

and his boy Tom were obliged to have "weater and gurts" (water and groats) for breakfast, and barley bread for "mossle." The first week of the "taking" passed away without any improvement; but on the Monday of the second week there were some indications of a change. Two branches, or veins, were running in such a way that they must meet somewhere at an angle; that was favourable, and John took heart. "Come, let ez heave to un, boy; and let ez looken keenly, perhaps we shall hev a little money to car home to the old "hummun" (woman) yet. What un will make I don't know, but I bleeve un'll make somfen (something) whether or no." The next day the father and son were down at their pitch; they had eaten their "mossle," and Tom had gone to sleep. As he lay stretched on a board, some fathoms from the pitch where his father was working, and quite unconscious of the sudden change of circumstances which had really taken place, John had cut a beautiful bunch of ore. It was copper ore, of that kind which is called "peacock" ore, from the brilliant colours that sparkle on it like so many gems. Overjoyed with the discovery, the father went out to the boy, who lay snoring on the board. He looked on Tom, then pinched his leg. Tom shuffled and rubbed his eyes. "Hollo, how long have I ben sleeping?" "Coomo out here a minute, and see what I got out here. I cut the lode; dost a hear?" Up sprang Tom, and went to the pitch, rubbing his eyes, and there was the sparkling ore shining against him like a nest of jewels. "Oh, father!" said Tom, looking round and scratching his head, "that ez a bender;" and Tom took up a pick and began to dig at the ore, and he turned the stones over and over before his eyes, which were now wide awake. And Tom looked up at his father, exclaiming, "I thought I was dreaming." There were nearly eight weeks to work, and if the vein held at that size and quality all the time, they would get a first-rate start.

The "old woman" was delighted at the news when they told her, and they had a good supper that night, and something better than "weater and gurts" the next morning. Day succeeded day, and the "load" held, though father and son worked hard and long at it. They lived well now; instead of barley mossles they carried down beef pasties, plum cake, and "figgy hogans," in great plenty. Week after week they broke out the yellow lumps, and still the load did not fail. And, oh what a pile of ore they had to put in on the sampling day! The pay-day came, and John White and his son received the comfortable sum of seventy-five pounds each!

#### THE SWANS ON THE RIVER THAMES.

LIVING on the banks of that far-famed river, I have often had my attention drawn to the swans which beautify its bosom, and are so intimately associated with all bygone recollections of it in the olden time. I was led on from one fact connected with them to another, till I had collected, from the most authentic sources, the following particulars relating to them, which I hope may be productive

of pleasure to my readers. I am the more induced to furnish this account, because the subject has hitherto been passed over in silence by all topographical guides for the banks of the Thames, and is only noticed by one naturalist in treating of this splendid bird.

We find at a very early date that it was considered a great privilege to be allowed to keep swans—a privilege only granted to certain companies, or to individuals possessed of freehold property of the requisite amount. Persons thus qualified were permitted to keep swans on certain streams; but the regulations respecting them were very strict, especially those connected with marking the birds with the distinctive marks appropriated to the company or person possessing them. I have been able to collect many of these marks, which are attached to this paper, with the explanation of each.

Marks Nos. 1 and 2 are those belonging to that most magnificent of monarchs, (as far, at least, as his taste for all that was gorgeous and glittering was concerned), king Henry VIII. The date is 1526 of the 1st mark, and a somewhat later one of the 2nd.

The 3rd mark belonged to the Abbey of Winstead, in Lincolnshire; and it is worthy of remark that the crosier, or crook, is borne by the divine, the shepherd, the swanherd, and the gooseherd, as emblematical of a pastoral life and the care of a flock.

No. 4 is the mark of Sir E. Dymoke, of Lincolnshire. The descendant of the family still exists, and the Royal Champion has always been of that house, holding the manor of Scrivelsby by that tenure.

Nos. 5 and 7 both bear date during the reign of Queen Elizabeth; and No. 6 is the mark of Lord W. Howard, Lord High Admiral of England in the days of Queen Mary.

