CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS THE HISTORY OF MEDIÆVAL WEAPONS AND MILITARY APPLIANCES IN EUROPE.

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THE GOEDENDAG, A FOOT-SOLDIER'S WEAPON OF THE THIRTEENTH AND FOURTEENTH CENTURIES.

At a first glance, the weapon before us would appear to belong to the Early-Middle-Ages of the Sandwich Islanders, and it is with no small surprise that, on further inquiry, we

find this primitive form of the Club to be the chosen arm of the great guilds of the richest princedom of Europe, in its richest period—of Flanders in the fourteenth century. The

figure here given is one of many, forming an extensive wall-painting in an old chapel at Ghent. The men are citizens of Ghent, and are represented as marching in procession at one of their guild festivals. The picture itself no longer exists, but it has been fully and carefully reproduced by M. De Vigne in his "Recherches Historiques sur les Costumes des Gildes, &c." The citizen-soldier wears the "bacinet rond," so often mentioned in documents of the time, with camail of banded-mail overlying the surcoat. The sleeve of the hauberk is strengthened at the elbow with a roundel of plate, charged with a cross: the arms on the surcoat are those of his company. The equipment appears to be that of the beginning of the fourteenth century.

But the weapon carried by this warrior (borne also by many of his companions) is the most curious part of the representation; and, though we have examined many thousand examples of weapons of all ages, pictorially or otherwise reproduced, we have never before met with the singular implement here figured. M. De Vigne, in producing it, claims to have discovered the true form of the GOEDENDAG; and, in the minute description of that arm by Guiart, in the "Branche des Royaux Lignages," there are certainly many points of resemblance. The passage to which we allude is that recounting the conflict between the men of Bruges, led by "Mesire Walepaiele," and the French.

"El tens dont ge conte nouvele,
Iert Mesire Walepaiele,
Des fiez de Bruges capitainne:
Cil meut un jour," &c.
(Ad ann. 1297; Ed. Buchon, vol. ii. p. 209.)

Reaching the enemy, the Flemings attack them:—

"A granz bastons pesanz ferrez,
A un lonc fer agu devant.
Tiex bastons qu'il portent en guerre
Ont nom godendac en la terre.
Goden-dac, c'est Bon-jour à dire,
Qui en françois le veust descrire.
Cil baston sont lonc et traitiz,
Pour ferir à deuz mainz faitiz.
Et quant l'en en faut au descendre,
Se cil qui fiert i veust entendre,
Et il en sache bien ouvrer,
Tantost puet son cop recouvrer

Et ferir, sans s'aler moquant,[1]
Du bout devant, en estoquant
Son ennemi par le ventre ;
Et li fers est aguz qui entre
Légierement de plainne assiète
Par touz les lieuz où l'on en giète,
S'armeures ne le detiennent.
Cil qui ces granz godendaz tiennent,
Qu'il ont a deux poinz empoingniez,
Sont un poi des rens esloingniez,
De bien ferir ne sont pas lasche.
Entre les gens le roi en tasche
Au destriers donnent tiex meriax
Amont, parmi les hateriax,
Que des pesanz cops qu'il ourdissent
En pluseurs lieus les estourdissent,
Si qu'a poi qu' a terre ne chieent."

(Ibid., vol. ii. p. 210.)

The goedendags of the Flemings are mentioned in many other places of Guiart's poem, but in none with so much detail. Under 1304 (vol. ii. p. 302) we have a passage showing that the arm was for thrusting and striking :—

"Godendaz levez, lances prises,
S'assaillent en diverses guises :
Uns estoquent, autres rabatent."

At page 316 we find that the weapon was a heavy one:—

"Aucuns a godendaz pesanz,
Dont les cops lancent et desrivent,
Jusqu'en mi le mont les poursivent."

See also pages 240, 246, 256, 277, 280, 312 and 446, where, though the godendac is mentioned with honor, no new characteristic appears.

