THE

RENOVATION OF INDIA.

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RENOVATION OF INDIA,

AND

PROPHECY OF GANGES.

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SECOND EDITION.

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To WILLIAM ERSKINE, Esq.

OF BOMBAY.

Mid vales, where oft along the fair expanse
Each charm seem'd brighter to our mingling glance;
In bowers, where, studious of the bard or sage,
Oft glow'd our rapture o'er one common page;
Ah! shall my lay half dream of honour won,
Nor thou be conscious of the toil begun:—
Thou, to whose ever-open soul I brought
My first quick fancies, as they gleam'd to thought,

Each busy plan of fame, that lightly mov'd,
Nor seem'd but half resolv'd,—till thou approv'd!
Yet tho' my verse, thy distant view debarr'd,
Must bear of colder eyes the proud regard,
Perhaps alike to censure and to praise
Lost, and forgotten ere it meet thy gaze;
Receive, and own the song!—Its feeblest line,
Cold to all hearts, will still be warm to thine:
Nor wonder thou, the foreign theme to see!
To think of India—was to think of thee.

Yes! to these hopes, that throb for Asia's sake,
When more than pity bids my soul awake,
Indulge the presage of delight, and feel
A sacred joy, as for my country's weal,

Thine is the charm :—for O ! where'er may roam
Thy lingering step, is half my land of home.

India !—What thoughts of glory and of shame,
What pride and sorrow, mingle at the name ;—
A realm of kings, by arts, and arms, and guile,
Won to the little sceptre of our isle ;
Where merchant heroes, cold to nobler fire,
Brib'd to be great, illustrious for a hire,
Even in the doubtful or victorious hour,
Gold still in view, sole charm of sordid power,
With warriors' statesmen's sudden instinct wise,
Achiev'd an empire, for a plunderer's prize !
From the first perils of that venturous day,
When foe-girt outcasts dar'd to think of sway,

Snatch'd the fierce tyranny, abhorr'd before,
And bath'd a gory sceptre still in gore,
What gallant strifes, of all-surmounting force,
Thro' frauds and rapines led their wondrous course!
How have I blush'd at glory's brightest meeds,
When miser passions fir'd the hero's deeds;
Blush'd, yet, while peril made even guilt sublime,
Half own'd and hail'd the daring and the crime!

'Tis past.—No more, at India's name, are brought
Crimes of dark grandeur to my shuddering thought:
Of virtue now delightful musing springs,
Or a sweet sadness, such as virtue brings.
No more my fancy, if the scene arise,
Shrinks, and for solace speeds to other skies;

But pauses oft, and, its long vision o'er,
Turns gladly there again, to pause the more.
How chang'd!—Yet, why with lingering joy I dwell,
Thou need'st not ask:—for sure thy heart will tell.

Nor thine alone.—The Want, which lifts an eye
Of grateful blessing, when thy step is nigh,—
Whatever Sorrow owns thy soothing power,
Has felt the charm, that wafts me to thy bower.
Even where her fiercest robbers Britain pour'd,
And all was spoil, when Avarice bore the sword,
Thy gentle virtue, softening every scene,
Like the sweet ray that smiles where storms have been,
Lulls my quick-kindling breast,—till calm it roam
Mid realms of guilt, and think but of thy home.

And many a victim of those years of shame,
That knew thy country but to loathe the name,
Partakes the charm, and oft, when thou art nigh,
As at the smiling of a Brother's eye,
Feels strange delight his sullen brow assuage,
And soothe to peace the wrath of half an age.
The roofless wretch, who from his plunder'd sire
Receiv'd no heirdom, but his wrongs and ire;
Who oft upon his aged lips has hung,
And sought again the horror from his tongue,
And listen'd, with such fix'd and eager ear,
As if 'twere vengeance but the tale to hear;—
Even he, all sternly glorying in his fate,
And proud to bear traditionary hate,
Won by thy bounty, deigns new joys to see,
And half forgets the past—in loving thee.

Friend of the sufferer! when thine eye shall trace
These happier visions of an injur'd race,
No sudden theme thy fancy will employ,
With cold and foreign images of joy;
But cherish'd wishes on thy soul will start,
And dreams that long have hover'd round thy heart.

Yes! thou hast own'd their sweet presageful power;—
And oft at moonlight's solitary hour,
Slow wandering on that venerable ground,
Where silent Ages seem to sleep around,
How has thy time-rapt spirit burn'd to view
The Queen of ancient wisdom rise anew,
Shake the wide dust of empires from her head,
And catch once more the brightening life she spread!

In that soft hour of musing, when thy mind
Melts with the scene, and glows for all mankind,—
Thine eye sad-pausing, where with lengthen'd shade
The dim Pagoda gleams along the glade,—
How hast thou mourn'd the faith, whose iron plan
Makes guilt in man to pity wretched man,
That hallows proud disdain, and calls alone
The Slave and Tyrant, to a Tyrant's throne;
Love's gracious stamp to seal oppression given,
And death and agony the voice of Heaven.

Then on thy fancy, far o'er Ocean's swell,
The whisper of thy hamlet's simple bell
Has sounded sadly joyous,—and the fane,
Which heard thy early prayer, has beam'd again;

That equal altar, to whose hallow'd place
The cottage grandsire led his smiling race,
And, mingling in the hymn that rose on high,
Knelt by his lord,—joint pilgrim to the sky.
—It lives—it spreads.—To Asia's farthest bound,
A charm like that sweet vision smiles around.
And O! with cruel speed shall Reason cast
Her wan cold light, the glowing dream to blast?
Is love too daring?—Or the hopes, that thrill
Thy Heaven-confiding breast, shall Heaven fulfil?
—Yes time shall come, when Britain's peaceful hand
Shall stretch her blessings to each subject land,
Shall see, still richer from the wealth she gave,
Her faith, her joy, her freedom, o'er the wave,
Teach long-remembering hate to bless her name,—
And pay her dread arrear of guilty fame.

Such are thy cherish'd musings.—My glad song
But calls thee hope's lov'd vision to prolong:
And proud, tho' from the lyre all-rude it start,
The lay, that flows accordant with thy heart;
For sure, if Virtue pause a pledge to see,
She still must smile on wishes—shar'd with thee.

Ah! why so long the happier charm forbear,
Those wishes living from thine eye to share?
When shall the hour return, which gives me blest
To all the hopes and fancies of thy breast,—
Not in cold lines, that, ever sad tho' sweet,
Still say how distant is the heart we greet,
And, even when health and rapture they avow,
Wake the quick fear, that all is alter'd, now,—

But warm, and breathing present in thy voice
That safe delight, which dreads not to rejoice:
As in those years of careless bliss, when, caught
In many a presage of consenting thought,
Our friendship, brightening as our souls refin'd,
Grew with the growing firmness of our mind!

Even now, when menial throngs, in idle state,
More numerous than thy wishes, round thee wait,
When varying pleasures to the banquet call,
And gemm'd with lustres glows the marble hall,
A sigh will turn to hours more humbly bright,
The simple evenings, gay but with delight;—
When, pleas'd to mingle at each setting sun
The wondrous wisdom which a day had won,

And prouder of some sage's new-learn'd name,
Than he who own'd and rais'd it into fame,
Oft have we seen our midnight taper die,
Nor mark'd nor miss'd it, in our keen reply;—
Still by our fading fire the converse sped;
And, wiser than the wisest tome we read,
Doubted, in critic pride, where truth was strong,
Or boldly prov'd even demonstration wrong,—
Or for some once-fam'd system, now half-known,
Some ponderous folly fifty-times o'erthrown,
Brought all our logic's war the strife to lead;
And more contended, as we more agreed.

O gentle strifes,—O studious sweet employ,—
Calm hours of more than intellectual joy,

Still sure our mutual labours to requite,
And, when they gave not wisdom, give delight!
Alas! of all shall memory sole remain?
No!—They but wait thee,—and they live again.

Come!—To thy native breeze a stranger thou!
Come, feel its freshness on thy sultry brow!
View the bright vale,—the glade,—the angry rill,
That wont to chide the rock, there murmuring still,—
Still green the conscious thorn that saw us part,—
And all the scene unalter'd as my heart!

Let sun-parch'd misers fear, for barren health
To quit the land of sickness and of wealth,
With burning eye survey their countless store,
And breathe one other gasp—to strive for more!

Let vainer fools, who, conscious they can hold
No heart by merit, therefore *must* have gold,
Unform'd for pleasure, toil to win with haste
Those riches, which they soon shall toil to waste!
But why shouldst thou, at cheerless distance, sigh
For scenes that long to bloom beneath thine eye?
What to thy modest wants could wealth bestow,
In sickly splendour, and a life of show?
To call tir'd strangers, mid thy bowers to roam,
And fill with fools the quiet of thy home!—
O no!—For thee enough, what gives to hear
The prayer of Misery with unaching ear,—
The heart's sweet dew, from grateful eyelids caught,–
That simple luxury, so cheaply bought;
For not to Wealth's luxurious train has Heaven,
That gives them grandeur, all its pleasure given:

Some cold delights to few may Fortune bound,
But what she richest spreads flows wide around ;—
One midnight banquet, which Profusion swells,
That fops may yawn dull mirth to duller belles,
Enough for mild Benevolence, to cheer
With many a charity her busy year.

Come then, with other wealth than marks the knave
To scorn, or loads for life the gorgeous slave ;
With India's many voices rich thy store,
And all the mystic secrets of her lore,—
More rich in hearts that still thy name shall hail,
And sighs and blessings that pursue thy sail !
Come !—With thy praise a milder pleasure blend !
Adorn thy country,—and rejoice thy friend !

PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

WHAT INDIA was,—what INDIA is,—what INDIA is yet to be;—the Land of ancient wisdom,—the Land of present and long-continued slavery and superstition,—the Land, I trust, of future happiness and pure religion;—these are the views, which I have endeavoured in the following Poems to exhibit.

When the volume was first given to the world, I was not aware that I was afterwards to have any closer connexion with the University of Edinburgh, than that of a Student, who had spent many of his happiest hours within its walls; and though, in republishing it now, as a member of the Academic Body, it is impossible for me to avoid all notice of the circumstances in which the Poems were written, it is with great reluctance that I am obliged thus to allude with dissatisfaction to any measure, that must be considered as, ostensibly at least, an act of the respectable Body with which I am connected. But, when I think of the sort of poetry which there was reason to expect in a competition

for a College prize, and measure with that humble standard the claim of my verses, I should indeed regard it as the very absurdity of affected humility, if I were to wish to appear to acquiesce in the decision as a just one. I confess even, that I have so much vanity, as to have no objection that the verses should be estimated without regard to such a standard, and, still more, that I am presumptuous enough to flatter myself, that the mode in which "The Renovation of India" was received, *may* hereafter be a subject of wonder, and of some little interest to the literary inquirer of another age. With this view, accordingly, I feel it a duty to the University, whose honour must always be dear to me, to

state, that, when it appeared to give its sanction for withholding from that Poem the very humble meed which it did not assign to any more successful competitor, the judgment was not founded on personal and general examination, but on a report of only two of its Members; and that the decision of the whole Academic Body, therefore, was in truth the decision of that very small Committee.

PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION.

"THE Renovation of India," and the Latin Ode which follows it, were presented to the University of Edinburgh, in competition for prizes * offered by Dr BUCHANAN of Calcutta. But, though more than three years have

* For the best English Poem on *The Restoration of Learning to the East*, and the best Latin Poem on *The College of Fort-William.*

since elapsed, no award has been made, nor has any public notification appeared, to alarm the pride or the humility of the different candidates. The contest appears to have ended in the same placid and equal manner, in which the poetic strifes of eclogue are usually terminated by the gentle rustics who preside over them; for, though a meed of excellence has not been allotted to each contending singer, like the pipe or the beechen bowl, each at least may flatter himself, that, in the estimation of his Arcadian judges, he is as powerful a poet as any of his rivals:—and when the glory of being first is denied, it is not a little to be saved from the cruel mortification of being second.

It is not, therefore, under the reverend shade of Academic laurels, that the present Poems can venture forth, licensed to be immortal, and fearless of the thunder. Alas! in these thundering days of criticism, not even the reverence of Academic laurels is safe: but blemishes and deformities are sought and found, where Principals and Professors, and Masters and Heads of Houses, have said that all is beauty.

The Latin Ode, I am aware, appears now in very unfortunate circumstances. When it was originally composed, the College of Fort-William had been founded on an extensive scale; and the prophecy which it contains was

sufficiently appropriate. But the poetic illusion exists no longer; a single act of the East India Company having torn away more than half the splendour of the magnificent Institution, of which such glorious things are predicted, and thus made the Ganges a deceitful Prophet, in defiance of the well-known sanctity of his character as a River. There is, I own, something very ominous of short life to my verses, in this sad calamity which has befallen their subject.—May the omen be as false as the prophecy!

With respect to the English Poem, it may be necessary to anticipate a very probable objection, that much is said in it about the com-

munication of science and religion to a Country, to which very little science, and still less religion, have been communicated. But it must be remembered, that *The Restoration of Learning to the East* was the subject proposed by Dr BUCHANAN, and that the reality of my subject was necessarily assumed by me. Nor ought it to appear very wonderful, that, when I had to describe so great a blessing as brought about by Christians, I should have taken the liberty of supposing, that a little christianity, as a still greater blessing, would accompany the gift. I trust, that, with respect both to science and religion, I have merely anticipated what must ultimately take place; and that the swiftness with which it is

brought about is the only circumstance imagined. But, in imagining this, I have used only the common licence of poetry, to which it has been always given, to concentrate events, and give rapidity to changes, that, in nature, and in prose, are of slow and gradual developement. Without a privilege of this kind, indeed, half its charm would be lost, in a cold minuteness of detail, which might vie with the dull precision of our almanacs and our systems of chronology: and therefore, since the only reasonable limit to poetic licence seems to be, *that it never be taken, where it does not tend to produce more delight, than if it were not taken,* the licence, which hurries and condenses, and thus gives the full force

and interest of contrast, to events which in chronicles and annals are so slowly varied as scarcely to appear contrasted, may surely be said to be a just one. The laws of narration in prose and verse are not merely different, but in some respects opposite. Strict precision of detail, and regularity of succession, belong to the one; while, in the other, not the mere *words* alone, but the very actions and scenes, are *winged*.

This licence of *annihilating time and space* may be occasionally assumed, in poetry of every kind, though it should be for nothing more than the very humble purpose of *making two lovers happy*. But it is especially

necessary, in that higher sort of poetry which deals largely in prosopopœia. When human beings alone are the agents, causes and effects may be supposed and expected to follow each other in their exact natural order; but, when Powers more than human are introduced, their agency is best marked, by a violation of that natural order,—by unexpected combinations and rapid shiftings of events. We are shocked, when in epic machinery a god is forced upon us, for no other purpose, than to do what a mortal could have done, as swiftly and as well. Even the humblest fairy tale, however much it may violate other laws of composition, has always regard to this principle of the marvellous; because, though the violation

of almost any other law requires some maturity of discernment to perceive it, the violation of this more obvious one, in the shock and disappointment immediately felt, makes a critic even of the infant listener. We acknowledge the enchanter, when he is represented as changing at will a sword into a feather or a wreath of flowers into a diadem; but if he were deliberately to take away the one, and then bring the other, we should not merely cease to wonder at the magic of his art, but should even consider him as a very sorry bungler in legerdemain. It is the same with every personified Power,—Religion, Science, Art, and all the creations of the poetic fancy. They are enchanters of a higher order, that,

without the delay even of spells and talismans, bring together objects and events which man could not combine. For producing those changes, which I have described perhaps with too triumphant exultation, but with the exultation of one who rejoices in anticipating them, philosophers and missionaries may take as many years, as the most calculating critic may think necessary;—because philosophers and missionaries are men. But it is only to human agents that this arithmetical criticism can refer: and of these poetically I have made no use; because I was sufficiently aware, that it would be absurd to ascribe to the operation of human agents that rapid contrast, which was necessary for poetic effect. To SCIENCE

and RELIGION, however, the measurements of human power do not apply. Their energies are of a different order, in relation to which it is impossible for us to determine what is swift or slow; and in describing the effects which they produce, therefore, a thousand years may be considered but as one day. The great question of criticism, in such a case, seems to be, whether there be sufficient poetic reason for introducing them *as persons:* since, if this be admitted, and their agency allowed, it must of course, to preserve that dignity which alone can justify their introduction, be more rapid and powerful than the agency of man. To be historically true, is then to be poetically false.

It may be thought, that some of the instances, which I have given, of the wonders of Western art are not of such important utility, as to justify the selection. But it is not a treatise on European arts and manufactures which I have written;—it is only a poem, in which they are incidentally noticed: and the mere circumstance of poetic effect, therefore, was the directing principle of choice. A balloon, and an electric conductor, I am ready to allow, are of very trifling value, when compared with many of the products of art which are in daily and vulgar use. But the one steals the thunderbolt from heaven, and the other outsoars the bird that is mythologically represented as its bearer.

There is another circumstance, for which it may perhaps be necessary to bespeak the indulgence, or rather, as I flatter myself, the approbation of my readers. It may be thought, that too little use has been made of the high-sounding vocabulary of Oriental names, and of the monsters and wonders of a mythology which teems with every thing that is monstrous and wonderful. I anticipate this objection the more readily, because I am desirous of stating and enforcing a principle of criticism, which, obvious as it may seem, and essential to poetic truth of character, has been strangely overlooked by writers of very high general discernment. It is nothing more than the very simple rule, That *he who writes in*

his own language, should always bear in mind, that he writes to be read by those who speak the same language, not by the natives of those countries which he may chance to describe; that the circumstances selected ought, therefore, to be such as may be expected to afford interest to those by whom the work is to be read, not such as can be interesting only to those of whom it is written; and that, except when the character of a native is professedly assumed or pictured, and his feelings therefore professedly displayed, the emotions are to be such, as may be naturally believed to arise in the mind, not of a native habituated to the scene, but of the poet himself, as a foreigner, contemplating it. It is astonishing,

how much havoc the adoption of this rule as a just rhetorical law would make, in many descriptions which have long been held forth as standards of excellence. But the reverence, which we owe to great names, sanctifies their merits, not their imperfections; and we may without vanity attempt to avoid their faults, as long as we do not fail to acknowledge the great and often inimitable beauties, which accompany them. The rule, as now laid down, I have endeavoured in my poem strictly to follow. Though my subject was India, I remembered, that I was addressing myself to my own countrymen; and therefore, though I did not wish to transgress any of the local proprieties, or to avoid any allusions

that would add real embellishment to description, I shunned, rather than affected, the introduction of mere names, which were to serve no other purpose, than to add a few pompous syllables to a verse, and to puzzle the reader's recollection. The Poem must be miserable indeed, that reminds us of the country of which it treats, only by a versified vocabulary of its natural and civil and geographical history. It cannot surely be supposed, that the feelings and conceptions of a Briton, when he thinks of India, are the same as those of a Hindoo, or of a Mussulman, habituated to other mythologies and other manners;—and, if his feelings and conceptions be different, why is it expected, that his expres-

sions should be the same! Abstracting from its commercial relations to Europe,—which may be supposed readily to occur to the mind of an European,—and regarding the country with a poetic eye, he will think, perhaps, of its ancient civilization, of its general state of happiness or misery, of its most prominent peculiarities of scenery and manners, and of its chief political revolutions;—but he certainly will not think of tracing the theogony of its thirty-three *crores* of deities, as if he had himself ministered in the rites of the pagoda, or at least been a partaker of its worship. Yet how many are there of our European bards of the East, who, in this exact minuteness of detail, seem to wish to vie with the

divine *Mahabarat* itself,—who crowd into the smallest possible space the greatest possible number of gods and heroes,—and who would be censured for pedantry, even by those very Pundits, for the refreshment of whose memory only, they seem to have written. It is as if a British poet, sitting amid the ruins of Rome, or on the cliffs of Thermopylæ, should pause to tell us, that Love rose from an egg deposited by Night in the bosom of Erebus. If we *must* go through the detail of the mythologic history of Hindostan, let us at once have a translation of the Puranas and of all the Holy Books. The very absurdities, with which they abound, may then be perused with an interest, which it would be too

much for the happiest modern imitator of them to expect to excite: for, though, from the mere reverence for antiquity, we can submit to be wearied by an author, who has had the advantage of living some thousand years before us;—nay, though, in such a case, we are often willing to blame every thing but the cause, and can even take our listlessness, while we yawn, for the mere repose of exhausted and overwhelmed admiration;—we have not equal mercy for a contemporary, who seems to us to have dressed himself in the rags of antiquity, to persecute us with hard names and frivolous exploits. Even the rich and graceful fancy of Sir William Jones is incapable of giving interest to hymns, that enu-

merate to us the unknown powers and attributes of names unknown; that give us genealogies, of which the hero himself is as uninteresting to us, as his divine uncle, or aunt, or grandfather; and that, with all this solemnity of trifling, mortify the reader at every other word, with an implied superiority of knowledge, which, however unimportant, still seems a sort of triumph over his ignorance. When we are often called away to such details, we feel, in the very effort which it is necessary for ourselves to make, that we are reading, not the prompt inspirations of feeling and genius, but the slow and weary strains of laborious learning;—and the only common sympathy which we have with the

poet, is with the vast fatigue which he must have had, when, in his ambition to overwhelm and amuse us, he committed to memory so many wonderful things, which it is so very difficult to read, and so very easy to forget.

