

Christ Church Library, Carroll Collection

Digitised image notes and captions by Edward Wakeling

Carroll-MS 1 - The Life of Richard Hakluyt

Introductory notes:

"The Life of Richard Hakluyt" was a Gaudy oration given by C. L. Dodgson on 31 May 1856 in Christ Church Hall at the request of the Dean - 15 page manuscript. Dodgson was appointed lecturer in mathematics in August 1855 by the new Dean, Henry George Liddell. He took up the post in January 1856.

Dodgson's diary recorded on 6 May 1856: "The Dean sent for me to tell me he wishes me to read out the "Life" at the Gaudy this time. He chose "Richard Hakluyt," author of a book of travels. The Gaudy was a dinner attended by old members of Christ Church, and the "Life" was usually about a successful old member. Richard Hakluyt (1553-1616) was admitted to Christ Church in 1570: BA 1574, MA 1577, lectured on the construction and use of maps, spheres, and nautical instruments, collected information about voyages of English and other sailors, chaplain to the ambassador in Paris 1583-1588, rector of Wetheringsett, Suffolk 1590, prebendary of Westminster 1602, archdeacon 1603, and rector of Gedney, Lincolnshire 1612. He married twice; firstly c. 1594, and secondly, Frances, the widow of William Smithe, in 1604. He published *Divers Voyages Touching the Discovery of America* (1582), and *Principal Navigations, Voyages and Discoveries of the English Nation* in three volumes (1598-1600). He died on 23 November 1616 and is buried in Westminster Abbey.

Other diary entries reveal how Dodgson prepared for the Gaudy oration:

May 27. (Tu). Spent most of the evening in drawing up an arranged list of the events in the life of Hakluyt, and wrote a conclusion for it.

May 29. (Th). Sat up late, writing Hakluyt's life: about half past 1 in the morning the men began to explode fireworks in Chaplain's Quadrangle, and three of them came out and threw bottles into Lloyd's windows. I went over to Lloyd's rooms and woke him: he got up and dressed and went over for Marshall: we went into Page's rooms, from which we saw the last fireworks come, but the offenders had beat a retreat.

May 30. (F). The last day of Collections. Finished Hakluyt's life.

May 31. (Sat). Spent the day in the Library: read out the life in Hall, and afterwards dined at the high table: the noise was tremendous, and Gordon turned several men out of Hall.

The oration would have been quite an ordeal for Dodgson with his speech hesitation, made a little better by choosing his own words and rehearsing beforehand. The behaviour of the undergraduates left much to be desired - a task that Dean Liddell tackled successfully, instilling discipline over a period of time.

The full transcript of Dodgson's oration is given here:

Foremost in the ranks of those who have aided the progress of science and civilisation by their writings, and have earned for themselves an imperishable name in the records of History, stand original writers, inventors, and projectors: second to these, and second only so far as their genius is less brilliant, and their names less widely known, are those who have recorded the advance of those before them, who have mapped out the landmarks of the fields of Science already in possession, and from which future investigators are to begin their labours.

It is among this latter class that the name of Richard Hakluyt, sometime Student of Ch. Ch. deserves an honorable mention: the few facts which history has recorded of him all bear testimony to the care and unremitting diligence with which he cultivated Science, and to the success with which his labours were crowned.

He was born, as the learned Anthony Wood informs us, of an ancient and honourable family at Yetton or Yatton in Herefordshire: the date of his birth does not appear to have been accurately ascertained, but it was very nearly in the middle of the 16th century. He received his education in Westminster School, and it was during his residence there that his thoughts were first accidentally directed to those subjects which were destined to engross his attention and labour during the greater portion of his life. He paid frequent visits to the house of a relative, a man of great learning and influence, who is related to have given up his whole life to the encouragement of navigation, commerce, arts and manufactures. The constant sight of the maps and books with which his house was filled, aided probably by the pleasing associations with which the young schoolboy would naturally look back upon these visits, awoke in his mind a love for Science, and inspired him with the resolution to devote his life to these studies.

