

John Nichols
Illustrations of the literary history of the eighteenth
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ILLUSTRATIONS
OF THE
LITERARY HISTORY
OF THE
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

...

BY JOHN NICHOLS, F.S.A.

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“Sir, Eastwell, Oct. 20, 1722.
“Nothing could so much atone for your leaving us so soon, as
letting me hear from you. I was extremely pleased to learn, by
your very obliging, entertaining, and instructive Letter, that,
after a long penance here, by what you saw and observed in your
way, the journey must have been very agreeable to you; and
that you are, after all your toils, arrived in good health, and are in
safe harbour before the rough season of the year comes in, and
where I hope very soon to wait on you. I set out from hence
next Tuesday; shall dig for urns, &c. next day, and view the
Kit-Coty-house; which, by the help of your observations, I shall
see to much greater advantage than I could otherwise have done.
Your account of it seems very just, and, I am sure, is very cu=
rious. I am glad you have prevailed with Mr. Taylor to let a
section be made in this grave; perhaps I shall get it done, but
I doubt whether it can well be while I am present, for want of
time. I am glad you think this work strengthens my conjec=
tures concerning Julabury's grave. You encourage me to study

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that matter a little farther; and your learned and very judicious
Letter, with the observations you made in your way from Dover
to Eastwell, give me great light. I will certainly, as you desire,
bring you some of the stones out of Todingden Brook. — I much
fear my time will not allow me to see the Roman Durolenum,
unless it falls in my coach-way to Bursted. I should en=
large a great deal upon your Letter if I did not hope to see you
so soon, when we can discourse upon these things at large.

“I received a Letter last post from my Lord Hartford *, who is
a great lover of Antiquities; he sent me a design of a fine Tesse=
lated Pavement found in a church-yard at Gloucester. It seems
to be very curious, but perhaps you have seen it. I have pro=
mised my Lord your acquaintance, and you will not let me break
my word with him. Mr. and Mrs. Smith present their humble
services to you; and I am, Sir, your much obliged and most
humble servant, Winchilsea †.”

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* Algernon Seymour, son of Charles sixth Duke of Somerset. On the death of his father in 1748 he became the seventh Duke, and died in 1750.

Lord Hartford was in the year 1724 elected President of the Society of Antiquaries; and the Earl of Winchilsea a Vice-President.

† Daniel Finch, fifth Earl of Winchilsea (so the noble Earl uniformly spelt his name). He died in 1726; see p. 783.

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"My dear Druid, Eastwell, Oct. 3, 1723.

"You cannot imagine with what pleasure I received your Letter: I longed for your return to London, where you are within

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reach of a correspondence, though I shall be impatient till I can have a personal conversation with you, and therefore shall leave the country as soon as possible for me; but not quite so soon as I would do, for I must pick up a few rents, to maintain me in my winter quarters in town. Your Letter is full of obliging expressions; but believe me, Sir, if I was any way agreeable to you, I am sure, I reaped a great deal of pleasure, and profit too, by your conversations and instructions.

"I am extremely obliged to you, and my very valuable friend Dr. Hales, for remembering me at your College; as I am to Mr. Gale, whose health, with yours, is drunk every day by me and Mr. Creyk *, a very worthy Clergyman, who is with me. I wish I could have gone with you through all your progress from Carvilium; but I shall soon see some of the fruits of your travels; and shall be very thankful for your design of the Dorchester Amphitheatre. – Though I have not been so well employed as you since we parted, I have not been idle; and, though I may trouble you with too long an epistle, I must give my dear Chindonax some account of what I have seen, and what I have got.

"In my way from London to this place, I drove into a field near Newington (at this day called Crock Field), famous for the vast number of urns and other earthen ware formerly dug out of it, as we learn from Dr. Meric Casaubon, and after him from Mr. Burton in his Itinerary. I found there two or three bits of urns, and of Roman tiles, which have been turned up by the plough: but, since I was there, nine men have dug for me three days, without success; though I hear, something, I know not what, was found the last day, which is kept for me.

