XXII.—*On Richard Hakluyt and American Discoveries. In a Letter from J. PAYNE COLLIER, V.P. to the Right Honourable Lord Viscount MAHON, President.*

Read Feb. 7, 1850.

MY LORD,

Considering the important services rendered by Richard Hakluyt to the history and progress of navigation, very little has been done to illustrate his life. I am not aware of the existence of any separate memoir of him, and the accounts in our ordinary biographical collections are meagre and unsatisfactory. The notice of him by Anthony Wood, in his *Athenæ Oxonienses* (II. 186, Edit. Bliss), is short, but, as usual with that industrious and able antiquary, correct as far as it goes; and such as have followed him have done little more than make a few trifling additions to the text he supplied. The most curious and authentic materials, regarding his early habits, studies, and employments, are furnished by Hakluyt himself, but extremely sparingly, and with a simplicity of narrative, and a modesty of spirit, that increases our admiration of the man, and inspires the fullest confidence in his statements. I allude particularly to the well-known dedications, and other prefatory matters, to his three volumes of “*English Voyages, Navigations, Traffics, and Discoveries*,” published between the years 1589 and 1600.

In a paper like the present I am not about to attempt any complete biographical account of Hakluyt, but merely to bring forward a few new particulars that have fallen in my way, which may hereafter be of use to any competent person in drawing up a systematic and well-digested life of a man, to whom all early navigators, and especially those of our own country, are under such weighty and universally admitted obligations.

I have also another purpose in view—that of directing especial attention to one of Hakluyt’s earliest productions, issued some years before the appearance of the first volume of his “*English Voyages*,” &c.; which has indeed been mentioned by some of his biographers, but which is of such extreme rarity, that one or two of them have not even noticed its title. As it seems to me that literary antiquities are certainly not less valuable, than such as more commonly occupy the attention of members of our Society, I shall run the risk of entering into some little detail upon the subject; and I will follow my account of the volume in question by the insertion

of two original and highly important letters from Hakluyt to his chief and early patron, which have not only never been printed, but which have hitherto entirely escaped observation.

The map exhibited on the table forms, in some respects, the most interesting portion of the work to which I have alluded; and when I add that only one other copy of it has been discovered, members will be able to judge of its great rarity, as well as in some degree of its high pecuniary value. Its importance, as a record of the state of geographical knowledge and science at the time the map was engraved, must depend upon other circumstances. It will be observed, that it is a wood-cut, somewhat coarsely executed, of a great part of the then known world, north of the tropic of Cancer, and that it includes portions both of land and water, then only conjecturally laid down, which subsequent discoveries in many instances falsified. On this very account it possesses additional claims to notice, since it shews decisively some of the singular speculations indulged by our ancestors, in the year 1582, respecting the seas and continents of North America.

The only other copy of this map known to be in existence was in the library of the late Mr. Grenville, now removed to the British Museum, where, by the favour of the keeper of the printed books, I was recently permitted to inspect it, and to compare it with the exemplar upon the table. They are identical, having been struck from the same block. It forms one of two illustrations of the rare tract by Hakluyt; and the late Mr. Grenville thought his copy of that work unique, because it contained this map: another perfect copy has, however, come to light, from which the map before the Society has been extracted for exhibition this evening; and I apprehend that a third copy of the volume is preserved in the cabinet of a chary lover of old books, who was glad to obtain it at a high price, although it has not either of the maps that properly belong to it, and are mentioned in the title-page. I quote that title-page at length on account of the rarity of the volume (which Anthony Wood, among others, never saw), and because it expressly mentions the "two maps," as a component part of the original publication. It runs thus:—

"Divers voyages touching the discoverie of America, and the Ilands adjacent vnto the same, made first of all by our Englishmen, and afterward by the Frenchmen and Britons: And certaine notes of aduertisements for obseruations, necessarie for such as shall heereafter make the like attempt, With two mappes annexed heereunto, for the plainer vnderstanding of the whole matter.—Imprinted at London for Thomas Woodcocke, dwelling in paules Church-yard, at the signe of the blacke beare. 1582." 4to.

