

West Country Hobby-Horses and Cognate Customs

BY HERBERT W. KILLE

IN two places in the West of England—Minehead and Padstow—the words of Shakespeare : ‘ For O, for O, the hobby-horse is forgot ’ are without significance. For in each of these ancient towns, both of them on the sea-board of the Bristol Channel, the hobby-horse still comes forth to greet the summer, with quaint rites and merry antics, as it has done from ‘ a time whereof the memory of man is not to the contrarie.’

Up to about a century ago such a custom was also observed at Combe Martin, and although it may strike one as rather singular that these three instances of the survival of the hobby-horse should be found on the same stretch of coast at no great distance apart, the wonder is perhaps that hobby-horsing which, in one form or another, apparently figured in May Day celebrations all over the country in the past, has not survived to a greater extent elsewhere.

It is said of the Minehead and Padstow customs that they have been kept up ‘ from time immemorial.’ What warrant there is for this sweeping supposition it would be hard to say inasmuch as written or printed references to these customs have not been traced back farther than a century or so. Not that that matters possibly because negative evidence may mean that nobody troubled about recording such observances until their survival beyond the age when they were regarded as commonplace. Nowadays it seems to be the accepted theory of those who have given the subject of hobby-horsing and cognate customs any consideration that they are of extreme

antiquity, that they are, in fact, a perpetuation of a primitive festival with which was celebrated the coming of summer, a vestige of the ancient fertility rites.

Regarding the Minehead hobby-horse with which, as a Somerset survival, this article is mainly concerned, the earliest written or printed reference to the custom occurs in Savage's *Hundred of Carhampton* (1830). 'A singular custom,' Savage called it, 'which prevails on every first day of May.' This is his description of the custom :

'A number of young men, mostly fishermen and sailors, having previously made some grotesque figures of light stuff, rudely resembling men, and horses with long tails, sufficiently large to cover and disguise the persons who are to carry them, assemble together and perambulate the town and neighbourhood, performing a variety of antics, to the great amusement of the children and young persons; they never fail to pay a visit to Dunster Castle, where, after having been hospitably regaled with strong beer and victuals, they always receive a present in money; many other persons, inhabitants of the places they visit, give them small sums, and such persons as they meet are also asked to contribute a trifle; if they are refused, the person of the refuser is subjected to the ceremony of booting or pursing; this is done by some of the attendants holding his person while one of the figures inflict ten slight blows on him with the top of a boot; he is then liberated and all parties give three huzzas: the most trifling sum buys off this ceremony, and it is seldom or never performed but on those who purposely throw themselves in their way and join the party, or obstruct them in their vagaries. This custom has prevailed for ages, but what gave rise to it is at present unknown; it probably owes its origin to some ancient custom of perambulating the boundaries of the parish.'

In May 1863, the local newspaper (*West Somerset Free Press*) contained a paragraph about the custom which included the following observations :

'The origin professes to be in commemoration of the wreck of a vessel at Minehead in remote times, or the advent of a sort of phantom ship which entered the harbour without captain or crew. Once the custom was encouraged, but now is much neglected, and perhaps will soon fall into desuetude. The same thing is reputed to have obtained at Padstow.'

Poole, in his little book on Somerset customs and lore (1877) has some account of the custom. He writes :



PADSTOW HOBBY HORSE

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MINEHEAD HOBBY HORSE

From a Photograph by Mr. H. E. Cranmer

‘Many conjectures as to its origin have been given, one asserting that the famous hobby-horse was the ancient King of May; another that it was a religious fracas long ago in which one party trounced the other; and even until recently it seems to have been not unusual for those connected with the hobby-horse to catch hold of some luckless wight and give him a drubbing. The First of May 50 or 60 years ago was made a High Day at Minehead. The ancient town was paraded the evening before as a reminder to the inhabitants of what was to take place on the morrow. At early dawn the sleepers were aroused by the beating of a great drum whereupon they betook themselves to a cross-road a little outside Minehead in the direction of Bidcombe (*sic* Woodcombe) and there danced round the hobby-horse for some time. Then home to breakfast and off to Dunster Castle where they were regaled with ale and presented with coin after gambolling about for some time on the lawn in front of the entrance, then back to Minehead collecting donations on their way. The festivities appeared to have lasted till May 3rd, terminating in another cross-way on the Porlock road. Years ago many of the tradespeople and others of respectability in Minehead took part in the proceedings but at the present day the sole representative of this ancient custom is the man who goes to the Castle on the 1st of May accompanied by a few children.’

