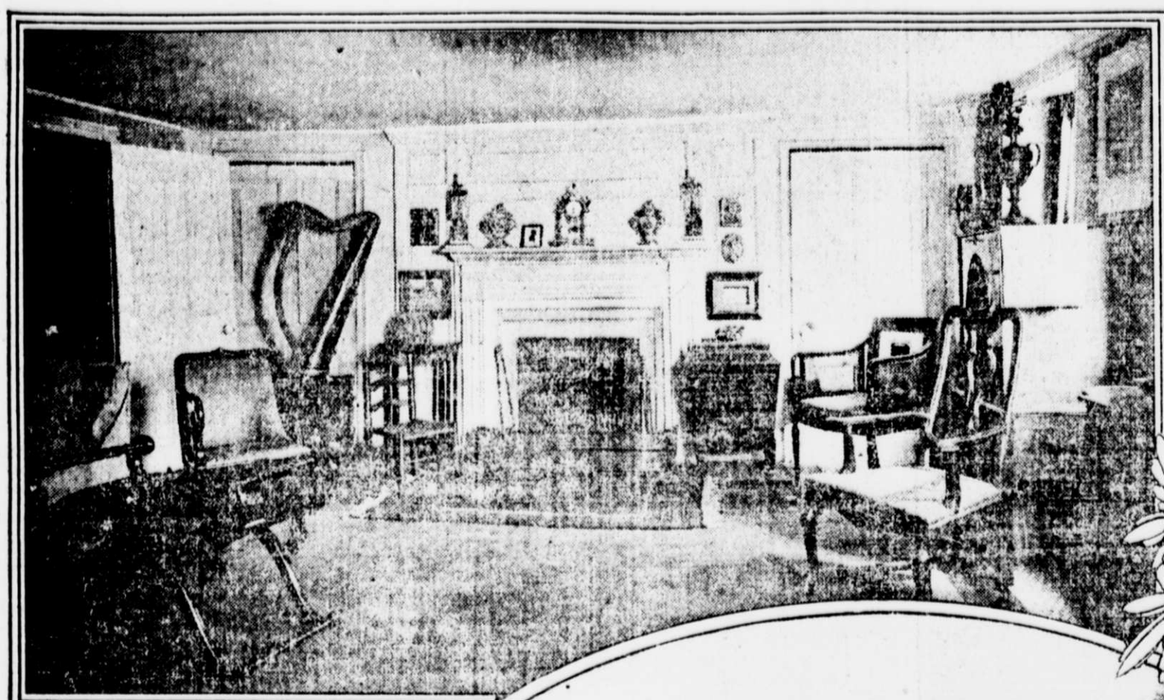
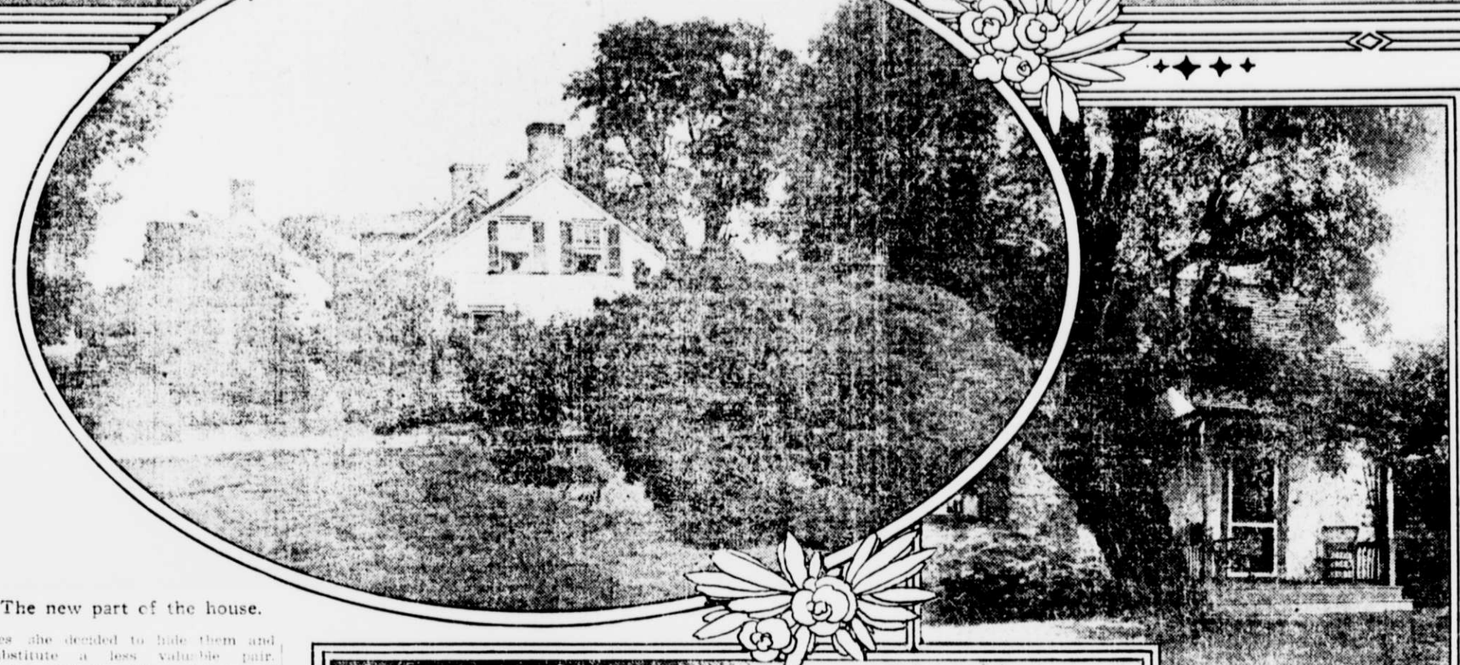
ROMANTIC OLD HOUSE IN STATEN ISLAND NOW A MUSEUM



