusions to window curtains, though they were not common. Curtains were hung about the beds. Curtains were frequently the only divisions between the smaller rooms into which a larger one was divided by their use. One of the frequent uses for a curtain was as a covering to a picture. Pictures were not then a common form of decoration. Such as were to be found were mostly portraits. These were sometimes painted directly upon the wood panelling. When they were movable, they were sometimes painted upon wood, sometimes upon canvas. In any case, they were likely to be protected by curtains, for glass makers had not yet learned to make glass in large pieces.

As has already been said, in the dining room, which was more likely to be the hall than a separate room, the table, between meals, was stood against the wall, with its pair of trestles beside it. Perhaps the only other characteristic piece of dining room furniture was the cupboard or buffet. This was frequently large and massive. In and on it was stored much plate; and dishes of



OAK CHEST SUPPORTED ON FRAME.

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meat were left upon it between meals for those who wished to help themselves.

When meal time came, the servants entered and set up the table. It was then covered with a carpet. Occasionally we find a carpet used on the floor as a sort of rug; but in most instances where the word is used in Elizabethan literature the reference is to a covering for the table. Napkins were also used. Most of the table linen was perfumed. Plate was indulged in to a great extent by those who could afford the gratification. The bulk of a family's wealth was often in the plate. China and porcelain were coming into use, but when the plate ran short, pewter was more likely to be the material of the other dishes. Pewter was not then cheap, and in no wise looked down upon. The common folk used wooden dishes in place of plate. Mottos were often carved about the edge of the wooden trenchers.

Perhaps the main reason why we do not to-day eat with our knives is because we are conservatively subject to the instinct that was bred into our nature when every person at the board used the weapon at his side to assist him at dinner. Whatever duty the dagger may have performed between meals is irrelevant; but once arrived at table the knife that went into the common dish could not with propriety go into the individual

mouth. It may surprise some readers to know that table knives as a distinctive instrument only came into use in England about the beginning of the reign of Elizabeth; and that the fingers were used as main assistants till 1611, when forks were first introduced by Thomas Coryat, who had seen them in use in Italy.

It is hardly necessary to mention pots, flagons, and tankards of all shapes and sizes, and in all kinds of ware. But one other article of table furniture is of interest. Toothpicks had been recently introduced. In those days, when cleanliness of the body was as little thought of as was the sanitary condition of the house, the advent of the toothpick was really a mark of advanced civilization. The Elizabethan susceptibility to fads caused the generation to "take up" toothpicks. They were ostentatiously carried by all. They were frequently made of gold with jeweled cases. And to pick one's teeth in public became as surely the mark of a gentleman as to talk the rubbish set in vogue by Lyly's *Euphues*.

In the bedroom we find heavy four-posted beds, very massive in construction and frequently carved. There was a canopy above the bed, and curtains permitted the inhabitants to sleep absolutely independent of ventilation. The page of the master or mistress usually slept upon a low

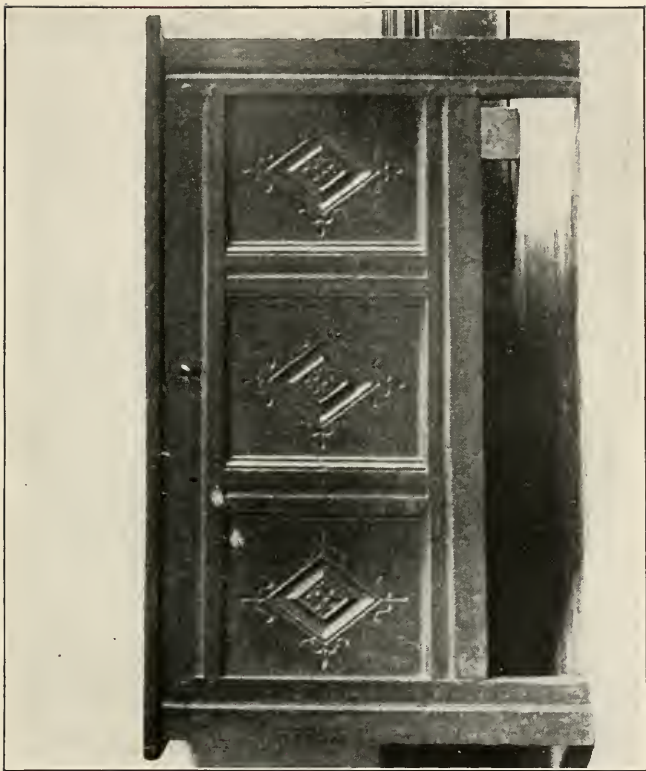
truckle bed which was pushed under the large one during the daytime. Sheets of linen were fastened to the bed by little pegs. The counterpanes were elaborate and gaudy. Though nightclothes were in use, many people habitually slept naked. Oftentimes the word nightclothes in Eliabethan literature refers not so much to sleeping clothes as clothes for negligee wear. Perhaps the only other characteristic article of bedroom furniture, besides a few stools and, perhaps, a day bed, that is, a sofa, was a chest. These chests were huge affairs and used to store whatever would to-day be put into drawers, an article of furniture that had not yet come into general use. Most of the outer clothes, however, were not kept in the bedroom, but in the wardrobe. This was not an article of furniture, but a separate room where the articles of the wardrobe were kept, hence its name. The garments were hung about the walls of the room upon pegs. Frequent allusions seem to point to the fact that cut flowers were more frequently found in the bedroom than in any other part of the house.

