

‘that he had forgotten it; a proof,’ he adds, ‘that I at least did not think it sufficient foundation for so high a character as he acquired.’ This is mere malignity. Sidney had diligently read the best Latin and Italian commentaries on Aristotle’s Poetics, and these he has illustrated with the most correct taste and the most beautiful imagery. It is a work of love; and the luminous order of criticism is embellished by all the graces of poetry.

The *ARCADIA* is a posthumous and unfinished work, and was composed, as he himself tells his sister, ‘in loose sheets of paper, most of it in your presence, the rest by sheets sent unto you, as fast as they were done.’ ‘For severer eyes,’ he adds, ‘it is not; being but a trifle, and triflingly handled.’ It was his earnest request on his death-bed, that the *Arcadia* should be destroyed. The Countess of Pembroke collected and published the fugitive leaves, and with a sisterly fondness, called them ‘The Countess of Pembroke’s *Arcadia*.’ Such is the history of a work, which the gallantry of criticism should have spared.

Of this romance Dr. Zouch has given a curious and copious account; it was read with avidity and delight in an age when pageants and pastorals were familiar to the eye and the ear; even in the present times, congenial fancy can kindle over Arcadian scenery; and a poet never dies, while there lives another poet of his nation.

---

ART. VIII. *The Credibility of the Jewish Exodus, defended against some Remarks of Edward Gibbon, Esq. and the Edinburgh Reviewers.* By the Rev. W. Cockburn, A.M. Christian Advocate in the University of Cambridge, late Fellow of St. John’s College, and Morning Preacher at Woburn Chapel. pp. 93. cr. 8vo. London. Hatchard, 1809.

WE shall be always ready to defend the cause of Revelation ourselves, and to encourage the defence of it by others. We shall not however permit every raw recruit to place himself in the ranks at pleasure, much less to lead others into battle. The theological combatant must have other requisites besides his own ‘*dira cupido*.’ It is the sensible advice of St. Paul, to ‘take to ourselves the whole armour of God.’ We would therefore advise Mr. Cockburn to get his ‘helmet,’ ‘sword,’ and ‘shield’ from

from the proper armoury, before he ventures to sustain the 'fiery darts' of the enemy of the faith.

Mr. C. undertakes to refute an insinuation of Gibbon against the truth of the Mosaick History; and at the same time, to satisfy the doubts of the Edinburgh Reviewers, who are said to have adopted the objection of the Historian, and added to its force by stating it anew in terms of their own.

'The contemporaries of Moses and Joshua,' says Mr. Gibbon, had beheld with careless indifference the most amazing miracles: under the pressure of every calamity the belief of those miracles has preserved the Jews of a later period from the universal contagion of idolatry; and in contradiction to every known principle of the human mind, that singular people seems to have yielded a stronger, and more ready assent to the traditions of their remote ancestors than to the evidence of their own senses.'

But how has Mr. C. performed his task? Unluckily he has written an introductory chapter, and laid down certain preliminary principles which he wishes us to regard as necessary to the due investigation of the main question. His principles however are at war with the subject, as he states it himself from the Old Testament. What is more extraordinary, he does not seem to be aware of the contradiction, but insists alternately on the one and the other, till the reader is bewildered together with the writer.

Who could imagine that the advocate for the truth of the miracles recorded in the Mosaick History, would begin with such observations as these,—that the Exodus took place, 'if at all,' a long while ago,—that men were then very ignorant in comparison with the fortunate and enlightened cognoscenti who flourish in the nineteenth century,—that therefore they were inadequate judges of physical events, and that the common ebbing and flowing of the tide might be regarded by the Israelites as a miraculous event, &c. &c. Having thus degraded the people whose history he undertakes to defend, his next step is to degrade the Divine Wisdom. The followers of Moses were, it seems, so devoid of modern science (indeed it does not appear that they were at any time furnished with Institutions and Lecturers in Natural Philosophy) that even real miracles might have no more effect upon them than common physical occurrences. 'Something miraculous *appears* to have been done; but we are so little capable of judging, and so liable to be deceived, that we cannot determine whether it were so or not.' p. 8. And from this sort of

of reasoning it would appear, that the miracles attending the deliverance from Egypt were of little or no use:—they made scarcely any impression upon the mind, and were therefore wasted upon a people who wanted capacity to judge of them. Hence Providence is represented as making absurd demonstrations of wisdom and power, as offending even against an Hebrew Proverb, and casting pearls before swine.

It is fortunate that Mr. C. now ends his reflections, and takes up the Exodus, as it is related by Moses. Here at length he is correct. Indeed he cannot be otherwise: for such is the inherent and invincible truth of the History, that while he follows it chapter by chapter, and verse by verse, he is compelled to be right. Now then we find, not only that the miracles were real, but that they were known and acknowledged to be such. ‘Moses exhibits stupendous proofs of supernatural power,’ and the people struck with awe, ‘implicitly obey every minute command issued by this favoured oracle of heaven.’ p. 12. He adduces a number of instances to prove the point at issue, and justly infers from them that ‘the miracles were not beheld with careless indifference.’ p. 13. On the contrary, they were witnessed with humiliation, and amazement; and the consequence was immediate obedience to the servant of God. But amidst this conclusion, what becomes of Mr. C.’s preliminary principles? While he refutes G. he unawares refutes himself; for assuredly, they who could not distinguish natural from miraculous events, were not precisely the people upon whom miracles can be supposed to have had the striking effects which he describes.

