

HERALDRY REVIVED

A WHOLE bay of the library of the Society of Antiquaries is given up to the books which treat of heraldry. A bushy growth has sprung up round this unhappy subject, a maze or Troy Town in which wanderers, studious of the beaten track, mark out fresh blind alleys with their stumblings. More than a generation ago there came to the gate of this maze one Mr. James Robinson Planché. Being no antiquary by training, but a writer of burlesques, he took his eyes off the ground and looking over the hedges saw the level green in the middle. For the first time in the history of heraldic study heraldry was, as his title page boasted, to be 'founded on facts.' Certainly he pushed his way forward with little regard for the ordered paths of precedent; but his play writing encroached on his hours for original study, and his work, although it saw several editions, remains shallow and hastily-conceived, the child of a very thin notebook. From a Pursuivant of Arms of his own creation he became Rouge Croix Pursuivant of Arms and a member of a college of augurs, whose high pontiff, as we may gather from a preface to one of his later editions, had no sympathetic eye for critical thumbing of the sacred books of the caste. For one reason or another the task which this pioneer set himself remains for us to make an end of, an end best achieved by the levelling of the whole maze.

This beginning of a new century sees the antiquary abroad. The antiquary as the early nineteenth century knew him, a fusty person enamoured of fustiness, lingers in our dark places, but the new school of English archæology, building fact upon the sure foundation of fact and adding daily to the mass of our knowledge of the past of our race, is up and doing with a more reasonable enthusiasm. Architect antiquaries are telling every stone of our ancient houses and churches; topographer antiquaries are writing the history of the land to the twelve-inch scale; folk-lore antiquaries are garnering in what remains of old English custom and tradition; genealogist antiquaries are hewing with critical axes amongst the stately family trees, under whose shade their forerunners were content to walk reverently. It is making no undue claim for heraldry to say

that a working knowledge of it is needful for each and all of these workers, although with none of their grave studies can the science of heraldry presume to rank.

For the art of heraldry is a wide field—as wide as a great decorative art may be ; but when the science of heraldry has suffered the unwinding of its gilded mummy clothes, one must acknowledge, calling to mind the extravagant claims of those who swaddled it, that, like Sarah's baby, it is 'a very little one.'

Let us consider the outset difficulty of the antiquary to whom the occasion comes for a prentice knowledge of heraldry.

When an architect or topographer is before a shield in stone or glass or laton, or when the genealogist is considering the shields of descents and alliances, how shall he describe them ?

To those loaded bookshelves he comes for guidance. On the lower shelves are the ancient folios. These indeed are well-springs of limpid and engaging nonsense, but the mind capable of absorbing the systems of blazonry formulated by Randle Holme and his fellows is only found to-day amongst graduates of Peking. And from the works of these fathers there is no appeal to the little treatises of our own days, for they are but the fathers in miniature, duller it may be, and with the fathers' flamboyant English pruned away. Little or no critical advance has been made since the time when seventeenth century pens squeaked through reams of disquisition concerning things which the passing of but two or three centuries had made as remote as the economies of Tibet. It seems that before our antiquary may describe his shield he must sit down to a full meal of folly.

Yet if we take in hand the ancient rolls of arms, and under their guidance approach the contemporary seals and painting of arms, we are at once in clearer air. For the blazon of arms is no hidden thing to be learned with a great toil ill-spent. What is it but the short and meet description of the manner in which the cunning artists of the past planned that certain simple devices might be painted upon shields in such fashion that although men arrayed ten or twenty thousand such shields each should have its distinct bearing ? The student finds himself asking what has happened that a shield which its bearer in the former days might blazon in a dozen reasonable words now demands a mouthful of strange phrases in a long sentence framed in the fear of fifty rules and precedents.

This, in a word, is what has happened. Heraldry, which was feeling its way stiffly and uncertainly when Matthew Paris first made a pictured list of English arms, came towards the end of the thirteenth century into the hands of the artists who brought it at once into line with the graceful decoration of the day. The work of this school develops, as the years pass, to the vigorously drawn shields of the time of the Edwardian wars in France, which time saw the increase of the custom of quartering arms. But heraldry was child of the whole blood of the middle ages, and with the middle ages the art crumbles away. Some flamboyant pieces of the fifteenth century take the eye, but the end is at hand, and here the monstrous regiment of the books written round about heraldry begins to assert itself. Master Mumblazon has nibbed his quill, and so have John of Guildford, Nicholas Upton and Dame Julian Barnes of St. Albans. The Wars of the Roses were making tatters of the old coats, a new gentry was arising, and the heralds were up and at work. Richard III. made a corporation of these heralds, and it is but fair to say that certain of its earlier members strove hard to set up again a fallen art, so that a certain renaissance of heraldry may be observed under the seventh and eighth Henries. But the arms granted by the heralds were overloaded with charges, and cumbered especially by the fancy for capping already crowded fields with a crowded chief. Decoration lost its balanced ease and became lumpish and stodgy. The books about heraldry and the growing mass of official precedent were too much for the art, and the little science became dropsical with words. The ancient words were mistaken and misplaced and hustled by hundreds of newly minted absurdities. The end may be said to have come when the Elizabethan heralds and their followers, for the magnifying of an office already somewhat blown upon, set themselves deliberately to change the customs of blazonry for a code with a thousand laws, a species of augurs' slang whose key and control should rest with them, although country squires might reverently spell out some of its mysteries from the big bibles of the faith.

