

A letter from Dr. Ducarel, F.R.S. and F.S.A. to William Watson, M.D. F.R.S. upon the early cultivation of botany in England; and some particulars about John Tradescant, a great promoter of that science, as well as natural history, in the last century, and gardener to King Charles I.

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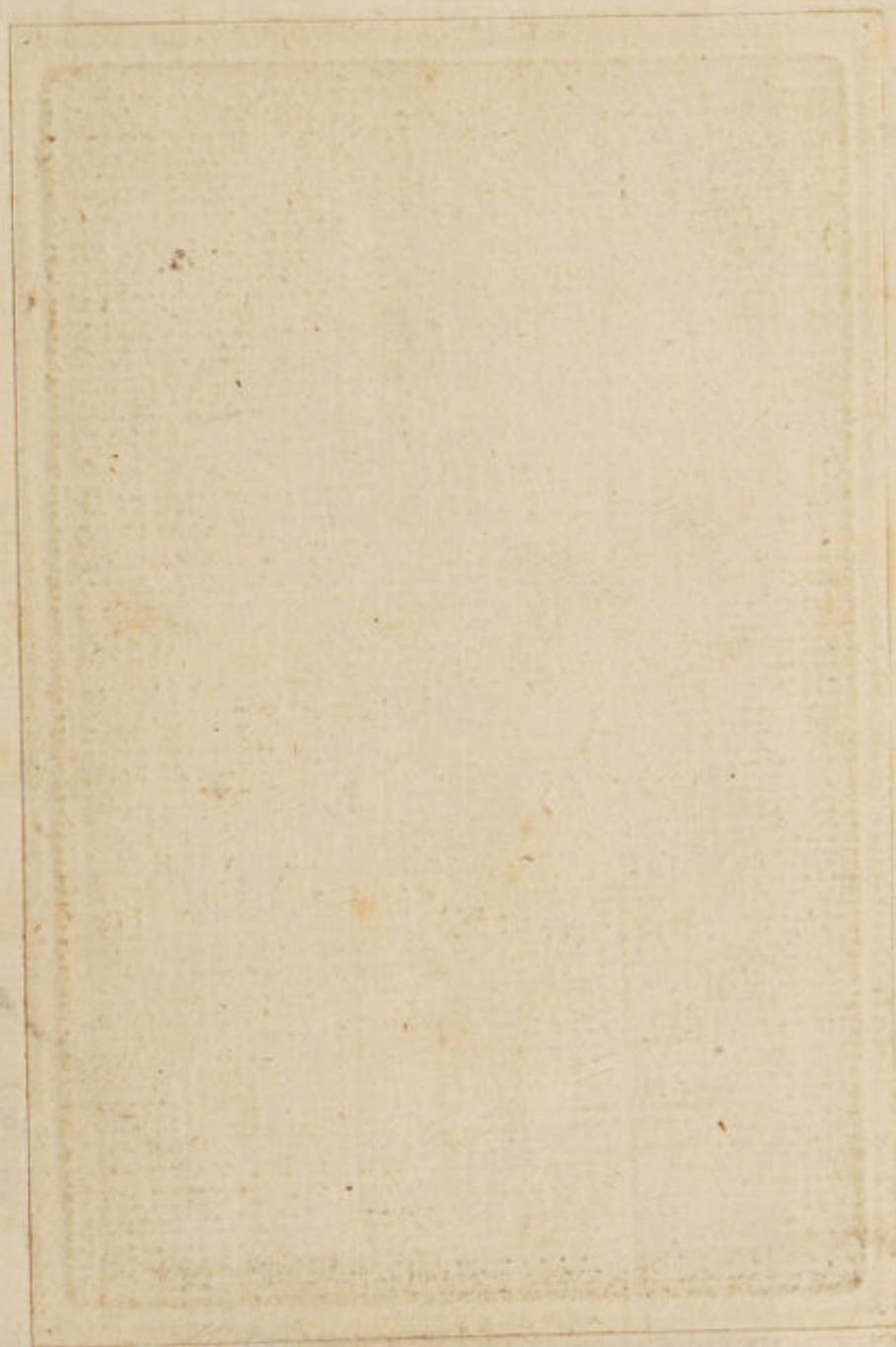
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Johannes Tradescantus Ruten, rerum selectarum
insignem suppellectilem in Reconditorio Lambethiano
propè Londinum, chammum visendam primus
instituit ac locupletavit.

