

A narrative of the last illness and death of Richard Porson, Professor of Greek in the University of Cambridge / [Adam Clarke].

Contributors

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LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH
OF
RICHARD PORSON

CLARKE

1808

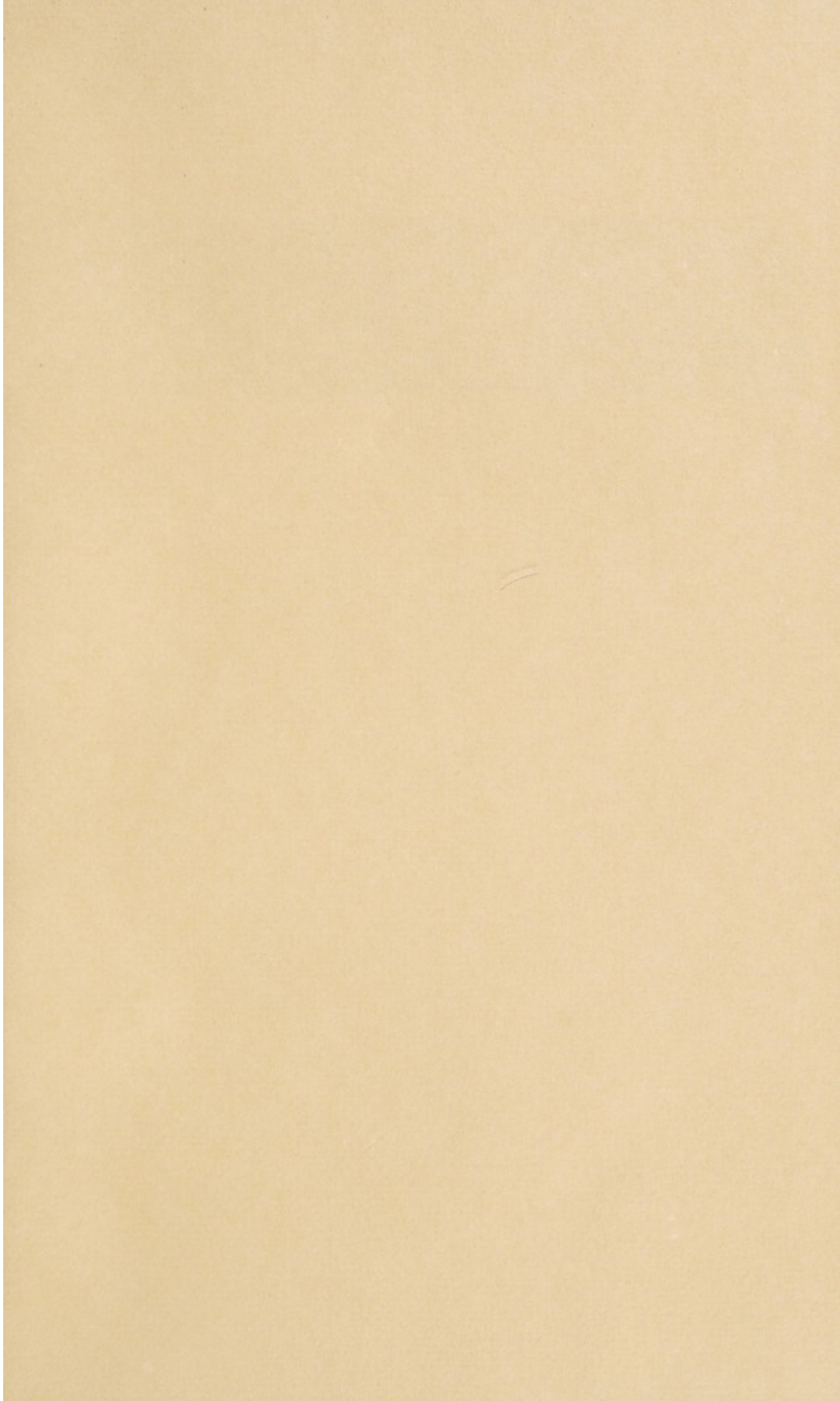
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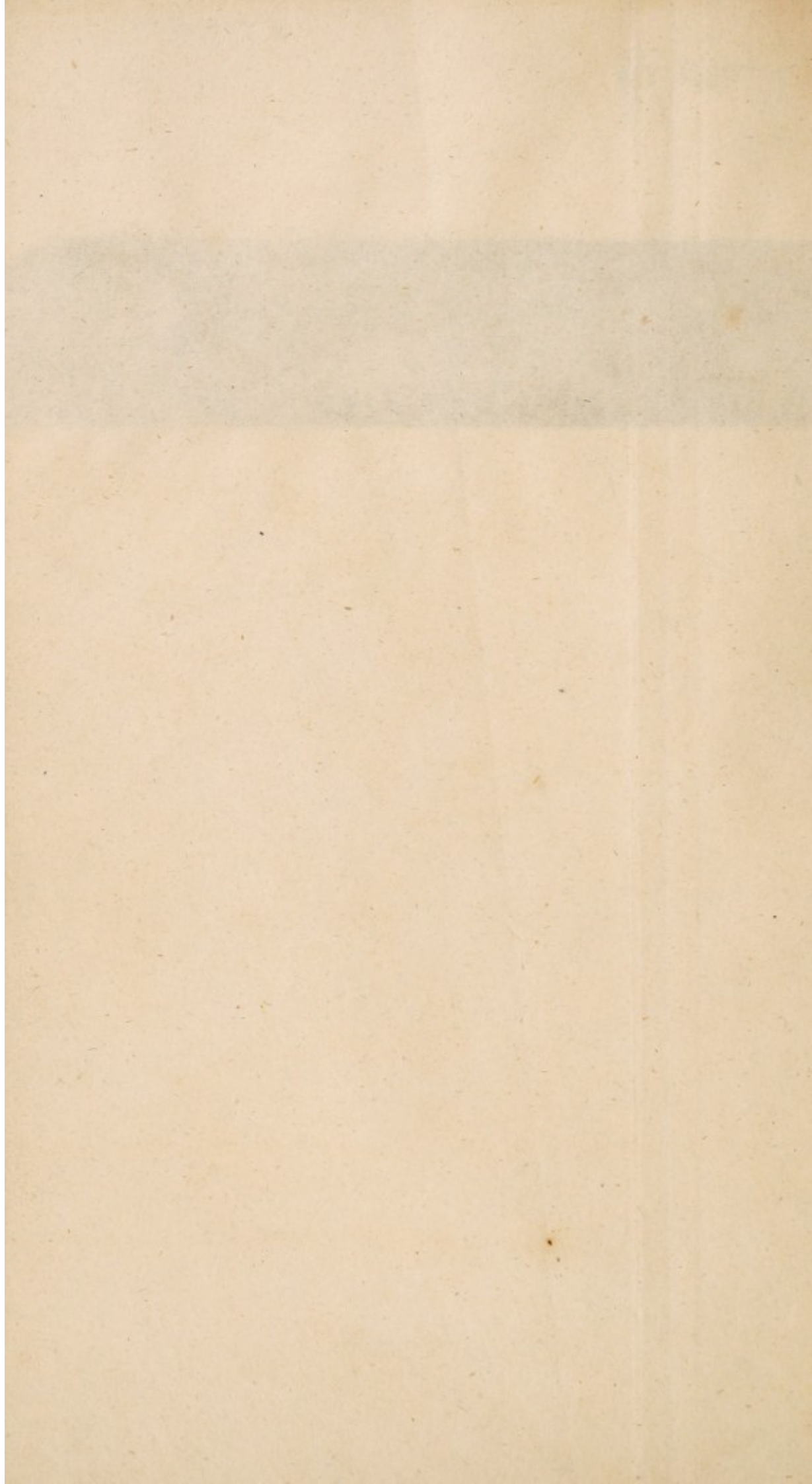




