

THE
POLITICAL WORKS
OF
RICHARD GLOVER,
WITH THE
LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

ILLUSTRATED WITH SUPERB ENGRAVINGS.

London:

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Agnes Badgley

August, 1897.





GLOVER'S POEMS,
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 SELECT BRITISH POETS,
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THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
RICHARD GLOVER.

WITH
THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

Cooke's Edition.

GLOVER ! thy mind in various virtue wise,
Each science claims, and makes each art thy prize ;
W. N. Newton, soars familiar to the sky,
Looks nature through, so keen thy mental eye ;
Or down descending on the globe below,
Through humble realms of knowledge loves to flow ;
Promiscuous beauties dignify thy breath,
By nature happy, as by study blest.
Thou, wit's Columbus ! from the epic throne,
New worlds descry'd, and made them all our own.
Thou first through real nature dar'd explore,
And waft her sacred treasures to our shore.
Nor Ariosto's fables fill thy page,
Nor Tasso's points, but Virgil's sober rage.
How soft, how strong, thy varied numbers move,
Or swell'd to glory, or dissolv'd to love.
Correct with ease, where all the graces meet,
Nervously plain, majestically sweet :
The muses will thy sacrifice repay,
Attendant warbling in each heavenly lay.

Thomson's Epistle to Glover.

EMBELLISHED WITH SUPERB ENGRAVINGS.

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THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
RICHARD GLOVER.

Containing his

LEONIDAS,
POEM ON SIR ISAAC
NEWTON,

LONDON,
AND
ADMIRAL HOSIER'S GHOST.

But there's a youth that you can name,
Who needs no leading-strings to fame,
Whose quick maturity of brain
The birth of Pallas may explain:
Dreaming of whose depending fate,
I heard Melpomene debate:
This, this is he that was foretold
Should emulate our Greeks of old:
Inspir'd by me with sacred art,
He sings, and rules the varied heart;
If Jove's dread anger he rehearse,
We hear the thunder in his verse,
If he describe love turn'd to rage,
The furies riot on his page;
If he fair liberty and law
By ruffian power expiring draw,
The keener passions then engage
Aright, and sanctify their rage:
If he attempt disastrous love,
We hear those plaints that wound the grove:
With him the kinder passions glow,
And tears distill'd from pity flow.

Green.

London:
PRINTED AND EMBELLISHED
Under the Direction of
C. COOKE.

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LIFE OF GLOVER.

THE subject of the following memoirs, in whom centered considerable poetical talents and great commercial knowledge, was the son of an eminent Hamburgh merchant, and born in the city of London in the year 1712. He completed his education, both classical and mathematical at a country school, where he soon distinguished himself by a rapid progress in the several departments of learning to which he applied, and gave early specimens of a poetic genius.

His judgment appears to have been considerably matured at a period remarkably early, as, at the age of only sixteen, he wrote a 'Poem to the Memory of Sir Isaac Newton,' prefixed to the 'View of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy,' published in 4to, 1728, by his intimate friend Dr. Pemberton. "I have presented my readers," says Dr. Pemberton, in the preface to this work, "with a copy of verses on Sir Isaac Newton, which I have just received from a young gentleman, whom I am proud to reckon among the number of my dearest friends. If I had any apprehension that this piece of poetry stood in need of an apology, I should be desirous the reader might know that the author is but sixteen years old, and was obliged to finish the composition in a very short time; but I shall only take the liberty to observe, that the boldness of the digressions will be best judged of by those who are acquainted with Pindar."

Considering this poem as the composition of a school-boy, it will excite no small degree of surprise, as it possesses more claim to applause, and requires fewer allowances for faults, than productions of such an age are always allowed. To Glover may be applied what the Earl of Orford said of his friend Gray, "that he never was a boy."

It is a singular trait in the character of Richard Glover, that after he had given incontestible proofs of transcendent

literary abilities, he did not aspire beyond the sphere of commerce, but pursued the study of it with such attention, as enabled him to become a proficient; and when he attained to a proper age, he commenced Hamburgh merchant, as appears from the following lines at the beginning of his poem entitled 'London.'

Ye northern blasts, and Eurus, wont to sweep
 With rudest pinions o'er the furrowed waves;
 A while suspend your violence, and waft
 From sandy Weser, and the broad-mouth'd Elbe
 My freighted vessels to the destin'd shore
 Safe o'er th' unruffled main——

From the knowledge he had acquired of commercial transactions, as well as of men and manners in general, he soon attained to a degree of eminence in the mercantile world; but trade did not wholly engross his attention; in his hours of retirement, he courted the Muses, and devoted the time he set apart for relaxation, to the society of select companions, eminent for literary and scientific acquirements, and was particularly attached to the party in opposition to the measures of Sir Robert Walpole, at that time prime minister of state.

The eminence, as well as versatility of Glover's poetical talents, are very emphatically represented in a poem entitled "The Spleen," written by Green, one of his intimate friends, a very ingenious, though obscure author, who, in the following lines, presages his future fame, and evidently alludes to his Leonidas, which he commenced at a very early period of his life.

But there's a youth that you can name,
 Who needs no leading strings to fame,
 Whose quick maturity of brain
 The birth of Pallas may explain:
 Dreaming of whose depending fate,
 I heard Melpomene debate:
 This, this is he that was foretold,

Should

Should emulate our Greeks of old :
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We hear the thunder in his verse,
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The keener passions then engage
Aright, and sanctify their rage ;
If he attempt disastrous love,
We hear those plaints that wound the grove ;
With him the kinder passions glow,
And tears distill'd from pity flow.

This poem was published by Glover in 1737, soon after the death of the author.

In the month of May of the same year, he entered into the married state, and obtained a dowry of 12,000*l.* he also published his ' Leonidas,' an epic poem, in nine books, which met with a most favourable reception from the public, and greatly enhanced the poetical reputation he had previously acquired. But though this poem, at the time of its introduction, was generally approved, as well as inscribed to Lord Cobham, a very popular nobleman, its celebrity has since greatly declined, and its favourable reception at first, has been imputed not solely to its intrinsic merits, but in part to a zeal, or, as some persons term it, a rage for liberty, which at that time prevailed in England. A party composed of the most eminent characters for learning, talents, and patriotism, formed an opposition to the court, and became the warm patrons of every species of literary composition that professedly asserted the cause of civil and religious liberty. Hence the poem of Leonidas, fraught with the noblest sentiments of liberty, and exhibiting the most brilliant achievements of genuine patriotism, could

could not fail of such powerful recommendation from the popular party, as must ensure to the author a considerable degree both of fame and emolument.