From that time an antiquary's interest in heraldry may well cease, and we need not follow it as it went at a hand gallop to the point at which, to use our grandfathers' elegantly turned and perfectly truthful phrase, it was 'abandoned to the coach-painter and the undertaker.'

For those who would rescue heraldry from the hands of these respectable men and from the hands of their brother the engraver of book plates there is no help from the compilers of the little 'handbooks of heraldry.' Mr. Boutell's work, which for want of a better is often recommended to the student antiquary, is of the smallest service. It is true that in the warm periods of his preface he seeks 'from the authority, the practise, and the associations of the early heraldry of the best and most artistic eras, to derive a heraldry which we may rightly consider to be our own, and which we may transmit with honour to our successors.' But in the next sentence Mr. Boutell wavers. He does not 'suggest the adoption, for present use, of an obsolete system,' so we gather that the 'early heraldry of the best and most artistic eras' is not for Mr. Boutell's readers after all. Lower down in the page he lashes himself again to the repudiation of 'the acceptance and maintenance amongst ourselves of a most degenerate substitute for a noble science,' and yearns 'to revive the fine old heraldry of the past,' yet it seems that on no account we are 'to adjust ourselves to the circumstances of its first development' or to 'reproduce its original expressions.' So long as we were 'animated by the spirit of the early heralds' we might 'lead our heraldry onward with the advance of time,' but unhappily for Mr. Boutell he was a child of the spacious days of the Great Exhibition, and he is unmistakably of his own period when we find him begging his pupils on no account to draw their heraldic beasts as freely as they appear on the shield of John of Eltham. Mr. Boutell may not have 'led his heraldry onward' in any notable degree, but in this matter his exhortations bore fruit. No one of late years has drawn shields resembling that flower of fourteenth century art which is on the arm of the Lord John of Eltham.

The real importance of such a work as *English Heraldry* lies in its popularity, a popularity encouraged by the excellent engravings of ancient seals and the like with which the book is illustrated, whereby in spite of its slender scholarship and its injudicious commonplaces it is become the manual of most people studying heraldry in England. Through it all, and through all the dozen little books its fellows, runs with pathetic insistence the hope that, by avoiding too close an intimacy with the medieval side of a frankly medieval art, heraldry, rising from its tomb in some familiar and mid-Victorian shape, may

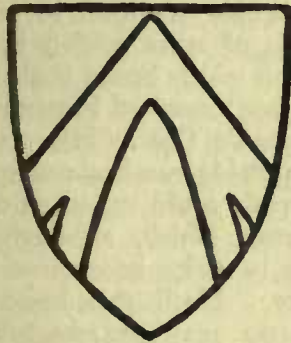
be coaxed into remaining with us, to use a phrase dear to the Boutells and the Cussanses, as 'a living science.' The courage of their opinions however never takes these writers to the logical conclusion of exchanging the helms which support their crests for the tall silk hats, their legitimate successors, mantled with the antimacassars of Mr. Boutell's day, although this would have grown reasonably enough out of their suggestions. Their feet desired the respectable middle way in all matters, and when they speak of heraldic art we know that they yearned for a heraldic lion which should be gendered in spousebreach by one of John of Eltham's leopards upon a Landseer lioness, a respectable beast which might decorate without incongruity a hall chair in carved oak of Tottenham Court Road.

The heraldry manuals of Messrs. Cussans, Jenkins, Elvin and their like do not call for remark here, or, for that matter, elsewhere, for the better known Boutell may stand for an example of all of them; but the work of Woodward and Burnett, lately republished with Mr. Woodward's name alone upon the title page, demands some notice by reason of the weight and size which give these two volumes a certain distinction amongst modern books on the subject. Mr. Woodward was an excellent scholar, with a really remarkable knowledge of the vagaries of modern European heraldry, of which knowledge his pages give voluminous proof. But of the main principles of our own English heraldry, and especially of its beginnings, he was careless and ill-informed, and for the study of these things his book is worse than useless.

One and all, these modern works on heraldry depend for the language of their blazonry upon the folios and quartos from which they are the lineal descendants. In the main their writers show themselves indifferent to the early art and practice which is the only side of heraldry worthy the attention of reasonable men, and delight to clothe themselves as with a garment with a patchwork of language from those great webs of nonsense woven by the dead and gone pedants by whose authority their tangled vocabularies exist.

If we were willing to receive the instruction of these fathers it were surely better to seek their lore at first hand. But the gap between their day and ours is not to be spanned. Even the little handbooks have decided to drop overboard the mass of metaphysic and crack-brained symbolism with which they freighted their barks. We may listen, but it is with wonder

and scant reverence, when owlish wisdom lays down that 'he that is a coward to his country must bear this—argent a gore sinister sable, albeit if it be a dexter gore although of staynand colour yet it is a good cote for a gentlewoman'; or when the hidden significance of colour or metal is laid bare, as in the case of the colour vert, 'which signifieth Venus, emaragd or emerald, loyalty in love, courtesy and affabilitie, Gemini and Virgo in planets, May and August, Friday, lusty green youth from 20 to 30 years, verdures and green things, water, spring time, flegmatique complexion, 6 in number and quicksilver in metals.' We admire, but are unable to follow, their evolving of the original story of a shield of arms by earnest contemplation of its charges. Holbeame's shield was for them 'a cheveron enarched,' and therein Master Gerard Leigh had good assurance that 'the ancestors of this cote had done some notable act in the art of geometry.' One may indeed suggest, with Master Leigh safely under turf, that 'the ancestor of this cote' had but cast up his eyes to his own 'hall beam' and taken its arch for his punning arms, but such an explanation in the days of the fathers would have been reckoned trivial and unedifying.



