REMAINS, HISTORICAL AND LITERARY, CONNECTED WITH THE PALATINE COUNTIES OF LANCASTER AND CHESTER. VOL. I. TRAVELS IN HOLLAND THE UNITED PROVINCES ENGLAND, SCOTLAND AND IRELAND, M.DC.XXXIV. - M.DC.XXXV

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SIR WILLIAM BRERETON & EDWARD HAWKINS

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TRAVELS

IN

HOLLAND THE UNITED PROVINCES ENGLAND SCOTLAND AND IRELAND

M.DC.XXXIV.—M.DC.XXXV.

BY

SIR WILLIAM BRERETON, BART.

EDITED BY

EDWARD HAWKINS, ESQ.

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INTRODUCTION.

The travels here presented to the reader are contained in a thin folio volume, which consists of sixty rather closely written leaves, bound together in a parchment cover. Its history cannot be traced higher than the time of Percy, Bishop of Dromore, in whose possession it once was, and who inserted the following note on the inside of the cover: "The writer of these travels seems to have been a gentleman of the Egerton family in Cheshire. He lived at Handford, which I conceive to be in that county." By Bishop Percy the volume was presented to Mr. Joseph Cooper Walker, a gentleman of some literary eminence, and Secretary to the Royal Irish Academy, who died about the year 1813. After his death, it passed into the hands of his sister, who for some years entrusted it to the care of Sir William Betham, Ulster King-at-Arms. While in this gentleman's possession, it was seen by Mr. Monck Mason, who, in his "History of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin," p. 7, makes mention of it as "The Travels of a Person of the Egerton family, who dwelt at Handford in Cheshire, and visited Ireland in 1635," deriving his opinion evidently from the autograph note of Bishop Percy.

From Miss Walker it was afterwards purchased by Mr. Christopher Bentham, a member of the Society of Friends, and at that time a printer in Liverpool, but who has now

retired to a residence at Birkenhead in Cheshire. During a temporary sojourn in Ireland, he shewed it to several gentlemen with whom he had the pleasure of being acquainted, and amongst others to the Rev. Sir Francis Lynch Blosse, who published, in the "Church of Ireland Magazine" for the year 1826, copious extracts of those parts which referred to Ireland; but, unfortunately, without adding any illustrative notes which, from local knowledge, might have much enhanced the interest of the work.

It was afterwards "placed in the hands of Sir Walter Scott, who was much interested with it, and strongly urged its publication, tendering his own services as editor, and offering to supply all the necessary explanatory notes." The reader cannot lament more than the editor, that, from some disinclination towards Sir Walter Scott's publisher, this most valuable offer should have been declined. Had the editor been aware of this fact at an earlier period, it is probable that he would have shrunk from an undertaking, in which, at every page, will be forced upon the reader the deteriorating comparison between what is, and what might have been.

It is a somewhat singular illustration of the different estimate which may be formed by different people of the same performance, that this work, which so much interested Sir Walter Scott, should have been rejected by the Camden Society as unworthy to take a place amongst their more interesting publications. By Mr. Bentham it was afterwards presented to Sir Philip de Malpas Grey Egerton, Bart. of Oulton Park, Cheshire, who has kindly granted the use of it to the Chetham Society, that it may be printed for the gratification of its members.