

Literature, &c.

British Magazines
FOR SEPTEMBER.From Chambers's Edinburgh Journal.
A TRADITION OF SARK.

THE small island of Sark, or, as it is sometimes called, Serk, is situated in the British Channel, somewhat between, and to the southward of its better-known neighbours Alderney and Guernsey. In fair weather it is easily discernible from Port St. Peter in the latter Island being distant about seven miles—an hour and a half's sail, under the most favourable conditions, owing to the prevalence of strong currents, which in some cases literally race between the islands. As thus seen, it presents the most singular appearance. To my own mind, there is no simile which seems to picture it more completely than that of comparing it to a vast wart stuck in the green waters, with rugged sides and a verdant summit. This will only faintly convey the impression of the precipitous character of the mural ramparts with which the island breasts and defies the Atlantic stream rushing up the Channel. The British seas own scarcely such another island as Sark. It is a natural citadel, shut up on every side, and built, as it were, to defy the entrance of mankind: its perpendicular sides are cleft into deep abysses, which seem to yawn with fearful omen upon all intruders, while every now and then some great wave breaks over their mouths, filling the air with a thunder of the most mournful and depressing character. The surrounding waves bristle with sharp rocks, which assume the most grotesque and hideous forms I ever beheld—huge elephants, giants' heads and arms, pinacled spires, pyramids, heads of animals—and from the face of one black rock looks forth a gigantic countenance, grinning a grim defiance. These accessories appear as if set by nature as huge sentinels to guard the privacy of the isle. Tradition and history concur in informing us of the fearful shipwrecks which these natural defences have caused; and it is still more melancholy to think that the great caverns; over which the waters idly splash now, have formerly resounded to the drowning shriek of the unhappy seamen.

From an outline so forbidding as this, it may be conjectured that it was long ere Sark was inhabited by man. The grey gull probably held undisputed dominion over it for centuries. It was about the sixth century, if history is to be relied on, before a human being entered the island, at least to dwell there. The first occupant, having a just appreciation of the peculiar appropriateness of the island for seclusion, was as we are informed, a bishop of Dol, in Brittany, who had in view the conversion of the neighbouring islands to the Christian faith; and, a preparation for the work, the old gentleman shut himself up in Sark to enjoy a little private meditation. There he built himself a chapel and monastery. Whether, having once got in, the reverend father found it a hard matter to get out again, and so remained a solitary prisoner to the end of his days, history says not. For a considerable period subsequent to the decease of a bishop, Sark was as desolate an island as the veriest hermit could have desired; but it was a desolation of a peculiar character; for the seas around it, and the nearest islands were if not filled with life and bustle, at any rate tolerably busy for quiet times like these; and no doubt many a passing vessel carried a shuddering crew as she ran by the frowning cliffs and roaring caves of Sark.

Of the tradition I am about to relate there are two or three different accounts. All agree upon the remarkable manner in which the exploit was conducted, but differ with regard to the time and persons engaged therein. A sketch of events in chronological order will give us an outline of both accounts.

The next occupants were a horde of pirates, who protected by the nature of the coast of all aggression, and possessing themselves of the requisite intimate knowledge of its dangers, were able to pursue their iniquitous trade to an extent which made them a terror to the Channel. The island itself was the destroyer of perhaps more vessels and men than the pirates as, in stormy weather, they exhibited false lights and beacons, which only too successfully decoyed ships into their power, or caused their ruin upon the iron-bound shores. The havoc committed was so extensive, as to prove a material hindrance and injury to the trade of these parts, and it was determined by the merchants of Rye and Winchelsea, who had probably been among the severest sufferers, to send out an expedition to exterminate the pirates without mercy. If these were really the actors in the succeeding drama, it will tell by what means they accomplished their end.

Sir Walter Raleigh, and some analysts of the Channel Island events, record that, after the expulsion of the pirates, Sark was for some time once more left to its primitive desolation and solitude, until, in fact, the reign of Edward VI. During that monarch's reign, however, it was seized by the French, who performed a work of considerable supererogation in fortifying the island by the erection of two forts thereon, and thus, as Sir Walter Raleigh says, could have held out 'against the grand Turk himself,' there being a sufficient quantity of cultivated ground to support the men necessary for its defence in perpetuity. The French, availing themselves of their invincible position, harassed the English traders, and did serious damage to the Channel traffic, making descents, to the great loss and terror of the inhabitants, also upon the neighbouring islands. No open military efforts appear to have been made to dis-

lodge them from their citadel. If made, they were futile; and in truth, it was probably perceived that all chance of success by other means than stratagem was wholly nugatory. In the reign of Mary, some bold Flemings, subjects of Philip her husband, headed by a gentleman from the Netherlands, undertook the work, and immediately set forth on the expedition. Whether the Winchelsea and Rye merchants, or Flemings, have the legitimate claim to the merit of the action, I am unable to determine: either account is sufficient for my purpose in the present place.

