THE SWORD BELTS OF THE MIDDLE AGES.[1]

By ALBERT HARTSHORNE, F.S.A.

In the remote ages of the world the belt or girdle consisted of a simple leather girth round the waist. In its specially pacific aspect, as a mere twisted linen band for confining or restraining loose flowing oriental raiments, it was in early days an indispensable part of the costume, so much so that, before undertaking any important or desperate enterprise, the adventurer was first careful to gird himself. Thus, in one of the wonderful predictions of Isaiah, through Maher-shalal-hash-baz, against Judah and Jerusalem, the prophet says, "gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken to pieces";[2] that is, "though ye be never so ready, yet shall ye be subdued by the Assyrian." Or, as by way of giving freedom and power, as we have it in Job, "He looseth the bond of kings, and girdeth their loins with a girdle."[3]

Again, to take a notable instance in the fateful episode of the meeting of Ahaziah and Elijah the Tishbite, the great seer is described as "an hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins;"[4] and again, on that memorable occasion, when Peter's chains fell from him, he was told by the heavenly messenger, "gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals," "cast thy garment about thee,"[5]—thus to completely habit himself before he went out and "wist not that it was true," before he passed the first and the second ward, and the iron gate, and found himself alone; and, as a further and famous example, John, in the wilderness, had "a leathern girdle,"[6] "a girdle of a skin about his loins."[7]

[1] Read in the Antiquarian Section at the Annual meeting of the Institute, at Edinburgh, August 12th, 1891.
[2] Is., 8, 9.
[3] Job 12, 18.
[4] 2 Kings, 1, 8.
[5] Acts, 12, 8.
[6] Matt., 3, 4.
[7] Mark, 1, 6.

It is recorded that when Joab dealt treacherously with Amasa, "and put the blood of war upon his girdle,"[1] "his garment was girded unto him, and upon it a girdle with a sword fastened upon his loins in the sheath thereof;"[2] this is an early registry of the lethal weapon, its belt and scabbard.

Of zones of the priestly kind we need only allude to "the curious girdle of the ephod,"[3] with which Moses invested Aaron, and the same "of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twisted linen, of needlework;"[4] to the picturesque figure of the fresh linen girdle hidden in a hole of the rock by Euphrates, and after many days found "marred" and "profitable for nothing,"[5] and we need merely call to remembrance the numerous allusions in the Scriptures to the girdle, both priestly, civil, and military, as a metaphor of gladness, faithfulness, strength, or revelation.

With the Egyptians the sword of bronze was carried in its leather scabbard in front of the body, and thrust in the sword belt in a sloping direction from right to left; and similarly of the dagger.

The Greek sword, generally speaking, was worn on the left side, suspended by a belt, usually from the shoulder, as in the figure of Meleager in the coins of Ætolia; it was sometimes slung more forward, bringing the hilt into the front,—a fashion which was revived, as we shall see presently, in the middle of the fifteenth century,—and occasionally suspended from a girdle round the waist.

As to the Romans, the monumental statue at Colchester of Marcus Favonius, a centurion of the Twentieth Legion, furnishes an excellent example. He wears a broad baudric, a sword suspended on the left side by a narrow belt from the shoulder, and a dagger on the right hung from a slender strap attached to the lower edge of the baudric; this appears to have been a modification of the Greek fashion. In the Colchester figure, which bears the reputation of being as early as before the insurrection of Boadicea, when the first Camulodunum fell, and consequently representing one of the Colony of Veterans honoured by the notice of

[1] 1 Kings, 2, 5.
[2] 2 Sam., 20, 8.
[3] Lev., 8, 7, and Ex., 28, 8.
[4] Ex., 39, 5, 29.
[5] Jer., 13, 7.

Tacitus, we have, distinctly prefigured, four of the objects with which we shall now be more or less concerned,—the sword belt, the baudric, the sword, and the dagger of the Middle Ages.

Herodian, in the third century, speaking of the Britons, says:—"They wear iron about their bellies, and wear no clothing; they are a very bloody and warlike people; their sword hangs on their naked bodies" This sounds somewhat primitive, but seems to have been the costume for war. On the other hand, Dion Cassius, speaking of the Caledonians at the same period, says:—"They have no houses, but huts, where they live naked, they use large swords," and, we may presume, wore belts.

According to Sidonius Appolinaris, writing in the fifth century, the Frankish soldiers wore a belt round the waist; Agathias, speaking two centuries later, tells us that they bore the sword on the left thigh, and Gregory of Tours, in his *Annales Francorum*, alluding to the same period, adds another weapon, a dagger, also suspended from the belt. It must be sufficient now to say that these declarations are amply supported by the testimony of the graves, as far as the weapons and the metal attributes of the belts are concerned. In certain rare instances we have indications from the barrows of the leather sword belt, but, although it may be true in one sense, according to the ancient saying, that "there is nothing like leather," it is also true in another, that the adage is not quite complete, for there is nothing like leather to perish; and it will be our difficulty throughout, in dealing with the sword belts of the Middle Ages, that we have absolutely no original examples to refer to. This being the case we must, for the preliminaries, content ourselves with the evidences which the earth has surrendered, evidences of so much of the domestic and military life of our far-removed ancestors, which have been so faithfully interpreted and made available for use by a patient, enthusiastic, and learned body of investigators.

We gather, as we have indicated, from the graves, that the sword belts of Anglo-Saxon times were of leather, and usually girt round the waist. That they were fitted with buckles and tongues of bronze, or sometimes copper, and other harnessings, not infrequently gilt, embossed, or

enamelled, we know from the same irrefragable sources; we have, however, as yet, no pictorial representation, but there seems no reason to suppose that any change took place in the method of wearing the sword during a long period. The same rude and general military requirements produced the same general results. Presently Illuminated MSS. became available as contemporary evidence, and from them we ascertain that no important alteration took place in the fashion of the sword belt up to the end of the tenth century. The belt was, indeed, worn for a time not over, but under the body garment, or hauberk, and so invisible, while the sword handle projected through a cleft, a contrivance seen in the figures in the Bayeux Tapestry, and apparent also in early seals. Likewise in the Stitch Work, and in other pictorial authorities of the eleventh century, the sword is shown, not suspended from the waist belt, but simply stuck into it. It is evident that the same style of military equipment in this particular had become general throughout Western Europe before the close of the century, and so continued for another hundred years.

