

The original paper appears to be the remnant of a very comprehensive diary, and reads as follows :—

A. D. 1749, M. Sept., D. Sat. 2.

Some seasons by, while strolling along the shore at sunset, I espied glinting upon the water, some distance out from the land, what appeared to me to be a large bottle, slowly moving shoreward. I turned about my steps in a direction to where I thought the floating glass would reach the sands, and there I seated myself upon a rock. After some short period of wait I was gratified to see it cast upon the beach but a few paces from the rock whereon I rested. In thinking this object a bottle I had judged aright, but it was not of such a size as it at first appeared to my vision. It was a vessel with a capacity of perhaps some half-dozen gills, but on picking it up, I found to my great surprise, that it contained nothing except a small piece of parchment closely folded, and sealed well with a seal. In the orifice of this bottle was placed a cork, and over this a seal was also placed, which I adjudged similar to the one placed upon the paper enclosed within.

The inscription upon this seal, then somewhat defaced by the action of the water, I was unable to understand, for the reason that it consisted, besides some blossoms, of words writ in a language the which I do not possess the power to translate. I considered this language (as subsequently proved correct) to be of the French, for the reason that the letters resemble much the characters of our own alphabet, and furthermore, the words had a form in some instances, I thought, similar to those of the Garter on the Great Seal of His Majesty King George, imprinted on certain parchments the which I have seen. As I considered this curious parcel to be of some value, should I be able to ascertain its contents, I placed it beneath my cloak, and carried it home with me, so that I might examine it at leisure.

With some little difficulty I succeeded in removing the stopper with the seal upon it, almost intact, the both of which I placed carefully away. With trembling hands I then drew forth the packet, on the which the seal proved to be, as I had conjectured, similar to the first. It was a note written, to my great astonishment, not even in the French, but in a number of consecutive unbroken lines, the which, at first sight, reminded me of the characters in an ancient book of the Greek, owned by my friend the schoolmaster.

On closer examination the letters proved to be of our own, but it was impossible to know their meaning, for the reason that