Thus we see that both the maps which ought to be contained in the work are promised on the title-page, the first map being, as is stated on the face of it, a fac-simile of one that had been sent from Spain to England by "maister Robert Thorne, marchaunt," as early as the year 1527; and the second, the map on the table, dedicated by Michael Lok, *civis Londinensis*, to Sir (then only Mr.) Philip Sidney, with the date of 1582. Of Michael Lok, and of his losses and sufferings in the cause of American discovery, I have a good deal to say; but I must reserve it for a future occasion: at present I shall confine myself to Richard Hakluyt and to his work under consideration. I may here mention that the Museum copy of it is most strangely and carelessly bound; for the prefatory matter, instead of being followed by the first sheet of the book, marked A, is followed by the second sheet, marked B; while sheet A is postponed to the end, and actually placed after the imprint. The sooner this mistake is remedied the better, for at present, to a cursory observer, the work seems imperfect.

I shall pass over two lists of "late writers of geography," and of "certain late travellers," &c. in order to come at once to the dedication and what may be justly called its remarkable contents. It is only signed with the modest initials of the indefatigable writer, and is addressed, with great simplicity, "To the right worshipfull and most vertuous Gentleman, master Phillip Sydney Esquire." It fills seven closely-printed pages; but I am only about to make a few brief extracts from it, which relate personally to Hakluyt, to Sir Francis Drake (who had returned from his voyage round the world two years before), to Sir Stephen Burrough, or Burroughs, and to Michael Lok.

Hakluyt begins by blaming the slackness of the English, in not making themselves masters of at least such parts of America as were not in the hands of the Spaniards and Portuguese: observing, "Surely if there were in us that desire to advaunce the honour of our countrie, which ought to bee in every good man, wee woulde not all this while have foreslowne the possessing of those landes, which of equitie and right appertaine unto us, as by the discourses that followe shall appeare most plainely."—Thence he goes on to shew how our prisons might be emptied, and rogues and vagabonds cleared from the streets, by exporting them to new and promising colonies. He especially points to what he calls "those blessed countries from the point of Florida, northwards," and enforces his recommendation in this respect by the opinions of Frobisher, Drake, Burrough, and others, adverting, as he proceeds, to the lectureship established in the Contractation House at Seville, for the advancement of the art of navigation. He earnestly urges that a similar course should be pursued in London, near Ratcliff, adding,—“For whiche cause I

have dealt with the right worshipfull Sir Frances Drake, that, seeing God hath blessed him so wonderfully, he would do this honour to him selfe, and benefite to his countrey, to be at the cost to erecte such a lecture: whereunto in most bountiful maner, at the very first, he answered, that he liked so well of the motion that he would give twentie poundes by the yeere standing, and twentie poundes more before hand, to a learned man to furnish him with instruments and maps, that would take this thing upon him."

We are to bear in mind, that such was the comparative scarcity of money in 1582, when Hakluyt wrote, that £20, then, was at least equal to £100 now; so that Drake was ready to give out of his own pocket as much as £100 a-year to pay the salary of a lecturer, and £100 down for the purchase of maps and instruments for his use. At the express instance of our great first circum-navigator, Hakluyt pointed out to him a man competent to the office, but who declined the duties of it, unless £40 a-year (equal to £200 a-year of our present money) could be obtained to remunerate his services, and the expectations of the individual, to whom the proposal was made, do not seem to have been unreasonable.—"Nowe (continues Hakluyt) if God shoulde put it into the head of any noble man to contribute other twentie pounce, to make this lecture a competent living for a learned man, the whole realme, no doubt, might reape no small benefite thereby." Nevertheless we do not find that any such lectureship was established in London.

Hakluyt afterwards proceeds in this dedication to detail the particular contents of his book, into which it would, perhaps, be tedious now to enter; but I must not omit the passage in which he adverts to the curious map upon the table—"The mappe (he observes) is master Michael Locke's, a man, for his knowledge in divers languages, and especially in cosmographie, able to doe his countrey good, and worthie, in my judgment, for the manifold good partes in him, of good reputation and better fortune."—It is lamentable to reflect, after such testimony in Lok's favour, that late in life he was reduced to great poverty, and that the person whom

take to have been his son was obliged to procure a maintenance by the beggarly pursuit of poetry. If Sidney and Walsingham had survived, a happier lot might have awaited both.

