

# **Armor in England**

From the earliest times to the reign of James the First  
and

## **Foreign Armor in England**

By  
J. Starkie Gardner



# **Vol. 1 Armor in England**

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James the First

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# **Vol. 2 Foreign Armor in England**

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By  
J. Starkie Gardner

1897

With 89 illustrations

## **Imprint**

Copyright: © 2018 Carsten Rau

Address of the author and publisher:

Carsten Rau

Treskowallee 36

10318 Berlin

Germany

Barbarus Books Berlin

[kontakt@barbarusbooks.de](mailto:kontakt@barbarusbooks.de)

[www.barbarusbooks.de](http://www.barbarusbooks.de)

ISBN: 9781790716258

**1st edition 2019**

Reprint form 1897

Printed in USA.

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**PART I**  
**ARMOR MADE IN ENGLAND**  
**OR FOR ENGLISH MEN**



**Plate I.** — Full suit of armor of Henry, Prince of Wales, in the guard-chamber at Windsor Castle. Attributed to William Pickering, master armorer.

# ARMOUR IN ENGLAND

## I

### The Britons — An Early Age of Plate-Armor

It is the nature of islands to exhibit some peculiarities in their fauna and flora, and this insularity is no less pronounced in the manners and customs of the human beings inhabiting them. Thus, even the stone implements of Britain of remote prehistoric days can readily be distinguished by the expert; and we have the authority of Sir John Evans for regarding our types of bronze Celts and weapons as both peculiar and indigenous. On first taking a place in history several strange and extra-European customs were noticed in these isles by Caesar, such as the use of chariots in war, and dyeing the skin blue with woad: British nations were, moreover, frequently ruled by queens, and some practiced the rare and difficult, and very far from barbaric, art of enameling on bronze.

Modern opinion is at present opposed to the theory that the culture and civilization of Western Europe originated exclusively in the East, and is inclined to regard our primitive arts and crafts as indigenous. That this must in a large measure be true appears sufficiently established; but the large and excellently-made bronze bucklers with concentric rings of bosses or studs, called the clypeus, the singular art of enameling, the use of studs of coral for embellishing weapons and trinkets, the chariots of war and the government by women, all so remote from savagery, and so intimately connected with Eastern civilization, compel the belief that these isles did actually at some distant time possess a privileged and intimate communication with the East. The old and rooted tradition of a direct traffic in tin between Britain and Phoenicia cannot yet in fact be safely abandoned.

These arts and practices, however, only fall within the scope of our subject so far as they were applied to arms and weapons. One of these, very rarely used for the embellishment of arms in later times, is that of enameling, a process unknown to the Romans. Philostratus,

who wrote in the third century, referring to some colored horse-trappings, observed, "They say that the Barbarians who live in the Ocean pour these colors on to heated bronze, and that they adhere, become hard as stone, and preserve the designs which are made in them." The bronze to be enameled was cast with the pattern upon it, and the colors used were varied and bright, but opaque. Some brilliant horse-trappings with purely Celtic decorations and a few sword-hilts are known, but the bulk of cast bronze enameled ware consisted of brooches, seal-boxes, cups, and vases, all Romano-British in design. A much rarer enamel is found on beaten or repousse bronze armor. Pliny, in the *Natural History*, remarks that the Gauls were in the habit of adorning their swords, shields, and helmets with coral, but an immense demand springing up in India, it became unprocurable. We find accordingly that resort was had in England to enamel to reproduce the effect of the coral studs. In the British Museum is an oblong shield of Celtic design, found in the Witham, embellished with coral, but a smaller and handsomer shield beside it, found in the Thames, has gold cloisonne studs of blood-red enamel. The curious Celtic reproduction of the Roman peaked helmet, and the horned helmet found in the Thames, both from the Meyrick collection, are also decorated with small raised bosses cross-hatched to retain red enamel, some of which still adheres. The horned brazen helmet should, according to Diodorus Siculus, be a relic of, or borrowed from, the Belgic Gauls, who inhabited so much of this part of England. The gem-like effect of the enameled studs, like single drops of red on the golden bronze, must have been most refined; it is altogether too restrained to have originated with the enameller, who usually covers his surfaces. The identity of workmanship of these arms with the Irish bronze and enamel work suggests that some of those who produced them passed over and found with their traditions and arts a peaceful refuge in the sister isle.