There is another circumstance which rendered the use of the personifications of Hindoo mythology, however interesting it might even be allowed to be in other instances, peculiarly incongruous in the present case. It is on the supposed introduction of Christianity, as the most important of all contributions which can be made by the western world, to social happiness,—and, I may add, to philosophy, and the general diffusion of knowledge,

—in a country which is at present so cruelly divided into Casts, that the Poem is chiefly founded. With the Christian religion the Braminical cannot be introduced and mingled as true. Its gods are no longer *persons:* they become instantly mere *idols*, at the very mention of that faith, which reveals the ONE living and true God. The days of poetry, it is to be hoped, are now over, in which Neptune lowers his trident to Christ as he walks upon the waves, and Venus, weeping over Jerusalem, laments that the land of salvation has fallen under the power of the infidel. The Capitoline Jove may still be introduced, in a poetical description of Rome: but he would be ludicrously out of place, as assisting

in the hymns and pompous rites of St Peter's. As little would the agency of Brimha, or of his offspring and kindred deities, harmonize with the diffusion of Christianity in Hindostan. The only allowable personifications, which remain, are those of *general qualities*, which, as they do not necessarily imply any peculiar system of religion, do not shock us, by the immediate perception of opposition, or of incongruity with any system. Even the Christian poet of a Christian subject may talk of WAR and of WISDOM, though he must not individualize nor localize them by the appellations of MARS and MINERVA. It was, accordingly, to *general* in exclusion of *local* prosopopœia, that I felt myself limited, when-

ever the employment of machinery appeared necessary or useful for additional animation. At the same time, I am conscious, that there are many readers, to whom the use of high and abstract personification, like that which I have introduced in the first part of my Poem, may be too little familiar, to be altogether free from obscurity. But I have at least the consolation of believing, that, even to such readers, the obscurity which it may produce will be less, than if, instead of introducing them to Truth and Fancy and the Sciences and the Genius who watched over the ages of antiquity, I had led them to all the Divinities of the Hindoo Pantheon, and all the sages of Hindoo lore.

In the " Prophecy of Ganges," I have not confined myself closely to the original of which it is a paraphrase, but have very frequently amplified the expression, and in some instances added thoughts and images, which are not to be found in the Latin Ode. The spirit of the Latin language admits, and may be said even to require, greater conciseness and abruptness than can be attempted in English ; while the regularity of its lyrical metres, recurring at short intervals, appears to me to exclude, at least in the impassioned species of Ode, that long continued flow of verse, which the irregular measures of English lyrical poetry, or even its more regular stanzas of greater length, allow. In short and regular

stanzas, the artificial division of the rhythmical period is constantly forcing itself upon the reader's mind, so as, after a very few recurrences, to destroy altogether the half-illusive imitation of a burst of unpremeditated passion:—and though, on light or grave subjects, when the gaiety or gravity is uniform, and when the poet alone can be considered as speaking, this recurrence adds no unpleasant effect, but rather, if skilfully managed, gives an additional charm, like that which arises from the melody and vanquished difficulty of verse itself, the effect cannot but be unpleasant, when, in impassioned soliloquy or dialogue, there is an eternal contrast of the exact regularity of the measure with the va-

riety and suddenness of the emotion which is supposed to speak. It excites very nearly the same feelings of constraint and discrepancy, as the drama in heroic couplets,—in which rage and despair are never suffered to transgress their twenty syllables, nor to have even the appearance of having once ventured to utter the tenth syllable, till they had fairly anticipated the twentieth.

From these fetters our drama is happily delivered. But it must be owned, that it is a freedom, which suits better with the admirable harmony of our heroic blank verse, than with any variety of shorter measure. It does not seem very probable, that we shall ever

abound with rhymeless lyrics; nor is it wonderful, that attempts of this kind should be unsuccessful, in a language of such monotonous accentuation. Where there are few words of more than one or two syllables, it is difficult to fix the exact limits of each portion of the melody, so as to distinguish a line of six syllables followed by a line of ten, from two similar lines of eight syllables: yet, when this is not immediately obvious, the ear is disquieted rather than pleased; as it cannot be satisfied without the distinct perception of the metrical close, and is therefore occupied incessantly in an anxious and distracting search of that which no search seems capable of detecting. Indeed, verse of this kind is scarcely, if

at all, distinguishable from the rhythm of eloquent discourse; and a good citizen might almost find, that he had spoken it for years, without knowing it,—which is more than M. JOURDAIN did, whose humble discovery was confined to prose.

The satisfaction then, which the ear derives from the precision of rhyme, when lines of unequal length are used, is almost sufficient of itself to establish it as essential to lyrics; and it is even no very extravagant paradox, to assert, as a consequence of it, that, of two odes, one in rhyme, the other in blank verse and equally well written in other respects, the one in rhyme will appear the less constrained.

and obtrude less on the reader's mind the artifice of the poet. I do not say this merely on account of the rarity of rhymeless odes,—which of course makes us pause when we read them, and wonder at the poet who has attempted them,—but for reasons inherent in the language and independent of custom. The addition of rhyme marks so infallibly the close of a line, that every freedom may be taken in the length and shortness of successive lines in a stanza, and even the stanzas themselves be indefinitely varied, without any risk of perplexing the reader's ear. But, where rhyme is not used, such freedom and variety of measure cannot be adopted, without the risk or rather the certainty of that very un-

pleasant effect. It is an effect which is not confined to verse as recited, but is felt by us even during the perusal: for though, by the care of a printer, the lines may be sufficiently marked to the eye, we are still sensible of the measure only by the ear, and, by a sort of sympathy of organs, think of it rather as heard than seen. The whole melody and magic of sound are so completely addressed to one sense, that we cannot separate them from it, even while we attempt to fix and estimate the varying delight; and therefore, in enjoying the full flow of metrical rhythm, we almost listen while we read. We call up a sense which lies dormant, to attend to unexisting sounds; and catch our pleasure, by re-

flection, from the very shadow of our own imagination.

It may hence naturally be supposed, that the writer of blank verse lyrics, if he do not set the ear altogether at defiance, will feel himself deprived of the use of irregular measure,—that he will be tempted to use only very short stanzas,—and that even of these the parts will be abrupt and strikingly dissimilar, in order that the ear may be forcibly impressed with the peculiar pauses, so as to distinguish them readily on a few repetitions. The frequent recurrence of such stanzas, however, is necessarily more fatiguing to the ear, than the free flow of stanzas of greater length

and of less rapid and never-failing contrasts. How tiresome, though so rich in poetic imagery, would COLLINS's *Ode to Evening* have been, if the Ode had been of much greater length! Yet, even short as it is, it is impossible to read it and his own Ode on the Passions, without being struck with the comparative ease and freedom of the rhymed Ode, and the formal abruptness of that which is without rhyme;—the appearance of labour, in the unvarying returns of the same short and quaint measure, being much more obvious, than that which arises from the mere addition of the rhyme.

But though, from the nature of the lan-

guage, rhyme may be regarded as almost essential to English Lyrics, this should not be considered as a reason for subjecting them to additional restraints, but rather as a reason for giving them as much freedom in other respects, as is consistent with metrical harmony, in order to atone, if possible, for a constraint which is unavoidable, in those cases in which the appearance of constraint would be peculiarly unsuitable. Graceful as rhyme unquestionably is on many occasions,—in impassioned Odes it is not a grace in itself, but a veil thrown over the deformity of our monosyllabic language. It is an evil, but an evil which is suffered, and which ought to be suffered, because it is impossible to banish it, without the

risk of much greater evil. Still, however, as an imperfection in itself, it is that which should be palliated at least, when it is incapable of being remedied altogether: and there appears to be no other mode of palliating the evil of rhyme, in Odes of strong emotion, than the use of perfect freedom and irregularity of measure, such as does not seem to constrain the passion, which it should follow rather than lead, but to accommodate itself to all its changes, with corresponding varieties of harmony.

The great art of the Poet or Orator, when he wishes to carry the passions of his auditors along, is always to precede them in the progress of their feelings, not indeed at a great

distance, but at least by a single step. When their imagination has got before him, his dominion over them is lost for the time, and is not easily recovered. It is not enough for him, to have once taken the mind by surprise; he must continue to hurry it on, while it is still unconscious of what is to succeed. Nothing is less melting, than the pathos of sorrow which has been fully anticipated,—nothing less animating, than a strain of anticipated animation. To adopt therefore a succession of metres, recurring in regular stanzas, is to give up voluntarily a great part of that mastery over the listening and obedient passions, which it is so important to retain. It is to force upon the prepared ear and mind

a complete foreknowledge of every change of strain, however abrupt the change may afterwards be feigned to be:—it is to announce, when we are still all softness, that we are immediately to be all fire and fury, or that, frantic as we may be at present, we are, precisely in two lines more, to melt away in the most voluptuous languor.

If, however, there be any sort of poetry, in which immutable exactness in the successions of lines and stanzas is out of place, it is surely that, in which prophetic vision is described, and the description poured out by the prophet himself, in the very moment of the vision. Even the violence of human passion, extrava-

gant as it is, and difficult to be swayed, is still a part of man, and in some degree under his controul. But the spirit of prophecy is altogether foreign and independent of his efforts, and therefore cannot be made to harmonize with the efforts of human art, when the art is such as unavoidably to fix the reader's notice. The expectation of the altered measure, which we know to be about to recur, is felt by us, as if we already saw preparations and arrangements made for that which could not be foreseen: and abruptness of transition, and sudden changes of passion, instead of being sublime or pathetic, have an air of the ridiculous, when we have perfect certainty, that the last emotion, however violent, *must* cease

immediately, because the stanza does not allow a single line to be added,—and that the transition *must* be very abrupt, because the lines which are to begin the next stanza must be very short and rapid and unequal. The reader indeed knows well, that even Odes of prophecy are meditated by the Poet, as much as other Odes; but it is not the less necessary for dramatic illusion, that there should be left that slight semblance of being unpremeditated, without which the mind cannot be satisfied, and with which it is easily satisfied, even when it is aware that it is a semblance only;—in the same manner as, in the regular drama, it is necessary to banish all appearance of study from the answers and replies of

impassioned dialogue, though the reader of the tragedy cannot be supposed to be ignorant, that much study of the Poet has been exerted, to produce that very appearance of natural and unpremeditated emotion.

