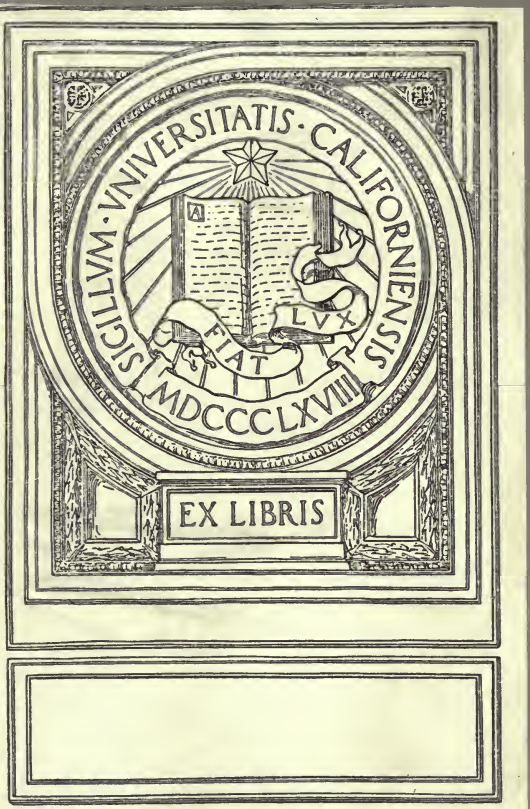
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THE

HISTORY AND POETRY

OF

FINGER-RINGS

BY

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"—— My ring I hold dear as my finger; 'tis part of it."
SHAKSPEARE

WITH A PREFACE BY R. H. STODDARD.

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PREFACE.

THE history of finger-rings is more abundant than the poetry, which is chiefly connected with the ceremonies and observances in which they figure. What this history is Mr. Edwards has indicated in the gossipy pages which follow, and which contain a world of curious information. Interesting in themselves, they are valuable for their references, which enable the reader to verify the statements of Mr. Edwards, and to pursue his line of study farther than he has chosen to do. He will find many particulars in regard to rings of all sorts, among the different people by whom they have been worn, in ancient and modern times, and of the important part they have played in the history of the world. He will also find many allusions to them in the poets, but not so many poems of which they were the inspiration as he might have expected, for the simple reason that such poems do not exist.

"The small orbit of the wedding-ring,"

as a nameless old poet satirically calls it, has seldom proved large enough for genius to revolve in. Mr. Edwards quotes but one marriage poem,

"Thee, Mary, with this ring I wed,"

which he fails to trace to its author, the Rev. Samuel Bishop, who has written nothing else that is worth remembering. I am happy to restore it to him, and

to quote a second poem, which is rather more elegant and less familiar, and which is put down to the credit of William Pattison, of whom I know nothing. I take it from Dr. Palmer's "Poetry of Courtship and Compliment" (1868), an admirable collection of amorous verse.

TO HER RING.

Blest ornament! how happy is thy snare,
To bind the snowy finger of my fair!
O, could I learn thy nice concise art,
Now, as thou bind'st her fingers, bind her heart.

Not Eastern diadems like thee can shine,
Fed from her brighter eyes with beams divine;
Nor can their mightiest monarch's power command
So large an empire as my charmer's hand.

O, could thy form thy fond admirer wear,
Thy very likeness should in all appear;
My endless love thy endless love should show,
And my heart flaming, for thy diamond glow.

R. H. S.

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HISTORY AND POETRY

OF

FINGER-RINGS.

CHAPTER ONE.

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§ 1. A CIRCLE, known as a finger-ring, has been an object of ornament and of use for thousands of years. Indeed, the time when it was first fashioned and worn is so far in the past that it alone shines there; all around is ashes or darkness.

This little perfect figure may seem to be a trifling matter on which to found an essay; and yet we shall find it connected with history and poetry. It is, indeed, a small link, although it has bound together millions for better for worse, for richer for poorer, more securely than could the shackle wrought for a felon. An impression from it may have saved or lost a kingdom. It is made the symbol of power; and has been a mark of slavery. Love has placed it where a vein was supposed to vibrate in the heart. Affection and friendship have wrought it into a remembrance; and it has passed into the grave upon the finger of the beloved one.

And, though the ring itself may be stranger to us, and might never have belonged to ancestor, friend or companion, yet there can be even a general interest about such a slight article. For instance, a few years ago a ring was found which had belonged to Shakspeare, and must have been a gift: for the true-lover's knot is there. Who would not desire to possess, who would not like even to see the relic? There is reason to suppose that this ring was the gift of Anne Hathaway, she "who had as much virtue as could die." And we must be allowed to indulge in the idea that it was pressing Shakspeare's finger when those lines were inscribed "*To the idol of mine eyes and the delight of my heart, Anne Hathaway:*"

"Talk not of gems, the orient list,
The diamond, topaz, amethyst,
The emerald mild, the ruby gay:
Talk of my gem, Anne Hathaway!
She *hath a way*, with her bright eye,
Their various lustre to defy,

The jewel she, and the foil they,
So sweet to look Anne *hath a way.*
She *hath a way,*
Anne Hathaway,
To shame bright gems Anne *hath a way!*"*

We shall find many interesting stories connected with rings. By way of illustration, here is one:

In a battle between Edmund the Anglo-Saxon and

* The poem from which this stanza is taken has now become so scarce, and is so pleasing, that we are induced to insert it in this note:

TO THE IDOL OF MINE EYES AND THE DELIGHT OF MINE HEART, ANNE HATHAWAY.

Would ye be taught, ye feathered throng,
With love's sweet notes to grace your song,
To pierce the heart with thrilling lay,
Listen to mine Anne Hathaway!
She *hath a way* to sing so clear,
Phœbus might wond'ring stop to hear;
To melt the sad, make blithe the gay,
And nature charm, Anne *hath a way:*
She *hath a way,*
Anne Hathaway,
To breathe delight Anne *hath a way.*

When envy's breath and rancorous tooth
Do soil and bite fair worth and truth,
And merit to distress betray,
To soothe the heart Anne *hath a way;*
She *hath a way* to chase despair,
To heal all grief, to cure all care,
Turn foulest night to fairest day:
Thou know'st, fond heart, Anne *hath a way,*
She *hath a way,*
Anne Hathaway,
To make grief bliss Anne *hath a way.*

Talk not of gems, the orient list,
The diamond, topaz, amethyst,
The emerald mild, the ruby gay:
Talk of my gem, Anne Hathaway!

Canute the Dane, the army of the latter was defeated and fled; and one of its principal captains, Ulf, lost his way in the woods. After wandering all night, he met, at daybreak, a young peasant driving a herd of oxen, whom he saluted and asked his name. "I am Godwin, the son of Ulfnoth," said the young peasant, "and thou art a Dane." Thus obliged to confess who he was, Ulf begged the young Saxon to show him his way to the Severn, where the Danish ships were at anchor. "It is foolish in a Dane," replied the peasant, "to expect such a service from a Saxon; and, besides, the way is long, and the country people are all in arms." The Danish chief drew off a gold ring from his finger and gave it to the shepherd as an inducement to be his guide. The young Saxon looked at it for an instant with great earnestness, and then returned it, saying, "I will take nothing from thee, but I will try to conduct thee." Leading him to his father's cottage, he concealed him

---

She *hath a way*, with her bright eye,
Their various lustre to defy,
The jewel she and the foil they,
So sweet to look Anne *hath a way*.
She *hath a way*,
Anne Hathaway,
To shame bright gems, Anne *hath a way*.

But were it to my fancy given
To rate her charms, I'd call them Heaven;
For though a mortal made of clay,
Angels must love Anne Hathaway.
She *hath a way* so to control
To rapture the imprisoned soul,
And sweetest Heaven on earth display,
That to be Heaven Anne *hath a way!*
She *hath a way*,
Anne Hathaway,
To be Heaven's self Anne *hath a way*.

there during the day; and when night came on, they prepared to depart together. As they were going, the old peasant said to Ulf, "This is my only son Godwin, who risks his life for thee. He cannot return among his countrymen again; take him, therefore, and present him to thy king, Canute, that he may enter into his service." The Dane promised, and kept his word. The young Saxon peasant was well received in the Danish camp; and rising from step to step by the force of his talents, he afterwards became known over all England as the great Earl Godwin. He might have been monarch; while his sweet and beautiful daughter Edith or Ethelswith did marry King Edward. "Godwin," the people said in their songs, contrasting the firmness of the father with the sweetness of the daughter, "is the parent of Edith, as the thorn is of the rose."*

§ 2. The word *symbolum*, for a long time, meant a ring; and was substituted for the ancient Oscan word *ungulus*.

§ 3. In examining ancient rings, care must be taken not to confound them with coins made in the shape of rings.† The fresco paintings in the tombs of Egypt exhibit people bringing, as tribute, to the foot of the throne of Pharaoh, bags of gold and silver rings, at a period before the exodus of the Israelites. Great quantities of ring-money have been found in different countries, including Ireland.‡

* Chambers's Miscellany, vol. xv., No. 132.

† Layard's Nineveh, ii. 318.

‡ Papers read before the Irish Academy, 1836.

Egyptian Ring-money.

Celtic Ring-money.

The ancient Britons had them. That these rings were used for money, is confirmed by the fact that, on being weighed, by far the greater number of them appear to be exact multiples of a certain standard unit. Layard mentions* that Dr. Lepsius has recently published a bas relief, from an Egyptian tomb, representing a man weighing rings of gold and silver, with weights in the form of a bull's head; and Layard also gives a seeming outline of the subject, (although its description speaks of "weights in the form of a seated lion.") It is presumed that these rings are intended for ring-money; the fact of weighing them strengthens this idea; and see Wilkinson's Popular Account of the Ancient Egyptians, (revised,) ii. 148–9.

§ 4. We not only find rings in the most ancient times, but we also trace them in mythology.

Fish, in antediluvian period, were intelligent, had fine musical perception and were even affectionate. Thus, in relation to Theseus, the Athenian prince: Minos happened to load Theseus with reproaches, especially on account of his birth; and told him, that, if he were the son of Neptune, he would have no difficulty in going to the bottom of the sea; and then threw a ring in to ban-

* Babylon and Nineveh, 513.

ter him. The Athenian prince plunged in, and might have been food for fishes, had they not, in the shape of dolphins, taken him upon their backs, as they had done Arion, and conveyed him to the palace of Amphitrite.* It is not said whether she, as Neptune's wife, had a right to the *jetsam*, *flotsam*, and *lagan*, to the sweepings or stray jewelry of the ocean; but she was able to hand Theseus the ring, and also to give him a crown, which he presented to the ill-used lady Ariadne, and it was afterwards placed among the stars.

And, coupled with mythology, we have, according to the ancients, the origin of the ring. Jupiter, from revenge, caused Strength, Force and Vulcan to chain his cousin-german Prometheus to the frosty Caucasus, where a vulture, all the livelong day, banqueted his fill on the black viands of his hot liver. The god had sworn to keep Prometheus there (according to Hesiod†) eternally; but other authors give only thirty thousand years as the limit. He who had punished did, for reasons, forgive; but as Jupiter had sworn to keep Prometheus bound for the space of time mentioned, he, in order not to violate his oath, commanded that Prometheus should always wear upon his finger an iron ring, to or in which should be fastened a small fragment of Caucasus, so that it might be true, in a certain sense, that Prometheus still continued bound to that rock. Thus, as we have said, came the idea of the first ring, and, we may add, the insertion of a stone.‡

While some writers, under this story, connect Prome-

* Pliny, lib. ix.; Pausanias in Attic. Poet., c. vi.; Ovid. Fast., l. v. Bannier, ii. 497.

† Lib. i. c. 1.

‡ Plin. lib. xiii.; Montfaucon.

theus with the first ring, Pliny still says that the inventor of it is not known, and observes that it was used by the Babylonians, Chaldeans, Persians and Greeks, although, as he thinks, the latter were unacquainted with it at the time of the Trojan war, as Homer does not mention it.*

It has however been said that Dschemid, who made known the solar year, introduced the use of the ring.†

Touching Pliny's notion of the antiquity of rings, there is, in Southey's "Commonplace Book," (second series,‡) the following quotation from "Treasurie of Auncient and Moderne Times," (1619:) "But the good olde man Plinie cannot overreach us with his idle arguments and conjectures, for we read in Genesis that Joseph, who lived above five hundred yeares before the warres of Troy, having expounded the dreame of Pharaoh, king of Ægypt, was, by the sayde prince, made superintendent over his kingdom, and for his safer possession in that estate, he took off his ring from his hand and put it upon Joseph's hand." . . . "In Moses's time, which was more than foure hundred yeares before Troy warres, wee find rings to be then in use; for we reade that they were comprehended in the ornaments which Aaron the high priest should weare, and they of his posteritie afterward, as also it was avouched by Josephus. Whereby appeareth plainly, that the use of rings was much more ancient than Plinie reporteth them in his conjectures: but as he was a Pagan, and ignorant in sacred writings, so it is no marvell if these things went beyond his knowledge."

* Book of Costume, by a Lady of Rank, 21.

† Archæologia Biblica. ‡ P. 246.

It is pretended that seal-rings were an invention of the Lacedemonians, who, not content with locking their coffers, added a seal; for which purpose they made use of worm-eaten wood, with which they impressed wax or soft wood; and after this they learned to engrave seals.*

§ 5. Cylinders, squares and pyramids were forms used for seals prior to the adoption of ring-seals.† These settled with the Greeks into the scarabæus or beetle, that is to say, a stone something like the half of a walnut, with its convexity wrought into the form of a beetle, while the flat under surface contained the inscription for the seal. The Greeks retained this derivable form until they thought of dispensing with the body of the beetle, only preserving for the inscription the flat oval which the base presented, and which they ultimately set in rings. This shows how ring-seals came into form. Many of the Egyptian and other ring-seals are on swivel, and we are of opinion that the idea of this convenient form originated with the perforated cylindrical and other seals, which were, with a string passed through them, worn around the neck or from the wrist.‡

The sculpture of signets was, probably, the first use of gem engraving, and this was derived from the common source of all the arts, India.§ Signets of lapis lazuli and emerald have been found with Sanscrit inscriptions, presumed to be of an antiquity beyond all record. The natural transmission of the arts was from India to Egypt,

* Fuss's Roman Antiquities.

† Pictorial Bible, (Knight's Ed.,) Note to 1 Kings, ch. xxi.

‡ Curiosities of Burial, (Chambers's Repository.)

§ Dagley's Gems, *Preface.*

and our collections abound with intaglio and cameo hieroglyphics, figures of Isis, Osiris, the lotus, the crocodile, and the whole symbolic Egyptian mythology wrought upon jaspers, emeralds, basalts, bloodstones, turquoises, etc. Mechanical skill attained a great excellence at an early period. The stones of the Jewish high-priests' breast-plate were engraved with the names of the twelve tribes, and of those stones one was a diamond(?). The Greek gems generally exhibit the figure nude; the Romans, draped. The Greeks were chiefly intaglios.

It is generally understood that the ancients greatly excelled the moderns in gem engraving, and that the art has never been carried to the highest perfection in modern times. Mr. Henry Weigall, however, states that "this supposition is erroneous, and has probably arisen from the fact of travellers supposing that the collections of gems and impressions that they have made in Italy are exclusively the works of Italian artists; such, however, is not the case, and I have myself had the satisfaction of pointing out to many such collectors, that the most admired specimens in their collections were the works of English artists."*

§ 6. Rings have been discovered in the cinerary urns of the Greeks. These could hardly have got there through the fire which consumed the body, for vessels still containing aromatic liquids have also been discovered in the urns. It is very possible they were tokens of affection deposited by relations and friends. Such remembrances (as we shall see) are found in the graves of early Roman Christians.

* Hottzappfel's Turning and Mechanical Manipulations, p. 1362.

The idea that rings in Roman urns were secretly and piously placed there, is strengthened by the fact that it was contrary to the laws of Rome to bury gold with the dead.* There was one exception to this rule, which appears odd enough to readers of the nineteenth century, namely, a clause which permitted the burial of such gold as fastened false teeth in the mouth of the deceased, thus sparing the children and friends of the dead the painful task of pulling from their heads the artificial teeth which they had been accustomed to wear. It seems strange to find that these expedients of vanity or convenience were practised in Rome nearly two thousand years ago.

Maffei† gives a description and enlarged illustration of a gold ring bearing a cornelian, whereon is cut the story of Bellerophon upon his winged horse, about to attack the *chimera;* and also a small but exquisite urn of porphyry, which contained funeral ashes and this ring. These were found in the garden of Pallas, freed man of Claudius; and Maffei reasonably makes out that the ring had belonged to him. Bellerophon is said to have been a native of Corinth, and Pallas was from that city. Nero became emperor mainly through Pallas, and yet he sacrificed the latter to be master of his great riches. These relics thus possess much interest. Although a freed man, merely as such, had no right to wear a gold ring, yet Pallas gained the office of Prætor, and so was entitled to one. (In Plutarch's Galba, the freed man of the latter was honored with the privilege of wearing the gold ring for bringing news of the revolt against Nero.)

* Chambers's Repository, (Curiosities of Burial.)

† Gemma Antiche, iii. 182.

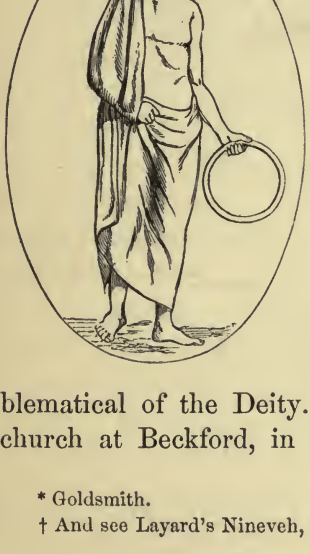
§ 7. In the unpleasant story of Judah and Tamar, we see that the former left in pledge with the latter his signet.* This, most likely, was in the shape of a ring, although such signets were often worn from the wrist: for, in this case, he also pledged his bracelets.

In the Scriptures, the signet ring is frequently named; and Quintus Curtius tells us that Alexander wore one. After his fatal debauch, and finding himself past recovery, and his voice beginning to fail, he gave his ring to his general, Perdiccas, with orders to convey his corpse to the temple of Ammon. Being asked to whom he

* Genesis, ch. xli. *et seq.*

would leave his empire, he answered, "To the most worthy."*

§ 8. The ring was generally the emblem of fidelity in civil engagements; and hence, no doubt, its ancient use in many functions and distinctions.† A ring denoted eternity among the Hindoos, Persians and Egyptians; and Brahma, as the creator of the world, bears a ring in his hand. The Egyptian priests in the temple of the creative Phtha (Vulcan of the Greeks) represented the year under the form of a ring, made of a serpent having its tail in its mouth—a very common shape of ancient rings. Although Jupiter is often figured with attributes of mighty power, yet he is seldom coupled with a mark of eternity. There is, however, a gem (an aqua-marine, engraved in hollow) of this deity holding a ring as the emblem of eternity.‡



Pythagoras forbade the use of the figures of gods upon rings, lest, from seeing their images too frequently, it should breed a contempt for them.§

It has been attempted to connect with a ring the consecration of a circle, as emblematical of the Deity. Over the door of a Norman church at Beckford, in Gloucestershire, England, is a

* Goldsmith.

† And see Layard's Nineveh, 339, 340.

‡ Caylus, vol. iii. p. 157.

§ Montfaucon.

rude bas-relief, representing the holy cross between the four beasts, used as symbols of the Evangelists. The "human form divine" appears to have been beyond the sculptor's power; he has made *a ring*. The others are an eagle, lion, and bull.*

§ 9. The Romans distinguished their rings by names taken from their use, as we do.† The excessive luxury shown in the number worn, and the value of gems and costly engraved stones in them, and the custom of wearing lighter rings in summer and heavier in winter, are among the most absurd instances of Roman effeminacy, (as we shall hereafter more particularly show.)‡ The case in which they kept their rings was called *Dactylotheca*. No ornament was more generally worn among the Romans than rings. This custom appears to have been borrowed from the Sabines.§ They laid them aside at night, as well as when they bathed or were in mourning, as did suppliants. However, in times of sorrow, they rather changed than entirely put them aside; they then used iron ones, taking off the gold rings.‖ It was a proof of the greatest poverty, when any one was obliged to pledge his ring to live. Rings were given by those who agreed to club for an entertainment. They were usually pulled off from the fingers of dying persons; but they seem to have been sometimes put on again before the dead body was buried.

There is no sign of the ring upon Roman statues before

* Gentleman's Magazine, vol. xx., N. S., 55.
† Fuss's Roman Antiquities, sec. 435.
‡ Juvenal, Sat. VII.
§ Adams's Roman Antiquities, 366, (Boyd's edit.)
‖ Montfaucon.

those of Numa and Servius Tullius. The rings were worn to be taken off or put on according to festivals, upon the statues of deities and heroes, and upon some of the emperors, with the *Lituus* ensculped, to show that they were sovereign pontiffs.

This *lituus* is a crooked staff; and the Roman priests are represented with it in their hands. They, as augurs, used it in squaring the heavens when observing the flight of birds. It is traced to the time of Romulus, who being skilled in divination, bore the lituus; and it was called *lituus quirinalis*, from Quirinus, a name of Romulus. It was kept in the Capitol, but lost when Rome was taken by the Gauls; afterwards, when the barbarians had quitted it, the lituus was found buried deep in ashes, untouched by the fire, whilst every thing about it was destroyed and consumed.* Emperors appropriated to themselves the dignities of the office of high priest,† and hence this priestly symbol upon their medals, coins and signets. Although it is a common notion that the pastoral staff of the Church of Rome is taken from the shepherd's crook, it may be a question whether it did not take its rise from the *lituus?*

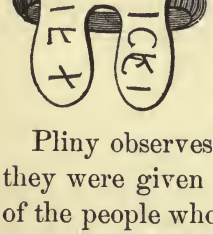
Brave times those Roman times for lawyers—or patrons, as they were called. Their clients were bound to give them the title of *Rex;* escort them to the Forum and the Campus Martius; and not only to make ordinary presents to them and their children or household, but, on a birth-day, they received from them the birth-day ring. It was worn only on that day.‡

There were rings worn by flute-players, very brilliant and adorned with a gem.

* Plutarch's Numa. † Fuss, § 318. ‡ Fosbroke, 247; Fuss, § 150.

In the Sierra Elvira, in Spain, more than two hundred tombs and an aqueduct were discovered. Several skeletons bore the rings of Roman knights; and some of them had in their mouths the piece of money destined to pay the ferryman Charon.* These skeletons crumbled into dust as soon as they were touched. What a perfect subject for a poem by Longfellow!

Roman stamps or large seals or brands have been found of quaint shapes. Some of them are in the form of feet or shoes. Drawings of them appear in Montfaucon. They were fashioned to mark casks and other bulky articles. Caylus gives an illustration of a ring in the form of a pair of shoes, or rather, the soles of shoes.†



Pliny observes that rings became so common at Rome, they were given to all the divinities; and even to those of the people who had never worn any. Their divinities were adorned with iron rings—movable rings, which could be taken off or put on according to festivals and circumstances.

§ 10. At Erpfingen in Germany, remarkable stalactical caverns have been discovered. Every where, and especially in the lateral caves, human bones of extraordinary size, with bones and teeth of animals, now unknown, have been discovered, and there, with pottery, rings were found.

§ 11. Rings were in use among the Gauls and Britons,

* Gentleman's Magazine, vol. xviii., N. S., 527. † 4. vol. i. pl. lxxxix.

but seemingly for ornament only. They are often found in British barrows. Anglo-Saxon rings were common.* William de Belmeis gave certain lands to St. Paul's Cathedral, and at the same time directed that his gold ring set with a ruby should, together with the seal, be affixed to the charter for ever. The same thing was done by Osbart de Camera, he granting to St. Paul's, in pure alms and for the health of his soul, certain lands; giving possession by his gold ring, wherein a ruby was set; and appointing that the same gold ring with his seal should for ever be affixed to the charter whereby he disposed of them.†

Anglo-Saxon kings gave rings to their wittenagemot and courtiers, and they to their descendants.

§ 12. In metals the Anglo-Saxons worked with great skill. We read of the gold cup in which Rowena drank to Vortigern. So early, perhaps, as the seventh century, the English jewellers and goldsmiths were eminent in their professions; and great quantities of other trinkets were constantly exported to the European Continent. Smiths and armorers were highly esteemed, and even the clergy thought it no disgrace to handle tools.‡ St. Dunstan, in particular, was celebrated as the best blacksmith, brazier, goldsmith and engraver of his time. This accounts for the cleverness with which he laid hold of the gentleman in black:

* Fosbroke's Encyclopædia of Antiquities, 247.

† Dugdale's History of St. Paul's; and Archæologia, xvii. 316.

‡ Eccleston's Introduction to English Antiquities, 60, 61; and see Manufactures of Metal, 376; Hone's Every-Day Book, 671; Archæologia, iv. 54.

"St. Dunstan stood in his ivy'd tower,
Alembic, crucible, all were there;
When in came Nick to play him a trick,
In guise of a damsel, passing fair.
Every one knows
How the story goes:
He took up the tongs and caught hold of his nose."*

§ 13. Ladies used seal-rings in the sixth century; but women of rank had no large seals till towards the beginning of the twelfth.†

§ 14. There is scarcely a hard substance of which rings have not been composed. All the metals have been brought into requisition. First, iron; then, as in Rome, it was mingled with gold.

Conquerors wore iron rings until Caius Marius changed the fashion. He had one when he triumphed over King Jugurtha.‡ And while stones have lent their aid as garniture for metal, these too have made the whole hoop.

We find rings of two stones; such were those which the Emperor Valerianus gave to Claudius.

Near to the Pyramids, cornelian rings have been discovered. Rings of glass and other vitreous material have been found. Emerald rings were discovered at Pompeii, also glass used instead of gems. Some made entirely of one stone, as of amber, have been obtained.§

With the Egyptians, bronze was seldom used in rings, though frequently in signets. They were mostly of gold

* Ingoldsby Legends, 223.
† Fosbroke, 251.
‡ Montfaucon.
§ Fosbroke's Encyclopædia of Antiquities, 246.

and this metal seems to have been always preferred to silver.

Ivory and blue porcelain were the materials of which those worn by the lower classes were made.*

An ancient ring of jet has been dug up in England.

There were some rings of a single metal, and others of a mixture of two;† for the iron, bronze and silver were frequently gilt, or, at least, the gold part was fixed with the iron, as appears from Artemidorus.‡ The Romans were contented with iron rings a long time; and Pliny assures us that Marius first wore a gold one in his third consulate. Sometimes the ring was iron, and the seal gold; sometimes the stone was engraven, and sometimes plain; and the engraving, at times, was *raised*, and also *sunk*. (The last were called *gemmæ ectypæ*, the former *gemmæ sculpturâ prominente*.)

An incident, mentioned by Plutarch, shows how distinctive was a gold ring.§ When Cinna and Caius Marius were slaughtering the citizens of Rome, the slaves of Cornutus hid their master in the house and took a dead body out of the street from among the slain and hanged it by the neck, then they put a gold ring upon the finger, and showed the corse in that condition to Marius's executioners; after which they dressed it for the funeral, and buried it as their master's body.

The rings of the classical ancients were rather incrusted than set in gold in our slight manner.¶

The first mention of a Roman gold ring is in the year

* Wilkinson's Manners of the Ancient Egyptians, 371.
† Rees's Encyclopædia—Title, *Rings*.
‡ Lib. i. i. cap. 5.
§ Life of Caius Marius.
¶ Fosbroke's Encyclopædia of Antiquities, 246.

432 U. C.; but they, at last, were indiscriminately worn by the Romans. Three bushels were gathered out of the spoils after Hannibal's victory at Cannæ.*

"Lovely soft pearls, the fanciful images of sad tears," have been used in rings from the time of the Latins. Cleopatra's drinking off the residuum of a pearl, worth three hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars, aside from luxurious extravagance, seems to be somewhat nasty; but we are inclined to believe that this fond queen had faith in its supposed medicinal and talismanic properties:

"——— Now I feed myself
With most delicious passion."

Pliny, the Roman naturalist, gravely tells us that the oyster which produces pearls, does so from feeding on heavenly dew. Drummond thus translates him:

"With open shells in seas, on heavenly dew,
A shining oyster lusciously doth feed;
And then the birth of that ethereal seed
Shows, when conceived, if skies look dark or blue."†

Early English writers entertained the same notion; and Boethius, speaking of the pearl-mussel of the Scotch rivers, remarks, that "These mussels, early in the morning, when the sky is clear and temperate, open their mouths a little above the water and most greedily swallow the dew of heaven; and after the measure and quantity of the dew which they swallow, they conceive and breed the pearl. These mussels," he continues, "are so

* Wilson's Archæological Dictionary, Art. *Rings.*
† Chambers's Miscellany.

exceedingly quick of touch and hearing, that, however faint the noise that may be made on the bank beside them, or however small the stone that may be thrown into the water, they sink at once to the bottom, knowing well in what estimation the fruit of their womb is to all people." In the East, the belief is equally common that these precious gems are

> "——— rain from the sky,
> Which turns into pearls as it falls in the sea."

The ancient idea that pearls are generated of the dews of heaven, is pretty conclusively met by Cardanus,* who says it is fabulous, seeing that the shell fishes, in which they are conceived, have their residence in the very bottom of the depth of the sea.

The charlatan Leoni de Spoleto prescribed the drink of dissolved pearls for Lorenzo the Magnificent, when he was attacked by fever aggravated by hereditary gout.†

There was supposed to be a gem called a carbuncle, which emitted, not reflected, but native light.‡ Our old literature abounds with allusions to this miraculous gem. Shakspeare has made use of it in *Titus Andronicus*, where Martius goes down into a pit, and, by it, discovers the body of Lord Bassianus; and calls up to Quintus thus:§

> "Lord Bassianus lies embrewed here,
> All on a heap, like to a slaughter'd lamb,
> In this detested, dark, blood-drinking pit.
> *Quintus.* If it be dark, how dost thou know 'tis he?
> *Martius.* Upon his bloody finger he doth wear

* Cardanus, lib. vii. *de Lapidibus.*

† Dumas' Celebrated Crimes—*The Borgias.*

‡ Notes to Tallis's Edit. of Shakspeare.

§ Act IV. Scene 2.

A precious ring, that lightens all the hole,
Which, like a taper in some monument,
Doth shine upon the dead man's earthy cheek,
And show the ragged entrails of this pit:
So pale did shine the moon on Pyramus,
When he by night lay bathed in maiden's blood."

Ludovicus Vartomannus, a Roman, reporteth that the king of Pege (or Pegu), a city in India, had a carbuncle (ruby) of so great a magnitude and splendor, that by the clear light of it he might, in a dark place, be seen, even as if the room or place had been illustrated by the sunbeams. St. or Bishop Epiphanius saith of this gem, that if it be worn, whatever garments it be covered withal, it cannot be hid.*

It was from a property of resembling a burning coal when held against the sun that this stone obtained the name *carbunculus;* which being afterwards misunderstood, there grew an opinion of its having the qualities of a burning coal and shining in the dark. And as no gem ever was or ever will be found endued with that quality, it was supposed that the true carbuncle of the ancients was lost; but it was long generally believed that there had been such a stone. The species of carbuncle of the ancients which possessed this quality in the greatest degree was the Garamantine or Carthaginian; and this is the true garnet of the moderns.†

Rings, with a death's head upon them, were worn by improper characters in the time of Elizabeth of England. This kind of ring is referred to in Beaumont and Fletcher:

* Nichols's Lapidary, 54, 57; Kobell, 274.
† Hill's Theophrastus, p. 75, notes *n. y.*

"———I'll keep it,
As they keep death's head in rings:
To cry *memento* to me."*

Although we meet with nothing to show the motive for wearing such rings by the characters referred to, we are inclined to fancy the desire was to carry the semblance of a widow and to let the ring have the character of a mourning token. Lord Onslow, who lived in the time of Elizabeth, bequeathed "a ring of gold with a death's head" to friends.†

Sir Isaac Newton was possessed of a small magnet set in a ring, the weight of which was only three grains, but which supported, by its attractive power on iron, seven hundred grains. It has been observed that such instances are by no means common, although the smallest magnets appear to have the greatest proportionate power.‡

Our own sailors, in the quiet weather of a voyage, will, with the aid of a marlinspike, make exceedingly neat rings out of Spanish silver or a copper coin.

Some of the Egyptian signets were of extraordinary size. Sir Gardiner Wilkinson mentions an ancient Egyptian one which contained about twenty pounds worth of gold. It consisted of a massive ring, half an inch in its largest diameter, bearing an oblong plinth, upon which the devices were engraved; on one face was the successor of Amunoph III., who lived B. C. 1400; on the other a lion, with the legend, "Lord of strength," referring to the monarch; on the other side a scorpion, and on the remaining one a crocodile.

* Chances, Act 1, Sc. 3. † Collins's Peerage.
‡ Harris's Rudimentary Magnetism, 6.

In the work of Count Caylus, there is a *vignette* of a ring of bronze, remarkable from its size and the subject upon it.* The collet or collar of the ring is an inch in height, and eleven lines in thickness. The figure upon it is an ox—or, as the author we have referred to calls it, a cow, recumbent and swaddled, or covered by draperies; and it wears a collar, to which hangs, according to this author, a bell. He considers that it was made when the Romans wore them of an excessive size, and while Gaul was under the dominion of the former. He does not give any guess at the intention or meaning of the subject. We believe it was, originally, Egyptian; and made in memory of the sacred Bull Apis, (found in tombs,) honored by the Egyptians as an image of the soul of Osiris and on the idea that his soul migrated from one Apis to another in succession. And as to what Caylus considers a bell, we are inclined to designate a bag. In Dr. Abbott's collection of Egyptian Antiquities are not only mummies of these sacred bulls, but also the skulls of others, and over the head of one is suspended a large bag, found in the pits with the bulls, and supposed to be used to carry their food.

Addison, in observing upon the size of old Roman rings,† refers to Juvenal, as thus translated by Dryden:

> "Charged with light summer rings, his fingers sweat,
> Unable to support a gem of weight."

And he goes on to say, that this "was not anciently

* Recueil d'Antiquités. † Remarks on Italy.

so great an hyperbole as it is now, for I have seen old Roman rings so very thick-about and with such large stones in them, that it is no wonder a fop should reckon them a little cumbersome in the summer season of so hot a climate."

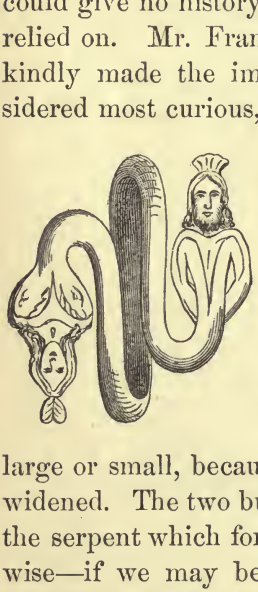
As a proof of the size to which Roman rings sometimes reached, we here give an outline of one as it appears in Montfaucon.

This ring bears the portrait of Trajan's good queen Plotina. The coiffure is remarkable and splendid, being composed of three rows of precious stones cut in facets.

According to Pliny, devices were not put upon the metal of rings until the reign of Claudius.

When a wealthy Egyptian had been embalmed and placed in a superb case or coffin, with a diadem on his head and bracelets upon his arms, rings of gold, ivory and engraved cornelian were placed upon his fingers.*

Contrary to what might have been supposed, the British Museum is not rich in rings. Through a dear friend, the author is able to give drawings of a few of its treasures, and the following extract from a letter: "They can trace none of their rings with any certainty. The collection is not large, and has been bought at various times from other collections and private sources, which could give no history, or, if attempted, none that can be relied on. Mr. Franks, the curator of this department, kindly made the impressions I send of those he considered most curious, and selected the others for me."



Here is one of those rings. It bears the heads of Isis and Serapis. A similar ring (perhaps the same) is figured in Caylus,† who observes on the singularity of form and the ingenuity attendant upon shaping it, while it is considered extremely inconvenient to wear. It would, however, suit all fingers, large or small, because it can be easily diminished or widened. The two busts are placed at the extremities of the serpent which forms the body of the ring contrariwise—if we may be allowed the expression—so that whatever position or twist is given to the ring, one of the two heads always presents itself in a natural position.

* Curiosities of Burial—Chambers's Repository.

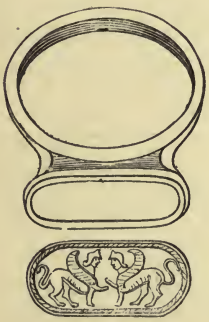
† Recueil d'Antiquités, Tom. ii. p. 310.

The ring given by Caylus was found in Egypt, but is said to be of Roman workmanship and made when the former was under the dominion of the Romans; and he hints that the heads may represent a Roman emperor and empress under the forms of Isis and Jupiter Serapis, adding, "I will not hazard any conjecture on the names that may be given them. I will content myself with saying that the work is of a good time and far removed from the lower empire; and I will add, that the quantity of rings which were wrought for the Romans of all the states may serve to explain the extraordinary forms which some present to us."

Here is another, from the British Museum, in which Isis and Serapis appear, singularly placed. This ring is Romano-Egyptian, and of bronze.

Here are two, Etruscan, from the same source, with an impression from each.

No. 1.



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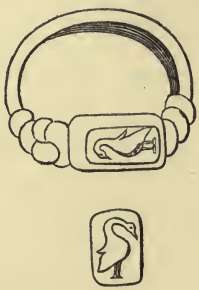


They are both of gold, while No. 2 has a white stone which works upon a swivel.

We add, in this portion of our book, another from the British Museum. It is worked from Greek or Etruscan gold, and was found in the Abruzzi.

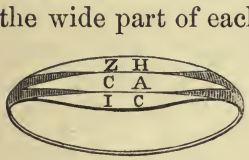
Illustrations of some of the Egyptian seal-rings contained in the British Museum, will be found in Knight's Pictorial Bible, at the end of the third chapter of Esther.

Fashion and Fancy have given us rings of all imaginable shapes, and these powers, joined with Religion and Love, have traced upon them every supposable subject.

