

VARIOUS

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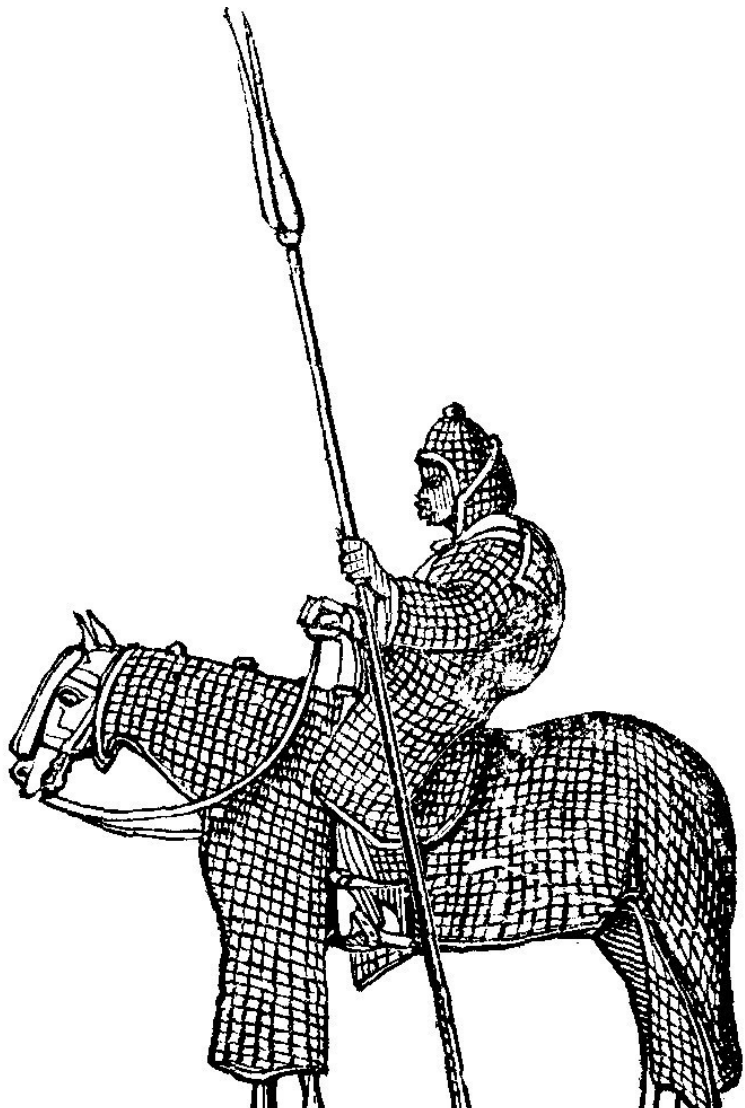
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MANNERS AND CUSTOMS
OF ALL NATIONS.
NO. XIV





The first of the above engravings represents one of the *Body Guards of the Sheikh of Bornou*, copied from an engraving after a sketch made by Major Denham, in his recent "Travels in Africa." These negroes, as they are called, meaning the black chiefs and favourites, all raised to that rank by some deed of bravery, are habited in coats of mail, composed of iron chain, which cover them from the throat to the knees, dividing behind, and coming on each side of the horse; some of them wear helmets or skull-caps of the same metal, with chin-pieces, all sufficiently strong to ward off the shock of a spear. Their horses' heads are also defended by plates of iron, brass, and silver, just leaving room for the eyes of the animal; and not unfrequently they are hung over with charms, enclosed in little red leather parcels, strung together, round the neck, in front of the head, and about the saddle.

Their appearance is altogether of a warlike character, the horses being well caparisoned, and the riders well clothed for personal defence; and though their equestrian evolutions be somewhat wild, the lance or spear is doubtless a formidable weapon in their hands. The savage splendour of their dress, together with the pawing and snorting of their fiery steeds, render them appropriate auxiliaries to royalty, in countries where such attributes of power are requisite to impress the people with the importance of their rulers, and where the milder aids of civilization and refinement are wanting to protect the sovereign

from violence.

