

“the earliest distinct reference to Columbus in the English language is to be found in a prose translation of Sebastian Brandt's ‘Shyppe of Fooles,’ by Henry Watson, published in London, by Wynkyn de Woode, in 1509.”¹ The authority cited for this statement is HARRISSE.² But Mr. Fiske failed to notice that HARRISSE makes a reservation expressly in regard to Alexander Barclay's poetical version of the same poem, as he had been unable to find it. Warton,³ however, informs us that Barclay's translation was made in 1508, and that it was published in 1509 by Pynson. Consequently the world seems to have agreed to regard this as the earliest notice of Columbus in our tongue.

But enough of picking flaws in so learned, painstaking, and entertaining a work as Mr. Fiske has produced. Indeed, I think he has made it quite evident that he has no very different opinion in regard to the personal identity of Agamemnon from that of your Committee. True, in speaking of Abraham and Agamemnon, he says in a foot-note: “I here use these world-famous names without any implication as to their historical character or their precise date.”⁴ But, earlier in his work, he has drawn a contrast between Agamemnon and Edward III.;⁵ and in a subsequent passage he says that “the Inca was in all probability much more a king than Agamemnon,—more like Rameses the Great”;⁶ thus sandwiching him between two personages certainly historical in a most realistic fashion.

When your Committee made their much-criticised comparison between the actuality of Leif and of Agamemnon, they only voiced the sentiment so admirably expressed by one of the greatest living classical scholars of England, in considering the confirmation of Agamemnon's existence supposed to be afforded by Schliemann's discoveries at Mycenæ. He says:

“This wide sway of the Pelopidæ, on which Homer so emphatically dwells, though it rested only on tradition, and was not supported by what we should call historical evidence, was to the Greek mind a real fact,

¹ Discovery of America, vol. i. p. 452.

² Bibliotheca Americana Vetustissima, Additions, p. 45.

³ History of English Poetry, § xxix.

⁴ Discovery of America, vol. i. p. 124.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 113.

⁶ *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 337.