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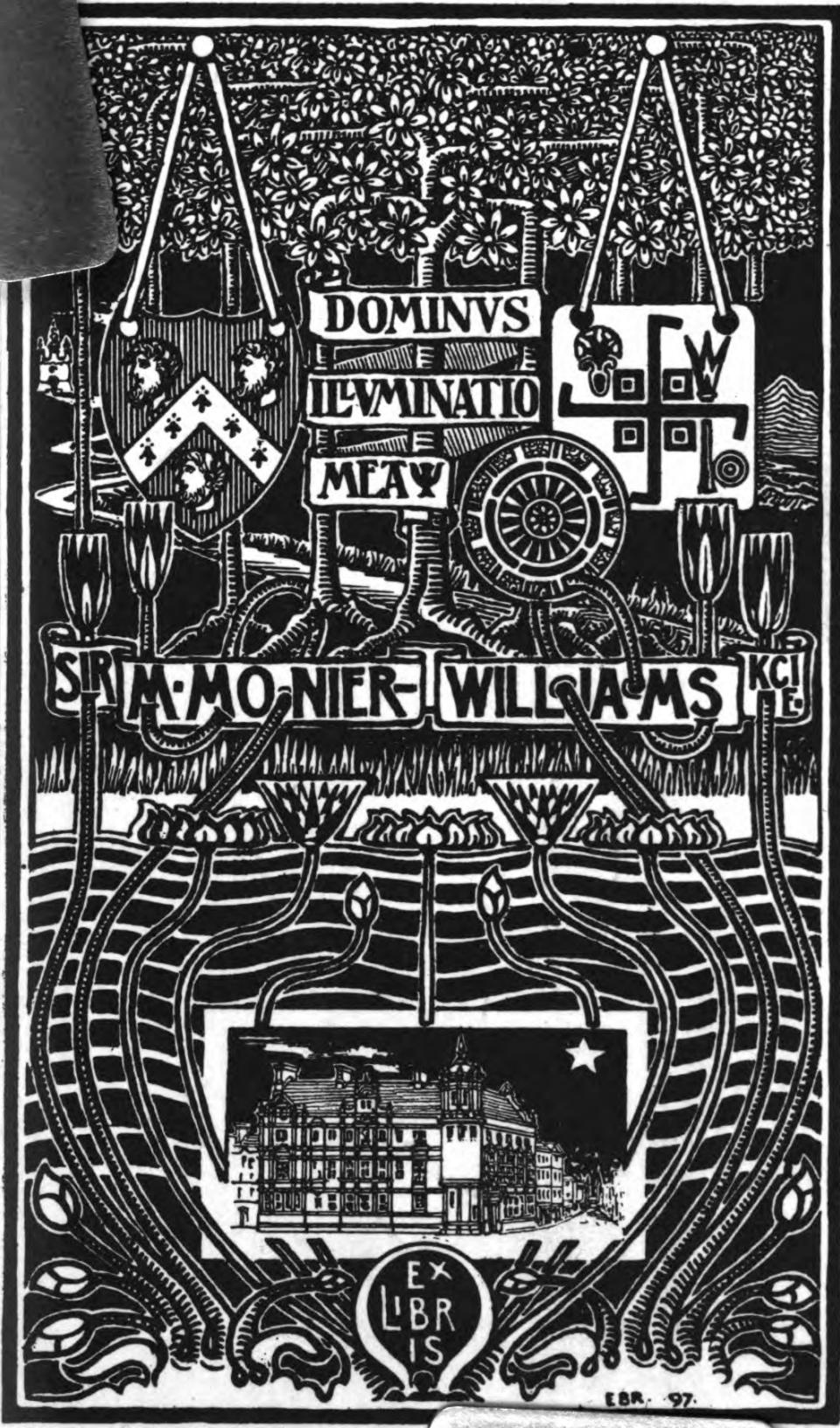


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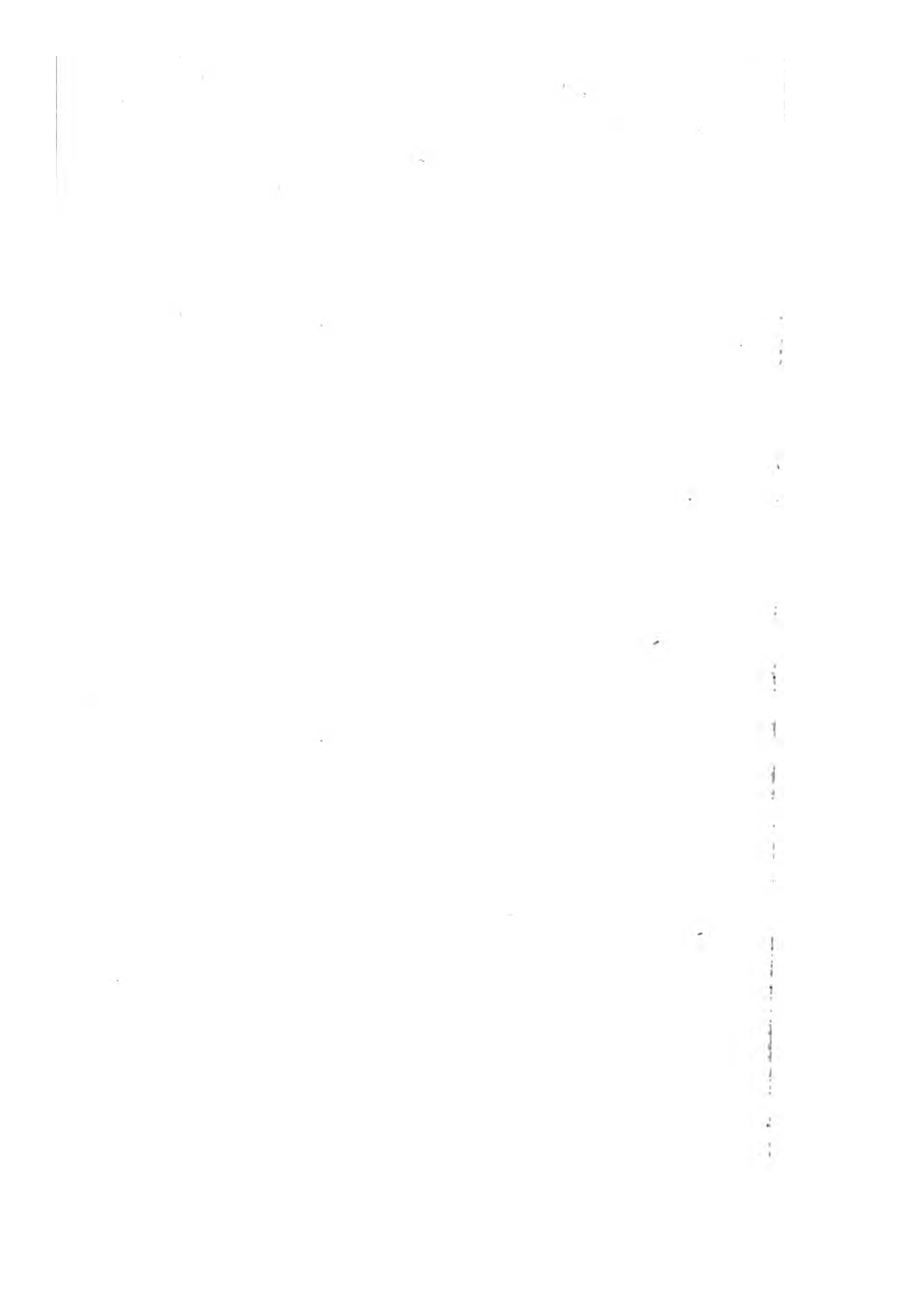
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TRANSLATION
OF THE
LETTERS
OF A
HINDOO RAJAH;

WRITTEN
PREVIOUS TO, AND DURING THE PERIOD OF
HIS RESIDENCE IN ENGLAND.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,
A PRELIMINARY DISSERTATION
ON THE HISTORY, RELIGION, AND MANNERS,
OF THE HINDOOS.

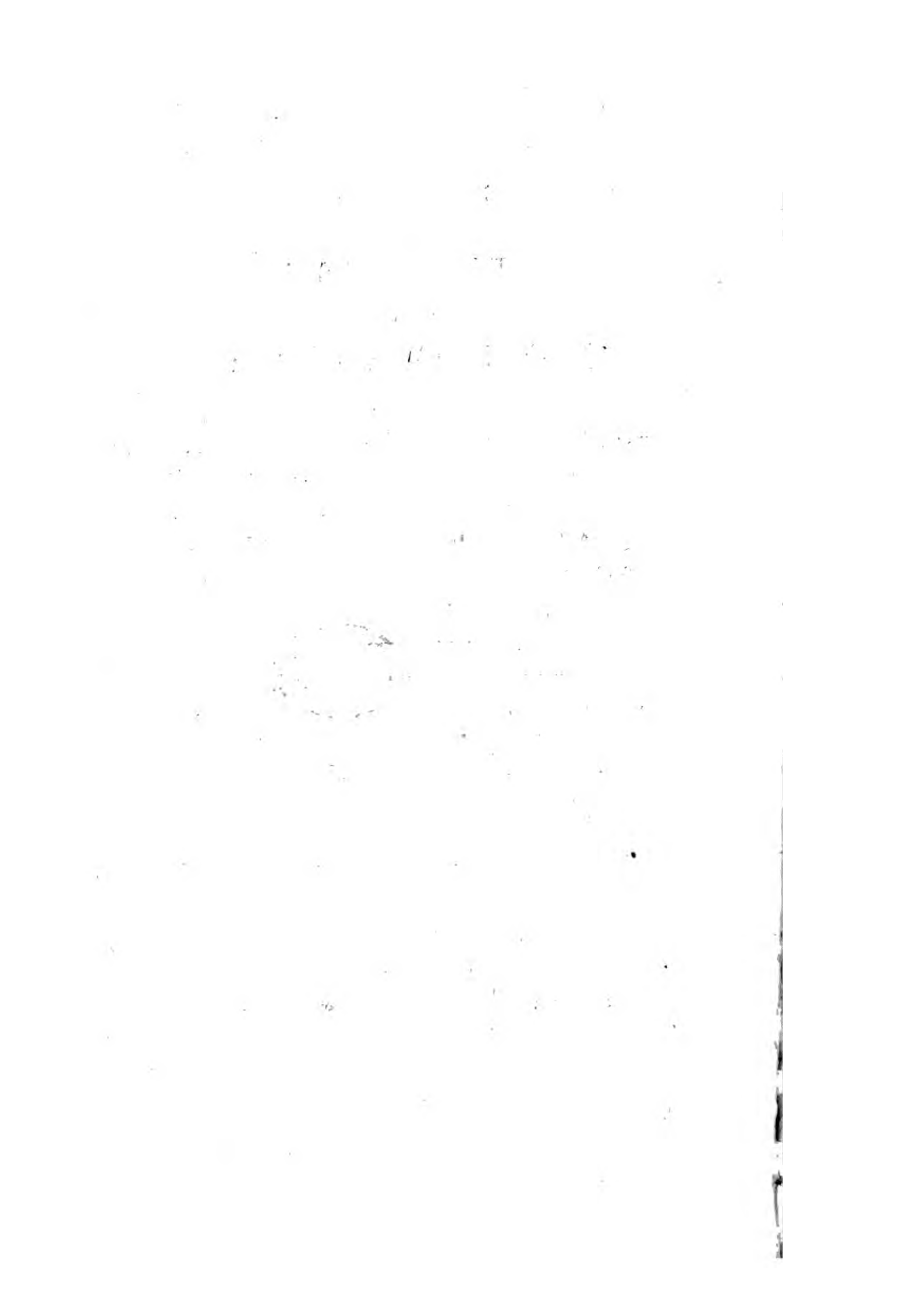
BY ELIZABETH HAMILTON,
AUTHOR OF LETTERS ON THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES OF
EDUCATION, COTTAGERS OF GLENEURNIE, &c. &c.

VOLUME I.

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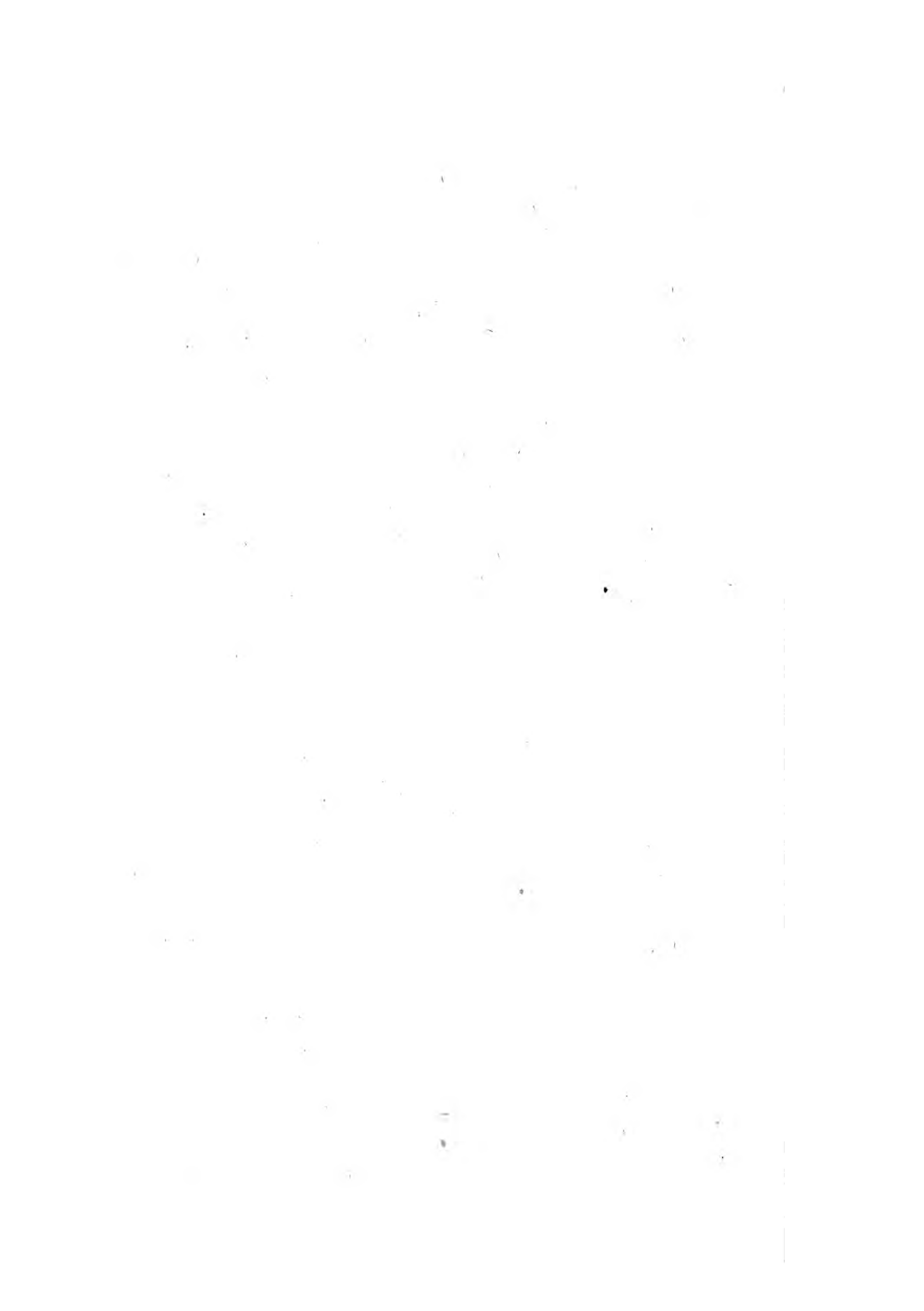
1811.



TO
WARREN HASTINGS, Esq.
LATE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF BENGAL,
UNDER WHOSE AUSPICES,
AS THE DISTINGUISHED PATRON OF
SHANSCRIT, AND PERSIAN
LITERATURE,
THE MOST IMPORTANT OF THE ORIENTAL
TRANSLATIONS HAVE HITHERTO
APPEARED.
TO HIM,
AS THE HONOURED PATRON, AND FRIEND,
OF A BELOVED, AND MUCH LAMENTED
BROTHER,
IS THIS TRIFLE,
AS A SINCERE, THOUGH HUMBLE TRIBUTE
OF ESTEEM AND GRATITUDE,
RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,
BY HIS MUCH OBLIGED,
AND OBEDIENT SERVANT,

London,
6th June, 1796.

ELIZABETH HAMILTON.



PRELIMINARY DISSERTATION.

IN the extensive plan which is carried on under the direction of the great Governor of the universe, an attentive observer will frequently perceive the most unexpected ends, accomplished by means the most improbable, and events branch out into effects, which were neither foreseen nor intended by the agents which produced them. A slight view of the consequences which have hitherto resulted from our

intercourse with the East-Indies, will sufficiently evince the truth of this assertion.

The thirst of conquest, and the desire of gain, which first drew the attention of the most powerful and enlightened nations of Europe toward the fruitful regions of Hindoostan, have been the means of opening sources of knowledge and information to the learned and the curious, and have added to the stock of the literary world, treasures, which if not so substantial, are of a nature more permanent than those which have enriched the commercial.

The many elegant translations from the different Oriental languages, with which the world has been favoured within these last few years, have not failed to attract merited attention; and the curiosity awa-

kened by these productions, concerning the people with whom they originated, has been gratified by the labours of men, who have enjoyed the first rank in literary fame.

Still, however, the writers in every branch of Oriental literature have to contend with disadvantages, too numerous and too powerful to be easily overcome. The names of the heroes of Greece and Rome, are rendered familiar, at a period of life, when the mind receives every impression with facility, and tenaciously retains the impressions it receives. With the name of every hero, the idea of his character is associated, and the whole becomes afterward so connected in the mind, with the blissful period of life at which it was first received, that the recollected scenes of juvenile felicity may frequently, even in the most accomplished minds, be found

to give a zest to the charms of the ancient authors. To those, who have not had the advantages of an early classical education, the same objections which render the translations from the Oriental writers tiresome, and uninteresting, will operate with equal force on the most beautiful passages of Homer, or Virgil; and the names of Glaucus and Sarpedon, of Anchises and Eneas, be found as hard to remember, and as difficult to pronounce, as those of Krishna and Arjoun.

Of these advantages, resulting from early prepossessions, the Persian and Hindoo writers are entirely destitute, and the difficulty of reconciling the sounds of the names of their heroes to an European ear, is so great, that it is not till after a greater degree of attention than the generality of readers will bestow, that any appropriate

idea of them can be fixed in the mind. This appears to be at least one cause of that ignorance and indifference, with regard to the affairs of the East, which is frequently to be remarked in minds, that are in every other respect highly cultivated, and accurately informed. For the sake of readers of this description, particularly those of my own sex, who may have been deterred, by reasons above hinted at, from seeking information from a more copious source, I think it necessary toward explaining many passages in the letters of the Rajah, which might otherwise be unintelligible, to give a short and simple sketch of the history of the nation to which they belonged. Should my feeble effort lead to further enquiry; should it, in the mind of any person of taste, give birth to a laudable curiosity, upon a subject where so much is to be learned, my

design will be still more fully answered, and my wishes more completely fulfilled.

That part of Asia known to Europeans by the name of Hindoostan, extends from the mountains of Thibet on the north, to the countries of the Deecan on the south. It is separated from Persia and Uzbek Tartary by deserts on the west; and on the east, is bounded by the kingdoms of Tipra, Assam, and Arracan; comprehending within its limits a variety of provinces, many of which have been famous, from the earliest ages, for the salubrity of their climate, the richness of their productions, and the fertility of their soil. Of this country, the Hindoos* are the Aborigines.

* The word *Hind*, from whence *Hindoo*, and Hindoostan, or country of the Hindoos, is of Persian origin, computed by Colonel Dow to have been derived from *Hind*, a supposed son of Ham, the son of Noah; and

Over the origin of this celebrated people, time has cast the impenetrable mantle of oblivion. Their own annals trace it back to a period so remote, so far beyond the date of European chronology, as to be rejected by European pride. The magnificent proofs of ancient grandeur, however, which are still to be found, and which have been sought for with the most successful assiduity by many of our countrymen in India, give the most irrefragable testimony of the antiquity of their empire, and seem to confirm the assertion of its

by other Orientalists, to owe its origin to the river Indus. For the sake of such as take pleasure in tracing etymologies, I insert a note written on the margin of the copy of *Gentoo Laws*, now in my possession, by one whose knowledge of the Persian language has not been excelled by any. He says, "The word *Hind* is often used by the Persian Poets to signify *Black*, or *dark-coloured*, and it is probable that *Hindoo* may mean no more than a *black man*, as our negro from *Niger*."

historians, "that its duration is not to be "paralleled by the history of any other "portion of the human race." To account for this extraordinary degree of permanency, we must direct our attention, not to the barriers formed by nature around their territories, but to those internal causes, arising from the *nature of their government, their laws, religion, moral prejudices*, and established manners.

The ancient government, throughout Hindoostan, appears to have been a federative union of the various states, each governed by its own Rajah, or Chief, but subjected, in a sort of feudal vassalage, to the sovereignty of the supreme Emperor, who was head of the whole.

. The manner in which the Rajahs of the Hindoos exercised the rights of dominion

over their people, bears so little analogy to that practised by the petty sovereigns of such European states as are placed in circumstances nearly similar, that it would be doing the greatest injustice to the amiable and benevolent character of the Hindoos, to bring them into comparison. *There* the right of sovereignty bore the mild aspect of parental authority. The prince considered the people in the light of children, whom he was appointed by Heaven to protect and cherish; and the affection of the subject for the prince, under whose auspices he enjoyed the blessings of freedom, and tranquillity, was heightened by esteem for his virtues, into the most inviolable attachment.*

* The descriptions of the Poet, may sometimes be called in to justify, and illustrate, the assertions of the Historian. In this light, the following passage from the beautiful drama of Sacontala, which was performed at

The division of the Hindoos into four *Casts*, or tribes, to each of which a particular station was allotted, and peculiar duties were assigned, might, doubtless, be another cause, which lent its aid toward the preservation of the general harmony. This division must have been made at a period too remote for investigation; and

the court of an Indian Monarch, celebrated for his love of the arts, and the encouragement he gave to polite literature in the first century before Christ, may not be unacceptable. “There sits the King of men, who has
 “felicity at command, yet shews equal respect to all:
 “here no subject, even of the lowest class, is received
 “with contempt.”——“Thou seekest not thy own pleasure, no, it is for the people thou art harassed from
 “day to day.”——“When thou wieldest the rod of justice, thou bringest to order, all those who have deviated from the paths of virtue; thou biddest contention
 “cease; thou wast formed for the preservation of thy
 “people; thy kindred possess, indeed, considerable
 “wealth; but so boundless is thy affection, that *all thy*
 “*subjects are considered by thee as thy kinsmen.*”

which seems to set conjecture at defiance. It is by the Hindoo writers wrapt in the veil of allegory; they say, that Brahma, the first person in their Triad of Deity, having received the power from the Supreme for the creation of mankind, created the Hindoos in the following manner:

From his mouth he produced the Bramin, and destined his rank to be the most eminent; allotting, for his business, the performance of the rites of *religion*, and the instruction of mankind in the path of duty.

The next tribe he created was the Khettrie, or war tribe, and this he produced from his arms, his duty being *to defend the people, to govern*, and to command; of this tribe were the ancient Rajahs.

He next produced the Bice, or Banyan, from his thighs and belly, assigning him the occupations of *agriculture*, and commerce. And lastly,

He created from his feet the tribe of Sooder, and to him allotted the duties of *subjection, labour, and obedience*.

The respective, and peculiar virtues of these different Casts, are admirably described in the following passage of the Bhagvat Geeta, an episode, from their great epic poem, translated into English by Mr Wilkins:

“ The natural duty of the Bramin is
 “ peace, self-restraint, patience, rectitude,
 “ wisdom, and learning. The natural du-
 “ ties of the Khettrie, are bravery, glory,
 “ not to flee from the field; rectitude,

“generosity, and princely conduct. The
“natural duties of the Bice are to culti-
“vate the land, to tend the cattle, and to
“buy and sell. The natural duty of the
“Sooder is servitude; a man, by following
“the duties appointed by his birth, cannot
“do wrong. *A man being contented with
“his own particular situation obtaineth per-
“fection.”*

Though all Bramins are not priests, none but such as are of this Cast can perform any offices of the priestly function. The members of every other Cast preserve for theirs the most respectful veneration, and a spirit of partiality toward them seems to breathe throughout their laws, as well as religious institutions.

Those who take pleasure in pointing the shafts of sarcasm against the order of the

'priesthood, (without considering, that invectives against any society of individuals, are only satires upon human nature), will readily assign to the Bramins themselves, the formation of laws which appear so favourable to their interests, and produce it as an additional proof of priestly cunning and ambition; but a moment's reflection on the duties, as well as privileges, of this Cast, will put an end to invidious exultation.

An abhorrence of the shedding of blood, is a principle which pervades the whole of the Hindoo religion; but the Bramins observe it in the strictest degree. They eat nothing that has life in it; their food consisting entirely of fruit and vegetables, and their only luxury being the milk of the cow, an animal for whose species they have a particular veneration. Not only every

act of hostility, but even every method of defence, is to them strictly prohibited; submitting to violence with unresisting patience and humility, they leave it to God, and their Rajahs, to avenge whatever injuries they may sustain.

The separation of the different Casts from each other, is absolute and irreversible; it forms the fundamental principle of their laws, and the slightest breach of it never fails to incur universal reprobation.

Thus, those sources of disquiet, which have held most of the empires of the earth in a state of perpetual agitation, were unknown to the peaceful children of Brahma. The turbulence of ambition, the emulations of envy, and the murmurs of discontent, were equally unknown to a people, where each individual, following the occupation,

and walking in the steps of his fathers, considered it as his primary duty to keep in the situation that he firmly believed to have been marked out for him by the hand of Providence.

In the spirit of the religion of the Hindoos, a still more efficient cause of the durability of their state presents itself to our view. Original in its nature, and absolute in its decrees, its precepts induce a total seclusion from the rest of mankind. Far, however, from disturbing those who are of a different faith, by endeavours to convert them, it does not even admit of proselytes to its own. Though tenacious of their own doctrines, in a degree that is unexampled in the history of any other religion, the most fervent zeal in the most pious Hindoos, leads them neither to hate, nor despise, nor pity such as are of a dif-

ferent belief, nor does it suffer them to consider others as less favoured by the Almighty than themselves. This spirit of unbounded toleration proceeded in a natural course from the sublime and exalted notions of the Deity taught by the Bra- mins, and every where to be met with in their writings, and which are only equal- led in that Gospel, “which brought life “and immortality to light.”

That Being whom they distinguish by the different appellations of *the Principle of Truth, the Spirit of Wisdom, the Supreme*, by whom the universe was spread abroad, whose perfections none can grasp within the limited circle of human ideas, views, they say, with equal complacency, all who are studious to perform his will throughout the immense family of creation. They deem it derogatory to the character

of this Being, to say that he prefers one religion to another; “to suppose such preference being the height of impiety, as “it would be supposing injustice toward “those whom he left ignorant of his will:” and they therefore conclude that every religion is peculiarly adapted to the country and people where it is practised.* The Bramins, who compiled the code of Gentoo laws, translated by Mr Halhed, explain their opinion upon this subject in very explicit terms: “The truly intelligent (say “they) well know that the differences and “varieties of created things are a ray of “his glorious essence, and that the contrarities of constitutions are types of “his wonderful attributes. He appointed “to each tribe its own faith, and to every “sect its own religion, and views, in each

* See Crawford's Sketches.

“ particular place, the mode of worship re-
“ spectively appointed it. Sometimes he
“ is employed, with the attendants upon
“ the Mosque, in counting the sacred
“ beads; sometimes he is in the temple
“ at the adoration of idols, the intimate
“ of the Mussulman, and the friend of
“ the Hindoo, the companion of the Chris-
“ tian, and the confidant of the Jew.”

A toleration founded upon such systematic principles, would necessarily exclude those argumentative disputations, those cruel and obstinate animosities, which, alas! under a dispensation whose very essence is benevolence, have so often disturbed the peace of society. There the acrimonious censure, the keen retort, the vehement invective against those who differed in opinion, was totally unknown. Under the banners of their religion, the

irascible passions were never ranged. "He, " my servant," says Krishna, speaking in the person of the Deity, "He, my servant, is dear to me, who is *free from en-* " *mity*, merciful, and exempt from pride " and selfishness, and who is the same in " pain and in pleasure, patient of wrongs, " contented, and whose mind is fixed on " me alone."

A further view of their religious system may be necessary, and will, perhaps, be sufficient to elucidate another characteristic feature of the Hindoos, which has forcibly struck all who have had an opportunity of observing them. The patience evinced by this mild and gentle race under the severest suffering, and the indifference with which they view the approach of death, which has been severally assigned to constitutional apathy, to their mode of

living, and to the delicate texture of their bodies, may perhaps be equally accounted for, from their firm and stedfast belief in a future state. This belief, indeed, is darkened by many errors. They believe that the human soul must be purified by suffering, and that it is not till after having undergone this expiatory discipline through a series of different bodies, that it becomes worthy of admission to eternal happiness. The evils inflicted upon the seemingly inoffensive, is attributed by them as a punishment for crimes committed in a pre-existent state. Revolting from the idea of eternal punishment, as incompatible with the justice and goodness of their Creator, they believe that the souls of the wicked, after having been for a time confined in Narekha (the infernal regions) are sent back upon the stage of life, to animate the bodies of the inferior creation,

till by various chastisements and transmigrations in these probationary states, every vicious inclination is sufficiently corrected to admit of their reception into the regions of perfection and happiness. “Animated
“ by the desire of obtaining that final
“ boon,” says a late historian,* “and fired
“ by all the glorious promises of their re-
“ ligious, the patient Hindoo smiles amid
“ unutterable misery, and exults in every
“ dire variety of voluntary torture.”

Notwithstanding the sublime notions of the Hindoo concerning deity; and, notwithstanding the strenuous assertions of the best informed Bramins, even at the present day, that their worship is only directed to one divine essence, and that the many inferior deities, whose images fill

* See Maurice's Antiquities.

their temples, are but so many emblems of his different attributes, it must be confessed, that the religion of the vulgar has degenerated into the grossest idolatry. This may be accounted for by the jealous care with which the tribe of Brahma prevented the intrusion of the multitude into these avenues to science and to truth, of which they were the peculiar guardians.* Ignorance naturally leads to superstition, and the vulgar of all ranks, fixing their attention on the external object that is presented to them, lose sight of the more remote and spiritual allusion, and soon transfer that veneration to the symbol, which was at first meant only to be excited for the thing signified. Nor is it in the religion of Hindoostan alone, that similar effects are produced by causes of a like nature.

* See introduction to the Gentoo Laws.

To enter upon the disquisition of a subject, so extensive and so intricate as that of Hindoo Mythology, would be to wander far from the purpose of the present introduction: such an idea of it, however, as may serve to elucidate some passages in the Letters of the Rajah, which allude to their divinities, may be deemed neither unnecessary, nor impertinent.

The first thing that presents itself to our view is the Triad of Deity, Brimha, Veeshna, and Seeva, under which form is represented the three great attributes of the Almighty—power to create, goodness to preserve, and justice to punish. The long list of the inferior deities, which follow, exhibit such a striking similitude in their character and offices to the ancient gods of Greece and Rome, that it has led to a conjecture of their being actually the

same, and an attempt has been made by a writer of equal taste and erudition, to prove their identity, and to trace their wanderings through the mazes of Grecian and Egyptian lore. Of the members of this numerous Pantheon, it will be sufficient for our purpose to mention the few following.

The first in rank is Ganesa, the God of Wisdom, who is thought to be the Janus of the Roman Mythology; Carticeya, the God of War, whose prowess is not inferior to that of the Mars of Rome. Seraswattee, the Goddess of Letters, and protectress of Arts and Sciences, whose insignia, the Palmyra Leaf, and the Reed or Pen, (implements used in writing) are surely more appropriate to her character, than the Shield and Lance which graced the Minerva of the Greeks. Cama, or the

God of Love, is said, by Sir William Jones, to be the twin brother of the Grecian Cupid, with richer and more lively appendages. And, indeed, if we form our notions of this fabulous divinity from the beautiful ode addressed to him, by an ancient Hindoo bard, we must confess his superiority to be very evident.* And, lastly, Surraya, or the God of Day, who, in his chariot, drawn by seven green

* See the beautiful hymn to Camdeo, by Sir William Jones. In his introduction to that charming poem, Sir William observes, that the "God to whom it is addressed appears the same with the Grecian *Eros* and the Roman *Cupido*; but the *Indian* description of his person and arms, his family, attendants, and attributes, has new and peculiar beauties. His bow of sugar cane or flowers, with a string of bees, and his *five* arrows, each pointed with an *Indian* blossom of a heating quality, are allegories equally new and beautiful."

In allusion to these peculiar insignia of the Hindoo God, are the following appropriate and beautiful lines :

horses, bears so near a resemblance to Apollo, that it is impossible not to recognise them as the same.

These will serve to give the reader some idea of the numerous divinities whose images are worshipped in the temples of the Hindoos, and to whose honour festi-

“ God of the flow’ry shafts, and flow’ry bow,
 Delight of all above and all below !
 Thy lov’d companion, constant from his birth,
 In heav’n clyp’d *Bessent*, and gay *Spring* on earth,
 Weaves thy green robe and flaunting bow’rs,
 And from thy clouds draws balmy show’rs,
 He with fresh arrows fills thy quiver,
 (Sweet the gift, and sweet the giver!)
 And bids the many-plumed warbling throng
 Burst the pent blossoms with their song.

He bends the luscious cane, and twists the string
 With bees, how sweet ! but ah, how keen their sting !
 He with five flow’rets tips the ruthless darts,
 Which through five senses pierce enraptur’d hearts.”

vals are celebrated, and votive offerings of fruits and flowers are presented.

The peculiar construction of the Hindoo government, and the precepts of Hindoo faith, though admirably calculated for the preservation of their empire in happiness and tranquillity, were not so favourable to the cultivation of the mind, and to its advancement in the paths of useful knowledge.

To expand the faculties of the human soul, the passions must be called into action, nor can any of these be laid under such restraint, as dooms them to lie for ever dormant, without injuring the powers of the mind.

In the struggle of contending interests, though peace is sometimes lost, intellectual

energy is roused; and while the strife of emulation, and the restlessness of ambition, disturb the quiet of society, they produce, in their collision, the genius that adorns it. It is accordingly pronounced, by one who must be allowed competent to the decision, that “reason and taste are the grand prerogatives of European minds, while the Asiatics have soared to loftier heights in the sphere of imagination.”*

But, notwithstanding all the disadvantages under which they laboured, the many monuments that yet remain of their former splendour, the specimens of their literature, and the productions of their manufacturers, sufficiently evince their advancement in the sciences which dignify life, as well as in the arts that ornament it.

* See Asiatic Researches, vol. i.

The Bramins, to whom the cultivation of science was exclusively committed, seem to have made no contemptible use of their high privilege. In astronomy, they are allowed to have excelled; many works of their ancient writers on metaphysics, and ethics, have already come to our knowledge; and, surely, no lover of poetry can peruse the specimens of that divine art, which have been presented to the public in an English dress, without feeling a desire to be more intimately acquainted with the productions of the Hindoo bards.

The degree of knowledge we already possess, concerning the antiquities of Hindoostan, has not been attained without efforts of the most indefatigable assiduity. But what obstacles are sufficient to deter the spirit of literary curiosity? When sup-

ported by philosophy, and guided by taste, it seldom fails to subdue every difficulty, and to see its persevering labours crowned with success!

How much this observation has been verified, in respect to the Asiatic Society, is well known to all who have perused the volumes of their Researches. It is thus briefly described by Mr Maurice, in the Introduction to his Indian Antiquities. “The buried tablet has been dug from
“the bowels of the earth; the fallen, and
“mouldering pillar has been reared; coins
“and medals, struck in commemoration of
“grand and important events, have been
“recovered from the sepulchral darkness
“of two thousand years; and the obsolete
“characters, engraved on their superficies,
“have, with immense toil, been decypher-
“ed and explained.”

In the contemplation of these scientific labours, the Governor-General, under whose auspices they were commenced, will have the deserved meed of grateful acknowledgment from every candid and philosophic mind ; for although he declined complying with the wishes of the members, who were all solicitous to see him at the head of their Society, he was eminently instrumental in promoting its success ; and in this, as in every other instance, he stood forth the steady friend, the liberal patron, and zealous promoter, of useful knowledge.

How much the world has been indebted to the learned gentleman who was nominated to the Presidentship of the Society, is too well known to require animadversion. Long and deeply will his loss be

deplored by every lover of literature, and friend to virtue.

A few of the original members of the Asiatic Society,* still continue to pursue the great object of their undertaking with unremitting ardour, and undiminished success. Of the rest, some have returned to the bosom of their families, and native country, not enriched by the plunder, and

* The names of the original members of the Asiatic Society were as follows:

Sir William Jones, Knt. President; Sir Robert Chambers, Knt.; David Anderson, James Anderson, Francis Balfour, George Hilario Barlow, John Bristow, Ralph Broome, Reuben Barrow, Esqrs.; General John Carnac; William Chambers, Charles Chapman, Burnots Crisp, Charles Croftes, Jonathan Dunken, Esqrs.; Major William Davy; Jonathan Duncan, Francis Fowke, Francis Gladwin, Thomas Graham, Charles Hamilton, Thomas Law, John David Paterson, Jonathan Scot, Henry Vansittart, and Charles Wilkins, Esqrs.

splendid by the beggary and massacre of their fellow-creatures, as has been represented in the malevolent and illiberal harangues of indiscriminating obloquy, but possessed of those virtues which ennoble human nature, and that cultivation of mind and talents, which dignify the enjoyment of retirement. Others of that Society, equally honoured, and equally estimable, are, alas, no more! The generous esteem, the cordial friendship, the warm admiration which accompanied them through life, has not been extinguished in the silent grave; it lives, and will long live, in the hearts of many, calling forth the tear of tender recollection, and of unextinguished, though, alas! unavailing sorrow.

The reader of sensibility will, it is hoped, pardon a digression, into which

the writer has been betrayed, by feelings of which they know the power and influence, and from which she hastily returns, to remark, that the happiness enjoyed by the Hindoos, under the mild and auspicious government of their native princes, and preserved, without any material interruption, through such a mighty period of revolving time, as staggers the belief of the ever-fluctuating nations of Europe, was at length doomed to see its overthrow effected, by the restless fury of fanatic zeal.

The impostor of Mecca had established, as one of the principles of his doctrine, the merit of extending it, either by persuasion, or the sword, to all parts of the earth. How steadily this injunction was adhered to by his followers, and with what success it was pursued, is well known to

all who are in the least conversant in history.

The same overwhelming torrent, which had inundated the greater part of Africa, burst its way into the very heart of Europe, and covered many kingdoms of Asia with unbounded desolation; directed its baleful course to the flourishing provinces of Hindoostan. Here these fierce and hardy adventurers, whose only improvement had been in the science of destruction, who added the fury of fanaticism to the ravages of war, found the great end of their conquests opposed, by obstacles, which neither the ardour of their persevering zeal, nor savage barbarity could surmount. Multitudes were sacrificed by the cruel hand of religious persecution, and whole countries were deluged in blood, in the vain hope, that by the destruction of

a part, the remainder might be persuaded, or terrified, into the profession of Mahomedanism; but all these sanguinary efforts were ineffectual; and at length being fully convinced, that though they might extirpate, they could never hope to convert, any number of the Hindoos, they relinquished the impracticable idea with which they had entered upon their career of conquest, and contented themselves with the acquirement of the civil dominion and almost universal empire of Hindoostan.

In the provinces where the Mussulman jurisdiction was fully established, Mussulman courts of justice were erected. The laws which the Hindoos had for numberless ages been accustomed to revere, as of divine authority, were set aside, and all causes judged and decided by the standard of Mussulman jurisprudence; an evil which

appeared to the unhappy Hindoo more formidable than the extortions of avarice, or the devastations of cruelty.* Nor was the effect of these latter passions unfelt; the peculiar punishment of forfeiting their Cast, which is attached by their law to the most temporary and seemingly trivial deviation from its precepts, and which involves in it the dreadful consequences of irremediable alienation, and irreversible proscription; was converted by their Mahomedan rulers into a lucrative source of oppression. Superstition combined with avarice to invent the means of inflicting this dreadful chastisement, and fines, without mercy, were exacted by those bigotted and venal judges.

By the same merciless conquerors, their commerce was impeded by every clog which

* See Scrofton's Hindoostan.

avaricious and unfeeling power could invent to obstruct it. Neither the mild and tolerating spirit of the religion of the Hindoos, nor the gentle and inoffensive manners of its votaries, were sufficient to protect them from the intolerant zeal and brutal antipathy of their Mahomedan invaders. In the effusions of their barbarous enthusiasm, the temples of the Hindoos, ornamented with the most curious sculpture, and decorated with all the ingenuity and skill for which they were celebrated, were utterly demolished, and the monuments of their ancient splendour every where destroyed.

For the support of the Mogul nobles, assignments were granted on the lands of the different provinces, which were levied by these military lords in person, who, haughty and voluptuous, came to collect

their pay from a timid people, whom they hated and despised with all the fervour of bigotry and ignorance.

To enumerate the multifarious load of oppression under which the unhappy Hindoos were doomed to groan, would be a tedious and ungrateful task. A generous mind cannot take pleasure in contemplating the picture of human misery, and human crime, though drawn by the correct hand of truth: let it then suffice to say, that the whole system of Mogul government, toward their conquered provinces, was such, as could never fail to shock an European mind.

Hard, however, as was the fate of the poor Hindoos under their Mogul Sovereigns, even in the most flourishing state of their empire; when that empire moul-

dered to decay, and the power of one despot was overthrown, to make way for the uncontrolled licentiousness of numberless petty tyrants, it became yet more truly deplorable.*

The vigorous administration of a long line of able princes, had alone, for ages, preserved this vast, but heterogeneous and ill-constructed fabric from dissolution; and when, according to the unavoidable consequences of hereditary despotism, the reins of government were transmitted into weak and feeble hands, it fell rapidly to ruin. To the wretched successor of the imperial throne, the miserable representative of the house of Timur, little now remains, but an universally acknowledged title to royalty, declared by inefficacious expressions of

* See Rohilla History.

loyalty and attachment; while those, who by bold usurpation, successful rebellion, or insidious fraud, possessed themselves of the spoils of the ruined empire, have established in their own families the right of succession to the territories thus acquired.

In those provinces which, by a train of circumstances totally foreign to our purpose to relate, have fallen under the dominion of Great-Britain, it is to be hoped the long-suffering Hindoos have experienced a happy change. Nor can we doubt of this, when we consider, that in those provinces, the horrid modes of punishment, inflicted by the Mahommedans, have been abolished; the fetters, which restrained their commerce, have been taken off; the taxes are no longer collected by the arbitrary authority of a military chieftain, but are put upon a footing that at once secures

the revenue, and protects the subject from oppression. The banditti of the hills, which used to molest the inoffensive inhabitants by their predatory incursions, have been brought into peaceable subjection. That unrelenting persecution, which was deemed a duty by the ignorant bigotry of their Mussulman rulers, has, by the milder spirit of Christianity, been converted into the tenderest indulgence. Their ancient laws have been restored to them; a translation of them, into the Persian and English languages, has been made, and is now the guide of the courts of justice which have been established among them. Agriculture has been encouraged by the most certain of all methods—the security of property; and all these advantages have been rendered doubly valuable, by the enjoyment of a blessing equal, if not superior, to every other—the blessing of peace; a

blessing to which they had for ages been strangers.*

These salutary regulations, originating with Mr Hastings, steadily pursued by Sir John M'Pherson and Lord Cornwallis, and persevered in by the present Governor General, will diffuse the smiles of prosperity and happiness over the best provinces of Hindoostan, long after the discordant voice of party shall have been humbled in the silence of eternal rest; and the rancorous misrepresentations of envy and malevolence, as much forgotten, as the florid harangues, and turgid declamations, which conveyed them to the short-lived notice of the world.

The change which has been effected on the character, and manners of the Hin-

* Review of the British Government in India.

doos, during so many years of subjection, and so many convulsions in their political state, is not by any means so great, as such powerful causes might have been supposed to have produced.

In wandering through the desolated islands of the Archipelago, or even on the classic shores of Italy, the enlightened traveller would in vain hope to recognise, in the present inhabitants, one remaining lineament of the distinguishing characteristics of their illustrious ancestors. *There* the mouldering edifice, the fallen pillar, and the broken arch, bear, alone, their silent testimony, to the genius and refinement of the states which produced them. But in Hindoostan, the original features that marked the character of their nation, from time immemorial, are still too visible to be mistaken or overlooked. Though

they have, no doubt, lost much of their original purity and simplicity of manners, those religious prejudices which kept them in a state of perpetual separation from their conquerors, have tended to the preservation of the originality of character, and all its correspondent virtues.

In the few districts which, secured by their insignificance, or the inaccessibility of their situation, retained their independence, the original character still remains apparent. Such, till about the middle of the present century, was the fate of those whose territories were situate along the mountains of Kummaoom.

The inhabitants of this lofty boundary of the rich and fertile province of Kuttaher, continued to enjoy the blessings of

independence and security, till that province was brought under the subjection of a bold and successful Rohilla adventurer, who, establishing himself and his followers in the possession of Kuttaher, (which from thenceforth bore the name of Rohilcund) directed his arms toward the extirpation of those Rajahs, whose vicinity excited his jealousy and alarmed his pride.

He succeeded but too well in the execution of his unjust design, and did not fail to make the most tyrannical use of the victory he had obtained. Some of these chiefs he banished for ever from the long enjoyed seats of their ancestors; some he removed to the other side of the Ganges, and from the few he suffered to remain, he stipulated the payment of an

annual tribute,* and the immediate deposit of an exorbitant fine.

The Rajah Zaarmilla, who will soon be introduced to the acquaintance of the reader, appears to have been descended from one of those petty sovereigns, who were obliged to put on the galling yoke of their unfeeling conqueror. He, however, must be supposed to have been among the number who were permitted to remain on their ancient territories, while the family of his friend and correspondent Maandaara, appears to have been banished from the province, and to have taken shelter in the neighbourhood of Agra.

This short sketch, imperfect as it is, may serve to give some idea of the state

* See Rohilla History.

of Hindoostan, not only when the Letters of the Rajah, which are now to be laid before the public, were written, but antecedent to that period. Necessary, however, for the purpose of elucidation, as it may be thought by some readers, it may be censured by others, as a presumptuous effort to wander out of that narrow and contracted path, which they have allotted to the female mind.

To obviate this objection, the writer hopes it will be sufficient to give a succinct account of the motives which led her to the examination of a subject, at one time very universally talked of, but not often very thoroughly understood. From her earliest instructors, she imbibed the idea, that toward a strict performance of the several duties of life, ignorance was neither a necessary, nor an useful auxiliary,

but on the contrary, that she ought to view every new idea as an acquisition, and to seize, with avidity, every proper opportunity for making the acquirement.

In the retirement of a country life, it was from books alone that any degree of information was to be obtained ; but when these sequestered scenes were exchanged for the metropolis, opportunities for instruction, of a nature still more pleasing, were presented.

The affairs connected with the state of our dominions in India, were then the general topic of conversation. It was agreeable, from its novelty ; and she had the peculiar advantage of hearing it discussed by those, who, from local knowledge, accurate information, and unbiassed judgment, were eminently qualified to render the discussion

both interesting and instructive. The names of the most celebrated Orientalists became familiar to her ear ; a taste for the productions of their writers was acquired ; and, had it not been for a fatal event, which transformed the cheerful haunt of domestic happiness into the gloomy abode of sorrow, and changed the energy of hope into the listlessness of despondency, a competent knowledge of the language of the originals would likewise have been acquired. Time, at length, poured its balm into the wounds of affliction, and the mind, by degrees, took pleasure in reverting to subjects which were interwoven with the ideas of past felicity. The letters of the Rajah were sought for, and the employment they afforded was found so salutary in beguiling the hours of solitude, and soothing the pain of thought, that the study of them was resumed as an useful relaxation, and, being

brought to a conclusion, they are now presented to the world, whose decision upon their merit, is looked forward to with timid hope, and determined resignation.

IT has been justly complained, that the different orthography adopted by the Oriental translators is a source of much perplexity to the English reader; but, from the variety of opinions that prevail upon the subject, it is an evil which cannot easily be remedied. Instead of the double vowels *ee* and *oo*, used by Mr Wilkins, and frequently by Mr Halhed, Sir William Jones substitutes *i* and *u*; and instead of the *K*, made use of by the former Gentleman, he uses the letter *C*. From the different modes of pronunciation among the natives in the different provinces, another difficulty has arisen. It is from that cause that we frequently find the letter *B* a substitute for *V*, as *Beena* for *Veena*, &c.

IN the following Glossary, most of the Oriental words that occur in the Letters of the Rajah will be found.

GLOSSARY.

ARJOON, or **ARUN**. The dawn. See **SURRAYA**.

AVATORS. Descents of the Deity in his character of Preserver. Ten of these appearances of the Divinity

GLOSSARY.

are mentioned by the Hindoos, nine of which have already taken place; the tenth Avator we are told is yet to come, and is expected to appear mounted (like the crowned conqueror in the Apocalypse) on a white horse, with a cimetar, blazing like a comet, to cut down all incorrigible offenders.—*Asiatic Researches*.

BRAHMA. The creating power.

BIBBY. Lady.

CARTICEYA. The God of War.

DEWTAH. The Divinity to whom worship is offered.

DEVAS, or DAIVERS. The Hindoos suppose the universe to be divided into fourteen regions, or spheres, of which six are below, and seven are above this of the earth; next beyond the vault of the visible heavens is the first Paradise. The proper inhabitants of this region are called Devas or Daivers; they may be considered as Demi-Gods, of whom Endra or Indra is the chief.

FAKEER, or FAQUIR. An order of religious recluses.

GANESA. In many parts of Hindoostan every temple has the image of Ganesa (the God of Wisdom) placed over its gate; and the door of every dwelling-house is superscribed with his name.

GLOSSARY.

HIRCARRAH. A messenger. A spy.

KRISHNA. One of the Avators. His adventures are celebrated in the epic poem called the Mahabbaret. He is considered by Sir William Jones as the Apollo of the Hindoos.

KHANSAMAN. Land, or house-steward.

LACKSHMI, or LACSHMI. The consort of Veeshnú. She, like the other Hindoo Goddesses, is distinguished by a variety of names; as Lackshmi, she is the Goddess of Fortune: as Sree, the Goddess of Plenty, or Hindoo Ceres.

MAYA. Explained by some Hindoo scholars to be "*the first inclination of the Godhead to diversify himself by creating worlds.*" "But the word Maya, or "Delusion, has a more subtle and recondite sense in the "Védánta Philosophy, where it signifies the system of "*perceptions.*"—*See Asiatic Researches.*

MAHABBARET. An epic poem in the Shanscrit language, of great antiquity. The Bhagvat Geeta, an episode from this poem, has been translated into English by Mr Wilkins.

PUNDIT, or PUNDEET. A learned Bramin.

POOJAH. The performance of worship to the Gods.

GLOSSARY.

RYOTS. Hindoo labourers, or peasants.

RAMOZIN. The Mussulman Lent, or great fast, observed for the period of 30 days.

RIGYAJUHSAMAT'HARVA. A compound word denoting the four immortal Vedas, namely, the Rig-veda, the Yajur-veda, the Sama-veda, and the Atharva-veda.

SERRESWATTEE or SERESWATI. The Patroness of Science and Genius.

SHASTER. Literally a book. The Scripture of the Hindoos is, for pre-eminence, called *the Shaster*.

SANC'HA. An ancient Hindoo poet.

SURRAYA, or SURYA. The God of Light, or Orb of the Sun personified. The Sect who pay particular adoration to this Divinity are called Sauras. He has a multitude of names, and among them twelve epithets or titles which denote his distinct powers in each of the twelve months. The Indian poets, and painters, describe his car as drawn by seven green horses, preceded by Arun, or Arjoon, the dawn, who is denominated his charioteer.

SANASSEE. A Hindoo devotee.

SAIB. Gentleman. Persons of estimation.

VAIDYA. The tribe who practise physic. Physicians.

VARUNA. The genius of the sea, and wind.

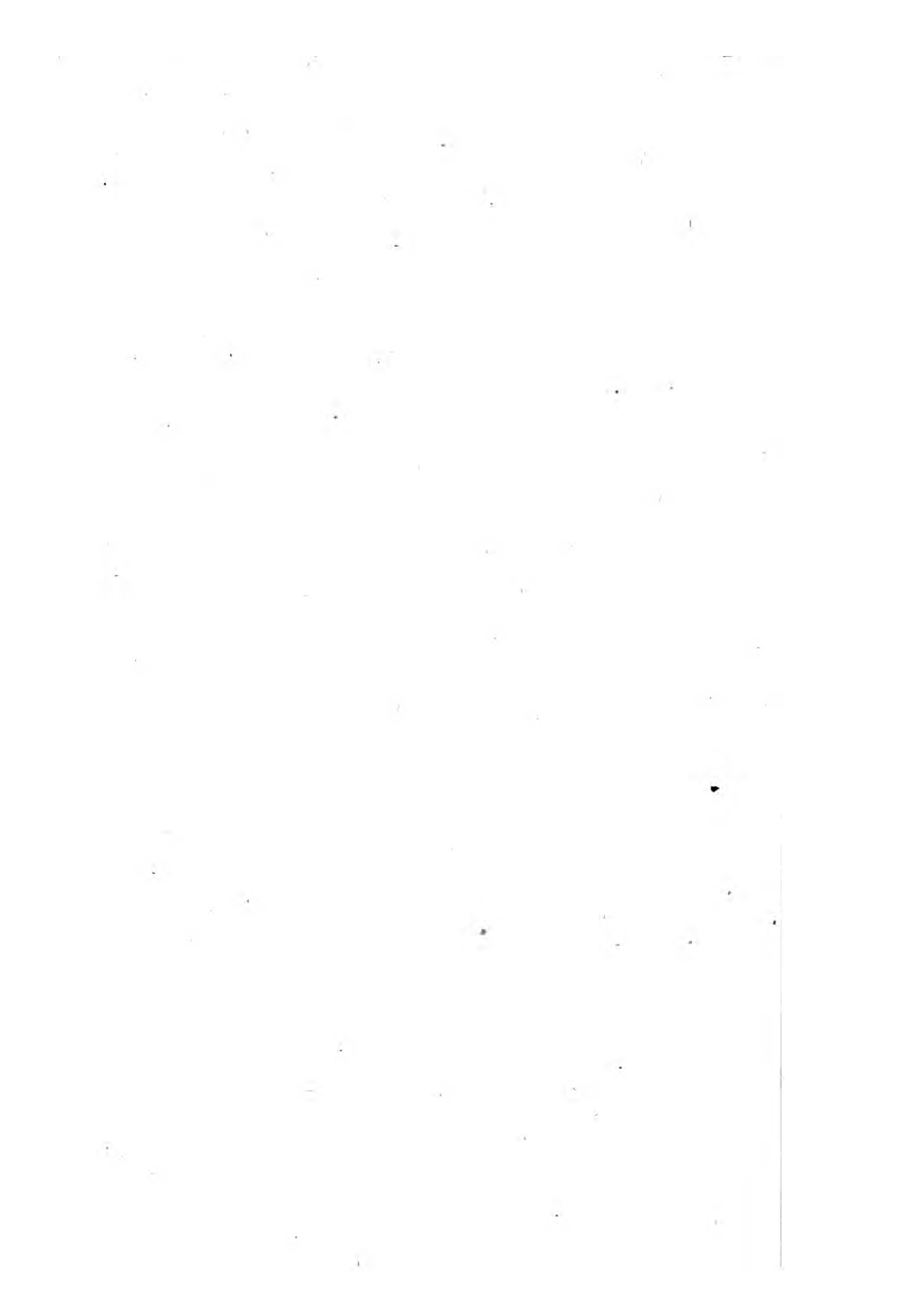
GLOSSARY.

VEDAS, or BEIDS. The sacred books of the Hindoos.

VEESHNU. The preserving Power.

VEENA, or BEENA, or BEEN. A musical instrument, of the Guittar kind.

ZIMEENDAR. A Landholder.



LETTERS
OF A
HINDOO RAJAH.

LETTER I.

*Zaarmilla, Rajah of Almora, to Kisheen
Neeay Maandaara, Zimeendar of Cum-
lore, in Rohilcund.*

PRAISE to Ganesa ! May the benign influence of the God of Wisdom,* beaming on the breast of Maandaara, dispel those clouds of wrath which have been engen-

* The God of Wisdom, a customary introduction to the writings of the Hindoos. From several expressions made use of by the Rajah in the course of his corres-

dered by mistake, and poured forth in the whirlwind of impetuosity.

I might justly expostulate upon the harshness of thy expressions; but I call to mind the goodness of thy heart, and they are effaced from my memory. We shrink from the fury of the King of Rivers, when his terror-striking voice threatens destruction to the surrounding world; but when his silver waves return to the peaceful channel allotted to them by the adored Veeshnu, we forget our terrors, and contemplate with rapture the majestic grandeur of the sacred stream who rolls his blessings to a thousand nations. And who would not prefer the casual fury of the mighty Ganges to the apathetic dulness of the never moving pool?

pondence, he appears to have been an adherent of the sect called in the northern parts of India *Veeshnûbukt*, or Adorers of *Veeshnû*, the preserving power.

The Angel of Truth, whose dwelling is with Brahma, be my witness, that I have never been unmindful of the vows of friendship we so solemnly exchanged over the still warm ashes of the venerable Pundit, the guide and the instructor of our tender years. Twice, in performance of that vow, have I essayed to send the promised information, and twice have my intentions been frustrated.

