Sir Peter Wyche.—I should be very glad if any of your readers could put me on the track of a portrait of Sir Peter Wyche, who was ambassador to Constantinople temp. Charles I. I can find no engraved portrait of this worthy in the Hope Collection here, but it is not improbable that a painting is somewhere to be found.

B. H. Blackwell.

Replies.

Rags and Old Clothes Left at Wells.

(11 S. iii. 409.)

This old practice may be said to extend all over the world. Invalids visited wells and fountains for healing purposes; a coin might be left with the monk or hermit, keeper of the place, but an important function was leaving a piece of the clothing of the devotee on some adjacent tree or bush. We read that in Scotland, fifty years after the Reformation, the wells were all tapes-tied about with old rags; it was so in Ross-shire as late as 1860 (Proc. of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, iv. 209). For the custom at St. Colman's Well in Ross-shire and at St. Fillan's Well in Renfrewshire see Old Stat. Account of Scotland, i. 284, 316. For a well in Banffshire see Robertson's 'Antiquities of Aberdeen and Banffshire,' ii. 310. The practice is described in a long article in Brand's 'Popular Antiquities,' entitled 'Customs and Superstitions concerning Wells and Fountains,' pp. 516-20.

I have not all my notes by me, but there are further references in S. Carter Hall's 'Ireland: its Scenery,' &c.; Mitchell's 'The Past in the Present,' pp. 149-51; and Folklore, iv. 451-70. It would take up too much space to give references, which are very numerous.

A. Rhodes.

In a paper by Professor (now Sir John) Rhys on 'Manx Folk-lore and Superstitions,' which appeared in Folklore (vol. ii. pp. 284-313; and vol. iii. 74-91), he says (iii. 76):—

"There is another point to which I should like to draw attention, namely, the habit of writing about rags as offerings, which they are not in all cases. The offerings are the coins, beads, buttons, or pins thrown into the well, or placed in a receptacle for the purpose close to the well. The rags may belong to quite a different order of things: they may be the vehicles of the diseases which the patients communicate to them when they spit out the well-water from their mouths. The rags are put up to rot, so that the disease supposed to cling to them may also die; and so far is this believed to be the case, that any one who carries away one of the rags may expect to attract the disease communicated to it by the one who left it near the holy well. So it is highly probable that the relation between the offerings and the accursed things should be observed, at any rate in writing of holy wells in the Isle of Man. How far the same distinction is to be found elsewhere I am unable to say; but the question is one that deserves attention."

Robert E. Savage.

There is a reference to the above custom in 'The Evil Eye,' by Frederick Thomas Elworthy (John Murray, 1905), on p. 59:—

"We may easily find instances of the use of sympathetic magic for beneficent or at least harmless purposes. The idea prevails in various parts of South Wales, where at certain holy wells, each having a separate reputation of its own for specific diseases, the faithful hang a piece of rag, after having rubbed it over the part diseased, upon some special tree or bush near the well, in the belief that the rag absorbs the evil and that the sufferer will be cured. One or more of these trees are covered with pieces of rag placed on it by the believers."

The paragraph goes on to refer to the accompanying practice of dropping pins into the well, and in a note cites as an authority 'Sacred Wells in Wales,' by Prof. Rhys, read before the Cymrodorian Society, 11 January, 1893. C. W. Firebrace.

Mr. R. C. Hope in the introduction to his book entitled 'Holy Wells, their Legends and Traditions' (London, 1893), states that the hanging of rags and scraps of clothing on branches of trees and on bushes near the holy wells is probably a remnant of the old tree-worship; it obtains all over the globe; it is very common in Great Britain. In the Church-prohibitions this tree-worship is variously mentioned as 'vota ad arbores facere,' 'arborum colere,' 'votum ad arborum persolvere,' &c.

A. H. Arkle.

The practice noted in the query is not confined to Ireland and Scotland. It prevails to an equal if not greater extent in England and Wales. A somewhat detailed account of the customs observed at holy wells will be found in Chambers's 'Book of Days,' ii. 6-8.