Tacitus, however, states most explicitly that the Britons wore neither helmets nor armor, and were not able, therefore, under Caractacus, to maintain their resistance. Herodianus also, relating the expedition of Severus 250 years after Caesar's invasion, presents an extraordinary picture of savagery. He observes that the Britons were a most warlike and sanguinary race, carrying only a small shield and

a spear, and a sword girded to their naked bodies. "Of a breast-plate or helmet they knew not the use, esteeming them an impediment through the marshes." They encircled their necks and loins with iron rings as an evidence of wealth, instead of gold, and went naked rather than conceal the tattoos of different animals which covered and gave a blue cast to their bodies.

In striking contrast to this picture are the large number of chariots employed in war and the extraordinary skill displayed in handling them. Caesar states that Cassivelaunus, when totally defeated and a fugitive, was still accompanied by 4000 charioteers; the basis probably of Pomponius Mela's later statement that 4000 two-horsed chariots armed with scythes formed part of that chieftain's army. Having proved ineffectual against Roman discipline, this arm was perhaps soon abandoned, since we find little further mention of war-chariots, though cavalry did not cease to form part of a British army. In process of time the subjugated Britons must have become completely Romanized as to arms, and accustomed to wear the helmet, greaves, and corselet, either of one piece or formed of smaller and more flexible plates or scales. Though the manhood of the country enrolled in disciplined cohorts and legions had deserted it, Roman weapons must have been the arms of those who remained when the Romans finally retired from Britain in 410.

In the two succeeding centuries, which were to elapse before the country definitely inclined to become English, an intensely Celtic feeling, embodied in the legends of King Arthur and wholly opposed to Roman ideas, had time to spring up. Judged by their ornament, it is to this period that most of the bronze enameled arms and trappings in the British Museum belong. The golden corselet found in a barrow in Flint, together with many traditions of the finding of golden armor, such as the helmet of pure gold set with gems found in a bronze vase and presented to Katherine of Aragon, suggest the idea that serviceable qualities became sacrificed to a love of display. At this time, it is said the Britons, in obsolete and fantastic panoply, bore an evil reputation, as being vain and fruitful in menaces, but slow and little to be feared in action. Their frightfully demoralized state, if not greatly overdrawn by Gildas, called for a day of reckoning and the condign, almost exterminating, punishment which overtook

them. The agents destined to execute the vengeance of Providence were the Frisian pirates, the scourge of the Channel, who had with difficulty been kept in awe by the most powerful Roman fleets. The country, left to the divided rule of clergy, nobles, and municipalities, and described as “glittering with the multitude of cities built by the Romans,” presented a tempting and easy prey to these professors of rapine. They were Teutons, who relied mainly on the Fram or spear-like javelin, as when Tacitus described them, and still carried the round gaudily-painted buckler, though then strengthened with an iron umbo and rim. Their weapons had been perfected in a long series of grim experiences in actual war, and they had added to their equipment a sword and dagger, and some kind of simple headpiece. That they had adopted any complete defense of plate-armor in the Roman fashion is improbable, but they were apparently entirely unacquainted with chain-mail. In the history of armor in Britain this period, taken as a whole, can only be regarded as a very primitive age of plate. To be an efficient protection plate-armor must, however, be of an intolerable weight, at least to men on foot, making celerity of movement impossible. We cannot close the chapter better than by instancing the dreadful fate of the Ædunan Crupellarians, related by Tacitus, who clothed themselves in unwieldy iron plate, impenetrable to sword and javelin. Though the main army was overthrown, these kept their ranks as if rooted to the ground, until, fallen upon with hatchets and pickaxes, armor and men were crushed together and left on the ground an inanimate mass. This lesson was not forgotten by the nations of Europe who fought on foot with Rome, and no such use of body-armor among them is again recorded.

## II

### The Mailed Warrior

The appearance of the mail-clad warrior opens up an entirely new era in the history of European armor. The light plate defenses worn by the Mediterranean nations, whether Greeks, Etruscans, or Romans, were never calculated to secure immunity from wounds; and as a fighting equipment they went down before mail, as stone before bronze, or bronze before iron. Chain-mail body-armor is distinctly

represented on the Trajan column, and wherever worn, whether by the Scythian, the Parthian who was armored down to his horse's hoofs, or the dreaded Sassanian horse, it seems to have flashed like a beacon of victory, and its wearers ever appear in history as Rome's most dreaded and formidable foes.

