THE SURPLICE AND "THE CLOTH"—THE CIVIL ORIGIN OF VESTMENTS—SPECIAL VESTMENTS—PROCESSIONAL VESTMENTS, SO CALLED—NUNS' DRESS—THE CHOKER

THE dress worn by clergy when conducting religious ceremonies offers many opportunities for studying the development of garments, and illustrates at the same time how the dress used by a special class may evolve more slowly and on different lines from the same clothes that may be worn by the people at large. The case is similar to that of animals or plants which are isolated from the other members of their species, and in course of time come to differ very markedly from their far-away relatives who flourish in the old home.

We shall see that many of the ecclesiastical vestments can be traced to civil dress; but for the moment we may discuss those which are in use at the present time, and which afford additional evidence in support of our statement that the more important the ceremonial, the more ancient the costume. At the present day we find that the clergy of the Church of England
preach either in a white surplice or in a black gown. We can trace the black gown to an order made by James I, but at the present day the vestments worn by the clergy of the Presbyterian Churches are rather professional, or academical like a barrister's gown, than properly ecclesiastical. We have already mentioned the bands (see p. 44) which are worn with the black gown, and here we might mention that when the preacher ministers to a recognized congregation he wears them, though if he is ordained but is conducting an occasional service he does not.

Charles I gave instructions that the surplice should be worn, and had an Act passed giving him power to regulate clerical costume. But the clergy sent in a petition that matters should be left as they were, and this request seems to have been granted, as some of the ministers at the time expressed the fear that His Majesty would order them to wear hoods and bells. Mr. Macalister\(^{25}\) says that the surplice was originally invented to take the place of the albe, which was made so small that it was difficult to put it over the cassock when the latter garment was thick and lined with fur.

Originally the surplice was put on over the head, in the same way as the albe, the place of which it took, but some two hundred years ago the surplice was made open in front and fastened at the neck with a button. The reason for this is that in this way the surplice could be put on without disarranging the
enormous wigs which were worn during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The cassock, to which we have already alluded, was a long, loose coat or gown, which was worn by both sexes from the eleventh century onwards. The name was applied to the coat adopted by foot soldiers in the time of Elizabeth. In the case of the laity, it was abandoned in favour of the shorter and more convenient coat.

The black coat of the modern clergy, whom we term "the cloth," no doubt represents it, while it is of course worn ordinarily by many Roman Catholic clergy, and some High Churchmen, as an everyday garment, for which it was originally intended. The row of buttons which now fasten the long cassocks from neck to the foot have been humorously compared by Lord Grimthorpe to the close row of rivets on a boiler.

With regard to the development of the more ornamental dress of the clergy there is a great deal to be said. In the past, two separate origins for it have been suggested, and to pursue either of these would be to take us far back into history. It has been claimed, in the first place, that modern church vestments have been derived from those of the Levitical priesthood. The other idea is that the ceremonial dress of the clergy was derived from the civil costume of the Romans. It appears, however, that careful researches have shown that the decorations which have given ecclesiastical vestments their highly orna-
mented character—in which they resemble certainly those used by the Jews in Temple worship—have been gradually acquired.

The dress of the ancient Christians was simple, and it seems likely that owing to the poverty of the early Church rich clothing could hardly have been adopted. Besides, for many centuries there is no mention of such vestments as we are considering, and no records as to their having been derived from Jewish models. On the other hand, everything points to a more natural origin of the raiment concerned. Flowing garments, as we have already seen, give dignity, and we find that among the Romans such were used in dignified leisure or on occasions of state, in contra-distinction to the dress of active existence, which consisted of a short tunic or chiton. It is with the first kind of dress that we have to deal.

It consisted of a tunic either short or long, over which was worn the toga which was capable of the same variety of arrangement as the plaid which still survives. Even when the toga was given up by the people generally, on the founding of the Roman Empire, it continued to be used in certain cases.

It was etiquette to wear a toga when dining with the Emperor or going to court; advocates wore it, as did clients when they visited their patrons, and it was also adopted at funerals and when sacrifices were being made.