If I thought it expedient on the present occasion to give an account of the materials of which the volume is composed, I would have done so in the words of the author, to which I have already alluded; but, although they establish the great industry and learning of Hakluyt on a subject then engaging so much attention, and although they shew the eagerness of his patriotism, that England should not be behind other nations in naval enterprise or territorial acquisitions, it would be out

of place here to enter into an explanation, or discussion, of what had been done towards American discovery previous to the year 1582. Suffice it to say, that Hakluyt has collected and printed all the then existing evidence, and that he patriotically labours to prove the prior claim of his own country to the merits and advantages of discovery.

Closing, therefore, Hakluyt's book of 1582, in the dedication of which he so strongly contends for the fitness of establishing a lectureship on navigation, I come to a document in his own hand-writing, dated two years afterwards, in which, among other things, he enforces the same point, and backs himself by the example of Peter Ramus, who, narrow as his circumstances were, left by will 500 livres for the endowing of a lectureship on mathematics. It is an original letter addressed by Hakluyt, then in Paris with the English ambassador, Sir Edward Stafford, to Sir Francis Walsingham, and it is endorsed by that statesman's private secretary in these words.—“Primo Aprilis, 1584. From Mr. Hakluite, the Preacher, at Paris.” The contents will be perfectly intelligible from the perspicuity of the style of the writer; but I may mention, that the “Mr. Carlile” whose name is introduced was no other than Christopher Carlisle, who became Lieutenant General (as the post was then termed) to Sir Francis Drake in the new voyage he commenced on the 14th September, 1585. Of course the “worthy and virtuous son-in-law” of Walsingham, also mentioned, was Sir Philip Sydney, who had married Walsingham's daughter in 1583. The importance and interest of the letter will be perceived at once; and it is as follows :—

“RIGHT HONORABLE,

“The famouse disputations in al partes of the mathematikes, which at this present are held in Paris, for the gayning of the lecture which was erected by the worthy scholer Petrus Ramus, to the great increase of those excellent sciences, put me in mynd to sollicite your honour agayne and agayne for the erection of that lecture of the arte of navigation, whereof I have had some speach with your honour, Sir Francis Drake, and Alderman Barnes and other. And that you might meet with al inconveniences, which might frustrate the expected profit, which is hoped for by the erection of the same, I send your honour here the testament of Petrus Ramus, newly put out agayne in printe, and sent unto mee by monsur Bergeren, Ramus his executor; whereby you may see, first the exceeding zeale that man had to benefit his countrey, in bestowing 500 livers, which (as your honour knoweth) is fiftie pound sterling, upon establishing of that lecture, bequeathing not halfe so much to al the kindred and friends he had. Secondly, you may note, that he, being one of the most famouse clerkes of Europe, thought those

sciences, next after divinitie, to be most necessarie for the common welth, in that he erected a newe lecture of the same, whereas there was one before erected, and endued with fiftie pound stipend, by the kinges of France. Thirdly, that most provident order, which the good man by his will hath taken, is most requisite to be put in execution in England; which is, that everie three yeares there shalbe publicke disputation, signified to al men by publicke writing, wherein it shalbe free for any man, for three monethes space, to dispute agaynst the reader for the tyme being; who, yf he be found negligent, or yf any one of the competitours be found more worthy by the opinion of certayne indifferent men of lerninge, chosen out of the purpose to be judges, that then the unworthie shall give place to the more sufficient; who, so being placed, is bound in three yeares space to read through the course of the mathematices.

“Yf, by your honour’s instigation, her Majestie might be endued to erecte such a lecture in Oxford, and the like for the arte of navigation might by some other meanes be established at London, allowing to each of them fiftie poundes yearly, with the same conditions, in my simple judgment it would be the best hundred poundes bestowed these five hundred yeares in England. For it is not unknowne to your wisdom, how necessarie for service of warres arithmetike and geometrie are, and for our new discoveries and longe voyages by sea, the arte of navigation is, which is compounded of many partes of the aforesayd sciences.

