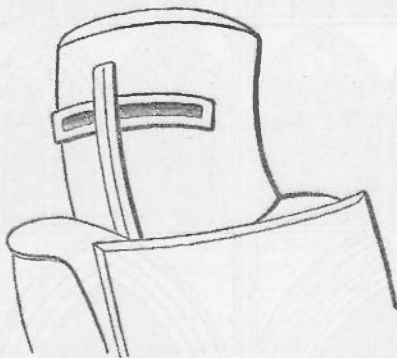


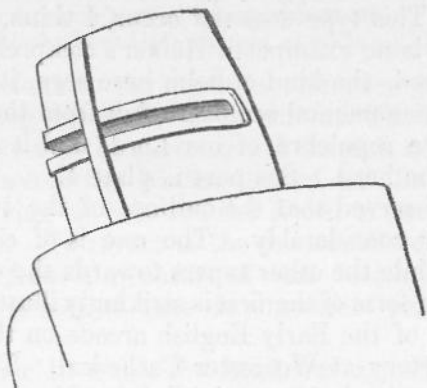
#### HELMS FROM SCULPTURED EFFIGIES AT FURNESS ABBEY.

BEING at Furness Abbey in the month of June of this year, I observed the two monumental figures from which these two helmets are copied lying on the east side of the choir. The statues are a good deal broken, but not so much as to leave any doubt either of their age or mode of arming. The helmets being the only portion of the figures of any



interest, they only have been drawn. The body-armour of both knights is entirely of interlinked chain-mail; of that kind which is so clearly shown on the Trajan Column, though, with a curious perverseness, some persons still talk about "edgewise mail," a monstrosity that never existed. As seen in one of the sketches, a surcoat overlies the hauberk, leaving the arm free, and both figures carry the usual triangular shield of the time. This period seems to be the first half of the thirteenth century. The effigies are of life-size, and there can be no doubt they were originally painted. Indeed, it is from the painting of the shield only that an identification of the figures could have been obtained, irrespective, of course, of any inscription that may have been added on the tomb. This is the most curious feature in the type of monument before us, that there is no personality in the

memorial—it is altogether a knight in the abstract. The question often mooted, whether mediæval monumental effigies were intended to portray the person commemorated, or



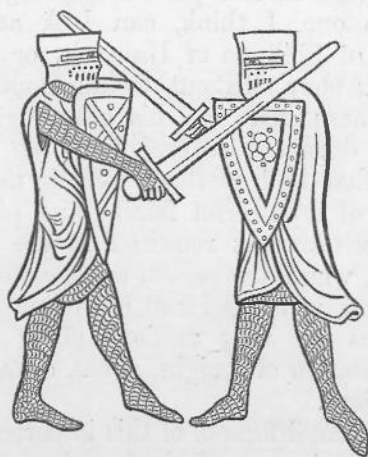
whether they are to be regarded as simple testimonials of affection, supplied as our wreaths of *immortelles* are at the cemetery gate, receives considerable light from these figures. Such monuments might clearly be kept on hand by the sculptor, and the finishing stroke given to the order by painting the knight's arms on the shield. This does not, however, militate against the fact that in particular instances of eminent persons a careful portraiture may not have been attempted. No one, I think, can look at the statue of Queen Eleanor, of Philippa of Hainault, or of Richard II. in Westminster Abbey, without feeling convinced that the "lattener" in these cases did his best to give us the true features of the departed sovereigns. We may therefore fairly conclude that both methods were in use : that, where the defunct was of a powerful family, and portraiture could be obtained, a likeness was required in the funeral monument ; and that, where the person to be commemorated was of little distinction, or his portrait not obtainable (or peradventure his heirs not very anxious about the matter), a general representation of knight, abbot, or burgomaster was considered sufficient.

Several monumental figures of this impersonal kind are to be found in different parts of the kingdom. One, at Staindrop, Durham, is engraved in Stothard's Monuments. Three others in the same county are given in Surtees's History.

Another is drawn in Powell's Lincolnshire Collections, now in the British Museum, Add. MS., 17,462, fol. 71; this is a statue in Kirkstead Chapel; and another will be found in Hollis's Monumental Effigies, part i., from a tomb at Walkerne, Herts. This type does not occur, I think, in Germany, at least, there is no example in Hefner's comprehensive work. He gives, indeed, the kind of helm here seen, it is not, however, from a monumental sculpture, but from the statue of a watcher at the sepulchre of our Lord, and it is there displaced from the head. See part i., plate 4.

It will be observed that the outlines of the two helms at Furness differ considerably. The one is of equal breadth throughout, while the other tapers towards the crown. The curious curving form of the first is strikingly illustrated among the sculptures of the Early English arcade on the south side of the Presbytery at Worcester Cathedral. The crown in both the examples before us is slightly ridged fore and aft. The vertical bars, it will be noticed, are not of equal length; and one is ridged while the other is flat.

In manuscript illuminations representing this type of armament, we occasionally find the incognito of the warrior so far compromised that we are enabled to catch a glimpse of his eye; but this point does not appear to be ever conceded in a mortuary statue. The annexed group, representing a



sword-fight between two knights of the thirteenth century, armed cap-à-pie, furnishes a good example. It is from Roy.

MS., 12, F. xiii., fol. 42. The knights being completely armed in steel, and also having shields, it does not appear what final gain could accrue to either party by their belabouring each other with the light weapons which they carry.

“As easy may'st thou the intrenchant air  
With thy keen blade impress, as make me bleed,”

may each exclaim to the other in reference to the contest. Indeed, having come down so far as Shakespear for an illustration, we may be permitted to descend another century or two and see in the picture before us the contention at present carrying on between the North Americans and the Confederates. To revert to the thirteenth century, we perceive clearly from the nature of this battle how needful it was for the heroes of that day to resort to the ponderous axe.

The manner in which the head was armed with its hood of mail, before the flat-topped helm was donned, may be seen in the figure on folio 219 of Roy. MS., 2, A. xxii., and again in Hefner's Costumes, part i., plate 4.

Varieties of the flat-topped helm will be found in the seals of Henry III. and Edward I., of Alexander II. of Scotland, of Hugo de Vere and Robert Fitzwalter, in the glass-picture of Ferdinand of Castille, the figure on fol. 27 of Harl. MS., 3244 (all engraved in “Ancient Armour,” vol. i., pp. 278, 299, 307, and 339); and again among the groups of the Painted Chamber, as reproduced by Charles Stothard in the *Vetusta Monumenta*, the Lives of the Offas (Cotton MS., Nero, D. ii.), and the real example figured in this Journal, vol. viii., p. 420.

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