

**NATIONAL POEMS: I. KING ARTHUR AND
HIS ROUND TABLE OR THE MONKS AND
THE GIANTS BY
WILLIAM AND ROBERT WHISTLECRAFT;
II. ATHELSTAN'S VICTORY AND OTHER
MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS**

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JOHN HOOKHAM FRERE & RICHARD HERNE SHEPHERD

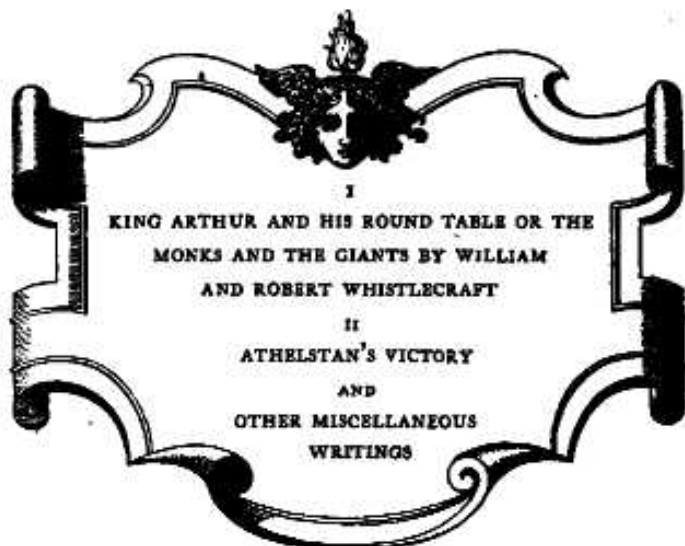
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MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS OF
JOHN HOOKHAM FRERE.



JOHN HOOKHAM FRERE'S
NATIONAL POEMS



EDITED AND PREFACED BY

RICHARD HERNE SHEPHERD



BASIL MONTAGU PICKERING
LONDON

1867

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BIOGRAPHICAL PREFACE.

IT has been thought desirable that the miscellaneous Writings of the late accomplished translator of Aristophanes—hitherto buried in the bulky or voluminous publications to which they were originally contributed—should be collected together in a separate volume, with such minimum of introduction and comment as might seem necessary, and rendered easily accessible to the general public, who have hitherto scarcely had an opportunity of pronouncing their verdict on his rare and singular genius. Of this idea the present venture is the result.

JOHN HOOKHAM FRERE was born on the 21st of May, 1769. He was the eldest son of John Frere, Esq., of Roydon Hall, Norfolk. His father sat in Parliament as Member for Norwich, and had evidently some of the literary tastes which the more famous son inherited, as we find he was a Fellow of the Royal Society, and of the Society of Antiquaries. His mother was Jane, only

daughter of John Hookham, Esq. of Beddington Surrey.

In his sixteenth year he was sent to Eton, where he formed a friendship with his fellow-collegian George Canning, which continued unabated during their joint lives.¹ In 1786 the two schoolfellows embarked together in a small literary undertaking. They started, on the sixth of November in that year, a periodical publication entitled "The Microcosm," which appeared every Monday until the thirtieth July of the following year. Eton itself was a *μικρόκοσμος*, or little world, from which they began to look out with hope and ambition into the larger world beyond—its interests and affairs. To this work, which extended to forty numbers, Frere contributed five papers, remarkable for their clear pellucid style and justness of thought and criticism, though scarcely evincing the power and originality which he subsequently discovered as a translator.² In the latter capacity he first distinguished himself by a translation into Anglo-Norman of an Anglo-Saxon poem on Athelstan's Victory at Brunanburg, printed by his friend George Ellis in his *Specimens of English Poetry*, which won him

¹ Canning was Frere's junior by just a year, having been born April 11, 1770. Frere, however, survived his friend, as we shall see, for nearly twenty years.

² "The Microcosm, a Periodical Work, by Gregory Griffin." Windsor, printed for C. Knight, 1787.