On the face of it, it would appear likely that those
who ministered to the early Christian Church would follow the general custom. Nothing, perhaps, affords better evidence of this having taken place than an illustration which is considered authentic of St.

Fig. 128.—St. Gregory the Great with his father Gordianus, who was a senator, on his right, and his mother Sylvia on his left. This shows the similarity between ecclesiastical and civil costume in early times. From an authentic picture (after Marriott).

Gregory the Great with his father and mother. As Mr. Marriott notes, if it were not for the Papal pallium—that is to say, the band round his shoulders—on which crosses are embroidered, and the book of the Gospels which he holds in his hand, it would be hard to distinguish which was the bishop and which the senator. (See Figure 128.)
COSTUME CONNECTED WITH RELIGION

From this dress it is claimed, by those who have carefully gone into the question, that ecclesiastical vestments have been developed. In connection with this, Mr. Macalister makes the following remarks: "Fashion in dress or ornaments is subject to constant changes, which, though perhaps individually trifling, in time amount to complete revolutions; but the devotees of any religion, true or false, are by nature conservative of its doctrines or observances. At first the early Christians wore the same costume both at worship and at home. Fashion," Mr. Macalister continues, "would slowly change unchecked from year to year, while ecclesiastical conservatism would retard such changes as far as they concern the dress worn at divine service; small differences would spring into existence between everyday dress and the dress of the worshipper. These differences, at first hardly perceptible, would increase as the process went on, until the two styles of costume became sharply distinguished from one another." In this connection it will be interesting to mention those vestments which antiquarians have traced to Roman costume.

The albe takes its name from the *tunica alba*, which was used as a purely secular garment until the ninth century. It was worn by all the ministers and deacons, but as the latter had no vestment above the albe, it came to be the special characteristic of the deacons. Usually, as the name implies, the albe was
white, but in this country coloured albes were sometimes used.

We have already seen that the surplice was derived from the albe, and Mr. Marriott has brought forward all the evidence that he can to show that white was the colour of the vestments at the earliest times in the history of the Church. His arguments, however, do not seem to be conclusive, and his inferences do not commend themselves to Mr. Macalister. The latter thinks, however, that the view that white was the colour appropriated in primitive times to the dress of the Christian ministry is preferable to the theory that the early vestments were of the same elaborate description as their mediæval successors. He is of opinion, nevertheless, that the passages upon which Mr. Marriott bases his arguments are quite consistent with a third alternative, namely, that no distinctive vestments were set apart for the exclusive use of the Christian minister during the first four centuries of the Christian era.

The dalmatic was a wide gown or tunic with long full sleeves, which was derived apparently from the albe and used by persons in high secular positions before it was adopted by the Church. In the mediæval period the dalmatic was slit for a short distance up either side and fringes were added to decorate the slits, the hems, and the ends of the sleeves. In this style the garment was worn by a bishop. There were, however, only fringes on the
left sleeves and along the left side in the form of this vestment which was appropriated to a deacon.

Most elaborate explanations were offered by mediæval writers for this difference, which seems merely to be a matter of convenience for the deacon, who served at the altar. It was important that he should have his right side free, and the heavy fringes would have got into his way. One of the ideas with regard to the fringe was that the absence from the right side symbolizes our freedom from care in the world to come; but why, Mr. Macalister asks, was not the bishop to be exempt from care in the future world? In connection with the coronation of English sovereigns the dalmatic is still used, as well as representatives of other ecclesiastical vestments, but to these we shall refer again.

It is not at all unlikely that the stole which a clergyman wears after the fashion of an untied tie, and which hangs from his neck nearly to the ground, is really the same thing as our handkerchief, and it is certain that it was employed originally as a scarf or orarium. In many Roman monuments which are not of an ecclesiastical character, scarves are worn over the rest of the dress. They pass over the left shoulder, diagonally, towards the right side, and are fastened under the right arm. They are not to be confounded with the two bands of purple (or clavi) which on the tunics of senators and other important men ran round the sides of the neck openings and down to the lower hem.
It is probable that the scarves were used in the same way as favours and "colours" among ourselves. It is recorded that Aurelian was the first emperor who distributed "oraria" as presents to the people to be worn as favours. In this connection we must not forget the ribbons of the Knightly Orders, which we have already mentioned when speaking of the baldric.