No sooner had the auspicious arms of the sons of mercy opened the long-obstructed channels of conveyance, and checked the fury of the Afgan Khans, who have so long oppressed our unhappy country,*

* " On the 22d day of April, 1774, was fought between the armies of the visier, assisted by the English, and the troops of Hafiz Rhamut, the Rohilla Chief, the decisive battle of Cutterah; in which the complete victory obtained by the former at once annihilated the power, and decided the fate, of the Afgan adventurers.

than I dispatched a messenger to thee, with a full account of public affairs, and of all the incidents that have occurred to me in my retirement. Two months ago I learned that this messenger was drowned in his attempts to pass the Jumna. Again I wrote the same voluminous detail, and sent it by the hands of an Hircarrah, employed in the English camp, and who was sent from thence with dispatches to Agra, his native city. This messenger, more unfortunate than the other, was seized and cut in pieces, by a band of brutal Afgans. Hoping that this account will fully exculpate me from the charge of neglect, and

Wherever the fate of the Rohillas became known (says the historian of their short lived empire) the Hindoo Zimeendars (each of whom is possessed of a strong-hold attaching to the chief village of his district) shut their forts, and, refusing to their late masters protection, plundered without distinction all whom they found flying toward the hills."

leaving it to the shrill voice of fame to acquaint thee with the public transactions of this eventful period, I shall recapitulate such parts of my two epistles as regarded myself alone, and, in conformity to the promises that have passed between us, shall lay open to you not only the actions of my life, but the very thoughts of my heart.

Three days after that in which the blood of the Khans had stained the plains of Cutterah,* word was brought me by the Zimeendar of Lolldong, that our late oppressors were flying on the wings of despair to the mountains of Cummow. He conjured me, by all that we had suffered from the cruelty of Allee Mohamed, and the tyranny of his successors, not to give passage to the fugitives; but, by arming my Ryots, to disappoint their hopes of safe-

* History of the Rohilla Afgans, page 241,

ty, and turn them back upon the swords of their enemies. I returned for answer, that " I gave praise to Veeshnu, who had avenged the wrongs of the Hindoos, but that I had never learned to lift my hand against a fallen foe." I then issued strict orders to all my Ryots to keep within their dwellings, and having performed the accustomed Poojah,* betook myself to rest.

Reflections upon the vicissitudes of fortune agitated my soul. Sleep forsook my eyelids; and, while the earth was yet clothed in the robes of darkness, I went forth with a few attendants, in hopes that the temperate air, and placid stillness of the night, would tranquillize my mind. With astonishment I perceived the eastern horizon already tinged by the flame colour-

* Worship.

ed charioteer of Surraya.* I hastened to ascend the hill, that I might be ready to pay my devotions at the first appearance of the glorious orb, the sacred emblem of the life-giving spirit of the Eternal! I reached the summit of the hill, but, Powers of Mercy! what a sight then presented itself to my view? The vast jungle extending over the northern side of Cumlore was in a blaze of fire. The reflection of the mighty conflagration illuminated the heavens, while sounds more dreadful than had ever pierced my ears, undulated through the fire-fraught air. The shrieks of the affrighted Afgans, the shouts of the Hindoos, who had contrived this method to obstruct their flight, the growling of the tigers, and yelling of the other beasts of

* Arjoun, or the dawn; who is expressively represented in Hindoo sculpture by the upper part only of a man, the rest of his person being supposed not yet emerged from darkness.

prey, who had been disturbed in their dens, the crackling of the flames, and the bright glare of the still spreading fire, formed altogether an unspeakable combination of horrors.

Many of the wretched fugitives passed the place where I stood; no longer the proud and haughty lords, at whose frown the Rajahs of the earth were wont to tremble: terror now sat upon their humbled foreheads, and despair seemed the leader of their steps. While I contemplated their present calamity, the remembrance of their former tyranny passed into the bosom of oblivion.

A young man appeared, the blood still streaming from his wounds; while on his back he bore his aged father. In vain did the old man entreat this dutiful son to leave him to his fate; he still proceeded, with tottering steps, to convey him he

knew not whither. "Surely," said I, "the actions of this old man must have been meritorious in the sight of Heaven, that he should have been rewarded with such a son." I looked on the old warrior, and called to mind the grey hairs of my father.

I stopped the fugitives, who, seeing my dress, looked on me without hope, and prepared themselves to receive the stroke of death. Whatever are your offences, said I to the son, your filial piety has in my eyes made atonement: turn, therefore, to the shelter of my fortress, where you may remain in safety till times of peace. They expressed their thankfulness, and with them I retraced the road to my house. At the foot of the hill I heard a groan, which I perceived to proceed from under the branches of a tree that had lately fallen. I ordered my servants to search for the person who uttered it, and to my astonishment saw one in the dress of an

English officer; he appeared to suffer the anguish of excessive pain, and, though borne by the servants with all possible care, before we could reach the house, the invisible spirit seemed about to forsake the noble dwelling that had been allotted to it. On examination, we found that his leg and many of his ribs were fractured. While I was in despair about this apparently irremediable misfortune, the old Afgan addressed himself to me, and professing his skill in the art of surgery, told me that he thought he could effect a cure. He accordingly applied such remedies as he deemed proper, and with such success that the stranger soon obtained some degree of relief. He no sooner lifted his eyes upon me, than calling to mind the English that had been taught us, by the Vaidya Beass, I held out to him the hand of friendship, saying, "how do?" His eyes glistened with pleasure, and from that moment our hearts were united by the seal of friendship.

When the tyrant pain had a little loosened the fetters of her power, he spoke to me in the Persian language; of which, as well as the Arabic and the different dialects of Hindostan, he was *perfect master*. His conversation was like the soft dew of the morning, when it falls upon the valley of roses; it at once refreshed and purified the soul. His knowledge, in comparison of that of the most learned among the Pundits of the present age, was like the mountains of Cummow compared to the nest of the ant. The powers of his mind were deep and extensive as the wave of the mighty Ganges. His heart was the seat of virtue, and truth reposed in his bosom.

He had set out many months before, from Calcutta, with an intention of traveling through the northern parts of Hindostan, in order to trace the antiquities of the most ancient of nations. He had proceeded into Kuttaher, when a band of Af,

gans, headed by Daunda Adoola, who had been lately dismissed from the service of Hafiz Rhamut, took him prisoner. They confined him in a strong hold, on the banks of the Gurra; and on the approach of the combined armies of the English and Sujah Dowla, they left him exposed to the miseries of famine; but when obliged to fly to the woods of Cummow, they forced him to accompany their flight, in hopes that he might be the means of procuring them terms with the English, whose honour they knew to be equal to their valour.

On their rout to Cummow they were discovered by the Ryots of Raey Bandor, who, by the orders of their master, set fire to the wood in which they lay concealed; attempting, by this act of cruelty, meanly to avenge on these poor fugitives the death of his kindred, and the loss of his Zimeendary. Captain Percy, for this was the name of my amiable guest, fled with the

rest; and being overpowered by fatigue, and alarmed by the yells of the tiger, had resolved to climb a tree for safety, and there to remain until he could put himself under the protection of a Hindoo. The tree he attempted had been one left almost cut by my servants, but who had neglected to pull it down; it unfortunately gave way to the pressure, and occasioned the fatal accident I have already mentioned.

Thou knowest, O Maandaara, how my mind has ever thirsted after knowledge. Thou knowest with what ardour I have ever performed my *Poojah Seraswatee*,* and that, at an age when few young men have read the *Beids* of the *Shaster*,† I had not only studied the sacred pages, but had perused every famous writing in the *Shanscrit* language.

* *Worship to Seraswatee, the Goddess of Letters.*

† *Scripture of the Hindoos.*

The acquisition of the Persic tongue opened to me a door of knowledge which I was not slow to enter. History, for some time, became my favourite study. But what did the history of states and empires present to my view? Alas! what, but the weakness and the guilt of mankind? I beheld the few, whom fortune had unhappily placed in view of the giddy eminences of life, having put the reins of ambition into the bloody hand of cruelty, lash through torrents of perfidy and slaughter, till, perhaps, overthrown in their career, they were trampled on by others who were running the same guilty race: or if they survived to reach the goal they aimed at, living but to breathe the air of disappointment, and to experience the thousand miseries attending that elevation which they had vainly looked to as the summit of felicity.

Such is the history of the few, whose guilty passions and atrocious deeds have

raised them to *renown*, and to whom the stupid multitude, the willing instruments of their ambition, the prey of their avarice, and the sport of their pride, have given the appellation of *heroes*.

To the great body of the people I never could perceive that it made any difference who it was that held the scorpion whip of oppression, as, into whatever hand it was by them conveyed, they were equally certain of feeling the severity of its sting.

Meditating on these things, the deep sigh of despondency has burst from my heart. Can it be, said I to myself, that the omnipotent and eternal Ruler of the universe should create such multitudes for no other purpose but to swell the triumphs of a fellow mortal, whose glory rises in proportion to the misery he inflicts upon the human race? Surely, by what I learn from the actions of the princes of the earth,

virtue is a shadow, and the love of it, which I have heretofore cherished in my breast, is nothing but the illusive phantom of a dream!

By conversing with my English guest I got a different view of human nature. Through the medium of the Persic literature, it appeared universally darkened by depravity. In the history of Europe it assumed a milder form. In Europe, man has not always, as in Asia, been degraded by slavery, or corrupted by the possession of despotic power. Whole nations have *there* acknowledged the rights of human nature, and, while they did so, have attained to the summit of true glory. The Romans, whom the Persian* writers represent as the lawless invaders, and fearless conquerors of the world; and the Greeks, whom they

* See Richardson's introduction to the Persian Dictionary.

load with every opprobrium, were in fact nations of heroes. Spurning the chain of slavery, they wisely thought that human nature was too imperfect to be intrusted with unlimited authority. While they performed Poojah to the Goddess of Liberty, their hearts were enlarged by the possession of every virtue. She taught them the art of victory; strengthened their nerves in the day of battle; and, when they returned from the field of conquest, she gave sweetness to the banquets of simplicity, and rendered poverty honourable by her smiles.

At length, Wealth and Luxury, the enemies of the Goddess, entered their dominions, and enticed the people from the worship of Liberty; who, offended by their infidelity, entirely forsook their country, making Happiness and Virtue the companions of her flight. On a re-examination of the conduct of these illustrious

heroes, who, while their nation performed Poojah to Liberty, had gained the summit of fame; Percy pointed out to my view many imperfections, which, while my breast was inflamed by the first ardour of admiration, had escaped my notice. The love of liberty itself, that glorious plant, as he called it, which if properly cultivated never fails to produce the fruits of virtue, sprung not (he said) in the Grecian, or the Roman breast, from the pure soil of universal benevolence, but from the rank roots of pride and selfishness. It never, therefore, extended to embrace the human race. This perfection of virtue was unknown in the world, till taught by the religion of Christ. This last assertion of Percy's, appeared to me as a prejudice unfounded in truth. But such are ever the hasty conclusions of ignorance. I had been taught to believe, that the pure doctrine of benevolence, and mercy, was unknown to all but the favoured race of Brahma; that the Christian

faith, like that of the Mussulmans, was a narrow system of superstitious adherence to the wildest prejudices, engendering hatred, and encouraging merciless persecution against all who differed from them. Nothing can be more erroneous than this idea of Christianity. By the indulgence of my English friend I was favoured with the perusal of the Christian Shaster.* The precepts it contains, are simple, pure, and powerful; all addressed to the heart, and calculated for restoring the universal peace and happiness which has been banished from the earth, since the days of the Sottee Jogue.†

* Scriptures.

† The age of purity. The Hindoos reckon the duration of the world by four Jagues, or distinct ages. The Sottee Jogue, or age of purity, is said to have lasted 3,200,000 years, when the life of man is said to have extended to 100,000 years. The Tirtah Jogue, or age in which one third of mankind were reprobate, which

The love of liberty in a people who are taught by the fundamental precepts of their Shaster, "to do to others as they would have others do to them," rises above the narrow spirit of selfishness, and extendeth to embrace the human race! Benevolent people of England! it is their desire, that all should be partakers of the same blessings of liberty, which they themselves enjoy. It was doubtless with this glorious view, that they sent forth colonies to enlighten, and instruct, the vast regions of America. To disseminate the love of virtue and freedom, they cultivated the trans-Atlantic isles: and to rescue *our* nation from the hands of the

consisted of 2,400,000 years. The Dwaper Jogue, in which one half of the human race became depraved, endured 1,600,000 years. And the Collee Jogue, in which all mankind are corrupted, is the present era. See Halhed's Gentoo Laws.

oppressor, did this brave and generous people visit the shores of Hindostan!

You may imagine how desirous I was to become acquainted with some particulars concerning the form of government, laws, and manners, of this highly favoured nation. Provided the above particulars are *true*, it is of course to expect, that they must all be formed after the model of perfection; and such, according to my conception of the accounts of Percy, they undoubtedly are.

It having pleased Brahma to create them all of one cast, among them are no distinctions, but such as are the reward of virtue. It is not there, as in the profligate court of Delhi, where great riches, a supple adherence to the minister, and a base and venal approbation of the measures of the court, can lead to titles and distinction. No. In England, the honours of nobility

are invariably bestowed according to intrinsic merit. The titles and privileges of these heroes of the first class, descend to their children. We may well suppose what care is bestowed on the education of these young nobles, whose minds are moulded into wisdom at Universities instituted for the purpose: Where vice and folly are *alike* unknown; and where the faculties of a young man might have as *great* a chance of getting leave to rust in ignorance, as of being lost in dissipation! From these seminaries of virtue, they are called to the Senate of the nation: where they debate with all the gravity and the interest that might be expected from their early habits of serious thought, and deep investigation. The sons of the King, at an early age, take their seats in that tribunal, from whose decision there lies no appeal. As their example is supposed to animate the young nobility, it may well be imagined how wise, learned, grave, and pious,

these princely youths must be; their actions are doubtless the mirrors of decorum, and their lips the gates of wisdom!

The equality of human beings in the sight of God, being taught by their religion, it is a fundamental maxim of their policy, that no laws are binding, which do not obtain the consent of the people. All laws are therefore issued by the sanction of their representatives; every separate district, town, and community, choosing from among themselves, the persons most distinguished for *piety, wisdom, learning, and integrity*, impart to them the power of acting in the name of the whole.

About four hundred of these eminent men, each of whom, to all the requisites of a Hindoo magistrate,* unites the know-

* It is ordained, that "the magistrate shall keep in subjection to himself his *Lust, Anger, Avarice, Folly,*

ledge of a Christian philosopher, form, what is termed, the third estate.

Uninfluenced by the favour of party, uncontaminated by the base motives of avarice or ambition, they pursue, with steady steps, the path of equity, and have nothing so much at heart as the public welfare. No war can be engaged in, and no taxes imposed, but by the consent of these patriot chiefs. Judge then, my friend; how light the burden must be, that is laid on

“ *Drunkenness*, and *Pride*; he who cannot keep these
 “ passions under his own subjection, how shall he be
 “ able to nourish and instruct the people? Neither shall
 “ he be seduced by the pleasures of the chace, nor be
 “ addicted to play, nor always employed in dancing,
 “ singing, and playing on musical instruments. Nor
 “ shall he go to any place without a cause, nor dispraise
 “ any person without knowing his faults, nor shall he
 “ envy another person’s superior merit, nor shall say
 “ that such persons as are men of capacity, are men of
 “ no capacity,” &c. See Code of Gentoo Laws, page 52.

by these representatives, these brothers of the people. Never can such men as these be instrumental in sending war, with all its attendant miseries, into the nations of the earth; all of whom they are taught by their Shaster to consider as brethren. In Asia, we behold the gory monster, ever ready to stalk forth with destructive stride at the voice of ruthless tyranny; but in Europe, Princes are the friends of peace, and the fathers of their people.

Many of our Pundits have contemplated, with astonishment, the animosities that have arisen among the followers of the Arabian prophet, on account of the different interpretations given by their* Imaums to certain passages of the Koran; forgetting that the Supreme Being delighteth in

* See Preliminary Discourse of the Bramins, employed by Mr Hastings in the Pootee, or compilation of the ordinations of the Pundits.—Gentoo Laws.

variety, and that He who hath not formed any two objects in his vast creation exactly similar, and took doubtless no less care upon the formation of the human mind, perceiveth with delight the contrarieties of opinion among men. They have carried their presumption so far, that one sect hath dared to conceive hatred and ill will against another, for not viewing every dark passage in the writings of their prophet exactly in the same light! How different is the case with the Christian? The great Founder of their religion having left every man at liberty, to choose the form of worship which he finds best calculated to excite, and to express sentiments of devotion, they each attach themselves to the form most agreeable to their own minds, allowing the same liberty to others, and convinced that all are equally acceptable to the Deity, who acquiesce in his laws, and obey his commandments. In the dominions of the Mussulmans, though all sects are permitted to live,

it is one sect alone (the orthodox*) that is invested with power, or entrusted with authority. But among Christians no sect exists that would accept of the most beneficial distinctions, on terms so contrary to the spirit of their Gospel. All sects, equal in the eye of Heaven, must needs, by the wise and virtuous legislators of this happy country, be admitted into an equal enjoyment of every right, and every privilege. The priests of their religion are, as their characters are fully set forth in their Shaster, men who despise adventitious advantages of rank and fortune, who regard no distinctions in their flock, but the distinctions arising from internal worth, and intrinsic goodness; not thirsting after worldly honours; not given to luxury; strangers to avarice and pride. Having no bitterness against those who differ from them in opi-

* See the Hedaya or commentary on the Mussulman Laws.

nion ; animosity, strife, or wrath, is never heard of among these holy men, who, in the language of their Shaster, " pass through things temporal, only mindful of those which are eternal." Although my unwearyed application to the study of the English language, enables me to read a few passages in that tongue, it is to the Arabic copy of those books of the Shaster, called Gospels, to which I am indebted for the accuracy of my information.

Not presuming to lift the veil of mystery, with which some passages are enveloped (a presumption, which in a stranger would be equally unpardonable and unbecoming) I pass over whatever appears to be mysterious, with the most profound respect. But that Power, which taught me to sweep from my heart the dust of prejudice, taught me also to pay homage to excellence, wherever it might be found. In the precepts of the Christian Shaster, I be-

hold the grandeur of sublimity, and the simplicity of truth. There is one particular so novel, so peculiar, so repugnant to the universally received opinions of mankind, that it considerably excited my astonishment. In the revelation bestowed upon the Christians, women are considered in the light of rational beings! free agents! in short, as a moiety of the human species, whose souls are no less precious in the eye of the Omniscient than that of the proud lords of the creation! What can be more extraordinary?

The inferiority of women appears so established by the laws of nature, and has been so invariably inculcated, by all the legislators sent by Brahma to enlighten the eight corners of the world, that it seems altogether incontestible. It is true, that our divine laws (incomparable in wisdom!) do not, like the laws of the Mussulmans, absolutely exclude women from the participa-

tion of happiness in a future state, it being written in the Shaster, "*that a woman, who burns herself with her husband, shall live with him in paradise three crore and fifty lacks of years.*" But even in this case, it is contested by the Pundits, that her admission into Paradise depends on her husband's title to an entrance into that state of felicity. Uncertain tenor! precarious dependence! on which a poor woman commits herself to the flames! Wisely did our lawgivers ordain, that ignorance and submission should be the ornaments of women; seeing how much the privilege of inquiry might have disquieted their repose!

Christian women are more fortunate; they may enjoy heaven without the company of their husbands! Throughout the Christian Shaster, they are exalted to perfect equality with man. They are considered as occupying a station of equal dignity, in the intelligent creation; and as

being equally accountable for the use they make of the gift of reason, and the motions of conscience. What care, what pains, must we then conclude to be bestowed by Christians, on the formation of the female mind! "As the beams of the moon kindle the flowers of the Oshadi, so," says the philosopher, "doth education expand the blossoms of intelligence." Where women are destined to be under no controul but that of reason, under no restraint, save the abiding consciousness of the searching eye of Omnipotence, of what vast importance must their education appear in the eyes of the enlightened! Accordingly we find that seminaries of female instruction, called Boarding-schools, are in England universally established; where, by what I can learn, the improvement of the understanding is as successfully attended to, and every solid and useful accomplishment as fully attained, as are the severe morals of Christianity, by their bro-

thers at the university. When the females of England have completed their education in these seats of science, these nurseries of wisdom, they come forth like the mother of Krishna, the torch of reason enlightening their minds, and the staff of knowledge supporting their virtue! In that enlightened country, a wife is the friend of her husband. Motives of esteem influence the choice of both; for there, women are at liberty to choose, or to reject offers of marriage, and educated as they are, we may well suppose how wisely they will always choose! By their religion, men are prohibited from having more than one wife at a time, which at first view will doubtless appear a hardship in your eyes; but if you consider what an endless source of disquiet, the quarrels, jealousies, and strifes among our wives frequently produce, you will perhaps acknowledge, that to lessen the number is not so great a misfortune!

What I have said concerning the cultivation of the female understanding, will perhaps appear ridiculous in your eyes; but take the following proof of the veracity of my assertion. One day that I had been studying the Shaster of my English guest, I perceived, written in fair and legible characters, upon the first leaf, these words; "The parting gift of Charlotte Percy to the most beloved of brothers." I carried the book to my friend, who was still confined to his couch, and asked him if Charlotte was the name of his brother? He answered with a smile, that Charlotte was the name of his dear, and amiable sister. "Your sister!" repeated I, with astonishment;—"Can it be, that in your country a woman is permitted to touch the Shaster? or, are women taught to write? It cannot be. Such things are not proper for women." He replied, that my surprise was occasioned, by having always been accustomed to behold the sex in the degrading state of

subjection : A state which, wherever it prevails, subdues the vigour, and destroys the virtue of the human mind. Man, he observed, received from nature no passion so powerful as the love of tyranny. This, the superiority of bodily strength had enabled him to exercise over the weaker part of his species, with uncontrolled sway. In proportion as society advanced in civilization, the advantages of reason over bodily strength prevailed, and the passions received from the fetters of restraint a degree of polish, which, if it did not change their nature, rendered them less disgustingly ferocious. The wife of a Hindoo, continued he, is, from this cause, treated with more respect, and enjoys a much greater degree of liberty and happiness, than the wife of an untutored Afgan. But it is not in the nature of man, to relinquish claims so flattering to his pride ; and the innate love of the exercise of despotic authority, must have for ever kept the

female sex in a state of subjection, had not the powerful mandate of religion snapped their chains. This, the religion received by the Christians has fully accomplished: and to shew you how much it is in the power of education to improve the female mind, continued my friend, I shall translate, for your perusal, some of the letters of that sister, whose name is written in the leaf of the book you are now reading.

According to this promise, my excellent friend translated for me several pieces, both in prose and verse; presenting me at the same time with copies of the originals, that I might compare them together. By that which I have enclosed for your satisfaction, you will perceive, that the sister of Percy has not only learned to read, and write, but is in a considerable degree capable of thinking. Nursed in solitude, she in early youth took delight, to string the

pearls of poetry. I send you one of the first of these gems of fancy; which, though it boasts not the radiant brilliancy of the diamond, is pleasing as the varying opal, and soft as the lustre of the green emerald. It was written after having refused an invitation to a party of pleasure, on account of her duty to an aged uncle, who had adopted her as his daughter, and of whom she speaks, in the language of filial affection. Let it be read with candour, for it is the offspring of youth! with indulgence, for it is the tribute of gratitude!

BLEST be these rural glens, these flowery glades;
 The lov'd retreats of innocence and joy:
 Content's sweet voice is heard beneath these shades;
 Her quiet seat no wild wish dares annoy.

Dear to my heart is this sequester'd scene;
 By liberal nature deck'd in robes so gay:
 O'er all my soul she breathes her sweets serene,
 As in her walks I take delight to stray.

'Twas her sweet hand that strew'd this bank with flowers;
 She bends these osiers o'er the chrystal stream;
 She twines the woodbine round these leafy bowers;
 And turns that rose-bud to the morning's beam.

From her, sweet Goddess, here in youth, I drew
 Spirits as light as airy fancy's wing:
 'Twas here I mark'd each glowing tint she threw
 On the fair blossom of the opening spring.

And shall I leave her? leave her lov'd retreat?
 For scenes where Art her mimic power displays;
 For the false pleasures of the gay and great;
 Pride's empty boast, and Splendor's midnight blaze?

Can Pride, can Splendor's most triumphant hour,
 Give any pleasure to the breast so dear,
 So exquisite, as is the conscious power
 A venerable parent's days to cheer?

Ah! then, from thee, my guardian, and my friend,
 Let never vagrant wish presume to stray;
 But on my steps let filial love attend,
 Gently to sooth thy life's declining day.

Can I forget what to thy love I ow'd?

Forget thy goodness to my orphan state?
 Forget the boons thy tenderness bestow'd?
 Or thy unchang'd affection's early date?

When my lov'd father press'd his early bier,
 (From which, alas! nor youth, nor love could save)
 And when my widow'd mother (doom severe!)
 Victim of sorrow! sunk into the grave;

Thy care a more than father's care supplied,
 Thy breast a more than father's fondness knew:
 Led by thy hand, or cherish'd at thy side,
 My infant years in sprightly pleasures flew.

No frown from thee repress'd the harmless joy,
 No harsh reproof repell'd the lively thought;
 Pleas'd, thou couldst smile on childhood's simplest toy,
 And say, "no pleasures were so cheaply bought."

Can I forget the partner of thy cares?
 Whose kind attention form'd my early youth;
 Or with what care she watch'd my tender years;
 And in life's morning, sow'd the seeds of truth?

'Twas her instructions, pious, prudent, wise,
 Taught me the virtues that adorn our sex ;
 Its humblest duties bade me not despise,
 But rise superior to its weak defects :

Taught me to shun mean pride's malignant sneer,
 To scorn low envy's keen provoking taunt ;
 And still to turn my ever willing ear,
 To the low voice of sorrow, or of want :

Taught me on pure devotion's wings to rise
 To the unseen, supreme, eternal Power ;
 To read his works where'er I turn'd mine eyes,
 In heaven's starr'd concave, or earth's lowliest flower.

If e'er my breast with love of virtue glow'd,
 Or ardent sought the muses' hallow'd shrine,
 To thee my dawning taste its culture ow'd ;
 Each high-born sentiment, dear shade, was thine.

Oh ! if thy sainted spirit hovers near,
 With smiles benign my filial vows approve ;
 Vows like thy conduct, artless, and sincere,
 Pure as thy faith, and spotless as thy love !

Thus far did Zaarmilla write to his friend Maandaara, by the slave who perished in the swelling of the Jumna. Captain Percy had been then five months under the shadow of my roof; the skill of the Afgan had not been sufficient to join the fractured bone, so that great pain was inflicted upon him. I had often attempted to get an account of his situation transmitted to the English camp, but without success. The troops of the Afgans surrounded me, and the danger of discovering to them that an English officer was in their power, obliged me to act with the utmost circumspection. At length, in the month Assen (October) the treaty was concluded between the Khan of Rampore, and the great powers. I besought and obtained leave from Fyzoola Khan to go myself to the camp of the English, which was yet at the foot of the mountain. Captain Percy, weakened by the languor of disease, and sinking under the pressure of incessant

pain, revived at my proposal: the big tear glistened in his eye, and pressing my hand between his, "God shall bless thee, my dear Zaarmilla," cried he, "the God of heaven shall bless thee for thy kindness to me. In contemplating the approaching dissolution of my being, unshaken confidence in the mercies of my God and Saviour support my soul. Death has for me no terrors; but methinks it would brighten the dark passage that leads to it, could I again behold any of my former friends, and countrymen; their accounts would soften to my sister the tidings of an event that will pierce her soul. She knows not the goodness of Zaarmilla; and will only imagine to herself the figure of her dying brother, expiring among strangers. Could she be assured, how often my sufferings have been alleviated by the balm of sympathy, and how much the endearing sensibilities of cordial friendship have refreshed my soul, it would be a solace to her affliction."

He then wrote as much as strength would permit, to a British officer, who was his particular friend, and enclosing it in a few lines to the commander in chief, delivered it into my hands.

I pursued my journey to the foot of the mountains, attended only by a small retinue. When we reached the place of our destination, we had the mortification to find that it had been for some time abandoned by the English, who were on their march down the country. I did not hesitate to follow them: though, being unused to travel, I was overtaken by fatigue, and annoyed by the rains, which began at this time to set in with great violence.

After a tedious and disagreeable journey, I at length reached Rhamgaut, where the English army, at the request of the Visier, had for some time halted. I was received by the commander with the eye of kindness,

and recommended by him to his officers, with the voice of praise. The chief to whom Captain Percy had written, welcomed me in the warmth of friendship, and bestowed upon my conduct unmerited eulogium.

Soon as my limbs had recovered from the weariness of fatigue, this Saib, and another dear, and intimate friend of the unfortunate Percy's, who was deeply skilled in the science of medicine, purposed returning with me, in order to solace, and if possible to restore the amiable youth. The rains continued to descend; but the spirit of true friendship rises superior to every obstacle. We carried with us the good wishes of an host of friends, and, supported by hope, accomplished our journey in safety.

From the accounts I had communicated concerning the situation of our friend,

Doctor Denbeigh, the friend on whose knowledge in the healing art, his brother officers placed so much reliance, had pronounced great hopes concerning him; hopes which inspired the alacrity of cheerfulness. Alas! as the blood-stained tiger of the forest rushes on the timid fawn, who, unconscious of his presence, sports within the reach of his ferocious grasp, so doth calamity dart upon the cherished hope of mortals.

When we approached my dwelling, the Khansaman, under whose particular care I had left my friend, came out to meet us. His eyes were heavy with the tears of grief, and his whole deportment was marked by the pressure of recent sorrow. I was afraid to question him, lest his answer should bereave me of hope; but at length my tongue articulated Percy's name. Alas! my fears were just. The pure spirit had fled from its corporeal

confinement, to the boundless expansion of infinity. Three days had elapsed since the body, deserted by its celestial inhabitant, had been committed to the womb of earth: I visited the dust which covered it, and gave vent to the grief that oppressed my soul. The friends of Percy united their tears with mine: they were the pure offering of friendship flowing from hearts of sincerity.

After we had indulged the first impulses of grief, the Khansaman presented us with the papers which our friend had consigned to his care. These were, a sealed packet, directed to his sister, a letter to his English friend, with directions concerning his effects, and an epistle to me, written with the pen of affection. To me he bequeathed, as a token of his love, the little shrill-voiced monitor, whose golden tongue proclaims the lapse of time, called in English a repeating watch, his sister's

picture, together with all the manuscripts of her writing, his English Shaster, and, in short, all that was about his person when I had the happiness of receiving him under my roof. I have since perused with care the precious relicts of this amiable young man. In the leaves of his pocket-book were written many valuable remarks, some of which had evidently been deposited there but a short time before the Angel of Death arrested the hand which wrote them. Among his loose papers were several pages entitled, "Thoughts on the Prevalence of Infidelity;" in which the names of Hume, Bolingbroke, and Voltaire, frequently occur. It will oblige me if you inquire of the Immaum Yuseph Ib'n Medi for some information concerning these men; who, I make no doubt, are of the sect of Hanbal, against whose opinions the Mussulman doctors so bitterly inveigh. What makes me certain they are not Christians is, that from what Percy has said

concerning their opinions, it is evident that these unhappy men are unconscious of the precious spark of immortality which glows within their bosoms. Nay, so much are they inflated by vanity, so infatuated by the spirit of pride, as to utter words of arrogance with the tongue of presumption; saying, that men ought *not* to believe in the supreme Inheritor of eternity.

Our departed friend concludes his remarks upon these people, in the following words :

“ Ye who are so keen to disseminate the baneful principles of infidelity, did ye know what it is to watch the slow, but steady steps of death; to behold his approach in the silence of solitude, where the whispers of vanity are unheard, and the *small still* voice of conscience alone speaks audibly to the soul, ye would not, surely, be so rashly forward to dash from

the lips of a fellow mortal the cordial draught of hope, and to offer in its stead, the bitter cup of doubt, uncertainty, and despair!

“The principles of religion are so congenial to the human mind, that I am convinced they would almost always remain permanent, was it not for the adventitious prejudices, with which the pure and simple doctrines of Christianity are so entangled, by the zealous adherents of every sect and party.

“Of all my contemporaries, they have ever been the foremost to throw off the restraints of religion, who have been what is termed *most strictly educated*; but who never had any religious sentiments impressed upon their minds, distinct from the particular dogmas of their respective sects. With these dogmas their ideas of the truth of Christianity were inseparably combined;

and when they afterward came to mingle with the world, and found their prejudices untenable against the attack of argument, the force of reason, or the sneer of ridicule, the whole fabric of their faith was shaken to the foundation. Blessed be the memory of the parent who instructed me, whose care it was to impress upon my mind the strictest principles, with the most liberal opinions. In her eyes, the *mode* of worship was nothing; the spirit from which it proceeded was every thing.

“ My feelings tell me that the lamp of life is nearly extinguished. Never more shall I behold the face of a friend. No sister’s friendly hand to smooth my pillow, or to sooth my soul with the tender accents of affection. My impatience for the pleasure of seeing my friend Grey, has deprived me of the comfort I have hitherto received, from the consoling sympathy,

and unremitting kindness, of the amiable Hindoo.

“ Remote from country, friends, and all that my heart has been accustomed to hold dear;—but what, in a moment like this, could friends or country do for me? what, but to “ point the parting anguish.” I am *not* alone. No. The ever-present God is with me; and his comforts support my soul. Often, in the hour of health, have I repeated with rapture the lines of the poet; and now I am called to be an evidence of their truth.

“ Should fate command me to the farthest verge
Of the green earth, to distant barbarous climes,
Rivers unknown to song; where first the sun
Gilds Indian mountains, or his setting beam
Flames on th’ Atlantic isles; ’tis nought to me:
Since God is ever present, ever felt,
In the void waste as in the city full;
And where his spirit breathes there must be joy.

When e'en, at last, the solemn hour shall come
And wing my mystic flight to future worlds,
I cheerful will obey ; there, with new powers
Will rising wonders sing. I cannot go
Where universal love not smiles around."

Such, O ! Maandaara, was the conclusion of the life of this European. His two friends abode with me for a few days, and departed, loaded with every mark of my friendship and esteem. I was no sooner left alone, than melancholy took possession of my mind. The conversation of Captain Percy gave light to my soul ; it was at an end ; and darkness again surrounded me.

The Rajah of Lolldong, and his brother, the Zimeendar, heard of my affliction, and came to comfort me. Alas ! they were both too full of their own concerns, to take any part in the grief which filled my heart.

In the late calamities of our nation, their lands had been ravaged by the troops of the Visier. The protecting hand of the English had not been able to save their villages from the ruthless hand of the destroyer; and their Ryots were consequently unable to pay their rents. I listened to the story of their distresses with concern, and said all in my power to comfort them. A second, and a third time, they repeated the particulars of their grievances; and though they both usually spoke at once, still I listened with patience. But when I found them obstinately persist in cherishing the feelings of selfish regret, for their own particular misfortune, while the miseries of thousands, who on the same occasion had lost their all, found no entrance into their hearts, I could no longer listen to their complaints with the semblance of attention; and, perceiving that they wearied me, they departed.

In the innocent and playful vivacity of the little Zamarcanda, I have found a better substitute for intellectual enjoyment, than in the tiresome solemnity of sententious dulness. But still the soft dew of contentment sheds not its divine influence on the dwelling of Zaarmilla. My mind is tossed in the whirlwind of doubt, and bewildered in the laybrinth of conjecture: but let not Maandaara mistake the words of his friend; let him not imagine that my veneration for the Gods of my fathers can be lessened by the words of a stranger: or, that I am so far misled, as to conceive that the greatest portion of wisdom bestowed by Brahma upon any nation in the world's circumference, can bear any comparison with that which has been given in the sacred Vedas. No. I bow with reverence while I pronounce the name of the sacred volumes; and confess that in Rigyajuhshamas' Harva the immortal treasures of true knowledge are deposited.

But in what text of the Veda, Upa-Veda, Vedanga, Purana, Dherma, or Dher-sana,* is it forbidden to contemplate the operation of Maya throughout the sea-girt earth? Why should I remain in doubt as to the truth of the accounts given me by the young Christian? why should I not satisfy my mind by a farther acquaintance with his countrymen, by which alone I can discover, whether his words have been dictated by the spirit of delusion, or emanated from the heart of integrity?

If his accounts are just; if the book he has given me be *indeed* the Shaster of the Christians, I can, in that case, have no doubt of its being the guide of their practice, as well as the rule of their faith; nor help feeling an ardent desire for knowing

* The six great Shasters, in which all knowledge, divine and human, is supposed to be comprehended. See Asiatic Researches, vol. i. article 18.

more of men, whose conversation must be so full of purity, and whose lives are devoted to good works!

What I have already learned from the worthy European, whose death has caused the arrow of affliction to rankle in my bosom, so far from hurting my mind, has served but to invigorate my virtue. It is by the breath of Ganesa, that the flame of curiosity has been kindled in my bosom. And wherefore should I not indulge myself in following that path to knowledge, which the spirit that enlighteneth my understanding impelleth me to pursue? If the sun of science, which rose with radiant splendor on our eastern hemisphere, now beams its fervid rays upon the regions of the west, why should I be prevented from following its glorious course?

Thou wilt, perhaps, tell me of what I owe to my Cast, my country, and my

people. As to the first, thou knowest that the acquirement of knowledge, is not a duty confined to the race which sprung from the mouth of Brahma; and though it is necessary that every Hindoo should keep himself free from contamination, yet many holy men have found it possible to do so, in the strictest sense, even while they made their abode in the dwellings of Mahommedans, and Christians. No opportunity could offer more favourable than the present, for quitting my country, without prejudice to my own interest or that of my people. The peace which has been happily restored to us, is ensured by the faith of our deliverers: and, moreover, the wisdom, generosity, and clemency, which adorn the character of Fysoola Khan,* give the best pledge for the security of our possessions.

* See the Rohilla History.

I have, therefore, no obstacle to surmount in the accomplishment of my wishes but one. It is the disposal of Zamarcanda. Could I leave her in the possession of my friend, my mind would be at rest. And who so worthy to be the wife of Maandaara as the sister of Zaarmilla? She is yet in the tenderness of youth, but is accomplished in all that our laws permit women to learn. Her mind is pure as the lily, that bends its silver head over the transparent stream. Modesty is enshrined in her cheeks, and beauty sparkles through the deep fringe which encircles her ground-kissing eyes. The blood of a thousand Rajahs flows through her veins, and her Ayammi Shadee* shall be worthy of the love of her brother. If this

* Ayammi Shadee is the present made to a young woman by her relations, during the period of her betrothment, and which is, ever after, considered as her own property. See the Gentoo Laws.

proposal seemeth good in thine eyes, I will meet thee at Ferrochabad, in the middle of the month Phogoun,* and there thou shalt receive the virtuous maiden from the hands of thy friend.

I expect thy answer with impatience. Farewell.

* Answering to part of our February and March.

LETTER II.

*The most faithful of Friends, Kisheen Neeay
Maandaara; to the powerful and enlight-
ened Rajah, Seeta Juin Zaarmilla.*

PRAISE be to Veeshnu ! The long wished-for letter from the friend of my youth, hath kindled the fire of conflicting passions in the breast of Maandaara. The assurance of thy continued kindness lights the spark of joy ; but the intelligence of the infatuation that hath seized thy mind, envelopes my soul in the dark cloud of despair.

I perceive that thou art under the influence of enchantment, and that that false stranger hath used some charm to deceive

thy understanding. What would the spirit of thy father, what would the learned Pundit, to whose instructions we are equally indebted, what would they pronounce, could they hear that Zaarmilla thought it necessary to sojourn among infidels, and impious eaters of blood, in order to acquire knowledge? Can a race which sprung from the dust that was shaken from the feet of Brahma, and on that account beneath the Sooder, who is honoured in being permitted to touch thy sandals, a race which, though less savage than that of the Mussulmans with regard to those that bear the human form, exceed them in cruelty to all the other animated inhabitants of the earth: Can any of this race be capable of instructing the descendant of a thousand Rajahs? Impossible. From the ant thou mayest learn industry; from the dog thou mayest be instructed in faithfulness: the horse may teach thee diligence, and the elephant instruct thee in

patience, magnanimity, and wisdom; but expect not from Europeans to attain the knowledge of any virtue. How should they be learned that are but of yesterday? Their remotest annals extend but to the trifling period of a few thousand years. While enlightened, and instructed in mystery, we can trace the history of revolving ages through the amazing period of the four Jogues.

I am not, however, surprised that you should be the dupe of their enchantments. I know how far the evil geni have assisted them in that art: of their proficiency in it I had myself a very convincing proof.

When the English Saib, to whom Rursha Bedwan was Mounshi, abode at Agra, he took pleasure in astonishing those who went to visit him, with a display of his magical skill. Among several other tricks, he made the whole company, consisting of

more than twenty persons, lay hold of each other's hands, and form a circle, and then by turning the handle of a little instrument, composed only of metal and glass, but which, I suppose, must have contained the evil spirits obedient to his command; he all at once caused such a sensation to pass through the arms of the company, as if a sudden stroke had broken the bone, which was not, however, on examination, found to be in the least injured. As all felt it precisely at the same moment, it was impossible that he could have touched each of us, and therefore it is evident that it could be nothing but magic that could produce so extraordinary an effect. At another time, he shut out the piercing light of day, which has always been unfavourable to such practices, and made us behold armies of men, and elephants, and horses, pass before us on the wall. When they disappeared, they were succeeded by a raging sea, vomiting fire, and foaming with all

the appearance of a tremendous storm. Ships rolled upon the bosom of the deep; and men, who appeared wild with distress, and panting in the agony of terror, were exerting themselves to save their lives, and preserve their ships from the pointed rocks which environed them. This sight of horror drew tears from our eyes; and we burst into exclamations of sorrow. When lo! in a moment, the sun being admitted into the apartment, the scene vanished, and we saw nothing but the hangings which formerly adorned the wall.

Would the son of Coashhind forsake the land of his fathers, and wander to regions which the glorious luminary of heaven scarcely deigns to irradiate with his golden beams, to learn tricks like these? Surely there are jugglers enough in Hindoostan, who would, for a small reward, instruct him in the mysteries of the magic art; and as

the devils they employ are of our own country, they must be of a less pernicious nature than those of strangers.

So far from being guided by wisdom, the laws by which these people are governed are abominable and absurd: which I shall demonstrate to you by the following facts, of which I was myself an eye witness, during my short abode at their camp. Like you, I had suffered my mind to be prejudiced in favour of a people whose conduct had been so favourable to our nation. The order and regularity which prevailed among them, impressed me at first with the highest idea of their virtue and wisdom. I had as yet seen no appearance of any religious ceremony among them, when, on the third day after my arrival, my attention was attracted by a procession, which I immediately supposed to be in honour of their Dewtah. Curious to behold the nature of their ceremonies

upon this occasion, I followed the procession, at which part of the camp assisted. When lo! to my equal surprise and horror, I beheld one poor soldier stripped, tied up, and almost lacerated to death; a thousand lashes being inflicted upon his naked shoulders. That one of their priests should have undergone all this involuntary penance, would not have surprised me. We every day see instances of greater sufferings than this, inflicted by our Fakcers upon their own bodies. But I could not forbear astonishment, when informed, that this cruel ceremony was performed as a punishment upon a soldier, for the trifling crime of purloining a few rupees from one of his officers. Doubtless, thought I, the morals of the people must be very pure, in whose eyes so small an offence can seem worthy of so great a punishment.

While I yet ruminated upon the scene which I had witnessed, I was called to

the tent of an officer, who had, ever since my arrival at the camp, treated me with great kindness. I had not long conversed with him, (for he spoke very good Mhors) when several of his brother officers came to visit him. They conversed in their own language, and appeared, from the frequent bursts of laughter which escaped them, to have entered upon a very pleasant topic. I was unwilling to lose the knowledge of a discourse, which seemed to produce so much mirth ; and applied to my interpreter for information. He told me the subject of their merriment, was the *dishonour* of one of their own countrymen, a Chief of rank and eminence, whose wife had suffered the torch of her virtue to be extinguished, by the vile breath of a seducer. How great, cried I, must be the torture awaiting the wretch who could be guilty of so great a crime? If the poor pilferer of a few rupees was doomed to suffer so severely, what must the man undergo,

who could basely contaminate the bed of his friend, rob him of his honour, and destroy his peace? If the weight of the punishment keeps pace with the gradation in atrocity, imagination can hardly paint to itself any thing so dreadful as the sufferings to which this wretch must be condemned. This observation, repeated by my Mounshi, redoubled the mirth of the company; and I heard, with astonishment, that the dishonour of one of these *illustrious Europeans* was to be compensated, not by the punishment of the aggressor, not by the sacrifice of his life, and the degradation of his family, but by a sum of money! Can virtue subsist among a people, who set a greater value upon a few pieces of silver, than upon their honour?

This circumstance did not fail to destroy the impression I had received in favour of these people. But I should, perhaps, have remained some time longer among them, had

I not beheld a deed so horrible, as filled my soul with indignation and disgust. Yes, my misguided friend, I saw these heroes, whom you falsely imagine so pure, so harmless, so full of piety and benevolence, I saw them—my heart shudders, and my hand trembles while I relate it, I saw them devour, with looks that betokened the most savage satisfaction, the sacred offspring of a spotted cow. Yes, Zaarmilla, this unhappy calf, for whom a thousand sons of Brahma would have risked their lives, was slain at the command of these inhuman Europeans, and devoured by them, without one pang of remorse!

Does not nature itself revolt at such an action? And, had any spark of religious knowledge enlightened their minds, would they not have perceived, that the calf they slew was, if not so learned, at least more pious, and more uncontaminated by the corruption of impure ideas, than them-

selves? Tell me no more of the virtue of such men. And no more, I conjure thee, think of incurring the wrath of Mahadeo, by dishonouring the Cast, and forfeiting its sublime privileges, at the instigation of a curiosity, which has doubtless been kindled in thy mind, by the powerful charms of magical incantations. These spells would probably have failed in their effect, hadst thou not incurred the displeasure of the Dewtah, by neglecting to perform the duty to which every Hindoo is bound; the indispensable duty of marriage. Four years have elapsed since, in obedience to the command of my father, I married the daughter of the reverend Gopaul. She was ill-favoured, and of a bad temper: so that, being disgusted with her peevishness, and still more with the plainness of her countenance, (for in a beautiful woman many errors may be forgiven), I parted with her some months since, and presenting

her with her *ayammi shadee*, sent her back to the house of her father. I will, therefore, with great pleasure, accept of your sister for my wife. With this intention, I some time ago inquired after her disposition, and heard that she was beautiful, and good tempered; which is the utmost perfection in women. To what purpose should they have judgment or understanding? were they not made subservient to the will of man? If they are docile, and reserved, with enough of judgment to teach them to adorn their persons, and wear their jewels with propriety, and never presuming to have a will of their own, follow implicitly the direction of their husbands, studying his temper, and accommodating themselves to his humour, it is all that can be wished for. As to all that you say of the cultivation of their understandings, I can only look upon it as the ravings of a dis-tempered imagination.

Bad as my opinion is of those English Christians, I cannot possibly imagine them to be so absurd as to give learning to their women. Allowing it possible (which I am very far from allowing), that these creatures, whose sole delight is finery, who were born to amuse, to please, and to continue the race of man, should be capable of entering the sacred porch which leads to the temple of knowledge, what would be the consequence of their being admitted to it? would their steps be steady enough to conduct them through the labyrinths of that awful fane? No. Contenting themselves with the first tinsel ornament that caught their eyes, they would come out at the first opening of vanity; and, having made a deposit of their gentleness and humility, would clothe themselves with the robes of arrogance, and rest dauntless upon the hollow reed of self-conceit. Such are the consequences that would result, from

the foolish attempt, of teaching women more than nature designed them to know.

Let Zaarmilla, therefore, hearken to the voice of reason; and, at the same time that he gives his sister to be the wife of his friend, let him accept for his spouse the sister of Maandaara. Without being strictly beautiful, her countenance is pleasing: a mole of extreme beauty is seated on her cheek; and her eyes sparkle like the gems of Golconda. She has been taught humility and obedience, and has never conversed with any man, except her father and her brother. I know so well the tenderness and extreme lenity of thy disposition, that it is necessary to caution thee against extreme indulgence, and to put thee in mind of the words of the sacred Shastra,* which sayeth, “ that a man both day and night must keep his wife so much

* See Halhed's Translation of the Gentoo Laws.

in subjection, that she by no means be mistress of her own actions. If she have her own free will, notwithstanding her having sprung from a superior Cast, she will nevertheless act amiss."

If thou art inclined to dismiss the spirit of delusion, and listen to the voice of thy friend, I will meet thee, not at Ferrochabad, but at Rampore; as, through the interest of certain friends, I have some hopes given me that Fyzoola Khan may look *upon me* with the eye of kindness, and probably restore me to the possession of my fathers. I have just received intelligence of the arrival of Sheermaal from England; whither he was induced to accompany the great man to whose service he had lent the assistance of his abilities; and from him I make no doubt of receiving such information respecting the country he has seen, as will satisfy thy mind,

and restore thee to the right use of thy understanding.

What can I say more?

will nevertheless act unbiaſed, and will not be influenced by any party, or by any interest, but as a friend, I will meet thee, not as a teacher, but as a companion; and through the interest of certain friends, I have some hopes given me that Fysook Khan may look upon me with the eye of kindness, and probably restore me to the possession of my father's estate. I have just received intelligence of the arrival of Sherman from England; whether he was induced to accompany the great man to whose service

LETTER III.

From the SAME to the SAME.

THE powerful influence of the *Goitterie*,* which I have employed some expert and holy persons to use, in order to dispossess thy mind from the influence of the magic of the Christians, will, I hope, be aided in their operation by the following account of the observations of Sheermaal, during his abode in England.

If, then, Zaarmilla has any value for the peace of Maandaara, he will instantly quit the wild and fantastic project of seeking

* A Gentoo incantation.

for truth in the regions of darkness ; and, remaining in the land of his fathers, receive the gifts of happiness into the bosom of content.

Let thine ears now listen to the words of Sheermaal ; and from his experience be thou contented to receive the fruits of wisdom.

LETTER IV.

*The Bramin Sheermaal, to Kisheen Neeay
Maandaara.*

THE letter of the noble and illustrious Rajah, I have read with the most profound respect ; and, at thy request, shall hasten to remove from his eyes the film of prejudice, and to convince him that the opinions he has conceived, concerning the Christians of England, are altogether false and erroneous. I do not wonder, that the enlightened mind of the noble Rajah should have conceived a predilection in favour of a people, who seem destined to make so conspicuous a figure in the annals of Asia. As a race of brave and daring mortals,

chosen by Veeshnu to curb the fury of destructive tyranny, to blunt the sword of the destroyer, and break the galling fetters of the oppressed, I, and every Hindoo, must unite with him in pronouncing their eulogium: but as to the principles which actuate their conduct, their religion, their laws, and their manners, the mind of the noble Rajah has been immersed in error.

The learned Pundit, whose fame has extended from the walls of Lucknoo to the banks of Barampooter,* had sufficiently opened my understanding. It became evident, that whatever was in any degree excellent or admirable, throughout the Bobor Logue,† was an emanation from the shadow of wisdom, a ray of light obliquely

* The Translator must acknowledge, that the fame of this learned Pundit has not reached so far as to acquaint her with his name.

† Habitable world.

darting from the sacred volume which issued from the chambers of the deep.* To ascertain the certainty of this truth, I determined to visit the remotest corner of the habitable world, and in the bosom of experience I have found the expected conviction.†

Let not the noble Rajah be deceived. Let him not vainly imagine the Christians to be in possession of such an invaluable treasure as the Shaster he describes ; a

* The Vedas, or Hindoo Scriptures, said in their allegorical mythology to have been recovered from the sea, by the God Veeshnû, in the form of a fish ; who, after slaying the giant Hayagriva, tore from his belly the sacred volumes which he had profanely swallowed, returned with them in triumph, and presented them to Brahma. A print of Veeshnû performing this ceremony is given in the second volume of Maurice's Indian Antiquities.

† The meaning of the Bramin is rather obscure ; it is, however, sufficiently obvious to establish his character as a *systematic traveller*.

Shaster promulgating the glorious hopes of immortality ; calculated to produce the universal reign of peace and justice, the exercise of the purest benevolence, and the most perfect virtue : Let not the Rajah think, that the knowledge of such a book as this exists among Christians. If it did, is it possible, that in the ten years in which I have intimately conversed with Christians of all ranks and orders ; military commanders, chiefs invested with the powers of civil authority, and men who made the study of literature their employment and delight ; is it possible, I say, that I should never once have heard of such a book ? Let the noble Rajah be the judge.

That a book of ancient origin, vulgarly called *the Bible*, was once known to the English, I have had certain information ; but that it is far from containing doctrines of such a nature as the Rajah has announced is evident : as the first proof of wisdom

which a young man gives to the world, upon his issuing from the schools, is to speak of it with a becoming degree of contempt. Indeed, to extirpate from society all regard for the pernicious doctrines it contains, has long been the primary object of attention to the enlightened philosophers of Europe. How much the book is detested by these sage philosophers, may easily be inferred, when I declare, that of the many philosophers I have met with, who had most vehemently spoken and written against it, not one had contaminated himself, by deigning to examine its contents. One of these great men, a profound writer of history, has given to the world a work more voluminous than the Mahabbarat, more brilliant than the odes of Sancha, undertaken, and accomplished, as I was well assured, with the benevolent purpose of convincing his countrymen of the superiority of the Mahommedan to the Christian faith. Whether these enlight-

ened men will ever really succeed in their intention of establishing the religion of Mahomet in England, is, however, in my opinion, rather doubtful.

However alluring the doctrine of polygamy, and the view of the Mahomedan paradise, may be to men of taste and sentiment, there are some obstacles which, I apprehend, would, in the opinion of the people, be insurmountable. The chief of these I take to be the prohibition of wine, the strict fast of Ramozin, and, above all, the injunctions* concerning the treatment of slaves, which are so mild and generous, that the Christians of England, who are concerned in the traffic of their fellow-creatures (and who form a large and respectable part of the community) would never be brought to submit to its authority.

* See Sale's Koran, and Hamilton's translation of the Hedeya.

From the delusive opinion entertained in the sublime mind of the Rajah, of the religion of the Christians, he will, no doubt, be inclined to imagine, that their philanthropy embraces the wide circle of the human race. How far the rule of "doing to others, as they would be done by, in the like case," actuates the Christians of England, may be learned from the following history of my voyage.

As I attended the family of a great man, I had the advantage of being accommodated on board one of their ships of war, a huge edifice, whose sides were clothed with thunder. This mighty fabric contained near seven hundred people, governed by a few Chiefs, whose commands were obeyed with the quickness of the lightning's glance, and the frown of whose displeasure was followed by the severity of punishment. We had made two-thirds of our voyage to the coast of Britain, when

a ship appeared at a distance, which our skilful mariners soon perceived to be in distress. I had so often witnessed what I thought to be the exercise of cruelty during my abode in this sea-borne fortress, that I did not expect the distresses of people, whom they had never seen, would excite much of their compassion. In this, however, I was mistaken. To my astonishment, every effort was instantly made to afford relief to these strangers; and I beheld the toil-strengthened nerves of these lions of the ocean strained, by the most vigorous exertions, to save the almost sinking vessel. At length, the object of their labours was effected; and they, who had been so zealous to save, now appeared perfectly indifferent to the expressions of gratitude and admiration, which were poured out by the people whom they had so gallantly delivered from the jaws of destruction. Our carpenter was employed to repair the breaches in the

unfortunate vessel ; and, as the weather was now calm, curiosity led the principal people of our company to visit the ship of the strangers. I was among the number. But Oh ! that I could obliterate from my mind the memory of a scene, the horrors of which no pen can describe, no tongue can utter, no imagination conceive. It was an English vessel, which had been on a voyage to the coast of Africa, from whence it was now proceeding to the British settlements in the West Indies, with a cargo, not of silver and gold, not of costly spices and rich perfumes, but of some hundreds of the most wretched of the human race ; a cargo of slaves ! These miserable beings were here huddled together in the squalid cells of a moving dungeon. Their uncouth screams, their dismal groans, their countenances, on which were alternately depicted the images of fury, terror, and despair, the clanking of their chains, and the savage looks of the

white barbarians who commanded them, exhibited such a scene as mocks description.

Surely, the magnanimous Rajah will not imagine, that the perpetrators of this cruelty could be the professors of a religion of mercy. No. Had a ray of knowledge enlightened their understandings, through the tawny hue of the unlettered savage, they would have recognized the emanation of the creating Spirit; they would have perceived the kindred mind, which, in its progressive course through the stages of varied being, might one day inhabit the bodies of their own offspring. For my part, when I contemplated the scene before me, I anticipated, in imagination, the few swiftly rolling years, which might change the abode of the souls of these tyrant whites into the frames of woe-destined negroes; while the present victims of their cruelty would,

in their turns, become the masters, and, seizing the scorpion whip of oppression, retaliate their present sufferings with all the bitterness of revenge. But, alas! the divine doctrine of retribution is unknown to these Christians. No dread of after punishment restrains the remorseless hand of cruelty; no apprehension of the vengeance of an offended Deity, diverts them from the greedy pursuits of avarice, or disturbs the enjoyments of luxury. For let it not stagger your faith in my veracity, when I inform you, that all this aggregate of human misery is incurred, in order to procure a luxurious repast to the pampered appetites of these voluptuaries, and that the unhappy negroes are torn from their country, their friends and families, for no other purpose, but to cultivate the sugar-cane; a work of which the lazy Europeans are themselves incapable.

When I mention the slaves of Christians, let not your imagination turn to the bondsmen of Asia, as if their situations were parallel. No. By the mild laws of our Shaster, and even by the less benevolent institutions of Mahommed, slaves are considered as people who, having bartered their liberty for protection, are entitled to the strictest justice, lenity, and indulgence. They are always treated with kindness, and are most frequently the friends and confidants of their masters. But with these white savages, these merciless Christians, they are doomed to suffer all that cruelty, instigated by avarice, and intoxicated by power, can inflict. Ah! beloved Hindostan! happy country! paradise of regions! the plant which in the trans-Atlantic islands is fattened with the blood of the wretched, with thee raises its blooming head, a voluntary offering to thy pure and innocent children. That luscious cane, which the inhabitants of

Europe purchase by the enormous mass of misery, is on the banks of the Ganga, the exclusive property of the laughing Deity, the heart-piercing Cama: with it the son of Maya forms the bow, from which his flowery shafts are thrown at the sons of men;* with it the blameless hermit approaches the altars of the rural Gods; and from it the simple repasts of the favoured of Veeshnu receive their highest relish.