“Understandinge heartofore of your honour’s great abundance of busines, and your dangerouse sicknes, I thought it not meet to trouble your honour with such thinges as I had carefully sought out here in France, concerning the furtherance of the westerne discoveries, but chose rather to imparte the same with Mr. Carlile, which thing also I did. But, being lately advertised of your recovery (for which I humbly thanke almightie God), I was bold to signifie unto your honour my dealing with Horatio Palavicini, to become an adventurer in those westerne voyages, and, among other talke, afleaded your good disposition to the same; which he hearing of, replied very cheerfully, that yf he were moved thereto by the least word from your honour, he would put in his hundred pound adventure or more. If Mr. Carlile be gone, yet it might come in good tyme to serve Mr. Frobisher’s turne, yf your wisdom shall like well of yt, seeing he setteth not forth, as I understand, until the beginning of May.

“I understand that the papistes give out secretly in the towne, that there shall shortly come forth a confutation of the defence of the execution of justice in England, which was set forth in English and French in London. When yt cometh forth, I trust to have it with the first.

“There is good hope that the minister, and those that were taken lately with him in Paris, by the abbot of St. Geneveva, shall very shortly be set at libertie ; for the King secretly seemeth to favour them ; and they have very discreetly answered for themselves, that they were not at any communion or sermon, but that they met together to consult whether to go out of Paris to some place lawful by the edict. A frind of myne told mee he heard a frier inveigh very exceeding bitterly agaynst them in a sermon before a great congregation of people.

“Wee have heard by divers letters from Geneva that, besides the earthquake, which was there about the end of Februarie, which untyled many houses, and overthrewe many chymneis in the towne, there is besides a whole village, in the contrey of Vallaye, swallowed up, being foure dayes journey of Geneva.

“Those that favour the Spanish here in the towne have spred al abroad, these two or three dayes, that Monsur is dead, which is nothing so.

“Thus leving other matters and advertisementes of importance to them unto whom they apperteyne, with remembraunce of the continuance of my humble dutie to your honour, and your worthy and vertuose sonne in lawe, I leve you to the merciful protection of the Almightye. Paris, the first of April, 1584.

“Don Antonio, his captaynes, and his fleet, are not yet departed from Paris, but look every day to depart.

“Your honour’s most humble

“RICHARD HAKLUYT.”

The notion of Don Antonio, his captains, and his fleet, departing from Paris brings to mind the charge against Shakespeare, that in his *Winter’s Tale* he represented Bohemia as a maritime country ; but Hakluyt’s meaning is quite as intelligible as Shakespeare’s reason for disregarding mere geographical accuracy in his popular drama. “The Defence of the Execution of Justice in England,” spoken of above among the miscellaneous matters, was of course Lord Burghley’s tract published in 1583, to vindicate the punishment of Campion and other Jesuits.

Before I conclude, I have to introduce another letter from Hakluyt to Walsingham, which, though somewhat shorter, is personally even more interesting than the preceding. It bears date on the 7th January, 1584, which must, I apprehend, be taken as 7th January, 1585, the year not then being usually terminated, at least so far as epistolary correspondence is concerned, until 25th March. Such is, however, not invariably the case, and for my present purpose (that of bringing the document for the first time from its obscurity), it is not of much consequence whether it was

written eight months before or after the letter already inserted. The main subject of it is the same, but pressing still more strongly on the Queen's Minister the fitness of encouraging discoveries and settlements, by reason of the profitable nature of the commodities to be obtained from North America. The most valuable portion of the letter, as regards Hakluyt himself, is that paragraph wherein he expresses his own willingness, not merely pecuniarily to join in the adventure, but personally to share in its dangers and sufferings, by relinquishing his office of preacher in the family of Sir Edward Stafford, and accompanying the fleet, which was then expected very shortly to leave the shores of England for the other side of the Atlantic. This is a new point in the biography of Hakluyt, although we nowhere learn that his wishes were carried into execution. The other points of the subsequent letter will speak for themselves.

“RIGHT HONOURABLE,

“I understand from your servant Curtis your good acceptation of my hastie letter, your special favour and good will towards mee, as also your expectation of my diligent inquirie of such thinges as may yeld any light unto our westerne discoverie. For the two former I yeld you most humble thankes; and for the later, I nether have nor will omitte any possible diligence, expecting intelligences thereof from Roan, Diepe, and St. Malo very shortly.