A single ship anchored before Sark, having all the appearance of a merchant vessel, which excited an unusual commotion and surprise among the vigilant inhabitants of the island: her sails were hauled down, and preparations were made on board for a temporary stay. There was something particularly alarming in all this, but it was carefully remarked by the look-out on shore, that no weapon of offence was visible on deck, or in the hands of the seamen. There were all sorts of conjectures as to the object of the arrival, and the most sedulous preparations were made by the Sarkese for a vigorous defence in the event of any attack upon the island. Nothing however appeared to be farther from the minds of the occupants of the ship. A white flag waved from her top, and every demonstration of a pacific nature was exhibited. But the Sarkese were not without the strongest suspicions of treachery; and when they beheld a boat leave the side of the vessel with a white flag at her bow, and containing only a few sailors, and make for the rocks, which formed the only landing-place, they crowded to meet them with loaded harquebuses and other weapons of offence. The sailors, however, making parade of their defenceless condition, were permitted to approach within earshot of the rocks, and then explain the object of their visit. A comrade a good son of the Catholic church, had died on board a day or two previously. Their vessel was outward bound; they might not within a considerable period, touch at any port where there was consecrated ground, and they prayed permission to enter his remains in the little chapel erected by the pious hands of the bishop already mentioned. No weapon should be brought on shore, and, in return for the permission, a present would be made of such commodities as they had on board: their only object was, that the bones of their departed friend might be committed, not to the mercy of the waves, but to a peaceful rest in the holy chapel. Accessible through their religious feelings to this demand, the Sarkese were nevertheless somewhat suspicious; but the same seamen acted their parts with so much simple earnestness, and they had already given such a striking evidence of the perfect harmlessness of their intentions, in voluntarily throwing themselves into the power of the others, that permission was at length given, upon the express condition however, that not so much as a 'pocket-knife' would be allowed to be brought on shore—a condition which obtained the readiest assent from the men, who returned to the ship, concealing their exultation, until beyond the reach of detection, at the partial success of their adventure.

On shipboard that night a goodly-sized coffin which in anticipation of the mournful event, had been prepared, was filled, not with the cold remains of their comrade—an individual of fictitious origin altogether—but with a large number of swords, targets, and harquebuses, carefully packed, to provide against any risk of detection by their rattle, over which the coffin lid was secured, but in such a manner as to admit of its ready removal. The next day saw the boat leave the ship with a few more men than on the previous occasion, containing in her centre the coffin, covered by a flag, and in its interior the pseudo corpse. It was met by the Sarkese at the landing place—nothing more than a few rude steps cut into the face of the cliff; and each man was permitted to leave the boat only after undergoing a rigid search. All suspicion was at rest with the Sarkese, who after crossing themselves with devout diligence, proceeded to give assistance to the removal of the coffin. To the invaders this was a particularly anxious time, as it was absolutely necessary that none of the islanders should have any idea of its weight. Long ropes had been provided, as, from the precipitous nature of the place, it was requisite to draw the coffin up the rock; and the seamen, taking great care that none of the Sarkese should lend a hand to the work, with hearts, as may well be conjectured, full of the most painful excitement, eventually, after the greatest difficulty, and by an amount of exertion the more painful, from the necessity of its concealment, succeeded in effecting its safe landing upon the summit of the rock. The men drew a long breath; one of the most formidable of their difficulties had been overcome, and they began to make arrangements for the completion of the funeral ceremony. The Sarkese dispatched a body of men to secure the boat, while the rest accompanied their visitors, who shouldered the coffin with a solemnity becoming the supposed character of the occasion, and, with much of the semblance of unfeigned sorrow, carried the remains towards the burial-place.

Those of the Sarkese who had secured the boat then pulled towards the ship in anticipation of the promised commodities, and without a dream of treachery, on arriving at the vessel clambered up her sides. As soon as they touched her deck, a number of seamen rushed upon them, disarmed them without a blow, and bound them together and to the deck by heavy manacles. A party then entered the boat and rowed hard for shore, to the rescue

and assistance of their companions engaged in the funeral obsequies.

