

NOTICE OF A RELIQUE OF OLD MUNICIPAL CEREMONY,
PRESERVED AT CHICHESTER.

OF the pomp and circumstance with which, in old times, our municipal Institutions were surrounded, great part will soon be remembered only amongst the curiosities of antiquarian research. The subject of the following brief notice may possibly appear to some readers of this Journal too trivial, or of insufficient antiquity to claim attention. The chronicles, however, of civic state in the corporate towns of England, and the accessories which gave impressive solemnity to the functions of civic authority, in the so-called "good old times," are not without interest to us, intimately associated as they are with the growth of Institutions which have exercised at all times an important influence on the social conditions of this country, and on the development of commercial enterprise.

During the meeting of the Institute at Chichester, in 1852, a remarkable vestige of municipal state, as formerly maintained in that city, was brought to light, and excited considerable attention in the Museum formed on that occasion. It was a huge globular lantern, once well known to the citizens as the "Moon," which, with its companion luminary of somewhat larger size, designated as the "Sun," were the accustomed precursors of the Worshipful Mayor and his solemn company, whenever occasion called them forth by night, through streets in which modern arrangements for convenience and security were as yet unknown. Although now many years eclipsed from view, it is yet remembered how in the winter months, these satellites were even wont to await at the entrance of the choir the close of evening service at the Cathedral, and to accompany the Mayor through the nave and along the dark cloister, on his customary visit to the bishop at that hour. The "Moon," of which a representation, prepared by the skilful hand of Mr. Henry Shaw, is here given, measured about 26 inches in diameter ; it was carried on a pole about three feet in



Lantern of State, known as "The Moon."
Formerly carried before the Mayor of Chichester.

length (see woodcut) ; the lantern being of plates of horn set in a light frame of metal, and surmounted by an arched crown. There were six lights within ; the "Sun," tradition states, was a luminary of somewhat statelier dimensions and more powerful radiance.¹

I have been unable to ascertain the period when these great lights first accompanied the civic orbit ; or whether a similar usage prevailed in other towns ; it may, however, be safely concluded that such was the case from an early time. It will be remembered that, according to Stow, some regulations for lighting the streets of the Metropolis had been made in 1416, when the Mayor, Sir Henry Barton, "ordained lanthornes with lights to bee hanged out on the Winter evenings, betwixt Hallontide and Candlemasse."² It is very doubtful, however, whether any effectual provisions were carried out in London at so early a period, and in other large towns in England it is probable that no like arrangements had been proposed before the close of the XVIIth century. Paris was not lighted until 1524 ; *falots* or cressets filled with pitch, &c., were then placed at the corners of the streets ; and in 1662 the provision was so imperfect, that an exclusive privilege was granted to an Italian Abbe to supply men bearing links and lanterns for coaches and foot passengers at a reasonable cost. In 1668, an endeavour was made to render the regulations in London more effectual, but it was not until 1736 that the authority of Parliament was obtained to remedy an evil which had given perilous facilities for nightly plunder and disorders.

I have sought to ascertain whether civic authorities in other great towns were attended by any luminous satellite, as at Chichester. At Folkstone, indeed, I found a curious lantern in the town-hall, formerly



¹ Precisely such a lantern, triumph of the craft of the Horner, anciently so noted in England, was the crest of the tin-plate workers' company of London, incorporated 22 Charles II., 1670. It is described as "a globular ship lantern or lamp, ensigned with a regal crown."

² Stow, Survey of London, in the list of mayors. This fact is not mentioned by Arnold or Fabyan. On the lighting of streets, Beckman's Hist. of Inventions supplies much information.

used in escorting the chief municipal officer of that ancient Cinque-port town. It is of stately proportions, but not of globular form. A lantern of like fashion is held forth by the *guet* or watchman aloft on the tower, as seen on the reverse of the common seal of Winchelsea.³ The Mayor of Dover must have needed such accompaniment to his brazen horn, still preserved, the work of John of Almayne, and inscribed with the mysterious talismanic word, *AGLA*. Amongst the payments at Dover, 19 Hen. VI., I find the item of 8s. 8d.—“pro j. torticio (a link) pro majore hoc anno.”⁴

We might well suppose that so effectual a contrivance as the moon-like lantern, reclaimed from oblivion by our visit to Chichester, would have been available in travelling and used on other occasions. Such was indeed the case, since it was pointed out by Mr. Curzon that two “Moons” are still preserved at Knole. They had, according to tradition, preceded the caroché of Edward Sackville, Earl of Dorset, who espoused the daughter of Sir George Curzon, in the reign of Charles I. There is likewise a “Moon” at Fountains Hall, now in possession of the Earl de Grey; there is another at Kefnmably, the seat of the Tynte family, in Glamorganshire, which was carried by a man on horseback before the carriage on returning from dinner at any neighbouring house. It was last used, I am informed by Mr. Octavius Morgan, as recently as 1750. There was a “Moon” at Pepperharrow, Surrey, carried in like manner in the last century, when Lord Middleton went abroad after dark; and Mr. Harrod has informed me of one formerly at Hethel Hall, in Norfolk. Other examples are no doubt to be found, and some of these might supply more distinct evidence in regard to their earliest use in England, than at present I am able to offer.

I have only further to express my acknowledgment to Mr. Mason, of Chichester, who has preserved the relique of old customs in that city, and by whom it was displayed in our Museum. I hope that it may have found a place in the permanent collection there established, and where many objects of interest to the archaeologist have been deposited.

ALBERT WAY.

³ Figured in *Sussex Archæol. Coll.* vol. i. p. 22, No. 5.

⁴ *Boys' Hist. of Sandwich*, p. 795.