"To make amends for my ill success here, I have had some things brought me which were found in East Kent; viz. two large pateras of the fine red earth; two dishes, something like large coffee-cups (but wider at the mouth), and in the bottom of one of them this inscription, CALETI M. for *caleti manibus*; these too are of the fine red earth. These were found some years since by the Whitstable men, dredging for oysters, near Reculver. I have too a piece of a broken vessel found at Richborough. And he brought me several other pieces of Antiquity, which were some years ago dug out of a barrow in East Kent, and there seem to be some of them Roman, and others Saxon; and such the late Dr. Batteley told me he had seen dug out of one barrow in that County. Mine are as follow: – A large fibula of copper, but wrought: and two strings of beads; one of amber, with some of blue glass among them; the other of glass gilt, most round, but some of them long. – I take these to be Roman. – I have a piece of a skull found there.

“Those which I think may be Saxon are, the head of an axe, sharp before, and very thick behind; it is iron, and weighs one

* John Creyk, of St John's College, Cambridge; B. A. 1711; M. A. 1722; elected F. S. A. 1723-4. – Another John Creyk, of St John's also; B. A. 1734; M. A. 1748 (probably son of the former); obtained the Vicarage of Eastwell in 1742; and died in 1745.

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pound and half and a quarter of an ounce: – and there is a little round fibula of copper gilt, on which a head (Saxon, I think) is carved (not engraved, or cast). – There was a sword and helmet, and many other things, found there; some of which I think I shall procure, besides those above mentioned, which I have already. – Besides these, I have found something worth your knowledge at home, in my park. I do not know whether you remember your way from Eastwell to Beamstone gate (in your road to Charing). On the right hand of Beamstone lawn, the top of the hill is covered with woods, from whence the hill slopes gently down to the plain; but towards the bottom the slope is steep, and a sort of bank runs a great way along the plain from N.W. by W. to S.E. by E.; and the bank faces S. by W. at 10 degrees, or thereabouts, (without regard to the variation of the compass). Conies have burrowed in this bank; and at the further end of it, almost over against Beamstone house, my keeper found two or three pieces of urns, by the mouth of a coney-hole newly turned out by a rabbit; he brought them to me, and I needed no better motive for digging, and at the same time to destroy the rabbits which spoil my park. Accordingly, I dug through two burrows; and in my working I found a great many pieces of urns, which had been of diverse shapes, and of different-coloured earth, as white, black, brown, red, and two very small bits of the fine polished red earth, I believe pieces of pateras. I found no whole vessels: but human bones, and bones of beasts, and some pieces of deers' horns, and horses' teeth (as I found formerly in Julabury's grave). I must observe, that the bones and pieces of urns are very rotten, and crumble with handling, which may be the reason we found nothing entire; the rest may be dissolved and incorporated with the earth about them. I found a large bead, of baked earth, perforated from end to end. We found a great deal of wood, coal, and several pieces of iron; some which I believe are pieces of armour; and one which I think was an iron mace, used in battle. It is only the head, with a bit of its handle. I will send you a drawing of it another time. – I believe you are satisfied this was a burial-place, and, I think, Roman, by its situation, &c. I think I can trace an ancient road along that side of the hill, and which goes through my park by my house, through Wye and Crundale, and so on to Canterbury, and the other way to Charing, and perhaps to Durolenum, which place I shall look after next week. But I must tell you, this place where I have dug is very near the distance between Canterbury and Durolenum in the Itinerary: but the distance would be great from thence to Maidstone and Rochester; and every way we shall find great difficulties in that respect; for Lenham, which some would have to be the place, is 16 or 18 miles from Canterbury, and Durolenum should be but 12 miles from thence; and if we place it where you suppose it should be, it will be yet too far from Canterbury, and a great deal too far from Rochester. But I will use all the diligence and care I can in making some discovery, and shall make designs; as I will do

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of this place in my park, where I shall have more digging. – It is

time to release you. – Pardon blots, repetition, and nonsense; but I have not time to write over my Letter again by this post.

“I am, Sir, your most faithful humble servant, Cyngetorix.”

“Dear Chindonax, Eastwell, Oct. 12, 1723.

