

**TWO LECTURES READ
BEFORE THE ESSAY
SOCIETY OF EXETER
COLLEGE, OXFORD**

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Two Lectures Read before the Essay Society of Exeter College, Oxford by R. J. King

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R. J. KING

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TWO LECTURES

READ BEFORE

THE ESSAY SOCIETY

OF EXETER COLLEGE, OXFORD.

"And now I sent my book to be printed in Paris, at my own cost and charges, without suffering it to be divulged to others, than to such as I thought might be worthy readers of it."

LOUIS HENRIET OF CHARENTON.

PRINTED FOR PRIVATE DISTRIBUTION.

M.DCCC.XL.

930 . d . 53 .

"He will write it," said the Bhow Begum, taking up her son's box, and accompanying the words with a nod of satisfaction and encouragement.

"He will never be so foolish," said my wife.

My wife's eldest sister rejoined, "He is foolish enough for any thing."

The Doctor, vol. 1.

"Saint Bride and her brot,
Saint Colme and her cat,
Saint Michael and his spear,
Keep this buke free harm and weir."



TO

RICHARD COWLEY POWLES, ESQ.

President

OF THE ESSAY SOCIETY OF EXETER COLLEGE.

MY DEAR MR. PRESIDENT,

DO you recollect that immortal courtesy executed by the Ladies Seraphina and Angelica Arthuret, when Father Bonaventure entered the gallery at Fairladies? "the hoop petticoats which performed the feat seemed to sink down to the very floor—nay—through it, as if a trap door had opened for the descent of the dames who performed this act of reverence." With a bow of proportionable humility I would present myself before you and the Society on this occasion; perhaps if I had duly considered the absolute truth, that

" Knowledge is like the heaven's glorious sun,
And will not be deep searched with saucy looks,"

I should have hesitated before rushing thus daringly into all the glories of a fair stream of type, meandering pleasantly through a broad meadow of margin: the summit of my ambition will be reached, however, should you consider the "Supernatural Beings of the Middle Ages" worthy of a place on the same shelf with Mr. Oldbuck's Essay on the right hand gauntlet of "Hell-in-Harness," and Dr. Dryasdust's Discourses on the Saxon Horn at York Minster.

If any thing could add to the audacity of my attempt, it would be the remarkable difficulties presented at the very first view of the subjects I have chosen:—well said old Du Bartas—

" Most famous people's dark antiquitie
Is as a wood; where bold temeritie
Stumbles each step."

And whilst this is peculiarly the case with all mythological subjects, "The Pleasaunt Londe of Faërie" claims for itself a preeminence of obscurity, and the hapless individual who launches his bark on this "ydle lake," feels much the same as a certain eminent member of this Society would do, if when he

" Bares his broad bosom to the buxom wind,"

and floats down the swift stream of the Isis, his course

should be impeded by divers masses of duckweed and water lilies—

“ And all the way before him, as he goes,
Triton his trumpet shrill ” ——

but that shake of your ambrosial curls, Mr. President, tells me that I am approaching interdicted ground; so with all their difficulties and “ errors manifold,” I submit these imperfect attempts to the consideration of the Society,—and trusting that the tree which has been planted may continue to flourish vigorously as at present—that its leaves may not wither or its boughs fall—and that distant generations “ may sing among the branches,”

I remain,

my dear Mr. President,

yours most sincerely,

Exeter College,
June 15, 1840.



“ And with that worde, he with a sobre chere
Began hys tale, as ye shullen after here.”

VENATOR.—This is a very little book—

PISCATOR.—That may serve to shew you it is for a very little fly.

The Complete Angler.

On the Supernatural Beings

of

The Middle Ages.