

## NOT MERELY FOR SHOW.

THE GIRLDE HAS HAD AN IMPORTANT PLACE IN HISTORY.

Its Use and Significance in the Days of Ancient Rome—The Later Ecclesiastical Use of It in Poetry and the Drama—Some Very Interesting Facts.

The girlde is an article of dress with a history that is not unimportant or uninteresting. It has in times past been much more highly esteemed than it is now; and was, in fact, among not a few peoples, worn by both males and females. This was so amongst the ancient Hebrews, as well as amongst the Greeks and Romans, who found it well nigh indispensable because of the flowing raiment they wore.

In Rome, a man's investiture of his girlde showed that he was intent on work of some nature. When he took it off and let his tunic fall it was patent to all that business was over, and that he was free to speak to his friends at his and their leisure. Thus the girlde served a purpose negative in its character, of course, but a purpose nevertheless. Its sphere of usefulness did not end here. It was figurative of property. When a man or woman put off his or her girlde, it was a token of renunciation of some right or privilege. The widow of Philip I., Duke of Burgundy, for instance, renounced her right of succession by "putting off her girlde on the duke's tomb." Per contra, the Princesses of Ireland in taking the oath of fealty to King John laid aside their girdles, their *skeans*, and their caps.

"In the ceremony of excommunication," says a writer, "the bishop cut or tore away from the culprit the girlde that was about him, and the newly-made husband in Rome took from his wife the maiden girlde of sheep's wool in which she was bound up to the day of her marriage." It is a quite a century (He has given up his girlde), which intimated as much as if he had become bankrupt, or had all his estate forfeited, it being the ancient law of France that when any man, upon some offence, had the penalty of confiscation, inflicted upon him, "he used before the tribunal to give up his girlde, implying thereby that the girlde held everything that belonged to man's estate, as his budget of money and writings, the keys of his house, with his sword, dagger and gloves." The fact that the girlde was used as a purse had much to do with its importance in general appreciation. We have an English confirmatory of this appreciation. It said, "Ungirt, unbelted," and that it was in very common use is clear from the frequency with which the phrase occurs in old out-of-the-way literature.

The girlde was used for other material or actual purposes besides that of a receptacle for money. At it hung the thousand-and-one odds and ends needed and utilized in every day affairs. The scrivener had his inkhorn and pen attached to it; the scholar, his book or books; the monk, his crucifix and rosary; the innkeeper, his tallies; and everybody his knife. So many and so varied were the articles attached to it that the flippant began to poke fun. In an old play there is mention of a merchant who had hanging at his girlde a pouch, a spectacle case, a "punnard," a pen and inkhorn, "a handkercher, with many other trinkets besides, which a merry companion seeing, said it was like a haberdasher's shop of small wares.

In another early play the lady says to her maid: "Give me my girlde, and see that all the furniture be at it; look that cizars, pinners, the penknife, the knife to close letters with, the bodkin, the earpicker and scale be in the case." Girldes were in some respects like the chateaux of not long ago so much the rage amongst ladies; but they differed therefrom in being more useful, more comprehensive in regard both to sex and to articles worn, and when completely furnished, more costly. It is partly for this last reason that we find girldes bequeathed as precious heirlooms and as valuable presents to keep the giver's memory green after death. They were not infrequently of great intrinsic value. One of King John's girldes was wrought with gold and adorned with gems; and that of the widow of Sir Thomas Hungerford, bequeathed in 1504 to the mother church of Worcester, was of green cloth, harnessed with silver, and richly jeweled.

Not a few wealthy commoners were able to afford the luxury of gold-embellished belts, and were no superior to that pardonable vanity so long as no regulation prohibited them. Those who have studied social history will not be surprised to learn that enactments were passed, restraining them. Edward III. forbade any person under the degree of a knight from wearing girldes gilt or silver, unless he should happen to be an esquire of substance valued at more than two hundred pounds, when a reasonable embellishment was tolerated.

Henry IV. confirmed this regulation; but it does not seem to have been stringently enforced, for Edward IV. was constrained to impose a penalty of forty pence upon the wives of servants and laborers who should have the impertinence to aspire to be as good as their master's spouses.