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A Clarke to his much respected
friend M^r J. G. Brown



OE

ΤΙΒΕΡΙΟΣ ΚΛΑΥΔΙΟΣ
ΘΕΟΦΙΛΟΣ ΤΙΒΕΡΙΟΥ
ΚΛΑΥΔΙΟΥ
ΘΕΜΙΣΤΟΚΛΕΟΥΣ ΒΗΣΑΙΕΩΣ

A
NARRATIVE
OF THE
Last Illness and Death
OF
RICHARD PORSON, A. M.
PROFESSOR OF GREEK IN THE UNIVERSITY
OF CAMBRIDGE,
FORMERLY
FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE,
AND
Principal Librarian of the London Institution;
WITH A
FAC SIMILE OF AN ANCIENT GREEK INSCRIPTION,
WHICH WAS THE
CHIEF SUBJECT OF HIS LAST LITERARY CONVERSATION.

BY ADAM CLARKE, LL. D.
PRINCIPAL LIBRARIAN OF THE SURRY INSTITUTION.

ἐμνητος οὗτος ἀνὴρ γίνεται σωφαις.

PIND. Pyth. x.

—*At ingenium ingens*
Inculto latet sub hoc corpore.— HOR. SAT. iii.
Multis ille quidem flebilis occidit..... HOR.

London :
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR, BY RICHARD EDWARDS,
Crane Court, Fleet-Street ;
1808.

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NARRATIVE

OF THE

East Angles and

OF

RICHARD PORSON, A. M.

PROFESSOR OF GREEK IN THE UNIVERSITY
OF CAMBRIDGE.

EDITED BY

WILLIAM LUTHER, ESQ.

AND

Principal Librarian of the Bodleian Library.

LONDON: Printed by J. JOHNSON, in Pall-mall.

1804.



Printed by J. JOHNSON, in Pall-mall.

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR, BY RICHARD EDWARDS,

at the Press of the University of Cambridge.

1804.

ADVERTISEMENT.

SEVERAL causes have concurred to induce me to lay this memorial before the friends and literary acquaintances of the late Professor PORSON. 1st, My high esteem for him as a scholar. 2d, The desire of several of his and my own friends, who heard of my interview with him, to neither of whom I could refuse any reasonable request. 3d, The incorrect, not to say false and uncandid accounts handed about in different daily publications; and 4th, Because his last conversation was with *me* alone, and the *principal* subject of it, the annexed Greek Inscription, in *my possession* only.

For the circumstances immediately preceding and subsequent to his apoplectic seizure, I have been indebted to different sources of authentic information; but am chiefly obliged to Mr. Savage, Clerk to the

London Institution ; a gentleman whose good sense enabled him to form a correct judgment on the different incidents which fell under his notice ; and whose esteem and affection for the Professor, led him to interest himself in the tenderest manner in every thing that concerned him, and especially at the momentous period of which these pages treat. As to the *conversation* between the Professor and myself, I hope I may say that it is literally correct, as I wrote it down carefully a short time after it took place. It is of no mean consequence to have even the last scintillations of so eminent a genius preserved. To none therefore of his friends, can even this imperfect account be destitute of interest.

ADAM CLARKE.

SURRY INSTITUTION,
October 25, 1808.

NARRATIVE, &c.

ON Monday, Sept. 19, 1808, about One o'clock P. M. the late Professor PORSON left the house of the London Institution in the Old Jewry, where he resided, and of which he was the Principal Librarian, and proceeded to his brother-in-law's Mr. Perry, in the Strand, where he arrived at about half past One. Not finding Mr. Perry at home, he proceeded farther, and was shortly after seized in the street with an apoplectic fit, which totally deprived him of the use of his speech, his senses, and all voluntary motion. As his person was utterly unknown to those who first found him in that state, and as there was nothing even in his pocket-book which could lead those strangers to find out who he was, they carried him to a contiguous watch-house, where he lay for some time, but as no one happened to come that way who could identify his person, he was carried to the work-house in Castle-street, St. Martin's-lane, where medical assistance was immediately administered. As he had the misfortune to be wholly unknown here also, it was thought most advisable to send a correct description of his person to some of the morning papers, that his friends might be apprized of his situation. Accord-

ingly the following description was sent to the *British Press*, Tuesday, September 20.

