

**THE CAVE OF HOONGA, A  
TONGAEN TRADITION, IN  
TWO CANTOS. AND  
OTHER POEMS**

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The cave of Hoonga, a Tongaen tradition, in two cantos. And other poems by Miss Hindmarsh

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**MISS HINDMARSH**

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**CAVE OF HOONGA,**

*A TONGAEN TRADITION,*

*In two Cantos.*

AND OTHER POEMS.

*Unbelle*

BY

MISS HINDMARSH.

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## PREFACE.

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IT is generally thought necessary to assign a motive for giving publicity to poetic effusions, written for the purpose of *private* amusement. The author of the present juvenile productions candidly acknowledges, that *her* reasons are not of the most important nature. She *might* urge the desire of friends;—but that convenient retreat of vanity, interest, or other latent motives, at present affords neither shelter nor concealment. The lynx eye of criticism long ago penetrated the shade, and brought the trembling culprits to open shame!

The tradition related in MR. MARINER'S account of the Tonga Islands, though a *love tale*, is of no *common* nature. It possesses, in a considerable degree,

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the charm of novelty ; and has many circumstances of touching interest attached to it. Indeed it is exquisitely adapted for the subject of a Poem ; and if the attempt to render it in that form has not entirely failed,—the plain and very brief, though interesting narrative, must become doubly pleasing through the medium of versification, and the occasional aid of fictitious colouring where the original appeared imperfect.

The author *dare* not presume to say, that she has attained in her poetic relation, that rarest of all the graces of style—*simplicity* ; yet she may confidently observe, that the simplicity of *nature* is in no respect violated by the studied phraseology of *art*, or caricatured under the garb of modern affectation.

Feenou is a lover, and a child of Nature, in one of her remotest islands. Unacquainted with the trick, or disguise of artful refinement, his sentiments must flow in the genuine language of simple affection, or he will not be the lover of a *South Sea*

*Island!* But, however the Poem may be executed, it must be *read* as the production of *eighteen*, and judged accordingly.

The author has frequently been surprised to hear persons of the best sense assert, that to publish poetry inferior to the effusions of a GRAY, or a THOMSON, (not to mention poets of higher fame,) is justly entitled to the name of presumption. Allowing this to be just,—*how many* shall be found *guilty* since the grave shrouded these distinguished luminaries! And shall a CAMPBELL, a MONTGOMERY, and a SCOTT, blush for the folly of *presumption*? Forbid it, justice, taste, and candour!

The author, without the slightest intention or wish of bringing *herself* into the scale of comparison, considers the idea extremely illiberal and erroneous. The *Eagle* flights of genius, amid clouds and storms, astonish and overpower us;—but who has not felt the peaceful soaring of the *Lark* a thousand times more pleasing? The song of the *Nightingale* is ex-



quisitely melodious,—but none on this account would chase, (of humbler note,) the *Linnet* and the *Black-bird* from our woods and vales!

Pursuing the metaphor in *feathers*, few will consider the *Mocking* bird an emblem of himself; yet, perhaps, the greatest bard has unwittingly mingled a *borrowed* note in his own delightful strain. And should the *mimic* propensity be discoverable in any part of this *unpretending* volume—the *charitable* will believe the author when she asserts, that she has always endeavoured to look into nature with her *own eyes*, and to consider every subject with an effort of her *own mind*. But the sentiments and descriptions contained in books float in the memory, and sometimes so indistinctly and vaguely, that they are mistaken by *self*-partiality for *original* conceptions.

It has been mentioned to the author as matter of surprise, that so many of her pieces (being juvenile productions) should be tinctured with *me'ancholy*.

Allowing that no personal motive exists for this disposition,—can a mind of any sensibility or reflection, look around on the scenes of misery daily exhibited, and accumulating in awful increase, without a *congenial* impression? Does not the sparkling eye of pleasure involuntarily grow dim with tears, and the breast of careless gaiety acknowledge itself capable of melancholy reflection? The tolling of a bell announcing in solemn accent the departure of a fellow-creature, naturally leads Melancholy to twine the cypress round Fancy's bower. But when the mind considers the *nature* of the exit, and the impenetrable mystery in which its future state of existence is shrouded, this feeling arises to sublimity! Besides, when the *joyous* spirit is on the wing, who can expect it tamely to alight and trace its feelings on *paper*? It is only in our *sober* hours that poetry becomes an amusement.

Though possessing little ambition, and still less vanity, the author considers it but just to say, that many of the detached pieces were written at the age

of *fifteen*; and even the more immediate productions of seventeen and eighteen claim a generous exemption from the *severity* of criticism on the score of *juvénility*. Maturity of judgment, extensive observation, and consequently an enlargement of ideas, have not set their seal on the author's talent, therefore *decisive* opinion must be suspended till that period. And even to pronounce sentence on *future* productions from the appearance of the *present* should be done with *caution*. The *juvenile* productions of LORD BYRON, the first Poet of the present day, excited the laugh of *contempt* in the world of critics!!

Perhaps the best recommendation the author can give her poetic effusions, is to say, that they were written with the greatest facility. She has too much compassion for her own feelings to sit down and *rack* her brain for ideas, and too much indolence of disposition for *dragging* together line after line by mere dint of *force* and *labour*!

ISABELLA HINDMARSH.