It was extolled in the most encomiastic strains by Lyttleton, then one of the leaders of the opposition, in a popular periodical paper entitled 'Common Sense,' under the signature of Philo Musæus. Also by Dr. Pemberton in a pamphlet entitled 'Observations on Poetry, especially 'Epic, occasioned by the late poem of Leonidas; merely with a design to descant elaborately upon its beauties.'" And further it was commended by Thompson of Queen's college, and other poets high in estimation. In the course of the years 1737 and 1738 it passed through three large editions, but it declined considerably when the ardour of patriotism, and the zeal of party began to abate, as appears from the following observations of a modern biographer.

"The imprudent zeal of his friends had encouraged such extravagant ideas of it, that though it was found to have very great beauties, yet the ardour of the lovers of poetry soon sunk into a kind of cold forgetfulness with regard to it; because it did not possess more than the narrow limits of the design would admit of, or indeed than it was in the power of human genius to execute. It was severely animadverted upon in a series of letters addressed 'to the Author of Leonidas,' in the 'Weekly Miscellany,' for May 1738, under the signature of Miso Musæus."

His 'London, or the Progress of Commerce, and his ballad entitled 'Hosiers' Ghost,' were published in 1739. The design of both these poems was to incite the government to resent the depredations committed on the commerce of the nation by the Spaniards, and the latter written with much humour and spirit, had a powerful tendency to effect the purpose intended by the publication.

The recommendation of Cobham, Lyttleton, Pitt, and other leaders of the opposition, obtained him the notice of
Frederick,

Frederick, Prince of Wales, who had acquired great popularity, by his patronage of men of genius and learning. He was honoured with the countenance of his Highness, who, as a testimony of regard for his literary talents, presented him with a complete set of the classics, bound in the most elegant manner.

Party zeal and political animosity raged at this time throughout the nation in general, but with particular violence in the metropolis; insomuch that Sir George Champion, alderman and member of parliament for the city of London, who was next in rotation for the chair, was set aside for having offended the majority of his constituents; by voting with the court party in the business of the Spanish convention. The motion for this purpose was carried on Michaelmas day, when Sir John Salter, the next in rotation, was elected to the mayoralty by the almost unanimous voice of the livery in Common Hall assembled. Glover, on this occasion, took a very active part, and defended the conduct of his partizans in a speech equally eloquent and argumentative, which did much honour both to the orator and the cause he maintained, and greatly enhanced his character in the opinion of his fellow citizens; as appears from ‘A Narrative of what passed in the Common Hall of the City of London, assembled for the election of a Lord Mayor, on Saturday the 29th of September, on Monday the 1st and Tuesday the 2d of October; together with a defence of these proceedings, both as reasonable and agreeable to the practice of former times.’ 8vo, 1739 written by Benjamin Robins, the supposed author of ‘Lord Anson’s Voyage.’

In 1740, the same resolution of the majority continuing, Glover presided at Vintner’s Hall, September 25th, at a meeting of the livery, to consider of two proper persons to be recommended to the Court of Aldermen; when it was resolved to support the nomination of Sir Robert Godschall; and George Heathcote, Esq. who being returned to the Court

Court of Aldermen, the latter gentleman was chosen; but he declining the office, another meeting of the Livery was held at Vintner's Hall, October 13th, when Glover again was called to the chair; and the meeting resolved to return Humphry Parsons, Esq. and Sir Robert Godschall, to the Court of Aldermen, who made choice of the former to fill the office.

On the 19th of November, another meeting was held at Vintner's Hall, when Glover pronounced an eulogium on Sir John Barnard, and advised the Livery to choose him one of their representatives in Parliament, notwithstanding his intention to resign.

On all these occasions Glover acquitted himself in a very able manner. His speeches, printed in the '*London Magazine*,' 1740, and the '*Annals of Europe*,' 1740, p. 283 are elegant, spirited, and appropriate.

Our author having given, upon these occasions, such striking specimens of his superior abilities, both political and commercial, was, with great propriety, selected, by the merchants and principal traders of the city of London, as a person duly qualified to conduct their application to parliament, on the very important subject of the declension of commerce, consequent on a neglect of attention to it. Glover most cordially embraced the offer, and displayed in the statement of their case, and his address to the House of Commons on the 27th of January, 1742, such profound knowledge of the subject he had undertaken, as well as exquisite skill and pathos as an orator in enforcing it, that his speech was soon after published under the title of '*A short Account of the late Application to Parliament, made by the Merchants of London, upon the Neglect of their Trade, with the Substance thereupon, as summed up by Mr. Glover*, 8vo. 1742.'

In this, and many other instances, he asserted the rights and promoted the interests of the nation in general, and the city of London in particular, with a zeal and energy

so truly laudable, that he conciliated the universal esteem of his countrymen, and acquired the exalted character of an able and steady patriot, as well as a man of the strictest honour and most inviolable integrity.

Sarah, Duchess of Malborough, who died in 1774, had bequeathed to Glover, and his contemporary Mallet, five hundred pounds each, on condition of their writing the history of her consort the renowned Duke of Malborough. Of Glover, her grace mentions in her will, "that she believes him to be a very honest man, who wished, as she did, all the good that could happen to preserve the liberties and laws of England.

But neither Glover nor Mallet fulfilled the conditions which entitled them to the bequest of the duchess; the former is said to have renounced his share from motives he never disclosed, and the latter, though he professed a design of undertaking the task, was never known to have entered upon it; a circumstance of general surprise, from the popularity of the subject, and the emolument attached to the fulfilment of the conditions.

The patriotic zeal and literary pursuits of Glover, diverted his mind from that attention to his private concerns, which reason dictates and prudence justifies; and induced him to sacrifice his personal interest to the public good, so that his fortune, being considerably impaired, he withdrew from public life, preferring, from very laudable motives, an obscure retreat to popular applause, till time, attention, and economy, should extricate him from his present embarrassments.