These inward meanings and significations we may leave behind us for very jealousy, for we can never approach the standard of divination which Sylvanus Morgan could bring to bear upon the simplest charge. Hear him on the Inescutcheon.

The In-Escutcheon is (as it were) the Honour Point of Joseph's Achievement, 'tis (as it were) a single heart deserving respect from all that behold him. It denoteth the pulchritude of his inward mind intire, which if you should or could behold through his brest, it should discover (as through the Orle) the most delightful Images of his natural and supernatural parts, by his wise carriage to his brethren, whereby he obtained the Escocheon of pretence by

putting the Cup in Benjamin's Sack. And here you may see how the variety of Arms are incredible, being a fit recreation worthy the speculation of the Generous and Noble : while the single Escoccheon is an entire Heart, and the Orle is perforated and open, that those that saw through the windows of his bosom that his heart was open to receive them that sold him. His Escoccheon of Pretence declared his sound wisdom, though he might bear it also, for that he married the Daughter and Heir of Pothipar.

In this humour Torquatus the knight sits at the feet of Paradinus the herald, hearing the sage boast his knowledge of the 'coatarmours of the feminine sex, more auncient than Rome, yea, before the foundations of Old Troy'; and hungry for such learning Torquatus says that if they be not shown him 'then farewell all friendship.' His zeal, needless to say, is rewarded on the spot, but the 'coatarmours' are but interesting as examples of the euphuistic gabble of the Elizabethan day, of which our degenerate stomachs, as we sit at those overloaded tables, grow easily wearied. The writing of such a book, as its author confesses, was 'an intermissive delectation' to the writer, but the reading of it has become, if a delectation to a few curious, a very intermissive one indeed.

It is not to be wondered at that under this midden of Latinisms the art of heraldry was smothered. The mere artist who, with a simple tradition in his mind, had been wont to paint shields of arms guided by a native sense of balance and proportion which books could not teach him, did not wait to hear the last lesson of Honour Dative which may be derived from Joseph's Coat. His place is taken by the ancestor of the respectable mechanic who fills it to-day, one whose subordinate brush could construct uninspired diagrams from standard patterns, which, although commonplace and spiritless, should be in strict accordance with the Book of the Thousand Rules. Until this book flare in the fiery dustbin, which, as we may piously hope, awaits all bad books, the artist and craftsman will do well to leave heraldry out of their day's work. But with the Book of the Thousand Rules once rejected their way will be cleared of the oppressive lumber which hindered them in the use of a beautiful art, and the most interesting motive of decoration will be given back to the cabinet-makers and the weavers, to the engravers, the enamellers and the jewellers.

Overboard then must go the 'sealed pattern' of the achievement of arms, the supporters, it may be of elephants or prancing hussars, treading delicately upon ribbon edges, the mantles

'tinctured of the principal colour and metal of the arms,' and the little 'crest-wreath' of the same, balanced like a Frankfort sausage on a helmet's cockscomb, having long since forgotten that it once turbaned round about the great helm. Round this same crest-wreath and its helm the rules buzz like flies. It seems that the wreath must have but six twists and no more of the metal and colour alternately, the laws of heraldry forbidding five twists or seven, and the helm must be 'a helmet of degree.' Truly the herald who devised the thrice ridiculous 'helmet of degree' struck a shrewder blow at common sense than any one of his fellow augurs, for his ingenious conceit has made foolscaps of all our crests. We may draw the helms of the Peer and the Squire sidelong, a convenient position for the display of most English crests, but it is doomed that the helms of the King and the Knight must ever be painted as full front to the artist. And now for the application of this rule to the depicting of the crest, which, built up in painted leather, wood or parchment, sat aloft upon the helm in old days. The Book of the Rules teaches us that, with the exception of some dozen crests set apart to be blazoned as '*affrontée*,' the crest, whether it be beast or bird, or Saracen's head, must always be drawn sidelong. In this the Peer and the Squire may find no cause for complaint, but the King and the Knight, whose helms must be thus topped with a sidelong crest, are in pitiful case. A familiar example of this is always before us. Our sovereign lord the King is provided by the Book of the Rules with a full-faced helm, and on this the crest of England, the crowned leopard, ill balanced on the arch ridge of a closed crown, must range from left to right, a position which gives the royal beast the air of one uneasily determined to jump off over the right ear of the helm. It may be added that a rule thus laying down that one side only of the crest may be shown has ended in our crests being treated as though they were plane surfaces or silhouettes having but one presentable side. This curious misconception of the meaning of the crest is especially to be noted in the modern grants of arms from the College of Heralds. The absurdity is sometimes too much even for the 'heraldic stationer,' and the crest see-sawing on the little striped bâton of 'wreath' is often drawn as clear altogether of the helm.

