

CRITICAL NOTICES OF THE INDIAN PRESS.

(From the "*Friend of India*," April 15.)

We have been favoured with a copy of this work which has just issued from the press, and have spent many hours in rambling through its interesting pages. We have no hesitation in affirming, that a more interesting and valuable publication has not issued from the Calcutta press. It supplies a desideratum which has long been felt. It affords information, essential to a correct understanding of this division of our Indian Empire, and of its general relations and policy, which is to be found in no other compilation. Not only does it present at one view, facts, for which we were previously constrained to hunt through a variety of works, but facts which are not to be found elsewhere. The greatest encomium which can be passed on it, is that it places within the reach of all, those statistical and political data which have hitherto been the exclusive property of men who had leisure and inclination for research, and in this respect puts the industrious and indolent upon a par.

It is impossible, in so brief a space as we can allot to this article, to do justice to its various merits. It supplies so vast a fund of material for examination, for comparison, and reflection, that half a dozen articles would scarcely be sufficient for an adequate review of it. All that we can do at present, therefore, is to present the reader with a general view of its contents, and to avail ourselves gradually of the information which it furnishes in successive articles.

In the Preface, the Editor states that, in common with others, he had long felt the want of a current and demi-official book of reference, and was satisfied that the want could only be supplied by one whose official position gave him access to the records of Government. Lord Auckland cheerfully gave his sanction to the compilation, and threw open to the Editor all the archives of the State, with the stipulation, that all pecuniary risk should rest with the publishers, and that all profit beyond a fair remuneration for their outlay, trouble, and risk should be devoted to some charitable institution. It was eventually determined to employ the profits in founding a Scholarship in the Medical College. Though the Editor does not affect originality, he has not made up the work with the aid of his scissors only. It is not a mere compilation from works already printed. The latitudes and longitudes of places in India are supplied by an officer employed in the Trigonometrical Survey; to a like courtesy in the Master Attendant's office, he is indebted for the Tide Table; the laborious calculations for the Almanac have been made by one of India's best astronomers. Some valuable returns from the Mint office, supply the Calcutta and Agra Mint Rules, and give the tables of the value of Scinde and Affghan coins. The subdivisions of Indian weights and measures varying not only in each district, but in parts of each district, have been forwarded by the district officers for publication in the work.

The work opens with the Almanac, and gives us the eras of ancient and modern times, and of various countries, with a view to the comparison of dates. Not only is the information given under this chapter highly valuable, but the tables which show the correspondence of the Hindoo and Mahomedan with the Christian dates, will be found of the highest importance. This is succeeded by a Popular Calendar; by a dissertation on tides; a table of latitudes and longitudes of some of the principal places on the globe; and very full information on this point regarding places in India. We have then in succession, remarks on the weather; notices of animal, mineral, and vegetable poisons—not forgetting tobacco, as a narcotic poison