Since observers of a generation ago noted the custom, it may have been shorn of some of its trimmings—happily the rougher elements have gone—but it has never fallen into desuetude. Every year, as many old folk of the town have affirmed, the hobby-horse has made its appearance, and not until the years of the Great War was there a break in the observance of the custom so far as the adult members of the community who made themselves responsible for it were concerned. But even then certain of the youthful generation constructed and brought out unkempt looking ‘colts’ or, if one may coin a word, ‘Hobble-de-horses’, which imitated, though indifferently, their sire’s ceremonial and performance, so that the break in the custom was hardly absolute.

To-day the Minehead hobby-horse, nourished be it said to a great extent by the publicity which it receives throughout the land as a survival of a quaint custom and by the interest which many students of folklore display in its appearance, is possibly more vigorous than ever it has been within the memory of the oldest living inhabitant. Usually two ‘horses’ appear, one

of them always emerging from 'stables' in the old Quay Town, the whereabouts of the said 'stables' being a close secret to all but those immediately interested. This latter is known as 'The Sailors' Horse,' and it is usually claimed by the sea-faring part of the community that the custom has always been kept up by the sailors. Be that as it may, men living in the old part of the town near the parish church on the hill have often brought out a 'horse' and on many occasions a 'horse' has appeared from some other part of the town, each, of course, soliciting 'largesse.'

At the present day the smartest-looking 'horse' hails from the Quay Town. Its owner and 'trainer' is Mr. Richard Martin (the present coxswain of the Minehead lifeboat) who has been connected with the custom almost since his boyhood. It was he who presented the 'Sailors' Horse' before the members of the Archæological Society during their Minehead visit in 1931.

In practically all essentials the hobby-horse at Minehead appears to be the same as it was when Savage described it. It consists of a large light framework of wood, roughly shaped like an inverted boat, 7 to 8 ft. in length. Through an aperture in the centre of the framework the man who carries the horse puts his head, and his shoulders sustain the weight. The framework itself is concealed with a profusion of coloured ribbons and houselling, extending from the framework all round to the ground, conceals the man's body. The houselling is painted all over with different coloured circular spots, and along the bottom edge of the cloth are painted the words: 'The Sailors' Horse.' The man wears a grotesque mask, shaped in tin, and painted white with red embellishments. The mask is surmounted by a tall conical cap also decorated with ribbons and at its peak there is a tuft of ribbons finished off formerly with a peacock's feather. The 'horse' has a long tail, nowadays of rope, but up to less than twenty years ago a cow's tail was fastened to the rope forming the end of the tail. (Plate XIV.)

There does not seem to be any regularity about the circle markings on the houselling. There are circles painted all in white and others in red or some other colour, but in many cases there is an outer ring of white or red according to the colour of the inner spot.

Two men, one with an accordion, the other with a drum, accompany the 'horse' as musicians. They play a traditional tune, which is given here, locally known as 'the hobby-horse tune,' which is actually an old air called 'Soldiers' Joy.' It is to be found in various collections of folk tunes, and only recently it was collected,—so the librarian of the English Folk Dance Society states,—by Miss Maud Karpeles in Northumberland, where it is still danced traditionally as a country-dance. More than two musicians used to accompany the



ORIGINAL VERSION OF THE 'SAILOR'S HOBBY-HORSE'

'horse.' Eighty to ninety years ago four clarionet players and a drummer helped to make up the party, and brass instruments have been known to assist.

While the 'musickers' perform on their instruments the man in the hobby-horse prances to and fro, pirouettes, leaps into air, does obeisance to onlookers, especially if they be affluent-looking ones, or, if they be otherwise, flutters its hundreds of ribbons with a wicked shake and rushes affrighteningly at them. Through a hole in the side of the houselling the man puts his hand to solicit contributions and when they are forthcoming

the 'horse' bows ceremoniously. If nothing is given, then, according to whom the persons about him appear to be and the liberties he thinks he may take, the 'horse' swings suddenly round and its long tail, which has been dragging in the mud or dirt, swishes out and round causing all in the vicinity to hurriedly retreat.