Although modern rings seldom display the exquisite cutting and artistic taste which appear upon antiques, still the latter exhibit sentimental phrases and sentiments similar to such as are observed upon rings of the present day. The Greeks were full of gallantry. Time has preserved to us incontestable proofs of the vows which they made to mistresses and friends, as well as of the trouble they took and the expense they went to in order to perpetuate their sentiments. Caylus,* who says this, gives a drawing of a ring bearing the words KIPIA KAAH, *Beautiful Ciria;* and adds, "This inscription is simple but energetic; it appears to me to suit the sentiment." In Montfaucon are several illustrations of Greek sentences upon rings, which carry out what Caylus has observed; thus there are (rendered into English), *Good be with you, Madam. Good be with you, Sir. Good be with him who wears you and all his household. Remember it. Theanus is my light.* Upon a ring bearing a hand which holds a ring: *Remember good fortune.* There are, also, upon Roman rings, sentiment and compliment

* Lib. iv., p. 172, Pl. LVII.

in Latin sentences, as thus translated: *Live happy, my hostess. You have this pledge of love. Live in God. Live.* And Caylus* gives a description and drawing of a remarkably formed gold ring; and although it bears Greek words, he leaves it in doubt whether it is of Roman or Grecian workmanship. It has the appearance of three rings united, widened in the front and tapering within the hand. Upon the wide part of each are two letters, the whole forming

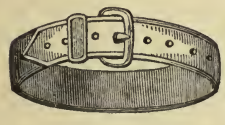


ZHCAIC, *Mayest thou live.* The Romans often preferred the Greek language in their most familiar customs.

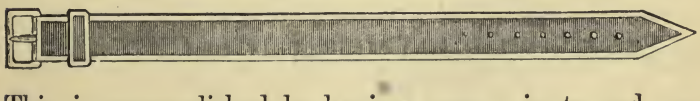
A ring of bronze has been discovered, in the form of a snake with its tail in its mouth, made on the principle

of some of our steel rings which we use to hold household keys, widening their circle by pressure.† In the finger-ring, the part in the mouth is inserted loose, so as to draw out and increase to the size of the circle needed.

Rings of gold are common in England at the present day, made to form a strap with buckles, precisely, in shape, a common belt or collar. It lies flat like an



ordinary leather strap, and is formed of small pieces of gold which are kept so delicately together that the lines of meeting are scarcely perceptible.



This is accomplished by having many minute and un-

* Lib. v. p. 161. † Caylus, ii. 311.

seen hinges, which make the whole pliable and allow it to be buckled (as a ring) upon the finger.

Nothing is new. One of the prettiest modern rings, used as a remembrancer, has a socket for hair and a closing shutter. Roman remains were found at Heronval in Normandy, and among them were rings. One of these was almost of modern form, with a small place under where the stone is usually fixed, into which hair might be inserted.* We are constantly retracing the steps of antiquity.

A Roman gold ring of a triangular form has been discovered in England, with an intaglio representing the story of Hercules strangling the Nemean lion.† And also a ring that, while it was remarkable for its thickness, had a whistle on one side, which was useful in calling servants before the time of domestic bells.‡

We shall find that there were rings in which poison was carried.

Wilkinson has discovered several Egyptian rings, where the subject is made up of two cats sitting back to back, and looking round at each other, with an emblem of the goddess Athor between them.

We do not know why Athor, *Venus*, should be between these sentinel cats. Had the symbol of Pasht, *Diana*, been there, the thing would have been less difficult; for cats, like maids, "love the moon," and their guardian goddess was Pasht. Their attitude is more watchful than sacred cats would be supposed to assume, and might rather appear to apply to the species embalmed in Kilkenny history.

* Gentleman's Magazine, Vol. xviii., N. S., 527.

† Archæologia, v. 71. ‡ Ib. viii. 430.

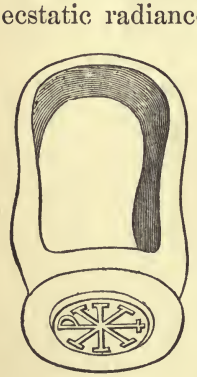
There is an Anglo-Saxon ring inscribed Ahlstan, Bishop of Sherborne, which has the hoop of alternate lozenges and circles. It has, also, a Saxon legend. Epigraphs in that language are extremely rare. It has been supposed that Ahlstan had command of the Saxon army.*

In the catacombs of Rome, where the early Christians "wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented,"* where they stealthily prayed and lived and died, vast quantities of signet and other rings have been discovered, as well as medals, cameos and other precious stones. Signet rings of different devices, as belonging to different owners, are in the catacombs here; and this has raised the idea that they were deposited by relatives and friends as the stone lid of the grave was about to be shut,—offerings of love and affection.†

"What a picture," exclaims a writer in the London Art Journal,‡ "do these dark vaults display of the devotion, the zeal, the love of those early Christian converts whose baptism was in blood! I picture them to myself, stealing forth from the city in the gloomy twilight, out towards the lonely Campagna, and disappearing one by one through well-known apertures, threading their way through the dark sinuous galleries to some altar, where life and light and spiritual food, the soft chanting of the holy psalms and the greeting of faithful brethren, waking the echoes, awaited them. The sight of these early haunts of the persecuted and infant religion is inexpressibly affecting; and I pity those, be they Protestant or Catholic, who can visit these hallowed precincts without

* Heb. xi. 37, 38. † Fosbroke, 247; Archæologia, iv. 54.
‡ Vol. iv. N. S., p. 224.

an overwhelming emotion. How many martyrs, their bodies torn and lacerated by the cruel beasts amid the infuriated roar of thousands shrieking forth the cry of *Christianos ad leonem!* in the bloody games of the Flavian amphitheatre, breathing their last sigh, calling on the name of the Redeemer, have passed, borne by mourning friends or by compassionate widows or virgins to their last dark narrow home, along the very path I was now treading! How many glorified saints, now singing the praises of the Eternal around the great white throne in the seventh heaven of glory, may have been laid to rest in these very apertures, lighted by a flickering taper like that I held. But I must pause—this is an endless theme, endless as the glory of those who hover in eternal light and ecstatic radiance above; it is moreover a pæan I feel utterly unworthy to sing."

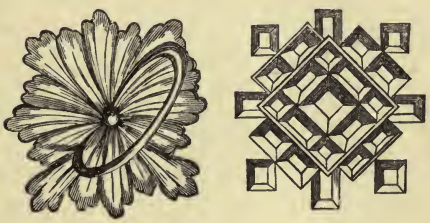


We have received a drawing and impression of a ring which is in the British Museum; and our opinion is that it belonged to one of the early Christians. While the ΧΑΙΡΩ, *I rejoice*, upon it, favors the idea, the monogram (upon the signet part) confirms it. This is, evidently, the name of Jesus in its earliest monogrammatic form, made up of the letters X. and Ꝑ. As commonly found on monuments in the catacombs of Rome, it has a single cross with the Ꝑ. thus,  while in our illustration the cross is multiplied; and this is the only difference. Surely such a memorial as this is more likely to have been the ring of the lowly-minded "fisherman,"

than the one which is said to be framed with diamonds and worn by the Pope. In Dr. Kip's very interesting work on the Catacombs of Rome, there is an illustration of a seal-ring, upon which a like monogram appears, although somewhat complicated.*

Near Cork, in Ireland, a silver ring was discovered, the hoop whereof is composed of nine knobs or bosses, which may have served instead of beads and been used by the wearer in the Catholic counting of them. The antiquaries of Ireland have considered this ring as very ancient.†

In referring to Irish rings, it may be well to mention one which was found in the county of Westmeath, with some very ancient remains.‡ It is remarkable, from being set with many diamonds in beautifully squared



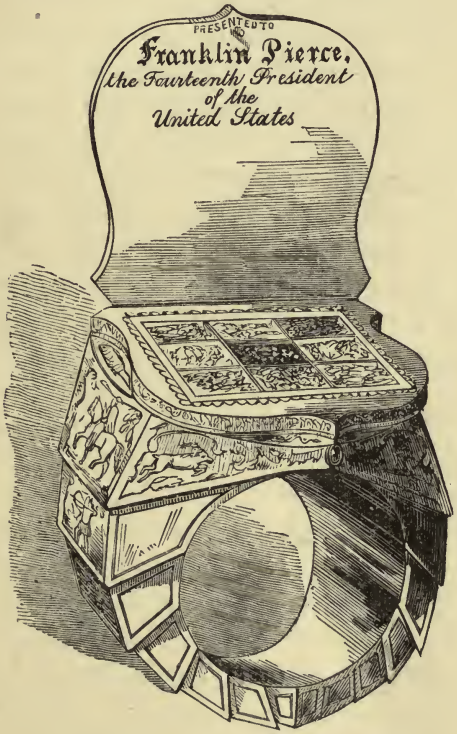
work. On account of the place where it was discovered, a suggestion has been made that it may have belonged to Rose Failge, Prince of Ireland, eldest son of Calhoir the Great, who reigned A. D. 122, he being called the *Hero of Rings.* However, diamonds do not appear to have been named among precious stones at that early period.

* (Published by Redfield,) p. 110.
† Lond. Gent.'s Mag., Vol. xxiv. p. 285.
‡ Archæologia, (London,) ii. 35.

The author is not aware that diamonds are often set loosely or upon swivel in a ring. We have mention of one in the reign of James I. of England. Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, (nicknamed by a cotemporary "Robert the Devil," and by James called his "little Beagle,") was dangerously ill at Bath; but on a report of his recovery, the King sent purposely the Lord Hay to him, with a token, "which was a fair diamond, set or rather hung square in a gold ring without a foil"—and this message, "That the favor and affection he bore him was and should be ever, as the form and matter of that, endless, pure and most perfect."* A writer, given to detraction, says that this great statesman died of the disease of Herod, upon the top of a mole-hill; and that his body burst the lead it was wrapped in. On his tomb lies the skeleton of the Earl curiously carved. He seemed well to weigh the glory of a courtier, for in writing to Sir John Harrington,† he said: "Good Knight, rest content and give heed to one that hath sorrowed in the bright lustre of a Court, and gone heavily even on the best seeming fair ground. 'Tis a great task to prove one's honesty and yet not spoil one's fortune. You have tasted a little hereof in our blessed Queen's time, who was more than a man, and, in truth, sometimes less than a woman. I wish I waited now in your presence chamber, with ease at my food and rest in my bed. I am pushed from the shore of comfort, and know not where the winds and waves of a Court will bear me. I know it bringeth little comfort on earth; and he is, I reckon, no wise man that looketh this way to heaven."

* Memorials of Affairs of State, iii. 368.
† Nugæ Antiquæ, ii. 263.

In the year one thousand eight hundred and fifty-two, some citizens of California presented President Pierce with a gigantic ring. We here give an outline, and add a description of it from Gleason's Pictorial Newspaper for the 25th of December, 1852.



"It is already pretty widely known to the public generally, that a number of citizens of San Francisco have

caused to be manufactured and forwarded to Gen. Pierce, a most valuable and unique present, in the form of a massive gold ring, as a token of esteem for the President elect. Of this ring our artist has herewith given us an admirable representation. It is a massive gold ring, weighing upwards of a full pound. This monster ring, for chasteness of design, elegance of execution, and high style of finish, has, perhaps, no equal in the world. The design is by Mr. George Blake, a mechanic of San Francisco. The circular portion of the ring is cut into squares, which stand at right angles with each other, and are embellished each with a beautifully executed design, the entire group presenting a pictorial history of California, from her primitive state down to her present flourishing condition, under the flag of our Union.

"Thus, there is given a grizzly bear in a menacing attitude, a deer bounding down a slope, an enraged boa, a soaring eagle and a salmon. Then we have the Indian with his bow and arrow, the primitive weapon of self-defence; the native mountaineer on horseback, and a Californian on horseback, throwing his lasso. Next peeps out a Californian tent. Then you see a miner at work, with his pick, the whole being shaded by two American flags, with the staves crossed and groups of stars in the angles. The part of the ring reserved for a seal is covered by a solid and deeply carved plate of gold, bearing the arms of the State of California in the centre, surmounted by the banner and stars of the United States, and inscribed with 'Frank Pierce,' in old Roman characters. This lid opens upon a hinge, and presents to view underneath a square box, divided by bars of gold into nine separate compartments, each containing

a pure specimen of the varieties of ore found in the country. Upon the inside is the following inscription: '*Presented to* FRANKLIN PIERCE, *the Fourteenth President of the United States.*' The ring is valued at $2000. Our engraving gives a separate view of the lid, so as to represent the appearance of the top of the ring both when it is open and when it is closed. Altogether, it is a massive and superb affair, rich in emblematical design and illustration, and worthy its object."

Rings appear to have been worn indiscriminately on the fingers of each hand. It would seem, however, from Jeremiah, that the Hebrews wore them on their right hand; we there read that when the Lord threatened King Zedekiah with the utmost effects of his anger, he told him: "Though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were the signet on my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence."*

Trimalchion wore two rings, one large and gilt, upon the little finger of his right hand, and the other of gold, powdered with iron stars, upon the middle of the ring finger.†

Among the Romans, before rings came to be adorned with stones, and while the graving was yet on the metal itself, every one wore them at pleasure on what hand and finger he pleased. When stones came to be added, they had them altogether on the left hand; and it would have been held an excess of foppery to have put them on the right.

Pliny says, they were at first worn on the fourth finger, then on the second or index, then on the little finger, and at last, on all the fingers excepting the middle one.

* Jer. xxii. 24. † Montfaucon.

Clemens Alexandrinus has it that men wore the ring on the extremity of the little finger, so as to leave the hand more free.

According to Aulus Gellius,* both the Greeks and Romans wore them on the fourth finger of the left hand; and the reason he gives for it is this, that having found, from anatomy, that this finger had a little nerve that went straight to the heart, they esteemed it the most honorable by this communication with that noble part. Macrobius quotes Atteius Capito, that the right hand was exempt from this office, because it was much more used than the left, and, therefore, the precious stones of the rings were liable to be broken, and that the finger of the left hand was selected which was the least employed.

Pliny says, the Gauls and ancient Britons wore the ring on the middle finger.

At first, the Romans only used a single ring; then, one on each finger, and, at length, as we gather from Martial,† several on each. Afterwards, according to Aristophanes,‡ one on each joint. Their foppery at length arose to such a pitch that they had their weekly rings.

The beast Heliogabalus carried the point of using rings the farthest, for, according to Lampridius, he never wore the same ring or the same shoe twice.

Heliogabalus was a funny wretch:—he would frequently invite to his banquets eight old men blind of one eye, eight bald, eight deaf, eight lame with the gout, eight blacks, eight exceedingly thin, and eight so fat that

* Lib. x. † Martial, Lib. xi., epiq. 60.

‡ Aristophanes, *in Nub.*, &c.

they could scarcely enter the room, and who, when they had eaten as much as they desired, were obliged to be taken out of the apartment on the shoulders of several soldiers.

Egyptian women wore many, and sometimes two or three on one finger; but the left was considered the hand peculiarly privileged to bear these ornaments; and it is remarkable that its third was decorated with a greater number than any other and was considered by them as the ring finger.* This notion, as we have observed, the Grecians had.

The idea of wearing rings on the fourth finger of the left hand, because of a supposed artery there which went to the heart, was carried so far that, according to Levinus Lemnius, this finger was called *Medicus;* and the old physicians would stir up their medicaments and potions with it, because no venom could stick upon the very outmost part of it but it will offend a man and communicate itself to the heart.

With regard to the translation of rings from the right to the left hand, it may be pleasing to refer to that charming old work, *Enquiries into Vulgar and Common Errors*, by Browne:† he says, "That hand [the left] being lesse employed, thereby they were best preserved, and for the same reason they placed them on this finger, for the thumbe was too active a finger and is commonly imployed with either of the rest: the index or fore finger was too naked whereto to commit their pretiosities, and hath the tuition of the thumbe scarce unto the second joynt: the middle and little finger they rejected as extreams, and too big or too little for their rings; and of all

* Wilkinson. † P. 185, Edit. of 1646.

chose out the fourth as being least used of any, as being guarded on either side, and having in most this peculiar condition that it cannot be extended alone and by itselfe, but will be accompanied by some finger on either side."

As to the Egyptians deriving a nerve from the heart in the fourth finger of the left hand, the priests, from this notion, anointed the same with precious oils before the altar. And Browne, in his Vulgar Errors, says, "The Egyptians were weak anatomists, which were so good embalmers."*

In the General Epistle of St. James,† we have this: "For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there or sit here under my footstool: are ye not then partial in yourselves and are become judges of evil thoughts?" In an illustrated edition of the New Testament, it is said, the expression "with a gold ring" might very properly be rendered, "having his fingers adorned with gold rings;" and that about the time referred to in the text, the wearing of many rings had become a fashion, at least among the master people, the Romans, from whom it was probably adopted by persons of wealth and rank in the provinces. The custom is noticed by Arrian; while Seneca, in describing the luxury and ostentation of the time, says, "We adorn our fingers with rings, and a jewel is displayed on every joint." There is a newspaper anecdote of an eminent preacher at

* P. 185. † Chap. ii., v. 2.

Norwich, in England, which shows that he had the above verse (from the Epistle of St. James) in mind when it occurred. His Reverence made a sudden pause in his sermon; the congregation were panic-struck. Having riveted their attention, he addressed himself by name to a gentleman in the gallery. "Has that poor man who stands at the back of your pew a gold ring on his finger?" The gentleman turned round, and replied, "I believe not, sir." "Oh, then, I suppose that is the reason he must not have a seat." The gentleman had three gold rings on his hand; and his pew was nearly empty.

Here is another anecdote of a priest, in worse taste than the last. Albert Pio, Prince of Caspi, was buried with extraordinary pomp in the Church of the Cordeliers at Paris. He had been deprived of his principality by the Duke of Ferrara, became an author, and finally a fanatic. Entering one day into one of the churches at Madrid, he presented holy water to a lady who had a very thin hand, ornamented by a most beautiful and valuable ring. He exclaimed in a loud voice as she reached the water, "Madam, I admire the ring more than the hand." The lady instantly exclaimed, with reference to the cordon or rope with which he was decorated, "And for my part, I admire the halter more than I do the ass." He was buried in the habit of a Cordelier; and Erasmus made a satire on the circumstance, entitled the "Seraphic Interment."

The Hebrew women wore a number of rings upon their fingers.*

Hippocrates, in treating of the decency of dress to be observed by physicians, enjoins the use of rings. We

* Archæologia Biblica, § 128–9; Wilkinson.

have somewhere seen it suggested, that the rings thus worn by physicians might have contained aromatic water or preservative essence, in the same way as their canes were supposed to do; and hence the action of putting the heads or tops of the latter to their noses when consulting in a sick-room.

§ 15. The author deems it as well to refer to the law, in relation to rings. In common parlance, we consider precious stones to be jewels; but rings of gold will pass by that word. In the time of Queen Elizabeth, the Earl of Northumberland bequeathed by his will his jewels to his wife, and died possessed of a collar of S's, and of a garter of gold, and of a button annexed to his bonnet, and also many other buttons of gold and precious stones annexed to his robes, and of many chains, bracelets and rings of gold and precious stones.* The question was, whether all these would pass by the devise under the name of jewels? It was resolved by the justices, that the garter and collar of S's did not pass, because they were not properly jewels, but ensigns of power and state; and that the buckle of his bonnet and the button did not pass, because they were annexed to his robes, and were no jewels. But, for the other chains, bracelets and rings, they passed under the bequest of jewels.

Persons who desire to leave specific rings to friends should designate them; for, otherwise, the particular article will not pass. Thus, "I give a diamond ring," is what is called a general legacy, which may be fulfilled by the delivery of any ring of that kind; while "I give

* Godolphin's Orphan's Leg., 413.

the diamond ring presented to me by A," is a specific legacy, which can only be satisfied by the delivery of the specified subject.* A legacy of £50 for a ring is but a money legacy; it fastens upon no specific ring, and carries interest like other money bequests.†

A family ring may become an important piece of evidence in the establishment of a pedigree; and the law admits it for that purpose: upon the presumption, as Lord Erskine has it, "that a person would not wear a ring with an error upon it."‡

In ancient times dying persons gave their rings to some one, declaring thereby who was their heir.§

§ 16. We do not find in any work on orders of knighthood, any association having direct reference to a ring; but in a volume of the Imperial Magazine there is a reference to the Order of the Ring, said to have been copied from a beautifully illuminated MS., on vellum.¶ The sovereign of the order was to wear upon the fifth finger a blue enamelled ring, set round with diamonds, with the motto, *Sans changer.* The matter looks fictitious, for it embraces the seeming signatures of Leonora, Belvidera, Torrismond and Cæsario.

Lorenzo the Magnificent, of the Medici family, bore a diamond ring with three feathers and the motto, *Semper;* and when the Medici returned to Florence, Giuliano de Medici instituted an order of merit, denominated the Order of the Diamond, alluding to the *impresa*, an emblem of his father. This was done to secure influence

* Williams on Executors, 739.
† *Apreece* v. *Apreece*, 1 V. and B. 364.
‡ *Vowles* v. *Young*, 13 Ves. J. 144.
§ Montfaucon.
¶ London, for 1760, p. 243.

by recalling the memory of the parent. The members of it had precedence on public occasions, and it was their province to preside over festivals, triumphs and exhibitions.*

§ 17. Rings have been found in strange places, and under interesting circumstances. We find them upon and below the earth; within the Pyramids; beneath the ashes of Pompeii and Herculaneum; and strewed over battle-fields.† They have been discovered on the field of Cressy.

§ 18. In Persia, at the present day, letters are seldom written and never signed by the person who sends them; and it will thus appear that the authenticity of all orders and communications, and even of a merchant's bills, depends wholly on an impression from his seal-ring.‡ This makes the occupation of a seal-cutter one of as much trust and danger as it seems to have been in Egypt. Such a person is obliged to keep a register of every ring-seal he makes; and if one be lost or stolen from the party for whom it was cut, his life would answer for making another exactly like it. The loss of a signet-ring is considered a serious calamity; and the alarm which an Oriental exhibits when his signet is missing, can only be understood by a reference to these circumstances, as the seal-cutter is always obliged to alter the real date at which the seal was cut. The only resource of a person who has lost his seal is to have another made with a

* Roscoe's Leo X., i. 338, (8vo.)

† Library of Entertaining Knowledge, Pompeii, vol. ii. p. 324.

‡ And see Layard's Nineveh and Babylon, (Putnam's Edit.,) 529.

new date, and to write to his correspondents to inform them that all accounts, contracts and communications to which his former signet is affixed are null from the day on which it was lost.

Importance has been given to signets in England. This was at a time when the schoolmaster had not made many penmen. "And how great a regard was had to seals," says Collins, in his *Baronage*, "appears from these testimonies; the Charter of King Henry I. to the Abbey of Evesham, being exhibited to King Henry III. and the seal being cloven in sunder, the King forthwith caused it to be confirmed," etc., etc.; "and in 13 Ed. III., when, by misfortune, a deed, then showed in the Chancery, was severed from the seal, in the presence of the Lord Chancellor and other noble persons, command was not only given for the affixing it again thereto, but an exemplification was made thereof under the Great Seal of England, with the recital of the premises. And the counterfeiting of another man's seal was anciently punished with transportation, as appears from this record in the reign of King John," etc., etc. "It is also as remarkable that in 9 H. III. c. c. marks damages were recovered by Sir Ralph de Crophall, Knight, against Henry de Grendon and William de Grendon for forcibly breaking a seal from a deed. Also so tender was every man in those times of his seal, that if he had accidentally lost it, care was taken to publish the same, lest another might make use of it to his detriment, as is manifested in the case of Benedict de Hogham," etc. "Also not much unlike to this is that of Henry de Perpount, a person of great quality, (ancestor of his Grace the Duke of Kingston,) who, on Monday, in the Octaves of St.

Michael, 8 Ed. I., came into the Chancery at Lincoln and publicly declared, that he missed his seal; and protested, that if any instrument should be signed with that seal, for the time to come, it should be of no value or effect. Nor is that publication made by John de Greseley of Drakelow, in *Com. Derb.* 18 R. II., upon the loss of his seal, less considerable," etc., etc.*

§ 19. We are aware of the value of many modern rings, arising from their being used as mere frames for jewels. And ancient ones, from the same fact or from having exquisite engraving upon them, were also highly prized. Nonius,† a senator, is said to have been proscribed by Anthony for the sake of a gem in a ring, worth twenty thousand sesterces.

The "Roving Englishman"‡ informs us, that the Pasha wears on his right-hand little finger, a diamond ring which once belonged to the Dey of Algiers, and cost a thousand pounds sterling.

§ 20. An English work, of but little note, professes to make out "Love's Telegraph," as understood in America, thus:—If a gentleman wants a wife, he wears a ring on the *first* finger of the left hand; if he is engaged, he wears it on the *second* finger; if married, on the *third;* and on the fourth if he never intends to be married. When a lady is not engaged, she wears a hoop or diamond on her *first* finger; if engaged, on the *second;* if married, on the *third;* and on the fourth if she intends to die a maid.§

* Vol. i. p. 345, 4to.

† Adam's Roman Antiquities, 366, (Boyd's edit.)

‡ Household Words, ix. 462.

§ Family Friend, vol. ii. p. 132.

Many of our readers are aware that there are *name-rings*, in which the first letter attaching to each jewel employed will make a loved one's name or a sentiment. In the formation of English rings of this kind, the terms *Regard* and *Dearest* are common. Thus illustrated:—R(*uby*) E(*merald*) G(*arnet*) A(*methyst*) R(*uby*) D(*iamond*). —D(*iamond*) E(*merald*) A(*methyst*) R(*uby*) E(*merald*) S(*apphire*) T(*opaz*). It is believed that this pretty notion originated (as many pretty notions do) with the French. The words which the latter generally play with, in a combination of gems, are *Souvenir* and *Amitié*, thus: S(*aphir* or *S*ardoine) O(*nix* or *O*pale) U(*raine*) V(*ermeille*) E(*meraude*) N(*atralithe*) I(*ris*) R(*ubis* or *R*ose diamant). —A(*méthiste* or *A*igue-marine) M(*alachite*) I(*ris*) T(*urquoise* or *T*opaze) I(*ris*) E(*meraude*).

Here are the alphabetical French names of precious stones:*

A. Améthiste. Aigue-marine.
B. Brilliant. Diamant, désigniant la même pierre.
C. Chrisolithe. Carnaline. Chrisophrase.
D. Diamant.
E. Emeraude.
F. (*Pas de pierre connue.*)
G. Grenat.
H. Hiacinthe.
I. Iris.
J. Jasper.
K. (*Pas de pierre connue.*)
L. Lapis lazuli.
M. Malachite.

* Furnished to the author through the attention of Messrs. Marchand Aé. Gaime, Guillemot & Co., Jewellers, of New-York.

N. Natralithe.
O. Onix. Opale.
P. Perle. Peridot. Purpurine.
Q. (*Pas de pierre connue.*)
R. Rubis. Rose diamant.
S. Saphir. Sardoine.
T. Turquoise. Topaze.
U. Uraine.
V. Vermeille (*espèce de grenat jaune*).
X. Xépherine.
Y. Z. (*Pas de nous connus.*)

Kobell says,* "In *name-rings*, in which a name is indicated by the initial letter of different gems, the emerald is mostly used under its English and French name (*Emeraude*) to stand for *e*, which would otherwise not be represented. (The German name is *Smaragd.*) While on this point, it may be mentioned that a difficulty occurs with *u*, but recent times have furnished a name which may assist, namely, a green garnet, containing chrome, from Siberia, which has been baptized after the Russian Minister Uwarrow, and called *Uwarrovite.*"

The Poles have a fanciful belief that each month of the year is under the influence of a precious stone, which influence has a corresponding effect on the destiny of a person born during the respective month. Consequently it is customary among friends and lovers, on birth-days, to make reciprocal presents of trinkets ornamented with the natal stones. The stones and their influences, corresponding with each month, are supposed to be as follows:

January—Garnet. Constancy and Fidelity.

* Mineral Kingdom, p. 269.

February—Amethyst. Sincerity.
March—Bloodstone. Courage, presence of mind.
April—Diamond. Innocence.
May—Emerald. Success in love.
June—Agate. Health and long life.
July—Cornelian. Contented mind.
August—Sardonyx. Conjugal felicity.
September—Chrysolite. Antidote against madness.
October—Opal. Hope.
November—Topaz. Fidelity.
December—Turquoise. Prosperity.

Modern jewellers are known to palm off imitations of gems; and so did sellers of trinkets in ancient times. The moderns only run the chance of a loss of custom; but the latter were well off if they got no greater fright than the jeweller who sold to the wife of Gallienus a ring with a piece of glass in it. Gallienus ordered the cheat to be placed in the circus, as though he were to be exposed to the ferocity of a lion. While the miserable jeweller trembled at the expectation of instant death, the executioner, by order of the emperor, let loose a capon upon him. An uncommon laugh was raised at this; and the emperor observed that he who had deceived others should expect to be deceived himself.

A ring often figures in the old English ballads. Thus, in *Child Noryce*, the hero of it invites Lady Barnard to the merry greenwood:

"Here is a ring, a ring, he says,
It's all gold but the stane;
You may tell her to come to the merry greenwood,
And ask the leave o' nane."

§ 21. A ring, as an heraldic figure, is found in coats of arms throughout every kingdom in Europe. In Heraldry, it is called an *annulet.* We find the ring "gemmed" borne in the *arms* of the Montgomeries, who hold the Earldom of Eglinton; and one of whom figures in the ballad of Chevy Chase:

> "Against Sir Hugh Montgomerie
> So right his shaft he set,
> The gray-goose-wing that was therein
> In his heart blood was wet."

A father and son of this family were opposed to each other in the battle of Marston Moor. The father, from his bearing, had the popular appellation of *Gray Steel.* We find the amulet borne in the coats of arms of several of the peers and gentlemen of England.

Louis IX. of France, St. Louis, took for his device a marguerite or daisy and fleur-de-lis, in allusion to the name of Queen Marguerite his wife and the arms of France, which were also his own.* He had a ring made with a relief around it in enamel, which represented a garland of marguerites and fleurs-de-lis. One was engraven on a sapphire with these words, "*This ring contains all we love.*" Thus, it has been said, did this excellent prince show his people that he loved nothing but Religion, France and his wife. It is a question, however, whether the emblem on the escutcheon of the kings of France is really a fleur-de-lis. Some think it was originally a toad, which formed the crest of the helmet worn by Pharamond; and others, the golden bees which were

* New-York Albion newspaper, 8th October, 1853.

discovered in the tomb of Childeric at Tournay in 1653.* The story is that Clovis, after baptism, received a fleur-de-lis from an angel. Since then France has been called "the empire of lilies." The coat of arms of Clovis and his successors was a field of azure, seeded with golden fleurs-de-lis.

The story of losing rings and finding them in fish, is as old as Pliny, and we shall have to mention Solomon's ring, which, it is said, was found in one. We have an English statement† of a Mrs. Todd, of Deptford, who, in going in a boat to Whitstable, endeavored to prove that no person need be poor who was willing to be otherwise; and, being excited with her argument, she took off her gold ring and throwing it into the sea, said, "It was as much impossible for any person to be poor, who had an inclination to be otherwise, as for her ever to see that ring again." The second day after this, and when she had landed, she bought some mackerel, which the servant commenced to dress for dinner, whereupon there was found a gold ring in one. The servant ran to show it to her mistress, and the ring proved to be that which she had thrown away.

We are told in Brand's "History of Newcastle," that a gentleman of that city, in the middle of the seventeenth

* When the tomb of Childeric, father of Clovis, was opened, there were found, besides the skeletons of his horse and page, his arms, a crystal orb and more than three hundred little ornaments resembling bees of the purest gold, their wing part being inlaid with a red stone like cornelian. It has, however, been asserted that they were what are called *fleurons*, supposed to have been attached to the harness of the monarch's war-horse. Napoleon, wishing to have some regal emblem more ancient than the *fleur-de-lis*, adopted the *fleurons* or bees, and the green ground as the original Merovingian color. (Notes and Queries, viii. 30.)

† London Gent.'s Mag. for January, 1765, p. 210.

century, dropped a ring from his hand over the bridge into the river Tyne. Years passed on; he had lost all hopes of recovering the ring, when one day his wife bought a fish in the market, and in the stomach of that fish was the identical jewel which had been lost! From the pains taken to commemorate this event, it would appear to be true; it was merely an occurrence possible, but extremely unlikely to have occurred.

We are inclined to add in this section a circumstance connected with a ring as it appeared in a respectable English periodical. Fact, here, beats fiction:

"Many years ago a lady sent her servant, a young man about twenty years of age, and a native of that part of the country where his mistress resided, to the neighboring town with a ring, which required some alteration, to be delivered into the hands of a jeweller. The young man went the shortest way across the fields; and coming to a little wooden bridge that crossed a small stream, he leant against the rail, and took the ring out of its case to look at it. While doing so, it slipped out of his hand, and fell into the water. In vain he searched for it, even till it grew dark. He thought it fell into the hollow of a stump of a tree under water, but he could not find it. The time taken in the search was so long, that he feared to return and tell his story, thinking it incredible, and that he should be even suspected of having gone into evil company and gamed it away or sold it. In this fear he determined never to return—left wages and clothes, and fairly ran away. This seemingly great misfortune was the making of him. His intermediate history I know not; but this, that after many years' absence, either in the East or West Indies, he returned with a

very considerable fortune. He now wished to clear himself with his old mistress; ascertained that she was living; purchased a diamond ring of considerable value, which he determined to present in person, and clear his character, by telling his tale, to which the credit of his present position might testify. He took the coach to the town of ——, and from thence set out to walk the distance of a few miles. He found, I should tell you, on alighting, a gentleman who resided in the neighborhood, who was bound for the adjacent village. They walked together, and in conversation, this former servant, now a gentleman, with graceful manners and agreeable address, communicated the circumstance that made him leave the country abruptly many years before. As he was telling this, they came to the very wooden bridge. 'There,' said he; 'it was just here that I dropped the ring; and there is the very bit of old tree into a hole of which it fell—just there.' At the same time he put down the point of his umbrella into the hole of the knot in the tree, and drawing it up, to the astonishment of both, found the very ring on the ferrule of the umbrella."

Here also was an occurrence against which one would have previously said the chances were as one to infinity. It was a circumstance which we see to be most unlikely, yet must acknowledge to be possible, and, when well authenticated, to be true.

In the year 1765, a codfish was sold, and in its stomach was a gold ring. It had remained there so long that the inscription was worn off, although the scrolls in which it had been written remained entire.* Codfish, like sharks, swallow any thing, whether fresh or salted,

* Gentleman's Magazine, vol. xxxv. old series, p. 141.

bits of wood, red cloth, and even a whole book has been found in one. We are not aware, however, that a cod has turned "State's evidence," as it is said a shark did. A shark had swallowed a log-book, thrown overboard to him by a pirate; and afterwards repenting, took the first hook that offered, and thus turned State's evidence—so as to hang the villain by the revelation of the document.*

§ 23. Poetical riddles are but a low species of verse, and yet the best of poets have made them. We find a neat one on a ring, which, in riddle-phrase, has been said to "unite two people together and touch only one." It runs thus:

"Though small of body, it contains
The extremes of pleasure and of pains;
Has no beginning, nor no end;
More hollow than the falsest friend.
If it entraps some headless zany,
Or, in its magic circle, any
Have entered, from its sorcery
No power on earth can set them free.
At least, all human force is vain,
Or less than many hundred men.
Though endless, yet not short, nor long;
And what though it's so wondrous strong,
The veriest child, that's pleased to try,
Might carry fifty such as I."

George Herbert—"Holy Mr. Herbert," as Isaac Walton calls him—has an enigma in which a ring appears. We must confess our inability to solve it, and leave readers to do so. It is entitled—

* Article in the N. Y. Albion for 31st Dec. 1853, on Cod and Cod Fishing, 627.

"HOPE.

"I gave to Hope a watch of mine; but he
An anchor gave to me.
Then an old prayer-book I did present,
And he an optic sent.
With that, I gave a phial full of tears;
But he a few green ears.
Ah, loiterer! I'll no more, no more I'll bring:
I did expect a ring."

§ 24. Rings are sometimes misapplied. In the church of Loretto is the house in which some Catholics say the Virgin mother of Jesus was born, it having occupied a lane in Nazareth where Christ resided, and which, after a long flight of years, was transported by angels to Loretto. It must, as it stood in Nazareth, have resembled a mud cabin. Within it is a miraculous statue of the Virgin and child, in cedar wood. "The Bambino," says an authoress, "holds up his hand, as if to sport a superb diamond ring on his finger, presented to him by Cardinal Antonelli; it is a single diamond, and weighs thirty grains."*

§ 25. The scenes through which many rings are carried must be as remarkable as those exhibited in "The Adventures of a Guinea," or "of a Feather." "My Lady Rochford," writes Horace Walpole, "desired me t'other day to give her a motto for a ruby ring, which had been given by a handsome woman of quality to a fine man; he gave it to his mistress, she to Lord *****, he to my Lady; who, I think, does not deny that it has not yet finished its travels. I excused myself for some

* Lady Morgan's Italy, vol. ii. p. 419.

time, on the difficulty of reducing such a history to a poesy—at last I proposed this:

'This was given by woman to man and by man to woman.' "*

* Correspondence, vol. iii. p. 107.

It may be well for the author to so far take the part of a jeweller, as to sort his Rings before he exhibits them. We propose to speak of:

1.—*Rings connected with power.*

2.—*Rings having supposed charms and virtues, or connected with degradation and slavery, or used for sad and wicked purposes.*

3.—*Rings coupled with remarkable historical characters or circumstances.*

4.—*Rings of love, affection and friendship.*

CHAPTER TWO.

RINGS CONNECTED WITH POWER.

1. The Ring an Emblem of Power; Pharaoh; Quintus Curtius; Antiochus Epiphanes, Augustus; King of Persia, Egypt under the Ptolemies; Roman Senators; the Forefinger. 2. Rings used in Coronations; Edward the Second, Mother of Henry VIII.; Queen Elizabeth; Charles II.; Coronation Rings, Canute; Sebert; Henry II.; Childeric; Matilda, wife of William the Conqueror. 3. King withdrawing a Proceeding from the Council by the use of a Ring. 4. The Doge of Venice marrying the Adriatic. 5. The Ring of Office of the Doge. 6. *The Fisherman's Ring.* 7. Papal Ring of Pius II. 8. Investiture of Archbishops and Bishops, by delivery of a Ring; Cardinal's Ring; Extension of the two Forefingers and Thumb. 9. Serjeant's Ring. 10. Arabian Princesses. 11. Roman Knights. 12. Alderman's Thumb Ring.

§ 1. From the most ancient times, a ring has been an emblem of power.