W. Hollar sculp.

(1)

A
L E T T E R
F R O M
DR. DUCAREL, F. R. S. AND F. S. A.
T O
WILLIAM WATSON, M. D. F. R. S.
U P O N
THE EARLY CULTIVATION OF BOTANY IN ENGLAND;
A N D
SOME PARTICULARS ABOUT JOHN TRADESCANT,
A GREAT PROMOTER OF THAT SCIENCE, AS WELL AS
NATURAL HISTORY, IN THE LAST CENTURY,
AND GARDENER TO KING CHARLES I.



*Thus John Tradeskin starves our greedy Eyes,
By boxing up his new found rarities—*

L O N D O N,
PRINTED BY W. BOWYER AND J. NICHOLS.

M.DCC.LXXIII.

Flatman's Poems 8vo London 1682

4781

L E T T E R

FROM

DR. DUCARRE, F.R.S. AND F.S.A.

TO

WILLIAM WATSON, M.D. F.R.S.

UPON

THE EARLY CULTIVATION OF POTATOES IN ENGLAND:



SOME PRACTICAL REMARKS

A GREAT PROMOTER OF THAT SCIENCE, AS WELL AS

NATURAL HISTORY, IN THE LAST CENTURY.

AND ANSWERS TO THE CHARTER L.

These letters were written by Dr. Ducarre in 1781 and are now deposited in the library of the Wellcome Historical Medical Library.

Printed by W. B. B. & Co. 1781.

WELLCOME

A

L E T T E R

T O

WILLIAM WATSON, M.D. F.R.S.

S I R,

YOUR love for Botany, and your great knowledge in that science, will, I hope, be a sufficient apology for laying before you some observations which have occurred to me on that subject. And I flatter myself that the following anecdotes will not be altogether unacceptable to you.

The sciences, we know, are subject to revolutions. But is it not a very extraordinary one that Botany, so useful to mankind, and so well known to the ancients, should, for some ages, abandon Europe, and remain almost unknown there till the sixteenth century; when it is supposed to have suddenly revived; and has since, by the industry of the moderns, been brought to the highest perfection?

The

The truth, however, is, that Botany returned into England long before this æra. It was brought back here by the Saxons; since whose time, I shall endeavour to shew, that it hath always flourished, more or less, in this kingdom.

I found my opinion upon the authority of the four following Saxon manuscripts.

Two in the Bodleian Library, viz.

- (a) N° 4125. Herbarium Saxonicum.
- (b) N° 5169. Liber Medicinalis MS. continens Virtutes Herbarum Saxonice.

And two others in the Harleian Library, viz.

- N° 5066. entitled, Herbarium Saxonice.
- N° 585. Tractatus qui ab Anglo-Saxonibus dicebatur LIBER MEDICINALIS: scil. L. Apuleii Madaurencis Libri de Virtutibus Herbarum, Versio Anglo-Saxonica.

Madaurensis

Medaura

This Lucius Apuleius of Medaura was a famous Platonic philosopher, who flourished about A. D. 200. X

From this time I have met with no MS. concerning Botany, till the thirteenth century, when (c) Bishop Tanner mentions three MSS. on this subject, written by Gilebertus Legleus, five Anglicus, a phy-

(a) Cat. MSS. Angliæ, p. 185.