It is objected by JOHNSON to the measure of *The Bard* of GRAY, that the recurrence of the similar stanzas is too little perceived.—The objection which I am inclined to make to it, and which has always appeared to me a very powerful one, is, on the contrary, that there is any such exact similarity of recurrence to be at all perceived. The Bard, in the never-erring measurements of his returning stanzas, is much less a Prophet than a

Poet. There is too much of the "*master's hand*" of the one, and consequently too little of the "*fire*" of the other. He does not seem to forget, even for a moment, that he is holding a lyre: and though he certainly at times throws his arms boldly across the strings, and is almost always graceful in his attitudes, he still has too much of the air of a performer, who counts the notes of every bar, and plays *con molta espressione*, when it is the pleasure of his music-book, that he should be *very* tender or animated. How much more would the reader have been affected by every change of movement, if its approach, and the precise moment of its arrival, had not been exactly foreseen; and how much

more natural would every sudden burst of passion have appeared, if the surprise, or sorrow, or indignation, had not seemed unavoidable, because, a certain number of minutes before, there was a similar paroxysm of surprise, or sorrow, or indignation. The triple arrangement of the stanzas, in imitation of the ancient Strophe, Antistrophe, and Epode, is not a successful expedient, for removing the appearance of a display of art, so evidently out of place. On the contrary, when once the uniformity of the arrangement is perceived and felt, —and, unless it were meant to be perceived, there could be no reason for adhering to it,—it renders the exactness of the method, and consequently the constraint and labour of observing

it, still more remarkably incongruous with the wild imagery and sudden passions of prophecy; because it necessarily supposes all the varieties, included in a longer series of melodies, to have been constantly present to the mind, and to have influenced it in every change of thought and expression. All that hurrying and irresistible impression, which might have been produced by more rapid and unexpected transitions of the verse, is lost; and the Bard, as he is represented by GRAY, bears to the Bard, as he might have been represented by him, if the Poet had not shackled himself with the unnecessary constraint of regular stanzas, the same relation, which the Operatic hero, dancing and chanting in strict

musical time, bears to the hero of a Tragedy, moving, and speaking, and pausing, as the all-powerful feeling of the moment seems to command.

The two most popular Odes in the language are unquestionably *The Passions* of Collins, and Dryden's *Alexander's Feast;* both which are specimens of that freedom of measure for which I contend. The charm of this species of imitative harmony, if I may so term it, as suitable to the quick and irregular changes of the mind, in poetry of strong emotion, is indeed so obvious, that it is felt even by the rudest of those readers who never think of accounting for the pleasure they

receive: while it is as much as Learning can do, in such a case, to admire and be proud of her Strophes and Antistrophes. Truly excellent as the Ode of DRYDEN is in almost every respect, it is not easy to say, how much of its powerful impression depends on this single circumstance. Had TIMOTHEUS, in *raising* and *quelling* the passions of the mighty victor who listened to him, gone round and round the same eternal metrical circle,—had he changed the measure, and of course the subject of his lay, only when the change was necessarily foreseen and expected, and thus seemed to adapt it less to the varying feelings of his hero, and the circumstances of the moment, than to those past circumstances, which,

at a regular period before, had already produced their effect,—the Ode might perhaps have been very much praised, but it certainly would not have been read, and felt, and remembered, as it now is, so as to be cited with triumph, whenever it is necessary to shew and defend the excellence of British lyrics.

The practical conclusion, which I wish to draw from these critical remarks, is, that tho' in Odes of which the subject is nearly uniform, or in which the appearance of considerable art and method in the poet has no remarkable incongruity with the subject, regularity of measure is not merely admissible, but even adds a peculiar charm to the flow of melody;

—in the more animated species of lyrics, which are intended to describe sudden and frequent changes of any kind, and particularly of emotions or the visions of wild and uncontrollable fancy, the measure should not be circumscribed by the necessity of recurring stanzas, but should be left to accommodate itself spontaneously to the changes which it presents.

—But I am affecting to give laws to Odes in general, when I should content myself with apologizing for my own. My readers, I fear, will think, when they consider the length of these remarks, and the shortness of the poem to which they relate, that I have transgressed

the just limits of prefatory discussion; and that so many pages must have been very tediously occupied, when their only object has been, to state the sort of measure which I have chosen for a Paraphrase of a few lyrical stanzas, and the reasons that influenced so very unimportant a choice.

THE

RENOVATION OF INDIA.

PART FIRST.

ADDRESS to INDIA.—Emotions of awe excited by the remembrance of its early civilization.—Allusion to the visit of Pythagoras.—Regret at the present state of the land of antient intellectual glory, as contrasted with its former renown.—Anticipation of a happier time.—The anticipation fulfilled by the return of Truth, attended by the Sciences, among which Astronomy and Metaphysics are particularly described, as familiar to ancient Hindostan.—Wonders of art which the civilized Western world communicates in return to the East.—Instanced in the chemical powers—in aërial navigation—in the electric conductor—in the prevention and cure of disease.—But the chief object of the return of Truth with the Sciences is to prepare the way for a Holier Wisdom.

THE

RENOVATION OF INDIA.

PART I.

Fields of a brighter sun, gay realms that spread
Your dazzling colours to the day, and breathe
In thousand odours from undying blooms
The spirit of delight!—why throb'd my soul,
Even in the charm of wondering gladness, awed,
As if Eternity her boundless cave
Had oped, and from the echoless abyss
A low but mighty murmur call'd my steps,

To tread the silent gloom ?—I feel the sway.—
It was no passing influence.—Yet, even yet,
My bosom owns you as ye float scarce seen,
Ye far-sent shadows of departed years !
And thou, lone voice of Empire sunk in dust,
Sad yet majestic, that, mid smiling vales,
As from the ruins of a world, but speak'st
Of half-forgotten glories, and the pomp
Of time-whelm'd ages, even to memory lost,—
Still breathe, where'er I tread, this solemn charm !

Not unremembering, nor with thankless heart,
I come,—to Ancient Wisdom proud to bend
With more than natal homage and delight
The filial knee.—Hail, nobler birthplace, hail
Thou fount of intellectual life, that gav'st

Whatever wakes the spirit to exult
Conscious, in all the luxury of thought:—
Where man, the savage, from his ancient lair,
Wild as the struggling prey he tore, first rais'd
A wondering look, and, half-inquiring, drew
At every glance strange wisdom from the sky!
O visited by sages, sought by him
Who, like the monarch of the spreading day,
First to the Western clime exulting bore
A brighter sunshine! Proud imperial Land,
That, mid a world of darkness, sole thy brow
High lifting, wav'dst thy diadem of light,—
How is the glory of thy sceptre quench'd,
While Nations shine afar! Ye fanes, that still,
Even on your mouldering altars, guard some beams
Of the rich fount whose radiance warm'd the world!

Who now with haughty joy the prayer shall list
Of mighty strangers, bending at the blaze?
What glorious visitant shall come, with zeal
Ardent, as when of old ye proudly hail'd
The truth-adoring pilgrim to your shrines
Oracular,—when, by the palm, that crown'd
With tuft of sunny verdure high o'erspread
The darkness of the grove, or in the vault
Of deeper consecrated gloom, mid shapes
Of mystic power, unawed but reverent, sat
The guest sublime, and heard with faithful ear
Words that to wanderer of the race of earth
Had never deign'd their lore!—O sacred haunts,
Where, led by Fancy, in her infant hours,
By hill and forest-glade and shadowy stream,
Truth rov'd in sportive joyance! shall her step,

That lights each gloom it treads, no more illume
Her early mazes wild? Shall Plantain shade
Be silent, and the fountain's clustering arch
Of Jasmine self-embower'd in sweets, which heard
The eager converse, when, with lisping voice,
Soon answering what it sought, of things divine
She question'd,—or, at Faney's wildest tale,
All pleas'd yet doubting, listen'd to her song!

Ye shall not sleep for ever.—Rise, exult,
Ye long-deserted! for again your bowers
Shall be her home. Awake, ye slumbering realms,
Awake, the triumph and the hymn prepare,
Lift the glad eye of greeting!—for again
To bless her native haunts, with brighter charm,
The early roamer of your wilds returns.

Mature in grace she comes, with many a Nymph
In choral bands attendant, that her step
Circle, and from her quick but solemn glance
Catch every kindling thought. The Star-eyed Maid
Is there, who first at midnight, on your hills,
In sleepless vision, saw the mighty veil
Ascend that hides infinitude, and mark'd
The wonders of the sky, and heard the words
Of planetary converse, orb to orb
Whispering in mystic strain divinest sounds,
Which never but to unpolluted ear
Her voice reveals.—Nor stranger to the groves
That wrapt her early musings, comes the Power
Of self-retiring thought, who, with fix'd eye,
Lost in strange ecstacy, the forms of earth
Beholds not, as they bloom all fair around,

Yet sees them living in the fainter hues
That rise ideal to her inward glance ;—
Or, watching where the mad Emotions rage,
Undazzled by the rushing shapes that flash
Too swift for mortal eye, each frowning mien
Of Passion views unterrified, and counts
The fleeting bands, and bids them at her will
Pause.—Nor shall *She,* the voice that wakes delight,
Be absent :—with new majesty of song
More elevate, and warmer-kindled heart
Sweet Fancy comes ; and by the jasmine bower,
And sunny plain, and far down every dell,
Shall float in fuller stream the liquid soul.

Yes, ye late offspring of the sires, who tam'd
With wisdom's early voice a savage world !

Rich are its gifts of recompence.—Receive
The mutual lore!—For you the distant sage
Has toil'd, unconscious to what land he owed
His ardent impulse, or what minds afar
Should catch the spreading wonders of his thought.
What gather'd wonders wait you,—the wide spoil
Of Ages yours! With new dominion arm'd,
Your hands each stubborn element shall rule,
And with no common sway: for ye shall call
The secret Powers invisible, that first
With chemic fetters in the stormy flood
Of Chaos bound the strugglers as they raged;
And bid them at your will the fetters loose,
Or link the parted captive to new forms,
With heavier bondage. Ye shall climb, untir'd,
The azure track of light, and from your path

Point to the half-seen eagle far below ;
Or, when he slumbers on his darkest cloud,
Awake the Storm, and from his angry grasp
Snatch the red bolt. The Pestilence, that lays
A nation prostrate, as his robe of fire
Sweeps o'er the realm, when, hovering low, he drinks
The meteor poison that from every marsh
Steams to the sun, undaunted ye shall meet ;—
And dare his mighty strength, secure,—and send
The giant to his cave :—for Truth elate
Approaches, and the filial Arts, that bless
The Western world, and arm its feeblest sons,
Like nature's guardian Spirits, with the power
Of more than kings, come smiling in her train.

On move the bright-ey'd band, but not to lead
Supreme that sacred triumph they prepare:—
With ministry more honour'd they but ope
The radiant path divine, where steps more pure,
That walk in all the harmony of heaven,
Speed jubilant.—She comes.—O'er the glad waste
Religion's voice shall flow. Not long afar
The Holy Power shall linger,—she who bears
The inspiration from on high, the life
Of generous ardour to the languid heart,
The liberty sublime;—who lifts the slave,
Even while the tyrant with his darkest weight
Of ignominy bends his fearless neck,
To more than freedom,—lifts him to his God.