In the library or den of the master of the house we find his books, usually sumptuously bound volumes, small in number and not various in subject-matter. The Bible and a book on hawking or hunting were considered necessary. A few

others were thrown in for effect. Books, however, played a small part in the daily life of the average Elizabethan. The bindings, however, were frequently very beautiful and studded with jewels. Sometimes only the clasp was jewelled, hence rose the custom of putting books on the shelf with the binding next the wall so that the handsome clasp would be visible. A candlestick a little more elegant than those used throughout the rest of the house, an hour-glass, and a globe were other requisites. Also writing materials. Pocket inkstands were in general use. Pens were made of quills. In place of blotting paper scribes used small boxes of sand pierced like pepper boxes. Perfumery, in so frequent demand elsewhere, was also pressed into service in preparing paper for correspondence. Letters were always sealed with wax; and it was considered bad form for one to deliver his own letter.

#### IV

“Wives in England,” says the Antwerp merchant Van Meteren in 1599, “are entirely in the power of their husbands, their lives only excepted. Therefore when they marry they give up the surname of their father and of the family from which they are descended, and take the surnames of their husbands, except in the case of duchesses, coun-



AN ELIZABETHAN CHEST.

(From N. Hudson Moore's "Old Furniture Book." By permission of Frederick A. Stokes Company.)



tesses and baronesses, who, when they marry gentlemen of inferior degree, retain their first name and title, which, for the ambition of the said ladies, is rather allowed than commended. But though the women there are entirely in the power of their husbands except for their lives, yet they are not kept so strictly as they are in Spain or elsewhere. Nor are they shut up, but they have the free management of the house or housekeeping, after the fashion of those of the Netherlands and others their neighbours. They go to market to buy what they like best to eat. They are well dressed, fond of taking it easy, and commonly leave the care of household matters and drudgery to their servants. They sit before their doors, decked out in fine clothes, in order to see and be seen by the passers-by. In all banquets and feasts they are shown the greatest honour; they are placed at the upper end of the table, where they are the first served; at the lower end they help the men. All the rest of their time they employ in walking and riding, in playing at cards or otherwise, in visiting their friends and keeping company, conversing with their equals (whom they term *gosseps*) and their neighbours, and making merry with them at child-births, christenings, churchings (*kerck-ganghen*), and funerals; and all this with the permission and knowledge of their husbands, as such

is the custom. Although the husbands often recommend to them the pains, industry, and care of the German or Dutch women, who do what the men ought to do both in the house and in the shops, for which services in England men are employed, nevertheless the women usually persist in retaining their customs. This is why England is called the paradise of married women. The girls who are not yet married are kept much more rigorously and strictly than in the Low Countries.

“The women are beautiful, fair, well-dressed, and modest, which is seen there more than elsewhere, as they go about the streets without any covering either of huke or mantle (*huycke*) hood, veil, or the like. Married women only wear a hat both in the street and in the house; those unmarried go without a hat, although ladies of distinction have lately learnt to cover their faces with silken masks or vizards, and feathers—for indeed they change very easily, and that every year to the astonishment of many.” (The translation is due to Rye.)

