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Mr W. B. REDFERN then delivered a lecture, which was illustrated with lantern-slides, blackboard sketches and exhibits of ancient shoes, on

ANCIENT FOOTGEAR.

It is difficult to say with any certainty when man commenced to use footgear regularly, though from the earliest times some kind of covering must have been used to protect the soles, if not the whole of the foot, from injury. Yet we know at the present time of civilised people—for instance in parts of Scotland and Ireland—as well as native tribes in various parts of the world, who go unshod. That the Egyptians knew and practised the art of shoemaking we have ample record, and that their work was of a high character we have pictured and sculptured authority. Probably shoes in the earliest times were made of rushes or grass, possibly before the skins of animals were used for the purpose. When leather did come into use the whole shoe-sole and fastenings were in one piece.

Among the Greeks and Romans shoe and sandal making was followed at a very early period, and legal enactments prevailed to regulate the style of foot covering by which different ranks and professions should be distinguished; possibly these differed not only in shapes, but also in material. Highly decorated, often jewelled and gilded, shoes and sandals were worn by the higher classes in Rome, who also as a mark of position delighted to wear shoes which came higher up the leg of the wearer than those of the meaner classes. The common people, we learn, frequently wore shoes of wood. The nailed shoe (*caliga*) of the Roman soldier, as well as the slashed and laced sandal of the aristocrat, have been preserved to us deep in the soil of ancient London. Among the Romans every grade in life was marked by its clothing and its shoes. Crispin and Crispinian, two brothers, citizens of rank in Rome, together went to Gaul to preach the gospel. In order to be independent,

like S. Paul, among those for whose conversion they worked, the two brothers earned their livelihood by following the trade of shoemakers. They settled in the town of Soissons, where they suffered martyrdom during the reign of Diocletian in A.D. 286, and became the adopted patron saints of the shoemakers' craft.

The early Briton wore shoes made of raw cow hide, the hair turned outside, in one piece, fastened at the heel by strips of the same material and drawn together by thongs across the instep, in fact, much resembling a purse over the foot. On the coming of the Romans to our country their costume, including shoes, became gradually that of the native inhabitants, so Roman shoes and sandals became the footwear of the Briton. Then came the period of the Anglo-Saxon and the Dane, when the legs were encased in a bandaged kind of stocking, while the shoes or half boots were of leather generally blackened, the soles being often of wood; even the feet of the higher classes being so shod. The Normans wore similar shoes, sometimes in yellow, green, blue, and red material, as can be seen delineated on the Bayeux tapestry.

During the reigns of Henry I. and Stephen, A.D. 1100-1154, shoes became lengthened to an absurd degree. Planché in his *History of British Costume* says, at this time "peak toed shoes and boots of an absurd shape excited the wrath and contempt of the monkish historians." These peaked toed boots were at last strictly forbidden to the clergy. So long were these peaks that they had to be stuffed with tow or wool and curled up like a ram's horn. A shoe of this character was found in pulling down an ancient house in Toledo. This shoe is now in possession of Mr Geo. C. Haite, the artist, and is pictured in Mr Redfern's book on *Royal and Historic Gloves and Shoes*. By the time Henry III. came to the throne, A.D. 1216, boots and shoes of rich materials became generally worn by wealthy people. They were of cloth or leather, rich in colour and greatly decorated. Shoes of cloth of gold embroidered with pearls were worn by monarchs, the soles sometimes being of cork. The shoes of the ladies of the period were of the same costly character and material. In the reign of Edward III.,

A.D. 1327-1377, the costume generally became most elegant and extravagant, while the boots and shoes were of a most sumptuous character. The various designs cut in the different materials used convey the impression of a window in a cathedral, and one might be allowed to quote Chaucer's description of the parish clerk Absolon, who, he says, had "Paules windows corven on his shoes." The pattern of the shoe, if of black material, would be thrown up by the red or other coloured hose of the wearer. Very often the pair of hose was of different colours, the left shoe might be black and the hose blue, while the right shoe might be white and the hose red. The sharp-pointed toe continued in fashion for a long time, as we find in paintings and on brasses in many of our churches.

During the 14th century the long points of the shoes were turned outwards, and the shoes themselves were made perfect rights and lefts as was the case during the Roman period and at the present day. In the reigns of Richard II. and Richard III. long-pointed shoes were in vogue, and such an extreme length were they made that the points were fastened by a cord or light chain to the garter or knee of the dandy of the time, and, as before mentioned, the long toe itself had to be kept somewhat in shape by a stuffing of tow or other material. Fashions, then as now, changed rapidly from one extreme to another, and in the 15th century we notice the long-pointed shoe gave place to a short and very broad-toed foot covering. A broad-toed shoe dug up in London, now in the Northampton Museum, is a good specimen of this kind. We are all familiar with the wide shoes of Henry VIII. with their slashed toes and puffings of coloured stuffs, the hose sometimes forming the background for the openings in the shoes. The price of shoes during this period sounds strange to modern ears. In the account books of the L'Estranges, of Hunstanton, a pair of leather shoes is set down at the value of 8*d.*, a pair of velvet at 12*d.*, and a pair of white shoes at 20*d.* A pair made for the young Earl of Essex, at Cambridge, cost one shilling, and a pair of winter boots 6*s.*