No. 8 is the mark of Lord Buckhurst. The keys bear reference to his office of Chamberlain of the household. At the present day the appointment of the Royal Swanherd is vested in the Lord Chamberlain for the time being.

No. 9 is the mark of Sir William More, who was appointed by Lord Buckhurst to the office of Master of the Swans for Surrey. "In such sorte were all the rest of the sheres (shires) granted; one of the conditions is as follows: But this order must be kept that the upping (or marking) of the swans near or within the said branches of the Tems (Thames) may be upped all in one day with the upping of the Tems, which is referred to Mr. Mayland, of Hampton Court, who hath the ordering of the Tems; so if it please you from time to time to send and confer with him."

No. 10 is the swan-mark of the late Bishop of Norwich, to whose kindness I am indebted for many of the particulars herein contained, and also for a quaint and original receipt for feeding the young swans of the year for the table, which we shall come to by and by.

No. 11 is the Eton College mark, which educational establishment has the privilege of keeping these birds. It represents the armed point and

feathered end of an arrow, and is represented by nail heads on the door of one of the inner rooms in the college: it is difficult to explain the kind of framework on which the arrow rests.

Nos. 12 and 13 are the ancient marks of the Dyers' and Vintners' Companies of the City of London, as used in the reign of Elizabeth. These two companies have long enjoyed the privilege of preserving swans on the Thames from London to some miles above Windsor, and they continue the old custom of going with their friends and guests, with the Royal Swanherdsman and their own swanherds and assistants, on the first Monday of August in every year, from Lambeth, on their swan voyage, for the purpose of catching and marking all the cygnets of the year, and renewing any old marks in the swans that may have become partly obliterated.

Nos. 14 and 15 are the marks of the same companies as used at the present time. The forming circlets and anulets on the beak, as observed in the two ancient marks, being considered as inflicting more severe pain upon the bird than the straight lines, these rings are now omitted, and the lines doubled, as shown in these more modern marks.

No. 16 is the royal swan mark of our most gracious Queen Victoria. This mark has been used through the reigns of George III and IV, William IV, and so up to the present time.

These are all the swan marks for the River Thames (only two being admitted in the number having reference to the birds on other rivers) that careful research has been able to discover; and the smallness of their number proves how seldom the privilege of keeping swans was granted, and the great value and importance which was attached to the possession of the bird, as well as to the authorized power to protect it. For example, in the twenty-second year of the reign of Edward IV, 1483, it was ordered that no person not possessing a freehold of the clear yearly value of five marks should be permitted to keep any swans; and in the eleventh year of Henry VII, 1496, it was ordained that any one stealing a swan's *egg only*, should have one year's imprisonment, and be fined at the king's will; and stealing, setting snares for, or driving grey or white swans, were punished still *more severely*.

There are many curious ordinances respecting swans on the River Witham, in the county of Lincoln, which may serve to illustrate our subject. The ordinances were made on the 24th of May, 1524, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Henry VIII, by the Lord Christopher Willuby, Sir. E. Dymoke, and others, justices of the peace, and commissioners appointed by the king "for the confirmation and preservation of his highness's game of swans, and signets of his stream of Witham within the county of Lincolnshire, from a Breges, called Boston Breges, into the head of the same stream." A copy of the whole roll being too long for insertion, I shall only quote a few particulars.

No persons having swans could appoint a new swanherd without the licence of the king's swanherd; and every swanherd on the stream was

bound to attend upon the king's swanherd on warning, or to suffer fine; and the royal swanherd was obliged to keep a book of swan marks, in which no new marks could be inserted for fear of their interfering with the old ones: the marking of the cygnets was generally done in the presence of all the swanherds on that stream, and on a particular day, of which all had notice. Cygnets received the mark found on the parent bird; but if the old swans, had no mark at the time of the upping, then old and young birds were seized upon for the king, and marked accordingly. No swanherd might affix a mark on a bird, except in the presence of the king's swanherd, or his deputy. Formerly, when the swan made her nest on the banks of the river rather than on the islands, one young bird was given to the owner of the soil as an inducement to him to protect the nest; and this was called the ground-bird. A money consideration is now given instead. The swan mark, called by Sir E. Coke Cigninota, was cut in the skin, or on the beak, with a sharp knife or instrument. From the specimens given, it will be seen that they are very varied, consisting of anulets, cherrons, crescents, crosses, initial letters, and numerous other significant devices.