How effectually he adhered to this resolution we find abundantly proved in the history of his Collegiate life: he was elected as a student from Westminster to Ch. Ch. in the year 1570, and while here he prosecuted with such success the studies he had begun at Westminster, that we find him soon after taking his degree made Professor of Naval History, in which capacity he delivered public lectures on cosmography and its kindred sciences. We cannot doubt but that there was seen in him some peculiar fitness for this office, a fitness which had led him as a mere boy to devote himself to studies which are usually found so laborious and uninteresting, and obtained for him as a young man a distinction all the more honorable, as he appears to have been at once the first lecturer in this subject, and the cause of the lecture itself being instituted.

A great friend and patron of his, Sir Francis Drake, who about this time made his celebrated voyage round the world, was encouraged by the success of these lectures on naval history, to offer funds for the institution of a lecture on navigation. This was intended to be a continuation of the lecture begun on Hakluyt, and he was requested by Sir Francis to look out a fit person to succeed himself: Hakluyt succeeded in the search, but the nearest approach that was ever made to an arrangement in this matter, was that Sir Francis offered £20 per annum for the lecturer, and that Hakluyt's friend demanded £40, alleging that less would not support him: and as neither party would alter his terms to accommodate the other, the proposition came to nothing.

Hakluyt however persevered for some years in the lecture to which he had been appointed, and in so rude a state did he find that science at the outset of his course, that to him is ascribed the introduction into England of the use of the globe and other instruments of geography. Besides this, he kept up an active correspondence with all the noted seamen of the day, among whom we may find the name of Gerard Mercator. About at this time, he entered for a short time on the study of law, in the Middle Temple, but whether from the little success he had in that study, or that with a mind so preoccupied as his he found it uncongenial to his tastes, he appears to have soon deserted it for his favourite pursuits. We are informed that he entered into holy orders, probably soon afterwards, but in connection with this we have no further information than the names of the different livings and other ecclesiastical preferments which he held.

His fame as one learned in nautical matters had now reached a more than Oxford celebrity, and we find him frequently consulted by various companies as well as private individuals on the subject of voyages to be undertaken. Through all this he appears to have kept one object steadily before him, the accumulation of all the documents he could find relating to former voyages, and these afterwards constituted the large and valuable collection of voyages which bears his name, and on which his claim to celebrity as a writer chiefly rests.

His was a curious instance of the exclusive direction of the mind to one especial branch of a subject: we do not find that the interest he took in voyages of discovery ever led him to join one in person; nor that his aptitude for collecting and compiling documentary evidence was ever applied to any other branch of history: but for the one of these two great features in his character, he might have been a sailor; but for the other, he might have been an historian. The union of the two made him that character, as which alone he is presented to our view in history, the recorder of naval enterprise.

As secretary to Sir Edward Stafford, who went as ambassador to Paris in the year 1584, Hakluyt found an opportunity for extending the researches he had so long carried on in England. Here it was that he came upon a manuscript, by a captain Laudonnière, relating to the discovery of Florida, and generously furnished the funds necessary for its publication: as this was done under the editorship of Martin Basanier, it does not appear that Hakluyt had any thoughts of acquiring celebrity for himself in doing this: indeed throughout the whole of his literary career, his devotion to Science appears to have been most sincere and disinterested.

On his return to England he gave to the world the first result of his laborious research in the form of a *Collection of Voyages*, in one folio volume, which he dedicated to another patron, Sir Francis Walsingham. This appeared in 1589, but he continued to enlarge this collection during the remainder of his life, until it had reached the bulk of three folio volumes. In the course of this work he records the voyage which his earliest patron, Sir Francis Drake, made round the world. Another voyage, in the relation of which he must have taken an almost personal interest, was that made by Thomas Randolphe, who was also a student at Ch. Ch. and who was sent as an ambassador to the Emperor of Russia in the year 1568. This account is worth noticing, as it furnishes us with a curious picture of the manners and customs of the Russian court of that day. At the conclusion of his interview with the Emperor,

