

# **GALILEO AND OTHER POEMS**

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Galileo and other poems by J. P. Johnston

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**J. P. JOHNSTON**

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# GALILEO

AND OTHER POEMS.

BY

J. P. JOINSTON.

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1875.



## PREFACE.

To my friends, in particular, for whose perusal this volume is chiefly intended, and to those of the public into whose hands it may chance to fall, a few introductory words may not be inappropriate.

The production of these pieces was undertaken, not in any sense with a view to book-making, but simply to gratify a youthful inclination in the direction of versification: and finding, by repeated experiment, that I could spin a line with tolerable facility, I afterwards, in the intervals of active life, continued the diversion, until it resulted in the somewhat variegated fabric which is here, in part, presented. The subjects chosen, at first, being generally such occasions, either in my own experience, or that of others, as furnished the suggestion of a sentiment, or afforded an opportunity of embodying the characteristics of some favorite author. Should the discriminating reader, therefore, discover in some of the earlier pieces a decided flavor of imitation, let him not be offended, but reflect that where no originality is designed, the absence of it is no cause for disparagement.

Of the most considerable in length of these Poems—*LEON*, I would say, that it is an attempt to portray the influences of Nature and Life on a mind of strongly idealistic and reflective tendencies, unbiased by any authorita-

tive teaching ; and to give expression to the various phases of thought and emotion which occur in all such minds in the progress of development. The characters, as well as incidents, of the poem are, of course, fictitious ; being merely intended to serve as material for the embodiment of the thoughts. I had at one time intended to continue the poem, carrying LEON onward towards a sager contemplation of those mysteries of life and nature, than is here indicated. But it is now more than ten years since it was thrown aside in its present form, and it is not at all probable that I shall undertake to complete the task.

In GALILEO I make no pretensions to be strictly historical; endeavoring to regard the great astronomer as a representative character in the Conflict between Religion and Science ; and to suggest a possible key for the solution of their difficulties, namely: A more complete recognition of the mutual relations of the Religious or Symbolical, and the Scientific or Literal, both in Language and Nature. I also endeavor to relieve the name of the illustrious philosopher from the odium which attaches to his Recantation. An odium which (since this poem was written) I have heard, with very great dissatisfaction, attempted to be enforced by a certain prominent historical lecturer. In this I hope the motive will be pardoned, however the logic of the attempt be regarded.

J. P. J.



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