

MORE PICTURE BOARD DUMMIES.

By R. S. FERGUSON, F.S.A., Chancellor of Carlisle.

In May, 1890, I had the honour of laying before the Institute an account of two Picture Board Dummies, or life-sized figures of Grenadiers, the property of the County Hotel Company, Carlisle.¹ On December 5th, 1894, I had the further honour of laying before the Institute an account of several Picture Board Dummies of various kinds—soldiers, sweeping housemaids, lads and lasses, grotesques, and the like.² Owing possibly to these two papers—though I hardly venture to so far flatter myself—a boom has taken place in Picture Board Dummies: their value has gone up: the County Hotel Company at Carlisle have put their interesting Grenadiers under glass: the curiosity shops exhibit Picture Board Dummies in their windows; and the manufacture of them has been resumed. Sir Henry Dryden, who has taken great interest in this subject, tells me that he has been informed by Mr. Seymour Lucas, R.A., that “a good many of these board figures of less than life-size have been made from commonplace Dutch paintings on panel, cut to the outline, and put on a stand, as they fetched more that way than in their original state.” Mr. Sephton, the artist, tells me that a Dutch figure of a child in the National Gallery has recently been painted on canvas several times, for the purpose of being cut out and glued to a board. Not very long ago I saw a pair of Picture Board Dummies (Dutch boy and girl) in a curiosity shop, and went in to look at them. On looking at their back, I noticed that they were painted on mahogany, and were evidently quite new. On pointing this out to the dealer, he at once replied, “Oh, yes; I bought them in Holland, and had to wait while they were being finished.” Furthermore, Mr. Andrew Lang

¹ Printed in the *Journal*, Vol. XLVII,
321.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. LII. p. 1.

has written a leaderette upon them in the *Daily News* of September 13th, 1895.

And, first of all, I would like to deal with the remarkable herd of dummies at Dorchester, of which a couple were suspended in the room in the Town Hall, in which Lieutenant-General Pitt-Rivers, F.R.S., F.S.A., delivered his presidential address: another couple or so adorned the staircase, and others slumbered in the municipal cellar. Several of our members called my attention to them and asked what they were: that is my excuse for bringing their history, such as it is, before you to-day. For this I am indebted to Mr. Moule, to whom so much of the success of our visit to Dorset was due. These figures are life-size, or larger, clad in armour with surcoats over it; each has his hand resting on a large shield with armorial bearings thereon. Beneath the feet of each is a sham bracket, slightly projecting. They were made and painted some thirty years ago by a local coachbuilder, on the occasion of a visit to Dorchester of the Bath and West of England Agricultural Society. They were suspended from Venetian masts, and formed part of the decorations of the streets. The shields seemed to have been intended to bear the armorial insignia of the chief county families. These figures are not feather-edged from the back to the front, as is usual with the older and genuine Dummies (see my previous papers).

I am indebted to Mr. Moule for information as to a pair of most interesting Picture Board Dummies, which were formerly in his charge in the Dorset Museum. They are painted on boards (no canvas) of Red Baltic deal; are feather-edged from the back to the front, and formerly belonged to the old Dorset family of the Trenchards of Wolveton, near Dorchester. They are now the property of Sir E. R. P. Edgcumbe. They represent a boy and a girl: the girl wears the "Fontange" headdress, thus fixing the date as 1694-1699, or, if the figure is English work, a little later—Queen Anne, 1702 to 1714. She has long sleeves, richly laced, an apron apparently of black silk, and carries a little dog under her left arm. Her companion wears a plumed hat, a large lace cravat, a loose coat down to his knees, and long stockings, shoes and buckles. Not having been able to see the originals, I

have no information as to the colours of the dresses of this pretty couple. I am indebted to Sir E. R. P. Edgcumbe for permission to have these dummies photographed, and to Mr. Moule for calling my attention to them. The boy is 3 feet 4½ inches high and the girl 3 feet 7½ inches: they are very well painted. These Dummies are represented on the accompanying Plate.

Our member, Miss Frere, informs me of a Sweeping Housemaid Dummy at Tregehan, Par, Cornwall. The figure is in the attitude of listening, and may represent a lady, who has disguised herself in order to overhear the plans of some conspirators, as in the legend told about the Dummy at Folkington, near Polegate, Sussex.¹

Sir Henry Dryden informs me of a maid [a sweeping housemaid?], the property of Morgan Williams, Esq., of Aberpergwn, Glamorgan.

I also exhibit a photograph, showing the two Picture Board Dummies at Powderham Castle, Devonshire, which I described in 1894.² The photograph is marked copyright, and cannot therefore be reproduced. The costumes of the figures are of the time of George II.

The "Shakspeare Lodge, Spilsby, 426," possess two Dummies representing Grenadiers; a sketch of one of these is here reproduced; but there is not sufficient detail to show what regiment is intended to be represented. A paper upon these Dummies and upon other furniture of the Lodge was read in London at a meeting of the Lodge "Quatuor Coronati." I do not know whether this paper is published, but no history is attached to these Dummies, except that they were purchased when the Lodge was founded. The Secretary of the



DUMMY GRENADEIER. SPILSBY.

¹ See the *Journal*, Vol. LII, pp. 9 and 10.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 18 and 19.

Lodge informs me that a friend of his has a Picture Board Dummy representing a girl with an apple in her hand and a dog running at her side.

There are four Picture Board Dummies at Raby Castle. Two of these represent Grenadiers, but the figures are so dark that they photograph badly, and the details are difficult to make out. One, if not both, of them belong to the 23rd Fusiliers; they are of the time of George II.

Of the other two Dummies at Raby, one represents a peasant woman with a basket of eggs; the other, a man with slouch hat, long coat, and knee breeches and stockings; he carries a goose, and probably represents one of the Irish jobbers who every autumn bring over Irish bred geese for sale to the farmers to fatten on their stubbles against Christmas.

The late Major Brown, of Callaly Castle, Northumberland, possessed a very charming Picture Board Dummy, representing a partridge plump little Dutch girl, holding a parrot in her left hand. For information about these last five dummies I am indebted to Mr. Blair, F.S.A., one of the Secretaries of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle.



PICTURE BOARD DUMMIES,
FORMERLY IN THE DORCHESTER MUSEUM.