“ Yesterday about Two o'clock a gentleman was found senseless in the street, and conveyed by one of the beadles of the parish to St. Martin's watch-house, and from thence to the work-house, where he remained in the same state at a late hour last night. He had a gold watch in his pocket, a trifling quantity of silver, and a memorandum-book, the leaves of which were filled chiefly with Greek lines written with a pencil and partly effaced; two or three lines of Latin, and an algebraical calculation. The Greek extracts were principally from ancient medical works. It is hoped this description will be the means of his being traced by his friends. He is a tall man, apparently about forty-five years of age, and dressed in a blue coat with black breeches.”

On the arrival of the paper in the morning at the news-room of the Institution, the account was first seen by Mr. Savage, who knowing that Mr. Porson had not slept at home the preceding evening, which was rather an unusual case, was convinced from the description that *he* must be the person intended. Mr. Savage immediately proceeded to St. Martin's-lane, where he found the Professor, a little recovered and feebly walking about in the room. It may be naturally supposed that, especially in such circumstances, he was highly pleased to see a person at whose table he had long boarded, and with whom he had lived

upwards of two years in the habits of friendship. After a few words exchanged, chiefly in relation to the state of his health, Mr. Savage proposed to call a coach, but this the Professor would not permit; therefore at his express desire, they walked across the King's Mews to Charing-cross, where they took one, and drove towards the house of the London Institution. On the way, he began to lament the loss of *lives* and of *property* which had taken place that morning in the burning down of Covent-garden Theatre and several adjoining houses; and afterwards, referring to his late seizure in the street, he congratulated himself on falling into the hands of honest men, and particularly observed, how fortunate he was in not having had his gold watch taken from him. During their passage along the Strand and down Fleet-street, he conversed in his usual pleasant and instructive manner, without affording the smallest evidence that his mental faculties had sustained any serious damage by his late seizure. Indeed he appeared, from Mr. Savage's account, to have the whole *compass* of his mind in action, so that he could notice every occurrence, and make it a subject of instruction and entertainment. He gave full proof of this on approaching St. Paul's; when with great feeling he mentioned the case of Sir Christopher Wren, the architect of that magnificent pile, and "deplored the ill treatment he had received in the latter part of his life;" thence taking occasion to observe, "that even in *our own days*, when literature and usefulness could be better estimated, the public was too apt to neg-

lect modest unassuming merit." I mention these things the more particularly, because I wish to counteract a false statement which has gained considerable currency, viz. that he had no return of the proper exercise of his reason from the time of his seizure in the Street; and that his intellects had been much impaired even a considerable time before that period. That his prodigious memory had failed a little for some months past, I had myself noticed; and spoken of it with regret to some of my friends: but neither then, nor at the time of which I am now writing, could any other symptom of mental decay be discerned. What follows will probably appear a sufficient proof that he was not only in possession of his ordinary faculties, but that his critical powers were vigorous, and capable of embracing and discerning the nicest distinctions.

About a quarter past Nine, they reached the house of the Institution, and he appeared then to be considerably fatigued, and his strength greatly prostrated, so that he walked up stairs with much difficulty. Mrs. Savage having requested his permission to prepare him some breakfast, he consented, and drank two cups of green tea, which he always preferred, and ate two small pieces of toast, and soon after walked down into the library of the Institution.

Having that morning occasion to call at the Institution, to consult an edition of a work to which the course of my reading had obliged me to refer, on

returning from one of the inner rooms, I found that since my entrance, Mr. Porson had walked into that room through which I had just before passed ; I went up to him, shook hands, and seeing him look extremely ill, and not knowing what had lately happened, I expressed both my surprize and regret. He then drew near to the window, and began in a low, tremulous, interrupted voice, to account for his present appearance ; but his speech was so much affected that I found it difficult to understand what he said. He proceeded, however, to give me, as well as he could, an account of his late seizure, and two or three times with particular emphasis said, “ I have just escaped death.”——

When he had finished his account of the apoplectic fit, into which he had lately fallen, and on which he seemed unwilling to dwell, except merely to satisfy my inquiries ; he suddenly turned the conversation, by saying, “ Dr. Clarke, you once promised, but probably you have forgotten, to let me see the Stone with the Greek Inscription, which was brought from Eleusis.” I replied, I have not, Sir, forgotten my promise, but I am now getting a *fac simile* of the Stone and Inscription engraved, and hope soon to have the pleasure of presenting you with an accurate copy. To which he answered, “ I thank you ; but I should rather see the Stone *itself*.” I said, then, Sir, you shall see it : when will you be most at leisure, and I shall wait upon you at the Institution, and bring the Stone with me.

Will to-morrow do? After considering a little, he said, "On Thursday morning, about *Eleven o'clock*; for at that time of the day, I am generally in the Library in my official capacity." This time was accordingly fixed, though from his present appearance I had small hopes of being gratified with that luminous criticism with which, I well knew, *he* could illustrate and dignify even this small relique of Grecian antiquity.

It may be necessary here to state, that, about twelve months ago, when this stone came into my possession, (see the subsequent account,) I took a copy one morning of the inscription to the Institution to shew it to the Professor:---He was not up, but one of the sub-librarians carried it to his room: he looked at, and was much pleased with it, "as affording a very fair specimen of the Greek character, after the time that Greece fell under the power of the Romans. For it was evident," he said, "that the inscription was not prior to that period." Some days afterwards I met him in the library of the Institution; and he surprised me by saying, "I can shew you a *printed* copy of the inscription on your stone." He then led me up stairs to his study, and taking down *Meursius's Theseus*, shewed me in the tract *De Pagis Atticis*, at the end, the very inscription which had been taken down from the stone then at Eleusis, by Dr. Spon, in 1676! From this time he wished particularly to see it, as by it, the existence of the village *Besa*, and the proper method of writing it with a single *s* to distinguish it from a village called

Bissa in Locris) was confirmed: and he considered the *character* to be curious. This gratification, both to himself and me, was denied, as I had little time, except pretty early in the morning, and then I could never find him in the way.

