

LETTERS OF "VERAX"

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Letters of "Verax" by Anonymous

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ANONYMOUS

**LETTERS
OF "VERAX"**



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[Reprinted from the "Manchester Weekly Times."]



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1878.

270. f. 601.

VERY few who can be expected to honour the following letters with a perusal will need to be initiated into the rather open secret of their origin. They have been selected from a considerably larger number which were published in the *Manchester Weekly Times*, and republished in the *Manchester Examiner and Times*, during the year 1877 and January, 1878—the year's limit having been overstepped for the purpose of including the five letters on the Biography of the Prince Consort. If it should be said that, having figured in two newspapers of no inconsiderable circulation, they may fairly be held to have already enjoyed all the publicity to which their merits entitle them, the author could not conscientiously say one word in reply; but the truth is that he has been reduced to an emergency too flattering not to be patiently endured, and plied with suggestions which human frailty can hardly be expected to resent or to resist. The result is that he succumbs, and assents to their republication in the present form, modestly and frankly, but without apology.

One word of explanation. The letters deal with topics with which the public were familiar at the time they were written, and it has not been thought necessary to encumber them with dates and references. Some care has been taken to set forth fully in each letter the facts and statements to which its criticisms refer, and this will perhaps be deemed sufficient. As regards one letter, that on Theatre-going, the author regrets that he cannot reproduce along with it the able reply it called forth from the reverend gentleman whose discourse supplied the text, and he has omitted from the present issue one or two sentences which were perhaps chargeable with undue though not intentional severity.

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CHURCH DESCENT.

ONE of the advantages of having two Bishops in the same neighbourhood is that there is sure to be an occasional "kick-up" between them, and that in the course of the fray, as is well known to happen in a parallel case, honest people are likely to come by their own. I see from the daily papers that such an accident has just happened between Bishop Fraser and Bishop Vaughan, both of them excellent prelates, I dare say, but whom I love better as men than as prelates. This latest "row" seems to have been begun by a sermon of Bishop Fraser's, wherein the Bishop declares that the Roman Catholic Church is a comparatively modern invention, that its characteristic doctrines are all new, that Popery sprang up about the time of Gregory VII. (1073), and that the Church of England comes down in a continuous line from the earliest ages of Christianity. Bishop Vaughan, preaching last Sunday in the Church of St. Joseph, vigorously assails all these assertions, but especially the last. He denies that the Church of England has come down in a continuous line from the earliest ages of Christianity, and maintains that it is only a