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staff. It was then only a ceremonial weapon. The popularity of the bill was owing to its being of use in peace times as we see now in the bill-hook, which is the old bill cut short, and without its back spike or top spike. (In Sweden, "bill" is the name for a ploughshare. W. L. H. D.) The halberd would never make a tool, but the bill would. As regards the ceremonial halberds, fancy ran riot in the shapes given to those weapons, and many of them were quite unfit for the battlefield.

⁶ Fig. 9 is of the Jedburgh and Lochaber axe type, and is also seen in Russia and Poland as the Bardicke. Like some Indian weapons, the axe-blade is attached by one or more bands to the staff, as well as by the main ring.

⁷ Fig. 10 is the couse, a purely ceremonial weapon, and seen in great variety of detail in Italian and German body-guards.

⁸ Fig. 11 is called by Meyrick a "Corsèque." In some foreign collections it goes by various other names, but it is not an English arm.

⁹ Fig. 12 is a pole-axe, and the form is seen in the picture of Queen Elizabeth in a progress, where the Gentlemen Pensioners carry such an arm.

¹⁰ Fig. 13 is a musket-rest of the xvth and xvith Centuries: often combined with a long concealed blade springing out between the horns.

¹¹ Fig. 14 is a lintstock, in which we find the partizan combined with two necks each furnished with a screw to tighten their jaws, when the lint or match is placed in them. The lintstock is a gunner's arm, combining defence with the tool for fixing the cannon.

¹² Fig. 15 is a partizan. This clumsy weapon may be described as a pike with a broad blade instead of a spear-point. It is hard to say where the division is between the xvth Century form of partizan and the spontoon or half-pike. It was carried by officers, and in later times by sergeants, who as late as 1830 carried them in some regiments.

The spontoon, partizan, or half-pike is also in later days often called a halberd, though, as I have said above, the halberd has an axe-blade. The expression to "give a man a halberd" was used to express promotion to non-commissioned rank, while to *bring* him to the halberds was to flog him, the triangles to which the subject was tied being often formed of three halberds. The small cross-bar to the weapon was introduced after Culloden, when an officer, driving his weapon too far into a Highlander, could not disengage himself and was cut down.

ON SOME OLD PLAYING-CARDS FOUND IN TRINITY COLLEGE.

By W. M. FLETCHER, M.A., Fellow of Trinity College.

In the summer of 1902 the staircase A, leading to the rooms which the writer then happened to occupy in the north-west corner of the Great Court of Trinity College, was under repair. It is a spiral staircase, of oaken steps set round a central oak newel-post; the headway is plastered. As the

worn-out treads were removed, a few at a time, for the institution of the new, the fen reed upon which the plaster of the headway below is laid became disclosed. Here, in the accumulated dust upon the reeds, lying in the space between plaster-ceiling below and oak-treads above, were found several old playing-cards, and the mice-nibbled fragments of probably a good many more. At another part of the staircase were found a fragment of an Italian MS. on vellum, a few pages of a Gryphius duodecimo Cicero, and a single card, the four of spades; all alike pierced with stitching holes containing fragments of thread. These no doubt represent some rubbish from destroyed bookbindings, for it should be remembered that this staircase provided a back way to the College Library when it was housed in this block.

Special interest however is attached to this four of spades ($3\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{1}{8}$ in.), for on the back of it is scribbled in 17th century hand a hasty note:

"This be d—d to the hand of Mr William Crane at his chamber in Trinitie Colledge with spede."

William Crane was elected Scholar of Trinity in 1628, Fellow in 1633, and Sublector Primus in 1635, but of the situation of his chambers, or indeed of any particular of his life, I have as yet been able to ascertain nothing.

It is of the little collection of playing-cards found in the lower part of the staircase that I should like to say something. They could be sorted at once into two packs, both very far from complete, and each representing parts of more than one original pack of the same kind. In detail we have

1. Eleven cards of inferior make. Uniform size $3\frac{3}{8}$ in. by $1\frac{1}{4}$ in. Each card built of three sheets. Of *Hearts*, the ten; of *Spades*, the king, ten, and eight; of *Diamonds*, the king, *three* nines, *two* eights; of *Clubs*, the nine only.