The Scandinavian also, isolated so long and unknown in history, suddenly burst upon Europe as a new and even more redoubtable mail-clad warrior. How so remote a people became acquainted with chain-mail can only be surmised, but it was perhaps through some Scythian channel not open to Western Europe. That the ravaging Viking landed on our shores equipped in mail, the "war nets" of Beowulf, "woven by the smiths, hand-locked, and riveted"; "shining over the waters" or in "the ranks of battle," is sufficiently recorded by the Chroniclers. Shirts of mail, called "byrnies," attributed to even the fourth and fifth centuries, are found in Danish peat-bogs fashioned of rings welded and riveted in alternate rows as neatly and skillfully as can possibly be, and all made by the hammer, if it be a fact that wire-drawing was not invented till nearly a thousand years later. The almost perfect specimen we figure, one-tenth the natural size, was found at Vimose, with portions of others. Some have also been found at Thorsberg, and in a burial-place of Roman age in Jutland.

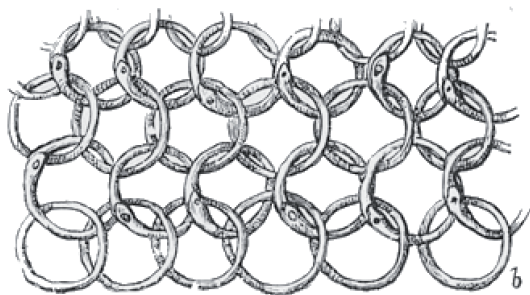
Besides the mail defense, the Danes were armed with a shield, an iron cap, lance, axe, and sword. Thus, equipped they proved for a long time almost irresistible, and ventured on the most dangerous and desperate undertakings. When we reflect on their adventurous voyages, the reckless attacks on powerful nations made by mere handfuls of men, and the gallant pertinacity they at all times displayed, it is impossible not to admire their exalted courage. It is easy to detect a rugged poetry, almost chivalry of a kind, underlying the Viking nature, in spite of ruthless cruelty, while the exaltation of deceit when practiced on an enemy into a virtue is but a germ of modern statecraft. Their lives depending at every moment on the quality of their weapons caused these to be invested, particularly the sword, with a mystic glamour, which scarcely died out with chivalry itself, and lingers even yet in the more important functions of state. The chieftain's sword was in fact his inseparable companion, known and

endeared to his followers by a name symbolic of the havoc they had seen it wreak upon the enemy, and its fame in sagas was as undying as its owner's. Tradition elevated the maker of the sword of Odin, a smith, we must believe, who forged swords of uncommon excellence, into a demigod; and has handed down the story of how he made a blade called Mimung so keenly tempered that when challenged to try conclusions with one Amilias, a rival, it sliced him so cleanly in two as he sat in his armor, that the cut only became apparent when, as he rose to shake himself, he fell dead in two halves. The name of this prince of craftsmen yet lives in the mysterious Wayland Smith of English folklore. Another vaunting smith Mimer was slain by the sword Grauer wielded by Sigurd; and the sword Hrunting is made famous by its owner Beowulf, the father of English lyrics. A Danish sword in the British Museum is inscribed in runes *Ægenkœra*, the awe-inspirer. From the Danes the exaltation of the sword passed to the English, and we find Ethelwulf, Alfred, and Athelstan bequeathing their swords by will as most precious possessions, equivalent to a brother's or sister's portion. Thence it passed, in legend at least, to the Britons, King Arthur's sword Calibon, or Excalibur, presented ultimately by Richard I. to Tancred when in Sicily, being almost as famous as Arthur himself. Even Caesar is provided by history with a sword named "*Crocea mors*," captured from him in combat by our valiant countryman Nennius. The hilts of the Danish swords are described in the *Edda* as of gold, and Beowulf speaks of hilts that were treasures of gold and jewels. Canute's huiscarles and Earl Godwin's crew had swords inlaid with the precious metals, and some English swords were valued at eighty mancuses of gold.

The origin of the remarkable veneration for arms and armor, so apparent in the history of chivalry, is thus traced to wearers of mail, the first figures also to appear in something like what we regard as knightly equipment. The dress of Magnus Barefoot, described in 1093, differed probably but little from that of his predecessors, and consisted of helmet, a red shield with a golden lion, his sword called Leg-biter, a battle-axe, and a coat-of-mail, over which he wore a red silk tunic with a yellow lion.