But my observations on the religion of the people of England stop not here. To obtain complete information upon this subject, was the object I kept perpetually in my view. And I hope it is known to the Rajah, that a Bramin of my character is not easily to be deceived. The custom of dedicating the seventh day to acts of piety and devotion, is mentioned by the Rajah as an institution, admirably calcu-

* See the Introduction.

lated for keeping up the spirit of a religion, which was intended for the purification of the heart, and of which the duties of penitence and self-examination formed constituent parts. Alas! how grossly has his simplicity been imposed upon. It is indeed observed as a holiday by the lower Casts, and spent by some of the industrious orders of mechanics in the innocent amusement of walking in the fields, accompanied by their wives and children. By those of less sober manners, it is employed in the indulgence of gluttony, and the most depraved intemperance. By the higher Casts, it is altogether unobserved, except as a day particularly propitious to the purpose of travelling. A select number, from all the different Casts, occasionally amuse themselves by attending, for an hour or two, on the mornings of that day, at certain large buildings, called Churches; a practice which they, doubtless, continue in conformity to some an-

cient custom, the origin of which is now forgotten, though the practice continues to be partially observed. Curiosity once led me into one of these churches, where a young man dressed in white began the performance of the ceremony. Had it not been for the carelessness of his manner, I should have been tempted to believe that he was engaged in offering prayers to the Deity; and, so far as the extreme rapidity of his utterance would permit me to judge, some things he said so plainly alluded to a future state of existence, that one, less truly informed than I was, might have been led into a belief that some such notions had actually been entertained among them. The ceremonies of this day were concluded by an elderly priest, in a black robe, who read, in a languid and monotonous tone, from a small book, which he held in his hand, a sort of exhortation; the truths contained in which, seemed

equally indifferent to himself and to his audience. Nor did the little attention that was paid to his discourse seem to give him any offence, or to impel him to speak in a more energetic manner; though it probably hastened his conclusion; at which he had no sooner arrived, than the countenances of his auditors brightened, and they congratulated one another on their being emancipated from the fatigue of this tiresome ceremony.

Had I never penetrated farther into the character of these Christians, I should have considered them as beings altogether incapable of a serious and profound attention to the performance of any religious duty; but a deeper investigation convinced me of the contrary, and that in the performance of such ceremonies as they deemed *of real importance*, these trifling people could evince a degree of assiduity

and perseverance, that would have done honour to a Saneé assee.*

The rites to which I allude may, in my opinion, easily be traced to the sacred institutions of the beloved of Brahma; the nation which is the pure fountain of all human wisdom.

To the intelligent mind of the noble Rajah, it is well known how our great ancestors, incomparable in wisdom, ordained such mystical representations of the superior intelligences, as it is not lawful for any but the most holy and learned of the Bramins to explore.† The most pious of the sacred Cast, after purifying themselves

* A religious recluse.

† We are now in possession of so many accurate engravings and minute descriptions of the extraordinary sculpture which decorates the temples of the Hindoos, that there are few readers to whom a detail of them would not be superfluous.

from worldly thoughts, by years of abstinence, spent in the silence of solemn groves, are, by much application, and unwearied study, enabled to perceive the true meaning of those representations hewn in the stupendous rock, or carved in the lofty walls of ancient edifices, which, to the eyes of the vulgar, appear uncouth images of stone. And it is doubtless from this wise example of our ancient Bramins, that the priests of all religions have learned the art of concealing the simplicity of truth, under the dark and impenetrable cloud of symbolical mystery, which none but they themselves can fully explain. The knowledge of the vulgar is the death of zeal. But deep is the reverence of ignorance.

It was not then, from the people engaged in the rites I mention, that I could expect information concerning them: but I had a better instructor in the depth of

my own sagacity, which soon taught me, that the object of their most serious devotion was strictly analogous to the symbols of our Dewtah, not indeed cut in the solid rock of gloomy caverns; not hewn on the walls of sacred temples; but, correspondent to the trifling genius of these silly people, painted upon small slips of stiff paper! Neither is the manner in which these devotions are performed exactly similar to ours. It is not necessary that those devotees should perform the seven ablutions; neither do they rub their bodies with earth; neither do they cover their heads with cow-dung: and, instead of solemn prostration before these painted objects of their idolatry, they take them familiarly into their hands, and toss them one after another upon a table covered with green cloth; turn them up and down, sometimes gazing upon them with momentary admiration, as they lie prostrate on the middle of the table; then again, seizing

them with holy ardour, they turn them hastily upon their faces. And to this Poojah* of idols, termed CARDS, do the major part of the people devote their time; sacrificing every enjoyment of life, as well as every domestic duty, to the performance of this singular devotion.

It is said, that it is incumbent *only* on a 'professed hermit *utterly* to renounce his passions, and worldly pursuits; but that it is sufficient for a domestic character to refrain from their abuse.' The zeal for the Poojah of cards inspires a more exalted degree of self-denial: I have known it lead its ardent votaries to exclude the soul-enlivening rays of the golden sun, in the finest evenings of their short-lived summer; and while the nightingale warbled its tale of love to the listening rose, and

* Worship.

all the beauties of nature glowed around them, I have beheld them turn from the temptation with heroic firmness, and placing themselves at the altars of their idols, remain immoveably fixed in that devotion, which absorbed the powers of their soul.

Little as I am inclined to coincide with the opinion of the Rajah, relative to the superiority of the females of Europe in any other particular, I must confess, that in their unwearied assiduity to the Poojah of cards, they evince a degree of constancy scarcely exceeded by a pious Yogee* in the act of penance.

* An order of religious recluses, remarkable for the rigorous performance of the penitential duties, esteemed by the Hindoos so essentially necessary toward the advancement of their happiness in a future state. The voluntary penances undertaken by these pious Yogees, are frequently so severe as to excite an equal degree of astonishment and horror.

The languor, so visible in the countenances of the people assembled in the church, was never to be observed during the performance of this more important ceremony. Here, even the very Priest lost the apathy which had *there* so strongly marked his countenance. The attention of his fellow worshippers was no longer a matter of indifference to him. His zeal was kindled into fervor, and broke forth into the severity of reproach against a female who sat opposite to him, for exhibiting some transient mark of negligence in the performance of the duty in which she was now engaged.

Universally as the Poojah of cards is established throughout the country, it has not, in the remotest provinces, been able entirely to supersede another species of idolatry, which has clearly, and indisputably, been borrowed from the manners of their eastern progenitors. This is no other

than the worship of certain birds, and quadrupeds, which are held so sacred by their worshippers, that the preservation of their lives occupies, I am well assured, many volumes of their laws, and has employed the chief study of their sapient legislators. I should have wished to obtain much information upon a subject so curious; but all that I could learn, was, that the provincial Rajahs, devoted to the worship of these animals, are mostly sprung from the first Cast. (A certain proof of their Braminical origin.) They despise the vain pursuit of literature; and, conscious of their native and inherent superiority, they pique themselves upon their ignorance of all the sciences that are in esteem among the lower orders of men.

From such exalted personages much information was not to be looked for: but a circumstance which occurred while I journeyed over the remote parts of the

kingdom, threw sufficient light upon the subject.

In one particular, however, the higher Casts in that country must be acknowledged to differ widely from the race of Brahma.—They are deficient in hospitality! Never did I see the doors of a great man open to receive the wearied traveller: the milk of his cows flows not into the stranger's dish. Nay, so very rude and inhospitable are the manners of the people of high Cast, that once upon a time, when, being overtaken by darkness in a rainy evening, I attempted to procure lodgings for myself and my attendant, at the house of one of these provincial Rajahs, which was situate near the road, I was not only denied admittance, but repulsed with the language of contempt, and necessitated to continue my route, in a dark and stormy evening, till the sight of a peasant's hut cheered my heart with the hope of shelter.

I was not disappointed ; for in this country the spirit of hospitality is only to be found beneath a roof of thatch. The decent matron, who inhabited this lowly hut, received me with looks of cordial welcome. Five blooming children surrounded the blazing fire, whose cheerful light was reflected from the bright utensils that adorned the white washed walls. My first appearance dismayed the little train, but some candied sweetmeats, with which I presented them, quickly reconciled them to my complexion. The genii, who delight to revel in the troubled air, howled around this humble dwelling, and pouring the dashing torrent from the black-bosomed clouds of night, they heard with joy the thunder's roar, while nimbly following the lightning's flash, they exulted in the mingled tempest. The pale hue of terror sat upon the matron's cheek : she listened, with anxiety and impatience, for the voices of her husband and her son, who were not

yet returned from the labours of the day : and while her own fears increased with the horrors of the tempest, she employed herself in appeasing those of the infant group, who clung to her, demanding, with accents of clamorous sorrow, the return of their father and their brother.

When the storm a little abated of its violence, the little creatures ran by turns to the door, eagerly peeping into the dark abyss of night, in hopes of discovering their approach. The anxious mother added fuel to the already blazing fire ; again she swept the unsoiled hearth ; and again adjusted the chairs, which had long been placed for the reception of the supporters of her hope. At length, the well known steps were heard ; every heart fluttered with joy, and every little hand was stretched out, eager to receive the paternal and fraternal embrace. The old man and his son were for some time occupied in re-

turning the caresses of their family ; which they did with the tenderness of affection : and then the venerable master of this humble abode came forward, to welcome me to a share of the comforts it afforded. He had looked at me earnestly for some time, when, to my utter astonishment, he addressed me in my native language. The Mhors he spoke was but indifferent, but it was intelligible, and more charming to my ears than the music of the seven genii.

In order to account for what appeared to me such an extraordinary phenomenon, he told me that, in early life, he had been tempted, by the God of Love, to win the affections of a damsel, whose beauty had touched the heart of the village Lord. The place of wife, in the establishment of this great man, was already occupied by the daughter of a neighbouring Rajah ; but he had probably been convinced by the philosophers, of the propriety of the

system of Mahommed; and thought that the damsel, though the daughter of a mechanic, would be no unworthy ornament of his zenana. It is not to be wondered at that he should be filled with indignation at the presumption of the young peasant, who dared to interfere with his pleasures, and disappoint his schemes, by marrying the object of his hopes. It is not proper that inferiors should be permitted to defeat the intentions of their Lords with impunity. This great man was of the same opinion; and, in the height of his resentment against his successful rival, he had him torn from the arms of his bride, and sent in a company of soldiers, who were all collected in the same arbitrary manner (probably as a punishment for the same sort of offence) to the East Indies. Here this unfortunate martyr to love spent eleven years in the service of the Company, in the rank of a petty officer: when having, by his economy, saved a sum sufficient for the

purposes of humble competence, he obtained leave to return to his native country. As the gay pennant, though forced to obey the pressure of the changeful breeze, still clings to its beloved mast, and, at the return of every short-lived calm, flutters round the object to which it was in youth united; so the heart of this honest peasant, in all the storms of fortune, hovered round the cottage that contained his wife and child. At length, her obscure retirement was gladdened by his presence. By the employment of her needle, she had procured, during his absence, an honourable and virtuous subsistence for herself and son. The little fortune he had brought from India was lost by the villainy of the agent into whose hands he had entrusted it. But in the endearments of mutual affection, this honest couple had a fund of felicity, which the malice of fortune could not destroy. Both the good man and his son found employment for their industry,

in cutting down the trees of a neighbouring wood: a work which had been committed to their care, and amply recompensed their diligence. When they returned from their labour, the cheerful appearance of the well ordered family at home, the smiling welcome of the little innocents, and the affectionate tenderness of the worthy matron, presented to them a reward which went farther than the gifts of fortune have power to penetrate:—it reached the heart.

The recital of these circumstances was made to me during the most cheerful repast that I ever saw Christians partake of. When it was ended, a ceremony ensued, which having never seen practised at any other period, I have reason to think *peculiar to themselves*. Upon a hint from the old soldier, his eldest daughter presented him with a very large book, from which, with a clear and solemn voice, he

read some admirable instructions and exhortations. The sublime and commanding energy with which these precepts were expressed, might lead to a conclusion, that this was a copy of the same Shaster with which the departed Saib Percy presented the learned Rajah; but many obstacles oppose themselves to this supposition. Could we believe that a book of such distinguished authority, unheard of among the learned, and totally unknown among the superior Casts, should yet be found familiar in the cottage of a peasant? It is too absurd for the shadow of probability to rest upon.

But to return to the religious rites of these simple people, which, as I have observed, differ essentially from all that had hitherto come within my observation; for instead of the Poojah of cards, which at that hour would have been performed in the families of the higher Casts, when the old man had shut the book, he knelt

down, his wife and blooming infants following his example. The latter clasped their little hands, and held them up to heaven, while he lifted up his voice, calling upon the unseen, omniscient, and immortal Preserver, to bless them, and to accept from hearts of gratitude the offering of praise and thankfulness. I cannot account for it, but there was something in this whole ceremony which greatly affected my mind; and I could not help, while I listened to the simple, but fervent devotion of this virtuous labourer, feeling for him a degree of veneration, even superior to what I had experienced for the Priest, whose zeal had been so conspicuous at the Poojah of cards.

In the morning, the same rites were again repeated; after which, I took leave of this innocent and happy family; the old man insisting that, as I had come some miles out of my way, his son should ac-

company me to the village where I had directed my servant and horse to meet me. The lad willingly obeyed the commands of his father, and we set out together. He was a handsome youth, of about twenty years of age, and of a sensible and intelligent countenance. Taking a path through a corn field, it being now the latter end of harvest, we met a young peasant, who carried a gun, which he frequently fired, to frighten the crows and other birds from the grain. My companion took the weapon of destruction into his hand to examine it: and in that unhappy moment, in which the Goddess of Mischance presided, a group of partridges appeared before him: he involuntarily struck the flint; the report resounded through the air, and oh! unfortunate destiny, seven of these sacred birds were laid rolling in the dust. He had no time to consider of the fatal deed; for, in a moment, two men, whom the bushes had concealed from our

view, darted on the guilty youth, wrested the weapon of destruction from his trembling hand, and, with many imprecations of vengeance, insisted upon his immediately attending them before the awful tribunal of assembled Magistrates, who were now exercising the sacred functions of their office in the neighbouring village. It was then I learned the real magnitude of my friend's offence. For I was then informed, that to preserve these sacred birds from being injured by the unhallowed hands of any of the lower Cast, the severest laws were promulgated; and as the Zimeendars in the office of the magistracy, before whom these offences were tried, were all of them worshippers of the rural Dewtah, they never suffered the stern sentence of justice to be softened at the suggestion of mercy.

As it is not good to forsake a friend in his adversity, we entered the temple of

justice together. In this awful tribunal, seated in two large chairs, we found the offended Magistrates. The first of these judges seemed fully conscious of his dignity; which was indeed very great; uniting in himself the triple offices of Priest, Zimeendar, and Magistrate of the place. The other was a Pundit, learned in the law; called, in the language of these people, an attorney. No sooner did the witnesses of my friend's guilty deed present the unhappy culprit before them, producing at the same time the murdered birds, and the destructive engine of their dissolution, than the murmur of indignation arose; the cause in which they were then hearing evidence was instantly dismissed; it was, indeed, only concerning a man who was said to have beaten his wife almost to death; a trifling crime, in the eyes of these Magistrates, when compared to the murder of seven partridges!

The son of the soldier attempted to speak in his own defence, but was prevented by the first judge, who declared that the proof was sufficient for his condemnation, and that he never would hear any thing in favour of A POACHER, (a name given by this sect to the enemies of their idolatry). From the tone of wrath with which he pronounced these words, I saw that the young man's fate was determined; and when, after some consultation between themselves, the younger judge arose to pronounce his sentence, I expected to have heard the irrevocable mandate of immediate death; and knowing how vindictive the priests of all religions usually are toward those who have treated with contempt the objects of their superstitious veneration, I should have been well pleased to have compounded for his simple death, unattended by the tortures which I feared might be inflicted on him. Judge then with what

a mixture of astonishment and delight, I heard the mild and merciful sentence uttered by the Pundit, which pronounced no other sentence of punishment, but that of paying a sum of money?

How universal is the sin of ingratitude? When I expected to behold this young man embracing the feet of his merciful judges with grateful rapture, I heard him, with astonishment, venture to expostulate with his benefactors upon his utter inability to pay so great a fine. He mentioned the situation of his parents; said they depended upon his labour for support; and that, should his judges persevere in inflicting the payment of so large a sum upon him, it must deprive them of his assistance; or, by robbing them of the little savings of their industry, reduce their young ones to penury, and cause them to eat the bread of bitterness in their old age. "Let pity for my aged

parents induce you to soften the rigour of my sentence," cried the ungrateful youth, "and, though a thousand partridges were to start up before me, I swear I shall never injure one feather of their wings." Alas! his eloquence was lost. The judges remained inexorable: till at length, being touched with the sorrow of the young man, I resolved to address them in the best English I was master of. "Mild, upright, and merciful judges," cried I, "believe not that I speak to excuse the crime of which this young man has been guilty. No. I have ever been taught to pay respect to the Dewtahs of whatever country I was in. With the Persic Magi I have bent in solemn adoration of the solar orb! while, with other equally enlightened nations of the East, I have demonstrated my respect for the crocodile, the jackall, and the monkey. Since fate has brought me into this renowned king-

dom, I have, in the great capital, attended, with due solemnity, the Poojah of cards: and now, that I am made acquainted with the religion of the Rajahs of the provinces, I judge of your feelings, most venerable Magistrates, upon the present occasion, by what my own would have been, had any base born sooder dared to lift his impious hands against one of the sacred cows who range the flowery meads of Burrampooter. But since, in the overflowing of your clemency, you have condescended to limit the deserved punishment of this audacious youth to the payment of a fine, I hope you will extend the shadow of your goodness so far, as to accept the money from a stranger." They stared at one another, astonished, no doubt, at the boldness of my speech; but, nevertheless, were so kind as graciously to accept of the gold I offered them, and to suffer my companion to depart with me in peace.

After giving him some good advice against meddling, in future, with the Dewtahs of the country, and presenting him with some pieces of gold for his family, I dismissed him, and proceeded on my journey.

In the course of this tour, I had the courage to penetrate into the northern regions of this united kingdom of Britain, where mountains, more stupendous than those of Upper Tartary, heave their bare brown backs to the merciless arrows of the keen-edged wind; where the bright-faced luminary of heaven is wrapt in the eternal veil of clouds and storms; but where, in the uncultivated bosom of heath covered deserts, resides a people, whose origin is more ancient than the rocks whose gloomy summits overhang their dwellings.

It was with a view of gaining some information in regard to the chronology of

this ancient nation, that I was induced to visit it. I had heard that the original Casts into which these, as well as other nations, had been divided at their creation, were here preserved in their original purity and perfection. For this is another particular, in which the Rajah of Almorah has been grossly deceived, or misinformed. Instead of being all of *one* Cast, as he imagines, the people throughout Great Britain are divided into *three* Casts, all separate and distinct from each other; and which are commonly known by the several appellations, of PEOPLE OF FAMILY, PEOPLE OF NO FAMILY, AND PEOPLE OF STYLE, or fashion. The first two are of much more ancient origin than the other Cast; which, indeed, appears to have sprung from an unnatural mixture of the others; like the tribes of Buhran Sunker,* in Hindostan. But what is extraordinary, and entirely peculiar to

* See Gentoo Laws, page 43.

the Cast of *people of style*, is, that admission may be obtained by those who were not born in it, nay, who have sprung from the lowest of the tribe called PEOPLE OF NO FAMILY; and these people, thus admitted, I have ever observed to be most tenacious of the rights and privileges of their new Cast, treating those who still remain in that which they have left, with the utmost contempt, breaking off all connection with them, and frequently denying (particularly in the presence of other *people of fashion*) that they ever had any acquaintance with them: an asseveration always made with peculiar warmth, when these newly made *people of fashion* are known to be under any particular obligations to the PEOPLE OF NO FAMILY. The mode of initiation into this Cast, I suppose to be made by the ceremonies of ablution: and certain streams, and springs, of mysterious efficacy, are to be found in various parts of the kingdom; where I have rea-

son to think the ceremonies of initiation are usually performed. A resort to these springs, called watering-places, at certain seasons of the year, being prescribed to *people of style*, and all the candidates for that Cast, as an indispensable duty.

Among these candidates, the most certain method of procuring success, is an assiduous devotion to the Poojah of cards: liberal offerings of gold, at the altars of these little painted idols, having frequently procured the honours of initiation, to the most low-born, low-bred, and illiterate personages in the community. The flood of wealth, which the golden stream of commerce has diffused over the kingdom of England, has greatly contributed to the exaltation of this upstart tribe: but in the northern kingdom, which is now blended with it (as Bahar is with Orissa) the barrier between *people of family* and *people of no family*, has been too strong for the tide

of wealth to break, too powerful for the teeth of time to destroy. I was extremely anxious to gain an insight into the chronological annals of this most ancient nation, but could obtain none that was any wise satisfactory. By a strange custom, the cultivation of letters is confined to the *people of no family*; who are at no pains to trace the origin of the first Cast, beyond that of their own; but by my own observation, confirmed by the hints I received from all the *people of family* with whom I conversed, it is evident that a period of many thousand years must have elapsed between the creation of the two Casts. Indeed, to believe, that the venerable and exalted Cast of *people of family* should have sprung from one common parent with the *people of no family*, is equally absurd as to suppose, that in the revolution of the few years that are doomed to terminate a transient and uncertain existence, they should moulder into the same sort of dust! Base slander on the in-

herent superiority of birth! The minds of the *people of family* are filled with too just an idea of their own dignity, to admit so injurious a supposition. Conscious of the blessing of superior origin, the ancient Rajahs, and all who can boast a portion of their blood, never fail to express a proper degree of contempt for the people of inferior Cast: nor can the possession of talents, the attainments of science, or the exercise of the sublimest virtue, serve, in any degree, in their eyes, to lessen the invincible barrier that divides them.

Together with the cultivation of letters, the exercise of the priestly function is usually confined to the second Cast. These men are more distinguished for the regularity of their lives, and sanctity of their deportment, than for their dexterity at the Poojah of cards, which in the southern part of the kingdom is so essential a requisite in the duty of a priest.

The ceremonies of their religion are somewhat similar to those of the cottager; they are no strangers to the duties of hospitality, and recommend the enlightening study of literature, both by their precept and example. In all other respects, the characteristic virtues, and peculiar customs of this nation, are so evidently of Hindoo origin, that nothing but the most wilful blindness could make any one assert the contrary.

As the illustrious Rajahs of Hindostan, when sitting in the midst of their wide-extended possessions, forget not to bend before the Bramin, who, to procure nourishment for his family, laboureth in his garden, in like manner the people of whom I speak, retain the dignity of their Cast, even when compelled by poverty to exercise any trade in order to procure a livelihood: and as, in India, members of the tribe of Brahma are frequently found exer-

cising the employments of commerce and agriculture, so, in this ancient nation, do *people of family* often condescend to become weavers, shoemakers, and barbers, without forfeiting Cast, or in the least abating of the high idea of their own inherent superiority. It is not so with *the people of style*; who, by entering into any of these employments, lose all the privileges of their Cast; a circumstance which occasions numbers of the poorer branches of that tribe, to live in a humiliating state of dependence upon the richer, rather submitting to any indignity, than run the risk of *losing Cast*, by working for their own subsistence.

The mode of living among these people, in which animal food is scarcely known, is another argument in favour of their Hindoo origin. Much might likewise be said of the similarity of sound between Laird and Rajah; a similarity, which, in

the opinion of learned antiquarians, is more than sufficient to establish an etymology. Nor is this all; like us, they consider themselves a *distinct* and *favour-ed people*, superior to the rest of the inhabitants of the earth, and do not fail to maintain, that whatever instances of courage, magnanimity, or heroic virtue, are displayed by any inhabitant of the other nations of the world, would, in similar circumstances, have been far exceeded by one of their own countrymen.

These highly favoured people being too tenacious of their dignity to admit strangers (with whose pedigree they are unacquainted) into the honour of their society; the person, to whom I was chiefly indebted for information, was the lady, at whose house I lodged. She was of the *people of family* Cast; sprung from an illustrious race; her fifteenth grandfather had been a mountain Rajah; and, in the ramifica-

tions of his blood, she could boast a degree of affinity to one-and-twenty Lairds ! She was forced, by the dictates of necessity, to make up articles of female attire for her maintenance, but never worked, as she herself assured me, for any but *people of her own Cast* ; and I was induced to believe her, from the marked contempt with which I observed her to treat all who had the misfortune to be born *people of no family*. This was particularly felt by a young woman of beautiful person, gentle manners, and good education, whom this high-born female, being equally ignorant of orthography, and arithmetic, was under the necessity of employing as an assistant in her business : and whose conversation, had it not been for the difference of the Casts from which they sprung, I should have greatly preferred to that of her mistress ; but the cousin of one-and-twenty mountain Rajahs had too just a claim to my veneration, to be put in competition with

the paltry advantages of youth, beauty, talents and understanding !

It was in this house I observed, with pleasure, the practice of that admirable degree of abstemiousness, the reverse of which, had, in the southern part of the island, so frequently excited the feelings of horror, and disgust. The servants of this illustrious Bibby did not sit down together to excite one another to acts of gluttony and intemperance ; but, after long and rigorous abstinence, they snatched the scanty morsel of simple viands which their prudent mistress had allotted for them ; nor, even at her own table, did I ever see a meal displayed, of which the most holy hermit might not have partaken without breaking his vows of self-denial !

Thus hath thy servant clearly refuted two of the propositions of the misguided Rajah : and proved, in the most satisfac-

tory manner, and from the most undoubted authority, that if such a Shaster as he speaks of *ever did exist*, it is now become altogether *obsolete*, and entirely unknown; that the only devotion known to the majority of the community is the Poojah of cards and partridges; and that the people of Great-Britain are, at this day, divided into separate Casts, as distinct from each other as the Bramin from the Kетtrie.

There are other errors, into which the noble Rajah has suffered his mind to be led, which I could with equal ease refute, did not I know how easily the mind of a great man is disgusted by prolixity.

What can I say more!

I shall begin with an account of the usual mode of conducting the education

LETTER V.

From the Bramin to Maandaara.

LET the commands of Maandaara be obeyed. In the plenitude of my desire to open the eyes of your misguided friend, I hasten to proceed to a more particular description of the education and manners of the females of England; which the illustrious Rajah has so erroneously conceived to be in some measure influenced by the doctrines of that obsolete Shaster, which seems to exalt the dignity of the female mind to an equality with that of the lords of the creation.

I shall begin with an account of the usual mode of conducting the education

of females in England. How far that is of a nature calculated for "lighting the torch of reason, and expanding the germ of intellect," let the wisdom of the Rajah decide!

During the period of infancy these Christian females (whose souls are, in the erring mind of Zaarmilla, deemed so precious) are permitted to receive their first ideas from mercenary attendants, always ignorant, and frequently vicious. When the rising plant puts forth the tendrils of curiosity, which may at pleasure be directed to the tree of knowledge, or suffered to twine round the hollow bamboo of prejudice and folly: at that period, lest from the conversation of fathers, or brothers, these young females might, peradventure, acquire some degree of information, they are removed from the possibility of such deplorable consequences, and placed where science, reason, and common sense, dare

not to intrude. In these seminaries, far from being treated as "beings, whose intellectual faculties are capable of progressive improvement through the ages of eternity," their time is solely employed in learning a few tricks, such as a monkey might very soon acquire; and these are called accomplishments!

Judge how ridiculous it would be to make creatures, believed to be accountable to their Creator, for the employment of their talents and the improvement of their virtues, spend the most precious years of life, in running their fingers over certain bits of wood, which are so contrived as to make a jingling sort of noise, pleasant enough when one is a little accustomed to it, but which, in the manner executed by them, very seldom equals what is every day to be heard from the itinerant musicians that practise in the streets!

Another ingenious contrivance for filling up that portion of time, which the friend of Maandaara supposes to be employed in the acquisition of useful knowledge, is, by the assistance of a master (whose attendance is paid for at a vast expence), making wretched imitations of trees, and flowers, and this is called *learning to paint*! It appears as if great care was taken to avoid the possibility of the female pupils ever arriving at any degree of perfection in the art, as I am well informed, that not one in five hundred is ever capable of copying from nature, or of doing any thing, when left to herself, that is not many degrees inferior to the little pictures which may be purchased for the value of a rupee.

Another indispensable part in the education of females of every Cast, of every rank, and in every situation, is the knowledge of the language spoken in their neighbouring nation. I was for some time

at a great loss to know what reason could be assigned for so strange a custom, and, after many conjectures, I rested in the belief, that as the French nation was frequently at war with the English, it might either be customary to send the women as Hircarrahs,* into the camp of the enemy, or, in case of defeat, to employ them in procuring terms of peace, which, from the remarkable complaisance of their adversaries to the female sex, it might be supposed, would be negociated by the Bibbys with peculiar advantage to their country. I was, however, forced to give up this conclusion, on being assured, that after years spent in the study of the language, as it is taught at these excellent seminaries, few are capable of reading, and still fewer of conversing, with any degree of fluency in this tongue; and that the only real advantage resulting from it was, that

* Spies.

by what they knew of it, they were enabled to understand the peculiar terms belonging to the articles of dress imported from that country, which had an acknowledged right of imposing its fashions on the other nations of Europe.

Dress is, indeed, *one* science in which full scope is given to the faculties of these females ; and the love of it is, at the great schools of the Christians, so successfully inculcated, that it remains indelible to the latest period of life. Nor is the mode of education I speak of confined solely to the children of the higher Casts, it extends to all, even to the daughters of tradesmen, and mechanics, who are employed, during the years of improvement, exactly in the manner I have described. All the difference is, that at inferior schools, where inferior masters are employed, the girls do not, perhaps, arrive at the art of running their fingers over the bits of wood, called

Keys of a Harpsichord, with an equal degree of velocity ; they make rather more execrable copies, of more wretched pictures ; and the knowledge they acquire of the French language does not, perhaps, enable them to run over the names of the new fashions, with an equal degree of volubility ; but as to making any attempt at instructing the daughters of Christians, in any thing useful to themselves, or society, the idea would be deemed equally ridiculous in seminaries of every class.

So far all is right. We behold women moving in their proper sphere ; learning no other art, save that of adorning their persons ; and inspired with no other view, but that of rendering themselves objects of pleasure to the eyes of men. But how shall I astonish you, when I unfold the extreme inconsistency of the foolish Europeans, and inform you, that these uninstructed women are frequently suffered to

become entirely their own mistresses; sometimes entrusted with the management of large estates, and left at liberty to act for themselves! Nay, that it is no uncommon thing for a man, who may, in other respects, by no means be considered as a fool, to leave his children to the care of his widow; by which means I have frequently seen a little family cast upon the care, and depending for protection, on a pretty, helpless being, incapable of any idea, save that of dress; or of any duty, except the Poojah of cards! How much wiser is the institution of Brahma, by which creatures, incapable of acting with propriety for themselves, are effectually put out of the way of mischief, by being burned with the bodies of their husbands.—Wise regulation! Laudable practice! by which the number of *old women* is so effectually diminished!

From what I have formerly said, you will observe, that women do actually sometimes carry on certain branches of trade; but to infer from this, that they are generally esteemed capable of business, or receive such an education as to enable them, if left destitute of the gifts of fortune, to enter into it, would be doing them great injustice. No; in that country, as well as in this, all men allow that there is nothing so amiable in a woman as the *helplessness of mental imbecility*; and even the women themselves are so well convinced of this, that they would consider it as an insult to be treated like rational creatures. The love of independence is, therefore, a masculine virtue, and though some few females are *unamiable* enough to dare to enter upon some employment for their support, this conduct is very much discouraged, and not only properly discountenanced by the men, but held in abhorrence by all women, who entertain a

proper sense of the amiableness of female weakness. The females, who belong to the Cast of *people of style*, are particularly zealous in reprobating the exertions of female industry, and are careful to employ *men* only, in all these branches in which fortuneless women have audaciously endeavoured to procure subsistence: For this reason, when a family, by any of those misfortunes occurring in a commercial country, happens to be reduced to poverty, the daughters of the family are either left a prey to ghaunt-eyed indigence, or doomed to eat the bitter bread of dependence, administered with sparing hand, and grudging heart, by some cold relative! Equally ignorant, and equally helpless, as the females of Hindostan, their situation is far more destitute and pitiable. By the admirable institutions of our laws, it is ordained, "that a woman shall by no means be left to herself, but that, in case her nearest relations are incapable of taking

care of her, that duty shall devolve upon the Magistrate."* But, among the Christians of England, they are as destitute of protection as of instruction.

The misguider of the mind of Zaarmilla has, it must be confessed, mixed some truth with the abundance of his falsehoods. When he told him, that it was customary in his country to teach women to read and write, he did not advance the thing which was not. It is true, that they are actually taught both, though for what purpose those keys of knowledge are put into their hands, it is not easy to imagine; few bad consequences, however, are found to result from this practice, as it is in general so wisely managed, as to be very little prejudicial to the interests of ignorance; and is seldom employed for any other purpose, than that of reading motely tales of love

* See Gentoo Laws.

and murder, of which care is taken to furnish them with an abundant supply, from certain storehouses of trash, called Circulating Libraries.

The system of female education, such as I have described, is now almost universally practised over the island of Great-Britain; though I have heard that, till lately, a system of a different nature was prevalent in the northern part of the united kingdom. There, instead of the Poojah of cards, it was then customary for the mothers of families to employ themselves in the education of their children, in teaching their daughters the duties of domestic life, and in instilling into their tender minds the principles of piety and virtue. Beneath a mother's eye, the young females were then sent to certain places of instruction, called Day-schools, accompanied by their brothers; a practice which would inevitably lay the foundation of a degree

of fraternal affection, inconsistent with that sort of reserved and austere demeanor, which it is so proper for men to observe toward their female relatives. Nor was this the only bad consequence resulting from the practice of sending boys and girls to the same school. In the pure hearts of the little innocents, attachments were often formed ; which, in the minds of the young females, excited such a wish to excel, in order to render themselves amiable in the eyes of their little friends, as was altogether incompatible with the preservation of ignorance. Nor did the evil stop here ; being habituated to consider their young school-fellows in the light of brothers, they had none of that restraint, which, before company, seals the lips of the Boarding-school Bibbys, but behaved with the frankness that is natural to the pure in heart. By early discipline, their minds received such an odious degree of firmness, as often enabled them to sustain,

with dignity, the most bitter decrees of adverse fortune; and their bodies acquired such a repulsive degree of health, as rendered them equal to the discharge of every active duty. All these multifarious evils are now no longer to be apprehended: the system of their southern neighbours is now, I am well assured, practised with so much success, that the daughter of a *mountain Rajah* will soon be as amiably frivolous, as engagingly ignorant, as weak in body, and in mind, as the pupil of the greatest Boarding-school in London.

There are other instances in which these females of England, whom the infatuated Rajah has represented to himself "as exalted in the scale of being to the rank of rational, as capable of receiving the pure principles of virtue, and of steadily performing the various and complicated duties of life," are treated in a manner at which the soul of humanity revolts. Thousands,

and ten thousands, of these Christian women, being yearly suffered to perish in the streets of their great metropolis, under the accumulated misery of want, disease, and infamy!

We now think, with horror, of the blood-stained altars of the ancient groves, where, to appease the wrath of the Black Goddess,* it was permitted that human victims should be immolated: we paint to ourselves the agonizing feelings of the parent, when the blooming virgin was led forth, presenting a spotless offering to the sacrificial knife; and, sickening at the

* Callee, or the Black Goddess, is exhibited in the Indian temples with a collar composed of golden skulls, as descriptive of the dreadful sacrifices in which she took delight. The timid and benign character of the Hindoos, has induced many to doubt in the possibility of these horrid rites having ever been practised in India; but the proofs that are given in many of the Shanscrit writings, of human sacrifices offered, in remote ages, to this truly infernal deity, seem too strong to be refuted.

thought, we give praise to the adored Veeshnu, at whose commands these horrid rites were terminated. But callous, and unfeeling Englishmen! they endure to behold, with their own eyes, sacrifices in one year exceeding in number all that, in the course of revolving ages, perished on the altars of Asia! victims, not immolated to appease the wrath of the infernal Dewtahs, but sacrificed to the licentious passions of unprincipled men. And yet, many of these men are so absurd as to pretend to sensibility! Nay, so much is their conduct at war with their professions, that I have heard them declaim, with apparent horror, against the holy ceremony of the virtuous widow throwing herself upon the funeral pile of her deceased Lord. Yes, I have seen those, who could witness the scene of misery exhibited in their own streets, without betraying one symptom of compassion, affect to shed tears of pity, at the description of a Hindoo female's volun-

tary sacrifice, by which she attained glory here, and had the certainty of happiness hereafter! Is it thus, by a pretended feeling for imaginary sorrows, that the Christian Shaster teaches men to exercise their benevolence? Is it in conformity to any part of *its* precepts, that they can so freely grieve at equivocal and distant evils, while those which are before their eyes, excite neither compassion nor remorse?

However unfeeling others might be to the misery of the wretched females, one would think that the voice of nature in a father's breast would cry aloud, to save his offspring from a fate so dreadful; but, deaf to her pleadings, parents themselves do not hesitate to devote the unhappy victims, by means of an education which conducts them, step by step, from vanity to vice, reconciling themselves to all its direful consequences, by a repetition of the cabalistic word GENTEEL, which has such

a magical charm, as to change, in their opinion, the very nature of every species of madness, vice and folly!

Can a mind, pure and intelligent as that of Zaarmilla, delight to dwell with such a people? Is it from such a polluted stream, that the descendant of a thousand Rajahs would wish to imbibe knowledge? Foolish project! Perverted ambition! How many choice morsels of Shanscrit literature lie mouldering in the temples of Benares, which he may rescue from the ravages of devouring worms, and be repaid with the words of wisdom! Hath the shallow invention of Europeans conceived any work equal to the Mahhabarat? Can the aphorisms of their philosophers be compared with the Heetopades of Veeshnoo Sarma? or the imagination of their poets vie in lofty imagery, or sublime expression, with the beautiful dramas of the immortal Calidas? Doth the wisdom-loving Rajah de-

light to tread the maze of logic? let him seek for gratification in the Persian writings of the Mussulmans, which, though scarcely lawful for a Hindoo to peruse, are yet to be preferred to the absurd writings of Christian philosophers.

Which of the lawyers of Europe has shewn himself more expert in involving the simplicity of truth in the deep mazes of perplexity, than the Imaum Aboo Yooseff, and the more illustrious philosopher Ib'n Edress al Shaffie? * What King of Europe could ever boast of a Minister equal to that Golden Pillar who supported the throne of the renowned Ackber? Or who, in modern times, can, among them, be compared with the great Eradut Khan Waseh? The memoirs, written by that nobleman, is a gem of such transcendent worth and lustre, that its imitation as far

* See Preliminary Discourse to the Hedaya.

exceeds the abilities of the puny nobles of Europe, as does the unshaken fidelity and magnanimous heroism of the illustrious writer. In truth, there was no point in which I was more disappointed, than in the state of learning in England. By multitudes of the people of that country, the name of Abul Fazel has never been heard! I conversed with many, to whom the renown of Veias was unknown; and can with truth aver, that numbers who have the character of *learned*, are yet so very ignorant, as not to know whether the great city of Canouge was founded by a Hindoo or a Mussulman!

With regard to the political state of Great-Britain, its laws and form of government, I am not qualified to speak with certainty; never having been able to find any two people of the same opinion with respect to any of these points. One circumstance alone appeared to be irrefragably

established; and this is a circumstance so extraordinary, that it deserves attention.

Know, then, that the Visier, or first Minister, to the king of Great-Britain, is, at all times, the weakest, and most wicked man in the kingdom, and that there is not a man in England, however incapable of managing with propriety the simplest concerns of private life, who is not much better qualified than the Minister, to conduct the complex and extensive business of a great nation! You may, perhaps, be inclined to doubt the truth of this assertion; but when I inform you, that I repeat it not from vague report, but from the reiterated and solemn asseverations of people of all stations, the point will appear incontrovertibly established.

I herewith send, for the gratification of your curiosity, a specimen of the painted idols of the Europeans, the examination

of which has lately employed much of my time. A rich field of conjecture is already opened, to the culture of which I shall willingly devote some of the remaining years of my existence. That the origin of the rites of these divinities may be traced to the favoured country of Brahma, will not admit of a doubt. The flower, which one of the Goddesses carries in her hand, bears such a striking resemblance to the Lotos, that, at first sight, any impartial person must recognise the adored figure of the bounteous Ganga. If any one of the figures has any claim to European origin, it is that of *Knave*; but who ever heard of a *King of Hearts* in the history of any nation of Europe? In the course of a few years investigation, I do not despair to prove the real family of every one of these painted idols; and, in the prosecution of this laborious work, I shall not disdain to imitate the method pursued by the antiquarians of England, for "wise men will

not disdain to learn, even from the counsel of fools." I recommend thee to the protection of Veeshnu, and the favour of all the inferior Gods.

What can I say more !

LETTER VI.

Third Letter of the Bramin.

BEFORE the delivery of my letter into the hands of the Dauk,* I resolved to re-examine the counsellors of memory, lest any circumstance, that could serve to enlighten the mind of the noble Rajah, should, unfortunately, have been omitted. It was a happy precaution! By it I am enabled to add to the proofs I have already given of the Braminical origin of the English nation, one other proof, which establishes the opinion of the Pundit, beyond the reach of human controversy.

* Messenger.

Let it be known, then, to the friend of Maandaara, that the performance of the ceremony of the Purekah* is known to the Christian, and so much is the practice of its mysterious rites encouraged, that the most trifling and insignificant disputes are frequently referred to its decision: as, for example; in speaking of the colour of the eyes of a dancing-girl, one man should say that they were black, and another aver them to be blue, the common method of deciding the dispute (either between *people of style*, or such as pant for admission into that honourable Cast) is the performance of Purekah. The method of performing this sublime ceremony, is not, it is true, exactly similar, in all respects, to that which is so piously observed in India. A little consideration on the genius of the people, and their deficiency in religious knowledge, will, however, account for the

* Trial by Ordeal, still practised in Hindostan.

difference. In England, I never heard that the performers of the Purekah took the precaution of preparing themselves for the award of fate, by the observance of long and rigorous abstinence; or that they were particularly assiduous in their acts of devotion; or that they bound themselves by any oath before the Magistrate to abide by the infallible decision of the Gods. All these preparatory duties are, by these trifling people, altogether omitted, and the ceremony itself, instead of being performed in the presence of the Magistrate, and the assembled people, is usually gone through, under the immediate inspection of only *two witnesses*. In the Purekah of the English, they neither thrust their hands into vessels filled with boiling oil, nor do they say to the Balance, "Thou, O Balance, art the mansion of truth, thou wast anciently contrived by Deities. If I am guilty, O venerable as my own mother, sink me down; but if innocent, raise me

aloft in air." Neither do they swallow poison; nor cast an Idol into the water; nor take into their hands the red hot iron; nor make any use of the seven leaves of the trembling Pippel, or the seven blades of Dharba grass,* but by means of the diminutive *Agnee Astors*, called Pistols, the two disputants attempt to convey little leaden bullets into one another's bowels, or brains. In the opinion of some philosophers, a worthless fellow will continue to be as much a worthless fellow after the performance of the Purekah as before; but in the opinions of the performers themselves, it has efficacy to change the nature of guilt, and to wash away the foulest spot of dishonour.

What can I say more!

* For an account of the Indian Ordeal, in which all these methods are mentioned, see *Asiatic Researches*, vol. ii.

LETTER VII.

Seeta Juin Zaarmilla, *Rajah of Almora* ; to
 Kisheen Neeay Maandaara, *Zimeendar
 of Cumlore.*

I BOW with reverence to Ganesa, and submit the ardent struggles of my soul to the decrees of friendship. The request of Maandaara I am unable to resist, even when his arguments are too feeble to make any impression on my mind: though my reason is unconvinced, I am subdued by my tenderness; and should consider myself unworthy of the name of friend, could I persist in tearing myself from my country at the moment that Maandaara is about to be restored to its bosom. Yes, my

friend! I have this moment received the delightful intelligence, that the Firman, which restores thee to thy Zimeendary, hath been issued! Thou mayest return in peace to the land of thy fathers! The Gods of Baandaresa shall be raised from their hiding places in the earth, to be placed upon the altars of his son: they shall see him perform the rites of hospitality; spread his feast for the poor, and afford shelter to the oppressed. The Dairers, who delight in beholding the reward of virtue, shall hover round your dwelling. Seraswatee shall bless your hours of study, and the bees of Cama, divested of their stings, shall pay you the tribute of pure and genuine sweetness.

I have prepared Zaamarcanda for receiving you as her husband. Her mind is too gentle to require the harsh restraint of authority: let me, therefore, conjure you to treat her with tenderness; and you will

be repaid by that willing obedience, which is the offspring of affection, in a docile, and ingenuous mind. For my share, I declare to you, that while I accept, with pleasure, of your sister for my wife, I, at the same time, must inform you of my intention of acting in direct opposition to your advice. From me she shall receive every indulgence. If she has any understanding, I will take pleasure in improving it: nor shall I dread any consequences that can arise from doing so. The more I meditate, the more am I convinced, that, to tread firmly in the path of virtue, it is necessary that we should be supported by the staff of knowledge. Ignorance is the mother of many follies.

It is with grief that I behold a mind, great and noble as that of my friend's, darkened by the clouds of prejudice. Had you, with me, paid homage to Seraswatee,

the soul-enlightening Goddess would have inspired you with ideas more worthy of yourself: you would not then have attributed a desire to enlarge the sphere of knowledge, and an ardent admiration of excellence, wherever found, to the influence of magical spells, or incantation.

There is a period, beyond which, if the human mind remains bound in the chains of ignorance, it loses the power of expansion, and considers the existence of it in others as the dream of illusive imagination.

He who loosed the fetters of my understanding, who convinced me, by the cultivated state of his own, how high the minds of mortals might soar—the enlightened Percy—taught me to observe, that the negative ignorance, in which the mind is immersed, when excluded from com-

merce with the world, is of a nature far less obdurate, than that which has been rivetted by pride in the bosom of society. Such is the ignorance of Sheermaal. His mind was too much narrowed, by its own prejudices, to receive a fair impression from new images. The few ideas which had been put into it, by his first teacher, had been received without examination, but retained with the pertinacity of unyielding pride.

Can *he* be a proper judge of the peculiar customs of remote nations, who measures every thing by the narrow standard of his own prejudices? Can *he*, who instead of making observations on the variety of human character, pronounces sentence of condemnation on whatever he does not understand; can *he* be qualified for communicating information to others? No. False and foolish will ever be the conclusions of presumptuous ignorance!

Ah! what a pattern might Sheermaal have found in the travellers, and the travel-writers of Europe! How many of these does England alone, every year, pour from her maternal bosom! Happy for Sheermaal, if he had followed the laudable example of their sapient youths; how deep would then have been his observations! how important his discoveries!

I am unwilling to speak with disrespect of a Bramin: I view the ignorance of this man with pity, and should only give to his *prejudice* the smile of contempt; but I cannot perceive his malice and his falsehood, without feelings of abhorrence and indignation. Is it for a mind, base and ignoble as his, to accuse the ingenuous and enlightened Percy of falsehood?

O that Maandaara could have known that incomparable youth! That he could have listened to his instructions, while

every word he uttered, was like the vivid flash of lightning, illuminating the dark expanse of night. He would then have been convinced, that a mind, like his, was incapable of swerving from the rigid dictates of truth; and he would have united with me in reprobating every attempt to calumniate his memory. Dear shall his memory be to Zaarmilla, while the blood of life flows through his veins; and whoever would shun my resentment, must be careful how they suffer the shadow of disrespect to pass over the name of my departed friend!

I HAVE just received the two concluding letters of that ignorant, and deluded Bramin; who has instilled his base preju-

dices into the mind of my friend. Surely some malignant Dewtah must have blinded the eyes, and fettered the understanding, of this unhappy man; who could not, otherwise, have been so grossly deceived. — What! during his ten years abode among Christians, never to have heard of, or seen, the Christian Shaster! That Shaster, the most abstruse and difficult doctrines of which are so carefully inculcated into the tender minds of youth, that every boy, who is sent to the University, is so perfectly master of the subject, as to be able to give his solemn assent to the unerring explanations of his Church! That Shaster, of which the precepts of Peace, Charity, Humility, and universal Benevolence, form the basis of every law, and direct the practice of every Christian court! That Shaster I have studied with the strictest attention, and do solemnly assure you, that the virtues I have enumerated are as strictly enjoined to the Christians, as the per-

formance of Poojah to the Hindoo, or the Fast of Ramozin to the Mussulman. The Mussulman fasts, and the Hindoo performs Poojah, according to their respective laws; and can we believe that the Christian alone treats with contempt the authority of his God?

How could the lie-loving Bramin expect to be credited, when he asserts, that Christians enter into the traffic of blood! That these men, who walk by the rule of "doing to others, as they would be done by in the like case," invade the countries of the defenceless, and seizing, with tiger-like ferocity, their unoffending children, bind them in the galling chains of slavery, and devote them, as a cruel sacrifice, to the black Goddess of affliction! Surely, such a representation cannot fail to appear in its true light to every one, who knows the jealousy entertained by the sublime Governors of that enlightened nation, for the

purity of their honour! Do we not know their notions of moral excellence to be so exalted, that even those Chiefs whom we have considered as bulwarks, raised by the immortal Veeshnu, to protect us from the destroyer, have fallen short of the standard of perfection erected in the immaculate bosoms of their brethren at home? And can such men be supposed to sanction the traffic of human misery? Ah! how little doth he know of the undeviating rectitude of the British Senate!

Indeed, all that he says upon the religious rites practised by the English nation, is equally false, and absurd. There is no such thing as any Poojah performed to bits of painted paper: neither are partridges held sacred. From examining their Shaster, with the strictest accuracy, I am prepared to assert, that it contains not one word which could countenance such idolatry. And, whether it is likely that any

practices, not warranted by its authority, would be suffered to become prevalent, I shall leave you to judge, after informing you, that, in England, no man is deemed qualified for holding even the meanest employment in the state, but by the performance of an act of the most solemn devotion: An act which is only safe to the pious and the pure; and of which, to participate unworthily, is declared to be a heinous sin! Ah! how pure must be the morals of such a people!

As to what he says of the frivolous education bestowed upon Christian women, it is sufficient to observe, that it is utterly inconsistent with the belief of the immortality and progressive improvement of the human soul; it is, indeed, too absurd to stand in need of confutation. When he can convince me, that the men are vain, voluptuous, selfish, and unjust, then shall

I believe, that the women are frivolous, and ignorant.

In regard to what he asserts, of the different Casts into which the people are divided, I am not so well prepared to answer him. I only know, that nothing like it appears in the Christian Shaster. The *people of family*, and the *people of no family*, are there put upon a level; and, at the time it was written, it is evident *the people of style* had never been heard of.

Oh! that it had been permitted me to have confuted the misrepresentations of this wicked Bramin, by the unerring answers of *experience!* O! that I could have followed the impulse of my own desires, in the glorious pursuit of wisdom; and traced the obscure and distant path, by which Knowledge disseminated her treasures over the various regions of the earth! Ah! didst thou know what it has

cost me to relinquish this favourite pursuit; what self-denial I have been obliged to exert, ere I could turn mine eyes from the enchanting prospect that opened to my view, thou wouldst esteem this act of friendship more, than if I had poured into thy lap the accumulated treasures of my fathers!

Having once determined, thou needst not fear that ought shall have power to shake my resolution. I swear to thee, by the name of my father, *that while Prymaveda lives, Zaarmilla will never forsake her.*

I shall be at Rampore in the space of a fortnight: there I shall give, to the arms of my friend, the lovely and gentle Zamarcanda; and receive thy sister for the partner of my bosom. After the performance of our nuptials, I shall have the pleasure of conducting you to the ancient seat of your forefathers. You will be received

with joy by all the Ryots, and welcomed by every surrounding Zimeendar, with the sincerest satisfaction. You must, after this, return with me to Almora; and there, where every scene recalls to memory the days of early felicity, we shall renew the studies, and retaste the pleasures of our youth. We shall mingle our tears of gratitude, at the tomb of the venerable Pundit, who first poured the balm of instruction into our young and tender minds.

In the fair bosom of creation, and in the gorgeously enamelled vault of heaven, we shall, together, read those divine mysteries, over which the wisdom of our holy Bramins has thrown a veil, that is impene- trable only to ignorance.* From these we will rise to the contemplation of that

* This expression seems favourable to the opinion entertained by some of our own writers, that great part of the Mythology of the Hindoos is nothing more than enigmatical representations of astronomical facts.

Omniscient Spirit, whose all-ruling power
Bids from each sense bright emanations beam ;
Glow in the rainbow, sparkles in the stream,
Smiles in the bud, and glistens in the flower
 That crowns each vernal bower ;
Sighs in the gale, and warbles in the throat
Of every bird, that hails the blooming spring,
Or tells his love in many a liquid note,
While envious artists touch the rival string,
 Till rocks and forests ring ;
Breathes in rich fragrance from the sandal grove,
Or where the precious musk-deer playful rove :
In dulcet juice from clust'ring fruit distils,
And burns salubrious in the tasteful clove.*

May the sovereign Maya † present to the
 mind of Maandaara, an ever-varying assem-

* This Stanza of *the Hymn to Narayana*, by Sir William Jones, is so expressive of the sentiments of the Rajah, that the translator has taken the liberty of inserting it.

† It will be sufficient here to premise, that the inextricable difficulties attending *material substances*, induc-

blage of fair ideas ! but may that which is dearest to his heart, be the friendship of Zaarmilla!

What can I say more!

ed many of the wisest Hindoos " to believe, that the whole creation was rather an *energy* than a *work*, by which the Infinite Being, who is present at all times, in all places, exhibits to the minds of his creatures *a set of perceptions* like a wonderful picture or piece of music, always varied, yet always uniform ; so that all bodies, and their qualities, exist, indeed, to every wise and useful purpose ; but exist only as far as they are *perceived*. This *Illusive Operation* of the Deity, the Hindoo philosophers call *Maya*, or *Deception*." See the Argument to the above mentioned Hymn.

[In the correspondence of the Rajah we here find a chasm of several years. Though none of the letters bear any date, we have, from circumstances mentioned in the preceding ones, concluded them to have been written toward the beginning of the year 1775. Those which follow, we presume, could not have been written before the year 1779, or 1780.]

LETTER VIII.

*From the Rajah Zaarmilla to Maandaara.
(Written from Barellee.)*

MAY the powerful Eendra be ever propitious to the most benignant of friends; and the Goddess Sree preserve his heart from the arrows of affliction!

An opportunity offers, of which I am not slow to avail myself, of sending thee information of my health and safety. Had not sorrow spread its raven wing over the beauties of every prospect, my journey might have been delightful. But, alas! to him, whose heart is oppressed by recent calamity, the face of nature is veiled in

darkness. My person was soon at a distance from the scene of sorrow, but from it I could not, by distance, disengage my mind. Prymaveda! my affectionate and faithful Prymaveda, expiring in my arms, was the picture that every-where presented itself to my eyes. Her last low and feeble sighs, were still the only sounds which vibrated upon my ears. Change of scene afforded no alleviation to my grief, and time, whose tongue of fire devoureth all things, appeared to move with too slow a pace to leave me room to hope much from his assistance. One only source of consolation presented itself to my deeply wounded mind, it was the reflection of having contributed to the happiness of her whose image dwells in my heart. Had I ever reprov'd with harshness, or indulg'd my pride in the morose exercise of authority, how insupportable would be the bitterness of my affliction!

Let not Maandaara reproach his friend for indulging in these melancholy reflections. The woman, who is attached to her husband, will follow the spirit of her departed Lord, even though condemned to the regions of punishment; and shall my soul forget her who waiteth for me in the realms of death? She, from whom sprung my final deliverer!* She, who was the companion of my days, the friend of my heart, whose gentle manners, and pru-

* Alluding to the ceremony of the Sradh, which the Hindoos believe it necessary should be performed by a man's own son, in order to facilitate his entrance to the regions of felicity; it is, therefore, by them esteemed a great misfortune to die childless. In the drama of *Sacotala*, Dushmanta thus laments his fate: "Ah me! the departed souls of my ancestors, who claim a share in the funeral cake, which I have no son to offer, are apprehensive of losing their due honour.—My forefathers must drink, instead of a pure libation, this flood of tears, the only offering which a man, who dies childless, can make." See *Sacotala*, page 125.

dent counsels, smoothed the rugged path of life, and gave value to every blessing. But, alas! the innocent vivacity, the endearing tenderness, which, but yesterday, were the delight of my life, are now recalled but to aggravate my sorrow. But why should I, with the dart that rankles in my own bosom, wound the breast of my friend? Let me try to change the subject.

At Bissoolee, I was received by my kinsman, with every mark of kindness. He endeavoured to divert my mind from the subject of its own griefs, by turning my attention to those great transactions, of which this country had lately been the scene.

The first information that is given us upon any subject, that is in its nature interesting, and which is beyond the reach of our own inspection, is so greedily received,

that the judgment we form upon it is equally prompt and decisive. I have frequently observed, that such hasty judgment is, upon more full investigation, found erroneous; and here I had ample proof of the justice of the observation.

When the fall of the Afgan Khans had taken place, we rejoiced to hear that this beautiful, and fertile province, was to be put under the administration of Beass Raye;* that pious Hindoo, who had shed so many tears over the misfortunes of his country. We imagined that he, who could paint the extortions, and oppressions of the Afgans, in such true and lively colours, must necessarily be possessed of a good, and feeling heart. Alas! the art of describing human misery, and the virtue of feeling for it, are two very different things.

* See the Rohilla History.

This man, who declaimed so eloquently against the rapacity of the Afgans, had a heart *so steeled* by avarice, as to be impervious to every sentiment of humanity. The country groaned beneath his oppressions, and his removal was considered as a deliverance from the pestilence.

After having spent a week at Bissoolee, I took leave of my kind, but too officious kinsman, and proceeded to Barellee. The approach to this city, through lofty rows of bamboos, which form a continued arbour, surrounded on every side by gardens, flourishing in all the pride of beauty, extorted my admiration.

I did not fail to visit the tomb of the renowned Afgan, who was so long the terror, and the glory of Kuttaher.* I

* Hafiz Rhamut, a Rohilla Chief, celebrated for his warlike talents, and unprincipled ambition : by betray-

chose to visit it alone. There are moments, when the soul, absorbed in its own reflections, feels an elevation which is incompatible with any society.

