

different symbols which have at different times and in different places been used heraldically. Some writers in treating of European heraldry profess to give a definite origin and meaning to every form and symbol, but the meanings asserted are frequently arbitrary and often fanciful even to absurdity. While a lion, for instance, may naturally convey the idea of strength or courage, and it may be the case, as is asserted, that a martlet was regarded as referring to exploits or adventures of travel, it is the fact that both these symbols have been frequently adopted without any regard to such ideas or meanings: thus the lion appears in the arms of certain Provinces of Canada to indicate British relationship; and the martlet is borne by many English families simply as a mark of feudal connection with other families bearing the same charge. It may be said in a general way that when a symbol has been adopted it has been selected for a certain reason or purpose, and in order to memorise some particular event or some characteristic or relationship of the person assuming it, but it is certain that many have been adopted arbitrarily, or for no better reason than as ornament, or to fill up space in a shield. It would indeed be too much to expect of the ever-varying mind of man, than a meaning attached by one man to some particular symbol adopted by him should convey to all others, in different places and in different ages, the same ideas which were present in his mind; and if the heralds of one country chose to assign some particular meaning to a charge, they could not rely upon other heralds following them and attaching the same meaning to it. It is a plain conclusion that heraldic forms do not necessarily, or as a rule, symbolise definite ideas or meanings or record historical events; there are, of course, numerous instances where charges are so borne as to convey certain ideas or record events in a manner readily intelligible, but these are really exceptions to the general rule, and do not constitute the rule itself.

European heraldry is generally speaking homogeneous, or was so originally, or perhaps rather was so at the period of the Crusades when the intercourse of armour-bearing men of different countries was frequent, rendering it necessary that the forms and principles of the heraldry which the circumstances of the times called forth, should be largely of an international character—such, for example, as was the use of Latin as an international language. Nevertheless, as no central standard or authority existed, it was inevitable that differences in detail should arise, and that has in fact occurred, and although there is a general resemblance in the heraldry of the different European nations, there is a great difference in detail.

English heraldry is the purest, in that it conforms more closely than any other to the simpler standards of general recognition, and, excepting the vagaries of the heralds of the Georgian period, avoids the fantastic forms of some and the crude forms of others. To mention an instance of adherence to recognized standards: It is a rule laid down by all European heralds that metal must not be charged upon metal or colour upon colour. The writer has no recollection of ever having observed an infringement of this rule in English heraldry,* while it is frequently disregarded by continental heralds. Many forms used by continental heralds are entirely unknown in England.

*Except the arms of the Canadian Diocese of Quebec.

The most primitive form of heraldry is probably the use of animals as symbols; this appears in Indian heraldry, where (excepting the Pacific tribes, who use heraldic forms of a unique character) the symbols are nearly always natural animals. Then follows the adoption of inanimate objects; and a further development is the use of conventional forms, both animate and inanimate. An undeveloped form of heraldry of a different kind is the use of simple colour for military purposes, one army or nation using one colour, and their opponents another; naturally leading to the use of banners of a more complex form, with a combination of different colours, and thus to the forms familiar to all students of European heraldry, in which this development has met with and combined the development of symbolic forms.

Scottish heraldry in the Lowlands seems to be nearly identical with English, but apparently showing Continental influence, of which the occasional occurrence of metal charged upon metal, or colour upon colour, may be an evidence. In the Highlands the forms are of a rather less developed character, being frequently crude and unscientific. A marked characteristic of Highland armorial bearings is the adoption of quarterings having reference to territorial claims, rather than to family relationships. Certain charges are of frequent occurrence, such as the bear's head and the lymphad; these no doubt indicate territorial claims, alliances, or in some instances feudal connections. The most distinctive and unique heraldic system of the Highlands is the use of clan tartans. These are hereditary, and occasionally show an adoption of the practice of cadency,* divisions of clans using tartans slightly varied from one another, but such cases are exceptional. A remarkable feature of Scottish tartan heraldry is the recent adoption of a great number of tartans for Lowland families, or rather as appropriate to certain surnames, whose insignia of this sort are either new inventions or revivals of patterns long obsolete.