As no knave of this series appeared, no clue is given as to the maker. Upon the back of one of the cards was written in a bold hand, probably, I am told, of the early 17th century, "Morris de W. Vanderli(s?)," the ink failing from the quill at the end of the signature. No name approaching this can

be found either in the University records, as the Registry has very kindly ascertained for me, or in the list of members of the College foundation. No similar name appears in the College index of admissions, which begins only in 1635, so that if the name be that of a member of the College he was admitted before 1635 and was not upon the foundation.

2. Ten cards of better make. Uniform size $3\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $2\frac{1}{16}$ in. Each card of four sheets. Of *Hearts*, two kings, queen, and knave; of *Spades*, king, two knaves, and the ten; of *Diamonds*, none; of *Clubs*, the knave and eight. (Plates XXXII and XXXIII.)

In this series it is most fortunate that knaves of three suits are preserved, and among them the knave of clubs. The knave of clubs bears the full name of the maker—Nicholas Beniere—in Renaissance characters, upon a scroll along the lower edge, with his trade mark, a white swan. On a simpler scroll the knave of spades shews "N. beniere" in Gothic characters. The knave of hearts is marked only by a plain shield outline containing the monogram NB.

The cards of both these series shew clearly the characteristics of French cards, and, as I hope to shew, more particularly of Rouen cards, belonging to the second half of the 16th century.

During a visit to Rouen early in 1905 I was enabled, by the kindness of M. Albert Sarrazin, to obtain ready access to the local sources of information. To him and to the Keeper of the Departmental Archives at Rouen, who did all in his power to give me enlightenment, I owe my grateful acknowledgments.

Whilst at Rouen I learnt that M. Henri d'Allemagne had nearly brought to completion a great work upon French playing-cards. His two sumptuous volumes¹ have now appeared, and contain a very full account of the history of card-making throughout France. In these may be found abundant information about the early *cartiers* in Rouen and their trade history.

¹ Henri-René d'Allemagne, *Les Cartes à jouer, xiv^e au xx^e siècle*, 2 vols., Paris, 1906.





The cards of series (1) may perhaps be assigned to a card-maker of Rouen, Pierre Maréchal, who worked in 1567. Unluckily in this series we have one court card only—the king—but this presents a very exact likeness to the same king of a pack by Maréchal¹ now in the Departmental Archives at Rouen.

The second series (2) are by Nicholas Beniere, and, in accordance with a custom of French card-makers, his full name and trade mark appear on the knave of clubs. This custom was confirmed by an ordinance of Louis XIII in 1613 which ordered that the "noms et surnoms, enseignes et devises" of the maker should be placed on the valet de Trèfle². A long succession of makers named Benieres, Beniere, or Besnieres flourished in Rouen as *cartiers* during the whole period between 1550 and 1650, and one Nicholas Beniere, at least, worked there between 1641 and 1660, though there is reason to suppose he was not the first of his name. And, as we shall see, it is also possible that card-makers having or taking the name of Beniere were also at work in England at this time. I know of no other cards in France or England made by Nicholas Beniere, so spelt, or any shewing, as in this knave of clubs, his trade mark. Some cards in the British Museum, assigned by Dr Willshire³ to the late 16th century, are by Nicholas *Besnieres*, and this maker may perhaps be identified with ours: on one knave in each case is the same abbreviated monogram NB within the same containing shield.

Some points of interest arise in connexion with the discovery of these cards in Trinity College. The staircase in which they were found was built by Nevile, and completed very near to the year 1599. It is probable that they became deposited below the steps not long after that date, and, from their make, some at least, if not all of them, belong to years earlier in the 16th century. They are, it must also be noticed, playing-cards which had been in actual use at that time. I know of no other cards of this epoch of which that can be

¹ This pack has now been figured by M. d'Allemagne, vol. II. p. 86.

² Chatto, *Facts and Speculations on the Origin and History of Playing-Cards*, London, 1848.