But one especial innovation took place about the middle of the twelfth century, which brought about an important change in the sword belt. The surcote was introduced, to be worn over the hauberk. This loose light garment necessitated a narrow belt, or strap, round the waist to confine and control its folds. King John is the first English sovereign shown in his great seal wearing the surcote, and we fortunately have, in the Temple Church, a most interesting and valuable series of monumental effigies, exhibiting this picturesque vestment in its various forms during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. As examples of military costume during 150 years these memorials are unsurpassed, but it is somewhat depressing to know that they have not only been moved from their original positions, but also restored by that *bête noire* of antiquaries the modern "restorer." Of the vexed question of restoration generally this is not the occasion to speak, but certain it is that whatever else may, by very particular concession, be restored, an effigy most assuredly may not. It is to be hoped that we have passed the dangerous time when such work as this was possible, aud it is some satis-

faction to know that both Kerrich and Stothard made careful drawings of some of the Temple effigies, before Richardson was set to work, and did not as he did, both in the Temple Church, and at Elford, "restore" the figures first, and draw and publish them afterwards. In spite, however, of the troubles and sufferings of six centuries, the nine Temple memorials are still of the utmost value, and take the first place both in age and interest in the finest series of national monuments in Europe.

We now enter upon a new and wide field of enquiry, and we propose to draw our illustrations and information from the effigies and brasses,—from the stony texts and brazen records, in which the details of the sword belts are set forth with minuteness and precision, but only up to a certain point, in consequence of the nature of the materials used by the "kervers" and "latteners." Any detailed study of sword belts must be supplemented by special examination of Illuminated MSS., in which their delicate particulars are expressed in the vivid hues of the miniature painter, and by close attention to the pictures of the early Flemish and German Schools. For the present purpose of a general survey of the subject, the effigies and brasses will suffice.

No. 1, the most ancient of the nine Temple effigies, an unknown man carved in Purbeck marble in low relief, gives us the early short surcote, confined round the waist by a cingulum, and showing the sword hung from its separate, and in this particular instance, horizontal belt. Now, the question at once arises, how was this belt kept in position, and prevented from slipping down? This is a difficulty that has not been satisfactorily solved by any detail shown on the figures themselves, or by representations in Illuminated MSS. We can, therefore, only suppose that in the early days the sword belt was sustained at the back by a loop attached to the cingulum. It is, indeed, ill work to have to guess in such a matter, and at the outset, and it may be urged that the great men did not fight on foot, and that the sword belt was kept naturally in its place when the wearer was on horseback. But this is by no means sufficient, a sudden contingency, as of a smitten steed, and the walking attitude, must also have been provided for, how, we know not yet exactly.

No. 2, Geoffrey de Magnaville, died 1144, in Sussex marble, in the Temple Church, puts us into a better position; in this case the sword belt is certainly attached to the cingulum, and we have, besides, the curious feature, associated with a few early effigies,—perhaps the characteristic of a special school of sculpture, of the sword worn on the right side, and the man lying upon it.

No. 3 is from the very interesting enamelled plate at Mans representing Geoffrey Plantagenet, Earl of Anjou, who died in 1149. Not only as the father of Henry II. does he claim attention, but on account also of the costume which he wears, namely, tunic, or dalmatic, supertunic, and mantle, with the sword belt in the ancient position, and a shield whose ample form recalls those in the Tapestry. He holds up a sword in the early manner, indicative of power. Henry the Lion, died 1195, in his effigy at Brunswick bears his sheathed blade point upwards, with the belt wound round it. Eric Menved, King of Denmark, died 1319, in his brass at Ringstead holds his naked brand erect, and the costume of Geoffrey is the same as may be seen, with slightly varying forms, in the effigies of Henry II., Cœur de Lion at Rouen, King John, Henry III., Edward II., Edward III., Richard II., Henry IV., and Henry VII. No. (a) exhibits the sword of Henry II., died 1154, from his effigy at Fontevrault. The King is shown with closed eyes lying dead upon a bier, the sword sheathed and useless, and the belt twisted round it and done with.

No. 4, Cœur de Lion at Rouen, died 1189, gives an excellent example of the belt or girdle over the tunic, harnessed alternately with bars and quatrefoils of gold, and furnished with a buckle and pendant of rich jewellers' work, such as may be seen in the details of the *chasses* of the period. Nos. 5 and 6, both unappropriated Temple effigies, show an advance in style, and the belts decorated with bars and quatrefoils leave no doubt as to their period.

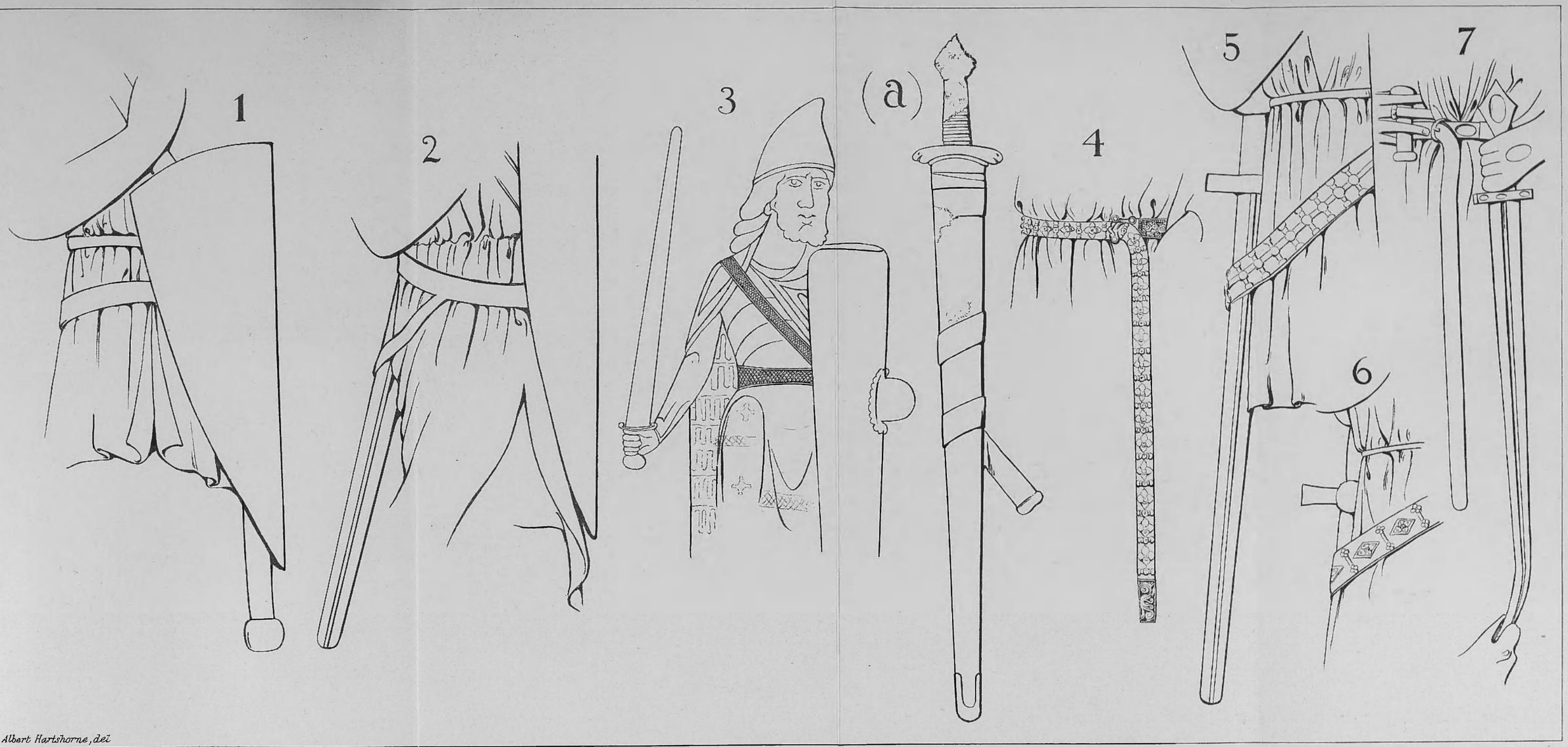
No. 7 gives the girdle and sword of that remarkable personage, the worst and ablest of the Angevins, King John, died 1216, from his effigy at Worcester, the earliest of a King in England. The belt is, perhaps, not the sword belt, but the kingly girdle. The effigy had many points of interest. Carved in Purbeck marble, like

