

CURIOSITIES OF FOOT-GEAR.

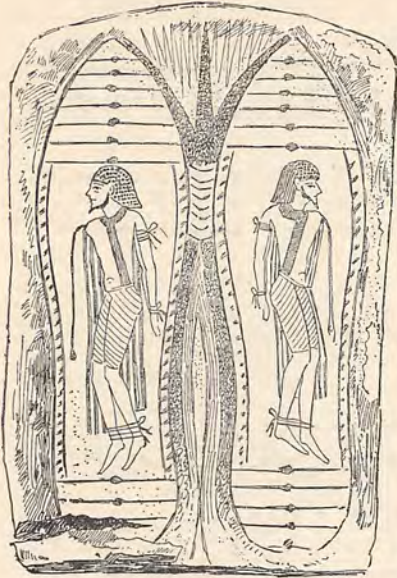


FIG. 1.—EGYPTIAN SANDALS.

THAT costume is incomplete if due attention has not been paid to the clothing of the feet, is an admitted fact; yet, I think that our ancestors would be filled with astonishment, could their superbly clad feet carry them again through the

stately homes, halls, and courts in which they once had their place, so that they might be enabled to observe the simplicity of design and material, in the *chaussure* which satisfies the *élégantes* of the present day; unless, indeed, they were to be carried back to those remote ages, when their forefathers had only just discovered the inconvenience of going barefoot. The date of this discovery I have been unable to arrive at, but that sandals were worn by the Egyptians more than three thousand years ago, is amply proved by the fact that they have been found upon the feet of mummies preserved since that time, and that they were evidently worn by Moses, for he was commanded, "Loose thy shoe from off thy foot," &c. There is an even earlier mention of the shoe than that just quoted, when Abram declared to the King of Sodom, "I will not take from a thread even to a shoe-latchet" (Gen. xiv. 23). The Egyptian shoe alluded to in Exodus was doubtless a sandal, as the one word used in the original is translated both ways. It was probably made from the same preparation of papyrus as that used for writing upon, examples of this primitive foot-gear being still in existence; sandals were also worn made from palm-leaves—they must have been delightfully cool and light for a hot climate—the idea is recommended to the notice of shoemakers of the present day for the soles of indoor shoes for summer wear, and although the material might possibly not be found very durable, yet that would hardly be regarded as a disadvantage from their point of view. These sandals were kept in place by two thongs, one across the instep, and another passing between the great and second toe, and joining the first at the instep: not a very perfect method of attaining the desired object, but adopted, probably, that the feet

might be easily withdrawn from them: a custom denoting reverence to Deity and respect to superiors—practised in the East even now—which has been so ably and humorously illustrated by Robertson's "The Shoes of the Faithful," a picture that attracted a good deal of attention from visitors to the Academy Exhibition of '82.

The sandal of the Egyptians denoted the caste of the wearer; that reserved for the upper classes being



FIG. 2.—ROMAN SANDAL.

long, pointed, and turned up at the toe, not unlike the skate of the present day. The lower classes were forbidden to wear them shaped in this manner, but what they lost in the supposed elegance of the fashionable foot-gear, was compensated by the greater convenience of the commoner short-toed sandal. The Egyptian belles seem, after a time, to have paid great attention to the beauty of their sandals, which we find made of rushes, palm-tree bark, and even leather, dyed and variously ornamented.

An extremely curious custom was practised by the men of Egypt in order to gratify their hatred of their enemies; upon the cloth lining of the sandal a figure was painted representing the hated nation or person,

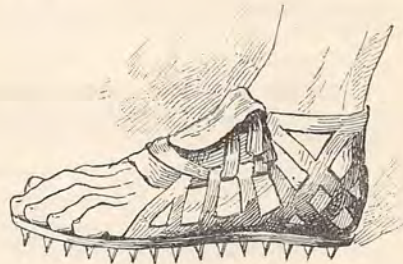


FIG. 3.—ROMAN SOLDIER'S SANDAL.

"that so they might continually tread the enemy underfoot" (Fig. 1).

The Romans ordinarily went barefoot indoors, and the earliest examples of the sandals used by them are extremely simple, until their far-reaching conquests introduced them to the luxurious foot-gear of other nations, which they adopted and improved upon to such an extent that Cato, as a protest against the usage which compelled their wear, and the extrava-

gance of decoration his countrymen indulged in, often went barefoot. The ancient Greeks, as well as the Romans, shod themselves with great simplicity, except in time of war, until they, too, advanced as they increased in riches and luxury, to an elaboration of style, and richness of decoration in their foot-gear,



FIG. 4.—ROMAN PATRICIAN'S SHOE.

(From an Iron Statue of Hadrian in the British Museum.)

which raised shoe-making to the dignity of an important and artistic handicraft.

Amongst them, as well as the Egyptians, the foot-gear indicated the class of the wearer. Slaves were not allowed to wear anything on their feet. Priests and philosophers often adopted the foot-gear of the lower orders as a sign of humility. One of the kinds in use amongst rustics was called the *crepida*, on account of the noise (*crepitus*) made by the wearers in walking. Fig. 2 represents a very curious kind of sandal belonging, it is supposed, to the period of the conquest of Britain; the high soles are of cork, and the straps are most wonderfully elaborate. In the time of Caligula, the Roman soldiers wore a kind of shoe, the sole of which was studded with spikes, to give them a firm foot-hold when marching over rugged ground, or climbing steep places: a device the value of which cricketers of the present day can appreciate (Fig. 3). It was because he wore a lighter and more elegant variety of this kind of shoe (*caliga*) while with the army of his father Germanicus, that the soldier gave to the young Caius the surname of Caligula.



FIG. 5.—PYKES.

