VI
VESTIGES IN THE HAT

HOW HATS WERE EVOLVED—WHY PLUMES ARE ON THE LEFT SIDE—THE GROWTH OF THE BUSBY—HELMETS AND COCKED HATS.

THOSE who have written upon dress from an artistic point of view have recognized that costume and architecture are affected by the same influences. When we come to the hat, we find that its name is connected with a building of a primitive character, namely, a hut. Mr. Allan Poe Newcombe, an architect, some years ago pointed out the curious resemblance which has existed, and is still to be found in many countries, between headgear and habitations or other buildings. It may be that the cases which have been collected together are mere coincidences, though it must be allowed that they are both numerous and striking. It may be that the same taste, or lack of it, has given rise to the similarity of style, or in the beginning, the designer of the hat may have taken the hut as a model.

In the Hawaiian Islands, long before the inhabitants troubled about clothes, they built themselves grass houses, and at the present time the characteristic
Hawaiian hat is remarkably like the hut. The turbans of Eastern Church dignitaries are still of the same shape as those worn by the high priests among the Jews, and are remarkably like the characteristic dome which surmounts a mosque. (See Figure 42.)

Looking about in other countries we shall find further instances that support Mr. Newcombe’s contention; our illustration of a Siamese head-dress and building is a case in point. (See Figure 43.)

Again going back into European history, we find that the high pointed spires of Gothic churches were cotemporaneous with the high horn-like head-dress known as the hennin (see Figure 44). It is claimed, moreover, that like results will be found after a comparison of other styles of architecture with the costume of the period in which they flourished.
Fig. 43.—A Siamese head-dress and a Pra Pang or Votive spire (after P. A. Thompson).

Fig. 44.—A Gothic spire (St. Stephen’s, Caen) compared with the hennin (the latter after Fairholt).
Leaving this suggestive line of research, and coming to hats as we have them at the present day, we find that they offer several remarkable vestiges for our consideration. First of all there is the hat-band outside, which sometimes ends in two tails or streamers that hang from the back of the hat (see Figure 47). From the bow usually present it is evident that the hat-band was tied, and the streamers represent the loose ends. As a matter of fact, primitively, a head-dress was made from a piece of cloth, round which a fillet was tied so that it fitted the head. In this connexion Figure 45 is most interesting. It repre-
sents the back view of the head of the Egyptian woman of the Sixth Dynasty, who is seen in Figure 76, and shows a head-dress which is confined with a fillet that is tied at the back so as to make two tails.

The modern Arab fastens his kefiyeh with a twist of camel’s hair without streamers, and the lady of the

fourteenth century, shown in Figure 46, has also an ordinary band.

The child’s sailor hat and the Scotch cap are among the modern head coverings which retain the strings (Figure 49). A twelfth-century head-dress shown in a manuscript (Figure 48) has a great similarity to the Scotch cap, as the band forms a kind of binding to the article in both cases, and there are streamers to both.
The strings or streamers are to be found in many other head coverings, including the mitres of bishops (see Figure 50). The particular mitre illustrated is that of the See of Durham, which is distinguished from others in being plumed.

An interesting suggestion as to the origin of the slit in the top of the mitre may be mentioned here. Head-dresses were used in very early times which were in the form of a fish's head, and it has been thought that the slit in the mitre, so distinctly shown in chess-men, represents the fish's mouth.

On looking at the inside of a modern hat, a little bow of silk ribbon will usually be found at the back where the two edges of the leather lining meet. Here, again, is a vestige. (See Figure 51.)
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In some hats the ribbon does not simply make the bow, but it is threaded through a greater or less number of holes in the leather, though now fulfilling no useful purpose. (See Figure 52.)

Fig. 51.—Small vestigial bow of ribbon in a modern hat.