most of the early recumbent figures, it was originally painted to the life, in accordance with the invariable practice of the time. Thus, the King was shown in a crimson dalmatic lined with green, a yellow tunic, red hose, and black shoes. When the coffin was opened, in 1797, the agreement of the dress on the body with that expressed on the effigy was very remarkable, and showed that the latter faithfully represented the King "in his habits as he lived;" on the head was found the remains of the famous monk's cowl spoken of by Matthew Paris,—the pastport through Purgatory,—a practice alluded to by Milton in a grand Puritanical outburst.[1] Unhappily, by the process of restoration, all evidence of the King's costume was obliterated in 1873, when the whole of this most genuine and interesting memorial was ignorantly gilded. This is the sort of thing "restoration" of effigies does for us.

We have seen already a certain advance in the character of the sword belts, but that shown in No. 8, from the Sussex marble figure, in the Temple, of William Marshall the Elder, died 1219, is again quite simple, the sword has, however, recovered its position on the left side. No. 9, is from an interesting statue of an interesting character, William Longespée, in Salisbury Cathedral, who died in 1227. The bastard grandson of Geoffrey Plantagenet, and son of Fair Rosamond de Clifford, wears his sword from one plain belt, and lies upon his wooden tomb in a lifeless manner that is admirably expressed. This beautiful monument was one of those that suffered by "re-arrangement" at the end of the last century, at the hands of Wyatt, the "restorer" of Salisbury, who caused the thirteenth century glass to be taken out, to be wickedly beaten to bits, and cast into the city ditch. The matter is too shocking to dwell upon.

In No. 10, about 1230, a further unappropriated example in Purbeck, from the Temple, we again have an advance. The surcote is fuller and more freely rendered, the belt is barred with bosses, and, for the first time, we have indication of the means of attaching the leather belt to the leather scabbard by metal studs; but there is, as yet, no sign of the locket of

[1] *Paradise Lost.* Book iii, line 478.



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later times. No. 11, again a Temple figure, William Marshall the younger, died 1231, is the earliest instance of the sword being handled in its sheath by the wearer. Here is also shown a method of attaching the short or buckle portion of the strap, to the scabbard by a metal tab. No. 12, the man with the targe and martel at Malvern, about 1230, wears his sword from a plain belt, a recurrence to the practice of a hundred years earlier,—an old-fashioned warrior.

Gilbert Marshall, Earl of Pembroke, died 1241, is the subject of No. 13. This figure is also preserved in the Temple Church, and is valuable as a *point de départ*. The belt is well suited, both in its metal harnessing, and width, for practical use; the sword is, in like manner, well shaped and suitable for the service to which it is about to be put, and, not least important, is the new method for attaching the belt to the scabbard by means of leather ties. Apparently the metal studs and the tab before spoken of, were found, the former to tear through, and the latter to tear out from the leather scabbard, for there is at present no sign of a metal mouth to the sheath, a detail that was, perhaps, not conspicuous by its absence from swords of a far earlier period. But, be this as it may,—and it will be borne in mind that there are no original examples for comparison,—these slight metal arrangements were soon discarded, and we find, as we have intimated, that the belt of Gilbert Marshall is fastened to the scabbard, by double thongs of leather, knotted in front, with the slack ends hanging free. These thongs or ties soon led to an improvement in the use of the material. The mediæval girdler seems to have quickly realized in the old adage that "there is nothing like leather," the means, in its practical manipulation, both for adding to the efficiency of the belt, and increasing the picturesqueness of the military costume of that stirring and warlike period. No. 14, from the long posthumous and excellent wooden figure of Robert, Duke of Normandy, at Gloucester, presents no new features, save that the unfortunate subject of it seems to have been deprived, among his many distresses, of a cingulum round his waist.

No. 15, Sir David de Esseby, from Castle Ashby, Northamptonshire, 1268, in polished Purbeck, gives us a new and important arrangement. Hitherto we have

seen the belt attached solely to the top of the scabbard, the result being that the sword constantly hung in a more or less vertical position, and vibrated inconveniently. This was found to be an evil both on foot and on horseback. The new system of fastening the entire end of the buckle strap to the scabbard, and the other, or long strap, a few inches down the scabbard, had many advantages. It brought the grip of the sword more within the compass of the right hand, and the weight of the weapon, by leverage, tended to tighten and steady the belt, while, on horseback, the hilt was pitched outwards, and the sword thrown more into a line parallel with the side of the body of the horse and its rider. But there was yet a difficulty. The tendency of the sword, thus hung from two points, not opposite each other, was to take a diagonal bearing, and throw its front edge out of plane. This was at once obviated by slitting the upper portion of the buckle end of the belt into a number of thongs of varying widths, lacing and tying these into the mouth of the scabbard, and carrying the remaining portion of the belt in a slanting direction, and free, across the scabbard, until it met on the scabbard the loop of the long portion of the belt. Arrived at this point, the slanting strap was split into two narrowing thongs; these were laced alternately into the sinister or back edge, never into the dexter, of the loop of the long portion of the belt, the ends were run out behind, brought forward to the front of the scabbard, and tied in a "sennit" knot. Thus the sword was steadied and righted, and this connection of the belt ends on the scabbard had the further advantage of hindering it from flying wildly about, and entangling in the belt when the sword was drawn from it, and the wearer on horseback and in action. That the system answered its purpose there can be no doubt, for it remained in constant use, of course with different, or modified details, until the middle of the first quarter of the fourteenth century, and it probably had other qualities connected with service in the field, which to us at the present day are not so apparent. The illustrations from 16 to 36 give a variety of examples. During the whole of this eventful period the sword belt was supported, as we suppose, by the cingulum, and it so

happens that the duration of this particular type of belt exactly covers the reign of the King of whom, in these friendly and peaceful days, it may perhaps be allowable to speak as "the Great Edward," so far north of the Tweed as in Edinburgh itself.

