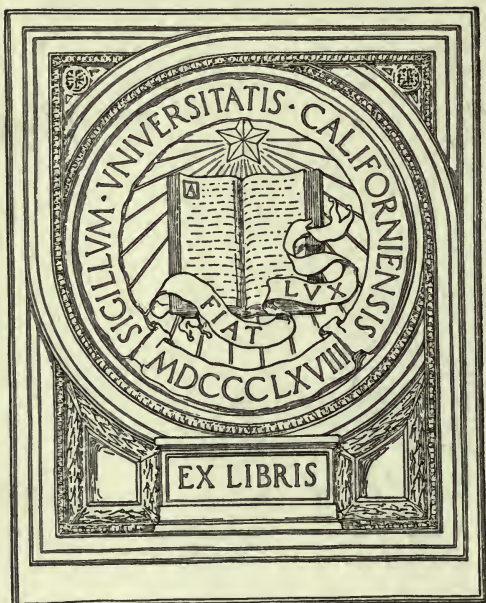


DA
20
C35H3

UC-NRLF



B 4 007 436



EX LIBRIS

Halliwel. - Phillips, Jo

Letter to Francis Egerton.

57-

62

Oct 213-48

A

LETTER

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

LORD FRANCIS EGERTON,

PRESIDENT OF THE CAMDEN SOCIETY,

ON THE PROPRIETY OF

CONFINING THE EFFORTS OF THAT BODY

TO THE

ILLUSTRATION OF A STRICTLY EARLY PERIOD OF
HISTORY AND LITERATURE.

BY

JAMES ORCHARD HALLIWELL, Esq.

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY; FELLOW OF THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES; MEMBER OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF LITERATURE; FELLOW OF THE ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY; HONORARY FELLOW OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF NORTHERN ANTIQUARIES AT COPENHAGEN; HONORARY SECRETARY OF THE CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY; SCHOLAR OF JESUS COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, &c. &c. &c.

“Take care to have all in a new fashion or all in an old; a modern chimney and a lightning conductor on the top of a Roman tower make the effect ridiculous.” *Smith's Essay on Building*, p. 16.

LONDON,

JAMES BOHN, KING WILLIAM STREET.

1839.

DA20

C35H3

TO VIND
AMPHILIA?

2111111

A
LETTER,

&c.

MY LORD,

IN the original Prospectus of the Camden Society, the alleged object of the prospective Society was stated to be the "publication of early historical and literary remains." Had this promise of the projectors of your Society,—I say, a promise, for what is a proposed object to certain conditions eventually fulfilled by those to whom the conditions are proposed but a promise;—had, I say, this promise of the projectors of your Society been kept, I should never have presumed to trouble your Lordship with remarks from an obscure individual, whose only inducement to offer them is from a consciousness of the utmost good-will towards the

infant Society, from a desire that it should do its best, and because he wishes to point out what he considers to constitute a great error in its modus operandi; and, further, because he is convinced of being actuated by only the most honest and best of motives.

I am aware, my Lord, that in thus transgressing the bounds of what is usually considered individual prudence, I do for the time run the risk of creating myself powerful literary enemies among those leading members of the Camden Society who differ from me; and I, for that reason, and because I should wish no one to bear malice against me upon mere grounds of dissent in opinion, do earnestly protest against the intention of the few following remarks being considered as personal to any of the members of the Camden Council: too happy and honoured do I feel in being able to bear testimony to the undeniable ability of every member of that respectable body.

But, my Lord, when there evidently appears to

be a desire among a certain portion of the Members of the Society to transgress a conspicuous original law of the Society, and it must be remembered, a law under which all the Subscribers were obtained, and when that law was not repealed at the General Meeting of the Society, it certainly does appear to me, that a Member of the Society has a right to enter his caveat against the legality of such a desire, when we find it supported sufficiently strongly to receive the approbation of the Council. Legality did I say?—Honesty would have been a far more appropriate term.

I would not, however, wish to indulge largely in remarks of dissatisfaction, and therefore I pass over, at any rate for the present, several matters of fact, which would be far from pleasing to some of the learned Members of your Society. Of the first publication of the Society, the second, the third, and the fourth, I have nothing now to remark; but I immediately proceed to point to the last volume, Mr. Thoms's Anecdotes and Tradi-

tions, as the book, the publication of which I consider violates the very first law of the Camden Society.

Now, in the first place, I profess my highest esteem for the value of Mr. Thoms's work^a, and I have done so to the learned Editor himself, whom I have the honour of numbering among my personal friends; and, in the second place, were there always a certainty of every volume violating that law being as interesting as Mr. Thoms's collection appears to be, no Member of the Society, I imagine, would complain. I ought to add, that my various avocations have not yet allowed me sufficient leisure to conclude my perusal of the whole of Mr. Thoms's work, but I venture an opinion on that which I have attentively read.

Can an historical book, the greater portion of which belongs to the latter half of the seventeenth

^a Why does Mr. Nichols, in his addition to this book, call almost every anecdote he refers to *trifling*? I don't complain, but why?

century, be considered in any way as early? It may be said that it is by comparison, and assuredly so; for four o'clock p. m. would be *early* for a person in the habit of rising at five, and turning night into day; but in the natural order of things, when we have a thousand years of field for our general subject, can a period which relates to the last century and a half be considered as early? In point of fact, then, my Lord, the Council of the Camden Society have violated a law originally emanating from themselves!