Formerly, no great banquet or entertainment was considered complete, unless at one end of the board there was a cygnet, or young swan; and in any town where there were many proprietors of swans there and in the neighbourhood, the town clerk, on the second Monday in August, sent notes from the town hall to the public swanherd and others having swans and swan rights, to desire them to bring all their cygnets intended for killing, in order to their being collected in a small stew or pond, the number varying generally from fifty to seventy, many belonging to private individuals. The birds began to eat immediately, and being provided with an abundance of barley, they were usually ready for killing early in November. They varied in weight, some reaching to twenty-eight pounds; and they were all cygnets, as, if kept beyond November, they began to fall off, losing both flesh and fat, while the meat becomes darker in colour and stronger in flavour. The following quaint and amusing versified receipt for roasting a swan is attributed to a town clerk of the city of Norwich:—

#### "HOW TO ROAST A SWAN.

Take three pounds of suet, beat fine in a mortar,  
Put it into the swan (that is, when you have caught her).  
Some pepper, salt, mace, some nutmeg, and onion,  
Will heighten the flavour in gourmand's opinion;  
Then tie it up tight, with a small bit of tape,  
That the gravy and other things may not escape.  
A meal paste rather stiff should be laid on the breast,  
And some whited-brown paper should cover the rest.  
Fifteen minutes, at least, ere the swan you take down;  
Pull the paste off the bird, that the breast may get browne."

It was a popular delusion in old times that the ancient sign of the "Swan with two Necks" bore some reference to the two nicks in the swan mark of the Vintners' Company. The sign has, however, been considered a fair heraldic personification of the term, united as it is to the following considerations: namely, that the swan has been for some hundred years identified with the Vintners'

Company and its privileges; that the principal governing officers of this company for the time being are a Master and three Wardens, the junior Warden of the year being called the Swan Warden; that models of swans form conspicuous ornaments in their hall, and that the first proprietor of the well-known inn, "The Swan with two Necks," was a member of the Vintners' Company.

It has furnished me with amusement during many an hour, to watch the swans with their broods. The care taken by the parent birds of the young ones is very pleasing. Where the stream is strong, I have often seen the female sink herself low enough to bring her back on a level with the water, when the cygnets will get upon it, and in this manner are conveyed to the other side of the river or into stiller water. Each family of swans has its own district, and if the limits of that district are encroached upon by other swans, a pursuit immediately takes place, and the intruders are driven away. I have seen fierce battles take place if the intruder has attempted to make good his settlement; but, excepting in those instances, they appear to live in a state of the most perfect harmony. The male is very attentive to the female, assists in making the nest, and, when a sudden rise in the river takes place, joins her with great assiduity in raising it sufficiently high to prevent the eggs being chilled by the action of the water. Sometimes the rise is so rapid that all their efforts are in vain; the whole nest is washed away and destroyed.

It is when we pass Richmond Bridge that we approach the spot where the silver Thames first becomes purely rural, and reveals its poetical beauties. Pleasurable sensations of escape come freshly over one, giving buoyancy to one's spirits, and the mind seems to participate in the calm and sunshine of external nature. Thus writes one of our most delightful poets, whose works, however, are not much read at the present day:—

"See the fair swans, on Thames's lovely side,  
The which do trim their pennons, silver bright;  
In shining ranks, they down the waters glide;  
Oft have mine eyes devoured the gallant sight."

COWLEY.

At Richmond we are among the swans of the Thames. Many of our most gifted poets have written lines on this beautiful river. What, for example, can be more charming than these lines of Thomson?

