

**THE DREAM OF A
DAY, AND
OTHER POEMS**

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The dream of a day, and other poems by James G. Percival

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JAMES G. PERCIVAL

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BY

JAMES G. PERCIVAL,

NEW HAVEN.

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PREFACE.



THE present volume is composed, for the most part, of a series of shorter pieces, part of which have been published in a fugitive form, at different intervals since the publication of my last volume (*Clio*, No. III, 1837,) and part of which have till now remained in manuscript. The longer piece, at the commencement of the volume, takes its name (*Dream of a Day*) partly from its subject, and partly from the time in which it was written. This is one of the later written pieces. The others are arranged, mostly, in the order of time in which they were written. The reader will perceive, in running over the volume, that a great variety of measure is introduced, (more than one hundred and fifty different forms or modifications of stanza,) much of which is borrowed from the verse of other languages, particularly of the German. This last is especially true of the *Lays* (p. 104—127.) The *Songs* (p. 67—69) are from Spanish and Italian measures. The imitations of different

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Classic measures, as well as the Songs for National Airs, are more particularly explained in the introduction to each. In adopting different measures from the German, I was led, by their peculiar rhythm, to use our adjective adverbially, according to the German idiom, and I may add, according to the idiom of our Saxon ancestors, still retained in the expressive language of common life. This form of expression is certainly more energetic than that in which we use the constantly recurring and cumbrous adverbial suffix *ly*. It may not, however, be sanctioned by general usage, the legislator in all matters of language.

The limits of the present volume, as well as the character of its contents in general, have precluded from it a series of specimens of different varieties or systems of national verse, in which I had designed to give, under the general head of "Studies in Verse," imitations of the versification of all accessible cultivated languages, systematically arranged, and illustrated by comments. These, as well as a quite extensive series of Translations from different languages, (accompanied with illustrative remarks,) part of which have been already published in a fugitive form, and part of which still remain in manuscript, may hereafter furnish materials for another volume, if an opportunity should ever offer for their publication.

In the long interval which has elapsed since the publication of my last volume of poems, (sixteen years,) I have been most of the time engaged in pursuits which have had little or no relation to poetical studies, or which have been peculiarly adverse to them; consequently, during this period, the composition of verse has been to me only an occasional amusement or exercise. As such

I offer this volume; not as the fruits of a continued and regular study of an art, which, for the high principles it involves, and the great powers which it demands for its true and most successful cultivation, deserves to hold a place in the first rank. It is unnecessary to say any thing in vindication of an art, which requires a mastery of the riches and niceties of a language; a full knowledge of the science of versification, not only in its own peculiar principles of rhythm and melody, but in its relations to elocution and music, with that delicate natural perception, and that facile execution, which render the composition of verse hardly less easy than that of prose; a deep and quick insight into the nature of man, in all his varied faculties, intellectual and emotive; a clear and full perception of the power and beauty of nature, and of all its various harmonies with our own thoughts and feelings; and to gain a high rank in the present age, wide and exact attainments in literature and art in general. Nor is the possession of such faculties and attainments all that is necessary; but such a sustained and self-collected state of mind as gives one the mastery of his genius, and at the same time presents to him the ideal as an immediate reality, not as a remote conception. Such a cultivation of the poetical art is only for those who can devote themselves to it under favourable auspices; not for one who can only give to it, now and then, a few moments of leisure.

NEW HAVEN, JULY, 1843.

ERRATA.

Page 33, line 2, for "first of day," read, first day.

Page 39, line 23, insert comma at end of line.

Page 175, line 9, read ! at end of line.

" " line 23, after "comfort," insert comma.

Page 192, at end of line 8, read period, in part of the edition.

Page 219, line 3, (Alcaic,) after "youth," insert comma.

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