Having parted with so much that was thrust upon us by the old heraldic writers, having rejected their art as a debased making of diagrams, their archæology as childish speculations,

their philosophy as a crack-brained pedantry, what remains of their authority as it comes down to us filtered through the handbooks of heraldry? When we find them, and them alone, responsible for the whole ragbag of jargonings which, as Sir Peter le Neve said in his wrath, cumber the memory without adding to the understanding, we shall surely hasten to reject the laws and rules with which they stuffed the little science of blazonry until it swelled into a sort of mad Euclid. Then it will be that the medieval blazonry, unmuddied by those middens of paper and ink, will assert its reasonable claims to the attention of antiquaries. First of these claims is its simplicity—in the space of an hour or two any man with his wits about him can learn all that he needs of it. It sets the great period of heraldry before us as our standard, and the heraldry that showed itself in the jousting yard and the fields of France is gloriously different from the heraldry of the study.

Above all things, it enables us to deal in reasonable fashion with the monuments, the seals, the carvings and the illuminations which we are at last beginning to study as something more to us than a peepshow for Dryasdust.

Examples of the need for a wider knowledge of old heraldry are not far to seek. It is not long since the Dean of York put forth a great sumptuous book on the important subject of the heraldry of York Minster, illustrated with the most beautiful pictures we have yet seen of ancient armorial glass. But being ignorant of our old English heraldry with a curiously comprehensive ignorance, the Dean, handbook to aid, not only essays the description of the medieval arms in glass and stone which so enrich the minster, but, heartened by his success, pads his folio with an ample treatise on armory, of which it may be said that Sir John Ferne or Sylvanus Morgan might have fathered it pridefully. In another field, and that a far more important one, I cannot but cite the six heavy volumes which the British Museum has issued as a catalogue of the seals deposited there. These laboriously wrought books, which must represent years of work, are a sad monument of the unwisdom of putting old wine into new bottles and attempting to decipher the seals of the men of the middle ages by the light of the farthing candles of the 'handbooks of heraldry.'

At the outset of our study of medieval armory we meet a difficulty in the fact that our earliest examples of blazonry are written as a rule in the French speech, which was so long in

use amongst the great folk and the lawyers. Something might be said for keeping blazon in this tongue, but the objections rise up at once. The French in which these blazons were written is a dead language on both sides the channel, and its literature is, to all but a few, a dead literature. The French of Froissart has been woefully academized, and if we blazoned in the new tongue we should be seeking new words for old ones with indifferent success. And moreover the most part of the English bring from the schoolroom but little French speech that will serve them outside the doors of a restaurant. We know too that the French blazon in French, the Italians blazon in Italian, the Spaniards in Spanish, and the Germans, although they have fallen into the modern error of over-description of details, yet describe arms in unmingled German. Few people, however, are aware of the strong precedent which exists for the blazoning of English arms after a more English fashion than that which obtains to-day. From the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries we have wealth of examples to show that those who blazoned arms in French could also blazon them in stark, straightforward English. For the mass of words in dog-latinized English and misspelt and misunderstood French which clot in the pages of the heraldry books there is neither early authority nor present need, being, as they are, nothing but the maggots of the armorists. There is no excuse for our use of adjectives in French of Stratford atte Bowe under a mysterious rule which decrees that those ending in *-ant* should keep the masculine form, whilst those ending in *-e* keep as invariably the feminine.

The new broom may surely swish about most of these epithets. There is no reasonable excuse for an English herald's description of the smoking chimney as *fumant*, the bloody hand as *embrued* with some one else's blood or as *distilling* its own. A bent bow explains itself without need of the word *flexed*. She whose golden hair is hanging down her back need not be labelled *crined or*, and it were better to call a round object round rather than *arrondie*. When we meet a man walking in our shield Mr. Boutell offers us the alternative of describing him as *ambulant* or *gradient*, neither of which words seems to throw any new light on the attitude. In a vast number of cases the real meaning of these words has been obscured by the practise of ignorant heralds. Thus a bar with its ends cut off is said to be *bumettée*. But *bumettée*, if it have

any meaning, signifies moistened or wetted, and we discover at the last that *bumettée* when applied to a bar is nothing but a misspelt misapprehension of the old French word *bamede*—the barrier which such a trunked bar represented. Once *bamede* has become *bumettée* its sphere of usefulness enlarges beyond the qualifying of bars or barrier. Thus nothing lets but our good Mr. Boutell shall apply it even to crosses. 'A Cross having its four extremities cut off square, so that it does not extend in any direction to the border-lines of the shield, is *couped* or *bumettée*.' And in his glossary of heraldic terms the same author translates *bumettée* as 'cut short at the extremities.'

This is but one of the score of instances of misapplied verbiage which meet us at an opening of the handbook. Everywhere we see that the deliberate exchange of good English for obscurity was effected as much at the cost of philology as of common sense by enthusiasts who believed that the science of armory, like a child's kite, mounted the better for the long string of wastepaper tags which they fastened to its tail.

How many of these may be cast into the wastepaper basket which yawns for them will be seen as we take the handbook again and turn its leaves.

The figure of the shield meets us. To the basket at once with the points—honour point, nombril point, dexter chief point and their fellows. Honour point and nombril point are imaginings of the pedant's day. A charge in the first quarter of the shield was in old time said to be 'in the quarter' or 'in the cantel,' so the clumsy phrase of dexter chief point may take its dismissal.