"Go, where the silver Thames first rural grows;  
There let the feasted eye unwearied stray;  
Luxurious there rove through the pendant woods;  
There let us trace the matchless Vale of Thames,  
Far winding up to where the Muses haunt,  
To Twickenham bowers."

In quite another style are the following verses, which are so beautiful and so apt to our subject, that they seem to me worthy of insertion:—

"Oh, could I flow like thee, and make thy stream  
My great example, as it is my theme;  
Though deep, yet clear; though gentle, yet not dull;  
Strong without rage; without o'erflowing, full."

"My eye descending from the hill surveys  
Where Thames among the wanton valleys strays:  
Thames, the most loved of all the Ocean's sons,  
By his old sire, to his embraces runs,  
Hasting to pay his tribute to the sea,  
Like mortal life, to meet eternity."

I must not, however, be carried away from the literal to the metaphorical swans of this beautiful river, but hasten to give a few more interesting particulars relating to them. Their instinct is often shown in a most surprising manner. I am indebted to the kindness of a friend for the following remarkable instance that occurred on a small stream at Bishop Stortford. The swan of which the story is told was eighteen or nineteen years old, had brought up many broods, and was highly valued by the neighbours. At the time the incident occurred, she was sitting on five eggs, when some of the people about observed her to be very busy collecting weeds and grasses for the purpose, as it appeared, of raising her nest. One of the farming men was ordered to take down a great quantity of litter (sticks, straw, etc. etc.), with which she most industriously raised her nest and the eggs two feet and a half. That very night there came down a fall of rain which caused heavy floods, and did no end of damage. Man made no preparation; the bird did. Instinct prevailed over reason; her eggs were above, and only just above, the water. I have seen on the Thames the female swan, by raising her leg, assist the cygnets in getting upon her back. I thought it probable that carrying the young in this way might only be resorted to when the brood were on a river, to save them the labour of following the parent bird against the stream; but, in the course of the summer, I noticed a female swan often carrying her young in this manner on the canal in St. James's Park, where there is certainly no current to impede them.

One morning I shall always recollect with pleasure; it was a lovely day in May. As I reclined on the soft green bank, gazing at the lovely scenes all around me, or turning my attention to the majestic swans (of which I counted twenty-four in sight at once), I thought how fair a world it is that the bountiful Creator has bestowed upon his creatures, and the emphatic words of the Bible came forcibly before my mind: "And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good."

There were in sight many hen swans with their broods; one had eight cygnets, which a man in charge of them told me was the greatest number he had ever known. One of the duties of the attendants is to save the parent bird the great labour of collecting materials for its nest: they bring fagots of stick, which they roughly place in the form of the nest, leaving the bird to complete it after its own fancy. The mates sail backwards and forwards in front of the nest, to guard the hen from all harm; they do not seek to hide their nest from view; on the contrary, it is generally so placed as to be easily seen by any one passing along the river bank. From my favourite seat I could see the spot where formerly Pope's Villa stood. Alas! nothing now remains of it but his well-known grotto, of which he gives the following pleasant account in one of his delightful letters. "In my garden, in the banks of this lovely river, I found a spring of the clearest water, that echoes through my grotto day and night. From the river you see

through my arch, up a walk of the wilderness, to a kind of open temple, wholly composed of shells, in the rustic manner; and from thence you look down, through a sloping arcade of trees, and see the sails on the river, passing suddenly and vanishing as through a perspective glass. When you shut the doors of this grotto, it becomes on the instant, from a luminous room, a camera obscura, on the walls of which all the objects of the river, hills, woods, boats, etc., are forming a moving picture, in their visible radiations; and if you have a mind to light it up, it affords you a very different scene. It is finished with shells, interspersed with coloured glass, and in the ceiling is a star of the same material, at which, when a lamp is hung in the centre, a thousand pointed rays glitter and are reflected all over the place. There are connected with this grotto, by narrower passages, two porches, one towards the river, of smooth stones, full of light and open, the other towards the garden, shadowed by trees, and roughly paved with pebbles and shells; as is also the adjoining walk, up the Wilderness to the Temple, in the natural taste, agreeing not ill with the little murmur of the constant dropping water, and the aquatic idea of the whole thing."