But, to return from this digression. After having fixed Thursday morning to wait upon him with the stone, I approached the table, and took up the 4to edition of Dr. Shaw's Travels, and unfolding the plate containing the *Lithostroton Palæstrinum*,* said, I wish just to look at the title of this plate, as I have got a copy of it collated with that in Montfaucon, engraved for a work which I am just now about to publish. Whether this part of Dr. Shaw's work had ever attracted his notice before, I cannot tell; but seeing several words

* The *Lithostroton Palæstrinum*, is a Mosaic pavement found in the Temple of Fortune, in the ancient *Palestrine*, now *Preneste*, in Italy. We have the testimony of *Pliny* that this sort of pavement was begun under *Sylla*: and that this in question, was made by his direction: *Lithostrata*, says he, *captavere jam sub Sylla, parvulis certe crustis, extat hodieque quod in Fortunæ delubro Præneste fecit*. Hist. Nat. lib. xxxvi. c. 25. Montfaucon has described this particularly in the Supplement to his *Antiquité expliquée*, vol. iv. p. 149, &c.—Dr. Shaw has copied him, and has added some further illustrations. A connected account, with a complete outline of the plate, will be found in the new edition of *Harmer's Observations on select Passages of Scripture*. Præneste is about twenty-one miles from Rome, but the pavement has been taken up and deposited in the palace of the Barberini for greater security.

in the *uncial Greek character*, interspersed through the plate, he appeared particularly struck with the name of an animal of the *Lutra* species, there denominated ΕΝΗΥΔΡΙΣ, where the η *eta*, evidently serves as an *aspirate* to the υ *upsilon*; and immediately observed, "If this be authentic, here is an additional proof that the η *eta* was anciently used and pronounced as we do our H." I replied it certainly was; and as to the authenticity of the *Prænestine Pavement*, I believed it could not reasonably be called in question.*

* On mentioning this conversation to a very ingenious and learned gentleman, the Rev. Mr. John Jones, author of the *Greek Grammar*, &c. he said, The "Professor is certainly right; such letters were formerly *aspirates*, as they derived their origin from the strong *gutturals*, which the Greeks borrowed from the Oriental tongues; and hence the origin of the much disputed *Aeolic Digamma*."—Of this he gave me the following curious theory, which, though only remotely connected with the subject of these pages, the learned reader will not be displeased to find here.

"This letter, called *Digamma*, because it has the form of two gammas one upon another, like our capital *F*, and *Aeolic*, because erroneously supposed to belong exclusively to the *Aeolic dialect*, is borrowed by the ancient Greeks from the Oriental tongues. In these languages, *gutturals* abounded, which, like other consonants, contained in themselves the vowel necessary to their pronunciation. But it is the tendency of every guttural when become habitual, to soften down in the rapidity of utterance, into a mere *aspirate*. Thus χωμος *earth*, degenerated into *humus*, and the Latin cornu, into the English *horn*. Thus also the Hebrew ח (chi) which signifies *life, soul, self*, appeared in

He seemed to wish to converse further on the subject, though his speech was greatly affected, so that he was a long time before he could complete a sentence, not only because of the paralytic affection

Greek in the form of $\acute{\omicron}\upsilon \acute{\omicron}\iota$ or $\acute{\epsilon}$. Moreover כבד kabad, *liver*, gave birth to $\eta\pi\alpha\tau\text{-}\omicron\varsigma$. This word retains an unquestionable mark of its derivation: for it has the form of כבד kabad, or כבד kabar; and this variation has been transfused into Greek, $\eta\pi\alpha\rho$ and $\eta\pi\alpha\tau\text{-}\omicron\varsigma$. Hence we obtain the origin of the *aspirate* placed over a vowel. It was originally a *guttural*, which losing its power as a consonant, leaves the included vowel behind, with an inverted comma above, to perpetuate that part of the letter which fell into disuse.

“The *guttural* when softened into an *aspirate* is apt to be dilated into a *long* vowel. Hence the reason why η eta in the ancient Greek seems to have been accompanied with an aspirate, as in $\eta\pi\alpha\rho$, though formerly as in the ENHTΔPIS, on the Prænesine Pavement, it expressed the full power of H, as Professor Porson has remarked.—But farther. On the same principle that a *guttural* softens into an *aspirate*, the aspirate melts often into a *gentle breathing*, or becomes in pronunciation quite *quiescent*, as the Latin *honor* and *honestus*, become in English *honour* and *honest*. On the same principle too, *gh* become silent in our tongue, as in *taught*, *sought*. So in the Greek, the Oriental خان khaan a king, has degenerated into $\alpha\nu\alpha\sigma\sigma\omega$, which Homer pronounced $\phi\alpha\nu\alpha\sigma\sigma\omega$. This leads me to remark, that the *aspirate* instead of vanishing was changed into a *labial* letter, w, v, b, f, or ϕ . Thus *laugh*, *cough*, which are still strong guttural sounds among our northern neighbours, are sounded *laff*, *coff*, among us. Thus also in Greek, what was written $\chi\alpha\nu\alpha\sigma\sigma\omega$, was pronounced $\phi\alpha\nu\alpha\sigma\sigma\omega$; and the words $\acute{\omicron}\upsilon \acute{\omicron}\iota \acute{\epsilon}$, were sounded *wou*, *woy*, *we*, or *fou*, *foy*, *fe*.

