

IMPRESSION TAKEN FROM A
LEAD CAST OF THE COMPLETE
EYAM HORN-BOOK.



EYAM HORN-BOOK MATRIX.

Derbyshire and other Horn-books.

By WILLIAM BEMROSE, F.S.A.

THE EYAM STONE MATRIX FOR HORN-BOOKS.



HIS rare and interesting Matrix for casting lead Horn-books belongs to Mr. Bowles, who has kindly given the information relating to its discovery.

The Matrix was discovered on his property a short time ago by Robert Fox, the tenant of a farm called Shepherd's Flat, which is in the township of Foolow, and about a mile from Eyam. It is of grit-stone, such as abounds in the wall-fences of the district, and measures $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches by $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

The Matrix was found whilst digging near some farm buildings on the site of the old house at Shepherd's Flat. This farm formed part of the estate of the Staffords of Eyam, and passed into the possession of the Bradshawes, to which family it belonged in the year 1665, when the village of Eyam was practically decimated by the Plague.

At that time it was in the occupation of a man named Morten, the harrowing details of whose sufferings during the time of the Plague are graphically told by Wm. Wood in his *History of Eyam*, page 99. Morten survived, but, bereft of wife and child, whom, as was often the case, he was forced to bury close by the house in which he lived at Shepherd's Flat. He was thus left a solitary man, with four cows and a greyhound as his only companions.

This Derbyshire grit-stone was very intractable for such a purpose, and the maker deserves great credit for obtaining such

good results. The Eyam Matrix has, unfortunately, at some period received an injury which has somewhat defaced several letters. Other stone matrices that are known were cut in finer-grained stone, such as honestone or lithographic stone, but the latter was only introduced into England in 1796, when Senefelder discovered the art of lithography. It is thought by some authorities who have examined the matrix that it is of the seventeenth century, or possibly somewhat earlier. It will be noticed that the alphabet is on one side, and the matrix forming the handle is upon the other side. The handle in this case was no doubt soldered in position by an after process. Modern stereotyping has enabled it to be cast complete and in one piece.

At present only three or four stone matrices are recorded, although there is little doubt the lead Horn-book was amongst the earliest to impart the alphabet to the young. Mr. Tuer, the greatest authority on this subject, says:—"Inscribed leaden tablets have been very largely used. In recent years one with a Latin inscription was dug up at Bath, which dates back to the Roman occupation. Another rescued from a Dalmatian grave has inscribed in cursive writing of the sixth century a charm in Latin against evil spirits. Recording or writing on soft plates of lead, a metal which readily lends itself to incising with a point, is mentioned by Pliny, and dates back to very early times. It is natural to suppose that a material so easily manipulated should have been used for horn-books."

On 27th November, 1851,¹ Sir George Musgrave, F.S.A., exhibited before the Society of Antiquaries by the hands of Captain W. H. Smythe, V.P. and Director, a leathern case with a brass clasp, in which were two engraved pieces of honestone, with evident marks of having been used in casting metal horn-books for children. They are figured in cut 41 in Tuer, and are thus described in a letter dated Eden Hall, 18th November, 1851:—

¹ *Vide Archaeologia*, vol. i., 34.

“Seven years ago a labourer digging among the ruined walls of Hartley Castle, the habitation of my family from Edward the Second’s time till 1700, when it was partly pulled down, found a cannon ball: and a few days afterwards, at the same place, he discovered a mouldering leathern case, with a brass clasp, in which were engraved pieces of honestone, which I now forward for your inspection. They look to me like moulds for casting leaden Horn-books for little children, with rude figures of birds and crosses on the other side,” much like Pilgrims’ signs.

