

CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS THE HISTORY OF MEDIÆVAL
ARMOUR AND WEAPONS IN EUROPE.

By JOHN HEWITT.

TILTING-HELM OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY, IN THE
ROYAL ARTILLERY MUSEUM, WOOLWICH.

A FINE example of a Tilting Helm, of about the close of the fifteenth century, was exhibited at the meeting of the Archæological Institute in January last by General Lefroy, by whom it has recently been added to the Royal Artillery Museum at Woolwich. It formed part of the collection of Mr. Brocas, of Wokefield, Berkshire, and will be found figured in the sale catalogue of that collection. It is very clearly identified, as may be seen in the engraving there given, by the broken portion at the lower edge of the helm, as well as by the very curious perforated bar in front, for fixing the head-piece to the breast-plate. The helm subsequently passed into the hands of a Norfolk gentleman, by whom it was presented to the Richmond Museum. On the breaking up of that collection it was returned to the executors of the donor, who presented it to Mr. Harrod, the Secretary of the Norfolk Archæological Society. It afterwards became the property of Mr. Bayfield, of Norwich, at whose recommendation it was copied as part of the decorations of the celebrated "Norwich Gates," now at Sandringham. From Mr. Bayfield it was purchased in December last by General Lefroy. See Official Catalogue, class xvi. no. 6.

As a sample of the knightly tilting helm this is an exceedingly fine specimen, but the particular points of interest in it are the singular contrivances for attaching the defence to the breast and back-plates; the former consisting of a perforated iron bar, moving on a hinge, and adapted for the passage of a pair of staples at a height that might be adjusted to the convenience of the wearer; the latter being an iron buckle of peculiar construction, to receive a strap fixed to the back-plate. The securing of the helm fore and aft to the cuirass is indeed no new thing, but the particular manner

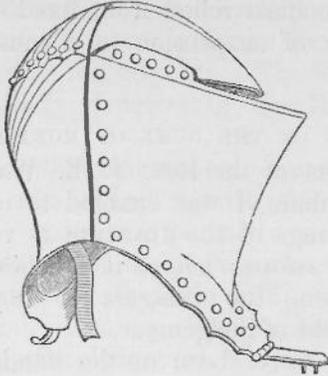


Tilting-Helm of the fifteenth century, in the Royal Artillery Museum, Woolwich.

(From a drawing by Walter H. Tregellas, Esq.)

Scale one-fourth linear.

of fastening here seen is very rare. An example, however, existed in the collection of the Baron de Peuker, at Brussels, and is engraved in the sale catalogue of that museum. It



Tilting-Helm formerly in the Baron de Peuker's Museum.

will be observed that, besides the fastenings in front and behind, the helm had two lateral stays: these consisted of straps, which, attached to the shoulder, passed through the staples seen on the lower edge of the helm, and were then secured by buckles. This side-strapping is also found in other examples. The fine tourneying helm figured by Hefner (*Costumes*, plate 137 of part ii.) exhibits it, and we find it again in the German tourney helm engraved in the *Journal of the Archæological Association*, vol. iii. p. 59. In both these specimens there are on each side *two* staples. The casque before us has no opening on either side of the fore part: the hind plate has four clusters of air-holes, two in the upper, two in the lower part, close to the vertical row of rivets. The usual perforations for fixing the crest and mantling are seen in the crown. The rivets themselves are not unworthy of remark. Each boss consists of three metals—first the iron, then a coating of tin, and lastly the surface of brass.

By examining the interior, it will be seen how the lining of the head-piece was held in its place; for, simple though at first it may seem, it was by no means an easy thing to bring the padded lining over the top of the head and there fasten it. This was effected by means of a thin strip of iron, passing across the head just behind the ocularium, and secured at each extremity by one of the temple-rivets

passing through it. The lining was made fast to this iron strip by short rivets, which, while they pierced the lining, did not penetrate the helm-plate above.

The weight of the helm is $22\frac{1}{2}$ lbs., its height 18 inches. Some pieces of modern rolled iron, fixed at the sides for purposes probably of suspension in a museum, have been removed.

SWORD OF THE DUKE OF MONMOUTH.

By the kindness of the Rev. J. E. Waddy, and of Mr. Allsop, of Cheltenham, I was enabled to exhibit at one of the monthly meetings of the Institute a very curious and richly-ornamented sword; left, as it is believed, by the Duke of Monmouth among the villagers of Dorsetshire on his flight from the Field of Sedgemoor.

This sword has never been in the hands of dealers; its claims to authenticity are founded on no bold history; all its guarantees lie in itself—in the emblems with which it is adorned, in the singular manner in which it was rescued from the hands of a knot of rustic mummers, and in the locality where it was discovered.

In the year 1844 the weapon was found in the possession of a band of villagers, exhibiting their histrionic talents at Woodyates Inn, a hamlet rendered celebrated in the West Country from its being the spot where the fugitive duke changed dresses with a peasant a little before his capture. It was purchased from the "mummers" for the sum of eighteen-pence, and presented to Mr. Howitt, a collector of antiquarian objects, residing at Wilton. From Mr. Howitt the sword came into the possession of Mr. Allsop, its present owner.

After the battle of Sedgemoor the Duke of Monmouth fled across the country, by the north of Wells, to the east of Shepton Mallet, and by Gillingham and Shaftesbury, to the village of Woodyates Inn. At Woodyates Inn, as we are told by Bishop Burnet and other chroniclers, the duke changed clothes with a shepherd, his horse and those of his attendants were turned loose, and their saddles and bridles concealed. Soon after this the duke dropped his gold snuff-box, full of gold pieces, in a pea-field, where it was picked up, the lucky finder obtaining the half of the contents for his share of the transaction. A little to the south of Wood-

yates Inn the duke was taken, and on his person, we learn, "were found certain papers and books, one of which books was a manuscript of spells, charms, and conjurations, songs, recipes, and prayers, all written with his own hand. The charms and spells were against death in battle, for opening prison doors, &c. Two other books were manuscripts on fortification and the military art. The fourth contained an estimate of the yearly expenses of His Majesty's navy and land forces."¹

Let us now see what internal evidence the sword presents to justify us in identifying it with the forfeited blade of Monmouth. The guard and pommel are covered with royal emblems, portraits and military subjects, chased with great care (though indeed with little skill), and the whole has been richly plated. Among these ornaments we have the Rose and Crown, the Prince of Wales's feathers, and two portraits which may, I think, be fairly assigned to Charles I. and his queen. The hair, beard, and moustaches of Charles are exactly those of his other portraits, and the hair-dress of the companion figure is similar to that of Queen Henrietta. In this view, it is clear that the sword could not have been *made* for Monmouth. He landed as duke, and at Taunton set up as king: he never claimed to be Prince of Wales. I am inclined, therefore, to believe that the sword belonged originally to his father, Charles II., when Prince of Wales; and this would be during the residence of that prince at the Hague. I am willing also to think that the weapon is of Dutch manufacture—at all events, to enter the strongest protest against its being accepted as a sample of English art.

The grip, it must be observed, is a restoration. The original was probably of silver wire, which the Shakespearians of Dorsetshire would naturally, at the earliest moment, convert into cider. The blade, which is two-edged, bears the common inscription of ANDRIA FERARA, Andria being spelt with an *i*. The armourer's mark is a very rude version of the Sun in his splendour. The hilt has a thumb-ring, and there is both a front and lateral bar for handguard. The blunted point of the blade is not unworthy of notice, as furnishing a memento of the fortunes of the weapon while in the hands of the Dorsetshire players.

¹ Roberts's Life of the Duke of Monmouth, vol. ii. p. 110.