

**REMAINS, HISTORICAL AND
LITERARY, CONNECTED WITH THE
PALATINE COUNTIES OF
LANCASTER AND CHESTER. VOL.
IX. THE NORRIS PAPERS**

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THOMAS HEYWOOD

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THE
NORRIS PAPERS.

EDITED BY
THOMAS HEYWOOD, ESQ., F.S.A.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE MSS. here printed are a portion of a much larger collection made by several generations of the family of Norris, of Speke. These documents are said to have been distributed when the estate, fifty years ago, passed into the hands of Mr. Watt. They have since fallen into the hands of auctioneers, booksellers, and virtuosi, and are now diminished in number, and separated beyond the possibility of ever again being collected so as to form a connected series.

Fortunately the CORPORATION OF LIVERPOOL, and MR. NORRIS, of Manchester, are the possessors of many of the Papers, and the CHETHAM SOCIETY have to acknowledge the very liberal manner with which these MSS. have been placed at their disposal for publication.

A few of the earlier documents are printed, but the great interest of the book is the insight which it affords into the characters and actions of the men, who at the close of the seventeenth, and the beginning of the succeeding century, founded Liverpool. Defoe, whose visit is alluded to in the following correspondence, (1705,) has left on record his surprise at the change which this little community of merchants had effected, though opposed by what appeared to him almost insurmountable natural difficulties.

The principal person in directing the energies of the infant town was SIR THOMAS JOHNSON, a name which, excepting for the lists of members of Parliament, and Mayors, would be unknown in the place he so largely benefited. For whilst Clayton and Cunliffe repose under their marble monuments in the Parish Church, in all the odour of municipal sanctity, Johnson, who was always poor, lies probably in some obscure corner of Virginia. If, however, the separation of the parish from Walton,—the building of St. Peter's,—the formation of the first dock,—the creation of the Corporation property,—and the seeking out new sources of wealth by distant and daring adventures, entitle the merchants of Liverpool who lived in the reigns of William and Anne, to be considered as the founder of the town's prosperity, of those traders Johnson was the acknowledged head; and, therefore, to him more than to any one else is the town indebted for its vigorous and well-omened commencement.

We have purposely retained some of the letters bearing upon the mode in which the customs were collected in Liverpool, because the want of honesty towards the King's revenue officers, or rather, the understanding which existed between them and the merchants, was universal at the time these letters were written, and forms a peculiarity in the age when contrasted with that in which we live.