It would have been well if Mr. C. had contented himself with extracting the plain truth from the scriptures; but no part of his book is safe from the intrusion of his spruce philosophy. He ought to have rested in the conclusion which the History so strongly supports, that the offences committed by the Israelites, fully confessed as they are, and occurring through a considerable space of time, are not numerous; and that occasional relapses into idolatry might naturally be expected from a people bred in Egypt, the sink of polytheism, notwithstanding the miracles displayed before their eyes, and acknowledged by themselves, at the moment, as proofs of divine power. But, fearing lest he should have conceded too much, he shews a great inclination to demonstrate that the idolatry of the Israelites was not idolatry, but an innocent, civil sort of thing, meant perhaps as a compliment to the true God!

These strange sentiments occur in his relation of the behaviour  
of

of the Israelites while Moses continued in the Mount. They made the 'molten calf,' ascribed to it their deliverance from Egypt, and incurred the guilt of idolatry,—a guilt repeatedly charged on them by Moses and the succeeding prophets. But Mr. C. imagines that the 'God of Moses' was still the object of their reverence: and to make this good, he widens his position, and informs us, that neither in this nor any other instance of image worship, does it appear 'that the Israelites, or any other adorers of images, intended to pay homage to the particular piece of mechanism, but to some invisible Deity whom they conceived to delight in such a residence.' p. 22. With this contrivance he covers the present image worship of the Romish church. 'We cannot call this idolatry among the Roman Catholics.'—p. 25. Is Mr. C. serious? He may quote some Encyclopedia in his favour, (and we are sorry to see him relying upon such authority) but it would have been better if he had remembered the homilies of his church. Our reformers spoke another language. On the worship of images they have bestowed the same appellation, which we find in the Prophets. The philosophy of Mr. C. may be shocked; but they have called it downright idolatry.

We could point out other instances of the same crude and injudicious mode of interpretation—but we have said enough. Less than this however we could not say. It is indeed no trivial matter. Mr. C. chuses to write on the Bible in his character of 'Christian Advocate' in one of our universities; and we must take the liberty of reminding him of the consequences which may arise from hasty and unsound publications like the present. Some young reader will probably feel a want of conviction from his reasoning, and attribute to the scriptures a deficiency which belongs only to Mr. C. Those indeed who are acquainted with the minds of youth, well know how quick they are in detecting failures, and how incompetent to form sound conclusions for themselves.

We would advise him too (nor is this an unimportant point to a person in Mr. C.'s situation) to look with more caution to his style. He is fond of words better adapted to poetry than prose. His sentences are harsh and rugged, and his notion of sustaining a metaphor is not the most correct. 'If when the Old Serpent, the foe of man pricks them to iniquity, and bites them to blasphemy, instead of yielding themselves a willing prey to death, they would turn, like the Israelites, their penitent eyes on him who was lifted up on high, like the brazen serpent in the wilderness,' &c.

One word yet remains on that part of Mr. C.'s tract which relates

relates to the Edinburgh Reviewers. He begins with protesting that he ‘sincerely believes them to be Christians.’ They have scarcely made their bow in acknowledgment of so unexpected a compliment, when he turns round, and charges them with the ‘light manner in which they sometimes treat sacred subjects.’ He applies this to the point in question, and quotes the support which they have given to the ‘dangerous and improper paragraph of Mr. Gibbon.’ We are informed too, that they have left the objection without one word in reply, or in diminution of the difficulty; that they have given an increased currency to this piece of scepticism, weakened perhaps the religion of some, and ‘raised doubts to the prejudice of revelation which did not previously exist.’ p. 93. Is Mr. C. in his senses? Or does he suppose his readers blind to his self-contradictions? Can he conscientiously affirm of those to whom he attributes so marked an hostility to revelation, that he ‘sincerely believes them to be Christians?’ No; let Mr. C. chuse his ground, and maintain it, if he can: but let him not trim between two parties. Let him retract his charge, or his compliment. It may indeed be convenient to him to parry, in this double manner, the blow which his terror makes formidable: but the world will know what to think of a man who inveighs against infidelity, in support of his own character and station, and who is ready to sooth literary wrath at the expence of the cause of which he steps forth as the advocate.

---

ART. IX. *Speeches of the Right Honourable John Philpot Curran, Master of the Rolls in Ireland, on the late very Interesting State Trials.* pp. 475. 8vo. Dublin, J. Stockdale and Sons. London, Mawman, 1808.

THE title of this volume does not convey an accurate idea of its contents. There are but six speeches of Mr. Curran on trials for state crimes, the remainder of the volume being occupied with his speeches on various cases, which, though of a different description, attracted much of the public attention; and with some of his most celebrated speeches in the Irish House of Commons. It is offered to the public without the sanction of his authority; but we are disposed to consider it, with some important exceptions, as a report, on the general accuracy of which it is not unsafe to rely. The editor is probably a member of the same learned profession with Mr. Curran: if