During his continuance in retirement, to which his particular friends only had access, the Prince of Wales is said, with his usual benevolence and liberality, to have sent him a present of five hundred pounds, to console him under the losses he had sustained, and administer to his comfort and accommodation in his retreat.

The prince dying in March 1751, and the office of Chamberlain

berlain being vacant in May following, Glover, by the importunity of his friends, was prevailed on to abandon his retreat, and offer himself as a candidate, in opposition to Mr. Deputy Harrifon. But, whether from his popularity having declined in consequence of his retirement, or the majority of votes having been engaged prior to his application, he found himself in a great minority on the poll, in the course of a few days, and therefore gave up the contest. On Mr. Harrifon's being declared duly elected, on the 7th of May, Glover, as unsuccessful candidate, addressed the Livery in the following speech, which did great honour to his head and heart.

“ Heretofore I have frequently had occasion of addressing the Livery of London in public; but at this time I find myself at an unusual loss, being under all the difficulties which a want of matter, deserving your notice, can create. Had I now your rights and privileges to vindicate,—had I the cause of your suffering trade to defend,—or were I now called forth to recommend and enforce the parliamentary service of the most virtuous and illustrious citizen,—my tongue would be free from constraint, and, expatiating at large, would endeavour to merit your attention; which now must be confined to so narrow a subject as myself. On those occasions, the importance of the matter, and my known zeal to serve you, however ineffectual my attempt might prove, were always sufficient to promise me the honour of a kind reception, and unmerited regard. Your countenance first drew me from the retirement of a studious life; your repeated marks of distinction first pointed, me out to that great body, the merchants of London, who pursuing your example, condescended to intrust me, unequal and unworthy as I was, with the most important cause; a cause where your interest was as nearly concerned as theirs. In consequence of that deference which was paid to the sentiments and choice of the citizens and traders of London, it was impossible but some faint lustre must

must have glanced on me, whom, weak as I was, they were pleased to appoint the instrument on their behalf; and if from these transactions I accidentally acquired the smallest share of reputation, it was to you that my gratitude ascribes it; and I joyfully embrace this public opportunity of declaring, that whatever part of a public character I may presume to claim, I owe primarily to you. To this I might add the favour, the twenty years countenance and patronage of one, whom a supreme degree of respect shall prevent me from naming; and though under the temptation of using that name as a certain means of obviating some misconstructions, I shall, however, avoid to dwell on the memory of a loss so recent, so justly, and so universally lamented.

“ Permit me now to remind you, that when placed by these means in a light not altogether unfavourable, no lucrative reward was then the object of my pursuit; nor ever did the promises or offers of private emolument induce me to quit my independence, or vary from the least of my former professions, which always were, and remain still, founded on the principles of universal liberty; principles which I assume the glory to have established on your records. Your sense, and the sense of your great corporation, so repeatedly recommended to your representatives in Parliament, were my sense, and the principal boast of all my compositions, containing matter imbibed in my earliest education, to which I have always adhered, by which I still abide, and which I will endeavour to bear down with me to the grave; and even at that gloomy period, when deserted by my good fortune, and under the severest trials; even then, by the same consistency of opinions, and uniformity of conduct, I still preserved that part of reputation which I originally derived from your favour, whatever I might pretend to call a public character, unshaken and unblemished; nor, once in the hour of affliction, did I banish from my thoughts, the most sincere

the diction, sentiments, and conduct of the play," 8vo. 1753, and other anonymous remarks, criticisms, and reflections; appeared about this time, relating to this play.

In 1761, he published his "*Medea*," a tragedy, 4to. taken from the dramas of Euripides and Seneca, and constructed professedly upon the ancient plan, each act terminating with a chorus. It was not acted till 1767, when it was brought on the stage at Drury Lane, for Mrs. Yates's benefit, and has since been often performed with success. Heinsius and Scaliger have called the *Medea* of Seneca, the "*Alta Medea*;" but that title more properly belongs to the work of Glover, which is superior both to the *Medea* of Seneca, and even that of Euripides. In Euripides, *Medea* tells us that she murders her children because she would rather have them fall by her own hand, than by the hands of the Corinthians, which, as she had effected the death of Creusa, she might expect. This produces very little that is interesting or affecting. Indeed, when Jason is informed of the murder of his children, he gives a loose to parental sorrow; but the altercations between him and *Medea*, on that occasion, are very low and trifling. Seneca, with a greater appearance of probability, imputes her murder to revenge. When *Medea* discovers Jason's fond affection for his children, she immediately meditates their destruction. But when he describes her as deliberating upon this cruel deed, though very ingenious in his distinctions, he is certainly too minute. *Medea's* motive to the murder, imputed as it is by Glover, to the rage of madness, is much more natural, and produces more affecting scenes than could follow from the motives to which either the Greek or Latin poets have ascribed it. She appears, in the work of our countryman, that wild, infuriate, sun-born *Medea*, which the ancient mythology represents her. Her indignation, on the thought of Jason's deserting her for Creusa, is forcibly expressed. The pathetic manner of Euripides is happily imitated in the tender conversation between *Medea* and her children,

children, in the second scene of the third act. When she is told by Jason that he is married to Creusa, her sudden madness is well conceived, and expressed in a grand and affecting manner. But when, still raving and distracted, she comes upon the stage, her hands dropping with the blood of her children, her words and wild appearance perfectly harrow up the soul.

It is begun.

Now, to complete my vengeance, will I mount
The burning chariot of my bright forefather ;
The rapid steeds o'er Corinth will I drive,
And, with the scatter'd lightning from their manes,
Consume its walls, its battlements, and towers ;
Then, as the flames embrace the purple clouds,
And the proud city crumbles from its base,
The demon of my rage and indignation
All grim, and wrapt in terror, shall bestride
The mountainous embers ; and denounce abroad,
To gods and men, my wrongs and my revenge.

When her returning reason discovers to her what she had done, her horror and anguish are dreadful, even beyond imagination. The tragedy ends, like that of Seneca, by representing Medea snatched up into the air in a chariot drawn by dragons. The unities are preserved throughout, the diction in general is harmonious, poetical, and picturesque ; animated in proportion to the scenes it represents, and rising or falling with the passions. But the thoughts are sometimes spun too fine ; some of the epithets, though not pedantic, are too stiff, and the blank odes, introduced by way of chorus, though not inharmonious, must be very disagreeable to ears long accustomed to rhyme in lyric compositions.