These, being at the head of the procession, proceeded at a steady pace until within a short distance of the chapel, where they quickened their steps. All had entered before the arrival of the Sarkese, who had followed them. The pregnant coffin was set down, the chapel door closed and fastened, the coffin lid was rapidly removed, its contents drawn forth, the men arming as silently and swiftly as possible, and by the time the Sarkese had arrived at the chapel, there was a company of men armed to the teeth ready to salute them. The chapel door was unfastened; and the Sarkese, to their horror and amazement, received their first intimation of the real object of the mourners in a furious attack, before which they fell like sheep.

The suddenness of the onset took away all power from the men, and they fled with the wildest precipitation from before the murderous weapons of their assailant. A few, of bolder hearts, made a short defence, but were swept down by the swords of their enemies. The rest fled hither and thither; and, rendered almost senseless by surprise, some plunged with mad haste into the yawning abysses around the island. Others more wisely perceiving all efforts at defence and escape to be alike in vain surrendered themselves to their victors. In a word, the island was depopulated, and the Channel Islands rid of one of the most serious and mischievous annoyances to which their trade and security had ever been subject.

The foregoing adventure, however much partaking of the character of a romance, rests upon evidence sufficient to assert its credibility in the most complete manner; and, moral considerations apart, there can be no doubt that projector and executor of this *coup de main* must have been, in the words of Sir Walter Raleigh, 'a bold and very ingenious gentleman.'

From Jerrold's Magazine.

THE AGE OF PRACTICE.

THE Age of Practice is now at hand. The true credentials are deeds. The genuine test is performance.

The Doctrine of Works has been too much neglected in this Protestant age of sectarian opinions. "Faith without works," rightly said the Apostle James, "is dead." Mere expression of belief is not true faith. Simple assent to a verbal creed is of no avail. True faith is a practical confidence operating in good works.

The union of Church and State—not the mere formal worthless thing of politicians, but a truer, a diviner idea—is the societarian actualization of the sacredness of good works. We should sanctify and hallow art, science, and industry. Our fields and houses should become to us as portions of the common temple of God. Each effort should be as a prayer, each rest as a thanksgiving. Every function of work should be holy: each department of labour honorable, each portion of industry attractive. The priesthood of industry should commence. The hierarchy of labour should be installed. Every one should be a worker: every one a priest. This would be the true union of Church and State. This is the required combined reform in temporals and spirituals.

The true practice of good works does not consist in mere almsgiving. Justice above charity, O pharisaic and ever good-intentioned but unenlightened alms-givers! Put that spade into the hand of your beggar, take one in thine own, go there both together upon that field and dig! This is better than putting money into a pocket full of holes. This is better than sending Charity with halfpence to the gin-palace. This is better than alms-giving. It is grander than charity, for it is love and justice. It is as fraternity, above patronage. It is as community, above slavery. It is the land and the tool: it is the spade and the acre which every Christian, every human being, out to have with which to work. By the lazy rich and by the idle poor, and by those unemployed, the Divine command is not obeyed: "By the sweat of thy brow thou shalt eat bread."

We unto those by whom this divine and benevolent command is obeyed not. By the contracted chest, by the weak and undeveloped frame, by the flaccid muscle, by the hellish pang of ennui, are those who will not work punished. By increased pauper rates, by dread of incendiary torch and smoking homestead, by fear of red riot and flaming rebellion are those damned who will not let others work. No sin under God's heaven escapes without a punishment. Those who transgress God's laws in human nature or in human society, are condemned by their transgression.

Mightily let us invoke the Age of Practice: its credentials, deeds; its test, performance. Nothing is too good to be done. Nothing is too loving for the heart. Nothing is too thoughtful for the mind. Nothing is too powerful for the hand. There cannot be too much piety too much patriotism, too much philanthropy. One cannot be too much a saint or a hero. "Be ye perfect as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Never too high the kebla in the mosque of the true Islam. The higher the endeavour, the more likely the effort. Shoot at a rush candle and thou shalt hit the table. Wing thy shaft at the Pole Star, and thou shalt pierce the Lion or the Great Bear. That which is most wanting should be most tried after. All things are possible to faith. The thought of annihilation approximates Atheism. "Perhaps" should be banished the dictionary. The more we try the more shall we gain. Trial itself is a gain. If we reach not at first the

thing attempted, we shall yet acquire more strength for another endeavour.