Where Ann Perine's silver shoe buckles are supposed to be hidden.

The tea room, which formerly was the kitchen where British soldiers slept.



The new part of the house.

Ancient Perine Home, Built in 1668 and Famous in Revolutionary Days, Acquired by Antiquarian Society

Mystery of Mistress Ann's Silver Shoe Buckles and Many Other Quaint Traditions Centre About the Place

WHEN in Revolutionary days pretty Ann Perine hid her silver shoe buckles from a covetous British soldier, tradition has it that she tucked them away in a secret recess of the old Perine homestead standing on the King's Highway, now Richmond road, Dongan Hills, Staten Island, and proceeded to forget their whereabouts. At least, history, while it records the incident, does not relate the story of their recovery, so the general supposition is that the buckles still remain hidden in the old stone dwelling known as the Perine house.

Built away back in 1668, one of the first important houses on Staten Island, the dwelling has recently been acquired by the Antiquarian Society of Staten Island and the Staten Island Garden Club. Therefore there is more or less speculation among the members of the two societies as to the fate of the comely Ann's silver shoe ornaments. A further element of mystery is found in the story that there is a secret closet in the house which has not been disturbed for the past 100 years or more, and which tradition further chronicles as being the possible receptacle for long lost family plate.

Leaving facts aside, the rambling old, stone house of fifteen rooms added to as its succession of owners felt the need, is quite romantic enough to be the repository for any number of lost or buried treasures. It is the subject of many tales, of which the story of Ann Perine is not the least interesting.

One lover of the Colonial likens the old stone house to Washington's home. "A second Mount Vernon" he calls it, but while the old Perine house has undeniable charm, the simplicity of its primitive construction does not permit it to have the beauty of the stately mansion referred to.

While its early history is obscure, lost in the haze of the days when Queen Anne reigned, it is believed the house was first a tavern erected by Capt. Thomas Stilwell in 1668. From him it passed into the hands of Governor Dongan's family and then into the possession of Joseph Holmes, an innkeeper, whose daughter married Edward Perine of an old French Huguenot family, among whose descendants it remained until very recently.

Of roughly quarried stone, now grown mellow with the change which more than two centuries have wrought, the house is of the familiar Colonial type. It is long and low, with numerous windows both front and back along the lower story. They are supplied with the solid wood shutters that form an interesting feature of early American architecture. Above are quaint dormers which have been let into the low sloping half-story for light and air.

The house is set close to the street amid the sweeping arms of ancient willows, while enormous box trees, close clustered and dark hued, their gnarled branches bespeaking their age, stand close to the wall. Altogether it presents a charming picture of early Colonial architecture.