The Minehead hobby-horse comes out first on the eve of May Day which is known among the hobby-horsing fraternity as 'Warning Night'. At 6 o'clock on May morning, the 'horse' and its attendants who comprise the musicians and a man or two as reliefs, go to a cross-roads known as Whitecross, about half-a-mile to the westward of the town, and here the 'horse' indulges in a dance. Old Minehead residents, long since passed away, have told of how in their youthful days, many of the inhabitants accompanied the 'horse' to Whitecross on May morning and, to the music of fiddle and clarionet and drum, danced 'a sort of Maypole dance' but without any maypole, and the prettiest girl among them was chosen to be Queen of the May. It seems to have been customary at one time for a King and Queen of the May to have been chosen and crowned, and it was part of the ceremonial for the Queen to be placed on the 'horse' and carried round.

On the night of the third day of May the hobby-horse and party have always gone, and still go, to another cross-roads on the east of the town known as Cher, and after a dance and gambol there the 'horse' returns to its 'stable' until the following May. No form of words ever appears to have been said, or any song sung, either at Whitecross or Cher, and if any particular rites were performed at these cross-roads all memory of them has vanished.

Seldom does one see now the custom of 'booting' or 'pur-sing'. It is only done occasionally, perhaps by request or as a joke to which the 'victim' is quite agreeable, but in earlier years, when the hobby-horse custom was carried on with more licence anyone who declined to contribute might be seized and subjected to the ordeal. Such a person would be held face downward by two or more of the party who chanted: 'Oh, one, oh two, oh three', and so on up to ten. With each cry another member of the party struck the victim with a boot on

the rear part of his anatomy, and the hobby-horse bowed. Immediately 'Oh ten' was chanted the victim was dropped as the attendants scuttled out of the way of the 'horse's' tail which was swung round vigorously.

Up to about fifty years ago one or more fantastically dressed attendants known as 'gullivers' accompanied the 'horse'. The gulliver's dress was in its decorative effect somewhat similar to that of the horse, and he wore a mask surmounted with a similar conical hat also decked with ribbons. These gullivers did the begging and would go as far as to open doors and go into houses. A fracas occurred as the result of a householder resenting this intrusion, so one version has it, and he received injuries from which he died. After that the gullivers ceased to appear.

It seems to have been about that time that the hobby-horse lost its snappers. Previously it was armed with a formidable pair of snappers made of wood and fixed to the front of the body and operated with a cord by the man inside, which enabled him to catch hold of people and detain them until 'largesse' had been paid. These snappers were covered with a hare's skin and ears.

Many tales about the hobby-horse have been told by old inhabitants. Most familiar is the tradition which has been handed down to the effect that a party of marauding Danes threatening a landing at Minehead were frightened away by the appearance of the hobby-horse. The tale has been told, too, of how the hobby-horse once went to Porlock and the party 'got drinky and the Porlock men beat them and stole their horse and put it up on Porlock church steeple.' It is related, also, that a former vicar of Minehead tried to put the custom down but without success. The hobby-horse was made in secret in the woods on the hill beyond the town and it appeared as usual in defiance of the vicar.

Of the Padstow hobby-horse, Minehead men say that some Padstow sailors who once landed at Minehead a long time ago stole the 'horse' or the idea and on their return home established the custom at Padstow. The men of Padstow repudiate this tradition. They also claim to have kept up their custom from time immemorial. It is rather singular that the Padstow

people tell a story about their 'horse' scaring off invaders. They say that during a siege of Calais—perhaps the siege of 1346–7—a French vessel, taking advantage of the absence of Padstow men, entered the harbour but was frightened away by the hobby-horse.

In its general outline the Padstow horse bears sufficient resemblance to the Minehead 'animal' to suggest that they both had a common origin. As with the Minehead 'horse', the wooden framework, hung round with a curtain of black hessian or sail-cloth, is carried on the shoulders of the men inside, and his head protruding through the centre is concealed by a mask and conical head-dress. The differences in detail, however, are considerable. The Padstow 'horse' is of more sombre appearance yet more formidable looking. The framework is almost circular and the curtain hanging to the ground is black. The mask concealing the man's face is black, the nose and mouth and eyes being outlined in red and white. The cap is black, embellished with white stripes longitudinally, and a plume of black horse-hair surmounts the cap. On the cap are painted the letters O. B.