The sun had just hid the splendour of his beams behind the hills of Bissoolee, and night begun to spread her dusky curtain over the face of nature, when I approached the silent scene, where the tomb of the warrior was reared. Of that ambi-

ing the trust of his friend, and usurping the inheritance of his wards, he put himself at the head of the Rohilla government ; and was killed at the battle of Cutterah, 22d of April 1774. By those who ought to have known better, Hafiz Rhamut has been confounded with HAFIZ, the celebrated poet of Shiraz, who flourished about four hundred years ago. On consulting the Parliamentary Register, we find Hafiz Rhamut, who was neither a poet nor a man of letters, introduced, as "*famous throughout the East for the elegance of his literature, and the spirit of his poetical compositions.*" Parliamentary Register, No. 76. page 205.

tion, before the impetuous career of which, the bars of gratitude, and of justice, had been annihilated; that ambition, insatiable as the ocean, and extensive as the firmament of heaven, what were now the limits? Small was the spot which contained the mouldering remains of him, who had struck the princes of the earth with terror. I listened—but the thunder of his voice was no longer to be heard. I looked—but the crowds of flatterers, who were wont to pay adulatory homage to his smiles, were no longer to be seen. The world, which had beheld the Afgan greatness arise, like a meteor from the womb of obscurity; which had been dazzled by the brightness of its splendour, and astonished by the celerity of its progress, beheld, without regret, its utter extinction in this narrow tomb. I indulged in these reveries the greater part of the night. The remainder of my time, at Barellee, was spent in making inquiries concerning the remark-

able events which have taken place in its vicinity. The difficulty of obtaining information was greater than I was aware of. Every one, whom I applied to for that purpose, I found to be so brimful of that part of the story which particularly related to himself, that I was obliged to listen to a volume of uninteresting anecdotes, before I could arrive at the truth.

The ravages committed by the troops of his Highness, after the battle of Cutturah,* were such as have been constantly practised by every victorious army; but the contrast exhibited in the behaviour of the English, was altogether new and uncommon: such as no Mussulman army has ever been known to practise; and such as, I greatly fear, they will never be induced to imitate.

* See Rohilla History.

After having, by their courage and superior skill, decided the event of the day, while those for whom they fought, rushed upon the spoil of the defeated enemy, and, in their avidity for plunder, were alike regardless of the remonstrances of justice, and the dictates of humanity; the gallant army of the English, satisfied with the glory of victory, disdained all other spoil. They beheld, with indignation and horror, the behaviour of their allies, and exerted themselves for the protection, and relief, of the unhappy sufferers, whom the successful foe had left destitute of every other resource.

All that I have heard in this place, rekindles in my bosom the desire so long cherished, and so unwillingly suppressed, of becoming more intimately acquainted with a people, who have ever been the objects of my affectionate veneration. My resolution is taken; and, in pursuance of

it, as soon as I have performed the act of pious ablution, in the sacred spot where the two wandering blessings of Hindostan unite their waves, I shall proceed to the English camp. In listening to the instructive conversation of these enlightened men, the selfish sorrows which at present occupy my heart, may, for a time, be soothed into forgetfulness. I shall, perhaps, renew my acquaintance with the friends of Percy. I shall, with them, have the pleasure of recapitulating the virtues of that amiable youth; those virtues, whose fragrance perfumed my soul, and left an impression, strong as the incense from the aromatic plant, which time has not the power to obliterate.

Present Zamarcanda with the affectionate remembrances of her brother. I would recommend my son to her affection, did I not know that her goodness will anticipate my wishes. To you, my friend, and to

her, I trust the precious deposit—the life of my life! And to Camdhaynu my soul is expanded in prayers for your happiness!

VOL. I.

Q

Camdhaynu
my soul
is expanded
in prayers
for your
happiness!

LETTER IX.

The SAME, to the SAME.

FROM the King of worshipped places,* the renowned Allahabad, to the most faithful of friends, Zaarmilla sends health and prosperity. While the divine influence of the sacred stream, into which I have so lately plunged, continues to re-

* The English reader will find some light thrown upon the subject of this letter, by consulting Mr Maurice's Indian Antiquities, who having traced the progress of the Ganges, from the mountains of Thibet to the plains of Hindoostan, thus proceeds: " Then flowing on through delightful plains, and diffusing riches and verdure in its progress, at Allahabad receives a rich tribute to its stream, in the waters of the Jumna. If we may

fresh my soul, I hasten to impart to thee the sentiments which have inspired my heart. But how shall I describe to you the transport with which I beheld the sacred spot, celebrated through all ages! that spot, consecrated by the threefold junction of the sacred Ganges, the health-giving Jumna, and the unseen, but not less benignant Serraswattee! I contemplated, with elevated rapture, the junction of those honoured streams, which here mingling their sacred waves, diffuse the exhaustless treasures of fertility, and verdure, over the most favoured of regions. From these blessed emblems of the mys-

believe the Bramins, another sacred river, called the Serraswatty, joins these rivers under ground; and, therefore, this spot, consecrated by the threefold junction of their waves, has ever been the resort of devout pilgrims, from every province of Hindoostan, and is denominated, in the Ayeen Ackbery,—*The King of worshipped Places.*" Maurice's Indian Antiquities, vol. i. p. 155.

tic union of the divinities, my soul, wrapt in gratitude, ascended to the Almighty Creating Power, the grandeur of whose works is only to be equalled by his beneficence.

In the lessons of the venerable Pundit, who was our first instructor, and in the sublime writings of the great luminaries of the world, we have been taught to lift our hearts to Him, who alone is infinite in power and goodness! But, alas! the minds of all the Bramins I have met with here, are completely engrossed by the multiplied symbols of his attributes. From their company, I have received no pleasure; from their conversation, I have reaped no instruction. I shall, therefore, hasten the period of my departure, and, probably, finish this letter from Benares.

FROM the Queen of Science, the favoured seat of learning, the celebrated Benares, Zaarmilla again addresses his friend.

Before I say any thing of a place of which you have already heard so much, I shall proceed to inform you of my visit to the English officers, in the garrison of Chunar.

As I stopt to take some refreshment, at the distance of a few coss from the fort, I was informed, by my people, that some English officers, who had been out on a hunting party, were, at that very time, in the same village. I sent to inform them of my intention of visiting Chunar; and, in a few minutes, I was no less delighted

than surprised, to see Doctor Denbeigh enter the veranda, where I was then reposing myself. He saluted me with that glow of kindness, which is excited in the bosoms of the benevolent, by an unexpected interview with those whom the hand of time seemed to have separated for ever. He introduced me to his companions, the urbanity of whose manners formed a striking contrast to the plainness of their dress.

On my arrival at Chunar, I found myself as if I had been all at once transported into a new world. Surrounded by the English Chiefs, whose dress, whose language, and whose manners, were all so different from what I had ever been accustomed to, I could scarcely persuade myself that I did not wander in the realms of delusion.

At first, all Englishmen appeared to me to wear the same aspect, and to have the

same manners. But when wonder had sufficiently subsided, to admit of the calm accuracy of observation, I perceived that every countenance had a characteristic distinction; a distinction which extended to the tones of the voice, and gestures of the body. This variety, like the Raginis which preside over music,* served but to render harmony more pleasing. The senior officers smiled at the playful vivacity of their youthful friends, who frequently ventured to exert their wit in a manner that could not have failed to excite resentment in less amiable minds. The time of each was spent according to his own taste. By some it was employed in the pursuit of literature; and I am certain it must exalt

* The Raginis, or female passions, are the nymphs, which, according to the beautiful Allegory of the Hindoos, preside over musical sounds. A translation of some of the many Dissertations upon this subject, which are to be found in the Shanscrit language, is much to be wished for.

my new friends in the estimation of Maandaara, when he is informed, that to the knowledge of the Persian, many of the English Chiefs add a considerable degree of information in the Shanscrit language. The time of vacation from immediate service, wasted by the Mussulman Commanders in voluptuous indolence, is spent by these more enlightened men, in studies which add to their stock of knowledge, and do honour to the genius of their country. It is by these strangers that the annals of Hindoostan, which her barbarian conquerors have sought to obliterate in the blood of her children, shall be restored! Already have temples, palaces, and cities, which Calli* had covered with the mantle of oblivion, been, by the indefatigable researches of these favourites of Seraswattee, dragged to light.

* Calli, here signifies Time.

The Pagodas, whose lofty summits had sustained the clouds, and palaces, which had once spread their golden fronts to the sun, proud of being the residence of the ancient Rajahs of our nation, now bow their time-worn heads to listen to the voice of strangers, and behold the sacred characters, inscribed upon their bosoms, familiarly perused by a people, whose nation had not sprung into existence at the time these towering monuments of Eastern splendour had commenced the progress of decay !

I found great difficulty in tearing myself from the society of these gentlemen, from whom I experienced every mark of kindness and attention. The pain of parting was, however, in some degree alleviated, by the promise made to me, by two of these Saibs, to rejoin me at Benares.

I embarked, for the first time, on the mighty Ganges, and, turning my eyes to take leave of the seat of hospitality, I was struck with the appearance of the citadel, which seems to have arisen from the bed of Ganga: the piety of our fathers is still legible on the walls of this massy pile; nor has the guardian Dewtah forsaken her sacred charge. The seat of her residence remains entire. And though the refreshing breeze of morn wafts her to the seat of Science, she fails not to return to Chunar, before the sultry heats of noon.*

* The Fort of Chunar is said to be of the highest antiquity. In the citadel is a black marble slab, on which the tutelar Deity of the place is traditionally supposed, at all times, to be seated, except from sunrise until nine o'clock in the morning, when she is supposed to be at Benares; during which time, from the superstition of the Hindoos, attacks may be made upon the fort with a prospect of success. See Hodges' Travels in India, page 56.

We gently floated down the unruffled bosom of the Queen of Rivers, which expands itself on approaching Benares, and puts on an additional air of grandeur, in honour, it would seem, of this celebrated city. The city appears to have returned the compliment, and to have selected its choicest ornaments to deck the banks of its beneficent visitor. Numerous and beautiful are the Pagodas, all enriched by the piety, and adorned by the ingenuity of our ancestors, which see themselves reflected in the mighty stream. Some, in mouldering ruins, tell of the injuries they have sustained, not only from the insidious hand of time, but from the ruthless bigotry of the destroying foe. Innumerable Ghauts,* some of which are highly decorated, and embankments, which exhibit all the splendour and elegance of architecture, give ad-

* Flights of steps leading up from the river.

ditional grace and beauty to this most enchanting scene.

My reception from the Rajah was extremely flattering. You will, no doubt, be anxious for my opinion of this man, who now fills so important a station.

There is no trial so dangerous to virtue, as prosperity: had the father of this young man continued to occupy the office of Dewan to the Aumeldar* of the province, so long filled by his grandfather, and he himself succeeded to the same advantageous, though subordinate employment, he

* Bulwart Sing, the father of Cheyt Sing, was the son of Monserans, a Bramin, who had been appointed Dewan (*or steward*) to Rushem Ally, then Aumeldar (*or governor*) of the province of Benares; he supplanted his master, and obtained the province for himself; and this was the origin of a man, called, by some in this country, a sovereign Prince! See Broome's *Elucidation of the Articles of Impeachment*.

might, perhaps, have conducted himself with temper and discretion : but the height of his elevation has made him giddy ; he wishes to quit the staff which has hitherto supported him ; and by the assistance of which he has climbed to his present greatness. If he succeeds, he will probably be made sensible of his folly, by the precipitancy of his fall.

You may imagine in what manner this young man is imposed upon by his people, when I tell you, that they have actually made him believe that the present Governor-General is not without enemies, even in the Supreme Council ! Was ever any thing more absurd, than to imagine that men, who could possibly have no other motive for visiting these regions, than to promote their country's glory, and the happiness of mankind, should yet become enemies to him who has so eminently contributed to both ? Ridiculous idea ! What

is it but to imagine, that from the base motives of *personal enmity, envy of superior talents, or jealousy of superior power*, these men would prefer the ruin of a rival to the glory and preservation of an empire! How unworthy of the character of Englishmen!

I was much rejoiced at the arrival of my two English friends, whose chief motive for visiting Benares at this time, was to inspect and examine the astronomical apparatus still extant in the Tower of the Stars. Both these gentlemen were deeply learned in this divine science. The stupendous engines, constructed by the ingenuity of our ancestors for measuring the expanse of heaven, and tracing through its trackless arch the path of its illustrious inhabitants, filled their minds with astonishment. Alas! that these evidences of the wisdom of our fathers, should now serve to mark the degeneracy of their

children ! That science, which exalts the soul to heaven, which enables it to peruse that book of wisdom, where the Supreme hath written his attributes in the most legible characters ; even in the golden orbs whose distant glories delight the eye of ignorance. That science, so familiar to our fathers, is now almost lost to their unenlightened sons. But as the splendid luminary of the sky, when apparently extinguished in darkness, continues still to pursue his course, illuminating with his brightness the various inhabitants of the earth ; so doth the Goddess of Science pursue her radiant journey ; and when we vainly imagine she is gone for ever, if we open the eyes of our understanding, we shall see her beaming with redoubled lustre on the children of another hemisphere. These strangers could, at one glance, comprehend the use of those instruments, which the Pundits who attended us could not explain ; and I soon found

that the knowledge imparted to us upon this subject, by our reverend teacher, was but ignorance, compared to their superior attainments. Need we farther proof that the spirit of Brahma is not confined to any particular region, but extendeth over his great creation?

In the conviction of this truth, I have determined to devote some months to the cultivation of a more intimate acquaintance with those, who are so well qualified to impart the light of knowledge to my mind.

I have now fulfilled the purpose of my journey to Benares, but have no pleasure in the thoughts of returning to Almora. Alas! wherefore should I return? The lamp of love is extinguished in my dwelling, and darkness rests upon my pleasant bowers. To my friend, and to my sister, I can, with confidence, entrust the only

treasure that interests my heart. Yes, Zamarcanda, I know that thou wilt watch with a mother's care over the helpless infancy of my child. May the Gods of our nation reward thy tenderness!

What can I say more!



LETTER X.

From the SAME, to the SAME.

“WHOSE happiness,” saith the wise instructor, “is equal to that of the man who hath a friend to live with, a friend to converse with, and a friend to embrace;” and such happiness it is now my destiny to enjoy. Behold me at Calcutta, under the same roof with the gentle Saib, who was the chosen friend of the ever-lamented Percy!

Once more embarking on the bosom of the beneficent Ganga, I was conducted by the gentle Goddess to Patna, where the first person that met my arrival was no other than Captain Grey himself. He

instantly recognized me, and received me with the spontaneous glow of cordial affection. The few days that I remained there, were chiefly occupied in viewing that ancient city, which the residence of the English has recalled to the vigour of life. Nothing has more forcibly struck my mind, in the whole course of my journey, than the amazing contrast, in point of fertility and cultivation, between the territories of the Christian and Mussulman Lords of Hindoostan. In the Mussulman districts, we behold ruined villages, where, instead of the cheerful noise of the mechanic, or the mingled hum of light-hearted loquacity, universal silence reigns; nor, in some once populous districts, does any human figure meet the eye, save that of some solitary Bramin, who, absorbed in contemplation, forsakes the haunts of men.

The chief stations of the English, on the contrary, may easily be traced by the

flourishing state of the country which surrounds them : There, the peasant throws the grain into the liberal bosom of the earth with cheerfulness ; assured, that he shall reap the reward of his toil. Having paid his rent, he knows that the remainder will be his own ; nor fears that it will be wrested from him by the open violence of the spoiler, or seized by the hard hand of rapacious avarice. Even when the heavens withheld their fructifying distillations from the thirsty earth, and ghastly famine stalked through the provinces around, the benignant charity of the English Chiefs sustained the lives of thousands : and thousands more would have been saved from perishing, had their religious principles permitted them to accept the proffered bounty.*

* The English reader may perhaps object to the account of the Rajah, as being very different from that tale of horrors, which has been so generally received.

The day after my arrival at Patna, Captain Grey received the agreeable news of his having been promoted, by the Governor-General, to a new appointment, which demanded his immediate attendance at Calcutta. It was with pleasure that I accepted his obliging invitation to accompany him thither. Several of his friends agreed to be of the party. We proceeded in Budgerows, furnished with every accommodation that could add pleasure to this delightful voyage.

As the channel of the river enlarged, my heart bounded within me at the expanse of waters which surrounded me. "Yet what is this stream, in all its majesty," exclaimed I, "in comparison of

Which account comes nearest to the truth, those who have been eye-witnesses of the scene described, can best determine.

that mighty ocean, that fathomless abyss, which all these Europeans have already passed!" Such is the degree of knowledge to be acquired in retirement, compared to the attainments of those, whose bosoms receive the waters of wisdom, flowing through the thousand channels of experience!

The novelty of the picturesque and beautiful scenery, that frequently presented itself to our eyes, produced astonishment and delight; but the uncommon traits of character, which I observed in some of my companions, exhibited a novelty still more interesting. As an example, I shall only attempt to describe to you a few of those features, in the character of one young officer, from which you may form some idea of the many subjects of wonder with which a stranger is surrounded when he enters into the society of Christians.

The first thing that attracted my attention toward this young man, was the beauty of his countenance; but the prepossession was soon done away, by the familiarity of his manners, and that indecorous want of respect toward his superiors, which gave me inconceivable disgust. When the senior Chiefs opened their lips to speak, instead of listening, in mute attention, to the words of wisdom which proceeded from their mouths, he interrupted their discourse with some sally of wit, which not unfrequently presented all they had said in so ridiculous a point of view, as to excite the laughter of all present. Judge how this shocked and offended me! Not a day passed, in which he did not perform some wild pranks; in these, however, there was such a mixture of pleasantry, as to force mirth to get the better of anger. On expressing to Captain Grey my surprise at the lenity with which this young man was treated, even

by those who suffered from him, he gave me to understand, that the follies of which I complained were occasioned by a disease, called, in their language, HIGH SPIRITS; a malady peculiar to the climates of Europe. This information quickly changed my aversion for the poor youth into compassion; but, surely, if this disease be very common in those climates, it must be extremely troublesome: how happy is it, that it is not infectious! I was very sorry to learn that he intended being of our party to Calcutta, and avoided, as much as possible, having any communication with him; but my efforts were vain; his disorder made him so restless, that he never remained in one part of the Budgerow for ten minutes at one time.

It would be endless to repeat all the fooleries of this youth, during our voyage: I shall only mention the following, which

will be sufficient to give you an idea of the effects of *high spirits*.

It was on an evening of unparalleled beauty. The air, which had been just refreshed by a North-wester,* breathed sweet fragrance; delightful as the reconciliation of friends, when the clouds of resentment have been dissipated by the Sun of Truth. The clear blue sky saw itself reflected on the unruffled bosom of the Queen of Rivers. On the right hand, the lovely Goddess stretched her majestic waves to such a distance, that the prominent and lofty banks which formed her western girdle, appeared to our view as a black line touching the horizon. At less than half a coss distance on the left, a richly cultivated country smiled upon us, through the various openings of a Mango grove; which

* A term used in India for a particular species of hurricane.

frequently intruded upon the verdant slope, to kiss the tresses of Ganga.

We were tempted by the beauty of the evening to go on shore, somewhat sooner than usual: On our landing, innumerable flocks of peacocks, lorys, and other inhabitants of the grove, were in motion, who, waving their resplendent plumage in the golden rays of the declining sun, gave an additional charm to the graces of this lovely landscape.*

* A late writer (Mr Belsham, in his *Reign of George the Third*) in portraying the horrid deeds of our countrymen in India, and the calamitous state to which that country was reduced, through their oppressions, thus expresses himself: "Striking, indeed, is the contrast between the situation of the country at this period, and that, which we were told it enjoyed, *in the happy times of the Mogul Government*. The kingdom of Bengal, during a long period of peaceful repose, is described as (*then*) exhibiting the most charming and picturesque scenery, opening into extensive glades, covered with a

A walk to the next village was proposed, and agreed to by all the party, excepting one little fat man, who seemed, upon all occasions, to make the study of his own ease the principal object of his concern; and whose extreme selfishness had given frequent disgust to all his fellow voyagers. To him young Cooper attached himself,

fine turf, and interspersed with woods, *filled with a variety of birds of beautiful colours; among others, peacocks in abundance, sitting on the vast horizontal branches, displayed their dazzling plumes to the sun, &c.*

The benevolent reader will be happy to learn from the account of the Rajah, confirmed by the views of a late ingenious traveller (Mr Hodges) that the race of peacocks has not been *utterly exterminated* by the cruel rapacity of the British Governors of Bengal! If the misrepresentations of credulity had been always restrained to external objects, their confutation would have been an easy task. But who can follow the historian, who pretends to expose the secret workings of the human mind, and pursues the victim of his prejudice even to the throne of God! Who, speaking of the un-

declaring that he could not think of leaving alone, in a strange country, so valuable a gentleman. Pleased at this instance of his benevolence, we commended his good nature, and proceeded on our walk.

Following the course of the transparent Nullah,* on whose banks we had landed,

fortunate death of a man, whose services had been an acknowledged benefit to his country, could presume to say, that "though acquitted at the highest human tribunal, he could not acquit himself, *or hope for acquittal at that far more awful tribunal at which he dreaded to appear!*" History of the Reign of George the Third, vol. i. page 355.

Instead of the quotation from Persius, we would rather conclude such a sentence with the lines of Pope.

Let not this weak unknowing hand,
 Presume thy bolts to throw,
 Or deal damnation o'er the land
 On each I judge thy foe.

* Small streams.

we soon arrived at a small village, most of whose peaceful inhabitants we found busied at their looms, beneath the friendly shade of a far spreading banyan. In one of the hundred arbours formed by the descending branches, sat a musician, who softly touched the chords of a vena; to the sweet sound of which, the women and children were listening with mute attention.

Our approach presented a new object to their curiosity. The music had ceased; but was renewed at the request of Captain Grey, who entreated we might give no interruption, either to their labours, or amusement.

Mean time the Chief of the village drew near, to perform the duties of hospitality. A young officer, who saw him advancing, hastily inquired, in English, whether we could be supplied with milk from the vil-

lage? "Archa Sahib, tamarrow Mulluk,"* replied the villager, making a profound reverence. "To-morrow wont do for us, friend," replied the officer, "we can't stay here all night." And returning to Captain Grey, "we have had a fruitless errand," said he, "for the old man here says, we can have no milk till to-morrow."

The poor fellow, who had been greatly mortified by the abrupt manner in which the gentleman had received his offered civilities, now repeated them to Captain Grey in the same terms, who laughed very heartily at his friend, for suffering the casual resemblance between the sound of an English and a Bengal word to lead him into such a mistake.

Having received from the village an ample supply of the articles we wanted, we

* Is not this your country?—command in it what you please.

returned, in search of our friends, followed by a train of villagers, loaded with milk, eggs, fruit, &c.

We soon reached the Mango grove, but what was our surprise, on entering it, to see the poor fat gentleman straining his unwieldy limbs to grasp the trunk of a large tree, which he was attempting to climb, as fast as his untoward bulk would permit. Panting for breath, he cast a look of despair on young Cooper, who sat perching on a bough of the same tree above; and whose voice we heard from a considerable distance, vehemently urging his corpulent companion to proceed: "But two or three feet farther, my dear sir, and you will be out of all danger," cried he. The poor gentleman made an effort, but slipped back to the same situation. "One other attempt, for heaven's sake, my dear sir," resumed Cooper, "or the tiger will lay hold of your poor limbs." "Gracious

heaven!" cried the gentleman, in agony. At these words, he cast a glance around, which was fully descriptive of the horrors of his situation. On perceiving us, he shouted out, that Cooper had seen a tiger: beseeching us, at the same time, to assist him, and to take care of ourselves. Captain Grey, who immediately apprehended some trick of young Cooper, inquired of the villagers, whether any tiger had been lately seen in the neighbourhood? and, being answered in the negative, he prevailed on the poor gentleman to descend. On further investigation, it appeared that the young gentleman had been seized with a paroxysm of his disease in our absence, and that the story of the tiger had been invented by him, in order to throw his poor unsuspecting companion into the awkward situation in which we found him; and of which he produced, next morning, so admirable a drawing, as excited laughter in all who saw it: from me, I confess,

it extorted an unwilling smile. But these Europeans do not seem to think the entertainment, that is purchased at the expence of the feelings of another, is too dearly paid for.

We arrived at Calcutta in the night, and went directly to the house of a friend of Captain Grey's, where, according to the rules of hospitality established in this place, we were both invited to take up our abode.

The Governor-General is now in the country, and as it is not proper that I should appear, till after I have been introduced to him, I shall have nothing of any consequence to write for some days.

It has always been my intention to communicate to you a faithful copy of the first impression made upon my mind, by every new object presented to it; but knowing the aptitude of ignorance to fall into the path of error, I am not without apprehensions, that, while I intend to inform, I may possibly mislead. This shall not, however, deter me from pursuing my plan, but only render me more careful in forming my judgment.

Experience has already taught me, that the conclusions, which are formed with precipitance, are almost always retracted with shame: Thus, for instance, when I hear these Christians introducing, in familiar conversation, the name of their *Almighty Creator*, upon the most trifling

occasions; nay, sometimes, as it would appear, merely to supply the lack of matter, and to fill the chasms of conversation; I can scarcely forbear from accusing them of impiety. But a moment's reflection convinces me of the absurdity of supposing that they, who boast the light and privileges of a divine revelation, can be guilty of irreverence to the Supreme! I therefore conclude, that when these Christians pronounce, with so much ease, *that Name*, which is held, by every pious Hindoo, in too great reverence to be uttered, except upon the gravest, and most solemn occasions; and which no faithful Mussulman was ever known to pronounce, without a pause, it is from a consciousness of their own superior piety, which they, doubtless, imagine, entitles them to this degree of familiarity with their Maker.

Another instance of the same kind has occurred to me, in an expression much in

use, the meaning of which, on applying to the Dictionary, I found to be that of *the eternal punishment of the soul in hell!* I shuddered to think, how often I had heard this dreadful doom pronounced by some of my fellow-travellers, not only on their own souls, but on that of many of their brethren! but on more maturely considering the matter, I found it more agreeable to the precepts of their religion, as well as to the dictates of common sense, to conclude, that, in my imperfect knowledge of the language, the *negative* had escaped me; and thus what sounded in my ears as the most dreadful imprecation, was, in reality, an ejaculation uttered in the spirit of that charity, which teaches to pray for their enemies, even in the moment of wrath. Looking upon it in this *proper* light, I could not but admire the fervor with which I last night heard many petitions of this kind preferred for the soul of a General Officer, who had introduced certain regu-

lations into the service, by which these gentlemen considered themselves aggrieved. And I make no doubt, that had the animadversions of these young men been reported to him, he would have had the charity to pray for them with similar fervency!

“ A GREAT man,” saith he whose words are incomparable in wisdom, “ should speak kindly, without meanness ; he should be valiant, without boasting ; he should be generous, shedding his bounty into the dish of the worthy ; he should be resolute, but not rash.” This is the character of a great man !* And such a one have I this day seen.

* See Hetopades.

It would be in vain to attempt describing to you my feelings, while I stood in the presence of this truly exalted personage. Of him, who, uniting the lofty spirit of the renowned Acbar,* with the penetrating and comprehensive genius of his still more renowned minister, has shewn himself superior to both, in schemes of sound and extensive policy ; as well as in that pure and blessed spirit of humanity, which has distinguished every act of his administration.

The pious Hindoo, no longer forced to submit to laws, that are repugnant to the spirit of his faith ; no longer judged by

* The Emperor Acbar was the cotemporary of our Queen Elizabeth, and is one of the few monarchs on whose character posterity can dwell with feelings of respect and admiration. The choice of such a minister as the great Abual Fazel, is a sufficient proof of his penetration. Kindred souls naturally discover each other.

the unhallowed ordinances of strangers, beholds, with extatic gratitude, the holy Shaster * rising, at the command of this enlightened Governor, to be once more the standard of his obedience.

The same benevolence, which has restored to our nation the invaluable privilege of being tried by our own laws, has projected the extension of the same favour to the Mahomedan inhabitants of Hindoostan. A translation of the Hedaya, † both into the Persian and English languages, I am well assured, is about to take place, and thus the haughty Mussulman will receive, from Christian magnanimity, a degree of favour and protection, which the laws of his Prophet never taught him to bestow! Surely, one such act is worth a

* Code of Gentoo Laws, translated by Mr Halhed.

† Commentary on the Mussulman Laws, translated by Mr Hamilton.

thousand of those deeds of heroes, whose fame is written in letters of blood, upon the fields of desolation! Just as it is said, that "truth being weighed against a thousand *Ashmavedajugs*, was found to be of more consequence than the thousand offerings."

At the house of the Governor-General, I was introduced, by Captain Grey, to several gentlemen, both in the civil and military departments. They were all extremely kind and obliging to me, and appeared to be no strangers to those laws of hospitality, of which our nation has long considered itself as the exclusive possessor.

I was invited by the Governor-General himself, to a notch, or, as they express it, *a ball*; which was to be given in the evening, in a house appropriated to that purpose. On inquiry, I found that the dancers were to be all *English*; a circum-

stance that delighted me, as I have hitherto had no opportunity of seeing any of their females.

I waited with impatience for the hour which was to take us to the place appointed; but as neither Captain Grey, nor any of his friends, had the same degree of curiosity, the greater part of the company were assembled before we reached the room. When we entered it, amazement, and delight, took possession of my soul. It is impossible to convey to you, by words, any idea of the beautiful objects that surrounded me; but you may judge of the transcendent power of their charms, when I tell you, that they shone forth with invincible lustre, in spite of the deformity of a dress, which appears to have been invented by envy, with an intention of disfiguring the fairest works of nature. These lovely creatures, to the number of about one hundred, were seated

on benches in the European fashion, and smiled, and talked to the gentlemen, who addressed them with great spirit and vivacity: but this I did not wonder at; as I had been told by Grey, that they all either *were, or had been Dancers*: and, you know, women of that profession are seldom at a loss for conversation.

The great man having entered, and received the compliments of the company after the manner of his nation, which consists of very little ceremony, the dancing commenced. But judge of my astonishment, when I beheld the dancing girls led out—not by their masters—but—debasement! each by an English Chief! Sincere as my respect for the Governor-General certainly is, I could not restrain my indignation at seeing Chiefs, and military Commanders of high rank and authority, thus publicly degrading themselves by dancing for his amusement. How incon-

sistent, thought I, is the conduct of mortals! These men, who plume themselves upon their notions of liberty and independence, submit, without reluctance, to an indignity, to which the Omrahs of the empire, who, in the days of its greatness, surrounded the royal Musnud, and prostrated themselves, to salute the dust which was shaken from the feet of royalty, would sooner have died than have submitted! Though, on the part of the English Chiefs, it appeared entirely voluntary, yet I thought I could perceive that many of them felt sufficient repugnance to this degrading business, which they went through with that sort of heroic apathy and indifference, which you have beheld in a criminal of our nation when about to be hanged: Indeed, I never saw a dance so very little amusing. The gestures of the women were as little graceful as their dress: and had it not been for the extreme beauty of their countenances, I confess, I

should soon have been tired with looking at them.

A gentleman, whom I had seen in the morning, told me, that his wife wished to be introduced to me. The request surprised me; but as I knew the gentleman to be a personage of high rank and character, I prepared to follow him. He conducted me to the opposite side of the room, and led me up to the group of Bibbys, whom I had mistaken for superannuated dancing girls, but whom I now, to my infinite astonishment, discovered to be the wives of men of rank and eminence, whose names, according to the custom of their country, they bore. I could not find myself in the presence of these ladies without experiencing a considerable degree of embarrassment: this was by no means the case with them; like other females, they all spoke at once, and seemed endowed with much loquacity. They looked at me

with steady countenances, totally void of that modest timidity, which is the most inestimable gem in female beauty. That glare of colouring, which, at first sight, caught my soul in the net of astonishment, lost, by degrees, its power of enchantment. And as the nightingale,* after having viewed with short-lived rapture, the splendour of the gaudy tulip, returns with fresh delight to the contemplation of his beloved rose; so did my soul, in the midst of this blaze of western beauty, turn to the remembrance of the gentle graces, and endearing charms of my beloved Prymaveda! The loveliness of eyes, sparkling in beauty, may attract our admiration, but the bare recollection of those which beamed with

* This simile the Rajah seems to have borrowed from the Persian. Of all the poetical fables of the East, none is so frequently alluded to, in the compositions of the Persian writers, as that which supposes the nightingale to be violently enamoured with the rose.

the softness of tender affection, is yet more precious to the soul!

Lost in these reflections, I became insensible to the scene around me; and, incommoded by the extreme heat of the room, I took the first opportunity of departing. The green horses of Surraya had seen me perform my morning ablutions in the sacred stream, before my friend Grey returned from this nocturnal festival.



I KNOW you would deem it an unpardonable neglect, should I say nothing to you of the city itself; which, under the auspices of him who is the liberal patron of every useful, and every elegant art, is already become worthy of being the capital of an empire.

Calcutta presents to the eye of a stranger, a spectacle, delightful from its novelty, and amusing from the variety of its scenes. This city, which, so short a time since as the Subahship of Cossim Ally Cawn, consisted of nothing more than a mean fort, and a few surrounding huts, now sees rows of magnificent palaces, adorned by all the beauties of architecture, stretching along the banks of this favoured mouth of the Ganges, to the distance of several miles. The extent, and grandeur, of the fortress, has never failed to impress the Asiatic beholder with sentiments of awe, and admiration; but all the descriptions we have received tended rather to give an idea of its strength, than beauty: It is pre-eminent in both: and when the eye surveys, even but a part of this grand and massy structure, taking in, at the same glance, a view of the elegant buildings of the town, separated from each other by gardens, rich in vegetable beauty;

the silver current of the river, as it is partially seen, gliding between the ships of every colour, shape, and nation, which here wave their various streamers on its bosom, it is impossible for imagination to conceive a sight more charming. Add to this, the variety to be seen in the streets, where you behold a concourse of people, whose dress, complexion, religion, and manners, all differ widely from each other; and whose numbers are so nearly equalled, that it is impossible to say who is the stranger. All appear to be at home. Here the holy Fakeer, with no other dress than a piece of muslin wrapped round his lean and shrivelled limbs, walks with folded arms, ruminating on some passage of the holy Shaster, and striving, by penance and mortification, to facilitate the moment of absorption and unchanging bliss. There the turbaned Mussulman, from the top of an adjoining minoret, adjures the followers of Mahomet to attend the hours of devotion

in the holy mosque ; while the stately Armenian, the money-changing Jew, and the no less money-loving Englishman, mingle on the beach ; too intent on their affairs of traffic, to listen to any voice save that which calls to the temple of Lackshmi.*

European chariots, various in their form, and elegant in their structure, drawn by horses decked in silver-studded harness, glide like meteors along the streets ; passing, in their career, the country hackery, † the heavy loaded camel, and even the majestic but unwieldy elephant, who, turning up his great proboscis, wonders at the noise and bustle which surrounds him.

* Goddess of Riches.

† Small covered carts, drawn by bullocks, which are in general used all over India.

SHALL Ignorance be for ever leading me into error? And shall experience never be able to defend me against the dangers of misconception and mistake? I this morning accompanied Captain Grey into the country, in an open vehicle, called a Buggy, drawn by one horse, which he himself drove. It was the first opportunity we had for conversation, since the Governor's notch; and he was anxious to know my opinion of it. "What do you think of the ladies," cried he; "did you not think some of them very beautiful?" I answered, "that as to beauty, I must confess, I thought the ladies had but a slender share in every respect, *bloom* only excepted, compared to that which adorned the dancing girls; they, indeed, were beautiful!"

“ ’Tis them I mean,” returned he; “ you do not think I could expect you to admire the old painted witches, to whom — introduced you?” “ I could never have thought of giving the appellation of ladies to dancing girls,” returned I gravely. “ Dancing girls!” repeated he, bursting into a fit of laughter; “ Why the ladies, whom you saw dance, were, many of them, married ladies of rank and distinction; the lovely Mrs * * *, and her still more lovely sister, were of the number.” “ Is it possible,” cried I, “ that men of rank can basely contaminate their honour, by suffering their wives and daughters to stoop to the degrading employment of dancers to the G. G—?” “ Why,” returned Grey, almost suffocated with laughter, “ do you imagine they dance to please him?” “ Whom should you all dance to please, but him,” rejoined I, peevishly, a little picqued by the excess of his mirth. “ Forgive me, dear Zaarmilla,” returned my companion,

“ I confess nothing could be more natural than your mistake : I certainly ought to have informed you, that dancing is a favourite amusement in Europe ; it forms part of the education of both sexes, and to dance gracefully, is an accomplishment on which women are taught to set a very high value : nor is it without reason that it is thus esteemed, for nothing sets off the charms of a fine woman to greater advantage. Did you not remark the young lady in the blue and silver ? ” continued he. “ The elegance of her figure, the gracefulness of all her motions, the animation that sparkled in her eye, and the sensibility that glowed in her countenance. Never did— ” but here a sudden stop was put to the harangue : In the vehemence of his description, my friend had neglected the management of the reins ; the wheels of the carriage were intercepted by the stump of a decayed tree, and the horse, impatient of the inter-

ruption, begun to fret, and rear, till the love-pierced charioteer, applying his whip to the unfortunate animal, forced him to make a sudden spring, which at once extricated him from confinement, and broke the carriage to pieces. We were both thrown to a considerable distance, and though neither of us received any material injury, we were sufficiently bruised to make us remember *the lady in the blue and silver* for some days to come.

It is upon those subjects which particularly excite my curiosity, that I find it most difficult to procure information. Captain Grey, who is always willing to oblige me, when I call upon him for instruction, is naturally of so silent a dispo-

sition, that I fear to trouble him by a multiplicity of questions. When, happily, he, of his own accord, engages in conversation, he appears to possess a mind enriched by the ore of knowledge, adorned by the gem of taste, and enlightened by the steady torch of intellect.

The war in which his nation is at present engaged, is a subject he seems particularly assiduous to avoid: for, alas! my friend, it must be confessed to thee, that these Christians do not always, as I have hitherto supposed, carry arms *only* to redress the wrongs of the injured, to assert the cause of the oppressed, or to defend themselves from the invaders of their country;—they actually make war *upon one another!*

I have, in vain, sought in their Shaster for some precept that might give a sanction to this custom, for some incident, in

the life of their great Teacher, that might afford a precedent for human butchery. But, no. Whether I turn to the life and conversation of the Founder, or to the precepts and example of his first followers, I find but one spirit—the spirit of peace, of love, the meekness of charity, and the magnanimity of forgiveness. How then, comes War, that scourge of mankind! nurse of guilt! and parent of desolation! How comes it to be practised by the professors of a religion, which proclaimed “peace on earth, and good-will toward the children of men?” I confess that this question has greatly puzzled me: and I can solve it in no other way than by supposing, that the Christian Shaster, presented me by Percy, is *not complete*; and that an additional revelation hath, in after times, been afforded to these Christians: in which supplement to the Gospels, it is ordained, that when a sufficient number of Christian men are united together, to form an army,

a brigade, or any other military division; and are dressed in a particular colour, blue or scarlet, or a mixture of both, they shall be licensed to commit murder, at the command, and by the authority of their *religious* superiors (provided they are in the regular receipt of pay for so doing); and that all the slaughter, bloodshed, and devastation, so committed upon their *Christian brethren* (for whose salvation they believe a Saviour to have descended from above, and in whose society they hope to live for ever in the Kingdom of Heaven) shall no longer be termed, Murder; but Glory!



“By whom was constructed that jewel of a word, that monosyllable, friend?”*

* Heetopades.

Praise to Veeshnu, for the letter I have just received from thee. It was brought by the Dauk from Benares, and its presence refreshes my soul.

Your apprehensions of the inconveniences to which you think I must be subjected, among these Christians, are without foundation. It is true, I meet with many things that would greatly shock me, did I not consider, that that variety of manners, as well as of sentiments, which is pleasing to the superior divinities, ought not to be displeasing to us; I, nevertheless, cannot be easily reconciled to that custom of devouring the flesh of so many innocent and unoffending animals, whose lives are daily sacrificed, in order to procure a short-lived, and inelegant enjoyment, to the vitiated palates of these voluptuaries. The injustice done to these animals, is, however, amply revenged, by the qualities of the liquors which it is the custom to swal-

low at the conclusion of these cruel feasts; and which, when taken in great quantities, seldom fails to pervert the senses, and reduce the reason to a temporary level with the victims of their gluttony.

In regard to the ceremonies of the Christian religion, of which you want to be informed, I am sorry I cannot satisfy your curiosity. Were I unacquainted with the peculiar precepts of their Shaster, I should be surprised at the little appearance of devotion that is to be observed among them; but, knowing that it is expressly commanded them to "pray in secret," and not appear unto men to fast, my wonder is changed into admiration, at the strictness and punctuality with which they adhere to the precept! The same secrecy is, indeed, enjoined them with regard to their acts of charity, but it must be confessed, that, in this particular, they are not quite so scrupulous.

I yesterday accompanied Captain Grey to a hall, called a coffee-house, where it is the custom for gentlemen to meet and converse on business, or politics. We no sooner entered, than I observed the eyes of my companion to fix upon a young man of about seventeen or eighteen years, who sat in a corner of the room, apparently retiring from observation. Melancholy and dejection were painted on a countenance, which the hand of nature had endowed with manly beauty. The meanness of his attire proclaimed him to be no favourite of Lackshmi,* but his air seemed suited to a better garb. Captain Grey took up a printed paper, which lay before him, but his eyes were frequently turned toward the youth, and his mind appeared absorbed in reflection. A person, at length, entered, who addressed the young man by the name of Morton. "Morton!" repeated Grey,

* The Goddess of Fortune.

springing toward the youth, his eyes glistening with pleasure, and his manly countenance animated by the glow which warmed his bosom, "Morton," repeated he, "was the name of my first friend, my worthy tutor; and every feature tells me, that you, sir, must be his son." "The reverend Mr Morton, of ——, was my father," returned the young man. "Then you are the son of my old friend," cried Grey, taking the young man by the hand, "and you must look on me as a brother; but this is no place," continued he, "to have all my questions answered; you must come home with me, and let me hear every particular respecting the situation of your family, and especially that of your worthy father, who, I hope, is yet alive?" "Alas! no;" returned Morton: "It pleased Heaven to take him from us upwards of ten months ago." The tear of filial sensibility, which trembled in the eye of Morton, appeared to be infectious; my friend Grey seemed

afraid of it; and taking the young man by the arm, he instantly led him to the house that is now our home.

On our arrival there, he engaged the young man to give him a recital of all that had befallen his family, since the period in which he had been under the tuition of his father. The relation was short and simple.

His father, who it seems was a priest of the order of *Curates* (for so, at my request, he wrote the word), had, in his old age, been assailed by disease, and afflicted by poverty: death, at length, came to his release, and sent him to obtain the reward of virtue in the region of felicity.

The young man, after this event, proposed to visit India; hoping that in a region, which since the foundation of the world has been pouring out her treasures

to enrich the various countries of the earth, he might acquire a competence for the support of his mother and sisters. With the reluctance of a fond parent, struggling between the dictates of prudence, and the yearnings of affection, his mother at length yielded to his entreaty. She was the sooner induced to do so, from the consideration of the many affluent relations she had in the capital; all of whom, she fondly hoped, would strain every nerve to promote the interest of her son. To all these affluent relations, she wrote in his behalf, requesting from them letters of introduction to some of the great Chiefs in India; and having presented him with these harbingers of future fortune, she suffered him to depart, loaded with maternal blessings. On his arrival at the capital, which they call London, he did not fail to visit those relations on whom depended his prospects of future felicity.

Some of them, having been under peculiar obligations to his father, would, he doubted not, rejoice in this opportunity of discharging their debt of gratitude; but it unfortunately happened, that he never could find any of them at home.

After repeated disappointments, he wrote to each of them, enclosing his mother's letters to them; and after many days of anxious solicitude, he received the answers of those on whom his hopes had been principally placed. They all grieved at not having it in their power to serve him: they could not but be sorry, extremely sorry, that he had set out in the most unlucky moment possible; for one had just procured an appointment for the son of his taylor, and could not again trouble his friends in power with a similar application. Another had lately made it a point never to solicit any thing for any person out of his own family. A third had given up, some

years ago, all correspondence with India; and a fourth had made a recent vow, never to plague his friends with letters of introduction. Mortified, and dispirited, with these various disappointments, he was on the point of giving up the pursuit; when his landlady, who had formerly lived in his father's parish, informed him, that her daughter's husband had a friend, who was intimately acquainted with a butcher, who had a vote in a borough, of which one of the Directors of that Company of Merchants, who have become the Sovereigns of so great a part of India, was the representative: by this train of interest she hoped to do something for him. The good woman's hopes, and honest endeavours, were not frustrated. Through the friend of her daughter's husband, she procured for him an introduction to the slayer of cattle, who prevailed with the Director, to favour the Curate's son with a letter of introduction to one of the English Chiefs at this

place; and, at the same time, gave him an order for his passage in one of the Company's ships.

His sufferings on the voyage were many, but his ardour was invincible. Immediately on his arrival at Calcutta, he presented the letter, on which was founded all his future hopes; but, alas! what was his mortification, on being told, by the great man to whom it was addressed, that it was only one of a hundred applications of the same kind, the twentieth part of which it was utterly impossible for him to attend to!

In a land of strangers, without friends, and without bread, too modest to solicit, and too proud to bear the harshness of repulse, without feeling its indignity, is it to be wondered that he was reduced to despondency?

It was at this period, in the moment of dejection and despair, that he was discovered by the worthy friend of Percy, in whom he has, indeed, found a brother.

This incident seems to have entirely banished that silence and reserve, which I have hitherto considered as natural to the temper of my friend. Roused by the ardour of friendship, he exerted, in its cause, all his eloquence and activity; and, in two days, procured for the young man an appointment, which will soon enable him to return the obligations he owes to parental tenderness, with the substantial proofs of filial affection.

I HAVE for some days laboured under an indisposition, which has kept me from

going abroad. The most mortifying circumstance attending my confinement, is the deprivation of the pleasure I promised myself, in accompanying Grey to the houses of some noble Saibs, where numbers of Bibbys were assembled. By the accounts I received from him, on his return from these parties, I could easily perceive, that the remembrance of the bruises we received in our fall, had not been able to give him any antipathy to the lady in the *blue and silver*. As often as he was disappointed in his expectations of seeing her at any of those feasts, the disappointment was visible in his countenance, and he cut short all inquiries, by declaring, that the visit had been *very stupid*. But if the evening was spent in her presence, hilarity smiled in every feature, and joyfulness beamed from his eyelids.

I longed to see a female, capable of making so deep an impression on a mind

so solid ; and as soon as I was able to go abroad, I accepted, with eagerness, an invitation to the house of a friend, where she, and many other ladies, were expected to spend the evening. Captain Grey had, in his impatience, ordered our pallenkeens at so early an hour, that we were at his friend's house long before any other guest appeared. The ladies, at length, came ; and I recognized the features of several whom I had seen at the notch : but methought they appeared more modest, as well as more beautiful, than when I mistook them for dancing girls ; so much is our opinion under the dominion of our imagination. I was now eager to listen to their discourse, and delighted in the expectation of hearing words of wisdom proceed from the lips of beauty. Wise might be the words they uttered, and truly edifying their conversation ; but unhappily for me, I was too ignorant of the

topics they discussed, to receive much benefit.

Two ladies, who had just arrived from England, engrossed the greatest share of the discourse: innumerable questions were put to them, which they answered with great quickness and volubility. In the course of their conversation, frequent mention was made of *public places*; by which I understand institutions, similar to those formerly established at Athens, where the renowned Socrates, Plato, Zeno, &c. initiated their disciples in the mysteries of wisdom and philosophy. Whatever are the sciences taught at those modern seminaries of taste and learning, the minds of these ladies seemed to have acquired the most lively relish for them; and the name of Vestris* (who I take to be one of the principal of their instructors) was

* A celebrated Opera Dancer.

never mentioned without the epithet of delightful! charming! divine!

It is not surprising, that to these females, so well instructed, so learned, and sedate, should be entrusted the most important concerns of the state. Such an one's having *had an affair* with a certain great man, was frequently mentioned; but so great was the modesty of these ladies, that not one of them ever hinted at having *had an affair* with any great man herself.

While I was employed in listening to this conversation, my friend Grey was too much occupied with the young lady, whose charms had captivated his heart, to pay attention to any other object. In conversing with her, he seemed inspired with unusual eloquence; and I was happy to perceive that the fair maiden appeared not insensible to his attention, but smiled

upon him with angel-like sweetness and complacency.

I have already observed to you, that nothing can be more awkward and ungraceful, than the dress of these females; their robes, instead of falling in easy and graceful folds around their limbs, are extended on huge frames, made of bamboo, or some similar material, and gives to their figure very much the shape of a Moor Punky.* The only useful ornament they have is a Choury,† which, instead of being carried in the hands of their attendants, is stuck in the heads of the ladies, where, by the continual motion, it is of great utility in driving off the flies, which are here much more troublesome and offensive than in Kuttaher.

* A country vessel of a peculiar construction, used for the conveyance of cotton and other bulky articles.

† A bunch of feathers used to drive away the flies.

After some time was spent in conversation, many of the company sat down to cards: that which Sheermaal ignorantly pronounced *a species of worship*, being, in reality, no other than an amusement, invented by the Europeans, as chess was by our ancestors, for the pastime of the rich, and idle. Judge, then, what degree of credit is due to the representations of that arrogant Bramin, when he asserts, that many of the females of the West, make this pastime the chief business of their existence, sacrificing to it the duties they owe to society, as wives, as mothers, as rational and intelligent creatures. Base slanderer! how little doth he know of the ladies of England!

I HAVE omitted no opportunity of procuring from the young friend of Captain

Grey, some degree of information respecting the order of the Priesthood, to which his father belonged. These Priests, when spoken of collectively, are called *the Church*; and have the precedence of the Sovereign, as may be inferred from the usual mode of expression, *Church and King*.

From the conversation of Morton and his friend, I am convinced that to preserve the primitive purity of their religion, is the first object of attention to the English Government. To ascertain the virtues of those who are devoted to the sacred function, they are destined to undergo trials of no common kind. Worldly riches and honours are held out, not as rewards to virtue, but rather as means of proving the degree of pride, venality, hypocrisy, meanness, &c. of the individuals; and as they are carefully withheld from all, who have not given unequivocal proofs of some of

these qualifications, men of modest virtue, and rigid integrity, run no risk of being spoiled by the pomps and vanities of this wicked world.

By these humble, and lowly men, are performed all the most sacred and important duties of their function. These instruct the ignorant, comfort the afflicted, visit the sick. It is the prayers of these, which ascend to the throne of the Eternal; and it is these, likewise, who, from their slender store, impart relief to the children of indigence.

Such were the duties performed by the father of Mr Morton, who, according to Grey, added to the virtues of a Christian priest, the learning of a true philosopher. This excellent man was never molested by the offer of what is called *preferment*, but was permitted to exert his superior talents

and virtues, in a state of poverty equal to that of the first teachers of Christianity.

Thus is the purity of the Priesthood preserved. The least worthy of its members are provided for in this world; and those, whose labours have been truly beneficial to mankind; who have diffused knowledge, by their writings; inspired the love of virtue, by their precepts; and taught the practice of it, by their example, are permitted to look for their reward in the world to come!



“IN this world,” says the philosopher, “the wealthy are every one, every where, and at all times, powerful. Riches being the foundation of preferment, and an intro-

duction to the favour of the Prince."* It is likewise, here, a necessary introduction to the favour of the ladies. *and especially -*
gentleman

My poor friend Grey returned this morning from the house which is the residence of his charmer, in a state of indescribable agitation. Vexation, displeasure, and disappointment, were written in such legible characters on his countenance, that they could neither be concealed, nor mistaken. I soon discovered, that his uneasiness had arisen from that sex, whose fickleness, and infidelity, have been the theme of the satirists of a thousand generations.

We are told, by the sages, " that women have been at all times inconstant, even among the celestials; and that the security for their virtue, is neither a precise behaviour, nor a modest countenance, but

* See Hetopades.

depends solely on the want of suitors." * These are words of gall, flowing from the heart of the disappointed ! It was not, however, on the fickleness of the sex, that my friend poured forth the invectives of his wrath ; it was upon their avarice, and ambition.

Had I given credit to his assertions, I should have considered all the young Bibbys of Calcutta, as votaries of Lackshmi ; † and that, with them, " no man is handsome, none ugly, none virtuous, valiant, or wise, *but as he is rich.*"

The smiles of the lady in the blue and silver, which gladdened the heart of my friend, were not bestowed upon him, but upon the fortune, which, by the mischievous folly of young Cooper, she was led to

* See Hetopades.

† The Goddess of Riches.

imagine he possessed. Charmed by her affability, and misled by the complacency with which she received his attentions, my friend assured himself of having a place in her heart. His fortune is not large, but he imagined it sufficient to preclude every inconvenience; and indulged himself in forming the most enchanting picture of domestic felicity. He went out this morning, with an intention of imparting his scheme of happiness to her on whose approbation it was to depend. He was chagrined, at hearing she was not at home; but was met at the gate, by the master of the house, who is brother-in-law to the lady, and who politely entreated him to return. How great was his surprise, on entering the apartment to which he was led by the gentleman, to see the fair object of his passion seated beside a rich civilian, to whom fortune has made amends for the sparing boons of nature; and on whom, the young Bibby smiled with the sweetest

complacency. Poor Grey, stunned by this appearance, was yet more embarrassed by the distant coldness with which she returned his salutations. He did not long remain in a situation so cruelly mortifying, but, casting a look of contempt on his mistress, hastily withdrew.

He was met, in the anti-chamber, by young Cooper, who, reading in the countenance of the rejected lover all that had passed, burst into a loud laugh. "So, she has discovered the trick," cried he; "I could lay a hundred guineas, by the woful length of your countenance, that she has found us out." Grey, who was in no humour to be trifled with, quickly put an end to his mirth, and forced from him an explanation of the circumstances to which he alluded. Cooper confessed to him, that the very evening on which the lady was first introduced to his acquaintance, he

had mentioned him to her, as the worthy possessor of *many lacks*.

Piqued at being thus made the dupe of the mischievous trick of a boy, and the scorn of an ambitious woman, he rails at the whole sex, without considering, that disappointment is, most frequently, the "fruit of the tree of our own planting." He knew not the character of this damsel—but she was beautiful; and he assured himself, it must be excellent! He knew not from whom her mind had received the light of instruction—but she danced gracefully; and he gave her credit for every accomplishment. She smiled upon him—and was it possible to doubt her discernment? The qualities, which alone constitute the affectionate wife, the faithful friend, the tender mother, were the spontaneous offspring of his own impassioned fancy. Born of error, how could they be expected to live to maturity?

This affair has given me much pain, on account of the wound it has inflicted on the feelings of my friend; and, for my own part, I grieve to find that these lovely females of England, are not totally free from imperfection.

Having just had notice of an opportunity of dispatching this packet, I hastily bring it to a conclusion.

May the errors of others teach us wisdom; and, while the waters of experience flow through our hearts, may they fructify and enrich the soil! The blessing of thy father rest upon thee.

What can I say more?

LETTER XI.

From the SAME to the SAME.

SINCE I last held the reed that is dedicated to friendship, my soul has been tossed in the whirlwind of conflicting passions. My desires have been at variance with each other. Friendship calls me to Almora, while the insatiable thirst of curiosity, the love of knowledge, and of novelty, all unite in prompting me to the hazardous undertaking of an European voyage.

Full of dangers and of difficulties as this step may appear to you, no obstacle presents itself to my view, half so formidable as thy disapprobation. But why should

a difference of opinion, between men of sound principles, cause a breach of friendship? "*The stalk of the Lotus may be broken, and the fibres remain connected;*" and are not the fibres of affection, that unite *our* hearts, of a still stronger texture?

Let not the length of the voyage, or the consideration of its dangers, give any uneasiness to the breast of my friend; for "what is too great a load for those who have strength? What is distance, to the indefatigable? What is a foreign country, to those who have science? Who is a stranger, to those who have the habit of speaking kindly?"*

Every thing I have seen, every thing I have heard, since I have been in this place, has tended to create doubt, and aggravate curiosity. My opinion of the morals and

* See Hetopades, page 93.

manners of Christians, formed upon the precepts contained in their Shaster, has been frequently staggered by the observation of practices, inconsistent with its simplicity; and the knowledge of actions, irreconcilable to the tenor of its precepts.

It is true, these instances are not universal; and that by far the greater number of those with whom I converse, are men who, though they have not the words of their Shaster often in their mouths, seem to have imbibed a part of its spirit in their hearts. Indeed, the extreme delicacy observed by the Christians of this place, in regard to the expression of religious sentiment, is so universal, that I do not wonder that to such a superficial observer as Sheermaal, it should have appeared doubtful whether they really had any religion at all.

• This amiable modesty, which, no doubt, originates in that respect for the opinions

of their Mussulman and Hindoo friends, which renders them anxious not to hurt their feelings by an opposition of sentiment, is carried to such a length, that they who generously extol the wisdom of Zoroaster, the morality of the Koran, and the sublimity of the Veda, make no more mention of the energetic eloquence of Paul, or the beautiful simplicity of the Gospels, than if they were actually ignorant of both!

But to return to the more immediate subject of this letter. I have not determined on the important step I am about to take, without weighing well all the arguments which I thought you could adduce against it.

The loss of Cast, which to you appears so formidable, has, I confess, to me lost many of its terrors. I have made it the endeavour of my life, to act in the manner

that to me appeared most conformable to the will of the omniscient Spirit, the eternal Brahma, and, "*He,*" saith Krishna, "*he is my servant, he is dear to me, who is free from enmity; merciful; and exempt from pride and selfishness: who is the same in pain and in pleasure; patient of wrongs; contented; and whose mind is fixed on me alone.*"*

Can this Being, whose animating spirit is spread abroad over the whole universe! can he behold with displeasure, the attempt of any of his creatures, to explore the varied forms of being which partake of his essence? Doth not this all-pervading, life-giving soul of universal nature, reside in the piercing regions of the north, as well as in those which are favoured with the smiles of Surraya? And doth not the knowledge of his truth exalt the children of Brahma more than the descent of a thousand Avators?

* See Bhagvat Geeta.

Let, then, Maandaara rest assured, that in quitting, for a season, the favoured land of Hindoostan, Zaarmilla doth nothing contrary to the spirit of our religion: and as for the censures of the bigotted and illiberal, I regard them not. “ He,” saith the Prince of Goverdhan, “ is my beloved, of whom mankind is not afraid, and who is not afraid of mankind: who is unsolicitous about events, and to whom praise and blame are as one.”*

But, in truth, from the Bramins I have little to apprehend. I have given orders, that the gifts I have so liberally bestowed, may be continued; so that the customary Poojah may be regularly performed in my absence: and I have sent them such reasons for my departure, as, I make no doubt, will perfectly satisfy them.

* See Mahhabbarat.

It is thou, Maandaara, it is thou, that art entrusted with the hope of Zaarmilla's heart. My son ! the tender pledge of the love of Prymaveda, I confide to thy care; my confidence is in thy virtue, and in the tender affection of my sister. I was a father to her tender years, shall she not be a mother to those of my child?

May the Ruler of the Devas keep thee from evil ! May Vrehashpatee watch over thy dwelling, and the bountiful Lackshmi load thee with her blessings.