(b) Ibid. p. ~~562~~ 253

(c) Bibliotheca, p. 474.

fician,

X In the Cotton Library, Vitellius C. III. - 2 is the following MS. - Herbarium Apulei Platonicæ, quod accepit ab Esculapio, et Chirone Centauro, Magistro Achillis, Saxonice, cum figuris plantarum.

fician, who flourished in the year 1210, entitled,

1. De Virtutibus Herbarum, MS. Bodl. Digb. 75.
2. Gilberti Liber de Viribus & Medicinis Herbarum, Arborum, & Specierum, MS. olim Monast. Sion.
3. De Re Herbaria, Lib. I.

(d) The Bishop likewise mentions one John Arden, a famous surgeon, who lived at Newark in Nottinghamshire from 1349 to 1370, as the author of a MS. (now extant in Sir Hans Sloane's library), entitled, Volumen Miscellaneorum de Re Herbaria, Physica, & Chirurgica.

In the Ashmolean Library are the following MSS. viz.

- (e) (N^o 7704.) entitled, A Treatise of Chirurgery, with an Herbal, &c. in Old English, 4to. 1438. And another,
 (N^o 7709.) called, An Herbarie, &c. written alphabetically, according to the Latin names, in 1443. And
 (N^o 7537.) entitled, A Book of Plants and Animals, delineated in their natural colours on vellum, Old English, A. D. 1504. +

Mr. Ames, in his Typographical Antiquities, p. 470, informs us, that, in the year 1516, a folio, entitled, "The Greate Herball," was printed in

(d) Bibliotheca, p. 48.

(e) Cat. MSS. Angl. p. 341. - 335

+ B. P. Tanner in his Bibliotheca p. 431, 432, mentions ^{South-}^{none} John Carleon, alias Kent alias Coylegas, who flourished about the year 1482 as the author of Divers Tracts, one ~~of which is entitled~~ of which is entitled "De Herbarum naturis. lib. 1."

Southwark by Peter Treveris; and this, Sir, I believe, is the oldest English herbal now extant in print.

To come to later times. The ingenious Mr. Gough (in his British Topography, p. 61.) informs us, " That, before the year 1597, John Gerrard, " citizen and surgeon of London, seems to be the " first who cultivated a large physic garden, which " he had near his house in Holborn, where he " raised 1100 different plants and trees." (He might have add, that Gerrard had another physic garden in Old-street, containing a great variety of plants; a printed catalogue of which is to be found in the libraries of the curious). But Gerrard had a famous cotemporary, who greatly advanced that valuable science, and of whom but little hath hitherto been said by the modern biographers.

John Tradescant is the person meant. And I hope, Sir, that an attempt to revive the memory of this once eminent botanist and virtuoso will not be displeasing.

John Tradescant was, according to Anthony Wood, a Fleming, or a Dutchman. We are informed by Parkinson, that he had travelled into most parts of Europe, and into Barbary; and, from some emblems remaining upon his monument in Lambeth church-yard, it plainly appears that he had visited Greece, Egypt, and other Eastern countries.

In his travels, he is supposed to have collected not only plants and seeds, but most of those curiosities of every sort, which, after his death, were sold by his son to the famous Elias Ashmole, and deposited in his Museum at Oxford.

When

When he first settled in this kingdom, cannot, at this distance of time, be ascertained; perhaps it was towards the latter end of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, or the beginning of that of King James the First. His print, engraven by Hollar before the year 1656, which represents him as a person very far advanced in years, seems to countenance this opinion.

He lived in a great house at South Lambeth, where there is reason to think his museum was frequently visited by persons of rank, who became benefactors thereto: among these were King Charles the First (to whom he was gardener), Henrietta Maria his Queen, Archbishop Laud, George Duke of Buckingham, Robert and William Cecil, Earls of Salisbury, and many other persons of distinction (f).

