

Dorothy Vernon.

BY A. E. COCKAYNE.

IN the course of transmission of books and papers from old to new offices by a firm of solicitors in Bakewell, a quantity of old papers were discovered of considerable value and importance. A cursory look through them revealed one document which is apparently unique; no writing of the celebrated Dorothy Vernon of Haddon Hall being hitherto known to exist; not even the searches of the Historical MSS. Commission at Belvoir having unearthed any such document.

The paper to which I now allude is a quarto single sheet, written on both sides, and is a letter written by Dorothy Manners (Dorothy Vernon having married John Manners) to the then agent of the Haddon estate, Mr. Swan.

There is a good deal of character in the style of writing in the signature, though that of the letter itself rather points to a later date than that of Dorothy Manners. Yet the style of its diction, and particularly its subscription, "Your trew frind to my power," leads to the belief in the identity of the writer. There was another Dorothy Manners later; namely, Dorothy, a younger daughter of Sir George Manners (who became the wife of Sir Thomas Lake), and a Mr. Swan, I believe, was then agent; but she would scarcely be likely to conclude a letter to the Estate Agent in form as this, nor to be in a position to borrow money from the agent. I believe, therefore, we have here a genuine letter of the celebrated heiress of Haddon. It

is unfortunate there is no date of year given, only "the 19." The examination of the other papers has been courteously promised to me, and I hope soon to look through them carefully.

The following is a transcript of the letter, along with a fac-simile of the signature:—

" Good Mr. Swan

" I know not how to make a note as I think fiting to send to you ; therefore, by Jack, write ye such note as you thinke good, and send it in your let : to me, and I will set my hand to it, and by the first safe hand send it you againe ; you may say in the note y^t I will pay you the golde againe, or so much as ye will have for change in silver by our Lady-day, for I have them frinds that knows of this, w^{ch} I am sure w^d pass there words, or give there hands, but at this time, w^t y^r kindness to me, I will not desier them ; but they assure me if I should die to-morrow it should be payd you at the time, you may say in the noate w^h shall be our Lady-day therefore make it so, and send it me, by Jack ; and you will still more oblige me to be as trewly I am

" Good Mr. Swan

" Your trew frind to my power

" *The 19.*"

" Dorothy Manners."

Fac-simile of signature :

Dorothy
Manners