“Though I have reason to believe you had too much of my last long Letter, I must write again, to give you an account of my proceedings upon Wednesday last, when I went with my friend Mr. Creyk in search of Durolanum; some progress I have made, but am not yet at the end of my task (which will be pretty difficult), though I was out many hours, in my chaise, and upon brown Joan. I sent my keeper some days before to Hazlewood-street, as you directed, but no shoemaker or cobbler lives there; wherefore Dobson went to Egerton, another town, where he was told there lived an old cobbler, and there he found one, who, I believe, is your man: for he said a Physician called there last October, and talked with him about Antiquities, and went over the way (for you was, he says, at a public-house) to see a grandchild of his who was sick: you will remember whether this is so. He believes you are something more than mortal; for, that you not only cured the child, but foretold that he would live, and make a bright man, if he would give him learning (which he will certainly do). He says, that, as you foretold, the child’s parts are already wonderfully improved, and that he is the cutest boy he ever saw of his age. – This person (John Pemble by name, and by profession a Cobbler, and an Anabaptist Teacher), this Rabbi, who by appointment met us at Charing, upon examination, knows of no place where he has heard of any Antiquities, except at Royton Chapel, at about a mile and a half from Lenham on the left hand, and by a river. This description seemed right enough, if the distance is so.

“We went from Charing town to the Heath, about a mile, where we thought we saw your Roman Road, but which leads to the left hand. We went that way for a while; but, seeing no continuance of the Road (if it was Roman), we turned back, and went into our former road upon the Heath, and, at a mile and half beyond Charing, we came upon a road a little raised, which we fancy is the Roman Road – if the other is not, which I should rather take for it. We kept on for above half a mile farther on the Heath, and a little way in a lane, where we turned on our left hand, and went on for about half a mile, when we came to Royton Chapel. We rode up a high bank on the left hand of the road; and among trees stands the little ruin of the Chapel, which I measured, and drew a design of (with some others, which I will send you as soon as drawn fair). I must here observe, that Mr. Creyk, with better eyes than mine, perceived two paving-tiles between the stones of the wall in different places. We pulled them out of the mortar with some difficulty; for the mortar is as hard as the stone. They are singular, and perhaps Roman. After I had drawn this ruin, I made another drawing of it in a less scale, with a prospect of the country.

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“We descended into the road again, and on our right hand, over against the ruin, stands an old house called too Royton Chapel; Mrs. Crips, a widow lady, lives in it. I drew its front, but could not bring it into my prospect of the country, because it stands below the bank, which partly hides it, and trees about the ruin hide the rest of it: but I drew it by itself, except that I have added a very little of the country beyond it; and, what is more material, the little river, which has its rise about a mile, or a little more, from hence on this side Lenham, and it runs behind the back front of Mrs. Crips’s house, within about 30 yards from

it. From hence it runs to the South-west a little by the South (no regard to the variation of the compass); but after that course for some way it turns toward the South-east, and goes by Ashford, &c. – At 30 or 40 rods beyond this house we came into the great Rochester road; so that from Charing this way, I think, is as near a road to Rochester as the Lenham road. The river near Mrs. Crips's house is not above three or four feet wide.

“You will not find, I doubt, that I have discovered much.

The ruin, though little remains, for it is not above (I mean the wall) 16 feet long, and ten feet and a half high, the wall a yard thick – a little bit of a cross wall remains – this ruin, I say, seems to be very antient (whether a Chapel or not); but the tiles sticking among the stones of the building must have been taken from some antienter ruins, with which materials this probably was built. – I will send you a Drawing (with the others) of these Tiles, of their proper size, with the work upon them; but must give you a little description of them here, and you may, perhaps, judge whether they are Roman. – I have designed the tiles square, though they are not exactly so, as you will see by the measures set down. They are about eight-tenths of an inch thick. They are glazed, the ground of the work upon them is of a deepish yellow, and the figure is of a very pale yellow. It is all flat work. The tiles were burnt very hard, even almost as any stone; and where one of them has a piece broken off, I see they are of a black earth, as several pieces of the urns which I found in my park. Pray have you met, among any Roman Antiquities, tiles of this sort?