The house, it is said, represents two periods. What is now the front was built on a later date than the rear portion. If you are curious to know just why the addition was built at such an angle tradition will supply an explanation. In the jog where the two portions join, the story goes, there was standing a great tree, which the family would not allow to be destroyed. Consequently the new part of the house was built some ten or twelve feet to the north in order to allow for the preservation of the tree.

It was in the older portion that the mystery of the silver shoe buckles is laid. During the Revolution the house was occupied by Capt. Coghlan of the British army and his soldiers and Anne Perine, then a widow with eight children, was unceremoniously crowded into one room with all of her family. She was a comely matron with the natural liking of her sex for dainty accessories of dress. On her shoes she wore large silver buckles, as was the custom in those days.

The ornaments attracted the attention of one of the soldiers, and suspecting that the man coveted the buckles she decided to hide them and substitute a less valuable pair. It was well she did so, for toward evening when she was alone in the house the man returned and demanded the buckles. While he was trying to bully her into giving them up a neighbor came to her rescue. But tradition does not say whether she ever took them out of their hiding place.

There is in the main living room a secret closet to which access is had only from the floor above by means of a trap door. It has never been thoroughly searched owing to the fact that the acquisition of the Perine house by the Antiquarian Society is of recent date, and Mrs. Henry Taylor, a club member who occupies the house, has been too much occupied with other things to do more than indicate to curious visitors the presence of the "story book secret cupboard."

Mrs. Taylor has invested the place with the home atmosphere which is a feature seldom found to exist in an old landmark restored and furnished by a historical or patriotic society. Incidentally, through C. G. Hine, president of the Antiquarian Society, there are being gathered curios that are to form the nucleus of a collection of Staten Island relics.

Through a small porch upheld by octagonal pillars entrance is had to the hall whose deep embrasured windows lend a cosey atmosphere to the place and indicate as well the tremendous thickness of the walls. With the exception of a fine old Colonial sideboard the furnishings, including a gate legged table, a settee and chairs, are of the Queen Anne period.

One who is fond of fine cabinet work will appreciate the Colonial panelling in the parlor, which opens off the hall, for the whole southern end is encased in wood. The mantel and over mantel are particularly representative specimens of ancient hand modelling. Flanking the fireplace are closets whose shelves are cut in the decorative fashion of the day.

In this room there are some interesting family portraits. Among them one of Clarissa Claypole, sister-in-law of Betsy Ross, and James Trimble, an important figure in the Revolution. Included among the furniture is a piece which might be mistaken for a high boy, but is really an ancient barrel organ. It is believed to be unique in this country.

According to the imprint inside the cover it was made in London some 100 years ago. It plays ten tunes, namely: "Bethesda," "Cambridge," "Philadelphia," "Charlestown," "Melchizedek," "100th Psalm," "Bedford," "Stroudswater," "Wandsworth," and the "Angel's Song."

In view of the present difficulties with Mexico a handbill printed during the Mexican war is enlightening to those who have forgotten the part the United States played in that country in 1847. Accompanying illustrations of Gen. Scott and Gen. Taylor, the latter kin of Mrs. Taylor's husband, are descriptions of the battles of Monterey, Buena Vista, Churubusco and Palo Alto, with beneath the central picture the legend "City of Vera Cruz and Castle of San Juan de Ulloa, taken by the Americans March 13, 1847."

A few steps up and one enters the hall of the old part of the house, to which entrance is also had from an attractive rear porch. From it ascends a rather modern looking stairway. Off to the right is what is called the beam room, so named from the old oak rafters, 7 by 10 inches in size, which according to tradition were polished by the Perine slaves twice a year. To uphold the legend is the patina, which affords evidence of the amount of elbow grease expended upon them. Besides this sheen that comes from hand rubbing, the color of the beams is also a mark of age, for the dark woody brown hue is only acquired by time.

An old fashioned fireplace is a part of the construction of this room, but it has been partly closed by a former tenant. The removal of the obstruction may yet afford the society members a double thrill, since the chimney adjoins the famous secret closet where Ann is supposed to have hidden her silver shoe buckles.

On the walls are hung many interesting documents relating to the Perine family, including civil and military commissions issued to its members. A marriage license of Daniel Perine, "the Huguenot," and Maria Thorel in 1665 is the oldest and possesses a sentimental value for even the casual visitor, while the quaint petition of Ann Perine, widow, to William Pitt, Chancellor of the Exchequer, England, in which she begs to be paid for "900 cords of wood used for fortifications at 'flag staff,'" now Fort Wadsworth, shows her to have been a good business woman.