At this point it will be convenient to call attention to some of the examples to which allusion has just been made. The belts all differ slightly, as the details of every effigy do, and they are, no doubt, accurate representations of the individual fancies or peculiarities of the wearers in their arming items. No. 16, the earliest example of the new style, is the belt of a Ros, at Braunston, Northamptonshire, in Purbeck marble, who died in 1270. No. 17 is from the vigorous figure of a De Vere, at Hatfield Broad Oak, Essex, about 1275. No. 18 is well-known as from the earliest brass, Sir John Dabernoun 1277, at Stoke D'Abernon, Surrey. No. 19 is from the effigy of a Gosberton, at Gosberton, Lincolnshire, carved in admirable style, and of the same date; and No. 20 shows the system adopted by Sir Richard de Crupes, died 1278, in his effigy at Whittington, Gloucestershire. No. 22, also a Ros, the latest of the Temple effigies, is dated 1285 on the authority of Hewitt. This example is very puzzling, because it shows the fully developed metal locket of the scabbard, quite of the end of the next reign, and the free-flowing long surcote of about 1300; moreover, lions' faces are introduced on the belt much before such decorations came into general use. Such doubts do not arise concerning No. 23, part of a noble and death-like figure of a De Lisle, in Purbeck, at Stow-Nine-Churches, Northamptonshire, who died in 1287. He lies upon his sword, after the ancient fashion. The wide barred belt takes its proper place in the order of time and sequence of belts. No. 24, from a Purbeck effigy at Winchelsea, shows the knight's own peculiar little tie in the sword belt, and [illegible] upon the pommel,—"goddes hygh name thereon was grave,"—a very rare feature.

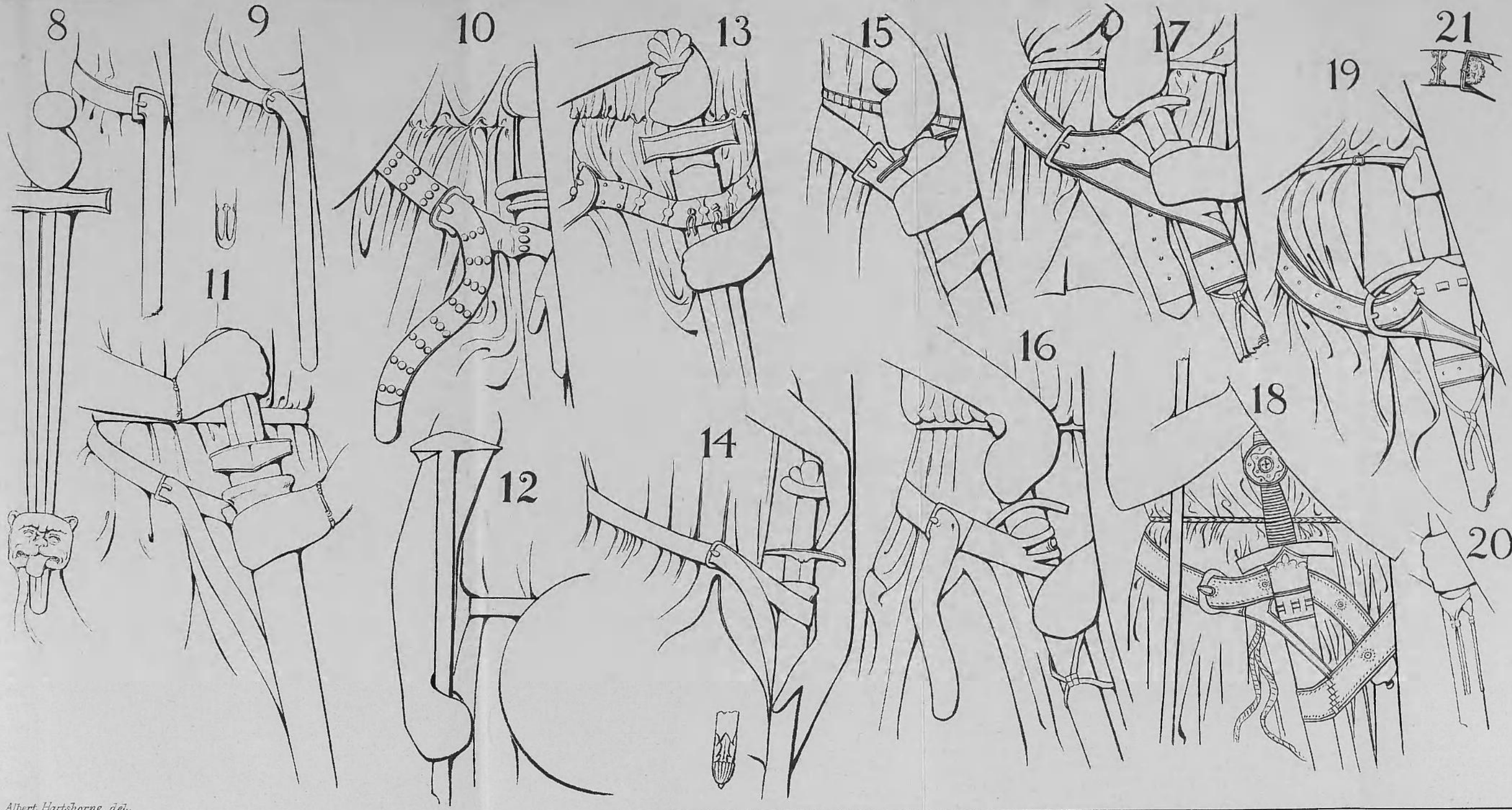
Nos. 25 and 26 have a melancholy interest for antiquaries. Both examples are from Beer Ferrers in Devonshire. The one is from a representation in glass of the founder of the church, Sir William Ferrers, and the other from a crossed-legged effigy lying upon a tomb imme-

diately below the window. While Mr. Charles Alfred Stothard was pursuing his labours for his masterly work on the Monumental Effigies of Great Britain, he was standing upon a ladder tracing this glass, when, suddenly, the step broke, and he was thrown to the ground; he struck his head against the effigy and was killed on the spot, May 28th 1821. His widow, who married the Rev. E. A. Bray, survived her first husband sixty-one years, and, dying in 1883, at the age of ninety-two, bequeathed his beautiful drawings to the British Museum.