An anonymous black-letter pamphlet printed at London in 1598 contains the following interesting details relative to the customs pertaining to women:

“But yet there remains one service wherein they [gentlemen] must employ more men than the

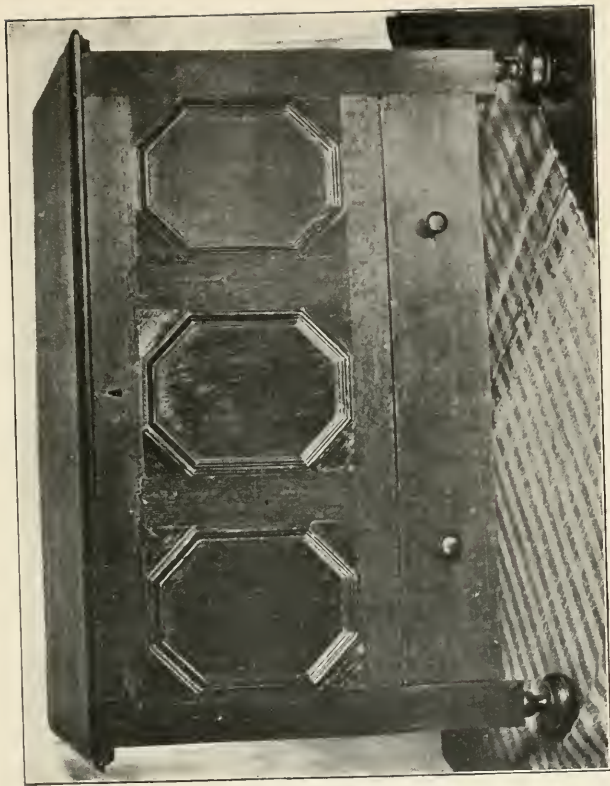


table's attendance requireth, that is, if their mistress ride abroad, she must have six or seven serving men to attend her, she must have one to carry her cloak, and hood, lest it rain, another her fan, if she use it not herself, another her box with ruffs and other necessaries, another behind whom her maid or gentlewoman must ride, and some must be loose to open gates, and supply other services that may be occasioned. Now to diminish and cut of this charge, as well of horse and men, there is a new invention, and that is, she must have a coach, wherein she, with her gentlewomen, maid, and children, and what necessaries they or any of them are to use, may be carried or conveyed with smaller charge, less cost, and more credit, as it is accounted: for one or two men at the most besides the coachman, are sufficient for a gentlewoman or lady of worthy parentage."

Gervase Markham, in his *English Housewife*, thus describes her:

"Next unto her sanctity and holiness of life, it is meet that our English housewife be a woman of great modesty and temperance, as well inwardly as outwardly; inwardly as in her behaviour and carriage towards her husband, wherein she shall shun all violence of rage, passion, and humour, coveting less to direct than to

be directed, appearing ever unto him pleasant, amiable and delightful; and, tho' occasion of mis-haps, or the mis-government of his will may induce her to contrary thoughts, yet virtuously to suppress them, and with a mild sufference rather to call him home from his error, than with the strength of anger to abate the least spark of his evil, calling into her mind, that evil and uncomely language is deformed, though uttered even to servants; but most monstrous and ugly, when it appears before the presence of a husband; outwardly as in her apparel, and diet, both which she shall proportion according to the competency of her husband's estate and calling, making her circle rather straight than large; for it is a rule, if we extend to the uttermost, we take away increase; if we go a hair's breath beyond, we enter into consumption; but if we preserve any part we build strong forts against the adversaries fortune, provided that such preservation be honest and conscionable: for as lavish prodigality is brutish, so miserable covetousness is hellish. Let therefore the housewife's garments be comely and strong, made as well to preserve the health, as to adorn the person, altogether without toyish garnishes, or the gloss of light colours, and as far from the vanity of new and fantastic fashions, as near to the comely imitations of modest matrons.