as the ambassador himself relates, he "said unto me: 'I dine not this day openly for great affaires I have, but I will send thee my dinner, and give leave to thee and thine to go at liberty, and augment our allowance to thee, in token of our love and favour to our sister the Queene of England.' I with reverence took my leave, being conveyed by two other of greater calling than those that brought me to the Emperor's sight, who delivered me to the two first gentlemen, who conducted me to the office where I first was, where came unto me one called the Long duke, with whom I conferred a while, and so returned to my lodging. Within one houre after comes to my lodging a duke richly appparelled, accompanied with fiftie persons, ech of them carying a silver dish with meat, and covered with silver. The duke first delivered twenty loaves of bread of the Emperor's own eating, having tasted the same, and delivered every dish into my hands, and tasted of every kind of drinke that he brought. This being done, the duke and his company sate downe with me, and tooke part of the Emperor's meat, and filled themselves well of all sorts, and went not away from me unrewarded."

The duke here mentioned appears to have filled a situation to which in England we should have given a very different name, but there can be little doubt that this strange and inconvenient honour was intended as a real mark of the Emperor's regard, for we find that this visit was very shortly followed by a grant, made by the Emperor at the ambassador's request, of a great number of privileges for the accomodation of English merchants trading in Russia.

Throughout the whole of this work the style is uniformly simple and unpretending, aiming at no brilliance of writing, but merely at relating in as truthful a manner as possible, the bare facts of the history on which he was engaged. And he does this with all the minuteness of detail, and all the apparent credulity of Herodotus himself.

In another account of a Russian voyage, made by Dr. Giles Fletcher, who went out as ambassador in the year 1588, we find accounts of popular legends and superstitions, which might almost have been taken from the pages of the father of History: "They say that to the men of Lucomoria chaunceth a marveilous thing and incredible: For they affirme, that they die yearly at the XXVII day of November, being the feast of S. George among the Muscovites: and that at the next spring, about the XXIII day of April, they revive againe as doe Frogges. With these also the people of Grustintzi and Serponowtzi exercise a new and strange kinde of trade: For when the accustomed time of their dying, or rather of sleeping, approacheth, they leave their wares in certaine places appointed, which the Grustintzi and Serponowtzi carry away, leaving other wares of equal value in their places: which if the dead men at the time of their reviving perceive to be of unequal price, they require their owne againe: by reason whereof, much strife and fighting is betweene them."

He remained with Sir Edward Stafford in Paris for 5 years, during which time he published, or rather re-edited, two works. One of these, by Peter Martyr, bears the title of "De novo orbe," and he afterwards published an English version of it, under the name of "The history of the West Indies." The other was originally written in Portuguese, by Antonio Galvano, governor of Ternate, the chief island of the Moluccas. Hakluyt gave to his translation of this work the name of "The discoveries of the World from the first, original, unto the year of our Lord 1555."

The next of his works is also taken from the Portuguese, and is entitled "Virginia richly valued by the description of the main land of Florida her next neighbour." The author of this work was Ferdinand de Soto.

In the year 1598, just before the publication of this book, he brought out the 3 folio volumes, into which his Collection of Voyages had now grown, and this is in fact the only work which we can, with any idea of the originality of writing, ascribe to his pen. In the year 1605 the government recompensed him, as we are informed, by presenting him to the Rectory of Wetheringset in Suffolk, as well as to a prebendaryship at Bristol: he had been for some years before this a prebendary of Westminster. Whether this recompense had reference to the services he had done to Science or to the Church, we are not informed: indeed there is scarcely any fact preserved in the history of his life, which does not bear, directly or indirectly, upon his literary career.

He did not live long enough to enlarge still further his great work, although he has left sufficient materials to constitute a fourth volume; these, while still in manuscript, fell into the hands of Samuel Purchass, a very similar literary character, and were by him embodied in one or other of his collections of travels and voyages; probably in that which bears the name of "Purchass his pilgrims."

Richard Hakluyt died in the year 1616, and was buried in Westminster Abbey: a more enduring monument to his fame is to be found on the coast of Greenland, one of whose promontories was named by the navigator Hudson "Hakluyt's Headland."