Before proceeding further, it may be as well to call to mind that the name of Goedendag has been held to apply to the Halbard ; and I am not aware that any ancient passage has yet been found in which the two words stand in juxtaposition, so as to indicate a difference between the two weapons.

In the account of the battle of Courtray in the "Grandes Chroniques," the goedendag again appears as a Flemish arm.

[1] Query, "manquant ?"

"Ceux de Bruges, si comme l'en dit, estudians et cuidans mourir pour la justice, liberalité et franchise du pays, portant avec eux ensement aucunes reliques de Sains, et à glaives, à lances, espées bonnes, haches et goudendars, serréement et espessement ordonés, vindrent au champ à pié par un pou tous. . . . Et lors adecertes ceux de Bruges nulle ame n'espargnierent, mais aux lances agues bien ancorées, que l'on appelle bouteshaches et godendars, les chevaliers des chevaux faisoient trebuchier; et ainsi comme its chéoient, comme brebis les acraventoient sus la terre."—Vol. v. p. 139.

M. Paulin Paris adds a note to the word *ancorées*:—"Terminées en forme d'ancres, à peu près comme les hallebardes:"—which, however, does not throw much light on the subject. Perhaps the word was originally *acérées*.

In the continuation of the Chronicle of Nangis, the similar incident of the battle of Courtrai is thus recorded:—"Cum lanceis adjunctis et exquisiti generis quod gothendar vulgò appellant."

The goedendag is not, however, confined to Flanders. In an ordinance of King John of France in 1355, for the defence of the city of Poitiers, it is commanded "Que toute manière de gens habitans en la ville et suburbez de Poitiers seront contrains à eulx armer, chacun selon son estat: c'est assavoir, les riches et les puissans de toutes armeures; les moiens de lances, pavois ou godendac et de cote gambezie; et les menus de godendac ou d'espée, si et tellement comme ils pourront."—Collect. des Ordonnances, t. iv. p. 169.

Ducange, who never fails to contribute curious illustration to every archæological inquiry, has several passages from Letters Remissory of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, relating to the *godendac*. His interpretation of the word is "Hasta brevior, Flandrensibus familiaris." In a Remissory Letter of 1357 we have: "Quemdam baculum ferratum, *godendart* Gallicè nuncupatum, quem deferebat, sublevavit," &c. Again, in 1376: "En soy défendant, féry ledit Cannaux d'un godandart ou pique de Flandres un cop seulement, dont mort s'ensuy." And in a third letter of 1417: "Un baston que l'en appelle goudendart, qui est à la façon d'une pique de Flandres, combien que le fer est un pou plus longuet."

We thus find that the goedendag was a "grand baston,"—"à lonc fer agu devant"—pour férir à deux mainz—pour

estoquer et rabattre—pesante—bien ancorée (?)—exquisiti generis—à la façon d'une pique de Flandres, mais dont le fer estoit un pou plus longuet." How far these characteristics of the goedendag, godendac, godendas, godendaz, godendoc, godendart, goudendart, gothendar, godandar, godandac, godandart, godardus, godendus, godandardus, or gondendardum, apply to the weapon of M. De Vigne, or whether they do not rather indicate the arm familiar to us under the name of halbard, it will be for our readers to determine. At all events, the weapon is a very curious one, and one of the simplest forms of the "menues armes" of the middle-age foot-fighter.

In conclusion, we may remark that the giving facetious names to instruments of warfare, as in the "Good-den" before us, has been in vogue through all ages. Thus we have the holy-water-sprinkle, the morning-star, the *gagne-pain*, the swine's-feather, and others. Fire-arms have been complimented with sobriquets taken from the fair sex, as Mons Meg at Edinburgh, and Mad Margery at Ghent; while, even in our own day, we have listened to the energetic voice of Brown Bess.