There is also an order from George III, issued through Lieut.-Gen. James Robertson, Governor of New York, demanding that "two-thirds of the fresh hay produced on the Island of New York, Staten Island and Long Island be set apart for carrying on the King's service" and that "all persons whatsoever possessed of hay are required to bring the above proportions into the King's magazines most contiguous thereto."

Just beyond is the tea room, so called by the present occupants of the house, where the cup that cheers is dispensed to visiting members. It was formerly the kitchen of the ancient house, and the fireplace takes up practically the entire southerly end of the room. It has such a cavernous mouth that some one remarked "a large tree trunk makes the only appropriate back log." Here are gathered many old relics of the early days on Staten Island as well as of the personal belongings of those who have lived in the old Perine house.

On the kitchen mantel are pewter mugs and platters, a candle mould and other ancient utensils, while inside the fender are handsome brass andirons, a toaster, trivets and roasting jack. On the floor are braided rugs of the Colonial period, which are amply large to cover the ancient broad planked flooring, still wonderfully well preserved.

On the upper floor, attained by the staircase, which enjoys its own mysterious trapdoor opening to a closet beneath, are several bedrooms, all prettily furnished in olden style. In fitting up these rooms Mrs. Taylor has taken advantage of the vogue for painted furniture, which seems especially appropriate for old time surroundings, and one room, that devoted to guests, is done in black and gold. The bedroom set is black with gold ornamentation, and there are a dressing table and chairs to match the quaint low bed. At all the windows are English chintz or imported prints, which, though modern, are made from the old wood blocks and are printed in the queer browns, reds and blues that look for all the world as ancient as the small paned windows the material covers.

One of the rooms of the old house Mrs. Taylor has fitted up as a museum, and in it she has hung a large collection of ancestral gowns, curious headgear and articles of wearing apparel in vogue fifty or a hundred years ago. Old fashioned bandboxes varying in size from one sufficient to hold a calash to a miniature receptacle suitable for a lady's cap are there. Covered with gay flowered paper, which is often decorated with scenes of local interest, the boxes form a particularly pleasing part of the collection. One of them depicts an early view of Sands Point.

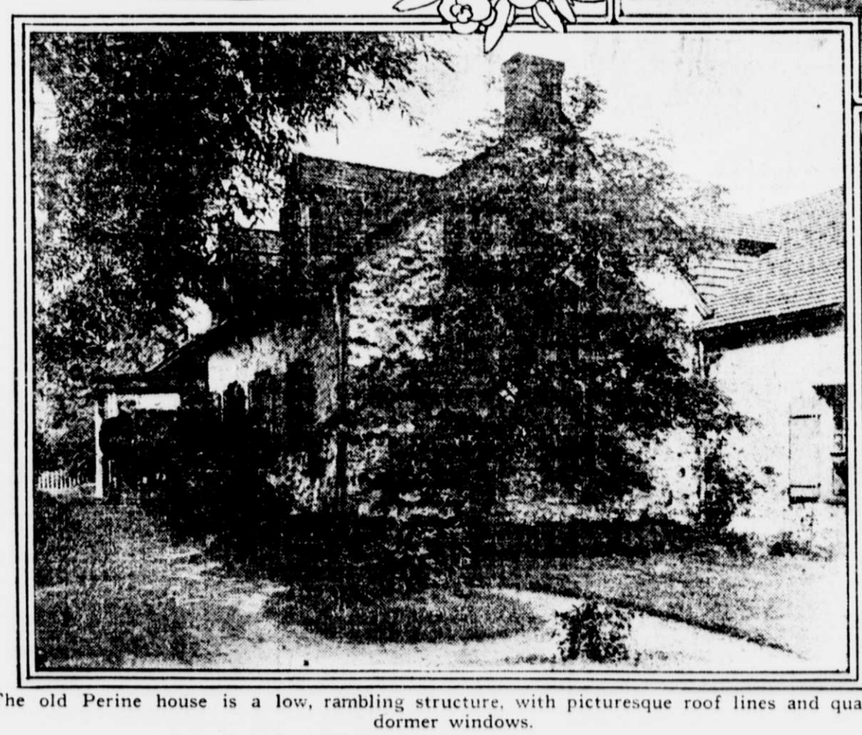
From the standpoint of the costumer the gowns that hang on the pegs have much to recommend them. Some of the short waisted dresses, with very full skirts, might be worn to-day with little change, though a calash of ashes of roses silk that accompanies them would hardly take the place of the miniature velvet hood that Paris dictates as the mode this fall.

