

ARMS AND ARMOUR ABROAD.

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The occurrence of European arms and armour in Eastern and African localities has often surprised those who have not considered the many causes which might account for such finds. But there is not much difficulty in accounting for the presence at very great distances from their place of origin, of both arms and armour, if we consider the reasons of such wanderings. In Baron Cosson's most valuable and interesting catalogue of helmets and mail exhibited in the rooms of the Royal Archaeological Institute in 1880, he mentions a helmet, now in the British Museum, evidently of the fourteenth century, of European make, which was found in Kordofan, on the White Nile. The late Mr. Burges recalled the fact that when Jacques Coeur, the merchant prince of Charles VII.'s time, was tried in 1452, one of the accusations brought against him by one of his envious accusers was that he had sold armour to the Soldan of Babylon. The date of the helmet would present no difficulty to the conclusion that this helmet was part of the armour referred to in the accusation. Jacques Coeur declared that he had in 1447, when the armour was sent, received Charles' permission to send the armour desired by the Soldan. This was a complete suit of armour such as was made in France, and was intended as a copy for the Soldan's workmen. As to the arms which he was said to have sent, the only mention of it is in very general terms in the apology or *amende honorable* which the unfortunate silversmith was compelled to make bare-headed and without his girdle. The whole of the charges against him were, we know, reversed later on, but there may have been some ground for them, though no treason to the Christian world was intended in the sending of the arms.

Taking into consideration the dry climate of the East and the number of warriors and others who perished in

the many crusades, it would be unsafe to say that arms or armour of the period of crusades did not still exist in some parts of the countries where those expeditions had their disastrous terminations.

But if real European arms of great antiquity are still in existence in Africa, we must remember that many European arms of very modern date are still coming back to us. During the wars in Egypt and the Soudan in the later years of the last century many swords have been brought home with the interesting but misleading title of crusader's swords. Some of these, taken at intervals of fifteen or more years and described to me, as to their dimensions and marks, had such a family likeness that apart from the absurdity of the marks on them I felt they were exceedingly modern. On referring to a list of the names and marks of the Solingen sword cutlers I found that these blades of which I am now speaking were the outcome of the workshop of Messrs. Kull, who used these marks, viz., a lion rampant, a cross above a circle, and something which looks like a bee. Messrs. Kull appear in the Solingen list under the year 1847. The blades are 36·75 inches long and straight. The hafting of course was local and African, and it is evident that the blades were exported in great numbers from Solingen and finished as regards hilding and scabbarding in Africa.

Then as to armour, in about 1880 the late Khedive had some six or eight hundred shirts of chain mail and helmets of the so-called crusader pattern made for him in England. The shirts were made of steel split rings interdependent like ordinary chain mail, and the *crusader helmets* were of the style of those covers used to keep warm the chop or steak sent out from the restaurant to the city office. The shirts, it is hardly necessary to remark, were most dangerous garments, for a bullet striking on one would at once lodge a number of split rings in the body of the unfortunate wearer. It is said that most of these men perished with Hicks Pasha in November, 1883, and consequently in the succeeding campaigns many of these shirts and gauntlets of the same make slowly dribbled back to Europe as the spoils of the victorious armies of the Sirdar. In some cases the gauntlets had been relined in a homely fashion, but they

were the same mail garments which a few years before left England.

In India also are found many German blades mounted, as one would expect them to be, with Indian hilts. Even in the rich collection of His Majesty at Marlborough House these German blades appear in weapons of great Indian historical interest, and it is the same in other less valuable collections. Among the blades in the Royal collection are some with the following *European* inscriptions :—

ABRAHAM STAMM IN SOLINGEN. (He made swords
1764-1770.)

.....PRO-NOBI INTER ARMA } on a Rajput
NTRA NOS SELENT LRGES } Talwar.

FRANCISCO : RUIS : ENTOLEDO, on a rapier from
Jeypore.

ANDREA-FERRARA, on a Rajput sabre.

In 1691 we have a note on an incident that throws light on the existence of so many European swords in native use in India. It appears that in May of that year Sir John Chardin, agent for the Armenian nation, presented a petition from Bogos Aviet, Daoud and Zacaria Parsijan, Armenian merchants, who had contracted with the East India Company of England to carry upon their ships the trade which they formerly did through Italy. The petition was referred to the Attorney-General, as, amongst the commodities exported from Europe "are large swords three fingers broad, made at Nuremburg, which they cannot bring to England, there being an Act of Parliament against the importing of arms except by their Majesties' leave. As the said swords are only intended to be transported to the East Indies, the petitioners beg leave to bring the said large swords from time to time into England in order to have them carried into the East Indies."