The colours come next. Sable, azure, vert and purpure, although like many other words we shall keep in use, reminding us of the French root of much of the language of our armory, may serve our turn, having become a part of our own tongue; and gules must stay, if only for its ancient standing and curious descent. But *or* and *argent* may surely be jettisoned as base currency because they are strangers in English blazon until the Elizabethan heralds deliberately cast off *gold* and *silver* as clownish Anglicisms and unmeet ingredients in their new euphuistic patter. Here let us note that the handbooks warn us that once a colour, be it azure or gules, has been said in a blazon it must be azure or gules

no longer to us for the occasion, but may be darkly hinted at as 'the first,' 'the second,' or 'the third,' as the case may be. No ancient rule or modern reason exists for this bemusing of our sentence, and therefore if we have need to say 'gules' a twenty times in describing some new devised shield's tangled patchwork let us say 'gules' boldly for the twentieth time without stopping to track back with the thumbnail to recall whether gules was introduced as our first or fourth colour.

Of the long list of furs remain but vair, and ermine with its black tails upon white, and its reverse with white tails upon black, which is however so rare a device in ancient heraldry that some doubt exists as to what it should be styled. 'Ermines' as the handbooks have it, is an impossible description, not only because the word is too near to 'ermine' in sound, but because it was actually the form used for 'ermine' in nearly all the earlier English blazons, 'erminees' being the word then used for the white upon black. Erminois and pean, counter-vair, potent and counter-potent, are words which we shall not encounter in our heraldry book of the future.

The checky or checkered field remains, and gobony must still be the word when a bend baston or fesse is measured into lengths of two alternating colours, but we may rid ourselves of *counter-compony*, for to the old painters a chief was a checkered chief, whether the checks ran in a pattern of two rows of checkers or three or four.

When we come to part our shield in colours the ancient armory will save us from some latinisms. Waldegrave's shield, parted down the midst in two colours, was blazoned as 'party silver and gules,' and *party per pale* is a redundancy of the later time. How then, it will be asked, was *party per pale* distinguished from *party per fesse*? It may be answered that *party per fesse* had no existence. A chief is the upper part of the shield and not necessarily the 'third part' of the handbooks. It may be narrow when the field below is filled with charges, it may be wide when it bears charges itself, and when (as in the arms of Fenwick) field and chief are both filled with charges it is wider still and assumes the appearance which the later writers, eager for a new entry in their dictionaries, styled 'party per fesse.' In this case, as in the case of all of the 'ordinaries,' the size or breadth, whether of chief, bend, chevron or border, depends not upon the measuring tapes of the rules but upon the eye of the artist

seeing where balance and proportion lie in the single case before him.

Of the lines which divide the shield or vary the edgings of charges it may be noted that the conventional cloud edging called *nebuly* is very rare in the middle ages and not to be found at all in the early rolls. The word's appearance in modern blazoning (as in the arms of Blount and Lovell) is due to the fact that the later heralds, depicting a wavy line as they did with a feeble ripple, were convinced that the bold waving in the old examples must bear some different name. In considering the ancient heraldry, *nebuly*, or as Mr. Boutell would have it, *nebulée*, may be packed away with dovetailed lines, and with the invected line which in a Victorian grant of arms speaks to the antiquary as plainly as ever a neglected shop ticket upon our other modern purchases. *Crenellée* finds a better word in the old English *battled*, and *raguly* may make way for *ragged*. We do not speak of the famous ragged staff of Beauchamp as a staff *ragulée*.

When the shield is divided with stripes paly, bendy or barry, verbiage will be saved if we follow the old blazonry by recognizing that six divisions make the normal number of such stripes. *Barry silver and gules* therefore connotes to every one understanding heraldry *barry of six pieces*, and the like rule applies to the paly and bendy shields. When however a chief is imposed upon a barry coat the normal divisions will naturally be reduced to four. *Barry wavy* was commonly distinguished by the word *wavy* alone. *Wavy gold and gules* is therefore as ample a description of the arms of Lovell as is the handbook blazon of *Barry undée of six or ana gules*. *Bar-rulée* is a mock-French abomination which may be pilloried with *humettée*. A barred coat of many bars, like the well known coat of Valence of Pembroke, was anciently described in the French as *burele*. The Boutells and Cussanses have jumped to the conclusion that this word is a diminutive of the word *barry*, and, its *u* being ignored, *burele* becomes *barrulée* for the handbooks, and *barrulelet*, which is 'the diminutive of a bar,' follows in the same coinage. Here let us purge the heraldry books of the obsession of the 'diminutives of the ordinary.' A glance at the list of these must have driven many a student with but reasonable powers of memory from the study of heraldry. When we have allowed that there is a species of narrow bend called a *baston*, and that the little

bends which in some coats lie beside the bend are called cotises, what remains of the tribe of illegitimate descendants credited by the handbooks to the 'ordinaries'? Pallets and endorses, bendlets and ribands, barrulets, closets, escarpes, and the like should be brought to the bar of modern archæology charged with loitering in print without visible means of, or necessity for, existence. The *flasques* and *voiders* which are reckoned diminutives of the *flaunch* owe their origin to the practice of those armorists who, finding a second word or even a second spelling for the name of a charge, hastened to construct a new charge out of their *trouvaille*. Of the quarter Mr. Cussans, a typical armorist, tells us that 'examples of this charge are very rarely to be met with.' They are rare indeed in such books as that of Mr. Cussans, but in ancient heraldry this is invariably the word for the frequently occurring charge lately called the *canton*, and the word will serve us well enough for this charge, whilst the pedant's word *canton* for 'the diminutive of the quarter' will be dispensed with when we consider that, as has been said before, the size of 'ordinaries' varies freely with the nature of the composition, and the word quarter commits us to no rule for filling a fourth part of the shield's surface with the charge.