Several years elapsed before Glover appeared upon the stage of the great world ; nor does he appear to have surmounted the difficulties and embarrassments which were the causes of his retirement, till the year 1761, when he

came forward, offered himself as a candidate, and was elected member for Weymouth, in the parliament which met at the accession of his present majesty to the throne of these realms. At the same time he interested himself in the concerns of the East India company, at one of the elections of a chairman, and introduced in a speech upon that occasion, the fable of the "Man, Horse, and Boar," deducing, from a jocular subject, a very serious inference; "that whenever merchants made use of armed forces to maintain their trade, it would end in their destruction."

Having greatly enlarged his poem of Leonidas, by the addition of several new characters, and placing those previously introduced in more important and extensive spheres of action, he published it in 1770, in twelve books; but though the improvements were considerable, and very judicious, they did not attract the public curiosity in a degree sufficient to compensate the pains and expence attending the publication of a new edition.

On the failure of the bank of Douglas, Heron, and Company, at Ayr, in June 1772, he took a very active part in the settling their complicated concerns, and in stopping the distress then so universally felt. In February 1774, he called the annuitants of that banking-house together at the King's Arms Tavern, London, and laid proposals before them, for the security of their demands, with which they were fully satisfied.

He also undertook to manage the interests of the merchants and traders of London, concerned in the trade to Germany and Holland, and of the dealers in foreign linens; in their application to Parliament, in May 1774. Both the speeches made on these occasions were published in a pamphlet that year.

In 1775, he engaged on behalf of the West India merchants, in their application to parliament, and examined the witnesses, and summed up the evidence, in the same masterly manner he had done on former occasions. For
the

the assistance he afforded the merchants in this business, he was complimented by them with a service of plate of the value of 300*l.* and the speech which he delivered in the House was printed. This was the last opportunity he had of displaying his oratorical abilities in public.

Having now arrived at a period of life which demanded a recess from business, he retired to ease and independence; and wore out the remainder of his life with dignity and with honour, in the exercise of the virtues of private and domestic life, and in his attention to the muse. He died at his house in Albemarle-street, Nov. 25, 1785, in the 73*d* year of his age.

No edition of his "*Leonidas*" has been called for since 1770. His "*London*" was reprinted in the second volume of "*Pearch's Collection of Poems*," 1774. The "*Atheniad*," a sequel to "*Leonidas*," which he bequeathed, with his other manuscripts, to his daughter, Mrs. Halfey, was presented to the world, as it came from his hands, with the exception of a few corrections from the pen of a friend, in three vols. 12mo. 1788. He has also written a sequel to his "*Medea*;" but, as it requires scenery of the most expensive kind, it has never been exhibited. It is said, indeed, that it was approved by Mrs. Yates, the magic of whose voice and action, in the first part, produced as powerful effects as any imputed by Greek or Roman poets to the character she represented. He has left some other dramatic pieces, which, it is hoped, will be presented to the world. His "*Leonidas*," reprinted from the edition 1770, "*Poem on Sir Isaac Newton*," "*London*," and "*Höfner's Ghost*," are now received into a collection of classical English poetry.

The following character of Glover, drawn up immediately after his death, by his friend Dr. Brocklesby, and printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1785, is adopted without exception, as it contains an accurate and elegant estimate of his virtue, his learning, his eloquence, his patriotism, and his poetry.

"Through

“Through the whole of his life, Mr. Glover was by all good men revered, by the wise esteemed, by the great sometimes caressed, and even flattered, and now his death is sincerely lamented by all who had the happiness to contemplate the integrity of his character. Mr. Glover, for upwards of fifty years past, through every vicissitude of fortune, exhibited the most exemplary simplicity of manners; having early attained that perfect equanimity, which philosophy often recommends in the closet, but which in experience is too seldom exercised by other men in the test of trial. In Mr. Glover were united, a wide compass of accurate information in all mercantile concerns, with high intellectual powers of mind, joined to a copious flow of eloquence as an orator in the House of Commons. Since Milton, he was second to none of our English poets, in his discriminating judicious acquaintance with all ancient as well as modern literature; witness his “Leonidas,” “Medea,” “Boadicea,” and “London;” for, having formed his own character upon the best models of the Greek writers, he lived as if he had been bred a disciple of Socrates, or companion of Aristides. Hence his political turn of mind; hence his unwarped affection and active zeal for the liberties of his country, hence his heartfelt exultation whenever he had to paint the impious designs of tyrants, in ancient times frustrated, or in modern defeated—defeated in their nefarious purposes to extirpate liberty, or to trample on the unalienable rights of man, however remote in time or space from his immediate presence. In a few words, for the extent of his various erudition, for his unalloyed patriotism, and for his daily exercise and constant practice of Xenophon’s philosophy, in his private as well as in public life, Mr. Glover has left not his equal in the city, and some time, it is feared, may elapse before such another citizen shall arise, with eloquence, with character, and with poetry, like his, to assert their rights, or to vindicate, with equal powers, the just claims of freeborn men. Suffice this testimony

testimony at present, as the well-earned meed of this truly virtuous man, whose conduct was carefully marked, and narrowly watched, by the writer of the foregoing hasty sketch, for his extraordinary qualities during the long period in human life of upwards of forty years; and now it is spontaneously offered as a voluntary tribute, unsolicited and unpurchased; but as it appears justly due to the memory of so excellent a poet, statesman, and true philosopher, in life and in death the same."

This account of his private and public character, by one who knew him well, is so ample and satisfactory, that it leaves little to be added. In the domestic relations of husband and parent, his manners were as amiable as his abilities were respectable. In the character of a merchant, he distinguished himself by the most exemplary integrity; yet in fortune he made no advances towards affluence. He was a patriot of the most independent cast, and, scorning to bind himself to any one political party, was by all alike neglected. But there is a fame, not resulting from so perishable a means as the contention of parties, and alike out of their power to confer or take away, which will long flourish round the name of Glover.