Girldes were an object of superstition, more especially if they had belonged to female saints. Such girldes were popularly believed to possess a certain remarkable power—the power, namely, of protecting women from some of the more serious illnesses that are attendant or consequent upon childbirth. This superstition permeated through all classes of the sex. Queens credited the miraculous virtues of "Our Lady's Girlde," and paid large prices for the loan of one. The majority of these girldes were believed to have been the property during her lifetime of St. Margaret, the gracious patroness of married women. Most every nursery in England—to say nothing of France—possessed one. There is an old Irish poem, with the charmingly euphonious title of "Oran eadar Ailte agus MacKonnain air dhoibh learg a grabhail ri Fionn," an allusion to the efficacy of an enchanted or sanctified girlde in this same direction; and we are further informed that "sickness cannot affect those whom their girlde binds." In Ossian there is mention made to much the same effect. It does not matter that the poems of Ossian are put before the world by Mr. Macpherson are not genuine; one of the schoolmaster's commentators state that "sanctified girldes till very lately were kept in many families in the north of Scotland. They were impressed with several mystical figures, and the ceremony of binding them about the woman's waist was accompanied with words and gestures which showed the custom to have come originally from the Druids."

## IN MUSICAL CIRCLES.

Few musical organizations have given such admirable performances in this city, as those of last Monday and Tuesday evenings by the Swedish Concert Co. in the Opera House. The quartet is by far the best that has been here for a long time, being most evenly balanced in power; the voices harmonizing particularly well; with a specially distinct enunciation, which would give a great lesson to many English speaking born singers. Some of the trick singing (to coin an expression) was specially good; the imitation of the banjo by the tenors; and, most noticeable of all, the resonance of the sounding bell showed what possibilities there are with four clever musicians with good voices.

Their best numbers were *Sof i ro* a charming slumber serenade (which by the way, was learned by the first amateur minstrels but never performed owing to the backing out of the soloist.) *Slumber Dearest*, by Ahlstrom, and "*Kor i vind Polka*." The most amusing were the "*Mrs. Winslow's Cradle*" song a most glaring advertisement but at the same time most delicious music, and there was a boy.

Mr. Laurin the new tenor, is a delightful ballad singer and sang Milton Wellington's "*Forget and forgive*" in a very finished manner but eclipsed his performance with the encore he gave. The bass, Mr. Emslie, also appeared to much advantage in his selection of "*Thy Sentinel am I*," his voice being of very even register. Miss Skoog accompanied well. The reciter, Miss Barden, did not appear very advantageously in her selections, her recitations being on a par with her idea of the kind of dance that a minuet is. The Opera House directors did not think much of the comfort of the audience as the house was wretchedly cold and with a small audience, continued so. This is poor policy to help along the popularity of the house.

Mr. Fisher (Mus. B.C. Toronto) played before quite a large audience in St. Andrews church on Wednesday evening. The St Andrews people would do well to engage this gentleman if terms are satisfactory, as he played on a strange organ at very short notice in quite a clever manner and would be an acquisition to the city, which has such a lack of really good organists just now.

The organ recital at St. Peter's church, North End, last Sunday evening, was attended by a large and appreciative audience. The new vocal organ was very fully tested by Messrs. Costin and Ford, and was found to be a very sweet-toned instrument, well adapted to the church, and capable of producing excellent results. A well arranged programme was carried out. Among the numbers were the solo "*Salve Maria*," by Miss Kathleen Furlong, with violin obligato by Miss Marie DeBury; a violin solo by Prof. White; "*Abide with Me*," by A. H. Lindsay; and "*Saviour Hear Us*," by Miss McMullen. Mr. T. M. Burns also appeared to advantage in the baritone obligato to the chorus of "*Mighty Jehovah, Accept Our Praises*." The Cathedral choir sang both this and "*The Heavens Are Telling*" with fine effect, despite their limited numbers. It is hardly necessary to add that both Messrs. Ford and Costin handled the organ in such a way as to make its powers fully understood.

## Tones and Undertones.

Marie Roze and Sims Reeves have been singing in London with great success.

E. Jakobowski, the composer of "*Erminie*" has come to this country to be present when Francis Wilson gives the piece in New York, Oct. 2.

Mrs. Thompson, daughter Ruth of old John Brown, whose soul went marching on, lives on a ranch near Pasadena, Cal., a well-preserved woman of seventy, who looks less than sixty.

Two managers have obtained the American rights to the new Gilbert and Sullivan piece—John Stetson for New York and New England and David Henderson for the remainder of the country.

Mrs. Jennie Patrick-Walker will remain at her summer home at Crow Point, Hingham, Mass., into October. Mr. and Mrs. Walker will occupy apartments at the United States hotel Boston, during the winter.

Quite a number of eminent composers and musicians commenced their career as chorists. Sir Arthur Sullivan was as a boy a member of the choir of the Chapel Royal, St. James. Mr. Sims Reeves first sang in the village choir at North Cray, Kent; Mr. Edward Lloyd at Westminster Abbey; and Dr. Bridge at Rochester Cathedral.