The lozenge is set down for us as a diminutive of the fusil, the fusil being described as an elongated lozenge. This again being one of those rules which would cramp the artist's freedom in drawing his charges, we may regard it with a natural suspicion. A fusil, we find, is a term for which we have no need unless it serves us as a word for those shuttle shaped divisions into which the ancient 'engrailing' divided bends and fesses. Its cousin the rustre, being only encountered in dictionaries of heraldry, need not trouble us.

A fret in its modern sense of a heraldic device formed of two bastons laced through a mascle is another 'ordinary' to be rejected of the antiquary and the artist. The ancient figure the fret, or fretty as it was more frequently termed, formed by the interlacing of some six crossing bastons, is the sole figure of the kind discoverable before the making of the dictionaries of arms. Planché himself is entrapped by the assumption of the armorist that the modern figure followed the use of the middle ages, and blunders sadly when he lays down that Harington's fret may be the descendant of an earlier 'fretty' coat.

The common charge of a mullet may surely for philology's sake be allowed to drop its modern spelling for its ancient and less fishlike spelling of molet, and the pierced molet seems to have a single and suggestive word awaiting it in the 'rowel' of the old rolls of arms. The *estoile* also has every authority for dropping its foreign dress and shining as a plain English 'star.' Whether our labels have three, four or five pendants is a matter which may concern the painter of arms, but the armorist should take no verbal heed of their variety, save perhaps in such a case as the curious label of many points which was borne by Sayer de Quinci.

No charge has been the victim of the armorists in such degree as the cross. They have vied with one another through the ages in wringing from their imaginations new shapes into which the emblem of our salvation might be chipped or writhen. Here alone may the modern writers take credit to themselves beyond the measure which may be allowed to their fathers. At a comparatively early date Gerard Leigh had produced forty-six different crosses for his delighted readers, but even the wisdom of the seventeenth century is surpassed by Robson's *British Herald* with its two hundred and twenty-two, whilst I hesitate to say how many figure in Mr. Elvin's modern dictionary of heraldry, a work of which I can only say with a certain admiration that the very funeral rites of our ancient national heraldry might be read from its inspired pages.

If we set aside from these crosses those which were manifestly evolved by the armorists as so much padding for the dictionaries there remain still a number to be resolved into their originals. The rule of the armorist was here, as elsewhere, to make on the one hand a fresh word of every antick spelling or variant of a recognized word, and on the other hand a new word was to be found for every pictured cross which the old artists, in their search for the beautiful line, had varied from the pattern which the laws of the later armorists were to declare unchangeable. Thus flowery, flory, flurty and floretty—all these words signify a cross whose form in actual use varied with the fashion of the time, but whose distinguishing note was to be found in the fleurs-de-lys sprouting from its ends, the 'crois od les bouts flurtees' of the old rolls. Yet they are now reckoned four crosses, although no two armorists can be found to agree upon their exact differences. In the work of

Woodward and Burnet, Burnet is found differing from Woodward on the grave point of the distinction between *flory* and *flurty*, and Burnett dead, Woodward points his case in notes to a new edition of their book. For an example of the second custom of constructing separate words for artistic variants of the same form—the cross paty is a case in point. The unvarying use of the middle ages points us to a certain type of cross—as found in the arms of Latimer—for a cross paty. But not one of our modern armorists is content with this description. The three centuries of the heraldic age he tacitly sets down as mistaken. Paty as an epithet he applies only to that variety of flat-ended cross which the man in the street calls Maltese, and which, although very early armory might sometimes place it amongst crosses paty, the later middle ages found an adjective for in the word formy. The true cross paty, when encountered by the armorist in its plump shape (fashion of 1300), is ticketed cross *patouée*; but when the fashion of 1450 thins its arms it straightway becomes a cross *flory*. For those who affect to regard heraldry as an unreformable science because of the wide acceptance of an iron tradition which makes the last development of its rules as fixed as the definitions of Euclid, we may recommend the comparison of the last half-dozen handbooks of heraldry, of which no two agree in their efforts to reconcile the old crosses with their modern tickets.

The antiquary will concern him very little with this tangle of crosses. 'You bring me so many crosses that I am in a manner weary of them,' he will say, as even a character in one of the heraldic dialogues is made to say in a curiously convincing phrase. With ancient examples before him he will recognize some half-dozen crosses in frequent use, with two or three more variants of rare occurrence. Elvin's and Edmondson's lists will trouble him not at all, and unless for enlargement of the understanding he will never win to a knowledge of shy varieties such as the cross *nowy-degraded-conjoined*. In one of those interminable lists a certain cross is found whose expressive name may answer for the most of its fellows. Therefore we draw it from obscurity. It is the cross *anserated* or cross *issuing out of geoses' beads*!

And now to speak of the beasts and fowls and other living things to whose shapes the art of armory owes its most fantastic beauty. For their conduct in their shield prison the armorist has exhausted ingenuity in the devising of rules upon

rules. No paw is lifted without a word-shackle snapped upon it. Yet with a few words on the conventional positions of the lion, the beast most often found upon the shield, whose very antiquity as the earliest of charges has caused conventions to arise round about him, the natural history book of the heralds may be left to the philologist, to whom a strange word is a truffle to be joyfully rooted up.