THE

RENOVATION OF INDIA.

PART SECOND.

INVOCATION of the Genius of Antiquity, reposing from his long watch of the Universe, to descend to India, and witness the change.—He descends, and beholds still remaining the great public evils which he had witnessed in his early charge of the world.—The Pariar.—Reflections on the system of casts, as diminishing general affection, and as restraining, with many cruel prejudices, the free ambition of Genius, and the softer passion of the heart.—Procession of the car of Sheevah, seen at a distance.—Devotees, who throw themselves beneath its wheels.——A Fakeer in his longer voluntary penance.—Burning of a widow on the funeral pile of her husband.—The Genius, retiring in despair, is adjured to remain, as the evils are about to vanish,—for Religion comes.

THE

RENOVATION OF INDIA.

PART II.

GENIUS of ancient years, who in the bower
Of eldest Time, thy Earthly watch fulfill'd,
From that long toil hast lain for many an Age
In the calm gloom reposing! thou, who saw'st
The rill of Science from its eastern fount
With dewy softness flow, and lov'dst to stray
Amid the twilight of the groves, that cast
A sunless silence on the narrow stream!

That brightening stream thou mark'dst not, when, as oped
The looser umbrage, from the half-seen sky
It caught the flashing day,—now, o'er the steep,
Rough with each fierce rock struggling,—now thro' banks
Of verdure, calm, and shaded but with flowers
That smil'd amid its freshness, to the sun
Returning all the splendour of his blaze.
O! if it haunt thy slumber;—in thy dream
If yet a thought of mortal things awake
Thy fondness, come!—A happier scene thine eye
Shall gladden.—Rich with many an added fount,
In sinuous course majestic, far thro' realms
That bless its circling path, the sea-like flood
Speeds to its parent clime; nor only full

With swelling waters from its kindred Earth,—
Heaven's brightest sunshine mingles in the wave.

Thou com'st!—O viewless Spirit! yet again
To Brahma's hills descend'st thou?—Not to eye
Of mortal darkness beams thy giant form;
Yet mortal ear, that to the tempest's shout
Lists unappall'd, the rushing of thy wing
Owns, trembling. Well, dread visitant! too well
Each wonted prospect from thy mountain throne
Hail'st thou. Not yet the triumph and the joy
Begin. The temples and their idol gods
Still gleam upon thy gaze: still, still around,
As when of old thou mourn'dst him, man, the slave,
The tyrant, not the social brother, lifts
His feeble arm, despising or despis'd.

But there shall come a time.—The ready hour
Watches.—A word—one mighty word of Heaven—
Shall sound, and speed from far the spreading bliss.

Hark, from the columns of the porch, the song
The tabor and the choral dance! The crowd
Haste to the hallowing rite.—But, who is he,
That hastes not with the crowd, yet to their path,
With eye fix'd sad and motionless, afar
Looks, as his soul were with them?—Not to him
The song the tabor and the dance assure
The present Deity; yet not in one
Of all who share the worship does their voice
So holy love awake. Tho', at his sight,
The thrice-bath'd menial of the haughtiest lord
Start, and abhorrent of his passing shade

Fly shuddering ;—tho' his field, which heaven's
sweet breath
Has cherish'd, and his fruits, on which the sun
Has shed its brightest colours, from his touch
Drink pestilence ;—tho' even the pitying hand,
Which gives in mercy to his burning lip
The cool refreshment, with the speed of fear
Break the polluted goblet ;—shut from man,
From all the mingling courtesies and powers
Of social being, his expansive heart,
Mild as a grief-struck hermit that has fled
To willing solitude, can feel, still left,
The joy of wishes, and with ready love
Bless even the pride that scorns him. But, from God
Secluded, from the dwelling of his Sire
Driven like an outcast of his hate,—he feels,

There only, that the wretched Pariar shares
No brotherhood with man. The holy voice,
Still reverenced while his praises it forbids,
Sounds,—tho' he knows not wherefore,—like the threat
Of guilt-offended Deity: and oft,
When, in his lonely vale, the distant hymn,
Of happy crowds permitted, on his heart
Falls faint and sweet but sorrowful, the tear
Which rises on his unrepining thought
Is more remorse than grief.—Meek sufferer, rest!
Forlorn, but O not joyless!—Yet awhile
Rest;—and the God thou lov'st will own thy praise,
And turn that fear to rapture;—yet awhile,
And Man, thy fellow-worshipper, thy friend,
Will blush, and clasp thee to his equal breast!

O day of gladness, when the blending tribes,
One family of love and joy, shall loose
The fetters of the heart;—when, proud no more,
Even tyrants shall be free; and the bright fane,
That on the parted worshipper its shade
Casts sullen, like the happy bower of home
Shall gather in fond circle every smile!
Then, boundless as the various throb within,
To young Ambition, in his pause of choice,
Shall ope the wide career. Not freer speeds
The lightning through the unresisting cloud,
With heaven's own sacred flame upon its wing,
Than o'er the cottage field, or tent of war,
Or busy mart of commerce, shall the voice
Of Genius call her sons. They will not fear
The inspiration: for not then, as now

In pious sacrifice submissive doom'd
A life-degraded victim, o'er the task
Of daily toil shall the reluctant heart,
High-conscious, tremble at the passing wish
Of power and blessing and immortal praise,—
As from the brightness of some Form of Heaven,
In short but dazzling visitation, shrinks
The awe-struck soul. The glorious light of God,
The spirit flaming with celestial truth,
Shall not be quench'd: each free inspiring Art
Shall nurse the ardour; and the Power, who gave
The fire, receive its incense. Even the sage,
Who o'er the guarded volume long has toil'd,
Hoary, and proud of the mysterious lore,
Shall bend to younger lips that never heard
His secret tale, and list unfabled themes

Of Nature, and behold her mighty arm,
As at the magic of some Prophet's spell
Obedient, in her darkest workings rise
All bright reveal'd;—or in the busy grove,
Where simple voices live along the shade,
Turn, with reluctant wonder, from sweet strains
Which Brahma owns not;—and with sadden'd pride
Muse, as 'twere solace still, some long-lov'd hymn,
That soothes no more. The hero shall not sleep
In the far hamlet of his sires, supine,
In silence unremember'd: he shall grasp
The dread avenging sword,—shall be the song
Of nations, when, for liberty, they lift
The arm that lays the desolator low.

With charms no more forbidden, soft around
Shall love prevail. Whatever Virtue dares
Heroic things shall find in Beauty's heart
No alien warmth. The tender fear shall glow
Of bashful modesty,—that, even in hope
Of fondness soon to bless her mutual vow,
Half sighs with meek unconsciousness of sway,—
But not of *guilt*, as if the Power, who form'd
The breast to kindle at each generous deed,
Forbade the admiration. The warm maid
No more, with trembling prayer, shall call from heaven
The holy ardour, to subdue a joy
Pure as the flame she seeks; no more shall strive
To think the past forgotten, or to lose
In feeble piety the lingering wish,

As if it ceas'd to charm,—and, while she clasps
Each sad memorial to her heart, and weeps
With agony of love, still bless the Power,
That saves her—from the virtues she adores.

Dark waves the distant plain.—Half-seen on high,
Comes, towering o'er the moving cloud beneath,
The car of THE DESTROYER.—Slow it comes,
Urg'd by a thousand hands. A thousand hands,
And yet a thousand, gather round its course,
As if the touch were purity.—Afar
Bursts thro' the shout the louder-crashing wheel,
Like thunder on the voices of the storm
Hurling its sullen roar.—The mountain-weight
Moves, unretarded by the prostrate heap
Self-sacrificed, who writhe not when 'tis past,

But follow still its track with dying gaze.
On them no gaze is fix'd. The shout, the joy,
Move onward with the onward pomp. Even he,
Who, pillow'd on his bed of spikes, his eye
Serene, in inward vision of the God,
Lifts not to earthly things—a moment sends
A glance of worship to the passing Power.

O blessed Power of Mercy! is thy pomp
The sacrifice of torture? Thou, who spread'st
The sunshine o'er the gloom, the grateful voice
Of waters o'er the desert,—thou, who gav'st,
In smiling earth, and ocean, and the vast
Ethereal, with its majesty of light,
The boundless beauty to the wandering eye
Of man, and music to his airy dreams,

And friendship to his heart,—O blessed Power,
Who taught'st the worship of the generous wish!
Thou ask'st not agony to speak thy praise.

The sacred wood is heap'd,—the perfume pour'd.
Come to the bridal couch, which waits the dead,
But not the dead alone! The pomp is near,—
The Bramin, and the sire, and she, who, warm
With youthful beauty, in the bower of peace
And wedded love, the year of new delight
Thrice hail'd with fearless happiness. She comes,
With graceful step serene; and still her eye
Smiles, as if other new-returning years
Of joy as soft were opening on her home
Of undivided fondness.—Cease, ye sounds,
That on the dark but guiltless breast oft breathe

A melancholy milder than its own,
A sanctity of sweetness! not with deeds
So dread, in profanation of delight,
Mingle the melodies of heaven,—like beams
Of holy moonlight, melting o'er a plain
Of blood, and smiling on the death-sick eye!
Thrice has the pile been circled, thrice pronounc'd
The mystic words of union.—To her lord
The glance of sponsal salutation lifts
The victim bride. Still cling thou to her breast,
But not with arm so sportful wreath'd,—sweet babe!
Cling thou, and weep!—She yet can bid thee go,—
She, who upon thy bosom'd head has wept
With tenderness of joy,—when *other eyes,*
With joy as tender, but with wandering look
From thy couch'd slumber to that bending form

Alternate, at the softness laugh'd, with smiles
That almost shar'd the tear.—She folds thee close,
And closer yet she folds thee, as if still
Her parting soul would, even in other life,
Its earliest rapture clasp in thy embrace.
And she can bid thee go!—Thy grandsire's arm
Receives thee; but his tear-drop on thy cheek
Is not for thee.—The mystic leaf is cast—
It flames, the symbol of her fate,—the torch
Faint-kindled gleams.—The gems are loos'd.—No more
The bracelet sparkles, where it sadly shone,
The ornament of death.—Again one look,
One longer look of fondness, on her babe
Lingers.—Her babe no answering look returns;
No arm he stretches, but the glittering gem,

Which oft had press'd him in the fond caress,
Shakes loose,—and stops,—and smiles with laughing eye.