The wearing of armor, particularly mail, on land, necessitated riding, and the northern rovers, finding the weight intolerable on their in-





**Fig. 1.** — Hauberk, or byrnie, of chain-mail, of the fourth or fifth century, found at Vimose; and part of another, full size, from Thorsberg. From "Danish Arts," published for the Science and Art Department.



land forays, took to horse whenever possible, harrying by this means an extent of country otherwise almost inaccessible. They even learnt in time to transport their horses over the sea, and in the ninth and tenth centuries landed in England from France as a mounted force, as their descendants after them did at Hastings. The English, on the other hand, rarely wore mail, though the spoils of the Danes might have furnished a fair supply, and they only used cavalry as a small force for scouting. An English king of the eighth century is, however, represented in mail by Strutt, and Harold and his immediate companions may have worn mail at Hastings, as represented in the Bayeux tapestry, and as he certainly did when assisting William in his war against Conan of Brittany. Handsome presents of Norman arms and armor were then made to him by Duke William. A little later we have the curious testimony of Anna Comnena, 1083-1146, that this mail, made entirely of steel rings riveted together, was wholly unknown in Byzantium, and only worn by the inhabitants of Northern Europe.

The definite conversion of the Northmen from sea-rovers to mounted men-at-arms when they settled in Normandy enabled them to lengthen their coats-of-mail, as well as their shields, lances, and swords, and to adopt many French manners and customs. But in facing the infantry wedge at Hastings, the time-honored fighting formation of Teutonic stocks from the days of Tacitus, they did not disdain to fall back on the old Viking tactics of a pretended flight and rally, practiced already by them during two centuries of warfare in England. That the English should have allowed their impenetrable ranks to be broken by so threadbare a stratagem is indeed extraordinary.

The Norman Conquest introduced into England a permanent mail-clad cavalry as the chief strength of the battle, as in France, and infantry was discredited until the disputes of the sons of the Conqueror led once more to an English infantry force taking the field. The mail coat of the cavalry had in the meantime been further lengthened, and changed into a complete sheathing of steel by the addition of long sleeves and mufflers falling over the hands; leggings covering the thighs, shins, and feet; and a capuchin-like hood only leaving the eyes and nose exposed, but which could be thrown back. Thus enveloped, with a thickly-padded garment under the mail, a conical



**Fig. 2.** — Norman knights in mail hauberks and conical helmets. From the Bayeux Tapestry.

or flat-topped steel helmet, a large kite-shaped shield, and long-reaching weapons, he had little to fear when opposed to light-armed cavalry or infantry. The mail and helmets were always kept bright, as we know, but Anna Comnena adds that even the shields of steel and brass were so brightly polished as to dazzle beholders. Combined with the pennons and banners of various forms, with their glittering emblazonry, the massed men-at-arms of that day must have presented a magnificent spectacle, as the Chroniclers so frequently remind us. The coat-of-mail remained with but trifling variations the chief knightly defense until the close of the thirteenth century, and the protection it afforded was so complete that of 900 combatants who once entered battle in steel armor but three were slain. At Joppa in 1192, during a battle lasting from the rising to the setting sun, only three were killed on the side of the Crusaders; at the battle of Lincoln only three, at Evesham (1260) one knight and two esquires, at Falkirk (1295) but one knight and thirty foot on the winning side. These somewhat random examples seem fairly to represent the loss on the side of the victors, though terrible massacres overtook the losers. The protection was such that Saladin's bravest warriors reported our

men to be impenetrable; blows, they said, fell as if on rocks of flint, for our people were of iron and would yield to no blows. But though so terrible on horseback, the mailed knight, as observed by Anna Comnena, was little dangerous when dismounted. Neither had the English failed to observe this, and thus directed all their efforts to dismount the enemy. They had been severely galled by the bow at Hastings, and they came to recognize it as the one weapon likely to render them really formidable to their Norman oppressors. Henry I. encouraged its use, and we soon find the English arrows described as falling in battle like a shower on the grass or as falling snow. In a skirmish at Bourghtheroude in 1124, the first discharge brought forty horses to the ground before a stroke was struck, and eighty men-at-arms soon fell prisoners into the victors' hands. At the battle of the Standard, the cloud of arrows pierced the unarmored Scots, and chiefly contributed to the dreadful slaughter, set down at 11,000. The effects of missile weapons were such that the mailed period of which we are speaking saw three English kings fall victims to the bow, while a fourth, Edward I., escaped a like fate by a miracle. The accounts handed down of the extraordinary range and precision attained soon afterwards by this weapon appear wholly incredible in the light of modern toxophilite displays.

