

But ah!—if her Owen remain'd,
Of how little value are they!
She darts through the furious crowd,
Resolving his fate to explore:
She calls on her Owen aloud!—
She sees him—all bath'd in his gore!
Oh then, on his corse as she lay!
Her babe all unconscious beside,
In vain she invok'd the cold clay;
Her Owen no longer replied.

The warriors, reproach'd by her moans,
Their bosoms all poison'd with strife,
With insults reply'd to her groans,
And threaten her innocent life.

Ah! what was her life in that hour!—
The load she had gladly resign'd;
No insults, no threats could have power
To quell the fierce pangs of her mind.

She lives for her fatherless train,
She lives though her comfort is dead,
Chill poverty's gripe to sustain,
And strive for a morsel of bread.

Humanity weeps at the tale;
Yet frequent such scenes will appear,
Till concord's soft voice will prevail,
Which angels delighted will bear."

Extracts could be readily multiplied,
but for want of room, we must refer to
the book itself, in which the lover of nature
and simplicity will find much to like.

"The Widow," "The Summer Morning's Distraction," and "The Triumph of Terror," are much in the same style with the extract given. "The Mother" is an affecting delineation of maternal distress, on the death of her children, while "The Beggar" forms an artless and pathetic little tale. "The View of Ballitore" contains very natural painting of domestic scenes, and interests even without a knowledge of its adaptation to local circumstances.

What adds greatly to the merit of these poems is, that they are drawn, it is presumed, from real life, the circumstances recorded having come under the author's observation. We have heard of the author's merit in pathetically and successfully delineating distress, in an instance of a lady in England, entirely unacquainted with the author, who was so touched on reading *The Tale of Distress* in "The Ruined Cottage," as to send a handsome donation to poor Dora. This is an example of poetry doing good, by being actively and usefully engaged in the cause of benevolence, and is an interesting comment on the author's power to touch the heart. K.

LITERATURE, ANCIENT AND MODERN.

ESSAY ON ORIENTAL LITERATURE, &c.
THE learning of Europe, vast as it seems, has yet been confined nearly within the limits of three or four languages. There are many deeply read in the most secret histories of the Grecian cabinets, who are in utter ignorance of the most obvious events related in the histories of that vast part of the world, which includes Persia and Tartary, whence have (as it is now on good ground supposed) proceeded the various tribes of mankind. However that be, they demand our attention from the mighty revolutions they have been subject to, and present a spectacle peculiarly interesting to the reflecting mind from having united in the same character, circumstances the most opposite. They were warlike, cruel, and destructive; yet polite literature was cultivated among them, and its profes-

sors rewarded with a munificence, and distinguished with a respect unknown among any other people. They enjoyed privileges nearly equal to those of the heralds among the classic nations, in being respected by contending parties, and finding safe conduct through countries over-run with armies; and kings have nearly engaged in war for the honour of patronizing a man of genius. From the little inquiry, which has been heretofore made into Oriental literature, we are too prone to suppose that the Orientals were barbarous, and that consequently they have not left any compositions, worth searching for; of the very face of the country inhabited by those nations, we are much in the dark. There is a singular as well as signal instance of this in Montesquieu's *esprit des loix*. He is labouring to prove, that external circ-

cumstances in a great measure create forms of government. Speaking of Tartary and its inhabitants, he says, "they have no towns, they have no forests and but few marshes, their rivers are almost always frozen; and they dwell in an immense plain." From these circumstances he infers those people must be free. The abilities of Montesquieu demand the most profound respect, and it might be reasonably expected, that a subject, to the examination of which he had long devoted his great powers, would have been accurately considered. Yet in this important point, important for his argument, he has displayed utter ignorance.