Pharaoh put his ring upon Joseph's hand, as a mark of the power he gave him; and the people cried, "Bow the knee."*

Quintus Curtius tells us that Alexander the Great sealed the letters he wrote into Europe with his own ring seal, and those in Asia with Darius's ring; and that when Alexander gave his ring to Perdiccas, it was understood as nominating him his successor.

When Antiochus Epiphanes was at the point of death, he committed to Philip, one of his friends, his diadems, royal cloak and ring, that he might give them to his successor, young Antiochus.†

* Genesis, chap. lxi. *et seq.*

† 1 Mac. vi. 15.

Augustus, being very ill of a distemper which he thought mortal, gave his ring to Agrippa, as to a friend of the greatest integrity.

The ring given by Pharaoh to Joseph was, undoubtedly, a signet or seal-ring, and gave authority to the documents to which it was affixed; and by the delivery of it, therefore, Pharaoh delegated to Joseph the chief authority in the state.* The king of Persia, in the same way, gave his seal-ring to his successive ministers, Haman and Mordecai; and in the book of Esther,† the use of such a ring is expressly declared: "The writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's seal, may no man reverse."

That ministers or lords under the king had their rings of office, is also apparent from what occurred with the closing of the den of lions: "And a stone was brought and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel."‡

In Egypt, under the Ptolemies, the king's ring was the badge under which the country was governed. It seemed to answer to the great seal of England.§ We read that Sosibius, minister under Ptolemy Philopater, was forced, by popular clamor, to give up the king's signet ring to another. Here was a going out of a Lord John Russell, and a coming in of a Lord Palmerston.

At first, Roman Senators were not allowed to wear gold rings, unless they had been ambassadors; but, at length, the Senators and Knights were allowed the use

* Encyc. Brit., Article *Ring*. † Chap. viii. 8.
‡ Daniel vi. 17. § Egypt under the Ptolemies, by Sharp, 118.

of them ; although Acron in Horace observes they could not do it unless it were given them by the Prætor.* The people wore silver rings.

Inhabitants of the eastern world do not sign their names. They have ring-seals, in which name and title are engraven, and they make an impression with thick ink where we make our signature. To give a person, then, your seal-ring, is to give him the use of an authority and power which your own signature possesses. This explains the extraordinary anxiety about seals, as exhibited in the laws and usages of the East, and to which we have referred in a former chapter. It also illustrates Judah's anxiety about the signet which he had pledged to Tamar.

In ancient times, the forefinger was emblematical of power. Among the Hebrews, "the finger of God" denoted his power ; and it was the forefinger among the gods of Greece and Italy which wore the ring, the emblem of supremacy.†

§ 2. Rings are used in coronations. The English public records, as now extant in the Tower of London, contain no mention of any coronation proceedings before the reign of Edward the Second. The accounts of the forms observed with reference to that king being crowned, as also of Richard the Second, are the two most ancient from which the minutes of those matters can be collected on official authority.‡ However, there is

* Lib. ii. Sat. 7. † Notes and Queries, iv. 261.

‡ An Historical and Critical Enquiry into the nature of the Kingly Offices, etc., by T. C. Banks, p. 7. See also a complete account of the Ceremonies observed in the Coronation of the Kings and Queens of England, 4th edition, published by J. Roberts. Also, the entire Ceremonies of the Coronation of King Charles II., and of Queen Mary, consort of James II., as published by the Learned Heralds, Ashmole and Sandford.

enough of Saxon times left to show that the Anglo-Saxon kings used a ring in their coronation ceremonies.*

In a curious old manuscript relating to the Ancient Form of the Coronation of the Kings and Queens of England, we have this: "After the king is thus arrayed, then let the crown be placed upon the king's head by the Archbishop, and afterwards let a ring be put upon the king's hand by the Bishop."

In Leland's *Collectanea* is a circumstantial account of the coronation of the mother of Henry the Eighth. In describing the ceremonies made use of by the Archbishop: "He next blest her ring and sprinkled on it holy water."

In the ceremony of Queen Elizabeth's coronation, she was wedded to the kingdom with a ring, which she always wore, till the flesh growing over it, it was filed off a little before her decease.†

On the restoration of Charles the Second of England, measures were adopted to repair, as much as possible, the loss of the ancient regalia of the crown taken from their depository, the Jerusalem Chamber, Westminster, and broken up and sold by the Parliamentarians.‡ The new regalia was constructed by Sir Robert Vyner, the king's goldsmith. The cost of it was £21,978 9s. 11d.

In an account of the coronation of Charles II. of England,§ we have the following, which comes after a description of the robing and crowning: "Then the master of the jewel house delivered to the Archbishop the ring,

* Archæologia, (London,) iii. 390. † Biographia Britannica, Art. *Devereux*.

‡ Archæologia, vol. xxvi. (London.) Account of the Jerusalem Chamber, by A. J. Kempe, Esquire.

§ Ib. vol. xxix. pl. 2. Particulars of the Regalia of England, made for the Coronation of Charles II., by Robert Cole, Esquire.

who consecrated it after this manner, saying: Bless, O Lord, and sanctify this ring, that thy servant, wearing it, may be sealed with the ring of faith and, by the power of the Highest, be preserved from sin; and let all the blessings, which are found in Holy Scripture, plentifully descend upon him, that whatsoever he shall sanctify may be holy; and whomsoever he blesseth may be blessed. Amen.' After which he put it upon the fourth finger of the king's right hand, and said: 'Receive this ring of kingly dignity, and by it the seal of Catholic Faith, that as this day thou art adorned the head and prince of this kingdom and people, so thou mayest persevere as the author and establisher of Christianity and the Christian faith; that being rich in faith and happy in works, thou mayest reign with Him that is King of kings; to whom be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.'" Think of this imposing ceremony; and then remember the after life and the death of that royal libertine. Better for his country had he never known a British oak for safety. The living tree was dishonored when its foliage shaded him. What can be said in favor of one who squandered on his mistresses seventy thousand pounds sterling, which had been voted by Parliament for a monument to his father? And also to think of the joking excuse, that his father's grave was unknown!

In an explanation of what are called the sacred and royal habits and other ornaments wherewith monarchs of England are invested on the day of coronation, we have a description of the king's and queen's coronation rings. The king's is a plain gold ring, with a large table ruby violet, wherein a plain cross or cross of St. George is curiously enchased. The queen's coronation ring is

likewise gold, with a large table ruby set therein and sixteen other small rubies round about the ring, whereof those next to the collet are the largest, the rest diminishing proportionally.

In the account of Ancient Regalia which were destroyed and dissipated in the time of the Commonwealth in England, there is no mention of a ring.

In the year one thousand seven hundred and sixty-six, some workmen discovered a monument while repairing Winchester Cathedral, in England.* It contained the body of King Canute, and was remarkably fresh. There was a wreath around the head, several ornaments of gold and also silver bands; upon a finger was a ring, in which was set a large and remarkably fine stone; while in one of the hands was a silver penny. This silver penny was not for "the ferryman that poets write of," as was the piece of money in the mouths of the Roman knights whose passing-away bodies we have before referred to; but, although it may have been for Peter and not Charon, is it not probable that we find here a custom of Christian times springing out of heathen root? A statue of Jupiter has been turned into a Christ; and that which the Roman used for the boatman of Styx, is here meant for one who had the key of heaven.

While Henry the Second, of England, was rebuilding Westminster Abbey, the sepulchre of Sebert, king of the East Angles, was opened.† The body was dressed in royal robes, and there was a thumb-ring, in which was set a ruby of great value.

Horace Walpole, having reference to the opening of this monarch's tomb, complains, like an antiquary, of

* Archæologia, iii. 390. † Ib. 385.

the reburying the king's regalia. "They might, at least, have cut out the portraits and removed the tomb [of King Sebert] to a conspicuous situation; but though this age is grown so antiquarian, it has not gained a grain more of sense in that walk—witness, as you instance, in Mr. Grose's Legends, and in the dean and chapter reburying the crown, robes and sceptre of Edward I. There would surely have been as much piety in preserving them in their treasury, as in consigning them again to decay. I did not know that the salvation of robes and crowns depended on receiving Christian burial. At the same time, the chapter transgresses that prince's will, like all their antecessors, for he ordered his tomb to be opened every year or two years, and receive a new cere-cloth or pall; but they boast now of having inclosed him so substantially that his ashes cannot be violated again."*

When the tomb of Henry the Second, of England, was opened, it appeared that he was buried wearing a crown and royal robes, with other paraphernalia, while there was a great ring upon his finger.†

Richard the Second, of England, by his will directed that he should be buried in velvet or white satin, etc., and that, according to royal usage, a ring, with a precious stone in it, should be put upon his finger.

The body of Childeric, the first king of the Franks,‡ was discovered at Tours. It was found in royal robes, and, with other regalia, a coronation ring.

In the year one thousand five hundred and sixty-two, the Calvinists broke open the tomb of Matilda, wife to William the Conqueror, in the Abbey of Caen; and discovered her body dressed in robes of state and a gold

* Correspondence, vol. vi. p. 67. † Archæologia, iii. 392. ‡ Ib. 389.

ring, set with a sapphire, upon one of her fingers. The ring was given to the then abbess, who presented it to her father, the Baron de Conti, constable of France, when he attended Charles IX. to Caen in 1563.

§ 3. In the time of Henry VIII. of England, the king's ring was used to withdraw from the Council the power to adjudge a matter and to place it entirely in the hands of the monarch. We refer to the complaints against Cranmer, which are made use of by Shakspeare,* who has very closely followed Fox, in his Book of Martyrs.† The king sends for Cranmer, and follows up his discourse thus: "Do you not consider what an easy thing it is to procure three or four false knaves to witness against you? Think you to have better luck that way than your master Christ had? I see by it you will run headlong to your undoing, if I would suffer you. Your enemies shall not so prevail against you, for I have otherwise devised with myself to keep you out of their hands. Yet, notwithstanding, to-morrow when the council shall sit and send for you, resort unto them, and if, in charging you with this matter, they do commit you to the Tower, require of them, because you are one of them, a counsellor, that you may have your accusers brought before them without any further indurance, and use for yourself as good persuasions that way as you may devise; and if no entreaty or reasonable request will serve, then deliver unto them this my ring, (which, then, the king delivered unto the Archbishop,) and say unto them, 'If there be no remedy, my lords, but that I must needs go to the Tower, then I revoke my cause from you and appeal to the king's

* King Henry VIII., Act 5, Scenes 1, 2.

† See also Antiquitat. Britannicæ, 334, 336; Burnet, 327, *et seq.*

own person by this token unto you all;' for, (said the king then unto the Archbishop,) 'so soon as they shall see this my ring, they know it so well that they shall understand that I have reserved the whole cause into mine own hands and determination, and that I have discharged them thereof.' Anon the Archbishop was called into the council chamber, to whom was alleged as before is rehearsed. The Archbishop answered in like sort as the king had advised him; and in the end, when he perceived that no manner of persuasion or entreaty could serve, he delivered them the king's ring, revoking his cause into the king's hands. The whole council being thereat somewhat amazed, the Earl of Bedford, with a loud voice, confirming his words with a solemn oath, said, 'When you first began the matter, my lords, I told you what would become of it. Do you think that the king would suffer this man's finger to ache? Much more (I warrant you) will he defend his life against brabbling varlets. You do but cumber yourselves to hear tales and fables against him.' And incontinently upon the receipt of the king's token, they all rose and carried to the king his ring, surrendering that matter, as the order and use was, into his own hands."

§ 4. The stranger in Venice is yet shown the richly gilt galley, called *Bucentaur*, in which the Doge, from the year 1311, was accustomed to go out into the sea annually on Ascension Day, to throw a ring into the water, and thus to marry, as it were, the Adriatic, as a sign of the power of Venice over that sea.* This ceremony does not go into remote antiquity, yet the origin

* Encyc. Am., Art. *Venice*. And see Scott's Discovery of Witchcraft (1665,) p. 152.

of it is of considerable date. In the year 1177, when the Emperor Barbarossa went to humble himself before the Pope, who had taken refuge in Venice, the Pope, in testimony of the kindness he had there received, gave to the Doge a ring, and with it a right for the Venetians to call the Adriatic sea their own. He bade the Doge cast it into the sea, to wed it, as a man marries his wife; and he enjoined the citizens, by renewing this ceremony every year, to claim a dominion which they had won by their valor; for they had, with a small squadron, defeated a large fleet of the Emperor's and taken his son prisoner; and it was to regain his son that the Emperor submitted himself to the Pope.

The ceremony took place on Ascension Day. The Doge, the senators, foreign ambassadors and great numbers of the nobility, in their black robes, walked to the sea-side, where the magnificent vessel, the Bucentoro, was waiting to receive them. They then proceeded about two miles up the Laguna, and when arrived at a certain place, they all stopped. The Doge then rose from his chair of state, went to the side of the vessel and threw a gold ring into the sea, repeating the following words: "We espouse thee, O sea! as a token of our perpetual dominion over thee." At the close of this part of the ceremony, all the galleys fired their guns; and the music continued to play. On their voyage back, they stopped at a small island, where they went to church, and high mass was there celebrated. They then returned in the same order they at first set out.*

* In the Gentleman's Magazine for March, 1798, p. 184, is a minute account of this ceremony, which somewhat varies from the above: "On Ascension Day, the Doge, in a splendid barge, attended by a thousand barks and gon-

This cry of perpetual dominion over the sea, puts us in mind of the story of Canute; and knowing the present prostrate and decaying condition of Venice, truly may we say: "How are the mighty fallen." One of our frigates would make the whole maritime power of Venice tremble like the ring as it went through the waters. This ceremony was intermitted in the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety-seven.*

§ 5. The Doge of Venice had a ring of office. We find it figuring in the acts through which the Doge Foscari had to move. A noble creature was this Foscari. No Brutus ever behaved with the awful dignity which was apparent in Foscari at the period of his son's torture in his presence.†

When the Council of Ten demanded of him

> "The resignation of the Ducal ring,
> Which he had worn so long and venerably,"

he laid aside the Ducal bonnet and robes; surrendered his ring of office, and cried out:

> "There's the Ducal ring,
> And there the Ducal diadem. And so,
> The Adriatic's free to wed another."

dolas, proceeds to a particular place in the Adriatic. In order to compose the angry gulf and procure a calm, the patriarch pours into her bosom a quantity of holy water. As soon as this charm has had its effect, the Doge, with great solemnity, through an aperture near his seat, drops into her lap a gold ring, repeating these words, '*Desponsamus te, Mare, in signum veri perpetuique dominii.*' 'We espouse thee, O sea! in token of real and perpetual dominion over thee.'"

* Dictionary of Dates, Adriatic.

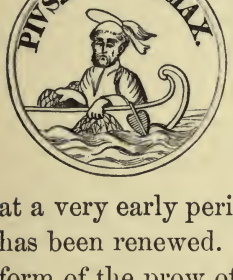
† See Smedley's Sketches of Venetian History, referred to in note [A] to Byron's Works.

The ring was broken in his presence, and as nobly as the old Doge had borne himself, whether when strangers were before him, or when his son was tortured in his presence, (as an awful punishment for the yearning of a young heart for childhood's home,) so did this great Venetian still act. He refused to leave the Ducal palace by a private way. He would descend, he said, by no other than the same giant stairs which he had mounted thirty years before. Supported by his brother, he slowly traversed them. At their foot, leaning upon his staff, for years of age were upon him, he turned towards the palace, and accompanied a last look with these parting words: "My *services* established me within your walls; it is *the malice of my enemies* which tears me from them." The bells of the Campanile told of his successor. He suppressed all outward emotion, but a blood-vessel was ruptured in the exertion and he died in a few hours.

§ 6. A Pope wears a ring of gold with a costly emerald or other precious gem set in it.

The decrees of the Romish Court consist of bulls and briefs. The latter are issued on less important occasions than the former. Briefs are written upon fine white parchment, with Latin letters; and the seal is what is called "The Fisherman's Ring." It is a steel seal, made in the fashion of a Roman signet, (*signatorius annulus.*) When a brief is written to any distinguished personage, or has relation to religious or general important matter, the impression from the Fisherman's Ring is said to be made upon a gold surface; in some other cases it appears upon lead; and these seals are generally attached by

strings of silk. Impressions of this seal are also made in ink, direct upon the substance on which the brief is written. The author has obtained a sight of an impression of the Fisherman's Ring, attached to a bull or brief in the archives of the Catholic bishopric of New-York, and liberty to copy it for publication.* The impression is in ink upon vellum or fine parchment, at the left hand of the extreme lower corner, balancing the signature at the other (lower) corner. We are not aware that a sketch has ever before been made public.



A "Fisherman's Ring" was used at a very early period; and no doubt the original device has been renewed. The reader will observe the antique form of the prow of the boat and oar, as well as the singular flying drapery attached to the head of the figure.

When a pope dies, the cardinal chamberlain or chancellor (*camerlengo*), accompanied by a large number of the high dignitaries of the Papal Court, comes into the room where the body lies; and the principal or great notary makes an attestation of the circumstance. Then the cardinal chamberlain calls out the name of the deceased pope three times, striking the body each time with a gold hammer; and as no response comes, the chief notary makes another attestation. After this, the cardinal chancellor demands the Fisherman's Ring, and certain ceremonies are performed over it; and then he strikes the ring with the golden hammer, and an officer destroys the figure of Peter by the use of a file.

* He is under obligations to the Reverend Thomas S. Preston for this.

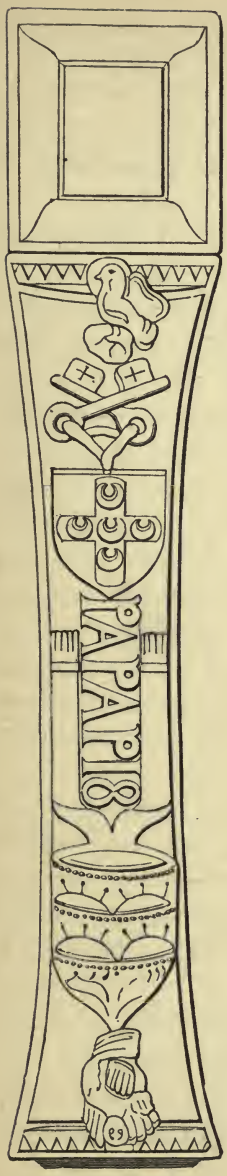
From this moment all the authority and acts of the late pope pass to the College or Conclave of Cardinals.

When a new pope is consecrated, it is always the cardinal chancellor or chamberlain who presents the renewed Fisherman's Ring; and this presentation is accompanied by imposing ceremonies.

Gavazzi, who tilts at every matter which may appear mystically Catholic, just as an excited bull runs at a red mantle, says: "The Fisherman's Ring now in use is most valuable, and would hardly square with the simplicity of Peter;"* and he remarks, in reference to the present Pope: "This man has on one of his fingers a splendid ring, composed of diamonds and pearls of great price, and this ring of $8,000 is called the Fisherman's Ring; it symbolizes the ring of poor St. Peter, which cost, perhaps, two cents." Gavazzi must be in error. A ring like that of the "Fisherman's," subject to be destroyed on the death of a pope, would not be surrounded by brilliants; and the fact that this ring is used as a signet to impress a gold or leaden surface, or even vellum, carries with it the conviction that it would not be encircled with precious stones and pearls; for, independent of the chance of injury, they would impede an impression. It is very possible that the official ring, bearing an emerald, and which a pope wears as Bishop of Rome, might be further ornamented. We have been favored with a sight of a ring used by the present Archbishop of New-York, which is composed of an extra large oblong emerald of beautiful color, surrounded by brillants. This ring is worn on the fourth finger of the right hand.

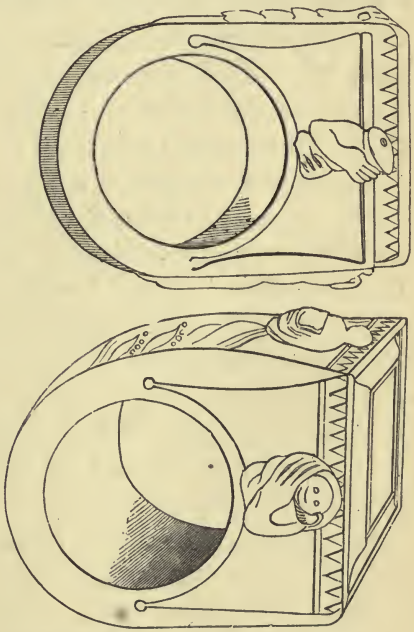
Horace Walpole refers to his friend Mr. Chute's play-

* Gavazzi's Lectures, (New-York ed.,) 185.



fully using an expression which couples itself with the fisherman's ring: "Mr. Chute has received a present of a diamond mourning ring from a cousin; he calls it *l'annello del Piscatore*. Mr. Chute, who was unmarried, meant that his cousin was *fishing* for his estate."

§ 7. There is a massive ring extant, chased with the arms of Pope Pius the Second.* It is of brass, and has been thickly gilt. It is set with a topaz, the surface of which has lost its polish.



* London Gent.'s Mag. for 1848, p. 599.

On the hoop of the ring are chased the arms of Pope Pius the Second, of the family of Picolomini, the papal tiara, and this inscription, *Papa Pio.* The stone is set in a massive square facet, carried up to a considerable height above the finger; and on each of the four sides is placed, in relief, one of the four beasts of the Revelation, which were used to typify the Evangelists. Pope Pius the Second is better known by his literary name of Æneas Sylvius. His works, which include a History of Europe, a History of Bohemia and a long series of letters, have passed through several editions. He was elected Pope in 1418, and died in 1464. This ring is considerably larger in size than the rings usually found buried with bishops, and which were probably what they received on their consecration. It must have been intended to have been worn over a glove. It seems to have been a state ring worn on one of those occasions when all Christendom came to receive his benediction.

The estates and honors which composed the ecclesiastical temporalities were considered to partake of the nature of fiefs; and, therefore, to require similar investiture from the chief lord. Charlemagne is said to have introduced this practice and to have invested a newly consecrated bishop by placing a ring and crosier in his hands.

By a Concordat at Worms, Henry V. resigned for ever all pretence to invest bishops by the ring and crosier.

§ 8. During the times of the early British kings, it was a rule for the monarch to invest archbishops and bishops, by delivery of a ring and the pastoral staff. Anselm was hurried into the presence of William Rufus,

in order to be made Archbishop of Canterbury.* He hesitated, because he was subject to Normandy, and the way in which the holy men around him acted, savors very much of a portion of the hurly-burly of a popular democratic election. When no argument could prevail, the bishops and others who were present clapped the pastoral staff into his hands, forced the ring upon his finger, shouted for his election and bore him by force into the church, where *Te Deum* was sung. This right of investiture became a serious matter of dispute in the time of Anselm.

Miracles have been attributed to Anselm. A Flemish nobleman was cured of a leprosy by drinking the water in which Anselm had washed his hands; and a ship, wherein he sailed, having a large hole in one of her planks, nevertheless took in no water so long as the holy man was on board.†

From the reign of Charlemagne, sovereign princes took upon them to give the investiture of the greater benefices by the ring and pastoral staff.‡ Gregory VII. was the first who endeavored to take from them this right, towards the end of the eleventh century.

Arnulph, immediately on his consecration as Bishop of Rochester, gave the attendant monks to understand how a dream about a ring had foretold this dignity.§ "Arnulph being received by the monks with all marks of respect, said to us, on the very day of his election: 'Brethren, I had assurance given me a few days ago that, unworthy as I am, I should soon be raised to the

* Eadmer, Histor. Nov., l. i. p. 16.
† John of Salisbury's Life of Anselm.
‡ Rapin. § William of Malmesbury.

dignity now conferred upon me. For as I slept one night, Gundulphus' (who had been Bishop of Rochester) 'appeared to me, offering me a ring of great weight; which being too heavy for me, I refused to accept it; but he, chiding me for my stupidity in rejecting his present, obliged me to receive it, and then disappeared.' This he related to us; and we were convinced it was no fantastical illusion which the holy man had seen in his sleep, since, being made Bishop of Rochester, he received that very ring, which Bishop Gundulphus, when alive, had given to Ralph, then an abbot, but afterwards bishop."

Symbols of ring, staff, mitre and gloves are not used at the present day in the consecration of archbishops and bishops of the Church of England. The delivery of the *pastoral staff* in the Roman pontificate was preceded by its consecration, and followed by the consecration and putting on of a *ring* in token of his marriage to the church; and of a *mitre*, as an helmet of strength and salvation, that his face being adorned, and his head (as it were) armed with the *horns* of both Testaments, may appear terrible to the adversaries of the truth, as also in imitation of the ornaments of Moses and Aaron; and of *gloves*, in token of clean hands and breast to be preserved by him.*

The episcopal ring, and which is thus esteemed a pledge of the spiritual marriage between the bishop and his church, was used at a remote period. The fourth Council of Toledo, held in 633, appoints that a bishop condemned by one council and found afterwards innocent by a second should be restored by giving him the ring, staff, etc.†

* Burn's Ecclesiastical Law, 209. † Encyc. Brit., Title, *Ring*.

From bishops, the custom of the ring has passed to cardinals, who are to pay a large sum for the right to use a ring as such. Perhaps this arises from the fact that cardinals and prelates do not, strictly, belong to the hierarchy.

A bishop, like a pope, receives a gold ring, set with a green gem. Sometimes an abbot of a convent is invested with a ring, but this is said only to occur when he possesses a bishop's powers.

Solid gold rings are frequently found in tombs of abbots and bishops.*

In a description of the finger-ring found in the grave of the venerable Bede, it is said, that no priest, during the reign of Catholicity in England, was buried or enshrined without his ring. This, however, has been questioned.†

High dignitaries of the Church do not appear to have restricted themselves to a single ring. On the hands of the effigy of Cardinal Beaufort in Winchester Cathedral, there are gloves fringed with gold and having an oval-shaped jewel on the back; while on the middle and third fingers of each hand are rings worn over the gloves.

In new paving and beautifying of Exeter Cathedral in England, a leaden coffin was found of a Bishop Bitton, who died in 1307.‡ Near the bones of the finger was discovered a sapphire ring set in gold, in the centre of which was engraved a hand with the two forefingers extended in the attitude of benediction.

This extension of the two forefingers, in company with the thumb, must have been often observed in Catholic

* London Gent's Mag., vol. lxxi. p. 1082.

† Notes and Queries, viii. 387. ‡ Ib. 2d vol. 4th S., 300.

pictures. We see it in the painting of the Virgin and Child in the Düsseldorf collection now in New-York.

The thumb and the first two fingers have always been reserved as symbols of the three persons of the Trinity.* When a bishop gives his blessing, he blesses with the thumb and first two fingers. Sepulchral monuments bear witness of this fact.

Both the Greek and Latin Churches agree that the thumb and first two fingers symbolize the Trinity.†

It is, however, insisted that the origin of thus using the thumb and two fingers is not of Christian, but of heathen derivation; for Apuleius mentions this practice as the usual one with orators soliciting the attention of an audience.‡ Here we see another pagan custom become a Christian one.

The hand, with the thumb and two fingers extended, is sometimes called the "hand of justice."§

Miniature hands, taking in a part of the arm, are found in Rome, which have the thumb and two forefingers extended and the remaining fingers closed. Caylus gives a drawing of one (two inches and nine lines in length) which has a serpent stretched on the back of the hand, after having surrounded the wrist, and a lizard, likewise in relief, placed upon the arm.‖ The author we have referred to cannot account for this peculiar disposition of the thumb and fingers; but he considers that the thing itself was an offering, and refers to a hole in it by which it could be suspended. But we observe that Addison, in his Remarks on Italy,¶ says: "The custom

* Notes and Queries, v. 114.
† Ib. 492.
‡ Metamorph. ii. 34.
§ Ennemoser, i. 258, *et seq.*
‖ Caylus, vi. 295, Pl. xciii.
¶ Addison, (Tickell's edit.,) v. 178.

of hanging up limbs of wax, as well as pictures, is certainly direct from the old heathens, who used, upon their recovery, to make an offering in wood, metal or clay of the part that had been afflicted with a distemper, to the deity that delivered them. I have seen, I believe, every limb of a human body figured in iron or clay which were formerly made on this occasion, among the several collections of antiquities that have been shown in Italy." This, however, does not account for the snake and the lizard, or the peculiarity of closing two fingers and elevating the others with the thumb; and we are inclined to raise a question, whether the miniature hand and arm, figured by Caylus, was not an amulet and worn as such? The position of the fingers and thumb may here denote power, or authority and control over noxious creatures. A Roman soldier going into Egypt might carry such an one.* (This custom of offering a model of the restored part, was common with the ancient Egyptians.†)

Catholics kiss the bishop's hand, or, rather, the ring which he wears in virtue of his episcopal office.

In the earliest ages bishops sealed with rings; but from the ninth century they had distinct seals.‡

* Since writing the above, we have come across *Ennemoser's History of Magic*, who refers to these hands; and while he takes up with the notion of their being votive offerings, he refers to the extended fingers to show that a cure had been effected by magnetic manipulation. In reference to one particular specimen, the author considers the hand itself to be an appropriate emblem from having performed the cure. (Vol. i. p. 255.) This, then, does away with the idea that a cure in the hand itself was effected; and if we take away the hand, the remarkable figures with which it was studded do not seem to be connected with or emblematical of any kind of disease. All this brings us nearer to our notion, that these hands were used as amulets.

† Wilkinson's Ancient Egyptians, ii. 354.

‡ Fosbroke's Encyc. of Antiquities, 246.

It is said that formerly bishops wore their rings on the forefinger of the right hand.*

When a bishop receives the ring at his consecration, the words used are: "Receive the ring, the badge of fidelity, to the end that, adorned with inviolable fidelity, you may guard, without reproach, the Spouse of God, that is, the Holy Church."

§ 9. At the English Law Bar, there is a distinction among the barristers. Those called Serjeants are of the highest and most ancient degree, and judges of the Courts of Westminster are always admitted into this venerable order before they are advanced to the Bench.

The ceremony of making a serjeant is or rather was a very imposing and expensive one. Connected with this ceremony, the serjeant had to give a great dinner, "like to the feast of a king's coronation," and which continued seven days, and he had to present gold rings, bearing some loyal motto, to every prince, duke and archbishop present, and to every earl and bishop, lord privy seal, lords chief justices, lord chief baron, every lord baron of Parliament, abbot and notable prelate, worshipful knight, master of the rolls, every justice, baron of exchequer, chamberlain, officer and clerk of the courts, each receiving a ring, convenient for his degree. And a similar token was given to friends.

These rings were delivered by some friend of the new serjeant's and who was of the standing of barrister. He was called his *colt*. Whitlock says, when the new serjeants counted, their *colts* delivered the rings.† Why

* Notes and Queries, v. 492.
† Whitlock's Memoirs, p. 356.

they are thus called is not very clear: "*colt*," according to Shakspeare, is a young foolish fellow.

In 1 *Modern Reports*, *case* 30, we have a hint of "short weight." "Seventeen serjeants being made the 14th day of November, a daye or two after Serjeant Powis, the junior of them all, coming to the King's Bench bar, Lord Chief Justice Kelynge told him that he had something to say to him, viz.: that the rings which he and the rest of the serjeants had given weighed but eighteen shillings apiece; whereas Fortescue, in his book *De Laudibus Legum Angliæ*, says, 'The rings given to the chief justices and to the chief baron ought to weigh twenty shillings apiece;' and that he spoke not this expecting a recompence, but that it might not be drawn into a precedent, and that the young gentlemen there might take notice of it."

We consider the matter about serjeants' rings sufficiently curious and interesting to allow of our adding extracts from Fortescue and Cooke:

"But this you must understand,* that when the day appointed is come, those elect persons, among other solemnities, must keep a great dinner, like to the feast of a king's coronation, which shall continue and last for the space of seven days, and none of those elect persons shall defray the charges growing to him about the costs of this solemnity with less expense than the sum of four hundred marks; so that the expenses which eight men so elect shall then bestow, will surmount to the sum of three thousand and two hundred marks, of which expenses one parcel shall be this: Every of them shall give rings of gold to the value of forty pounds sterling at the

* Fortescue de Laud. Legum Angl., cap. 50.

least; and your chancellour well remembreth, that at what time he received this state and degree, the rings which he then gave stood him in fifty pounds. For every such serjeant, at the day of his creation, useth to give unto every prince, duke and archbishop being present at that solemnity and to the Lord Chancellour and Lord Treasurer of England a ring of the value of 26*s.* 8*d.*

"And to every earl and bishop, being likewise present, and also to the lord privy seal, to both the lords chief justices, and to the lord chief baron of the King's Exchequer a ring of the value of 20*s.*

"And to every lord baron of the Parliament, and to every abbot and notable prelate and worshipful knight, being then present, and also to the master of the rolls and to every justice a ring of the value of a mark; and likewise to every baron of the exchequer, to the chamberlains and to all the officers and notable men serving in the king's courts rings of a smaller price but agreeably to their estates to whom they are given.

"Insomuch that there shall not be a clerk, especially in the Court of the Common Bench, but he shall receive a ring convenient for his degree; and, besides these, they give divers rings to other of their friends."

"And on Tuesday, May 10,* in the second week of the term, the said Sir John Walter being of the Inner Temple, Sir Henry Yelverton of Grayes Inne and Sir Thomas Trevor of the Inner Temple, with the benchers, readers and others of those Inns of Court whereof they respectively had been, being attended by the warden of the Fleet and marshall of the Exchequer, made their appearance at Serjeants Inne in Fleet street, before the

* 3 Cooke's Reports, 8.

two chief justices and all the justices of both benches. And Sir Randolph Crew, chief justice, made a short speech unto them, and (because it was intended they should not continue serjeants to practise) he acquainted them with the king's purpose of advancing them to seats of judicature, and exhorted them to demeane themselves well in their several places. Then every one in his order made his count, (and defences were made by the ancient serjeants,) and their several writs being read, their coyfs and scarlet hoods were put on them, and being arrayed in their brown-blew gownes, went into their chambers, and all the judges to their several places at Westminster, and afterward the said three serjeants, attyred in their party-coloured robes, attended with the marshall and warden of the Fleete, the servants of the said serjeants going before them, and accompanied with the benchers and others of the several Inns of Court of whose society they had been, walked unto Westminster and there placed themselves in the hall over against the Common Pleas bar.

"And the hall being full, a lane was made for them to the barre; (the justices of the Common Bench being in court) they recited three several counts, (and several defences made to several counts,) and had their writs read. The first and third by Brownlow the chief prothonotary, and the second by Goulton the second prothonotary. And Sir John Walter and Thomas Trevor gave rings to the judges with this inscription, '*Regi Legi servire libertas.*' And Sir Henry Yelverton gave rings whereof the inscription was, '*Stat Lege Corona,*' and presently after (they all standing together) returned to Serjeants Inn, where was a great feast, at which Sir

James Lee, Lord Treasurer and the Earl of Manchester, Lord President of the Council, were present."

§ 10. Arabian princesses wear golden rings on their fingers, to which little bells are suspended, so that their superior rank may be known, and they, themselves, receive, in passing, the homage due to them.*

§ 11. The insignia of honor peculiar to the Roman knights were a charger, furnished at the public expense, a golden ring and a certain place in the theatre.† The senators also wore golden rings.‡

§ 12. We read of:

"——— an agate stone
On the forefinger of an alderman ;"

but cannot discover whether an alderman in Shakspeare's time wore a ring in connection with his office. We however find this: "Grave persons, such as aldermen, used a plain broad gold ring upon the thumb." It may be that Shakspeare was not thinking of an alderman whose duties were attached to a mere city, but of the earl or *alderman* of a whole shire, to whom the government of it was intrusted. Such a person, from the authority he possessed, might have worn a ring of power in former times. The word had the same signification in general as senator. By Spelman's Glossary it appears there was anciently in England a title of *aldermannus totius Angliæ;* and that this officer was in the nature of Lord Chief Justice of England.

* Calmet's Dictionary, Art. *Bells.* † Roman Antiquities, by Foss, § 62.
‡ Ib. § 456.

It will be seen that there is an incorrectness in Mercutio, a Veronese and in Verona, referring to an alderman. Knight, in his edition of Shakspeare, sees this and proposes that we read, instead of alderman, *burgomaster*. It has been observed that in whatever country Shakspeare lays the scenes of his drama, he follows the costume of his own.*

In a portrait of Lady Ann Clifford, the celebrated Countess of Pembroke, she wears a ring upon the thumb of her right hand.

The mention of this lady will, at once, call up Ben Jonson's epitaph of the "wise, fair and good," and excuse us for quoting:

"That is a touching pillar planted on the road between Penrith and Appleby, in the year 1656, by Anne, Countess Dowager of Pembroke, to commemorate her final parting with her mother on this spot, on the second of April, 1616. The inscription declares that Anne of Pembroke gave four pounds to be annually distributed 'upon the stone hereby' amongst the poor within the parish of Brougham. Well, after forty years of troubles —and troubles that must have cost the 'pious Pembroke' many a bitter hour—it is pleasant to think of the daughter returning to consecrate it. Four pounds a year could not do much good, you may say, to the people of Brougham: but it may consecrate the spot in years of scarcity by the thanks of people sorely pressed; and the spirit of tenderness which dictated the bounty is something to think of every year."†

In a polyglot dictionary published in 1625, by John

* Brande's Popular Antiquities, (by Ellis,) 264.

† Household Words: *I Give and Bequeath.*

Minshew, under the article *Ring Finger*, it is said that rings were worn on the thumb by soldiers and doctors.

A thumb-ring would not seem to be always connected with a dignity, if it is to be judged of through its inscription or bearing. A massive thumb-ring of brass, strongly gilt, was formerly in the collection of the late Marquis of Donegal. Its motto, within side, was in quaint Latin, (*Cauda piera meleor cera*,) which may be rendered in this jingle:

When God does send,
The times shall mend.*

* London Gentleman's Magazine, vol. lxxxiii. p. 17.

CHAPTER THREE.

RINGS HAVING SUPPOSED CHARMS OR VIRTUES, AND CONNECTED WITH DEGRADATION AND SLAVERY, OR USED FOR SAD OR WICKED PURPOSES.

