

ART. IV.—*On a pair of Gaufering Irons.* By Mrs. T. HESKETH HODGSON.

Read at Carlisle, April 15th, 1909.

DR. WRIGHT'S *English Dialect Dictionary* gives the word *gaufer* as meaning

a kind of tea-cake or crumpet, square, and stamped like net-work with the gaufering irons The golfers were often of a chequer pattern somewhat resembling a large flat honey-comb . . . Goafers are commonly square, but sometimes round. The inner part of the instrument in which they are baked has many square projections that form holes in the goafer, which should be full of butter when eaten

Hence gaufering-irons, the iron mould in which "gaufers" are baked. (1) A bivalved iron mould with long handles. Golfer-irons were pushed into the open fire until the cake was baked. (2) A wooden frame with pegs, formerly used to crimp frills, &c., after washing.

Littré's *Dictionnaire de la Langue Française* gives:—

Gaufre, (1) Rayon, gâteau de miel. (2) Pâtisserie mince et légère, cuite entre deux fers . . . (3) Façon qu'on donne à une étoffe, à une reliure, en y faisant plusieurs figures avec un fer chaud.

He connects the word etymologically with the English *wafer* and German *Waffel*—"du même radical que *Wabe*, ruche à miel."

Professor Skeat's *Etymological Dictionary*, under *Wafer*, says, "The wafer (often, I believe, flavoured with honey) was named from its resemblance to a piece of honey-comb or cake of wax in a bee-hive," and connects the word with the Teutonic base *Wab*, to weave.

I think it seems clear that the name *gaufer* has originally meant honey-comb, and has been applied to cakes sweetened with honey, which were then stamped with a

pattern imitating the comb. The use of the word to describe similar irons employed for imparting patterns to linen, or in bookbinding, would be secondary. I am interested to notice a survival of the honey-comb pattern in the well-known wafer biscuits.

The pair of gaufering irons was kindly lent by Mr. F. P. Johnson of Castlesteads for exhibition at the April meeting of the Society. They are in the form of a blacksmith's tongs, 30 inches in length, or 22 inches from the end of the handles to the pivot and 8 from the pivot to the extremities of the arms, which terminate in circular plates, $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter and half an inch thick. There is a small knob at the end of one handle, and an oval ring, measuring $2\frac{1}{2}$ by $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches, on the other. The circular plates are plain on the outside, and have a shallow grooved pattern on the inside, as shown in the illustration. They seem to be of late date, being round, not square, and the pattern showing no trace of the honeycomb. They are, however, old enough for their use to have been forgotten in this district, as enquiries made have failed to produce anyone who knew to what purpose they were applied.

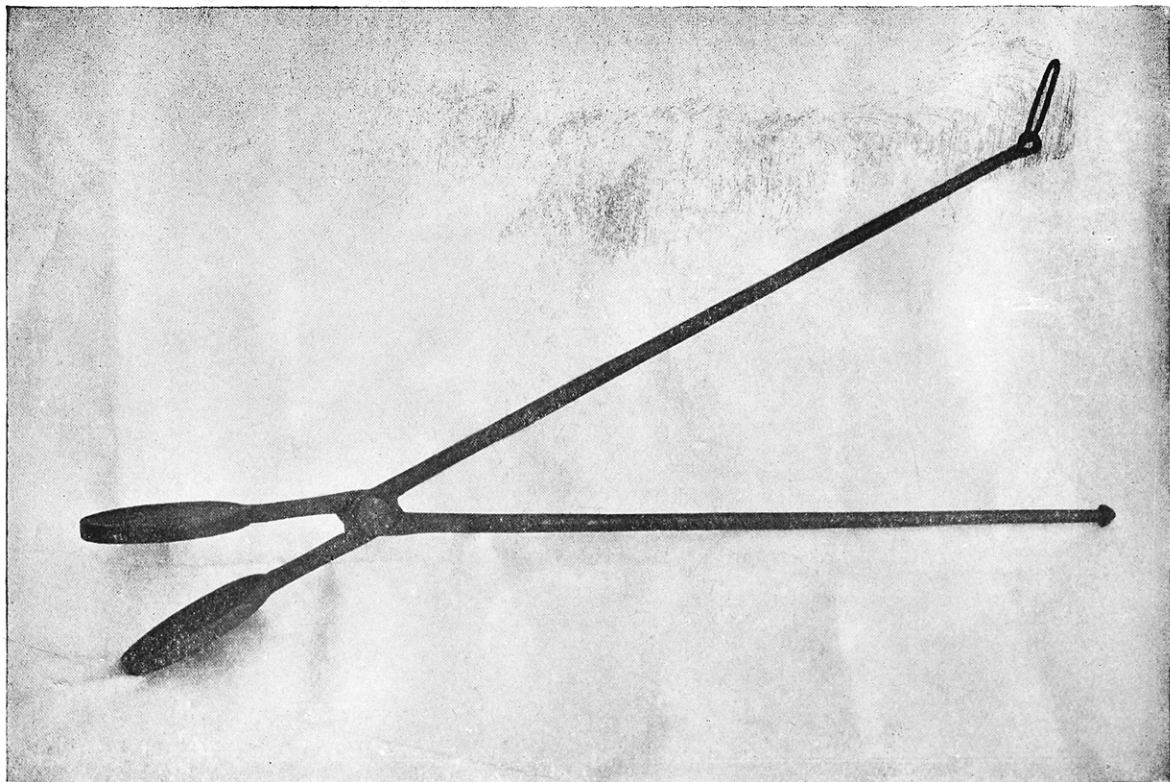


Photo. by Mrs. T. H. Hodgson.

GAUFERING-IRONS FROM CASTLESTEADS.

TO FACE P. 84.