There are very full bodied silved gowns of brocade and soft corded silk that look quite as old as some of the styles of to-day. A pompadour wig of white hair done in Colonial puffs might have graced the head of Ann Perine, who evidently followed the styles, and the dainty satin slippers may have been the identical pair to bore the famous silver buckles.

The gem of the collection is a cabinet among other specimens of early Colonial articles of feminine adornment. Upon a shelf is a piece of a shawl of manila camels hair and over it the artistic pattern is worked up in bold relief by the original and is a narrow edging of Mechlin lace. There is a slip of paper attached to the material and on it are the words "Lace and camel's hair shawl belonging to Martha Washington. Given to Miss Bodine."

One portion of the museum is devoted to the relics of Old Christmas Eve, and Mrs. Taylor has gathered some very unusual pieces of generations past and gone. So there is such a collection of them that it has overflown into what formerly was the stable, but which under Mrs. Taylor's direction has been transformed into a studio.

This is the first undertaking of the Antiquarian Society, the purpose being preservation of the Perine house, it hopes in time to be instrumental in saving other of Staten Island's colonial dwellings.



The old Perine house is a low, rambling structure, with picturesque roof lines and quaint dormer windows.

An ancient tree still stands at the entrance.

MAKING BIRDS SING

LIVING near St. Nicholas and 110th street there is a man who during a period of six months purchased no less than five canary birds with the hope that they would solace her with their singing, only to find that after she had installed them one by one in a spacious some cage she had prepared for them not only that they would not sing but that they moped and pined and finally died. The canary had tried old everything she knew to induce pets and teach them to sing. She decides that such birds can never be of any use.

Finally a neighbor advised her to discard the handsome and expensive cage and buy a new one, plainer in make.

"What in the world difference will that make?" the canary bird lover asked. "A cage is a cage, what's the difference to the birds?"

"All the difference in the world," answered her adviser, "and for two good reasons. One is that a bird has died in it. The other is that a bird of modest disposition does not like an overhandsome cage.

"The best singing results have come from the inmates of plainer cages. I don't know whether or not canary birds are natural democrats, but experience has been such as I relate. Buy a plainer cage that has no canary bird ghost stalking through it to frighten the living bird."

So the canary bird lover discarded the big cage and bought a plainer one. She transferred the last bird she had bought, and which had really begun to mope, to its new quarters. Then she waited a day and still another day, but not a sound came forth, though the bird began to look bright and chipper. She called in her advising friend and complained there was no result after the cage change.

"Wait," said her friend, "I depend upon a bird whistle."

The canary heard the notes, cocked his head and began to sing. Was it the new cage?

WAR BRINGS ABOUT MANY CHANGES IN DICTIONARIES OF EUROPE

WHETHER the present war permanently alters the geography of Europe or not it is certain to bring about many changes in the dictionaries of at least three countries. English, French and German lexicographers will find their work cut out for them when they come to the preparation of post-bellum editions.

Indeed, it is safe to assume that already the work of revising, expunging and adding has begun. For Germany, at war with France and Great Britain, now considers hitherto acceptable French and English words unworthy of further toleration, and France and England, while regarding every term having a Teutonic sound as objectionable, has each discovered fresh beauties in the language of its ally.

Officially the action of the French Government in discouraging the baking of the croissant—that delectable roll relished by the tourist as well as the native resident—was due to the necessity of conserving the country's supply of white flour. But the public already has divined another reason for the decree.

The croissant, as its name indicates, is crescent shaped. The story goes that when the Turks were besieging Vienna the city's bakers, having taken refuge in the fortifications, produced bread in the form of the Turkish emblem as a warning of the invader's approach. Turkey is an enemy of France now, hence, possibly, the Paris inhibition. After the war Frenchmen are certain to demand their croissants again, but they will order them by another name. And, in all probability, they and Englishmen too will find that Vienna rolls by some other name will taste as good.

France tabooed Eau de Cologne, so-called, when the Germans overwhelmed Belgium. Following a contest among readers of a Paris newspaper Eau de Louvain was adopted as an attractive and more appropriate name, and every bottle of the scent now purchased on the Paris boulevards bears that inscription.

