

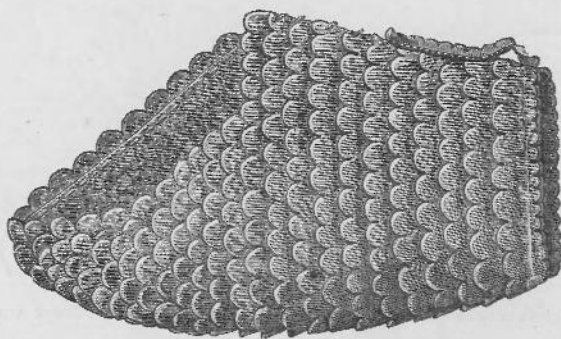
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NOTICE OF SOME EXAMPLES OF BUFF ARMOUR AND OF DEFENCES FORMED WITH SCALES OF LEATHER OR OF PLATE.

By J. HEWITT.

I HAVE great pleasure in bringing under the notice of those archæologists who take interest in warlike defences and costume a very rare example of horseman's armour of the time of Charles I., a vambrace of buff-leather used as a defence for the bridle-arm. I recently noticed this interesting relic in the Rotunda at Woolwich, and it has now been deposited in the Tower Armory. Beneath the outer covering of scales is a padding, formed of six sheets of

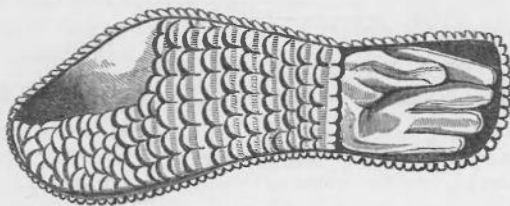


Vambrace of buff leather, *t.* Charles I. Tower Armory.

soft paper overlying each other, not pasted together so as to form a hard substance, but lying loosely, so as to deaden

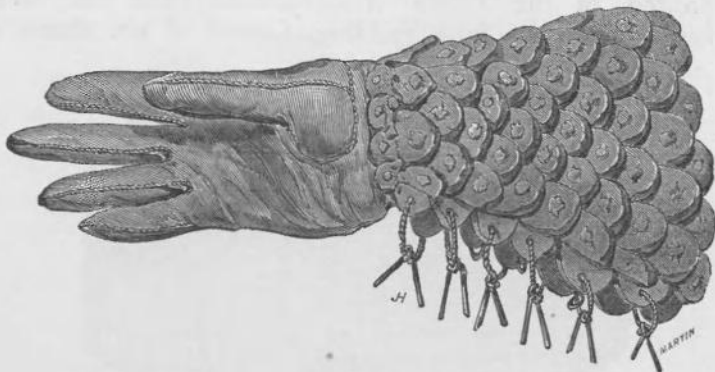
the blow of an adversary's weapon. The whole has a lining of soft leather.

A somewhat similar example is figured by Grose in Plate 39 of his "Ancient Armour." In that, the defence of scale-work is continued over the back of the hand, and a buff glove is attached to it. In the example before us there is some appearance of a similar hand-defence having once existed. The gauntlet in Grose (here figured) is described as "a buff covering for the left arm, contrived to answer the purpose of a shield, being composed of three skins of leather,



Buff-leather gauntlet, from Balborough Hall, Derbyshire. Length 25 inches.

with one of cartoon or paste-board." He further tells us that it was part of a defence "worn in the time of Charles I. by Sir Francis Rhodes, Bart., of Balborough Hall, Derbyshire." It is now in the collection at Goodrich Court¹ (See Skelton's



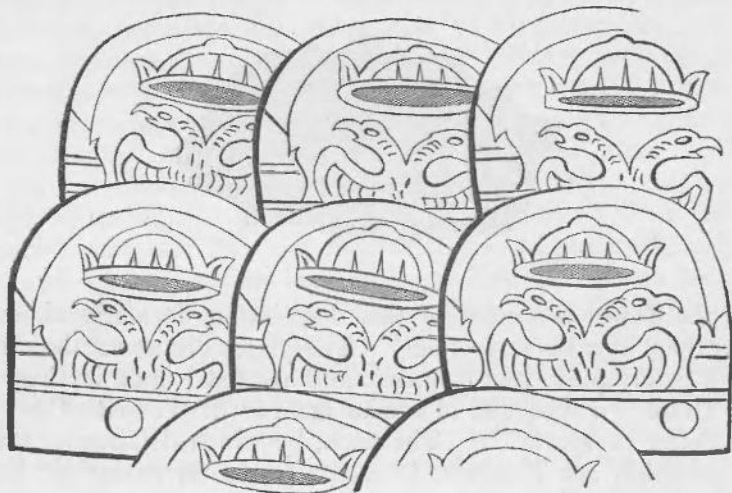
Buff glove of scale-work, formerly in the Bryn-y-pys collection. Tower Armory.