John Tradescant may therefore be justly considered as the earliest collector (in this kingdom) of every thing that was curious in Natural History, viz. minerals, birds, fishes, insects, &c. &c. He had also a good collection of coins and medals of all sorts, besides a great variety of uncommon rarities. (g) A catalogue of these, published by his son, contains an enumeration of the many plants, shrubs, trees, &c. growing in his garden, which was pretty extensive. Some of these plants are (as I am informed), if not totally extinct, at least become very uncommon, even at this time. A list of some remarkable ones

(f) See a list of them at the end of *Museum Tradescantianum*, 12^{mo}, London, 1656—where are Hollar's two prints of John Tradescant, the father and son. — *see Granger Vol. 1 p. 541*

(g) Ibid.

introduced by him, is inserted below (*b*). And this able man, by his great industry, made it manifest (in the very infancy of Botany), that there is scarce

(*b*) From *Parkinson's Garden of pleasant Flowers*, printed in 1656.

1. " Pseudonarcissus aureus maximus flore pleno, five roseus
" Tradescanti.
" The greatest double yellow bastard daffodil, or John
" Tradescant's great rose daffodil.
" This daffodil was primarily introduced by John Tradescant, and for its extreme beauty, may well be entitled
" the glory of daffodils." Page 102.
2. " Moly Homericum, vel potius Theophrasti.
" The greatest moly of Homer. 141.
3. " Moly Indicum, five Caucason.
" Indian moly. *ibid.*
" Both the above molys are natives of Spain, Italy, and
" Greece, and were procured from thence by John Tradescant, and flourished with him, in his garden at Canterbury," (should be South Lambeth).
4. " Ephemerum Virginianum Tradescanti.
" John Tradescant's spider-wort of Virginia.
" This spider-wort is of late knowledge, and for it the
" Christian world is indebted unto that painful industri-
" ous searcher and lover of all nature's varieties John
" Tradescant." 152.
5. " Gladiolus Byzantinus.
" Corn-flag of Constantinople.
" With this species John Tradescant observed many acres of
" ground in Barbary overspread. 199.
6. " Elleborus albus vulgaris.
" White hellebore.
" This groweth in many places in Germany, and also in
" some parts of Russia, and in such plenty, that John
" Tradescant observed quantity sufficient to load a good
" ship with the roots. 346.
7. " Nardis montana tuberosa.
" Knobbed mountain valerian.
" Discovered in a botanic excursion by J. Tradescant. 388.
any





Iohannes Tradescantius Filius, genij ingenijq;
paterni verus heres, relictum sibi rerum vudiq;
congestarum thesaurum ipse plurimum adauxit
et in Museo Lambethiano amicis videntum exhibet,

W. Hodder ad vivum delin. et sculp.

any plant extant in the known world, that will not, with proper care, thrive in this kingdom.

When his house at South Lambeth (then called Tradescant's Ark) came into Ashmole's possession, he added a noble room to it, and adorned the chimney with his arms, impaling those of Sir William Dugdale (whose daughter was his third wife), where they remain to this day.

This house belongs at present to John Small, Esq; who, about twelve years ago, purchased it of some of Ashmole's descendants; and my house, once a part of Tradescant's, is adjoining thereto.

It were much to be wished, that the lovers of Botany had visited this once famous garden, before, or at least in, the beginning of the present century. But this seems to have been totally neglected till the year 1749, when yourself, and the late Dr. Mitchel, favoured the Royal Society (*i*) with the only account now extant, of the remains of Tradescant's garden. In it, Sir, you seem to confine the extent thereof to

8. " John Tradescant introduced a new strawberry, with
" very large leaves, from Brussels; but, in the course
" of seven years, could never see one berry completely
" ripe. Page 528.
9. " John Tradescant procured a new and great variety of
" plums from Turkey, and other parts of the world. 575.
10. " The Argier, or Algier apricot. This, with many other
" sorts, John Tradescant brought with him, returning
" from the Argier voyage, whither he went with the
" fleet that was sent against pirates, A° 1620." 579.

Thus far Parkinson; but whether or no these plants bear his name at this period, I can no more pretend to assert, than that all the species therein mentioned are even now existing in our gardens.