In the time of Elizabeth shoes became of a more reasonable shape and size, their decoration for the most part consisting of coloured materials with roses of ribbon on the instep, although

among the upper classes velvet, gold, and silver, embroidery prevailed. High heels of cork also came into fashion for both men and women. About this time on the Continent, especially in Venice, an extraordinary fashion of Eastern origin came into use, namely, "chopines." These were a kind of stilt made of light wood or cork, a sort of cylinder, spreading somewhat at the top and bottom, forming a shoe-like top and an oblong or circular base. These "chopines" were used largely by the Venetian ladies, and were often quite half a yard high. Needless to say, when ladies took their walks abroad they had to be supported on one or both sides by cavaliers or servants. They never became very common in this country, but that they were used is partly proved by the story told of King Charles I. when he went to meet his future Queen, Henrietta Maria, at Dover, "he cast down his eyes towards her (she seeming higher than report was, reaching to his shoulder), which she soon perceiving showed him her shoes, saying to this effect, 'Sir, I stand upon mine own feet; I have no help of art; thus high I am, and am neither higher or lower.'" Specimens of "chopines," 6 or 12 inches high, can be seen in the British Museum. The roses and shoe strings at this time were embroidered, and were often of considerable value. The rosettes on the shoes of Charles I. are familiar to us through the portraits of the King by Vandyck. A pair of shoes minus the Vandyck rosette, lined and bound with rich ribbed silk, once worn by King Charles I., is now in the possession of General E. G. Lytton Bulwer.

Then came the Cavalier boot, worn either drawn full up over the knee to the thigh, or folded downwards, showing the crimson or other coloured lining, and trimmed, when worn by the dandy, with lace or other material. It was a singular fact that at this time both Cavalier and Roundhead were equally extravagant in the size and shape of their boots, though the Puritan did not ornament his riding or walking boots with lace. This extravagance in size, and in the profusion of decoration, was not confined to this country, for the courtiers of Louis XIV. equalled, if they did not excel, us in their foot wear. At this time the ordinary walking shoe became exceedingly ugly; it had square toes, and high heels, often of red leather and cork,

the instep being disfigured by enormous bows or ties, often stiffened in some way to extend them at the sides. Coming to the time of William III., much the same shape remained in vogue, but the upper leathers were higher, and a wide flap over the instep took the place of the bow, the shoe being fastened on the instep by a leather strap and small buckle. The dandy of the period wore high red heels. Hogarth's pictures give a good idea of the shoes and boots of his time. The ladies' shoes were no more beautiful than those of the men, and frequently they had a clog of stiffened leather permanently fixed to the sole of the shoe, which must have made walking no easy matter. Mrs Seymour Lucas has in her possession a shoe and clog combined, of white kid leather, at one time covered with cream silk, the instep and toe richly embroidered with pale pink or salmon-coloured silk, and powdered with seed pearls.

During the reigns of Queen Anne and George I. ladies' shoes seem to have been increased in height, the heels being much higher than in the previous reign, and placed more under the foot. Men soon followed the lead given by the ladies. Towards the end of 1700 buckles became more worn, and were much larger than those of the previous fashion; they also became very expensive articles of costume, diamonds and precious stones frequently being used; the placing of the heel yet further beneath the instep, as the heels became lower, was the rule. An extraordinary gentleman's shoe of this date, with the heel 6 in. high, is in the Whitley Museum. In 1790 an entire change took place, the heel of ladies' shoes became almost flat, and the shoe generally more resembled a slipper than the shoe of the past generation. Early in the 19th century high heels were less and less seen, and buckles also went out of fashion, the shoe strings which have taken their place, it must be owned, are scarcely so beautiful.

CONTENTS

OF PROCEEDINGS, No. LIV.

VOL. XIII. (NEW SERIES, VOL. VII.) No. 3.

	PAGE
Runic Inscriptions. H. M. CHADWICK, M.A. (n. p.)	223
An Ancestor's Escape from France after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. C. P. ALLIX, M.A.	224
The Shops at the West End of Great St Mary's Church. G. J. GRAY .	235
On Four MS. Books of Accounts kept by Joseph Mead, B.D., Fellow of Christ's College, with his pupils between 1614 and 1633. Dr JOHN PEILE, F.B.A.	250
Ancient Footgear. W. B. REDFERN	262
Notes on Corsica (Plates XXVI—XXIX, Three Text Figures). Dr W. L. H. DUCKWORTH	267
Greek Coins and Syrian Arrowhead from a Roman Cemetery at Godmanchester (Plates XXX—XXXII, Six Text Figures). Rev. F. G. WALKER, M.A.	280
Sixty-ninth Annual General Meeting	291
The Zodiac Club (Plate XXXIII). R. BOWES	292
General Index for Vol. XIII.	319