1. Antiquity of Amulets and Enchanted and Magical Rings; Samothracian Rings; Double Object in Amulets; Substance and Form of them. 2. Precious Stones and their Healing or Protective Powers; Jasper; Diamond; Ruby; Carbuncle; Jacinth; Amethyst; Emerald; Topaz; Agate; Sapphire; Opal; Cornelian; Chalcedony; Turquoise; Coral; Loadstone; Sweating Stones. 3. Enchanted Rings; those possessed by Execustus; Solomon's Ring; Ballads of Lambert Linkin and Hynd Horn. 4. Talismanic Ring; Elizabeth of Poland; Ring against Poison offered to Mary of Scotland; Rings from the Palace at Eltham and from Coventry; Sir Edmund Shaw; Shell Ring. 5. Medicinal Rings. 6. Magical Rings; Ariosto; Ring of Gyges; Sir Tristram; Cramp Rings; Rings to cure Convulsions, Warts, Wounds, Fits, Falling Sickness, etc.; Galvanic Rings; Headache and Plague Rings; Amulet against Storms. 7. Ordeal. 8. Punishment in time of Alfred. 9. Founding of Aix-la-Chapelle. 10. Ring on a Statue. 11. Bloody Baker. 12. The Borgia Ring. 13. Rings held in the Mouth. 14. Rings used by Thieves, Gamblers and Cheats. 15. Roman Slave.

§ 1. Rings were made use of by way of charm and talisman in remote ages.

Their potency was directed against fascination of every kind, but more particularly the evil eye, against demons and witches, to excite debility, against the power of flames, against wounds in battle and, indeed, every danger and most diseases. Nor was it the ring alone, for the supposed virtue existed also in the material or in some device or magical letter engraved upon its circumference.

Shakspeare is thinking of the fascination of the eye in "Titus Andronicus," when he makes Aaron say:*

"And faster bound to Aaron's *charming* eyes."

It has been observed that even Solomon was not exempt from the dread of the fascination of the evil eye, and reference is made to Proverbs xxiii. 6: "Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye, nor desire thou his dainty meats." A writer, however, remarks how the context clearly shows that nothing more is intended than to express the disquiet with which a niggardly person regards what another consumes at his table.† This dreaded fascination still perplexes the minds of Orientals; and is not banished from Spanish and Neapolitan superstitions. Naples is the headquarters for charms and amulets. All the learning has been collected by the Canon Jorio and the Marques Arditi.‡

We read of the Samothracian talismanic iron ring, engraved with magical characters, inclosing an herb cut at a certain time or small stones found under particular constellations.§ Samothrace is an island of the Ægean sea, opposite the Trojan territory, and celebrated for its mysteries. An initiation into those mysteries was supposed to have efficiency in preserving persons from dangers by sea.‖

It has been observed that inscribed rings, commonly called talismanic or cabalistic rings, are improperly so designated. The mixed term is much more appropriate, *annuli virtuosi*. Perhaps *mystical* might be a suitable name.

* Act 2, scene 1; and see Douce's Illustrations, 383.

† Knight's Bible. ‡ Spaniards and their Country, 66.

§ Fosbroke's Ency. of Antiquities, 247–8. ‖ Ency. Brit., Ency. Amer.

Although true "Abraxas" stones have that word engraved upon them, and most of these are as old as the third century, yet this term is now applied to gems which bear supposed talismanic emblems, although it would be most proper to call them Abraxoids.

According to Caylus, amulets were always made with a double object: to flatter the superstition of the people and serve for seals; thus holding on to the charm itself, while they were able to spread a supposed effect through impression; and this idea, he observes, is strengthened by the fact that the subjects cut upon them never appear in relief.

Philostratus says: "The Indian Brahmins carry a staff and a ring, by means of which they are able to do almost any thing." Here may be the origin of similar articles received by Christian kings and ecclesiastics as emblems of power?

Stones and conglomerated earth were mostly used for amulets.

Wherever the living man turns up the remains of past ages, superstition is shown to belong to them through the appearance of amulets; and no matter whether the subjects be Pagan or Christian—for still we find this proof of weakness. Even in our own day, men will carry these things under some creed that allows or custom which defends their use. It is a pity such persons do not feel, as they must know, that he is nearest heaven whose conduct is his talisman.

Many of the ancient amulets are in other shapes than rings; often in the form of perforated cylinders, worn round the neck; and we presume they were set in rings for convenience.

Werenfels, in his Dissertation on Superstition,* where he speaks of a superstitious man, says: "He will make use of no herbs but such as are gathered in the planetary hour. Against any sort of misfortune he will arm himself with a *ring*, to which he has fixed the benevolent aspect of the stars and the lucky hour that was just at the instant flying away, but which, by a wonderful nimbleness, he has seized and detained."

A ring, being a circle, was given to the initiated in the Eleusinian mysteries as an amulet possessed of the power to avert danger.†

We find amulets referred to in Isaiah: "In that day will the Lord take from them the ornaments of the feet-rings and the net works and the crescents, the pendents and the bracelets and the thin veils, the tires and the fetters and the zones and the perfume boxes and the *amulets*."

Fosbroke‡ says that the makers of talismanic rings generally used to have the sealing part made of a square shape; we, however, find many of an oval form.

"Amulet" with us, is *talisman* with the Arabians. The Jews were extremely superstitious in the use of them to drive away diseases; and the Mishna forbids them, unless received from an approved man who had cured at least three persons by the same means.

The use of charms and amulets to cure diseases or avert danger and mischiefs, both from the body and the fruits of the earth, was even common among ignorant and superstitious Christians: for Constantine had allowed the heathen, in the beginning of his reformation, for some time, not only to consult their augurs in public,

* P. 6. † Oliver on Masonry, 168. ‡ P. 249.

but also to use charms by way of remedy for bodily distempers, and to prevent storms of rain and hail from injuring the ripe fruits, as appears from the very law where he condemns the other sorts of magic (that tended to do mischief) to be punished with death. St. Chrysostom thundered against the use of amulets and charms, as did St. Basil and Epiphanius, which shows that this piece of superstition, of *trying to cure diseases without physic*, was deeply rooted in the hearts of many Christians.*

We here give an enlarged specimen of one of these

Bingham's Origines Ecclesiasticæ, p. 943, (Bohn's edit.)

complicated amulets—an amulet against evil, to act favorably and fortunately.*

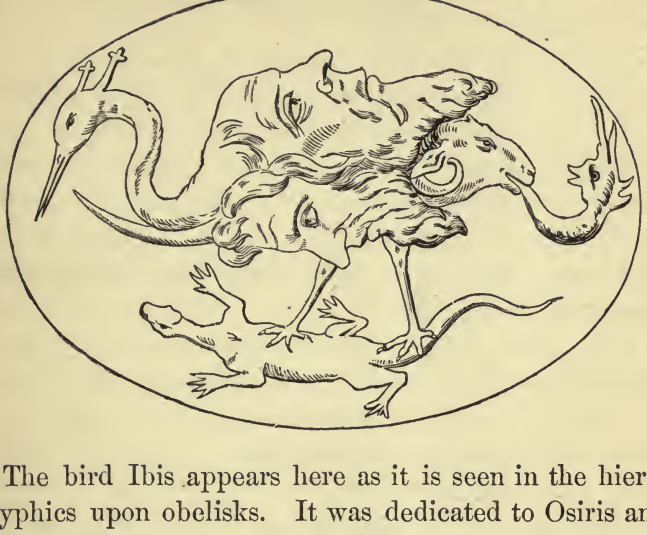
The emblems are thus made out. The hare, rustic head and head of a goat are to be considered as representing the god Pan, and to be a guard against fear and certain sudden terrors called *panics*, which were thought to be occasioned by this god.† The cornucopia (erect) is to confirm abundance and happiness. In Memphis a white cock was held to be a sacred animal. He was consecrated to the sun: according to the Egyptians, to Osiris. It was made an emblem of the soul. When Socrates hoped to be able to unite the divinity of his soul with the divinity of the greater world, he ordered a cock to be sacrificed to Æsculapius, as to the physician of souls. This animal was sacrificed to Annubis, who was the sailor's Mercury. The dolphin, fed from food thrown away by sailors, is to represent those seeming friends who swim with and follow our fortunes until they get depth of water sufficient for themselves. Here the cock, by treading upon a dolphin, with a palm branch over him, represents the power of wisdom in the soul over a feigned or evil friend.

We are inclined to present the reader with another of these remarkable combinations, which is said to be an amulet of health.‡

* Maffei, vol. ii. pl. 20, p. 42.

† "The first author of it (*general shout*) was Pan, Bacchus's Lieutenant-General in his Indian expedition, where, being encompassed in a valley with an army of enemies, far superior to them in number, he advised the god to order his men in the night to give a general shout, which so surprised the opposite army that they immediately fled from their camp; whence it came to pass that all sudden fears impressed upon men's spirits without any just reason were called by the Greeks and Romans *pannick* terrors."—*Potter's Greece*, iii. c. 8.

‡ Maffei, vol. ii. pl. 21, p. 45.



The bird Ibis appears here as it is seen in the hieroglyphics upon obelisks. It was dedicated to Osiris and Isis, good and salutary genii. This creature treads upon the crocodile, emblematical of Typhon, who was reckoned among the Egyptians as the cause of every evil. The two-headed Janus may signify the power of the sun and of Osiris from east to west in the day and in the night (although it has been questioned whether the faces are not those of Pythagoras and the magician Apollonius). The goat's head, which also appeared in the last gem, is said to be an amulet of health and intended to have power to defend against evils which malice might work, and such its power is marked by holding in its mouth a monstrous crested dragon allied to hatred and coupled with poisonous qualities and carrying a terrible appearance.

§ 2. Jasper, set in rings, took the lead of all other precious stones in its supposed healing power; and this

power was supposed to be strengthened when combined with silver in preference to gold.

Even Galen has recommended a ring with jasper set in it and engraved with the figure of a man wearing a bunch of herbs round the neck. Many of the Gnostic or Basilidian gems, evidently used for magical and talismanic purposes, were of jasper. Rings of this material, and to be used as marriage tokens, are said to be made at Wesingburg, the materials being supplied from the shores of Lake Wetter.*

Pierre de Boniface, a great alchemist and much versed in magic, who died in 1323, is the reputed author of a manuscript poem on the virtues of gems, of which the celebrated Nostradamus gives the following pretended extract:

"The diamond renders a man invincible; the agate of India or Crete, eloquent and prudent, amiable and agreeable; the amethyst resists intoxication; the cornelian appeases anger; the hyacinth provokes sleep."†

In a scarce poem, by T. Cutwode, entitled *Calthæ Poetarum*, or the Humble Bee, (1599,) the goddess Diana is introduced, modestly clothing and attiring the heroine:

> "And with an emerald hangs she on a ring,
> That keeps just reckoning of our chastitie.
> * * * * *
> And therefore, ladies, it behoves you well
> To walk full warily when stones will tell."

The ancients have had a very high esteem of the diamond, "champion of the precious stones," insomuch as

* Archæologia, xxi. 127.

† Fosbroke's Encyclopædia of Antiquities, p. 246.

they have thought it to be endued with divine virtues, and that if it were but worn in a ring or carried about a person near his heart, it would assuage the fury of his enemies and expel vain fears, preserve from swooning, drive away the vanity of dreams and terrors of the night and frustrate all the malign contagious power of poisons.

According to Josephus, the high-priest of the Israelites wore a ring on his finger of inestimable value and celestial virtue; and Aaron had one whereof the diamond, by its virtues, operated prodigious things, for it changed its vivid lustre into a dark color when the Hebrews were to be punished by death for their sins, when they were to fall by the sword it appeared of a blood-red color, while, if they were innocent, it sparkled as usual.

It is reported of the diamond that it is endued with such a faculty as that if it be in place with a loadstone, it bindeth up all its power and hindereth all its attractive virtue. Also, that if a diamond be put upon the head of a woman without her knowledge, it will make her, in her sleep, if she be faithful to her husband, to cast herself into his embraces; but if she be an adulteress, to turn away from him.

We take the above from a quaint work, by Thomas Nicols.* He goes on to say: "It hath been by the ancients esteemed powerfull for the driving away of *Lemures*, *Incubos* and *Succubos;* and for the hindring of contentions and to beget in men courage, magnanimitie and stout-heartednesse."

* A Lapidary, or the History of Pretious Stones, with cautions for the undeceiving of all those that deal with pretious stones, (1652,) p. 51.

A species of ruby, called *Balassius*, or *Palatius*,* is said to restrain fury and wrath. There is a story of this stone by Ælian.† Heraclis had cured the fractured thigh of a stork. The creature flying in a dark night by a palace where one of these stones lay flaming like a lamp, took it up and brought it to Heraclis and cast it into her bosom, as a token of the acknowledgment of the favor which it had received from her in the cure of its harm. Andreas Baccius, speaking of a rubine of his inclosed in a ring, says that on the fifth of December, 1600, he was travelling with his wife Catharina Adelmania to Studgard, and, in his travel, he observed his rubine to change its glory into obscurity, whereupon he told his wife and prognosticated that evil thereupon would ensue either to himself or her, which accordingly did; for, not many days after, his wife was taken ill with a mortal disease and died. After which, he saith, his rubine, of its own accord, did again recover its former lustre, glory, beauty and splendor. A perfectly pure deep carmine-red ruby often exceeds in price a diamond of the same size.‡ It has been written, that, if the carbuncle be worn in an amulet (or drunk) it will be good against poison and the plague, and will drive away sadness, evil thoughts, terrible dreams and evil spirits; also that it cleareth the mind and keepeth the body in safety, and that if any danger be towards it the stone will grow black and obscure, and that being past, returns to its former color again.§

The jacinth or hyacinth is said to have the faculty to

* This name occurs among the ancients, because it is the mother-dwelling or the *palace*, as it was said, in which the carbuncle or true ruby is produced and dwells.—*Kobell*, 274.

† Lib. viii. *de Hist. Animal.*

‡ Kobell.

§ Nicols' Lapidary, 56–7.

procure sleep when worn in a ring on the finger. Cardanus says he was wont to wear one to the intent to procure sleep, to which purpose "it seemed somewhat to confer, but not much." The amethyst is said, by Aristotle, to hinder the ascension of vapors; and that this is done by the stone drawing the vapors to itself and then discussing them. Andreas Baccius says that it sharpens the wit, diminishes sleep and resists poison.

The emerald is said to be at enmity with all impurity; and will break if it do but touch the skin of an adulterer. We cannot forego Nicols' description of this stone: "The emerald is a pretious stone or gemine of so excellent a viridity or spring-colour as that if a man shall look upon an emerald by a pleasant green meadow, it will be more amiable than the meadow, and overcome the meadow's glorie by the glorie of that spring of viriditie which it hath in itself. The largeness of the meadow it will overcome with the amplitude of its glory, wherewith farre above its greatnesse it doth feed the eie; and the virescencie of the meadow it will overcome with the brightnesse of its glory, which in itself seemeth to embrace the glorious viridity of many springs." It is reported of Nero that he was wont to behold the fencers and sword players through an emerald as by a *speculum* or optic glass and that for this cause the jewel is called *gemina Neronis*. According to Pausanias,* the favorite ring of Polycrates, a tyrant of Samos, contained an emerald. He was advised by Amasis, king of Egypt, to chequer his continued prosperity and enjoyments by relinquishing some of his most favorite pleasures; and he complied by throwing into the sea this most beautiful

* Paus. viii, c, 14.

of his jewels. The voluntary loss of so precious a ring affected him for some time; but a few days after, he received, as a present, a large fish, in whose belly the jewel was found.*

Albertus Magnus observes: "If you would sharpen the understanding, increase riches and foresee the future, take an emerald. For prophesying, it must be placed beneath the tongue."

The topaz is said to free men from passions and sadness of mind; and that, if it be cast into boiling water, it will suddenly "astonish it into coldness."

The agate is stated to be good against poisons. It is reported of the eagle that it doth carry this gem into her nest to secure her young from the bitings of venomous creatures. "If," says Albertus Magnus, "you would avoid all dangers and overcome all earthly things and possess a stout heart, take an agate. It causes danger and opposition to vanish and makes a man strong, agreeable and of good cheer."

The sapphire, according to St. Jerome, will procure the wearer the favor with princes and all others, pacify enemies, free him from enchantments, bonds and imprisonments and it looseth men out of prison and assuageth the wrath of God. It is reported of it that it is of so contrary a nature to poisons that if it be put into a glass with a spider or laid upon the mouth of the glass where it is, the spider will quickly die. It is said to keep men pure and, therefore, is worn by priests.‡ The Gentiles consecrated this gem to Apollo, because, in their inquiries

* The Imperial Treasury at Vienna possesses an emerald valued at £50,000.

† Nicols' Lapidary, 85.

‡ And see Kobell's Mineral Kingdom, 274.

at his oracle, if they had the presence of this gem with them, they imagined they had their answer the sooner.

The opal is said to sharpen the sight of its possessor and cloud the eyes of those who stand about him, so that they can neither see nor mind what is done before them; for this cause it is asserted to be a safe patron of thieves and thefts. Albertus Magnus says, "If you wish to become invisible, take an opal and wrap it in a bay-leaf, and it is of such virtue that it will make the by-standers blind, hence it has been called the patron of thieves." Nicols gives a glowing description of this stone.* "The *opalus* is a pretious stone which hath in it the bright fiery flame of a carbuncle, the pure refulgent purple of an amethyst, and a whole of the emerauld's spring glory or virescency, and every one of them shining with an incredible mixture and very much pleasure." It is reported of Nonius, a Roman senator, that he had rather been deprived of his country and senatorship than part with an opal which he had from Antonius.

It is asserted of the cornelian that it causeth him that weareth it to be of a cheerful heart, free from fear and nobly audacious and is a good protection against witchcraft and fascination.

"Chalcedony procureth victory to him that is the possessor of it and carrieth it about him. It is much used for signets, for it sealeth freely without any devouring of the wax."†

The report on jaspers is that they preserve men from drowning; and "divers do very superstitiously attribute much power and virtue to them if figures, images and characters be engraven upon them. The effects which

* P. 86. † Nicols.

by this means are wrought in or for any, Andreas Baccius doth attribute to the devil."*

We might presume that the ring of Gyges held the opal or the stone known as the Heliotrope or Oriental jasper; for Pliny gives the report of magicians that if this gem be anointed with the juice of the marigold, it will cause him that carrieth it to walk invisible.

The forget-me-not stone, turquoise or Turkey stone, "ceruleous like unto a serene heaven," if worn in a ring of gold will, it is said, preserve men from falls and from the bruises proceeding of them by receiving that harm into itself which otherwise would fall upon the man; yet these virtues are said not to be in the gem except it has been received as a gift. "The Turkeys," says Fenton, in his Secrete Wonders of Nature,† "doth move when there is any peril prepared to him that weareth it." Ben Jonson and Drayton refer to the same superstition. Rueus says, that he saw a *Turchoys*, which, upon the death of its master, lost all its beauty and contracted a cleft, which, a certain man afterwards buying at an under price, returned again to its former glory and beauty, as if, observes he, by a certain sense, it had perceived itself to have found a new master. The same author says of it that it doth change, grow pale and destitute of its native color if he that weareth it do, at any time, grow infirm or weak; and again, upon the recovery of its master, that it doth recover its own lovely beauty, which ariseth of the temperament of its own natural heat and becometh ceruleous like unto a serene heaven. According to the ancients, the wearing of the turquoise had a most excellent quality: it destroyed animosity

* Nicols, 130. † 1569, p. 51.

and, in particular, appeased discord between man and wife.

It is possible that Shakspeare had in his mind the seeming influence of the turquoise (as well as its value):

"*Tubal.* One of them showed me a ring, that he had of your daughter for a monkey.

"*Shylock.* Out upon her! Thou torturest me, Tubal; it was my turquoise; I had it of Leah, when I was a bachelor: I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys."

The Arabs value the turquoise chiefly for its reputed talismanic qualities; and they seek for large pieces, without particular reference to purity of color. The stones intended for amulets are usually set in small rings of plated tin.

The wearing of coral in a ring has been thought of power to "hinder the delusions of the devil, and to secure men from *Incubus* and *Succubus*."*

All remember Shakspeare's beautiful exposition of adversity:

"Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head."†

Fenton, writing in 1569, says: "There is found in heads of old and great toads a stone which they call borax or stelon: it is most commonly found in the head of a he-toad." They were not only considered specifics against poison when taken internally, but "being used in rings, gave forewarning against venom." This stone has often been sought for, but nothing has been found except accidental or perhaps morbid indurations of the

* Ib. 164. † *As You Like It*, Act 2, Sc. 1.

skull. Lupton says,* "You shall know whether the *tode-stone* be the right and perfect stone or not. Hold the stone before a tode, so that he may see it, and if it be a right and true stone, the tode will leap toward it and make as though he would snatch it. He envieth so much that man should have that stone." Nicols, in his Lapidary, observes :† "Some say this stone is found in the head of an old toad; others say that the old toad must be laid upon the cloth that is red, and it will belch it up, or otherwise not; you may give a like credit to both these reports, for as little truth is to be found in them as may possibly be. Witnesse Anselmus Boetius in *Lib.* 2, in the chapter of this stone; who saith that to try this experiment in his youth, he took an old toad and laid it upon a red cloth, and watched it a whole night to see it belch up its stone, but after his long and tedious watchful expectation, he found the old toad in the same posture to gratifie the great pangs of his whole night's restlessness.

"Some of the toads that carry this precious jewel must be very large, for Boetius says the stone is found of the bigness of an egg, sometimes brownish, sometimes reddish, sometimes yellowish, sometimes greenish." It is reported that if poison be present, the alleged stone will go into a perspiration. In connection with this sensitiveness, it may be observed that precious stones are said to sweat at the presence of poison. We are told that the jewels which King John wore did so in his last sickness. There is no doubt, however, although Shakspeare makes him cry out, "Poison'd—ill fare," that John got his death from unripe pears and new cider. His living about three

* First Book of Notable Things, 4to, vol. i.

† P. 158.

days from his attack, is a reasonable proof of not dying by poison.*

* This subject may allow us to mention what is called the "mad-stone," a supposed antidote to hydrophobia. The following is from the New-York Tribune newspaper for July 4, 1854:

THE MAD-STONE.—The reference of *The Washington Union* to the mad-stone (one of which is now in the possession of the family of the late Mr. John King Churchill, in Richmond, Va.) has drawn articles upon the subject from several of our cotemporaries. *The Petersburg Intelligencer* has been shown one, in the possession of Mr. Oliver, who resides in Petersburg, and, it is said, has several certificates of cases in which it has been successfully used for the bite of a mad dog. It is rectangular in shape, with parallel sides and polished surfaces, traversed by dark-gray and brown streaks, and about a size larger than half a Tonquay bean, except that it is not near so thick. Upon being applied to the wound of the patient, says *The Intelligencer*, it soon extracts the virus, which, it is said, may be distinctly seen in the water, into which it is repeatedly dipped during the operation. *The Portsmouth Globe* says: "We were raised—'brought up' is, perhaps, the word—in Petersburg, Va., and among our very earliest recollections is one concerning a cure from hydrophobia, made through the agency of a mad-stone. The person, whoever it was that was bit by a rabid dog, went to Williamsburg, in this State, where it was said that a mad-stone was located, and came back well, and was never troubled either with madness or its symptoms. Our next notice of the subject was when two individuals in Petersburg were bitten by mad dogs. One, we think, lived in Halifax street, and his father believing the mad-stone a humbug, refused to let his son go and try it. He was seized with the fits, after the usual medicinal agents had failed, and died in great agony. The other visited the mad-stone—still then at Williamsburg—and entirely recovered. The next case was this: We were travelling from Paineville, Amelia County, to Farmville, Prince Edward County, Va., and stopped at a blacksmith's house to get dinner. In the course of conversation, he said he had been bit by a mad dog, that had destroyed by its bite a number of cattle, sheep and hogs, and that he hastened at once to Williamsburg; that, on the way, he had suffered much from the bite, but after the application of the stone, he had got relief and suffered none since. 'That bite,' said he, laying much emphasis on the cost, '*cost* me nearly a *hundred* dollars.'

"Such is all that we remember concerning the mad-stone."

As a pendant, we give a "slip" from the Richmond (Virginia) *Penny Post* for August 12, 1854. The description, if it may be so called, of the stone referred to is remarkable: "as large as a piece of chalk," and "almost indescribable:"

In a strange old book, and from which an interesting article appears in "Household Words," it is said, the use of a ring, that has lain for a certain time in a sparrow's nest, will procure love.

"An article which we inserted in the *Penny Post* some two months ago, has elicited remarks from the press in every quarter. We know from facts in our possession, that we were '*rectus in curia*.' Mr. W. Bradly, who resides some half mile from the city, has left at our office the genuine Simon Pure mad-stone, which can be examined by the curious. We understand from Mr. Bradly that this stone has been in the Bradly family for more than one hundred years; and we are informed by gentlemen of intelligence from the counties of Orange, Green, Culpepper and Madison that they are cognizant of more than fifty cures of mad-dog bites, snake and spider bites. This is a most valuable discovery, and one which ought to be generally known. We mentioned facts some time since, with regard to Sale's mad-stone, located in Caroline County, which excited only a sneer from the press; none are so blind as those who will not see. We who write this happen to know facts connected with this matter, and we have faithfully given them. This stone is rather a curious-looking affair; it is about as large as a piece of chalk, perfectly porous, and truth to say, almost indescribable. When applied to the wound either of a snake or mad-dog bite, it will draw until all its pores are saturated, then drop off, and if placed in warm water will soon disgorge and then be ready for action again. We shall keep this stone in our office for several days for the inspection of the curious. It ought to be purchased by the city for the use of the public. We understand that Mr. Bradly will sell it for $5,000; if it saves one valuable life, it will be cheap at double that price."

In connection with this, we add a letter from the *Macon Journal and Messenger*, (August, 1854:)

A Tale for the Curious.—We received the following communication from Major J. D. Wilkes, of Dooly County. He is a highly respectable citizen, well known to us, and we feel no hesitation in assuring the public that he would make no statements which were not fully reliable.

"*Editors of the Journal and Messenger:*

"Permit me to lay before your readers a few facts which may furnish matter of speculation for the curious, but may be doubted by some or ridiculed by others. They are, nevertheless, strictly true. Some twelve years ago I went out with a party on a deer hunt, and shot down a fine buck. While dressing him, I cut up the haslet for my hounds, and in doing so, I cut out a stone of dark greenish color, about where the windpipe joins the lights. It was from an inch and a half to two inches long, and quite heavy for its size, although

§ 3. That kind of fortune-telling, called Divination, has held an empire over the mind of man from the earliest period. It was practised by the Jews, Egyptians, Chaldeans, Persians, Greeks and Romans, and is known to all modern nations.*

The species of divination by rings is called Dactylomancy.†

it appears to be porous. I have heard of such stones from old hunters, and that they possessed the faculty of extracting poison, and other medical virtues, but they were seldom found. They were called beasle or bezoar stones. I have been a frontier man and killed many a deer, but have never found another of the same kind. I laid it by more as a matter of curiosity than having any faith in its virtues.

"On the 12th ult. I had a favorite dog bitten on the nose by a large rattlesnake. The dog at once commenced reeling and fell down. I was within a few feet of him, and immediately (as the only remedy at hand) forced a chew of tobacco down his throat. I got him home very soon and dissolved some alum, but found his jaws nearly set. I forced open his mouth, and poured it down his throat. I then recollected seeing in your paper of the 5th ult. the description of a stone and its virtue in extracting poison, in possession of some family in Virginia, which stone, I presume, was similar to the one I had taken from the deer. I got a bowl of warm water and applied the stone to the place bitten, and then dropped it into the water, when I could see a dirty, dark green substance shooting out of it. This I repeated three times with a similar result. The fourth time it seemed to show that all the poison had been extracted. In less than a minute the dog got up, vomited up the tobacco, and the swelling subsided immediately. In less than two hours he was perfectly well, and eating any thing that was offered him.

"Now I will not decide which of the three remedies—the tobacco, the alum or the stone—cured the dog; but from the fact that he was immediately cured on the application of the stone, should reasonably weigh in favor of that remedy. In the article published in your paper it is remarked that 'We are not aware that the existence of such is known to the scientific world at all,' and it is spoken of as its origin being a mystery, and wholly unknown. Now, will not the above facts reveal the mystery of their origin? I have now several highly respectable neighbors who were with me when I obtained the stone. I live about nine miles east of Montezuma, in Dooly County, where it may be seen or the use of it obtained, by any one who may need it.

"J. D. WILKES."

* Popular Delusions, ii. 298, 301; Harwood.

† Brande, iii. 329.

Scott, in his work on Demonology,* observes, that in the now dishonored science of astrology, its professors pretended to have correspondence with the various spirits of the elements on the principles of the Rosicrusian philosophy. They affirmed they could bind to their service and imprison in a ring some fairy, sylph, or salamander and compel it to appear when called and render answers to such questions as the viewer should propose. It is remarkable that the sage himself did not pretend to see the spirit; but the task of reviewer or reader was intrusted to a third party, a boy or girl usually under the years of puberty.

As to divination by means of a ring, in the first place the ring was to be consecrated with a great deal of mystery: "the person holding it was clad in linen garments to the very shoes, his head shaven all round, and he held the vervein plant in his hand," while, before he proceeded on any thing, the gods were first to be appeased by a formulary of prayers, etc. The divination was performed by holding the ring suspended by a fine thread over a round table, on the edge of which were made a number of marks, with the twenty-four letters of the alphabet. The ring, in shaking or vibrating over the table, stops over certain of the letters, which, being joined together, compose the required answer.†

Clemente Alexandrino speaks of enchanted rings which predicted future events—such were two possessed by Execustus, the tyrant of Phocis, who was able, by striking them together, to know, by the sound, what he ought to do and what was to happen to him. He was,

* P. 295.

† Ennemoser's History of Magic, ii. 456, referring to the 29th book of Ammianus Marcellinus.

however, killed through treason. The magnificent rings had been able to tell the time of his death, but they could not point out the means of avoiding it.

Arabian writers make much mention of the magic ring of Solomon.* It is said to have been found in the belly of a fish; and many fictions have been created about it. The Arabians have a book called *Scalcuthal* expressly on the subject of magic rings; and they trace this ring of Solomon's, in a regular succession, from Jared the father of Enoch to Solomon.† Josephus,‡ after extolling the wisdom and acquirements of Solomon, and assuring us that God had enabled him to expel demons by a method remaining of great force to the days of the historian, says:

"I have seen a certain man of my own country whose name was Eleazar, releasing people that were demoniacal, in the presence of Vespasian, his sons and his captains and the whole multitude of his soldiers. The manner of the case was this: he put a *ring*, that had a part of one of those roots mentioned by Solomon, to the nostrils of the demoniac; after which, he drew out the demon through his nostrils; and when the man fell down, immediately he adjured him to return unto him no more, making still mention of Solomon and reciting the incantations which he composed.

* Archæologia, xxi. 124.

† Solomon's wisdom and happiness have become proverbial; and the fable of the rabbins and the heroic and erotic poems of the Persians and Arabians speak of him, as the romantic traditions of the Normans and Britons do of King Arthur, as a fabulous monarch, whose natural science, (mentioned even in the Bible,) whose wise sayings and dark riddles, whose power and magnificence are attributed to magic. According to these fictions Solomon's ring was the talisman of his wisdom and power.—Ency. Amer., Art. *Solomon.*

‡ Johnston's Josephus, Book viii. ch. 2.

"And when Eleazar would persuade and demonstrate to the spectators that he had such a power, he set a little way off a cup or basin full of water, and commanded the demon, as he went out of the man, to overturn it, and thereby to let the spectators know that he had left the man; and when this was done, the skill and wisdom of Solomon was shown very manifestly."

In the popular old ballad of *Lambert Linkin*,* rings give proof of a terrible coming event by bursting upon the fingers:

* * * *

"The Lord sat in England
A drinking the wine.

"I wish a' may be weel
Wi' my lady at hame;
For the rings o' my fingers
They're now burst in twain.

"He saddled his horse,
And he came riding down;
But as soon as he viewed,
Belinkin came in.

"He had na weel stepped
Twa steps up the stair,
Till he saw his pretty young son
Lying dead on the floor.

"He had na weel stepped
Other twa up the stair,
Till he saw his pretty lady
Lying dead in despair.

* Motherwell's Minstrelsy, vol. ii. p. 164, (Ticknor's edit.) In Chambers's Collection of Scotch Ballads, this story goes under the name of *Lammilsin.*

"He hanged Belinkin
Out over the gate;
And he burnt the fause nurice,
Being under the grate."

We would refer our reader to a beautiful Syrian legend in the "Household Words,"* in which a ring is made to play an interesting part upon the fingers of a maiden, who is able to know of the good or ill fortune and faith of her absent lover through its changes. He, in giving it, had informed her: "If good fortune is with me, it will retain its brightness; if evil, dim. If I cease to love, and the grave opens for me, it will become black." Fitful changes then come and go upon the ring, as the light and shadow of life accompany the roving lover.

There is a like notion in the ancient Scotch ballad of *Hynd Horn*:†

"And she gave to me a gay gold ring,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
With three shining diamonds set therein,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.
* * * *

"What if these diamonds lose their hue,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan,
Just when my love begins for to rew,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

"For when your ring turns pale and wan,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan,
Then I'm in love with another man,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.
* * * *

* Vol. ix. p. 233. † Motherwell's Minstrelsy, vol. i. p. 187.

"Seven long years he has been on the sea,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
And Hynd Horn has looked how his ring may be,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

"But when he looked this ring upon,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan,
The shining diamonds were both pale and wan,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

"Oh! the ring it was both black and blue,
With a hey lillelu and a how lo lan;
And she's either dead or she's married,
And the birk and the brume blooms bonnie.

"He's left the seas and he's come to the land," etc.

John Sterling, whose life has been written by the Rev. Julius Charles Hare, composed a fiction which is worked up through a supposed talismanic Onyx Ring. The hero had been reading an old book on necromancy; it caused him to long to change his lot; he appears to be able to do this, through the appearance or apparition of an old man. "Would you," says this figure, in a sweet but melancholy voice, "in truth accept the power of exchanging your own personal existence at pleasure for that of other men?" After a moment's pause, he answered boldly, "Yes." "I can bestow the power, but only on these conditions. You will be able to assume a new part in life once in each week. For the one hour after midnight on each Saturday, that is, for the first hour of the new week, you will remember all you have been and whatever characters you may have chosen for yourself. At the end of the hour you may make a new choice; but, if then deferred, it will again be a week before the opportunity will recur. You will also be in-

capable of revealing to any one the power you are gifted with. And if you once resume your present being, you will never again be able to cast it off. If, on these terms, you agree to my proposal, take this ring and wear it on the forefinger of your right hand. It bears the head of the famous Apollonius of Tyana. If you breathe on it at the appointed hour, you will immediately become any person you may desire to be," etc. The hero hesitates and says, "Before I assent to your offer, tell me whether you would think me wise to do so." "Young man, were I to choose again, my choice would be to fill the station where nature brought me forth and where God, therefore, doubtless, designed me to work." The ring is taken; it is supposed to be at a time when this same hero is in a suspense of love, and he appears successively to take the form of those who are around the maiden of his affections. All this, in fact, is imagined by him while in sickness. He secures his lady love; and sees upon her finger an onyx ring like the one which had appeared to have allowed of his visionary changes. She held up her hand before his face, which his first impulse was to kiss; but he saw that on one of the fingers was an onyx ring. "How on earth did you come by that? It has haunted me as if a magic Ariel were fused amid the gold or imprisoned in the stone." "I will tell you." And then the lady, somewhat lamely for the story, informs him how she came into possession of it. The author acted cleverly in coupling Apollonius with this ring: for he is reputed to have been a most potent magician; not only miracles have been imputed to him, but one writer dares to rank him above Jesus in superhuman powers.

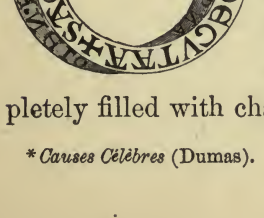
§ 4. Crowned heads have believed in amulets.

When Elizabeth of Poland could not induce her son Andrea to leave his lustful wife of sixteen, Joan of Naples, and he was determined to be and act the King of Sicily and Jerusalem, she drew from her finger a richly chased ring, took Andrea aside, placed it upon his finger, and, clasping him in her arms, "My son," she said, in a trembling voice, "since you refuse to accompany me, here is a talisman which I never make use of but in the last extremity. While you retain this ring upon your finger, neither steel nor poison can injure you." "You see, then, my mother," answered the prince, smiling, "thus protected, you have no reason to fear for my life." "There are other deaths besides those by poison or steel," replied the queen, sighing. When the course pursued by Andrea had determined Joan that he should be killed, her paramour Bertrand d'Artois told her of the talisman. "Nevertheless, he dies," cried Joan. The next day, and in the castle of Aversa, this Queen of Naples was working, with her delicate hands, *a rope of silk and gold.*

When conspirators flew upon him, they attempted to strangle him with their hands, for it was supposed he could not be slain by steel or poison, owing to the amulet which his mother had given him. Struggles and terror were about to allow of his escape, when Bertrand d'Artois seized the prince round the body and, after a desperate resistance, felled him to the ground; then dragging him by the hair of the head to a balcony which looked out upon the gardens and placing his knee upon his victim's breast, "This way, barons!" he cried; "I have got something to strangle him with!" and, after

a desperate struggle, he succeeded in passing *a rope of silk and gold* round the unfortunate man's neck. When strangled, his body was cast over the balcony. Charles of Duras was the mainspring of this tragedy; and he afterwards died on the same spot, and was thrown over the same balcony. Years after and while Joan was a prisoner in the castle of Aversa, two Hungarian barons, in complete armor, presented themselves before her, making a sign that she should follow them. She rose and obeyed in silence; but a dismal cry burst from her when she recognized the place where Andrea and Charles of Duras had each died a violent death. Recovering herself, however, she inquired, in a calm voice, why they had brought her to that place. One of the barons showed her *a rope of silk and gold.* "Let God's justice be accomplished!" cried Joan, falling on her knees. And in a few minutes she had ceased to suffer. This was the third corse that was thrown over the balcony of Aversa.*

Patrick, Lord Ruthven, a man suspected of occult practices and who had been appointed of the privy council of Mary, Queen of Scots, offered her a ring to preserve her from the effects of poison.†



Amulet rings have been used by persons calling themselves Christians even in, comparatively, late times. Caylus gives one covered with letters of the twelfth century. The body of the ring is simple and square; each of its surfaces is completely filled with characters, skilfully engraved.

* *Causes Célèbres* (Dumas). † Strickland's Queens of Scotland, iii. 319.

The words are barbarous and the whole is senseless—the name of Jesus Christ abbreviated with the words Alpha, Adonai and Agla and the cross repeated appear here as they frequently do upon amulets. At the end of the lines, two Arabic characters are distinctly marked 7. I. These sort of characters did not pass, according to common opinion, from Africa to Spain until the tenth century; and it was through Spain that they were communicated to other parts of Europe. Rings of the shape of this one and for similar use often inclosed sprigs of some herb or hair or other light substance. The present one, however, is said to be solid and does not contain any foreign matter.

