ORIGINAL VIEWS OF PASSAGES IN THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF THE POET-PHILOSOPHER OF VENUSIA

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Original Views of Passages in the Life and Writings of the Poet-Philosopher of Venusia by John Murray

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JOHN MURRAY

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Trieste

ORIGINAL VIEWS

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OF

PASSAGES IN THE LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF THE

POET-PHILOSOPHER OF VENUSIA:

WITE WHICH IS COMBINED

AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE SUITABILITY OF THE ANCIENT EPIC AND LYRIC STYLES TO MODERN SUBJECTS OF NATIONAL AND GENERAL INTEREST.

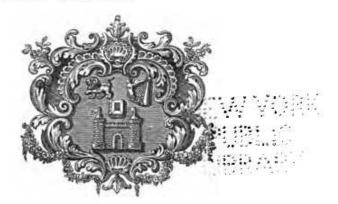
BY

JOHN MURRAY, M. A.,

BOTAL GOLD NEDALIAST IN "BOTWOOD AND ARTS," BY AWARD OF EIS MAJESIT THE EINS OF PRUSSIA ; FIRST JUSIOE MODERATOR IN THEIGG AND LOGIDS ; EX-SIGULE AND LAY REGISTRICH MANTER OF EINITY COLLEXE, DOLLIN.

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"Legitime inquisitionis vera norma est, nt nihii veniat in practicam, cujus non fit etiam doctrina aliqua et theoria."-ELCON, De Aug. Scien.



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PREFACE.

It is related, I think, by Baron Holberg, in his Outlines of Universal History, that the Spanish author Sepulveda once published an antiquarian Work, apparently for the sake of introducing a single original notion worthy of record, namely, that of deriving the term *Æra* from the initial letters of the words composing the sentence 'Annus Erat Regnantis Augusti.' And although the derivation is about as well founded as would be that of the English term News from the initials of the names of the four cardinal points, yet Sepulveda, on the whole, 'stood confest' an expert literary nomenclator, and very respectable 'editor'—of results ascertained by others; his faults being confined to his originalities, and these latter being few.

Now, although I feel a strong, but, I trust, moderate hope that Sepulveda's favourite 'idea' may not be deemed a fair exponent of those which I am about to submit to the ordeal of the reader's criticism, yet I would, were it practicable, most gladly avail myself of the protective advantages which every modern 'editor' of the Works of any notable ancient author may derive from blending his own remarks, however elementary, with those more recondite *dicta* that are already stamped by the impress of influential names. The conclusions, however, at which I have arrived, are so frequently

PREFACE.

adverse to generally received notions, that, taken apart from the arguments on which they rest, they could hope for little favour from most readers; while the principal of these arguments could not possibly be embodied in a compendium of general annotations.

While, therefore, I am far from affecting to depreciate that species of ' authorship,' so valuable to rudimentary education, whose end is instructive compilation, and whose operation is legitimately a kind of sartorial process exercised upon furnished materials, I am compelled, by the necessities of the case, to present my humble contribution to the permanent Exhibition of the Industry of all Authors, the recognised ' Commissioners' of which are the successors of the Sosii, in a perfectly independent form, and one which, I fear, is ill adapted to the great majority of junior students.

In another respect also I feel a disadvantage, in being unable to banish the impression that 'Dedication' suggests the notion of patronage courted, more directly than that of compliment intended. I have therefore denied my book this delicate honour. Besides, to resolve against 'dedicating' altogether appeared the only feasible solution of some conflicting difficulties, which I felt to belong to my own particular case.

I trust, however, that these considerations, physical and moral, may assist in conciliating indulgence; and that I may, without presumption, even read a favourable omen in the date which happens to be proper to this publication,—a date which, the classical reader needs not to be told, was regarded as auspicious in the good old Roman commemorations.

JOHN MURRAY.

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CHAMBERS, 2 TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN, 21st April, 1851.

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SECTION I.

INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS.

THE products of ancient classical genius, considered relatively to their matter, and independently of titles, authors, and times, may be conceived to be distributed over three intermixed classes. Under one class may be included those whose modes of thought and forms of expression are based on associations which have not only ceased to exist among men, but which it is now impossible for the mind adequately to recall. Another may recognise the offspring of combinations which, although obliterated by time, are yet fairly restorable by the imagination. A third, and the most important, will embrace such as respect those developments of mental and physical agencies whose uniform processes constitute the course of nature itself.

That casual associations should be familiar at one time or place, which in a different locality or age are impracticable, or inconceivable, will not appear astonishing to any who reflect how much the sugges-