

TO SIR JOHN FREDERICK WILLIAM HERSCHEL,

K. G. H.

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MY DEAR HERSCHEL,

It is with no common pleasure that I take up my pen to dedicate these volumes to you. They are the result of trains of thought which have often been the subject of our conversation, and of which the origin goes back to the period of our early companionship at the University. And if I had ever wavered in my purpose of combining such reflections and researches into a whole, I should have derived a renewed impulse and increased animation from your delightful Discourse on a kindred subject. For I could not have read it without finding this portion of philosophy invested with a fresh charm; and though I might be well aware that I could not aspire to that large share of popularity which your work so justly gained, I should still have reflected, that something was due to the subject itself, and should have hoped that my own aim was so far similar to yours, that the present work might have a chance of exciting an interest in some of your readers. That it will interest you, I do not at all hesitate to believe.

If you were now in England I should stop here: but when a friend is removed for years to a far distant land, we seem to acquire a right to speak openly of his good qualities. I cannot, therefore, prevail upon myself to lay down my pen without alluding to the affectionate admiration of your moral and social, as well as intellectual excellencies, which springs up in the hearts of your friends, whenever you are thought of. They are much delighted to look upon the halo of deserved fame which plays round your head; but still more, to recollect,