The Fourth Council of Toledo enacted that deacons should wear their stoles over their left shoulder so that their right arm might be free to facilitate the execution of their duties in divine service. An English church vestment actually goes by the name of the scarf, and is a broad black band of silk worn in the same way as the stole. It is probably a modification of some article of university costume, possibly the tippet (see p. 212), and is worn by Doctors of Divinity and the clerical authorities of Collegiate and Cathedral bodies.

The outdoor garment which replaced the toga took several forms. One of these had already been in use for some time as part of the dress of the lower classes and of slaves. Speaking briefly, it rose in the world, and emperors even wore it when they were travelling. One form, called the casula, is of interest to us because it is the forerunner of the chasuble.

So much attention has been drawn to ecclesiastical vestments of recent years, owing to the adoption by English High Church clergy of those in which Roman Catholic priests celebrate Mass, that it may be per-
haps of interest, even at the risk of recapitulation, to consider them. It should be said at the outset that the stripes of embroidery, which are often very elaborate and enriched with jewels, which appear on vestments such as the amice and albe, are called apparels.

To garments which are white and have at times to be washed, these ornaments are sewn or otherwise attached, so that they can be removed when it is necessary and replaced. The amice we have not yet mentioned, as it is of mediaeval origin and did not come into our consideration of the evolution of modern vestments from Roman dress. It was a rectangular piece of linen, about thirty-six inches by twenty-five inches, with an apparel sewn along one edge and a cross embroidered in the centre. This the priest at the present time wears round his neck. The outer garment or chasuble, which is richly ornamented, we have traced to the garment which replaced the Roman toga, and as it is without sleeves and has become heavier, it has been found necessary to slit up the sides. Under this the stole is worn over the albe, and only its ends appear beneath the chasuble. (See Figure 129.) There is ornamentation on the sleeves of the albe, where they show, and on the back and front of it where it shows below the chasuble.

The apparels, according to Druitt, are possibly the remains of the purple bands and other ornamentations of the Roman tunic, from which we have seen that the albe was derived. Over the left arm the priest
carries a maniple which is something like a stole. This was originally made of linen, and worn over the fingers of the left hand. There is no doubt but that it was once a napkin and, according to Mr. G.

C. Coulton, originally used in the fashion of a modern pocket-handkerchief. That it was a napkin is shown by quotations from ancient writers, and there seems no doubt also that many refinements of Roman civilization, of which the pocket handkerchief was one, were lost in the later Middle Ages. In fact,
the handkerchief only began to come into general use in polite society about Henry VIII’s reign, and the maniple of the ministrant at the altar must have lost its original use, or Bernard would not have twice warned him against blowing his nose on his chasuble or surplice.

When speaking of the handkerchief, there is another use which we may mention. It was often employed for ceremonial purposes in connection with the giving of presents, and this idea seems to have come from Eastern lands, where gifts are wrapped in highly ornamental covers. In the parable of the talents, one of them, it will be remembered, was wrapped in a napkin, and even to-day the labourer has his dinner taken to him in a brightly coloured cotton handkerchief.

Among the special vestments of bishops are the dalmatic, which we have already described, and the tunicle, which originally did not differ from it, and began to be worn beneath it about the twelfth century. Others are the buskins or stockings (which were originally reserved for the pope), sandals, ring, gloves, and mitre, together with a pastoral staff adapted from the shepherd’s crook.

Archbishops have a cross staff and a pallium or pall which is probably derived from the same ancestor as the stole, namely the orarium, which, we have seen, was a favour or distinction granted by the Roman Emperor.
The word pallium has been applied to a number of garments in the past, many of which were of a flowing character, and some writers have seen in the archbishop’s pall a small vestige of what was once an ample vestment. Early pictures, however, show the pall looped round the shoulders with one end hanging in front of the body and one behind. Mr. Macalister says that it was difficult sometimes to distinguish between it and the stole, and that the next step in its evolution was to knot the free ends to the loops as shown in the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries. From this it was but an easy step to the final form which consists of an oval loop with a long tail pendent from each of its ends, so that when it is worn on the person it makes a capital “Y” on the back and another on the chest. It should be pointed out that the pall must not be confounded with the apparel of the chasuble called the orphrey, which also has a “Y” shape.

