

**A MEMOIR OF THE
LIFE AND WRITINGS
OF CHARLES MILLS**

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A Memoir of the Life and Writings of Charles Mills by Augustine Skottowe

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AUGUSTINE SKOTTOWE

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Charles Mills, Esq.

Engraved by J. G. Kneller, from a drawing by J. G. Kneller.

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J.H. 1828

Memoir

OF THE

LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

CHARLES MILLS,

AUTHOR OF

HISTORIES OF "MUHAMMEDANISM," OF "THE CRUSADES,"
OF "CHIVALRY," &c. &c.



LONDON:

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1828.

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MEMOIR

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THE even tenor of the scholar's existence is seldom very productive of incident; and, where his lot has been blessed with exemption from the miseries of want and the bitterness of dependence, little will usually be found, in the mere course of his peaceful fortunes, to excite deep emotions of interest, or to gratify lighter curiosity. But, to the thoughtful observer, the history of the mind of a man of genius and learning can never be destitute of attraction or utility. The whole process by which his faculties have been cultivated and his knowledge built up, is in itself well deserving of attention; and if the generous ambition of excellence be apparent throughout as the guiding principle of action, a still higher character will be im-

parted to the study. There will then surely be few spectacles more instructive, or better calculated to inspire intellectual exertion, than that of a life of pure and enthusiastic devotion to literature, which has conducted its votary to happiness in the pursuit, and to honourable distinction for its reward.

Such an example, if the delineation be worthy of its object, should be gathered from the following pages. It is their earnest purpose to render a faithful record of an individual, whose writings have given celebrity to his name, and the useful memory of whose talents and virtues should not willingly be lost. The sketch offers no pretence of an unbiassed spirit: but it claims the merit that may belong to a tribute of grateful affection, in which the simplicity of truth is rigidly preserved, even while cold impartiality of judgment is felt and acknowledged to be impossible.

CHARLES MILLS, the subject of the present memoir, was born at Croom's Hill, Greenwich, on the 29th of July, 1788. His family had been long and respectably known in that place, where his grandfather and father had successively exercised the profession of surgeons, for nearly half a century, in the enjoyment of the first practice afforded by an opulent vicinity.

His father, Samuel Gillam Mills, was not more esteemed for professional ability, than for his private qualities of mind and heart. He was a man of powerful intellect, upright intention, and keen sensibility; and the uncompromising integrity of his character was brought conspicuously into public notice, upon more than one occasion of his life, on which it is not here necessary to dwell. His tastes were intellectual; his acquaintance with general literature was extensive; and the charms which his mental accomplishments lent to his conversation, were heightened by a ready flow of vivacity and sprightliness. His society was generally courted in the circle in which he moved; and between him and one rather distinguished member of it, Archdeacon Edwards,—the friend of Paley, and himself a scholar of considerable attainments—congeniality of spirit produced a close and particular intimacy.

These features in the character of Samuel Gillam Mills are worth recording, because they may be supposed to have had no light influence in awakening the early tastes of his son. The intellectual tone of the father's pursuits communicated itself to his domestic party; his wife, too, was a woman of strong sense and cultivated understanding; and his children, as they grew up, though not denied the ordinary amusements

of society, found books the habitual recreation of their home. The Mills's were, what may be expressively called, a reading family; and they experienced in literature that rational and calm enjoyment, which is at once the ornament and the blessing of English middle life.

Charles was the youngest of the family; and his infancy enjoyed all the advantages which a society thus constituted could afford. So early was a fondness for reading imbibed by him, that, when quite a child, a book or a newspaper was a never failing expedient for quieting his gambols, and rivetting him to a chair. He had been rather a weakly infant; and one severe illness, when a boy of thirteen, betrayed a defective constitution, and perhaps left the seeds of that decay which prematurely terminated his existence. This early delicacy of frame had its usual attendant consequence of exciting a disposition to indulge him; but not its usual ill effects. Coercion he never knew; and perhaps the unbending independence of purpose, which, guided by good principle and clear judgment, kept him all his life in the right path of honour and virtue, may be traced to the unrestrained freedom which was permitted to his boyish spirit. To the same cause, too, may in some measure be ascribed that enlargement and vigour of mind, which made him ambitious