The second engraving, copied from the same authentic source as that preceding it, is a somewhat grotesque portraiture of one of the *Lancers of the Sultan of Begharmi*, described, in an historical and geographical account by a native prince, as an extensive country, containing woods and rivers, and fields fit for cultivation; but now desolated, as the inhabitants say, by the "misconduct of the king, who, having increased in levity and licentiousness to such a frightful degree, as even to marry his own daughter, God Almighty caused Saboon, the prince of Wa-da-i, to march against him, and destroy him, laying waste, at the same time, all his country, and leaving the houses uninhabited, as a signal chastisement for his impiety."

Major Denham having applied for the covering of the above warrior and his horse, in his journal thus describes their arrival:—"Aug. 11. Soon after daylight, Karouash, with Hadgi, Mustapha, the chief of the Shouaas, and the Sheikh's two nephews, Hassein and Kanemy, came to our huts. They were attended by more than a dozen slaves, bearing presents for us, for King George, and the consul at Tripoli. I had applied for a *lebida*, (horse-covering,) after seeing those taken from the Begharmis; the sheikh now sent a man, clothed in a yellow wadded jacket, with a scarlet cap, and mounted on the horse taken from the Begharmis, on which the sultan's eldest son rode. He was one of the finest horses I had seen, and covered with a scarlet cloth, also wadded. 'Every thing,' Hadgi Mustapha said, 'except the man, is

to be taken to your great king."

The Begharmis, it will be seen, were conquered by the people of Kanem; and Major Denham has translated, and given in the appendix to his *Travels*, a song of thanksgiving on the triumphant return of the governor, full of the characteristic beauty and simplicity of savage life. In these struggles it would appear the law of nations is severe on the weakest; for the son of the late sultan of the Begharmis is described as "now a slave of the sheikh of Bornou." So wags the world!

LIVING AT TOULOUSE

Part of a house, sufficient for a small family, unfurnished, may be had for 14*l.* a year; and the most elegant in the city, in the best situation, for 60*l.*, including coach-house, stable, cellar, &c. A horse may be kept well for 14*l.* a year. The wages of a coachman are 8*l.*, a housemaid 8*l.*, a noted cook 16*l.*, and a lady's-maid 10*l.* The price of a chicken is 7½*d.*; a partridge 1*s.*; a hare 2*s.* 6*d.*; a duck 1*s.*; a turkey 2*s.* 6*d.*; the best bread 1½*d.* per lb.; common ditto 1*d.*; a bottle of wine 3*d.*; brandy is sold by the lb. of 16 oz. and costs 6*d.*; grapes ½*d.* per lb.; meat 3*d.*; butter 4*d.*; cheese 6*d.*; 50 lbs. carrots 10*d.*; other vegetables at the same rate. A dozen very fine peaches now cost a halfpenny; pears 3*d.* a dozen; labourers, who work from sunrise to sunset, are fed by the proprietor, and have 6*d.* per day, which, in this part of the country, will go further than three times the sum in England. The horses and oxen used about the farms are fed chiefly on straw, and do not consume more than 3*d.* a day. The labouring people make a very nourishing diet from maize flour, which is fried with grease; and this, with beans, forms the principal part of their food. They neither use nor wish for meat; but at this season they have figs and grapes almost for nothing—*Original Letter.*

MOHAMMEDAN SUPERSTITION

The eastern, and all Mohammedan people, considering Alexander the Great as the only monarch who conquered the globe from east to west, give him the title of "the two horned," in allusion to his said conquests. They likewise believe that Gog and Magog were two great nations, but that, in consequence of their wicked and mischievous disposition, Alexander gathered and immured them within two immensely high mountains, in the darkest and northernmost parts of Europe, by a most surprising and insuperable wall, made of iron and copper, of great thickness and height; and that to the present time they are confined there: that, notwithstanding they are a dwarfish race,—viz. from two to three feet in height only—they will one day come out and desolate the world. As Lord Mayor's Day is just approaching, perhaps some of the visiters of Gog and Magog on that occasion may decide this matter. It is almost akin to our nursery quibble of the giants hearing the clock strike, &c. &c.

PERSIAN BARBER

The Khas-terash (literally, personal shaver) of the present sovereign has, in the abundance of his wealth, built a palace for himself close to the royal bath at Teheran. And he is *entitled* to riches, for he is a man of pre-eminent excellence in his art, and has had for a long period, under his especial care, the magnificent beard of his majesty, which is at this moment, and has been for years, the pride of Persia.—*Persian Sketches*.