Fig. 52.—A hat with the remains of lacing.
In a hunting hat, however (see Figure 53), the lacing is continuous round the hat, and the lining can be made to fit the wearer. It helps to form a buffer, should the huntsman unfortunately fall on his head, and it is claimed that many lives have been saved by this small detail.

It may be gathered from the description that in times when hats could not easily be got to fit their wearers, the lacing inside would be most useful, as it ensured that the size could be adjusted.

It is possible also that in the lacing we have a means by which a hat was originally shaped, and that the lace is really a hat-band threaded through the material of the head-dress instead of being tied round outside. The first diagram on page 57 shows a flat piece of leather cut into a circular form; the

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**FIG. 53.—A hunting hat with complete lacing inside.**
next shows it perforated and a lace put through the openings; the third indicates how by tightening the string a crown could be made to the hat.

![Fig. 54.—A disc of leather.](image)

![Fig. 55.—The disc perforated and the lace inserted.](image)

![Fig. 56.—The lace tightened to form a crown.](image)

![Fig. 57.—The ends of the lace tied as a bow inside.](image)

In time, when the crown was made in different ways, it would be easy to transfer the lacing to the lining as seen already in the hunting hat (Figure 53).

It is interesting to note that a small bow is also found inside ladies’ hats, and often used as a place on
which to put the name of the maker. (See Figure 58.)

Sir George Darwin has shown why plumes are, and used to be, on the left side of a hat only. In the days when the feathers were particularly long there was also plenty of fighting, and it only needs the attention to be drawn to the point, to make one realize that if the plume had been on the right side, it might often have got in the way of a sword and thereby caused the overthrow or even death of its wearer. At the present day in the army (see Figure 59), the plumes will be found on the left side as in the days of cavaliers.

Sir George Darwin\(^8\) has traced the origin of the
busby, and has shown that the little red flap that hangs on the left side as a useless appendage is really the original cap. Busbies were the special attributes of the Hussars, who were originally Hungarian soldiers. It is the peasant's cap of Hungary that is the forerunner of the military head-dress which we are considering, and it consisted of a red cap of cloth with a band of fur round the edge. As time went on, the fur on the cap, which was adopted in the end by various regiments, became wider and wider, and the original red cap got smaller and smaller until the form of the modern busby was reached. In some cases even the flap already mentioned has gone, though the fact that the top of the busby is made of cloth instead of fur still points to its origin. (See Figures 60 and 61.)

Though we are not discussing armour at the
moment, we may say while speaking of military head-dresses that metal helmets are still in use in a few regiments. The helmet also of the fireman deserves attention, as it is practically of the same type as that worn by the ancient Greeks. (See Figure 62.)

The cocked hat should also claim our attention,

![Fig. 62.—A fireman’s helmet (of the ancient Greek type).](image)

![Fig. 63.—Buttons so arranged that the broad brim of a hat can be fastened to the crown, thus forming a temporary “cock” (Hudibras after Hogarth).](image)

and it gives us another instance of temporary alterations which have ultimately become permanent. The picture of Hudibras shows an early stage in the history of cocking. The strings which connect the brim of a bishop’s tall hat to the crown are evidently connected with this practice. In the modern cocked hat more of the right side is turned up than of the left. A little careful examination will render its development from the broad-brimmed hat easily
understood, while the representatives of the hat-band and the details of the cocking will be soon discovered.

The cock of the hat formed a convenient spot in which to fix an ornament, and the name cockade has come to be applied to such an addition, borne on the hat, as a mark to distinguish the wearer.

The part which cockades have played in history is considerable, but as they are now chiefly associated with the liveries of men-servants they will be considered later on in the book. Before, however, we leave, for the present, the subject of head coverings, we ought to mention that a piece of woven material as primitively used without even a restraining band, still survives in the shape of the small shawl which north-country girls and women very generally wear over their heads. The head-dress of the nun is another case in point, and recalls that in vogue in Tudor times, while the sun-bonnet of the barge and market women, though more highly developed, still consists to a considerable extent of simple drapery.