UNIQUE EXAMPLE OF A SABRE WITH FINGER-GUARD, OF THE BEGINNING OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

By the kindness of Colonel Lefroy, I am enabled to place before the Archæological Institute a very curious example of a sabre with finger-guard, of the commencement of the sixteenth century. I observed it recently in the collection at the Rotunda, Woolwich, and learn from Colonel Lefroy, who is now zealously engaged in re-arranging this collection, that the weapon in question was found in some obscure corner, where it has lain hidden for years, all clue to its history having been totally lost. One good result, however, of its ignominious treatment is, that we have it in all its rough integrity of genuineness: it has not been "restored."

The chief characteristic of the weapon is the finger-guard, a contrivance not seen in mediæval swords, but coming in with the cinque-cento period. The earliest example I have noticed of such a guard is the representation in the tapestry

Sabre with finger-guard, in the Armory at the Rotunda, Woolwich.

Date, early in the Sixteenth Century.

of Charles the Bold (or of Berne), figured by M. Jubinal. It occurs on Plate 6 of the Berne series in the "Tapisseries historiées." The blade in that case is curved, and notched at the back of the point. Another early authority is the "Speculum Conversionis Peccatorum," printed at Alost in Flanders, in 1473. The weapon occurs there in several places: the fighters who use it are on foot, have full body-armour, and carry shields: the blade is formed as in the preceding examples. (Engraved in Dibdin's "Bibliotheca Spenceriana," vol. iv. p. 554.) In the "Memorare Novissima," printed about 1495, we have, in the group of Dives and Lazarus, a similar hand-guard, but with a straight, long blade attached. (Dibdin, Bib. Spenc. iv. p. 413.) The "Tapisserie d'Aulhac," also of the fifteenth century, gives us several examples: in plate 4 (Jubinal) we have a classic subject, where "Troillus," whose name is written on the blade, combats with a scymitar of this fashion. Others appear in Plate 5. The tapestry of this period in the "Presence Chamber" at Hampton Court offers several examples of the finger-guard; in one case combined with a prolonged cross-piece. A scymitar with guard exactly resembling the one before us forms the principal bearing of the Sword Cutlers' Guild of Brussels. It is figured in De Vigne's "Recherches sur les Costumes des Gildes," &c., Plate 24; and we venture to refer this design to the fifteenth century, because the shields-of-arms of the "Cordewaniers" and the "Handscoemakere" (*savetiers*) in the same series (pl. 25) give us the long-piked shoe and boot of that time.

In the sixteenth century the fashion of the finger-guard unattached to the pommel continued. The sabre preserved at Woolwich offers a very curious example. The whole length of the arm is 4 feet, the blade measures 3 ft. 3 in. It might be used with two hands or with one only. The hilts of two-hand swords, it is true, are commonly straight, round, and sloping, but instances occur in which the hilt of the form here seen is used with both hands, as in a subject from a fifteenth-century volume, the "Speculum Humanæ Salvationis," given by Dibdin in the "Bibliotheca Spenceriana," vol. iv. p. 12. The swordsman there is an executioner, and it has been suggested that the weapon before us may have been a heading-sword. But I think

not, from the engraved figures of saints on the blade, one of whom is Saint Barbara, the special patroness of *soldiers.* There is a peculiarity in the formation of the hilt. Instead of the narrow tang commonly employed, riveting at the pommel, a broad piece of iron runs to the end of the grip, occupying its entire breadth. This mode of balancing the arm, I am informed by a scientific sword-cutler, has been lately brought out by a London weaponer, as a new discovery. What effect our Escalibar would have at the Patent Office, I am unable to say. Touching this question of "balance," it must be remembered that the balance of mediæval swords had not in view recovery to guard, but recovery to strike. The guarding was done by the body-armour and the shield. A nicely-balanced weapon, therefore, as we now understand the term, was not needed by the mediæval warrior. The sword of those old times had but two duties to fulfil—to strike and to pierce. Now it has three—to cut, to thrust, and to guard.

