



Helmet in the Museum of Artillery at Woolwich.  
Date, the first half of the fourteenth century.

HELMET OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY, AND OTHER OBJECTS  
PRESERVED IN THE ROYAL ARTILLERY MUSEUM, WOOL-  
WICH.

By BRIGADIER-GENERAL LEFROY, R.A., F.R.S.

THE annexed illustration represents a helmet recently procured for the Museum of Artillery, and exhibited at a meeting of the Archæological Institute in May, 1866. It bears a considerable resemblance to the fine example in the Parham collection, stated to have been formerly in the church of Hathersage, Derbyshire, where it was traditionally associated with the memory of "Little John," who is supposed to have been there buried.<sup>1</sup> This latter belongs undoubtedly to the first half of the fourteenth century.

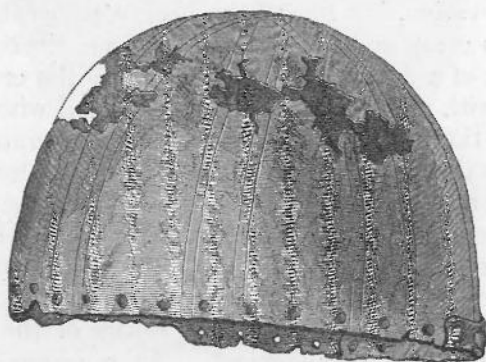
In its present state this helmet in the Woolwich collection weighs 9 lbs. 9 oz. It is perfect as to form, and in pretty good preservation, but must have been considerably heavier. The body is composed of four plates of iron, riveted together in the form of a double cone; a fifth forms the crown, which is marked with a foliated cross, and provided with a pin or button for the attachment of a plume or mantling. The sixth forms the visor, which is hinged on the left side, and secured by a hook or staple on the right. The *ocularium* is of the usual character—a long narrow slit left between the two front plates, and which the top of the visor does not cover. The knight was supplied with air by means of about 150 small holes pierced through the centre of the visor in a group of chevrony arrangement. In a group figured in

<sup>1</sup> In the church-yard at Hathersage are two stones, which according to tradition mark the spot where the companion of Robin Hood was interred. The distance between these stones is 13 ft. 4 in. Pilkington, in his History of Derbyshire, states that a thigh-bone measuring 29½ in., was found in this grave; it lay at the depth of two yards. The excavation was made about the close of the last century, by some persons from Cannon Hall, near Barnsley, who carried off the gigantic

bone together with "an ancient cap," which was suspended by a chain in the church, and traditionally reputed to have been worn by the bold forester. Further particulars are given in Mr. Hall's Rambles in the country surrounding the Forest of Sherwood. According to the old inhabitants of Hathersage, however, the cap, "which everybody knew to be Little John's," was of green cloth. Gutch, Geste of Robin Hood, pp. xv. 68.

Hewitt's *Ancient Arms and Armour* (vol. ii. No. 42) a very similar head-piece may be seen ; an example is also to be found in the Museum of Artillery at Paris, in a tilting-helmet of the fifteenth century (Class H., No. 5). Mr. Hewitt remarks that it differs from the helm of the latter part of the thirteenth century in having the cleft for sight at the base of the crown defence, instead of forming part of the moveable door or face defence. The button at the apex, which he considers to be for the purpose of affixing the kerchief of pleasance, may be seen in the seals of the Earl of Lancaster, son of Crouchback, Robert Earl of Flanders, 1305, and others of the same period ; its absence, however, from the majority of early helms seems to indicate that little pleasance was associated with their use.

The next example is a bassinet presented by Sir John Hay Drummond-Hay, H. B. M. Minister Resident at the Court of Morocco, to the same museum. It was obtained by that gentleman many years ago from a considerable deposit of ancient arms and armour existing at Tangier, as similar deposits have existed, down to our own times, in



Bassinet from the deposit of Armour at Tangier.

Presented to the Museum of Artillery at Woolwich by Sir John H. Drummond-Hay.

other neglected fortresses of the Ottoman empire, such as those at Rhodes and Cyprus. It belongs to the period of the expulsion of the Moors from Spain at the end of the fifteenth century, and although now in a decayed state, shows the skill of the artificer, being beaten from a single plate without riveting. It will be noticed that the crown



Iron Target from the deposit at Tangier, of arms and armour of the period of the  
Expulsion of the Moors from Spain.

Presented to the Museum of Artillery at Woolwich by Sir John Hay Drummond-Hay, K.C.B.

is marked with four bands bordered, and intersecting like the crosses of a union jack, a singular description of ornamentation for a Moslem helm.

The next illustration represents a target of the same period and provenance as the last. It is composed of two plates of iron riveted together in the middle, where their junction is covered by a narrow slip of the same metal, forked at either extremity. Two bars or bends of wavy outline cross the shield and meet in the form of a chevron in the centre, and there are two bosses, one of which retains a small ring, fashioned like a serpent. There are traces of gilding discernible, and small remains of velvet under the cross-bars. The edge of the shield is punctured all round with holes for the attachment of a covering.

To the guarantee which we have for the genuineness and precise period of these objects, from the conditions under which they were obtained by Sir John Drummond-Hay, may be added a remarkable confirmation, to which my attention was called by the Very Rev. Canon Rock. There is, he states, a well-known mural painting in the Cathedral of Granada, representing a combat between Moslem and Christian knights, in which the former, who are of course defeated, carry shields precisely resembling the one here engraved. Dr. Rock himself saw the Tangier hoard about the year 1837, and procured specimens from it, which he presented to the late Earl of Shrewsbury; they were in the collection at Alton Towers at the time of its dispersion.

I am indebted to Mr. Hewitt for the observation that similar forms occur likewise in the paintings of the Alhambra, as shown in the illustrations of that palace by Mr. Owen Jones. There is a shield of similar form in the Tower Armoury, formerly in the collection of the Baron de Peuker.

A target of somewhat similar fashion, heart-shaped, with a central ridge and two bosses, is figured by Hefner. It occurs on an altar sculpture of wood painted, that was to be seen at Hall in Suabia. This example, however, is pointed at its lower extremity, instead of being forked or bifid as on the Moorish targets that have been noticed. Hefner ascribes it to the second half of the fourteenth century.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Trachten des Christl. Mittelalters, IId. Division, pl. 34.