Let the future era be the Age of Practice: we have had enough of mere doctrine. If we cannot, however, ourselves become practical; let us at any rate write in favour of practice. Let our poets sing its laud. Let our orators speak its praises. So sung and so spoken, assuredly it will then be done.

From Hogg's Instructor.

OTHER PEOPLE'S EYES.

STRANGE as it may sound, certain it is that the regard we universally pay to other people's eyes, puts us to more trouble and expense than almost anything else. There are numbers who would be far wealthier and more comfortable, even with the tenth part of their incomes, than they now are, were but their fellow-mortals deprived of vision, or instead of eyes endowed with the faculty of seeing had merely those 'star' and 'diamond' proxies for them which poets bestow upon ladies, or with which they may be said literally to in-oculate them. Without stopping to inquire whether such poetical inoculation did not originate with some rhyming jeweller, we are tempted to give it as our opinion that people would be infinitely better off than they now are, had their neighbours no optics, and themselves also occasionally no eyes, since our eyes frequently tempt us into silly extravagances, while our over-amiable consideration for those of other people leads us into a thousand more.

What sums of money are squandered away whether they can be afforded or not; what trouble, what toil, what fuss, what vexation, are submitted to for no better reason than because our neighbors possess the power of looking at us! How many respectable persons—far more 'respectable,' indeed, than discreet—have owing to that unhappy circumstance, involved themselves in difficulties, all the more pitiable because no one pities them! Therefore, though by no means addicted to believe in popular superstitions, we incline to fancy there must be some truth in that of the Neapolitans, which attributes a mischievous spell, called by them *la Jettatura*—a peculiar ill-foreboding and evil-working fascination—to the eye or glance of the malignant. Some such unfortunate sorcery there must undoubtedly be in the eyes of the 'World,' compelling people, in spite of themselves, of their very best resolutions, and, in fact, of all the firmness they can muster, to do what is frequently little short of madness on their part to attempt. Did they, on the contrary consult only their own eyes, what an infinitude of trouble, vexation, and loss of both time and money folks might avoid, but to all of which they now submit, if not always cheerfully, yet, as matter of absolute necessity, and in order to gratify the eyesight of their acquaintance. Benevolent weakness!—a weakness it undoubtedly is for the most part; and, in some instances, the height of imprudence, folly, and absurdity likewise; the benevolence, however, is not quite so certain, for the self-sacrifice thus made is not invariably prompted by the most amiable motives. In the majority of cases, it is to be feared this seeming study of the taste of others in preference to our own, is at the bottom something worse than selfish, inasmuch as it is prompted not so much by any desire to gratify them, as to flatter one's own vanity, and excite the painful admiration of envy. Those who aim at distinction by astonishing the world—that is, the world of their own acquaintance, or their own neighbourhood—do not consider that they must pay the penalty for it, and that if they do not exactly expose themselves to ridicule, they subject themselves to comments, disagreeable if not dangerous. Envy is apt to be malicious and satirical, astonishment to be inquisitive, and the mortified vanity of one's own 'friends' to be the reverse of charitable and indulgent—in fact, to be so lynx-eyed that it is not to be imposed upon by counterfeit metal, but at once detects the brummagem beneath the gilding.

As if other people's eyes did not already tax us sufficiently in the way of what is called 'keeping up appearances,' many even double or treble that tax in order to exaggerate appearances, and show themselves to the world in an expensive masquerade, till perhaps they end by becoming really poor, merely through the pains they take to avoid the imputation of being thought so; or rather, through the misplaced ambition of being considered far wealthier than they really are. The keeping up appearances is laudable enough; but the art of doing so is not understood by every one, for instead of regulating appearances according to a scale which they can consistently and uniformly adhere to, a great many persons set out in life by making appearances far beyond what they can afford, and beyond what they can 'keep up' at all—at least, not without constant effort, pain, and apprehension. Society abounds with such *tiptoe* people—as they may well enough be described, since they assume the uneasy attitude of walking upon tiptoes, which though it may do for travelling across a Turkey carpet or hearthrug, is ill suited for journeying through life, on a road, which though rugged, is nevertheless apt to be found *ragged*, and requires to be trodden firmly if we would keep our footing.

Had people but resolution enough to be, not absolutely indifferent to, or cynically regardless of, but less solicitous about what others may think of their concerns, of what a load of trouble might they at once relieve themselves; for one half of the toil, the anxieties, and the fatigues of life, is occasioned by the struggling to cut a figure in that great *oil de laus*, the eye of the world. It is to please, or more correctly speaking, to impose upon that eye of