THE ROSARY; OR, BEADS OF LOVE. WITH THE POEM OF SULA: IN THREE CANTOS

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The Rosary; Or, Beads of Love. With the Poem of Sula: In Three Cantos by Anonymous

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ROSARY.

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ROSARY,

BEADS OF LOVE.

OR

WITH

THE POEM

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SULA:

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THREE CANTOS.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR, BY 7. DAVISON, WHITEPRIANS; AND SOLD BY J. MURRAY, 32, FLEET-STREET.

1812.

PREFACE.

IN consideration of the numerous volumes of mediocrity so continually deluged on the world, it seems but reasonable, and in a degree necessary, that an author should endeavour by a share of self-confidence to spread, as far as he is cspable, the merit of his own performances: or it may with justness be enquired, when he seems so conscious of his own inabilities, why he would increase the heap he complains of? The fact is, that few or none can think so slightingly of themselves; and when they are deploring the contemptible effusions of others, they vainly conclude that they alone are the authors of real merit, and that none but themselves are worthy

of admiration : in short, the motes in their own eyes to their own view are imperceptible. Thus then, as I am a sceptic to the idea of a poet's despising the labours of his Muse, I may boldly advance that I have endeavoured in the follow ing collection of Poems to give amusement to my readers, and have conceived that I am not a follower of any particular Parnassian school in existence: but whether I have over-rated my abilities when I imagined myself capable of pleasing or interesting others, or whether I am indeed original amid " the Sons of Song," I leave to be decided by the public; for although many an author of slender sense and less renown has asserted that the world is no judge, yet I doubt if he would have passed the same sentence on its decisions had he obtained from it a verdict in his favour. A general condemnation from the voice of the people, when it is not guided by the whispers of faction, or adulterated by the fanaticism of party, is most likely the correctest

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judgment that is passed, especially on the works of imagination; for it is the suffrage of feeling and nature, and if these are not the first aims of poetry, I know not what are. That many an author has sunk to silence from the adjudgment of this tribunal is undoubtedly the case; but it reminds me of a judicious Roman emperor I have read of, who ordered the greater part of the writings of the primal poets of his country to be burnt, that the world might be troubled with them no longer. Perhaps it is not impossible that his Royal Highness the Prince Regent may, by the same impulse of poetical patriotism, one day feel inclined to imitate such an example with many of the modern efforts of the British Muse : for, as a corroboration to the supposition, I have been informed that our illustrious Prince has tasted of the Castalian fount from its purest and most unadulterated springs. If in such an enormous conflagration my verses should increase the blaze, in consideration of what a minute par-

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ticle they would appear, and certainly not exclusive of feelings for public fame, I should be led to approve of the fire of his criticism. That however a different opinion may be formed from this self-condemnation is my wish, most obviously appears, by the risk I run of meeting an acquiescence. As little is to be expected, so little apology is offered. My Muse has not arrayed herself in the garb of publicity from the solicitations of friendship, or from the dictates of expectation pointing to emolument. She admires the advancement of literature which has graced the colleges of her native country, yet courts not the dedication of a titled or reverend character as a preface to her toils: unfriended, but not as yet dismayed, she steers her own course on the tide where many sink. In short, it is a willing appearance before a public she has attempted to please with her effusions, and if they are met with commendation, assiduity and exertion will reward their applause; but if condemned as unworthy, she will sorrow it in silence. Quintilian has observed, "Volo se efferat in adolescenti fœcunditas:" and her errors may meet excuse as her fancy deserves it.

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