In some parts of Tartary, there are large and flourishing cities, fertile plains and noble rivers: in others, deserts, marshes, mountains, and forests. The region contains about twenty millions of square miles, and abounds in every possible variety of surface, mountain, and vale, plain and forest, rock and marsh, inhabited by nations of the most opposite manners, watered by very large rivers, and ornamented by cities of great size and population, as Bokbara, Samarcand,* &c. These nations produced many men famous in the different walks of literature. Late investigations into these subjects have brought to light many particulars interesting in themselves, as well as in the rich promise they afford, of successful aid in the investigation of other subjects, which have hitherto baffled the most learned and indefatigable. Those who have been accustomed to consider the Greek and Roman writers as infallible guides, will be startled perhaps to find their authority questioned, and what has been hitherto deemed the mere ill-natured sneer of a bitter satyr, now put on the appearance of truth. † When a nation is known, not from tradition, but from *existing* proofs, to have been highly polished, and to have abounded in learned men, whose works remain to this day, that historic works are numerous among them, and that

* Richardson's dissertations.

† ——— Creditur olim
Velificatus Athos, et quicquid Græcia
mendax
Audet in Historia.

JUV. Sat. x. 173.

they bear internal evidence of being the histories of those, whom they profess to treat of, it is but reasonable to allow to such nations and their authors such credit, as is allowed to other people in similar cases. But this demand for credit to those authors must become strengthened, when they describe those things, as happening in their own country, and *about* the times in which they flourished; and farther, their authority should be indisputably superior to the contradictory account of persons of a distant country. This is exactly the case of the Persian and Grecian writers: they are totally contradictory, not agreeing throughout the course of an history of some thousand years, except in *one* or *two* particulars at the most. The vanity and ignorance of the Grecian writers in all foreign matters are well known. Sallust with some delicacy mentions this;* even that splendid era, the conquests of Alexander the Great, bids fair to prove no more than a gorgeous tissue of falsehoods. Of the principal historians of Persian affairs, Ctesias, who had resided fourteen years in the court of Persia, is decided on, from what remains of his writings, to have been a credulous retailer of fables. Arrian, who wrote the history of Alexander, lived *many ages* after the period he describes, and seems to have been so much occupied in detailing the military transactions of that prince, as to have overlooked what has been seen by the wisdom of later ages, to have been particularly valuable in the history of any period; a description of the manners, customs, and internal policy of the conquered people. Curtius is on all hands considered as a mere romancer. If such be the characters of the classic historians, who have written *expressly* on these subjects, we may readily infer, what degree of credit, or rather how little is due to those, who have mentioned them incidentally only, and whether these writers are to be justly preferred to the native authors. The Orientals have been conspicuous for various talent; even the scanty informa-

* BELL. CAT. Atheniensium res gestæ satis amplæ magnificæque fuere; verum aliquanto *minores* tamen, quam fama teuentur, &c.

tion we have concerning them at present, affords ample ground for admiring their diligence in research, the height of their attainments, their varied excellence in poetry, their unequalled vivacity of conception, and quickness of thought and repartee. The most ingenious member of that ingenious fraternity, the attorney's, would not perhaps think the following devices unworthy of his talents.

The Khalif Haron Arashed had taken a fancy for a slave belonging to his brother Ibrahim: he offered to purchase her, but Ibrahim, though willing to oblige his sovereign, had sworn, that he would neither sell nor give her away. As all parties wished to remove this difficulty, Abu Joseph, a celebrated lawyer of Bagdat, was consulted; he advised Ibrahim to give his brother one half of the slave, and to sell him the other. Happy to be relieved from this embarrassment, the Khalif ordered 30,000 dinars for the moiety of the slave; which Ibrahim, as a mark of his acknowledgment, immediately presented to the lawyer. But a second difficulty now arose: the Moslem law prohibits all commerce between a man and the wife or concubine of his brother, till she has been re-married and divorced by a third person. Abu Joseph advised the Khalif to marry her to one of his slaves; who for a proper consideration, would be easily induced to repudiate her on the spot. The ceremony was instantly performed; but the slave, falling in love with his handsome spouse, could not be prevailed on to consent to a separation. Here was a strange and unexpected dilemma, for, despotic as the Khalif was, he durst not compel him. But Abu Joseph soon discovered an expedient. He desired the Khalif to make a present to the lady of her new husband, which virtually dissolved the marriage; as no woman, by the Mahomedan law, can be the wife of her own slave. Overjoyed, that the Gordian knot was thus so ingeniously loosed, the Khalif gave him 10,000 dinars; and the fair slave receiving a considerable present from her lover, presented him with 10,000 more; so that Abu Joseph, in a few hours, found his fees amount to 50,000 dinars, or, nearly £25,000*.