Thus having briefly noticed the inconsistency of sending forth such a volume to its Members, let me be permitted to urge further my original proposition to the Society—the propriety of confining its future exertions to a more limited period, and, if I might be permitted to suggest, to more limited subjects.

Were the resources of the Camden Society sufficient to enable them to publish inedited documents indiscriminately, I should be the very last person to

enter a negative, not only against the publication of the penny histories of the seventeenth century, but against any sort of trash^b they might chance to have offered to them, provided that they could procure persons ready to transcribe and correct the press for the sake of immortalizing their names on the title-page. But when I consider the original character of the Camden Society, at least as it has always occurred to me from the expressed opinion of many of those Members who were most instrumental in its formation, I think that we ought not to print any work that would cover its expenses in

^b I cannot help remarking here, that I think a succession of puns and jokes, however splendid and imposing, rather unsuited to a work with a head of the venerable Camden on the title-page as its tutelary saint. Poor Camden! how melancholy would have been the prospect, could he have foreseen that the unfortunate name of his valuable book would have afforded a handle for the facetious to make vulgar in the court of Momus his venerated manes! But no one could have improved it, and its author will be for ever immortalized, notwithstanding the opinion of old Doctor Syntax! Might not we take the liberty of adding a *mem.*?—Take care to pronounce *manes* as one syllable, or the joke will not take, in spite even of the Italics.

the common way of publication ; it does not show a genuine love for the advancement of historical literature for a man to press a popular work^c upon the Society, which confessedly would have been undertaken by almost any publisher, and when many most valuable historical documents are lost to the public, because in all probability, owing to the necessarily high price of antiquarian works, five or ten copies would be the extent of the circulation.

This is the grand ultimate point of the question,—whether the Society, as some Members maintain, would advance its true interests by flattering the popular taste for fun^d? To make the Camden

^c I am sorry to see “Kemp’s Nine Daies Wonder” proposed for publication, when I should have thought that its Editor could have chosen many things so much more suitable to the objects of the Society: it would be desirable to transfer it to the pages of the “Mirror.”

^d Several newspaper puffs, inserted by the exertions, as I accidentally learned, of an individual Member of the Council, contain expressions of opinion which ought properly only to have emanated from the Council as a body. The object of all this is, in case of necessity, to have documents to show against the opinion of the Council, as being documents of public opinion.

Society a strictly popular Society would, I grant, have the effect of increasing its number and its funds; but what object would be attained?—an accession of number to pay the expenses of an expected series of half-Pickwickian pseudo-antiquarian publications, and a consequent increase in the impression of all, thereby rendering those that are really valuable works liable to the effects of the fluctuations of a low book-market.

I am perfectly aware, that many Members of the Society will be but ill-disposed to pay attention to the suggestions of *a boy under nineteen*, as an honourable and learned Member of your Society, with more truth than kindly feeling, lately taunted me, when, in the purest innocence, and certainly with the best intention, I ventured to point out a most egregious and nepial error in one of his recent publications. You, however, my Lord, I am perfectly confident, will be the last person in the world to treat with disdain this humble effort for the attainment of what I really consider will

greatly conduce to the future well-being of the Society, merely because that a few summers, more or less, have not yet lent their aid to ripen a judgment, at best not at all equal to compete with minds such as have shone forth in the alpha and omega of the first year's publications. On any other ground I am ready to maintain the position I have taken.

I have the honour to remain,
My Lord,
With the highest respect,
Your Lordship's most obedient, and most
humble servant,

J. O. HALLIWELL.

Bodleian Library, Oxford,

Aug. 10, 1839.

POSTSCRIPT.

I am sure I must be the most good-natured person living, or I should quarrel with nearly every antiquary under the sun. Hardly a day passes, but what I am assaulted with some insult or another, under the impression of an almost universal doubt—What can a young person know of antiquarian matters? Had I not a very great dislike to the system of publishing any letters which were not, at the time they were penned, intended for the public ear, I should have been induced to have added one I received the other day, wherein the writer calmly stated, that no person under age should allow his name to appear in print! I merely take the opportunity of mentioning this here to say, that I shall not be so scrupulous in the event of receiving another epistle, for I shall certainly not trouble myself with answering the puerile though annoying remarks of such a narrow-minded literary quack.

In an early number of the Gentleman's Magazine, I shall fully expect, after the opinion the able conductor of that periodical has expressed in his review of one of the Camden publications, an attempt at a

refutation of the preceding calm remarks; and I hope that the Editor will take care to attack the proper points; otherwise I cannot be considered intruding to request, according to the invariable custom of that periodical, the insertion of an answer.

August 11, 1839.

RECENTLY PUBLISHED.

I.

A BRIEF ACCOUNT of the LIFE, WRITINGS, and INVENTIONS of SIR SAMUEL MORLAND. By J. O. Halliwell, Esq.

II.

