THE BRITISH CRITIC, AND QUARTERLY THEOLOGICAL REVIEW, VOL. XXVI

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THE

BRITISH CRITIC,

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JANUARY, 1840.

ART. I.—The Psalter, or Psalms of David; in English Verse.
By a Member of the University of Oxford. Adapted for the
most part to tunes in common use, and dedicated, by permission, to the Lord Bishop of Oxford. Oxford: J. H. Parker.
London: J. G. & F. Rivington.

Ir must ever be the object of the Church, not to conform its hymns and psalmody to the popular taste or demand, but rather by means of them to purify and exalt the general tone of feeling to its own high and heavenly standard; and in order to effect this it has of course in some measure to influence the whole Christian character, of which these tastes are the necessary developments: but the fact is, that these parts of our worship, our spiritual songs and melodies, are of themselves very powerful means for producing these great ends. On this subject we would dwell a

little more at large.

The effect of popular airs, not only in producing immediate impressions, but even in moulding and permanently affecting the sentiments and character, has long been proverbial. It is well known how important a place music was considered to hold among the Greeks, even for the purposes of education. The song and the ballad, and, much more, hymns and sacred Psalms, have the combined influence of both poetry and music, those two powerful principles for touching the secret springs of the human heart. And as we find on every matter that can engage the soul of man, that on referring to Holy Scripture the same is invested with a mysterious and sublime interest by being introduced in its relations to other worlds and other unseen living agencies, so we find it especially on this subject. It would seem as if music had some profound and secret connection with the power which good and evil spirits have over our hearts, which is darkly intimated in that remarkable passage respecting Saul, "When the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, David took an harp and played with his hand, so Saul was refreshed and the evil spirit de-NO. LIII .- JAN. 1840.