(*i*) Philosophical Transactions, Vol. XLVI. p. 160.

that

that now belonging to Mr. Small's house. I believe it was otherwise; and, on the account of the great number of plants, trees, &c. am inclined to think that Tradescant's garden extended much farther. Bounded on the West by the road, on the East by a deep ditch (still extant) it certainly extended a good way towards the North, and took in not only my orchard and garden, but also those of two or three of my next neighbours; and some ancient mulberry trees, planted in a line towards the North, seem to confirm this conjecture.

When the death of John Tradescant happened, I have not been able to discover, no mention being made thereof in the Register Book of Lambeth Church.

A singular monument, of which I herewith send you a drawing (see the annexed Plates), was erected, in the South-East part of Lambeth church-yard, in 1662, by Hester, the relict of John Tradescant the son, for himself, and the rest of this family, which is long since extinct (*k*).

This once beautiful monument hath suffered so much by the weather, that no just idea can now, on inspection, be formed of the North and South sides. But this defect is happily supplied from two fine drawings, preserved in Mr. Pepys's Library at Cambridge. We see

On the East side Tradescant's arms.

On the West A hydra, and under it a skull.

(*k*) John the grandson, buried 15th September 1652.

John the son, buried 25th April 1662.

Hester, widow of John Tradescant, buried 6th April 1678.

From the Register of Lambeth Church.

On the South { Broken columns, Corinthian capitals, &c. supposed to be ruins in Greece, or some other eastern countries.

On the North { A crocodile, shells, &c. and a view of some Egyptian buildings.

Various figures of trees, &c. in relievo adorn the four corners of this monument.

The following remarkable epitaph (preserved at Oxford, and printed in Mr. Aubrey's *Antiquities of Surrey*, p. 11.), was intended for, but never placed upon, this monument.

Know, stranger, ere thou pass, beneath this stone
Lie John Tradescant, grandfire, father, son.
The last dy'd in his spring; the other two
Liv'd till they had travelled art and nature thro'.
As by their choice collections may appear,
Of what is rare in land, in seas, in air:
Whilst they (as Homer's *Iliad* in a nut)
A world of wonders in one closet shut.
These famous antiquarians that had been
Both gardeners to the Rose and Lilly Queen,
Transplanted now themselves, sleep here; and when
Angels shall with their trumpets awaken men,
And fire shall purge the world, these hence shall rise
And change their garden for a paradise..

Before I conclude, I must beg leave to add a list of the portraits of the Tradescant family, now in the Ashmolean Museum. I cannot, however, conceive why both father and son are therein called Sir John, as it does not appear either of them were ever knighted. But so it is in the Oxford list communi-
cated.

cated to me, some time since, by the late worthy and learned Mr. William Huddesford, keeper of the Ashmolean Museum.

1. Sir John Tradescant, senior. A three quarter piece, ornamented with fruit, flowers, and garden roots.
2. Ditto. After his decease.
3. A small three quarter piece. Water colours.
4. A large piece, of his wife, son, and daughter. Quarter length.
5. Sir John Tradescant, junior, in his garden. Half length, a spade in his hand.
6. Ditto, with his wife, in one piece. Half length.
7. Ditto, with his friend Zythepfa of Lambeth, a collection of shells, &c. upon a table before them. A large quarter piece, inscribed Sir John Tradescant's second wife, and son.

These pictures have no date, nor painter's name, as I can yet find. They are esteemed to be good portraits. Who the person was, called in the picture Zythepfa, I never could learn. He is painted as if entering the room, and Sir John is shaking him by the hand.

I have the honour to remain, with great esteem,

S I R,

Your most faithful,

humble servant,

Doctors-Commons,
November 2, 1772.

And. Coltee Ducarel.

From the SOUTH .

Philos Trans. Vol. LXIII Tab. V. p. 88.