The lion on the shield is the whelp of convention—a monster like his bastard kinsman the griffon. No attempt is ever made to paint this royal beast in colours which hint at the colour of a mortal hide. Like the eagle he is at ease in blue, gold or checkers. His natural position is held to be when he stands ramping at the world, claws to the fore and lashing with his tail. Therefore the lion rampant in old blazon as in modern French may be 'a lion' needing no further epithet until he drops to his paws and becomes passant. It will be found that we follow the habit of the ages of heraldry and save ourselves needless words if we recognize that the lion looking sidelong towards the spectator may be styled a leopard. Even the modern armorists recognize this when they come to describe the lion's face used as a charge by itself, in which case it has always been blazoned as a leopard's head. Now as the customary position of the leopard is passant so the word leopard used alone serves for what the handbooks would describe as *a lion passant gardant*. A ramping lion with the full face seen, as in the arms of Brocas, was emblazoned as a leopard rampant. Early heraldry knows nothing of lions *regardant* as the modern word is, signifying looking backwards with turned heads. A sole exception may be the well known Welsh coat of three skulking lions with tails between their legs. But if it be needful to describe such a lion in modern heraldry it may be as well to note that *regardant* and *gardant* are in effect the same word, having the same meaning, and were used indifferently in old blazons—the splitting of them into two meanings being a piece of the usual heraldic illiteracy. *A lion looking backward* is better English and better sense than the *lion rampant regardant* of the dictionaries.

Let us say again that for the blazoning of beasts and the like some knowledge of the customary conventions of armorial art is very needful if we would save ourselves a mouthful of foolish words. Keeping before us the flat-iron shaped shield-form we shall see that three ramping lions are commonly set

upon it, two above one, and that for the artist's reasons as they fill the shield space best in that position. This is so commonly recognized that only those enamoured of words follow the modern French custom of adding the caution 'two and one' to the blazon. But the same principle can be carried further, as the early folk did carry it to the great simplifying of heraldic



speech. A modern herald blazons the arms of the King of England much as Mr. Boutell would do—with '*gules, three lions passant guardant, in pale, or*,—the lavish and meaningless commas will be noted. But the long *passant* stripe of the leopard's body could never be accommodated by an artist to the 'two and one.' The three leopards are therefore by a natural movement of the artist placed barwise one under the other, and *gules three leopards gold* is all the blazon needed if we would follow the example of the ancients. *Three running grey-bounds* would by the same rule naturally place themselves barwise and rearrange themselves as 'two and one' if we drove a chevron between them. Three lions passant will be set barwise, but three owls or three eagles 'two and one.' Three swimming salmon will lie barwise also, but three dolphins, a fish which we draw bowed in its leap, cramp themselves unless placed two and one. *In pale* therefore is another phrase to be rid of.

Of the eagle we may say that as he is always borne *displayed* until we come to some late coats in which he perches with

closed wing, the word *displayed* is redundant. *De or a un egle de vert*, said the ancient armorist, and the blazon was enough. The griffin follows the lion in his natural position which is rampant, in which case *rampant* is unnecessary, and we may disregard the armorists who have invented the word *segreant* for the ramping griffin.

The enthusiasm of word-making rose to strange heights when the later armorists approached the brute creation like spectacled Adams to find dog-latinisms for their every part and attribute. Birds of prey were to be *armed* and the other birds *beaked and membered*. Their wings were to be described as *overt, inverted or disclosed*. The common heraldic placing of fish as upright makes them *hauriant*, the swimming fish is *naiant* and the diving fish *urinant*, though our Mr. Boutell, dreading ambiguities, spells it *uriant*. The dolphin must be qualified as *embowed*, although the arm painters never figured him otherwise. Griffons are *segreant*, horses are *forcenée*, grazing oxen are *pascuant*, and the wood wild boar is *armed and unguled*.

All such charges are peppered freely with the word 'proper,' a word of little or no value. *Sable three swans* is a complete blazon for a coat, it being to be guessed that the swans are in their usual colours, that is white, with red beaks and legs. *Silver three corbies* leaves no room for daubing the corbie with blue or red, and *gold three Cornish choughs* demands black birds with beaks and legs of red. The popinjay is green, and we are free to touch his poll and legs with red if we will. Trees and flowers, with the exception of roses, are of custom in the colours nature gave them, and nowhere arises the necessity for clapping 'proper' to a blazon. If something of the sort were necessary our own neglected language gives us a better phrase in 'after his kind' or 'of his kind.' *Couped* is another word of which we may be sparing when we deal with the heads of beasts or birds, as the fact of cutting squarely off is inferred whenever the word 'rased' is not employed. In all things the law cares nothing for little matters of detail. A man blazoning at his leisure may specify that his lion should be said to be *langued* and *armed gules*, but the artist may paint these ornaments gold or azure or leave them out altogether and yet not err, and the barbs and seeds of roses likewise follow the rules of the colour scheme and no others.

'No care for little matters' must be set before us as a clear

rule. A man's hand is drawn cut off at the wrist and palm forward, but *couped at the wrist* and *appaumée* are needless, nor need it be noted whether the hand be *dexter* or *sinister* save in a case where the punning blazon of such a name as Poingdestre must be brought in. Malmaynes should surely have *left* hands, but they are not found so in old figures.

