

Heraldry in Brief.



ARMORY, or Heraldry, as it is usually, but not quite accurately, termed, is the Art or Science of pictorially symbolising (1) Persons, Families, Tribes, Nations; (2) Governments, National, Provincial, Municipal; (3) Associations of persons for a common purpose; Ecclesiastical, Military, Naval, Commercial, or Sentimental. Pictorial symbolism has been practised in various forms by almost all civilised, and many uncivilised, people in all ages of the world of which we have definite information. It was about the eleventh century that the Armorial form or system as known to us had its origin, or perhaps rather its adaptation or development; and this arose chiefly in consequence of armour coming into use, which so disguised the wearer that it became necessary for him to adopt some external mark by which his identity could be known to friend or foe. It then became reduced to a science or system regulated by suitable laws, and so continued as of necessity so long as defensive armour concealing the wearer continued to be used, during which time the system became so well established that it has ever since continued, although the chief reason for it has long since passed away.

Armory had its highest development in form and practice in the Plantagenet period, or in the time of the defensive armour which made it so necessary;