LIVING IN GENEVA

The vicinity of Geneva appears peculiarly eligible for the permanent residence of an English family. There is perhaps no town on the continent where greater facilities are afforded for a man of literary and scientific pursuits to indulge his taste or to increase his knowledge. The city is close built, and consequently not an agreeable place to live in; but its immediate environs abound with delightful spots.

The costume of the Genevese assimilates much with that of the French; but the better class of females are partial to the English fashions. The language of the country is French, but its habits and religion are widely different. Not only does the Protestant faith find here the salutary prevalence of a kindred faith, but the members of our own ecclesiastical establishment are enabled to join each other every Sabbath day in the worship of God, and at stated seasons to receive the holy sacrament according to the pure and apostolic ritual of the church of England.

The expense of a house, with a garden and piece of land, within a mile of the gates, including also the keeping of a caleche and pair of horses, for a gentleman, his lady, two children, and three servants, does not exceed 300*l.* a year; and with this he is enabled to receive his friends occasionally, and in a respectable style. To proceed from a family establishment to a bachelor's

pension, "I," says Mr. Seth Stevenson, in his *Continental Travels*, "was told that a person at Petit Saconnex has a sleeping-room to himself, and his breakfast, dinner, tea, and supper with the family, for 500 francs (20*l.* 16*s.* 8*d.*) per annum."

The taxation of Geneva is described as very trifling. There is a sort of income-tax, to which every man of property contributes, on his honour, as to the amount of that property. The whole tax for horses and carriages amounts to about 18*d.* for each person; the richest it seems pays no more, and the others pay no less. "My friend assures me," continues Mr. S. "that his fellow citizens approve of their annexation to Switzerland, and also of the union of the Valais with the Helvetic confederation—that the people of this little republic are flourishing again, contented with their government; and as the best proof of their returning prosperity since the peace, he adverted to the comparatively few indigent or distressed persons among them, and to the fact of there being only forty-five persons in the poor's hospital, besides those admitted under the head of casualties."

ORIGINAL STORY OF HAMLET,

(From the Latin of Saxo
Grammaticus, but interspersed.)

Florwendillus, king of Jutland, married Geruthra, or Gertrude, the only daughter of Ruric, king of Denmark. The produce of this union was a son, called Amlettus. When he grew towards manhood, his spirit and extraordinary abilities excited the envy and hatred of his uncle, who, before the birth of Amlettus, was regarded as presumptive heir to the crown. Fengo, which was the name of this haughty prince, conceived a passion for his sister-in-law, the queen; and meeting with reciprocal feelings, they soon arranged a plan, which putting into execution, he ascended the throne of his brother and espoused the widowed princess. Amlettus, (or Hamlet,) suspecting that his father had died by the hand or the devices of his uncle, determined to be revenged. But perceiving the jealousy with which the usurper eyed his superior talents, and the better to conceal his hatred and intentions, he affected a gradual derangement of reason, and at last acted all the extravagance of an absolute madman. Fengo's guilt induced him to doubt the reality of a malady so favourable to his security; and suspicious of some direful project

being hidden beneath assumed insanity, he tried by different stratagems to penetrate the truth. One of these was to draw him into a confidential interview with a young damsel, who had been the companion of his infancy; but Hamlet's sagacity, and the timely caution of his intimate friend, frustrated this design. In these two persons we may recognise the Ophelia and Horatio of Shakspeare. A second plot was attended with equal want of success. It was concerted by Fengo that the queen should take her son to task in a private conversation, vainly flattering himself that the prince would not conceal his true state from the pleadings of a mother. Shakspeare has adopted every part of this scene, not only the precise situation and circumstances, but the sentiments and sometimes the very words themselves. The queen's apartment was the appointed place of conference, where the king, to secure certain testimony, had previously ordered one of his courtiers to conceal himself under *a heap of straw*; so says the historian; and though Shakspeare, in unison with the refinement of more modern times, changes that rustic covering for the royal tapestry, yet it was even as Saxo Grammaticus relates it. In those primitive ages, straw, hay, of rushes, strewed on the floor, were the usual carpets in the chambers of the great. One of our Henrys, in making a progress to the north of England, previously sent forward a courier to order *clean straw* at every house where he was to take his lodging. But to return to the subject.

