Snape-Guest

Author(s): Ernest Weekley

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MACKENZIE'S TRANSLATIONS FROM THE GERMAN.

In the article on Henry Mackenzie in the *Dictionary of National Biography* some doubt is thrown on the statement, quoted from Allibone's *Dictionary* (and appearing also in Chambers' *Eminent Scotsmen*), that Mackenzie published, in 1791, 'Translations from the German of Lessing's Set of Horses and some other dramatic pieces.' The writer of the article found 'no trace of the work in the Catalogue of the British Museum Library or in that of the Edinburgh Advocates' Library.' The book is, however, in the Library of the British Museum, appearing in the catalogue under the title *Dramatic Pieces from the German*. The catalogue gives the date 1892; but this, as the title-page shows, is in error for 1792.

The *Set of Horses* is the last of the three pieces contained in Mackenzie's little volume. It is a translation of *Der Postzug* by C. H. von Ayrenhoff (Scherer, transl. Mrs Conybeare, II, p. 311), whose name Mackenzie here, as in his *Account of the German Theatre* (Roy. Soc. Edinb. Trans., II, 1790), converts to Emdorff. The other two pieces in the volume are versions of Goethe's *Geschwister* and Gessner's *Unterhaltungen eines Vaters mit seinen Kindern*.

How the mistake came to be made of ascribing this little comedy to Lessing is not clear. Several of Lessing's works, both comedies and tragedies, are mentioned in Mackenzie's *Account of the German Theatre*, where *Der Postzug* appears under the name of its French translation, *L'Attelage de Poste*; but there is in this fact no adequate reason for confusion.

HELEN M. RICHMOND.

ENGLEFIELD GREEN.

'SNAPE-GUEST.'

The reviewer of Professor Mawer's *Place-Names of Northumberland and Durham* (*M.L.R.*, vol. XVII, p. 85) regards as 'somewhat fanciful and even picturesque' the author's explanation of the word < from the dialect *snape*, to be hard on, rebuke, or snub, and *guest*. Picturesque perhaps, but certainly not fanciful to anyone who is familiar with M.E. nomenclature. In my *Surnames* (ch. XII) I give about 130 existing English surnames of what I have called the Shake-spear type and about 350 more which are presumably extinct. My former pupil, Miss Dorothy Pilkington, who has done some valuable research in this type of name, enumerates many

examples which ante-date the *N.E.D.* records by from one to four centuries (see *Discovery*, January 1921, pp. 2-5) and about a thousand more which have never attained dictionary honours. Homesteads were occasionally named in the same way, and anyone familiar with the topography of a particular district would be able to quote one or two examples. A striking parallel to the northern *Snape-Guest* is the (chiefly) southern *Mock-Beggar*, occurring in more than one of Miss Sheila Kaye-Smith's novels of Kent and Sussex life. To the courtesy of Miss Kaye-Smith I owe the information that there are houses called *Mockbeggar* near Iden in Sussex, near Billingham in Sussex, and near Stelling in Kent. 'There are I believe others, and I expect you know the origin of the name, i.e., an empty house of prosperous appearance, to which the beggar goes in quest of alms, only to find it deserted.' Miss Kaye-Smith appositely quotes the parallel of the *Coldharbours* along the Pilgrim routes. There are also the *Caldecotes* of the old Roman roads. The *Gazetteer* gives a *Mockbeggar* near Ringwood in Hants, *Mockbeggar's Hall*, a group of rocks on Hartle Moor, Derbyshire, and *Mockbeggar Wharf*, a strip of sand on the Cheshire coast. It is precisely the repetition of the name that makes it clear as a popular coinage, just as the fourfold occurrence of *Snape-Guest* puts the correctness of Professor Mawer's ingenious interpretation beyond all reasonable doubt, though I should rather incline to give to *snape* its existing dialect (northern) sense of stinting or starving, or perhaps of disappointing (*ib.*), which brings the compound still nearer to *Mockbeggar*. Farms, like individuals, had reputations for hospitality or the reverse, and it is as natural to find a house called 'starve-guest' as to discover William Coldbord in the *Lanc. Assize Rolls* 1176-1285 or the contrasted Agnes Bonetable in the *Pipe Rolls*.

This type of place-name formation is better exemplified in France, where we find numerous compounds of verb + object, e.g. Crèveœur (several), Heurte-(Hurte-)bise, Heurte-(Hurte-)vent, Écornebœuf, or verb + vocative, e.g. Chanteloup (several), Chantemerle (several), Chantepie. I pass every day a house called Happegarbes (grab-sheaves), which I imagine the owner has named from some French farm with which he has family or holiday associations.

Finally, though I have not yet found a medieval individual called Sneipgest, I can quote the name Kepegest (*Leicester Borough Records*, 1196, and *Hundred Rolls*, 1273), in which the opposite idea is expressed.

ERNEST WEEKLEY.

NOTTINGHAM.