“This is all I have been able to do at this place: whether this can be the place we hunt after, or another (which I intend to go to next week) I cannot tell. But I have tried an experiment, which perhaps may bring me right (if I am not so already): for, seeing the distances in the Itinerary to be 16 miles from Rochester to Durolevi, and from thence 12 miles to Canterbury, I opened two pair of compasses, one to 16, the other to 12 miles, by the scale in Mr. Philpot's Map in 'Villare Cantium,' and set a point of one at Rochester, and a point of the other at Canterbury; I found the other points (upon that Map) meet at a stream which runs into the river that comes from near Lenham, and, running by Royton Chapel, goes to Ashford; and this point is in the Ashford road, within three-tenths of a mile

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from that river. It is one mile and two tenths from Charing, on the left hand of the way as soon as we come upon Charing-heath. It is about two miles from Royton Chapel, about a mile from Cale-hill, and very little above a mile from Egerton. – If this is the place (to which the distances between it, and Rochester, and Canterbury, agree) we should have turned on our left as soon as we came upon the Heath, where there runs a bank, which may be the Roman road you told me of. We did go a little way there, as I told you: but, when I go again, I will pursue it till I come to the point; and you shall soon have an account of my proceedings, with drawings, if I find any thing worth preserving. – The measures I took in the Map are the distances in strait lines; and allowance should be made for the Roman miles being shorter than ours; but I am convinced the Itinerary wants correcting; for there are certainly a great many mistakes in the figures. – I would have sent you the Drawings by our carrier the beginning of next week, if I had not been prevented by a severe fit of the stone, which much tormented me yesterday. I am easier, yet not able to copy my Drawings fair for you, but you shall soon have them. – Pray let me hear from you as soon as possible, if but three lines, to let me know if you can

make any thing of this lame account, and if you can guess whether either of the two places mentioned is likely to be that we look for. – Mr. Creyk, a learned gentleman, and lover of Antiquities, presents his service to you. I am, dear Brother,

“Your humble servant,
Cyngetorix.”

“Eastwell, Oct. 14, 1723.

“This is to return you, dear Chindonax, abundance of thanks for your present of the Dorchester Amphitheatre, though it is not yet come to my hands; for Mr. Bedford has by the post informed me that an accident made him miss sending it by the carrier last week, and therefore I cannot receive it till next Saturday; but you, supposing I had it already, might have thought me very wanting in not taking notice of it till next week, and that brings you this trouble. I impatiently long to see it, for I am sure you must have designed it very perfectly. My next, I believe, will bring you an account of my farther proceedings near Charing; for, the first fair weather, I shall go upon that which I hinted to you in my last; no pains or diligence shall be spared; and, if I do not succeed, it must proceed either from not finding sufficient marks of the place I look for, or from my want of capacity; but I will do my best. It is late; and I am, Sir,

“Your most humble servant,
Winchilsea, as an Englishman;
“And as a Briton, Cyngetorix.”

“Eastwell, Oct. 21, 1723.

“I shall trouble you, dear Sir, with but a very few lines by this post; and should not have written till the next, but that I cannot defer one moment the paying my thanks for your most

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agreeable present, which I did not receive till last Saturday. You have made a very fine design of the Amphitheatre, and it is very well engraven; but your discourse upon it is admirable. There is very good learning, and much ingenuity; your thoughts fine, and extremely well expressed. – Though I expected no less from you, I know not any other man who could have performed this undertaking half so well. Mr. Creyk (who desires me to present you with his humble service) is in great admiration of it. This increases my longings to see Stonehenge and Abury set in their true lights; I hope you are upon that Work.

“To-morrow morning I go again in quest of Duroloenum; and by the next post you may expect to be informed of the utmost I can do in this matter; no pains shall be spared. I shall make use of your directions for finding the place; and, if I should be so happy as to succeed, ‘O brave Cyngetorax’ shall be engraved upon my tomb-stone. Farewell, dear Chindonax. I hope to see you in town within a fortnight; and am, &c. Winchilsea.”

“Dear Druid, Oct. 26, 1723.

“I promised you in my last an account of my farther proceedings, and did hint to you the difficulties I apprehended in my attempt to find out Duroloenum; and I have indeed found them too great for me. No pains have been spared by me and my friend Mr. Creyk. But, alas! all our endeavours have been with so little success, that, instead of the inscription on my tomb-stone mentioned in my last, I doubt you will think I deserve to be deprived of my spurs.

“Last Monday we went again upon our quest in my chaise, where that could go; and where not, upon our horses; and where they could not be got into the inclosures, we did not spare our feet. We had for our guide an old gentleman of Charing, who knows every road, every town and village, and every inch of ground, for some miles round about him.