Mr. J. H. Macmichael mentions the discovery of the Hartley Castle stone matrix, on the reverse of which are emblems which seem to be the missing-link connecting the Horn-book with the runic or Danish Calendar, in respect of the devices apparent on the moulds, which are so strikingly similar to those on the runic or clog almanack that their origin and import cannot be doubted. First appears the cock emblem of St. Peter; next in order is the heart of the Virgin Mary, a symbol which in the almanack published in Camden’s *Britannia* (Gough) is placed against each of the six days appropriated to her calendar feasts. Thirdly, the square device is in all probability that of St. Gregory, the patron saint of children; whilst the triple formation at the end of another square device perhaps represents the three Passion nails. Finally, *i.e.*, in the absence of any knowledge as to what the linear formation and roundels at the top and base of the mould may signify, the circular device, no doubt, stands for the wheel of St. Catherine, a symbol of the patroness of learning which is also seen on the clog almanack.” From a model of this stone matrix to be seen at the Society of Antiquaries the alphabet was similar in size to the Eyam matrix—but probably of an earlier date. The Pilgrim emblems were each cast separately, as indicated by the runners for the metal, and possibly given to, and worn by the children.

The word *Horn-book* in later times was used whether any *horn* was used or not, and came to mean an alphabetical tablet of any kind; indeed, child’s primers, books, and cards were called

Horn-books for some time after the Horn-book had nearly died out. Mr. Tuer states "that although many millions of Horn-books were produced, yet not more than one hundred and fifty are now in existence." Possibly, as more examples have come to light since the publication of Mr. Tuer's valuable work, this number might be somewhat increased. It is computed that at least thirty different trades contributed to the manufacture of a single Horn-book, which sold for 1½d.

It is an extraordinary fact that if a number of persons were asked to-day what the word *Horn-book* meant, but few could answer correctly. Yet up to the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century they were in use, and previous to that the common text-book in almost every household for centuries. We ought, therefore, to look upon the Horn-book almost with reverence. Its slab of oak, with its little strip of printed paper, which commenced with the ✚, the emblem of Christianity, the piece of transparent horn to protect it in its great mission of education, the Lord's Prayer, and the *Amen* at the end, a prayer for its success. What do millions of people owe to this child's primer? The foundation of all the knowledge they gathered in later life. Probably Milton and Shakespeare, and other great intellects for centuries used the Horn-book as the first stepping-stone to their future greatness.

The whole series of Horn-books point to the fact that religious instruction was interwoven with the secular instruction from the earliest times.

" Neatly secured from being soiled or torn,
 Beneath a pane of thin translucent horn
 A Book (to please us at a tender age,
 'Tis called a book, though not a single page)
 Presents the Prayer the Saviour deigned to teach,
 Which children use, and parsons, when they preach."

Cowper.

Speaking of the card Horn-book, Hone says, in one of the notes for his projected tract: "There was also a remarkable alteration at the beginning of the printed page; the cross ✚ which had given the name of the Christ-Cross-Row to the alphabet was omitted, and the letter X inserted in its place.

This substitution must have sorely perplexed many an aged school dame, who having taught that † was *cris-cross*, found an unhorned Horn-book with X, which she could make nothing of but 'eks.' The cross was placed before the alphabet in Catholic times, when the lips of infancy were required to name the 'Christ's Cross' whilst its fingers were forming the sign upon the bosom. After the Reformation the Cross continued to be printed before the alphabet, and children were still required to name the 'Christ's Cross,' but were not taught to sign themselves. The act of devotion had ceased and become forgotten, and the corrupt pronunciation *Cris-Cross* soon rendered the cross unmeaning. The † was naturally transformed to X. Children who learned the Horn-book were taught to know the *criss-cross*, but not to know that it signified Christ's Cross."

"Little girls with thread upon their fingers play at what they call *scratch cradle*, and while they alternately lengthen and shorten the threads say '*cris-cross, cris-cross.*' The pastime is a conjunction of two different movements which engaged children of bygone centuries. In one of these recreations threads were arranged upon the extended fingers into the form of a manger, which anciently was called a *cratch*, and this form of the threads purported to represent the manger or cradle wherein the Infant Saviour was laid by His Virgin Mother. The other amusement was the adjusting of the threads upon the fingers in the form of Christ's Cross. It is doubtful whether any female who reads this and remembers to have played at *scratch cradle* and said '*cris-cross*' either intended to form or knew that her words implied *cratch cradle* of Jesus and Christ's Cross."