“But the Digamma did not always originate in a guttural,

of all the organs of speech, but also through extreme debility, and the dryness of the tongue and fauces, his lips being parched so as almost to resemble a cinder. Though I wished to hear his remarks, yet

but sometimes in consonants allied to our *w* or *y*. Thus from ידע *yido* Hebrew, is derived the Greek εἶδω, *to know*, which is sounded in Homer *wido*, because the original is *yido*, hence the Latin *video*. So again from יין *yin* Hebrew, is taken οἶνος *wine*, sounded *woinos*, hence *vinum* and *wine*.

‘ Again the Arabs, in one of their conjugations, use the servile و *wa*, to augment the sense of the verb modified by it. This augmentative has been borrowed by the Greeks under the character of *o* (which is the Persian mode of sounding و *wa*,) and inserted by them in the middle of words; that is before ων, of the first declension, and ων, of the present participle: as λαμπετωonti pronounced *lampetowonti*, or *lampetowonti*; and μουσαων pronounced *mousawon*, or *mousavon*.

‘ From this account it follows, that the Digamma did not belong, as Dr. Bentley and others supposed, to the *Aeolic* dialect only, but to all the dialects of Greece in their more ancient mode of pronunciation. It follows also that the universal opinion of the learned, who say that the Digamma at first prevailed, and was afterwards succeeded by the *aspirate*, is the reverse of the truth. For the true state of the case is, that *gutturals* at first prevailed, these softened into mere *aspirates*; and these again were changed for a more easy and agreeable letter, which being simply a *labial*, was diversified by different people into *y*, *w*, *v*, *φ*, *b*, or *f*.


“ But the Digamma,” it will be said, “ is to be found only in Homer, by far the most ancient writer of Greece, while the *aspirate* is in all the more recent authors.” The

feeling a desire to save him from the great pain he appeared to have in speaking, I would have withdrawn, but felt reluctant on account of his appearing pleased with my visit. I endeavoured therefore

answer is this : The use of the *aspirate* obtained in the *written* language, and was therefore less susceptible of corruption. On the other hand, that of the *Digamma* prevailed in *pronunciation*, which was more liable to change, and to deviate from the original terms. Homer, we may naturally suppose, adopted the *first*, in composing and *writing* his poems, and the *last* in *reciting* them to the people. The *written* form, we may presume, was at first used but little, but prevailed by degrees ; while the peculiarities of *pronunciation* in their turn began to *decline*. The language as *written* by Homer, at length became *fashionable* in the conversation of polished people : and the *aspirate* being thus triumphant in the daily converse of learned men, would of course in their writings triumph over oral and temporary corruptions.

‘The change of a *guttural* into an *aspirate*, or into a *long vowel*, or into a *labial* letter, called the *Digamma*, is not peculiar to any one language, but is founded in the structure of the organs of speech ; and instances of it prevail in all tongues, both ancient and modern.

‘The preservation of the *aspirate* in the *written* poems of Homer, while the *Digamma* was used in *reciting* them, is a proof that Homer did actually use a *written* language, and that his works were preserved by a written language ; otherwise the *aspirate* would have been lost, and the *Digamma* alone would have prevailed in all the Greek authors who followed. If an editor of Homer in modern days, would insert the *Digamma*, he would corrupt the original orthography of Homer, and substitute in the room of the original characters, the *corruption of pronunciation*.”

to change the conversation, in order to divert him as much as possible from feeling the necessity of any mental exertion ; and taking occasion from the remark he had made on the power of the ω in the ΕΝΗΥΔΡΙΣ, I observed, that I had noticed a very curious peculiarity in the formation of an *omega* on my Eleusinian Stone ; it resembles said I, a *kappa* lying on its left perpendicular limb, with a semicircle drawn between the two arms on the left, thus  making the form with my pen on a piece of paper. I then asked him, if he had ever noticed this form of the omega in any ancient inscription? He said, “ No : but it may serve to form a system from : ” and then began to relate with considerable pleasantry, the story of the critic, who having found some peculiarity in writing one of the tenses of the verb γραφω, made an entire *new person* of it ! I said, I wish the system-makers, especially in literature, would have done, as they are continually perplexing and retarding science, and embarrassing one another. To this he answered ; “ Your wish is the wish of *all*, and yet each in his turn will produce his system ; but you recollect those lines in the Greek Anthology :

Οὐκ ἔστι γήμας ὅσις οὐ χειμάζεται,
Λέγουσι πάντες, καὶ γαμοῦσιν εἰδότες.*

* All acknowledge that the married state is continually agitated with storms and tempests ; and yet, though they know this, they nevertheless all get married.

As soon as he had repeated these lines, which he did considering his circumstances, with a readiness that surprised me; he proceeded, as was his general custom when he quoted any author in the learned languages, to give a *translation* of what he had quoted. This was a peculiar delicacy in his character. He could not bear to see a man confounded, (unless he knew him to be a pedant); and therefore, though he might presume that the person to whom he spoke understood the language, yet, because it might possibly be otherwise, and the man feel embarrassed on the occasion, he always paid him the compliment of being acquainted with the subject, and saved him, if ignorant, from confusion, by translating it. This, however, in the above case, cost him extreme pain, as he was some *minutes* in expressing its meaning, which astonished me the more, because, notwithstanding his debility, and the paralysis under which the organs of speech laboured, he had so shortly before quoted the *original* in a few *seconds*, and with comparatively little hesitation! The truth is, so imbued was his mind with Grecian literature, that he *thought*, as well as *spoke* in that language; and found it much more easy at this time, from the power of habit and association, to pronounce Greek, than to pronounce his mother tongue!