A German professor recently was fined $7 for speaking French in the streets of Berlin. A Lutheran pastor had remonstrated with him and the two exchanged a good deal of abusive language. In appealing the case the professor explained that he had been walking with his wife, who was French by birth, and his child's Swiss governess. The court thereupon reduced the fine to $3, but warned him against speaking an enemy language loudly in future.

A German automobile owner was fined for painting the word "Garage" over the door of the shed where he houses his car. What substitute is to be offered for the objectionable French term is not known.

The sartorial world of Germany has proved itself particularly patriotic in the matter of purging the language of foreign elements. Here are some of the expurgated terms, with the acceptable German equivalents in parentheses:

Cutaway (rock), smoking jacket (abendjacke), Raglan (kellmantel), ulster (mantel), knickerbocker (sportbose), breeches (reithose), sweater (sportwomms), Norfolk (faltenjacke).

The leading German barbers' journal has published suggestions for the elimination of foreign expressions used in barbers' shops. Ondulieren (from the French onduler—to wave) is to be superseded by Haarwellen (hair waving); champonieren (to shampoo) is to give place to Haarwaschen (hair washing); manicure becomes Handpflege (care of the hand); the razier salon (shaving saloon) is to be called Herrenabteilung (gentlemen's department), and toupet (front) Halberrecke (half wig).

In the slaughter of foreign words used in the toilet there are two exceptions—friseur (barber) and frisur (hair). They have been spared on the ground that they have been in use for 200 years and must be considered as naturalized. The word coiffure, on the other hand, is taboo, as it cannot boast of such a long lineage.

Police headquarters in Berlin has issued a list of foreign words, hitherto in common use, which are no longer to be allowed to taint official police literature. Some of the terms "verboten" are:

Bonbonniere	Export
Atelier	Import
Cafe	Institut
Confection	Portier
Cravatte	Equipage
Expedition	Magazin (shop)
Delikatessen	Manufactur
Vestibul	Medaille
Chic	Modistin (modiste)
Commission	Producte
Comptoir	Restaurant
Decorateur	Juwelier (jeweller)
Elegant	Pensionat

Language purists in England have been less active, but in both London and the provinces German is held in by no means as high regard as it was before the war started. The popular sentiment was expressed in a school advertisement in a daily newspaper recently. It read:

"All Languages Taught—Even German."

When Lord Kitchener announced his motto as "Thorough," Paris papers, in the true spirit of the Entente, set out to find a French equivalent. Here are some of the suggestions which were offered by readers:

d'outre en outre, de part en part
Sans relâche.
solide.
inebranable.
Ne jamais rien faire à moitié
parfait.
bien achevé.
à fond.

The headlines of London newspapers contain almost daily expressions formerly found only in the pages of romance but now apparently to come into general use again. Among these are:

"Pirate," "sap," "brassard," "munitioneer."

No one in England nowadays thinks of "Jack Johnson" as a dusky skinned ex-champion. The vision is rather of a great gun belching out grim darkness, desolation and death on a battlefield in Flanders. And "Black Maria" is no longer a conveyance to carry prisoners from a police court. Letters from soldiers at the front have made it a much more real and horrible thing.

The following has a fairly representative of words and phrases, many of them new, which have come into common use in England since war was declared:

Hun	slacker
respirator	zepe
tipperaries	conductress
hay-maid	bombed
curtain fire	U boat
baby-killer	war-plane
submarined	scrap o' paper
gassed	

Some changes in the gazeteers already have been made. The Russian Government, considering St. Petersburg too suggestive of German, rechristened it Petrograd several months ago. Who knows whether the Teutons may one day have the authority to give it its original name? When they took Przemysl the Russians gave the name "Peremysl" to the Galician fortress, but when the stronghold was recovered by the Austrians it became Przemysl again. The French, meanwhile, have dubbed Hartmannsweilerkopf "le vieil Armand."

In the list of articles which the war makes unpopular in certain places the following should escape condemnation, for they are not at all what their names indicate:

Turkish rhubarb, which does not come from Turkey; India ink, which is not made in India; Paris green, which is not peculiar to Paris; Malt-ose cats, which are almost unknown in Malta; plaster of Paris, which is not a monopoly of the French capital; Irish stew, Jerusalem artichokes, German silver, French coffee, Scotch broth, Yorkshire pudding, Canterbury lamb, Japanese lanterns, Egyptian cigarettes, Yarmouth bloaters and Oxford shoes.