# POEMS: CHIEFLY RELATING TO THE PRESENT STATE AND PROSPECTS OF THE CHURCH

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Poems: chiefly relating to the present state and prospects of the Church by H. Clarke

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# H. CLARKE

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### THE PRESENT STATE AND PROSPECTS

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## The Church.

BY .

### THE REV. H. CLARKE, M.A.

- " Poetry is most just to its own Divine origin, when it administers the comforts, and breathes the spirit, of Religion."—Wornsworth.
- "Thou, Lord, who walkest in the midst of the golden candisaticks, remove not, we pray thee, our candisatick out of its place; but set in order the things which are wanting among us, and strengthen those which remain and are ready to die."—Bisnor Ampanwa.

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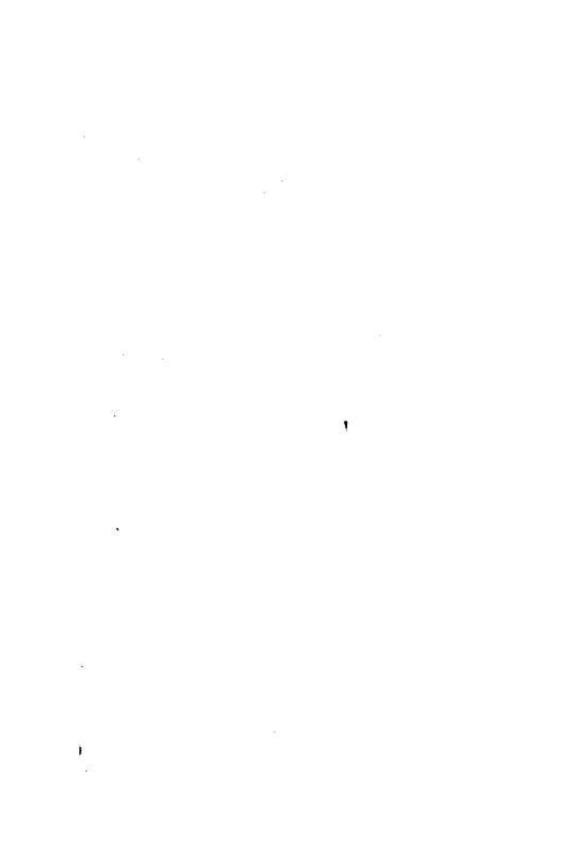
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## POEMS.

### On Visiting the Comb of Bede,

IN THE GALILER OF DURHAM CATHEDRAL.

Let him who thinks this age is to be won From all the deeds of mischief it has done, By gentlest admonitions, go to see The tomb of Bede, in Durham's Galilee.1 Safe sleeps the saint beyond misfortune's reach, And calumny may rail, and dulness preach, But never shall the doubly grating sound Impair his honours, or his patience wound! Yet wears the stone, in its dismantled nook, A dark, forbidding, stern, indignant look, As if (since Truth disdains our air to breathe, And flies for refuge to the vaults of death) It felt its granite entrails inly bleed, O'er the wrong'd bones of missrable Bede. Descend, thou pitying angel,2 and erase His honour'd title from its ancient place! This age has proved, by logic sound and stable, That what none venerate is not venerable.3

True, the pale saint did breathe monastic air, And daily bow'd his knees in public prayer;\* True, his great spirit pass'd, by trials hard. Through fast and vigil, to its great reward; And his ne'er-shrinking hand exhausted fell Dead, on th' illumined page it loved so well :5 But cells monastic suit not times like these! Dull, daily prayer is made for Pharisees !a Fasting's a trick, with which astucious Rome Cheats God and man-this world and that to come; And Scripture, by tradition's light illumed, Is fit for souls in ignorance entomb'd And to the body subjugate !- O times ! O manners! Who shall number up the crimes Which, in this giddy turmoil, have laid waste The unimagined glories of the past! Can Keble's fancy give, or Hook instil, With vanquish'd language bending to his will, One faint conception of the burst of praise, That rose, O Durham, in the ancient days, Thine endless aisles and awful tow'rs among, Ere Rome, as yet, with smooth delusive tongue, " Her spells through all the charmed air had hurl'd. \* And fix'd her grasp upon the prostrate world! Sad change has come-but let it stir to prayer And vigorous deeds, not freeze us to despair. Behold you azure regions of the sky. Which change with ev'ry wind that lives on high, Now blushing in the purple light of morn, Now pale with vapours, now by tempests torn,

Anon resuming all their peace again, And bidding sun-beams course o'er hill and plain, While joyous Earth the dews of gladness quaffs, And Ocean dons his countless gems, and laughs : o Yet are they ruled by Him who sits above. And all those countless revolutions move To heavenly music; nor shall Time have power To stop them, till Creation's latest hour, When Heav'n and Earth new-made shall rise, and wear Immortal robes, imperishably fair !10 Such is the Church of God, a fabric proved By storm and sunshine, but in change unmoved. As Time his circle runs, she dauntless hears Th' unearthly voices of the fleeting years, Which cry unto each other in their flight, And learns their lore, but bends not to their might. And we, on History's page, as in a glass, May see each shade along her surface pass. First rose the faultless blushes of the day New-born-and pass'd reluctantly away. Next, with most subtle speed, was seen to come A dread malaria creeping up from Rome, And gathering into vapours, dark of hue, Such as the prime of morning never knew. Then silence reign'd a space-when, on the blast 11 A stormy spirit sprung, in fiery haste, Before him drove the clouds with thunder riv'n, And gave to discord all the face of Heav'n! Discord, which never since has left the sky, But still extends its lurid pall on high;