³ W. H. Willshire, M.D., *Catalogue of Playing and other Cards in the British Museum*, 1876.

said. In various museums and libraries are examples of sheets of card, or rather card facing paper, assigned to the same date, which have in general been discovered in old bookbindings: these are sheets as the maker has printed them, not cut up into individual cards.

Any new evidence as to the character of cards used in England at exactly this period, the beginning of the 17th century, is for special reasons very much to be welcomed. For it was at this time that our national playing-cards took, so far as the court cards are concerned, what has proved to be their final shape. A modern pack of cards owes the attitudes, the dress and the weapons of its kings, queens and knaves directly to the influences which determined those in the times of Elizabeth and James. What these influences were, may, I think, be easily decided, and since this critical period in the history of English playing-cards has not—chiefly through lack of material—received due attention in the various books which have dealt with the subject, I may perhaps be allowed to say something about it here.

The first definite reference to playing-cards in England is said to be in the Act of Edward IV, 1463¹, in which the importation of foreign cards is prohibited (this is quoted in the Act of 10 Anne, cap. 19, by which a similar prohibition came into force). This early prohibition appears to have become a dead letter throughout the next century, during which cards were increasingly used in England, and during which, as we shall see, cards were abundantly imported from France, and probably also, but to a much smaller extent, from Spain or even Italy. From the beginning of the use of cards in England, French influence, as was inevitable, predominated, and we adopted here the French suits, Coeur, Carreau, Pique, and Trèfle, and did not adopt the southern equivalents, Cups, Money, Swords, and Sticks, which are still characteristic of Italy and Spain. But a trace of this southern influence still remains in our language, for we call the French trèfle, a *club*, from the sticks or batons of the southern cards, and the French pique, a *spade*, from *espada*, Spanish for sword (though here an

¹ Singer, *Researches into the History of Playing-Cards*, London, 1816.

equally obvious derivation is possible, since the French pique does resemble an early spade or shovel, and is actually called *scop* by the Dutch). Chatto suggests moreover that the English alternative word "Jack" represents the "servant of low condition" of the Spanish and Italian suits rather than the romantic or historical valet of the French, and Jackanapes may be Jack-a-naïpes, naïpes being the Spanish term for numeral playing-cards.

The importation of cards increased greatly, we gather, through the 16th century, and it was not French makers in general, but the Rouen makers in particular into whose hands the whole trade seems to have come by the middle of the century. It is uncertain how far the native makers could compete against the Rouen *cartiers*. Perhaps the cheaper cards were made in England, like those mentioned by Roger Ascham in *Toxophilus* published in 1545,—“he said a payre of cards cost not past iid.”—here a “payre” of cards is of course a pack. Christopher Sly in the *Taming of the Shrew* is perhaps a type of the card-makers of England ruined by the free trade with Normandy. In any case I doubt whether we possess a single card of undoubted English origin belonging to the time of Shakespeare. Towards the end of Elizabeth’s reign a patent was granted, we may note, to one Edward Darcy, for making cards¹, but by this time, as we shall see at once, many card-makers from Rouen had emigrated with their business to England to avoid the French export tax. Here it will be well to notice some points in the history of the Rouen industry during this century.

From the beginning of the 16th century, if not earlier, card-making flourished in Rouen. By 1540 the trade was not only well-organised but recognised as among the most honourable of the city. Several *maîtres cartiers* (and among them William and Robert Besnieres) figure soon after among the subscribers to the new Bourse at Rouen². In 1553 cards “*bien collées*” were sold to London at six livres the gross of packs, and a hint of the size of the business done with

¹ Chatto, *ut supra*, p. 131.

² d’Allemagne, pp. 114—140.

London at this period is given by the fact that an isolated order in that year, which happens to be preserved, was for 26 gross. This exportation, which was probably for some time enormous, not only to England, but to Flanders, Germany, and Spain, did not escape taxation. In 1582 a royal edict imposed a tax on all cards exported from Rouen, and only the most determined protests secured eventually a slight reduction of the duty (to 8 deniers a pack for England). In 1586 the protests to the parliament of Normandy were renewed, and enforced by the argument that many of the card-makers had gone "to England and elsewhere, whither they transported the said manufacture." The tax was farmed out, and it is on record that the tax gatherer in one year was nearly murdered. Later, in 1607, it was urged that the tax "had caused more than a thousand families to go over to England, and reduced the remainder to the point of following." But to these cries of distress no remedy was offered and they continued through the early part of the 17th century and beyond. Nevertheless Rouen remained a great centre of the card industry, though far into the 18th century the outcry against the tax is heard.