The crossbow was an even more powerful weapon, whose use had been forbidden in war, but allowed by the Pope to the Crusaders in 1139. Richard I. appears to have introduced it into the English army, which became so expert in its use that in some of the sieges conducted during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the enemies' walls could not be manned. It is related of Richard, both at the sieges of Acre and Nottingham, that he himself slew men with this weapon. The numbers of crossbowmen in our armies appear, however, to have been always relatively small. King John, with 400 knights, had but 250 crossbowmen, used as skirmishers, keeping a mile in front of the army. The splendid army of Edward I. assembled at Poitou (1242), numbering 1600 knights and 20,000 foot, comprised but 700. The battle of Lincoln, however, was gained by them owing to their shot mowing down the horses of the barons, who were rendered helpless when dismounted. The crossbow was at first bent by the hand and foot, but was afterwards of steel, when it required mechanical aids to

charge it. The short and heavy bolts, called quarrels, struck with greater force than arrows, and the knight hit full on the head or breast by one was fortunate if only stunned. Instances are recorded of twofold mail and the quilted coat being penetrated by them. Crossbowmen for a long time formed corps d'élite, the weight of the weapon and the armor causing them to be frequently mounted, and so early as King John the mounted "balistarii" were provided with one, two, or even three horses each, with carts to carry the quarrels and even the crossbows as well. Notwithstanding superior accuracy in aim and penetrating power, it fell into disuse in England soon after the close of the thirteenth century, owing to its heavy weight and liability to damage by wet, and above all, on account of the greater rapidity with which arrows could be discharged from the long-bow, — in a ratio of something like ten to one.

Nothing is more constantly met with in chronicles than accounts of the destructive effects of missiles, whether from bow or crossbow, upon the horses of mounted combatants; yet, apart from the poetic fancy of Wace, who mounts Fitz-Osbert on an iron-clad steed at Hastings, the first mention of horse-armor at all connected with English history is at the battle of Gisors in 1198, when Richard I. speaks of the capture of 140 sets in terms which plainly show that he then met with it for the first time. It has, however, been concluded, from the absence of any mention of horse-armor in English statutes until 1298, that it was unknown here till the close of the thirteenth century. At this time a man-at-arms in France received half as much again in pay if his horse was armored, and in 1303 every man with an estate of 500 livres was bound to provide horse-armor. A mailed horse appears in the effigy of Sir Robert de Shirland in Sheppey, and a fine figure of a steed completely clad in mail is among the figures of *The Painted Chamber*, published by the Society of Antiquaries.

The English custom of fighting on foot, it is almost needless to add, had been adopted by the Danish and even the Norman settlers here, and during the civil wars of Henry I., Stephen, and Henry II., the leaders on both sides, including the kings in person, fought their battles dismounted, rendering horse-armor of relatively small importance.

A permanent force was raised by a law of Henry II. in 1181, compelling every burgess or freeman to possess an iron headpiece, a lance,

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## PART II

# FOREIGN ARMOR IN ENGLAND



**Plate I.** — Painted Wooden Shield of the fifteenth century. Burges Collection, British Museum.

# FOREIGN ARMOUR IN ENGLAND

## I INTRODUCTORY

A former monograph, *Armor in England*, treated of weapons and armor made either in this country or connected historically with English wearers. The more extensive field of foreign armor brought into England by wealthy and enthusiastic collectors is now embraced.

The enthusiasm felt for armor is not surprising; its interest is so many-sided. Not only are collectors fascinated by it, but students of history, artists, and antiquaries. As mere decoration it appeals to some, and finds a place in their abodes; but it is among artistic people that its more ardent admirers are found. Hence it is far from rare to find the glint of arms and weapons lighting up the artist's walls.