The author from whom the above is extracted, details an award made by Ali, cousin to Mahomet, which will give some idea of the manners of the people in those times, and at the same time will furnish a tolerable specimen of that acuteness, which bespeaks natural mental vigour improved by cultivation.

Two Arabians sat down to dinner; one had five loaves, the other three. A stranger passing by, requested permission to eat with them, which they granted. The stranger dined, laid down eight pieces of money, and departed. The proprietor of the five loaves took up five pieces, and left three for the other, who objected, and insisted on half. The cause came before Ali, who gave the following judgment. "Let the owner of the five loaves have seven pieces of money, and the owner of the three pieces, one; for if we divide the eight loaves, each into three parts, they will make twenty-four parts; of which he, who had five loaves, laid down fifteen; while he, who laid down three, had only nine: as all shared alike, and eight shares was each man's proportion, the stranger eat seven parts of the first man's property, and only one belonging to the other. The money ought in justice to be awarded accordingly."

While due respect must be paid to our *Oriental predecessors* in the scientific parts of literature, their poets will attract our admiration, and excite a continual succession of admirers. The natural progress of the human mind necessarily produces new discoveries and improvements in science: and those, who, in their respective stages, obtained just praise for their exertions and discoveries, are dimmed in their reputation by succeeding discoverers; so that while we ascribe due honour to the Arabians for having ushered to us the first principles of science, at a time when Europe was immersed in barbarous darkness, we also consider them as writers, whose works, though admirable in their day, are now superseded by productions, which must be more valuable, because abounding with new information. This is not the case with poetry. The poet of nature born 3000 years ago still possesses attractions and

* Richardson's Dissertations.

while nature lasts must be read, admired, and felt. No new discoveries, no new productions in this delightful region can ever fade: while their admirers fade and flourish in quick succession, they enjoy amaranthine youth, and in the just homage of their lively beauties.

It is therefore natural, that the poets of the East should draw our first attention: and this has been the case. Among the earliest attempts to draw the attention of the English student to Persian literature, was a commentary and and translation of an ode by Hafiz, a celebrated Persian poet. This poet, whose proper name was Mohammed Shemseddin, tho' so much better known by the name of Hafiz, implying a man of great memory, was born at Shiraz, the capital of Farsistan, the ancient Persis, under the dynasty of the Modhafferrans, and lived at the period, when *Timur-lenk* or *Tamerlane*, defeated the *Sultan Shah Mansor*.

He died in the year of the *Hegira*, 797, (about 1419 of the Christian era,) and was interred at Shiraz precisely at the time, that Sultan Babu made himself master of that city; over the place of his interment Mohammed Mimai, preceptor to the Sultan, afterwards built a chapel and erected a monument to his memory. His poems were collected after his death into one volume, and have ever been much admired in the East for the sublimity of style, the variety of thought, the brilliancy of sentiment, the elegance and ease of expression; but above all, on account of the mystery, which many of the Mahometans have pretended to discover in them, being distinguished by some with the epithet of *Lissan ghaib*, *the language of mystery*.

The acknowledged licentiousness of some of his odes, form a considerable drawback on his general merits. On his death this was strongly objected to his memory, by some of the chief men of Shiraz, who were desirous of depriving the body of the rites of burial. This occasioned a violent contest between his friends and opposers, when they agreed at length, by way of appeal to heaven, to open the author's works, and be determined by the first verse that should occur, which happened to be the following. (Literally translated.)

“ Oh! turn not your steps from the obsequies of Hafiz,
For tho' immersed in sin, he will enter into heaven.”

The priests hesitated no longer, and Hafiz was interred at a place called Mosella, whose bowers he had so often celebrated. Hafiz was much caressed by many princes, particularly by the Sultan Ahmed Ilekhan, and by Tamerlane; but it appears that he was not ambitious of riches, nor of honours, preferring a life of retirement among his friends, to the more dazzling attractions of a court. The subjoined is a specimen of his poetry, translated by Mr. Richardson.