A gold ring has been found in the palace at Eltham in Kent, England.* It is set with an oriental ruby and five diamonds, placed at equal distances round the exterior. The interior is plain, but on the sides is this inscription :

Qui me portera exploitera
Et a grand joye revendra.

or,

Who wears me shall perform exploits ;
And with great joy shall return.

From these lines it is evident that the ring has been worn as an amulet; and there is a very probable conjecture that it may have been presented to some distinguished personage when he was on the point of setting out for the Holy Land, in the time of the Crusades. The inscription is in small Gothic letters, but remarkably well formed and legible. The shape of the ruby, which is the principal stone, is an irregular oval, while the

* Archæologia, xix. 411.

diamonds are all of a triangular form and in their native or crystallized state.

A ring of gold was found at Coventry in England. It is evidently an amulet. The centre device represents Christ rising from the sepulchre, and in the background are shown the hammer, sponge and other emblems of his passion. On the left is figured the *wound of the side*, with the following legend: "*The well of everlasting lyffe.*" In the next compartment two small wounds, with "*The well of comfort*," "*The well of grace;*" and afterwards, two other wounds, with the legends of "*The well of pity*," "*The well of merci.*" On the inside is an inscription in Latin which embraces the amulet, having reference to the three kings of Cologne.*

Sir Edmund Shaw, goldsmith and alderman of London, directed by his will *circa* 1487, to be made "16 Rings of fyne Gold, to be graven with the well of pitie, the well of mercie and the well of everlasting life."

Benvenuto Cellini mentions that, about the time of his writing, certain vases were discovered, which appeared to be antique urns filled with ashes. Amongst them were iron rings inlaid with gold, in each of which was set a diminutive shell. Learned antiquaries, upon investigating the nature of these rings, declared their opinion that they were worn as charms by those who desired to behave with steadiness and resolution either in prosperous or adverse fortune.† (By way of parenthesis: This dare-devil man of fine taste, Cellini, having finished a beautiful medal for the Duke of Ferrara, the patron of Tasso, the magnificent Alfonso sent him a diamond ring,

* Archæologia, xviii. 306.

† Egyptian rings in the form of a shell are not uncommon.

with an elegant compliment. But the ring was really not a valuable one. The Duke threw the mistake upon his treasurer, whom he affected to punish, and sent Cellini another ring; but even this was not worth one quarter of the sum he owed him. He accompanied it with a significant letter, in which he ordered him not to leave Ferrara. The artist, however, ran away as fast as his legs would carry him, and was soon delighted to find he was beyond the fury of the "Magnifico Alfonso.")

§ 5. Ancient physicians carried signets or rings, frequently wearing them upon the thumb, upon which were engraved their own names, sometimes written backwards, or the denominations of the nostrums they vended. With regard to one of these seals, we find the word *aromatica* from *aromaticum*, on another *melina*, abbreviation of *melinum*, a collyrium prepared with the alum of the island of Melos.* A seal of this kind is described by Tochon d'Annecy bearing the words *psoricum crocodem*, an inscription that has puzzled medical antiquaries.

It has been suggested that the use of talismanic rings as charms against diseases may have originated in the phylacteries or preservative scrolls of the Jews, although it is easy to imagine that, in the earliest days of medicine, the operator, after binding up a wound, would mutter "thrilling words" in incantation over it, which, in process of time, might be, as it were, *embodied* and perpetuated in the form of an inscription, the ring, in some degree, representing a bandage.† It appears to

* Milligen's Curiosities of Medical Experience, ii. 137.
† Archæologia, xxi. 25.

us this is much further from fact than that a barber's pole represents an arm with a bandage.

Amulet rings for medicinal purposes were greatly in fashion with empyrics and ancient physicians.*

In Lucian's Philopseudes, one of the interlocutors in a dialogue says that since an Arabian had presented him with a ring of iron taken from the gallows, together with a charm constructed of certain hard words, he had ceased to be afraid of the demoniacs who had been healed by a Syrian in Palestine.

In another dialogue, a man desires that Mercury should bestow a ring on him to insure perpetual health and preservation from all danger.

These rings were to be worn upon the fourth or medical finger.

Marcellus, a physician who lived in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, directs the patient who is afflicted with a pain in the side to wear a ring of pure gold inscribed with some Greek letters on a Thursday at the decrease of the moon. It is to be worn on the right side, if the pain be on the left; and *vice versâ*.

Trallian, another physician who lived in the fourth century, cured the colic and all bilious complaints by means of an octangular ring of iron, upon which eight words were to be engraven, commanding the bile to take possession of a lark. A magic diagram was to be added, which he has not failed to preserve for the certain advantage of his readers. He tells us that he had had great experience in this remedy and considered it as extremely foolish to omit recording so valuable a treasure; but he particularly enjoins the keeping it a secret from

* Archæologla, xxi. 121.

the profane vulgar, according to an admonition of Hippocrates that sacred things are for sacred purposes only. The same physician, in order to cure the stone, directs the wearing a copper ring, with the figure of a lion, a crescent and a star to be placed on the fourth finger; and for the colic, in general, a ring with Hercules strangling the Nemean lion.

In the Plutus of Aristophanes, to a threat on the part of the sycophant, the just man replies that he cares nothing for him, as he has got a ring which he bought of a person, whom the scholiast conceives to have been an apothecary, who sold medicated rings against the influence of demons, serpents, etc. Carion, the servant, sarcastically observes that this ring will not prevail against the bite of a sycophant.*

As to medicinal rings, Joannes Nicolaus, a German professor, has most unceremoniously ascribed the power of all these medical charms to the influence of the devil, who, he says, by these means, has attracted many thousands of human beings into his dominions.†

Lucati has attributed the modern want of virtue in medicated rings to their comparative smallness, contending that the larger the ring or the gem contained in it, the greater the medium power, especially with those persons whose flesh is of a tender and penetrable nature.

Lord Chancellor Hatton sent to Queen Elizabeth a ring against infectious air, "to be worn," as the old courtier expresses it, "betwixt the sweet dugs" of her bosom.

Ennemoser, in his History of Magic, a work made more visionary by the unsatisfactory additions of the Howitts, gravely speaks of coming events manifested

* Plut., Act 4, § 3. † Archæologia, xxi. 122.

in diseases. We have a betrothal ring in the following extract:*

"In the St. Vitus's dance, patients often experience divinatory visions of a fugitive nature, either referring to themselves or to others and occasionally in symbolic words. In the 'Leaves from Prevorst,' such symbolic somnambulism is related, and I myself have observed a very similar case: Miss v. Brand, during a violent paroxysm of St. Vitus's dance, suddenly saw a black evil-boding crow fly into the room, from which, she said, she was unable to protect herself, as it unceasingly flew round her as if it wished to make some communication. This appearance was of daily occurrence with the paroxysm for eight days afterwards. On the ninth, when the attacks had become less violent, the vision commenced with the appearance of a white dove, which carried a letter containing a betrothal ring in its beak; shortly afterwards the crow flew in with a black-sealed letter. The next morning the post brought a letter with betrothal cards from a cousin; and a few hours after, the news was received of the death of her aunt in Lohburg, of whose illness she was ignorant. Of both these letters, which two different posts brought in on the same day, Miss v. Brand could not possibly have known any thing. The change of birds and their colors, during her recovery and before the announcement of agreeable or sorrowful news, the symbols of the ring and the black seal, exhibit, in this vision, a particularly pure expression of the soul as well as a correct view into the future."

§ 6. Some of the finest scenes in Ariosto are brought

* Vol. i. p. 76.

out through a magic ring. When it was worn on the finger, it preserved from spell; and carried in the mouth, concealed the possessor from view. Thus, in the Orlando Furioso, where Ruggiero had Angelica in the lone forest and secure from sight, she discovers the magic ring upon her finger which her father had given her when she first entered Christendom and which had delivered her from many dangers.

> "Now that she this upon her hand surveys,
> She is so full of pleasure and surprise,
> She doubts it is a dream and, in amaze,
> Hardly believes her very hand and eyes.
> Then softly to her mouth the hoop conveys,
> And, quicker than the flash which cleaves the skies,
> From bold Rogero's sight her beauty shrouds,
> As disappears the sun concealed in clouds."*

The ring of Gyges is taken notice of both by Plato and Tully. This Gyges was the master shepherd to King Candaules. As he was wandering over the plains of Lydia, he saw a great chasm in the earth and had the curiosity to enter it. After having descended pretty far into it, he found the statue of a horse in brass, with doors in the sides of it. Upon opening of them, he found the body of a dead man, bigger than ordinary, with a ring upon his finger, which he took off and put it upon his own. The virtues of it were much greater than he at first imagined; for, upon his going into the assembly of the shepherds, he observed that he was invisible when he turned the stone of the ring within the palm of his hand and visible when he turned it towards

* Canto xi. v. 6, (Rose's translation;) and see Hunt's Stories from the Italian Poets.

his company. By means of this ring he gained admission into the most retired parts of the court; and made such use of those opportunities that he at length became King of Lydia. The gigantic dead body to whom this ring belonged was said to have been an ancient Brahmin, who, in his time, was chief of that sect.

Addison, in one of his Tatlers,* playfully declares he is in possession of this ring and leads his reader through different scenes, commencing thus: "About a week ago, not being able to sleep, I got up and put on my magical ring and, with a thought, transported myself into a chamber where I saw a light. I found it inhabited by a celebrated beauty, though she is of that species of women which we call a slattern. Her head-dress and one of her shoes lay upon a chair, her petticoat in one corner of the room and her girdle, that had a copy of verses made upon it but the day before, with her thread stocking, in the middle of the floor. I was so foolishly officious that I could not forbear gathering up her clothes together to lay them upon the chair that stood by her bedside, when, to my great surprise, after a little muttering, she cried out, "What do you want? Let my petticoat alone."

To have the ring of Gyges is used proverbially sometimes of wicked, sometimes of fickle, sometimes of prosperous people who obtain all they want. It is alluded to in Beaumont and Fletcher's Fair Maid of the Inn:

> "——— Have you Gyges' ring,
> Or the herb that gives invisibility?"

The Welsh Sir Tristram is described as having had, from his mother, a mystical ring, the insignia of a Druid.

* No. 243.

Let us now look particularly at the subject of cramp rings.

St. Edward, who died on the fifth of January, 1066, gave a ring which he wore to the Bishop of Westminster. The origin of it is surrounded with much mystery. A pilgrim is said to have brought it to the king and to have informed him that St. John the Evangelist had made known to the donor that the king's decease was at hand.* This "*St. Edward's Ring*," as it was called, was kept for some time at Westminster Abbey as a relic of the saint, and was applied for the cure of the falling sickness or epilepsy and for the cramp. From this arose the custom of the English kings, who were believed to have inherited St. Edward's powers of cure, solemnly blessing every year rings for distribution.

Good Friday was the day appointed for the blessing of rings. They were often called "medycinable rings," and were made both of gold and silver, and the metal was composed of what formed the king's offering to the Cross on Good Friday.

The prayers used at the ceremony of blessing the rings on Good Friday are published in Waldron's Literary Museum; and also in Pegge's *Curiatia Miscellanea*, Appendix, No. iv. p. 164.

Cardinal Wiseman is in possession of a MS. containing the ceremony of blessing cramp rings. It belonged to the English Queen Mary. At the commencement of the MS. are emblazoned the arms of Philip and Mary, around which are the badges of York and Lancaster and the whole is inclosed within a frame of fruit and flowers.

* See, however, Hospinian, referred to by Brande, vol. i. p. 151. As to Edward the Confessor's curing the *struma*, see Archæologia, i. 162.

The first ceremony is headed: "Certain Prayers to be used by the Queen's Leigues in the Consecration of the Crampe Rynges." Accompanying it is an illumination representing the queen kneeling, with a dish—containing the rings to be blessed—on each side of her; and another exhibits her touching for the evil a boy on his knees before her, introduced by the clerk of the closet; his right shoulder is bared and the queen appears to be rubbing it with her hand. The author of the present work caused an application to be made for leave to take a copy of this illumination, so that his readers might have the benefit of it: the secretary of the Cardinal refused.

In a medical treatise, written in the fourteenth century,* there is what is called the *medicine* against the cramp; and modernizing the language, it runs thus: "For the Cramp. Take and cause to be gathered on Good Friday, at 5 Parish Churches, 5 of the first pennies that is offered at the cross, of each Church the first penny; then take them all and go before the cross and say 5 paternosters to the worship of the 5 wounds and bear them on the 5 days, and say each day all much in the same way; and then cause to be made a ring thereof without allou of other metal and write within it Jasper, Batasar, Altrapa" (these are blundered forms of the three kings of Cologne) "and write without Jh'es Nazarenus; and then take it from the goldsmith upon a Friday and say 5 paternosters as thou did before and use it always afterward."

Lord Berners, the translator of Froissart, when at the

* London Gent.'s Magazine, vol. i., N. S., p. 49, referring to MS. Arundel. 275, fol. 23 *b*.

court of the Emperor Charles the Fifth as ambassador from Henry the Eighth, in a letter dated 21st June, 1518, writes to Cardinal Wolsey: "If your Grace remember me with some crampe rynges, ye shall do a thing much looked for and I trust to bestow thaym well, with Godd's grace."*

A letter from Dr. Magnus to Cardinal Wolsey, written in 1526,† contains the following: "Pleas it your Grace to wete that M. Wiat of his goodness sent unto me for a present certaine cramp ringges, which I distributed and gave to sondery myne acquaintaunce at Edinburghe, amonges other to Mr. Adame Otterbourne, who, with oone of thayme, releved a mann lying in the falling sekeness, in the sight of myche people; sethenne whiche tyme many requestes have been made unto me for cramp Ringges at my departing there and also sethenne my comyng from thennes. May it pleas your Grace, therefore, to show your gracious pleasure to the said M. Wyat that some Ringges may be kept and sent into Scottelande; which, after my poore oppynyoun, shulde be a good dede, remembering the power and operacion of thaym is knowne and proved in Edinburgh and that they be greatly required for the same cause by grete personnages and others."

The mode of hallowing rings to cure the cramp is found in what is entitled an "Auncient Ordre for the hallowing of Cramp Rings," etc. It is amusing to read of the degrading course which king, queen, ladies and gentlemen had to take, each one creeping along a carpet to a cross. The account runs thus: "Firste, the

*Ib. 50, referring to MS. Harl. 295, fol. 119 *b*, cited by Ellis, i. 129.

†Ib, referring to MS, Cott. Calig. B. II. fol. 112.

King to come to the Chappell or clossett, with the lords and noblemen wayting upon him, without any sword borne before hime of that day, and ther to tarrie in his travers until the Bishope and the Deane have brought in the Crucifixe out of the vestrie and laid it upon the cushion before the highe alter. And then the usher to lay a carpet for the Kinge to creepe to the crosse upon. And that done, there shall be a forme set upon the carpett before the crucifix and a cushion laid upon it for the Kinge to kneel upon. And the Master of the Jewell house ther to be ready with the crampe rings in a bason of silver and the Kinge to kneel upon the cushion before the forme. And then the Clerke of the Closett be readie with the booke concerninge the halowinge of the crampe rings, and the aumer must kneele on the right hand of the Kinge, holdinge the sayd booke. When that is done, the Kinge shall rise and go to the alter, weare a Gent. Usher shall be redie with a cushion for the Kinge to kneele upon; and then the greatest Lords that shall be ther to take the bason with the rings and beare them after the King to offer. And thus done, the Queene shall come down out of her closett or traverss into the Chappell with ladyes and gentlewomen waiting upon her and creepe to crosse, and then go agayne to her clossett or traverse. And then the ladyes to creepe to the crosse likewise, and the Lords and Noblemen likewise."

In 1536, when the convocation under Henry the Eighth abolished some of the old superstitious practices, this of creeping to the cross on Good Friday, etc., was ordered to be retained as a laudable and edifying custom.*

* London Gent.'s Magazine.

Even in the dark ages of superstition, the ancient British kings do not seem to have affected to cure the king's evil or *scrofula*. This gift was left to be claimed by the Stuarts. The Plantagenets were content to cure the cramp.

In our own time we find three young men in England subscribing sixpence each to be moulded into a ring for a young woman afflicted with the cramp.

In Berkshire, England, there is a popular superstition that a ring made from a piece of silver collected at the Communion is a cure for convulsions and fits of every kind.* Another curious British superstition, by way of charm, is recorded: that a silver ring will cure fits if it be made of five sixpences, collected from five different bachelors, to be conveyed by the hand of a bachelor to a smith that is a bachelor. None of the persons who give the sixpences are to know for what purpose or to whom they gave them. While, in Devonshire, there is a notion that the king's evil can be cured by wearing a ring made of three nails or screws which have been used to fasten a coffin that has been dug out of the churchyard.

There is a medical charm in Ireland to cure warts. A wedding-ring is procured and the wart touched or pricked with a gooseberry thorn through the ring.†

A wedding-ring rubbed upon that little abscess called a sty, which is frequently seen on the tarsi of the eyes, is said to remove it.‡ In Somersetshire, England, there is a superstition that the ring-finger, stroked along any

* Brande's Pop. Ant. iii. 300, referring to Gent. Mag. for 1794, p. 433, 648. Ib. 598, 889.

† Notes and Queries, i. 349. ‡ Ennemoser's History of Magic, ii. 488.

sore or wound, will soon heal it. All the other fingers are said to be poisonous, especially the forefinger.* In Suffolk, England, nine young men of a parish subscribed a crooked sixpence each to be moulded into a ring for a young woman afflicted with fits. The clergy in that country are not unfrequently asked for sacramental silver to make rings of, to cure falling sickness; and it is thought cruel to refuse.† There is a singular custom prevailing in some parts of Northamptonshire and probably there are other places where a similar practice exists. If a female is afflicted with fits, nine pieces of silver money and nine three-halfpennies are collected from nine bachelors. The silver money is converted into a ring to be worn by the affiicted person and the three-halfpennies (*i. e.* 13½d.) are paid to the maker of the ring, an inadequate remuneration for his labor but which he good-naturedly accepts. If the afflicted person be a male, the contributions are levied upon females.‡ In Norfolk a ring was made from nine sixpences freely given by persons of the opposite sex and it was considered a charm against epilepsy. "I have seen," says a correspondent in *Notes and Queries*,§ "nine sixpences brought to a silversmith, with a request that he would make them into a ring; but 13½d. was not tendered to him for making nor do I think that any three-halfpennies are collected for payment. After the patient had left the shop, the silversmith informed me that such requests were of frequent occurrence and that he supplied the patients with thick silver rings, but never took the trouble to manufacture them from the sixpences."

* Notes and Queries, vii. 153.
† Archæologia, xxi. 25.
‡ Notes and Queries, vii. 146.
§ Ib. 216.

Brande, in his *Popular Antiquities*,* says: "A boy, diseased, was recommended by some village crone to have recourse to an alleged remedy, which has actually, in the enlightened days of the nineteenth century, been put in force. He was to obtain thirty pennies from thirty different persons, without telling them why or wherefore the sum was asked; after receiving them, to get them exchanged for a half-crown of sacrament money, which was to be fashioned into a ring and worn by the patient. The pennies were obtained, but the half-crown was wanting—the rector of the place, very properly, declined taking any part in such a gross superstition. However, another reverend gentleman was more pliable; and a ring was formed (or professed to be so) from the half-crown and worn by the boy. A similar instance, which occurred about fourteen years since, has been furnished to the same work by Mr. R. Bond of Gloucester: "The epilepsy had enervated the mental faculties of an individual moving in a respectable sphere in such a degree as to partially incapacitate him from directing his own affairs; and numerous were the recipes, the gratuitous offering of friends, that were ineffectually resorted to by him. At length, however, he was told of what would certainly be an infallible cure, for in no instance had it failed; it was, to personally collect thirty pence, from as many respectable matrons, and to deliver them into the hands of a silversmith, who, in consideration thereof, would supply him with a ring, wrought out of half a crown, which he was to wear on one of his fingers—and the complaint would immediately forsake him. This advice he followed; and for three or four years the ring

* Vol. iii. p. 280, (Ellis's edit.)

ornamented (if we may so express it) his fifth or little finger, notwithstanding the frequent relapses he experienced during that time were sufficient to convince a less ardent mind than his that the fits were proof against its influence. Finally, whilst suffering from a last visitation of that distressing malady, he expired, though wearing the ring—thus exemplifying a striking memento of the absurdity of the means he had had recourse to."*

Quite recently, a new means has been contrived for deluding the public in the form of rings, which are to be worn upon the fingers and are said to prevent the occurrence of and cure various diseases. They are called galvanic rings. Although by the contact of the two metals of which they are composed an infinitesimally minute current of electricity (hence, also, of magnetism) is generated, still, from the absurd manner in which the pieces of metal composing the ring are arranged and which displays the most profound ignorance of the laws of electricity and magnetism, no trace of the minute current traverses the finger upon which the ring is worn; so that a wooden ring or none at all would have exactly the same effect as regards the magnetism or galvanism.†

Epilepsy was to be cured by wearing a ring in which a portion of an elk's horn was to be inclosed; while the hoof of an ass, worn in the same way, had the reputation of preventing conjugal debility.‡

* Lupton, quoted by Brande, says: "A piece of a child's navell string, borne in a ring, is good against the falling sickness, the pain of the head and the collick."

"*Annulus frigatorius.* A ring made of glass (*salt*) of antimony, formerly supposed to have the power of purging." Gardiner's Medical Dictionary.

† Beckmann's History of Inventions, i. 46, (Bohn's edit.)

‡ See also Burton's Anat. of Melancholy, (1621,) p. 476; Browne, ch. xviii.

Michaelis, a physician at Leipsic, had a ring made of the tooth of a sea-horse, by which he pretended to cure diseases of every kind.* Rings of lead, mixed with quicksilver, were used against headache; and even the chains of criminals and iron used in the construction of gibbets were applied to the removal of complaints.

Rings simply made of gold were supposed to cure St. Anthony's fire; but, if inscribed with magic words, their power was irresistible.

With regard to rings supposed to possess magical properties, there is one with an inscription in the Runic character, on jasper, being a Dano-Saxon amulet against the plague. The translation is thus given:

> "Raise us from dust we pray thee,
> From Pestilence, O set us free,
> Although the Grave unwilling be."†

On another ring, inscribed with similar characters, and evidently intended for the same purpose, the legend is as follows:

"*Whether in fever or leprosy, let the patient be happy and confident in the hope of recovery.*"‡

Rings against the plague were often inscribed Jesus—Maria—Joseph or I. H. S. *Nazarenus—Rex—Judæorum.*

A ring was dug up in England, with the figure of St. Barbara upon it. She is the patroness against storms; and it was most likely an intended amulet against them.§ However, St. Barbara was not solely here depended upon, for it has around it Jesu et Maria.

* Archæologia, xxi. 122; Illustrated Magazine of Art, i. 11.
† Archæologia, (London,) xxi. 25. ‡ Ib. 117.
§ London Gent.'s Mag. vol. lxxv. p. 801.

§ 7. The ordeal of touch, by a person accused of murder, remarkably appears in an English trial.* There, the murdered woman, at the touch of the accused, "thrust out the ring or marriage finger three times and pulled it in again and the finger dropped blood upon the grass." The report goes on to say, that "Sir Nicholas Hyde, seeming to doubt the evidence, asked the witness, 'Who saw this besides you?' *Witness.* 'I cannot swear what others saw; but, my lord, I do believe the whole company saw it; and if it had been thought a doubt, proof would have been made of it, and many would have attested with me.' The witness observing some admiration in the auditors, spake further: 'My lord, I am minister of the parish and have long known all the parties, but never had any occasion of displeasure against any of them, nor had to do with them or they with me, but as I was minister, the thing was wonderful to me; but I have no interest in the matter, but as called upon to testify the truth, that I have done. My lord, my brother here present is minister of the next parish adjoining, and, I am assured, saw all done that I have affirmed.'" The clergyman so appealed to confirmed the statement; and the accused were convicted and hanged.

§ 8. Amongst the dooms or punishments which Æthelbirht, King of Kent, established in the days of Augustine, the amount of what was called *bot* or damages to be paid for every description of injury to the person is fully detailed.† The laws of King Alfred comprise, likewise, numerous clauses respecting compensation for wounds

* Vol. xiv. of State Trials, case of Mary Norkott and John Okeman.

† Ancient Laws and Institutes of England, 8vo. vol. i. p. 13.

inflicted; and the term "*dolzbote*" occurs in c. 23, relating to tearing by a dog. A silver ring was found in Essex, England, inscribed with the Anglo-Saxon word *dolzbot*, the exact meaning of which is compensation made for giving a man a wound either by a stab or blow.*

§ 9. We find a romantic story coupled with the founding of Aix-la-Chapelle. Petrarch relates† of Charles the Great of France, that this monarch was so fondly attached to a fair lady that, after her death, he carried about her embalmed body in a superb coffin and that he could not indeed forsake it, because, under the tongue, was a gem "enchassée" in a very small ring.

A venerable and learned bishop, who thought a living beauty was preferable to the remains of a departed one, rebuked his sovereign for his irreligious and strange passion and revealed to him the important secret that his love arose from a charm that lay under the woman's tongue. Whereupon the bishop went to the woman's corse and drew from her mouth the ring; which the emperor had scarcely looked upon when he abhorred the former object of his attachment and felt such an extraordinary regard for the bishop that he could not dispense with his presence for a single moment, until the good prelate was so troubled with royal favor that he cast the ring into a lake or marsh. The emperor happened to be attracted to the site of the submerged ring; and, in consequence, founded upon it a palace and church, which gave birth to Aix-la-Chapelle.

The Germans have a legend which they connect with

* Ib. p. 79. † Mem. de Petrarque, i. 210.

what must have been this ring. It runs thus: Charlemagne, although near his dissolution, lingered in ceaseless agony, until the archbishop who attended him caused the lake to be dragged and, silently placing the talisman on the person of the dying monarch, his struggling soul parted quietly away. This talisman is said to be in the possession of Louis Napoleon; but it is described as a small nut, in a gold filagree envelopment, found round the neck of Charlemagne on the opening of his tomb and given by the town of Aix-la-Chapelle to Bonaparte and by him to his favorite Hortense, *ci-devant* Queen of Holland, at whose death it descended to her son. In the German legend it is said to have been framed by some of the magi in the train of the ambassadors of Aaroun-al-Raschid to the mighty Emperor of the West, at the instance of his spouse Fastrada, with the virtue that her husband should be always fascinated towards the person or thing on which it was.*

§ 10. Some of our readers are lovers of operatic music, and have heard *Zampa*. The placing of a ring on the finger of a statue and its consequences must have been gathered from a story by Floriguus. He mentions the case of a young gentleman of Rome, who, on his wedding day, went out walking with his bride and some friend after dinner; towards evening, he got to a tennis-court and while he played he took off his ring and placed it upon the finger of a brass statue of Venus. The game finished, he went to fetch his ring; but Venus had bent her finger upon it and he could not get it off. Whereupon, loth to make his companions tarry, he there

* Notes and Queries, i. 140.

left it, intending to fetch it the next day, went then to supper and, so, to bed; but, in the night, the truly brazen Venus had slipped between him and his bride, and thus troubled him for several successive nights. Not knowing how to help himself, he made his moan to one Palumbus, a learned magician, who gave him a letter and bade him, at such a time of the night, in such a cross-way, where old Saturn would pass by with his associates, to deliver to him the epistle. The young man, of a bold spirit, accordingly did so; and when Saturn had read it, he called Venus, who was riding before him, and commanded her to deliver the ring, which forthwith she did.

Moore has even made use of this tale. He calls it "The Ring," and uses upwards of sixty stanzas on it. He seems here to have laid aside, as much as it was possible for him, his usual polish and tried to imitate Monk Lewis. The scene is laid in Christian times; his hero is one Rupert; and the deliverer a Father Austin. Moore says he met with the story in a German work, "Fromman upon Fascination;" while Fromman quotes it from Belaucensis.

It is remarkable how often we find stories, which have originated in heathen times, made a vehicle for Catholic tales. The above has found its way into monkish legend.

In *The Miracles of the Virgin Mary*, compiled in the twelfth century, by a French monk,* there is a tale of a young man, who, falling in love with an image of the Virgin, inadvertently placed on one of its fingers a ring, which he had received from his mistress, accompanying the gift with the most tender language of respect and

* See Douce's Illust. of Shakspeare, p. 69.

affection. A miracle instantly took place and the ring remained immovable. The young man, greatly alarmed for the consequences of his rashness, consulted his friends, who advised him, by all means, to devote himself entirely to the service of the Madonna. His love for his former mistress prevailed over their remonstrances and he married her; but on the wedding-night, the newly betrothed lady appeared to him and urged her claim, with so many dreadful menaces that the poor man felt himself compelled to abandon his bride and, that very night, to retire privately to a hermitage, where he became a monk for the rest of his life. This story has been translated by Mons. Le Grand, in his entertaining collection of *fabliaux*, where the ring is called a marriage-ring.

Perhaps this last story grew out of the legend of St. Agnes. A priest, who officiated in a church dedicated to St. Agnes, was very desirous of being married. He prayed the Pope's license, who gave it him, together with an emerald ring; and commanded him to pay his addresses to the image of St. Agnes in his own church. Then the priest did so and the image put forth her finger and he put the ring thereon; whereupon the image drew her finger in again and kept the ring fast—and the priest was contented to remain a bachelor; "and yet, as it is sayd, the rynge is on the fynger of the ymage."*

§ 11. There is a legend of a Sir Richard Baker, who was surnamed *Bloody Baker*, wherein a ring bears its part.† This Sir Richard Baker was buried in Cranbrook church, Kent, England, and his gauntlet, gloves, helmet

* Hone's Every Day Book, i. 141.
† Notes and Queries, vol. ii. p. 67.

and spurs are suspended over his tomb. The gloves are red. The Baker family had formerly large possessions in Cranbrook; but in the reign of Edward VI. great misfortunes fell on them; by extravagance and dissipation they gradually lost all their lands, until an old house in the village (now used as the poor-house) was all that remained to them. The sole representative of the family remaining at the accession of Queen Mary was Sir Richard Baker. He had spent some years abroad in consequence of a duel; but when Mary reigned he thought he might safely return, as he was a papist; when he came to Cranbrook, he took up his abode in his old house; he brought one foreign servant with him; and only these two lived there. Very soon strange stories began to be whispered respecting unearthly shrieks having been heard frequently to issue at nightfall from his house. Many people of importance were stopped and robbed in the Glastonbury woods and many unfortunate travellers were missed and never heard of more. Richard Baker still continued to live in seclusion, but he gradually repurchased his alienated property, although he was known to have spent all he possessed before he left England. But wickedness was not always to prosper. He formed an apparent attachment to a young lady in the neighborhood, remarkable for always wearing a great many jewels. He often pressed her to come and see his old house, telling her he had many curious things he wished to show her. She had always resisted fixing a day for her visit, but happening to walk within a short distance of his house, she determined to surprise him with a visit; her companion, a lady older than herself, endeavored to dissuade her from doing so, but she would not be turned from her

purpose. They knocked at the door, but no one answered them; they, however, discovered it was not locked and determined to enter. At the head of the stairs hung a parrot which, on their passing, cried out:

> "Peepoh, pretty lady, be not too bold,
> Or your red blood will soon run cold."

And cold did run the blood of the adventurous damsel when, on opening one of the room doors, she found it filled with the dead bodies of murdered persons, chiefly women. Just then they heard a noise and on looking out of the window saw Bloody Baker and his servant bringing in the murdered body of a lady. Nearly dead with fear, they concealed themselves in a recess under the staircase. As the murderers, with their dead burthen, passed by them, the hand of the unfortunate murdered lady hung in the baluster of the stairs; with an oath, Bloody Baker chopped it off and it fell into the lap of one of the concealed ladies. As soon as the murderers had passed by, the ladies ran away, having the presence of mind to carry with them the dead hand, on one of the fingers of which was a ring. On reaching home, they told their story; and, in confirmation of it, displayed the ring. All the families who had lost relatives mysteriously were then told of what had been found out; and they determined to ask Baker to a large party, apparently in a friendly manner, but to have officers concealed. He came, suspecting nothing; and then the lady told him all she had seen, pretending it was a dream. "Fair lady," said he, "dreams are nothing; they are but fables." "They may be fables," said she, "but is this a fable?" and she

produced the hand and ring. Upon this the officers rushed in and took him; and the tradition further says, he was burnt, notwithstanding Queen Mary tried to save him on account of the religion he professed.

§ 12. Dumas has it* that Cæsar Borgia wore a ring, composed of two lion's heads, the stone of which he turned inward when he wished to press the hand of "a friend." It was then the lion's teeth became those of a viper charged with poison. (His infamous father, the old poisoner Alexander VI., kept a poisoned key by him, and when his "holiness" wished to rid himself of some one of his familiars, he desired him to open a certain wardrobe, but as the lock of this was difficult to turn, force was required before the bolt yielded, by which a small point in the handle of the key left a slight scratch upon the hand, which proved mortal.)

§ 13. Liceto, as referred to by Maffei, gives an example of a ring forming part of the Barberini collection, which has engraved upon the stone a Cupid with butterflies; and, on the hoop of it, *Mei Amores*, i. e. My Loves. This shows a freedom of subject that may have reference to pretty plain flirting or wantonness. A fragment of Ennius, which runs thus: *Others give a ring to be viewed from the lips*, is coupled with a wanton custom (in full vigor in the time of Plautus) for loose characters to take the hoop of the ring with the teeth and, leaving the stone out of the mouth, thus invite young persons to see either the figure or minute characters and who had to approach very close to do it.

* Crimes Célèbres.

§ 14. We have heard of rings with delicate spring-lancets or cutting-hooks, used by thieves to cut pockets before they pick them.

It is said that gamblers have rings with movable parts, which will show a diminutive heart, spade, club or diamond according as a partner desires a particular suit or card to be led.

Thieves in America will often wear a ring with the head of a dog projecting and its ear sharpened and still further extended, so that a blow with it would cut like any sharply pointed instrument. The present Chief of Police in New-York is in the habit of clipping off these sharp ears whenever he has a rogue in custody who possesses such a ring. And characters of the like class wear one bearing a triangular pyramid of metal, with which they can give a terrible blow.

The crime of ring-dropping consists, generally, in a rogue's stooping down and seeming to pick up a purse containing a ring and a paper, which is made in the form of a receipt from a jeweller, descriptive of the ring and making it a "rich, brilliant, diamond ring;" and in the fellow's proposing, for a specified payment, to share its value with you.

When Charles VIII. of France crossed the Alps, he descended into Piedmont and the Montferrat, which was governed by two Regents, Princes Charles Jean Aimé and Guillaume Jean. They advanced to meet Charles, each at the head of a numerous and brilliant court and shining with jewels. Charles, aware that, notwithstanding their friendly indications, they had, nevertheless, signed a treaty with his enemy, received them with the greatest courtesy; and as they were profuse in

their professions of amity, he suddenly required of them a proof: it was, to lend him the diamonds they then wore. The two regents could but obey a request which possessed all the characteristics of a command. They took off their rings and other trinkets, for which Charles gave them a detailed receipt and, then, pledged them for twenty-four thousand ducats.*

§ 15. When the Roman slave was allowed his liberty, he received, with a cap and white vest, a ring. The ring was of iron.† We have not heard the origin of this stated, but it appears to us it was gathered from the fable of Prometheus. The slave had been fastened, as it were, to the Caucasus of bondage; and when freed from that, he had, still, as Prometheus had, to wear an iron ring, by way of remembrance. He was not permitted to have one of gold, for that was a badge of citizenship.‡ However, vanity is inherent in bond and free; and slaves began to cover their iron rings with gold, while others presumed to wear the precious metals alone.§ The iron rings of slaves were alluded to by Statius, who died about thirty years later than Pliny.‖ Apuleius introduces a slave, with an iron ring, bearing a device.

We all remember Moore's lines, beginning with:

> "Rich and rare were the gems she wore,
> And a bright gold ring on her wand she bore."

This was rather an Irish way of wearing a ring, on the top of a snow-white wand, instead of upon a lily-white

* Crimes Célèbres, (Dumas.) † Roman Antiquities, by Fuss, § 62.
‡ Blair's Roman Slavery, 97; and see note 50, p. 241. § Pliny, xxxiii.
‖ Lacrim. Etrus., (Sylv. iii. 3,) "*lævæque ignobile ferrum.*"

finger. The poet works out and polishes and varnishes these verses from the following story in Warren's History of Ireland:* A young lady, of great beauty, adorned with jewels and a costly dress, undertook a journey alone, from one end of the kingdom to the other, with a wand only in her hand, at the top of which was a ring of exceeding great value; and such an impression had the laws and government of the then monarch, Brian Borholme, made on the minds of all the people that no attempt was made upon her honor, nor was she robbed of her clothes or jewels. Ireland may or not be changed since that time; yet the monarch Brian does not seem to have worked through moral suasion, if we may believe an Irish verse-maker, who certainly uses neither the delicacy of sentiment nor the polish of Moore:

"Oh, brave King Brian! he knew the way
To keep the peace and to make them pay;
For those who were bad, he knocked off their head;
And those who were worse, he kilt them dead."

* Vol. i. book x.

CHAPTER FOUR.

RINGS COUPLED WITH REMARKABLE HISTORICAL CHARACTERS OR CIRCUMSTANCES.

1. Ring of Suphis; Pharaoh's Ring given to Joseph. 2. Rings of Hannibal; Mithridates; Pompey; Cæsar; Augustus and Nero. 3. Cameo. 4. Ethelwoulf; Madoe; Edward the Confessor; King John; Lord L'Isle; Richard Bertie and his Son Lord Willoughby; Great Earl of Cork; Shakspeare's Signet-Ring; The Ring Queen Elizabeth gave to Essex; Ring of Mary of Scotland and one sent by her to Elizabeth; Darnley; The Blue Ring; Duke of Dorset; Ring in the Isle of Wight supposed to have belonged to Charles the First, and Memorial Rings of this Monarch; Earl of Derby; Charles the Second; Jeffrey's Blood-Stone; The great Dundee; Nelson; Scotch Coronation Ring; The Admirable Crichton; Sir Isaac Newton; Kean; Wedding Ring of Byron's Mother. 5. Matrons of Warsaw. 6. The Prussian Maiden.