Seeing him so very ill and weak, I thought it best to withdraw; and having shook hands with him, (which alas! was the last time I was to have that

satisfaction,) and with a pained heart earnestly wishing him a speedy restoration to health, I walked out of the room, promising to visit him, if possible, on Thursday morning, with the Greek Inscription. He accompanied me to the head of the great stair-case, making some remarks on his indisposition, which I did not distinctly hear; and then leaning over the balustrades, he continued speaking to me till I was more than half way down the stairs. When nearly at the bottom, I looked up and saw him still leaning over the balustrades; I stopped a moment, as if to take a last view of a man to whose erudition and astonishing critical acumen my mind had ever bowed with becoming reverence; and then said, Sir, I am truly sorry to see you so low. To which he answered, "I have had a narrow escape from death." And then leaving the stair-head, he returned towards the library.---This was the LAST CONVERSATION he was ever capable of holding on any subject. --On matters of *religion*, except in a *critical* way, he was, I believe, never forward to converse. I should have been glad to have known his views at this solemn time; but as there were some gentlemen present, the place and time were improper.

Mr. Savage states, that after having parted with me at the stair-head, he went up into his own room, and again coming down stairs, apparently going out, Mrs. Savage observing it, entreated him not to leave the house, as he appeared so much indisposed; adding, "that she would provide him for dinner any

thing he might prefer." To this advice he seemed for a little to consent, but fancying himself, as Mr. S. supposed, to be under some restraint, to convince himself of the contrary he walked out. At this time, it appears that his understanding became considerably affected. He proceeded from the Institution to Cole's Coffee-house, Cornhill, where he arrived about five o'clock, and was so greatly exhausted that he must have fallen, had he not caught hold of the brass rod of one of the boxes. He was instantly noticed by a gentleman, Mr. J. F. Leigh, who had frequently dined with him at the same place, and who has obliged me with the following particulars.--- A chair being given him he sat down and stared around with a vacant and ghastly countenance ; Mr. L. addressing him, asked how he was, but he did not recollect him, and gave no answer. He then invited him to have dinner, but this he refused. He asked him to have a glass of wine, this he also declined ; but on Mr. Leigh's assuring him that it would serve to *revive him*, he smiled, and said, " Do you think it will ?" and then drank about one half of it, giving back the glass to Mr. L. again, which he appeared scarcely able to hold. Previously to this from his coming into the Coffee-house, his head lay down on his breast, and he was continually muttering something, but in so low and indistinct a tone, as not to be audible ; but after taking the wine he seemed a little revived, and was able to hold his head more erect. Mr. L. then pressed him much to have some dinner, but he

declined it, shaking his head. As he appeared to be much exhausted and very cold, Mr. L. ordered a jelly to be put in a wine glass of warm water, with a very little brandy in it, and begged him to drink it : he refused at first, but on Mr. Leigh's entreaties, and assuring him it would do him much good, he took the tumbler, drank about two spoonfuls of it, and returned the glass. He seemed now considerably roused, but would make no answer to several questions addressed to him by Mr. L. except these words which he repeated probably twenty times, "The gentleman said it was a ludicrous piece of business, and *I* think so too." These words he uttered in so low a tone, that Mr. L. was obliged to put his ear nearly to his mouth in order to hear them. "Not thinking," says Mr. L. "that a Coffee-house was a proper place to witness the wreck of so great a mind, I ordered a coach to be brought to take him to the Institution."---He refused for some time to go into the coach, but at last was helped in by the landlord; and the waiter accompanied him home. When they came to the Old Jewry, the waiter asked him where they should stop? he then put his head out of the window, and waved with his hand when they came opposite to the door of the Institution. The waiter says that, previous to this, he appeared quite senseless all the way, and did not utter a word. How quick the transition from the highest degrees of intellect to the lowest apprehensions of sense ! On what a precarious tenure does frail humanity hold even its choicest and most neces-

sary gifts ! Where then is boasting ? it is excluded. Infinite wisdom alone, is subject neither to change nor decay.

On his arrival, Mr. Savage observing that he looked much worse, and that he could not articulate any word plainly, ran off to Mr. Surgeon Norris, one of the Professor's most intimate friends, who coming immediately, and finding him alarmingly ill, with great difficulty persuaded him to permit himself to be undressed and put to bed. Mr. Perry, his brother-in-law, was immediately sent for, who that evening visited him, and felt for him then and to the last, with a solicitude which the tenderest friendship alone could excite. Dr. Babington was also called in, but even *his* skill was in vain. "The effects," says one who was present, "of medical exertion served to infuse a portion of stimulus into the almost exhausted powers of nature ; but every new attempt to revive, only brought on its succeeding share of increasing debility."

On Friday morning, Sept. 23, I called at the Institution, and had the pleasure to hear, that he was then more recollected than he had been at any time since Tuesday evening. I went into his room, and on Mr. Savage saying, "Dr. C. is come to see you, Sir," I drew close to his bedside, and asked him how he did ? He fixed his eyes on me at first with a wild and vacant stare, and seemed to labour to recollect me. At last he recognized me, but was too

much exhausted to speak, though he appeared comparatively sensible. Mr. Savage then coming close to him, said, Mr. Porson, your head does not lie comfortably, I must alter it a little: to which he replied "It is of no consequence."

He continued sinking till Sunday morning, the 25th, when even his friends were obliged to relinquish all hopes of his recovery: it was then too plainly seen, that he could not possibly survive the ensuing night. This anticipation of his dissolution was too fully verified; for on Sunday Night, *exactly as the clock struck twelve*, with a profound groan, unaccompanied with any struggle, he breathed his last. Thus untimely fell, in the 49th year of his age, Mr. Richard Porson, a prodigy of intellect, learning, and memory, such as, probably, cannot be paralleled in Europe at this day.

