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SISMONDI'S
LITERATURE OF THE SOUTH OF EUROPE.

VOL. I.

“ Were I to pray for a taste which should stand me in stead under every variety of circumstances, and be a source of happiness and cheerfulness to me during life, and a shield against its ills, however things might go amiss and the world frown upon me, it would be a taste for reading. Give a man this taste, and the means of gratifying it, and you can hardly fail of making him a happy man ; unless, indeed, you put into his hands a most perverse selection of books. You place him in contact with the best society in every period of history,—with the wisest, the wittiest, the tenderest, the bravest, and the purest characters who have adorned humanity. You make him a denizen of all nations, a contemporary of all ages. The world has been created for him.”—SIR JOHN HERSCHEL. *Address on the Opening of the Eton Library, 1833.*



J. C. L. SIMONDE DE SISMONDI.

HENRY G. BOHN, YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

1846.

HISTORICAL VIEW
OF THE
LITERATURE
OF THE
SOUTH OF EUROPE;

BY

J. C. L. SIMONDE DE SISMONDI:

OF THE ACADEMY AND SOCIETY OF ARTS OF GENEVA,
HONORARY MEMBER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WILNA, OF THE ITALIAN ACADEMY,
ETC. ETC.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL,
WITH NOTES, AND A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,
BY THOMAS ROSCOE.

Second Edition.

INCLUDING ALL THE NOTES FROM THE LAST PARIS EDITION.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE established reputation of M. de Sismondi, as an elegant and accomplished writer, will preclude the necessity of any apology, for presenting to the public a new edition of a work which has already, in its original form, acquired an extensive and merited celebrity. It has been the object of the Editor, in the revision of his task, to adhere as closely as possible to the text of the original; no part of which he has taken upon himself either to suppress or enlarge, with the exception of one or two peculiar instances, where the extent of the alteration is pointed out. With regard to the poetical extracts, introduced by M. de Sismondi, and which are generally translated by him into French prose, the Editor has adopted, where practicable, such established English translations as already existed. In other instances he has either been indebted to the kindness of his friends, or has been compelled to insert his own metrical versions.

In the Memoir appended to the present edition, it has been his endeavour to comprise, in a brief review, the principal facts and the most interesting topics connected with the life and labours of the Author; while he has avoided those of a merely controversial nature. He has, therefore, purposely abstained from any detail of the differences of opinion which existed between M. Sismondi and the historian of Lorenzo de' Medici, respecting "that great potentate," as he is justly denominated by Bacon, and which gave rise to the vindication of his character in a separate publication by Mr. Roscoe, entitled, "Illustrations of the Life," &c. He is unwilling, however, to dismiss these volumes without observing, that the controversy was conducted without the slightest degree of acrimony, and that it exhibited peculiar traits of

character in two eminent writers, who found, upon a closer comparison of their views, that they aimed by different means at the same noble and beneficent objects. So far from alienating the disputants, it elicited both a greater respect for each other, and for the historical truths which they wished to establish; it gave rise to a friendly correspondence and an interchange of their works; and when M. Sismondi became the guest of Mr. Roscoe's son, at Liverpool, frequent interviews took place between the two historians, which served to confirm their mutual esteem and regard. There is indeed one passage in the letters of M. Sismondi to Mr. Roscoe, written in English, so full of that characteristic frankness and high feeling alluded to in the following Memoir, as to induce the Editor to insert it, in corroboration of the preceding remark. It is dated June 19, 1825, from Geneva. "I received," he says, "yesterday with a sentiment of great pleasure, as well as gratitude, the very valuable tract on Penal Jurisprudence you have been so good as to send me. I hasten to acknowledge that gift, doubly valuable for me, as it brings testimony that no ill-will exists between us; and how could it when both were animated by the same sentiments and the same principles. Both were equally eager after truth, though they happened not to see it in the same light. I accept, then, with the warmest thanks, the book you have sent me as a pledge of friendship, which I return most eagerly."

It is not improbable, that within a short period the present volume will be followed by another, containing a selection from the miscellaneous works of M. Sismondi, on Politics and Political Economy, to be preceded by the celebrated Eloge on the Historian, pronounced by his distinguished contemporary, M. Mignet, at the Académie des Sciences, Morales et Politiques, at Paris; and which has not hitherto made its appearance in this country. Nor is the Editor without hopes of obtaining further valuable materials, from the private letters and journals of this accomplished and very attractive writer.

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