“When we were about half a mile or less beyond Charing, we turned out of our road on the left hand, and went to Cale-hill Heath; and near the Warren-house we were shewn a place, where, some years ago, digging in a sandy ground to set up a jossing-block for upping stock, a man found a very large family urn, above two feet high, in which, besides bones, there were several sacrificing-dishes (as they called them). They were given to one Mr. Gardner *, Minister of Charing; but he is dead, and they are gone. May not the town we look for have been near this place? but I could not find any other signs of it. From this place we went to Hunger Hatch; from whence, at about a quarter of a mile, we came down to the river, the same which from near Lenham runs by Royton Chapel; and from hence to Little Chart; and so to Ashford: but here the river is become six or eight feet wide. It runs from North-west by North to South-east by South (no regard had to the variation of the compass).

“At this place, where we passed over the river, we saw Eger-ton Church at about a mile and a half from us to the North-

* Daniel Gardner, M. A. Rector of Charing 1681; died in 1698.

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west; and on our left hand Little Chart Church was a little more than a quarter of a mile from us to the South-east by East.

“At the place where we were to pass the river before we went over it, we saw on our right hand a great bank (not belonging to the river as we apprehended) run a little way parallel to it, and we took it for a piece of the Roman road. When we were got over the river into the field, and turning about with our faces to it, we saw more of that Roman road beginning opposite to the place where that on the other side ended. It goes up by the river to the North-west by North to a wood, where we lost it. It was here in length 240 of Ben’s paces. And standing over against the passage of the river, with our faces still to it, we found the river keep its course the same as before a little way, till near a farm-house it makes an elbow, and goes by Little Chart. We rode some way by that course, and found more of that Roman road, 74 paces long, in a line with the other, but not near the river, nor has it any ditches by it, which makes me the rather guess that these are several pieces of the Roman road. – After having viewed this, we went back to our passage, but without going over, we went up by the river and the road to the wood, where we lost our bank (or Roman road), but we went on by the river, which runs along by the side of the wood, and when we were passed that, we crossed the river again, and at about half a mile, in the middle of a very broad highway, we found more of a Roman road; it bears North-east by East.

“From this road, by a place called Park-house (belonging to Mr. Darell of Cale-hill), we went to Charing-heath, and in our way picked out, as we thought, several pieces of the Roman road, and upon the heath we saw that bank which I think I mentioned in my last Letter, where I said, that as soon as we came from Charing upon that heath we saw a great bank on our left hand, which I took for part of a Roman road. I now took its bearing, and it runs from North-north-east to South-south-west. – We rode to a place upon the heath, where we saw a water-course (now dry). It cuts the Roman road. We followed it to see where it runs (when full) into the river. We crossed several fields on foot, and found that it joins the river at about a furlong from the place where we first passed the river; but we met with nothing that inclined us to believe Durolenum could be here; and yet I am of opinion that it was somewhere within the compass of the ground we had traced that day. This is all I can

say, or have been able to perform, which I doubt you will think, as well as myself, is nothing to the purpose; and what I have written is, I fear, hardly intelligible for want of the Drawings, which I will shew you when I am in town. Oh, that I could either write or draw like Dr. Stukeley!

“I have since been at Canterbury, where I picked up some pieces of Antiquity. And I have been at Julaber’s grave, which I have formerly measured only by my paces, but have now taken it with my measuring-chain, and have all its dimensions very

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right; and I took its bearings with my compass, and from the top of it I have drawn a prospect of the country, with Chilham-house, the Castle, and the Town, which you shall see when we meet. I believe this is the last Letter I shall trouble you with from hence at this season, but may receive one from you.

“Excuse blots. – Mr. Creyk’s humble service attends you; and I am, Sir, your humble servant, Cyngetorax;
or (if I have lost that title for insufficiency) Winchilsea.”

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<These are some of the letters written to William Stukeley by the earl of Winchilsea. They were published in volume 2 of John Nichols’s ‘Illustrations’ (1817), among a selection of Stukeley’s incoming correspondence. Page images of that volume can be found through archive.org; one address is given below. Heneage (not ‘Daniel’) Finch was born in 1657, succeeded to the earldom on the death of his nephew in 1712, and died in 1726. The first letter is the earl’s reply to a letter from Stukeley, dated 10 October 1722, an edited version of which became one of the chapters in Stukeley’s ‘Itinerarium curiosum’ (1724, pp. 71–126). – C. F. May 2012.>

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