The Padstow 'horse' is a two-headed creature for, in addition to the masked head in the centre, there projects from the front of the framework a small horse's head the jaws of which form the snappers. These are worked by the man inside. (Plate XIV).

Over a century ago, according to an old Minehead inhabitant who died about 1880, the hobby-horse there had a small horse's head projecting from the front of the frame as well as the snappers.

Two hobby-horses have made their appearance at Padstow in recent years, one being known as the 'original horse' and the other as the 'Peace horse.' The 'original horse', which is said to be 130 years old, is attended by five men respectively designated as Signor Brentano, Colonel de Bato, Don Carlos de Bato, Trevathen Red, and Lively Mac. Up to the middle of last century one of the party was dressed as an old woman in scarlet cloak and cape.

An accordion and a drum, which is supposed to have gone through the battle of Waterloo, played by attendants provide

the music to which the 'horse' performs its antics. One of the men dances in front of the 'horse.' At Padstow, as well as at Minehead, it often happens that some of the younger generation turn out with rudely constructed 'horses.'

Observance of the Padstow custom commences also on the evening of April 30th, but finishes on the night of May Day. During May Day an itinerary of the town and locality is made and at the hamlet of Treator it was at one time the custom for the 'horse' to 'drink' at a pool there. During the perambulation on May Eve 'The Morning Song' is sung by the party, the first of its seventeen verses being :

'United and unite, and let us all unite,
For summer is acome unto day,
And whither we are going we all will unite
In the merry morning of May.'

Another song, 'The Day Song,' is sung during the May Day itinerary :

'Awake, St. George, Our English knight O,
For summer is acome and winter is ago,
And every day God gives us His grace,
By day and by night O.'

There is a reference apparently to the French invasion story in one of the verses of this song :

'Where are the French dogs that make such boast O
They shall eat the grey goose feather,
And we will eat the roast O
And in every land O, the land that e'er we go.'

Mr. Thurstan Peter, in a paper which he wrote for the *Journal of the Royal Institution of Cornwall* (1913) stated therein that 'at the starting of the second verse of 'The Day Song'—'Where is St. George, where is he O?'—the hobby-horse and the dancer crouch down, and at the end of the verse 'spring up, leap into the air, and then resume the dancing. This feature seems to have its counterpart in the duk-duk masked dance in the Bismarck Archipelago'. It certainly suggests a primitive form of dance.

An account of the Padstow custom which appears in Hunt's *Popular Romances of the West of England* (1881), states : 'This hobby-horse was, after it had been taken round the town,

submerged in the sea. The old people said it was once believed that this ceremony preserved the cattle of the inhabitants from disease and death.¹

There is no record that the Minehead hobby-horse was ever dipped in the sea, or that it was 'watered' at any point.

Whether the belief still holds or not is hardly safe to say in these enlightened days but it was, at any rate, at one time considered at Padstow that a woman who was touched by the hobby-horse was lucky, this 'luck' being understood by women to relate to child-bearing. The writer has been unable to discover any trace of such a belief at Minehead.

About the Combe Martin custom, which was kept up till 1837, little information seems to have been preserved. The custom there was known as 'Hunting the Earl of Rone,' and according to the first description apparently to find its way into print, this being by the Rev. George Tugwell in his *North Devon Scenery Book* (about 1856), Ascension Day was the occasion of its observance. Mr. Tugwell's account, summarised, states :

'The characters were the Earl of Rone, wearing a grotesque mask, a smock frock, padded with straw, and a string of biscuits round his neck ; the hobby-horse, covered with painted trappings and armed with an instrument called a " mapper " (*sic*, snappers) shaped to represent the mouth of a horse, furnished with rude teeth and the means of rapidly opening and closing the jaws ; a donkey decorated with flowers and a necklace made of a string of biscuits ; a troop of grotesquely dressed Grenadiers completed the procession, which paraded the parish for a week previous to Ascension Day, when an immense throng from the surrounding parishes gathered together all in their holiday costume. At three o'clock the Grenadiers marched in file to Lady's Wood where the Earl of Rone was hidden in a bush. They immediately fired a volley, laid hold of the Earl, and set him on the donkey, with his face to the animal's tail, and conducted him in triumph to the village. Here the hobby-horse and the fool and the inhabitants joined in the procession. At certain stations the Grenadiers fired a volley, when the Earl fell from the donkey, apparently wounded, to the great exultation of the soldiers, and lamentations of the hobby-horse and fool. The latter replaced

