

The Arms of the College.

“The style of King of Naples,
Of both the Sicillies and Jerusalem.”

King Henry VI.

WHEN our first foundress, Queen Margaret, crossed over the Channel from France in 1445, she brought with her the Armorial Ensign of her father, René of Anjou, which with its six quarterings was impaled by Henry VI. on his own Royal Arms, while at the same time he took as his motto the old English war cry “*Dieu et mon droit!*” not hitherto introduced in this capacity. The arms thus honoured were adopted by the College at the very outset in 1448, and though supplanted from 1465 onwards by Yorkist and other scutcheons, they were restored by Robert Cooke of Clarencieux in 1576 with the addition of the border vert, and for a crest an eagle with gold wings issuing from a golden coronet.

Before considering the actual history of these arms and the manner in which they fell to René, we may perhaps take a rapid survey over the whole composition, noticing the most important features in it.

Undoubtedly the chief of the six quarterings is that occupying the central position in the upper half of the shield, the blazon of the kingdom of Naples, flanked by Hungary and Jerusalem on either hand, being designated as “*Azur semée of fleurs-de-lys d'or*” with a Lambel of Three (or Five) Points gules.

The golden *fleurs-de-lys* on the azure ground form, of course, the sovereign standard of France, illustrating the fact that Charles I. founder of the first house of Sicily-France in 1265, was of blood royal and one of the “*princes de lys,*” his father being Louis VIII. The Lambel, or label, which somewhat resembles

the letter **E** with the points turned downwards , is a mark of cadency denoting that the bearer is not the head of the family, but one of the sons, and is supposed by some to be derived from the fringe of the distinguishing scarves worn in battle. Thus A. Nisbet in his "Essay on Armourie"—1718, writes:—"Label, or Lambel by the French, is taken for a kind of Skerf, which young Men wore anciently about the Neck of their Helmets (as we do now Cravats) with Points hanging down, when they went to the Wars or military Exercises with their Fathers, and by which they were distinguished from them." Others maintain with less likelihood of truth that the origin is to be found in the seals hanging down from ancient title deeds. Except in a family royal only the heir can support a Lambel, younger members of the house bearing other tokens, such as a Crescent, Star or Martlet; but all sons of reigning princes may display this mark, differentiating between themselves by additional signs or by the colour of the Lambel, following the order of the seven heraldic pigments. One occasionally sees the Lambel on the College Arms displayed in argent, white, which would seem to be an error, making Charles of Anjou an elder instead of a younger son of his house. On the shield above the archway in the first court the Lambel is correctly shown as Gules (Red).

Over the signification of the *fleurs-de-lys* controversy has waxed hot. They are commonly supposed to represent the iris or royal lily, but many other theories have been advanced to substitute different objects as their origin.

The unfortunate *fleur-de-lys* has been twisted into the semblance of a spear head, double headed axe,

bulrush, and toad. Dr. Nicholas Upton, writing in 1654, calls it the '*flos gladioli*' or flower of the sword grass.

The Boke of St. Albans, 1486, informs us that the arms of the king of France were:—

“certainli sende by an awngell from hevyn, that is to say, III flowris in maner of swerdis in a field of azure, the wich certan armys ware gewyn to the forsayd kyng of fraunce in synge of everlasting trowbull and that he and his successaries all way with bataill and swereddys (swords) shall be punished.”

Nicholas Upton adds "*Hec Franciscus de terra sua loquitur.*" Until 1801 the azure and gold of this French blazon was carried on the English Royal Standard. In the college arms they are borne not only on the scutcheon of the kingdom of Naples, but also on that of the Duchy of Anjou, with the addition of a *bordure gules*.

Displayed beside the arms of Naples are the silver and red stripes of Hungary, said by some to represent the four principal rivers of that country, the Save, the Drave, the Nyss and the Danube. In the case of the similar shield of Arragon, it is related that the portions of the field displaying gules commemorate the blood shed by one of the counts of Barcelona for his liege-lord Louis VIII, being retained when that family was raised to regal authority. There is a tradition to the same effect respecting the arms of the Keiths.

In the remaining cantonment of the upper portion of the college shield we have the arms of the Crusading kingdom of Jerusalem, a cross potent between four plain crosslets or. In this coat alone heraldry permitted metal to be placed over metal, *e.g.* or on argent,—a peculiarity which is said to refer to *Ps.* LXVIII. 13, while

the crosses symbolize the Five Wounds, the motto being "*Deus vult.*" This device is similar in many respects to that of the Bishopric of Lichfield.

Of the two remaining blazons in the lower field that of de Barre bears the two fishes, the barbels, by way of a rebus, while the arms of the Duchy of Lorraine are:—or, on a bend gules, three allerions argent, said to be displayed in commemoration of the skilful shooting of Godfrey of Boulogne, Duke of Lorraine, who brought down three allerions with his bow from a tower at Jerusalem, "upon the direction of a prophetick person, who had thereupon prophesied his success which accordingly happened." It is more likely however that here too we have a rebus.

An allerion, we should remark, is an eagle, generally displayed without beak or feet.

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