As a poet, his abilities are already well known. His *Leonidas*, though not in the highest class of epic poems, had, at its first publication, many admirers, and is still perused with pleasure. The subject of the poem is the gallant actions of Leonidas, and his heroic defence of, and fall at, the pass of Thermopylæ. It is characterized by a bold spirit of liberty, and generous, tender, and noble sentiments; but it leans toward the tender rather than the sublime. The author every where appears to be a virtuous man, and a good citizen; he expresses manly and patriotic sentiments, though many of them are taken from the orations of Lyfias and Isocrates. The style possesses many poetical graces; but it is often familiar and prosaic, and is generally deficient in that awful simplicity, and unadorned sublimity which are the characteristics

characteristics of the epic muse. It abounds in the affecting, the tender, and the beautiful, more than in the heroic and the sublime. Some of the characters are well drawn, and supported with proper dignity and elevation. The episode of "Teribazus" is poetical and pleasing.

"Can I, O Wisdom! find relief in thee,
 Who dost approve my passion? From the snares
 Of beauty only thou wouldst guard my heart.
 But here thyself art charm'd; where softness, grace,
 And every virtue dignify desire.
 Yet thus to love despairing to possess,
 Of all the torments, by relentless fate
 On life inflicted, is the most severe.
 Do I not feel thy warnings in my breast,
 That flight alone can save me? I will go
 Back to the learn'd Chaldeans, on the banks
 Of Ganges seek the sages; where to heaven
 With thee my elevated soul shall tow'r.
 O wretched Teribazus! all conspires
 Against thy peace. Our mighty Lord prepares
 To overwhelm the Grecians. Ev'ry youth
 Is call'd to war; and I, who lately pois'd
 With no inglorious arm, the soldier's lance,
 Who near the side of Hyperanthes fought,
 Must join the throng. How therefore can I fly
 From Ariana, who with Asia's queens
 The splendid camp of Xerxes must adorn?
 Then be it so. Again I will adore
 Her gentle virtues. Her delightful voice,
 Her gracious sweetness shall again diffuse
 Resistless magic through my ravish'd heart;
 Till passion, thus with double rage inflam'd,
 Swells to distraction in my tortur'd breast,
 Then—but in vain through darkness do I search
 My fate—Despair and Fortune be my guides."

This

This poem, in its machinery and incident, has been thought defective, but on no principle or reason whatever, unless a superstitious reverence for the practice of Homer and Virgil. These poets very properly embellished their story by the traditional tales and popular legends of their own country; but does it thence follow, that in other countries, and in other ages, epic poetry must be wholly confined to antiquated fictions and fairy tales? Lucan has composed a very spirited poem, certainly of the epic kind, where neither gods nor supernatural beings are at all employed. Davenant has made an attempt of the same kind, not without success; and undoubtedly a poetical recital of great adventures, though the agents be every one of them human, may be made productive of the marvellous, without forsaking the probable, and fulfil the chief requisites of epic composition. Leonidas is not exactly founded upon the model of the *Iliad* of Homer, the *Æneid* of Virgil, and the *Jerusalem* of Tasso, the three most regular and complete epic works that ever were composed. But it affords a sufficient proof that, however the use of machinery may heighten the effect, it is not essential to the existence, or to the success of epic poetry. It has a just title to be classed with Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Lucan's *Pharsalia*, Statius's *Thebaid*, Camoens's *Lusiad*, Voltaire's *Henriade*, and Wilkie's *Epigoniad*. The diction, the characters, and the narration of the poet are distinguished by the general strain and spirit of epic composition. But it is not without defects: it is too abrupt and laconic in the structure of its periods to suit the melody of verse, and is deficient in that poetical enthusiasm which is chiefly raised and nourished by an intimate acquaintance with the wild and sublime scenes of nature, and that creative and vigorous imagination, which, presenting a higher order of things than is to be found in human life, produces the marvellous, and raises that admiration which should be the predominant passion in heroic poetry. Hence Thomson, who was a poet truly inspired, when he heard
that

that a citizen of London had paid his addressee to the epic muse, exclaimed, 'He write an epic poem, who never saw a mountain!'

The excellencies of Leonidas have received every possible recommendation and illustration from the elegant critique of Lyttleton, and the learned "Observations" of Dr. Pemberton, to which Mr. Murphy alludes in the following lines, inserted in the last edition of his "Epistle to Dr. Johnson," 1786.

For freedom when Leonidas expires,
Though Pitt and Cobham feel their poet's fires,
Unmov'd, lo! Glover hears the world commend,
And thinks e'en Pemberton too much his friend.

"Since I have read Leonidas," says Lyttleton, Common Sense, No. 10. "I have been so full of all the beauties I met with in it, that, to give some vent, I found it necessary to write to you, and invite my countrymen to take part with me in the pleasure of admiring what so justly deserves their admiration. And, in doing this, I have yet a farther view; I desire to do them good, as well as please them; for never yet was an epic poem wrote with so noble and so useful a design; the whole plan and purpose of it being to shew the superiority of freedom over slavery; and how much virtue, public spirit, and the love of liberty, are preferable both in their nature and effects, to riches, luxury, and the insolence of power.

"This great and instructive moral is set forth by an action the most proper to illustrate it of all that ancient or modern history can afford, enforced by the most sublime spirit of poetry, and adorned by all the charms of an active and warm imagination, under the restraint of a cool and sober judgment.

"And it has another special claim to protection; for I will venture to say, there never was an epic poem which had so near a relation to Common Sense; the author of it not having allowed himself the liberty so largely taken by his predecessors,

predecessors, of making excursions beyond the bounds, and out of sight of it, into the airy regions of poetical mythology. There are neither fighting gods, nor scolding goddesses; neither miracles, nor enchantments; neither monsters, nor giants, in his work; but whatsoever human nature can afford that is most astonishing, marvellous, and sublime.

“ And it has this particular merit to recommend it, that, though it has quite the air of an ancient epic poem, there is not so much as a single simile in it that is borrowed from any of the ancients; and yet, I believe there is hardly any poem that has such a variety of beautiful comparisons; so just a confidence had the author in the extent and rich abundance of his own imagination.

“ The artful conduct of the principal design; the skill in connecting and adapting every episode to the carrying on and serving that design; the variety of characters, the great care to keep them, and distinguish each from the other by a propriety of sentiment and thought; all these are excellencies which the best judges of poetry will be particularly pleased with in Leonidas.