§ 1. When Egypt is mentioned, the Pyramids rise in their subimity—a sublimity made perfect by their vastness and mysterious age. We can fancy Abraham beholding them with awe, as, in the moonlight, they seemed to be awful and gigantic reflexes of his own tents looming into the heavens. We can imagine Alexander, rushing triumphantly on as the sun warmed and brightened their points; and Cambyses, within their shadow, horrifying the Egyptians by the destruction of their god Apis. We can hear, too, the modern destroyer, with the bombastic cry to his soldiers that, from the summits of those monuments, forty centuries looked down upon them: they must indeed have looked down upon those who

came as locusts and were swept away like them! And as our minds enter, from the outward heat, into the cold chamber of the Pyramids, we observe Champollion, Wilkinson, Vyse and Lepsius unrolling ages with the unwinding of papyrus and illuminated bandage.

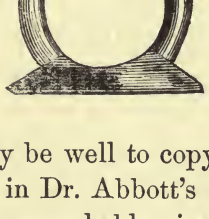
Let us, however, attempt to sink these mighty mountains of man's labor below the desert—upon which they now heavily press as though they were sealing the earth—and bring up, amid the vast desert and in their place, a single figure, bearing a signet-ring upon its finger. It is Suphis or Cheops, King of Memphis, who caused the Great Pyramid to be made for his monument. What a speck, for such a tomb! The monuments of man take up much space. Here was a whole nation employed to make one man's mausoleum. We fear that the virtues which live after men could often go within the compass of their finger-ring.

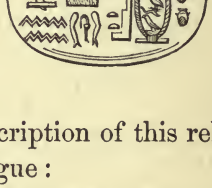
To every kingly order or decree connected with the foundation of the Great Pyramid or with the thousands of men who had to work or with the prodigious material employed, an impression of the signet-ring of Suphis had to be attached. Rings have been used for higher and holier things; but never for so vast a human purpose.

Now, bring up, once more, (through the mind's enchantment,) the Pyramids, built upwards of two thousand years before the time of Christ, with all the busy centuries which have encircled them; and looking back, we can hardly think that this ring of Suphis, a circle which an inch square might hold—is undestroyed! And even if it be, we can scarcely believe that it is to be seen within the sweep of our own observation. The city

of New-York holds the ring of Suphis. In the Egyptian collection formed by Dr. Abbott is this ring. And if exquisite work can add to its value, it has it in a high degree. Beautiful in execution;—there is something wonderful in its preservation; while a species of awe, seldom attaching to a small substance, seems to chill our nature and we are dumb while we look upon it.

Here is the most valuable antique ring in the world. This ring alone ought to be sufficient to secure the collection to New-York for ever.*





It may be well to copy a description of this relic as it appears in Dr. Abbott's Catalogue:

"This remarkable piece of antiquity is in the highest state of preservation, and was found at Ghizeh, in a tomb near that excavation of Colonel Vyse's called Campbell's tomb. It is of fine gold; and weighs nearly three sovereigns. The style of the hieroglyphics is in perfect accordance with those in the tombs about the Great Pyramid, and the hieroglyphics within the oval make

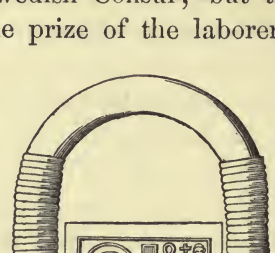
* We write at a time when a subscription is going among the inhabitants of New-York for the purchase of this collection; and already have private citizens subscribed to the amount of $25,000. This tells well for republican individual enterprise and taste.

The author has to acknowledge the prompt kindness of Dr. Abbott, in allowing him to take impressions as well from the Suphis-ring as from many others in the Doctor's collection.

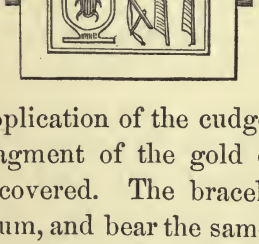
the name of that Pharaoh of whom the pyramid was the tomb. The details are minutely accurate and beautifully executed. The heaven is engraved with stars: the fox or jackal has significant lines within its contour: the hatchets have their handles bound with thongs, as is usual in the sculptures; the volumes have the string which binds them hanging below the roll, differing in this respect from any example in sculptured or painted hieroglyphics. The determinative for country is studded with dots, representing the sand of the mountains at the margin of the valley of Egypt. The instrument, as in the larger hieroglyphics, has the tongue and semi-lunar mark of the sculptured examples; as is the case also with the heart-shaped vase. The name is surmounted with the globe and feathers, decorated in the usual manner; and the ring of the cartouch is engraved with marks representing a rope, never seen in the sculptures: and the only instance of a royal name similarly encircled is a porcelain example in this collection, inclosing the name of the father of Sesostris. The O in the name is placed as in the examples sculptured in the tombs, not in the axis of the cartouch. The chickens have their unfledged wings; the cerastes its horns, now only to be seen with the magnifying glass."

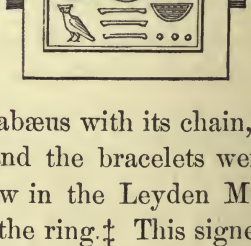
Probably the next most important ring is one believed to have been that which was given by Pharaoh to the patriarch Joseph. Upon opening, in the winter of 1824, a tomb in the necropolis of Sakkara near Memphis, Arab workmen discovered a mummy, every limb of which was cased in solid gold; each finger had its particular envelope, inscribed with hieroglyphics: "So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old; and

they embalmed him and he was put in a coffin in Egypt."* A golden scarabæus or beetle was attached to the neck by a chain of the same metal; *a signet-ring* was also found, a pair of golden bracelets and other relics of value.† The excavation had been made at the charge of the Swedish Consul; but the articles discovered became the prize of the laborers. By a liberal



Signet of the actual size.





application of the cudgel, the scarabæus with its chain, a fragment of the gold envelope and the bracelets were recovered. The bracelets are now in the Leyden Museum, and bear the same name as the ring.‡ This signet-ring, however, which was not given up at the time,

* Genesis, ch. l. v. 26.

† Pote's Inquiry into the Phonetic Reading of the Ashburnham Signet. (Pickering, 1841.)

‡ See Wilkinson's Manners of the Egyptians, iii. 374.

found its way to Cairo and was there purchased by the Earl of Ashburnham. That nobleman having put his collection of relics, with his baggage, on board a brig chartered in Alexandria for Smyrna, the vessel was plundered by Greek pirates, who sold their booty in the island of Syra. The signet in question fell thus into the hands of a Greek merchant, who kept it till about three years ago, when it was sold in Constantinople and purchased and brought finally to England. It is again in the possession of the Earl of Ashburnham. This signet has been assigned to the age of Thothmes III. The quantity and nature of the golden decorations existing in the tomb referred to indicate it as the sepulchre of one of the Pharaohs or of some highly distinguished officer of the royal household; and a calculation places the death of the patriarch Joseph in about the twentieth year of the reign of Thothmes III. The signet would be an excellent specimen of the antique of a kind called Tabat, still common in the country and which resemble, in all but the engraved name upon this signet, the ring placed by Pharaoh on Joseph's hand. The seal turns on a swivel, (and, so, has two tablets,) and, with the ring or circle of the signet, is of very pure and massive gold. The carving is very superior and also bold and sharp, which may be accounted for from the difficult oxydization of gold above all metals. In connection with this ring, it is necessary to remember what occurred when "Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand and put it upon Joseph's hand."—"And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee; and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am

Pharaoh and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt. *And Pharaoh called Joseph's name* ZAPHNATH-PAANEAH." The seal has the cartouch of Pharaoh. And one line upon it has been construed into *Paaneah*, the name bestowed by Pharaoh on Joseph. This signifies, in combination with "*Zaphnath*," either, *the Revealer of Secrets*, or, *the Preserver of the World.*

A discovery of the ring of Suphis and that which Pharaoh gave to Joseph appears to border on the marvellous; and, yet, such things were and gentleness of climate may allow us to suppose that they still exist,—while modern energy, science and learning are so laying bare the world's sepulchre of the past that we ought not to disbelieve at the suggested resurrection of any thing. In excavations recently made in Persia, the palace of Shushan and the tomb of Daniel have probably been found; and also the very pavement described in Esther, i. 6, "of red and blue and white and green marble."*

§ 2. Hannibal carried his death in his ring, which was a singular one. When the Roman ambassadors required the king of Bythinia to give Hannibal up, the latter, on the point of the king's doing so, swallowed poison, which he always carried about in his ring. In the late war between America and Mexico, rings were found upon the fingers of dead officers of the latter country. These opened and, it is said, a poisonous substance was disco-

* On the tomb is the sculptured figure of a man bound hand and foot, with a huge lion in the act of springing upon him to devour him. No history could speak more graphically the story of Daniel in the Lion's Den.—*The (American) Family Christian Almanac for* 1855.

vered; and there is a notion that the owners of these rings were ready to act the part of Hannibal: poison themselves rather than become prisoners.

The Romans were very curious in collecting cases of rings, (*dactylothecæ*,) many of which are mentioned as being at Rome; among these was that which Pompey the Great took from Mithridates and dedicated to Jupiter in the Capitol.*

And Pompey's ring is known. Upon it were engraved three trophies, as emblems of his three triumphs over the three parts of the world Europe, Asia and Africa.† A ring with a trophy cut upon it has helped to victory: When Timoleon was laying siege to Calauria, Icetes took the opportunity to make an inroad into the territories of Syracuse, where he met with considerable booty; and having made great havoc, he marched back by Calauria itself, in contempt of Timoleon and the slender force he had with him. Timoleon suffered him to pass; and then followed him with his cavalry and light-armed foot. When Icetes saw he was pursued, he crossed the Damyrias and stood in a posture to receive the enemy, on the other side. What emboldened him to do this was the difficulty of the passage and the steepness of the banks on both sides. But a strange dispute and jealousy of honor which arose among the officers of Timoleon awhile delayed the combat: for there was not one that was willing to go after another, but every man wanted to be foremost in the attack; so that their fording was likely to be very tumultuous and disorderly by their jostling each other and pressing to get before. To remedy this,

* Fuss's Roman Antiquities, § 435.

† Adams' Roman Antiquities, 366, (Boyd's edit.)

Timoleon ordered them to decide the matter by lot; and that each, for this purpose, should give him his ring. He took the rings and shook them in the skirt of his robe; and the first that came up happening to have a trophy for the seal, the young officers received it with joy and, crying out that they would not wait for any other lot, made their way as fast as possible through the river and fell upon the enemy, who, unable to sustain the shock, soon took to flight, throwing away their arms and leaving a thousand of their men dead upon the spot.*

Cæsar's ring bore an armed Venus. On that of Augustus there was, first, a sphinx; afterwards, the image of Alexander the Great; and at last, his own, which the succeeding emperors continued to use. Dr. Clarke says, the introduction of sculptured animals upon the signets of the Romans was derived from the sacred symbols of the Egyptians and hence the origin of the sphinx for the signet of Augustus.

Nero's signet-ring bore Apollo, flaying Marsyas. This emperor's musical vanity led him to adopt it.

§ 3. When the practice of deifying princes and venerating heroes became general, portraits of men supplied the place of more ancient types. This custom gave birth to the cameo; not, perhaps, introduced before the Roman power and rarely found in Greece.

§ 4. In the British Museum is an enamelled gold ring of Ethelwoulf, King of Wessex, second King of England, A. D. 836, 838. It bears his name.†

* Plutarch's *Timoleon*.

† Introduction to English Antiquities, by Eccleston, 60, 61.

The tradition of Madoc, one of the last princes of Powis, is kept up by the discovery of a gold signet-ring, with the impress of a monogram placed under a crown. It is supposed to be the ring of Madoc.

The ring of Edward the Confessor has been discovered; and is said to be in the possession of Charles Kean the actor and that he wears it whenever he plays the character of King Lear. This performer is a collector of antiquities. He purchased the red hat of Cardinal Wolsey at the sale of the Strawberry Hill collection. This hat was found by Bishop Burnet, when Clerk of the Closet, in the great wardrobe and was given by his son, the Judge, to the Countess Dowager of Albemarle, who presented it to Horace Walpole.

King John of England is reputed to have secured a ring to aid his designs upon the beautiful wife of the brave Eustace de Vesci, one of the twenty-five barons appointed to enforce the observance of Magna Charta.* The tyrant, hearing that Eustace de Vesci had a very beautiful wife, but far distant from court and studying how to accomplish his licentious designs towards her, sitting at table with her husband and seeing a ring on his finger, he laid hold on it and told him that he had such another stone, which he resolved to set in gold in that very form. And having thus got the ring, presently sent it to her, in her husband's name; by that token conjuring her, if ever she expected to see him alive, to come speedily to him. She, therefore, upon sight of the ring, gave credit to the messenger and came with all expedition. But so it happened that her husband, casually riding out, met her on the road and marvelling much to

* Dugdale.

see her there, asked what the matter was? and when he understood how they were both deluded, resolved to find a wanton and put her in apparel to personate his lady. The king afterwards boasting to the injured husband himself, Eustace had the pleasure to undeceive him. We may imagine the cheated monarch's rage and how freely he used his favorite oath of, "by the teeth of God!"

Lord L'Isle, of the time of Henry VIII. of England, had been committed to the Tower of London on suspicion of being privy to a plot to deliver up the garrison of Calais to the French. But his innocence appearing manifest on investigation, the monarch released and sent him a diamond ring with a most gracious message. Whether it was his liberty or the ring or the message, the fact is that he died the night following "of excessive joy."*

The turquoise was valuable enough for princely gift. Anne of Brittany, young and beautiful, Queen of Louis the Twelfth of France, sent a turquoise ring to James the Fourth of Scotland, who fell at Flodden. Scott refers to it:

> "For the fair Queen of France
> Sent him a turquoise ring and glove;
> And charged him, as her knight and love,
> For her to break a lance."

And, in a note, he says that a turquoise ring, "probably this fatal gift," is (with James's sword and dagger) preserved in the College of Heralds, London; and gives the following quotation from Pittscottie: "Also, the Queen of France wrote a love-letter to the King of Scotland, calling him her love, showing him that she had suffered

* Burke's Extinct Peerage, "Plantagenet Viscount L'Isle," 432.

much rebuke in France for the defending of her honor. She believed surely that he would recompense her again with some of his kingly support in her necessity, that is to say, that he would raise her an army and come three foot of ground, on English ground, for her sake. To that effect she sent him a ring off her finger, with fourteen hundred French crowns to pay his expenses."

Some of the trials of life which Richard Bertie and his wife Catharine, Duchess of Suffolk, underwent,* are matters of history. They arose from the zeal of the Duchess for the Reformation in the reign of Edward VI. and through the malice of Bishop Gardiner. The lady had in her "progress" caused a dog in a rochet (part of a bishop's dress) to be carried and called by Gardiner's name. They had an only son Peregrine Bertie, who claimed and obtained the Barony of Willoughby of Eresby. He was sent as general of auxiliaries into France; and did good service at the siege of Paris and by the reduction of many towns. His troops were disbanded with great commendation; and Lord Willoughby received a present of a diamond ring from the King of France.† This ring he, at his death, left his son, with a charge, upon his blessing, to transmit it to his heirs. Queen Elizabeth wrote a free letter inviting him back to England, beginning it, "Good Peregrine." His will is a remarkable one. It begins thus: "In the name of the blessed divine Trynitie in persons and of Omnipotent Unitye in Godhead, who created, redeemed and sanctified me, whom I steadfastlye beleeve will glorifye this sinfull, corruptyble and fleshely bodie, with eternal happiness by a joyeful resurrection at the general Judgment, when by his

* Hollingshed; Dugdale. † Echard, 363.

incomprehensible justice and mercye, having satisfied for my sinfull soule, and stored it uppe in his heavenlye treasure, his almightye voyce shall cāll all fleshe to be joyned together with the soule to everlasting comforte or discomforte. In that holye name I Pergrin Bertye," etc., etc., etc. He was once confined to his bed with the gout and had an insulting challenge sent him, to which he answered, "That although he was lame of his hands and feet, yet he would meet his adversary with a piece of a rapier in his teeth." His idea of a "carpet knight" is observable in his saying, that "a court became a soldier of good skill and great spirit as a bed of down would one of the Tower lions."

Richard Boyle, who, by personal merit, obtained a high position and is known as the "great Earl of Cork," did not forget his early life. When he was in the height of his prosperity, he committed the most memorable circumstances of his life to writing, under the title of "True Remembrances;" and we find the mention of a ring which his mother had given him: "When first I arrived in Ireland, the 23d of June, 1588, all my wealth then was twenty-seven pounds three shillings in money and two tokens which my mother had given me, viz. a diamond ring, which I have ever since and still do wear, and a bracelet of gold worth about ten pounds; a taffety doublet cut with and upon taffety; a pair of black silk breeches laced; a new Milan fustian suit laced and cut upon taffety, two cloaks, competent linen and necessaries, with my rapier and dagger; and, since, the blessing of God, whose heavenly providence guided me hither, hath enriched my weak estate in the beginning with such a fortune as I need not envy any of my neigh-

bors, and added no care or burthen to my conscience thereunto."*

We have mentioned Shakspeare's signet-ring. It is of gold and was found on the sixteenth day of March in the year one thousand eight hundred and ten, by a laborer's wife upon the surface of the mill-close, adjoining Stratford churchyard. The weight is twelve pennyweights; it bears the initials W. S.; and was purchased by Mr. R. B. Wheeler (who has published a Guide to Stratford-upon-Avon†) for thirty-six shillings, the current value of the gold. It is evidently a gentleman's ring of the time of Elizabeth; and the crossing of the central lines of the W. with the oblique direction of the lines of the S. exactly agree with the character of that day. There is a connection or union of the letters by an ornamental string and tassels, known commonly as a "true lover's knot"—the upper bow or flourish of which forms the resemblance of a heart. On the porch of Charlcote House near Stratford, erected in the early part of Elizabeth's reign by the very Sir Thomas Lucy said to have persecuted Shakspeare for deer stealing, the letters T. L. are surrounded in a manner precisely similar. Allowing that this was Shakspeare's ring, it is the only existing article which originally belonged to him.

Singularly enough, a man named William Shakspeare was at work near the spot when this ring was picked up.‡ Little doubt can be entertained that it belonged to the poet and is probably the one he lost before his death and was not to be found when his will

* Biographia Britannica, art. Boyle.

† 1814; and see Notes and Queries, v. 589.

‡ Halliwell's Life of Shakspeare, 334.

was executed, the word *hand* being substituted for *seale* in the original copy of that document. The only other person at Stratford having the same initials and likely to possess such a seal was William Smith, but he used one having a different device, as may be seen from several indentures preserved amongst the records of the corporation. Halliwell believes in the authenticity of this relic. Mr. Wheeler, its owner, says: "Though I purchased it upon the same day for 36s. (the current value of the gold) the woman had sufficient time to destroy the precious *ærugo*, by having it unnecessarily immersed in *aquafortis*, to ascertain and prove the metal, at a silversmith's shop, which consequently restored its original color."

In the Life of Haydon the painter,* we have the following letter from him to Keats, (March 1, 1818:) "My dear Keats, I shall go mad! In a field at Stratford-upon-Avon, that belonged to Shakspeare, they have found a gold ring and seal, with the initials W. S. and a true lover's knot between. If this is not Shakspeare's, whose is it?—a true lover's knot! I saw an impression to-day, and am to have one as soon as possible: as sure as you breathe and that he was the first of beings, the seal belonged to him.

"O Lord! B. R. Haydon."

Let us now turn to the ring that Queen Elizabeth gave to the handsome, brave and open-hearted Devereux, Earl of Essex; and which was probably worn by him, when, on his trial, he was desired to hold up his right hand, and he said that he had, before that time, done it often at her majesty's command for a better purpose. The

* Part i. p. 346, (Harper's edit.)

story of this ring has been discarded by some authors; but we see no reason to doubt it. We take our account from Francis Osborn's Traditional Memoirs on the Reign of Queen Elizabeth.* "Upon this," says he, "with a great deal of familiarity, she presented a ring to him, which after she had, by oaths, endued with a power of freeing him from any danger or distress, his future miscarriage, her anger or enemies' malice could cast him into, she gave it him, with a promise that, at the first sight of it, all this and more, if possible, should be granted. After his commitment to the Tower, he sent this jewel to her majesty by the then Countess of Nottingham, whom Sir Robert Cecill kept from delivering it. But the Lady of Nottingham, coming to her deathbed and finding by the daily sorrow the Queen expressed for the loss of Essex, herself a principal agent in his destruction, could not be at rest till she had discovered all and humbly implored mercy from God and forgiveness from her earthly sovereign; who did not only refuse to give it, but having shook her as she lay in bed, sent her, accompanied with most fearful curses, to a higher tribunal." This reads like truth; and what a picture it presents! Mark the fury of such an overbearing, half-masculine Queen; and, the repentant passiveness of the dying Countess!

Dr. Birch, in his Memoirs, says: the Queen observed, "God may forgive you, but I never can."

We are inclined to believe that Elizabeth swore pretty roundly on this occasion, as it is known she could; and

* P. 92. And see Johnson's Life of Coke, p. 147; Hume, Horace Walpole. The ring is said to be retained in the family of the Countess of Nottingham.

that there was a violence on the occasion is even shown by Dr. Birch: he says—"The Countess of Nottingham, affected by the near approach of death, obtained a visit from the Queen, to whom she revealed the secret; that the Queen shook the dying lady in her bed, and thenceforth resigned herself to the deepest melancholy."

The melancholy continued; and this haughty woman was soon smitten; refusing to rest on a bed, from a superstition that it would be her death couch, she became almost a silent lunatic, and crouched upon the floor. There sat she, as did another queen, who cried—

> "Here I and sorrow sit,
> Here is my throne;"

neither rising nor lying down, her finger almost always in her mouth, her eyes open and fixed on the ground.* But her indomitable will did not leave her in her death hour. She had declared she would have no rascal to succeed her; and when she was too far gone to speak, Secretary Cecil besought her, if she would have the King of Scots to reign after her, to show some sign unto them. Whereat, suddenly heaving herself up, she held both her hands joined together, over her head, in manner of a crown. Then, she sank down, and dozed into another world.

The Chevalier Louis Aubery de Maurier, who was many years the French Minister in Holland, and said to have been a man of great parts and unsuspected veracity, gives the following story of the Essex ring:†

* Pictorial History of England, ii. 693.

† Histoire de Hollande, 215, 216; and also see the Biographia Britannica, vol. 5, art. Devereux.

"It will not, I believe, be thought either impertinent or disagreeable to add here what Prince Maurice had from the mouth of Mr. Carleton, Ambassador from England in Holland, who died Secretary of State, so well known under the name of my Lord Dorchester and who was a man of great merit. He said that Queen Elizabeth gave the Earl of Essex a ring in the height of her passion for him, ordering him to keep it, and that whatever he should commit she would pardon him when he should return that pledge. Since that time, the Earl's enemies having prevailed with the Queen, who besides was exasperated against him for the contempt he showed for her beauty, which, through age, began to decay, she caused him to be impeached. When he was condemned, she expected that he should send her the ring; and would have granted him his pardon according to her promise. The Earl finding himself in the last extremity, applied to Admiral Howard's lady, who was his relation, and desired her, by a person whom she could trust, to return the ring into the Queen's own hands. But her husband, who was one of the Earl's greatest enemies and to whom she told this imprudently, would not suffer her to acquit herself of the commission; so that the Queen consented to the Earl's death, being full of indignation against such a proud and haughty spirit who chose rather to die than to implore her mercy. Some time after, the Admiral's lady fell sick and being given over by her physicians, she sent word to the Queen that she had something of great consequence to tell her before she died. The Queen came to her bedside, and having ordered all the attendants to withdraw, the Admiral's lady returned her, but too late, that ring from the Earl of

Essex, desiring to be excused that she did not return it sooner, having been prevented doing it by her husband. The Queen retired immediately, being overwhelmed with the utmost grief; she sighed continually for a fortnight following, without taking any nourishment; lying abed entirely dressed and getting up an hundred times a night. At last she died with hunger and with grief, because she had consented to the death of a lover who had applied to her for mercy. This melancholy adventure shows that there are frequent transitions from one passion to another and that as love often changes to hate, so hate, giving place sometimes to pity, brings the mind back again into its first state." Sir Dudley Carleton, who is made the author of this story, was a man who deserved the character that is given of him and could not but be well informed of what had passed at court. The Countess of Nottingham was the daughter of the Lord Viscount Hunsdon, related to the Queen and also, by his mother, to the Earl of Essex.

The story of the ring and the relations of the Queen's passion for the Earl of Essex were long regarded by many writers as romantic circumstances. But these facts are now more generally believed. Hume, Birch and other judicious historians give credit to them. Dr. Birch has confirmed Maurice's account by the following narrative, which was often related by the Lady Elizabeth Spelman, a descendant of Sir Robert Cary, Earl of Monmouth, whose acquaintance with the most secret transactions of Queen Elizabeth's court is well known :*

"When Catharine, Countess of Nottingham, wife of the Lord High Admiral and sister of the Earl of Mon-

* Biographia Britannica, art. Devereux.

mouth, was dying, (as she did, according to his Lordship's own account, about a fortnight before the Queen,) she sent to her majesty, to desire that she might see her in order to reveal something to her majesty, without the discovery of which she could not die in peace. Upon the Queen's coming, Lady Nottingham told her that, while the Earl of Essex lay under sentence of death, he was desirous of asking her majesty's mercy, in the manner prescribed by herself, during the height of his favor: the Queen having given him a ring which, being sent to her as a token of his distress, might entitle him to her protection. But the Earl, jealous of those about him and not caring to trust any one with it, as he was looking out of the window one morning, saw a boy, with whose appearance he was pleased, and, engaging him, by money and promises, directed him to carry the ring, which he took from his finger and threw down, to Lady Scroope, a sister of the Countess of Nottingham and a friend of his lordship, who attended upon the Queen and to beg of her that she would present it to her majesty. The boy, by mistake, carried it to Lady Nottingham, who showed it to her husband, the Admiral, an enemy of Lord Essex, in order to take his advice. The Admiral forbid her to carry it or return any answer to the message; but insisted upon her keeping the ring.

"The Countess of Nottingham having made the discovery, begged the Queen's forgiveness, but her majesty answered, 'God may forgive you, but I never can;' and left the room with great emotion. Her mind was so struck with this story that she never went to bed, nor took any subsistence, from that instant: for Camden is of opinion that her chief reason for suffering the Earl

to be executed was his supposed obstinancy in not applying to her for mercy."

Miss Strickland considers that the story of this ring should not be lightly rejected.

There are two rings extant claiming to be the identical one so fatally retained by Lady Nottingham. The first is preserved at Hawnes, Bedfordshire, England and is the property of the Reverend Lord John Thynne. The ring is gold, the sides are engraved and the inside set with blue enamel; the stone is a sardonyx, on which is cut, in relief, a head of Elizabeth, the execution being of a high order. The second is the property of a Mr. Warner, and was given by Charles the First to Sir Thomas Warner, the settler of Antigua, Nevis, etc. It is a diamond set in gold, inlaid with black enamel at the back and sides.*

And now let us turn to one of Elizabeth's victims, who had her talent and was her contrast: for Mary of Scotland was womanly and beautiful. So charming was she in the mind of the French poet Ronsard that he tells us France without her was as "a ring bereft of its precious pearl."† The nuptial ring of Mary, Queen of Scots, on her marriage with Lord Darnley, is extant.‡ It is, in general design, a copy of her great seal, the banners only being different, for, in the great seal they each bear a saltier surmounted by a crown. (In her great seal made when Dowager of France, after the death of Francis the Second, the dexter banner is St. Andrew's Cross,

* Lives and Letters of the Devereux Earls of Essex, by the Honorable W. B. Devereux.

† Strickland's Queens of Scotland, vol. iii. p. 181.

‡ Gent.'s Mag. vol. xxxv. p. 390; Archæologia, vol. xxxiii,

the sinister the Royal Arms of the Lion.) The ring part is enamelled. It is of most beautiful and minute workmanship. An impression is not larger than a small wafer. It has the initials M. R.; and on the interior is a monogram of the letters M. and A., *Mary* and *Albany:* Darnley was created Duke of Albany.

A use of the arms of England by Mary came to the knowledge of and gave great offence to Elizabeth and Burghley; and the latter obtained a copy of them so used, which copy is now in the British Museum. It is endorsed by Burghley, "False Armes of Scotl. Fr. Engl. Julii, 1559." The following doggrel lines are underneath the arms:

> "The armes of Marie Quene Dolphines of France
> The nobillist Ladie in earth for till aduance,
> Off Scotland Quene, and of England also,
> Off Ireland als God haith providit so."

A letter has been discovered in the handwriting of Mary herself which presents the monogram of M. and A. that is upon the ring. This epistle is in French; and the following is a translation:

"Madam, my good sister, the wish that I have to omit nothing that could testify to you how much I desire not to be distant from your good favor, or to give you occasion to suspect me from my actions to be less attached to you than, my good sister, I am, does not permit me to defer longer the sending to you the bearer, Master of my Requests, to inform you further of my good will to embrace all means which are reasonable, not to give you occasion to be to me other than you have been hitherto; and relying on the sufficiency of the bearer, I will kiss your hands, praying God that he will keep you,

Madam my good sister, in health and a happy and long life. From St. John's Town, this 15th of June.

"Your very affectionate and faithful
"Good Sister and Cousin,
"To the Queen of England, "MARIE R."
"Madam my good Sister
"and Cousin."

The history of the ring bearing the arms of England, Scotland and Ireland, (and which is said to have been produced in evidence at the trial of the unfortunate Mary as a proof of her pretensions to the crown of England,) is curious. It descended from Mary to her grandson Charles the First, who gave it on the scaffold to Archbishop Juxon for his son Charles the Second, who, in his troubles, pawned it in Holland for three hundred pounds, where it was bought by Governor Yale; and sold at his sale for three hundred and twenty dollars, supposed to the Pretender. Afterwards it came into the possession of the Earl of Ilay, Duke of Argyll. It was ultimately purchased by George the Fourth of England, when he was Prince Regent.* This is sometimes called the Juxon ring.

It appears by Andrews's continuation of Henry's History of Great Britain,† that Mary had three wedding rings on her marriage with Darnley: "She had on her back the great mourning gown of black, with the great mourning hood," (fit robes for such a wedding!) "The rings, which were three, the middle a rich diamond, were put on her finger. They kneel together and many prayers

* Willis's Current Notes for February and March, 1852.
† P. 184, (note.)

are said over them," etc., etc. Rings of Mary of Modena have been mistaken for those of Mary of Scotland.

There is a ring at Bolsover Castle containing a portrait of Mary.*

A word more of Elizabeth and Mary. Aubrey says,† "I have seen some rings made for sweethearts, with a heart enamelled held between two right hands. See an epigram of George Buchanan on two rings that were made by Elizabeth's appointment, being layd one upon the other showed the like figure. The heart was two diamonds, which joyned, made the heart. Queen Elizabeth kept one moietie, and sent the other as a token of her constant friendship to Mary, Queen of Scots; but she cut off her head for all that." Aubrey, who also quotes an old verse as to the wearers of rings: *Miles, mercator, stultus, maritus, amator*,—here alludes, it is presumed, to a diamond ring originally given by Elizabeth to Mary as a pledge of affection and support and which Mary commissioned Beatoun to take back to her when she determined to seek an asylum in England. The following is one of Buchanan's epigrams on the subject of the ring, described by Aubrey:

"*Loquitur adamas in cordis effigiem sculptus, quem Maria Elizabethæ Angl. misit:*" (The diamond sculptured into the form of a heart and which Mary sent to the English Elizabeth, says:)

> "*Quod te jampridem videt, ac amat absens,*
> *Hæc pignus cordis gemma, et imago mei est,*
> *Non est candidior non est hæc purior illo*
> *Quamvis dura magis non image firma tamen.*"

* Gent.'s Mag. for 1852, p. 407.

† Anecdotes and Traditions, published by the Camden Society, (London, 1839.)

These lines we thus render in verse:

> "This gem is pledge and image of my heart:
> A heart that looks and loves, though not in view.
> The jewel has no clearer, purer part—
> It may be harder, but is not more true."

The sentiment in this epigram must have been gathered from expressions made by Mary herself: for, at a time when she was at Dumferline and desired and hoped for an interview with Elizabeth, she received, through the hands of Randolph, a letter from the English Queen, "which first she did read and after put into her bosom next unto her *schyve*." Mary entered into a long private conversation with Randolph on the subject of their proposed interview; and asked him, in confidence, to tell her frankly whether it were ever likely to take effect. "Above any thing," said she, "I desire to see my good sister; and next, that we may live like good sisters together, as your mistress hath written unto me that we shall. I have here," continued she, "a ring with a diamond fashioned like a heart: I know nothing that can resemble my good will unto my good sister better than that. My meaning shall be expressed by writing in a few verses, which you shall see before you depart; and whatsomever lacketh therein, let it be reported by your writing. I will witness the same with my own hand, and call God to record that I speak as I think with my heart, that I do as much rejoice of that continuance of friendship that I trust shall be between the queen my sister and me and the people of both realms, as ever I did in any thing in my life." "With these words," continues Randolph, "she taketh out of her bosom the Queen's Majesty's letter; and after that she had read a

line or two thereof, putteth it again in the same place, and saith, 'If I could put it nearer my heart I would.'"*

Mary's sad going to England, makes us remember Wordsworth's sonnet:

> "———; but Time, the old Saturnian seer,
> Sighed on the wing as her foot pressed the strand,
> With step prelusive to a long array
> Of woes and degradations, hand in hand,
> Weeping Captivity and shuddering Fear,
> Stilled by the ensanguined block of Fotheringay!"

In the British Museum is a ring which belonged to one whose life had been a tissue of cowardice, cruelty, falsehood and weakness, Lord Darnley. If this was

Original size.

a ring he ordinarily wore, it probably was upon his finger when he led the way to the murder of Riccio and pointed him out to the slayers. However this may be, the story goes that when Darnley was reconciled to Mary and was in the house called Kirk of Field, she, one evening, on taking leave in order to attend a marriage of a servant, embraced him tenderly; took a ring from her finger and placed it upon his. It was on this night that a terrific explosion was heard, which shook the city of Edinburgh. Then it was that the Kirk of

* Strickland's Queens of Scotland, iii. 279.

Field was blown up; and at a little distance, in the garden, were the dead bodies of Darnley and his page. We are not of those who believe that Mary's hand or heart were in this murder, notwithstanding we read of the vote of the Scotch Parliament and peruse Buchanan's suggested letters from the Queen to Bothwell—especially as these epistles are not forthcoming. It has been said that Buchanan expressed sorrow on his death-bed for what he had written against Mary. But he certainly was not a repentant. We have a proof of his indomitable disposition in the fact that when, at his dying hour, he was informed that the King was highly incensed against him for writing his books *De Jure Regni* and History of Scotland, he replied, "he was not much concerned about that, for he was shortly going to a place where there were few kings."* Writers who show no esteem for Buchanan give him the character of an inveterate drinker even up to his death hour; he, "continuing his debauches of the belly, made shift to get the dropsy by immoderate drinking," and it was said of him, by way of jest, that he was troubled *vino inter cute* and not *aquâ inter cute* (by *wine between the skin* and not *water between the skin*).†

There is a ring known in English history as the *Blue Ring*.‡ King James the First kept a constant correspondence with several persons of the English court for many years prior to Queen Elizabeth's decease; among others with Lady Scroope, sister of Robert Carey, afterwards Earl of Monmouth, to which lady his majesty sent, by Sir James Fullerton, a sapphire ring, with posi-

* Mackenzie's Lives and Characters. † Father Garvasse.
‡ Burke's Extinct Peerages, "Carey," 111.

tive orders to return it to him, by a special messenger, as soon as the Queen actually expired. Lady Scroope had no opportunity of delivering it to her brother Robert while he was in the palace of Richmond; but waiting at the window till she saw him at the outside of the gate, she threw it out to him and he well knew to what purpose he received it. Indeed, he was the first person to announce to James his accession to the crown of England; and the monarch said to him: "I know you have lost a near kinswoman and a mistress, but take here my hand, I will be a good master to you and will requite this service with honor and reward." This Robert Carey wrote his own memoirs; and therein says: "I only relied on God and the King. The one never left me; the other, shortly after his coming to London, deceived my expectations and adhered to those who sought my ruin."

Thomas Sackvil, Duke of Dorset, who was Lord High Treasurer of England in the times of Elizabeth and James I., has left a remarkably long and curious will, which shows exceeding wealth and a mixture of seeming humility, obsequious loyalty and pride of position. His riches appear to have mainly come from his father, who was called by the people *Fill-Sack*, on account of his vast property. A great number of personal ornaments are bequeathed; and among them many rings, which are particularly described. He often and especially notices* "one ring of gold and enamelled black and set round with diamonds, to the number of 20., whereof 5. being placed in the upper part of the said ring do represent the fashion of a cross." This ring is coupled with "one picture of the late famous Queen Elizabeth, being cut

* Collins's Baronage, 421, (4to.)

out of an agate, with excellent similitude, oval fashion and set in gold, with 20. rubies about the circle of it and one orient pearl pendant to the same; one ring of gold, enamelled black, wherein is set a great table diamonde, beying perfect and pure and of much worth; and one cheyne of gold, Spanish work, containing in it 48. several pieces of gold, of divers sorts, enamelled white and of 46. oval links of gold, likewise enamelled white, wherein are 144. diamonds." These rings, chain and picture are to remain as heirlooms; while particular directions are given to place them in the custody of the warden and a senior fellow of New College at Oxford during minority of his descendants, to be kept within the said college "in a strong chest of iron, under two several keys," etc. The testator states how the "said rynge of gould, with the great table diamonde sett therein togeather with the said cheyne of goulde, were given to him by the Kinge of Spayne;" while the way in which he obtained the ring set round with twenty diamonds is thus elaborated in the will: "And to the intent that they may knowe howe just and great cause bothe they and I have to hould the sayed Rynge, with twentie Diamonds, in so heighe esteeme, yt is most requisite that I do here set downe the whole course and circumstance howe and from whome the same rynge did come to my possession, which was thus: In the Begynning of the monethe of June one thousand sixe hundred and seaven, this rynge thus sett with twenty Diamondes, as is aforesayed, was sent unto me from my most gracious soveraigne King James, by that honorable personage the Lord Haye, one of the gentlemen of his Highnes Bedchamber, the Courte then beying at Whitehall in London and I at that tyme re-

mayning at Horsley House in Surrey, twentie myles from London, where I laye in suche extremitye of sickness as yt was a common and a constant reporte all over London that I was dead and the same confidentlie affirmed even unto the Kinge's Highnes hymselfe; upon which occasion it pleased his most excellent majestie, in token of his gracious goodness and great favour towards me, to send the saied Lord Hay with the saied Ringe, and this Royal message unto me, namelie, that his Highness wished a speedie and a perfect recoverye of my healthe, with all happie and good successe unto me and that I might live as longe as the diamonds of that Rynge (which therewithall he delivered unto me) did indure, and, in token thereof, required me to weare yt and keep yt for his sake. This most gracious and comfortable message restored a new Life unto me, as coming from so renowned and benigne a soveraigne,"—but enough of this fulsome praise of the coward King of Holyrood. It makes us think of Sir Richie Moniplie's scene: "But ny certie, lad, times are changed since ye came fleeing down the back stairs of auld Holyrood House, in grit fear, having your breeks in your hand, without time to put them on, and Frank Stewart, the wild Earl of Bothwell, hard at your haunches; and if auld Lord Glenwarloch hadna cast his mantle about his arm and taken bluidy wounds mair than ane in your behalf, you wald not have crawed sae crouse this day."