Appendix to the above. *By the same.*

III.

TWO ESSAYS: I. An Enquiry into the Nature of the Boetian Numerical Contractions. II. Notes on Early Calendars. *By the same.*

IV.

RARA MATHEMATICA; or a Collection of Treatises on the Mathematics, and subjects connected with them, from ancient inedited MSS. With notes, &c. *By the same.*

V.

A FEW HINTS to NOVICES in MANUSCRIPT LITERATURE. *By the same.*

VI.

RELIQUIÆ ANTIQUÆ: Scraps from Ancient Manuscripts, illustrative of Early English Literature and the English Language. Edited by Thomas Wright, Esq. M.A., F.S.A., and J. O. Halliwell, Esq.

VII.

THE VOIAGE and TRAVAILE of SIR JOHN MAUNDEVILE. Reprinted from the Edition of 1715. With an Introduction, Additional Notes, and Glossary, by J. O. Halliwell, Esq.

THE HISTORY OF THE

CHAPTER I

II

III

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER III

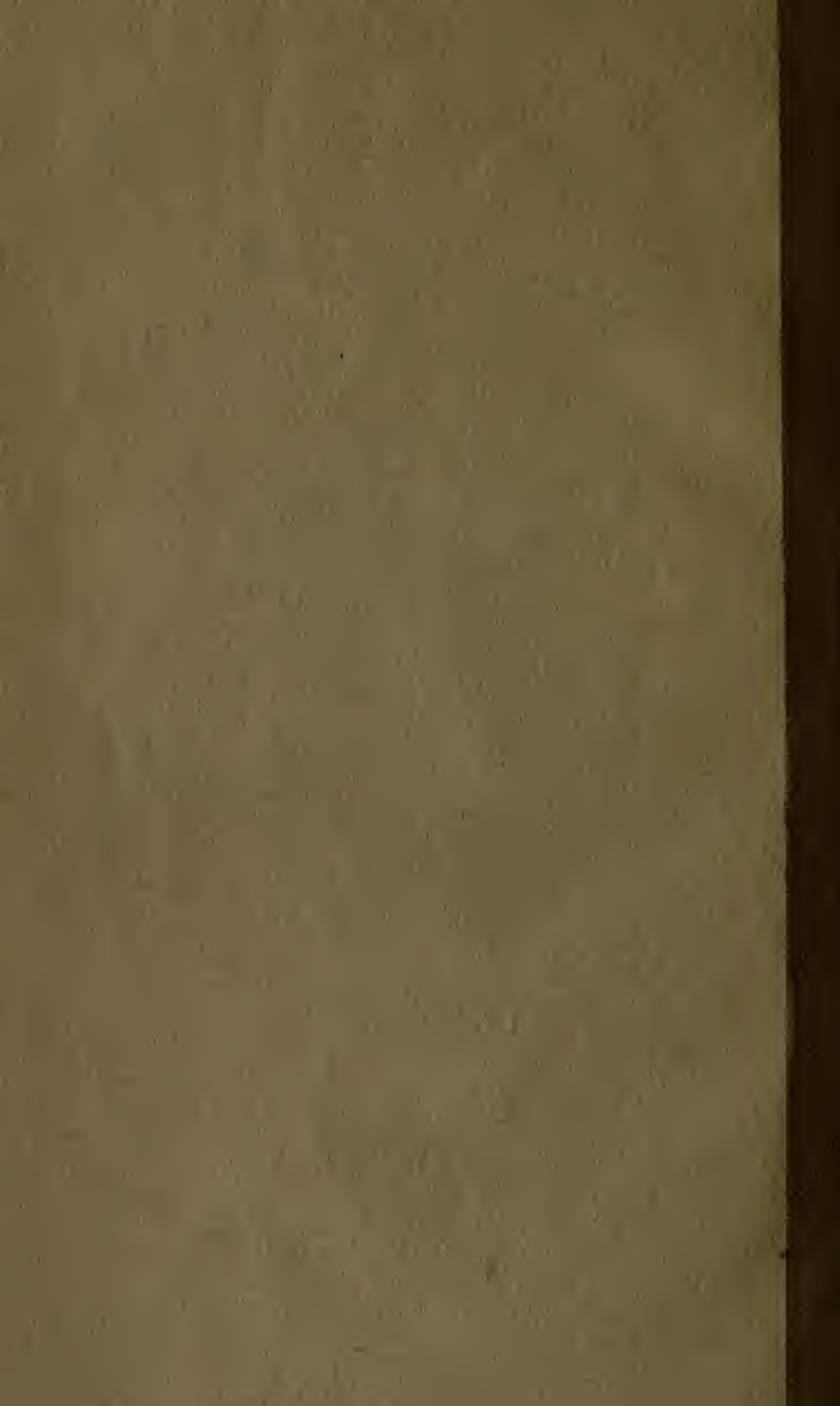
CHAPTER IV

V

CHAPTER V

CHAPTER VI

B2412



Gaylamount
Pamphlet
Binder
Gaylord Bros., Inc.
Stockton, Calif.
T. M. Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.

U. C. BERKELEY LIBRARIES



C047911491

M67243

DA20
C85H3

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