No. 28, Robert de Bures, 1302, from his brass at Acton, Suffolk, shows very distinctly the peculiar arrangement of lacing that this man chose to have for his sword. No. 29, John de Weston, about 1300, one of two wooden effigies, at Weston-under-Lizard, Staffordshire, has a belt of much simplicity. He wears a purse, his badge of office as keeper of the jewels to the Princess Elizabeth, daughter of Edward I. No. 30, Robert de Keynes 1305, in banded mail, from his Purbeck marble effigy at Dodford, Northamptonshire, on a low tomb formed of five plain polished slabs of the same material, has the belt fastened to the scabbard, apparently in the old way. The surcote is laced at the side, and short and scanty in the skirts, indicating the cyclas, and the coming change.

No. 31, from the brass at Chartham, Kent, of Robert de Septvans, 1306, is another step forward. The short piece of the belt is laced and studded into the top of the scabbard, and the long one has a metal end with a loop and ring, fastened to a staple in the scabbard below. It is a capital transitional example. No. 33, the belt of Robert du Bois, 1311, from his effigy at Fersfield, Norfolk, is an early instance of the style in the new reign which we shall presently see in its full development. Nos. 32, 34, 35, and 36,—the sword-belts respectively from the effigies of an Oxenbridge at Winchelsea; John de Lyons, Warkworth, Northamptonshire, died 1312; a Goshall at Ash, Kent, and Gervase Alard at Winchelsea, died about 1312, give the laced fastenings in their more complicated forms and latest evolutions. In No. 36 the final tie is not made, the long thongs hanging free in a very unusual manner.

But fashions in sword belts, as in all other things, overlap and run both ways into each other. Some men, as



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we have seen, preferred the old, while those more travelled, or more fashionably-minded, brought in the new style; and we have, for this reason, in the earlier and in the later parts of the reign of Edward I., two very different types.

Nos. 21 and 27 are respectively from the effigies of Charles King of Naples, brother of St. Louis, died 1285, formerly in the church of the Jacobins at Paris, and of Philippe d'Artois, died 1289, from the church of the Dominicans. They are taken from the drawings in the Kerrich collection in the British Museum, made in 1773, and serve to show how much more advanced the arts were in France in this respect at the end of the thirteenth century.

It may not be supposed that the sword belts of which we have been speaking were mere dull objects of leather and brass, like those of the present day. Far from it; they were enriched with patterns in gold, silver, and colours, many sculptured and painted representations of which have been revealed to us in their minute and beautiful details by the patience and accuracy of Stothard. But, rich as were the belts of the thirteenth century, they were far surpassed by those of the fourteenth and fifteenth. Notices in accounts and inventories, as well as Illuminated MSS. and early pictures, before alluded to, show what tasteful and splendid objects both sword belts and lockets were. However, the subject of the gold, silver, and *cuir bouilli* work, the jewelry, the enamelling, the painting, silvering, and gilding of these knightly accessories, cannot be entered upon now, it is one that is incidental rather than essential to the matter at present in hand.

We have said that fashions in sword belts overlap. For instance, Robert de Septvans, No. 31, was ahead of his time in 1306, while Sir John de Lyons, No. 34, still clave, in 1312, to the old style from which we pass away, to enter upon a new order of things, and with a new King very different from the old one.

The slittered and looped ends of the belts now give place to metal ones, hooked, at first, opposite each other into a single metal locket near the mouth of the scabbard, and, a few years later, into lockets of which the left one is a few inches lower than the right. The loose surcote is yielding to the tighter cyclas; and the narrow cingulum, instead

of its old use for confining the surcote's folds, has for its sole object that of sustaining the sword belt proper. This system is clearly foreshadowed as early as 1311, in the arrangement shown in No. 33. The green and gold belts of John de Ifield, died 1317, from his effigy at Ifield, Sussex, No. 37, who wears the cyclas, give a capital example of the manner of carrying the sword in the middle of the reign of Edward II.

It may here be mentioned that the outer covering for the body had three developments. First, the ancient *Surcote*. This, in its origin, as we have seen in the early Temple figures, Nos. 1, 5, and 6, reached only to the knees; it subsequently came to such a length, at the end of the century, that men called upon suddenly to fight on foot got their legs entangled in the surcote's ample folds, and fell an easy prey to the enemy. The skirt was accordingly evenly reduced all round, but still the shorter drapery was found to be an inconvenience. A new and strange garment was therefore formed by cutting away the whole of the front of the surcote up to the middle of the thighs, slitting it up the sides, to the hips, taking it in at the body, and lacing it on the right side, as No. 50 shows, or, like some of the later surcotes, as No. 30, for instance, indicates. Thus was formed the *Cyclas* which appears to have been a purely English garment.

It did not long find favour; the useless hinder flapping part was an incumbrance, and not more than fifteen monumental effigies, between 1321 and 1346, represent it.

As early as 1340, the long hinder flap of the cyclas was cut off, it was fitted tightly to the body, the lower edges of the garment thus formed were quainted, or dagged, it was laced up at the side, and the *Jupon* made its appearance. These three stages are remarkable examples of the gradual growth of a garment, from long and loose to short and tight, within two hundred years.

But before the jupon came fully in a curious style arose, rather connected with the history of art than of armour and costume. This was the representation of knights and ladies with their bodies bent outwardly to the right or to the left. The posture in the early days of the modern revival, was taken to be a truly correct mediæval attitude, and it formerly found much favour with the glass painters of the

modern school. It is a singular thing that with this ungainly position is generally associated, as to the knights, another not very practical feature, namely that of wearing the sword right in front of the body, and from the old-fashioned leather looped belts, and this in the middle of the fourteenth century. It was a peculiarity that was popular, not only in England but also in the Low Counties; it had only a short run. No. 45, from the small figure of Ralph, Lord Stafford, in one of the shafts of the canopy of the beautiful brass of Sir Hugh Hastings, 1347, at Elsing, Norfolk, and No. 46, from the brass of Sir John de Wantyng, at Wimbish, Essex, died 1347, are examples of these vagaries.

To return to the main story when we left it at No. 37. It will be noticed that the sword pommel is filled with a lion's face. This was out of compliment to the bravery of the knights, at a time when they all, doubtless, thought that they were imbued with the noble attributes of the lion proper. Some of us are rather apt to think that the simple soldier of the present day, who calmly faces the deadliest weapons of precision, "i' the imminent deadly breach," in a mere coat of cloth, is a far greater hero than he of the ages of chivalry who went forth with his shining shield "in glittering arms and glory drest," against nothing more serious than spears, swords, and quarrels. No. 42, from the beautiful effigy of John of Eltham, in the Abbey, 1334, gives precisely the same arrangement of belts as No. 37.

The rise of the jupon has been spoken of. Its first appearance as a military garment is about 1340. The figure of a knight at Ash, Kent, No. 40, gives a good and early example; it will be seen that the paramount belt is still retained in position by the small waist strap. In this instance, and at this time, the misericorde or dagger first appears, slung or attached at the right side of the sword belt. It was, perhaps, adopted from the anelace of civil dress, for every frankelin carried his dagger at his girdle, and from this time forward we never lose sight of the misericorde as part of the proper and constant arming of a soldier.