O Mother of the living! canst thou deem
That sacrifice a homage to the love
Which equall'd thine! Go'st thou, to meet the dead?
He is not dead *to thee*. He lives,—he lives
Even in that helplessness thou fliest. He lives,
And calls on thy affection, with a voice
More urgent, than when at the perfum'd blaze
He clasp'd thy bridal hand. In other forms
Of ever-changeful being, wouldst thou seek
His transmigrated spirit? Not in one,
With such sure consciousness thy soul would hail
The long-lov'd presence. Turn thee to that eye!

See'st thou no living fondness there, no charm
Of other years, that on thy memory beams
More than an infant's simple smile? The front
Of pride he wears not now, and the calm glance
Of fearless majesty, which, while it look'd
The safety of protection and command,
Was mild as soft obedience. Yet, tho' sleep
Silent that look of power, 'tis but to bless
With interchange of tenderness thy care
Connubial, and repay thee with thy love.
—Broad rose the tree of heaven. Beneath its shade,
The slender vale-shrub flourish'd, tho' around
Gasp'd the dry river, and each watery herb
Shrunk into dust, before the summer Star
Death-blazing;—tho' aloft the dread Monsoon
Came, with his sky of waters, and the tower

And forest and the long-resisting rock
Dash'd down the flood of clouds.—The mighty trunk
Is low, but from its mouldering root a stem
Still lingers into life;—and it shall rise.—
No fiery sun shall blast it: the proud shrub,
Which bloom'd and gladden'd in the parent shade,
Shall fling her coolness o'er its infant leaf.
And thou—O widow'd mother! once, tho' weak
In helpless loveliness, thou smildst:—for then
Thy weakness was not lonely. Thou couldst rest,
In the safe shelter of a stronger power,—
Glad, in that sweet protection, of the fear
Which gave the tenderer charm. Now, trembling lies
The strength which guarded thee; the powerful hand
Clings to thy neck for aid:—and wilt thou rend

Its tender grasp, and, thankless, wilt thou leave
That arm of fondness, that protecting arm,
To ask thy aid in vain?—No single bliss
To the proud office of continued love
Invites thee. With what transport, when the smile
Of infant joy had shone on thy caress
Maternal, thou wouldst mark *another* form
Still seem to mingle present in the gaze,
And lose thee in confusion of delight,
That doubly thrill'd,—a mother and a bride!

Genius of ancient years! thy sounding wing
Lift'st thou for flight, impatient? Wouldst thou turn
From Earth, as if thy long-despairing view
Still in the crimes and anguish of the scene
Found but the guilty past?—O, pause!—The gloom

Of mortal twilight brightens; and the morn,
The glorious morn, unwearied, from the sky
Comes on his ever-blazing pinions. Stern
And slumberless, with vampyre wings o'erspread,
A giant Fiend of Darkness, o'er the East
Has Superstition, quencher of the soul,
Lour'd mid the shadowy horror with fell eye
Whose glance is deeper gloom;—on that long night
The torch alone its bloody glare has cast
Doubtful.—Yet wait the dawn!—for the wide day
Shall stream o'er every vale,—the narrow cliff
Shall blaze,—and, opening yet more bright above,
And purer than the loveliness around,
Shine in divinity of pomp the Sky.

THE

RENOVATION OF INDIA.

PART THIRD.

RELIGION comes.—She comes, not to destroy, but to bless.—Contrast of the invasion of Timur.—The general desolation which marked his progress.—The tower of heads.—The massacre of the prisoners.—Burning of a temple.—Reflections on persecution.—The milder triumph of Christianity.

THE

RENOVATION OF INDIA.

PART III.

YES, Holy Power celestial! thou wilt come,
To bless, and to prevail: for now no hand
Of the hot ruffian leads thee o'er the field
Of havoc; as when gleam'd the iron arm,
That rais'd to thee its homage, while it wash'd
The guilt of the cold gore-drop in the blood
Of warmer slaughter. From his narrow throne,—
As if an empire were a dungeon's space,

The freedom of a slave,—from realms secure,
Restless, and when the work of death was done
All joyless even in desolation, came
The holy murderer,—he, who scorn'd to step
Where heav'd no corse below,—who, when the toil
Of carnage, in the long pursuit at eve,
O'er all his host more tir'd than sated, pass'd
Half like a thought of mercy, never shar'd
The idle wish to spare, but when his arm
Was weary, bath'd it deep, and from the stroke
Rose, as if freshen'd in the living stream.

On, like the rushing of the vulture's wing,
His thousand standards, hurrying on the blast,
Scream'd to the howling whirlwind.—O best light,
That, like the softness of the eye we love,

Smil'st till all nature melt beneath the beam!
Thy peaceful crescent from his ensign lour'd,
More ominous than in some livid sky
The bloody star portentous of the storm.
Before was blooming plenty, and the song
Of labour, and the hum of happiness.
Then came the tempest of the war,—the shout
Full-swell'd and loud at morn, that faint at eve
With half its voices sank, yet left no pause
In all its mid-day clamour, for the groan
The widening groan of death,—till, as afar
The onward tumult faded, from some bower
Of age, some half-unpeopled hamlet, came
The solitary death-cry, and the shrieks
Of virgins, and the fierce exulting joy
Low-mingling, but more dreadful. All behind

Was silent,—save when, from his blazing lair
Rous'd, the lone tyger thro' the woodless waste
Howl'd. In the smoking village, not a step
Echoed with life; no gliding form was seen,
Unless perhaps one weary wretch, who, slow
And half-unconscious, when her flight but found
A wider desolation, turn'd again
To the sweet scenes of youth, which, tho' as waste,
Still were more dear:—the vale, so lately fled,
Now seem'd like safety:—on the single pile,
That scap'd the ruin of her cot, she sat,
And, gazing watchful of the smouldering flame,
Felt even its ashes *home;*—while, from her side
Wandering, her infant o'er a stiffen'd corse
Leant playful, from the face it cover'd rais'd
Feebly the heavy turban thick with gore,

And smil'd to know her sire.—Oft on the field,
When the low murmur still was dying round,
Ere yet the wounded, mid the eloser heap
Where his true comrades fell,—rais'd on his arm,
As loath to press, even tho' it heav'd no more
With breathless agony, a long-lov'd breast,—
Had sunk, another weight; then, loud and wide,
Again the war-drum thunder'd. 'Twas no voiee
Of hope, and promis'd sueeour, and repose,
To the dull ear, that, dying, turn'd again
To catch onee more the sound of life,—no knell
Of peaceful obsequy:—it spoke, to raise
The ghastly trophy of the dead, to glut
The slaughter lost too soon. Nor did the hands,
Whieh heap'd the richer harvest, seorn to bear
The gleanings of the field; while, as they robb'd

The remnant of his feast, from corse to corse
Slow mov'd the half-gorg'd flesh-bird, as amidst
His kindred beaks of ravine :—on the pile
The weary builder cast the frequent skull,
Careless, yet sometimes shrinking, when, from heaps
Too hasty-gather'd, as the full-turn'd front
He lifted, gleam'd a comrade's well-known eye.

O ! what an eve was that, when to the moon,
At the sweet hour of quiet, instant blaz'd,
Wide-kindling like the lightning's sudden glare
That flashes o'er the deep from sky to sky,
The scymitars of death,—*not* o'er the free,
Not o'er the hand, that dar'd with equal pledge
The strife of mortal fate ;—when even the tent
Of him, the peaceful blood-detesting sage

Whose hand the lamb lick'd fearless, heav'd and shook,
With life's last strugglings;—when, from far-stretch'd plains
Which thronging nations cover'd, half the host
Shriek'd, and were still!—Calm from his slumber rous'd,
The tyrant chief smil'd, as the shriek he knew,
And sank again, as in the placid rest
Of guiltless infancy.—O! what an eve,—
When hoary plunderers, trembling at the slaves
They conquer'd, barter'd for a single stroke
The spoil of fields of death;—when even the hand,
Which sold itself to double slaughter, shrunk
From the rich steel, and falter'd in the blow!

Red o'er the city rush'd the torch;—but there,

Where zealot frenzy urg'd her myriad hands,
There rag'd the fierce destruction.—Soon it fell—
The dwelling of the mighty one—it fell,
But not alone. Rich was the pyre of death.—
No coward fled it.—Not a silver hair
Of Brahma's priests to the bright morning sun
Gleam'd.—The stern grandsire perish'd,—and the maid.
She stretch'd not out the vain imploring arm;
She mix'd not in the tumult:—but she died,
Amid the Gods she worshipp'd.—O more blest,
Than he, safe-wandering, who return'd, to mark
His holy dwelling desolate,—to see,
Where the first worship of his childhood knelt,
The fane of other rites,—to know his Gods

The foot-tread of the daily crowd, to live,
And look to Heaven, and think upon the past!

Ye Priests of Brahma! not again your bowers
Shall tremble, at the bloody name of love,
The shouted King of mercy;—not again
The mission'd scymitar shall chaunt its God,
And the red torchlight on your inmost shrines
Flash sudden, from the rushing arm of him
Whose footsteps drop with gore. A mightier Power,
All-gentle as resistless, in your fanes,
Even in the secret marble ye revere,
Is present. Not to him the falling shrine
Sounds grateful, and the wide-ascending voice
Of nations, in the songs of other sound,
New to his praise, if, silent still, the heart

In the full homage of the loud acclaim
Deny its soft sweet whisper.—On the smoke,
Still flashing from the altar's blaze, where lies
Frantic amid its dust the hoary priest,
He asks no incense, from the meagre hand
Slow-rais'd for vengeance, rais'd, in feeble prayer,
But not to him; nor calls he, on the corse
Yet warm, a father's corse, the trembling son
To kneel, and with affrighted lips adore
The murderer's God.—Shall HE, who, with a glance,
Can gather all the tempests, that o'er worlds
Unnumber'd rush on far-resounding wing,
And in one burning sky, thro' which the sun
In noon-day splendour looks not, give to flame
The lightnings of the infinite,—shall HE,
To aid his mighty purpose, ask the brand

Pale-gleaming from that arm whose coward grasp
Shrinks from its falling spark! He warm'd with life
The heart that ne'er has own'd him; to the pomp
Of the proud giant of the blazing day
He gives the car of glory, at whose wheel
Low falls the dazzled worshipper; the hymn
Which hails the passing splendour for its Lord,
Is but HIS breath.—Eternal! not with dread,
Not with the frown of vengeance, dost thou call
Thy wandering children to their sire: the smile,
Which wak'd their being, wins it to thy love.

