

Old decks tell about Yuletide parties in past

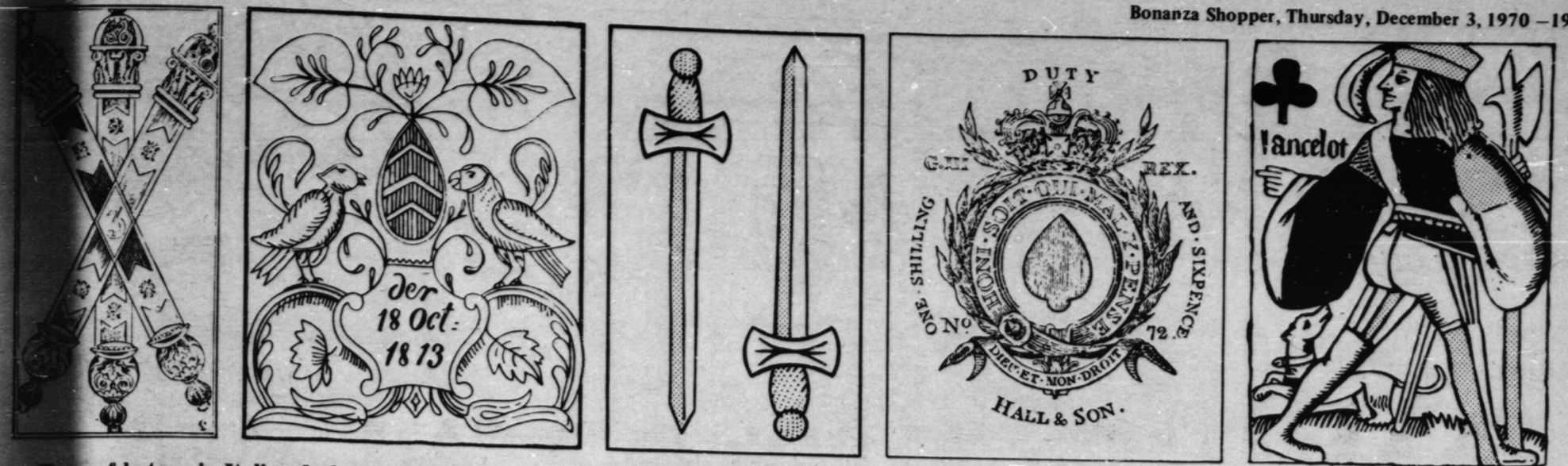
# It's All in the Cards

**B**RIBE a queen-regnant? Presume to give her money as if she were a beggar? Nay, nay! One could have been locked in the Tower for such lese majesty. To play cards with Her Majesty in such manner that she won substantial sums: that was permissible. Elizabeth I of England expected there'd be cardplaying at whichever peer's castle she chose to favor with her presence during Yuletides. It was reckoned by a chronicler of Elizabethan



In private decks of cards of 103rd Field Artillery, Yankee Division, World War One, a major general was king, a corporal was jack, Mlle. from Armentiers was queen. Victorian deck had 14th century regent as knight.

America are survivals of divining media of itinerant necromancers in Dark Ages. Before the suits became conventionalized for whist and other games—principally in the 19th century—as clubs, diamonds, hearts, spades, there were varieties of others. Cups, swords, coins, batons, acorns, leaves, bells were some of them. In Spanish packs, cups were broad bowls; in Italian decks they were tall chalices. At the close of the 13th century, manufacture of playing cards was a considerable industry in Nuremberg. One reason was popular development that cardplaying had undergone as a form of amusement in German principalities on such occasions as Christmas and New Years. Another cause was the exceptionally durable paper Germans produced. Playing cards actually served as currency where coinage was in short supply, as in European colonial possessions overseas. Still another factor was the German advancement of block-printing in colors. Coster's and Gutenberg's epochal interchangeable types owed something to playing cards. Elizabeth I was not the first English sovereign to tolerate subjects sitting down in her presence socially. Cards



Two of batons in Italian deck; (A) two of leaves in pack of Nuremberg cards, made 1813 by its manufacturer, and (right) two of swords in a Spanish deck. English ace of spades, 1810, denotes the amount of tax. King Arthur's Lancelot was knight in early packs.

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R denoted Rex in pack having Roman as king.

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