The place of manufacture of this weapon is not easy to determine. Among the ornaments of the hand-guard are two roses: the bosses on the grip are rose-formed, and the upper of the four armourer's-marks on the blade is also a rose. But, curiously enough, the three punch-marks on the lower part of the blade are double-headed eagles. It has been suggested that the eagle may have been the mark of a German weaponer, while the rose may have been added, to indicate the realm for which the sword was fabricated. I may add, though not insisting on much weight being attached to the remark, that one of the saintly figures on the blade is that of St. Katherine; and, as the weapon is of the time, so it may have been of the service of Katharine of Arragon. We may note also that one of the weapons of the Royal Guard of this period, still preserved at the Tower, is engraved with the same figures as those adorning the Woolwich sabre; namely, Saint Katherine and Saint Barbara. (Tower Catalogue, Class 7, No. 327: compare also No. 321.) All that we can safely affirm on this question of manufacture is that the Roses are in a decided majority over the Eagles.

The make of the handle is somewhat curious. Wood is laid on each side of the broad iron tang and riveted, the rivets being flush with the two surfaces. Leather is then

stretched over all, and the rose-formed bosses which we see at intervals along the grip, are fixed over the leather. The object of these bosses is to roughen the grip, so as to give a firmer hold to the combatant. The ornaments on the hand-guard consist of the engraved roses already noticed, and a flowing pattern of foliage. These have been gilt.

Illustrations of the finger-guard of this type in the first half of the sixteenth century are found among the engravings on the rich suit of Henry VIII. in the Tower. (Catalogue, No. 8 of Class 2.) In one subject it appears in an executioner's sword; the blade short, broad, curved and notched at the point. A similar weapon occurs in the Legend of St. Agatha, where it is carried by "the Prætor Quintianus." In the latter example it is curious to note that the guard terminates at one extremity with a snake's head, as in the weapon before us.

Sabre in one of the engravings on the suit of Henry VIII. Tower Armory.

It is again found in the Works of Holbein by De Mechel; in the Weiss Kunig, plate 176; in the du Sommerard tapestry (Jubinal, p. 42, pl. 6), with a long, straight blade; in Hefner's "Trachten," part 3, pl. 106, where it is carried by an unarmed *Landsknecht;* in the sword preserved at the Heralds' College, said to be that of James IV. of Scotland, from Flodden Field (figured in the Archæologia, vol. xxxiii. pl. 14, p. 340); in the sword of Francis I. of France, engraved by Willemin (*Mon. Ined.*, vol. ii., pl. 261); in the short sabre preserved at Ghent, and figured by De Vigne (*Vade mecum du Peintre*, vol. ii., pl. 98); in an example on a carved altar-piece in the Kensington Museum; and in the fencing-book of Camillo Agrippa, printed at Rome in 1553.

In the second half of the sixteenth century, we may refer to the portrait of the King of Navarre, 1562 (Hefner, part 3, pl. 43); that of Queen Elizabeth's porter, at

Hampton Court, by Zucchero, 1580; the figures in Jost Amman's *Kunstbuchlein*, cuts 18 and 175, the latter an unarmed horseman, carrying harquebus, mace, and long, straight sword; the engraving of a City harquebusier, given by Hefner, pl. 18, A. D. 1598; several of the plates in Schrenk von Notsing (see Nos. 18, 50, 88, 119, and 123); some of those in the Madrid Armory (vol. 1, pl. 8, and vol. ii. pl. 22, of the "Armeria Real"); the curious MS. in the British Museum, Addit. MS. 18,285, "Helvetiæ Descriptio;" and the well-known figures of Von Gheyn, published in 1607.

We thus see that the finger-guard of this type was used by many classes of swordsmen—by kings, nobles, armed knights, unarmed soldiers, and by executioners. It is carried both by cavalry and infantry, but chiefly by the latter. It is combined with the long, straight sword, the long sabre, the short sabre with plain point, and the short sabre with notched back.

We have only to add that, though we have traced this fashion down to the seventeenth century, it must not be forgotten that guards of a more perfect description were also in use from the first half of the sixteenth century; but to note the adoption and varying fashions of these would too far extend the limits of the present notice of the unique weapon preserved in the collection which Colonel Lefroy has undertaken with such efficient energy to amplify and re-arrange.