Nos. 38 and 39 give the belts of Robert Earl of Clermont, son of St. Louis, 1317, and of Charles Earl of

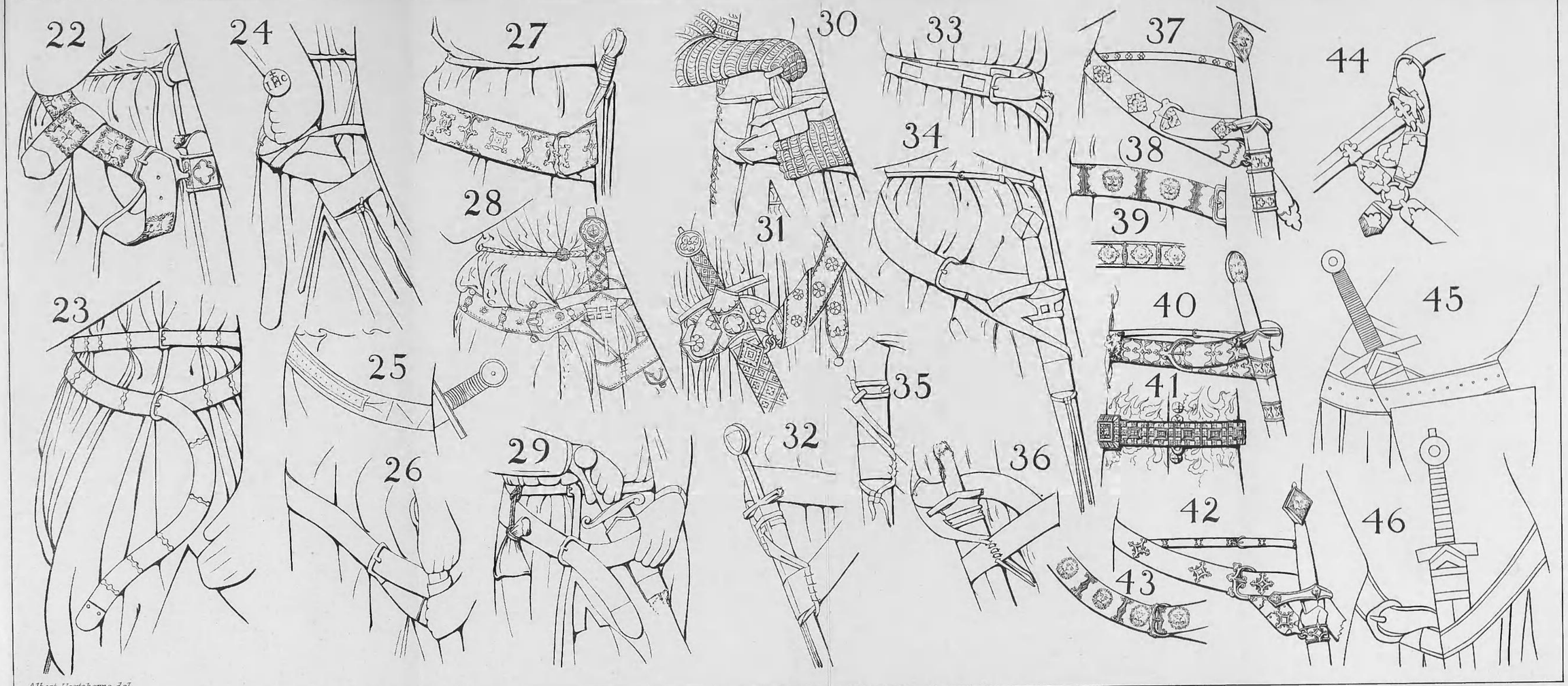
Valois, 1315, formerly in the Dominicans' Church at Paris; while No. 43 is that of Louis de Valois, 1329, in the Cordeliers,—all taken from the Kerrich collection in the British Museum from drawings made in 1773. They again illustrate, collaterally, the character of the belts in France. No. 44 shows the particular odd fancy and complicated sword belt of Maurice, Lord Berkeley, who died in 1326, from his effigy at Bristol.

We are now on the eve of another change,—the introduction of the baudric. This also seems to have originated with the civilians. A fine and early civil example is that worn by the youth William of Hatfield, No. 41, in his effigy at York. He died in 1335, and is represented wearing his baudric over a delicately embroidered jupon, and fastened by a large stud on the left side; there is a loop in front for the anelace. It is rather a puzzle to determine how these horizontal baudrics were kept in position; neither effigy, brass, or illumination indicates this, and we are therefore, again, as in the case of the early sword belts, left to conjecture. Perhaps the baudrics were sustained by loops fastened to buttons or hooks in the jupon, with the view of rapidly putting on or taking off, or possibly sewn directly on to this garment.

In wood-craft the baudric was the special band for suspending the hunting horn from the neck, and the points or "tyndes" of a hart's horn were reckoned in the Middle Ages so soon as a baudric, or a lyam or leash, could be hung on them.

We have already alluded to the trouble of having no original examples of sword belts to refer to, but there is one existing specimen of the military baudric, unfortunately not in this country, but in Munich. It consists of a leather belt with ornaments of gilt and engraved brass, having staples at their backs which pass through holes in the belt, and are secured by thongs.

At this stage it may be recorded that in the Roach Smith collection in the British Museum are a number of leather straps, &c, all found in London, and which appear, for the most part, to be portions of mediæval horse harness, not lost in battle,—for London was not a battle field, but thrown away as useless fragments. Some portions may, perhaps, be parts of belts, but not necessarily military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Albert Hartshorne, del.

belts, perhaps chest-bands of horses. Many pieces, including some large flat ones, are delicately treated in impressed work; these latter were probably parts of saddle flaps, or the decorations of the faces of the high cantles and cruppers, such as may be seen in the equestrian marble statue of Bernabo Viscounti, died 1399, now preserved in the Brera at Milan. These objects recall the work on early deed cases, pix, chalice, and cup cases of leather. Certain of the straps are quite narrow, and may be parts of the ceintures of ladies. Although there is nothing in the collection that approaches to the military belt proper, or that seems to have had anything to do with the sword, these remains have, of course, great interest and value as showing the treatment of leather trappings in the Middle Ages.

But the baudric, although in being in 1335, was slow in becoming generally adopted by military men. That martial spirit, Sir Roger de Kerdeston, who died in 1337, wears one in his interesting effigy at Reepham, Norfolk, No. 47. This example sustains a sword, upon whose pommel the vigilant wearer rests his steel-clad hand, and a misericorde of great elegance. The baudric would have been fastened at the circular stud in front, although there is a long pendent portion that might be taken for a loose end that has passed through a buckle. There is no indication of the means of retaining this baudric in position. Evidently it was not a popular change for the earlier arrangement well held its ground until the middle of the century. No. 48, a Gifford, from his effigy at Leckhampton, Gloucestershire, 1327, is a fine and fully developed example of the old style, and the figure has additional interest from the chains or mamelières from the breast to the sword-hilt and scabbard. No. 49, is the modest strap of Hugh Despencer, son of Hugh Despencer "the younger," died 1350, who sleeps beneath his sumptuous canopy under the stately vaults of Tewkesbury.