There is a ring in the Isle of Wight, shown as having belonged to Charles the First of England; and the following story is told of it.* When Charles was confined

* Hillier's Narrative of the attempted escape of Charles the First, etc., p. 79. And see Gentleman's Magazine, N. S., p. 28.

in Carisbrook Castle, a man named Howe was its master gunner. He had a son, a little boy, who was a great favorite of Charles. One day, seeing him with a child's sword by his side, the King asked him what he intended doing with it? "To defend your Majesty from your Majesty's enemies," was the reply; an answer which so pleased the King that he gave the child the signet-ring he was in the habit of wearing upon his finger.

An engraving of the ring has been published. The article itself is in the possession of a descendant of Howe's. It is marked inside with the letters A and T conjoined followed by E. The author cannot trace or couple these letters with Charles the First; and he is otherwise inclined to doubt the story. It is a tale to please loyal readers. Charles was an intelligent man; and he was not likely, especially under his then circumstances, to have given his signet-ring to a child. There is a very pretty incident connected with his passing to prison, where he might beautifully have left a ring with a true-hearted lady. As he passed through Newport, on the way to the Castle of Carisbrook, the autumn weather was most bitter. A gentlewoman, touched by his misfortunes and his sorrows, presented him with a damask rose, which grew in her garden at that cold season of the year and prayed for him. The mournful monarch received the lady's gift, heartily thanked her and passed on to his dungeon.

It is true that Charles, when in the Isle of Wight, gave a ring from his finger. But the receiver of it was Sir Philip Warwick. This ring bore a figure cut in an onyx; and was handed to Sir Philip in order to seal the letters written for the King by that knight at the time

of the treaty. This ring was left by Sir Philip to Sir Charles Cotterell, Master of the Ceremonies, who, in his will, (16th April, 1701,) bequeathed it to Sir Stephen Fox. It came into the possession of the latter's descendant, the late Earl of Ilchester and was stolen from his house in old Burlington street, London, about seventy years ago.*

Just before his execution, the same monarch caused a limited number of mourning rings to be prepared. Burke, in his Commoners of Great Britain and Ireland, mentions the family of *Rogers in Lota.* This family was early remarkable for its loyalty and attachment to the crown. A ring is still preserved as an heirloom, which was presented to its ancestor by King Charles the First during his misfortunes. Robert Rogers of Lota received extensive grants from Charles the Second. In the body of his will is the following: "And I also bequeathe to Noblett Rogers the miniature portrait ring of the martyr Charles I. given by that monarch to my ancestor previous to his execution; and I particularly desire that it may be preserved in the name and family." The miniature is said to be by Vandyke.

The present possessor of this ring says that when it was shown in Rome, it was much admired; the artists when questioned, "Whose style?" frequently answered, "Vandyke's."† Although many doubt whether Vandyke ever submitted to paint miniatures, yet portraits in enamel by him are known to be in existence.

A ring, said to be one of the seven given after the King's death, was possessed by Horace Walpole and

* Gent.'s Mag., vol. xli. p. 450, and ib. for June.

† Notes and Queries, vii. 184.

sold with the Strawberry Hill collection. It has the King's head in miniature and behind, a skull; while between the letters C. R. is this motto:

"Prepared be to follow me."

There is another of these rings (all of which may be considered as "stamped with an eternal grief") in the possession of a clergyman. The shank of the ring is of fine gold, enamelled black, but the greater part of the enamel has been worn away by use. On the inner side of the shank an inscription has been engraved, the first letter of which still remains, but the rest of this also has been worn away by much use. In the shank is set a small miniature in enamel of the King, inclosed in a box of crystal which opens with a spring. At the back of the box, containing the miniature, is a piece of white enamel, having a death's head surmounted by a crown with the date January 30 represented upon it in black. A memorial ring of Charles the First, which has a portrait of the King in enamel and an inscription at the back, recording the day of his execution, was exhibited before the members of the London Antiquarian Society in March, 1854.*

Rings, with portraits of Charles the First on ivory, are not uncommon.

When the body of Charles the First was discovered in 1813, (in the royal burial place at Windsor,) the hair at the back of the head appeared close cut; whereas, at the time of the decollation, the executioner twice adjusted the King's hair under his cap. No doubt the piety of friends had severed the hair after death, in

* See Gent.'s Mag., vol. xli. p. 512.

order to furnish rings and other memorials of the unhappy monarch.

A noble character was James Stanley, seventh Earl of Derby, who was beheaded for his loyalty to Charles the First.

As a proof of his bravery, with six hundred horse he maintained fight against three thousand foot and horse, receiving seven shots in his breast-plate, thirteen cuts in his beaver, five or six wounds on his arms and shoulders, and had two horses killed under him.

His manliness shows well in his answer to Cromwell's demand that he should deliver up the Isle of Wight: "I scorn your proffers; I disdain your favors; I abhor your treasons; and am so far from delivering this island to your advantage, that I will keep it to the utmost of my power to your destruction. Take this final answer and forbear any further solicitations; for if you trouble me with any more messages upon this occasion, I will burn the paper and hang the bearer."*

He was executed contrary to the promise of quarter for life, "an ancient and honorable plea not violated until this time."

There is a deeply interesting account of his acts and deportment written by a Mr. Bagaley who attended on him. The Earl wrote letters to his wife, daughter and sons; a servant went and purchased all the rings he could get and lapped them up in several papers and writ within them and the Earl made Bagaley subscribe them to all his children and servants. This coupling his servants with his children in connection with these death tokens is charming. The Earl handed the letters with the

* Collins's Peerage, v. 68, 5th edit.

rings to Bagaley and, in relation to delivering them, he used this beautiful and perfect expression—"As to them, I can say nothing: *silence and your own looks will best tell your message.*"

On quitting his prison, others confined there kissed his hand and wept; but as to himself, he told them: "You shall hear that I die like a Christian, a man and a soldier."

He was to be beheaded at Bolton. On his way thither, Bagaley says: "His lordship, as we rode along, called me to him and bid me, when I should come into the Isle of Man, to commend him to the Archbishop there and tell him he well remembered the several discourses that had passed between them there concerning death and the manner of it; that he had often said the thoughts of death could not trouble him in fight or with a sword in hand, *but he feared it would something startle him tamely to submit to a blow on the scaffold.* But," said his lordship, "tell the archdeacon from me that I do now find in myself an absolute change as to that opinion."

At night when he laid him down upon the right side, with his hand under his face, he said: "Methinks I lie like a monument in a church; and to-morrow I shall really be so."

There was a delay in his execution, for the people of Bolton refused to strike a nail in the scaffold or to give any assistance. He asked for the axe and kissed it. He forgave the headsman before he asked him. To the spectators, he said: "Good people, I thank you for your prayers and for your tears; I have heard the one and seen the other and our God sees and hears both." He caused the block to be turned towards the church. "I

will look," cried he, "towards the sanctuary which is above for ever." There were other interesting circumstances attending his execution. With outstretched arms he laid himself down to the block, exclaiming, "Blessed be God's name for ever and ever. Let the whole earth be filled with his glory." Then the executioner did his work—"*and no manner of noise was then heard but sighs and sobs.*"

We are left without any account of the way in which Bagaley delivered the rings; but, imagination can make a picture of a darkened and dismantled mansion, suffering widow and children, with terrified retainers, and Bagaley standing in the midst, weary, heart-sick, tearfully presenting the melancholy remembrances and realizing the truthfulness of the words of his brave, good and gentle master: "*Silence and your own looks will best tell your message.*"

The French woman Kerouaille, favorite mistress of Charles the Second, and created Duchess of Portsmouth, is said to have secured two valuable diamond rings from the King's finger while the throes of death were on him. The following graphic description is worth reading:

"I should have told you, in his fits his feet were as cold as ice, and were kept rubbed with hot cloths, which were difficult to get. Some say the Queen rubbed one and washed it in tears. Pillows were brought from the Duchess of Portsmouth's by Mrs. Roche. His Highness, the Duke of York, was the first there, and then I think the Queen, (he sent for her;) the Duchess of Portsmouth swooned in the chamber, and was carried out for air; Nelly Gwynne roared to a disturbance and was led out and lay roaring behind the door; the Duch-

ess wept and returned; the Princess (afterwards Queen Anne) was not admitted, he was so ghastly a sight, (his eye-balls were turned that none of the blacks were seen, and his mouth drawn up to one eye,) so they feared it might affect the child she goes with. None came in at the common door, but by an odd side-door to prevent a crowd, but enough at convenient times to satisfy all. The grief of the Duchess of Portsmouth did not hinder her packing and sending many strong boxes to the French ambassador's; and the second day of the King's sickness, the chamber being kept dark—one who comes from the light does not see very soon, and much less one who is between them and the light there is—so she went to the side of the bed, and sat down to and taking the king's hand in hers, felt his two great diamond rings; thinking herself alone, and asking him what he did with them on, said she would take them off, and did it at the same time, and looking up saw the Duke at the other side, steadfastly looking on her, at which she blushed much, and held them towards him, and said, 'Here, sire, will you take them?' 'No, madam,' he said, 'they are as safe in your hands as mine. I will not touch them till I see how things will go.' But since the King's death she has forgot to restore them, though he has not that she took them, for he told the story." This extract is taken from a letter written by a lady who was the wife of a person about the court at Whitehall and forms part of a curious collection of papers lately discovered at Draycot House near Chippenham, Wiltshire, England.*

Jeffreys, the bloody Jeffreys, whose greatest honor was to make a martyr of Sidney, while rising in royal

* Household Words, ix. 277.

favor and when about to depart for the circuit to give the provinces "a lick with the rough side of his tongue," (a favorite expression of his,) experienced a mark of regard from Charles the Second. The King took a ring from his own finger and gave it to this besotted wretch of a chief justice. At the same time the monarch bestowed on him a curious piece of advice to be given by a king to a judge: it was, that, as the weather would be hot, Jeffreys should beware of drinking too much.* The people called the ring "*Jeffrey's blood-stone*," as he got it just after the execution of Sir Thomas Armstrong. Roger North says: "The king was persuaded to present him with a ring, publicly taken from his own finger, in token of his majesty's acceptance of his most eminent services; and this by way of precursor being blazoned in the Gazette, his lordship went down into the country, as from the king *legatus a latere*." The Lord Keeper North, who, it has been said, hated Jeffreys worse than popery,† speaks of the terror to others of the face and voice of the chief justice: "as if the thunder of the day of judgment broke over their heads;" and shows how Jeffreys, who, by this time, had reached the position of Lord Chancellor, was discovered by a lawyer that had been under the storm of his countenance:‡ "There was a scrivener of Wapping brought to hearing for relief against a bummery bond; the contingency of losing all being showed, the bill was going to be dismissed. But one of the plaintiff's counsel said that he was a strange fellow and sometimes went to church, sometimes to conventicles and none could tell what to make of him

* Burnet; and see note to Life of Lord Keeper North, vol. ii. p. 13.

† Knight. ‡ P. 33, *et seq.*

and it was thought he was a trimmer. At that the Chancellor fired; and 'A trimmer,' said he, 'I have heard much of that monster, but never saw one. Come forth, Mr. Trimmer, turn you round, and let us see your shape;' and at that rate talked so long that the poor fellow was ready to drop under him; but, at last, the bill was dismissed with costs and he went his way. In the hall, one of his friends asked him how he came off? 'Came off!' said he, 'I am escaped from the terrors of that man's face, which I would scarce undergo again to save my life; and I shall certainly have the frightful impression of it as long as I live.' Afterwards, when the Prince of Orange came and all was in confusion, this Lord Chancellor, being very obnoxious, disguised himself in order to go beyond sea. He was in a seaman's garb and drinking a pot in a cellar. This scrivener came into the cellar after some of his clients; and his eye *caught that face*, which made him start; and the Chancellor, seeing himself eyed, feigned a cough and turned to the wall with his pot in his hand. But *Mr. Trimmer* went out and gave notice that he was there; whereupon the mob flowed in and he was in extreme hazard of his life," etc., etc. This term "Trimmer" seemed to be very obnoxious to Jeffreys. Once at the council and when the king was present, Jeffreys "being flaming drunk, came up to the other end of the board and (as in that condition his way was) fell to talking and staring like a madman, and, at length, bitterly inveighed against Trimmers and told the king that he had Trimmers in his court and he would never be easy so long as the Trimmers were there."* North gives the interpretation of the word

* North, 100.

"Trimmer," which was taken up to subdivide the Tory party, of whom all (however loyal and of the established church professed) who did not go into all the lengths of the new-flown party at court, were so termed.*

The name of the great Dundee instantly brings to mind one of the most spirited and characteristic ballads ever written:

> "The Gordon demands of him which way he goes—
> Where'er shall direct me the shade of Montrose!
> Your Grace, in short space, shall hear tidings of me:
> Or that low lies the bonnet of Bonny Dundee.
>
> Come, fill up my cup; come, fill up my can;
> Come, saddle the horses and call up the men;
> Come, open your gates and let me gae free,
> For it's up with the bonnets of Bonny Dundee."†

All of this is gone; low lies Bonny Dundee; and the untruth of what is called history is all we have of him. There was a ring of which a description and an engraving remain containing some of Lord Dundee's hair, with the letters V. D. surmounted by a coronet worked upon it in gold; and on the inside of the ring are engraved a skull and this poesy:

"*Great Dundee, for God and me. J. Rex.*"

* Lord Halifax, who is described by Dryden under the character of "Jotham" in *Absalom and Achitophel*, was at the head of the party called Trimmers; and in his "Preface to the *Character of a Trimmer*," thus explains the term: "This innocent word *Trimmer* signifies no more than this: that if men are together in a boat and one part of the company would weigh it down on one side, another would make it lean as much to the contrary, it happens that there is a third opinion, of those who conceive it would be as well if the boat went even, without endangering the passengers. Now, 'tis hard to imagine by what figure in language or by what rule in sense this comes to be a fault; and it is much more a wonder it should be thought a heresy."

† Miss Mitford's Recollections, 425, (Am. edit.)

This ring, which belonged to the family of Graham of Duntrune, (representative of Viscount Dundee,) has, for several years, been lost or mislaid.*

A memorial of Nelson is left in some half-dozen of rings. In the place of a stone, each ring has a metal *basso relievo* representation of Nelson, half bust. The metal, blackish in appearance, forming the relief, being, in reality, portions of the ball which gave the Admiral his fatal wound at Trafalgar.

Cardinal York, the last of the Stuart family, left as a legacy to the Prince of Wales, afterwards George the Fourth, a valuable ring which was worn by the kings of Scotland on the day of their coronation.†

We have met with but one case where, in a college disputation, the successful contestant was rewarded with a ring. James Crichton, who obtained the appellation of the "Admirable Crichton," had volunteered—it was at a time when he was only twenty years of age—to dispute with any one in Hebrew, Syriac, Arabic, Greek, Latin, Spanish, French, Italian, English, Dutch, Flemish and Sclavonian; and this, either in verse or prose. He did not seem to prepare himself, but occupied his time in hunting, hawking, tilting, vaulting, tossing a pike, handling a musket and other military feats. Crichton duly appeared in the College of Navarre and acquitted himself beyond expression in the disputation, which lasted from nine o'clock in the morning until six at night. At length, the President, after extolling him highly for the many rare and excellent endowments which God and nature had bestowed upon him, rose from his chair and, accompanied by four of the most

* Notes and Queries, ii. 70.

† Hone's Year Book, 1022.

eminent professors of the University, gave him a diamond ring (with a purse full of money) as a testimony of regard and favor.*

In England, during the year 1815, a tooth of Sir Isaac Newton was sold for seven hundred and twenty pounds to a nobleman who had it set in a ring.

The elder Kean used to wear, to the hour of his death, a gold snake ring, with ruby head and emerald eyes. At the sale of his effects, it fetched four guineas and an half.†

On the day of the arrival of Miss Milbankes' answer to Lord Byron's offer of marriage, he was sitting at dinner in Newstead Abbey, when his gardener came and presented him with his mother's ring, which she had lost and which the gardener had just found in digging up the mould under her window. Almost at the same moment, the letter from Miss Milbankes arrived; and Lord Byron exclaimed, "If it contains a consent, I will be married with this very ring."‡ It does not appear whether it was really used. Strange, if it were! and singular that his lordship, so full of powerful superstition, should have suggested it. His mother's temper had been, in part, his bane; her marriage was a most unhappy one; the poet's father notoriously wedded for money and was separated from his wife—while, the poet's offer, at a time when he was greatly embarrassed, coupled with his own mysterious after-separation, would make this ring appear a fatal talisman if it were really placed upon Miss Milbankes' finger. It was in his after-

* Biographia Britannica, Art. *Crichton.*

† London Gent.'s Mag., N. S., ii. p. 195.

‡ Moore's Life of Byron, vol. i. p. 458.

bitterness, in his desolate state and dissoluteness that Byron called the wedding-ring "the damn'dest part of matrimony."

§ 5. In the last Polish struggle, the matrons of Warsaw sent their marriage rings to coin into ducats.*

A few years ago the signet-ring of the famous Turlough Lynnoch was found at Charlemont in the county of Armagh, Ireland. It bears the bloody hand of the O'Neils and initials T. O. The signet part of the ring is circular and the whole of it silver. O'Neils had been kings of Ireland and were also Earls of Ulster. The symbol of the province of Ulster was a bloody hand. Fergus, the first King of Scotland, was descended from the O'Neils. King James the First made this bloody hand the distinguishing badge of a new order of baronets and they were created to aid by service or money for forces in subduing the O'Neils.†

During the years 1813, 1814 and 1815, when Prussia had collected all her resources, in the hope of freeing herself from the yoke which France had laid upon her, the most extraordinary feelings of patriotism burst forth. Every thought was centred in the struggle; every coffer was drained; all gave willingly. In town and village altars were erected, on which ornaments of gold, silver and precious stones were offered up. Massive plate was replaced in palaces by dishes, platters and spoons of wood. Ladies wore no other ornaments than those made of iron, upon which was engraved: "*We gave gold for the freedom of our country; and, like her, wear an iron*

* Beattie's Life of Campbell, ii. 287.

† Dublin Penny Journal, 208.

yoke." One evening, a party had assembled in the house of an inhabitant of Breslau. Among them, was a beautiful though poor maiden. Her companions were boasting what each had contributed towards the freedom of their country. Alas! she had no offering to proclaim—none to give. With a heavy heart she took her leave. While unrobing for the night, she thought she could dispose of her hair and, so, add to the public fund. With the dawn, she went to a hairdresser's; related her simple tale; and parted with her tresses for a trifling sum, which she instantly deposited on an altar and returned to her quiet home. This reached the ears of the officers appointed each day to collect the various offerings; and the President received a confirmation from the hairdresser, who proposed to resign the beautiful hair, provided it was resold for the benefit of fatherland. The offer was accepted; iron rings were made, each containing a portion of hair; and these produced far more than their weight in gold.*

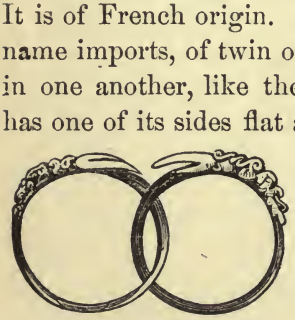
* The Death Warrant, or Guide to Life, 1844. (London.)

CHAPTER FIVE.

RINGS OF LOVE, AFFECTION AND FRIENDSHIP.

The Gimmal or Gimmow Ring. 2. Sonnet by Davison. 3. Church Marriage ordained by Innocent III.; and, Marriage-Ring. 4. Rings used in different countries on Marriages and in Betrothment Esthonia; the Copts; Persia; Spain; Aekmetchet in Russia. 5. Betrothal Rings. 6. Signets of the first Christians. 7. Laws of Marriage. 8. Wedding Finger; Artery to the Heart; Lady who had lost the Ring Finger. 9. Roman Catholic Marriages. 10. Marriage-Ring during the Commonwealth. 11. Ring in Jewish Marriages. 12. Superstitions. 13. Rings of twisted Gold-wire given away at Weddings. 14. Cupid and Psyche. 15. St. Anne and St. Joachim. 16. Rush Rings. 17. Rings with the Orpine Plant. 18. Ancient Marriage-Rings had Mottoes and Seals. 19. The Sessa Ring. 20. Rings bequeathed or kept in Memory of the Dead: Washington; Shakspeare; Pope; Dr. Johnson; Lord Eldon; Tom Moore's Mother. 21. The Ship *Powhattan*. 22. Ring of Affection illustrated by a Pelican and Young. 23. Bran of Brittany. 24. Rings used by Writers of Fiction; Shakspeare's Cymbeline. 25. Small Rings for the *Penates*. 26. Story from the "Gesta Romanorum."

§ 1. One of the prettiest tokens of friendship and affection is what is termed a *Gimmal* or *Gimmow* Ring. It is of French origin. This ring is constructed, as the name imports, of twin or double hoops, which play within one another, like the links of a chain. Each hoop has one of its sides flat and the other convex; and each



is twisted once round and surmounted with an emblem or motto. The course of the twist, in each hoop, is made to correspond with that of its counter-

part, so that, on bringing together the flat surfaces of the hoops, these immediately unite in one ring.*

This form of ring is connected with the purest and highest acts of friendship; it became a simple love token; and was, at length, converted into the more serious *sponsalium annulus*, or ring of affiance.

The lover putting his finger through one of the hoops and his mistress hers through the other, were thus symbolically yoked together; a yoke which neither could be said wholly to wear, one half being allotted to the other; and making, as it has been quaintly said, a joint tenancy.

Dryden describes a gimmal ring in his play of *Don Sebastian*:†

"A curious artist wrought 'em—
With joints so close as not to be perceived;
Yet are they both each other's counterparts!
(Her part had Juan inscribed; and his had Laydor;
You know those names were theirs;) and in the midst
A heart divided in two-halfs was placed.
Now if the rivets of those rings, inclosed,
Fit not each other, I have forged this lie,
But if they join, you must for ever part."

Gimmal rings, though originally double, were, by a further refinement, made triple and even more complicated, yet the name remained unchanged.

Herrick, in his "Hesperides," has the following lines:

"THE JIMMAL RING OR TRUE-LOVE KNOT.

"Thou sent'st to me a true-love knot; but I
Return'd a ring of jimmals, to imply
Thy love had one knot, mine a triple-tye."

* Hone's Every Day Book. † 1690, p. 122.

A singular silver gimmal ring was found in Dorset, England; the legend *Ave Maria* is partly inscribed on each moiety and legible only when they are united.*

A beautiful enamelled ring of this kind which belonged to Sir Thomas Gresham, is extant.* It opens horizontally, thus forming two rings, which are, nevertheless, linked together and respectively inscribed on the inner side with a Scripture posy: QUOD. DEVS. CONJVNXIT (*what God did join*) is engraved on one half and HOMO NON SEPARAT, (*let not man separate*), on the other. The ring is beautifully enamelled. One of the portions is set with a diamond and the other with a ruby; and corresponding with them, in a cavity inside the ring, are or rather were within the last twenty years two minute figures or genii. The workmanship is admirable and probably Italian.

The reader who may be curious to know more about the gimmal ring, and the probable derivation of the word *Gimmal*, is referred to a learned and interesting article by Robert Smith, Esq., in the London Archæologia, vol. xii. p. 7.

It is possible that Shakspeare was thinking of gimmal rings, some of which had engraven on them a hand with a heart in it, when (in the *Tempest*) he makes Ferdinand say to Miranda "Here's my hand" and she answers "And mine, with my heart in it."

§ 2. Coupled with the love of youth for maiden, we have one of the most simple and perfect of old English sonnets (by Davison):‡

* Gent.'s Mag. for 1852, p. 640.

† Ib. vol. xxxv. N. S. 390; Burgon's Life and Times of Sir Thomas Gresham, i. 51.

‡ Poetical Rhapsody.

"PURE AND ENDLESS."

"If you would *know* the love which you I bear,
Compare it to the ring which your fair hand
Shall make MORE precious, when *you* shall it wear:
So *my love's* nature you shall understand.
Is it of metal *pure?* So endless is *my* love,
Unless you it destroy with your disdain.
Doth it the purer grow the more 'tis tried?
So doth my love; yet herein they dissent:
That whereas gold, the more 'tis purified,
By growing less, doth show some part is spent;
My love doth grow more pure by your more trying,
And yet increaseth in the purifying."

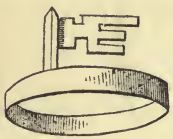
As far back as the fifteenth century a lover wore his ring on the last or little finger.*

§ 3. It is said that Pope Innocent the Third was the first who ordained the celebration of marriage in the church; before which, it was totally a civil contract; hence arose dispensations, licenses, faculties and other remnants of papal benefit.† Shelford‡ observes it came with the Council of Trent. The Council sat within the Bishopric of Trent, Germany, from the year 1545 to 1563.

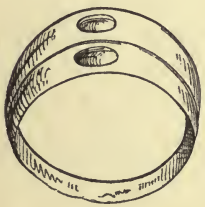
But the ring was used in connection with marriage before Catholic times. The Greeks had it. We find from Juvenal§ that the Romans employed the ring. There was commonly a feast on the signing of the marriage contract; and the man gave the woman a ring (*annulus pronubus*) by way of pledge, which she put upon her left hand, on the finger next the least: because

* Polyglot Dictionary, by John Minshew, (1625,) art. *Ring-Finger*.
† Reflections on the Causes of Unhappy Marriages, etc., by Lewis, p. 84.
‡ Shelford on Marriage, 17, 31. § Sat. VI. verse 27.

of the suggested nerve running to the heart.* The ring was generally of iron, though sometimes of copper and brass, with little knobs in the form of a key, to represent that the wife had possession of the husband's keys.† Roman keys attached to a ring for the finger are not uncommon.‡ The ring is at right angles to the axle and, therefore, it could only be used for a lock which required very little strength to turn it or as a latch-key. It may be a question, whether these were not rings used on marriages?



Maffei gives a gem, upon which is engraved only the two Greek words AΘANACI ΠICTIC, in English, *Faith immortal*, which he considers as intended to be set in a betrothal ring—in some one of those rings which lovers gave to their beloved, with protestations of eternal constancy, as a tacit promise of matrimony. Some Roman nuptial rings had inscriptions, as *Ama me; Amo te; Bonam vitam*, etc. Among other rings found at Pompeii were some which are considered to have been wedding-rings.§ One, of gold, picked up in Diomed's house, had a device representing a man and woman joining hands. Another, was a double gold ring, in which two small green stones were set.



There is no evidence that the ring was used by the Egyptians at a marriage.¶

On the authority of a text in Exodus, wedding-rings are attempted to

* Macrob. Sat. VII. 15.

† Wilson's Archæological Dictionary, art. *Ring*.

‡ Archæological Album, by Wright, p. 138.

§ Illustrations of Ancient Art, by Trollope, p. 49. ¶ Wilkinson.

be carried as far back as the Hebrews.* Leo of Modena, however, maintains that they did not use any nuptial ring.† Selden owns that they gave a ring in marriage, but that it was only in lieu of a piece of money of the same value which had before been presented. It probably was ring-money or money in the shape of a ring, (of which we have before spoken.)

§ 4. The common use of the ring in different countries, when betrothment or marriage takes place, is remarkable.

In Esthonia, a province of the Russian empire, where the girls consider marriage the one great object to be coveted, attained and prepared for from the earliest dawn of their susceptibilities, they spin and weave at their outfit, frequently for ten years before their helpmate is forthcoming: this outfit extends to a whole wardrobe full of kerchiefs, gloves, stockings, etc. When they have formed an acquaintance to their liking, the occasion having been usually of their own creating, they look forward with impatience to the moment of the proposal being made. But there is one season only, the period of the new moon, when an offer can be tendered; nor is any time so much preferred for a marriage as the period of the full moon. The plenipos in the business of an offer are generally a couple of the suitors' friends or else his parents, who enter the maid's homestead with mead and brandy in their hands. On their approach the gentle maiden conceals herself, warning having been given her in due form by some ancient dame; the plenipos never make a direct announcement of the purpose of their mission, but in most cases tell the girl's parents some story about

* Ch. 35, v. 22. † Uxor Ebraica, Lib. ii. ch. 14.

a lamb or an ewe which has got astray and they desire to bring home again. The parents immediately invite them to drink, vowing that they know nothing of the stray creature; if they decline to drink with them, it is a sign either that they have no inclination for the match or that their daughter has whispered them "her heart has no room for the youth in question." But if all are of one mind, the parents set merrily to work on the mead and brandy and give the suitor's envoys free license to hunt out the stray lambkin. When caught, she is also expected to taste of the cup; and from that moment the bridegroom becomes at liberty to visit his bride. He makes his appearance, therefore, a few days afterwards, bringing presents of all kinds with him, together with a ring, which he places on the maiden's finger as his betrothed.*

The Copts have a custom of betrothing girls at six or seven years of age, which is done by putting a ring upon their finger; but permission is afterwards obtained for her friends to educate her until she arrives at years of discretion.†

In Persia, a ring is among the usual marriage presents on the part of the bridegroom.‡

It is said that in Spain every girl who has attained the age of twelve may compel a young man to marry her, provided he has reached his fourteenth year and she can prove, for instance, that he has promised her his hand and given her to understand that he wished her to become his wife. These proofs are adduced before an ecclesiastical vicar. A present of a ring is considered sufficient proof to enable the girl to claim her husband. If the

* Kohl's Reminiscences.

† Hamilton's Marriage Rites, p. 188. ‡ Ib. 194.

vicar pronounces the marriage ought to take place, the youth, who has been previously sent to prison, cannot be liberated until after the celebration.*

Dr. Clark, in his Travels in Russia, describes the marriage, at Ackmetchet, of Professor Pallas's daughter with an Hungarian General according to the rites of the Greek Church. After ascertaining as to ties of blood between them and voluntary consent, a Bible and crucifix were placed before them and large lighted wax tapers, decorated with ribbons, put into their hands.

After certain prayers had been read and the ring put upon the bride's finger, the floor was covered by a piece of scarlet satin and a table was placed before them with the communion vessels. The priest having tied their hands together with bands of the same colored satin and placed a chaplet of flowers upon their heads, administered the sacrament and afterwards led them, thus bound together, three times round the communion table followed by the bride's father and the bridesmaids. During this ceremony, the choristers chanted a hymn; and after it was concluded, a scene of general kissing took place among all present, etc.

§ 5. The betrothal of a young couple was formerly attended with considerable ceremony, a portion of which was the exchange of rings. Shakspeare alludes to this in the play of "*Twelfth Night:*"

"Strengthened by the interchangement of your rings."

We have a similar thing in "*Two Gentlemen of Verona:*"†

* Bourgoing's Travels through Spain. † Act 2d, sc. 2d.

Julia. "Keep this remembrance for thy Julia's sake."
Proteus. "Why then we'll make exchange; here, take you this."
[*Giving a ring.*
Julia. "And seal the bargain with a holy kiss."

This betrothing, affiancing, espousal or plighting troth between lovers was sometimes done in church with great solemnity; and the service on this occasion is preserved in some of the old rituals.*

The virgin and martyr, Agnes, in Ambrose, says: "My Lord Jesus Christ hath espoused me with his ring."

This interchangement of rings appears in Chaucer's "Troilus and Cresseide:"

"Soon after this they spake of sondry things
As fitt to purpose of this aventure,
And playing *enterchangeden of rings*
Of whom I can not tellen no scripture.
But well I wot, a broche of gold and assure
In which a rubie set was like an herte,
Creseide him gave, and stacke it on his sherte."†

In Germany, a loving couple start on the principle of reciprocity and exchange rings. This is not done at the time of the marriage ceremony, but previously when the formal betrothment takes place, which is generally made the occasion of a family festival. The ring thus used is not called a wedding ring, but *Trau* ring, which means *ring of betrothal.* A particular ring does not form part of the ceremony of marriage. Royalty, however, appears to go beyond the common custom of the country, even in a marriage. At the late marriage of the Emperor of Austria, the Prince Archbishop of Vienna, who performed the ceremony, took rings from

* Douce, 24. † Book iii.

a golden cup and presented them to the august couple, who, reciprocally, placed them on each other's finger; and, while either held the hand of the other, they received the episcopal benediction.

In the early Christian Church a ring of troth, the *annulus pronubus*, was given by the man to the woman as a token and proof of her betrothment.

Pope Nicholas, A. D. 860, in the account which he gives of the ceremonies used in the Roman Church, says: "In the espousals, the man first presents the woman whom he betroths with the arræ or espousal gifts; and among these, he puts a ring on her finger."* This ring, which may be traced back to the time of Tertullian, appears to have come into the Christian Church from Roman usage; although the Oriental ring of betrothment may have been the origin of both.

According to the ritual of the Greek Church, the priest first placed the rings on the fingers of the parties, who afterwards exchanged them. In the life of St. Leobard, who is said to have flourished about the year 580, written by Gregory of Tours, he appears to have given a ring, a kiss and a pair of shoes to his affianced. The ring and shoes were a symbol of securing the lady's hands and feet in the trammels of conjugal obedience; but the ring, of itself, was sufficient to confirm the contract.†

It would seem that, on the ceremony of betrothal, the ring was placed on the third finger of the right hand; and it may be a question, whether the beautiful picture by Raffaelle, called *Lo Sposalizio*, should not be considered as an illustration of espousal or betrothing and

* The People's Dictionary of the Bible, art. *Rings*.

† Douce's Illustrations of Shakspeare, p. 69.

not a marriage of the Virgin. Mary and Joseph stand opposite to each other in the centre; the high priest, between them, is bringing their right hands towards each other; Joseph, with his right hand, (guided by the priest,) is placing the ring on the third finger of the right hand of the Virgin; beside Mary is a group of the virgins of the Temple; near Joseph are the suitors, who break their barren wands—that which Joseph holds in his hand has blossomed into a lily, which, according to the legend, was the sign that he was the chosen one.*

The same circumstance, of placing the ring on the third finger of the right hand, is observable in Ghirlandais's fresco of the "Espousals" in the church of the Santa Croce at Florence.

There is certainly some confusion as to the hand on which the marriage-ring was placed. However, in religious symbols of espousal, the distinction of the right hand was certainly kept. In an ancient pontifical was an order that the bridegroom should place the ring successively on three fingers of the right hand and leave it on the fourth finger of the left, in order to mark the difference between the marriage-ring, the symbol of a love which is mixed with carnal affection and the episcopal ring, the symbol of entire chastity.†

The espousal became the marriage-ring. The espou-

* The beautiful architectural design in this picture is said to be copied, but very much improved, from a picture by Perugino, the master of Raffaelle. As the latter had a genius beyond copying and as Perugino made use of the talents of his pupil, it is fair to suppose that Raffaelle composed the building and afterwards claimed its outline by inserting it, with improvement from reflection, in his own painting, *Lo Sposalizio*. The general form and proportions are to be found in Brunelleschi's design for the octagon chapel of the Scholari annexed to the church Degl' Angeli at Florence. See Kugler's Hand Book of Painting, by Eastlake, p. 332. † Martense, ii. 128.

sals consisted in a mutual promise of marriage, which was made by the man and woman before the bishop or presbyter and several witnesses; after which, the articles of agreement of marriage (called *tabulæ matrimoniales*) which are mentioned by Augustin, were signed by both persons. After this, the man delivered to the woman the ring and other gifts: an action which was termed *subarrhation.* In the latter ages the espousals have always been performed at the same time as the office of matrimony, both in the western and eastern churches; and it has long been customary for the ring to be delivered to the woman after the contract has been made, which has always been in the actual office of matrimony.*

According to Clemens Alexandrinus, the ring was given, not as an ornament but as a seal to signify the woman's duty in preserving the goods of her husband, because the care of the house belongs to her. This idea, by the by, is very reasonable, as we shall hereafter show, when speaking of the ritual of the Church of England. The symbolical import of the "wedding ring," under the spiritual influence of Christianity, came to comprise the general idea of wedded fidelity in all the width and importance of its application.†

§ 6. The first Christians engraved upon their seals symbolical figures, such as a dove, fish, anchor or lyre.‡ The rings used in their fyancels represented pigeons, fish, or, more often, two hands joined together. Clemens of Alexandria, who permitted these symbols, condemns not only the representation of idols, but also of the instru-

* Palmer's *Origines Liturgicæ*, vol. ii. p. 214.
† Bishop Jeremy Taylor's "*Wedding Ring.*"
‡ Fosbroke's Encyc. of Antiquities, p. 250.

ments of war, vases for the table and every thing repugnant to the strictness of the Gospel.

A ring, when used by the church, signifies, to use the words of liturgical writers, *integritatem fidei*, the perfection of fidelity and is *fidei sacramentum*, the badge of fidelity.*

§ 7. The canon law is the basis of marriage throughout Europe, except so far as it has been altered by the municipal laws of particular States.† An important alteration was made in the law of marriage in many countries by the decrees of the Council of Trent, held for the reformation of marriage. These decrees are the standing judgments of the Romish Church; but they were never received as authority in Great Britain. Still the ecclesiastical law of marriage in England is derived from the Roman pontiffs. It has been traced as far back as 605, soon after the establishment of Christianity there.‡

Marriages in the Episcopal Church are governed by the *Rubric*. This term signifies a title or article in certain ancient common-law books.

Rubrics also denote the rules and directions given at the beginning and in the course of the liturgy, for the order and manner in which the several parts of the office are to be performed.

Statutes of the English Parliament have confirmed the use of the rubric inserted in the part of the Common Prayer Book relating to the marriage ceremony. But prior to the British marriage acts, a case arose where no ring was used according to the Common Prayer Book.