“ Upon the whole, I look upon this poem as one of those few of distinguished worth and excellence, which will be handed down with respect to all posterity, and which, in the long revolution of past centuries, but two or three countries have been able to produce. And I cannot help congratulating my own, that after having, in the last age, brought forth a Milton, she has in this produced two more such poets, as we have the happiness to see flourish now together, I mean Mr. Pope and Mr. Glover.”

Dr. Pemberton's observations on the principal characters in Leonidas, under the head “ Sentiment and Character,” are subjoined; as “ this is the part of poetry,” as he expresses it, “ in which the divine invention is most eminently distinguished.”

“ Xerxes is an example of a little mind inflated with ab-

solute power. He is not only proud, impatient of contradiction, and precipitate, the natural effects of the adoration and blind submission, which had always been paid him ; but we see in him likewise many personal weaknesses. He is possessed of so mean a vanity, as to conclude his great and extensive dominion a proof of his being so singular a favourite of heaven, that no bounds could be set to his good fortune : he had persuaded himself, that the Greeks must have the same abject veneration for him as his own slaves, and will scarce believe that his ambassadors had made a true report, who bring him an answer contrary to what his foolish pride had imagined ; and it is with extreme difficulty that his brothers dissuade him from proceeding against them upon that supposition : nay, at last he gives orders for attacking the Greeks with the air of being still confident they must submit to his will without resistance. We soon after find this haughty and insolent monarch endued with a temper so weak and fickle, that, upon a little ill success, all his vain presumption and confidence abandon him, and he condescends to the proposing conditions, which, before, his pride could not have suffered him to think of without the utmost indignation.

“ In his brother Hyperanthes we see a good character, but confined to the virtues, which can have place only under arbitrary government. He is valiant, so far unprejudiced as to be duly sensible of the superior virtue in his enemies ; but had no reluctance to commit any kind of injustice towards them, when his brother had pitched upon them for a conquest. Otherwise he has great good nature, and a just esteem for real merit. This appears in his behaviour towards Demaratus, the Spartan exile, and much more in his singular affection for his friend Teribafus.

“ Teribafus possesses a very worthy mind, improved by the study of philosophy, but oppressed by the violence of a soft passion ; a weakness which the luxury, and the indulgence

gence for pleasure in an Asiatic court must have greatly increased. But Teribafus behaves not under this passion like the whining lovers of romance, who excite our contempt; but in so manly and reasonable a manner, that makes him an object of just compassion, and still worthy the esteem of every one, that has any feeling for human weakness.

But unreveal'd and silent was his pain :
 Nor yet in solitary shades he roam'd,
 Nor shunn'd resort; but o'er his sorrows cast
 A sickly dawn of gladness, and in smiles
 Conceal'd his anguish;

though still

——— the secret flame

Rag'd in his bosom, and its peace consum'd.

“ Ariana is still a less exceptionable subject of pity, as we do not so much require in that sex firmness of temper to resist these soft impressions. Her despair, and violent resolution in consequence of it, are the effects of an excess of passion very natural to the serious and thoughtful turn of her character. They are thus emphatically described by the poet :

“ O torn for ever from these weeping eyes !

Thou, who despairing to obtain a heart,
 Which then most lov'd thee, didst untimely yield
 Thy life to Fate's inevitable dart,
 For her, who now in agony reveals
 Her tender passion, who repeats her vows
 To thy deaf ear, who fondly to her own
 Unites thy cheek, insensible and cold.
 Alas ! do those unmoving ghastly orbs
 Perceive my gushing sorrow ! Can that heart
 At my complaint dissolve the ice of death
 To share my sufferings ! Never, never more
 Shall Ariana bend a list'ning ear
 To thy enchanting eloquence, nor feast
 Her mind on wisdom from thy copious tongue !

Oh ! bitter, insurmountable distress !
 She could no more. Invincible despair
 Suppress'd all utterance. As a marble form,
 Fix'd on the solemn sepulchre, inclines
 The silent head in imitated woe
 O'er some dead hero whom his country lov'd ;
 Entranc'd by anguish, o'er the breathless clay
 So hung the princess. On the goary breach
 Whence life had issued by the fatal blow,
 Mute for a space and motionless she gaz'd ;
 When thus in accents firm. Imperial pomp,
 Foe to my quiet, take my last farewell.
 'There is a state, where only virtue holds
 The rank supreme: My Terribazus there
 From his high order must descend to mine.

Then with no trembling hand, no change of look,
 She drew a poniard, which her garment veil'd ;
 And instant sheathing in her heart the blade,
 On her slain lover silent sunk in death."

" This episode is a shining ornament in the poem, as such a tender scene is a judicious relief to the severity, which is the general cast of the work, and is founded upon a kind of distress, which Aristotle expressly prefers, such as arises from some error in a person of great and conspicuous worth. Too frequent a representation of calamities absolutely unavoidable, serve only to deject the spirits, and create a disrelish for life; but such as are grounded upon pardonable errors, whether excess of any passion, or defect of judgment, instruct, while they excite commiseration.

" Polydorus, the attendant upon Ariana, is an example of an heroic spirit so oppressed by the flower of his age being wasted in slavery, as to have lost all taste of life. In less elevated characters, long continued calamity debases the mind, and confines its wishes to mean gratifications; but in the generous breast of Polydorus it ends in insurmountable

able grief. The only pleasure to which we find him sensible, is revenge.

“ In Demaratus, the exil'd king of Sparta, we have another example of unmerited distress, but of a more delicate kind. Cherished in a luxurious court, with all the ordinary means of enjoyment in his power, he pines away at the sense of being out of a condition to act worthy of himself. In his interview with Polydorus he even suspects and laments a diminution of his virtue. In his conversation with Xerxes, though at first he endeavours to speak of his countrymen with as much reserve as possible; yet we soon see his admiration of their virtues carry him out with great freedom in their praises, and he cannot refrain drawing the parallel between the military force of Greece and of Asia, in terms very disagreeable to the monarch, whose protection he was forced to accept; and in the end breaks into a flood of tears.

— Afide

His head he turn'd, and wept in copious streams.
 The keen remembrance of his former state,
 His dignity, his greatness, and the sight
 Of those brave ranks, which thus unshaken stood,
 And spread amazement through the world in arms,
 Excite these sorrows. His empassion'd looks
 Review the godlike warriors, who beneath
 His standard once victorious fought, who call'd
 Him once their king, their leader; then again,
 O'ercharg'd with anguish, he bedews with tears
 His rev'rend beard, in agony bemoans
 His faded honours, his illustrious name
 Forgotten long, his majesty defil'd
 By exile, by dependence.”