And that bless'd smile shall conquer.—Mighty Stream,
That see'st along thy wave the dying wretch,
For one short breath still struggling, with faint grasp

Cling to the dead,—and at far-mingling groans,
Heard frequent in the dashings of the blast,
Shudder'st, while every shriek is death!—Exult!
The purest harmonies of choral life,
The raptures which the Seraph but prolongs,
The songs of Zion wait thee.—He, whose gaze
One hour to worship and remember, came
Afar, rejoicing on their distant path,
The Wisest of the East,—even while he lay
In helplessness of infancy, and clung
To the frail mortal arm, where Seraphs fix'd
Their ardent eye of tenderness, yet, awed,
Approach'd not,—the victorious Lord of death,
Whose voice is immortality,—the Prince,
Whose step is on the stars of heaven, who bears
The sceptre blazing with ten thousand suns,

That lights and rules the universe,—the hail'd
Of prostrate Worlds, is nigh. To climes, where erst,
Musing high wishes yet despairing, wept
The pilgrim sages at the doubtful dream
Of holier hopes to man,—who first the knee
Bent, proudly honour'd, where all heaven adores,—
The bright Assurer, the Deliverer, comes,
And on the darkness of the Orient looks
The morn celestial. Ope your shadowy gates,
Ye vacant temples of the night!—the gloom
Of dawnless ages flies,—the spectral forms
Vanish,—the living glory fills their shrines.
Bend in the blaze, ye nations, as with steps
Of light he comes majestic!—Mark that eye,
Which, even on the Betrayer, when the glance
Of meek-brow'd Angels flash'd a glad revenge,

Look'd with so mild a sorrow, with a gaze
Of such all-melting pity, that the heart
Which shrunk not in the guilt, subdued yet tost
With mild remorse more frantic, rush'd to snatch
In death's dark plunge a moment's dread repose.
—No sorrow looks it now.—Yet even its joy
Triumphant, but like pitying mercy, beams
With majesty of love.—From Land to Land
The voice of gladness shouts.—The aged Deep
Listens, and answering from his cave, lifts high
His hoary locks delighted:—for HE COMES.—
The Hosts of Heaven are with him.—Ope your gates,
Ye proudly silent temples, to your Lord!—
Nor close ye, till, at thunder of the voice
Omnipotent, Eternity,—that sank
Lull'd by creation's spreading sound, when fill'd

The void one strange sweet murmur,—shall awake.
The sleeper of ten thousand years shall start
In ampler strength majestic from the gloom,
And lift her eyes undazzled to the blaze,
And spread her circling arms from orb to orb,
And bid them cease to be;—when rushing Worlds,
The comets of the infinite, shall flash
Loose thro' the gloom, and the last thundering shock
Of Earths and Suns still shout their worshipp'd God.

VATICINIUM GANGIS.

VATICINIUM GANGIS.

Indiam res imperii antiqui lapsas indignatam Ganges ex latebris vocat,—Collegium Bengalense monstrat,—lætiora multa vaticinatur ex Collegio condito oritura.

O NON subacto pectore, gloriæ
A strage lapsæ, quæ memor effugis
Umbras ad antiquas, senectam
Tot Nemorum, stabilesque Montes;

Gaudesque prisci cernere conscios
Ævi, et peractas dum velut insciis
Pompas renarras, prosequendo,
Heu veterem renovare fastum!
Audisne?—Luctu parce superbiam
Versare tristem!—Vox nova per nemus,
Non qualis olim mœsta, quærit
Te reducem.—Pater ipse Ganges
Exsurgit, altis rauca tonitribus
Dat gaudia, et per fulgura brachia
Et per procellas tendit, almi
Te sociam revocans amoris.
Quæ nunc obumbrat tecta manu?—Ipse nunc
Quæ verba mittit præscius?—" O veni,
Sero, tot indignans dolores,
Hospitio refovenda! Pandent

Hæc lætiori limina gloriæ
Per sæcla cursum.—Reddidit hic dies
Sperare. Quam longæ fugabit
Horrificæ vaga monstra noctis!
Jam pressit alas, avolat, avolat,
Spumosa tabo, SÆVITIA, et famc
Dum spumat ardens, sanguinemque
Per vomitus sitiens recentem.
Non illa siccas ex latebris feras
Rursus vocabit, lætaque tigridum
Mille ora commisisse, voces
Tot rabidas superabit una.
Aufertur:—Alas audio, nec tremo,
Longe strepentes.—Cedere lentior,
Ungues, tenaces semper, ægre
Cogit AVARITIA immorantes:—

Sed cogit.—Avete, O quibus intimis
Votis refulsit spes generosior,
Virtusque, divinusque laudum,
Atque tui, Veneranda, amoris
Prædulcis ardor! Sera nimis veni,
Non falsa proles gentis amabilis!
Agnosco nunc tandem BRITANNOS,
Nunc Genus impatiens domantis.
O quos triumphos, nomina quot vides
Laudis futuræ! *Hic* civibus otia
Componet, et virtute lætus
Lætitia irradiabit omnes.
Arma *ille* dirus, vindice sed manu,
Non prædo, sumet dux pia, Numinis
Fulmen resurgentis, tyranni
In medio scelerum horror æstu;—

Quem franget instans ultor; at artibus
Mollitus almis, fulgura bellicæ
  Dum cædis exstinguit, valendo
    Parcere, tum superâsse credet
Victor.—Quis, O quis sidereum diem
Fulgore rumpit?—Da solitum jubar,
  Da mite—Tanto cæcor—at te,
    Te video, integriore visu,
O maxime, ignote, optime!—Nunc sacer,
Nunc nunc colendus gentibus, insero
  Astris caput sanctum, et salutis
    Do latices, meliore fonte."

THE

PROPHECY OF GANGES.

A PARAPHRASE OF THE PRECEDING ODE,

ON THE INSTITUTION OF THE COLLEGE OF FORT-WILLIAM.

ADDRESS TO INDIA, indignantly ruminating over the fall of her ancient glory.—The Spirit of the Ganges rises, and, exhibiting to her view the newly instituted College, recalls her to enjoy the happiness which it is about to produce.—Effects of the Institution, in substituting a mild and liberal morality, for habits of oppression and avarice.—Pictures of a civil governor, and of a military commander, formed under its influence.—Diffusion of Christianity forseen, in a vision of the Christian God.

THE

PROPHECY OF GANGES.

Thou who, from wrecks of Ages long decay'd,
All sad but unsubdued,
Fli'st, mindful, to the still surviving Wood,
And Mountains of eternal shade;
There hail'st them, proudly pleas'd to view
Who mark'd thee queen-like in thy ancient power;
Yet still,—as if the tale were new,
And all, unconscious of thy glory,
Like wondering strangers hung upon the story,—

On faded pomps of throne and bower
Linger'st, for many a mournful hour;
Till, with the oft-repeated strain
Of joys and splendours round thee cast,
Thou almost feel'st the calm sweet pride again,
That bless'd thee in the past!
Ah! why, when memory half might cease to burn,
Why bid it still the torturing wrongs restore?
That haughty sorrow nurse no more!—
Return!—Thou heardst the mighty call.—Return!

Hark!—'Twas no wonted voice of sadness,
Like those, which, thro' the forest echoing slow,
Oft seem to answer to thy woe.—
List, as thou once couldst list, to sounds of gladness!
'Tis he, the Father Stream.—
Lo, where, half rising from his watery bed,

High o'er the sweep of clouds he bends his head!
Thro' the thick lightning's circling gleam,
Where near and far the hurrying tempest raves,
To thee his wide-inquiring arms he waves,
And, as the thunders rush around,
Gives his hoarse joy to swell the deepening sound.

He pauses.—To what dome of state,
Half-shadow'd by his giant hand,
Points he?–And hark! what strains thy soul demand?–
Approach, and listen ;—for the song is fate.

" O worn with many a care,
Come, for thy grief's long hour is past!
A sweeter triumph smiles at last.
Come, and the soft repose of glory share!

Behold the votive temple! See
The sacred fane, to Wisdom built and Thee!
From its calm portal brighter Ages rise,
And ope their track of lustre to the skies.

"The morning beam, which hail'd and bless'd
That roof so proudly glittering from the gloom,—
O! why despair'dst thou?—in thy breast
Gave fresh again its wither'd hopes to bloom.
With more than sunshine bright, the ray
Smiles sweet with dawning of a holier day.
—And see! the long long night of ages chas'd,
Already from their waste
The monster-brood of midnight shrink away!

"Lo! on the rock-hung eyry's height,
What howler of the desert from the beams

Impatient turns, and screams,
And claps his wings for flight?
'Tis CRUELTY.—I know that eye,
Those talons ne'er from slaughter dry,
The beak, which, foamy still with gore,
Even while, with ravine gorg'd, opprest,
He heaves the weight of sickness from his breast,
Still famish'd, burns for fresher blood the more.
Not now again, from marshy grove or dell,
That fierce inspiring yell
Shall rouse each hungry tyger to the fray,
And, pleas'd to hear their thousand voices swell,
With single shriek the howling madness sway.
'Tis o'er.—With angry speed he flings
Far to the gale the thunder of his wings.—

Yet still the mighty rush is near.—
I hear,—nor tremble while I hear.

" More slow to quit the field of spoil,
AVARICE his talons ever stretch'd for prey
Gathers, reluctant, lingering on the soil,
And faintly feebly flies, as tho' 'twere sweet to stay.

" Fear no more the shapes of dread!
Far, far in gloom, each monster form is fled.—
And see, impatient for thy glance,
With open eye whose look is truth,
Bright with the joy of youth,
What radiant bands advance!
All hail, whom generous hope has fir'd,
Virtue and praise divine,—and O! above

Each self-born wish desir'd,
Thou dear and long oppress'd! the blessing of thy love!

"Come to your paths of fame,—
Sons of the brave and wise, their glory trace,—
No false asserters of an honour'd race!
At length I own the British name;
At length—but O how late!—I see
The generous offspring of the Free.

"Behold!—what triumphs meet thy gaze,
What mighty names of future praise!
Thou mark'st, who, hail'd by many an eye,
And many a secret voice of blessing,
In homes afar his patriot zeal confessing,

Shall win what haughty Empire ne'er could buy.
'Tis his, with wisdom's guardian call
To bid each social tumult cease,
—A bloodless victor in the toils of peace,—
To soothe to reason's mild decree,
And make it safe for millions to be free;
And, while his conscious bosom glows
With that sweet calm, which only virtue knows,
To look around,—and beam the joy to all.

" There, born a nation's wrath to wield,
Glows the proud Chief of many a future field,—
Not, with rapacious hand,
By shrieks of Empires led,
The dying heaping on the dead,
To stretch the sceptre of unjust command,—

But, when the blaze of war the Spoiler lights,
Or mocks his country's awful rights,
His arm, the strength of thousand arms, to raise,
Till Guilt shall feel it driven,
The thunderbolt of heaven,
With vengeance swifter than the wrongs it pays.
The wretch, who ne'er with pity shrinks,
Remorseless as the sword he waves,
The tyrant of a shuddering realm of slaves,—
Even in the fury of his thought,
While scarce the crime's wild plan is wrought,—
Shall think of *him*, and tremble as he thinks.—
And he shall come, when vengeance calls;
She speaks.—He comes.—He strikes.—The tyrant falls.
—But O what mercy now!—Each generous Art,
That wont to play around his soul,

And charm and soothe it with unfelt controul,
Breathes sweet compassion to the victor's heart.
He hears a softer voice than fame,
And, while he can the battle's fury tame,
And bid the lifted arm forbear,
Feels all his conquest,—in the power to spare.