THE BATEMAN HORN-BOOK.

The first portion of the Bateman heirlooms was sold by order of the Court of Chancery, by Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge, on the 14th April, 1893. Much curiosity was shown, and many guesses were hazarded as to what amount the rare Horn-book, described by a London daily paper as being stamped with the

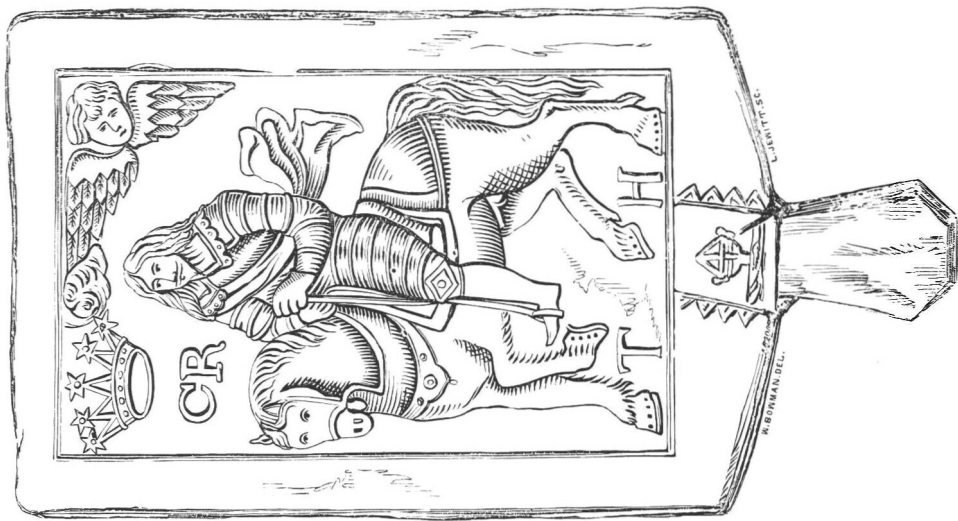
portrait of a "stout gentleman on a stumpy horse," would realize. Many well-known collectors attended the sale, and it was to the boldest rather than the richest to whom it fell. The bidding for the lot No. 118 in the catalogue began at ten pounds, reaching in a couple of minutes sixty-five pounds, for which sum it was knocked down to Mr. Durlacher, who afterwards sold it to Dr. Figdor, a private collector, of Vienna. Thus this interesting Derbyshire specimen was lost to Derbyshire and to England.

Mr. Bateman thus described in his own catalogue this Horn-book:—

"Horn-book formerly used in teaching the elementary parts of education, found 10th March, 1828, in the wall of an old house at Middleton; each side is represented of the full size by the accompanying plates. This exceedingly rare specimen consists of a thin board of oak with a short handle, covered at the back with leather, stamped with an equestrian portrait of Charles I., above him a celestial crown and cherub (and the letters C.R.), indicating a period shortly after the King's execution in 1649. At the front is a paper, with the alphabet, Lord's Prayer, etc., printed in black letter type, which is protected by a piece of transparent horn secured by tacks, whence the name of Horn-book. When first discovered a narrow strip of thin brass surrounded the edge of the horn." This Horn-book is backed by leather, on which has been embossed, in a silver foil, the equestrian Portrait of King Charles I. The letters T. H. on the block are, by some writers, said to be those of Sir Thos. Herbert, a devoted servant to His Majesty. Others say they are probably the initials of the engraver. The type used in the Bateman book appears to have been "set up" from two or three founts mixed in the "case," as various letters do not match when compared one with the other. The Bateman example was no doubt hidden in the wall and then forgotten, at the time of persecution that followed the King's death, when, being found in possession of such a badge of "Royalist" might have led the holder into serious consequences.

A b e d e f g h i k l m n o p q
 r s t u v w x y z . ã ã ã ã ã
A B C D E F G H I K L M N O
 P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
 a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q
 r s t u v w x y z . ã ã ã ã ã
In the name of the father and of
 the Son of the holy Ghost, Amen
Our father which art in Hea-
 ven, hallo wed be thy Name
 Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be
 done in Earth as it is in Hea-
 ven Give us this day our daily bread
 And forgive us our trespasses as
 we forgive them that trespass against
 us and lead us not into tempta-
 tion But deliver us from evil
 Amen.