The eminent historian, Professor Mommsen went to Italy to escape the enthusiastic demonstrations of his friends in Berlin on the approaching fiftieth anniversary of his taking his doctor's degree. It has been resolved to raise a fund and present it to Mommsen, in order that he may found a "*Stiftung*" for the promotion of scientific studies in his own branch of labor.

M. Gounod enjoys but feeble health now, and rarely leaves Paris. In a recent conversation he is reported to have said: "*Sapho* is my first work, and it will be the last over the production of which I shall preside in a foreign country." Melancholy as are the words, they afford ground for a hope that the maestro looks forward to bringing out a new lyrical work in Paris at all events.

Sims Reeves gives this advice: "*The ballad depends on the mind of the singer. Most people sing a ballad with no idea of the poetry or sentiment. You have to make the public feel—to touch their hearts. The so-called teacher of ballad singing nowadays generally conveys to his pupil*

simply his own rendering, which usually—as might be expected from a man who knows no better than to do so—is a false one. Hence the falseness of modern ballad singing, and hence, too, the neglect of the ballad form by the best modern composers."

The managers of Henri Marteau in this country have just arranged with his European managers by which he will fulfill his engagements in Europe before coming to this country. Marteau will therefore not arrive until Nov. 16. His first concert will be at Cincinnati on Nov. 23, with the Orpheus club. He will be heard in New York City with the Philharmonic society on Dec. 15 and 16 and with the Boston Symphony society on January 5 and 6. By this new arrangement his managers here are enabled to meet the demand for him, as they now have eighty-five concerts instead of fifty.

Sir William George Cousins, who was Master of the Music to the Queen from 1879 to the present year, has died in the Engadine from acute pneumonia. He was only sixty years of age. As a boy he entered the choir of her Majesty's Chapel Royal, though he did not remain long, being sent to the Brussels Conservatoire in 1844. He was only sixteen when he appeared in public as a pianoforte soloist, and in the same year he was appointed organist to the Queen's private chapel. In 1851 he was made assistant professor of the Royal Academy, and soon after professor, and from 1857 to 1883 he was conductor of the Philharmonic Society. Sir William's compositions include "*Gideon*," an oratorio produced at the Gloucester Festival in 1871, and numerous instrumental works. Last year he received the honour of Knighthood, in company with Sir Joseph Barnby and Sir Walter Parratt.

## The New Gilbert and Sullivan Opera.

Sir Arthur Sullivan, during his summer residence at Weybridge, has progressed so satisfactorily with the new comic opera which he is composing for the Savoy, says the Daily News, that Mr. D'Oyly Carte proposes, as we learn, to distribute the parts and to put the work into choral rehearsal at an early date. Towards the middle of September Sir Arthur will return to London, and the ordinary rehearsals will thenceforth be held daily under the direction of the composer and Mr. W. S. Gilbert, so that the opera will, it is hoped, be ready for production in public very soon after the Norwich Festival in October. Two of the leading parts will, we understand, be filled by Mr. Rutland Barrington and Miss Nancy McIntosh. The lady, who is new to the stage, has already gained success as a vocalist at the Monday Popular Concerts and elsewhere. She is an American, a native of Cleveland, Ohio, and she has studied singing first for three years under Mr. Errani, of New York, and latterly under Mr. Henschel in London.

## TALK OF THE THEATRE.

Henry Irving cleared \$50,000 in two weeks in San Francisco.

Oscar Wilde will come over to assist Rose Cogleland produce his play, "*A Woman of No Importance*," at the Fifth Avenue theatre, New York, in December.

Henry E. Dixey, "*Adonis*" opened the new Tuttle's opera house, St. Joseph, Mo., last week. The sale of the first sixty tickets brought a premium of \$60 each.

Manager—Do you understand a stage make-up? Applicant—Well, yes, if you mean general lying about the cast. I am a dandy at that; but when it comes to squaring rival actresses I'm not in it.

Actresses have the best kept heads of hair in the world. They are absolutely clean and healthy, and their tresses are invariably short. Shoulder length is the rule. Ellen Terry wouldn't bother with a useless mane, as she expresses it. There is always a pair of scissors in her dressing table, which she uses almost as often as she does the comb.

Actors and actresses are not regarded favorably by all the life insurance offices. Twenty-three companies will insure an actor without question, two will only insure him conditionally, while one will reject him altogether because he is an actor. On the other hand, five companies reject actresses, nineteen treat them as they would other female lives, and two accept them conditionally, discriminating against them on account of their occupation.