In connection with the manufacture of the pall there are some interesting proceedings. It is made from the wool of two lambs, and they are solemnly blessed on Saint Agnes’s day in the church dedicated in the name of that saint at Rome. The animals are chosen with special reference to their whiteness and goodness, and are carried into Rome in separate baskets, which are slung over a horse’s back.

On the way to the church the Pope makes the sign
of the cross from a window over the lambs, and they, after Mass has been celebrated and they have been blessed by the celebrant, go back to the Pope, who sends them to a nunnery, where they are shorn and the wool made into pallias by the nuns.

The modern pall has six black crosses on it, but previous to the eighth century it had sometimes four, sometimes eight, worked in purple.

At first the pall was fastened by gold pins to the chasuble to keep it in place, but just as ladies now use little lead weights to keep parts of their dress in position, so lead was used to hold the archbishop's pall in place. The effigy of Albrecht von Brandenburg in 1555, at Mayence, shows two palls, which probably indicate that he was Archbishop of Magdeburg as well as of Mayence. This repetition can hardly be strictly correct, as the pall could only be worn within the Archbishop's province.

Archbishops in olden days appeared to have had no authority to act until they received their pall from the Pope. The honour was, however, bestowed occasionally on bishops. The pall is generally shown on the coats of arms of archbishops. (See Figure 130.)

The cope is one of the so-called processional vestments. It does not appear before the ninth century, and is apparently connected with Roman dress. It was an outer cloak without sleeves, and originally was used as a protection from the weather at open-air
processions in Rome, its ancestor probably being the lacerna. In a similar way the almuce was a hood to protect the head, and such articles, as Mr. Macalister says, the clergy would continue to adopt in their cold and draughty churches or in open-air processions.

Of monastic habits the earliest was the Benedictine, consisting of a cassock over which was worn the cowl

![Fig. 130.—The coat of arms of Thomas à Becket. Showing an archbishop's pall.](image)

—a large, loose gown, with hanging sleeves and a hood attached to it. In the old times the costume of abbesses and nuns resembled the mourning habit of widows, who often retired to end their days in a convent. When the English Church was reformed, the Mass vestments practically disappeared. The first Prayer Book of Edward VI prescribed for the Holy Communion a white albe, without any apparels, with a vestment or cope, while the assistant priest or deacons were to wear albes with tunicles. The cope
was also to be worn with a plain albe or surplice on Wednesdays and Fridays when there was no communion. The bishop was to wear a rochet, a surplice or albe, and a cope or vestment. The Second Prayer Book prohibited the use of the albe, vestment, or cope to the minister, allowing him only a surplice, while the archbishop or bishop was allowed a rochet. The Act of Uniformity upheld the ornaments rubric of the first Prayer Book of Edward VI, and this has never been superseded.

The lawn sleeves of the modern bishop developed from the rochet, which was a kind of modified albe, which at first had a kind of tight-fitting sleeves or none at all. Over this rochet is worn a black satin chimere, and as it was difficult to get this over the bishop's sleeves, they were removed from the rochet and are now fastened to the chimere. The black scarf we have already considered.

It is customary at the present day for clergy of the English Church to wear the academical hood of their university degree over their surplices. This is ordained by the fifty-eighth canon, but ministers who are not graduates are permitted to wear, instead of hoods, "some decent tippet of black, be it not silk." It appears that in the time of Elizabeth, in everyday dress, ministers wore a gown and some of them a silk hood. The tippet is a survival of the almuce, which we mentioned in connection with the cope, and is one of the so-called processional dresses. It must there-
fore not be confounded with the amice, which is a truly ecclesiastical vestment.

As bearing on the conservatism of the Church in matters of dress, we may mention that in Holland, until recent times, the clergy wore a very old-fashioned dress, or perhaps it may better be described as a picturesque uniform, consisting of an old three-cornered hat, and a coat resembling the ordinary evening dress-coat, having a long pleated strip called "the mantle" hooked on the neck, and obviously being a survival from an early and more ample gown of some kind. They wore knee-breeches buckled at the knees, and buckled shoes, but this costume was only used when the minister was officiating at service.