L. JEMITT. S.
 R. BIRMAN DEL.



L. CHARLES S.
 R. BIRMAN DEL.

It is a singular circumstance that the two examples we have been considering were found in North Derbyshire, where at that time there was but a sparse population. The Eyam example, like the one now at Eden Hall, was found in a mining district, where lead would be at hand for casting the leaden books.

It is well to notice the curious fact that perhaps the two most interesting Horn-books belong to Derbyshire—the *Royal Martyr*, or Bateman Horn-book,¹ and Mr. Bowles' Eyam stone Matrix, one of the three or four in existence. The former, on account of the great price it fetched (£65), and its association with the troublous times of the "Martyr King."

Another interesting circumstance arises from the fact that two Battledore Horn-books, a cheaper edition printed on strong cardboard, were sold at the Bateman sale. One was "printed and sold by G. Nall, Bakewell"; the other "published by Thos. Richardson, Derby." The first is interesting as tending to show that with printers, in large and small towns, the Battledore was at one time an article of regular production.

Among present possessors in Derbyshire of Horn-books is Sir H. H. Bemrose, who owns the original of fig. 141 in Tuer's book—this has a leather back, an equestrian figure of Charles I. similar to the Bateman book; and another with plain slab of oak.

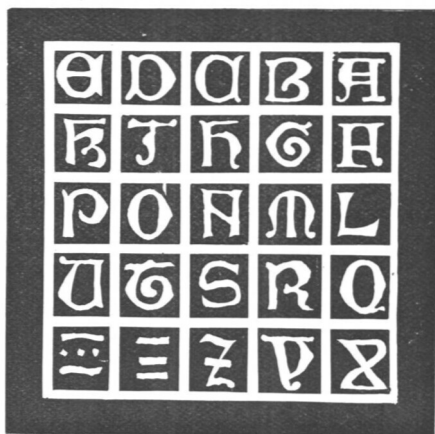
The writer also possesses two with oak backs; the latten strips (brass) and eight rose-head tacks are in perfect condition on one, the other one has the horn torn and a small piece missing.

Thos. Tickell, who wrote in 1728, is amusing on the subject:—

"Hail, ancient book, most venerable code,
Learning's first cradle, and its last abode!
The huge unnumber'd volumes which we see,
By lazy plagiaries are stol'n from thee;
Yet future times to thy sufficient store
Shall ne'er presume to add one letter more."

¹ I am indebted to the courtesy of the "Leadenhall Press Limited" for the loan of the Bateman block.

The following instances of Horn-books are instructive as well as interesting:—



Derbyshire Tile Horn Book.
Found at Dale Abbey by Derby.
Sixteenth Century.

DALE ABBEY TILE HORN-BOOK.

This Horn-book is an interesting and unusual type, and was found at Dale Abbey, a Premonstratensian House, near Derby, founded at the end of the twelfth century. The tile measures 5 inches by 5 inches, and was made of a red clay. The matrix which bore the letters and squares was pressed into the red clay tile, and then a light coloured clay was spread over the tile, and when partially dry the excess was scraped off, until the red ground was reached, when the light coloured clay had filled in the letters and lines, as shown in the block. The tile was then passed through the kiln. The maker of the Matrix or mould omitted to reverse the letters, so that they read from right to left instead of left to right. The letters are of Lombardic character, and well illustrate, in a remarkable manner, the earnest desire of the old monks who adopted this method of imparting the knowledge of the

alphabet as foundations to future learning, thus fulfilling the text: "And the Lord answered me and said, Write the vision and make it plain upon tables, *that he may run that readeth it.*"—*Habakkuk* ii. 2.

NEEDLEWORK HORN-BOOKS.