“ We ought not to pass over another observation upon this dialogue; the great distinctness with which the argument is here explained. The poet has been able to give every

proof its due place and force, unrestrained by the numbers of his verse.

“ If we are presented in the Persian army with patterns of ill fortune, on which we must reflect with regret; when we turn our eyes to the Grecian camp, we find a very different scene. There magnanimity is matched against the greatest difficulty human nature can have to contend with, the certain expectation of death: but the fortitude and vigour of mind; by which these heroes are supported, place them quite out of the sight of pity; not a single circumstance suggests a thought of their being unhappy: on the contrary; they are continually the objects of our admiration, almost of our envy. This ardent spirit shines out most eminently in Leonidas, their chief; but from him diffuses itself through them all: though there is not a single leader of eminence among them, which the poet has not marked with a character peculiarly his own.

“ The active vigour of Alpheus is very distinct from the deliberate valour of Dieneceæ.

“ The ambition of Megistias is confined to merit the esteem of the people by whom he is entertained. Upon this principle he animates his son in the fourth book, and the same is his motive for sharing their last fate.

“ The silence with which Menalippus obeys the command of his aged father, to provide for his own safety, is, I think, very judiciously imagined. For though it is not necessary that every gallant man should have the resolution to make a voluntary sacrifice of his life; yet the want of the same high spirit by which the rest are animated, must impress on him that consciousness of his inferiority, and create that degree of confusion, which of necessity must close his lips.

“ The gentle and polite character of Agis renders him in particular worthy the intimate friendship of the great Leonidas; in whom humanity and a liberal turn of mind distinguish themselves among his more sublime virtues.

“ The

“ The fierceness of Diomedon makes indignation and high contempt of an effeminate enemy, whom he had formerly seen to fly before him, a ruling motive in his conduct.

“ In Demophilus we see a speculative temper, where cool reflection supports an aged mind, and supplies the fire of youth. This draws from him those instructive sentiments, which he utters over the body of Phraortes. There is the same air in the short address at his first interview with Leonidas. And the same appears again, when he makes his choice for himself and all his troops to accompany Leonidas in his last fate. The sublimity of this character distinguishably appears upon this occasion towards his kinsman Dithyrambus.

“ The aged Megistias will not permit his son to finish his life with himself. But though Demophilus bears the affection of a parent to his, the superior turn of his mind makes him fonder of the glory than of the life of Dithyrambus.

“ Dithyrambus possesses, in an eminent degree, the amiable character of high merit accompanied with equal modesty. His ambition is ever to deserve praise rather than receive it. He chooses Diomedon for his constant companion in action, his wish being to equal the greatest. And at the same time he is an admirer of all virtue but his own.

“ This moderation, and delicacy of mind, create that reluctance, with which he engages Teribafus, whose virtues, though in an enemy, he held in high esteem. In this scene the poet has brought together several characters, and supported each with great success. The gloomy cast of mind, which ever accompanied Teribafus, here appears without breaking his spirit. The impatience with which Hyperanthes advances forward, when he hopes to see his friend victorious, the eagerness, with which he flies to revenge upon his disappointment, and the sudden suspense of that resolution to assist his dying friend, with the return of his indignation, as soon as his friend ex-

pires,

pires, are strong effects of that warmth of heart becoming a firm amity.

“ The respective characters of these two heroes are also well preserved in the manner, wherein each takes his resolution to share the glory with Leonidas, in his fatal catastrophe. The fierce intrepidity of Diomedon prompts him to appear the foremost of all in this high-spirited resolution; and Dithyrambus, with the modesty peculiar to his character, is solicitous to throw an humble shade over his own glory. The eulogium passed on Aristander, who was slain by Phraortes, is singularly picturesque and beautiful.

“ For brevity I pass over the lesser characters of the poem; though they also are distinctly marked. The savage fierceness of Phraortes, the vain arrogance of Tigranes, the diffidence and hypocrisy of Anaxander, and the confidence in villany of Epialtes, are very manifest.

“ The character of Leonidas is the most distinctly exhibited of any, being placed in a greater variety of lights.— We see him in council, in the army, in his family, and in his retirements. His first appearance in the Spartan council, shows us the ruling principle of his mind. The general principle, upon which valiant and heroic actions are founded, is, that there are occasions, which make it reasonable to put life in hazard. And we daily see this principle exerted, in very different degrees, in proportion to the measure of courage and spirit of different men. But Leonidas extends this principle so far, and has formed so exalted a conception of virtue, as to think it necessary for a great man to place the desire of life wholly out of the question.

“ This day, O Grecians! countrymen, and friends,
Your wives, your offspring, your paternal seats,
Your parents, country, liberty, and laws,
Demand your swords. You gen'rous, active, brave,
Vers'd in the various discipline of Mars,
Are now to grapple with ignoble foes

In war unskilful, nature's basest dross,
 And thence a monarch's mercenary slaves.
 Relax'd their limbs, their spirits are deprav'd
 By eastern sloth and pleasure. Hire their cause,
 Their only fruit of victory is spoil.
 They know not freedom, nor its lib'ral cares.
 Such is the flower of Asia's host. The rest,
 Who fill her boasted numbers, are a crowd,
 Forc'd from their homes; a populace in peace,
 By jealous tyranny disarm'd, in war
 Their tyrant's victims. Taught in passive grief
 To bear the rapine, cruelty, and spurns
 Of Xerxes's mercenary band, they pine
 In servitude to slaves. With terror sounds
 The trumpet's clangour in their trembling ears.
 Unwonted loads, the buckler and the lance
 Their hands sustain, encumber'd, and present
 The mockery of war.—But every eye
 Shoots forth impatient flames. Your gallant breasts
 Too long their swelling spirit have confin'd.
 Go, then, ye sons of liberty; go, sweep
 These bondmen from the field. Resistless rend
 The glitt'ring standard from their servile grasp.
 Hurl to the ground their ignominious heads,
 The warrior's helm profaning. Think, the shades
 Of your forefathers lift their sacred brows,
 Here to enjoy the glory of their sons."