In the 16th century the card-makers agreed to the rule that for playing-cards four thicknesses of paper must be used if the interior was of "*papier main brune*," and of three thicknesses if of "*etresse sangle*."

Among the numerous recorded names of Rouen card-makers occur the following:—Guillamme and Robert Besnieres (1554—1567); and Robert (1554), Guillamme (1569), Robert (1641—47), and Nicholas (1641—1660) Benieres. In the British Museum are uncoloured printed sheets of designs ready to be cut up for cards, by Robert Benieres: these are assigned to the 16th century: and two sheets, one plain and one coloured, by Nicholas Besnieres—assigned perhaps wrongly to the second quarter of the 16th century. It seems most probable that from 1550 to 1650 there was a succession of Besnieres or Benieres at card-making in Rouen, and that the names of particular individuals given here do not by any means exhaust the series. As the result of the importation of Rouen cards throughout the 16th century, and the establishment of Rouen

makers in England, we find that the national playing-cards of this country by the end of the century were in every important feature not simply French, as is generally stated or implied, but definitely Rouennais, and so they have since remained. There seems to be no ground for supposing that our cards were to any degree influenced by those of Paris, Lyons, Toulouse, Limoges, or any of the other later centres of their manufacture in France.

At the beginning of the 17th century card-playing in England was very popular and very fashionable. There is a reference to the type of cards then in use in the tract published by Samuel Rowlands in 1613, called *The Knave of Harts*, in which the knave addresses a "supplication to card-makers" in just over a hundred lines of verse¹.

I will quote some significant passages :

The idle-headed French devis'd us first,
Who of all fashion-mongers is the worst :

.....

The English is his imitating ape,
In every toy the tailers-sheares can shape,

.....

How bad I and my fellow Diamond goes,
We never yet had garter to our hose,
Nor any shooe to put upon our feete,

.....

My sleeves are like some Morris-dauncing fellow,
My stockings ideot-like, red, greene, and yeallow :
My breeches like a paire of lute-pins be,

.....

Like three-penie watch-men three of us doe stand,
Each with a rustie browne-bill in his hand :
And Clubs he holds an arrow, like a clowne,
The head-end upward, and the feathers downe.

.....

Exchange our swords, and take away our bils,
Let us have rapiers, (knaves love fight that kills),
Put us in bootes, and make us leather legs,
This Harts most humbly, and his fellowes, begs.

¹ Quoted by Singer, Chatto and others. The tract was reprinted for the Percy Society in 1843.

The English card-maker is here shewn as the "imitating ape" of the French, and the cards which are described correspond in every feature which is mentioned with what I would call the "Rouen type."

In 1615 a new prohibition of importation of cards was effected, and the excise on playing-cards was granted to Sir Richard Coningsby at 5/- a gross of packs, in return for £200 a year. Apparently the English manufacturers, probably including many immigrated Frenchmen, had now thoroughly learnt their business, and the Company of Card-makers was incorporated by Charles I in 1629. In 1638 it was ordered that all cards made abroad and imported should be sealed in London, and packed in new bindings and covers. In 1643 a parliamentary committee ordered the customs officers to seize all foreign cards, and to proceed against the importers.

Up to this time, as it did later, the "Rouen type" held the field in England, and I know of no example or illustration of any undoubted English cards, or cards of special English design, belonging to this or earlier times. Singer gives a plate shewing four "Old English" cards, of which he does not give the provenance or date, but these appear to be not earlier than the middle of the 17th century, and, so far as can be judged, they are based on the Rouen type. The great vogue of Rouen cards is well shewn in the tract *Chartae Scriptae*, 1645, "or a new game of cards called Play by the Booke¹." The dedication begins as follows, and this is of special importance in connexion with the cards found in Trinity College:

To the most vertuous and therefore most accomplished Lady, the
Lady V. M.