Illustrations, vol. ii. pl. 79). In the Tower there is a buff gauntlet of scale-work (here figured) ; this, however, is for the *right* hand. I purchased it from the collection at Bryn-y-pys

¹ See Meyrick's Crit. Enqu. vol. iii. p. 87, note.

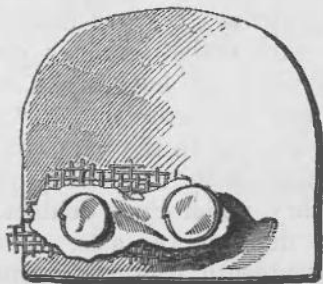
in North Wales; but have since transferred it to the Tower. It has been described in the eighth volume of this Journal, p. 301.

Armour of scale-work made of steel was also used at this time. The suit in the Tower, called the armour of Count Hector Oddi, of Padua, has a culet of this fashion; a portion of this rich suit, of which the scales are decorated with the double-headed eagle crowned, is here figured. Each



Portion of scale-armour, from the suit of Count Oddi, Tower Armoury. (Original size.)¹

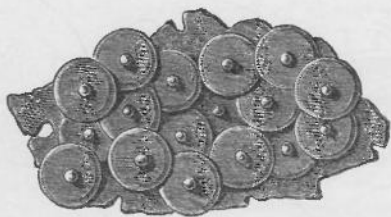
scale is fastened by two rivets to a foundation of canvas and leather, the canvas next the metal. The woodcut annexed gives a view of the reverse of one of the scales, showing the



rivets passing through the lining. The scales, it will be observed, overlap from below, so that the pointed weapon of

an enemy might glance off, instead of finding its way between the interstices of the metal. Recently I was fortunate enough to procure for the Tower collection another example of a culet of steel scale-work. In both specimens, each scale is engraved with an heraldic device.

In lieu of scales, discs of metal were sometimes employed for defensive equipment at this period. A portion of such a fabric, called "penny-plate armour," is here represented.



In the Tower is a culet of this description, formerly shown as "part of a horse armour." The plates are about the size of a penny-piece (old coinage), and are fixed upon leather.

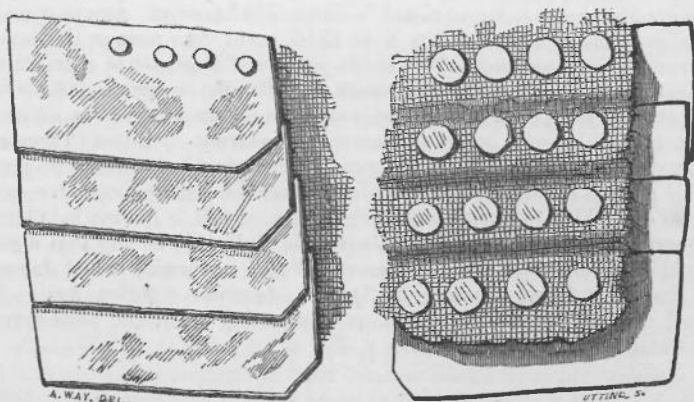
There is a specimen of similar armour at Warwick Castle, in better preservation. The term, by which defences of this description are designated, occurs in an inventory of the effects of the Earl of Shrewsbury at Grafton, Worcestershire, in 1570, 12 Eliz., including, "corselettes, almon ryvettes &c., one old peny platt cotte." Likewise, in an inventory of the armour, &c. of Edward Littleton, of Longford, Salop, 1591, 34 Eliz. (orig. roll, Library of Soc. of Antiqu.), "My armorie, blacke armor of proufe; item ij. penye platt coates, and ij. privye coates; item iiij. jackes, and ij. privie coates to weare under armore; item, a sleve layde with male and a payre of hose layde with male." Possibly, as it has been conjectured, the "pyne doublet" or "secret," of which we read in the narrative of Gowrie's conspiracy, was identical with the "peny platt cotte." (See Jamieson's Dictionary, under Pyne doublet.)