By the advice of his friends, it was judged expedient to open the body. Accordingly, on Tuesday morning, Sept. 27th, Dr. Babington, Sir William Blizard, Mr. Norris, Mr. T. Blizard, and Mr. Upton, apothecary of Coleman-street, (who attended the Professor during his illness with all the solicitude and anxiety of friendship) attended for that purpose; and their report, signed with their own names, was handed about among the Professor's principal friends; the substance of which, as the newspapers state, is as follows, for I have not been able to see the original :---*The heart was sound, and*

the pericardium contained the usual quantity of lymph; the left lung had adhesions to the pleura, and bore the marks of former inflammation, [probably occasioned by an imposthume that was supposed to have been formed on his lungs when he was a student at Eton School:] the right lung was in a perfectly sound state. On, and in the brain, they found a quantity of effused lymph, the effect of recent inflammation, to which they ascribed the cause of his death. It may surprise many to find, from the medical report, that a person who had lived so freely as Mr. Professor Porson, should have had viscera in such a sound and healthy state, especially as he had long been greatly afflicted with a Spasmodic Asthma; but this healthy state of the viscera may be attributed to his general abstinence from *ardent spirits*, which I am assured he very rarely drank, and scarcely ever to excess. Two widely contradictory reports relative to his *skull*, have been circulated among the public. One, that it was *uncommonly thick*: the other, that it was as *thin as paper*; both these accounts are equally false. On examination, I believe, it was found much like those of other men. It was, however, oddly stated in one of the public papers, that *his skull was thinner than usual, and of hard consistence*; and this statement has been as strangely attributed to gentlemen, whose profession certainly qualifies them both to *discern* accurately, and *describe* correctly; but the subject, be it as it may, is of little importance.

Mr. Savage, who has obliged me with several facts relative to the last days of this great man, concludes his account in the following words :

“ In communicating these facts relative to the illness of Mr. Porson, I cannot let this opportunity escape me, our official situations bringing us a good deal together, without being allowed to lament in common with his best and most intimate friends, the loss of so pleasant and agreeable an acquaintance. For, to the manners of a gentleman, and the most gigantic powers of learning and criticism, he joined the inoffensiveness of a child : and I cannot help wishing that some persons who have (with no common industry, especially since his decease,) been active in bringing his faults before the world, had been endowed with a small portion of some of his good qualities, one of which, among many others, was, *never to speak evil of the moral character of any man.*”

On the subject of the Professor's moral and literary character my plan prohibits me from going into particulars. As a simple narrative of the last week of this eminent man's life, including the last literary conversation he held, ascertained in my mind the limits of these pages, therefore, any detailed account of his virtues and failings, could not make a part of this outline : justice, however, requires me to say, in concluding, that the luminous disk of this vast Sun of Science and Literature was often partially

obscured by spots, which all his friends and acquaintance saw and deplored; and which the most partial to his person and memory, will not attempt to deny.

That he possessed many excellent, and some rare moral qualities, those who were most intimately acquainted with him, well know. By these and his literature, posterity may reap profit: to expose his failings can gratify no benevolent mind; let them find a common covering with his mortal remains: He alone who is infinitely just, and at the same time merciful, fills the judgment-seat.—

There was not a man of his acquaintance, I think I may safely assert, who revered Professor Porson more than I did: every production of his pen, and every conversation I had with him, only served to deepen the conviction in my mind, that he was the greatest scholar of his day. At the same time, I deplored his irregular mode of living as tending to injure a constitution already sunk low by his obstinate asthma, and to deprive *the world* of much of the benefit which it might have otherwise derived, from a proper use of his vast talents and erudition. Even by his comparatively *partial* exertions, the Republic of Letters has been enriched and dignified: and from his papers many invaluable remains may be expected. As a *scholar* his name is imperishable, and his shadow will be extended to the latest revolutions of time.

To draw his character, requires a mind similar to his own: I shall therefore leave this task to his biographers; and heartily wish they may be of a class widely differing from those who have already come forward through the medium of the public papers. From such, a very few excepted, may heaven forefend, both religion, and the Professor's fame!

The following short Character taken from a CAMBRIDGE paper, will doubtless be acceptable to most of the readers of this Narrative.

“Died on Sunday night, at his apartments in the Old Jewry, RICHARD PORSON, M. A. of Trinity College, and Greek Professor, in the University of Cambridge.---To the departed names of *Bentley*, *Dawes*, and *Markland*, whose classical acquirements so eminently maintained the reputation of this University, we must now add, with heartfelt regret, the name of this admirable scholar. In variety of information, in depth of learning, he fully equalled his great master *Bentley*; while in critical acumen he far outstripped him. In the happiness and sagacity of his conjectural emendations, the Professor had no equal. His letters to Archdeacon *Travis*, display the keenness and accuracy of his researches; and were considered by an able judge as the first critical productions since the memorable controversy concerning the Epistle of Phalaris. Considering his great acquirements, it may perhaps be said that he has not left much by which posterity may

judge him ; but what was said of *Cotes* is equally true of the Professor: "*Pauca quidem---sed egregia, sed admiranda !*" Every lover of Grecian literature, every real scholar, will appreciate the labours of PORSON, not by their number, but by their magnitude. In the few plays of Euripides, which he edited, they will feel and acknowledge the unshaken excellencies of the canons he has introduced ; they will perceive what is necessary to the formation of a true and genuine critic ; and they will unite in deploring, that a better portion of vigorous health was not allotted to one, from whom alone they could expect a solution of every difficulty in the progress of their classical researches."

By the kindness of Charles Butler, Esq. I am favoured with an Algebraical Problem, *written* by Professor Porson, a few days before his death. It appears to be the same with that in his memorandum-book, mentioned page 6th, as the Professor wrote it down from that memorandum-book at Mr. Butler's request.

$$\begin{array}{rcl} xy + zu & = & 444 \\ xz + yu & = & 180 \\ xu + yz & = & 156 \\ xyz & = & 5184 \end{array}$$

From a conversation he had at this time with Mr. Butler, it appears he had meditated a new edition of the *Arithmetica* of *Diophantus* ; and some further work on the disputed text, 1 John v. 7. as he found that the argument in favour of its authenticity, drawn from the Confession of Faith delivered by the African Clergy in 484, to Hunneric, king of the Goths, had not in the opinion of many, yet got a satisfactory answer.