" Save me, save my dazzled sight!—
What more than eye can bear of light
Bursts the dim splendour of the starry day?
O waft the mild accustom'd ray!
Or quench these weary orbs, or give
A sunshine, such as eye can meet and live!
—It comes—kind darkness comes,—my gaze to free.
Earth, heaven, all vanishes—yet THEE,

THEE, as with fresher sight, I see and own,
O Greatest, Best, Unknown!—
Now truly sacred, now, my name
With no illusive fame
By nations hallow'd,—mid the stars I rise,
And from the fountains of the skies,
That ope their streams of bliss to my command,
Pour life immortal o'er a thirsty land."

NOTES.

NOTES.

THE following NOTES were in the first Edition prefixed to the Poetic part of the Volume, because I was desirous that they should be read first; and it is only in compliance with general custom, that I have now reluctantly given them another place. The illustrations of this kind, which a poem may require, may indeed sometimes be very long and tedious;

when it would certainly be too much to expect that they should be read before the verses to which they refer: but, when that is not the case, I conceive that very great advantage would arise from the general adoption of the practice. It is a sort of tax, which the reader may very fairly be entreated to pay; because it is only as being of use to him, that it can be of use to the author who requests it. In works of science, the option may without any hazard be left to himself; and indeed, in such works, the text is usually more necessary to the note, than the note to the text, for mutual explanation. But in poetry, where there are often unavoidable allusions to circumstances not generally known, and allusions not fully detailed, but limited often to a single image, or perhaps even to a single word, the previous acquaintance with

these circumstances is necessary, not to illustrate merely, but to render at all intelligible, the figurative and shadowy language of verse. The poetry, or the reader, must be very cold, when, in the midst of a paragraph, a distant reference is made; and, when the paragraph is ended, the reference is too late.

P. 3.

Atchieved an empire for a plunderer's prize.

From the nature of this description, I trust, it is sufficiently apparent, that it relates to the early period of our government in India,—a period which, if we could think only of the genius and valour displayed in it, would perhaps be the brightest in the military and political annals of our country.

P. 73.

O visited by sages, sought by him, &c.

P. 74.

Ardent as when of old ye proudly hail'd
The truth-adoring pilgrim, &c.

Pythagoras, the great Western asserter of the metempsychosis, is supposed to have visited India. He is represented as of *the race of earth*, to distinguish him from the Hindoos as the fabled offspring of Brahma.

That this enterprising philosopher did really visit Hindostan, I am by no means disposed to contend. The very general tradition on the subject is sufficient to justify the use which I have made of what is perhaps only a fable, but a fable that does

honour both to the zeal of the adventurous sage, and to the country which could be represented as attracting so illustrious a disciple.

In like manner, when I represent India as the land from which all the science of the West originally flowed, I assume a very general opinion, only for that poetic use of it, which my subject requires. On its relative pretensions I am far from attempting to decide; and, for every purpose but my present one, shall be perfectly content to resign the palm of antiquity to Egypt, Chaldea, or any other country which can establish a better claim.

P. 76.

The Star-eyed maid is there, &c.

Astronomy and metaphysics are particularly described, on account of the early direction of Eastern Philosophy to these two sciences.

P. 78.

——————— *Ye shall climb untired*
The azure track of light, &c.

These lines, and the lines immediately following, allude to the invention of balloons, and of the electric conductor; and to the discoveries in European Medicine, the benefit of which has been of late so admirably exemplified in Hindostan, by the communication of vaccine inoculation.

P. 86.

Hark, from the columns of the Porch, the song.

" At the hour of public worship, the people are admitted to a peristile, or vestibule, the roof of which, in the large pagodas, is supported by several rows of pillars; and while the Brahmans pray before the image, and perform their ceremonies, the dancing women dance in the court, or under the portico, singing the praises of God to the sound of various musical instruments."—*Sketches, chiefly relating to the history, &c. of the Hindoos.* P. 99.

P. 86.

But who is he that hastes not with the crowd.

The outcasts, and every generation of their descendants, form a peculiar tribe, called in Sanscreet

Chandalas, and on the coast of Coromandel *Pariars*. "Were a Hindoo of any of the other casts to touch a Chandala, even by accident, he must wash himself and change his raiment. He would refrain from the productions of the earth, if he knew that they had been cultivated by a Chandala. A Chandala cannot enter a temple, or be present at any religious ceremony. He has no rank in society, and cannot serve in any public employment. Hence the punishment of expulsion, which is supposed in its consequences to extend even to another life, becomes more terrible than that of death." *Sketches*, p. 108.

Water or milk, if defiled by the shadow of a Pariar passing over them, must be purified before they be used. *Ayeen Akbery*.

P. 89.

——————— for not then, as now
A life-degraded victim, &c.

P. 92.

With charms no more forbidden, soft around
Shall love prevail.

The casts have innumerable subdivisions, corresponding with every variety of occupation; and, as the son is strictly enjoined by his religion to adhere to the employment of his father, the desire of a higher station has to him, in some measure, the guilt of impiety. Love also, from a similar prohibition as to inter-marriages, makes a near approach to the same sort of guilt, when its object is not of the lover's peculiar cast.

P. 90.

Who o'er the guarded volume long has toil'd.

The privilege of reading the sacred books is confined to the Bramins.

P. 91.

——————— *or in the busy grove,*
Where simple voices live along the shade.

" The weaver early in the morning sets up his loom under the shade of a tree, and takes it down in the evening. It is not uncommon, near manufacturing villages, to see groves full of looms employed in weaving the coarser cloths." *Sketches,* p. 327.

P. 93.

' The car of The Destroyer. Slow it comes,
Urged by a thousand hands, &c.

Sheevah, the third person of the Indian Triad of Gods is characterized as *The Destroyer.*

" There are frequent instances of devotees and penitents throwing themselves under the wheels of the chariots of Sheevah or Visnou, when the idol is drawn out to celebrate the feast of a temple, and being thereby crushed to death. These chariots are more properly great moveable towers, which require some hundreds of men to draw them." *Sketches,* p. 128.

The recent attention paid to the superstitions of India has made every one acquainted with the ce-

remonies attendant on the procession of the car of *The Destroyer* at Jaggernaut.

P. 94.

Even he, who, pillow'd on his bed of spikes, &c.

In the 5th Volume of the Asiatic Researches, there is a description, illustrated by an engraving, of a self-tormentor on a bed of spikes, like that to which the Poem alludes. This ingenious person had contrived to add to the luxury of his couch, by a perpetual blaze of fuel around him, as often as the weather was more than usually hot, and a cold shower-bath on his naked head as long as the weather was sufficiently chill.

P. 95.

——————— *cease ye sounds.*

Music is used in the procession to the pile. "After waiting a considerable time the wife appeared, attended by the Bramins, and music, with some few relations." *Travels in India by William Hodges, R. A.* p. 82.

P. 97.

——————— *The mystic leaf is cast.*

"One of the Brahmans gave into her hand a leaf of the bale-tree (the wood commonly consecrated to form part of the funeral pile) with sundry things on it, which she threw into the fire; one of the others gave her a second leaf, which she held over

the flame, whilst he dropped three times some *ghee* on it, which melted and fell into the fire. These two operations were preparatory symbols of her approaching dissolution by fire." *Sketches*, p. 267.

P. 97.

——————— *The gems are loos'd.*

" Certain ceremonies being performed, the widow took leave of her relations. She embraced those of her own sex; took off some jewels that she wore, and distributed them amongst them, as the last tokens of her affection." *Sketches*, p. 262.

P. 105.

——————————— the iron arm
That rais'd to thee its homage, while it wash'd
The guilt of the cold goredrop in the blood
Of warmer slaughter.

Timur signifies *iron.* The name was given to the celebrated warrior from his uncommon strength.

When he had resolved to make preparations for the conquest of China, which was prevented by his death at Otrar, "he summoned the Mirzas his children, and the great Emirs of his council to Court, to whom he made the following speech.

"God hath favoured us with such extraordinary good fortune, that we have conquered Asia, and overthrown the greatest kings of the earth; few sovereigns in past ages having acquired so great do-

minions, or attained so great authority, or had such numerous armies, or so absolute a command. And as these vast conquests have not been obtained without some violence, which has caused the destruction of a great number of GOD'S creatures, I have resolved to perform some good action, which may atone for the crimes of my past life, and to accomplish that which all the world besides is not capable of, that is, to make war on the infidels, and exterminate the idolaters of China, which cannot be done without very great strength and power. It is therefore fitting, my dear companions, that those very troops which have been the instruments whereby those faults were committed, should also be the instruments of repentance." *History of Timur Bec*, translated from Sherifeddin, vol. ii. p. 369.

P. 109.

——————— *Oft on the field,*
When the low murmur still was dying round.

It was customary with TIMUR, as with other Mogul warriors, to ereet high towers of the heads of the slain, as trophies of victory. When Bagdad was stormed by him, 120 such towers were ereeted.

P. 110.

O what an eve was that, when to the moon.

Before TIMUR marched against Delhi, he ordered a general massaere of the prisoners who had been taken in the various engagements from the passage of the Indus. "In less than an hour were put to death a hundred thousand Indians, accord-

ing to the smallest computation. Among others, Moulana Nasereddin Amor, one of the most venerable doctors of the court, who could never consent so much as to kill a single sheep, was constrained to order fifteen slaves whom he had in his house to be slain." *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 54.

P. 112.

——————— *to know his Gods,*
The foot-tread of the daily crowd.

In the northern provinces, which were peculiarly exposed to the violence of the Mohammedan inroads, few ancient Hindoo temples are to be found. "Most of them were destroyed, the images of stone broken, and those of metal melted, to cover the floors of the mosques and palaces, that the faithful

Mussulman should have the satisfaction daily to trample on what had been held sacred by the Hindoo." *Sketches*, p. 94.

Many of the temples were converted into mosques.

P. 113.

Shall tremble at the bloody name of love
The shouted King of mercy.

The shout, with which the Mussulmans commenced their assaults, was "*Allah Ecbar*" *God is great.*"

P. 115.

That seest along thy wave the dying wretch.

On the banks of the Ganges, and in the waters of the river itself, the dying Hindoos are often left, to have the benefit of its consecrating influence, while they expire.

P. 117.

——————— *Who first the knee*
Bent, proudly honour'd, where all Heaven adores.

" And when they were come into the house, they saw the young Child, with MARY his mother, and fell down and worshipped him."

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