He obtained the prize in poetry at the public games when he was fourscore years *o*f age. According to Suidas, he added four letters to the Greek alphabet, and Pliny assigns to him the eighth string of the Lyre ; but these claims are disputed by the learned.

His poetry was so tender and plaintive, that he acquired the cognomen of *Melicertes,* sweet as honey, and the tearful eye of his muse was proverbial. Dionysius places him amongst those polished writers who excel in a smooth volubility, and flow on like plenteous and perennial rivers, in a course of even and uninterrupted harmony.

There is a second great poet of the name of Simonides recorded on the Marbles, and supposed to have been his grandson, who gained, in 478 before Christ, the prize in the games at Athens.

SIMONY, is the corrupt presentation of any one to an ecclesiastical benefice for money, gift, or reward. It is so called from the resemblance it is said to bear to the sin of Simon Magus, though the purchasing of holy orders seems to appr*o*ach nearer to his offence. It was by the canon law a very grievous crime ; and is so much the more odi*o*us, because, as Sir Edward Coke observes, it is ever accompanied with perjury, the presentee being not to commit simony.

SIMOOM, a hot wind which blows occasionally in the deserts of Africa, and probably in other widely extended countries parched in the same manner by a vertical sun. Its effects on the human body are dreadful. If inhaled in any quantity, it produces instant suffocation, or at least leaves the unhappy sufferer oppressed with asthma and low­ness of spirits. The approach of this awful scourge is indi- cated by a redness in the air. well understood by those who are accustomed to journey through the desert; and the only refuge which they have from it, is to fall down with their faces close to the ground, and to continue as long as p*o*ssible without drawing in their breath. Mr. Bruce, who, in his j*o*urney though the desert, suffered from the simoom, gives the following graphical description of this visitati*o*n. “ At eleven o’clock, while we contemplated with great pleasure the rugged top of Chiggre, to which we were fast approaching, and where we were to solace ourselves with plenty of good water, Idris our guide cried out, with a loud voice, fall upon your faces, for here is the simoom. I saw from the south-east a haze come, in colour like the purple part of the rainbow, but not so compressed or thick. It did not occupy twenty yards in breadth, and was about twelve feet high from the ground. It was a kind of blush upon the air, and it moved very rapidly ; for I scarce could turn to fall upon the ground with my head to the northward, when I felt the heat of its current plainly upon my face. We all lay flat on the ground as if dead, till Idris told us it was blown over. The meteor or purple haze which I saw was indeed passed, but the light air that still blew was of heat to threaten suffocation. For my part, I found distinctly in my breast that I had imbibed a part of it, nor was I free of an asthmatic sensation till I had been some months in Italy, at the baths of Poretta, near two years afterwards.” Though the severity of this blast seems to have passed over them alm*o*st instantaneously, it continued to blow so as to exhaust them till twenty minutes before five in the afternoon, lasting through all its stages very near six hours, and leaving them in a state of the utmost despondency.

SIMPLON, a village in Switzerland, in the canton of the Vallais, only to be noticed from giving its name to the most magnificent of the roads over the Alps. This road, which leads from Switzerland into Piedmont, was constructed by Bonaparte betwixt the years 1801 and 1806, and has been long considered as one of the noblest monuments of his genius and power. It is near seventy English miles in length, is in every part twenty-five feet in breadth, and with an ascent so gentle, only one inch and a half in six feet, that the heaviest

carriage can pass down on both sides of the mountain without the necessity of applying the drag chain. It passes over several frightful precipices. It is carried through six solid rocks by means of arches called galleries, where by gun- powder a passage has been bored. Out of these the passenger steps into lovely valleys with the huts of the shep­herds sprinkled on the sides, and looks through forests of pines, to behold the glaciers and the snow-toped mountains in lofty regions of the air. Some bold bridges lead over the deep fissures from one rock to another. The Italian side presents more picturesque scenery than the Swiss side, from the rocks being much more rugged. On that side, too, is the grand gallery, 690 feet in length, excavated through a granite rock, called, from a remarkable cascade near it, the gallery *o*f Frissinone. The greatest height which the road attains, is at the gallery of the glaciers, where trees cease to grow, being somewhat more than 6000 feet above the level of the sea, while the mountain above it rises to the height of 11,000 feet. Owing to the expences of this magnificent road being to be provided for by the governments of Sardinia and of Switzerland, several repairs have been deferred or neglected, and it has in parts fallen into decay.

SIMPSON,Thomas**,** professor of mathematics at the Royal Academy at Woolwich, fellow of the Royal Society, and member of the Royal Academy at Stockholm, was born at Market Bosworth in Leicestershire in 1710. His father, a stuff-weaver, taught him only to read English, and br*o*ught him up to his own business ; but meeting with a scientific pedlar, who likewise practised fortune-telling, young Simpson by his assistance and advice left off weaving, and professed astrology. As he improved in knowledge, however, he grew disgusted with this pretended art ; and renouncing it, was driven to such difficulties for the subsistence of his family, that he came up to London, where he worked as a weaver, and taught mathematics at bis spare hours. As his scholars increased, his abilities became better known, and he published his Treatise on Fluxions, by subscription, in 1737 ; in 1740, he published his Treatise on the Nature and Laws of Chance, and Essays in Speculative and Mixed Mathematics. After these, appeared his Doctrine of Annuities and Reversi*o*ns; Mathematical Dissertations; Trea­tise on Algebra; Elements of Geometry; Trigonometry, Plane and Spherical ; Select Exercises ; and his Doctrine and Application of Fluxions, which he professes to be rather a new w*o*rk, than a sec*o*nd edition of his former publication on Fluxions. In 1743, he obtained the mathematical pro- fessorship at Woolwich academy ; and soon afterwards was chosen a member of the Royal Society, when the president and council, in consideration of his moderate circumstances, were pleased to excuse his admission-fees, and his giving bonds for the settled future payments. At the academy he exerted all his abilities in instructing the pupils who were the immediate objecte of his duty, as well as others whom the superior officers of the ordnance permitted to be board- ed and lodged in his house. In his manner of teaching he had a peculiar and happy address, a certain dignity and perspicuity, tempered with such a degree of mildness, as engaged the attention, esteem, and friendship of his scho- lars. He therefore acquired great applause from his supe- riors in the discharge of his duty. His application and close confinement, however, injured bis health. Exercise and a proper regimen were prescribed to him, but to little purpose ; for his spirits sunk gradually, till he became incapable of performing his duty, or even of reading the letters of his friends. The effects of this decay of nature were greatly increased by vexation of mind, owing to the haughty and insulting behaviour of his superior, the first professor ofmathematics. This person, greatly his inferior in mathematical accomplishments, did what he could to make his situ- ation uneasy, and even to depreciate him in the publie