





Painted by Lucas.

Engraved by

SIR JOHN BARROW, BART.

AN
AUTO-BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR
OF
SIR JOHN BARROW, BART.,
LATE OF THE ADMIRALTY;
INCLUDING
REFLECTIONS, OBSERVATIONS, AND REMINISCENCES
AT HOME AND ABROAD,
FROM EARLY LIFE TO ADVANCED AGE.

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—— “ *Hæc olim meminisse juvabit.* ”  
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P R E F A C E.

It may naturally be supposed that he who can sit down, in his eighty-third year, to write a volume of 500 pages, must have been urged on by some powerful motive to undertake such a task at so advanced a period of life; when the faculties of mind and body may be expected, in a certain degree, to have become impaired. I had a double motive for setting about the task:—the first was to gratify what I knew to be the wish of my family; the second, to gratify myself, by taking a wide range in recalling the remembrances of long by-gone years; quite certain that by so doing I should be able to realize the motto of my book, and say “*hæc olim meminisse juvabit.*” But I may also allege a third motive of gratification: that of expressing publicly the many acts of kindness and consideration I have experienced from numerous friends, especially from those to whose patronage I am indebted for the good fortune that has attended me through life.

To me, indeed, the labour of putting together the present volume has proved rather a delightful exercise,

by affording the opportunity of recalling to my memory the youthful companions of early days, and the friends of maturer age, together with the many agreeable associations that crowd into such recollections. If an excuse were wanting for this volume, it might be suggested that, as the lives of so many excellent characters have passed under my *review*, it is but reasonable that I should take a *review* of my own, though less distinguished; and I promise it shall be a true and a faithful one.

Long as my life has been spared, it has passed away in a state of what I may call uninterrupted health—in the full enjoyment of activity of body, and sanity of mind—*mens sana in corpore sano*; and, by the mercy of Providence, I have never had occasion to call in the aid of the doctor but once, and he was a Chinese, practising in the city of *T'ing-hae*, in the island of *Chu-san*. A great portion of the first forty years of my life was spent in rambling among the mountains of Cumberland and Westmoreland, or angling for trout in the mountain-streams; in sea-voyages, or in pedestrian exercises in foreign countries: the next forty years mostly at Charing-Cross, in close confinement for the greater part of the day, and in such sedentary exercise of the mind, as is required of a Secretary of the Admiralty; whose talent may, perhaps, be estimated by some, who know little about it, to lie more in the hand than the head. I may lay claim, however, to some small portion of mental exercise, in

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* To attempt a description of the events and transactions that occurred in the course of forty years, and which are recorded in the Admiralty, would require another volume even to do little more than to enumerate them. Briefly as they are touched upon in the present volume, they occupy more than 200 pages. In the *Contents*, therefore, it was deemed sufficient to name the parties in each of the thirteen Administrations on whom the responsibility is supposed chiefly to rest.

addition to, and in the midst of, the routine drudgery of office, by the production of six quarto volumes, four octavos, three or four smaller ones, about a dozen articles in the 'Encyclopædia Britannica,' and close upon two hundred articles in the 'Quarterly Review;' which may, perhaps, be considered as counting for something in the way of literary labour.

These are the kind of mental exercises, conjointly with personal exertions, that have tended to keep up a flow of health and of animal spirits much beyond the usual period of human existence; and which have encouraged me, even at this late hour of the day, to make trial of my strength in the same beaten track I have trod over for so many years; being not a little induced, as I have before hinted, by a wish to put on record the expression of a feeling of gratitude towards my benefactors; to state briefly the acts or opinions of those under whom and with whom I have served; and moreover, though it may occasionally wear the appearance of vanity, to record the opinions also, in their own words, that they may have entertained of me. No such feeling as vanity, however, can with justice be laid to my charge. I am but too conscious that, in my literary labours—the sources of my amusement—there will be found a great defect both in point of style and correctness of language. The hasty composition of official letters and documents has, I am free to confess, been followed up by a too careless habit of skimming over even graver subjects *currente*

calamo. This is a weak excuse, but I have no other to plead, with regard to the following pages, in claiming the indulgence of the *gentle reader*.

The volume contains—

1. Reminiscences of early life, entirely from memory.
2. Notices and observations on China and the Chinese, from Pekin to Canton.
3. Notices and observations on the Colonists, the Kaffirs, the Hottentots, and Bosjesmans of Southern Africa, from personal intercourse; and on the Natural History of S. Africa.
4. Brief notices of thirteen different Administrations, Whig and Tory, of the Navy.
5. Retirement from public life, and employment of leisure time.
6. The origin and successful establishment of the ‘Quarterly Review.’

NOTE.—The small portrait is taken from one of a larger size engraved by Messrs. Graves, from the original painted by Mr. Lucas; and I beg to express my thanks to Mr. Lucas, and also to Messrs. Graves, for their readiness in affording the accommodation of placing it as a frontispiece to this volume.

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