From the artistic standpoint nothing can be more picturesque than the varied forms assumed by armor and weapons in obedience to the all-powerful dictates of self-preservation, or to the more arbitrary changes of fashion. To realize what these changes mean, to appropriate them to the scenes and episodes of history, belongs to the painter, sculptor, and scenic artist. If anything in art should be accurately portrayed, it is the men and the events which make up history. Historic painting and sculpture, which might live long in art, may be disregarded by posterity owing to the anachronisms due to neglect of this important study. Most of the changes were perhaps efforts to avert the recurrence of some accident in the lists or field of battle. To definitely track them to their actual origin, to seek out the causes for the singular and ceaseless modifications arms and armor have undergone, is, however, work only possible to the antiquary. It is his province to open the door to the artist.

The quality of the art lavished as decoration on the gala suits of princes and nobles is superb. In mediæval days it was the prerogative of the male sex, the fighting sex, to deck itself like a game bird in gor-

geous plumage; women's raiment was more subdued. To the male, no richness of dress that ingenuity could invent or wealth procure was denied. In preparation for those stately festivals when the courtier was to shine in the presence of the fair sex, his sovereign, and his peers, nothing was spared. The armor of parade intended for royal jousts and tournaments is as sumptuous as the wit of man could devise, with time and money unstinted. Chasing, embossing, engraving, damascening, and gilding of the most exquisite quality were lavished upon it, the designs, and possibly the actual work, being by the best artists of the day. The later suits, when cap-à-pie armor was mainly consecrated to festivals and little regarded in battle, were especially loaded with decoration. Besides its excellence of design and richness of ornament, the mere craftsmanship of the armor itself is of a quality that never can be excelled, and the modern counterfeiter, with all his skill and appliances, is baffled in the reproduction of *tours-de-force*, such as the high-combed morions of Italy and Spain.

To study the evolution of armor is like observing the works of nature. Necessity, it is well-known, is the great stimulator of the inventive faculty of man, and no necessity is more cogent than that of self-preservation. In the long trials of skill, in which for generation after generation the armorer was pitted against the guilds concerned in the production of lethal weapons, the means of defense seemed once or twice so entirely perfected as to defy the weapons of the assailants. But ere long, the attacking forces, gathering energy, calling on the ingenuity of bowyers, fletchers, sword- and gun-smiths, seem again to emerge triumphant, armed with yet more deadly and powerful weapons. The struggle on the one hand to encase the man, like Achilles, in invulnerable armor, and on the other to break down his armor of proof, was like that between the gunners and naval architects to-day, but it lasted for centuries. It ended, as all such struggles must, in the complete discomfiture of the armorer; the increasing use and accuracy of firearms finally reducing defensive armor to a costly incumbrance. Nature, indeed, seems to will that all things, animate or inanimate, should succumb to persistent attack. Viewed in its true light, armor reveals all the stages, and is the very embodiment of, perhaps, the most prolonged and determined struggle that the



development of civilization has witnessed. It presents a gauge of the extent and limitation of man's inventive faculties, in other words, of his brain capacity, in the ages so-called medieval.

Concerning the history of the vast bulk of the armor that falls into the possession of the collector, all is speculation, and its very nationality perhaps matter of conjecture. The place whence it has come is often purposely concealed by the dealer, and a legend concocted to invest it with a higher market value. The weapon may have played its part in the stern realities of war; the armor may have saved its owner, or, failing in the hour of need, contributed to the deaths of those who trusted to it. Little armor perished with the wearer. Next to gold and silver, the harvest of arms was the most coveted spoil of victory, and none remained ungleaned on the battle-field. What harvests such holocausts as Flodden Field must have presented, affording opportunities of refitting to the man-at-arms, archer, hobilier, billman, down to the rapacious camp-follower. Though etiquette may have hindered the squire of low degree from donning the full cap-à-pie armor of the knight he overcame, no doubt many a captor of rich armor sacrificed life to indulgence in the dangerous vanity of dressing beyond his station.

The historic and personal associations connected with the arms and weapons present at, and by whose agency were enacted, the decisive battles, the most stirring incidents of history humanity can witness, are not the least of the many-sided interests of armor.