Another prolific source from which Horn-books proceeded was needlework, produced by the ladies of the past centuries. The modern fashion of collecting old needlework pictures, samplers, maps, etc., has brought to light many interesting and curious examples of this art. A sampler is illustrated, worked in silks of many colours, dated 1664 (Charles II.) and signed M. S. It contains some marvellous stitches, impossible to describe by pen. At the foot occurs the alphabet, initials, and date. It cannot for certain be claimed as a Derbyshire specimen, but from the source it was obtained it is very probable. Another example is a map of England and Wales most beautifully worked by Miss Anna Romana Wright, of Derby. The names of each county are wonderfully distinct. This map was worked with a treble object, to teach needlework, geography, and spelling; and on examining the map the conclusion come to is that the lesson could never be forgotten.

The small illustration is of a needlework Horn-book, worked by Hannah and Anne Wright, the daughters of Dr. Richard Wright, M.D., J.P., who at one time lived at Green Hill, Derby. The date is 1793. Miss Anne would then be sixteen years old. In 1821 she married James Holworthy, artist, and they built and lived at Brookfield Hall, Hathersage.

GINGER-BREAD HORN-BOOK.

The ginger-bread Horn-book here shown is from a block kindly lent by the Leadenhall Press Co. The date on the ginger-bread is 1778, but ginger-bread Horn-books were in vogue at a very early date, possibly as early as the fourteenth

century, and preceded the printed books, and were almost universal, and naturally became very popular with children.

Hone says: "Among my recollections of childish pleasures, I have a vivid remembrance of an alphabet called the Horn-book, price one farthing, published by the ginger-bread bakers in town and country. There was a superior edition with a wider margin, handsomely gilt, price one halfpenny." Hence the saying, "Taking the gilt off the ginger-bread." Many of us to-day can call to mind these ginger-bread books; they are still made by confectioners in Kensington, London, and used to be commonly exposed for sale at our country fairs up to recent times, and possibly are now in some remote villages.

Prior mentions this mode of teaching thus: "The method of tuition adopted by Professors of Education in the employment of this edition was to promise the pupil for every letter guessed the letter itself; and thus the scholar was doubly able to gratify his taste for learning."

"To Master John, the English maid
A Horn-book gives of ginger-bread;
And that the child may learn the better
As he can name he eats the letter."

"The bakers to increase their trade
Made alphabets of ginger-bread,
That folks might swallow what they read;
All the letters were digested
Hateful ignorance detested."

IVORY HORN-BOOKS.

Ivory Horn-books were in use during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and being more expensive were used by the well-to-do. The fine ivory book here shown, quarter the size of the original, $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches by $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches, was not shown in Tuer's work, except by two fragments, where Tuer remarks: "There is room for ingenuity in deciphering the matter." Through the kindness of Mr. R. Drane, of Cardiff, we are enabled to decipher the lettering, and it is of an interesting nature.



GINGER-BREAD HORN-BOOK.



The capital letters of the alphabet occupy one side ; on the other occurs the following, being special words that were considered desirable for the child to learn, being such as would be required in a nobleman's family. Thus:—And. Lord. Lady. Mr. Mrs. Miss. To-day. To-morrow. Yesterday. Read. Very well. Bateman. Fire. Dogs. Chaise. Walk. Ride. Glass. Rain. Dry. The word Bateman is probably the surname of a nurse or other servant. Glass, Rain, Dry, probably refer to the old wording of the barometer.

The Horn-book opens up an interesting field for comment

And.
 Lord. Lady. M^r. M^{rs}.
 Mifs. Today. Tomorrow.
 Yesterday. Read.
 Very well. Bateman.
 Fire. Dogs. Chaise. Walk.
 Ride. Glafs. Rain. Dry.

and illustration. Our endeavour has mainly been to put on record the Derbyshire specimens, which prove to be of more than local interest. The scarcity of examples to-day is accounted for by the fact that whatever is in very common use, and becomes superseded, are thought so little of, and consequently are destroyed and thrown away because of their abundance.

As a FINIS I venture to quote from an old card Horn-book, thus :—

“ Those that will not learn their A B C
 Will Blockheads all their lifetime be.”

“ An altered and curtailed prophecy, pointed, with the wood-cut of an ass.”