The superstitious belief in wells, once pretty prevalent all over Britain, is no longer entertained, so far, at least, as Scotland is concerned. When rags are still seen on bushes adjoining wells the reason for their presence is due to a cause quite other than superstition. The wandering tribes of
Coronation Bibliography (11 S. iii. 345, 453).—To the works already mentioned may be added William Prynne's 'Second Part of the Signal Loyalty and Devotion of God's True Saints and Pious Christians under the Gospel,' &c., 1660. Chap. viii. (pp. 148–321) deals with the coronations of Christian emperors, kings, and queens, from that of the Emperor Justin and his Empress Sophia, anno 565, down to James and Charles II., with the order of proceedings, prayers, &c. G. J. Gray. Cambridge.

Queen Victoria's Maternal Great-Grandmother (11 S. iii. 387, 438).—I note that Mr. Willochby A. Littledale, on the authority of the 'Wappen-Almanach' of 1842, states that the marriage of Henry XXIV. of Reuss with Caroline Ernestine of Erbach-Schönberg took place on 28 June, 1754, whereas I gave the date as 28 July. The point is of minor importance, but, as accuracy in even the smallest matters is desirable, I beg to append the following note as my authority:

"According to Luck, the chepacten were dated 27 July, 1754, and he quotes a letter of 29 July from George Augustus to his brother George William, which states that the marriage took place '28 diesis.' Simon adopts this date, but the Reuss genealogies (by Cohn, Behr, &c.) give 28 June."

This note is extracted from the valuable papers by Mr. G. W. Watson on 'The 4096 Quartiers of the Prince of Wales' (King Edward VII.), which ran through The Genealogist from October, 1899, to April, 1904. These papers trace the descent of the late King back to the middle of the fifteenth century, and are absolutely necessary to any one interested in royal genealogies. W. F. Prideaux.

The replies at the second reference somewhat perplex me. Queen Victoria's mother was the Princess Victoria Mary Louisa of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld, who was married to the Duke of Kent. She was the daughter of Francis Frederick Antony, Duke of Saxe-Saalfeld, who appears to have been the son of Ernest Frederick, Duke of Saxe-Saalfeld. The latter accordingly must have been Queen Victoria's maternal great-grandfather, and his wife, whoever she was, the Queen's maternal great-grandmother. How was the line of Saxe-Saalfeld connected with that of Reuss? and what relationship, if any, was there between Henry XXIV. of Reuss and Henry XIV. of Reuss-Schleiz, born in 1832, or Henry XXII. of Reuss-Greiz, born in 1846? W. S. S.

Notes and Queries.

homeless vagrants who infest the roads all over the country find in Scottish holy wells a convenient spot for the performance of much needed ablutions. Their linen, however, such as it is, being of a frail and unsubstantial character, is apt to leave fragments adhering to the bushes where it has been hung to dry. Hence the frequency with which rags may still be seen in the vicinity of Scottish holy wells.

Primitive man's idea of transferring his disease to an inanimate object through some thing, as hair or nails or fragments of clothing, is well known to folk-lorists. Sir Richard F. Burton suggested that rags, locks of hair, and whatnot hung on trees near sacred places by the superstitious from Mexico to India, and from Ethiopia to Ireland, were deposited there as actual receptacles for the transference of disease (see Tylor's 'Primitive Culture,' ii. 137). W. B. Gerish.

See J. M. Mackinlay's 'Folk-lore of Scottish Lochs and Springs,' pp. 82, 189-93, 197, 200, 233.

Mr. Harris Stone will find much valuable information on this subject in Mr. E. S. Hartland's 'Legend of Perseus,' 1895, vol. ii. p. 175 ff. W. Crooke.

Ebers and Gutha, 'Palestina,' ii. 248 and 358, mention among "the poor offerings of the children of the desert" found at the tombs of Moslem saints such objects as "ostrich eggs, camel-halters, cloths, and coloured rags." W. A. C.

These rags are noticed at 1 S. x. 397; and the communications to 'N. & Q.' on the subject of 'Wells' give references to much literature which should be searched. There is a long section on this very point in Brand, ed. Ellis, published by Bohn, 1849, ii. 380 sq.

[The quotation from Brand sent by Miss G. de Cassel Folkard has been forwarded to Mr. Harris Stone.]

"Great George our King" (11 S. iii. 387).—According to Dr. Julian's 'Dictionary of Hymnology,' the words "Great George our King" were introduced into the National Anthem in 1745 during the reign of George II. They were the Hanoverian response to the enthusiasm evoked in many quarters by the Jacobite rebellion. The lines quoted in the query are probably considerably later than the time of George II., but are evidently based on versions current after 1745.

W. Scott.