SOME ACCOUNT
OF THE
ANCIENT INSCRIPTION,
FOUND AT ELEUSIS,
MENTIONED PAGE 9.

SOMETIME in the year 1807, a young gentleman, surveying some old buildings, in North-green, Worship-street, observed a piece of marble, with certain letters on it, forming a part of the pavement of a back-kitchen. His curiosity led him to look at it more narrowly, and finding that it had a Greek inscription on it, he asked the person who was the present tenant, to permit him to take it up, and he would put one in its place that would answer the purpose much better; for they had used this stone to chop wood on, it being the most solid part of their pavement; in consequence of which, it was broken nearly across the middle, as appears in the *Fac Simile*.---Though his request was not then granted, the stone was taken up, and sent to him the next day, and he presented it to me.

It has already been noticed that *Meursius*, who has borrowed his tract *De Pagis Atticis* from *Spon*, (which he has inserted at the conclusion of his *Theseus*, 4to. 1684.) gives p. 10, of that tract, the very inscription which appears on this stone.

On having recourse to the work of Spon, entitled, *Voyage d'Italie de Dalmatie, de Grèce & du Levant*, fait és années 1675 & 1676, par Jacob Spon, Docteur, &c. & George Wheeler, gentilhomme Anglois : à'Lyon, 1678, 4 tom. 12 mo. we find that in 1676, the learned author saw *this stone* at Eleusis; for in vol. iii. p. 102, he gives the inscription in modern Greek characters, which in the orthography and collocation of words is exactly the same as it appears in the Fac Simile, and of course in the original; and accompanies it with a note, which it appears, from the conversation mentioned p. 10, Professor Porson had seen; for what book had he not seen and read? Spon's note is as follows; "*Bisa* de la tribu Antiochide. Elle se doit écrire avec une S simple, pour la distinguer de *Bissa* de Locride, comme le remarque Strabon, auquel les Inscriptions sont conformes."

In confirmation of the existence of this village, and the proper mode of orthography, Spon in the first place gives the following inscription :

... NOT ...
 ΣΤΡΑΤΟΝΙΚΗ
 ΕΚ ΒΗΣΑΙΕΩΝ
 ΤΟΙΝ ΘΕΟΙΝ
 ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΣ.

And next follows the Inscription represented on the annexed Fac Simile.

He mentions the same village in vol. ii. p. 205.

and gives another inscription which he found at Athens, which bears a very striking resemblance to that on the Eleusinian Stone, and which appears to designate the person whose statue is upon the Pedestal from which the inscription is taken. The Inscription is the following :

ΦΙΛΟΠΑΠΠΟΣ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ
ΒΗΣΑΙΕΥΣ.

Spon considers this as a monument erected to the honour of the Roman Consul Caius Julius Antiochus Philopappus. The statue of the Consul is sitting in a niche, at the feet of which is found the above Inscription.

Professor Porson observed that the inscription found on the Eleusinian Stone, was posterior to the subjugation of Greece by the Romans : this, the mixture of the Roman with the Greek names proves : Tiberius, and Claudius, are Roman ; *Theophilus* and *Themistocles* are Greek : some generations had passed since the mixture of those names, for Tiberius Claudius, who is also called *Theophilus*, from his Greek extraction, is the son of Tiberius Claudius, who is also called *Themistocles*, either from his *father*, or some other *Greek* ancestor.

But the name *Tiberius Claudius* presumptively proves that the stone was not engraved prior to the reigns of the Emperors Tiberius and Claudius ; and it is possible it might have been done during the reign of the latter, though most likely, after the first century of the Christian era.

But how could this stone, seen at Eleusis in 1676, find its way to London? And how, from having been so much valued by some antiquarian as to be brought from Greece to England, should it at last become so degraded as to make part of the pavement of a back-kitchen, in so very obscure a place as North-green, Worship-street?

To answer these questions at this distance of time would be extremely difficult. We find that Mr. *George Wheeler*, or *Wehler*, accompanied Dr. Spon in his travels through Greece; and we know, that shortly after he returned and settled in England. Possibly *he* might have brought the Stone in question with him. Dr. Chandler, who travelled over the same ground about a hundred years after, did not meet with this Stone; though he sought for, and copied every ancient inscription which remained in the countries through which he passed. The Stone, therefore, was probably removed before his time. An inscription relative to the same *family* and *village*, if not to the same *person*, he met with and copied at Athens: the reader may find it in the *Inscriptiones Antiquæ*, p. 57, Inscr. 37, which, because of its affinity to the accompanying *Fac Simile*, I shall here set down.

[TIBE]PIONK [Λ]ΑΤΔΙΟΝΤΙΒΕΡΙΟΥ
[ΚΛΑ]ΥΔΙΟΥΤΔΙΟΤΕΙΜΟΥΤΤΙΟΝΘΕΟΦΙΛΟΝ
ΒΗΣΑΙΑ

Tiberius Claudius Theophilus on the Eleusinian Stone, is the son of Tiberius Claudius *Themistocles*;

but on the Stone which Dr. Chandler copied, he is the son of Tiberius Claudius *Diotimus*. Probably this was a surname of T. C. Themistocles, and thus both inscriptions may refer to the same person. Still however the *history* of the Stone is a secret. *Where* it had been laid up, or by *whom* possessed for a long series of years, it is useless to conjecture. At last, however, it appears to have fallen into the hands of some person, who, knowing nothing of its value as a relique of Grecian antiquity, put it down in his back-kitchen to supply the place of some worn-out brick, where it seems long to have served the double purpose of a paving-stone and a chopping-block!

There is nothing very remarkable in the form of any of the letters, except the *omega* and the *omicron*. The former I have already noticed, and the latter is also worthy of regard, as its size in reference to the other letters, is so expressive of its *name*, it being much *less* in proportion than any of the other characters on the stone; this, though not frequent, is sometimes seen in very ancient inscriptions.