“ With sullen pace stern Winter leaves
the plain,
And blooming Spring trips gaily o'er the meads,
Sweet Philomel now swells her plaintive strain,
And her lov'd rose his blushing beauties spreads.

O Zephyr, whilst you waft your gentle gale,
Fraught with the fragrance of Arabia's grove,
Breathe my soft wishes thro' yon bloomy vale,
Tell charming Leila how her poet loves!

O for one heavenly glance from that dear maid,
How would my raptured heart with joy rebound,
Down to her feet, I'd lowly bend my head,
* And with my eyebrows sweep the halloved ground.”

Could those stern fools, who steal religion's mask,
And rail against the sweet delights of love,
Fair Leila see, no paradise they'd ask,
But for her smiles renounce the joys above.

Trust not in fortune, vain delusive charm!
Whom wise men shun and only fools adore;
Oft while she smiles, fate sounds the dread alarm,
Round flies the wheel.... You sink to rise no more.

* Literally, “I would make the hair of my eyebrows a besom for the house of wine.” In allusion to the highest mark of Eastern respect, that of prostrating themselves with their faces bent to the earth.

Ye rich and great, why rear these princely domes?
 Those heaven-aspiring towers, why proudly raise?
 Lo, whilst triumphant all around you bloom,
 Death's dreaded angel numbers out your days!

Sweet tyrant, longer in that flinty breast
 Lock not thy heart; my bosom is its throne;
 Here let the charming flutterer gently rest,
 Here feast on joys to vulgar souls unknown.

But, ah! what means that fiercely rolling eye,
 * Those pointed locks which scent the ambient air!
 Now my fond hopes in wild disorder fly,
 Low droops my love, a prey to black despair.

Those charming brows, arched like the heavenly bow,
 Arm not, O gentle maid, with such disdain;
 Drive not a wretch, already sunk full low,
 Hopeless to mourn his never-ceasing pain.

But to the fair no longer be a slave;
 Drink, Hafiz, revel, all your cares unbend:
 And boldly scorn the mean dissembling knave,
 Who makes religion every vice defend."

*The poet here draws an unfavourable omen from the dishevelled appearance of his mistress's hair: in the East the ladies are in general very curious in the disposition of their locks, which are for the most part descriptive of the state of their mind; disordered tresses implying strong agitation and resentment. Dishevelled locks are considered in some parts of India as a certain proof of the highest degree of madness. The Malays, a desperate race, who inhabit the peninsula of Malacca and many of the Indian islands, are sometimes (generally from an over-indulgence in opium) seized with a dangerous frenzy, during which they run through the streets stabbing indiscriminately every one who is so unhappy as to fall in their way. This is called *running a muck*. They are, however, dispatched like mad dogs, as soon as they discover any symptom of their madness, one undoubted mark of which is, the undoing of their hair, which is commonly woven into tresses, and put up with singular art: this circumstance being always considered as a never-failing prelude of their rage, any man may put them to death, without farther question.

A late writer has denied that this act of fury proceeds from taking opium to excess. He says that in all the instances on record slaves only *run the muck*, who having committed a fault, sometimes a trivial one, were driven to desperation, and resolved to sell their lives as dearly as possible, well-knowing they had no mercy to expect from the cruel and despotic owners of slaves in the East. He relates an instance of a slave running a muck, to which he was instigated by cruel treatment from his female owner, or mistress. If this statement be correct, we must attribute this act of desperation or insanity to the immoral effects of slavery.

To the Editor of the Belfast Magazine.

SIR,

THOUGH unconnected with your Publication, farther than as a Reader and a friend, it is with great satisfaction, I perceived in your Number for last month, the clear promise of a work that must do honour to yourselves, and be productive of advantage to the community. It marks an improvement in this country in MIND, as much as in commerce and the arts of life, which have carried so much wealth and competence in their train.