No. 50, from the effigy of Sir John de Lyons, Warkworth, Northamptonshire, living 1346, is the latest example of the cyclas, and marks the culminating point in the girdler's art. In allusion to the name and arms of Lyons, if not to his military virtues, we have lions' faces wherever they could with propriety be introduced. The whole monu-

ment is full of rich details, freely and artistically disposed, and the lions loll out long tongues, unlike French lions, and the lions of commerce. The lacing of the cyclas is finished with the ancient "sennit" knot, and the same detail appears upon the ornate misericorde; it is probably the finest effigy and military belt of the period in England.

No. 51, from the effigy of Sir Humphrey Littlebury, at Holbeach, Lincolnshire, 1360, is a good instance of the hesitancy and uncertainty that there was at this time as to the best manner of suspending the sword. There were then no harassing cast iron "dress regulations" issuing from a mediæval War Office; it was the period of individual prowess, and the knights had a free hand in the fashion of their military equipments, and were fully alive to the necessity of their harness and weapons being of the most convenient and practical kind that could be obtained. This example shows how awkwardly the horizontal baudric worked in the buckling, although a certain length was specially made less rigid for the purpose. So unpractical was it that soldiers preferred to increase the strength of the old disused subsidiary sustaining belt, and hang the sword from that alone, the baudric remaining as a mere ornamental girdle for supporting the misericorde.

Yet there was no marked retrogression and some very satisfactory means seem shortly to have been devised for bringing the ends of the baudric together in a simpler fashion. No. 52, from the effigy of an Arden, at Aston near Birmingham, about 1365, is a transition case representing a buckling leather belt, with metal collets filled with blue decoration, like the real example at Munich. In the actual effigy, much of this blue glass has been carried off by appreciative Black Country connaisseurs. No. 53, the baudric of an Orlingbury, at Orlingbury, Northamptonshire, about 1375,—exactly such as the Black Prince wore at the scenes of his valour,—shows the matter settled; all attempts at buckles and knots have been given up, and the baudric now does the work of sustaining both sword and misericorde, and so well that it remained the only sword belt through the reigns of Richard II. and Henry IV., and, indeed, for about 15 years of the fifteenth century. That some very good method had been conceived for fastening the baudric firmly at the widest part of the hips is further

shown by No. 54, Lord Montacute, at Salisbury, 1389, who twists the small belt, formerly so indispensable, round his scabbard, having no further use for it. At first the sword was hung from the baudric from two lockets, with one link, and a short chain respectively, as in the fine example on the effigy of Sir John Swinford, at Spratton, Northamptonshire, died 1371; in later times it was hooked up close from a single fastening.

No. 55, from the brass of Sir William Bagot, 1407, at Baginton, Warwickshire, indicates a shrinking of the baudric, and foreshadows the approaching change.

On the death of Henry IV. in 1413, a great alteration took place in armour, and again we enter upon a new stage of enquiry. The old-fashioned jupon, the lineal descendant of the ancient surcote, is almost clean gone, the baudric gradually vanishes, and gone is the mail camail and skirt, the last relics of the hauberk and hood of early days; the man is now "lock'd up in steel" and the change has been complete and remarkable.

Already in 1400 we have instances of the baudric being used for carrying the misericorde only, and a narrow transverse belt over the tassets introduced for the sword. The effigy of Ralph Greene, Lowick, Northamptonshire, died 1419, No. 57, is a good example of the transition, and is the more interesting because the Contract for the monument exists. It is stipulated that the figure shall be "counterfait à un Esquier en Armes en toutz pointz"; this gives us, therefore, the particular sword belts at a precise date. The Contract is set forth from the Drayton evidences, in that rarest of printed books "Halstead's Genealogies," and has been reprinted and commented on by Professor Willis in his "Architectural Nomenclature of the Middle Ages." As usual, the old and the new fashions over-lapped each other for a few years; in the new style, as in the old, we have no visible means for retaining the belt in position.

Throughout the whole story of the sword belt it may be taken for granted that its fashion was influenced, as was that of the armour, by the military events of the time. So great a tactician as Henry V., for instance, the greatest soldier of his age, is not likely to have ignored these particulars. This tempting field of study may not

be entered upon now. No 56, from the brass of Sir Simon de Felbrig, at Felbrigg, Norfolk, in his younger days standard-bearer to Richard II., laid down by him in 1416 when his first wife died, is an excellent example of the belt worn over the taces or tassets; it was in use in this form until the middle of the century, as we know from the numberless brasses which for a time took the place of effigies as monumental memorials. During the course of this belt the tuilles were gradually introduced. No. 58, Sir Thomas Strange, Constable of Ireland, from his brass at Wellesbourne, Warwickshire, died 1426, and No. 59, Sir Thomas Chaucer, son of the Poet, died 1434, from his brass at Ewelme, Oxfordshire, carry us forward chronologically. No. 60, from the effigy of a knight with the stirring name of Cressy, at Dodford, Northamptonshire, who fought under the Duke of Bedford in France, as captain of a band of fifty-four horse and foot lancers, and a hundred and forty-seven archers, and died in Lorraine in 1444, takes us so far onwards; and No. 61, a Delamare effigy about 1455, at Nunney, Somerset, gives us the very rare feature of the belt worn over the tabard, a military garment not seen earlier than the reign of Henry VI., and not shown in monuments before the end of the century. The common practice was to wear the tabard over the belt, the sword and dagger appearing through the side openings. No. (b) indicates a knotted cord and key, the mysterious Delamare badge, from the verge of the Nunney tomb. No. 64, from the effigy of an Erdington, at Aston near Birmingham, is a further development, in which the sword belt reached its narrowest form. This strap is associated with the effigies of a very uncommon kind, in which the armour is beautifully expressed, and the wearers exhibit the collar of Suns and Roses, with the pendent badges of the rival houses,—the white lion of March, the black bull of Clare, and the white boar of Richard III.

Immediately after the middle of the century an entirely new feature was introduced. The large and ponderous sword was now deliberately hung in front of the body. Further novelties also seen are the pierced pommel and the divided belt, stopped by a stud at the bifurcation. No. 62, from the brass of John Ansty, the Knight of

Quy, Cambridgeshire, 1465, exhibits these features. No. 63, from the brass of Simon Norwich, Brampton-by-Dingley, Northamptonshire, is an early example of the fluted pommel, and the fringed grip. No. 65, from the fine brass of Sir Thomas Peyton, 1484, and his two well-dressed wives with their butterfly head-dresses, at Iselham, Cambridgeshire; No. 66, Roger Salisbury, 1491, from his brass at Horton, and No. 67, Henry Mitchel, 1510 from Flore, Northamptonshire,—these two last, with demi "wrythen" grips to their swords,—further illustrate these strange fashions and take us out of the century.

