THE DRESS OF ANIMALS

NATURAL REPRESENTATIVES OF CLOTHES—HORSE TRAPPINGS—AMULETS ON HARNESS—DOGS' DISGUISES—FASHIONS IN THE FORM OF ANIMALS

HERE and there in the animal kingdom we find that creatures protect themselves from injury by building up cases and coverings from extraneous materials, and these may very well be compared with the armour and clothes of mankind. Protection may be gained by merely securing something ready made to take the place of a coat, as is done in the case of the hermit-crab or "soldier," which covers itself with the shell of some dead mollusc. The caddis worm, or larva of the caddis fly, builds its home of sticks and stones or twigs, and thereby not only preserves its soft body from injury, but also harmonizes with its surroundings, in the same way as does the soldier on active service in time of war.

To gain protection, also, some molluscs when building their shells introduce stones and other shells and corals into the edifice, so that they become indistinguishable from the sea-bottom on which they lie. Many caterpillars cover themselves with bits of
leaves, and even with the help of silk make spiral shells that might easily be mistaken for those of snails. The silk also, from which many of our gay clothes are made, is spun by the silkworm, which, like the larva of many moths, produces it in order to protect the chrysalis while it rests.

We are occupied here, however, with the coverings of animals that they owe to man, and first and foremost of those creatures which have come in for his polite attentions is the horse.

We may recall the armour by which the chargers of the old knights were protected, and the trappings or emblazoned coverings that were put over this in the same way as the surcoat was made to cover the armour of the knights. (See Figure 84.) The trappings were often made of coloured satin, and were embroidered with gold and silver, and at the exhibition held by the Burlington Fine Arts Society in 1905 a chasuble of red velvet was shown, embroidered with the arms of England in gold, which was apparently made from a horse-trapper of the fourteenth century. Figure 84 well shows how the horses carried the armorial bearings of their masters.

In the ostrich-feather ornaments and the velvet trappings of modern funeral horses, we still have some remnants of the days of chivalry.

To-day horse clothing, though not intended to be of an ornamental character, we should imagine, is still often decorated with a monogram of the horse's owner.
Perhaps one of the most interesting survivals in connection with horses is to be found in the brasses which decorate those used for carts and waggons. Dr. Plowright has shown that many of these ornaments, which are really amulets put on to the harness with a view to protecting the horses against the evil eye, are of Moorish origin. He contrasts their style with the ornamental details shown in the Alhambra, and he figures a number which take the form of a crescent, or a crescent enclosing an eight-rayed star, and others in which the ornament shows eyes and eyebrows conventionalized. In other cases we get the fleur-de-lys treated in an arabesque way, the escallop shell and the mystic interlaced triangles (which were considered the talisman of talismans, and are known as the seal of Solomon or the shield of David), with a crescent in the centre. Miss Lina Eckenstein figures many other horse brasses which can be compared with those worn by Roman cart-horses. Among them is the crescent, which was also worn by women carved in ivory, and by certain senators as ornaments on their shoes.

The crescent is made from a thin plate of metal, and is worn by children on the west coast of India, with the points upwards, as a protection against the evil eye, and gold ornaments of similar shape are among those which were worn in ancient Peru.

The moon, from times of remote antiquity, has been represented by a ring for the full moon and a
half-ring or sickle for the crescent. Miss Eckenstein does not, however, carry the origin of the horse amulets back to the stone stage of civilization, but she thinks that the crescent represents two boars’ tusks joined together by a thong, and the horse-amulet now worn in Italy shows the thinness and sharpness of curve that would be evident in one which was made out of boars’ tusks.

We may point out that in some English crescents the hollows which one tusk makes by wearing against its fellow are represented by little flat places on the horns of the crescent near their tips. (See Figure 163.)

The brasses seen in England to-day are worn on the face-plate, breast-plate, and martingale. On grand occasions, such as May Day celebrations, and
the cart-horse parade of Whit Monday, brasses are specially put on, though there is a tendency now for them to be stamped out of thin metal instead of being cast, with the result that they soon wear out. German horses wear the crescent on a strap which dangles below the right ear.