“In Paris I have seen in one man's house, called Perosse, the value of five thousand crownes worth of furies, as sables, bevers, otters, and other sortes, which he bought in August laste of the men of St. Malo; and the yeare before, he told mee he bestowed four thousand crownes with them in the like commoditie. He gave me further to understand that he saw great quantitie of buffe hides, which they brought home, and sent into the lowe countreys to sell. All which commodities, with diverse other of noe lesse value, are brought out of the most northerly partes of those countreys, whereunto our voyage of inhabiting is intended.

“And now, because I knowe that this present enterprise is like soone to waxe colde, and fall to the ground, unlesse in this second voyage all diligence in searching everie hope of gayne be used; and calling to mynd that your honor made a motion heartfore unto me, whether I cold be contented to goe myselfe in the action, these are to put your honor out of doubte, that for myne owne parte, I am most willing to goe now in the same this present setting forth, and in the service of God and my countrey to employ al my simple observations, readings, and conference whatsoever. For obtaining leave of my L. Ambassador heere to

departe, I doubt not but to find meanes of myselfe, seeing he may have inough to supply my roome.

“For leave of my colledg, and entertaynment in this voyage, I will wholly referre yt unto your honor, who wish me so well as you will not see my poore estate impared. Because the tyme is exceeding shorte, I wold desire your honor’s present aunswere; uppon sight whereof, with winges of Pegasus, I wold fly in England.

“I have talked twise with Don Antonio of Portugal, and with five or sixe of his best captaynes and pilots, one of whom was born in Easte India. They al wish al prosperitie to Her Majestie and yourselfe, and say that, if the Queene of England wold joyne with their master, whose strength by sea they commend unto the skyes, they know how the King of Spayne, our mortal enemy, might easily be met withal, and she much enriched. The number of Portingalls which hange uppon the poore King are aboute an hundred or sixe score: diverse of them are lately come out of the Easte India, overlande by Tripoly in Siria. They have a voyage in hand, with five or sixe sayle of ships, which are in preparing at Newe Haven for the coste of Guinea, and the castle of Mina, wherein most parte of the Portingalls aforesayd are to be employed, being joyned in company with the French. They set forward, as I heare, within this moneth.

“One Sinior Andreas, borne in Savoy, is nowe, I heare, in Paris, which hath bin lately in the Island of Japan, with whom, by meanes of Doctor Pena, I shall have conference within a day or two. Diverse other intelligences, tending toward the furtherance of our western planting and discoverie, I looke for from sondry places very shortly. In the meane season, with remembrance of my humble dutie to your honor, and to your worthy and honorable sonne-in-lawe, I cease for the present, and beseech the Almightye to hold you bothe in his safe garde.

“It was told me by Perosse, of whom I spake before, and by Andrew Thevet, the Kinges cosmographer, that Duke Joyeuze, Admiral of France, and the Cardinal of Burbon and their frindes, have had a meaning to send out certayne ships to inhabite some place of the north part of America, and to carry thither many friers and other religiouse persons; but I thinke they be not in haste to doe yt. Paris, from my Lord Ambassadour’s house, the vijth of Januarie, 1584.

“Your honor’s most humble to command,

“RICHARD HAKLUYT, Preacher.”

It may strike some persons as remarkable, considering Hakluyt’s eagerness to take a personal share in the hazard and distinction of these enterprises, recollecting

too that he was ready, at an instant's warning, "to fly on the wings of Pegasus" to join the expedition which was in a forward state of preparation in January, 1584-5, that he did not in some way carry his ardent wishes into effect. Had he done so at any time, it appears scarcely possible that we should not have heard of so important an incident in his life, however insufficient and scanty the general materials for his biography. To those materials something has now been added; and they could hardly have been brought forward at a time when they would attract more attention, recollecting the deep interest at this moment felt as to the fate and fortunes of some of those hardy adventurers who, within the last few years, have risked, and perhaps sacrificed, their lives in promoting the extension of our north-western discoveries.

I am, my Lord,

Your Lordship's

Most obedient and faithful Servant,

J. PAYNE COLLIER.

The Right Hon. Lord Viscount Mahon,
President of the Society of Antiquaries.