¹ For further information on the Padstow Hobby-horse, see *Journal, Royal Inst. of Cornwall* (1913) xix, 241-273 ; Fraser's *Golden Bough* (1913), ii, 68 ; and *Folk Lore* (1905), xvi, 59 *et seq.*

the Earl on the donkey and the procession again marched on. The actors continued their performance for several hours, stopping here and there to levy contributions from the inhabitants and visitors, and also at every public house for refreshment. In case anyone refused to give, the fool dipped a besom in the gutter, and besprinkled the recusant, and if this was not effectual the hobby-horse laid hold of the victim with his "mapper", and detained him until the black mail was forthcoming. This went on until nightfall, when the procession reached the sea and then broke up. It may be supposed that the licence and drunkenness on the occasion was extreme, which led to this very curious relic of antiquity being discountenanced and finally suppressed.'

The Combe Martin custom, whatever it may have been in the beginning, appears to have become an extraordinary mingling of hobby-horsing with boundary-beating, old hunting customs and the Tyrone tradition. There is a tradition at Combe Martin that an Earl of Tyrone landed in a skiff on the shore there, driven in by stress of weather. This tradition probably refers to Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone, who rose in insurrection early in the reign of James I, and fled from Ireland in September 1607. His voyage to Italy is known to have been lengthened by autumn storms.

It is unfortunate that, from the scanty description of the Combe Martin hobby-horse which has come down to us, it is not possible to tell whether it had much in common, as regards its appearance, with the Minehead or Padstow horse.

In the distinction which Minehead and Padstow enjoy as the remaining domiciles of the hobby-horse custom, Abbots Bromley, Staffordshire, with its 'Dance of the Deermen', may share to some extent. Although this is not a May Day observance, being performed on the first Monday after September 4th, a hobby-horse figures in the performance—not such an imposing 'horse' as is found at Minehead or Padstow.

Elsewhere in the British Isles where the hobby-horse was wont to make its appearance up to the last fifty years or less the custom has fallen into desuetude and, in some cases, as at Salisbury, its principal element relegated to a museum. In the Salisbury museum there is to be seen the 'Hob-Nob' or 'Old Snap' or 'Dragon' as it was variously termed, which once pranced before the giant effigy (also in the museum) in the grand

pageant with which the Trade Guilds of Salisbury celebrated the festival of St. Osmond on St. John's Day. 'Hob-Nob' is quite a different type of 'horse' from that at Minehead or Padstow, the man carrying the framework of it round his waist, with dummy legs dangling on either side.

Mr. Percy Maylam, in his book on *The Hooden Horse*, saved from oblivion a wealth of descriptive detail concerning this peculiar Kentish custom which survived up to about twenty years ago. The Kentish 'horse' which made its perambulation at Christmastide, was a poor thing in comparison with the West-Country hobby-horses. It consisted of a horse's head, crudely carved in wood, and fixed to the end of a stout wooden staff about 4 ft. long. Hanging from the head was a piece of sacking or hessian under which the 'hoodener' concealed himself. He then grasped with his hands the staff to which the head was fixed and stooped until the staff touched the ground. The lower jaw of the 'horse' worked on a hinge and, by means of a cord attached to it, the man produced a loud snapping noise. The party which accompanied the 'horse' included a 'waggoner' who cracked a whip, and a man dressed up as a woman, and known as 'Mollie,' who swept the ground before the horse with a birch broom.

In appearance the 'Hooden Horse' of Kent was very like the 'Mari Lwydd' of South Wales. The custom is still very much alive in Glamorganshire, and the fact that a dead horse's head, instead of a wooden one, was used in the 'Hoodening' custom at one time makes it still more akin to the Welsh survival in which a horse's skull forms the head-piece. The skull is covered with white calico and decked with ribbons, and fastened to the top of a pole and the man who bears the pole is covered to his feet by a long white shroud. The 'Mari Lwydd' is indeed quite a ghostly looking object if met in the dark. The jaws are hinged and worked by the man who is carrying the 'horse' so that they can be made to snap viciously. A peculiar feature of this custom is the manner in which the 'horse' takes up a position on the doorstep of a house and goes through a curious ceremony. While the 'horse' stands mute, the men accompanying it sing in Welsh a song of many verses, many of which are extemporised, to which the good man of the house in

due course replies, also in song. Eventually all enter the house and the wassail bowl flows.

