

work, illustrated and enriched as it is by Mr. Cary's excellent notes, will enable the reader to obtain a much more correct view of the state of society in that age than could be derived from even the best histories.

The poet did not spare the church. He found Pope Nicholas III. in hell, and *he* was daily expecting his successor, Boniface VIII. Dante's address to the lost spirit furnishes a good specimen of his style and manner:—

"Of shepherds like you, the Evangelist  
Was vire, when her, who sits upon the waves,  
With kings in filthy whoredom he beheld;  
She who with seven heads tower'd at her birth,  
And from ten horns her proof of glory drew,  
Long as her spouse in virtue took delight.  
Of gold and silver ye have made your god,  
Differing wherein from the idolater,  
But that he worships one, a hundred ye?  
Ah, Constantine! to how much ill gave birth,  
Not thy conversion, but that piteous dower,  
Which the first wealthy Father gained from thee!"

Tasso (born March 11, 1544, died April 25, 1595), whose genius has found admirers among all classes and all sects, requires not our commendation. His works praise him. The lover of poetry will not wonder at the strain adopted by Mr. Wiffen, at the close of his labour.

"Fare thee well, son of sweet Romance! farewell,  
Harp of the South! the stirring of whose strings  
Has given, by power of their melodious spell,  
Such pleasant speed to Time's else weary wings,  
That, rapt in spirit to the Delphic cell,  
Midst its green laurels and prophetic springs,  
The tuneful labours of past years now seem  
A brief indulgence—an enchanted dream."

We shall say nothing of Butler's *Hudibras*, because, however witty and caustic his verse, the objects of his satire (that satire is not always undeserved, however,) are too good to be laughed at.

Southey belongs to our own times. Some prefer his poetry to his prose; *we* prefer his prose to his poetry: yet both will repay attentive and frequent study. We do not subscribe to all his opinions, but we believe that the cause of Protestantism was much indebted to his pen. He held Popery in just abhorrence, and not ignorantly, for he was profoundly versed in Romish lore.

These volumes are very elegantly printed, handsomely bound, and adorned by engravings executed in admirable style. They must command an extensive sale. Dante, Tasso, and Butler sell at \$1 50 each; Southey at \$3 50.

*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.* Vol. X., Parts 1 and 2, 1846, 1847. *The Persian Cuneiform Inscription at Behistun, decyphered and translated: with a Memoir, by Major H. C. RAWLINSON, C.B., pp. lxxi. 186.*

The ancient inscriptions of Upper Asia,—termed arrow-headed and cuneiform, or wedge-shaped, from their peculiar character,—have for many years excited the attention of the learned. It is only recently, however, that any steps have been made towards their elucidation. The honour of having opened the way to later and more brilliant discoveries without doubt belongs to Professor Grotefend.

This eminent scholar first determined from the constantly uniform inclination of the wedge-like signs that the inscriptions were to be read from left to right. Then being guided by Tychsen and Miinter's recent discovery of the mark denoting the separation of words, he observed the frequent recurrence of a similar collection of characters. Professor Grotefend, in detailing his further progress, says:—"Supposing with Tychsen that we must look for titles of kings in inscriptions placed over their portraits, I felt convinced that the word so often repeated must signify 'king.'" For sufficient reasons he was further led to think that the repetition of this word in one of Niebuhr's inscriptions must refer to father and son. Having ascertained the peculiar age of the Persian kings to which the bas-relief in the ruins of Persepolis belonged, in order thereby to discover the names applicable to them, and thus find out, if possible, the signification of certain letters, the Professor felt assured that he must look for two kings of the dynasty of the Achæmenides. "I, in consequence," says he, "ran over the list, and successively applied the names to the characters of the inscriptions. These names could obviously be neither Cyrus nor Cambyzes, because the names occurring in the inscriptions do not begin with the same letter. Cyrus and Artaxerxes were equally inapplicable, because in reference to the characters, the first is too short and the second too long. There only remained, therefore, the names of Darius and Xerxes; and these letters agreed so exactly with the characters, that I could