the use of the point is abandoned, and the capacities of defensive use (to which Orientals pay little or no atten­tion) much diminished. These drawbacks have caused the scimitar type, after being in fashion for European light cavalry during the period of Napoleon’s wars and somewhat longer, to be discarded in our own time. But, as long as Easterns adhere to their rigid grasp of a small handle and sweeping cut delivered from the shoulder, the Persian scimitar or Indian talwár will remain the natural weapon of the Eastern horseman. Indian and Persian swords are often richly adorned; but their appropriate beauty is in the texture of the steel itself, the “ damascen­ing” or “watering” which distinguishes a superior from a

common specimen. This process, long obscure to Euro­peans, has in recent times been explained (see below).

There are special Asiatic varieties of curved blades of which the origin is more or less uncertain. Among these the most remarkable is perhaps the yataghan, a weapon pretty much coextensive with the Mohammedan world, though it is reported to be not common in Persia. It has been imported from Africa, through a French imitation, as the model of the sword-bayonets which have been common for about a generation in European armies ; probably the French authorities caught at it to satisfy the sentiment, which lingered in Continental armies long after it had dis­appeared in England, that even the infantry soldier after the invention of the bayonet must have some kind of

sword. A compact and formidable hand-weapon has thus been turned into a clumsy and top-heavy pike. If we try to make a bayonet that will cut cabbages, we may or may not get a useful chopper, but we shall certainly get a very bad bayonet. The double curve of the yataghan is sub­stantially identical with that of the Goorkha knife *(kukri),* though the latter is so much broader as to be more like a woodman’s than a soldier’s instrument. It is doubt­ful, however, whether there is any historical connexion. Similar needs are often capable of giving rise to similar inventions without imitation or communication. There are yet other varieties, belonging to widely spread families of weapons, which have acquired a strong individuality. Such are the swords of Japan, which are the highly per­fected working out of a general Indo-Chinese type ; they are powerful weapons and often beautifully made, but a European swordsman would find them ill-balanced and clumsy, and the Japanese style of sword-play certainly has nothing to teach us.

Other sorts of weapons, again, are so peculiar in form or historical derivation, orboth, as to refuse to be referred to any of the normal divisions. The long straight gauntlet- hilted sword (*patá)* found both among the Mahrattas in the south of India, and among the Sikhs and Rajputs in the north, is an elongated form of the broad-bladed dagger with a cross-bar handle *(lcatar),* as is shown by a transi­tional form, much resembling in shape and size of blade the mediæval English anlace, and furnished with a guard for the back of the hand. This last-mentioned pattern seems, however, to be limited to a comparatively small region. When once the combination of a long blade with the gauntlet hilt was arrived at, any straight blade might be so mounted ; and many appear on examination to be of European workmanship—German, Spanish, or Italian. There are various other Oriental arms, notably in the Malay group, as to which it is not easy to say whether they are properly swords or not. The Malay “ parang latok ” is a kind of elongated chopper sharpened by being bevelled off to an edge on one side, and thus capable of cutting only in one direction. The anlace incidentally mentioned above seems to be merely an overgrown dagger ; the name occurs only in English and Welsh ; in which language first, or whence the name or thing came, is unknown (see *Philol. Soc. Dict., s.v.).*

*Modern European Developments.—*In the course of the 16th century the straight two-edged sword of all work was lengthened, narrowed, and more finely pointed, till it became the Italian and Spanish rapier, a weapon still fur­nished with cutting edges, but used chiefly for thrusting. We cannot say how far this transition was influenced by the *estoc,* a mediæval thrusting weapon carried by horsemen rather as an auxiliary lance than as a sword. The Roman preference of the point was rediscovered under new conditions, and fencing became an art. Its progress was from pedantic complication to lucidity and simplicity, and the fashion of the weapon was simplified also. Early in the 18th century, the use of the edge having been finally abandoned in rapier-play, the two-edged blade was supplanted by the bayonet-shaped French duelling sword, on which no improvement has since been made except in giving it a still simpler guard. The name of rapier is often but wrongly given to this by English writers. About the same time, or a little earlier, the primacy of the art passed from Italy to France, and there it still remains. It would take us too far to consider the history of fencing here ; Mr Egerton Castle’s work will be found a trust­worthy guide, and almost indispensable for those who wish really to understand the passages relating to sword-play in our Elizabethan literature, of which the fencing scene in *Hamlet* is the most famous and obvious example.