Madam,—Though other cards passe here and there
Under the name of Nicholas Benier'e,
And his Protections good (unless it be
From the Exciseman or Monopoly,
These cannot so: a Grand Commission
And everyone's Exciser of our wits.

Among the prefatory testimonials at the beginning of the

¹ Brit. Mus. e 309. Pamphlets 233. Tract No. 19.

same tract is one, anonymous, "To his Friend, on his Ingenious *Chartae Scriptae*," which begins:

Come my Deare Sister, shall we have a Game?

and ends with the couplet

What good may wee not hope for, when we heare,
A Sermon Preach'd by Nicholas Benie're?

These passages are significant. Firstly we gather that Beniere was at that time almost a household word in connexion with playing-cards. Secondly it is hinted that cards were occasionally sold to the public falsely under the name of Nicholas Beniere; in fact, as we might say, "pirate" cards were upon the market. Whether these imitation cards were simple English forgeries, or whether they were cards made by Rouen makers settled in England, perhaps even of the family of Beniere, who fraudulently used a popular name, must remain an open question. It is even uncertain whether Nicholas Beniere had or had not migrated to this country. We have seen it is on record that a Nicholas Beniere worked at Rouen from 1641 to 1660, but there is room for a doubt whether this Nicholas could have become so well known in England in 1645 as to account for the references to him in the *Chartae Scriptae*, and if the ascription of the sheet of cards in the British Museum by Nicholas Besniere to the second quarter of the 16th century be correct, we must suppose at least two makers of that name in Rouen at different times.

Turning again to the cards found in Trinity College, we have seen reason to suppose that the inferior pack, (1) above, is by Pierre Maréchal, or a very close follower of his at Rouen or in England, and belongs to the last half of the 16th century. The superior pack, (2) above, bearing Nicholas Beniere's name, in spite of the maker's mark and name, presents some difficulties.

In general style they correspond with a date much earlier than the period 1641 to 1660, dates between which we know a Nicholas Beniere worked at Rouen. By the middle of the 17th century cards in England had approximated more closely to our modern cards in style, though still rigidly adhering to the

"Rouen type." And if these cards were by this later Beniere, they were smuggled into England against penalties.

But, on the other hand, the trade mark and full name on the knave of clubs makes them probably, but not certainly, later than the ordinance of 1613 in France; while their burial on the staircase A, which was built in 1599, puts their date more probably in the 17th than in the 16th century. The four of spades mentioned above, which carried a message for William Crane, was not found at the same level in the staircase as these cards. If there is any connexion at all between them, if William Crane had any concern with the pack found, then they came to the staircase not before 1628 at the earliest, probably even not before 1633.

Here we must leave the question of the date of the cards. The cards themselves have been given by the College to the University Collection in the Fitzwilliam Museum, and are at present the sole representatives there of the period during which the active industries at Rouen finally settled the form which our English cards were to take. This form we still adhere to with the toryism which, when confined to such a sphere, is so wholly admirable. In France, as little trace is left of the original traditions of card manufacture, as of the *régime* under which they were developed.

To-day, if we ask why in England the king of clubs alone among the kings has an orb, and the queen of spades alone of the queens has a sceptre; why the king of hearts holds his weapon threateningly behind his head, while the king of spades merely holds his sword at the "present"; why some kings and queens look to the right and others to the left, and why the pointed object held by the clubs knave is called his arrow, the only answer, I submit, is that it pleased the Rouen *cartiers* of the 16th century to have it so¹.

¹ In modern English (and American) cards the attitudes of the queen and knaves both of clubs and diamonds, the queen of spades, and the knave of hearts, are symmetrically *opposite* to those of the Rouen type. This reversal was effected in 1875 (as Messrs de la Rue & Co. have very kindly informed me), in order that the suit mark ('pip') of every court card should be in the left-hand top corner, for convenience of observation when the cards are held fanwise in the hand. Convenience again has abolished from all the court cards, by the

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