In another letter to his friend Digby, Pope thus alludes to the swans:—"No ideas you could form in the winter can make you imagine what Twickenham is in the summer; our river glitters beneath an unclouded sun, at the same time that its banks retain the verdure of flowers; the silver swans sail along its placid bosom, or come close to my garden bank to receive their accustomed food. Our trees, like new acquaintances brought happily together, are stretching their arms to meet each other, and growing nearer and nearer every hour,

while the birds are pouring forth their thanksgiving songs."\*

After much research, I obtained the exact account of the whole number of old and young swans belonging to her Majesty, and to the different companies, at the last swan voyage in August, 1859:—

	Old Swans.	Cygnets.	Total.
The Queen . . . . .	185	47	232
The Vintners' Company . . . . .	79	21	100
The Dyers' Company . . . . .	91	14	105
	<u>355</u>	<u>82</u>	<u>437</u>

The number formerly was much greater. At one period the Vintners' Company possessed 500 birds. In the language of swanherds, the male swan is called a cob, the female a pen. These terms refer to the comparative size and grade of the two sexes. The black tubercle at the base of the beak is called the berry. I will conclude this paper with the following beautiful lines of Pope:—

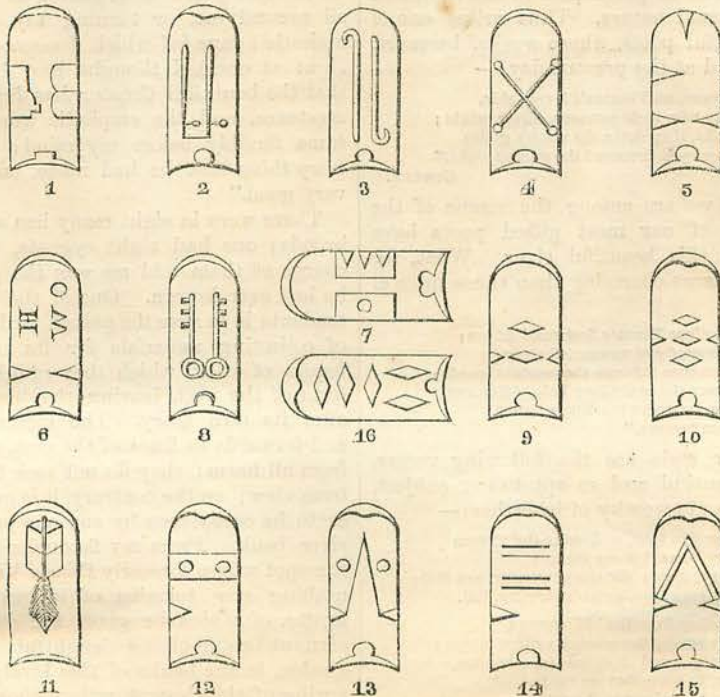
" Bear me, oh, bear me to sequestered scenes,  
To bowery mazes and surrounding greens;  
To Thames's banks, with fragrant breezes fill,  
Or, where ye muses sport, on Cooper's hill;  
On Cooper's hill eternal wreaths shall grow,  
While lasts the mountain, or while Thames shall flow.

" I seem through consecrated walks to rove,  
I hear soft music die along the grove;  
Led by the sound, I roam from shade to shade,  
By God, like poets, venerable made:  
Here his first lays majestic Denham sung,  
There the last numbers flowed from Cowley's tongue.

Oh, early lost! What tears the river shed  
When the sad pomp along his banks was led;  
His drooping swans on every note expire,  
And on his willows hung each muse's lyre."

WINDSOR FOREST.

\* Letter of Pope to Digby.



SWAN MARKS.