The bridle-arm defence was also, at a somewhat later period in the seventeenth century, formed of continuous plate. Many specimens of the so-called "long armed gauntlets" are to be found in the Tower. The portion beyond the wrists was made of scales, and a buff glove was fixed

under the finger-strips of steel. Grose has engraved one of these vambraces in his 26th Plate, but has inadvertently shown it as a defence for the *right* hand.

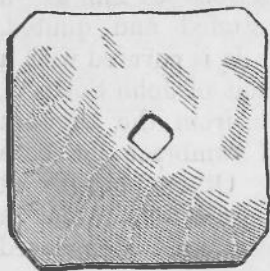
An analogous armour is that figured by Grose in his 35th plate, also of the Stuart period, and described by him as "a covering for the left arm, curiously stuffed and quilted, intended to answer the use of a shield. It is covered with a cinnamon-coloured silk." And, in the suit of John Sobieski, King of Poland, engraved by Reibisch, from the Dresden Collection, we have the same form of vambrace for both arms, the material being steel plate. Other portions of Sobieski's armour are formed of steel scale-work; and in this case, as in those already noticed, every scale is engraved with an emblem. The emblem here is a golden cross.

The various kinds of flexible armour, formed with plates or scale of metal, are well deserving of attention; their distinctive character does not appear to have been accurately defined. In the richest kind of brigandine the plates were nailed together, the gilt nail-heads appearing on the external surface of a velvet covering, by which the overlapping scales were concealed. A fine example is preserved in the museum of the Duke of Darmstadt (Hefner, *Trachten*, div. ii., pl. 62; *Armour and Arms in Europe*, p. 551; see also Grose, pl. 30; and Skelton's *Illust. Goodrich Court Armory*, pl. 16).



An interesting portion of scale-armour of this description is here figured (orig. size). The overlapping plates of iron are riveted on two thicknesses of canvas. Date sixteenth

cent. In another variety of brigandine, the plates were stitched or quilted into the garment, the plates being perforated; and the small cords used in the operation are seen in straight and diagonal lines knotted at their intersections on the out-



side. One of the perforated iron plates, as thick as a sixpence, for lining the foot-soldier's brigandine, date sixteenth century, is here represented (original size). These plates are slightly convex. A very curious brigandine head-piece, found at Davington Priory, Kent, has been figured in a former volume of this Journal (vol. xiv., p. 345). An ex-

ample of the brigandine jacket is in the Goodrich Court Armory (Skelton, pl. xxxiv.); another, in very perfect preservation, is in the possession of Mr. W. B. Johnstone, Treasurer of the Royal Scottish Academy. In scale-armour proper, the laminated plates appear upon the surface, as shown in the remarkable suit from Padua, previously noticed.

NOTE.—We may take this occasion to point out that defences designated *Jazerant* were doubtless of mail, and not of scales; from Ital. *Ghiazerino*, as Meyrick says, from “its resemblance to a clinker-built boat.” Crit. Enq. Glossary, in v. Skelton's Illustr. pl. 16. The evidence of the Romances, Inventories, &c., appears conclusive. We read of “auberc *jaserant*, qui ot le maille blanche et sierré et tirant.”—Rom. d'Alixandre. Amongst mailed defences in the armour of Louis X. in 1316, occur “un pans et uns bras de *jazeran* d'acier:—coleretes Pizaines de *jazeran* d'acier:—une couverture de *jazeran* de fer.” Ducange v. *Armatura*. The horse-armour (*couverture*) must at least have been of mail; we never see it formed of scales. We read in Cuvelier, “chascun ot cheval couvert de *jaserant*.” Nicot (Thresor de la langue Franc.) explains “*Jaseran*—une sorte d'habillement de guerre fait de grosses et larges mailles de fer lascées et jointes estroitement de couche ensemble:—on peut juger que le *Jaseran* soit le mesme habillement de guerre qu'on nomme a present Jaques de Maille;” adding that a chain of gold or silver, “qui est de grosses mailles,” is likewise called *Jazeran*. See Roquefort in v. So also in Spanish, *Jacerina* signifies mail. The French antiquaries use the term as designating mail, not scale-armour. See Catal. Mus. de l'Artill. Paris, p. 35.