The following phrases from the works of Shakespeare are quoted in the press and in speeches more frequently than any others, and stand as to frequency in the order given: "The ill will which blows no man good," Henry IV.; "Thy wish was father to that thought," Henry IV.; "Dance attendance," Henry VIII.; "Though this be madness, yet there's method in't," Hamlet; "Beggard's all description," Antony and Cleopatra; and the title of the play, *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Sarah Bernhardt has had many curious freaks. She has horsewhipped a lady who insulted her; she has procured a princess for daughter-in-law; she carries a silk-lined coffin about with her, and often sleeps in it; and for long she had as companion a tame tigress. But her latest past is the most extraordinary; it is an opossum, which she found as a baby in Australia at the foot of a tree where it had dropped from its mother's pouch. She has reared it quite successfully, and, what is more, has trained it to fetch and carry things at its mistress's order.

Ludovic Halevy, the novelist-dramatist, who was spoken of as possible successor to M. Jules Claretie at the Comedie Francaise, is one of the most striking literary personalities of modern Paris. As a writer he has been all things to all men—or perhaps it would be truer to say to women. Subscribers to Maudie know him as the author of that *jeune fille* idyl, "*L'Abbe Constantin*," while his "*Madame Cardinal*" and "*Les Petits Cardinal*" have made him a household word in somewhat different spheres, and in "*Frou-Frou*" he contributed a valuable addition to the dramatic repertoire of the world.

The production of "*Robert Emmett, Irish Patriot*," by C. A. Clarke, at the Comedy Theatre, Manchester, reminds one that an earlier play on the same subject, by Mr. Frank Marshall, was promised a dozen years ago by Mr. Henry Irving, at the end of his first season of management at the Lyceum. The programme then unfolded was singularly lacking in fulfilment, for it also included a work by Mr. Wills, with "*Riezni*" as the sub-

ject, and a revival of "*Coriolanus*," for which Mr. Irvine announced he would have "the invaluable benefit of the research of that gifted painter Mr. Alma Tadema." Mr. Tadema long ago completed his share of the work, but the revival is still among "the great expectations."

"A pair of nippers and half a dozen eighteen-inch gas-burner tips," was the order given by a jaunty young woman who visited a New York hardware store the other day. "That lady," said the proprietor after her departure, "is an actress, and is just going on the road. All theatrical people while travelling carry nippers and tips with them. The managers of hotels in small towns try to save gas by putting bits of cotton in the bedroom burners, thus impeding the flow. The minute an actor strikes a light and detects this he pulls out his nippers and tips. Off comes the 'faked' burner and on goes one that lets the full head of gas come through. Before leaving he arranges things as he found them and goes merrily along to get the better of the next economical landlord on his route."

"I haven't played in a place of 5000 inhabitants for ten years," remarked the manager of a theatrical company who was in New York the other day buying a lot of his old lithographs. "I got tired loafing about Union square and waiting for something to turn up. My wife's brother asked us to visit him at a village called Conklingville, in the lower Adirondacks. Just to keep our hand in, my wife, two daughters, and myself gave a little entertainment in a big room over a store. It took, and I got an idea. I sent for two fellows I knew, we formed a company, and started out. We travel all over the North woods by rail, stage or wagon. In summer we make the fair or circus towns, and in winter we have our regular dates. Everybody knows us and we are well liked. Our receipts are small, but so are our expenses. We are never out of a job and never dead broke. We are a happy family—for the young fellows married my daughters—contented to earn a comfortable living and to let others continue the heart-breaking chase after fame and fortune."

## Meeting His Match.

The great tragedian W. C. Macready, was very irritable on the stage, and always insisted upon receiving his exact cue or "property," as the case might be, and without them he could not or would not proceed with his next speech.

But he met his match on one occasion. He was being supported by John Ryder, who also had a temper of his own, and in the middle of a long and important scene Ryder had to say to him—

"Take this purse of gold."

When Ryder came to the speech he found that he had forgotten the purse, so he seized Macready's hand and pretended to place the money in his palm.

Macready, however, opened his hand, showing the audience he had received nothing, and growled out—

"I cannot speak to this, sir."

Ryder answered in the same tone—

"Can't you, by Jove! Then you can stand there mumble all night; and walked off, leaving Macready to finish the scene as best he could."

## Ending a Contest.

At one of the annual band contests held in a rural English valley, the services of a distinguished musician, Dr. X., were secured in the capacity of judge, for a sum of five pounds.

The talented Miss Doc. was stationed inside of a tent, so as not to be able to see which band was playing, and alone, so that his attention should not be drawn away. Some cigars and a bottle of whisky were supplied, for fear the musician might feel lonely.

The bands brayed their loudest; at the conclusion the committee approached the tent to hear the momentous decision. They entered it. The doctor was on the floor—the bottle was empty.

They had brayed in vain. So the contest resolved itself into a free fight, conducted with trombones, drumsticks, &c.



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