that such a character was long attached to his name. Bar­bour, who wrote about the year 1370, makes a distinct al­lusion to “ Thomas prophecy of Hersildoune.” Bower, the continuator of the Scotichronicon, who flourished about the year 1430, has furnished us with a circumstantial detail re­specting Thomas’s prediction of the king’s premature death. Winton and Henry have likewise represented him as en­dowed with the spirit of divination ; and they are equally dubious as to the origin of the power which they acknow­ledge him to have possessed. Mair and Boyce have in­serted in their respective histories, the tale so circumstan­tially related by Bower ; but, with his usual good sense, the former subjoins, “ To this Thomas our countrymen have ascribed many predictions, and the common people of Bri­tain yield no slight degree of credit to stories of this nature ; which I for the most part am accustomed to treat with ridi­cule.” Lesley commemorates Michael Scott and Thomas Learmont as personages of an extraordinary character; and he also hints at the famous prediction of the king’s death. But the period of the union of the crowns seems to have been the crisis of his reputation as a prophet ; for, as we learn from Robert Birrel, “ at this time all the haill cornons of Scotland that had red or understanding, wer daylie speik- ing and exponeing of Thomas Rhymer his prophesie, and of uther prophesies quhilk wer prophesied in auld tymes.” Of the collection which includes the prophecies ascribed to Thomas, the earliest edition that has hitherto been traced was printed by Robert Waldegrave in the year 1603. It was reprinted by Andrew Hart in 1615: the subsequent editions are very numerous ; and the collection still con­tinues to be printed for the worshipful company of flying stationers.

The claims of Thomas of Erceldoune to the character of a prophet, do not seem to require any further investigation ; but his claims to the character of a poet may perhaps be considered as more legitimate. That he was admired for his poetical talents, is supposcd to be established by the testimony of a writer who approached very near his own age : Robert of Brunne, who flourished about the year 1303, is believed to commemorate the same Thomas of Ercel­doune as the author of an incomparable romance on the story of Sir Tristrem. A romance of this description, and doubtless of a very early date, was discovered in the Auchin- leck MS. belonging to the Advocates Library ; and of this very curious relique of British literature, an elaborate and valuable edition, including all the necessary illustrations, was published by Sir Walter Scott in the year 1804. The dis­tinguished editor entertained no doubt of its being the genuine production of Thomas of Erceldoune ; but the supposition, we must confess, appears liable to many doubts and difficulties. This metrical romance, to whatever author it may be attributed, is deservedly regarded as a precious relique of early British, we do not venture to say Scotish, poetry. It is highly curious as a specimen of language, and not less curious as a specimen of composition. The verses are short, and the stanzas somewhat artificial in their struc­ture ; and amid the quaint simplicity of the author’s style, we often distinguish a forcible brevity of expression. But his narrative, which has always a certain air of originality, is sometimes so abrupt as to seem obscure, and even enig­matical.@@1 (x.)

THOMASTOWN, an ancient borough in the county of Kilkenny, Ireland, situated on the river Nore, which is here crossed by a handsome stone bridge. Its position on a navigable river renders it well adapted for trade, and in

some degree it acts as the port to the city of Kilkenny. The town contains the ruins of an old monastery, to which is attached the parish church. It is distant from Dublin sixty miles, and in the year 1831 its population amounted to 2871.

THOMPSON, Sir Benjamin, Count Rumford, a well- known natural philosopher and political economist, was born in 1753, at a village in New Hampshire, then called Rum­ford, and now Concord. His father died while he was very young, and his mother married another man, who banished him from her bouse almost in his infancy : he inherited only a small pittance from an uncle, who died soon after his father. Aclergyman named Bernard showed him great kindness, and taught him some of the higher mathematics at an early age, so that at fourteen he was able to calculate and delineate an eclipse of the sun. He had been intended for some commercial employment, but he preferred the pursuit of literature in any form : he attended the lectures of Dr Wil­liams, and afterwards those of Dr Winthrop the astronomer, at Harvard College ; and while he was still a stripling, he was established in the temporary occupation of a village school-master ; hoping, however, for an early opportunity to en­gage in some more agreeable employment : and at nineteen, he was fortunate enough to obtain the hand of Mrs Rolfe, daughter of Mr Walker, a clergyman, who had been em­ployed with considerable credit in conducting some public business. For a year or two he lived retired and happy ; but having obtained a commission of major in the militia from the governor of the province, together with some other distinctions of a civil nature, he was consequently led to adhere to the party of the Royalists ; and he was soon obliged, by the success of the Independent forces, to take refuge at Boston, then occupied by the English troops. It was in November 1773 that he secretly quitted his resi­dence, leaving his wife, whom he never saw again, and his infant daughter, who joined him twenty years after in Europe. He was employed to raise a regiment for the king’s ser­vice ; but when Boston was evacuated in 1776, he was sent with some important despatches to England. Here he soon acquired the confidence of Lord George Germaine, then colonial secretary of state, and was appointed secretary of the province of Georgia, though he never exercised the office ; but he remained attached to that department of the public service.

In 1777 he commenced his career as an experimental philosopher, by employing his leisure hours, during a visit to Bath, in making some experiments on the cohesive strength of different substances ; and upon his return to London, be communicated them to Sir Joseph Banks, with whom he formed an intimate acquaintance, which he kept up throughout the remainder of his life. In 1778 he was admitted a fellow of the Royal Society, and he made in that year his first experiments on gunpowder. In order to pursue these experiments, he went, in 1779, on board of the Victory, of 110 guns, commanded by his friend Sir Charles Hardy. He passed the whole campaign on board the fleet ; and the results of the observations which he then made, furnished the materials of a chapter which he con­tributed to Stalkart’s Treatise on Naval Architecture. He added to it a code of signals for the navy, which was net published. In 1780 he was appointed under-secretary of state, and he was constantly employed, for some little time, in the office on the business of the war. He succeeded, by means of his American friends and agents, in raising a regi­ment of cavalry, called the King’s American Dragoons, of

@@@, Sir Tristrem ; a Metrical Romance of the thirteenth century ; by Thomas of Erceldoune, called the Rhymer. Edited from the Auchin- leck MS. by Walter Scott, Esq. the third edition. Edinb. 1811, 8vo. Tristan: Recueil de ce qui reste des Poëmes relatifs à ses Aventures : composés en François, en Anglo-Normand, et en Grec, dans les XII. et XIII. siècles. Publié par Francisque Michel. Londres, 1835, 2 tom. 16to. Warton's History of English Poetry, vol. i. p. 184. Price’s edit. Guest’s History of English Rhythms, vol. ii. p. 173. Lond. 1838, 2 vols. 8vo. Madden’s Notes on Syr Gawaynel p. 304. Lond. 1839, 4to. Foreign Review, vol. iv. p. 141.