Some of the heads of the churches in Scotland still adopt a kind of Court dress.

In turning for a moment again to the everyday dress of the clergy, the method of fastening the characteristic white choker at the back seems to have come from the bands. Thackeray in "The Newcomes" uses the name choker as meaning a white necktie, and it was also applied to the old leather stocks which the clerical collar, in its stiffness, resembles. The bishop's hat we have already alluded to, as showing the stage in a process of cocking, the brim being tied to the crown by strings. The clerical gaiters we can derive from the old episcopal buskins, while the apron appears to be a vestige of the cassock to which we have before referred.
The dress of monks usually consists of a tunic or closed gown and scapular, while there may be one or more open gowns with a hood at the back.

Nuns or Sisters of Mercy are so commonly seen in our streets, and they do so much for the benefit of the poor, and take such a part in educational matters, that their dress is very familiar to us. It is difficult to say how old it may not be, and though stiff hoods similar to those which are now in use by nuns were adopted by women generally in Tudor times, we find in the head-dress of Henry II’s reign the counterpart of the linen bands which surround the face and hide the hair. The other garments of nuns may have the same origin as ecclesiastical vestments, for the dress of the Roman women was very much like that of the men. (See Figures 128 and 131-133.)

There are, of course, many orders, congregations, and communities of nuns, but we may describe the dress of one of the latter, and then make a few additional remarks. In the case of the Kilburn Sisters of the Church, who are English Catholics—but who have dedicated their lives to religion in the same way as the Roman Catholic nuns—the indoor dress consists of a white cap, the descendant of the Norman chin-band, which fits tightly round the head—as the hair of all nuns is, of course, cut close—and it is gathered round the face with a string. This cap, if it comes down low on the forehead, correspondingly covers the chin, but in many cases the latter is
free. Over the white cap in indoor dress a black veil is worn in the case of professed nuns, a blue veil by novices, while postulants, who may be taken as corresponding to probationers in a hospital, wear only a cap, though in chapel they have a white veil as well. Round the neck of the Sister is a white collar, which in this case is separate from the cap and buttons on to it at one side.

This collar, which like the veil may be traced to the wimple of Norman and later ladies, is also called a breast cloth or a gremial, and may be, as we have indicated, made in one piece with the cap.

In outdoor dress a stiff white hood is placed over the indoor head-dress, and over that again comes the outdoor black veil.

It should be mentioned that the Kilburn Sisters now pin their veils to the sides of their linen caps in exactly the same way that the dame in the time of the early Plantagenets did her wimple to the sides of her chin-band.

For working Sisters, the rest of the costume is a habit with skin-tight sleeves, though there are also most voluminous outer sleeves which are detachable and can be removed. A small cape is buttoned across the chest, and the number of buttons corresponds with the letters in the word "Obedience." An apron is also worn and a thick girdle, to one of the hanging ends of which a cross is attached. Other Sisters wear a scapular with shoulder-straps, over a
Fig. 131.—The head-dress of a nun showing the veil and breast-cloth derived from the wimple, the cap which represents the chin-cloth, together with the frontal and the hood.

Fig. 132.—The head-dress of a lady of the time of Henry II. The wimple is shown covering the chin- and head-bands (after Calthrop).

Fig. 133.—The chin-band and forehead strap after the wimple has been removed (after Calthrop).
white cape. Nuns are not allowed to wear gloves, and some orders use sandals, though absolutely bare-footed orders exist.

The lay sisters of the community under consideration wear a blue habit and a white cap with flaps. Some orders, in addition to the white cap, wear a plain band round the forehead over it, which is called a frontal, and is seen in the dress of Henry II’s time. (See Figures 131 and 133.)

Professed sisters wear a wedding ring on the third finger of their right hand. The white outdoor stiffened hoods often stand right up from the head in a very striking way, and sometimes no veils are worn. Some of the caps, which are made in one piece with the collar, are fastened under the chin by two strings, and the goffered edges of the collar recall the bands of the Stuart period.