The English crescent from harness will be found to match those which are represented on the horses on Trajan’s column and other monuments. The same design is to be seen also on the harness of camels and elephants. The most important symbol besides the moon is that of the sun, which is worn on the top of the head between the ears.

Heraldic brasses are not uncommon, and the heart-shaped amulet is also seen; it is possible, too, that this form may be connected with that of the flint arrows, which we have already mentioned as being worn as amulets. In Egypt, an amulet hung on a cow is said to protect the woman who owns it, and Miss Eckenstein suggests a similar origin in the case of the heart worn by horses. A brass showing a horse rampant, came from the estate of the Duke of Norfolk at Arundel, and it will be seen on looking at the arms of the nobleman in question that this device forms one of the supporters of his shield.

In prehistoric Egypt the slate palettes on which malachite was ground for face painting were often in the form of two birds, with their bodies put back to back, and their heads fully shown, and when this
form degenerates it becomes a kind of heart-shaped shield. Professor Petrie has pointed out that when this decoration is used, as on coffins and elsewhere, it is often thought to be merely a shield. Possibly the heart-shaped amulet may have some connection with this.

An amulet found by Professor Vellucci in Umbria consisted of an arrow-head sewn upon a piece of scarlet cloth, which was of a heart shape, and was intended doubtless to emphasize the heart significance. Another horse amulet, obtained by Miss Eckenstein from Sicily, also consists of a piece of scarlet cloth cut into the shape of a heart and decorated with tinsel.

An English horse brass seen in Figure 164 shows both the heart and the sun.

While on the subject of horses, one might allude to
the wisps of straw which are twisted in the mane and tail of cart-horses when they are for sale at markets and fairs. Horses were sacrificed in the old days; and as the slaying of domestic animals was supposed to secure fruitfulness, the horse became identified as a corn spirit, and the killing of horses formed a necessary incident of the harvest. The deity Demeter took upon himself the semblance of a mare, and the word mare is applied in the Midlands to the last uncut ears of corn, at which the sickles are thrown in order to bring them down. It is possible that the wisps of straw worn by horses are connected with these ideas.

A very curious and interesting custom is represented on the trappings of the horses ridden by the officers of the 10th Hussars. These trappings are ornamented on full-dress occasions with cowry shells; and to find a parallel to this we have to go to the East, where the head-stalls of the camels and mules are covered with the shells, while round their necks and those of donkeys there may hang an ornament or bell on a band which is similarly decorated. It will be noted that there is a pendant from the head of the Hussar horse which resembles that of the mule of the Holy Land. There is no doubt but that originally these ornaments were really amulets, and it is said that they are a survival of ancient phallic worship. (See Figures 165-7.)

Cowry shells were once generally used by the
Hussars, and were revived in the case of the 10th Hussars in connection with service in India.

Toby, as we have seen, is decorated with an Elizabethan ruff, but the wearing of collars and bells by pet animals is a remnant of a very old custom, and on early mediæval brasses in this country, dogs are often seen decorated with collars—sometimes bearing their actual names—and with bells. Now the wearing of a collar is enforced by law as a means of identification. All dogs found without
Fig. 166.—Cowry shells on an Eastern mule, hanging like the pendant of the 10th Hussars.

Fig. 167.—Cowry shells on the head-stall of a camel from Palestine.
collars may be considered as strays, and the regulation followed, as is well known, upon the muzzling order by which hydrophobia was practically stamped out.

Mr. C. J. Cornish once considered the subject of animals' clothes, and made some interesting remarks on horses' hats and sun-bonnets. He described the following sight, met with in Kensington Gore: First came a costermonger with his horse duly "hatted" and the hat trimmed with ribbon; next came a lady wearing a hat, in a victoria. Her horse also had a hat, and both hats had pink flowers in them.