You will allow me to notice another symptom of the same, in the first publication that has appeared from the *Literary Society of Belfast*, which I have just perused with pleasure. As interest cannot induce such publications, they will be valued as they deserve; since it is evident that public utility, as well as literary discussions, are comprehended in their plan.

The first article in their Fasciculus, is from the pen of the ingenious and indefatigable Doctor RICHARDSON, on a subject of prime importance. The discovery of a GRASS that nature appears to have produced as means of rendering valuable the most barren and unprofitable land; a vegetable that will grow in every season and soil; and that affords for cattle a cheap and abundant crop of GREEN FOOD through even the dreary months of *November, December, January, and February*, deserves the encomium passed on it.

The second number of the Fasciculus, is an account of the Aerostatic voyage of a French philosopher, to ascertain the properties of air, and the changes it undergoes in regions of the atmosphere, higher, I fancy, than ever man soared before.

I shall only trouble you farther, by expressing my wish, that such a Society may experience, in Ulster, a suitable disposition for encouraging its useful labours; particularly to induce them to publish their promised *Statistical Account of the County of Antrim*, or papers connected with the subject, on our Mineralogy, Antiquities, Agriculture, &c.

We observe, that their first Number is printed in an elegant style, in 4to. at a low price, and may serve as an

elegant specimen of the progress this town is making towards perfection in an art to which human knowledge stands so much indebted.

I am, Sir, wishing success to every Literary undertaking, especially within the precincts of our own Province,

Your obedient Servant,

Sept. 28, 1808.

A FARMER.

In addition to the preceding remarks of this Correspondent, the Monthly Magazine inserts the following Preface, which appears in the first Fasciculus of the Society alluded to.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The Belfast Literary Society was formed in the year 1808.... The objects of the original members were, mutual communications on literary subjects, and the investigation of the Antiquities, political economy, and history, natural and civil, of the county of Antrim. If they have extended their plan beyond these limits, it is not from an ambition to rival societies established in more favourable situations, and supplied with more abundant means of information; but with a hope of contributing in some degree to the general stock of literature and science; fostering the rising taste of their native province, and throwing additional light on a district, that has of late attracted the curiosity of philosophers, and with respect to which, they enjoy so many local advantages.... With the same views they now present the public with a selection from their papers.... Such memoirs, as may not be distinguished by taste or learning, will, it is hoped be received with pleasure by the public, and indulgence by the learned, if they tend to promote the improvement of their own vicinity, and disseminate a knowledge of their native country.

It is intended to publish a fasciculus twice in every year, in the months of May and November. Communications from any quarter will, if approved by

the committee of revision, be printed with those from the members: but all the writers are to be held individually responsible for the accuracy of their style, observations, experiments and statements of facts.

Their Bookseller will furnish separate fasciculi, receive orders for sets of the Society's papers, and furnish a title-page, preface, and table of contents on the completion of the first volume.

To the Editor of the Belfast Magazine.

SIR,

YOUR correspondent who wished for a poetical translation of Dr. Pitcairn's lines on Lord Dundas, was, I presume, ignorant that they had already been translated by Dryden. Yet though they have been clothed in an English dress, by one whose name renders the attempt at competition almost presumptuous, I would fain hope that some of your poetical friends may be induced to favour us with a new translation.

In great attempts 'tis glorious even to fail: though such an effort could scarcely be successful, it would be the surest means of improvement. As the English verses are not generally known, I annex them for the gratification of your readers.

“ Oh ! last and best of Scots, who didst
maintain
Thy country's freedom from a foreign
reign ;
New people fill the land, now thou art
gone,
New gods the temples, and new kings the
throne ;
Scotland and thou didst in each other live,
Nor wouldst thou her, nor could she thee
survive.
Farewel! who dying didst support the
state,
And couldst not fall but with thy country's
fate.

LIST OF NEW PUBLICATIONS.

HISTORY.

The History of the Antient Borough of Pontefract, by B. Boothbyod, 8vo. 10s. boards.

An Historical Survey of the Foreign Affairs of Great Britain, by G. F. Leckie, 6s.
Herodoti Halicarnassei Historiarum, Lib. 9 2 vols. 8vo. 18s. boards.