What can I say more?

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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Edinburgh.

TRANSLATION
OF THE
LETTERS
OF A
HINDOO RAJAH;

WRITTEN
PREVIOUS TO, AND DURING THE PERIOD OF
HIS RESIDENCE IN ENGLAND.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,
A PRELIMINARY DISSERTATION
ON THE HISTORY, RELIGION, AND MANNERS,
OF THE HINDOOS.

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EDUCATION, COTTAGERS OF GLENBURNIE, &c. &c.

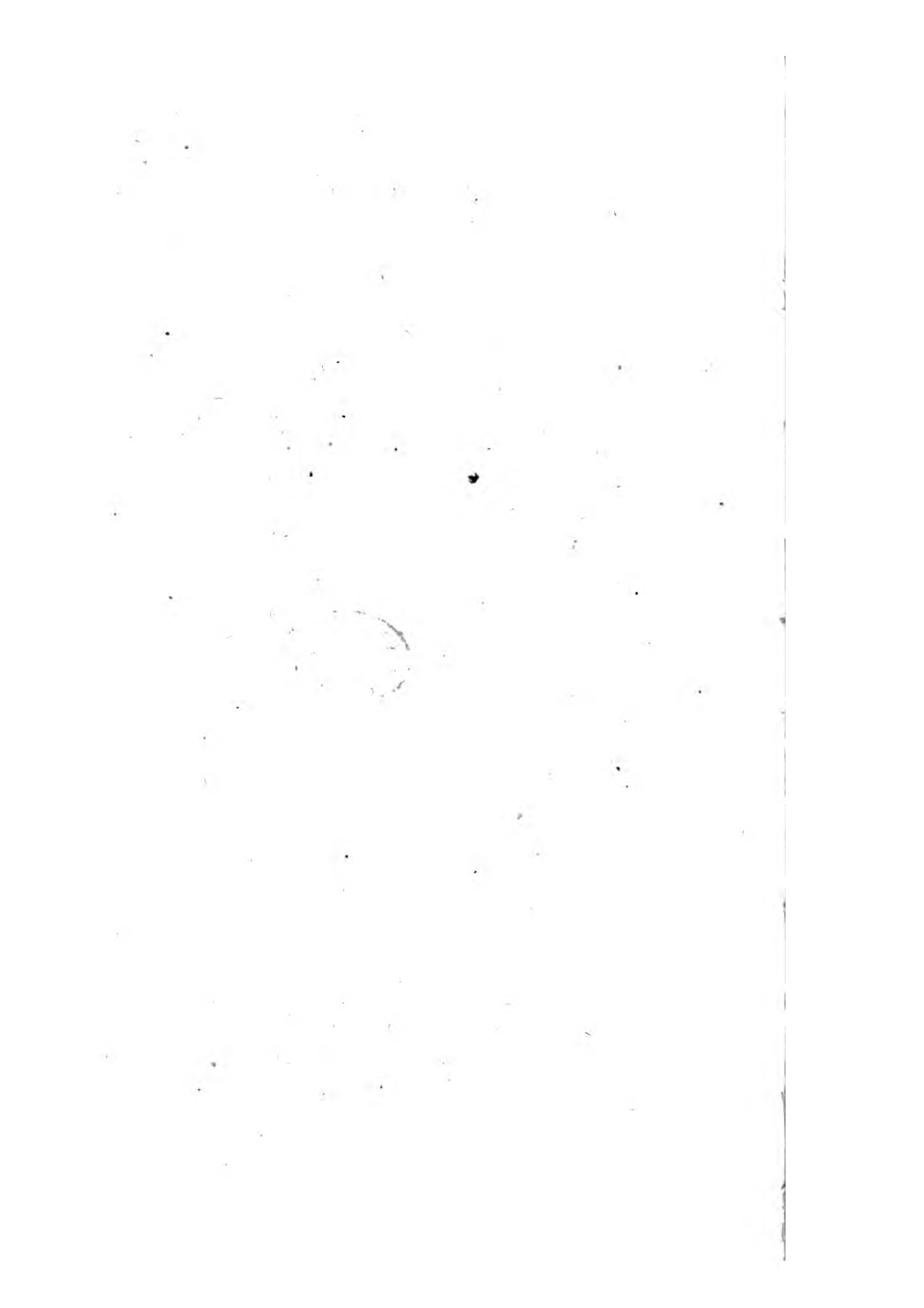
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LETTERS
OF A
HINDOO RAJAH.

LETTER XI.

From the Rajah Zaarmilla, to Maandaara.

PRAISE to Varuna! under the guidance of whose potent arm, behold thy friend, surrounded by the billows of the mighty ocean.

The most sublime objects alone present themselves to my view. *Above* is the azure canopy of heaven, in which " the

gold-crowned Sultan of the firmament advances the standard of his brightness ;” and without rival or competitor, enjoys the solitary grandeur of imperial state. *Below* is the boundless expanse of waters, the congregated waves of which, like the chiefs of some great republic, alternately rise into the majesty of power, and retire into the peace of obscurity.

From the benevolence and friendship of Captain Grey, I received every assistance in preparing for my voyage, and procured every necessary that could tend to its comfort. I have also from him letters of introduction to his friends, with a sketch of the character of each ; so that I shall have the advantage of a sort of pre-acquaintance in a land of strangers. From Morton, I have received letters for his mother, and sisters, accompanied by some valuable presents which the generous hand of Grey enabled him to procure for them.

This young man has made a rapid progress in my esteem: his mind seems formed for the residence of virtue; nor is there any reason to apprehend that the headstrong passions of youth will ever be able to drive her from her seat.

I have not forgotten the sister of my friend, the long lamented Percy. For her I have made a selection of whatever I thought could be acceptable: and the idea of presenting it in person, affords great delight to my mind.—Jeo-doss, to whom, as well as to my other servants, I gave the liberty of returning to Kuttaher, so earnestly entreated for leave to accompany me, that I consented; and also, at their own desire, have kept two more of my own people, all of whose services I find very useful to me in this floating castle; where, in spite of every precaution, I confess, many things occur, disgusting to delicacy, and abhorrent to the nice feelings of propriety.

I was accompanied to the ship by Grey, Morton, and some other friends, who have distinguished themselves by their particular kindness to me. Even Cooper, wild and eccentric as he is, would not suffer me to depart without some token of his kindness. He brought me a cap lined with the finest fur, which he told me would be of service in the cold climate I was about to encounter.

The pang of regret penetrated my heart, when I bade the last farewell to these amiable friends ; but when the ship was put in motion, and I saw those blest shores, "the favoured seats of the Gods of India," recede from my sight, my heart grew faint within me, and all my philosophy was insufficient to re-invigorate my sinking courage.

Sickness in a short time took from me the power of thinking. I have suffered under it so severely, that I have hitherto

been unable to enjoy the society of my fellow passengers, the female part of whom are still confined to their apartments, by the cruel effects of this sea nausea, the most intolerable of all diseases! Upon the quarter-deck I have met the husband of one of these ladies, who was —— of ——, in which station he acquired a fortune, which, though not the tenth of the sum that a Mussulman Dewan would have acquired, will, I am told, be sufficient to give him distinction in his own country. The commander of the ship, though among his men he appears like a lion of the forest, is to his passengers gentle as the deer of the mountain. I have already been much indebted to his politeness and civility. I have the same acknowledgment to make to the surgeon, a young man, whose quick and penetrating eye gives the promise of genius, and discernment.

TIME, that great Physician, having in some degree reconciled our stomachs to the motion of the vessel, I have had the pleasure of being introduced to the fair companions of our voyage; who are three in number.

The first, is the wife of the Dewan; her features are regular, but so insipid, that I should not fail to pronounce her equally void of sense and feeling, was it not for the unlimited affection she evinces towards the animal creation, which she carries to as exalted a height as any hermit of Cummow. Surrounded by Parrots, Lorys, Maccaws, small Dogs, Persian Cats, and Monkeys of every description, she seems attracted towards them by a mysterious sympathy;

while, if her languid eyes are cast towards any of the company, it is only to express the language of disdain.

Notwithstanding my admiration of this amiable protectress of the brute creation, I cannot help feeling a superior degree of pleasure, in contemplating the unaffected charms, and unassuming loveliness of a young widow; the beauty of whose countenance is shaded, though not concealed, by the veil of sorrow. Whilst bestowing on her fatherless babes the soft caresses of maternal tenderness, I have observed the tear which glistened on the silken fringe of her fine black eyes, mingled with the smiles of tender complacency.

Betwixt this lady and her husband, at an early period of life, a mutual attachment had taken place. Prudence could not at that time sanction their union: for in a country where luxury has fixed her resi-

dence, it becomes difficult to procure the necessaries of existence, and without these, how would a man answer the calls of an infant family? The affection of these lovers, at length, triumphed over every difficulty: the gentleman went to India, where, in process of time, he was promoted to the _____ of _____, and no sooner found himself in a situation to support a family, than he claimed the promise of his betrothed bride, who, throwing aside the timidity of her sex, and unprotected, save by the modest dignity of virtue, nobly braved the inconveniencies and hazards of an Indian voyage. She was received with transport by her anxiously expecting lover, whose happiness was completed by their immediate union. Their's was not that transient glow of joy, which, like the crimson-tinted cloud of morning, vanishes while gazed on; it was permanent as pure. Each met in each the enlightened companion, the wise adviser, the faithful friend. But, alas!

while fondly looking to a long period of felicity, the stroke of death suddenly destroyed the fair, but fallacious prospect. You will, perhaps, think but indifferently of her, who, in such circumstances, would persevere in preserving life:—But it is the custom of her nation: And she perhaps imagines, that she may as effectually evince her regard to the memory of her husband, by devoting herself to the care and education of his children, as if she had mingled her ashes with his!

Three fine boys look up to her for protection, and already begin to benefit by her instructions. Their innocent vivacity, though a source of amusement to most of the party, is a great annoyance to the monkey-loving Bibby, who declares, that “of all the odious torments of a long voyage, that of being teized with the noise of children is the worst.” At the sound of her voice, the dissonant screams of her feathered favourites

seem to ratify the declaration of their fair benefactress; whilst the young and lively niece of the Dewan, casts towards the many coloured objects of her aunt's affection, such an expressive glance, as seems to say, they are *almost* as bad.

Of this young lady I can say little, but that she appears gay and good humoured. The surgeon, indeed, from whom I have all my information respecting my fellow voyagers, tells me, that she had been brought to India by her uncle, in order to be married to the gentleman who was to succeed him in his appointment; but that, on the voyage from Europe, a mutual affection had taken place between her, and a young votary of Lackshmee,* who must obtain the smiles of the goddess, before he can procure the hand of his mistress. Her uncle, in the mean while, insists on her

* Fortune.

return to Europe; and from the hilarity of her countenance, I should not suppose the disappointment to have entered deeply into her heart.



A sad bustle has just taken place. One of the little boys having been allured into the great cabin, by the comical tricks of a Marmoset, was attacked by a huge Baboon, one of the fiercest animals in Mrs ———'s collection. His cries soon gave the alarm; every one flew to the place from whence they issued. No description can give any idea of the confused scene which followed. The voice of the sufferer was soon lost in universal uproar. The screams of the ladies, the chattering of the monkeys, the barking of the dogs, to say nothing of the squalling of the parrots and maccaws, made

altogether such a noise, that the thunder of the contending elements could scarcely have been heard in it. When peace was at length restored, and the little boy, whose leg was sadly torn, had been committed to the care of the surgeon, the Dewan ventured to remonstrate with his fair partner, on the numbers, and bad behaviour of her favourites. It was a tender point; the very mention of it, though managed with the utmost gentleness, threw her into a paroxysm of rage, which at length terminated in a flood of tears. In truth, there appeared to me in these tears, so much more of passion than of tenderness, that I could not regard them as any ornament to the cheek of beauty! Perhaps you may blame my insensibility, and bestow more unbounded admiration on this benevolent woman, who generously prefers the welfare and happiness of her tailed and feathered favourites, to the peace and comfort of her husband; and whose heart expands, with more lively

affection, for the meanest quadruped in her possession, than for the orphan child of any friend on earth.

Intelligence is just brought me of our having cast anchor in the road of Madras. —I will from thence send you this letter. May it find you in the possession of the best blessings of life, health and tranquility! What can I say more?

LETTER XII.

THE day after I concluded my epistle from Madras,* we returned on board our ship, and the morning following weighed anchor, and proceeded on our voyage, in company with many floating fortresses of superior size, sent by the king of England to protect the fleet of the Company. The gentleman who I mentioned to you in my last, proves indeed a valuable acquisition to our society. He, alas! returns to his country, *not* loaded with the riches of India, but possessing in his mind a treasure more desirable than any wealth can purchase. It is from the sneer of worthless prosperity,

* Which letter does not appear,—and is supposed by the Editor to have been lost.

from the contumely of successful pride, that Mr Delomond goes to hide his misfortunes in the oblivious shade of retirement. "When the frowns of fortune are excessive, and human endeavours are exerted in vain, where but in the wilderness can comfort be found for a man of sensibility?" Such an one is Delomond; unable to struggle with the tempestuous gales of adverse fortune, he declines the contest. The pride of talents, and the consciousness of rectitude, may, he thinks, support him in solitude; though he has found, from his experience, that they are frequently an obstacle to advancement in the world: the path that leads to fortune, too often passing through the narrow defiles of meanness, which a man of an exalted spirit cannot stoop to tread.

The manly elegance with which Nature has endowed this Saib, together with an air of dignity which marks his whole deport-

ment, commands the admiration of the whole party; even the lady of the Dewan, relaxing from the haughty languor of her usual manner, condescends to address him with the utmost civility: and though her mistake as to his being *a man of fortune*, which, from his appearance, she had naturally concluded him to be, was soon rectified, she could not divest herself of the respectful deference which his manifest superiority so justly claims. She sometimes, indeed, when he is not present, wonders what people of *no fortune* mean, by assuming the airs of quality?

In the conversation of Delomond and the beautiful widow, I have spent many delightful hours. The first possesses a rich mine of knowledge, from which I expect pure and genuine information. The latter is not less sensible, almost equally well informed, more lively in her ideas, and more quick in her discernment; but, at the same time,

so modest and unassuming is this lovely woman, that I am sometimes at a loss which to admire most—the perfection of her understanding, or her unconsciousness of its superiority.

The indisposition of these two intelligent companions, has for some days past deprived me of their society ; and I should have been at a great loss how to dispose of myself, had it not been for the goodness of the niece of the Dewan, who from her own library supplied me with a fund of instruction and amusement.

This young lady I have lately discovered to be a great lover of books ; of which she has by far the most numerous collection of any person on board. But it is not surprising, that I should never have suspected her taste for literature. No one could possibly find it out from her conversation, which always turns upon the most trifling

subjects. Notwithstanding the knowledge she must doubtless have acquired from the number of books she has read, she is so modest as never to utter a sentiment beyond vulgar observation, nor to attempt making use of her reason upon any occasion whatever; so that a person might easily believe her mind to be still immersed in the depths of ignorance.

In the valuable collection of biography, which this young lady kindly submitted to my perusal, the first book that attracted my attention was “the *History of a Nobleman* ;” but I soon found, that the word *history* has more meanings in the English language, than that which is given to it in the Dictionary. It is *there* said to be, “a narrative of events and facts, delivered with dignity.” But the history of this illustrious nobleman, consisted of nothing more than a few letters written in the days of juvenile folly, on the subject of love!—Indeed, I

cannot imagine why such immature productions should have been preserved at all; and still less can I conceive for what purpose they are given to the world, to whom, the opinion which a young man entertains of the unparalleled beauty of his mistress's complexion, can surely be of very little consequence. Other histories I found written in the manner of memoirs; these are said to contain the lives of illustrious personages, whose names adorn the title page. It appears very strange, that the lives of these great personages should abound in incidents so similar; an account of one will serve to give you an idea of the events that have occurred in fifty families, whose histories I have already read.

It generally happens, that a noble-born infant is deserted by its fond parents, and exposed to the care of chance, and the humanity of strangers. These fortunate foundlings never fail to be adopted by the

first person who takes them up, and as these are always people of fortune, they receive from their bounty an education, every way suitable to their *real* rank. As soon as the young nobleman attains the age of manhood, he falls in love with the daughter of his benefactor, a circumstance which involves the loving pair in the deepest misery. At length, a period is put to their misfortunes, by the discovery of the *real* parents, and the young lord is admitted to all the privileges of his order. You may now perhaps expect that the *history* should become more interesting and important, and be curious to hear how the young nobleman conducts himself in his new station; whether the experience he has had of life serves to expand his benevolence, to invigorate his intellectual powers, and to render him a more worthy member of that august tribunal, in which is concentrated the illustrious mass of hereditary virtue? As to all these points you must content yourself to

remain in ignorance: with the marriage of the hero, the *history* of his life concludes!

From this circumstance, and, indeed, from the whole tenor of these books, it appears evident, that with these islanders marriage is a certain passport to never-failing, and never-fading bliss! A state nearly resembling that divine absorption of the soul described by our Yogeas, which entirely excludes the cares and concerns of life, and in which the mind is wrapt in a delirium of perfect and uninterrupted felicity!—Happy country! where the prudence and fidelity of the women of high rank, so plainly evince the care that is bestowed on their instruction, and where the piety, learning, and morality of the men, is only to be equalled by their humility!

I will not conceal from you, that in these true and faithful pictures of the manners and morals of the people of Eng-

land, I see much that appears to me extraordinary, and incomprehensible. Here, it is said by our philosophers, that, “in this life (compounded of good and evil) *sickness and health, opulence and calamity, fruition and disappointment, are bound up together; *thus every thing is produced with a companion which shall destroy it.*” By this scheme of things, the wounds of affliction are ever within the reach of some cordial balm, which, if it does not heal, may at least serve to alleviate its anguish. While, in the purest cup of felicity, is mingled such particles as may serve to remind the mortal to whom it is presented, of the sublunary source from whence it flowed.—In England, on the contrary, (if I am to believe these histories) happiness and misery are known only in extremes; there, the tide of adversity sets in with such destructive fury, that the bare recital of the unheard-of calamities

* Heetopades.

it occasions, is sufficient to melt the hardest heart ! Nor, when the flood of fortune comes, is the torrent of prosperity which it produces, less extraordinary and amazing ! In its resistless career, every obstacle to happiness is broken down. The undeserving husband, the cruel father, and the malicious aunt, are all carried off by death : while riches, honours, titles, fine clothes, and spotless character, complete the felicity of the beautiful and loving pair, who are designed to be overwhelmed in this sea of bliss.

From the authority of these *authentic memoirs*, it appears, that marriage in Europe is never contracted but from the most pure and disinterested motives. Every young woman who is handsome and accomplished, however humble her birth, or small her fortune, is there certain of attracting the love and admiration of numbers of the highest rank in the community. What a glorious

encouragement is held forth to the females of that happy island, who must be blind indeed not to perceive, that it is their own *obstinacy* and *folly*, that alone can possibly prevent their advancement to the very summit of felicity!

For such folly and obstinacy, whenever it occurs, a very peculiar and extraordinary punishment is reserved. After a few years, spent, as it is generally believed, in vain repentance, and useless regret, they all at once, without any exceptions in favour of virtue, merit, useful or ornamental accomplishments, undergo a certain strange and incomprehensible transformation, and become what is termed OLD MAIDS. From all that I have hitherto been able to learn of these creatures, the Old Maid is a sort of venomous animal, so wicked in its temper, and so mischievous in its disposition, that one is surprised that its very exist-

ence should be tolerated in a civilized society.

AFTER having spent many days in the study of those authors, so warmly recommended by the young Bibby, I began to apprehend, that though to more enlightened minds, they might doubtless prove a source of instruction and delight, they were not sufficiently adapted to my weak capacity, to afford any recompence for the time spent in their perusal. Never before did my heart refuse its sympathy to human misery; but the distresses of the Lady Harriots, and the Lady Charlottes, which called forth the overflowings of compassion in the breasts of their fair correspondents, were of a nature too refined and delicate, to be discern-

able to any, save the microscopic eye of European sensibility!

The change which, according to these sage writers of novels, has taken place in human nature, must have been as sudden as it appears unaccountable. In the days of their great dramatic poet, *the Calidas of Europe*, it was certainly unknown; in his masterly delineations of the passions, it is every where, and at every period the same: and from a perusal of his works, one would be tempted to imagine (notwithstanding the evidence of these *authentic memoirs* to the contrary) that though manners may differ, and local customs fall into oblivion, the traits of kindred likeness, which the Creator has been pleased to impress on the great family of the human race, may, by a discerning eye, be traced through every clime, and in every period of its existence! How otherwise should the immortal Calidas,

who flourished two thousand years ago,* and the bard of England, who was cotemporary with Ackbar, teach the heart to vibrate with the same sensations? the Sacontala of the one, and the Desdemona of the other, speak so nearly the same language, that did I not believe the soul of the Indian poet to have been long absorbed in the regions of felicity, I should undoubtedly imagine, that it was Calidas himself, who, under the name of Shakespeare, again vouchsafed to enlighten and divert the world!—It is at least evident, that they have both copied from the same original—*Unchanging, everlasting Nature.*

* Calidas, the celebrated dramatic poet of India, flourished, according to Sir William Jones, in the first century before Christ; he was one of the nine men of genius, commonly called the *Nine Gems*, who were favoured with the patronage, and splendidly supported by the bounty of Vicramaditycs, a Monarch eminently distinguished by his taste for literature.—See the preface to Sir William Jones's translation of *Sacontala*.

A chasm of many weeks has taken place in my journal. Alas! When I undertook to write it, I was not aware of the tedious uniformity of a sea voyage. But though void of incident, the scene has not been destitute of instruction. By time, and increasing intimacy, the characters of my companions have been more fully developed. The first sketch that was drawn by the hasty pencil of imagination, I confidently pronounced to be a striking likeness; but very different now appears the picture that has been delineated by slow-working observation.

In my letter from Madras* I informed you of the acquisition I expected from the society of the young officer, whose sprightly

* This Letter is not to be found.

manners, and communicative disposition, gave the promise of an ever-pleasing companion. But, alas! I soon discovered that sprightliness and loquacity are by no means united with urbanity and cheerfulness.—The small stock of personal anecdote, with which the incidents of his life had furnished him, was no sooner exhausted, than he became dull, insipid, and morose. Nor was the change which seemed wrought on his temper, less extraordinary, than that which took place in his manners. This youth, seemingly so gentle; who took such pleasure in obliging; who lived but to promote the happiness of others, gives every day such convincing proofs of the malignity of his disposition, in the cruel treatment he bestows upon his younger brother, that it is impossible to behold it without feelings of horror, and indignation.

How different from this, is the change that has taken place in my opinion, con-

cerning the character of the Dewan. Alas! I fear, that, in more instances than these, my first opinion has been like an unjust judge, who suffers his decisions to be influenced by the eloquence of flattery. Self-love whispers, that those who are pleased with us, are pleasing; and it is not till experience has convinced us of our error, that we are willing to listen to the voice of truth. The reserve and silence which at first seemed to give to the character of the Dewan an appearance of sullenness and stupidity, gradually cleared away, by time and increasing intimacy, and discovered to us incontestable proofs of a mild and placid temper, a deeply-thinking well-informed mind, and a humane and benevolent heart.

The conduct of his lady has not, I confess, undergone much change; but my opinion of it has been somewhat altered, by an insight into its motives.

That haughty and arrogant demeanour, which I had conceived to flow from the conscious superiority of birth and merit, was, it seems, assumed by folly, to conceal the real meanness of both. Her history appeared to me so very extraordinary, that had I not had the most convincing proofs of the veracity of my informer, I confess, I should have been led to doubt its truth.

This disdainful lady, whom I had considered as some highly exalted personage, was the daughter of a tradesman, "whose foolish fondness," said the surgeon, (for I give you his very words) "bestowed upon her such an education, as without instructing her in the qualities that are alone suited to adorn an exalted rank, rendered her unfit for becoming wife to a man in her own. At the death of this parent, she laid out the small fortune he bequeathed her, in fine clothes, and took her passage to Bengal, where she did not doubt that her beauty

would procure her an advantageous marriage. The event proved equal to her expectations. On her arrival, she was seen by the Dewan, who admired, courted, and married her!" "I thought," said I, interrupting my informer, "that Europeans had made companions of their wives. Surely, this woman was not qualified for being the companion of such a man as the Dewan. It is not possible to imagine, that her intellectual deficiencies would be unobserved by a man of his sense and penetration." "The Dewan was too much charmed with her beauty, to observe any deficiency in her merit," replied the surgeon, "or, if he did, she was so young, that he promised himself much pleasure in filling the office of Preceptor." Alas! he considered not that pride is the usual concomitant of ignorance; that it is not the understanding which has been perverted by vanity, prejudice, and folly, that will listen to the instructions of a husband. Her hopes of

happiness were from the enjoyment of his fortune.

“ Elated by her exaltation to affluence, she thought, that to realize the dreams of bliss, formed by her fond fancy, she had only to indulge in every capricious whim of vanity. Her extravagance was unbounded. But soon she found that it was not in the power of splendid equipage, or fantastic finery, to fill the chasm of an empty mind.

“ The delight of unrivalled pre-eminence in every article of expensive ornament, soon gave place to sullen apathy, and fretful discontent. New follies were invented, and pursued with no better success, and it will, perhaps, astonish you to learn, that her mighty fondness for the brute creation, instead of proceeding from the pure source of true benevolence, was, in reality, no other than an effort of the animal spirits.

to procure an object of employment to her ever restless mind."

Here ceased my kind informer; who left me very much astonished at the picture he had drawn of an English woman, and a Christian.

After much reflection, I think I can trace the unenlightened state of this woman's understanding to her want of instruction. Had she received her education at one of those wise, learned, and pious seminaries, called Boarding-schools, her mind would no doubt have been vigilantly defended from the noxious breath of vanity and conceit. She would *there* have learned, according to the precepts of her Shaster, to have adorned herself with "shamefacedness and sobriety." "Not with the broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array, but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." Such, no doubt, is the edu-

cation of *Christian* women at *Christian* schools! How does it exalt my opinion of the native genius of the young widow; when I contemplate the extent of her acquired knowledge, her unaffected humility, her undeviating discretion; and, at the same time, consider that, by her own account, she never enjoyed the advantages of instruction at one of these enlightened seminaries, but was confined, during the early part of her life, to the roof of her parents! Is it not surprising, that, notwithstanding this disadvantage, she should have made such proficiency in every accomplishment? My first sentiments concerning her remain unaltered. Her exalted sentiments continue to excite my admiration, while her sweet temper, and ever-obliging disposition, make daily progress in my esteem.

THE morning after I last laid down my pen, we arrived at a small island, which the benignant hand of Nature seems to have erected in the midst of the mighty ocean, as a convenient Choultrie* for the floating caravanseras that traverse its watery bosom. Here we spent nearly twenty days, and were entertained by the inhabitants, who appear a gay and lively people, with much kindness and hospitality.

The change of scene was relished by all the party, but by none so much as the niece of the Dewan, to whom the uniform life we led on board ship, was become altogether

* Choultries are houses built in India for the accommodation of travellers.

insupportable. She had, indeed, for a long time, been at a most piteous loss for employment. The contents of her library, which I imagined would have afforded her a fund of amusement and edification during the course of her voyage, were soon exhausted. Having once found out how all the wished-for marriages of all the heroes and heroines were brought about; and been let into the secret of the surprising discoveries, lucky accidents, and miraculous combination of circumstances, which uniformly led to that happy event, she had no further interest nor curiosity concerning them. These books had, nevertheless, by giving constant fuel to the vivid flame of youthful imagination, created such an insatiable craving for novelty, as rendered every other sort of reading tasteless and insipid. Even the ever-entertaining conversation of our intelligent companions, had no charms for her. I have frequently known the chain of an interesting argument, to which I have

been listening with avidity and delight, all at once interrupted, by her abruptly asking when we should see land? Whatever gave the promise of variety, seemed to re-animate her flagging spirits. Whether it was the appearance of a flying-fish, or the rumoured approach of an enemy; the drowning of a kitten, or the indications of a coming storm, all were equally acceptable, so that they relieved her from the tedious task of thought. The approach to St Helena made her almost wild with joy. No sooner was it announced, than she flew to her cabin to take from her trunk some particular dresses which she had reserved for the occasion, and, hastily displaying them before the amiable widow, asked her fifty questions in a breath, concerning the important point, of which was most becoming.

Besides the novelty of the scenes and amusements at St Helena, she there made

another acquisition, which, I hope, will afford her sufficient variety of entertainment for many weeks to come. This is no other than a fresh supply of novels! This she happily accomplished, by exchanging the contents of her library, with another *reading fair one*, whom she accidentally met at a ball, and with whom, on an acquaintance of three days, she commenced an *extreme* and *ardent* friendship. The great loquacity with which her present flow of spirits has inspired this votary of fancy, is sometimes no less teasing than the effects of her former ennui; to the elegant, but somewhat too fastidious Delomond, it is peculiarly irksome.

In truth, it is not a little to be regretted, that this amiable man frequently indulges a certain soreness of mind, which may not improperly be termed the illegitimate offspring of sensibility. What proves its spurious birth is, that while genuine sen-

sibility is ever alive to the feelings of others, [this bastard branch of the family is only mindful of its own. By being ever ready to take offence, without considering whether offence was intended to be given, it frequently inflicts a wound in the bosom of friendship; but is unfeelingly insensible to the pain which it has produced. What a pity it is, that this impostor should ever find a place in the breast of a worthy man! I cannot, without pain, behold it cherished by the dignified mind of Delomond, and would not fail to remonstrate with him concerning it, was he not so *easily hurt*, that I fear an estrangement of his friendship might be the consequence. Fatal propensity! which presents a barrier to the wholesome succours of advice, and cuts off retreat from error. In the various sketches which this amiable and accomplished Saib has given me of his life and his misfortunes, I can plainly discern, that the disposition I have just now alluded to, has been no less

detrimental to his fortune, than injurious to his felicity.

I suspect that you are now almost as much tired of the voyage, as the niece of the Dewan, and begin to re-echo her interrogatory, of when shall we see land? But courage, keep up your spirits, your patience will not be put to a much longer trial.—Land has been just discovered from the topmast-head.—I cannot avoid envying the happy sailor, who, from the giddy height, catches the first view of his dear native country. Ah! what pleasing images play about his heart! In that little speck appearing in the distant horizon, he beholds his little home, his tender wife, his endearing infants; and already, in imagi-

nation, feels and returns their soft caresses. I go to participate in the joy of these honest people; it is a bad heart to which the *happiness of a fellow mortal* can be indifferent.

Ah! Maandaara, how astonishingly great has been my disappointment! Instead of the expected appearance of felicity, I beheld in the countenances of the hitherto hearty, and contented sailors, the strongest indications of consternation, terror, and dismay! On inquiring into the cause of this alarm, I was told, that it arose from the rumoured approach of a *press-gang*: a press-gang I never before heard of, but from the degree of terror it inspires, I can easily conceive it to be some infernal species of monster; some cruel servant to the genii of the deep, to whom the long-absent sailor is an acceptable sacrifice. Accursed spirits! the terror of whose name can put to flight the tender images of hope, and can induce

despair at a moment when the sweetest impulses of nature have kindled the torch of joy!

At the moment I laid down my pen, a fine boy of about fifteen years of age, who had frequently in the course of the voyage attracted my notice, burst into my cabin. "For the love of God, assist me, dear, dear sir," cried he, "the press-gang are already here, and I know I shall not escape! For myself I should not care; but, my poor, poor mother! she will never survive it. I know she won't. Alas! she has no son, but me.—Her heart is now yearning to embrace me. O it will break, if she is disappointed!" I gave him time to say no more, but having hastily emptied a large trunk,

made him leap into it, and there detained him until I was assured that these children of Nareyka had retired. Alas! they did not retire without prey; above thirty of those brave fellows, whose useful labours have conduced to the enrichment and prosperity of their country; who, after an absence of twenty months, hoped to reap the reward of their toils by returning to its bosom, were dragged reluctant victims to the infernal demon of power!

Nor are these the only monsters that infest the British coast.—Much apprehension is entertained by the seamen, and passengers, for certain savages, called *Custom-house Officers*; who, it seems, are particularly ferocious towards those who come from the East.

PRAISE to the preserving Spirit!—Our watery pilgrimage begins to draw near its close. At ten this morning we cast our anchor, at the distance of about a coss from one of the principal naval ports in England. All on board is now hurry and confusion, every eye sparkles with the eagerness of expectation, and every heart seems warm, with the thoughts of once more beholding their friends, and their native country: it is the tumult of delight; the dread of the custom-house officers is forgotten; I suppose our fleet was too formidable for these savages to dare to make any attack upon it. And now that we are within sight of an English port, we can have nothing to fear. Seeing every one making preparations for going ashore, I retired to spend

an hour at my pen ; but, the increasing bustle renders it impossible for me to proceed further at present.

ON going upon deck, I was surprised to observe a number of strange faces, and anxiously inquired, what kind friends had taken this early opportunity of greeting our arrival?—With astonishment I learned, that the strangers were no other than the dreaded custom-house officers. In manners, dress, stature, and complexion, nay, even in language, these savages bear so strong a resemblance to the English, that they might at a slight view be mistaken for the same ; but, on a more accurate examination of their countenances, evident traces of their savage origin may be easily dis-

cerned. They are less ferocious than the ———, and seldom murder those who fall into their hands, unless in cases of resistance. This they did not meet with from any of us; but got leave to rifle, rob, and plunder, without any hindrance or molestation. Their avidity for plunder, though eager beyond description, seems to be actuated by the strangest caprice. On the commodities of Europe, they seemed to set no value; but seized with savage rapacity on the more elegant productions of the East. In respect to these, the niece of the Dewan, and myself, have been the greatest sufferers. A beautiful piece of silver muslin, which the fair reader of novels had treasured up as her choicest ornament, and on which she set a ten-fold value, from its being of a similar description to that which was worn by the Right Hon. Lady Araminta Eleanora Bloomville, on the day of her nuptials, was seized by these relentless barbarians, without remorse. With a copious

flood of tears, she besought them to spare her favourite robe; but, alas! the supplications of beauty touched not the heart of these savage plunderers, who beheld, unmoved, the pearly drops which coursed each other down the fair one's cheek! My cabin afforded a still more ample share of plunder. The shawls, the muslins, which I intended to have presented to the sister of Percy; and the less costly, though in the eye of affection, no less valuable presents, which the generosity of Grey had enabled young Morton to send to his family; all, all were seized, by the unhallowed hands of these ruthless spoilers! Had they taken my whole chest of gold Mhors, it would not have grieved me half so much! But as it is a misfortune, for which I perceive there is no remedy, I must have recourse to that only physic of the hopeless—Patience.

CHAPTER
FROM the Queen of the ocean, the favoured
Island of Great-Britain, does the wan-
dering Zaarmilla now address the most be-
loved of friends.—Having taken leave of the
Captain and officers, and returned well-
merited thanks for their kind attention
during our voyage; we went into a boat,
which had been sent from the harbour, for
the conveyance of the passengers, and were
quickly landed on one of the ghauts of
Portsmouth. It is impossible to convey to
your imagination, any notion of the mag-
nificence of the spectacle that presented
itself to our view, in this short sail. No
idea of the sublimity of a fleet of floating
fortresses, can possibly be conceived by
those who have not beheld the unequalled
scene. The army of the most powerful

monarch of the East, though numerous as the grains of sand upon the shores of the sea, the dust of the feet of whose elephants obscures the noon-day sun, cannot, in point of grandeur, bear comparison with an assemblage of these glories of the ocean, that ride triumphant in an English port.

We have taken up our present abode at a sort of choultrie, called an Hotel, and are to spend the remainder of the day together. To-morrow, we shall separate, perhaps, for ever! The lovely widow, in whose countenance I see the emotions of tender recollections struggling with that amiable fortitude, which strives to repress the feelings of unavailing sorrow, purposes going to the house of a friend, at a few miles distance from this place, and there to wait the arrival of her mother. I am to have the happiness of Delomond's company, on my journey to London, which is a very great comfort to me, as I find myself almost as

much at a loss here, as if I had never before been in an English settlement. The Dewan has been busily employed in preparations for the conveyance of his family. His lady's extreme delicacy not permitting her to submit to the ordinary mode of travelling, in hired carriages, he has been obliged to purchase one for her accommodation. Happily, the mortality which prevailed amongst her favourites, in the course of the voyage, has so diminished their numbers, as to render their conveyance a matter of little COMPARATIVE difficulty; had they all survived, he must surely have had a carriage built for them on purpose!

I AM happy I had not closed this packet, as it gives me an opportunity of recording

a scene that has just now passed, while my heart still glows with the emotions it has excited.

The youth, whom I had the good fortune to protect from the ruthless fangs of the press-gang, presented himself before me at an early hour this morning.—“ You will think me a sad ungrateful fellow, sir,” said he, “ that I should not have appeared to thank you, for the very great service you rendered me; but, the moment I obtained the Captain’s leave, I made the best of my way out of this place; as I did not think I should be in safety, till I reached home. I set off on foot, and had got rather more than ten miles on my journey last night, when I was overtaken by a fellow-sailor, who informed me of the loss you had sustained from the sharks of the custom-house: I have got here, a bit of your India sort of stuff, to take home to my mother; but I know she would wear

nothing I brought her with any satisfaction, if she thought so meanly of me, as that I could basely forget a debt of gratitude." So saying, he pulled from his bosom a very handsome shawl, purchased, no doubt, with the scanty earnings of his initiating voyage. "Here, sir," said he, presenting it to me in a careless manner, as if in order to depreciate its value; "it is nothing, to be sure, in comparison of the fine things you have lost; but, as it is *real Indian*, it may be more acceptable to your English friends, than something much better bought at home." There was something so open and ingenuous in the countenance of the youth, while he spoke these words, which he did in the most impressive manner, that he altogether overpowered my feelings. Protecting Power! I exclaimed, thou, whose mighty breath can kindle, in the human soul, the flame of virtue; oh! grant, that the son of Zaarmilla may be capable of inspiring, in the breast of a stranger, such

sensations as the noble action of this youth causes now to glow in mine! But think not, excellent young man, (continued I) that I can deprive thy mother of the gift of such a son. No, long may she wear this, and proudly may she exhibit it to her friends and neighbours, as the sweet pledge of filial affection; more honourable than the gifts of princes! more precious than the jewels of Golconda!—I was interrupted by the Dewan, who had hitherto been a silent spectator of all that had passed. Shaking the youth heartily by the hand, “You are a noble fellow,” said he, “and I must know more of you; but you may make yourself perfectly easy about this gentleman’s losses, as, I believe, I have taken such steps as will effect their restitution; but I must let you know where to find me, and assure you, that wherever I am, there you shall have a friend.” So saying, he gave him his address, enjoining him to call upon him as soon as he could find an opportunity.

While he yet spoke, two men arrived, with the whole of the goods which had been seized by the pirates. The Dewan desired each of us to pick out our own ; but would give us no satisfaction, as to the manner in which he had effected their release.

I am told the carriage waits for me, and must therefore conclude this long protracted journal.

May the Almighty Preserver, whose omnipotent arm hath safely guided me across the world of waters, to this remote corner of the habitable globe ; He, whose essence pervades all space ! shed the dews of his mercy on the dwelling of my friend ! May his choicest blessings rest on the child of my affections ! the blossom of my heart ! and may the sweet buds of hope, peace, and contentment, continue to expand in the virtuous bosom of my gentle Zamar-canda ! What can I say more ?

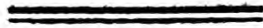
LETTER XIII.

AT length, Maandaara, behold me in the metropolis of England, the celebrated city of London. My heart bounds within me, at the idea of the new scenes I am about to behold. The pulse of expectation beats in every vein.—I was all impatience to deliver my letters of introduction; but, unluckily, we arrived at the very season of a solemn festival, which is very properly celebrated by the Christians, in commemoration of an event which opened to their view the glorious hopes of rising from the bed of death, to the regions of eternal glory!—You may well imagine, that a festival originating in such a source, is celebrated throughout the Christian world with appropriate solemnity. With them, the forms

and ceremonies of their religion remain, not merely as a testimony of the superior piety which produced them. These institutions have not become a reproach to the degeneracy of succeeding ages! They have not, with them, become a solemn mockery! a satire upon a trifling and frivolous generation! No; at the time of these holidays, most of the families of distinction retire into the country, that they may there enjoy the heart-purifying benefit of solemn meditation, uninterrupted by the business, or pleasures of the world. Ah! how edifying their devotion! How exemplary their conduct!—How happy for the community must it be, if the lower orders are induced to tread in their footsteps! The few people of rank who remain in town, are equally sedulous in preparing their minds for this devout solemnity.—They frequent no places that are not private:—private theatricals, private concerts, private pharo-banks, I have already heard

of; and I make no doubt, there are numerous other places of private resort, equally honourable to religion, and favourable to virtue!

By the kind care of my friend Delomond, I am provided with a very convenient lodging, in the street which leads to the King's palace. This palace is, in truth, but a mean building, very unlike the Durbar of an eastern monarch.



I have spent the greater part of the week in taking a survey of the town, and examining its temples, and other public buildings.—The extent of this metropolis, though it shrinks into insignificance, when compared with the imperial residence of our

ancient Rajahs, the celebrated birth-place of Rama,* or the Ganga-washed walls of Canouge;† is yet sufficiently great to strike with astonishment the insignificant mortal, who has beheld only the modern cities of Hindoostan. The foot-paths, which are raised at the sides of every street, are filled with a busy throng, where it is curious to behold women, as well as men, apparently intent upon business, entering into the shops, and making purchases, with the undaunted mien of masculine assurance. Far from walking along the streets, with that timid air of shrinking modesty, which dis-

* Oude, said in the Mahhabaret, to have been the first regular imperial city of Hindoostan, and extended, if we may believe the Bramins, over a line of ten Yogans, or about *forty miles*; and the present city of Lucknow was only a lodge for one of its gates.

† Canouge, a celebrated ancient city of Hindoostan, on the banks of the Ganges; whose walls are said, in the Mahhabaret, to have been one hundred miles in circumference.

tinguishes the females of our race,* when they venture into the walks of men, their fearless eye undaunted meets the glances of every beholder: and happy is it for the men of the country that it doth so; for if modesty was super-added to their other charms, it would be impossible to guard the heart from their fascinating influence.

Having heard that the first day of the week, Audeetye war, † was appointed for attending the worship of the Deity in public, I expressed to Delomond my wish of being present at the solemnity. He declined accompanying me; but sent to a lady of his acquaintance to beg she would

* See the elegant engravings, illustrative of Mr Hodges's remarks on this subject, in his *Travels in India*.

† It is very remarkable, that the days of the week are named in the Shauscrit language from the same planets to which they were assigned by the Greeks and Romans.

accommodate me with a seat in her pew. —These pews are little inclosures, into which the greatest part of the temple is subdivided. We walked up to that which belonged to this Bibby, preceded by one of her servants, who opened the door of the pew, and followed by another in the same livery, who carried the books of prayer, with which having presented us, he retired. I have already observed to you how scrupulously the English Christians adhere to those precepts of their Shaster, which seem to discountenance the outward appearance of a religious sentiment; and so rigorously do they abstain from the display of these delightful emotions, that they who will thankfully acknowledge the most trifling obligations, conferred upon them by the meanest of their fellow-creatures, would blush to be suspected of gratitude to the beneficent Governor of the universe! Instead of behaving in this temple, as if they had assembled together to send up their

united tribute of praise, thanksgiving, and humble supplication, to the Most High, so successfully did they affect the concealment of their devotional sentiments, that no one would have suspected they had met together for any other purpose, but that of staring at each other's dress ! I must, however, make an exception in regard to a small number of people, very plainly habited, who stood, during the service, in a part of the church called the aisle ; these appeared *not* to have arrived at such a state of perfection. *They* could not affect *indifference*, as they joined in the petition for averting the punishment of sins ; nor conceal the interest they had in the glad tidings of eternal happiness. They listened with peculiar complacency to the accounts of him who " came to preach the gospel to the poor," and the hopes of his favour seemed to irradiate with joy the bosom of resignation. A female of advanced life, in whom all these emotions were discernible, particularly arrested my

attention. The paleness of her countenance spoke her want of health, and the lines which sorrow had traced in it, accorded with the sable weeds of widowhood which she wore. She appeared ready to faint from the fatigue of long standing, and made a modest application to a person, who seemed to act as porter of the pews, for admittance into one of them. To my astonishment, she met with a refusal; nor did any one of the gorgeously apparelled Christians who sat in them appear to be any way concerned for her situation; indeed, they all seemed to regard those who worshipped God from the aisle, as if they had been beings of an inferior race. I was, however, well convinced, that Christianity admits of no such distinctions; and supposing the Christian lady who sat by me, though her eyes were roving to all parts of the temple, was, in reality, too much engaged in her devotions to observe what passed, I took the liberty of acting for her, and, opening

the door of the pew, invited the poor sick stranger to a seat. At that moment, the priest was preferring a petition in favour of all "fatherless children, and *widows*, and *all who are desolate and oppressed*;" to which the great lady had just uttered the response of, "We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord!"—when observing the poor woman by her side, her face instantly flushed a deep crimson; rage and indignation darted from her eyes, and, telling the fainting stranger, that "she was very impudent for daring to intrude herself into her presence," she turned her out into the aisle. I was weak enough to be shocked at the behaviour of this well-dressed votary of Christianity. Ah! thought I, can it be, that this woman should be so conscious of her superiority, in every thing which constitutes distinction in the eye of the Omnipotent, as to consider *herself* worthy of *sitting in his presence*, while she spurns from her

own, the humble child of poverty and affliction ?

I HAVE just returned from my first visit to Doctor Severan, the gentleman to whose attentions Grey has most particularly recommended me; nor could he, according to the opinion of Delomond, have done me a more essential service. My accomplished friend, who was, it seems, the companion of his youthful studies, tells me, that at the university, it appeared evident that he was born to be the ornament of science. Whilst other young men were pursuing the gaudy phantom of pleasure, his time was occupied in investigating the laws of nature, in tearing the choicest secrets from her reluctant bosom, or in tracing her foot-steps

through the various phænomena of the material world.—Nor, continued Delomond, as we drove to this gentleman's house, is he less estimable as a man, than respectable as a philosopher. But, indeed, the connexion between philosophy and virtue is “so natural, that it is only their separation that can excite surprise; for is not the very basis of science, a sincere and disinterested love of truth? An enlarged view of things cannot fail to destroy the effects of prejudice: and while it awakens in the mind the most sublime ideas of the great original Cause; it promotes, most necessarily, a detestation of every thing that is mean or base.” We just then stopped at the door of his friend, and were ushered into an apartment surrounded with shelves of books, arranged in no very good order; every table, and almost every seat, was occupied by numerous odd shaped vessels, some of glass, and others of metal, but for what use I could not possibly comprehend. The philosopher himself at

length appeared : A tall thin man, of about forty years of age, his dress put on in a manner particularly careless ; but his countenance, so mild, and serious ! it was the very personification of benignity. He appeared rejoiced at seeing Delomond, who, if possible, was exalted in my esteem, by seeing the degree of estimation in which he was held by the philosopher. Myself he received in the most gracious manner ; and, by his kindness to me, he gave the most convincing proof of his regard for my friend Grey, of whom, indeed, he spoke very handsomely. He informed me, that Lady Grey, widow to the brother of our friend, was then at her country residence, but that her brother, Sir Caprice Ardent, for whom I had likewise a letter of introduction, was in London ; and added, that he should do himself the pleasure of accompanying me to the house of this gentleman, the day after to-morrow ; and hoped that I would come *to eat my breakfast with him before we went.*

You will smile at the invitation; and, no doubt, be surprised to find this philosopher, whom one would expect to soar above the practices and notions of the vulgar, taking such a method of shewing his hospitality; but it is a difficult thing to get the better of early prejudice; nor do the generality of mankind in any country, inquire into the propriety of customs, to which they have been rendered familiar by use. Though to us it appears highly absurd, as well as grossly indelicate, to see people looking in each others' faces, while they chew their food, and calling it sociable to swallow their morsel at the same moment; it is possible, that these Europeans may think our solitary manner of eating equally ridiculous; and if they abstain from censuring it, is it not a proof of their being more enlightened? Often have I observed to you, and often do I see reason to repeat the observation, *that it is they only who have conquered the force*

of prejudice in themselves, that can make any allowance for the effects of it in others.

COFFEE-HOUSES, similar to that described in one of my letters from Calcutta, are to be met with in every quarter of this city. Those I have here seen are schools of politics, resorted to by all who take an interest in public affairs :—a true and authentic statement of which is daily printed on large sheets of paper, and copies are, I am told, sent to every part of the island. In the coffee-houses these are handed about from politician to politician, and furnish matter for the general discourse. For my part, though possessed of a sufficient share of curiosity, I did not care to be too forward in seeking to pry into the state affairs of

the country ; but, having accompanied Delomond, yesterday, into a neighbouring coffee-house, and hearing a gentleman who sat near me declare, that the paper he was then perusing, was indubitably published under the immediate direction of the British Minister, I could not restrain my impatience to examine its contents ;—and the moment he laid it down, I eagerly flew to its perusal.

It is impossible to describe to you, the admiration with which the reading of this paper inspired me, for the talents and virtues of this sapient noble, who presides in the supreme councils of this happy nation. So extensive ! so multifarious ! so minute are the subjects of his concerns, that one contemplates with astonishment, the mind that is capable of grasping such an infinity of objects ! In one paragraph, he reports to the nation the account of a victory, which their armies had obtained, *or nearly*

obtained, over the forces of their Christian enemies ; tells the number of the slain—of those who are still suffering the agonies of pain, far from the soothing balm of affection ! far from the healing consolations of friendship !—To the families of such as are in a situation to afford the expensive insignia of sorrow, the names of their fallen friends are announced ; but, to the poor, who can only afford to wear mourning in their hearts, there is no necessity of giving such a particular account of their friends ; it is sufficient for them to know, that few, very few of them can ever again behold their native homes ! In the next paragraph, this puissant statesman informs the world of the safe arrival in town of Sir Dapper Dawdle, in his phaeton and four ; which, and many similar pieces of intelligence, are, no doubt, given, with the beneficent intention of informing the poor and wretched, where they may find their benefactors ; those who, by their liberal and repeated acts of charity,

have obtained *the blessing of them who are ready to perish*. Nor is the nourishment of the mind neglected by this wise minister: the public are informed, in this newspaper, where such books are to be had, as are, doubtless, best calculated for their instruction. I have already told you, that the females of this place go themselves into the shops, in order to purchase what they want; and, methinks, it is highly praiseworthy of this good superintendent of the kingdom, to point out to the fair creatures, where they may lay out their money to the most advantage. They are in one part strongly assured of the superior excellence of the goods at the Pigeons; in another, they are conjured to buy their stockings at the Fleece; their shoes, their gloves, nay, the very powder, with which they disfigure their beautiful hair, are all objects of this good nobleman's tender anxiety: Indeed, the proper decoration of their persons, seems to employ no inconsiderable portion

of his attention ; there is no deformity of the body, no disorder of the skin, against which they are not here provided with a remedy. Nor doth *royal* dignity itself, disdain to extend its cares to beautifying and adorning the female subjects of these realms. You will, perhaps, smile, to hear of the *royal* firman's being attached to the ladies' garters? But there is not a brush for their nails, nor a soap for their hands, nor a powder for their teeth, nor wash for their pretty faces, that is not as highly honoured. Alas! how much are these females indebted to a prince, who evinces such unequalled solicitude for the preservation of their beauty!

Nor doth the parental care of royalty for the welfare of the people stop here. Their health is an object of peculiar concern. Innumerable are the lists of medicines of approved efficacy, which are here recommended to the public. I reckoned above

sixty, that had received the *royal* sanction, sealed by the *royal* arms, and mentioned by *royal* authority. When we reflect, how many nauseous draughts, the *royal* counselors must needs have tasted; how many bitter pills, they, doubtless, must have swallowed, before they could advise his Majesty on a subject so important; we can scarcely refrain from pitying the situation of those, whose high stations impose upon them the performance of such disagreeable duties!!—I could furnish you with further proofs of the tender care of this government, for the health and happiness of its subjects, but am obliged to leave off, on account of my visit to Sir Caprice Ardent.

I FORGET whether I informed you, that a necessary part of my establishment, is a carriage : A model of which, I have this morning purchased for you, at what is called a toy-shop, that you may form some idea of the manner in which the great are drawn about the streets of this city. Numbers, however, even of an exalted rank, occasionally walk : nor is it thought any degradation, to make use of their own legs. I this morning met the Heir-Apparent of the throne, walking on foot, in the very street in which I live ; far from appearing in my eyes as shorn of his dignity, by thus condescending to mingle with his people, it shed upon it, in my opinion, a beam of additional lustre. Ah ! what a transcen-

dent degree of excellence must we suppose these highly favoured Princes to possess, who, together with the dignified sentiments of their exalted rank, enjoy the advantages of that instruction, which is only to be obtained by commerce with the world! The mirror of truth is set before them, and, surely, they will never turn from it to view themselves through the distorting medium of venal flattery, and deceitful adulation!! —But, to return from this digression; I took up Dr Severan, according to appointment, and proceeded with him to the house of the Baronet, which is situated at the upper end of a short street, none of the buildings of which are yet completed; they seem as if they were intended for houses of very different sizes and shapes, and at present have a very strange appearance; but, it is impossible to form any idea of what they may be, when finished. The entrance to the house of Sir Caprice, was somewhat obstructed by heaps of rubbish, occasioned,

as we soon learned, by the destruction of a row of pillars, of Grecian architecture, with which the hall had been originally graced. These proud ornaments, which, during the short period of their exaltation, had heard the lofty roof which they sustained re-echo the voices of their flatterers, were on a sudden, disgraced, dismissed, and hurled headlong to the ground! Their fall was like that of the favourites of princes, which shakes the throne they once appeared destined to support. A long train of dependants were involved in the mighty ruin, and it was not without some degree of danger, that, following the servant, we scrambled through this scene of desolation to the apartment of Sir Caprice, whom we found seated at a large table, on which an innumerable quantity of plans, maps, models of buildings, and other various ornaments, were heaped. After reading the letter I had brought him, congratulating me on my arrival in England, and inquir-

ing after the health of Mr Grey, he turned to Doctor Severan, and expressed, in strong terms, the particular pleasure he at that moment felt in seeing him.—“ I know you are a man of taste,” cried he, “ and shall be wonderfully happy to have your advice on the plan of a new building, which I intend shall be something very extraordinary. Here it is,” continued he, holding up a small model ; “ here, you see, I have contrived to unite all the orders of architecture in regular gradation ; here, you will please to observe, that the basis is truly Gothic ; above that, observe the Tuscan ; above that the Composite, the Corinthian, the Doric, the Ionic—all placed as they never were placed before ! Still, however, the top is unfinished ; for that I have had many plans ; but that which pleases me best, is, the idea of crowning the whole with a Chinese temple ; is it not a good thought, eh ? Perhaps this gentleman could furnish me with a hint. Pray,

sir," turning to me, "has the Emperor of China done any thing new in this way, of late?" The philosopher, perceiving my confusion, reminded this noble builder, that I was from Bengal, and had never been in China in my life. "From Bengal? Ay, ay, I had forgot; a Hindoo, is he? Well, well, perhaps, then, he could give me a plan of a mosque, a minaret, or some such thing; it would oblige me extremely, as it would be something quite new and uncommon." Perceiving that he waited my answer, I told him, that I certainly had had many opportunities of seeing mosques, some of the most stately of which were built from the ruins of our ancient temples, particularly that at Benares, the minarets of which were esteemed eminently beautiful; but, that as I had never been in one, I was altogether unqualified to give an accurate description of them. "Did not trouble church much, I suppose, sir?" rejoined he, with an arch smile. "Good heaven!" cried Severan,

“do you not know, that a mosque is a Mahomedan place of worship, and have I not already told you, that this gentleman is a Hindoo?”—“Ay, ay, I had forgot, he is a *heathen*. So much the better; I shall love him, if he hates all priests and priest-ridden fools; I never knew any good come of either.” So saying, he offered me his hand, and shook mine in a most cordial manner. He then renewed his solicitations for the opinion of Severan, in regard to the manner in which he should finish his projected building,* (a building, for which he had not yet fixed upon a situation): the philosopher eluded any further dissertations on the subject, with great dexterity, and finally

* Explanations of the terms of Architecture, &c. though very necessary to the friends of the Rajah, it was thought would be rather tiresome to the English reader; they are therefore omitted by the Translator, who has frequently been obliged to take liberties of the same nature.

prevailed upon him to introduce us to the apartment of his lady.

We found Lady Ardent, and her eldest daughter, in the apartment called the drawing-room. They were prepared to go out, and had their carriage waiting for them at the door; but, on our entrance, politely resumed their seats. The countenance of neither of these ladies exhibited one single line, that could lead to the development of their characters; all was placid uniformity, and *unspeaking* regularity of feature. Surely, said I to myself, these women must have arrived at the very zenith of perfection! How effectually must every passion have been subdued under the glorious empire of reason, before they could have attained such inexpressive indifference! It is true, that in their eyes the sparkling chubdar*

* The servant whose business it is to proclaim the titles of any great personage.

of intellect doth not proclaim his master's presence—but the apathy which sits upon their foreheads, speaks in plain language, their contempt of the world and its vanities. With them, as with the beloved of Krishna, pain and pleasure are as one! The modesty of female bashfulness sealed the lips of the young lady, but her mother inquired after my friend Grey, if not with affection, at least with much politeness. She treated me (as I was told by Doctor Severan) with an uncommon degree of attention. She gave me a slip of stiff paper, on which was marked the 10th day of the next month, which I was informed by my friend, was an invitation to a rout; that is to say, an entertainment, where a vast number of rational, wise, and well-informed votaries of immortality, meet together, not to converse, but to look at each other, and to turn over the bits of painted paper called cards! After receiv-

ing this mark of her ladyship's attention, we took our leave, and retired.

I was curious to know some further particulars of a family, whose manners appeared to me so peculiar; and Doctor Severan, whom I have the happiness of seeing every day, has had the goodness amply to gratify my curiosity. He began with observing, that "to those who take pleasure in investigating the phenomena that fall under their observation, either mental or material, it is not sufficient to say that things are so; they must develop the causes in which they have originated. As there are few substances found in a natural state, whose constituent parts cannot be separated from each other by the methods used in chemistry, so there are few predominant dispositions of the mind, which may not be analyzed and traced through their origin and progress, by any one who will give himself the trouble to pursue the necessary process.