AN ELIZABETHAN OAK CHEST.  
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(From N. Hudson



Let her diet be wholesome and cleanly, prepared at due hours, and cooked with care and diligence, let it be rather to satisfy nature, than her affections, and apter to kill hunger than revive new appetites; let it proceed more from the provision of her own yard, than the furniture of the markets; and let it be rather esteemed for the familiar acquaintance she hath without it, than for the strangeness and rarity it bringeth from other countries."

Very good advice, this, and I fear seldom followed by the housewives Markham is extolling. In another part of the same volume he becomes more specific, more practical, and more accurate. He tells us that the housewife should be skilled in many things that have passed out of fashion. To begin with, she ought to understand medicine and nursing. Markham assists her to a sufficient knowledge of such things by descriptions of the various diseases and by prescriptions for their cure. Here is a fair example, the manner of treatment of quotidian fever: "You shall take a new-laid egg, and opening the crown, you shall put out the white, then fill up the shell with very good aquavitæ, and stir it and the yoke very well together, and then as soon as you feel your cold fit begin to come upon you, suck up the egg, and either labour till you sweat, or else, laying great

store of clothes upon you, put yourself in a sweat in your bed, and thus doe while your fit continues, and for your drink, let it be only cool posset ale."

The housewife should also have a knowledge of cookery, "else she can perform but half her vow in marriage." She should have a knowledge of all kinds of herbs, their uses, when to sow them, and when to gather them. "At any time sow 'Asparagus & colworts . . . in the February new moon Spike and Garlick . . . full moon Parsley . . . March new moon Marigolds and violets . . . etc." She must also know when and what herbs are to be transplanted. Concerning her ability to cook Markham says, "she must have a quick eye, a curious nose, a perfect taste, and a ready eare; (she must not be butter-fingered, sweet-toothed, nor faint-hearted;) for the first will let everything fall, the second will consume what it should increase, and the last will lose time with too much niceness. She must know how to prepare salids, simple and compound; salids for show only; how to adorn the table," etc., etc. Moreover, the housewife should understand the art of cutting up meat, the making of cheese and butter, and the care of poultry.

Another duty of the housewife was 'distilling. She ought to furnish herself with stills, and learn

their use in the preparation of medicines, perfumes, sauces, etc. She should know all about the ordering of wines, she should be a competent brewer, and know how to gauge wine and ale casks. Then a knowledge of wool was necessary. "The housewife should know when to send it to the dyer, yet, in case of emergency, she should understand dyeing, the action whereof must be got by practice, not by relation." All about flax was another part of her necessary knowledge, and skill in dairy work. Markham, after enumerating all these various duties with descriptions and receipts, belittles the value of his own volume by saying that the housewife must not only find time to read and study about these things, but also to practise them all, else the study will prove of no avail. The modern reader should bear in mind that the average English housewife in the time of Elizabeth was actually skilled in all these various duties, and that it often fell to her lot to train servants to skill in them, even if she did not need to exercise the knowledge otherwise herself.

In those days the retinue of household servants was far more numerous than it is to-day, and a more essential mark of gentility than at any other age. The servants wore their master's arms upon the left sleeve; their distinctive dress was a

blue coat. The feeling that dignity depended largely upon the size of the train of servants pervaded all ranks of society. The domestics, at least while they were within doors, were kept under the strictest discipline. John Harrington, in 1566, drew up a set of rules by which the servants of his house were to be governed. Such documents were common: the following selection illustrates the character of the supervision:

1. A servant shall not be absent from morning or evening prayer without excuse, upon the fine of 2d each time.

3. No man shall leave any door open that he findeth shut, without cause—fine 1d.

5. No bed shall be left unmade, nor fire or candle box unclean, after 8 a. m.

8. No man shall wait at table without a trencher in his hand except for good cause—fine 1d.

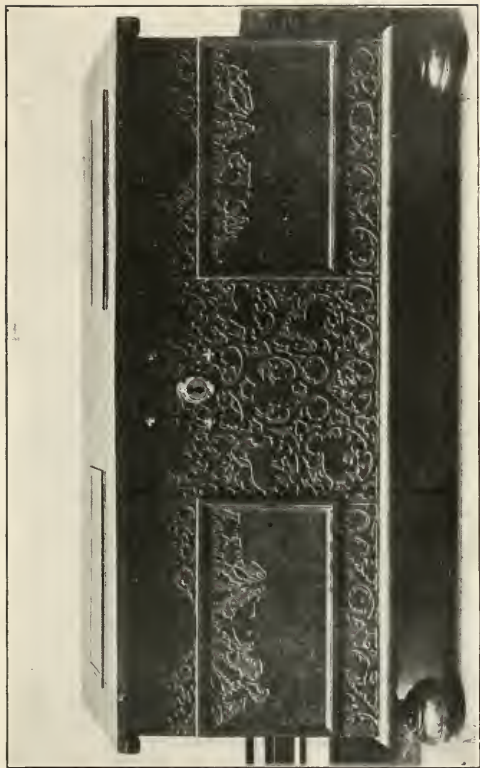
14. No one shall provoke another to strike, or strike another on pain of dismissal.

15. No man shall come to the kitchen without reasonable cause—he shall be fined 1d and the cook 1d.

20. The court gate must be shut during each meal.

The fines are to be bestowed upon the poor.





AN ELIZABETHAN OLIVE WOOD CHEST.  
(From N. Hudson Moore's "Old Furniture Book." By permission of  
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Servants usually rose at four in the summer and five in the winter time. They were subject throughout the long day to rule and regimen. We are told that even the maid-servants were thrashed into good behaviour by their masters. When not in disgrace, it was a part of their duty to amuse their master, mistress, and the guests during the meal. In this direction, however, the fool was the greatest resource. Fools were of two kinds. One was the witty fool or jester, so cleverly described in *Twelfth Night*. He wore the parti-coloured or motley garb, the cock's-comb, and carried his bauble and bells. The other kind of fool was the idiot. Elizabethans had not yet learned the pathos of insanity. The foolish antics of the half-witted afforded them endless amusement.

Returning again to Markham we find that he lays great stress upon the proper serving of a meal. "Thus you shall order them in your closet; but when they go to the table you shall first send forth a dish made for show only, as Beaste, Bird, Fish, or Fowle, according to invention: then your marchpane, then your preserved fruit, then a paste, then a wet sucket, then a dry sucket, marmelaide, cumfits, apples, pears, wardenes, oranges, and lemons sliced; then wafers and another dish of preserved fruits and so conse-

quently all the rest before: no two dishes of one kind going or standing together, and this will not only appear delicate to the eye, but invite the appetite with the much variety thereof." The foregoing description refers to the lighter part of the repast, known usually as the banquet, the dishes often being set upon the table first and the meat and game courses then served. For a family not too large, Markham says that sixteen dishes of meat and sixteen dishes of salad and vegetables would, if properly distributed, be sufficient.

Dinner and supper were usually served upon movable tables, which were covered with tablecloths of linen, often called carpets. The hour for dinner was twelve o'clock; supper was served at six. Wooden trenchers were still seen upon the tables of the rich. Pewter in its best form was a costly material, and wealthy persons often rented their stock of pewter by the year. It was, however, in its plainer forms, slowly working its way into the houses of the common people, hardly any of whom did not boast, at least, the possession of a few pewter dishes. Silver, gilt plate, cut glass, and china, the latter sparingly, were in use. Before 1563 people ate with their fingers; hence the frequent circulation at table of water and a towel. Knives were introduced in

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1563, but forks did not come till some time later.

Dinner was usually served in three courses: the first, meat; the second, game; the third, sweets. The last, called the banquet, was, when possible, served in the summer-house in the garden, from which, after sufficient time spent in conversation, the family adjourned to evening prayer and then prepared for supper. The people were extremely lavish in the matter of provision, and extravagant in their tastes. The consumption of wine was then far greater than now. Harrison mentions fifty-six French wines, thirty-six Spanish, and several made at home. Englishmen were very fond of sugar, which it was customary to mix with every kind of wine.

In an attempt to describe the social conditions of the Elizabethans one is constantly confronted with the difficulty of selection. There must be, however, a limit of space that often curtails when one would be inclined to continue. The brief view contained in this volume, it is hoped, will serve to give in broad lines the habits of life that characterised the people of Shakespeare's generation. Gaps there are, and some details may have been over-emphasised. The present writer, however, hopes that the attempt here set down may

serve, if but inadequately, to help the modern reader to an easier and more complete comprehension of those great Elizabethan writings to which this book aspires to be no more than a humble footnote.

THE END

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