

8th February, 1855. LITERARY SECTION.

THE REV. DR. THOM, V.P., in the Chair.

The Minutes of the last Meeting were read and confirmed.

The following Donations were laid upon the table:—

From the Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society. Original Papers published under the direction of the Committee, vol. iv, part 3, 1855.

From the Statistical Society. Journal of the Society. Parts 1, 2, and 3 of vol. xvii. (1854.)

From James Gordon Stewart, Esq. Liverpool Churches and Chapels, their destruction, removal, or alteration, with notices of Clergymen, Ministers and others. By the Rev. Dr. Thom. Reprinted with additions and alterations from the papers of the Historic Society. 1854.

From the Rev. Dr. Thom. The Ultimate Manifestation of God to the World. By David Waldie, Esq., 1847.

Mr. Hardman exhibited a copy of the Bible in Spanish, (Basle, 1569,) with curious MS. notes.

The Secretary laid upon the table the first five volumes of the Journal of the Statistical Society, now out of print. They had been purchased by the Council to complete the set.

The following communication was read:—

NOTICE OF AN ANCIENT MANUSCRIPT CHRONICLE. *By the Rev. John Sansom, B.A., Oxford.*

I have had put into my hands and have now before me, the unpublished manuscript of an ancient English Chronicle, a brief notice of which may perhaps be acceptable to the members of the Historic Society.

This MS is contained in a folio volume of 452 pages, written on parchment in a legible black letter of the simplest character, with illuminated capitals at the beginning of the several chapters, the headings of which are in red ink, as are also some quotations occurring here and there throughout the history.

From the account given of this interesting volume by the Rev. J. S. Davies, of Pembroke College, Oxford, by whose kindness I have been entrusted with it, it appears to have been handed down in the family from time immemorial, together with certain printed books known to have belonged to the historian Speed, from whom Mr. Davies's family claim descent. Thus it is not unreasonably conjectured, that the MS may also have belonged to Speed: a supposition, however, which had met with no conclusive corroboration up to Thursday last, February 1. Previously to that date, Mr. Davies had made a careful comparison of his MS with divers published Chronicles; by which means he thinks he has ascertained, that certain minor conversations and historical fables of greater or less interest, which are found interspersed here and there throughout the volume, do not meet with any mention at the corresponding places in such of the Ancient Chronicles as he had been enabled to search. It seemed, therefore, reasonable to conclude, even prior to any distinct clue being found to the authorship or original ownership of this nameless MS, that it was not a mere copy or translation of some other, but an independent and original work. This conclusion, as well as the fact of the volume having been in Speed's possession, may be now considered as satisfactorily established.

On Thursday, Mr. Davies accompanied me through the pages of Speed's History of Great Britain; where, in the course of our search, we detected *one undoubted extract* from this MS Chronicle, besides other references made to it with sufficient closeness and accuracy to allow of the passages being traced and collected. The volume is, in truth, no other than the "ancient MS," "nameless old MS," and "English Chronicle MS," to which reference is made several times in the margin of Speed's history.

The solitary extract, which I think conclusive in determining the book's identity, is found in the 7th book of the History of Great Britain, chap. 12, at p. 317 of the first edition, where reference is made in the margin to "a namelesse old MS, chap. 154."

The passage in the text is as follows:—

"Thus in an old manuscript we find it indited: *Understand among you of Rome, that I am king Arthur of Britaine, and freely it hold, and shall hold; and at Rome hastily will I bee, not to give you truage, but to have truage of you: for Constantine, that was Helene's sonne, and other of mine ancestors conquered Rome, and thereof were Emperours; and that they had and held I shall have yourz [sic!] Goddis grace.*"

The original passage in the MS, which occurs, *not* at chap. 154, (which is clearly a mistake,) but towards the end of cap. lviii, I will now transcribe literally: "Understondeyth among you of Rome yat I am kyng Artur of Britayne and frely it holde and shal holde and at Rome hastily will I be not to geve you truage but forto haue truage of you for, *Constantyn* yat was helene's sone and oyr of myn auncestris conquerid Rome and yerof were emperours and yat thay hadde and held I shall haue yorouz goddis grace."

The word "yorouz" in the MS evidently puzzled Speed's printer: but happily the printer's darkness discloses to us, as it were, a star—to be our beacon to the only passage, which the historian appears to have extracted word for word.

There is yet another argument, by which this identity may be corroborated. The writer of that portion of Speed's History, which records the death of King John, mentions certain "*nameless authors before ann. 1483,*" and refers in the margin to "*Eng. Chronicles MS;*" whilst it is observable of Mr. Davies's MS, that it ends somewhat abruptly with the close of the reign of king Henry vi; having the appearance of an unfinished work. So that, in all likelihood, the author of this Chronicle flourished in the succeeding reign (viz. that of Ed. iv.) which ended in the year referred to, (i.e. 1483.) It should perhaps be mentioned, that the MS commences by accounting for the name of Albion by the known fable of Albyne and her sisters; and that throughout it seems to contain the usual complement of romantic legends.

As Speed was a Chester man, it seems highly probable, that the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, or some member, may be in possession of some facts or documents capable of throwing light upon this interesting volume. Should such be the case, not only would it be esteemed a favour by Mr. Davies, and by the writer of this notice, but it might also tend to remove an obscurity in one of the bye-paths of historic literature, if any information that may be possessed might be obligingly communicated.

A Paper was also read, of which the following is an abstract:—

ANALYSIS OF THE SUBSCRIBERS TO THE VARIOUS LIVERPOOL CHARITIES. *By the Rev. A. Hume, D.C.L., LL.D.*

This Analysis was made in imitation of a former one, dated 1852, the intention of which was to shew the subscribers to all the Church objects in town.

The subjects were arranged under four general heads.

1. *Distant Missions*: Including the Church Missionary Society, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and the Colonial Church Society.

2. *Home Missions*: Including the Pastoral Aid, the Curates' Aid, and Church of England Scripture Readers' Societies.

3. *Religious Objects General*: Church building, in connexion with three local societies; and the building of other local churches, in a period of three years.

4. *Educational Objects General*: Building of Church Schools in a period of three years, and permanent support of the Church of England School Society.

The names of all the subscribers were arranged in alphabetical order, and in columns opposite to each name marks were put, indicating the objects to which the individual subscribed.

The general result was the following:—

(1) That there are only 122 gentlemen who subscribe to the majority of these objects, or to any considerable number of them. (2) That the entire strength of their supporters—that is, of those who subscribe to any or to all of them—is 1243. (3) That