“ This investigation, if accurately followed,” continued my friend, “ will invariably lead us to the *early education* of the object of it. In *it* we will commonly find an explanation of the manner in which the peculiar combination of ideas that ultimately forms character, has been produced ; to it, therefore, we must always recur in our analyzation of the propensities and conduct of any individual.

“ The father of Sir Caprice was three times married.—His first wife, who was the heiress of a wealthy family, died soon after the birth of a daughter, in whom the fortunes of her family are at present centered.—His second wife, the mother of Sir Caprice, brought him no other dower besides beauty and good temper. Her premature death overwhelmed him in affliction ; but, happily, just as he was erecting a monument to her memory, in the inscription of which he gave notice to the world, that

his affections were for ever buried in her tomb, a consoling angel appeared to comfort him, in the shape of Lady Caroline Beaumont:

“ This lady, who brought him only one daughter, proved an excellent wife, and would have been one of the best of mothers to his children, but for a certain timidity of temper, which restrained her from exerting authority over the children of another. From her, therefore, they met with unlimited indulgence; that most powerful inflamer of the passions, in whose high temperature, fortitude is lost, and selfishness, arrogance, and pride, are inseparably united.

“ Their father having a dislike to public schools, and resolving that his daughter should share the advantages of a classical education with his son, provided them with a tutor at home—the reverend Mr Ergo.

Well do I remember him. He afterwards got the living of our parish, and used to stuff his sermons with Greek and Hebrew, in such a manner, as to make the poor people stare at the depth of his knowledge. In truth, he was a most profound linguist; a complete walking vocabulary;—but of every virtue that dilates the heart, of every science that expands the soul, he was completely ignorant. The highest idea he could form of the efforts of human intellect, was confined to an accurate knowledge of nouns, verbs, cases, and tenses; and, to commit these to the memory of his pupils, was the chief object of his solicitude. Unqualified to fix the generous principle in the ductile bosom, he attended not to the development of mind, but, on the contrary, extolled as marks of genius, the early whims and caprices of his pupil, which were, in reality, the ebullitions of an unregulated imagination.

“It is, perhaps, to this want of judgment in the tutor, that the extraordinary degree of ardour and unsteadiness, which has distinguished the Baronet, may, in some degree, be attributed. A recital of the various and opposite pursuits, in which he has been at different times engaged, will be the best illustration I can give you of his character, which is such a one, as, I suppose, your eastern world has never produced. He is, however, by no means an unique in this part of the world; where the liberty of committing every folly that suggests itself to the fancy, is considered as the most glorious privilege.

“The ardour of Sir Caprice’s mind,” continued my friend, “was, for the first two years after his father’s death, expended upon running horses; at length, finding himself *taken in* by his compeers of the turf, cheated by his grooms, and most frequently dis-

tanced at the post, he sold his racers, and forswore Newmarket for ever."

Here I was obliged to beg an explanation from the philosopher, and found, that it is customary for the great men in this kingdom, in their exertion of the privilege hinted at above, to expend immense sums of money on a very beautiful, though useless species of horses. These animals are, however, doomed to experience the effects of the capricious humours of their masters. At one time, they are considered as the dearest friends, and most loved companions of their lords, who are never so happy, as when in the apartments of their four-legged favourites. While this fit of fondness lasts, they are attended by numerous servants, who, taking consequence from the dignity of their employment, are at once the most insolent, and most rapacious of the domestic tribe. Some of these are employed in rubbing the skins of the

horses into a beautiful polish, while others serve them with the choicest food. Nay, so far does their care extend, that, as if the clothing of nature were not sufficient, they provide them with woollen garments, which completely cover their whole bodies. Will not Maandaara think, that the truth hath forsaken his friend, when I say, that the tormenting of these unfortunate favourites, forms one of the chief amusements of the English nobility? But, so it is;—at certain appointed periods, they are brought out in the midst of a concourse of spectators, stripped of their fine clothing, and forced to gallop round a certain piece of ground full speed, while, for the amusement of their cruel masters, they are whipped, and even goaded by sharp instruments of steel, until the blood flows in streams from their lacerated bodies, and this is called sport!—But, to return to Sir Caprice Ardent. If I rightly remember, the next pursuit upon which, according to Doctor

Severan's account, he employed the vigour of his mind, was hunting. Here are no Jungles in which to pursue the ferocious tyrants of the forest. Here, courage is not called forth in the attack of the wild elephant, or the roaring lion. Nor is activity and watchfulness necessary, to guard against the sudden spring of the carnage-loving tiger. The pursuit of a small animal, called a fox, employs the vigour of the English hunters. The mischief which the philosopher informed me, was done by Sir Caprice, and his friends, in pursuit of this little animal, I confess, appeared to me altogether unaccountable. He mentioned their having spoiled fifteen farms, by breaking down the fences, and that a young wood, of great extent, which had been planted by his father, was, by the advice of one of the companions of Sir Caprice, in order to give free scope to the magnanimous pursuers of the red fugitive, burned to the ground. Another consequence of

this diversion was, to me, equally incomprehensible. Notwithstanding the coldness of the climate, it seems to be productive of the most astonishing degree of thirst. The sum of money, which, according to the calculation of Doctor Severan, was expended by Sir Caprice, on the wine gulped down by his companions of the chase, would, if it had been employed in improving the uncultivated parts of his estate, have been sufficient to have made the barren wilderness a garden of delights.

“Next to hunting,” said Doctor Severan, “succeeded the love of equipage and fine clothes. It was now the ambition of the Baronet’s heart, to attract the attention of the ladies. His ambition was, perhaps, in no other pursuit of his life, so fully gratified. Wherever he appeared, his exquisite taste was the object of unbounded admiration.

“To have a wife, whose beauty would justify the opinion entertained of his taste, and who would likewise give him a new opportunity of displaying it in the choice of female ornaments, now engrossed his cares. Such a one he soon met with. You have seen his lady. She is what is commonly called, *one of the best of women*. To an evenness of temper, flowing from insensibility, she adds a strict observance of all the rules of politeness and good breeding, taught by that sort of education given at modern boarding-schools; which, being directed to unessential forms, and useless accomplishments, renders the character cold and artificial. Though incapable of generous friendship, or heart-warming affection, she is never deficient in the external ceremonies of respect; and, though she never did a kind or good-natured thing in her life, the low temperature of her passions assists her in preserving that semblance of placidity, often, very improperly, called

sweetness, which at all times appears in her countenance.

“With a better understanding, she might, perhaps, have directed the effervescence of her husband’s disposition to some useful purpose, and restrained it within the limits of common sense. As it is, she contents herself, if, by the assistance of a *little* cunning, in which women of this class of intellect are never deficient, she can work out any *little* end, to which her *little* selfish mind inclines her.

“It would be too tedious,” continued Severan, “to follow the Baronet through all the various whims and fancies, in which his restless spirits have discharged themselves.

“The only period in which I ever knew reading to occupy much of his time, was soon after his marriage, when he took to

studying books of education; and had actually from these composed a treatise, for the instruction of his expected heir; which, however, was forgot before the child had learned to speak, for then he had turned *improver*.

“ It was then, that the fine grove of oaks and chesnuts, the massy richness of whose foliage served equally to shelter and adorn his stately mansion, was levelled to the ground; and every spot within sight of the windows, metamorphosed into ‘ a dry smooth-shaven green,’ awkwardly sprinkled with knarled sapplings, and ill-formed clumps of shrubbery. How far this spirit of improvement might have led him, it is impossible to conjecture; for it was still at its height, when a piece of silver ore, found by one of the workmen, in digging a canal, intended to meander through the grounds, gave a new object to his ever ardent mind.

“ For three sleepless nights, his fancy revelled in all the riches of Peru. Miners were brought from various parts of the kingdom, and the greatest encouragement offered to those who should be successful in discovering the vein, of the existence of which, he could not entertain a doubt. Huge excavations were made in various directions, all begun in hope, and ending in disappointment : The miners strictly followed the usual example of our British ministers of state ; who, when they have plunged the nation into an unnecessary and unsuccessful war, take care, when the account of defeat comes from one quarter, to amuse the attention of the public, with the prospect of better success in another ; and Sir Caprice, like the honest British people, was too willing to be deceived, to suffer himself to discover the trick. At length, finding his miners grow rich, in proportion as he grew poor, his patience became entirely exhausted ; and, with many execrations on

their knavery, and his own folly, he suddenly dismissed them all, and set himself diligently to repair the devastations they had committed on the face of his estate. —It was this circumstance that perhaps turned his thoughts to agriculture, which, as he contrived to manage it, was as unproductive a folly, as any in which he had ever yet engaged. With such avidity, however, did he enter into it, that I well remember him walking about the fields with a silver spoon in his hand, to taste the different composts, into the specific qualities of which he thought it necessary to examine; and, ignorant of chemical process, he trusted to his palate, for a discovery of the acids or alkalis they contained. It would seem, that, in this particular, it had proved a deceitful guide;—for, notwithstanding his delicacy of taste, and although he had laid out his fields in the best method, that the best theoretical writers had pointed out, he had the worst crops

that were known in the country: he was, at length, contented to replace the old tenants in their farms; and finding his estate considerably incumbered by his various schemes of fortune-making, (avarice having now become the passion which chiefly predominated in his heart), he resolved for a few years to try the economical plan of travelling. He accordingly set out for the continent, with his lady, leaving his eldest daughter at the most fashionable boarding-school in London; his second, who had been adopted from the hour of her birth by his sister, Miss Ardent, remained with her; and the youngest had the happiness of being received under the roof of her excellent aunt, Lady Grey.

“ Sir Caprice Ardent and his lady remained abroad for six years; in the course of which period his lady brought him three sons, only one of whom survives; a poor puny boy, so completely spoiled by indul-

gence, that there is no bearing his petulance and prate. During the residence of our Baronet in Italy, he gave sufficient proofs to his friends, that the change of atmosphere had no effect on the temperament of his mind. Antiques, music, pictures, statues, intaglios, and even butterflies, were, in their turns, the exclusive objects of his attention. The death of a relation who bequeathed him a large legacy, brought him at length back to his country, just as the rage for building had begun to occupy his mind. With its effects you are sufficiently acquainted; and you will probably, before the conclusion of the summer, see it give place to some other absurdity, which will be entered on with equal ardour, managed with equal skill, and ultimately abandoned with equal facility."

Alas! cried I, I find that folly is a plant which flourishes in every clime; it only differs in the colouring. But if it is not

intruding too far upon your time and patience, I should be glad to know, what hue it assumed in the young lady who was educated by the same tutor.

My friend willingly gratified my curiosity, and thus proceeded :

“ To the eldest sister of Sir Caprice, who inherited from nature a stronger intellect, and quicker perception than her brother, the tuition of Doctor Ergo was attended with more beneficial consequences. The ancient authors, whose works were by him put into her hands, merely as exercises in the dead languages, attracted her attention. She acquired a taste for their beauties, and soon became so addicted to reading, as, at an early period of life rendered her mistress of an extensive degree of information. But, alas! it is not merely a knowledge of the facts contained in history, nor a relish for the beauties of poetic

imagery, nor a superficial acquaintance with any branch of science, that can effectually expand the powers of the human mind. For that great end, the judgment must be qualified to apply them to useful purposes. It was this deficiency, which led Miss Ardent to value her accidental attainments at so high a rate, as to make her despise not only the weaknesses, but even the domestic virtues of her own sex. Their occupations and amusements she treated with the utmost contempt; and thought that in this contempt, she gave the surest proof of the superiority of her own *masculine understanding*.

“From her mind the particles of vanity were not expelled, they only assumed a new form. Instead of the attention to external beauty, feminine graces, and elegant manners, the vanity of Miss Ardent appeared in an affectation of originality of sentiment, and an intrepid singularity of

conduct. In support of this character, she altogether loses sight of her own, which is naturally gentle and benevolent; and enforces her opinions in so dictatorial a manner, as renders her equally the object of dread and dislike to the generality of her acquaintance. And, indeed, it must be acknowledged, that this accomplished woman, in her eagerness to display the strength of her mind, too often lays aside that outer robe of delicacy, which is not only the ornament, but the armour of female virtue; and that she never attempts to shine, without exciting the alternate emotions of admiration and disgust."

Good heaven! exclaimed I, and is *this* the consequence of female learning? is the mind of woman *really* formed of such weak materials, that as soon as it emerges from ignorance, it must necessarily become intoxicated with the fumes of vanity and conceit?

“ And did your highness never see a *male* pedant ? ” replied the philosopher. “ Did you never behold a man destitute of early education, and confined to the society of ignorant and illiterate people, who had by some chance acquired a knowledge of books ; and did he not appear as proud of his superior information, as ridiculously vain, as arrogant, as ostentatious, and conceited, as any learned lady that ever lived ? or, if a more phlegmatic temper prevented the effervescence of vanity from displaying itself in the same manner, it is ten to one, that he was still more insufferable by his dogmatic pedantry and superciliousness. The reason why such characters are not so frequently to be met with amongst men, is, that (in this country at least) the education of boys is, in some degree calculated to open, and gradually to prepare the mind for the reception of knowledge ; that of girls, on the con-

trary, is from their very cradles inimical to the cultivation of any one rational idea.

“ In the mental as in the material world, similar causes will ever produce similar effects : Let the combination of ideas be attended to from the earliest period of life ; let the mind be early taught to think ; taught to form a just estimate of the objects, within the reach of its observation ; and, appreciating every thing by its usefulness, led to see, that *genius is less valuable than virtue*, and that the knowledge of every science, and the attainment of every accomplishment, sinks into insignificance, when compared to the uniform performance of any known duty. Will the mind, whether it belongs to male or female, that is thus prepared, be elated into arrogance, by learning the opinions of the people of different ages, even though taught to read them in the language in which they were originally written ? will it become less

modest, less amiable, less engaging, for having been enlarged by this extent of information; or will it be less qualified for the performance of social duties, because it has been freed from the prejudices of ignorance, and taught to fill its place in the scale of rational beings? Surely, no; I need only mention the name of Lady Grey, to give the fullest proof of the justice of my assertion. This younger sister of the Ardents, had, under the care of a mother, eminently qualified for the task, the advantage of just such an education as I have described; but though to all the understanding and accomplishments of her sister, she adds that brilliancy of imagination, of which the value is so apt to be over-estimated by its possessors, she is neither vain, ostentatious, nor assuming. Accustomed to compare her actions, not with the triflers around her, but with the pure standard of Christian excellence, her virtues are all genuine. For instance, the

quality of gentleness, which, in woman, is seldom more than a passive tameness of spirit, that yields without struggling to the encroachments of the turbulent and unworthy, is, in her, the spontaneous offspring of true humility; it is the transcript of that wisdom which is from above, pure, and peaceable, and lovely!—Modesty is not in her the affectation of squeamish delicacy—it is the purity of the heart. Maternal fondness (and never was the heart of a mother more tenderly affectionate) is, like every other affection of her soul, put under the controul of reason. That blind indulgence, which would be prejudicial to the real interests of its objects, is by her considered as a selfish gratification, not to be enjoyed but at the expence of the future happiness of her child; it is therefore wisely restrained, though sometimes at the expence of present feeling. Such tenderness, directed by such wisdom, is the nearest possible imitation of the most amiable

attributes of the divinity!—And who would put such a woman as this, in comparison with the most beautiful piece of insipid ignorance, that ever opened its eyes upon the world? Is there a man, who would prefer the vapid chatter of a pretty idiot to the conversation of such a woman? So good! so wise! so beautiful! Yes, my noble Rajah, she is still beautiful! though her eyes have lost somewhat of that lustre, which, but a few years ago, was the admiration of all beholders, they still beam with animation and sensibility.”

Ah! my friend, cried I, you need say little to persuade me of her beauty; the accomplishments and virtues of an ugly woman, can make little impression even on the mind of a philosopher.—My friend coloured, but before he could reply, a loud explosion from the further end of the room burst upon our ears, and filled us with momentary terror. In discoursing

on Lady Grey, my friend had forgotten the necessary management of a retort, which, for want of his attention, burst in pieces. I know not what were its contents, but they sent forth such suffocating effluvia, as, had I not been restrained by politeness, would quickly have driven me from the room.

When the smoke which followed the explosion was somewhat dissipated, I observed my friend, standing in a melancholy posture, with clasped hands, and fixed eyes, ruminating on the misfortune that had befallen him. A course of experiments, the labour of many weeks, were by this unhappy accident rendered abortive. It was a subject that could not immediately admit of consolation: I therefore, for some time, preserved the strictest silence. Just as I was about to open my lips with the voice of sympathy, the philosopher, who had never lifted his eyes

from the remains of the broken vessel, suddenly clapping his hands together, exclaimed, in a transport of ecstasy, "I see it! I see it!—Heavens! what a discovery!—Never was there so fortunate an incident!" I was at first somewhat afraid that my friend's senses had received a shock from this alarming incident; but was happily relieved from my apprehensions, on being informed, that the appearances which the matter, contained in the retort, had assumed on its explosion, gave a hint to the philosopher, for the explanation of some phænomena hitherto unaccounted for. In a moment, that fine countenance (and never did Brahma bestow upon a human soul an index so intelligible) which had been so lately shaded by the cloud of despondency, was brightened by the emanations of joy, and irradiated by the smile of exultation and delight. I was not sufficiently initiated in science, to be able to appreciate the value of the disco-

very, which gave such ecstatic pleasure to the mind of the philosopher ; but contemplated with rapture, the wisdom of the immortal Spirit, who, when he spread the volume of nature before his rational offspring, passed this unalterable decree :—
 “ That to the mind devoted to its perusal, the corrosive passions should be unknown. That it should have power to assuage the tumults of the soul ; to foster the emotions of virtue ; and to produce a species of enjoyment, peculiarly its own ! ” —Such, O ! Maandara ! such are the advantages of science !!



ACCORDING to appointment, I went, a few evenings ago, to Lady Ardent's rout. Doctor Severan had the goodness to ac-

company me; a piece of condescension, which, now that I know what sort of a thing a rout is, I cannot but consider as a very distinguished compliment.

A rout is a species of penance, of which the pious Yogeas of Hindoostan never conceived an idea; if these people were not the professors of a religion which prohibits the worship of the inferior deities, I should say, it was a sacrifice to the Goddess of Fashion; a sacrifice, not of the joint of a finger, or a toe, as we are here told it is the custom to present to that Goddess in some newly discovered countries,* but of every faculty of the soul, that distinguishes the rational from the brute creation. These remain during the ceremony of the rout, in an absolute state

* It is supposed by the Translator, that the Rajah here alludes to a custom said to be practised in Otabeite. See Cook's Voyages.

of suspension. You may imagine, my dear Maandaara, what a sacrifice this must be to people possessed of so much wisdom, and who are so eminently qualified for the pleasures of conversation! What a sacrifice! to be deprived of the interchange of ideas, of every communication of sentiment, and every advantage of understanding, and to be doomed to sit stifling in a crowded room, during the length of an evening, with no other employment, than that of turning over little bits of painted paper!

It is not surprising, that in such circumstances the countenances of these votaries of fashion, should so frequently be distinguished by the insipid stare of vacancy, or the lowering frown of discontent. For my part, I could not help pitying them from my very soul: I was particularly concerned for a group of young females, who were placed on a sofa in a corner of

the room, and who, instead of cards, held each in their hand a small fan, which they from time to time opened, and again shut in a very melancholy manner. As I contemplated their situation with much compassion, wondering whether silence had actually been imposed upon them as one of the duties of the ceremony, my feelings were effectually relieved by the entrance of three effeminate-looking youths, dressed in the military habit, whose pale faces and puny figures rendered it a matter of doubt to which sex they actually belonged, till one of them being saluted *Lord*, relieved me from the dilemma. Whether there was any thing exhilarating in the perfumes which these Saibs had plentifully bestowed upon their persons, I know not; but their appearance seemed to spread a sudden ray of animation over the dejected Bibbys, who in a moment began to speak to each other with wonderful loquacity; the fans were opened and shut with increasing cele-

rity ; the Chouries upon their heads, were with one consent put into motion, waving like the graceful plumage of the Auney,* when it carries the messages of Camdeo ; and their eyes, which had hitherto rolled, with languid vacuity, from one head-dress to another, now turned their glances towards that part of the room, where the lady-like gentlemen stood. Two of these heroes, with a degree of fortitude to which many more gallant-looking men would have been unequal, turning their backs upon the fair creatures, who so sweetly solicited their attention, sat down at a card-table, each placing himself opposite to a wrinkled Bibby, old enough to be his grandmother. The young Lord, either possessing less resolution than his companions, or not considering this sort of penance necessary for the good of his soul, joined himself to the

* A fabulous bird, frequently mentioned by the Poets of India, as the ambassador of love.

fan-playing party of the young ladies.—
Dulness and melancholy vanished at his approach ; every word he uttered produced a simper on the pretty faces of his female audience ! the simper, at length, increased into a tittering laugh. Observing that they cast their eyes to the opposite side of the apartment, I judged it was some object placed there that excited their risibility ; following the direction of their glances, I perceived a lady with a remarkably pleasant countenance, who had indeed no Chourie upon her head, and who was in every particular less disfigured by dress, than any other person in the room. I was pondering in my own mind, how this modest and unassuming personage, could excite the risibility of the fair group, when a lady, who had for some time stood near them, apparently engaged in overlooking a card-table, turned round, and addressed them in the following manner :
“ When you, my Lord and Ladies, have

sufficiently amused yourselves in ridiculing the dress of that excellent woman, I hope you will next proceed to her character. You cannot do better, than compare it with your own. I do assure you, her dress is not so widely different from your's, as the furniture of either her head or heart. That very woman, with her flat cap and plain petticoat, has an understanding of the first quality; and a heart replete with every virtue. While she has been cultivating the one, and exercising the other in the noblest manner; be so good as to ask yourselves, how you have been employed? But, perhaps, your observations, like those of a monkey, can go no farther than the ornaments of the person? Then, poor things! who can blame you, for exercising the highest of your intellectual powers; and for asserting your claim to rationality, though even by the lowest and most equivocal of its characteristics?"—You have beheld a flock

of paroquets basking themselves in the rays of the sun, all exerting their little throats, and squalling and chattering with all their might; when, lo! a cormorant, or other bird of prey, has made its appearance, and in a moment, the clamorous voices of the little green-robed chatterers has been hushed in silence,—becoming as mute as the vegetable tribe, under whose friendly leaves they sought for shelter.

Such was the effect produced upon the pretty group of Bibbys, by this unexpected harangue; and, I confess, I participated so much in their feelings, that I was not a little alarmed, when the orator, turning, with a look of ineffable contempt, from her dismayed auditors, addressed herself to me.—Nor did it greatly tend to relieve me, when I discovered that it was *Miss Ardent* who thus did me the honour of introducing herself to my acquaintance. My friend, the philosopher, had said enough to fright-

en me, at the idea of holding any communication with *a learned lady*. I found her, however, not quite so formidable as I had at first apprehended. She, indeed, soon found means, not only to reconcile me to her company, but to render it quite charming. She directed the conversation to the delightful subject of my dear native country! At her desire, I described to her the peculiar charms of the blooming landscape, whose exhilarating beauties gladden the hearts of the happy inhabitants of Almora. I painted to her imagination the immeasurable forest, whose trees have their sky-touching heads overshadowed by the venerable mountains of Cummow. I talked of the thundering torrents which are dashed from the stupendous rocks, and which, delighted at their escape from the frozen North, run to hide themselves in the bosom of Ganga. I told her of the names which they assumed upon their route; expatiated on the charming banks

which adorned the course of the rapid Guntry, and of the playful meanderings of the Gurra. I had likewise the honour of explaining to her, the present political state of the country: it is a subject upon which, since I have been in England, I have seldom had any opportunity, and still seldomer any satisfaction in conversing. In all that relates to our country, I have indeed found these western lovers of science most deplorably ignorant. You may believe it impressed me with a very high idea of the superior powers of Miss Ardent's mind, when I found, that she had paid particular attention to every thing connected with the history or literature of India. But even Miss Ardent has her prejudices, and I did not find it a very easy matter to convince her, that the Mahhabbaret was superior to the Iliad of Homer; or that Calidas was a dramatic Poet equal in excellence to Shakspeare. You will smile at her prejudices; but consider, my dear

friend, what you would think of the arrogance of any foreigner, who would have the presumption to put the works of his countrymen in competition with those divine Bards, and you will learn to make allowances for this lady. She was surprised to hear that I had not yet been to see the representation of an English Natak, here called a play, and invited me to be of her party, to see the performance of one the following evening. I was charmed with the invitation, and did not fail in my attendance on the letter-loving Bibby, at the time appointed.

The building appropriated to this amusement belongs to the King, and is called his Theatre; and to it he sends his servants for the diversion of the public. They are not, however, paid by their master, but, like all the servants of the English nobility, are paid *by the visitors*. Nor are they so modest as some that I have seen, at the

royal palaces and gardens, who never asked for their wages, until they had gratified my curiosity ; but these stipulated for a certain sum, and demanded it before they permitted me to enter.

My expectations, in respect to the magnificence of the building, and the splendor of its decorations, were somewhat disappointed ; but, upon the whole, it is very well contrived for seeing and hearing the performers.—In front of the stage, is an aisle larger than that in the church, in which the people are, however, treated with more respect, being all accommodated with seats ; and I could perceive, that *here* their marked approbation of any passage excited some degree of attention in the great people, who sat in the little pews above them ; and although among these great people, some appeared to regard the Natak as little as the sermon, talking and whispering almost as much at the theatre

as they had done in church; yet the performance was here, in general, much better attended to by all who had the enjoyment of their senses.—You will think this a strange exception; but you must know, that a part of the royal theatre is peculiarly appropriated to the reception of a species of lunatics, called Bucks, who are indeed very noisy and troublesome; but who are treated with an amazing degree of lenity and forbearance, by the benevolent people, who bestow upon them the pity that is due to their unhappy situation.

Great part of the entertainment seemed, indeed, calculated for their amusement, as it is well known that the eye can be gratified by the display of gaudy colours, even where the mind is destitute of the gift of reason. This respect to folly, was, however, in my opinion, carried too far; and though I should have been well pleased to have seen the grown children amused

by the exhibition of a few shewy pictures and other mummery, I could not approve of turning the infirmities of old age into ridicule, for their amusement. I had foolishly thought that all English plays were like the plays of Shakspeare; but, alas! I begin to apprehend, that they are not all quite so good! Instead of those portraits of the passions, which nature spontaneously acknowledges for her own, I only see exaggerated representations of transient and incidental folly. Whether it be owing to the peculiar taste of the exalted Omrah, whose office it is to examine the merits of the Natacs that are performed by his Majesty's servants, or to the limited genius of modern poets, I know not, but it appears evident, that all dramatic writers in this country, are now confined to one plot: A foolish old man, devoted to avarice, has a daughter that is petulant and disobedient, or a son of the same character; perhaps two or three of these old men,

differing from each other in the size and shape of the covering of the head, called Wigs, are brought into the same piece, together with an old unmarried sister, who always believes herself to be young and handsome. After the young people have for some time exercised their ingenuity in deceiving the vigilance of the old ones, and have successfully exposed to public ridicule the bodily infirmities and mental failings of their several parents, they are paired for marriage, and thus the piece concludes. This composition is called a *Sentimental Comedy*, and is succeeded by what is termed a Farce. In the Farce, his Majesty's servants make faces, and perform many droll tricks for the diversion of the audience, who seem particularly pleased with their exertions in this way, which they applaud with repeated peals of laughter.—And, surely, it must be highly gratifying to the imperial mind, to see the people pleased at so cheap a rate.

The first time I went to the theatre was, as I have already informed you, in company with Miss Ardent, who was much disappointed, that the illness of one of the royal servants should have prevented the representation of a new piece, written by an English officer in the service of the East India Company; which, in the opinion of this lady, is a piece of much intrinsic merit. It is taken from the history of Zingis, and adorned with the terror-striking spirit of Zamouca, which blazes throughout the whole of the performance. To me, I must confess, the presentation of such a piece would have been more charming, than either the lesson of morality, given in the sentimental comedy, or the fooleries of the farce; but I was informed by Miss Ardent, that I must be cautious how I gave utterance to such an opinion, as nothing is now deemed so barbarous as the energy of good sense.—“ If your highness would have the people of this coun-

try," continued she, "entertain a good idea of your taste, you must give all your admiration to hollow, but high-sounding sentiment. Sentiment and sing-song are the fashion of the day. That it is so, we are much indebted to the care and talents of our modern Bards, who, by such compositions as the present, spoil and contaminate the national taste." "Pardon me," cried a gentleman, who stood by, "but in my opinion, the stage does not so much form, as *reflect* the national taste. Poetry has always reached her maturity, while her votaries were in a semi-barbarous state: with the progress of civilization, she has gradually declined; and if we take the rapidity of her decay in this country as the criterion of our refinement, we may proudly pronounce ourselves one of the most polished nations of the earth!"

Miss Ardent's carriage being announced, put an end to the conversation; but

before she stepped into it, she invited me to dine with her on the following day.—“What!” you will say, “a single unprotected woman, invite you to her house?—Shameful violation of decorum!”—But consider, my friend—custom, that mighty legislator, who issues the laws of propriety to the different nations of the earth, maketh that appear amiable and proper in the eyes of the people of one country, which in those of another is criminal and absurd: and so easily doth custom reconcile us to her capricious decrees, that I received the invitation, and went to the house of Miss Ardent, with as little perturbation as if she had been a gentleman in petticoats.

She received me in an apartment devoted to literature and contemplation, from whence it takes the name of *study*; the walls of the room were lined with books, all shining in coats of glossy leather, richly ornamented with leaf of gold.

That pains which in Asia is bestowed in decorating the illuminated page, being in England all given to the outside covering, which, it must be confessed, gives to the study a very splendid appearance.

Two gentlemen had arrived before me, and were already engaged in conversation.—These, as Miss Ardent informed me in a whisper, were great *Critics*.—The word was new to me, and I did not choose to ask for an explanation, but seeing a huge book upon the table, which I knew to be an explainer of hard words, I had immediate recourse to it, and found a critic to be “*a man skilled in the art of judging of literature.*” What information might I not expect to receive from such infallible judges, who, as the subsequent description informed me, must be qualified “*nicely to discriminate, and ably to judge the beauties and faults of writings.*”—The name of a great author, whose works I had read with

satisfaction and delight, met my ear, and the fire of expectation was instantly kindled in my bosom. Conscious that I could only skim the surface of that ocean of wisdom, contained in the work of this great moralist, I now hoped to see such hidden gems produced to view, as had escaped my feeble search; but, judge of my mortification, at being informed only of the size of his wig!—Both the critics produced a thousand little instances of the oddities of his manner, the peculiarity of his dress, and irritability of his temper. But as to the excellence of his precepts, the strength of his arguments, or the sublimity of his sentiments—the critics said not a word!

The name of this author led to that of another—a Poet, to whose verses Miss Ardent gave the epithet of *charming*.—Her learned guests, though, in general, obsequiously submissive to her opinion,

did not, in this instance, seem to coincide with her.—But, instead of pointing out the defects of his composition, they only mentioned the badness of his taste, of which they gave an irrefragable proof, in his preferring *a roasted* potatoe to a chesnut!—Miss Ardent, who did not seem pleased at having the taste of her favourite poet called in question, abruptly turned the conversation, and addressing herself to me, told me, she should soon have the pleasure of introducing me to some gentlemen of distinguished talents and acknowledged merit, whose names I had probably heard.—She then mentioned three of the most celebrated writers of the present day, every one of whose works I had had the advantage of reading with Delomond, in the course of our voyage. While she yet spoke, the Chubdar re-echoed the names of these celebrated men; they entered, and paid the tribute of respect to this patroness of science, who, when she was

seated among them, appeared, in my eyes, like the Goddess Serreswatti, surrounded by the gems of the court of Vicramaditya.

Think, Maandara! think what I must have felt, at the sight of four live authors! You may well believe, that I could not find myself in the immediate presence of so many learned personages, without experiencing a considerable degree of agitation. I remained immersed in silent awe and breathless expectation. Surely, said I to myself, the conversation of men who are capable of writing books, must be very different from that of common mortals.

One of them opened his mouth—I listened with avidity—and heard—that the morning had been remarkably rainy.—How beautiful is this condescension, said I again to myself, in one so wise!—The Chubdar again entered, it was to announce

that the dinner was upon the table. I followed Miss Ardent and her learned guests into the apartment destined for this repast, where, according to the barbarous custom of the country, they sat down to eat at one table, and confined their conversation, while they remained at it, to eulogiums on the good things set before them, of which, in compliment no doubt to the mistress of the feast, they devoured a goodly quantity. While they were thus employed, I retired to a sofa at the other end of the room, where I contemplated with astonishment, how much men of genius could eat. At length, the long protracted feast was finished; the mangled remains of the bipeds and the quadrupeds, the fishes of the sea, the vegetables of the earth, and the golden fruits of the garden, were carried off by the domestics; a variety of wines supplied their places upon the table—the liquid ruby flowed, and these disciples of the poet of Shiraz seemed to

unite with him in regard to the sovereign efficacy of the sparkling contents* of the goblet.

So much has been said and sung on the inspiring powers of wine, that I anxiously watched its effects on these men of learn-

* The allusion is taken from one of the odes of Hafiz, which, as it does not appear among those selected by Mr Nott, for his very elegant Translation, we think the following LITERAL one may not prove unacceptable :

1. The season of spring is arrived, let the sparkling goblet go round !
2. Seize, O ye youths, the fleeting hour, and enjoy the extatic delight of the company of the fawn-eyed daughters of love.
3. Boy ! fill out the wine, and let the liquid ruby flow, for it is it alone that poureth the oil of gladness into the hearts of the unfortunate, and is the healing balm of the wounds of the afflicted.
4. Leave the corroding thorns of worldly cares, and the anxiety of ambition, to immortalize the names of Cyrus and Alexander.

ing.—But, unfortunately for wit and me, no sooner were the bottles set upon the table, than the subject of politics was introduced: a subject which, to me, is ever dull and barren of delight. To Miss Ardent, it appeared otherwise; she entered with warmth and energy into the discussion, and spoke of ministers and their measures, of the management of wars, and the interests of nations, in such a decisive manner, as proved her qualified to become the vizir of an empire.

Not seeing the conversation likely to take a turn to any other subject, and con-

5. Let me indulge in my favourite wine, and see which of us shall soonest obtain the object of his desires.
6. Let mine ear listen to the melody of the lute and the cymbal, and mine eyes be charmed with the fair daughters of Circassia.
7. Go, O my soul, and give thyself to joy, for it is needless to anticipate to-day the sorrows of to-morrow.

sidering that the presence of a stranger might throw some restraint on the discussion of affairs of state, I took my leave, and must confess, that I returned from this banquet of reason, not altogether satisfied with my entertainment.

As, after having lost a game at Chess, it is my custom to ponder on the past moves, until I find out the false step that led to my defeat, so do I ruminate on the disappointment of expected felicity, till I make a discovery of the source from which it has flowed. In doing so, I am almost always certain of seeing it traced to the fallacy of ill-grounded expectation. Why, said I, should I have expected more from an author, than from any other man of sense? When a man has given his thoughts a form upon paper, and submitted them in that shape to the perusal of the world, is he from thenceforth to be obliged to speak in laboured sentences, and to utter only

the aphorisms of wisdom? Carrying my reasonings upon this subject a little farther, I was almost tempted to conclude, that the manners of even a female author, might not differ much from that of other women!

EVERY day presents me with some new subject of meditation and perplexity! Nothing however has appeared to me so very extraordinary, so altogether incomprehensible, as the notions which the enlightened people of London entertain of the duties of Friendship. These are capacious as the firmament of Heaven—extensive as the bounds of space! To have a few real, affectionate, and disinterested friends, we esteem a blessing reserved by the Gods for their peculiar favourites. One such

friend appears to our narrow minds as a cordial drop in the cup of life, of sufficient efficacy to sweeten its bitterest contents. Judge then of the portion of happiness enjoyed by a nation, where every man, and every woman of fashion, boasts of hundreds and of thousands of *friends*, all equally dear, and equally deserving! In this point of view, the ladies of London betray an expansion of soul, which I had vainly thought reserved for beings of a higher sphere. The greater part of these fair creatures devote their lives to the duties of Friendship—duties, which are in many respects incompatible with the duties of domestic life. You will, perhaps, imagine from this, that the powers of the soul are expended in the necessary interchange of sentiment, with such a numerous host of friends. You will conceive, that these amiable women neglect their families, in order to attend the sickbeds of the friends who are afflicted with

disease—to comfort those who are in adversity—to console the sorrowful, and to sympathize in the felicity of the fortunate.—No such thing. The ladies of London know no more of the joys or the sorrows of their *friends*, than they know of what is now doing in the house of Maandaara. Reciprocal good offices, which to our little minds appear to be the cement of friendship, have not the smallest influence in uniting the souls of people of fashion in the bonds of amity. The only essential duty of friendship, in this metropolis, is to be regular and punctual in leaving one's name (written, or printed, upon a bit of stiff paper) at the door of the friend's house, as frequently as the friend leaves a similar talisman at your's! You can have no idea of the zeal with which females, in the superior ranks, endeavour thus to keep alive the divine spark of friendship in the breasts of their sister beauties. With equal astonishment and veneration have

I beheld them hurrying in their splendid equipages, from street to street, dropping these talismanic tickets at the dwelling of every fair friend. To notify the approach of these votaries of friendship, a certain great hammer is suspended at every door, with which the servant, who may be called the high-priest of friendship, beats such an alarming peal, as is sufficient to strike terror to the stoutest heart. This, it would appear, is a very necessary part of the ceremony—as, wherever the offering is not made in this manner, it fails to produce any of the feelings of friendship in the breasts of the visited. “Do these friends then, you will ask, forever remain strangers to each other’s persons? Do they never meet? Methinks such a species of friendship can be very little beneficial to either party.”

Be not so hasty, my friend, in your conclusions. The ceremony I have described

is, it is true, the only means by which the breath of friendship, between these enlightened people, can possibly be kept alive. An omission of this ceremony would inevitably convert the warmest friendship into the most bitter enmity. But think not that this is all that is demanded of friendship. No, this is a trifling sacrifice, in comparison of that which follows. Every lady, who can boast some hundreds of friends, makes it a point to be *at home* on certain evenings, a circumstance which, from want of habit, is extremely irksome; and no sooner is it known to her friends that she is under the necessity of performing this penance, than they crowd to her house, in order to amuse and comfort her. The person who, upon these occasions, sees only as many friends as her house will conveniently hold, considers herself as quite deserted. To have not only the apartments, but the passages and stairs filled with friends, who pant for

admission, is a felicity reserved for the peculiar favourites of fortune ! At the time I visited Lady Ardent, I did not know that her Ladyship was then performing penance *at home*. I did not know the cause of that air of dissatisfaction which was visible on her brow. Her apartments were, in my opinion, sufficiently filled ; as I am sure the heat was sufficiently offensive ; but I have since learned, that of three hundred friends to whom she had notified her intention of being at home, *only* one hundred and fifty had made their appearance ! This was surely sufficient mortification to a woman of sensibility. But, added to this, was her kind participation in the feelings of her servants. In the countenances of her domestics she read the language of disappointment, and the good lady's soul sympathized in their distress. For be it known to my friend, that at every card-table a present is made to the servants, so considerable, as to enable

them to imitate their masters in every species of folly and dissipation. The money thus given is indeed, as I am well informed, considered as a fund sacred to profligacy and extravagance. As without this extra pay, the servants of the great could neither afford to game, nor to get drunk with generous wines, nor to keep expensive mistresses, they would, but for this happy contrivance, be deprived of many enjoyments, which are considered by their superiors as the prime privileges of existence!

In addition to the methods of making and preserving friendship, which I have already described, there is another now fast coming into use, which bids fair, as I am informed, soon to become universal. With many people of sentiment, those are already considered as the *best friends*, who give the best dinners and suppers. It is in this manner that people of low birth,

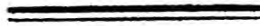
and mean education, contrive to make friends among the great. Could Maandaara listen to the praises sometimes bestowed upon these entertainments, he would surely conclude, that the souls of people of fashion were destined, in their future state of existence, to animate the bodies of the most detested quadrupeds! —What can I say more!

The amiable, the engaging Delomond, has this morning left us. His departure is like a dark cloud, which in early spring deforms the face of nature, and checks the gaiety of the season with the sudden chill of a wintry storm. It has particularly affected me, as it has at once shut the prospect of prosperity, which, as I had flattered myself, was fast opening on my friend, and deprived me of the sunshine of his presence. But, perhaps, my disappointment with regard to the success of Delomond, is more in proportion to the eagerness of

my wishes than to the solidity of my hopes. The mind, which, like the delicate leaves of the Mimosa, shrinks from every touch, is ill calculated to solicit the assistance of the powerful, or gain the favour of the great. The very looks of the prosperous, it construes into arrogance; and is equally wounded by the civility which appears to condescend, and by the insolence which wears the form of contempt.

From all these multiplied mortifications, some, perhaps, real, and some only imaginary, has Delomond hastily retired; and, relinquishing the pursuit of fortune, and the pleasures of society, devotes his future life to the indolent repose of obscurity. But, alas! how shall he, who was discomfited by the first thorny branch which hung across the path of fortune, struggle through the sharp briers of adversity?—Can a mind, formed for the happiness of domestic life, endowed with such exquisite

relish for the refined enjoyment of taste and sentiment, find comfort in a joyless state of solitude ; or, what is worse than solitude, the company of the rude and ignorant?—Ah! my amiable friend, thou wilt find, when it is too late, that the road to happiness is not to be entered by the gate of fastidious refinement.



THE first care that occupied my mind, after my arrival in London, was, to procure a safe conveyance for the presents which I had intended to lay at the feet of the sister of Percy.

I have just received an answer to the letter that accompanied them.—It is such as I should have expected from her who

was worthy the esteem of such a brother. But, alas ! it is written with the pen of sorrow, and blotted by the tears of affliction. The amiable old man, who supplied to her the place of a father, who loved her with such tenderness, and was beloved by her with such a degree of filial affection, is gone to the dark mansions of death. She has left the happy abode of her infancy, and her dwelling is now among strangers. This she particularly deplores, on account of depriving her of the power of shewing the sense she entertains of my friendship to her brother, in any other way than by words alone. Her expressions of gratitude have the energetic eloquence of genuine sensibility ! They are greatly beyond what I have merited ; but, when I consider the tender reflections that excited them, my heart melts into sympathy.

Alas ! it is easy to perceive, that this amiable young woman is not to be num-

bered with the happy. Perhaps, her present situation is peculiarly unfortunate. Perhaps, she has there been destined to experience the cold reception, the unfeeling neglect, of some little, narrow, selfish mind, to whose attentions she had been particularly recommended by her departed relatives. Perhaps, some friend of her brother.—But, no; the *real* friends of Percy were, like himself, noble, generous, and good. Far from being capable of dishonouring the memory of their friend, by neglecting to perform the rites of hospitality to his sister, they have taken an interest in her feelings, and by acts of kindness and attention, have endeavoured to promote her happiness. And, surely, for no act of kindness can the sister of Percy be ungrateful to the friends of her brother!

The loss of Delomond, and the melancholy letter of Miss Percy, dwelt upon my

spirits, and sunk them to a state of unusual depression. I spent the night in sadness, and, early in the morning, went in search of my friend, the philosopher, whose conversation is to me as the rod of Krishna, which no sooner touched the eyes of Arjoun, than he saw the figure of truth, as it appears unto the Gods themselves. This amiable friend had of late been so much engrossed by his scientific pursuits, that I had enjoyed little of his company. He received me with an air of unusual vivacity. "When I last saw you," said he, "I am afraid I must have appeared strangely inattentive; but, in truth, my mind was at that time very much embarrassed, and almost solely occupied on a subject which I did not then choose to speak of, but which I shall now fully explain. You must know, that I had lately entered on a course of experiments, more interesting than any in which I have ever yet engaged, and from which, I had no doubt, a

most important discovery would result. I found it, however, altogether impossible to go on without the assistance of an additional apparatus, the price of which was far more than I could afford. It was fifty pounds: Little less than a quarter of a year's rent of my whole estate! What was I to do? bespeak it of the artizan, without having the money ready to pay for it? This would be nothing less than an act of wilful dishonesty; for dishonesty, either to one's self or others, running in debt always is.

“ Could I hope to save it by retrenching any of my ordinary expences? I calculated every thing, even to living on bread and water, but found it impossible. I had, then, nothing for it, but to relinquish my plan entirely, and since I could not carry it on myself, to communicate my ideas upon the subject to some more opulent philosopher, by whose means the benefit of

the discovery might be still given to the world." "Ah! my friend," interrupted I, "I now see that you have no regard for me, or you would have given me the enviable pleasure, the delight of being able to say to myself, that I too, ignorant as I am, I too have contributed my feeble aid to the advancement of science, and the benefit of society." "You are very good," returned the Doctor, "and I have no doubt of your generosity. But, as the action of heat evaporates fluids, so does the borrowing of money, in my opinion, destroy the independence of the soul: that independence, which gives life and energy to virtue, without which, it becomes incapable of being exerted to any truly useful purpose. No; what I cannot effect by the means which Divine Providence has put into my power, I think is not intended by Providence that I should effect at all.

“ I was therefore quietly employing myself in unfixing that great retort ; when this morning, a letter was brought me from my agent in the country, informing me of his having obtained for me, from a neighbouring 'Squire, the sum of fifty pounds ; for damages done me, by taking, through mistake, a piece of my ground into one of his inclosures : which sum he inclosed to me in a letter. Thus, you see, my dilemma is quite at an end. I shall now go on with spirit ; and as I need lose no more time, I am just going into the city, to give the necessary directions to the work-people ; who, if they are any way diligent, may have the whole apparatus completely finished in a week.” As he spoke, I contemplated with delight the glow of pleasure which animated his finely expressive countenance ; a pleasure so different from the sparkling extacy of passion, that merely to have beheld it, would have been sufficient to convince the most

devoted sensualist, of the superiority of *mind* over every enjoyment of mere sense.

Having accepted my offer of attending him, we were just about to depart, when prevented by the entrance of a lady, whose air and manner had in them somewhat so interesting, that the unseasonableness of the interruption was soon forgotten. Grief and anxiety were painted on her countenance. Every feature was labouring with ill-suppressed emotion, and when she attempted to speak, the tremor of her voice prevented her words from being distinctly heard. I, however, soon gathered from her broken sentences, and the sympathetic replies of the philosopher, that she was the wife of an old school-fellow, one of his early and esteemed friends.—That she had been born to affluence, but forfeited the favour of her family by her marriage; her husband having virtue and talents, but no fortune.

His talents, however, had been turned to good account; he had employed himself in drawing plans of the estates of the affluent, which his taste taught him to embellish in such a manner, as gratified the vanity of his employers, by the admiration it excited. He was contented with the profit, while they enjoyed the praise.

“ We were doing charmingly,” said the lady, “ and had the prospect of soon getting above the world, and paying off all the little debts, which, at our first settling out in life, necessity had compelled us to contract. When, in the beginning of last Summer, my husband was seized with a fever, which lasted seven weeks; and left him so weak, that many more elapsed before he was able to go abroad. During that time, he lost some of his most advantageous situations; gentlemen who had

employed him, having, in the time of his illness, contracted with others. Winter came on, and no funds were provided against its wants; my husband, whose tenderness and affection for his family, seemed to be increased by the difficulty he found in procuring their support, had a genius fruitful in resources. In those months when the season necessarily put a stop to his employments, he wrote for the printer of a periodical publication, in which work he taught me to assist him; and thus, by our united endeavours, we contrived still to keep up a decent appearance; and to maintain with frugality our four little ones, whose innocent endearments repaid all our trouble, and made us, when we sat down to our little meal, forget the labour by which it had been earned. Ah! my poor babes! it is your sufferings, that, more than his own, now wrings your father's heart!"

“ But where is now my friend?” interrupted Severan. “ Is he well? What can I do to serve him? Where can I see him?”

“ Alas, he is in prison!” returned the lady. “ He is in a loathsome, dismal prison!—deprived of light, of liberty, of every comfort, and enjoyment; and his dear children, his pretty darlings, of whom he used to be so fond, they too must go, must be nursed in the abode of misery, and made familiar with every species of wretchedness!”—Here tears came to her relief, and for some time choaked her utterance.

At length, recovering herself, and assuming an air of dejected composure, “ I beg your pardon,” continued she, (observing the marks of sensibility, that overspread the benignant countenance of our friend), “ I did not mean to distress you, but it is so few that can feel for one’s

affliction!—and the voice of sympathy is so grateful to the wounded heart—that I could not deny myself the consolation of speaking to you. But things may yet go better.—My husband has enough owing to him, to enable him to pay every one. But the misfortune is, that his debtors are all people of fortune, whose favour would be for ever lost, by an untimely application for money; and should the news of his having been imprisoned for debt, once get abroad, he is ruined for ever! No person of fashion will ever employ him more!”

“I cannot think so,” said the Doctor, with his wonted mildness; “we see daily instances of the high favour that is shewn to people of ruined circumstances; many of whom I have known, even when worthless and depraved, to meet with attention and support, from people of elevated rank and fashion!”

“ Ah ! sir,” replied the lady, “ these were people who had squandered their fortunes in luxury and dissipation ; such, indeed, seldom fail to meet with patrons and benefactors ; but, it is far otherwise with the poor man, who has been struggling with adversity, and employing his efforts for the maintenance of a virtuous wife and family : when *he* fails, he is considered as an object unworthy of notice ; *his* situation creates *no* interest ; *his* wretchedness excites *no* commiseration.” —“ But your own family, my dear Madam, —they have it in their power to extricate you from every difficulty ; will you permit me to apply to them in your behalf ?”

“ Alas ! sir, I fear it would be in vain ; they are too fond of money, to give it to those who have none. You know how I offended them by my marriage ; yet, had my husband succeeded in the world, and made a fortune, *mine* would not have been

withheld from him. It would have been given, if we had not wanted it; but, now that we are reduced to poverty, I have no hopes of assistance from any of my friends. Yet would I thank you for making trial of an application to them, if they were in town—but they are not. They are all at York; except one aunt, who is, indeed, very rich; she is also very religious, and very charitable, but makes it a rule, never to give assistance to any who are not of her own sect.”

“Then,” cried Severan, with unusual warmth, “whatever are her professions, she is a stranger to the religion of Jesus Christ! But you have not told me the amount of the debt, for which your husband is confined; is it not considerable?”

“Alas! yes,” returned the lady; “it is more than forty pounds; and, what with

the bailiff's and the jailor's fees, will, I dare say, arise to little less than fifty!"

" Fifty pounds !" repeated the philosopher. " And fifty pounds would release your husband from a jail : Fifty pounds would restore a father to his infant family, and make the heart of a virtuous woman rejoice. It is the noblest of all experiments !—And detested be the pursuit, that would stand in the way of the happiness of a fellow-creature. My good Madam," continued he, addressing himself to the lady, who looked astonished at the incoherence of his expressions, " you must know, that I this morning made a mistake ; I thought that Providence had sent me fifty pounds, to enable me to pursue a philosophical discovery, on which I had vainly set my heart : but I now find, it was for a nobler purpose ; it was to contribute to the happiness of an unfortunate family ; here it is ; and all I desire is, that

you would consider me only as the agent, and keep your thanks for him who sent it.”

The various emotions of astonishment, doubt, gratitude, and joy, which took possession of the poor lady's bosom, struggled for utterance, and at length found vent in tears.

The effect upon my feelings, was too powerful to be supported: I left the room, and when I returned, found my friend advising with the lady, on the steps necessary to be taken for her husband's release. I had, from the commencement of our acquaintance, regarded the philosopher as the first of human beings. I now looked up to him as something more. To help a fellow-creature in distress, is the instinctive impulse of benevolence; but to sacrifice, for the good of others, the darling pursuit of one's life! to give up on that

account the favourite, the cherished object of one's mind! this belongs only to the philosophy of Jesus. It was now that I understood what cutting off the right hand, and plucking out the right eye, truly meant. But ah! my friend, if this is really the religion of Christ, how falsely are people often called Christians!

On the arrival of the man of the law, whom the Doctor had sent for to conduct the business, we all set out with the lady, for the place of her husband's confinement.

When we arrived at the great, gloomy mansion, Doctor Severan, thinking it indelicate to go immediately into the presence of his friend, sent his lawyer with the lady to inform her husband of his liberation, and, in the mean time, indulged my curiosity with a sight of the prison.

You have seen the dungeons in which the Mussulmans confine their malefactors, and in which their prisoners of war are often doomed to suffer the lingering tortures of despair; to inhale the noxious vapours of pestilence, and to pine in all the miseries of disease and famine. But after what I have said of Christian charity, you will, no doubt, think it impossible, that in a Christian country similar places should be found. This, indeed, at first sight, appears very inexplicable; but it only serves to confirm me in the truth of my former conjecture, respecting *a new revelation*, a supplementary code of Christian laws and Christian precepts, which, in many respects, must very essentially differ from the old one.

In this new gospel, I have every reason to believe, from all that I have observed since my abode in England, that poverty is considered as one of the most heinous of

crimes. It is, accordingly, by the *Christians of the new system*, not only stigmatized with a degree of infamy, but by their very laws, and under the immediate inspection of their sage magistrates, it is punished in the most exemplary manner. The abhorrence in which this crime is held by those Christian legislators, is, indeed, evident throughout the tenour of their laws.

Can a person contrive by villainy to possess himself of the estate of another, provided it can be clearly proved, that *poverty* had no share in instigating him to the offence, the law is satisfied with simple restitution. But, should a poor starving wretch put forth his audacious hand to satisfy the calls of hunger, or still the clamorous demands of an infant family, he is condemned to death, or doomed to everlasting wretchedness. You who are prejudiced in favour of the mild ordi-

nances of our revered Pundits, will, perhaps, think it unjust, that to the miserable mortal who steals the value of twenty rupees, and to him who boldly ventures on plundering the wealth of a family, adding murder to the crime of robbery, the same punishment should be allotted; but, you will admire the principle upon which the laws of these new Christians in this case proceeds. It throws the crime of poverty into the scale, which instantly settles the balance.

Even when poverty constitutes the sole offence, nothing is more equitable than the punishments which proceed in regular gradation, and correspond in exact proportion to the degree in which the crime exists. For instance, within the massy walls of this prison, whose iron gates open to receive the reeking murderer, the midnight thief, and all those miserable outcasts of society, who, lost to every prin-

ciple of shame, every feeling of humanity, have sunk into all the brutality of vice; those guilty of the crime of poverty, are likewise immured. But think not that they are all equally wretched. No; those that can afford to defraud their creditors, are suffered, by these wise legislators, to live in a degree of luxury. Those who can save enough from the wreck of former times, to pay for their accommodation, may still enjoy some comparative degree of comfort. But, it is those wretches who have lost their *all*, and are alike destitute of friends and fortune—it is they who are doomed to suffer the bitterness of confinement, in all its horrors.

It is true, that some who follow the old system of Christianity, as it was taught by Jesus Christ and his apostles, by whom poverty is *not* considered as so unpardonable a crime, have exerted their endeavours for relieving the sufferings of their fellow-

creatures, who for small sums; are shut up in these dreary abodes of wretchedness. But notwithstanding their endeavours, notwithstanding the zealous efforts, the heart touching remonstrances of one of these Christians of the old school, who devotes his life to the children of misfortune;* still, in these prisons, many thousands of the inhabitants of this land of freedom, are left to pine out a miserable existence, alike useless to themselves and to society. Many, at whose birth the voice of congratulation has been raised, and over whose infant forms the tears of parental tenderness have been fondly shed, are here suffered to languish, unnoticed and unknown.

As for those wretches who have committed such offences against society, as all nations upon earth have deemed cri-

* We suppose the Rajah points at the benevolent exertions of Mr Howard.

minal, they are here held in such just abhorrence, that it is not thought sufficient to visit their sins with mere *temporal punishment*, but every possible pains is taken to preserve them in such a state of wickedness, as may give them every possible chance of being, according to the faith of the lawgivers, *miserable to all eternity*.

This, you may, perhaps, esteem rather an unjustifiable degree of severity.—But consider, O benevolent Maandaara, that, by the old Christian Shaster, none are excluded from the hopes of mercy, who seek it by sincere repentance. Now, nothing is more probable than that many of those miserable beings, who have been unwittingly swept into the torrent of vice, might, when they find themselves shipwrecked on its barren shores, gladly listen to the voice that would conduct them to the paths of peace and virtue. If kept in a state of separation from the bad, and favoured with

means of instruction from the good, this would, no doubt, often be the case. But then consider what might be the consequence: perhaps, some of these vile felons might come to have a higher seat in heaven, than some of the proud and jealous guardians of the laws, which had condemned them upon earth. The idea is not to be endured with patience! and to prevent any possibility of its being realized, the poor trembling wretch, new to vice, and whose mind is not yet hardened in iniquity, no sooner commits (or is said to have committed) the most trifling offence that stands within the cognizance of the law, than, hurled into the society of those veterans in sin, of whose repentance there is little reason to be afraid, the unfortunate offender is gradually trained to an equal degree of depravity.

Thus, the door of mercy is for ever shut; the returning path to virtue is bar-

ricaded, and so filled up by the briers and the thorns, which these new Christians have thrown in the way, that it becomes quite invisible; and, lest reflection should point it out, intoxicating liquors are allowed in all prisons to be distributed in sufficient quantities, to prevent the most distant apprehensions of such an event. Thus do these enlightened people exert their endeavours to fill the regions of Nareyka!!

As for the philosopher, who, I need not tell you, is a Christian according to the old Gospel, he deprecates the whole system, and was so much shocked at the sight of the young victims, who are here devoted to vice, in order that they may be afterwards immolated on the altars of justice, that no cordial less powerful than the sight of the happiness he had himself created, would have had efficacy to restore his mind to any degree of composure.

Before I conclude this epistle, I must entreat you to send for the good and pious Bramin Sheermaal:—tell him, that my heart reproaches me, for the injustice I was guilty of towards him; I implore his pardon, for the incredulity with which I regarded his account of the conduct of Christians.—Experience has now taught me to acknowledge, that his words were dictated by truth, and his observations emanated from wisdom!

All that I have written, thou wilt not, perhaps, think proper to read to Zamar-canda; many parts of it, she certainly could not understand! but I request thou wouldst assure her, that the love of her brother is undiminished.—I embrace my son—and implore upon him the blessing of all the benignant Dewtahs!—May the fortunes of Maandaara be established for ever!—What can I say more?

LETTER XIV.

SINCE I last took up the reed of friendship, my heart has been fretted with vexation, and my soul chilled with astonishment. Will the friend of Zaarmilla believe it possible, that I should have found fraud and falsehood, venality and corruption, even in that court-protected vehicle of public information, that pure source of intelligence, called a Newspaper?