In 1534, as we judge from the brass of William Asshevy, Harefield, Middlesex, No. 68, the sword has, in a manner, regained its old position, but it has passed, together with the misericorde, behind, and almost out of sight. No. 69 is the belt of William, Lord Parr of Horton, 1546, from his effigy at Horton, Northamptonshire. He was uncle of Queen Katherine, and spent an eventful military life, serving the King's Grace in Spain, France, and Scotland; he conducted himself "right dangerfully," and accompanied his master to the Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1520. This is a good instance of the sword belts of the reign of Henry VIII. In an odd way Lord Parr's buckle is left-handed, and the dagger has two little knives outside the sheath, or, possibly, a knife and fork, indicative of the rude appliances of camp life. Sir Humphrey Bradbourne, 1581, exhibits, in his effigy at Ashbourne, three implements in the same position.

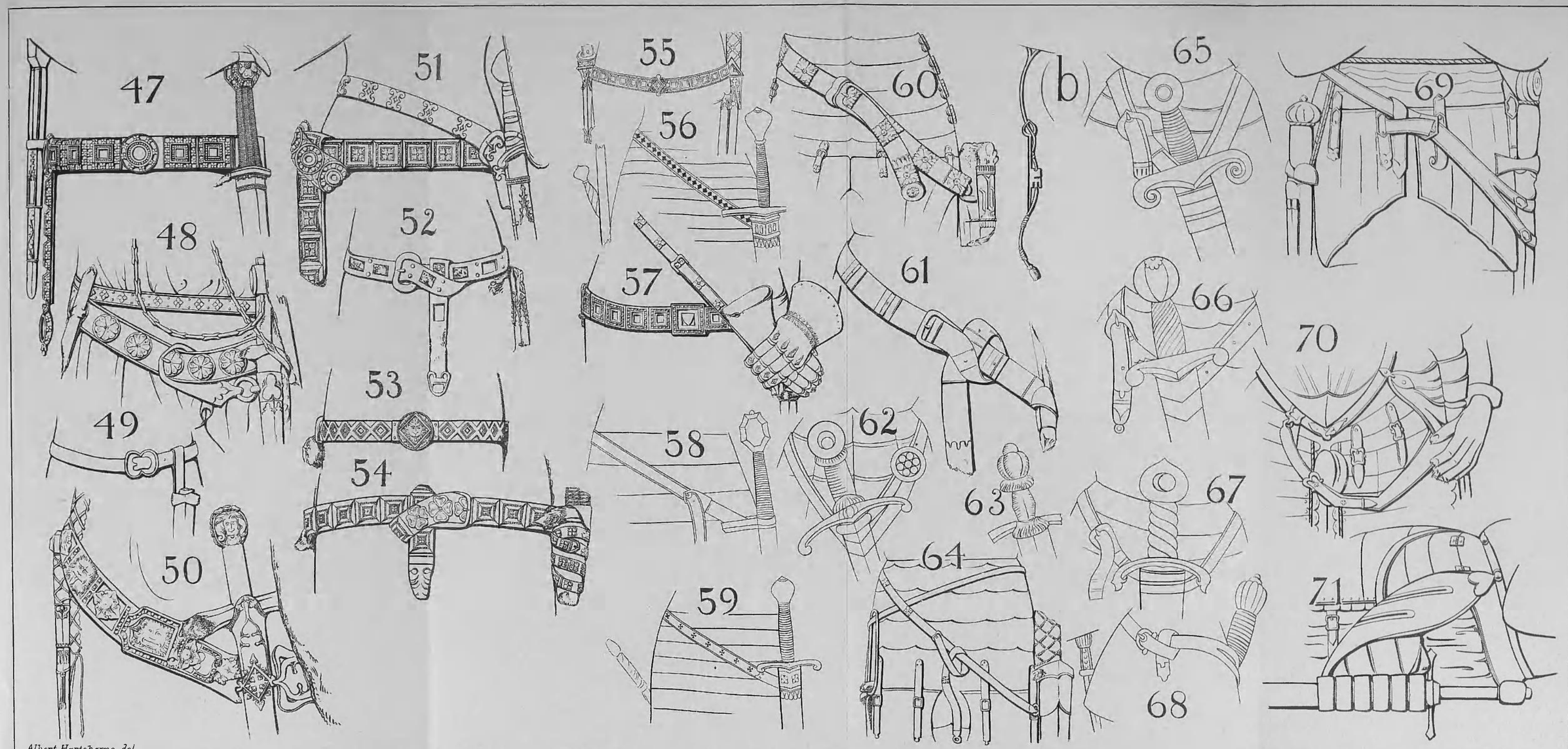
No. 70. shows the sword belt of that distinguished man Sir William Fitz William, 1599, from his effigy at Marholm, Northamptonshire. He was for thirty years Commander-in-Chief in Ireland, and Constable of Fotheringhay on a sad and memorable occasion. Here, again, we get an entire change, and a good type of the attributes of a working sword of the teeming times of Elizabeth, and which continued in use until the end of the reign of "our cousin of Scotland." In this example a tight belt encircling the waist has a slack strap attached to it in front. From another point is hooked a short, wide, and multiform suspending band. This is the notable item known as the *hangers*, and its object was to balance the

sword on the hip in an exact horizontal position; the lax strap, the lower one on the scabbard, permitted this feat to be satisfactorily accomplished. No. 71, the harness of another soldier of Elizabeth,—William Lord Russell, 1613, from his effigy at Thornhaugh, Northamptonshire, further exemplifies the working of this fashion. Such were the belts of the captains who went with the Earl of Leicester to the Low Countries in 1585, and fought on the field of Zutphen. The tall and athletic figure of Russell, and the romantic achievement of his arms struck consternation into the Spaniards, and when he soothed the last hours of Sir Philip Sydney that famous spirit bequeathed to him "his best gilt armour" as a mark of his regard.

With this knightly episode the story of the sword belts may well come to an end, for we have left the Middle Ages far behind.

The belts of the seventeenth century are illustrated with such accuracy of detail, and beauty of colour, in the pictures of the Flemish and Dutch Schools,—in the masterpieces by Rubens, Rembrandt, Van der Helst, Franz Hals, Flinck, and a multitude of other gifted men, that to pursue the subject any further on the present occasion would be alike inexpedient and tedious.

Moreover, these remarks have already run to too great a length, and the fear is that they may be deemed, like the girdle hidden and found by Euphrates, "marred" and "profitable for nothing."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