

BREWSTER AUTOGRAPH IN WISCONSIN.

BY JAMES D. BUTLER.

INTEREST in autographs is of decidedly modern growth. The word autograph in the sense of signature has been detected in English by the multitudinous readers for the Oxford dictionary in no author earlier than the elder Disraeli. Thus the specific use of the vocable began less than a decade before the year 1800. When regard for the Pilgrims took an autographic turn, the signature of William Brewster was at once brought to light on a deed in the record office at Plymouth. There was, however, unexpected difficulty in unearthing a duplicate, so that after much search and research the writing in the Old Colony archives came to be considered the unique autograph of Elder William Brewster, whose house was the first cradle of the first church of the Pilgrims.—(Bradford, p. 490.)

Notwithstanding, about 1857 some one in Yale college library opening Cartwright's *Harmonia Evangelica*, which had long slept soundly there in its own sheets, read on the title-page *Will'm Brewster*, and on the left of the name the phrase, *Hebel est omnis Adam*, which, though Mr. Winsor did not know it, is found word for word in the fifth verse of the 39th Psalm. The phrase is considered by Gesenius an independent clause and translated "A breath is every man." More literally, "All man all breath."

A third autograph with the same motto was soon afterward exhumed at the Boston Athenæum in a Greek folio of Chrysostom, Basle, 1522. This book is further inscribed "Ex bibliotheca avi mei," July, 1644. Thomas Prince [who was a son of Brewster's daughter]. A fourth autograph

next rewarded Rev. Dr. Henry M. Dexter, who ferreted out *Willm Brewster*, but not the Latinized motto, in a "Treatise on the minestery (*sic*) of the Church of England, 1595. [No mention of place] by Francis Johnson, pastor of the English church in Amsterdam." This book seems to have been bought before the Elder had adopted his book motto.

This quartet was supposed by Winsor to include all autographs extant; indeed he failed to specify the Dexter specimen in his *Narrative and Critical History* (Vol. iii, p. 287), published in the middle of the eighties. Yet two more Brewster signs manual were in reserve for him. One autograph with motto had been long lurking close by him in a neighbor's house at Cambridge. The name and motto gave him a glad surprise in 1887. They were written in the commentary of "Pareus In Genesin Mosis," Frankfurt, 1615. The other it was his fortune to read, both name and motto, on a folio translation of "Seneca's Morals, by Thomas Lodge, London, 1614," owned by Mr. McClellan in Woodstock, Conn.

These six were the only Brewster autographs described by Mr. Winsor in his monograph of 1887 in the *Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings* (Second Series, vol. iii., pp. 261-274). So far as can be ascertained they formed the total of discovery, after a century of search, until a seventh appeared in April, 1902, some fifteen years after the last windfall.

Miss Elizabeth Goffe Ticknor, now a student in the University of Wisconsin, then brought to her professor of history, Frederick J. Turner, an old book which had long been an heirloom in her home, which is with her mother and grandmother in Madison. Her volume is a relic of the self-same Francis Johnson, who wrote the work which, as before stated, was the delight of Dr. Dexter's old age, as found by himself with the fourth-found Brewster autograph—and the first one that had not been entombed in a public institution.

This Wisconsin treasure-trove shows on its title-page *Will'm Brewster*—and *Hebel est omnis Adam*, with not one letter in either of them obscured. The book itself, however, with no covers, the last four leaves in tatters, and all pages after 320 wanting altogether, recalls Shakespeare's unregarded age in corners thrown.

The gist of the title-page, where the words are two hundred and twenty, is as follows: "A Christian Plea," in capitals. By way of sub-title its three Treatises are: 1. "Touching Anabaptists," etc., pp. 1-210; 2. "Touching Arminians," etc., pp. 210-244; 3. "Touching the Reformed church with whom myself agree," etc., pp. 244-320.

"Made by Francis Johnson, Pastour of the ancient English church, now sojourning at Amsterdam in the Low Countries." The next line shows six golden words which glorify the whole volume—"Hebel est omnis Adam Will'm Brewster.¹ Printed In the yeere of our Lord 1617." No indication of place.

Here was the first discovery of the desiderated name in a second book by any single author.

A copy of this work stands in the British Museum marked in the catalogue *Brownist*, 696, b23, 1. His earliest publication is dated as 1600 in Allibone, but his book in Dr. Dexter's library bears the date 1595. He was in Middleburg 1593-99.

The chain of title to several of the Brewster volumes with his autograph is quite complete. No such evidence of either genuineness or authenticity is needed in respect to the present seventh autograph. Nor can it be furnished. Still the antecedents of the new-found rarity, so far as known, deserve record.

Mrs. Olive Ticknor, residing in Madison, was the legal

¹ Facsimile of autograph.

Will'm Brewster

owner of the volume containing the seventh autograph until April 15, 1902, when she allowed it to be stamped "State Historical Society of Wisconsin. No. 117,590." Born in 1819, her maiden name was Olive Kendall. Her father, Thomas Kendall (born 1786, died 1831), was son of Rev. Thomas Kendall, who was born in 1745 in Hopkinton, Mass., died 1836 (Daniels' Oxford, p. 564). Mrs. Ticknor, who was seventeen years old at her grandfather's death, and living in the same house with him, believes the volume to have been then long in his possession. Further genealogical research may shed light on the steps of its transmission after many a halt and hazard to a permanent home where dangers of loss or perishing are reduced to a minimum. Three of the six autographs before known—those at Yale, Plymouth, and the Boston Athenæum, may be equally secure—but the other three so long as they remain in private hands cannot be. Four of the six were found in Massachusetts, two in Connecticut. It will forever be a joy to Wisconsin, that in her capital was found the first Brewster autograph outside of New England. May it abide the *κτίμα ἐς ἀεί* which was the heart's desire of Thucydides!

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