It is considered that the household will be visited with good luck if the 'horse' passes through and leaves by a different door than that by which it enters. The 'Mari Lwydd' which has been variously translated to mean 'Blessed Mary' and 'grey mare', and which prevails on Twelfth Night, seems to be a relic (according to W. Roberts in the 'Mari Lwydd and its Origin,' *Transactions of Cardiff Naturalists' Society*) of an ancient miracle play which was in its turn an adaptation of a primitive ceremonial. A good specimen of the 'Mari Lwydd' is to be seen in the National Museum of Wales.

A Bristol paper recorded at Christmas, 1930, the observance by 'wassailers' at Tetbury, Glos., of 'the ancient custom of carrying round a dummy head and horns of an animal.' Inquiries by the writer failed to elicit any further information except that it was 'a bull's head affair on a pole,' and that the wassailers sang an old song known as 'The Wassail Bowl,' in which the only distinguishable words were 'awl awver the town.' Ditchfield in *Old English Customs* however mentions that 'at Kingscote in Gloucestershire they have a peculiar kind of Bull Hoodening.'

This 'bull's head affair' brings the Tetbury custom into kinship with the Wiltshire 'Wooset' or 'Ooser,' which has been extinct for over thirty years. As described in the *Antiquary* (1908) by E. E. Balch, the 'Wooset' consisted of 'the head of a bull, with great bottle eyes, large horns, and lolling tongue, which was manipulated by a man stooping inside a body composed of a broomstick, a hide of sacking, and a rope tail. The bull knocked at the door with its horns and if allowed to enter chased the young people round the house with fearsome curvets and bellowings.' Another account of this custom (*Wilts. Arch. Mag.* 1853) stated that a horse's skull fitted with deer's horns was used.

The former custom of 'souling' or 'soul caking' in Cheshire, in which the skull of a horse had a prominent place, bears quite a similarity to the 'Mari Lwydd.' Hone in his *Everyday Book* mentions this observance. 'There is a custom very common in Cheshire called Old Hob; it consists of a man carrying a

dead horse's head covered with a sheet, to frighten people. This frolic is usual between All Souls' Day and Christmas.'

Up to about thirty years ago the hobby-horse figured in a Christmastide ceremonial in certain parts of Derbyshire. A sword-dance team at Newbold included a hobby-horse, and at Staveley in that county over sixty years ago what was described by an old inhabitant as 'a wooden horse' accompanied Morris dancers who sang a song of which the chorus ran :

' Poor old horse, let him die ;
He's carried me many a mile
Over hedges, over ditches,
And over many a stile.'

Suggestions which have been made that the customs observed at Minehead and Padstow and in South Wales may have hailed originally from Ireland, may have some foundation possibly in the records of similar practices in the latter country. There is evidence of a May custom there. A writer (unknown) who described a procession which escorted the May tree in the celebration of May Day at Kerry in 1846 stated : ' The hobby-horse (the local vet. enclosed in a canvas-covered frame shaped like a horse) was a veritable monster . . . He ambled along his erratic course, rearing and plunging and wagging his lower jaw in the most astounding fashion.'

A writer in *Notes and Queries* (7th ser., vol. xi) quoted a description of a Bealtine celebration in King's County on St. John's Eve, which related how the peasantry danced around a huge bonfire to the strains of an old blind piper, and when the fire burned low everyone of the peasantry passed through it 'and several children were thrown across the sparkling embers, while a wooden frame of some eight feet long, with a horse's head fixed to one end, and a large white sheet thrown over it, concealing the wood and the man on whose head it was carried, made an appearance. This was greeted with loud shouts as "the white horse" ; and having been safely carried by the skill of its bearer several times through the fire with a bold leap, it pursued the people, who ran screaming and laughing in every direction. I asked what the horse was meant for, and was told it represented all cattle.'

In certain parts of Europe customs still survive which are

obviously of common origin with one or other of the observances described above, notably in Denmark, Germany, Roumania, in the Basque country, at Glarus in Switzerland and also at Cracow, while in Java quite a picturesque hobby-horse appears on ceremonial occasions.