In Holland, cows wear rain-proof jackets all the winter, and coats for show cattle are quite the fashion in England. Mr. Cornish says that a really smart Jersey cow would not like to be seen at a show without her luggage—"a chest containing, not only her sleeping jacket, but her brushes and combs, cosmetics and horn protectors. She puts on, or has put on, a smarter jacket in the daytime if she has to stand in a draughty place; if she is not sleeping out it does not so much matter. There are many ladies who would almost go without a jacket themselves rather than see their best animals go to a show without proper clothes."

In the North lambs are provided with waterproof coats when going on to the hills. These garments are called "brats," and the name has been trans-
ferred not only to the young sheep themselves, but also to human babies. We are all familiar with the clothes which monkeys wear when they go about with organs, and the big apes which are exhibited at shows are sometimes even clothed in the dress suit of conventionality. Johanna, the chimpanzee which was at Barnum’s exhibition, looked very effective in her petticoats, and the penguins at the Zoo, when performing tricks, wear coats, while animal actors are often dressed to suit their parts.

There is one case at least in which animals are disguised by dressing them up. There was a duck-decoy dog which was known to Mr. Cornish, which, in the first instance, grew as much like a fox as it was possible for a dog to be. This proved exceedingly attractive to the ducks, which seem to have an irresistible impulse to swim after a fox in order to see what he is about. In a short time, however, they get used to a particular dog, and their curiosity dies away. Then the dog’s master supplies him with a disguise in the shape of a jacket made of sheepskin. Furthermore, when this palls a rough woollen jacket of a black colour is brought into requisition, and the dog apparently knows the meaning of the whole performance. In other cases the disguise of a decoy dog takes the shape of a foxskin with its brush.

Racing dogs, prize dogs, and pet dogs also have their coats, and we have heard even of bracelets for
poodles, while there are fashions which regulate the way in which the hair of these dogs should be cut. Just as men and women deform themselves, so they mutilate their animals by the clipping of their ears and the shortening of their tails—practices which are worse than the dubbing of the birds' combs in the old days of cock-fighting, for the infliction of one slight injury probably prevented many.

This deforming of animals is a savage custom, for Hottentots twist the horns of their cattle and sheep, while a number of horns are produced in Africa by splitting the budding horns of the young animals. Though not obviously causing any deformity, there is one fashion which, though condemned by most people, is still followed by otherwise cultured and humane people. We refer to the bearing-rein with which horses' heads are kept in unnatural, uncomfortable, and constrained positions.

If, however, we consider animal fashions as a whole, and bring under discussion the colours and peculiarities of the fur or feathers that cover their bodies, we shall find that men from quite early times have amused themselves with producing all manner of curious and striking appearances. The fact is, that the ordinary conditions and dangers of life in the open, which would soon eliminate any creatures out of harmony with their surroundings, do not act in the case of domesticated animals very much; and this has been a help. We have, therefore, white rats, piebald mice, gold
fishes—some even with several tails—yellow canaries, frizzled bantams, hairless dogs, hornless cattle, booted bantams, and top-knotted fowls, as well as hosts of patterns and forms that are hardly to be numbered. There is an adage that "like produces like," but the student of heredity has recently become aware of the fact that animals of a certain colour may not always produce offspring which resemble them in this respect; but that in order to get the tint required for show purposes, parents of some particular but unfashionable colour should be chosen.

The colour of animals is taken into consideration in connection with ceremonies. White elephants have to be treated as if they were gods, and proverbially cost much to keep. Black horses are usually used at funerals; white or grey horses, which are much decorated with the badges and insignia of the regiments, carry the kettledrums of the cavalry. The Scots Greys take their name from their horses, which are all grey, like those with which, it is said, they were supplied by William III in Flanders. Spotted Dalmatian hounds are those which are chosen to run by the side of carriages, while circus horses exhibit much variety of colouring.

Whips are perhaps a little beside the subject, though there are fashions with regard to them. Not long ago it was customary for the whip stick in connection with a smart turn-out to have a bend in it. In various parts of the East the camel driver
carries in a graceful manner a red forked stick, and one of this form was used as a sceptre in ancient Egypt from 5000 B.C. downwards, so that we meet with a very interesting, if humble, survival of what was once a royal ornament.