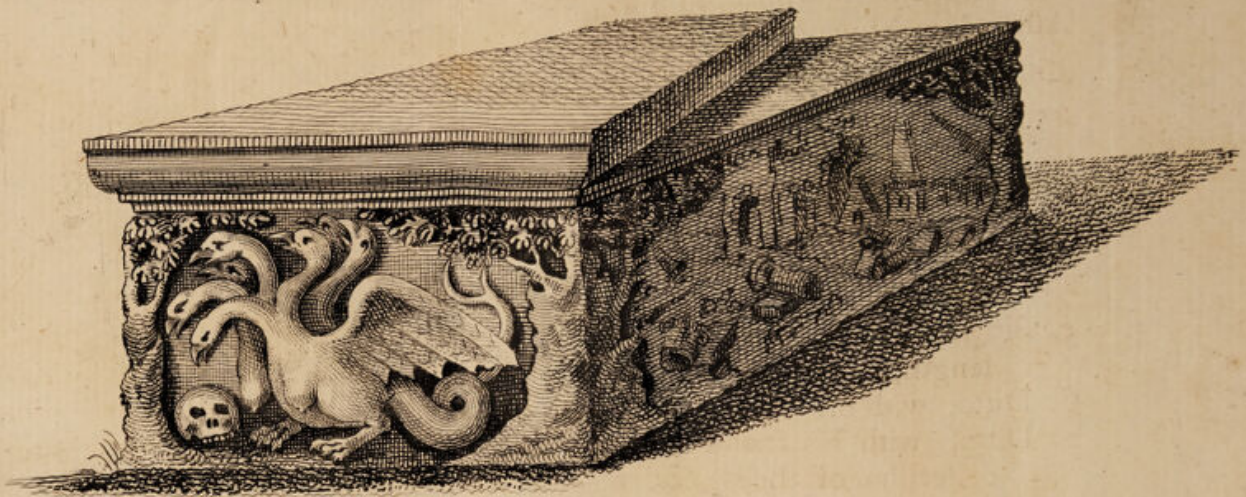
In the PEPYSIAN Library.



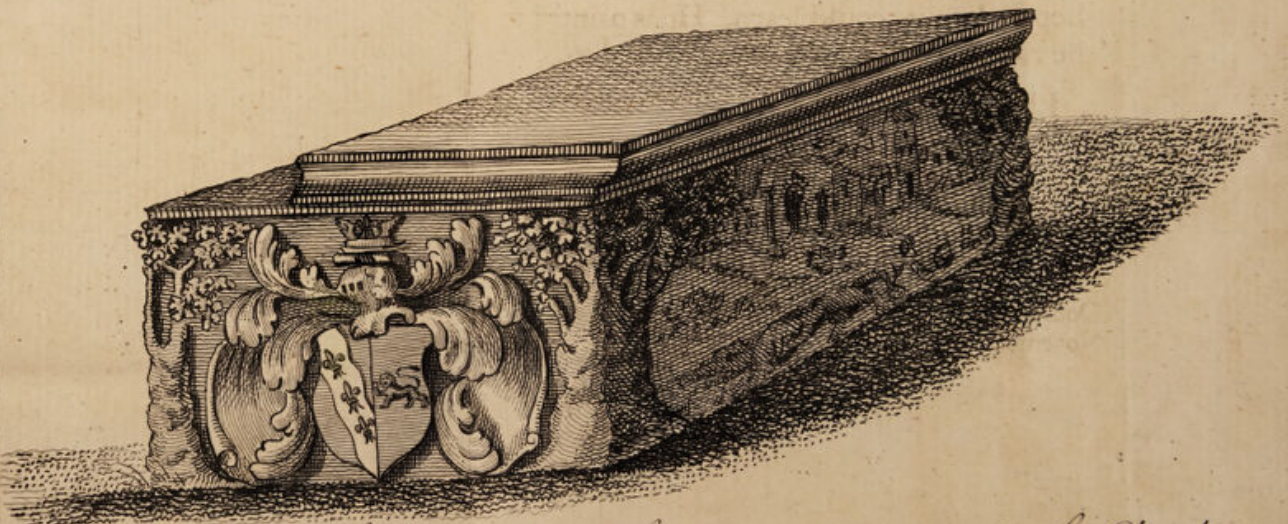
From the NORTH

Bracegirdle.

From the West.



From the East.