The shoe was so called from the number of straps (*ligulæ*) used to fasten it round the leg.

The *campagus*, a sort of half-boot not unlike the *caliga* in shape, was usually worn by the Emperors, but it was adorned with the embroidered figure of an eagle, and enriched with jewels. Heliogabalus is said to have worn exquisite cameos on his shoes; and as it is related of him that he never wore a pair twice, it is to be hoped that the costly adornments of the cast-off shoes were sometimes transferred to the new ones. Cyrus, the great Persian monarch—who, by the way, must have been rather a fop—advises short men to wear something between the sole of the sandal and the foot, in order to increase the dignity of their appearance; a hint which was adopted, centuries later, by the Roman ladies, who also copied the example set them by Heliogabalus, of adorning their *chaussures* with gold, silver, and precious stones, some having even the soles made of gold. It is difficult to understand why they were at length forbidden by him to ornament their shoes in this costly fashion, unless he wished to establish a monopoly of the privilege.



FIG. 6.—CHOPINE.

When luxury and extravagance in the adornment of the feet had arrived at its greatest height, the wealthy and fashionable Romans began to prefer half-boots made of purple leather, to those enriched with gold and precious stones; but these were by no means inexpensive, on account of the enormous cost of the dye used to give the desired tint, and the time taken to produce the exquisite embroidery with which they were embellished. It is said that the shoes of the Roman maidens were so ornamental, that lovers preserved the soles of those worn by the beloved one, in the same manner as they now treasure locks of hair, ribbons, &c.

I have said that the foot-gear indicated the wearer's rank; this indication was made decisive by sumptuary laws, the senators wearing black shoes, with a crescent of gold or silver, or other elaborate ornament on the top (Fig. 4), the patricians being allowed shoes with four straps, while the plebeians were forbidden to wear more than one.

We must pass on to the eleventh century, when the Normans began to wear long, sharp-toed shoes—a fashion which was carried to such an extent, that Archbishop Anselm deemed it necessary to preach furiously against it. His eloquence seems to have

been wasted, for we find one of the courtiers of the day improved upon the prevailing mode, by stuffing the toes of his shoes with tow, and having them twisted like rams' horns. Amongst the eccentricities of the Plantagenet period, was the fashion of wearing a differently coloured stocking on each leg, the shoes being adorned with designs cut from the upper leather, to show the stocking, each shoe itself being of a different colour; thus the right leg and foot would be clothed with a red stocking and a white shoe, while the left would display a purple stocking and a green shoe. The long-toed shoes then reappeared, the common people being permitted by law, to wear "pykes on their shoon" half a foot, rich citizens a foot, and princes two and a half feet long (Fig. 5); those who could afford it fastened them to the knee with gold or silver chains. It was in vain that Popes and Councils remonstrated against this absurd fashion—that "persons of any condition whatsoever" were forbidden, "on pains of being mulcted in a penalty of ten florins," from using the "long-peaked shoon, as contrary to good manners, and a mockery of God and His Church," until Parliament in 1643 prohibited shoemakers from making them with "beakes" more than two inches long, enforcing their prohibition with heavy fines, and the curse of the clergy. Fashion then ran to the opposite extreme, requiring the shoe to be a foot in breadth across the toes. One of the greatest follies ever perpetrated by the *beau monde* was the adoption, during the sixteenth century, of the "chopine," a device for increasing the wearer's stature. Shakespeare alludes to it when he makes Hamlet

address one of the lady actors thus: "Your ladyship is nearer heaven than when I saw you last by the altitude of a chopine." These chopines, as worn by the ladies of Venice, were "made with wood covered with leather of various colours . . . many of them curiously painted . . . some gilt. . . and by how much nobler a woman is, by so much higher are her chopines. All . . . gentlewomen . . . that are of any wealth, are assisted and supported either by men or women, when they walk abroad . . . otherwise they might quickly take a fall." Raymond says they wore these "wooden scaffolds" as "high as a man's leg." One writer says that "one being asked how he liked the Venetian dames," he laughingly answered "that they were *mezzo carro, mezzo ligno* (half flesh, half wood), and he would have



FIG. 7.—CAVALIER'S BOOT.

none of them." (Fig. 6.) During the seventeenth century high boots were worn, the tops of which were turned down when walking, to display the costly lace with which they were lined. The top of one style of boot worn at this time was so broad as to compel the wearer to assume a most ridiculous "straddle when walking." (Fig. 7.) Then high red heels, and buckles of an enormous size, became fashionable, which subsequently were worn richly ornamented, sometimes with real diamonds. After a time the heels became lower, and were slanted towards the middle of the foot; the discomfort of this mode was probably the reason why heels for a time almost vanished. Then came a period which was marked by nothing very remarkable in the history of foot-gear, until the introduction of machinery for the manufacture of boots and shoes.

ENGAGED TO BE MARRIED.

A STORY OF TO-DAY.

By L. T. MEADE.

"'Tis love that makes the world go round."

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIFTH.



MISS PHILLIMORE received her favourite Emmy with a little cry of delight. A delicate pink flushed all over her pale and suffering face. She stretched out her arms and folded them round the young girl, kissing her many times on her forehead.

"My child, my dear child!" she said. "This is good—I did not even know you were in the house."

"No; I meant to surprise you," said Emmy. "You

got my letters, of course? I wrote to you whenever I could. Now I have come back to stay, and I shall probably occupy my little room next to yours to-night, so if you want anything, you have only to tap with your stick, and I shall hear you."

"It all seems too good to be true," said Miss Phillimore. And she kissed Emmy's white brow again.

"I want to ask you something, dear Miss Phillimore," said Emmy. "All my people are well, and it is nothing about me specially. But do you know that Helen has come back? She has come back all the