The prince, suspecting there might be a concealed listener,

and that it was the king, pursued his wild and frantic acts, hoping that by some lucky chance he might discover his hiding-place. Watchful of all that passed in the room, as he dashed from side to side, he descried a little movement of the uneasy courtier's covering. Suddenly Hamlet sprung on his feet, began to crow like a cock, and flapping his arms against his sides, leaped upon the straw; feeling something under him, he snatched out his sword and thrust it through the unfortunate lord. The barbarism of the times is most shockingly displayed in the brutal manner in which he treats the dead body; but for the honour of the Danish prince, we must suppose that it was not merely a wanton act, but done the more decidedly to convince the king, when the strange situation of the corpse was seen, how absolutely he must be divested of reason. Being assured he was now alone with his mother, in a most awful manner he turns upon her, and avows his madness to be assumed; he reproaches her with her wicked deeds and incestuous marriage; and threatens a mighty vengeance upon the instigator of her crime.

In the historian we find that the admonitions of Hamlet awakened the conscience of the queen, and recalled her to penitence and virtue. The king, observing the change, became doubly suspicious of the prince; and baffling some preliminary steps he took to vengeance; Hamlet was entrapped by him into an embassy to England. He sent along with him two courtiers, who bore private letters to the English monarch, requesting him, as the greatest favour he could confer on Denmark, to compass,

by secret and by sure means, the death of the prince as soon as he landed. Hamlet, during the voyage, had reason to suspect the mission of his companions; and by a stratagem obtaining their credentials, he found the treacherous mandate; and changing it for one wherein he ordered the execution of the two lords, he quietly proceeded with them to the British shore. On landing, the papers were delivered, and the king, without further parley, obeyed what he believed to be the request of his royal ally; and thus did treason meet the punishment due to its crime. The daughter of the king being charmed with the person and manners of the foreign prince, evinced such marks of tenderness, that Hamlet could not but perceive the depth of his conquest. He was not insensible to her attractions; and receiving the king's assent, in the course of a few days led her to the nuptial altar. Amidst all joys, he was, however, like a perturbed ghost that could not rest; and before many suns had rose and set, he obtained a hard wrung leave from his bride, once more set sail, and appeared at Elsinour just in time to be a witness of the splendid rites which Fengo (supposing him now to be murdered) had prepared for his funeral. On the proclamation of his arrival, he was welcomed with enthusiasm by the people, whose idol he was, and who had been overwhelmed with grief when Fengo announced to them his sudden death in England. The king, inflamed with so ruinous a disappointment, and becoming doubly jealous of his growing popularity, now affected no conciliation, but openly manifested his hatred and hostility. Hamlet again had recourse

to his pretended madness, and committed so many alarming acts, that Fengo, fearing their direction, ordered his sword to be locked in its scabbard, under a plea of guarding the lunatic from personal harm, After various adventures, at last the prince accomplished the death of his uncle's adherents, and vengeance on the fratricide himself, by setting fire to the palace during the debauch of a midnight banquet. Rushing amidst the flames, he kills Fengo with his own hand, reproaching him at the moment with his murder, adultery, and incest. Immediately on this act of retribution he was proclaimed lawful successor to the throne, and crowned with all due solemnity.

Thus far Shakspeare treads in the steps of the annalist; the only difference is in the fate of the hero; in the one he finds a kingdom, in the other a grave. Saxo Grammaticus carries the history further; and after the crowning of Hamlet as king, brings him again into Britain, where, in compliment to that land of beauty, he marries a second wife, the daughter of a Scottish king. Hamlet brought both his wives to Denmark, and prepared for a long life of prosperity and peace. But the sword hung over his head; war burst around him, and he fell in combat by the hand of Vigelotes, son of Ruric. Saxo Grammaticus sums up his character in a few words: "He was a wise prince and a great warrior. Like Achilles, he had the principal actions of his life wrought on his shield. The daughter of the king of Scotland casting her eye on it, loved him for the battles he had won, and became his bride."

**SPIRIT OF THE
PUBLIC JOURNALS**

ENGLISH FRUITS

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