* Notes and Queries, ii. 611.

† 1 Dow, 181; 2 Hagg. C. R. 70, 81.

‡ Hallam's Middle Ages, ii. 286, *et seq.*; Shelford on Marriage, 19, 20.

A then Chief Justice (*C. J.* Pemberton) was inclined to think it a good contract, there being words of a present contract repeated after a person in orders.*

The rubric directs that the man shall give unto the woman a ring, laying the same upon the book; and the priest, taking the ring, shall deliver it unto the man to put it on the fourth finger of the woman's left hand. And he says, "With this ring I thee wed, with my body I thee worship and with all my worldly gifts I thee endow." These words are best explained by the rubric of the 2d of Edward VI., which ran thus:† "The man shall give unto the woman a ring and other tokens of spousage, as gold or silver, laying the same upon the book; and the man, taught by the priest, shall say, 'With this ring I thee wed, this gold and silver I thee give;'" and then these words, "With all my worldly goods I thee endow," were delivered with a more peculiar significancy. Here the proper distinction is made, the endowment of all his goods means granting the custody or key and care of them. It will be seen that the word "endow" is kept apart from the positive gift of pieces of gold and silver. It has been said that the ancient pledge was a piece of silver worn in the pocket; but marriage being held sacred, it was thought more prudent to have the pledge exposed to view by making it into a ring worn upon the hand.‡

The Christian marriage-ring appears, in its substance, to have been copied from the Roman nuptial ring. It was, according to Swinburn, of iron, adorned with an

* *Poulter* v. *Cornwall*, Salk. 9.
† Burns' Eccl. Law—*Marriage.*
‡ Athenian Oracle, No. xxvi.

adamant; the metal hard and durable, signifying the durance and perpetuity of the contract. Howbeit, he says, it skilleth not at this day what metal the ring be of, the form of it being round and without end doth import that their love should circulate and flow continually.

In the Roman ritual there is a benediction of the ring and a prayer that she who wears it may continue in perfect love and fidelity to her husband and in fear of God all her days.*

§ 8. We have remarked on the vulgar error of a vein going from the fourth finger of the left hand to the heart. It is said by Swinburn and others that therefore it became the wedding finger. The priesthood kept up this idea by still keeping it as the wedding finger; but it was got at through the use of the Trinity: for, in the ancient ritual of English marriages, the ring was placed by the husband on the top of the thumb of the left hand, with the words, "In the name of the Father;" he then removed it to the forefinger, saying: "In the name of the Son;" then to the middle finger, adding: "And of the Holy Ghost;" finally, he left it, as now, on the fourth finger, with the closing word "Amen."†

As to the supposed artery to the heart. Levinus Lemnius quaintly says:—"A small branch of the artery and not of the nerves, as Gellius thought, is stretched forth from the heart unto this finger, the motion whereof you may perceive evidently in all that affects the heart of woman, by the touch of your forefinger. I used to raise

* Burns' Eccl. Law, art. *Marriage.*

† Notes and Queries, iv. 199.

such as are fallen in a swoon by pinching this joint and by rubbing the ring of gold with a little saffron: for, by this, a restoring force that is in it passeth to the heart and refresheth the fountain of life unto which this finger is joined. Wherefore antiquity thought fit to encompass it about with gold."*

By the way, a correspondent, in a British periodical, suggests: that a lady of his acquaintance has had the misfortune to lose the ring finger, and the question is raised whether she can be married in the Church of England!?†

In the "British Apollo" it is said that, during the time of George the First, the wedding-ring, though placed in the ceremony of the mariage upon the fourth finger, was worn upon the thumb.‡

The use of the ring has become so common in England that poor people will not believe the marriage to be good without one; and the notion also is that it must be of gold. At Worcester (England) on one occasion, the parties were so poor that they used a brass ring. The bride's friends indignantly protested that the ring ought to have been of gold; and the acting officer was threatened with indictment for permitting the use of such base metal.

In another case of humble marriage, the bridegroom announced that a ring was not necessary. The woman entreated to have one. The superintendent of the poor took part with the woman and represented how the absence of it would expose her to insult; and he, kindly, hesitated to proceed with the marriage until a ring was

* Hone's Table Book. † Notes and Queries, v. 371.
‡ Vol. i. p. 270.

produced. The man yielded at last and obtained one. The woman's gratitude brought tears into her eyes.

§ 9. In Roman Catholic marriages, with the priest in pontificals, go two clerks in surplices. The latter carry the holy-water pot, the sprinkler, the ritual and a little basin to put the ring in when it is to be blessed.* After the pair have clasped hands and the priest has by words joined them together, he makes the sign of the cross upon them; sprinkles them with holy water; blesses the wedding-ring and sprinkles it also with holy water in the form of a cross, after which he gives it to the man, who puts it on the wedding-finger of the woman's left hand.

§ 10. The supposed heathen origin of our marriage-ring had well nigh caused the abolition of it during the time of the Commonwealth in England. The facetious author of Hudibras gives us the following chief reasons why the Puritans wished it to be set aside:

> "Others were for abolishing
> That tool of matrimony, a ring;
> With which th' unsanctify'd bridegroom
> Is marry'd only to a thumb,
> (As wise as ringing of a pig
> That us'd to break up ground and dig,)
> The bride to nothing but the will,
> That nulls the after-marriage still."†

§ 11. The author of the present essay found a difficulty in getting a correct account of the use of the ring in Jewish marriages;‡ although there is an exceedingly

* Hamilton's Marriage Rites, etc., 125.

† III. ii. 309. ‡ See Hamilton's Marriage Rites, etc., 178.

learned and interesting decision in relation to one in the English Ecclesiastical Reports.* He applied to a professional friend of the Jewish persuasion, who obtained the following interesting particulars from one of our best Hebrew scholars :† The nuptial rite among the Jews consists of three distinct acts which together form the regular marriage ceremony.

1st. The religious act *Kidushin*, consecration, by which the husband that is to be *mekadesh* consecrates—that is to say, sets apart from all other women and inhibits to all other men the woman who, by that act, becomes his wife.

The ceremony is performed in manner following. A canopy is raised under which the bridegroom takes his stand. The bride is brought in and placed either at his right hand or opposite to him. The officiating minister pronounces the initiatory nuptial benediction, after which he receives from the bridegroom a ring that must be of a certain value and the absolute property of the bridegroom, purchased and paid for by him and not received as a present or bought on credit. After due inquiry on these points, the minister returns the ring to the bridegroom, who places it on the forefinger of the bride's right hand, while at the same time he says to her in Hebrew: "Behold! thou art *mekudesheth* consecrated unto me by means of this ring, according to the law of Moses and of Israel." The bride joins in and expresses her consent to this act of consecration by holding out her right hand and accepting the ring; which—after her

* *Lindo* v. *Belisario*, 1 Haggard's Consist. Reps. 217.

† And see Morgan's Doctrine and Law of Marriage, Adultery and Divorce, i. 97, *et seq.*, and particularly note x. at p. 103.

husband has pronounced the formula—constitutes her his lawful wife; so that, even though the marriage should not be consummated, neither party is thenceforth at liberty to contract another marriage, unless they have previously been divorced according to law: and if the woman were to submit to the embraces of another man, she would be guilty of adultery.

The law which enjoins "consecration" requires that the symbol of the act should be an object made of one of the precious metals—gold or silver—and of a certain value. But though the law does not insist on or even mention a ring, yet the custom of using a ring has, during very many centuries, so generally prevailed—to the exclusion of all other symbols—that the words "by means of this ring" have been incorporated in the formula of consecration. In the greater part of Europe and in America the ring is usually of gold; but in Russia, Poland and the East the poorer classes use rings of silver.

2d. The civil act *Ketubah*, written contract: As soon as bridegroom and bride have completed the act of consecration, the officiating minister proceeds to read the marriage contract, a document in Hebrew characters, signed by the bridegroom in the presence of two competent witnesses—by which the husband engages to protect, cherish and maintain his wife; to provide her with food, raiment, lodging and all other necessaries; and secure to her a dowry for the payment of which the whole of his estate—real and personal—stands pledged.

When this document has been read, the minister pronounces the closing nuptial benediction, and a glass is broken in memory of Jerusalem destroyed, (see Psalm

cxxxvii.,) which completes the ceremony. The psalm here referred to is that most beautiful one, beginning, "By the rivers of Babylon," and ending with what has immediate reference to the destruction: "Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones."*

3d. But all the time these religious and civil acts are being performed, the young couple have likewise before their eyes and above their heads the emblem of the moral act *Hhupah*, cohabitation or living together by themselves under one roof. This is the purpose for which the canopy is raised over them; beneath which they ought, by right, to stand quite alone—though generally the minister and parents or nearest friends also find room under it.

These three distinct acts—religious, civil and domestic—to constitute marriage according to the regular form *Hhupa ve kidushin*, require ten adult male witnesses. But so binding is the act of consecration, that if it were performed privately, without the knowledge of parents or assistance of minister and solely in the presence of two competent witnesses who hear the man pronounce the formula "Behold thou art consecrated unto me," etc., and see the woman accept the ring, this proceeding, however irregular and reprehensible, constitutes a marriage perfectly valid in the eyes of the law.

Larpent, writing from France, but imbued with an ordinary English prejudice, which is apt to ridicule unfamiliar things and lose sight of reasons for customs, blurts out this: "I have been to the Jew's wedding. The ceremony consists principally of singing and drinking and

* Verse 9.

blessing in Hebrew. There must be something Jewish, however, as usual, and that is concerning the ring, which, as soon as produced, is shown round to all the rabbis near and some elders, etc., and to the sponsors, to be sure it is really gold or otherwise the marriage is void; and the true old clothesman-like way in which they all spied at the ring was very amusing. Nearly the last ceremony is the bridegroom's smashing a wine-glass in a plate on the floor, with an idea that he and his spouse are then as difficult to separate as it would be to re-unite the glass. The gentleman showed gallantry by exerting all his force and looking most fiercely as he broke the glass."*

The handing of the ring from the minister to some one of the persons present has a reason broader than that which Larpent is pleased to assign, as we consider we have shown. We confirm it by saying, that the Jewish law requires, at the time of marriage, that a valuable consideration should pass from the bridegroom to the bride. This consideration is represented by the ring, which, therefore, must not be of less value than the *minimum* fixed by the law. And as this value has to be ascertained and attested, which cannot be done by less than two witnesses, the officiating minister or Rabbi, after making the inquiries required by law, examines the ring and hands it to the presiding officer of the synagogue, (a layman, who is supposed to know more about the value of gold or silver than a Rabbi,) who also examines and hands it back to the minister; and these two, the minister and the officer of the synagogue, then witness that the article is of that value which the law re-

* Larpent's Private Journal, 563.

quires. We say this advisedly; and can add as positively that the ring is never handed round to third persons.

At a marriage to which the author was invited—a marriage between a Jewish merchant and the amiable daughter of a learned Rabbi in New-York—the usual course was not departed from. The father of the bride, who officiated, received the ring from the bridegroom, ascertained that it was the young man's own property lawfully acquired, examined and then delivered it to the president of the synagogue. He, also, examined and handed the ring back to the minister, who, finally, performed the ceremony.

§ 12. Some married women are so rigidly superstitious or firm that they will not draw off their wedding-ring to wash or at any other time: extending the expression "till death do us part" even to the ring.*

And there is a superstition connected with the wear of the ring, worked into this proverb:

> "As your wedding-ring wears,
> Your cares will wear away."

§ 13. Gold-wire rings of three twisted wires were given away at weddings; and Anthony Wood relates of Edward Kelly, a "famous philosopher" in Queen Elizabeth's days, that "Kelly, who was openly profuse beyond the modest limits of a sober philosopher, did give away in gold-wire rings (or rings twisted with three gold wires) at the marriage of one of his maid servants, to the value of £4,000."†

* Hone's Table Book.

† Fosbroke, 249; Hone's Table Book.

§ 14. A gold ring has been discovered in Rome, which has the subject of Cupid and Psyche cut into the metal.* We give an enlarged illustration of it. Psyche is figured

more ethereally than she generally appears upon gems. The lower portion of this emanation seems to partake of the delicate plumage of the butterfly; and the whole prettily illustrates the soul. There is a strong contrast between these figures; and we are inclined to think the designer intended it. While Psyche is all that we have said, the other form comes up to Colman's theatrical Cupid:

"Fat, chubby-cheeked and stupid."

Byron observes that the story of Cupid and Psyche is one uniform piece of loveliness.

§ 15. The meeting of St. Anne and St. Joachim at the Golden Gate is a favorite subject.† The Nuns of

* Caylus, iii. 313, Pl. lxxxv.
† Hone's Every Day Book.

St. Anne at Rome show a rude silver ring as the wedding-ring of Anne and Joachim.

§ 16. A wicked trick upon weak and confiding women used to be played by forcing upon their finger a rush ring: as thereby they fancied themselves married.* Richard, Bishop of Salisbury, in his Constitutions, Anno 1217, forbids the putting of rush rings or any of like matter on women's fingers.

De Breveil says,† it was an ancient custom to use a rush ring where the necessity for marriage was apparent.

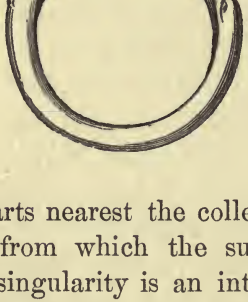
§ 17. Rings occur in the fifteenth century, with the orpine plant (*Telephium*) as a device. It was used because the bending of the leaves was presumed to prognosticate whether love was true or false. The common name for orpine plants was that of *midsummer men.* In a tract said to be written by Hannah More, among other superstitions of one of the heroines, "she would never go to bed on Midsummer Eve without sticking up in her room the well-known plant called midsummer men, as the bending of the leaves to the right or to the left would never fail to tell her whether her lover was true or false." The orpine plant occurs among the love divinations on Midsummer Eve in the Connoisseur:‡ "I likewise stuck up two midsummer men, one for myself and one for him. Now if this had died away, we should never have come together; but, I assure you, his blowed and turned to mine."

§ 18. Marriage-rings, in the olden time, were not, as

* See Douce's Illust. of Shakspeare, 194.
† Antiquities of Paris. ‡ No. 56.

now, plain in form and without words.* Some had a seal part for impression.† A ring of this kind was ploughed up in the year 1783 on Flodden Field. It was of gold and an inscription upon it ran thus: "Where are the constant lovers who can keep themselves from evil speakers?" This would have been a relic for Abbotsford; but Dryburgh Abbey has the wizard; and a stranger is in his halls.

A Roman bronze ring has been discovered of singular shape and fine workmanship, which appears to have been intended as a token of love or affection.*



The parts nearest the collet are flat and resemble a triangle from which the summit has been cut. Its greatest singularity is an intaglio ploughed out of the material itself, representing the head of a young person. The two triangular portions which start from the table of the ring are filled with ornaments, also engraved hollow. Upon it is the word VIVAS or *Mayest thou live.*

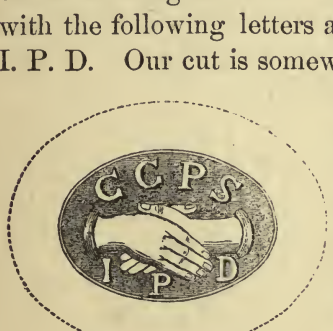
§ 19. In the year 1845, an interesting ring was found at Sessa, (the *Suessa Auruncorum* of the ancients,) situate

* Herrick, in his Hesperides, speaks of "posies for our wedding-ring."

† London Gent.'s Mag. vol. lv. O. S. p. 89.

‡ Caylus, ii. 312, Pl. lxxxix.

in the Terra de Livaro, Kingdom of Naples. We here give the original signet. A drawing of the same with its outer edge, which, as it will be seen, contained the name of an after owner and the outer ring, with its religious maxims along its edge, appears in the Archæological Journal.* The stone which forms the signet is of a deep-red color and, apparently, a species of agate. In the centre are engraved two right hands joined together, with the following letters above and below, C. C. P. S., I. P. D. Our cut is somewhat larger than the original.



Judging from the workmanship of the signet, it is believed to have been executed in the period between the reigns of Severus and Constantine or, in other words, about the middle of the third century. The interpretation of these letters must be left to conjecture. It would appear, however, to have been regarded as an object of value or interest at a later period, when it was set in gold for the person whose name appears round the stone in capital letters, which are to be thus read:

✠ SIGILLV· THOMASII· DE· ROGERIIS· DE· SUESSA·
Sigillum Thomasii de Rogeriis de Suessa.

On the outer side of the hoop of the ring are two other inscriptions, also in capital letters. The first reads:

✠ XPS· VINCIT· XPS· REGNAT· XPS· IMPERA·
Christus vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat.

* No. 32.

And the second:

✠ ET· VERBU: CARO: FACTU: E: ET ABITAUIT: INOB·
Et verbum caro factum est et habitavit in nobis.

The workmanship of these inscriptions is exceedingly good and the letters well formed and sharply cut. It will be remarked that in the first legend on the hoop the letter T. in the word *Imperat* is omitted for want of space; and in the second, for the same reason, not only the final *m*, as usual, is twice suppressed, but the word *est* is given in the abbreviated form of *e;* several letters are joined together; the aspirate is omitted in *habitavit;* and the letter *n* is made to serve for the final of *in* and the initial of *nobis*. As to the date of this ring, it may, very probably, be ascribed to the thirteenth century. There can be no doubt that the owner, Thomasius de Rogeriis, must have been a member of the Neapolitan family of Roggieri. The legend upon the ring, *Christus vincit*, *Christus regnat*, *Christus imperat*, is found, also, in the series of Anglo-Gothic gold coins from the reign of Edward III. of England to that of Henry VI.

We have been favored with the perusal of a presentation copy of the article (in the Archæological Journal) and from it have taken the above explanation. This copy was sent by the possessor of the ring, George Borrett, of Southampton, England, Esquire, to Isaac E. Cotheal, of New-York, Esquire; and it has, interleaved, (with the addition of a wax impression,) the following MS. note: "The Abbé Farrari, a priest attached to the Church of Sta. Maria in Comedia, (also called the Bocci della Venite,) submitted it to some members of the Propaganda at Rome, 12th April, 1845, who described it as

follows: *Christus vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat, et verbum caro factum est, et habitavit in nobis. Sigillum Thomasii de Rogeriis de Suessa:* Christ conquers, Christ reigns, Christ commands and the Word was made flesh and dwelt in us. The seal of Thomas de Rogeriis de Suessa.

"The veritable signet of Cicero (*i. e.*) the coral in the centre of the ring only. There were members of the Propaganda who thought it resembled some impressions attached to documents in the Vatican of the Roman Governor in Judea, '*Pontius Pilate.*' The gold setting is supposed to be about the eighth or ninth century by some dignitary in triumph over the pagan philosopher or governor."

Notwithstanding what is thus said, we are strongly under the impression that it was a mystical ring or one worn in remembrance of a marriage. Upon marbles and gems which illustrate the marriage ceremony, the bride and bridegroom are represented with their respective right hands joined. In Montfaucon* (and figured also in Maffei) is a gem which has marital symbols and among them a ring and the clasped right hands; and, in the same work, (Montfaucon,)† we find a ring precisely in the form and of the size of the Sessa ring, with right hands disposed in exactly the same manner and also letters above and below the emblem. The words there are:

PROTEROS
VGIAE

Proteros and *Hygie;* and Montfaucon says, "Cela marque peut être le mariage contracté entre les deux."

* Tom. III. P. II. Pl. cxxciv.
† Supplement, Tom. III. Pl. LXV. p. 174.

Addison, in his Dialogue on Medals, says: "The two hands that join one another are emblems of Fidelity;" and he quotes (Ovid's Met. lib. iv.):

"——— *Inde Fides dextræque data.*"

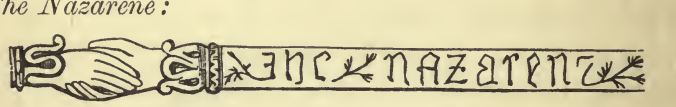
(Thence faith and the right hand joined.) And also Seneca (Hurc. Fur. lib. iv.):

"*Sociemus animos, pignus hoc fidei cape,*
Contingе dextram."

(Let us unite souls, receive this pledge of faith, grasp the right hand.)

We can hardly imagine a more perfect token of love, affection or friendship than this of right hands clasped and the names of giver and receiver. We commend it to loving friends and jewellers.

This joining of right hands appears upon ancient English marriage-rings. Here is one, with its motto, *The Nazarene:*



A silver wedding-ring, dug up at Somerton Castle, Lincolnshire, has a poesy very common in former times:

"I love you, my sweet dear heart.
Go I pray you please my love."*

There is a marriage gold ring of the time of Richard the Second of England, having a French motto, translated, *Be of good heart*, and bearing the figure of St. Catharine with her wheel, emblematical of good fortune, and St. Margaret, to whom Catholics address their devotions for safe delivery in childbirth.† The author has seen an old

* Gent.'s Mag. vol. lxxv. p. 801, 927.
† Ib. vol. lx. O. S. 798, 1001.

American ring, in the possession of a young man, whose grandfather presented it on his wedding day to his wife. It has a piece of jet set in it and is cut into raised angular facets. On the inside is engraved:

" First love Christ, that died for thee,
Next to him, love none but me."
T. A. G.

John Dunton, a London bookseller and who is mentioned in the *Dunciad*, describes, in his autobiography, his wedding-ring: as having two hearts united upon it and this poesy:

" God saw thee
Most fit for me."

This would not seem to have attached to his second wife; for she left him and wrote in one of her letters, "I and all good people think you never married me for love, but for my money."

Dr. John Thomas, who was Bishop of Lincoln in 1753, married four times. The motto or poesy on the wedding-ring at his fourth marriage was:

" If I survive,
I'll make them five."

This Rev. Dr. John Thomas was a man of genial humor. He used to tell a story of his burying a body; and a woman came "and pulled me," said he, "by the sleeve in the middle of the service. 'Sir, sir, I want to speak to you.' 'Prythee,' says I, 'woman, wait till I have done.' 'No, sir, I must speak to you immediately.' 'Why then, what is the matter?' 'Why sir,' says she, 'you are burying a man who died of the small-pox next to my poor husband, who never had it.'"

§ 19. Heroes, philosophers, poets—indeed, men of all classes leave remembrances in the shape of rings. The will of Washington contains this: "To my sisters-in-law Hannah Washington and Mildred Washington, to my friends Eleanor Stuart, Hannah Washington of Fairfield and Elizabeth Washington of Hayfield, I give each a mourning ring of the value of one hundred dollars. These bequests are not made for the intrinsic value of them, but as mementoes of my esteem and regard." Shakspeare bequeathes such tokens to several friends—among them, to his brother players, whom he calls "my poor fellows"—"twenty shillings eight pence apiece to buy them rings." Pope bequeathed sums of five pounds to friends, who were to lay them out in rings. This great poet was no admirer of funerals that blackened all the way or of gorgeous tombs: "As to my body, my will is that it be buried near the monument of my dear parents at Twickenham, with the addition after the words *filius fecit* of these only, *et sibi: Qui obiit anno* 17–, *ætatis* —: and that it be carried to the grave by six of the poorest men of the parish, to each of whom I order a suit of gray coarse cloth as mourning."

The affection which Dr. Johnson bore to the memory of his wife was a pretty point in his heavy character: "March 28, 1753. I kept this day as the anniversary of my Letty's death, with prayer and tears in the morning. In the evening I prayed for her conditionally, if it were lawful." Her wedding-ring, when she became his wife, was, after her death, preserved by him as long as he lived with an affectionate care in a little round wooden box and in the inside of which he pasted a slip of paper thus inscribed by him in fair characters:

"Eheu!
Eliz. Johnson
Nupta Jul. 9°, 1736,
Mortua, eheu!
Mart. 17°, 1752."*

Husbands can love, where friends may see nothing to admire: Mrs. Johnson has been summed up as "perpetual illness and perpetual opium."†

Lord Eldon wore a mourning ring for his wife. In his will we find this: "And I direct that I may be buried in the same tomb at Kingston in which my most beloved wife is buried and as near to her remains as possible; and I desire that the ring which I wear on my finger may be put with my body into my coffin and be buried with me."‡

The last gift of Tom Moore's mother to him was her wedding-ring: "Have been preparing my dear mother for my leaving her, now that I see her so much better. She is quite reconciled to my going; and said this morning, 'Now, my dear Tom, don't let yourself be again alarmed about me in this manner, nor hurried away from your house and business.' She then said she must, before I left her this morning, give me her wedding-ring as her last gift; and, accordingly sending for the little trinket-box in which she kept it, she, herself, put the ring on my finger."§

The poet Gray was the possessor of trinkets; and, perhaps, we may refer these to the "effeminacy" and "visible fastidiousness" mentioned in Temple's Life, (adopted by Mason.) In his will, the poet gives an

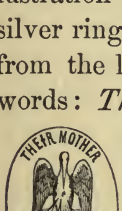
* Boswell's Johnson, 280, (Murray's ed.)
† Piozzi.
‡ Twiss's Life of Eldon.
§ Moore's Diary, 173.

amount of stock to Richard Stonehewer, and adds: "and I beg his acceptance of one of my diamond rings," while to Dr. Thomas Wharton he bequeaths £500—and, "I desire him also to accept of one of my diamond rings." He bequeaths his watches, *rings*, etc., to his cousins Mary Antrobus and Dorothy Comyns, to be equally and amicably shared between them.

§ 21. On the 1st of March, 1854, the ship *Powhattan* sailed from Havre for New-York, with two hundred and fifty passengers. Not far from Barnegat Inlet she became a wreck, so complete that not a vestige of her reached land. The passengers were seen to cling to the bulwarks and, then, drop off by fifties; her captain, through his trumpet, could be heard to implore attention to them; while the sea crushed and dashed all to death on the fretted beach. The clothing of one of the victims, who was not more than twenty years of age, showed her to have belonged to the wealthy class of Germans. She was beautiful even as she lay in death dabbled with sea-weed and scum. Upon her fingers were two rings; one, plain and the other had a heart attached to it. They were marked P. S. and B. S. 1854. This we gather from a fleeting newspaper. While the mind sighs as it leaves the corpse to its shallow, seaside, foreign and premature grave, a curiosity is awakened by the rings and the attendant emblem. The date shows them to be very late gifts. Were these tokens of affection from brother and sister—for one heart might well do for both—and who placed them upon that now cold hand, then glowing with an affection that throbbed from under those rings? Or, was this young creature on her

way to her youthful husband, who had come before and built up a home and whose betrothal was shown in the *heart*, while the plain ring had made them one before God and the church and who was watching for her and, in fancy, had, through day dreams and in night watching, fancied the vessel sweep into port and the hand, that lovingly wore his gifts, wave a recognition? It may be that father and mother were the donors, with a blessing and a prayer and the added almost certainty of thought that she who received with a last kiss, would long survive parents to reverence the tokens, hallow their memory and think of Fatherland! Oh, how much of fact, of poetry, of sadness may crowd around a little ring!!

§ 22. We can hardly meet with a prettier token and illustration of affection than is to be found upon an ancient silver ring. It has a pelican feeding three young ones from the life-current oozing out of her breast; with the words: *Their Mother.* There is but little doubt that



this was one of three rings given by a mother to her three children. The pelican is made an emblem of charity; and Hackluyt, in his Voyages, speaks of the "*Pellicane*"—"which is fain to be the lovingst bird that is, which rather than her young should want, will spare her heart-blood." In no form or fashion could a mother's love have been more beautifully and permanently displayed—pure as the metal, perfect as the emblem. It makes us feel that love *is* indestructible; that it came from Heaven and returns thither. No matter what may have been the sorrows, the cares and the long-suffering of that mother; no matter though her heart dances no longer to

the music of her children's voices; no matter what were the earthly trials of those loved children; no matter though their home-nest has been torn down or that the snow of the world covers where the wings of the parent bird were spread; no matter though the grave has taken all, save this illustration of a divine emanation:—we feel that such love could not die and the throbbing from the poet's soul comes upon our memory:

"Oh when the mother meets on high
The babe she lost ———
Hath she not then, for pains and fears,
The day of woe, the watchful night,
For all her sorrows, all her tears,
An overpayment ot delight!"*

§ 23. This love between mother and child, from its undying purity, is always a pleasant thing to trace and to follow. In the *Household Words*,† a work in which there is more of usefulness, pleasure and beauty than in any other modern book, a ring plays a pretty part in a ballad of the youthful knight, Bran of Brittany. He was "wounded sore," and "in a dungeon tower, helpless he wept in the foeman's power."

"O find a messenger true to me,
To bear me a letter across the sea.
A messenger true they brought him there,
And the young knight warned him thus with care:
Lay now that dress of thine aside,
And in beggar's weeds thy service hide,
And take my ring, my ring of gold,
And wrap it safe in some secret fold,

* A gold ring, bearing a pelican feeding her young, was found at Bury St. Edmunds, England. (Gent.'s Mag. xxxix. 532, N.S.) The crest of the house of Lumley, Earls of Scarborough, is a pelican in her nest feeding her young.

† Vol. viii. p. 179.

But, once at my mother's castle gate,
That ring will gain admittance straight.
And O! if she comes to ransom me,
Then high let the white flag hoisted be;
But if she comes not—ah, well-a-day!
The night-black flag at the mast display.*
When the messenger true to Leon came,
At supper sat the high-born dame:
With cups of gold and royal fare,
And the harpers merrily harping there.
I kneel to thee, right noble dame;
This ring will show from whom I came.
And he who gave me that same ring,
Bade me in haste this letter bring.
Oh! harpers, harpers, cease your song;
The grief at my heart is sharp and strong.
Why did they this from his mother hide?
In a dungeon lies my only pride!
O quick make ready a ship for me,
This night I'll cross the stormy sea."

The ballad goes on to show how young Bran, from his bed, at morn, at noon, at vesper, asked the warder whether he saw a ship; and when, at last, the warder says he observes one, he couples it with the falsehood that the color of its flag is black.

"When the downcast knight that answer heard,
He asked no more, he spake no word.

* Has not the idea of this *black flag* been taken from the black sail referred to by Plutarch in his life of Theseus? When the latter was to go with the Athenian youths to attempt the destruction of the Minotaur, a ship was prepared with a black sail, as carrying them to certain ruin. But when Theseus encouraged his father Ægeus by his confidence of success against the Minotaur, he gave another sail, a white one, to the pilot, ordering him, if he brought Theseus safe back, to hoist the white; but if not, to sail with the black one in token of his misfortune. When Theseus returned, the pilot forgot to hoist the white sail and Ægeus destroyed himself.

He turned to the wall his face so wan,
And shook in the breath of the Mighty One!"

The mother touches the strand; hears a death-bell; asks of a gray-haired man; speeds wildly to the tower:

"At the foot of the tower, to the gaoler grim,
She sobbed aloud and she called to him:
O! open the gates (my son! my son!)
O open the gates (my only son!)
They opened the gates; no word they said:
Before her there her son lay dead.
In her arms she took him so tenderly,
And laid her down—never more rose she!"

The ballad then describes an oak, with lofty head, whereon the birds gather at night:

"And amidst them comes ever croaking low,
With a young dark raven, an aged crow.
Wearily onward they flap their way
With drooping wings, soaked through with spray,
As they had come from a far countrye;
As they had flown o'er a stormy sea.
And the birds they sing so sweet and clear
That the waves keep very still to hear.
They all sing out in a merry tone,
They all sing together—save two alone.
With mournful voice ever croaking low,
Sing, happy birds! says the aged crow,
Blest little birds! sing, for you may,
You did not die from home far away!"

How this noble ballad would have stirred the hearts of the authors of "The Lay of the Last Minstrel" and of "Christabel"!

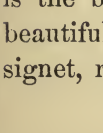
§ 24. Authors of fiction, from early times, have made

use of rings for their scenes. Shakspeare not unfrequently introduces them; indeed the most interesting portion of *Cymbeline* is worked up through the wager of a ring as to the honor of the heroine. Imogen, in taking leave of Posthumus, says:

> "——— Look here, love;
> This diamond was my mother's; take it, heart;
> But keep it till you woo another wife,
> When Imogen is dead.
> *Posthumus.* How! how! another?
> You gentle gods, give me but this I have,
> And sear up my embracements from a next
> With bonds of death! Remain thou here,
> (*Putting on the ring,*)
> While sense can keep it on."

And he, then, exchanges for it, "a manacle of love," a bracelet, placing it upon her arm, that "fairest prisoner." Iachimo induced Posthumus to wager this ring, which he esteemed "more than the world enjoys"—but it is unnecessary to go further: for who has not read Shakspeare?

§ 25. Roman iron rings, wrought with much care and having precious stones, but minute enough for a child, have been found. One or two of them are mentioned and



illustrated in Caylus,* who, no doubt rightly, considers they were intended for the finger of a domestic deity or household god.

The Romans clung to their home deities; and this is the best part of their character. One of the most beautiful of the antique draped figures, cut upon a signet, represents a woman contemplating a household

* Vol. ii. 310, 314.

god,* "a symbol of that domestic affection which the ancients, exalted almost blamelessly, into an object of divine homage."†

It was on this particular gem that Croly wrote these charming lines:

"Domestic love! not in proud palace halls
Is often seen thy beauty to abide;
Thy dwelling is in lowly cottage walls,
That in the thickets of the woodbine hide;
With hum of bees around, and from the spring,
Shining along thro' banks with harebells dyed;
And many a bird to warble on the wing,
When morn her saffron robe o'er heaven and earth doth fling.

O! love of loves!—to thy white hand is given
Of earthly happiness the golden key!

* It has been called Calphurnia consulting the Penates on the fate of Cæsar.
† Dagley's Gems, p. 6.

"Thine are the joyous hours of winter's even,
When the babes cling around their father's knee;
And thine the voice that, on the midnight sea,
Melts the rude mariner with thoughts of home,
Peopling the gloom with all he longs to see.
Spirit! I've built a shrine; and thou hast come;
And on its altar closed—for ever closed thy plume!"

Gifts of rings by lovers have always been common; but the intimate relation between husband and wife brings toils, duties and sacrifices which generally charm off ordinary love tokens. It is comforting, however, when the husband can look to the past, to the present, to the future with sentiments like those embraced in the following beautiful lines in connection with the gift of a ring:

"TO MRS. ———, WITH A RING.

"'Thee, Mary, with this ring I wed,'—
So, sixteen years ago, I said—
Behold another ring—for what?
To wed thee o'er again? Why not?
With that first ring I married youth,
Grace, beauty, innocence and truth,
Taste long admir'd, sense long rever'd
And all my Mary then appeared.
If she, by merit since disclosed,
Prove twice the woman I supposed:
I plead that double merit now
To justify a double vow.
Here then to-day (with faith as sure,
With ardor as intense and pure,
As when amidst the rites divine
I took thy troth and plighted mine)
To thee, sweet girl, my second ring,
A token and a pledge I bring,
With this I wed till death us part
Thy riper virtues to my heart;

Those virtues which, before untried,
The wife has added to the bride;
Those virtues, whose progressive claim,
Endearing wedlock's very name,
My soul enjoys, my song approves,
For conscience' sake, as well as love's.
For why?—They show me hour by hour
Honor's high thought, affection's power,
Discretion's deed, sound judgment's sentence,
And teach me all things—but repentance."*

And there is a charm and gentleness about the following lines which Dr. Drennan addressed to his wife, with a gift of a ring:

"Emblem of happiness! not bought nor sold;
Accept this modest ring of virgin gold.
Love, in this small, but perfect, circle trace;
And duty, in its soft but strict embrace.
Plain, precious, pure, as best becomes the wife;
Yet firm to bear the frequent rubs of life.
Connubial life disdains a fragile toy,
Which rust can tarnish and a touch destroy;
Nor much admires what courts the general gaze,
The dazzling diamond's meretricious blaze,
That hides, with glare, the anguish of a heart,
By nature hard, but polished bright by art.
More to thy taste the ornament that shows
Domestic bliss and, without glaring, glows,
Whose gentle pressure serves to keep the mind
To *all* correct; to *one* discreetly kind—
Of simple elegance the unconscious charm;
The holy amulet to keep from harm.

* We do not know who is the author of these lines. They appeared anonymously in the Gentlemen's Magazine (London) for 1780, vol. l. Old Series, 337, and it is merely said that they are by the "writer of lines on presenting a knife and verses on a former wedding day."

To guard, at once and consecrate, the shrine—
Take this dear pledge :—it makes and keeps thee mine.

§ 26. There is an interesting story in the *Gesta Romanorum** (indeed the whole work is full of pleasing matter) entitled the judgment of Solomon. It is often represented in that illumination which in the ancient manuscripts of the French translation of the Bible by Guiars des Moulins is prefixed to the Proverbs of Solomon, although the story itself does not occur in that Bible. It appears to have been a great favorite in the middle ages; and was often related from the pulpit. A king, in some domestic difference with his wife, had been told by her that one only of her three sons was a true offspring, but which of them was so she refused to discover. This gave him much uneasiness; and his death soon afterwards approaching, he called his children together; and declared, in the presence of witnesses, that he left a ring, which had very singular properties, to him that should be found to be his lawful son. On his death a dispute arose about the ring between the youths —and it was at length agreed to refer its decision to the King of Jerusalem. He immediately ordered that the dead body of the father should be taken up and tied to a tree; that each of the sons should shoot an arrow at it and that he who penetrated the deepest should have the ring. The eldest shot first and the arrow went far into the body; the second shot also and deeper than the other. The youngest son stood at a distance and wept bitterly; but the king said to him: "Young man, take your arrow and shoot as your brothers have done." He

* Douce's Illustrations of Shakspeare, 549.

answered, "Far be it from me to commit so great a crime. I would not for the whole world disfigure the body of my own father." The king said: "Without doubt you are his son, and the others are changelings: to you, therefore, I adjudge the ring."

Here the author closes his "Dactylotheca" or casket of rings.

Metaphorically speaking, he fears it has been discovered that he does not wear a *ring of power;* and that no *talismanic ring* is in his possession. And it may be that some constrained position in which the writer has kept his readers, will allow them to desire the use of *cramp rings* for relief. If so, he would willingly "creep to cross" to succor them: provided the ending of this essay did not answer that purpose.

One thing the author will hope; and it is this: that his readers and he have fashioned the interesting token of friendship a *gimmal ring;* and if it be so, then they will pass from this work with the idea that they have one part of such ring, while the writer may proudly hold to the other, until some future essay shall bring author and friends and the twin hoops of the *gimmal* together again. With such a token upon his hand, he can waive a farewell.

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D.

E.