Quite different from the European models is the crescent-shaped Asiatic sabre, commonly called scimitar. We are not acquainted with any distinct evidence as to the origin of this in time or place. Dr R. Forrer thinks the whole family of curved swords was developed from bronze knives. the Frankish *scramasax* would then represent an intermediate type. How­ever that may be, the fame of the Damascus manufacture of sword-blades is of great antiquity, as is also that of Khorāsān, still the centre of the best Eastern work of this kind. Who­ever first made these blades had conceived a very definite idea —that of gaining a maximum of cutting power regardless of loss in other qualities—and executed it in a manner not to be improved upon. The action of the curved edge in delivering a blow is to present an oblique and therefore highly acute-angled section of the blade to the object struck, so that in effect the cut is given with a finer edge than could safely be put on the blade in its direct transverse section. In a well-made sabre the setting of the blade with regard to the handle (“ leading forward ”) is likewise ordered with a view to this result. And the cutting power of a weapon so shaped and mounted is un­doubtedly very great. But 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 talwar 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.

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 Mahommedan world, though it is reported to be not common in Persia. It was imported from Africa, through a French imitation, as the model of the sword-bayonets which were 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 was thus 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 modern short sword-bayonet is a reversion to the original dagger type, and not open to this objection. The double curve of the yata­ghan is substantially identical with that of the Gurkha 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 the Japanese style of sword-play, being two- handed, has little to teach us.

Other sorts of weapons, again, are so peculiar in form or historical derivation, or both, as to refuse to be referred to any *oí* the normal divisions. the long straight gauntlet-hilted sword *(patá,* fig. 3) 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 *(kaṭâr,* figs, 9, 10), as is shown by a transitional form, much resembling in shape and size of blade the medieval 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 *oí* 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.

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* or *Panzerstecher,@@1* a late medieval 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 pτogress was from pedantic complication to lucidity and simplicity, and the fashion of the weapon was

@@@1 Probably this was the kind of sword called *Broch* in 14th-century English *(Eyre of Kent,* Selden Soc., 1910, p. 100).