

**QUILL**, a term applied to the bare, hard, hollow tube of the feather of a bird, also to the large flight feathers or *remiges*, and especially to the strong feathers of the goose, swan, or crow used in the making of quill pens (see FEATHER and PEN). The word is of obscure origin; a word with similar meaning, *Kiel*, is found in German, and French has *quille*, ninepin, apparently connected with Ger. *Kegel*. Certain ancient stringed instruments were played with a *plectrum* or plucker made of the quill of a bird's feather, and the word has thus been used of a *plectrum* made of other material and differing in shape, and also of an analogous object for striking the strings in the harpsichord, spinet or virginal. The verb "to quill" is to fold lace, muslin or other light material into narrow flutes or pleats; when so pleated the material is called "quilling." The French term "quillon," apparently formed from *quille*, ninepin, is applied to the projecting arms or cross guards of the hilt of a sword.