

the investigation of the arguments urged by the biographer in favour of the claim which he has set up for Sebastian as the sole discoverer ; and here we may remark, that in the classification of his evidence he has followed a method which is certainly not the best calculated for the manifestation of truth. He first arranges what he denominates the proofs in support of the father ; but those which he enumerates *first*, and which alone he discusses with minute attention, are the weakest that could be selected, and such as no one who carefully weighs them would place much reliance on ; whilst the unanswerable evidence is brought in last with extreme brevity, and dismissed with scarce any observation.

“ The various items of evidence,” says he, “ which are supposed to establish the prevailing personal agency of John Cabot, may be ranked thus :—

“ 1. The alleged statement of Robert Fabyan.

“ 2. The language of more recent writers as to the character of the father.

“ 3. The appearance of his name in the map cut by Clement Adams, and also in the patents.

“ As to the first,” he continues, “ the authority usually referred to is found in Hakluyt, vol. iii. p. 9,—‘ A note of Sebastian Cabot’s first discoverie of part of the Indies, taken out of the latter part of Robert Fabyan’s Chronicle, not hitherto printed, which is in the custodie of M. John Stow, a diligent preserver of antiquities. In the 13 yeere of K. Henry the 7 (by meanes of one John Cabot, a Venetian, which made himselfe very expert and cunning in the knowledge of the circuit of the world, and islands of the same, as by a sea-card and other demonstrations reasonable he shewed), the king caused to man and victuall a ship at Bristow, to search for an island which he said he knew well was rich, and replenished with great commodities ; which shippe, thus manned and victualled, at the king’s costs, divers merchants of London ventured in her small stocks, being in her, as chief patron, the said Venetian. And in the company of the said ship, sailed also out of Bristow, three or foure small ships, fraught with sleight and grosse marchandises, as course cloth, caps, laces, points, and other trifles, and so departed from Bristow in the beginning of May, of whom, in this maiors time, returned no tidings.’ ”