We recognize that our heraldry rose in the French tongue, and many of its words must always savour of it, but let us strive to use our own broad speech wherever it may displace a pedantry of the decadence. When words of French root must serve us, let us follow old authority in Englishing their form as far as may be. The old French *pate* soon became *party* in English, so let us avoid making it modernized French as *patée* and fly the meaningless illiteracy of *partée*. Let *nouée* be English knotted, and *volant* flying. *Garbs* and *annulets* are English sheaves and rings. *Clad* is a better word than *vested*, and *burning* explains itself more clearly than *incensed*. If we have a tooth for strange words let them remind us of old English pedantries of the chase and the wold, and of the furniture of the foray or hawking party. An antiquary may well defend the ancient word from the latinism or modernism which would devour it. Our parrot may rest as a popinjay, the fir-cone may remain an English 'pineapple' and the mole a moldiwarp, and the *panache* of Mr. Boutell's chapter on crests may be again the 'bush of feathers' of the old knights. Above all let us cherish the punning word, Latin, French or English, which explains so many strange charges in the shield. Harts must be harts for us in a shield of Hartwell, but bucks and deer in shields of Buxton and Dereham. The birding bolt of Boson is a *boson*, and the staff in Palmer's arms a palmer's staff, although the same staff in Burdon's arms is a punning *bordoun*. The cats in Pusey's arms and the cat in Pudsey's crest should all be pussycats to the English blazoner, and Dymoke the Champion has certainly a moke's ears for his crest although the family now make the ears of the more genteel fur of the hare. Almost every out of the way charge conceals your pun. Wunhale's three pillows hint at some ancient English word for a pillow allied to *wonne* a pleasure and *bals* the neck; Vane's three gauntlets are the old *gauns* or *wauns*, whilst Wilkinson's unicorn or *lycorne* certainly shows forth that Wilkinson, for the better playing upon his name, split it into Wil-lycorne-son.

The tangled skein of the story of heraldry can only be followed in a rambling essay. Let us sum up the position in which the antiquary finds himself to-day.

His handbooks and guides show themselves as the compilations for the most part of men whose enthusiasm was supported by slender scholarship without judgement or breadth of view, who decanted their new wine into old bottles without a gleam of humourous mistrust.

The handbooks differ amongst themselves, and offer no standard, however mistaken, of authority in heraldry.

The handbooks are, despite their flavouring of second-hand research, the thin extract of the old heraldry books.

The old heraldry books jargoned for sweet jargonning's sake witless symbolism and metaphysic of Bedlam to the delectation of Tom Fool and his brethren who, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, were great readers and loved a tall folio. The break between these books and the medieval practice of heraldry is complete, and their childish archæology made no attempt to close it. Their systems were too deliberately set up to be regarded as in any sense developments of the past, and their speech was darkened of set purpose with absurdities.

Beyond handbook and folio lies the field of medieval heraldry. Its records are too ample to allow us any misunderstanding of their nature, and an important class of them will soon be open to public study in the shape of the rolls of arms. The study of these and their comparison with the ancient personal seals and the evidences of the monuments will then be the task before the armorist-antiquary, and this enquiry can have but one result.

But although the result be assured there are already indications that those who would bring common-sense to sweeten this dingy corner of archæology will do so at the wonted peril of the image-breaker. Especially from two quarters criticism and opposition may be expected.

It will be urged that the early days of heraldry used up all the simple devices, and that, when new arms are to be devised, barbarous new methods and an elaborated jargon must be employed for the mere ensuring of novelty. Such a criticism will however be impossible if the art of heraldry could regain its place and set the pseudo-science of heraldry under its feet. The old methods and practice in the hands of a competent designer would be as fruitful as ever in new combinations and

simple and vigorous results. To deny this is to confess either to an ignorance of the practice of heraldry or to a mind barren of original effort.

Criticism such as this may be easily met. The simplifying and making reasonable of English heraldry has a more serious enemy in the path. The antiquary who is content to live and learn, the architect and the artist will welcome a new movement towards sanity and comprehension, but there remains the personage whom Mr. St. John Hope has christened for more distinction 'the Antiquarian.' That the past century has scantily left one stone upon another of dead antiquarian creeds affects him not a whit. He declares himself in this as in like matters 'in favour of established formula.' In the old days he said this as doggedly when innovators robbed Captain Clutterbuck of the established formula that a round arch was a Saxon arch and a pointed one a Norman. The private expression of some of the opinions of this present essay brought against the writer an antiquarian with furious quill, who maintained in black print that not only was the whole system of the handbooks an ark to be kept secure from enquiring hand, but as the antiquarian's favourite handbook shortened gules into *gu.* and azure into *az.* even so the abbreviations themselves became inspired, and the amplifying them back into gules and azure was 'ugly and ridiculous' as well as wicked. How the chopped fragments were to be pronounced by the pious was left uncertain.

Archæology is perhaps the only science in which such controversy as this would be possible in serious newspapers or reviews, and towards the unhappy subject of armory the duller minds amongst archæologists inevitably tend. No other subject, perhaps, offers at the cost of an uncritical browsing along a shelf of books the opportunity for a barndoor-fowl's flight into scientific literature. A dozen handbooks are probably a-making to-day, and the familiar tags will appear with new surnames on their bindings.

But the day is certainly at hand when the committal to paper of long and misunderstood lists of words will fail to equip the antiquarian for an honoured place on the bookshelves.

Dryasdust has been unhorsed, and we shall see whether Master Mumblazon, the least of his squires, has a surer seat.