**inſtance** of king **Edwyn’s** making uſe **of a ſeal about 100** years before the conqueſt, yet it does not follow that this was the uſage among the whole nation: and perhaps the charter he mentions may be of doubtful authority, from this very circumſtance of its being ſealed; ſince we are aſſured by all our ancient hiſtorians that ſealing was not then in common uſe. The method of the Saxons was, for ſuch as could write to ſubſcribe their names, and, whether they could write or not, to affix the ſign of the croſs; which cuſtom our illiterate vulgar do for the moſt part to this day keep up, by ſigning a croſs for their mark when unable to write their names. And indced this inability to write, and therefore making a croſs in its ſtead, is honeſtly avowed by Caedwalla, a Saxon king, at the end of one of his charters. In like manner, and for the ſame unſurmountable reaſon, the Normans, a brave but illiterate nation, at their firſt ſettlement in France uſed the practice of ſealing only, without writing their names; which cuſtom continued when learning made its way among them, though the reaſon for doing it had ceaſed; and hence the charter of Edward the Confeſſor to Weſtminſter- abbey, himſelf being brought up in Normandy, was witneſſed only by his ſeal, and is generally thought to be the oldeſt ſealed charter of any authenticity in Eng­land. At the Conqueſt, the Norman lords brought over into this kingdom their own faſhions; and intro­duced waxen ſeals only, inſtead of the Engliſh method of writing their names, and ſigning with the ſign of the croſs. The impreſſions of theſe ſeals were ſometimes a knight on horſeback, ſometimes other devices; but coats of arms were not introduced into ſeals, nor in­deed uſed at all till about the reign of Richard I. who brought them from the croiſade in the Holy Land, where they were firſt invented and painted on the ſhields of the knights, to diſtinguiſh the variety of perſons of every Chriſtian nation who reſorted thither, and who could not, when clad in complete ſteel, be otherwiſe known or aſcertained.

This neglect of ſigning, and reſting only upon the authenticity of ſeals, remained very long among us; for it was held in all our books, that ſealing alone was ſufficient to authenticate a deed: and ſo the common form **of atteſting deeds, “ſealed and delivered,” continues to**

this day; notwithſtanding the ſtatute 29 Car. II, c. 3. revives the Saxon cuſtom, and expreſsly directs the ſign­ing in all grants of lands and many other ſpecies of deeds: in which, therefore, ſigning ſeems to be now as neceſſary as ſealing, though it hath been ſometimes held that the one includes the other.

The king’s *great ſeal* is that whereby all patents, commiſſions, warrants, &c. coming down from the king are ſealed; the keeping whereof is in the hands of the lord chancellor. The king’s *privy-ſeal* is a ſeal that is uſually firſt ſet to grants that are to pals the great ſeal.

Seal. See *Keeper of the Privy-Seal.*

Seal is alſo uſed for the wax or lead, and the impreſſion thereon affixed to the thing ſealed.

An amalgam of mercury with gold, reduced to **the** conſiſtence of butter, by ſtraining off part of the mer­cury through leather, has been recommended as a pro­per material for taking off the impreſſion of ſeals in wax. In this ſtate, the compound ſcarcely contains one part of mercury to two of gold; yet is of a ſilver whiteneſs, as if there was none of the precious metal in it. In this ſtate it grows ſoft on being warmed or worked be­tween the fingers; and is therefore proper for the purpoſe above-mentioned, but is not ſuperior to ſome amalgama made with the inferior metals, as is well known to ſome impoſtors, who have ſold for this uſe amalgams of the baſe metals as curious preparations of gold.

Seal, in zoology. See Phoca.

SEALER, an officer in chancery appointed by the lord chancellor or keeper of the great leal to ſeal the writs and inſtruments there made in his preſence.

SEALING, in architecture, the fixing a piece of wood or iron in a wall with plaſter, mortar, cement, lead, or other ſolid binding. For ſtaples, hinges, and joints, plaſter is very proper.

*SEALING-Wax.* See Wax.

SEAM, or Seme of corn, is a meaſure of eight buſhels.

*Seam of Glaſs,* the quantity of 120 pounds, or 24 ſtones, each five pounds weight. The ſeam of wood is an horſe-load.

Seam, in mines, the ſame with a vein or ſtratum **of** metal.

BY this word we expreſs that noble art, or, more purely, the qualifications which enable a man to exerciſe the noble art of working a ſhip. A sea- wan, in the language of the profeſſion, is not mere­ly a mariner or labourer on board a ſhip, but a man who underſtands the ſtructure of this wonderful machine, and every ſubordinate part of its mechaniſm, ſo as to enable him to employ it to the beſt advantage for puſhing her forward in a particular direction, and for avoid­ing the numberleſs dangers to which ſhe is expoſed by the violence of the winds and waves. He alſo knows what courſes can be held by the ſhip, according to the wind that blows, and what cannot, and which of theſe is moſt conducive to her progreſs in her intended voy**age; and he mu**ſ**t be able to perform every part of the**

neceſſary operation with his own hands. As the ſea-men expreſs it, he muſt be able “to hand, reef, and ſteer.”

We are juſtified in calling it a *noble art,* not only by its importance, which it is quite needleſs to amplify or embelliſh, but by its immenſe extent and difficulty, and the prodigious number and variety of principles on which it is founded—all of which muſt be poſſeſſed in ſuch a manner that they ſhall offer themſelves without reflection in an inſtant, otherwiſe the pretended ſeaman is but a lubber, and cannot be truſted on his watch.

The art is practiſed by perſons without what we call *education,* and in the humbler walks of life, and there­**fore** it ſuffers in the eſtimation of the careleſs ſpecta**tor. It is thought little of, becauſe** little attention is