Irish native (Celtic) heraldry is also more crude in its form and symbols than English. A peculiarity is the frequent occurrence of the snakes which St. Patrick banished, and of the lizards which he permitted to remain. It is possible that these symbols may be of great antiquity, and perhaps adopted from Phœnician sources, and akin to the snake worship of the East, as are the dragons of China and Japan; all undoubtedly reminiscences of Eden.

Continental heraldry displays many complex forms in the divisions of armorial shields, many of which are of the most meaningless character, and are difficult to describe; some, indeed, are absolutely indescribable in the terms used by English heralds.

Plumes, wings, and horns, as crests, or used with crests, are a prevailing feature of German heraldry, which seems to delight in such things, and in an excessive use of scrolls, flourishes and the like, as adornments of heraldic achievements, and in the drawing of some heraldic charges. Another characteristic of German heraldry is the multiplying of crests, several of which, each borne upon a helmet with mantlings, may sometimes be seen crowded upon one shield. When this is the case the crests are usually arranged, respecting (or facing) each other, the rule of English

*Cadency is the adoption of charges to indicate a difference in seniority, or the formation of a new family branch.

heraldry that all animate charges look to the dexter, or right side of a person standing behind the shield, being ignored by German heralds. Thus where two animals, for instance, are borne separately on the shield, an ordinary arrangement is to face them inwards, one to the dexter and the other to the sinister, which would be quite inadmissible in English heraldry, where the only exceptions to this rule are (1) when animate charges are specially borne coupled as "addorsed" "combatant" or "counterpassant," positions which necessarily imply the movement of the two animals in contrary directions; and (2) when arms are borne upon a flag, the staff must always be on the proper dexter side, consequently if the flag is shown flying to the dexter, all charges will be reversed from the ordinary position.

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(To be continued.)

PARIS LETTER.

The *Figaro* is going in for the speciality of national scares. Recently it published on the authority of ex-Foreign Minister Flourens, the secrets of the French Foreign Office since 1871, to show that the diplomacy of France was at the beck and call of Prince Bismarck, and that preceding Foreign Ministers before acting invariably consulted the wishes and the whims of the great Chancellor. The revelations surprised and astounded the public, and despite the natural denials, did harm. It made foreign diplomats shake their heads and measure and weigh their confidences; to have their conversation and whisperings given to the world like a de Goncourt journal was too bad. Russia, it is said, felt particularly hurt at the exposure. Well, the same journal has lashed the newspapers, at least—for in France there are no public meetings to gauge indignation or measure public opinion—into a white heat, by its interview with one of the leading generals on active service, and destined to command, in case of war, 250,000 soldiers; that commander is pessimism itself; the French army—Deputy Lockrey, the other day, denounced the decadence and inefficiency of the French navy—states the general in question is not up to date, and not fit to cope with the forces of Germany, and the best thing France can do is to disarm, convert her soldiers into militia, keep up skeleton staffs and trust to events. Germany, the general asserts, can have 36 hours advance upon France in point of mobilization; then what is the use of soldiers if they cannot march or be fed, in presence of smashed up railways, Palatinate ravages—a la mode Turenne—and certain discomfiture in advance? The Minister of War denies the soft impeachment of the interviewed general; that it is all imaginary, etc.; but the *Figaro* reiterates the fact, adding, it toned down a great deal that was said. The journals demand that the general be unmasked and handed over to the Furies—*pour encourager les autres*.

Beyond doubt the question of disarmament is making way: it is in the air. Serious military writers admit that they have no theories, but, above all, no experience of modern weapons and combinations to fall back upon. M. Malo, the most learned writer on military affairs in France, avows that the future results of war are so unknown that governments may well be ex-