The manner in which I made the disagreeable discovery was, to me, no less extraordinary, than the discovery itself. I went, as usual, yesterday morning, to spend an hour at the neighbouring coffee-house, and, on entering it, was surprised to find myself the object of universal at-

attention. Every eye was turned towards me; some few seemed to regard me with a look of contempt; but the general expression was that of pity and compassion. I had advanced to a box, and called for a newspaper; but was hesitating whether I should retire or stay to peruse its contents, when a gentleman, whom I observed to eye me with particular eagerness, approaching me with much formality, begged leave to inquire, whether I was indeed the Rajah of Almora, a native prince of Rohilcund? On being answered in the affirmative, the gentleman, again bowing to the ground, thus proceeded: "I hope your highness will not attribute it to any want of respect, that I have thus presumed to intrude myself into your presence. I entertain too much respect, for whatever is illustrious in birth, or honourable in rank, or dignified in title, or exalted in authority, to do any thing derogatory to its greatness. I am but too conscious of

the prejudice which your highness must inevitably entertain against this nation, to hope that you will look upon any individual belonging to it without suspicion and abhorrence! But I hope to convince you, in spite of the reasons you have had to the contrary, that we are not a *nation* of monsters. Some virtue still remains among us, confined to me, and my honourable friends, it is true; but we, sir, are Englishmen. Englishmen, capable of blushing at the nefarious practices of delegated authority. Englishmen, who have not been completely disembowelled of our natural entrails: our hearts, and galls, and spleens, and livers, have not been forcibly torn from our bodies, and their places supplied by shawls, and lacks, and nabobships, and dewannes! We have real hearts of flesh and blood, within our bosoms. Hearts, which bleed at the recital of human misery, and feel for the woes of your unhappy country, with all the warmth of

unsophisticated virtue." Perceiving my intention to speak, "I know, sir, what you would say," cried he, with vehemence: "You would tell me, that your hatred to the English race was founded in nature and in justice.—You would tell me, that it is *we* who have desolated your empire, who have turned the fruitful and delicious garden of Rohilcund, into a waste and howling wilderness.—*We*, who have extirpated the noble race of warriors, who were your kind protectors! your indulgent lords! your beneficent friends!—to whom you paid a proud submission; a dignified obedience; a subordination more desirable than the tumultuous spirit of the most exalted freedom!" Again I attempted to speak.—"Ah!" cried he, in a still louder tone, "you need not describe to me the ravages you have seen committed! the insults you have sustained! You need not tell me, that your friends have been slaughtered; your country plundered;

your houses burned ; your land laid waste ; your zenana dishonoured ; and the favourite, the lovely, the virtuous wife of your affections, perhaps, torn from your agonizing bosom !” This was a chord not to be touched, even by the rude hand of a stranger, without exciting a visible emotion. “ I see the subject is too much for you,” cried he, “ it is too fraught with horror, to be surveyed with indifference. Nature sickens at the recollection ; but you need say no more ; depend upon it, I shall make a proper representation of your case. Through me, your wrongs shall find a tongue. I will proclaim to the world, all that I have heard you utter. That mass of horrors, that system of iniquity, which your highness would describe, shall be laid open to the eye of day, and its wicked, nefarious, abominable, and detested author, exposed to the just indignation of the congregated universe !”—At these words, again bowing to the ground, he turned round,

and departed. As I had no doubt of the unhappy man's insanity, I exceedingly rejoiced at his departure, and that he had done no mischief to himself or others, during this paroxysm of delirium.

Among the crowd, which the vociferation of this unhappy maniac had attracted round us, I perceived one of the gentlemen I had met at Miss Ardent's; and was happy to take the opportunity of renewing our acquaintance. From him I learned, that the notice of the noisy orator had been drawn upon me, by a paragraph inserted in a newspaper of that morning, which, after mentioning my name, and describing my person, falsely and wickedly insinuated, "that I had come thither on behalf of the Hindoo inhabitants of Bengal, to complain of the horrid cruelties, and unexampled oppression, under which, through the mal-administration of the British Governor of India, we were made to groan."

I was exceedingly shocked at the idea of the consequences that might arise to the chosen servant of the minister, the writer of the newspaper, from having suffered himself to be thus imposed upon. I did not know what punishment might await the confidential conductor of this vehicle of intelligence, should his master discover that he had suffered a falsehood to pollute that pure fountain of public instruction, in which his care for the morals, the virtue, the fortune, the health, and the beauty of all the subjects of this extensive empire, is so fully evinced.— The gentleman, observing my anxiety, told me, that the best method of proceeding was, to authorise the publisher to contradict the paragraph alluded to in the next paper; and that he would, if I chose it, go then with me to his house.

Eager to extricate the poor man from the dilemma into which his ignorance had

thrown him, I gladly accepted the friendly offer, and we proceeded immediately to the office of this prime minister of fame, who received us with all the stateliness which an idea of the consequence of situation never fails to inspire. The gentleman took upon himself to open the business; which he did, by saying, "that he had brought with him a stranger, of high rank, who considered himself aggrieved by a paragraph, which had been that morning inserted in his paper; and then pointing it out, he told him, that I would expect to see a contradiction of that part of it which related to the British Governor of India, for whom I entertained sentiments of the most profound respect. The conductor shrugged up his shoulders, and said, "the paragraph had been paid for."—"That is to say, the contradiction of it must be paid for likewise," returned the gentleman. "I dare say, the Rajah will have no objection." Observing the asto-

nishment that was painted in my countenance, he told me, that nothing was more commonly practised. "Yes," added the news writer, "the gentleman must certainly allow, that when a falsehood has been paid for, it is not reasonable to expect that it can be contradicted for nothing!—It would be quite *dishonourable!*"

"What!" cried I, with an emotion no longer to be suppressed, "and is it then in the power of a piece of gold, to procure circulation to whatever untruths the base malignity of envy or of hatred may chuse to dictate? Are these the articles of intelligence diffused, at such vast expence, over this Christian kingdom? Ah! ye simple people! whom distance has happily preserved in ignorance of the ways of news writers, how little do ye know the real value of what ye so liberally pay for!"

So much was I disgusted, that if my own character alone had been concerned, I would rather have submitted to the evil, than to the remedy.—As it was, I threw down the guinea and departed, with rather less reverence for the authenticity of newspaper intelligence, than I had entertained at my entrance.

The disagreeable consequences of this affair have not stopped here: I can no longer stir abroad, without attracting the gaze of observation. Places of public entertainment are filled by the bare expectation of beholding me; all those of resort, in the out-skirts of the town, have advertised me, as part of their bill of fare; and I am this evening disappointed of the pleasure I expected, at a new species of amusement called a Masquerade, from seeing in the newspaper that my intention is known to the public.—In fine, I can no longer find happiness in this metropolis, and would

with pleasure, at this moment, re-embark on the bosom of that ocean, whose distant waves now beat against the happy shores of India. Some weeks must elapse, before such an opportunity can be found. I shall, therefore, in the interim, avail myself of the polite and friendly invitation of Lady Grey, and the family of the Ardents, to go into the country.

If I can prevail upon the philosopher to accompany me, I shall indeed be happy. And let not Maandaara too much exult over the disappointment of his friend, when I confess to him, that experience has now convinced me, that, though the novelty of manners and opinions may produce amusement, and the variety of human characters afford some degree of instruction, it is the society of the friend we esteem, that can alone solace and satisfy the heart !

WHEN I vainly flattered myself with obtaining the company of Severan, I had entirely forgot his experiments. He has now engaged in them with renewed ardour; and so deeply is he interested in their success, that no motive, less powerful than the possibility of relieving a fellow-creature in distress, would be sufficient to make him quit his laboratory. The morning after that in which we had visited the building allotted to the reception of the unfortunate people, whom these good Christians have so piously devoted to Eemen,* I paid a visit to the worthy family who had been rescued from the punishment of poverty; and, after having done what was in my power to preserve

* The Prince of Hell.

them from being found guilty of a like crime in future, directed them to return to Severan the sum he had so generously advanced.

But though I am thus deprived of his company for the present, he promises to join me, as soon as his scientific engagements will admit. And in the mean time, he tells me, I may expect amusement (I wonder he did not rather say instruction) from the characters I shall meet at Sir Caprice Ardent's. This man of many minds, has left his temples and his turrets, his pillars and pilasters, his arcades and his colonades, to be finished by the next lover of architecture, who may chance to spring up in the family; and has retired into the country, to enjoy, without interruption, the calm pleasures of philosophy. The philosophy which at present engrosses the soul of the Baronet, is, however, of a different species from that which

engages the capacious mind of Doctor Severan. It is a philosophy which disdains the slow process of experiment, and chiefly glories in contradicting common sense. Its main object is to shew, that the *things which are, are not*, and the *things which are not, are*; and this is called Metaphysics.

As I understand the matter, the art of these metaphysical champions lies in puzzling each other, and the best puzzler carries off the prize.

While these Christian-born philosophers pique themselves in turning from light, to walk in the darkness of their own vain imaginations, may the words that are written in the "Ocean of Wisdom," never escape from our remembrance!

"Though one should be intimately acquainted with the whole circle of sci-

“ ences, and master of the principles on
 “ which the most abstruse of them are
 “ founded; yet, if this knowledge be un-
 “ accompanied by the humble worship of
 “ the omniscient God, it shall prove alto-
 “ gether vain and unprofitable.”*

I have heard of a conveyance, which, although not eligible for my personal accommodation, yet will serve to transmit this letter to my friend.

May he who possesses the eight attributes, receive your prayers! May you walk in the shadow of Veeshnu! and when, by the favour of Varuna, this letter shall reach

* This passage appears to have been taken from the *Tervo-Vaulever Kuddel*, a composition which bears the marks of considerable antiquity; and which, though written, not by a Bramin, but a Hindoo of the lowest order, is held in high estimation, for the beauties of its poetry, and intrinsic value of its precepts. Part of it has been lately translated into English by Mr Kindersley.

the dwelling of Maandaara, may he read its contents with the same sentiments of friendship as now beat in the bosom of Zaarmilla. The brother of Zamarcanda salutes the sister of his heart, and weeps over the tender blossom he entrusted to her bosom. O that by her care his mind may be nourished by the refreshing dew of early virtue! What can I say more!

LETTER XV.

PRAISE to Ganesa!* How would the God, whose symbol is an Elephant's head, have been astonished, could he have descended to have been a spectator of the scene I have just now witnessed? Had he beheld in what a ridiculous light he is represented by the philosophers of Europe, who pretend to be his worshippers, I am afraid, he would have been more than half ashamed of his votaries. But let me not anticipate. You must travel the whole journey; and, according to my plan of punctual and minute information, you must be told, that I left London the morning after that in which my last epis-

* The God of Wisdom, whose symbol is the Head of an Elephant.

tle was concluded; and travelled, after the manner of the country, in a carriage drawn by four horses, which were changed every six or eight coss, at Choltries replete with every convenience, and occupied by the politest, the civilest, and the most hospitable people I have since my residence in Europe ever encountered.

Wherever I stopped, smiles of welcome sat on every brow, nor was the benign suavity of their manners confined to myself alone; it extended even to my domestics; and was particularly evinced in the cordial looks, and kindly greetings, bestowed on my English Sircar, who has the uncontrolled disbursement of my money.

I had already travelled upwards of two hundred miles (about one hundred of our coss) without meeting with any adventure worth notice; and had turned a few miles out of the great road, into that which

leads to the Baronet's, when, on stopping to change horses at the inn of a paltry village, I met with an unexpected delay. They had no horses at home. I was, therefore, under the necessity of waiting for the return of a pair, which the landlord assured me would be back in less than half an hour, and should then proceed with me immediately. I was a little surprised, to hear him propose having my carriage drawn by *one* pair, as my English servant had assured me, it was a thing *impossible*. And his judgment had been confirmed, not only by the London horse-hirer, but by the master of every inn upon the road. But as the road was now more broken, and more hilly, than I had hitherto travelled, I found that two horses would be sufficient. And for these two I resolved to wait with all possible patience.—I do not know that I have hitherto mentioned to you, that in this country there are various ways of measuring time; and that what

is with trades-people, inn-keepers, servants, &c. called five minutes, is seldom less than one hour, by the sun-dial. What they call an hour, is a very undeterminate period indeed ; being sometimes two hours, and, as I have frequently known it with my English servant, sometimes the length of a whole evening. Making up my mind, therefore, to spend two or three hours at this sorry village, I was not a little pleased to hear, that I had the prospect of some company ; and that two gentlemen from Sir Caprice Ardent's were in the same house. They soon introduced themselves to my acquaintance ; and it was not long before I discovered, that these were two of the philosophers, mentioned to me by my friend Severan.

They informed me, that they had been brought to the village on a disagreeable errand. They had, it seems, been stopped and robbed in their way from London to

Ardent-Hall. The robber was now in custody, but their evidence was necessary for his commitment to prison. On this account they were desired to appear before a magistrate; and as I rejoice in every new scene, from which I can hope to acquire a new idea, I gladly accompanied them thither. Little did I know, what acquisitions were to be made to my stock of knowledge! or, that in the simple business of recognizing the person of a robber, I was to be made acquainted with a complete system of philosophy. Alas! ignorant that I was! I knew not, that to involve the simplest question in perplexity, and to veil the plain dictates of common sense, in the thick mist of obscurity and doubt, is an easy matter with metaphysical philosophers!

We were shewn into the hall of justice, and found the magistrate seated in his chair. This portly personage, who in

figure very much resembled those images of the Mandarines of China, which are often to be seen both in Asia and Europe, with due solemnity of voice, addressing himself to the eldest of the two gentlemen, desired him to examine the features of the culprit who now stood before him, and say, whether he was satisfied as to his *identity*. “Much may be said upon the subject of *identity*,” replied Mr Puzzledorf; “the greatest philosophers have differed in their opinions concerning it, and ill would it become me to decide upon a question of such vast importance.” “You have but to look in the man’s face, sir,” returned the magistrate, “to see whether he is the identical person by whom you have been robbed; and I do not see, what any philosopher has to say concerning it.” “It would ill become me to instruct your worship upon this point,” resumed Mr Puzzledorf, “but his being *identically* the same, is, in *my opinion*, altogether impossi-

ble. Nor is my opinion singular; happily, it is supported by the most respectable authorities. Locke, indeed, makes identity to consist in consciousness, but consciousness exists in succession, it cannot be the same in any two moments. His hypothesis, therefore, is not tenable; in fact, Watts, Colins, Clarke, Butler, Berkley, Price, Priestly, all have, in some degree, differed from it." "Pray, sir, were these gentlemen Justices of the King's Bench?" interrupted the magistrate; "if they were not, I must take the liberty of telling you, sir, they were very impertinent to interfere in such questions! I am not to be taught the business of a Justice of Peace, by any of them.—And again ask you, whether that man, who calls himself Tobias, *alias* Timothy Trundle, be the very identical person, by whom you were robbed on the 18th instant, on his Majesty's highway?" "I must again repeat it," returned the philosopher, "the thing is impossible;

it is proved beyond a doubt, that there is no such quality as permanent identity, appertaining to any thing whatever:—and that no one can any more remain one and the same person for two moments together, than that two successive moments can be one and the same moment. And if you will give me the honour of stating my arguments upon the subject, which I shall do in a manner truly philosophical, I make no doubt of convincing you of the truth of my system. It is, indeed, a system so clear, so plain, so unanswerable, that nothing but the most wilful blindness and obstinacy can resist its truth.” “That I deny,” said Mr Axiom, interrupting his friend. “I agree with you, that consciousness, being frequently interrupted, is not strictly continuous, and, therefore, the continuity of consciousness cannot constitute identity: I also allow, that wherever there is a chemical combination, there is a corresponding change of properties, and

that the majority of the particles of which the man is composed, are necessarily in succession changed.—But, I assert, and will undertake to prove, that there exists certain stamina which are never carried off. Where this stamina is situated, will, I know, admit of dispute. In the heart, say some; in the brain, say others: for my part, I think it is most probable, that it is placed in that part of the brain which approaches the nearest possible to the very top of the nose, which situation is, undoubtedly, the most convenient for receiving the notices sent to it from the organs of sight, hearing, smelling, &c. and which may be more incontestably proved from the following arguments: first”——

“Fire and fury!” exclaimed the Magistrate, “this is more than human patience can bear! But do not think, gentlemen, that I am to be made a fool of in this way; I shall let you know, that it is no such easy matter to make a fool of me! And was it

not for the sake of my worthy friend, Sir Caprice Ardent, I should let you know the consequence of insulting one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace, in the exercise of his duty. A vile misdemeanor! a high breach of decorum! and not to be suffered to pass with impunity. Once for all, I desire you, sir, (to Axiom) to examine the countenance of the culprit, and, without loss of time, to declare—whether he be actually the person guilty of the *alleged crime?*”

“As for crime,” replied Mr Axiom, “I absolutely deny the existence of crime in any case whatever. What is by the vulgar erroneously called so, is, in the enlightened eye of philosophy, nothing more than an error in judgment. And, indeed, according to my friend Doctor Sceptic, (Tim Trundle's former master) we have no right to predicate this much.—For what is right? what is wrong? what is vice?”

what is virtue? but terms merely relative, and which are to be applied by the standard of a man's own reason. If, for instance, the reason of Mr Timothy Trundle leads him to revolt at the unjust distribution of property, and to think it virtue to give his feeble aid towards redressing that enormous abuse, who shall dare to call it wrong?" "I can tell you, sir," cried the Justice, that the law—will think it *right*, that Mr Timothy Trundle should be hanged for so doing.—Nor would it be any loss to the world, if all the promulgators of such doctrines, the aiders and abettors of such acts of atrocity, shared the same fate!" "That, sir," returned Axiom, with great calmness, "I conceive to be an error of judgment, on the part of your worship."—"You, however, declare, that this is the person by whom you were robbed?" said the Justice. "Yes," replied Axiom, "I have no scruples on the subject of his personal identity; identity

being, as I said before,"—" O say no more upon the subject, but let the clerk read your affidavit, and have done with it," cried the Magistrate. The clerk proceeded, and the solemn appeal to the Deity—an appeal which so nearly concerned the life of a fellow-creature, was made—by the extraordinary, and, to me, incomprehensible ceremony, of kissing a little, dirty-looking book !

The prisoner, who had hitherto maintained a strict silence, now addressed himself to Mr Axiom, to whom, it seems, he was well known, having long been servant to his particular friend. He began in a sullen tone, as follows :

“ I did not think as how it would have been your honour, that would have had the heart to turn so against me at last. Many a time and oft have I heard you, and my master, Doctor Sceptic, say, that

all mankind were equal, and that the poor had as good a right to property as the rich. You said, moreover, that they were all fools that would not make the most they could of this world, seeing as how there was no other; for that religion was all a hum, and the parson a rogue, who did not himself believe a word of it.—Nay, the very last day that ever I attended you at dinner, did not you say, again and again, that kings, princes, and prime ministers, were all worse than pick-pockets? And yet now you would go for to hang me, for having only civilly asked a few guineas, to make up a little matter of loss I had had in the lottery. I wonder you a'nt ashamed to turn so against your own words.” “No, Timothy,” returned the philosopher, “my opinions are not so easily changed. No man ever yet convinced me of being in an error. You have only to regret your having lived in a dark age, when vulgar prejudices so far prevail, as

to consider laws as necessary to the well-being of society.—But be comforted, Timothy! The age of reason approaches. That glorious era is fast advancing, in which every man shall do that which is right in his own eyes, and the fear of the gallows shall have as little influence as the fear of hell.”

“ Ah! that I had kept to my good grandmother’s wholesome doctrine of hell and damnation!” (exclaimed the poor wretch, whom the Justice’s men were now dragging back to prison)—“ I should not now be at the mercy of a false friend, who laughed me out of the fear of God—and now leaves me to the mercy of the gallows!”—He continued to speak, but we could no longer hear. He was dragged to his prison, and we, having made our obeisance to the Magistrate, departed. I have been enabled thus circumstantially to detail the particulars of this curious con-

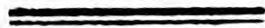
versation, from the politeness of the Magistrate's nephew, who was so kind as to furnish me with a copy of his notes, taken down in what is called Short Hand.

It is possible, that much of it may appear to you unintelligible ; but be not discouraged. How should our unenlightened minds expect to understand the language of philosophers, since, from all I can learn, they seldom thoroughly understand themselves ?

On returning to the inn, I found the horses in waiting, the gentlemen's were also in readiness, and we proceeded in company to Ardent-Hall. My reception from the Baronet was very cordial. That of his lady was most frigidly polite. Her daughter did not seem to remember ever having seen me before ; but the elder Miss Ardent shook me by the hand, with a

degree of frankness, as masculine as her understanding.

The conversation of the evening turned upon the same topics that had been discussed before the Magistrate; Mr Axiom and Mr Puzzledorf doing little more than support the opinions they had formerly advanced. Sir Caprice Ardent seemed, in general, disposed to agree with the last speaker; and Doctor Sceptic, who made one of the party, made a point of agreeing with none.—Miss Ardent retired to write letters, and her Ladyship and her daughter remained as silent as did the friend of Maandaara.



O SHEERMAAL!—Wise and learned Bramin!—May thy meek and generous spirit pardon the presumption of my ignorance, which, refusing to confide in thy experi-

ence, persisted in cherishing the ill-founded notion, that all the people of England were Christians!—With all humility, I now retract my error; and confess, that of the many religions prevalent in this strange country, Christianity (as it is set forth in the Shaster) has the smallest number of votaries; and, according to the accounts of my new friend, is fast journeying to oblivion.

Much do the philosophers exult, in exposing the weakness and wickedness of its authors. These artful and designing men, who, having entered into a combination to lead the most virtuous lives, having bound themselves to the practice of fortitude and forbearance, meekness and magnanimity, piety towards God, and benevolence to all mankind, weakly and foolishly refused to take to themselves any merit for their conduct; and, renouncing all worldly honours and interests, resigned themselves to per-

secution, pains, tortures, and death, in support of the truth of their doctrines.

All this appears very foolish in the eyes of the philosophers; who, judging of others by themselves, pronounce so much self-denial, fortitude, and forbearance, to be utterly impossible. The God of the Christians appears, in their eyes, as very unreasonable, in exacting purity of heart, and humility from his votaries. They therefore think it is doing much service to mankind, to free them from these uneasy restraints, and to lead them to the worship of Dewtah that are not quite so unreasonable.

To make the attempt, is all that is necessary, towards obtaining the appellation of Philosopher.

On examining the Cosha,* I found, indeed, that the word Philosopher, was

* Dictionary.

said to signify, “a man deep in knowledge, either moral or natural”—but, from my own experience, I can pronounce the definition to be nugatory; and that those who usually call themselves such, are men who, without much knowledge, either moral or natural, entertain a high idea of their own superiority, from having the temerity to reject whatever has the sanction of experience, and common sense.

The Poojah of philosophers is performed to certain idols, called Systems. The faith of each system has been promulgated by the priest, who either first formed the idol, or first set it up to receive the Poojah of the credulous. This faith is received by the votary of the system with undoubting confidence, and defended with the fervency of pious zeal. It must be confessed, that this zeal sometimes carries the philosophers to a pitch of intolerance that is repugnant to the feelings of a Hin-

doo. Never did the most bigoted dervish* of the Mussulmans, betray more abhorrence at the sight of the idols of the Pagoda, than is evinced by the worshipper of system towards a Christian priest! And yet, so far are the latter from returning any portion of this dislike, that the majority of them are very careful not to offend the philosophers, by too rigid an adherence to the precepts of *that* Shaster, to which they know their adversaries have such an insuperable antipathy.

All the philosophers now at Ardent-Hall, perform Poojah to different systems; and seem to have no opinion in common, except the expectation of the return of the Suttee Jogue, which they distinguish by the name of *The Age of Reason*.

* The antipathy of the Mussulmans to every species of idolatry, is still the occasion of frequent disturbance to the Hindoos, in the performance of the superstitious ceremonies of their religion.

In this blessed era of purity and perfection, it is believed by each of the philosophers, that the worship of his idol shall be established; and the doctrines of his priest be the faith of the world.

“Then,” says Mr Puzzledorf, “will be evinced the dignity of man,” for this is the idol to which Mr Puzzledorf professes the performance of Poojah. You are, perhaps, curious to know in what this dignity consists? Know, then, that it appears, from the researches of the priest of Mr Puzzledorf—that some difference, in point of organization, doth actually exist between him and a bamboo, or a bramble-bush: no brain having as yet been discovered in any of the vegetable tribes. Should such a discovery crown the labours of some future philosopher, what a sad stroke will it be to the dignity of man? He will then be reduced to a level, not only with the beasts of the field, but with the very trees

of the forest! The similarity is already too conspicuous. Like them, he is doomed slowly to advance to maturity; shortly to flourish, and quickly to decay. Like them too, according to the faith of Mr Puzzledorf, he is doomed to moulder into dust, from which there is no hopes of resuscitation, no prospect of revival!—Such, in the eyes of the adherents of this system, is the vaunted dignity of man!

The idol of Mr Axiom, is the little stammina at the top of the nose. This, he declares to be imperishable, and that it must of necessity exist to all eternity.—To the faith of Mr Axiom, Mr Puzzledorf opposes an argument, that is frequently made use of by the bigoted of all sects, against the opinions of their adversaries:—viz. That it is *nonsense*. He says, moreover, that in the age of reason it will incontestably appear, that every particle is alike liable to the decomposition which these poor bodies of

our's must undergo in the laboratory of death, who is too good a chemist to suffer the little favourite stamina of Mr Axiom to escape him. Both philosophers appeal for the truth of their systems, to the experiments of Doctor Severan. Alas ! little does the good Doctor think, that the existence of a future state depends upon the management of his crucible !

I have not been able to discover the name of the system, to which Doctor Sceptic pays his vows ; the only thing I have ever heard him attempt to prove, is, that nothing ever was, will, or can be proved : all religions being, in his opinion, equally false, ridiculous, and absurd. But, though he performs not Poojah to the idols of any of his brother philosophers, it is the religion of Christianity, against which the arrows of his sarcasm are chiefly pointed. When an opportunity occurs of venting the overflowings of his zeal, in a sneer

at any of the opinions or practices of the Christians, his rigid features relax into a smile of triumph, which, for a moment, dispels from his countenance the gloom of discontent. It seems to have been the endeavour of his life, to eradicate from his bosom those social feelings and affections, which form so great a part of the felicity of common mortals. A stranger to the animating glow of friendship, and the tender confidence of esteem; he considers all attachments as a proof of weakness—into which, if he has ever in any degree relaxed, it is in favour of a nephew, a hopeful youth, whom he piques himself upon having freed from the prejudices he had contracted from a pious father, at whose piety, and whose prejudices, the young man now laughs in a very becoming manner!

The idol to whose service this young man hath devoted himself, is called Athe-

ism. From all that I have been able to learn, Atheism is an infernal deity, who demands of his votaries such cruel sacrifices—that every one initiated into the mysteries of this faith, must make a solemn and absolute renunciation of the use of his senses—shut his eyes upon the fair volume of nature—and deny to his heart the pleasurable emotions of admiration and gratitude!

Such are the sacrifices required by this idol, even from its speculative votaries. The zeal of its practical proselytes carries them still farther.—I am told, that the female converts seldom fail to make an offering to Atheism of their peace, purity, and good fame; and that of its worshippers, among the lower orders of men, numbers every year suffer martyrdom, at a place called Newgate; which I suppose to be a temple dedicated to this superstition.

What are the posthumous honours, which the martyrs of Atheism receive from their brethren, the philosophers, I have not been able to discover, as it is a subject on which the philosophers modestly decline to expatiate.

From the conversations that I have overheard, between the nephew of Doctor Sceptic, and Mr Vapour, who is one of the most renowned teachers of this faith; I find, that its adherents perform Poojah to certain inferior Dewtah, called Existing, or External, circumstances, energies, and powers, of whom I am not yet sufficiently prepared to speak.

Mr Vapour is particularly tenacious of his faith, which is, indeed, of a very extraordinary nature. Rejecting all the received opinions that have hitherto prevailed in the world, and utterly discrediting the circumstances upon which they have been

founded ; he reserves his whole stock of credulity for futurity. Here his faith is so strong, as to bound over the barriers of probability, to unite all that is discordant in nature, and to believe in things impossible.

The age of reason is thought, by Mr Vapour, to be very near at hand. Nothing, he says, is so easy, as to bring it about immediately. It is only to persuade the people in power to resign its exercise; the rich to part with their property; and, with one consent, to abolish all laws, and put an end to all government: "Then," says this credulous philosopher, "shall we see the perfection of virtue!" Not such virtue, it is true, as has heretofore passed current in the world. Benevolence will not then be heard of; gratitude will be considered as a crime, and punished with the contempt it so justly deserves. Filial affection would, no doubt, be treated as a

crime of a still deeper dye, but that to prevent the possibility of such a breach of virtue, no man, in the age of reason, shall be able to guess who his father is; nor any woman to say to her husband, behold your son! Chastity shall then be considered as a weakness, and the virtue of a female estimated according as she has had sufficient energy to break its mean restraints. "To what sublime heights," exclaims this sapient philosopher, "may we not expect that virtue will then be seen to soar!—By destroying the domestic affections, what an addition will be made to human happiness! and when man is no longer corrupted by the tender and endearing ties of brother, sister, wife, and child, how greatly will his dispositions be meliorated! The fear of punishment too, that ignoble bondage, which, at present, restrains the energies of so many great men, will no longer damp the noble ardour of the daring robber, or the midnight thief. Nor will any

man then be degraded by working for another. The divine energies of the soul will not then be stifled by labouring for support. What is necessary, every individual may, without difficulty, do for himself. Every man shall then till his own field, and cultivate his own garden.”—“And pray how are the ladies to be clothed in the age of reason?” asked Miss Ardent.—“Any lady,” replied the philosopher, “who chooses to wear clothes, which, in this cold climate, may by some be considered as a matter of necessity, must herself pluck the wool from the back of the sheep, and spin it on a distaff of her own making.” “But she cannot weave it,” rejoined Miss Ardent, “without a loom; a loom cannot well be made without iron tools, and iron tools can have no existence without the aggregated labours of many individuals.” “True,” returned Mr Vapour; “and it is therefore probable, that in the glorious era I speak of, men will

again have recourse to the skins of beasts for covering; and these will be procured according to the strength and capacity of the individual. A summer's dress may be made of the skins of mice, and such animals; while those of sheep, hares, horses, dogs, &c. may be worn in winter. Such things may, for a time, take place. But as the human mind advances to that perfection, at which, when deprived of religion, laws, and government, it is destined to arrive, men will, no doubt, possess sufficient *energy*, to resist the effects of cold; and to exist, not only without clothing, but without food also. When reason is thus far advanced, an effort of the mind will be sufficient to prevent the approach of disease, and stop the progress of decay. People will not then be so foolish as to die."

" I can believe, that in the age of reason women won't be troubled with the va-

pours," replied Miss Ardent, "but, that they should be able to live without food and clothing, is another affair." "Women!" repeated Mr Vapour, with a contemptuous smile; "we shall not then be troubled with women. In the age of reason, the world shall contain only a race of men!"

Nothing could be more repugnant to the opinions of Miss Ardent, than this assertion.—This worthy daughter of Serraswati is firmly persuaded, that, in the age of reason, a very different doctrine will be established. It is her opinion, that the perfection of the female understanding will then be universally acknowledged.

She pants for that blessed period, when the eyes of men shall no longer be attracted by the charms of youth and beauty; when mind, and mind alone, shall be thought worthy the attention of a philosopher.

In that wished-for era, the talents of women, she says, shall not be debased by household drudgery, or their noble spirits broken by base submission to usurped authority. The reins will then be put into the hands of wisdom ; and as women will, in the age of reason, probably be found to have the largest share, it is they who will then drive the chariot of state, and guide the steeds of war !

Mr Axiom, whose deference to the opinions of Miss Ardent is implicit and unvariable, perfectly coincides in her opinion.—“ Who,” said he, the other evening, in discoursing upon this subject ; “ who would look for mind, in the insipid features of a girl ? It is when the countenance has acquired a character, which it never can do under the period of forty, that it becomes an object of admiration, to a man of sense. Ah ! how different is the sentiment which it then inspires !” The tender

sigh, which was heaved by Mr Axiom at the conclusion of this sentence, in vibrating on the ears of Miss Ardent, seemed to touch some pleasant unison, that overspread her countenance with a smile. You, my friend, will, I doubt not, smile also, at hearing of these glad tidings for grandmothers; and divert yourself with thinking, when this empire of reason shall be extended to the regions of the East, what curious revolutions it will make in the zenanas of Hindoostan!—May the Gods of our fathers preserve thee from the spirits of the deep—and the systems of philosophers!—What can I say more?

LETTER XVI.

MAY He, who at all times claims preference in adoration, preserve thee!

The day after that in which I last took up the reed of instruction, some strangers arrived at Ardent-Hall, who had come into the country on purpose to see a celebrated water-fall—on whose beauties they poured out such encomiums, as kindled the flame of curiosity in my bosom.

I no sooner expressed my desire of visiting this scene of wonders, than Sir Caprice, with great politeness, ordered the chief officer of his household to attend me thither.—It was natural to expect, that some of the philosophers might have felt an inclination to view a scene, to the description

of which, it appeared, they were no strangers.—But, alas! to the worshipper of systems, the fair face of nature has no charms!—In vain, for him, does the appearance of Arjoon tinge the cheeks of the cup-bearers of the sky,* with the crimson blush of gladness! In vain, for him, do the robes of the seasons, wove in the changeful looms of nature, present the ceaseless charms of variety! In vain, for him, smiles the soft beauties of the blooming valley, when the linnet, sitting on his rose-bush, sings forth the praises of the spring! And equally in vain for him, doth nature expose to view the terrors of her wonder-working arm, in the scenes of sublimity and grandeur! In all the beauties of creation, a philosopher sees nothing beautiful, but the system which he worships!

* An appellation for the Clouds, which frequently occurs in Asiatic Poetry.

Happily for me, Mr Trueman, the steward of Sir Caprice, was a stranger to systems; but had cultivated so much taste for the beauties of the rural landscape, as enabled him to point out to my observation a thousand charms, which might otherwise have escaped my notice. Nor was this the only benefit I derived from his society. From his plain good sense, I received more real and useful information, in our ride of four hours, than I had gained in nearly as many weeks, in the company of the philosophers.

For the distance of many miles round Ardent-Hall, the country is irregular and undulating. It abounds in trees, which, though they boast not the height of the Mango, or the vast circumference of the Banyan, are neither destitute of grandeur, nor of beauty. These are not clumped together in solemn groves, or gloomy jungles; but are so planted, as to surround

the small fields into which the country is divided ; each of which small enclosures, now fraught with the riches of the yellow harvest, appears like a “ topaz in a setting of emeralds.” The cheerful aspect of the peasants, busily employed in cutting down the grain, while their fancies seemed to revel in the scene of plenty, excited the most pleasurable emotions in my heart ; for who but a philosopher can “ breathe the air of hilarity, and not partake of the intoxication of delight ?” *

The scene, however, soon changed : an extensive plain opened before us, where no yellow harvest waved its golden head—where no tall trees afforded shelter to the traveller—all was waste and barren. Upon inquiring of my intelligent compa-

* In several passages of this Letter, the Rajah seems to have adopted the imagery of the Persian Poet Inatulla, of Delhi—with whose writings he was, doubtless, well acquainted.

nion, the reason of this wonderful change, he could only inform me, that this was called a *Common*, and that it could not be cultivated, without a solemn act of the Legislature. I now perceived, that it was from reasons of state, that these great portions of land (for Commons occur very frequently in England) were suffered to remain desolate; but in vain did I endeavour to discover the motives, which could induce the government to lay this restraint on cultivation.

As geese appeared to have here an exclusive right of pasturage, I was inclined to think, that they might, perhaps, be the objects of superstitious veneration to the English court; but, on applying to my guide, I found that geese were not of the number of protected animals; and that far from being honoured in the manner of those that are called *Game*, the murder of a goose might be performed, without cere-

mony, by the most ignoble hands. Perhaps, thought I, it is from the benevolent regard of the minister towards the old women, who keep these noisy flocks ; but, alas ! a little reflection convinced me, that the age of reason is not yet sufficiently established, to countenance the supposition. It must, then, be from the pious apprehension of endangering the virtue of the people, by an overflow of plenty.—If this be really the case, it must be confessed, that a more effectual method could not be taken to bring about the desired end.

Having passed the common, we entered into a deep and narrow valley, over-hung with frowning rocks ; these seemed frequently to close upon us, and sternly to deny all access to the interior scene. A silver stream, which alternately kissed the feet of the precipices on each side, encouraged us to proceed, and gently conducted us to the furthest end of the

valley. It was here, that the glories of the cataract burst upon our senses.—But how shall my feeble pen do justice to such a scene? Can I, by description, stun the ears of Maandaara, with the thunder of the falling waters; or present to his imagination, the grotesque figures of the rocks, surrounding the magnificent bason into which they fell? Can I bring terror to his bosom, by the mention of the over-jutting crags, which, on one side, topped the precipice; or produce in his mind the sensation of delight, by a minute description of the various trees and shrubs, whose thick foliage ornamented the opposite bank?—Ah no! The task is impossible; or possible only to the magic pen of poetry. By Zaarmilla, it must be passed over in silence!

We returned to Ardent-Hall, as the chariot of Surraya was sinking behind the distant hills. On approaching the house,

we beheld a scene of extraordinary commotion. All was hurry and confusion.— Men and boys, household servants and labourers, all seemed engaged in the pursuit of some invisible object. At one part of the lawn we beheld Doctor Sceptic and Mr Puzzledorf, cautiously stepping along, and carefully peeping into every bush they passed; at another place, we saw Sir Caprice, attended by the rest of the philosophers, carrying a large net—which, with much care, they softly spread upon a hedge, and then began to beat the roots of the shrubs that composed it, in the most furious manner.

“What is the matter?” cried my companion, to a lad who was running past us. “What is the occasion of all this bustle? What, in the name of goodness, are you all about?” Catching sparrows, sir,” returned the lad, in breathless hurry. “Catching sparrows!” repeated the good steward.

“ Philosophers, catching sparrows ! That is doing some good with their learning, indeed !—If they had begun to do this work sooner, the early corn in the South-field would have been the better for it !”

As my mind has not yet been sufficiently contaminated by the practices of Christians, to take pleasure in beholding misery inflicted upon any part of the animated creation, I hastened from this cruel scene, and took refuge in my own apartment. After some time spent in meditating on the cruel dispositions of Europeans, and in performing Poojah to the benignant Dewtah of our fathers, I descended, to pay my respects to Miss Ardent, whose voice I heard in the hall. “ How happy it is, that you have returned to-night !” exclaimed she, on perceiving me. “ You have come in time to assist at the most wonderful of all discoveries ! What will your friends in India think, when you tell

them, that sparrows may be changed into honey-bees?"

"It is a subject, on which none of my friends could possibly entertain a doubt," returned I; "the transmigration of soul, from body to body, is evidently necessary for its purification.—It is the doctrine of the Vedas—and its authority is unquestionable." "But the change I speak of has nothing to do with the doctrine of transmigration," rejoined Miss Ardent. "*Our* sparrows are still to continue *good* and *real* sparrows: it is only their instincts that are to undergo a change, from the power of *external circumstances*. So young Sceptic declared this morning at breakfast, and my brother, whose imagination takes fire at every new idea, declared instantly, that the experiment should be made. It is true," continued Miss Ardent, "this theory is not confined to sparrows—The reasoning faculties, of which we poor two-legged

animals are so proud—and the various instincts which mark each tribe of the brute creation, all equally originate in a combination of *external circumstances*. And, according to the arguments of the young philosopher, I see no reason, why, by a proper course of education, a monkey may not be a Minister of State, or a goose Lord Chancellor of England.”

Here a stop was put to our conversation, by the entrance of the gentlemen, each of whom was so full of his deeds of prowess, in the engagement with the sparrows, that he could talk of nothing else. One hundred sparrows were already taken prisoners;—but as this was only one-third of the number declared necessary to form a hive, a reward was offered by the Baronet for each live sparrow that should be brought to the Hall in the course of the succeeding day:—a measure which was crowned with such success, that, before

sun-set on the following evening, the number was declared complete.

Another tedious day elapsed, before the hut destined for their future residence could be finished; this was made exactly after the model of those of the domestic bees, which, in this country, are built of straw, made into small bundles, and bound together by the fibres of an aquatic plant. This hut, or hive, as it is called, bore the same proportion to its model, as the size of a sparrow does to that of a bee; it was furnished with cross sticks for the support of the combs; and that the sparrows might have no apology for not beginning immediately to work, great care was taken that no convenience usually afforded to the bees, should be wanting.—After undergoing a careful examination by the philosophers, this huge sparrow-hive was placed upon a platform, that had been reared

for its reception; and the sparrows having been brought in baskets to the spot, Sir Caprice Ardent, in presence of all the philosophers, with his own hand, pair by pair, deposited them in their new abode. The apparent satisfaction with which they entered their hive, gave such a convincing proof of the power of external circumstances, as already rendered Sir Caprice a complete convert to the system. At the conclusion of the ceremony, he cordially shook hands with the young philosopher, and requesting the rest of the party would excuse him for the evening, he retired to his study, to begin a journal of these important proceedings, with which he intended to illuminate the world.

At the first indication of the dawn of morning, I went, as is my constant practice, to the river side, and after the performance of the accustomed Poojah, and

having bathed in the refreshing stream, I strolled into that part of the garden where the honey-making sparrows were placed.

It was at an hour when my meditations have here never been disturbed by the appearance of a fellow mortal. Judge then of my surprise, at beholding the Baronet, who, wrapped in his night-robcs, stood at the side of the newly erected hut, listening with eager ears, to catch the first sound that should emanate from its precincts: On perceiving me he made the signal of silence, and then beckoning me to approach—inquired, in a soft whisper, whether I did not hear the sparrows hum? I told him that I did indeed hear a humming noise; but believed that it proceeded from a solitary bee, which was hovering over the adjoining shrubs. Chagrined at my discovery, the Baronet turned from me in displeasure, and went into the house.

Many were the visits, which, in the course of this day, were made to the new hive. It was soon discovered, that the sparrows had been so far impelled by the pressure of *existing circumstances*, as to go abroad in the morning, in quest of necessary food; and it was hoped by the philosophers, that, as is the custom of bees, they would return before the decline of day to deposit their yellow spoils. But, alas! fallacious is the hope of mortals! The shades of evening arrived, and night succeeded, spreading her dark mantle over the face of nature, but not a sparrow appeared!

Miss Ardent, whose knowledge extends to all the particulars of rural economy, on perceiving the vexation of her brother, suggested the idea that the sparrows had probably swarmed on some tree in the neighbourhood, where they might remain in safety till the following day; “and

then," continued she, "if they shew any inclination to fly off, they may easily be fixed, by beating the frying-pans, as they do to a swarm of bees."

This hint from Miss Ardent re-kindled the expiring flame of hope in the breasts of the philosophers.—Next morning, which proved a very rainy one, word was brought that a number of the fugitives were seen in a hawthorn tree, at the bottom of the lawn:—thither the philosophers instantly repaired, each armed with some culinary instrument, which, as soon as they reached the place, they began to beat, in such a manner as might have rescued the moon from the jaws of the Crocodile!*

Lost was the labour of the philosophers, who, in this instance, exerted their talents

* Alluding to a superstitious notion prevalent in the East.

in vain ! Instead of gathering together in a cluster, as was expected, no sooner did the discordant sounds from the instruments of the philosophers reach the hearing of the sparrows, than away they flew to another tree. Thither they were again pursued, but still the more noise that was made, the less did the sparrows seem inclined to listen. The master of the bees declared, that he had never seen a swarm so unmanageable !

Wet, and wearied, Sir Caprice and his learned guests at length returned into the house. Miss Ardent and Mr Axiom thought it a good opportunity to laugh at the system of the young philosopher ; who, on his part, defended the infallibility of his idol, by declaring, that the experiment had not been fully made :—that the habits of old sparrows were not easily conquered ; but that young ones, or young birds of any kind, he was still convinced,

if taken before their habits were sufficiently formed, would be found to obey the necessity of existing circumstances, exactly as did the little useful insects, of whose instinctive sagacity ignorance had said so much.

The hint was not lost upon the Baronet. A reward for nestlings, of every description, was again offered ; and again attended with the wished-for success.—Ah ! how many loving pairs among the feathered tribes, were, for the sake of this experiment, bereft of their infant families ! The groves resounded with the plaints of woe ! But little pain did the sorrows of the mourners give to the heart of the young systemist. By his advice, the little birds, after having had their bills rubbed with honey, were shut up in the hive, with a portion of the same sweet food, for their subsistence.

On the evening of the third day, which was the conclusion of their destined term of probation, the entrance to the hive was opened, but not a bird came forth; every method was taken to entice them abroad—but in vain. At length, by the assistance of the servants, their habitation was so far raised, as to enable the philosophers to take a peep within. Sight of horrors! and smell still worse than the sight!—The lifeless corpses of the three hundred half-fledged nestlings lay at the bottom of their hive, in a promiscuous heap.—“They have effectually swarmed at last!” said Mr Axiom.—Neither the Baronet, nor the young philosopher, staid to make any remark; but every one putting his fingers to his nose, impelled by the *necessity* of *existing circumstances*, hurried from the dismal scene.

Such, Maandaara, are the illusive phantoms which the all-pervading Spirit, the

sovereign Maya, presents to the perception of metaphysical philosophers!

May Ganesa, averting calamity, preserve to thee the use of thy senses! And may the Poojah performed for thy friend, by the holy Bramins of Almora, preserve his mind from the contamination of systems! What can I say more?

LETTER XVII.

MY time, for these two past days, has been occupied in a manner, that, I hope, will give pleasure to Maandaara.

I have been engaged in translating for your perusal, the greatest part of a very long epistle, with which Doctor Severan has had the goodness to favour his unworthy servant.

According to previous agreement, I transmitted to him all that I had written to you since my arrival at Ardent-Hall; intreating him to favour me with such strictures upon it, as he thought might be

necessary, towards giving me more just ideas upon the subjects of which I had treated.

In his observations, the Doctor does not follow me through the particular systems of the philosophers; but speaks in general terms, of the effects produced by what he calls Scepticism; which, according to the great English Cosha, is the art of doubting. But you shall have it as nearly as the different idioms of the two languages will permit, in his own words.—After opening his letter with the usual exordium, he thus proceeds:

“ Knowing the ardour with which you pursue knowledge, and the strong inclination that impels you to investigate the causes of the different phenomena which present themselves to your observation, I cheerfully comply with your request.

“ The history of literature is intimately connected with the revolutions of empires; and among all the rude storms which have assailed it, in none did it suffer more, than in that which it endured, together with the government of ancient Rome. Literature was, by this event, effectually driven from those countries where it had formerly flourished; and, during a long period (emphatically distinguished by our historians, by the epithet of *dark*) learning was almost completely obliterated. In this era of ignorance, superstition established her gloomy reign: and when the attention of men was once more turned to literary pursuits, the objects they had to surmount were new and numerous, and of a nature not very easily to be subdued.

“ Instead of that free communication, which had formerly been permitted to men, they were now fettered by the tyrannical edicts of kings and priests; the in-

vestigation of truth being equally hostile to the interests of both. While freedom of discussion was thus restrained, the faculties of the human mind were benumbed, and truth and falsehood were confounded together.

“ The errors that are mixed with truth, and promulgated by authority, enlist for a time the prejudices of mankind in their favour ; but when, from the detection of error, these prejudices are taught to mutiny, they desert not only the error, but the truth to which it was united. There is a propensity in the human mind to rush from one extreme to another, and thus implicit belief is succeeded by universal scepticism.

“ Wherever the mind has been bound by the fetters of authority ; wherever inquiry has been deemed a crime, and the free use of reason has been condemned as

impious ; there shall we find the throne of superstition usurped by enthusiasm, or *overturned by infidelity.*

“ Such is the natural progress of events. We, vain and presumptuous mortals, who, in the short span of our limited duration, can behold but one of the oscillations of the balance, are too apt to conclude, that whichever scale we see descend, must there for ever rest ! Could we extend the sphere of our observation, we would, I make no doubt, perceive these vibrations of public opinion at length fixed by the immutable law of TRUTH !

“ In this kingdom, which has long held freedom of investigation as one of its most glorious privileges, conscientious sceptics (if I may so call them) are but rare. Our wisest legislators, our greatest philosophers, whose names are the boast and honour of our country, were all firm believers in the

truth of that revelation, whose doctrines accord with all that sound philosophy has ever taught. The only species of sceptics in which we abound, are men of shallow understandings, and cold hearts; who, feeling their incapacity to attract attention by going on in the ordinary path, endeavour to gain it by stating opinions which may astonish their hearers, and acquire them some degree of applause; for their ingenuity and boldness. It may, indeed, be observed of this class, that they take special care never to utter their oracles before those who are capable of entering into argument with them, though they deliver themselves with dogmatical assurance before the ignorant and illiterate.

“ But let not my noble friend imagine from this account of scepticism, or from his own penetrating observation on the conduct of the gentlemen at Ardent-Hall, that metaphysical inquiry is without its

use. Such inquiry expands the powers of the human mind, enlarges the understanding, and, by placing the science of morals on a true foundation, tends to increase the happiness of society.

“ Would its professors pursue the same plan of investigation that has been so successfully adopted by natural philosophers, that of first making themselves well acquainted with facts, and thoroughly investigating them, before they draw conclusions, they would perceive the necessity of allowing first principles, which are so self-evident as not to admit of any direct proof. Indeed, I do not hesitate to assert, that almost all the errors of metaphysicians have arisen from their neglect of natural philosophy.—The extreme accuracy, and exact precision, that is requisite in the investigation of the phenomena of the material world, would induce like habits of reasoning in regard to that of the mental :

while that Colossus of scepticism, I mean atheism, would, by an acquaintance with the works of nature, be utterly annihilated.

“ I have endeavoured to explain myself to my noble friend as clearly as possible on the subject of his letter; and shall only add, that true philosophy is never the companion of arrogance and vanity. While *it* investigates with assiduity, and pronounces with diffidence; *they* assert with boldness, and give the crude conjectures of fancy, for the sound deductions of truth.

“ The natural turn of my mind, and, still more, the objects which have for the greatest part of my life occupied my attention, have effectually precluded me from sceptical opinions, and rendered me callous to the sophistry of their promoters; but it has always appeared to me, that

where freedom of discussion is permitted, there scepticism and infidelity will be but little known."

Such, Maandaara, are the opinions of the *natural philosopher*. The philosophers at Ardent-Hall declare, that it is a pity so good a man should have so many odd prejudices. I confess, that, to me, who have been accustomed to behold with reverence the self-inflicted torture of holy men, the noble enthusiasm of the worshippers of System is the object of veneration. It is true, these philosophers hold it not necessary to mortify the body, or to bring the irregular passions under subjection. But what is the severest penance of the most pious Yogee, compared to the utter dereliction of eternal happiness? By hope, a man is supported through many sorrows, but, on the shrine of his idol, the philosophic Sanassee makes a voluntary sacrifice of even hope itself!—On the system that

he worships, his thoughts for ever dwell ; on it his tongue for ever runs ; and, while it exclusively occupies every avenue to his soul, he, with a superlative degree of modesty, bestows the epithet of *prejudiced enthusiast* on the votary of Christianity.

Shall I confess to my friend, that to my weak mind, the enlightening conversation of the philosophers had become so tiresome, as to render the arrival of Lady Grey, and her blooming party, a considerable relief to my wearied spirits? Till then, I was destitute of all resource : Miss Ardent being too fond of disputing with the philosophers, and too much engaged by them to attend to me ; and her Ladyship so entirely engrossed by her darling boy, as to be incapable of attending to any other object. This boy is suffered to become so troublesome, that it entirely eradicates that benevolent complacency which one is accustomed to feel at the

sight of infant innocence. His parents behold the capriciousness of his desires increase with their gratification, and the irascibility of his temper receive fuel from satiety; yet do they continue to pamper the over-pampered appetite, and to indulge each caprice of the wayward fancy, in full expectation that, in the *age of reason*, he will be able to exercise the virtue of self-controul!—Yes, Maandaara, when, from the *pressure of existing circumstances*, sparrows are taught to make honey, then shall the passions, which have been fanned into a flame by the breath of indulgence, listen to the voice of moderation!

You may, perhaps, imagine, that the society of a young and lovely female, such as is Miss Julia Ardent, would be a dangerous trial to a man of my sensibility. But, alas! my friend, you know not how effectually the mixture of insipidity and haughtiness can blunt the arrows of Cam-

dea. It is, perhaps, for this reason, and to preserve the hearts of young men from the influence of female charms, that these qualities are so carefully instilled at the seminaries of female education, which were described in such true colours by the good Bramin Sheermaal. I was, at that time, too much blinded by the mists of ignorance, to give credit to his report.—I had read the Christian Shaster, and was it not natural for me to suppose, that all who called themselves Christians, were guided by its precepts? From it I learned, that Christian women were not prohibited from the cultivation of their understandings; and how could I conceive, that fashion should lead them to relinquish so glorious a privilege? How could I imagine, that Christian parents should be so much afraid of the improvement of their female offspring, as to give encouragement to seminaries formed on purpose for the exclusion of knowledge? It is true, the information

of Sheermaal might have instructed me in these things, but to the heart that is filled with prejudice, wisdom lifteth up her voice in vain.

Nothing but experience could have convinced me, that the cultivation of the rational faculties should, among the Christian women of England, be so rare, that no sooner does one of them emerge from the depths of ignorance, than she is suspected of assuming the airs of self-importance and conceit. If she has the knowledge of a school-boy, she is thought vain of her learning. Nor are there many men of sense among the Christians, who would not prefer to the conversation of such a woman, the impertinent tattle of the frivolous, the capricious, and the ignorant. Nor is this much to be wondered at, when we consider, that by the pains taken, from the earliest infancy, to sap the foundation of every solid improvement, the imagina-

tion becomes so much stronger than the judgment, that of the small number of females, who, under all the disadvantages of custom and prejudice, dare to distinguish themselves by the cultivation of their talents, few should do more than exchange one folly for another:—substitute the love of theory, for the love of dress; or an admiration of the mental gewgaws of flimsy sentiment, and high sounding declamation, for that of trifles of another kind.

But though I confess my error, and acknowledge, that I deceived myself in extending my notions of Christianity to every Christian, and of excellence to every female, of England, I still see some who amply justify the expectations that were formed by my sanguine mind. In Lady Grey and her daughters, I find all that I had expected from the females of their country; all that my friend Severan had described.

With them, arrived the two youngest daughters of Sir Caprice Ardent, one of whom has received her education under the care of Lady Grey, while the other has to her aunt, Miss Ardent, been indebted for her instruction. At first sight, one is struck with the similarity of their features. They are both beauteous as the opening rose-bud, when the dew of morning trembles on its leaf. The eyes of each, sparkling with vivacity, are dazzling as a bright dagger suddenly unsheathed. They are both shaped by the hand of elegance, and both move with the same degree of grace. Yet, notwithstanding this similarity, the opposite characters impressed by education is visible in each.—While over the graces of Miss Caroline is thrown the bewitching veil of timidity, and her every action is bound in the silken fetters of decorum; the adopted daughter of Miss Ardent speaks her sentiments with an energy that has never known

restraint. Though open to conviction, and ready to confess error with the candour of a noble mind, she yields less to the authority of persons, than to that of reason; and it is easy to perceive, has been early taught, that to be weak, and to be amiable, are two very different things.

An incident which occurred to the three sisters, in the course of their morning's walk, will serve to illustrate these observations upon their characters.

It appears, that having strayed into a narrow lane, they were frightened at the appearance of a horse and cart, coming towards them so quickly, as to leave them no other method of escaping, than to climb a steep bank, and get over the paling into their father's park. Miss Olivia, with the activity of an antelope, led the way, and, with some difficulty, assisted her sisters to follow her example. Just as she

had prevailed upon the terrified Miss Julia, who long insisted upon the impossibility of her making the attempt, they beheld near them an old man, who, excited by the screams and promised rewards of Miss Julia, attempted to lay hold of the horses. To stop them, his feeble efforts were ineffectual; the animals were too strong, and too spirited, to be managed by his aged arm. After a short struggle, the horses sprung over him, and in a moment the mangled and bleeding body was discovered lying, to all appearance, lifeless, in the track which the cart had passed.

Miss Julia redoubled her efforts to escape; she succeeded, and flew to the house, which she no sooner reached, than, as is customary with young ladies upon such occasions, she fainted away. When she had fainted for a decent length of time, she screamed, laughed, and cried alternately, and continued long enough in

the second stage of fright, called *an Hysterical Fit*, to draw round her the greatest part of the family. Indeed, there was full employment for them all. One held to her nose a bunch of burnt feathers; another chafed her temples with a drug, called hartshorn; a third held to her lips drops and cordials, while the rest ran about the room, opening the windows, ringing the bells, and giving directions to the servants.

While we were thus engaged, in flew Miss Olivia. But what a figure! The few tattered remnants of her muslin robe, besmeared with blood, streamed in the air; eagerness sparkled in her eyes, and an unspeakable glow of ardour animated her countenance. Totally unconcerned for her sister, on whom, indeed, she seemed to dart a look of contempt, she hastily snatched the hartshorn, and the cordials, and desiring, with a tone of authority, all

the men to follow her, she again flew off, with the swiftness of a bird of Paradise, who has been frightened by the voice of the hunter.

Miss Julia was left to recover as she could. Every soul deserted her. Men and maids, philosophers and footmen, all hurried after the fair Olivia; who, like the meteor which floats on the dark-bosomed cloud of evening, was seen gliding before us. At length we reached the lane, and there, seated on the ground, we beheld the twin-sister of Olivia; her fair arms supporting the unfortunate old man, whose wounded head reclined upon her lap. His wounds were, however, bound up; the robe of Olivia having been torn in pieces for the purpose. And now, with a tenderness which equalled her activity, she knelt at the old man's side, and carried to his pale lips the cordials she had, with so little ceremony, snatched from

her sister. The old man at length so far revived, as to pronounce, with feeble but impressive accents, the blessings of his God on the angel-forms who had saved his life. He was, with all possible care, by the direction of the two ladies, carried up to the house. A surgeon was immediately sent for, who, on examining his wounds, declared them to be of such a nature, that if he had not received the assistance bestowed upon him by the two ladies, he must inevitably have perished. "Then," cried the lovely Caroline, "it is to my sister Olivia, that he owes his life! —But for her, I should have followed my sister Julia into the house, to call for help; it was Olivia alone, who had the courage to return to him, and the presence of mind to afford him relief." "No, Caroline;" replied Olivia, "without you, I could have done nothing. When I looked back, and saw how the poor man bled, I knew he could not live without assist-

ance; but it was you, by whom the assistance was principally bestowed." "Don't speak any more about it, for heaven's sake," cried Miss Julia; "the very thought of it makes me sick. I would not have looked at him for a thousand worlds; I wonder how you could have so little sensibility!"