Though but a small proportion of the vast number of suits, helmets, and weapons that have come down to us can be assigned to definite wearers, and most of even these were but the parade suits of royalty and the court, the few pieces of real actual fighting armor identified with particular owners are invested with extraordinary interest. Most of these owe their preservation to the ancient and poetic custom of hanging the arms of knightly personages over their tombs, a custom linked with the still older dedication of arms and armor at the obsequies of the dead, either by placing them in the grave or hanging them in the temples of the gods. The reality of the connection between the pagan and Christian customs is apparent by such incidents as that of William of Toulouse, early in the thirteenth century, who dedicated his helm, shield, and weapons to St. Julian, hanging them

over his shrine; or that of the King of France, who, after the Battle of Cassel in 1327, presented his victorious arms to the neighboring church. The churches in fact ought to have been the great treasure-houses for actual armor, as they are of representations of armor on monuments and brasses. Unfortunately, however, the old veneration for the person of the dead which led to the consecration of the armor and weapons he had actually used, hardly survived the close of the thirteenth century. Cupidity induced the prelate to claim them as a perquisite of the burial function, as when the Prior of Westminster received £100 as ransom for the horse and accouterments of John of Eltham; while the temptation natural to the survivor to retain the finely tempered weapons and armor, whose quality had been tested in the field, had always to be reckoned with. This reluctance to sacrifice them is beautifully expressed in such ancient ballads as those on the death of King Arthur.

Armor was moreover specially devised by will to be kept as heir-looms. Grose in the *Antiquities* states that Thomas Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick in the time of Henry IV., left to his son Richard by will the sword and coat of mail said to belong to the celebrated Guy, Earl of Warwick, he having received them as an heir-loom from his father. Sir Thomas Poynings, in 1369, devised to his heir the helmet and armor which his father devised to him. It also became penal to make away with armor. Enactments, such as that of 1270, commanded that all armor was to be viewed and kept in safe keeping under good security not to be let go, for the king's use at reasonable valuation. The custom, which prevailed extensively, of leaving the undertaker to provide property helmets and arms in place of those the departed had himself used, also tended to lessen the interest of even the arms which yet remain. That the helmet of Henry V. was provided by the undertaker is well-known, and that he continued to provide arms down to Elizabeth's time, is shown by accounts of funerals such as of Lord Grey de Wilton in 1562, when among the items of the undertaker's bill are a "cote of arms," banner and bannerolles, a "helmett of stele gylt with fyne golde," with a crest gilt and coloured, a "swerde with the hyltes, pomell, chape, buckle, and pendant, likewise gylte, with a gurdle and sheathe of velvet." This custom of substituting spurious insignia at the solemn interment of

the dead was set by the Church, who consigned mock croziers and chalices of no intrinsic value to the graves of even the most exalted prelates. But of the true and the spurious armor alike, time, rust, and above all, changes of religious sentiment in regard to the churches, have spared little besides an occasional helmet. The claims of neighboring magnates, to the custody of what they regard as family relics, the temptation to sell, and lack of interest, have further sadly reduced this residue within the present century.

Yet neglect and depredations notwithstanding, the preservation of nearly all the English fighting helms known, from the time of the Black Prince to that of Henry VIII., and of many swords of early date, is due to their having been deposited in churches. Other magnificent fourteenth and even thirteenth century swords owe their preservation to their inclusion in the insignia of Municipal Corporations. Lincoln, Bristol, Kingston on Hull, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Southampton, Gloucester, Hereford, Exeter, Chester, Coventry, are among the cities still possessing these interesting relics.

If our national collections are less imposing than those of Spain, Austria, Italy, France, and Germany, the enthusiasm of wealthy amateurs has made this country second to none in the richness of its private collections of European arms and armor.

Of collections commenced and handed down from the time that armor was still in use, by far the most important is the Tower Armory. Its history can be gathered from Lord Dillon's paper in the fifty-first volume of *Archæologia*, "Arms and Armor at Westminster, the Tower, and Greenwich." The collection had its origin in Henry VIII.'s passion for arms and armor, which was ministered to by Continental sovereigns, especially Maximilian, who shared this taste, and with whom he maintained a close friendship. His extensive array of tilting and jousting suits was kept at Greenwich, and an inventory taken of them upon his death. They were not removed to the Tower until perhaps 1644, though the armory there was already, during the reign of Henry, one of the sights of London. The arms stored at Westminster were probably removed to the Tower as early as the beginning of the reign of Edward VI. The armory was no doubt regarded more as an arsenal for use, than in the light of a collection, and perhaps was drawn upon constantly until the Civil Wars, when

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