He had married in the year 1594, and he left behind him one son, named Edmund, to whom he bequeathed his country estate, as well as some property which he held in Westminster. The name of one other of his relations is handed down to us, Oliver Hakluyt, his brother, who was also a student at Ch. Ch. and who, we are told "having graduated in Physic, had an happy hand in the practice of it."

In the works which bear his name, little claim can be found to any originality of authorship: he appears to have been far more zealous to advance the science which he cultivated than to raise his own reputation as a writer. Three of the 5 works which he has left to the world are merely English versions of foreign works, in which accuracy of translation is the only point for which he was personally responsible: what Coleridge said of his system of philosophy, he would doubtless have felt with regards to these records of British Naval Enterprise, namely that he would have been "also lately glad, if he could hear that the thing had already been done before him."

The genius of an original writer, like the enterprising zeal of a first discoverer, or the resistless energy of a conqueror, is apt to dazzle the eyes of those that look on: and they too easily overlook the heavier toil and almost equal abilities which belong to those that come after, and whose part it is to collect and shape the stray efforts of genius, to record for time to come the results of discovery, to secure and perpetuate the gains of conquest.

In the rush and glare of a conqueror's triumphal procession as it sweeps by, the eye is naturally drawn to the one royal figure who forms the nucleus of all that splendour, the ear naturally dwells upon the swelling music which heralds his approach: and we scarcely hear the measured tread of the soldiery, who fill up the intervals in the line, and we hardly notice the dense dark masses against whom the gaudy banners show in such bold relief, and many and many a one, general, and

counsellor, and minister of state, goes by unheeded in that glittering stream, and yet they may have wrought as well and as fully in their work as the great chief himself, whose fortune has been higher than theirs; and but for their labours, unrequited and forgotten, even that mighty genius might have spent himself in vain.

The following set of complimentary verses, addressed to Hakluyt on the subject of his great work "The Collection of Voyages," may not inappropriately conclude this notice of his life.

IN NAVALES RICHARDI HAKLUYTI COMMENTARIOS

Anglia magnarum facunda puerpera cerum,
Sive solum spectes nobile sive salum.
Qua quantum sumptis se nobilarerit armis,
Sive domi gessit praelia, sive foris;
Multorum celebrant matura volumina: tanta
Insula materiem parvula landis alit.
At se in quot qualesque et quando effuderit oras,
Qua fidit ignotum pervia classis iter,
Solius *Hakluyti* decus est, praedivite penna
Ostendisse suis civibus ausa mari.
Quacunq;ue idcirco celeri gens Anglica navi,
Oceani tristes spernere docta minas,
A prima generisque et gentis origine gessit,
Qua via per fluctus ulla patere potest,
Sive decus laudemque secuta, ut et hostibus ala
Demeret, atque suis laeta pararet opes:
Hoc opus *Hakluyti*; cui debet patria multum,
Cui multum, patria quisquis amicus erit.
Qua re namque magis se nostra Britannia jactat,
Quam quod sit prater caetera classe poters?
Quam prius obsessam tenebris sic liberat, ut nunc
Quisque sciat, quam sit nobile classis opus.
Qua so Daedalice utemur, surgemus in altum,
Sin autem Icarice, quod voret, aquor habet.

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Letter from F. Menella Dodgson (1877-1963), niece, and sister of Charles Hassard Wilfrid Dodgson (1876-1941), then executor of the C. L. Dodgson Estate, probably to the Librarian at Christ Church, dated 8 February 1932. The letter is address from C. H. W. Dodgson's home at Breinton House, Hereford, where Menella was staying to help her brother edit Dodgson's Diary for publication (although this project never came to fruition). The letter says:

Dear Sir,

The "Life of Richard Hakluyt" which I saw amongst the Lewis Carroll papers shown to us on Jan: 27th, is, as I thought, one of the papers which he read out in Hall, and the following entries, taken from his Diary, will, I think, tell you all you want to know about it.

[She then quotes the entries given above]

Yours very truly,

F. Menella Dodgson

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Continuation of letter given above.

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Letter from F. Menella Dodgson to probably the same correspondent, dated 12 February 1932, giving an additional entry from Dodgson's Diary which she omitted from her first letter (given above).

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