"Sensibility, my dear niece," said Lady Grey, "is but too often another word for selfishness. Believe me, that that sensibility, which turns with disgust from the sight of misery it has the power to relieve, is not of the right kind. To weep at the imaginary tale of sorrow exhibited in a novel or a tragedy, is to indulge a feeling, in which there is neither vice nor virtue; but when the compassion which touches the heart, leads the hands to afford relief, and benevolence becomes a principle of action, it is then, and then only, that it is truly commendable." "I perceive that your ladyship has studied Mr

Hume's Principles of General Utility," said Mr Axiom. "No," said Mr Puzzledorf; "it is evident, her ladyship has taken her opinions from *my Essay on the Eternal and Necessary Fitness and Congruity of Things.*" "I have taken them," said her ladyship, "from the doctrines and examples of Jesus Christ and his Apostles."

In this life, "composed of good and evil," this younger sister of the Baronet has had her share of calamity. Her marriage with Sir Philip Grey, was an union of mutual affection, founded on mutual esteem, and productive of mutual felicity.

Though a Baronet, his estate was not extensive; and from it a numerous family of brothers and sisters were to be provided with fortunes, suited to their birth. Sir Philip and his lady, having the same views and opinions, easily settled the plan of their future life. They took the man-

agement of their estate into their own hands: taste and elegance became a substitute for splendor; and the propriety of domestic arrangement, amply compensated for the absence of a few articles of superfluous luxury. But though they retrenched in ostentation, they decreased not in hospitality; their house was the refuge of the distressed, the home of merit, and the central point of all the genius and the talent which the surrounding country could boast. In addition to the care of their fortune, they took upon themselves the sole care of the education of their children.—But, notwithstanding all these avocations, they still found time for the pursuit of literature, for which their taste remained undiminished. Lady Grey was not only (as is universally the custom in this country*) the companion of her hus-

* It is by some of the Hindoo authors mentioned, as one of the indispensable qualities of a good wife—"that she never presumes to eat, until her husband has finished."

band's table, but the partner of his studies ; and by him, her opinions were as much respected, as her person was beloved.

Years rolled on, and each returning season saw an increase of the happiness of this well-matched pair. But who can give stability to the felicity of mortals? While yet in the prime of life, this amiable and happy husband was seized by the ruthless hand of disease, in whose rude grasp the vigour of life was blasted, and the gay hopes of future enjoyment dashed on the rocks of disappointment. His senses, of which he suffered a temporary deprivation, were gradually restored ; but the wheels of life were clogged ; the vital fluid stagnated in the veins, or moved with such lingering and unequal pace, as was unequal to the re-animation of the palsied limbs ; nor did he ever recover a sufficient degree of strength, to enable him to quit his apartment. In such a situ-

ation, in vain would a man have looked for consolation in the pretty face of a fool: In vain would he have expected it from the trifling accomplishments, to the acquirement of which, the most precious years of life are commonly devoted. Alas! though Lady Grey could have spoken French with the fluency of a Parisian; though she could have danced with the grace of an angel; though she could have painted a flower, or a butterfly, even without the assistance of her drawing-master, and run over the keys of her harpsichord with the most astonishing rapidity—little comfort would it have given to the heart of her sick husband.

In an understanding enriched by the accumulations of wisdom, a temper regulated by the precepts of Christianity, and a heart replete with tenderness, Sir Philip found a more solid resource. By these endowments, was his lady enabled

to manage the affairs of her family, and the concerns of his estate ; to watch over the education of her children ; and, by the unremitting attentions of endearing affection, to cheer the spirits that were broken by confinement, and sooth the sufferings of a bed of pain. Nor was the performance of these multifarious duties the sudden effect of a short-lived energy. During the six years in which her husband lingered under the partial dominion of death, the fortitude of his lady remained unshaken, her perseverance unabated ; and when at length his soul was suffered to depart from the decayed mansion of mortality, though her heart was possessed with too much sensibility, not to feel with sorrow the stroke of separation, the assured hope of a re-union with the object of her affections in the regions of immortality, afforded consolation to her wounded mind.—Yes, Maandaara, notwithstanding all I have said in favour of this excellent woman, truth

obliges me to confess, that the powers of her mind are not sufficiently enlarged to embrace the doctrines of Atheism! She is blind enough, not to perceive the evident superiority of any of the systems of the philosophers to the Christian faith; and weakly asserts, that if all that was taught by Jesus Christ and his Apostles was generally practised, it would be no great injury to the happiness of society.—She takes great pleasure in the contemplation of a future state, and carries her *prejudices* so far as to declare, that she considers the account of it, as given in Scripture, as little less easy of belief than the system of Mr Puzzledorf; and that she finds it more satisfactory to rest her hopes on the promises of her Saviour, than on the permanent existence of the little imperishable stamina at the top of the nose!!

Not contented with making the precepts and doctrines of Christianity the guide of

her own conduct, she has endeavoured to instil them into the minds of her children ; and so well has she succeeded, that her eldest son, at the age of nineteen, though possessed of an uncommon degree of learning, sense, and spirit—is not ashamed to confess that he is a Christian !

ALAS ! my friend, how shall I inform you of the events of this morning ?—The number of philosophers is diminished ! The promising sprout of Infidelity, whose early genius gave such hopes of future greatness—he, by the prowess of whose pen it was expected that religion should be routed from the world—the nephew of Doctor Sceptic—this morning, took the privilege of a philosopher, and shot himself through the head !

As I find, upon inquiry, that this is a privilege which is often claimed, and a practice that is very common with the philosophers of England, I suppose it is found to be conducive to general utility, and agreeable to the eternal and necessary congruity and fitness of things.

The *existing circumstances* which impelled this young man to make so philosophical an exit, have been, to all appearance, fully explained; and as you may have some curiosity concerning them, I shall briefly state them for your perusal.

It appears that his father, a man of rigid morals and austere devotion, who lived in the exercise of much piety towards God, and much charity to his fellow-creatures, some years ago received into his family, the orphan niece of his wife. She was educated with his own children, and shared with them the benefit of his instruc-

tions, and the tenderness of his paternal love. Her beauty made an early impression upon the heart of her cousin, and such was her merit in the eyes of the old man, that, preferring the happiness of his son to the aggrandizement of his family, he consented that their union should take place, as soon as the young man should have attained his one and twentieth year. It was agreed, that he should employ the interval in what is called an Attendance upon the Temple; and, according to a previous invitation from his uncle, Doctor Sceptic, should during that period take up his residence at his house, in the capital.— There the young man had not long resided, till a new light burst upon his eyes: he saw things as he had never seen them before: saw that religion was a bugbear, made to keep the vulgar in awe:—saw that his father was a fool; and, as I have before mentioned, learnt to laugh at his preju-

dices, and his piety, in a very edifying manner.

In the summer, he returned into the country; found his cousin lovely and affectionate as ever, and had no great difficulty in initiating her into all the mysteries of Scepticism. They both found it a charming thing to be so much wiser than their instructors; and wondered they could so long have been blinded by prejudices, whose absurdities were so obvious. The young man went again to town, became every day more enlightened, and soon discovered that marriage was a piece of priest-craft—an ignoble bondage—a chain, which no *man of sense* should submit to wear.

He hastened to return to the country, to communicate to his cousin this important discovery. Finding some difficulty in convincing her understanding of the truth of

this new doctrine, he applied to the softness of her heart; he pretended to doubt of her affection, appealed to her generosity, and—completed her ruin.

Still the poor girl was not sufficiently convinced of the propriety of her conduct, not to entertain some doubts and apprehensions, which the young philosopher soon grew tired of hearing. Finding that their connection could not be much longer concealed, she grew more importunate, and he listened to her importunity with increased indifference. At length, to avoid her remonstrances, he came to Ardent-Hall, where he had been introduced by his uncle, who made the offer of his services to assist Sir Caprice in writing his book upon the *Supremacy of Reason*, with which the Baronet is soon to enlighten the world.—The young man willingly engaged in the task. But fatal are the effects of early prejudices to the peace of a philoso-

pher! His thoughts became gloomy; his speech has often of late been incoherent; and every action betrayed the restlessness of a mind at war with itself. Even his zeal against the advocates of Christianity had in it a degree of bitterness, which shewed that they still retained an authority over his mind, at which, though his pride revolted, his understanding could not conquer.

For the last few days, he had appeared to exert more than usual spirits. He laughed, when he had no occasion; talked, when he had nothing to say; and sedulously sought the company of the ladies, whom he had before neglected with the frigidity of indifference. Yesterday evening, his spirits were raised to a pitch which gave reason to suspect intoxication. When he retired to his chamber, it appears that he did not go to bed, but employed himself in writing letters to his father, all of

which he had again torn and scattered about the room. At four o'clock in the morning, the report of a pistol was heard; the family were instantly alarmed; the door of his chamber was broken open; and, on entering it, the first object that presented itself to view, was the lifeless corse of the young philosopher extended on the floor.

On the table at which he had been writing, lay two letters. The first was from his father, and feelingly descriptive of the agony of a parent's heart, on the first discovery of a son's unworthiness. The other was from his cousin. It pourtrayed the picture of a virtuous mind struggling with the dread of infamy, bitterly regretting the loss of peace and self-respect, and gently reproaching the author of its calamities, for depriving her of that hope which is the resource of the wretched, the comfort of the penitent, and the sovereign

balm for the evils of life! "To her," she said, "hope was a shadow which had passed away. Once there was a time, when she could have smiled at calamity, endured the severity of pain with unshrinking resignation, and, supported by faith, have cheerfully resigned her soul into the bosom of her Creator. Now, doubt and darkness sat upon the realm of death; she feared to die, but she had not courage to live.—Death," she said, "was the only refuge of despair; to it she fled, to save her from the reproaches of the world, and the torments of her own perturbed mind;"—and, with an affecting apostrophe to the days of unspotted innocence, this unhappy creature concludes her melancholy epistle; which, it seems, she had no sooner written, than she put an end to her existence, by plunging into the sea!

Such has been the effects of performing

Poojah to System, in the family of the Sceptics !

Blessed they, who can extract from the passing events of life the divine essence of wisdom ! To me it is now made evident, that the Eternal Being, who fills all space, hath immutably decreed—that belief in his existence, and hope of his protection, shall be necessary to the soul in every region and in every clime. This is the divine breath, or spirit, of which it is said by a royal poet of the Jewish nation—
 “Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are
 “ created; and thou renewest the face of
 “ the earth. Thou hidest thy face—they
 “ are troubled; *thou takest away thy breath*
 “ —they die, and return to their dust.”

May this life-giving spirit continue to animate the soul of Maandaara, with confidence in the mercies of the Eternal!—
 What can I say more !

Reverence to Ganesa !

THE previous arguments of the philosophers, in praise of suicide, had not sufficiently enlightened the minds of the family of Ardent-Hall, to prevent their regarding the death of young Sceptic as a melancholy catastrophe! Though the difference of character gave a variety to the expression of their feelings, all appeared to feel. The shock was universal.

The worshippers of System, and the votaries of Christianity, appeared, indeed, to be affected in a very opposite manner. The former, who had, till this event, been so clamorous in support of the pretensions of their idols, were all at once struck dumb.

Not one appeal was now made to *existing circumstances*. Not one ray of hope darted from *the age of reason*. Nor did either *general utility*, or the *fitness of things*, appear in this juncture to afford any comfort to their votaries. But while the lips of the philosophers were sealed in silence, those of the Christian religionists were opened. Their prejudices, indeed, appeared to have gained fresh strength: These *prejudices*, which are calculated to foster the sensibility of the tender heart, and to increase the feelings of sympathy, seemed likewise endowed with power to support their votaries in the hour of affliction, to soften the rigour of anguish, and to preserve from the tyranny of despair.

Lady Grey was the person who evinced at the same time the greatest degree of sensibility, and the most perfect presence of mind: she deplored the untimely death of this rash young man, with the most

lively pity, mixed with feelings of horror and regret; but for his family, she expressed a compassion that rendered her, in my eyes, the first of human beings.

The consolation of that unhappy family was the first object of her concern. Having seen Lady Ardent and the young ladies set off for the house of a friend, to which they had been invited on the first accounts of the melancholy event, she hastened to the house of affliction; there to mingle the tears of sympathy; to speak comfort to the wounded heart; and, by sharing in its sorrows, to lessen their severity.—Such, Maandara, are the offices pointed out by the prejudices of Christianity!

Deeming it improper, at such a juncture, to incommode the family by the presence of a stranger, I took my leave of Sir Caprice Ardent, and left the Hall, impressed with a deep sense of the kindness and

hospitality I had experienced beneath its roof.

Full of melancholy, I proceeded, without having fully determined on the route I was to pursue. To London, I was averse to return, and yet knew not how otherwise to dispose of myself. As I was debating this point with myself, while the horses were putting to my carriage at the third stage of my journey, a chaise drove up to the inn. From it alighted a gentleman—but, O ye Gods of my fathers! what was my surprise, on beholding, in this gentleman, my former guest Mr Denbeigh, the friend of Percy! He, who had at Chunar loaded me with so many marks of kindness and affection! Soon as the flutter of spirits which always accompanies an unexpected meeting, was a little subsided, he took from his port-folio a packet, on which I soon recognized the hand-writing of Maandaara. How did

my heart beat at the sight! I tear open the seals—I read. I hear of the welfare of my friend, of the health of my child. Ah! my son! my son! What tender emotions does the mention of thy name raise in my bosom! When shall the soft cheek of my child be patted by his father's hand? When shall my ears be gratified by the delicious music of my darling's gentle voice? Detested spirit of curiosity! too long have I sacrificed to thee the truest, sweetest joys, that gem the period of existence!

My heart is too full to proceed. May He, who is Lord of the Keepers of the eight corners of the world, preserve thee! May the adored wife of Veeshnu be the friend of my child!!

DENBEIGH, at the time I met him, was on his way to the place of his nativity. He requested me to accompany him to his father's house ; and found in me no disposition to reject a proposal so agreeable to my inclination. We proceeded together in the same carriage. Conversed of India—of our friends at Calcutta :—talked of all the little incidents that had occurred during my residence in that city ; the most trivial of which appeared interesting to the memory, on account of the pleasing ideas with which it was associated. Swiftly flew the wheels of our chariot, but more swiftly flew the rolling hours, which were occupied by this sort of conversation.

About noon, on the second day of our journey, we, by the direction of Denbeigh, struck into a narrow bye-road, which following the course of a clear stream, winded through the midst of a narrow valley. As we entered upon this road, the agitation of my companion became apparent. Every object that we passed, caused his heart to heave with tender emotion. In every shrub he recognized an old acquaintance, and in every tree he seemed to discover a long lost friend. "Let us stop here," said he, at a turn of the road; "the bridge for carriages is half a mile off, but I can take you a nearer way." So saying, he leaped out of the carriage, and I followed his example. My friend surveyed the scene around, and the soft tear of delight glistened in his eyes. "There," said he, "stands the old thorn, which, at the close of evening, I used to pass with such hasty steps, not daring to look behind, from terror of the fairies, who were said

to hold their nightly revels beneath its boughs. Ah! there is the wood, whose filberts were so tempting. There the pool, where I first ventured to beat the wave with my feeble arm. On the out-stretched branch of yonder beach, was suspended the swing, in which I have so often tossed my little sisters, who, half pleased and half afraid, squalled and laughed by turns, as they were made to fly through the yielding air."

We had now reached a little rustic gate leading into an orchard, in one of the broad walks of which we beheld an aged pair enjoying the smiles of the meridian sun. A little boy and girl sported beside them, joyously picking up the apples, that lay hidden in the grass.

Our approach was at length perceived. The old gentleman paused, and, leaning

on his staff, endeavoured to recognize us. The emotion of Denbeigh increased.—He bounded forward; and taking a hand of each, while the bursting sensations of his heart choaked his utterance—gazed for a moment on the revered faces of his parents, and in the next, was in their arms. His poor mother could not, for a few minutes, reconcile herself to the darkness of his complexion, which fourteen years, spent beneath the lustre of an Indian sky, had changed from the fair red and white, such as now adorns the face of his little nephew, to the deep brown shade that marks the European Asiatic. The good lady gently pushed him from her, to examine more minutely the features whose more delicate lines were engraven on her memory. He smiled.—In that smile, she recognized the peculiar expression of her darling's face, and fondly pressed him to her maternal bosom.

During this scene, I stood a silent and unobserved spectator ; nor was it till after a considerable length of time, that Denbeigh sufficiently recollected himself to introduce me to his parents. To be called the friend of their son, ensured my welcome ; but, that I might not be any restraint on their conversation, I attached myself to the little folks, to whom Uncle Henry was no more than any other stranger.

As we approached the house, I observed, at an open window which fronts the orchard, a lovely girl, who seemed to view the party with a greater degree of interest than curiosity alone could possibly inspire. Twice she came to the door, and twice returned irresolute. At length she was observed by one of my little companions, who, running towards her, called out, Uncle Henry is come ! Uncle Henry is come ! The words gave wings to her will-

ing feet ; she flew down the walk, and in a minute her beauteous face was hid in the bosom of her brother.

The shrill voice of my little friend had reached farther than the parlour. By the time we entered the hall, the servants were assembled.—The old nurse was the first who pressed forward to salute the stranger—by whom she was received with the kindness due to her affection and fidelity. Two other domestic companions of his youth still remained in the family ; tears spoke the sincerity of the many welcomes they bestowed on the traveller ; while the hearty good-will with which he received their salutations, gave a convincing proof, that neither time nor distance had changed the dispositions of his heart.

Mr Denbeigh, with that delicacy of attention which is peculiar to a few chosen minds, provided for me an apartment in a

detached house, where my Hindoo servants were furnished with every requisite for preparing our simple meals according to the religion and customs of our country. To this apartment I retired during the dining hour of the family; and by the time I returned, I found that an acquisition had been made to the happy party of united friends, by the arrival of the two married daughters of Mr Denbeigh, accompanied by the husband of the eldest. The countenance of this gentleman justified the character given him by Denbeigh, of worth and good-nature. He was bred to business, and has by industry and application, obtained an ample share of the gifts of fortune, which he enjoys with cheerfulness, and bestows with the frankness of a generous heart. His wife seems happy in his affection, and in the enjoyment of a degree of good temper equal to his own.

The countenance of the second sister bears a stronger resemblance to that of my friend; it speaks a soul endowed with superior powers; a more refined sensibility, a more lively perception, a more cultivated taste. When the arrival of her husband (who had been detained by the business of his profession, which is that of a physician) was announced, I marked the emotion of her spirits. She presented him to her brother, with an air that seemed to demand his approbation of her choice; nor was she disappointed: the appearance of the young man was too prepossessing to fail of making an immediate interest in the favour of my friend, whose sentiments were no sooner perceived by his sister, who eagerly watched them in the expression of his countenance, than her eyes sparkled with delight.—In a few minutes more, my friend had the pleasure of embracing his two brothers: the eldest, who is a year his senior, is now priest of the neighbour-

ing village. A man of mild aspect, and gentle manners. At an early age, he made a sacrifice of ambition to love, and married a young woman, whose dower was made up of beauty and good temper.

Of the numerous offspring with which she has presented him, the two eldest reside with their grandfather—the youngest has but two days seen the light; and all the others their uncles have promised to provide for. So that the good man looks with a smiling aspect upon futurity.

The youngest brother of my friend, is a professor of the art of surgery. A dapper little gentleman, with a smart wit, and perfumed handkerchief. His brother Henry says, he is a little affected by a disorder called *Puppyism*, but that he has sufficient stamina in his constitution to conquer the disease; which, it seems, is a very common one at his time of life.

Never did Calli,* in the progress of his eventful journey, behold a happier circle than that which now surrounded the hearth of Mr Denbeigh. When I saw them sit down at the supper-table, I began to think the custom of social meals not altogether so ridiculous as I had hitherto considered it. At the conclusion of the repast, the cordial wish of health was mutually exchanged; and a glass filled with generous wine was pressed to the lips of each, in token of sincerity. The cheerful song went round, every voice was in unison to strains of joy, and every countenance was irradiated with the smile of satisfaction. Before they parted for the night, the old gentleman, according to a very strange custom of his own, knelt down in the middle of his family, and, while the tear of joy strayed down his venerable cheeks, offered up the sacrifice

* Time.

of thanksgiving to the throne of the Eternal !

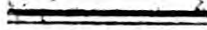
Alas ! this poor gentleman is not sufficiently enlightened to perform Poojah to System. He has never been convinced, that vice and virtue are only qualities of imagination ; and is deplorably ignorant of all theories, save that of a good conscience. —Nor has his wife advanced one step farther than himself towards throwing off the prejudices of Christianity. And what is still worse—the manner in which they have rivetted these prejudices in the minds of their children, scarcely admits a hope, that any of them will ever become converts to Atheism, or have sufficient spirit to exchange the morality of their Shaster, for the doctrine of external circumstances. On making inquiry of my friend concerning the cause of this phenomena, he informed me, that his father and mother, who were of different sects of Christians,

agreed, that the religion taught their children should not be indebted for its support to the peculiar dogmas of either; but should chiefly rest on the authority of that Shaster, which has so deeply incurred the displeasure of the philosophers.—His mother was the daughter of a priest of the sect of Dissenters, who had bestowed such particular pains on the cultivation of her understanding, as actually qualified her for conducting the education of her own children.

It is, perhaps, to this uncommon and extraordinary circumstance, that the children of Mr Denbeigh are indebted for many of those peculiarities which at present distinguish their characters. It is from this cause, that the daughters have become learned, without losing their humility; that they are gay, without being frivolous; that in conversation, their sprightliness is free from the lightness of vanity,

and their seriousness from the arrogance of self-conceit. Mrs Denbeigh, not considering the preservation of ignorance absolutely necessary towards the perfection of the female character, never sent her daughters to the seminaries that are established for that purpose, but suffered them, from infancy, to partake with their brothers, in the advantages of solid instruction.—Being early taught to make a just estimate of things, they learned how to value the performance of every duty; nor was their attention towards those annexed by custom to their situation, lessened from a consideration of their simplicity. In their minds the torch of knowledge was too fully lit, to lead to the dangerous path of singularity, into which unwary females have by its feeble glimmering been so oft betrayed. I can almost venture to assert, that the blooming Emma, at this moment, manages the domestic economy of her father's house, with as much prudence and

activity as could be expected from the most accomplished female that ever issued from a *genteel boarding-school*:—That she is as dutiful, as affectionate, as obedient to her parents, as if she had never looked into any book but a Novel; and will regard their memory with as much filial veneration, as if they had never furnished her mind with an idea, or taught her any other duty, save how to dress and play at cards !!



THE week that has elapsed since my arrival at Violet-Dale, has been spent in alternate visits to the sons and sons-in-law of Mr Denbeigh. As the most beautiful symmetry of feature eludes the skill of the painter, so do the quiet satisfactions

of life, though sources of the truest pleasure, bid defiance to the powers of description: I shall therefore of this week only mention one little incident, which pleased, in spite of its simplicity.

On the second day after our arrival, while Mr and Mrs Denbeigh, and the lovely Emma, were listening, with looks of complacency and delight, to the recital made by my friend of some of his adventures in India, Mr Denbeigh was informed, that a person wanted to speak with him.—It was a country-man, who being by universal consent admitted into the parlour, declared his business. It was, to pay to the old gentleman a small sum of money, which, it appeared, had been lent, with little prospect of return. He received for his punctuality the encouragement of praise; and Emma, unbidden, arose from her embroidery, to present him some wine for himself, and sweet-cake to

take home to his children. The poor man was, by this kindness, emboldened to loquacity. "Yes," said he to Mr Denbeigh, "I defy the whole world to say, that Gilbert Grub ever remained one hour in any man's debt, after he was able to get out of it. And as your honour was so good to me in my necessity, and lent to me when no one else would, it was good reason to pay your honour first. But, perhaps, you have not heard of the strange behaviour of Mr Darnley?"

"Mr Darnley!" repeated Emma, suspending her work to listen.

"What of Mr Darnley?" said Mr Denbeigh.

"Why, sir, you must know," said the peasant, "that old Benjamin Grub, who lived in one of Mr Darnley's free cottages, to whom, I am sure, both your honour and

these two good ladies have given many and many a shilling, died on Friday was eight days ; and, on opening his will, who do you think he should have left his sole heir, but Mr Darnley ?”

“ What could the poor creature have to leave ?” said Mrs Denbeigh. “ He was the very picture of wretchedness.”

“ Ay, so he was,” returned the garrulous old man ; “ and that was the very way he took to scrape together such a mine of wealth. Would you believe it, madam ? In the very rags that covered him, fifty golden guineas were concealed, and a hundred more were found in his house ; but no matter for that, if it had been ten times as much, it all went to Mr Darnley. And though, to be sure, we could not blame him for taking it, yet some of us thought it main hard, that while so many of his own flesh and blood were in a starving condi-

tion, all this store of wealth should go to one who had enough of his own."

"But, whilst his own relations left him to starve, had he not been supported by Mr Darnley's bounty?" said Mr Denbeigh.

"Ay, that is true," said the peasant; "but, as old Sam Grub of the Mill says, if any one of us had a-known of his wealth, we would all have been as kind to him as the 'squire."

"Mr Darnley ought certainly to have made some present to the old man's relations," said Mr Denbeigh. "Ay, sir, I thought he might ha' given some small thing among us," said the peasant, "but never could have imagined, that he would have behaved in the way he did."

"Go on," said Mr Denbeigh, knitting his brows.

The cheek of Emma grew pale: she took up her needle, but remained in the attitude of attention, while the peasant proceeded.

“ You must know, sir, that after having had a long confabulation with the sexton, who is himself a Grub, the first thing the 'squire did, was to send for all the Grubs in the parish, man and woman, to come to the funeral. Some of us were so much stomached, that we did not much like to go. But, says I, though Benjamin has been unnatural to us, that is no reason that we should be unnatural to him. So we all went yesterday morning, at the hour appointed, and found all things prepared for the funeral—and a gallant funeral it was; it would have done good to the heart of any of his friends to have seen it. When we returned from the church-yard, Mr Darnley, who was himself chief mourner, desired us all to go back with him to Ben's

cottage, where wine was poured out for us by Mr Darnley's butler, who is himself a very grand gentleman.—When we had drunk a glass, Mr Darnley got up, and said—“ My friends,” says he, “ I hope none of you will have any cause to repent the choice made by your kinsman of a trustee, for the distribution of his property, for I cannot look upon his Will in any other light.—Here are twenty of you present. Ten grand-children of his brothers, and as many descendants from his uncles. To the first I have allotted ten guineas each, to the latter five, which disposes of the whole hundred and fifty found in his possession—and I hope it is a division with which you will all be satisfied.” We all cried out with one voice, that his honour was too good ! too generous ! that he should, at least, keep one half to himself. “ God forbid !” said he, “ that I should take a farthing that my conscience told me was the property of another !”—

And he looked so pleased, and so good humoured! and we were all so astounded with delight! for your honour must know, that ten guineas to a poor man is a mighty sum! Ah! your honour can have no notion what it is, when a man has been working from hand to mouth, now scrambling to get out of debt, and then falling back into poverty—what it is to be at once, as I may say, set above the world!”

The eyes of Emma glistened with delight, and the sweet tint of the opening rose-bud again mantled over her lovely cheek.—The peasant continued—

“ Well, sir, we were scarcely come to our senses, as I may say, when Farmer Stubble’s cart came to the door, with old Martha Grub who kept the penny-school on the Green Common, and who broke her leg last year on going up to the hen-roost. We had every one of us forgotten

old Martha, but were all willing to club her share. "No, no," said the 'squire; "you must all keep what you have got, it was my fault, for not being better informed; but Martha shall be no loser," said he; "I will give her five guineas out of my own pocket!"—Who would have thought he would have behaved in such a manner?"

"It was indeed acting very handsomely," said Mr Denbeigh.

"Noble, generous Darnley!" said Emma. "It is just what I would have expected from him!"

The old man took his leave.—"And pray," says my friend, as soon as he was gone, "who is Mr Darnley? Is it he whom I well remember breaking down your fences, in following his fox-hounds?" "No, no," returned Mr Denbeigh, "that

was the elder brother of this Darnley, who was then, in obedience to the will of his father, preparing for the Bar. He was, as you have just heard, too fond of justice, to be very partial to the practice of the law; and on the death of that elder brother, who broke his neck one morning in hunting, he came down to Darnley-Lodge, where he has ever since resided.

“ He was soon discovered to be a very strange, whimsical sort of a creature, by the neighbouring 'squires.—The sufferings of a poor timorous animal, harassed by fatigue, and tortured by the agonizing sensations of excessive fear, were not necessary for his amusement. He could enjoy much pleasure in walking over a fine country, without being the butcher of either hare or partridge; and take delight in rambling by the side of our river, though his heart never felt the triumph of beholding the dying struggles of a poor

trout, or exulted in its writhing agony while tearing the barbed dart from its lacerated entrails. His mind sought for other objects of gratification. The study of mineralogy and botany, an exquisite relish for the beauties of nature, refined by an acquaintance with the sister arts of poetry and painting, gave sufficient interest to the rural scenery, without any aid from the misery of inoffensive animals. To the amusements of elegant literature, he has added those of agricultural improvement. He comes here to take my advice about the latter; and on the former, I believe, he comes to consult Emma, who will give you the best account of his taste."

Emma, at that moment, very suddenly recollected something she had left in her own room, for which she went in great haste, and the old gentleman proceeded. "At the time that our acquaintance with

Mr Darnley commenced, Emma was in her seventeenth year. He found her mind more cultivated than is common with girls of that age, and took delight in improving her already formed taste. His conversation was far superior, in point of elegance and information, to that of any person she had ever met with; besides, it must be confessed, that there is a charm in the manners of a man who has seen something of the world, and been accustomed to move in the upper circles of life, which is very captivating to a delicate mind. I saw the impression that was made on my poor Emma's, and trembled for the peace of my sweet child. I feared, that by acquiring a taste for that sort of refinement of sentiment and manners, which is so rarely to be met with in the country, she might injure her future happiness. I know not if Darnley perceived my uneasiness, but he soon took an opportunity of speaking to me on the subject.

He told me, that his affection for my daughter should long ago have led him to make proposals to me on her account, but that the disparity of their ages had rendered him anxious to make such an interest in her esteem, as might supply the place of that romantic passion, which, during the reign of fancy, is deemed essential to nuptial happiness. I approved of his conduct, and told him, that, in regard to my daughters, I had laid down a rule to which I had invariably adhered, and that was, never to give my consent to their entering into any engagement, before they had entered their twentieth year."

"Then you did not intend they should marry nabobs," said my friend. "Why, we Indians never think of any thing beyond sixteen."

"Then you do not think of the blessing of mutual happiness," said his father.

“Why not?” returned my friend. “We think of happiness in the possession of youth and beauty; and our young wives think of it in the enjoyment of our fortunes.—Is not this being mutually happy?” “Short-lived happiness!” rejoined his father, “which is certainly extinguished by satiety, and probably succeeded by disgust.—The first sight sympathy of souls,” continued Mr Denbeigh, “is laughed at by any well educated girl; but such an union of minds as includes a similarity of taste and sentiment; such a degree of esteem as is essential to mutual confidence, is, in my opinion, absolutely necessary between two people, who are to be bound in partnership for life. And is a girl of sixteen a proper judge of the qualities necessary for such an union?”—“But, if I mistake not,” returned my friend, “the age of Mr Darnley very nearly doubles that of my sister.” “True,” replied the old gentleman; “but Mr Darnley does not marry

Emma merely on account of her pretty face. Neither does she bestow her affections on his fortune. The tender friendship that already subsists between them, is cemented by esteem for real virtues. If it had been otherwise, it is not Mr Darnley's fortune (though far beyond what a child of mine is by any means entitled to) that should have tempted me to witness the sacrifice of her future peace."

Here the good gentleman was interrupted by the entrance of this very Mr Darnley, who had come to pay his compliments to the family, on the arrival of my friend. His noble aspect and graceful manner, apparently justified all that had been said in his favour; and the sweet blushes that spread themselves over the countenance of the fair maiden, on unexpectedly beholding him—told, that the old gentleman had not been wrong in his conjectures, concerning the state of her heart.

But what does Maandaara think of the doctrine of Mr Denbeigh? Not suffer a daughter to enter into an engagement of marriage before she is twenty!—Twenty!—why twenty is old enough for a grandmother!—I fear the reasonings of Mr Denbeigh would make as few converts in Hindoostan, as in the English seminaries, where young ladies are *genteelly educated*.

WE have just returned from spending the day with the eldest daughter of Mr Denbeigh.

The company assembled were numerous and gay, and the entertainment given them by the merchant, was at once substantial and splendid.—I should not, however, have thought of mentioning it, but

for the sake of one of the guests, whose behaviour will give you some idea of the manners and conversation of such *people of style* as are suffered to go abroad after the loss of their senses.—When such people visit, they make use of the company as their *Chubdars*;* and always keep them waiting for their appearance such a length of time, as may give them sufficient opportunity for discussing their birth, titles, and situation. This lady was accordingly announced, before her appearance, to be the wife of a recruiting officer, and fifteenth cousin to an Irish Lord—a circumstance, of which we might have remained in ignorance, had she arrived at the same time with the rest of the company.

When she entered, the height of the chourie that adorned her head; the length

* The servant whose business it is to proclaim the titles.

of the train of silk which followed her into the room, and which did not disdain to wipe the feet of the gentlemen; the scanty size of the veil of modesty, which covered, or rather, which did not cover her bosom; the quickness of her step, the undaunted assurance of her mein—all spoke the consciousness of her own superiority. I listened to her conversation with the most respectful attention, till she mentioned a circumstance, that at once struck me with astonishment and horror. “London,” she said, “was now become quite a desert, not a single being remained in town.” “London!” repeated I. “London! that populous city, which was late the residence of so many hundred thousand people; is it possible, that it can so suddenly have been rendered desolate?” “Lard bless me,” returned the lady, “every body knows that there is not at this time a single creature in London: and so I told the Captain before we went, but he would go, and staid

whole ten days ; you never knew any thing so horrid ! Not one creature was to be seen."

" Horrid, indeed," repeated I. " Alas ! poor Doctor Severan, what, in the general calamity, is become of him ?" A smile which sat upon the faces of the company, and a look of compassion with which the benevolent Mr Denbeigh at that moment seemed to regard my informer, made me suspect her insanity ; and she, indeed, said enough afterwards fully to confirm my suspicion.

Poor thing ! she was so incapable of concealing her misfortune—that she seemed to pique herself on having fainted at the sight of a red gown in the month of July, a convincing proof that she was not then in the possession of her understanding.—The derangement of her faculties, may, perhaps, be accounted for, from the

many *frights* and *shocks* she has met with in a country town, where her husband is unfortunately quartered.

“The *frights*,” she said, “came to visit her, and some of their heads were so *hideous*, that she thought she should have died at the sight.” No wonder that such a circumstance should have produced fatal effects upon a feeble mind. Like most people who labour under this sort of delirium, she was altogether unconscious of her unhappy situation, and really seemed to enjoy a fancied pre-eminence over the daughters of Mr Denbeigh, and many other females of sound mind, who were assembled upon this occasion. “Alas! poor lady,” said I to myself, how pitiable is thy situation! How much more would it have been to thy advantage, to have possessed one grain of the good sense of these amiable females, whom thy folly holds in such derision, than to have been cousin to all the

lords in Christendom! Had not thy mady brought blindness to thine eyes, thou mightest, doubtless, have beheld in the streets of London, thousands, and ten thousands of thy superiors in the scale of human excellence!"—But thus it is, that the dust of folly which is shaken into the eyes by the hand of affectation, produces the false perception of objects.

May we have our eyes enlightened by the Collyrium* of judgment—so shall we be able to observe ourselves in the mirror of truth!

* Collyrium. Crude Antimony, and sometimes lead-ore ground to an impalpable powder, which the people of India put into their eyes, by means of a polished wire. They fancy it clears the sight, and increases the lustre of the eye.

I HAVE had the unexpected satisfaction of beholding the sister of my first English friend. Yes, Maandaara, Charlotte Percy is now the guest of Mr Denbeigh, and you may judge how much such a circumstance has augmented the pleasure of Zaarmilla.

I did not till lately discover, that Morley farm was in the neighbourhood of Violetdale, and not many hours elapsed after the discovery, till, in company with Denbeigh and his sister Emma, I went to visit the late residence of the benevolent old man, whose character is still spoken of in this neighbourhood, in terms of respect, gratitude, and affection. The weather was serene and temperate, such as at Almora we frequently enjoy in the depth of winter ;

it was what is here called a fine autumnal morning. The trees, which were so lately clothed in the livery of the Mussulman Prophet, have now assumed a greater variety of colouring—while some have had their green coats changed into the sober tint of the cinnamon ; and others have taken the tawny hue of the orange. The leaves of many, which, like ungracious children, had forsaken their parent stem, rustled in our path. Of all the vocal inhabitants of the woods, one little bird alone, like the faithful friend who reserves his services for the hour of adversity, sitting on the half-stripped boughs, raised the soft note of consolation to the deserted grove.

Emma, who was our conductress, said she would take us by the private road, which had been a few years ago made by Mr Morley and her father, to facilitate the intercourse of their families. We soon arrived where the wooden bridge had

stood ; but, alas ! it was now no longer passable. A few of its planks half floated on the stream—the rest had been carried away by the farmer, to make up a breach in the fence. “ Ah !” said Emma, “ could poor Mr Morley now see that bridge!—but do not mention it to my father. I know how it would vex him to hear of it.” We proceeded on another road, and, at the distance of a few paces from the house, we met with a second disappointment. Attempting to open a small gate that led to the front door of the house, a little boy came out to tell us that it had been nailed up, and that we must go through the yard where the cattle were feeding.

Emma begged we might proceed no farther, and we were about to comply with her request, when the wife of the person who now rents the farm came to us. “ Ah ! how glad Miss Percy will be to see you, Miss !” cried she. “ I did not think

that my son could have been back from the Dale so soon."

"Miss Percy!" said Emma. "What of Miss Percy? When did you hear of her?"

"Did you not know that she came here yesterday?" returned the woman. "She sent a letter to let you know that she intended going over to the Dale to-night.

"Sent a letter!" returned Emma. "Charlotte used not to be so ceremonious."

"Indeed she is not what she used to be," returned the farmer's wife. "She is so melancholy, that I never saw the like. Soon after she came, yesterday evening, she went out to the garden, and, would you believe it? the sight of the potatoes my husband planted in the place my old master used to call his Velvet Walk, and which he used to have mown every week,

(though the grass was good for nothing, to be sure, but to be swept away as if it had been rubbish), and where he used to sit of an evening in the queer-looking chair, that now, when it is turned upside down, does so well for a hay-rack for the young calves; would you believe it, her eyes filled with tears at the very sight of it? Now, what could make any one cry at the sight of a good crop of potatoes, is more than I can imagine. But, says my husband, don't you see that it is being so very lonely that makes Miss so melancholy? So I went to her, and though she said she liked to be lonely, I would not leave her to herself the whole evening."

"Your company would be a great relief to her spirits, to be sure," said Denbeigh.

"Yes, for certain," returned the good woman, "though she took on a little still. And when she went into the paddock,

where the little poney that Mr Morley used to ride about the farm now runs, La ! see Miss, says I, if there is not your uncle's poney ; I dare to say it knows you. She held out her hand, and called it by its name, and, would you believe it ? it no sooner heard her voice than it came scampering up.—Poor Mopsy, said she, as she stroaked its ears, and again the tears came into her eyes. She turned away, but the beast still followed her, neighing, till we came to the gate. She then so begged me to leave her for a few minutes, that I went on the other side of the hedge, and saw her go back to poor Mopsy, and laying her hand upon its head, as it held it out for her to stroak—she burst into tears. Dear heart, says I, Miss, don't take on so ; my husband will buy you a surer-footed beast than Mopsy, at any market in the country, for five pounds.

“ Poor Charlotte !” said Emma : “ but why did she expose herself to this torture ?” The good woman stared at Emma, who declined listening to any more of her conversation ; but, demanding which way her cousin had walked, she hastily requested us to follow.

“ How nicely this gravel walk used to be kept !” said Emma (as we walked along) “ and see how it is now destroyed. These shrubs too, so broken down by the cattle, how the good old Mr Morley used to delight himself in taking care of them ! He is gone ! and, alas ! how quickly are the favourite objects of his attention likely to perish !—But the remembrance of his virtues shall not thus fall into oblivion.—No !” continued the lovely moralist ; “ the trees he has planted may be cut down by sordid avarice ; and the hand of brutish stupidity may root out the flowers of his

garden; but his deeds of benevolence and charity shall be held in everlasting remembrance!"

We were now arrived at the gate of a meadow, which was almost encircled by the stream. A narrow path winded through the plantation of young trees that ornamented its banks.—At the root of one of these trees, I perceived a small bright object glittering in the rays of the sun. I approached it, and found some leaves of ivory, fastened by a silver clasp, which, on touching it, flew open, and discovered the hand-writing of Miss Percy. "It is Charlotte's tablets," cried Emma. "It was in these she used to sketch the effusions of her fancy, on any subject that occurred.—It is still so," continued she, turning over the leaves. "Here is some poetry—she cannot think it any breach of faith to read it." "Read it then," said her brother.

She complied, and read as follows——

Why, shades of Morley! will you not impart
 Some consolation to my grief-worn mind?
 'Mid your delightful scenes, my sinking heart
 Had hop'd the sweets of wonted peace to find.

Dear scenes of sweet content, and careless ease,
 Where in unchanging bliss the seasons roll'd;
 Where winter's storm, or summer's genial breeze,
 Could some peculiar beauty still unfold.

The charmer hope then perch'd on every bough,
 And sung of friendship true, and love sincere;
 While fancy twin'd her wreath round youth's fair
 brow,
 And mem'ry's annals mark'd no transient tear.

But now—the charmer hope is heard no more!
 Gone are my youth's lov'd friends;—for ever
 gone!

The dear delusive dreams of bliss are o'er,
 And all fair fancy's airy train is flown!

Sad mem'ry now must these lov'd haunts invade
 With the dark forms of many a heart-felt grief,

With bosom'd sorrows, silent as this shade,
Sorrows from lenient time that scorn relief.

As to each well known object mem'ry clings,
She bids the tear of deep regret to flow ;
To every former scene of bliss she brings
The throb of anguish, and the sigh of woe.

As she retraces every blissful hour,
Here spent with cheerful hope, and youthful joy,
Hope lost ! joy gone for ever ;——

* * * * *

The tears which had fallen on the remaining lines had rendered them totally illegible. Those which suffused the blue eyes of the gentle Emma, stopt her utterance ; she hastily put the tablets in her pocket—and we proceeded in silence.

In a spot that was peculiarly sheltered by a row of beeches, whose leaves have now assumed the colour of the dried cinnamon, stood the remains of an arbour,

which had once been covered with the most beautiful creepers this ungenial climate can produce, but which, unsupported, now fell upon the ground : no bad emblem of the mind of their former mistress, who sat at the entrance of the arbour, on the trunk of a fallen tree. Her countenance wore the traces of melancholy, but the manner in which she received the salutations of my friends, shewed that her heart was still capable of the most animated affection. Me too she received with kindness ; though the ideas associated with my appearance gave a perceptible emotion to her already agitated spirits. She made an effort to banish the melancholy ideas which had of late been so familiar to her mind ; and having satisfied Emma as to the reasons that induced her to stop at Morley farm, she cheerfully acquiesced in her proposal of returning with us to Violet-dale, where she was received with the cordial welcome of sincere affec-

tion; and where, in the happiness of her friends, her own sorrows appear to be forgotten.



IN this temple of domestic bliss, the flight of time has been so imperceptible, that a whole week, which has elapsed since I laid down my pen, appears but as a day.

We know that one of the fourteen precious things which were produced in the churning of the ocean, was a learned physician; but which of the sages of the tribe of Vaidya ever contrived a remedy of such approved efficacy, as the conversation of a faithful and judicious friend?

Such a one has Miss Percy experienced in the father of Denbeigh. He has already convinced her, that the indulgence of melancholy, instead of being an amiable weakness, rather deserving of admiration than censure, is, in reality, equally selfish and sinful. It is, he says, the height of ingratitude to the Giver of all good, peevishly to refuse the enjoyment of the many blessings that are left us, because we are deprived of a few, which were in their very natures perishable.—“ But, alas !” replied Miss Percy, “ what is left to those whose earliest and dearest friends have been snatched from them by the hand of death?”

“ Much is left to all,” replied Mr Denbeigh. “ No one, who enjoys the blessings of health, and a peaceful conscience, can, without ingratitude, repine. The proper discharge of the duties of life is a source of happiness to every well regulated mind.”

“ But how circumscribed are the limits of those duties to a female, who has no longer any parent to attend on ; no family to manage ; no fortune to bestow in deeds of charity ; and who has it little in her power to be useful, even to a friend ? ”

“ And is the gift of reason then nothing ? ” retorted Mr Denbeigh. “ And are the powers of the mind to lie dormant, because, forsooth, you have not now the management of a family ? or the exercise of the benevolent affections to be given up, because you have not a fortune to build alms-houses ? These are the mere subterfuges of indolence. Believe me, my dear Charlotte, that whoever seriously resolves not to suffer any opportunity of benefiting a fellow-creature to pass unemployed, will find, that the power of doing good is not circumscribed within very narrow limits.

“ Why (let me ask you farther) should your mind, cultivated as it has been by education, and improved by listening to the conversation of the enlightened and judicious ; why should it not exert its powers, not only for your own entertainment, but for the instruction, or innocent amusement of others ?”

“ Ah ! sir,” returned Charlotte, “ you know how female writers are looked down upon. The women fear, and hate ; the men ridicule, and dislike them.”

“ This may be the case with the mere mob, who receive every prejudice upon trust,” rejoined Mr Denbeigh ; “ but if the simplicity of your character remains unchanged—if the virtues of your heart receive no alloy from the vanity of authorship ; trust me, my dear Charlotte, you will not be the less dear to any friend that is deserving of your love, for having

employed your leisure hours in a way that is both innocent and rational.”

Thus did this venerable old man persuade Miss Percy to reconcile her mind to the evils of her destiny, and, by the exertion of activity, to seek the road to contentment. Nor has his attention been confined to her. Me also, he has honoured with much of his instructive conversation. He has been particularly solicitous to know my opinions concerning all that I have seen in England; and expecting to reap advantage from his observations, I have put into his hands a copy of all my letters to you. These it was easy for me to give in English; it having been my custom to write down such conversations as I intended to recite to you, in that language, and after having given it to some English friend to revise, have from the corrected copy made the translations intended for your use.

Mr Denbeigh was much entertained with my account of the philosophers, but said, “ if it was known in England, people would think that I intended to turn philosophy itself into ridicule.” Thus it is that the designs of authors are mistaken ! Perhaps this is not the only passage in my letters that might, to an English reader, appear to be absurd.—Happily they will never be exposed to any eye, save that of my friend.—It is therefore sufficient, if to him they convey a picture of the truth, such as it appears to the mind of Zaarmilla.

I have already hinted my astonishment at the number of new books that are every year produced in England ; but, now that I know what these books have to encounter, before they fight their way into the world, my astonishment is increased tenfold ! Many and various are the evils which these poor adventurers have to encounter. Besides the smarting, though superficial

wounds, which they may expect to receive from the small-shot of the ladies and gentlemen *genteelly educated*, who call every thing *stupid* that is beyond the limits of their slender comprehensions, they have to sustain the *heavy* blows of those who cut down every thing as *nonsense*, that swerves from the beaten track over which they have been accustomed to trot. Should they be endowed with sufficient strength to survive the attack of both these adversaries, they have still to pass before the formidable phalanx of Reviewers; each of whom, like the mighty Carticeya,* brandishes in his hundred arms a hundred instruments of destruction. These terri-

* The Hindoo God of War. He is represented with six faces, and a number of hands, in each of which he brandishes a weapon. He rides upon a peacock, and is usually found in company with his mother Parvati, or the Mountain Goddess, one of the characters of the consort of Seeva. See Asiatic Researches, vol. ii.

ble Genii are said to judge of books by the smell, and when that has happened to be offensive to their nostrils, have been known, by one well-aimed dart, to transfix an unfortunate book to the shelves of the booksellers' shops for ever. But with the powerful is found mercy. Instead of the dread weapons of war, these imitators of the sons of the mountain-born Goddess, sometimes condescend gently to tickle the trembling adventurer with a feather plucked from the plumage of the peacock.

Ah! if ever friend of Zaarmilla's venture to send forth a book into the world, may it find these terrible Reviewers in this favourable mood! May its perfume be pleasing to their nostrils, and its form find favour in their sight!!

I HAVE just received a letter from my friend Severan; it contains the desirable information, that a ship will in a few weeks sail for India—the commander of which is his particular friend. In it I shall take my passage;—and if the powerful Varuna is favourable to my prayers, shall, in the progress of a few returning moons, again behold the blessed shores of Hindoostan. O thought replete with extacy! How does the bosom of Zaarmilla pant for the period of thy realization!—Yet shall I not purchase that felicity, without having paid the debt of anguish, in many a tear. Before my eyes can be solaced by beholding the companions of my youth, they must have been moistened with the sorrow

of an eternal separation from every English friend.

From this amiable family, from the worthy Denbeigh, and the excellent Severan, I shall have been parted for ever.—But the remembrance of their virtues shall be the companions of my life; and the idea of their happiness shall solace every hour of my existence.

Nothing can equal the delight of my friend Severan, at the success of his experiment; which has opened a new field for discovery, of which he will not be slow to take possession. It is a peculiar advantage attendant upon science, that the gratification it affords is not more delightful to the individual, than beneficial to society; and it is this consideration that enhances every enjoyment of the scientific philosopher.

I cannot help thinking, that this sort of philosophy is more favourable to the happiness of his votaries, than that sort professed at Ardent-Hall; but this may be owing to the advantages enjoyed by the former, of a happier method of conducting their experiments. It certainly does not arise in the latter from any want of zeal, or from a backwardness to repeat experiments, that have already been found unsuccessful. As a proof of this, my friend Severan informs me, that Mr Axiom has persuaded Miss Ardent to accompany him to the Continent, on an experiment of *abstract principle*, which, he says, "should put a learned female above the censure of the world." My friend seems to doubt whether the result of this experiment will bring peace to the poor lady's bosom; and adds, "that it would be no less surprising, to see the flame of the taper brighten on being plunged into mephitic air, than that a female, who bids defiance to modesty

and decorum, should preserve her honour, and her peace."

Miss Ardent has resigned her charge of the younger daughter of Sir Caprice, to Lady Grey. The eldest daughter of the Baronet, the Novel-reading Julia, has, it seems, suffered much from the unexpected metamorphosis of a charming swain; who, soon after he had introduced himself to her acquaintance, as a hero of exalted sentiment and tender sensibility, was unfortunately recognized by certain sagacious men, from a place called Bow-street, to be one of the tribe of swindlers. The discovery gave such a shock to the nerves of the young lady, that she has been ordered to a place called Bath, for the recovery of her health. Thither her father and mother have accompanied her; and there the former, at the instigation of a teacher of a sect called Methodists, has renounced the

Poojah of System ; and, instead of building a house for sparrows to make honey, he now intends to erect a church for the edification of the saints. Thus doth one folly succeed to another, in the breast of him who is void of all permanent principle !—May the mind of Maandaara be furnished by Ganesa with the protecting shield of judgment, and preserved from the evils of instability !



As this letter will be sent by a small vessel called a Packet, which carries dispatches from this government to the council of Calcutta, it will probably reach the happy region of Almora some weeks before thy friend.

I anticipate the comments which thou wilt make upon its contents. Thou wilt observe, that to extend our knowledge of the world, is but to become acquainted with new modes of pride, vanity, and folly. Thou wilt perceive that in Europe, as in Asia, an affected singularity often passes for superior wisdom; bold assertion for truth; and sickly fastidiousness for true delicacy of sentiment. Thou wilt see that the passions of men are every where the same; and that the variety made by the idol of Doctor Sceptic (existing circumstances) is not in the passions themselves, but in the complexion of the objects which excite them. Thou wilt remark, that though vice and folly have the appearance of being every where predominant, that it is only the superficial observer, who will from thence infer the non-existence of wisdom and virtue. These have been traced by Maandaara to the bosom of retirement, where he will have

observed them employed in scattering the sweet blossoms of domestic peace: and though the torch of vanity glares not on their dwelling, and the trump of fame sounds not at their approach, he will nevertheless have remarked with pleasure the extent of their silent reign, and, with Zaarmilla, will pity the man who can form a doubt of their existence.

Of the various religions of the English, I have given you a full and distinct account. You will perceive by it, that notwithstanding the progress of philosophy, and the report of Sheermaal, that that of Christianity is not *yet entirely extinct*; but that, like virtue and wisdom, it has still some adherents, in the retired scenes of life.—You will, perhaps, not have been able to discover how the practices enjoined by its precepts can be injurious to society; and inclined to think, that the love of a Being of infinite wisdom and good-

ness, and such a government of the passions as enables a man to love his neighbour as himself, can do no great harm to the world.—Obnoxious as the precepts which command purity of heart, unfeigned humility, sanctity of morals, and simplicity of manners, may be to the philosopher, you will conclude that they have, in reality, been found as little detrimental to the repose of the individual, as the expectation of everlasting felicity has been to his happiness. I am sorry, that the want of success attending the experiments of the worshippers of System, presents me with nothing to oppose to your conclusions better than assertion ; but if you have half the complaisance of the people of England, you will think that ought to be sufficient to overturn the dictates of common sense, though confirmed by the experience of ages !—Such faith do these good people put in the assertions of philosophers !

I am called from my pen to witness a ceremony called Signing the Settlements, which is preliminary to the marriage of Mr Darnley and the blooming Emma. The day after to-morrow is fixed for their nuptials, and on the day following, the amiable bride departs with her husband, loaded with paternal blessings. Though every thing is to be conducted in common form, and exactly in conformity to Christian prejudices, I do not know but this gentle and unassuming girl may have as great a chance for happiness, as if she had gone off with her lover on an experiment of *abstract principle*.

“ May the conduct of those who act
“ well, afford pleasure to the mind!—May
“ you, ye good, find friends in this world,
“ May virtue be for ever to be found!”

In reading the letters of a friend, may the goodness of his intention be put in

the balance with his errors ; and where the former is found predominant, may the latter be consigned to oblivion !

What can I say more ?



THE END.

Section 1

Section 2

Section 3

Section 4

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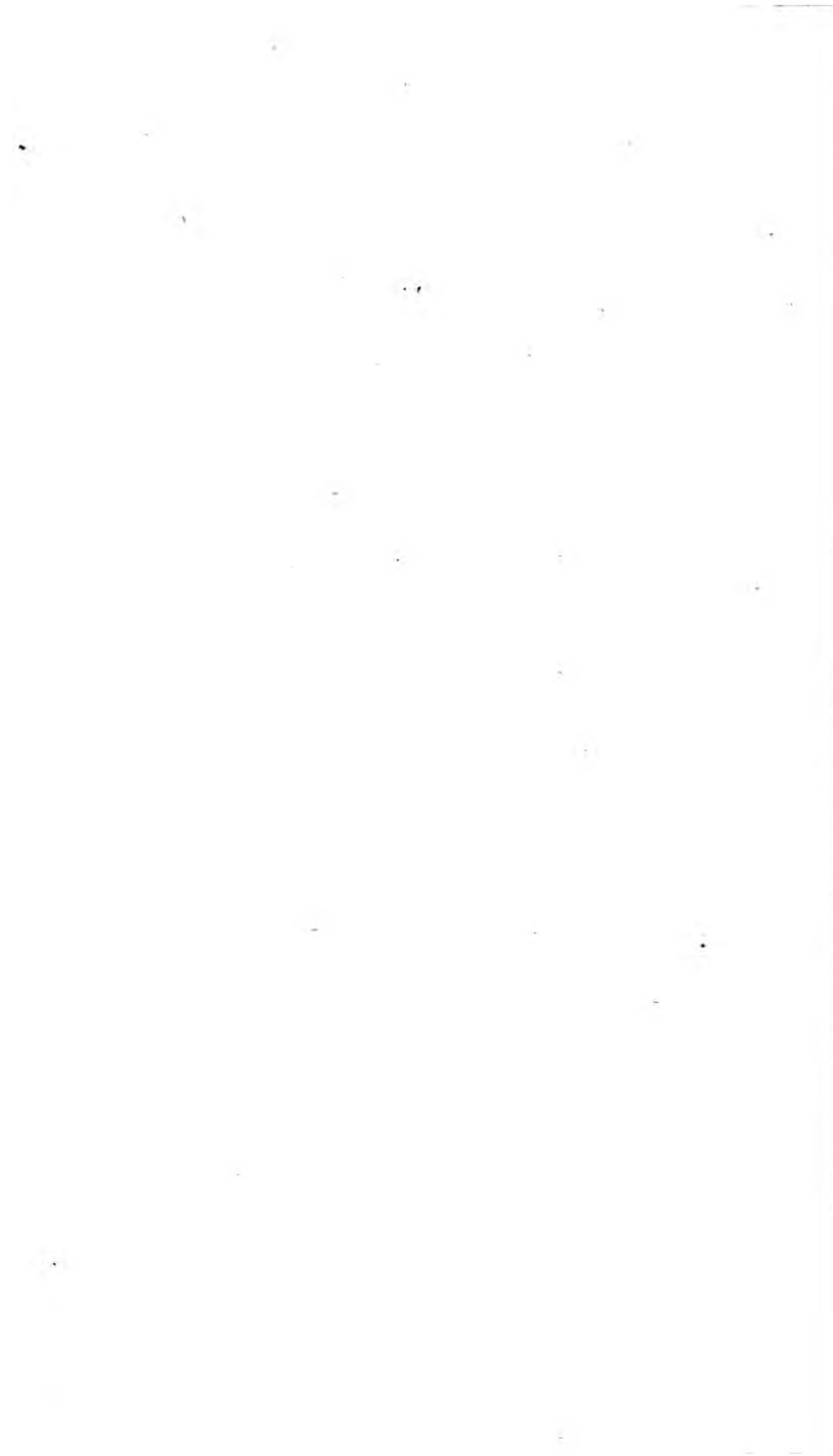
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