In September license was granted for the above, provided notice be given beforehand to the Commissioners of Customs as to the number of swords, name of vessel, etc., so that they may be examined to see that they are of the nature and kind above mentioned and to take bond of their exportation to the East Indies. It is also

mentioned that the swords are of such a kind as have never been made in England, and if imported cannot be vended.

Here we have evidence of the existence of a trade, probably of many years standing, between Germany and the East Indies. The only change in it is the route by which the blades were to reach their market.

1691. July 10th. Bogos Aviet, Daoud and Zacaria Parsijan, three Armenian merchants and others, had passes to go to Harwich and embark for Holland.

1691. May 19th. On the petition of Sir John Chardin, agent for the Armenian nation, a question was referred to the Attorney-General. It appears that these merchants had contracted with the East India Company of England to carry upon their ships the trade which they formerly did through Italy, and that amongst the commodities which they export from Europe are large swords three fingers broad made at Nuremburg which they cannot bring to England, there being an Act of Parliament against the importing of arms except by their Majesties' leave. As the said swords are of no use in England nor any other part of Europe, and are only intended to be transported to the East Indies, the petitioners pray leave to bring the said large swords from time to time into England in order to have them carried into the East Indies.

1691. September 15th. License was granted for the above, provided notice be given beforehand to the Commissioners of Customs, as to the number of swords, name of vessel, etc., so that they be examined to see they are of the nature and kind above mentioned, and to take bond for their exportation to the East Indies. It is mentioned that the swords are of such a kind as have never been made in England, and if imported cannot be vended.

In the Tower collection are six tulwars and blades

which appear from their dimensions to belong to the class referred to above as made for export to the Indies.

No. 406 has a total length of 42 inches, the blade being 34 inches, and $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches broad; the back is $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick, to within 13 inches of the point, when it becomes two-edged. There are no stamps on the blade, which is curved, and the weapon weighs no less than $10\frac{1}{2}$ lbs., much too great a weight for an ordinary man to wield.

No. 407 is $38\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, the blade $32\frac{1}{2}$ inches and $2\frac{1}{8}$ inches broad. At $11\frac{1}{4}$ inches from the point it becomes two-edged. The blade has three grooves on each side in which are five stamps, the first and last like a π . The blade is curved.

No. 408 has a very curved blade of 30 inches, which at 11 inches from the point becomes two-edged, and here has a square stop on the back. The blade is $2\frac{1}{2}$ —3 inches broad; the hilt, which is ornate, has the tang prolonged as in Rajput swords. On the blade is a European stamp and also an Arabic one.

No. 409 weighs 11 lbs. The blade, $32\frac{1}{4}$ inches long and 4 inches broad, has an inlaid stamp of brass, but it is difficult to see whether intended for a sort of wolf mark. The blade is much curved.

No. 234 has a blade of 32 inches, and 11 inches from the point there is a stop; the blade then is two-edged. At the stop the blade is 7 inches broad and at the hilt $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches. The back springs up 3 inches from the hilt to point line.

No. 768 has no hilt, but is 32 inches long, and $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches broad. At $10\frac{3}{4}$ inches from the point it is two-edged. This curved blade bears five stamps, two arcs back to back with dots at each end, and a mark like an eel. The back is $\frac{1}{2}$ inch broad.

None of these weapons could be used by any but exceptionally strong men, and the hilts are much bigger than those usually found on Eastern swords.

Nor are all the cannon taken in our wars in the East

of native make, as we may see by lists of those at Woolwich and the Tower.

In 1627, the local President of Batavia, writing to the East India Company, suggests suitable presents to be given, such as "very long fowling pieces, snaphaunces of especial show among the Emperor's guard, also fair armour for the Emperor's man and horse, large Venetian mirrors, etc.," and he adds that "the Dutch sent in their last ship two great brass pieces on field carriages with many other species of great value."

In 1623 we are told that the English had brought from the King of Persia "pictures, complete armour, etc."

In 1630 sword-blades are mentioned as exported to India, and in the next year Sir Henry Vane refers in a letter to armour and a coat of mail that had been brought as a present for but refused by the Persian Ambassador. They were left on Mr. Bell's hands, to whom they were given to adventure them to the Indies.

In 1632 we are told that as presents, sword-blades, mastiffs, and strong waters are not respected, but jewels that would do for the women would be useful.

In 1633 President Hopkinson sent to Nath Wyche at Brodera "as token of his love a curious newly invented pistol that serves also for a walking staff." It had been sent out from England by a friend but "in that place (Brodera) Wyche can make better use of it."

Burckhardt says (p. 271) that "some 3,000 Solingen blades are annually sold at Cairo to the traders from the south."