*Two Views of the Monument of JOHN TRADESCANT in the Church
Yard of S.^t Mary Lambeth 1773.*

Mrs Tredecants Submission
to Elias Ashmole Esq^r
Communicated to D Duncart by his Lute and my
Friend Wm Huddesford Keeper of the
Ashmolean Museum.
(From a Manuscript in the Bodleian)
— Library —

Be it knowne unto all persons that I,
Hester Tredecant of South Lambeth in
the County of Surrey widdow doe acknowledge
& confess in the presence of Mr Justice Dauling
& other the Witnesses hereunder subscribed,
that I have very much wronged Elias Ashmole
of the same place Esq^r by severall false scandalous,
& defamatory Speeches & Reportes, & otherwise tending
to the diminution and blemishing of his reputation
& good Name, more especially in these particu-
lars following,

First I have reported to severall persons that
the said Elias Ashmole had made a Dore out of
his Garden into my Orchard, by which he might
come into my House as soone as the breath was
out of my Body, & take away my Goods, whereas
in truth there was not, nor yet is any such done
made

Mrs Predescants Submission

made by him. —

Secondly that he had taken away 250 foot of my Ground, when he built his Golden Wall; whereas his said Wall was set in the Place where an old Pale stood immediately before he Built his Wall & was Lined out in the presence of my Cousen Blake the plummer, whome my Landlord Mr Bartholemew had impowred on his behalfe, so to doe

Thirdly I have reported to severall persons as well Strangers as others of my Acquaintance, that the said Mr Ashmole had forced me to deliver up to him my Closet of Rarities, and that if I had not done it, he would have cut my throat. And in the presence of divers Neighbours I falsely charged the said Mr Ashmole; that he had robbed me of my Closet of Rarities, & cheated me of my Estate; When as in truth I prest him to receive the said Rarities, & when he intreated me to keepe them, and not only used many Argu-

Mrs Tradescants Submission

Arguments to perswade me to it, but set on
other my Friends & Neighbours to perswade
me likewise, I would not hearken to their
advice, but forced him to take them away,
threatning, that if he did ^{not} I would throw
them into the Street; and he having at
last consented to receive them, Involuntarily
helped to remove some of them myselfe

Fourthly I reported that I had made
him promise me to bestow the said Rarities
on the University of Oxford; & that I would
force him to send them thither; When as I
never moved the said Mr Ashmole to any
such thing, either when I delivered them to
him, or at any tyme since —

Fifthly That I caused a great heape of Earth
& Rubbish, to be laid against his Garden Wall
so high that on the Last Day of August last
in the Night by the helpe thereof it is strongly
presumed that Thieves got over the same & stole
the

Mr. Tredescants Submission

The said Mr Ashmole of 32 Cocks Stens, and notwithstanding he admonished me to take it away, I ~~the~~ told him it should be there in Spight of his Teeth and so it continued untaken away above six Weekes after he was so robbed, whereby he lay in continual feare of having his House broken open every night.

All which, and many other like false & scandalous Reports & Words &c I have unadvisedly & rashly spoken against him, without any provocation of his in Words or Deedes, so am I really & heartily sorry that I have so greatly wronged him therein; I have in the presence of the said Mr Justice Dawling & the subscribed Wornepes, acknowledged the said Wrongs & Inquiries so done unto the said Mr Ashmole, and asked him publique forgiveness for the same; And doe hereby voluntarily & freely promise the said Mr Ashmole that noe manner
of

M^{rs} Tredescants Submission

of Rubish or Earth, shall be laid against
his said Garden Wall, and that henceforth
I will not say or doe any thing ag^t him
or his Wife that may tend to the damage
reproach or disreputation of them or either
of them. In witness whereof I have hereunto
set my hand the first day of September 1676.

Subscribed in the presence of / Ester Tredescant

Jo Daulong
Tho^s Bedford
Rich^d Rendall
Tho^s de. Britz
Tho^s Murrey
Garnard Fraugh
K. King
Geo: Woryer.