"It is upon this foot, that, notwithstanding the character of Leonidas is raised so far above that of other men, yet it appears absolutely natural; because his motives are not of a different nature from those of others, but only improved in degree.

"When Leonidas is retired, and the warmth of heart, excited by the public presence, is so far abated that he is left without restraint to his cool reflections, the poet has taken care not to outrage his character by divesting him of
 human

human nature; but we see those struggles, which must necessarily pass through the mind of the greatest man upon so extraordinary an occasion. Here he is not without natural fears; but has a spirit in his most deliberate moments to overcome them. His principal motive is the public good; though he is also not insensible to the fame which must accompany so meritorious an action.

“Cold men have considered this sublime degree of that desire of praise, which is implanted in our nature, as a weakness; but it is certainly a part of Leonidas’s character to hold it in high esteem; for as he has recourse to it for the support of his own mind, so in his first speech to his followers, on their arrival at Thermopylæ, he excites them to act with their utmost vigour upon the same motives.

“In his family another part of his character appears. He is there tender and affectionate, but still able to suppress the secret motions of his own heart, when it was necessary for inspiring his queen with spirit to support a calamity unavoidable. And, accordingly, he does in part raise and calm her mind. But when the sudden warning for his departure has renewed her grief, that she faints in his arms, and he is left, as it were, alone to himself, he breaks out into a degree of tenderness, that shows all his foregoing resolution to be the effect of true firmness of mind, not of insensibility.

“We next see him before the general council of Greece; and here he acts a new part. In the Spartan council he exerts a spirit and vigour, that commands all who hear him; but now he gives his advice with the moderation of one more disposed to be directed, than authoritatively to influence an assembly, to whose prudence the general states of the country had intrusted the conduct of their affairs.

“He is next brought into the field, and shown in the midst of those dangers, to which, for the public service, he had so freely offered himself. And here the same resolution supports him to perform, with the greatest coolness, all the
offices

offices of a skilful and prudent commander, to condemn in his last hours every peril, and to meet his fate with no less firmness than that, wherewith he first accepted of it, at a distance, in the council of Sparta, as appears from the beautiful passage with which the author concludes his poem.

“ Thus I think our author, in his principal Grecian heroes, and most eminently in Leonidas their leader, has represented, with singular strength and truth, virtuous characters of high spirit, superior to the greatest misfortunes ; which is an achievement Plato thought the most difficult of all poetical imitation.”

The author of the “ Remarks on Leonidas,” in the “ Weekly Miscellany,” No. 234, after taking notice of several faults and improprieties, concludes thus :—“ I ought in justice to confess to those readers who may chance not to have read Leonidas, that though there are faults sufficient to justify the opposition I made to it, yet there are beauties more than sufficient to repay them the trouble in reading it over.”

In the *Athenaid*, which is a poetical history of the wars between the Greeks and Persians, in thirty books, he proposes revenge for the death of Leonidas, as the great subject of his poem. The following is the exordium :

The Persians vanquish'd, Greece from bondage sav'd,
The death of great Leonidas reveng'd,
By Attic virtue——celebrate O muse !

The conclusion is in the same strain,

————— Night drops her shade

On thirty millions slaughter'd. Thus thy death
Leonidas of Sparta was aveng'd ;
Greece thus by Attic virtue was preserv'd.

It is indeed so much a counterpart to Leonidas, though still more prosaic, as to supersede the necessity of a particular critique. Events that are the subject of authentic record, are ill adapted to epic poetry. At the same time, the historical transactions of every age, are capable of poetical arrangement,

rangement, and poetical embellishment. But the narrow and limited view which he has taken of his subject, removes its grandest and most dignified aspect, and renders the epic muse inferior to the historical. Many of the episodes, however, are affecting and pathetic; and some of the characters are well drawn, particularly those of Themistocles and Aristides. But the importance and dignity of the events recorded are much diminished by the poetical mode of narration, and strike us less than in the original historian."

His London requires no distinct examination. The subject, which is the origin and progress of commerce, is peculiarly interesting to Britons; and the composition discovers a vigour of invention, a force of description, a dignity of sentiment, and a facility of expression, not unworthy of the author of Leonidas. His Hosier's Ghost is one of the most pathetic and beautiful ballads in the English language.



LEONIDAS :

A POEM.

IN TWELVE BOOKS.

—Θανεῖν δ' οἷσιν ἀνάγκη,
τί κε τις ἀνάνυμον γῆρας, ἐν σκότῳ
καθήμενος, ἔφοι μάταν, ἀπάντων
καλῶν ἄμμορος; *Pind. Olymp. Od. I.*

PREFACE.

TO illustrate the following poem, to vindicate the subject from the censure of improbability, and to show, by the concurring evidence of the best historians, that such disinterested public virtue did once exist, I have thought it would not be improper to prefix the subsequent narration.

While Darius, the father of Xerxes, was yet on the throne of Persia, Cleomenes and Demaratus were kings in Lacedemon, both descended from Hercules. Demaratus was unfortunately exposed, by an uncertain rumour, which rendered his legitimacy suspected, to the malice and treachery of his colleague, who had conceived a personal resentment against him; for Cleomenes, taking advantage of this report, persuaded the Spartans to examine into the birth of Demaratus, and refer the difficulty to the oracle of Delphi; and was assisted in his perfidious designs by a near relation of Demaratus, named Leutychides, who aspired to succeed him in his dignity. Cleomenes found means to corrupt the priestess of Delphi, who declared Demaratus not legitimate. Thus, by the base practices of his colleague Cleomenes, and of his kinsman Leutychides, Demaratus was expelled from his regal office in the commonwealth, a Lacedemonian, distinguished in action and counsel, and the only king of Sparta, who, by obtaining the Olympic prize in the chariot-race, had increased the lustre of his country. He went into voluntary banishment; and, retiring to Asia, was there protected by Darius, while Leutychides succeeded to the regal authority in Sparta. Upon the death of Cleomenes, Leonidas became king, who ruled in conjunction with this Leutychides, when Xerxes, the son of Darius, invaded Greece. The number of land and naval forces which accompanied that monarch, together with the servants, women, and other usual attendants on the army of an eastern prince, amounted to upwards of five millions, as reported by Herodotus, who wrote within a few years.

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after

after the event, and publicly recited his history at the Olympic games. In this general assembly, not only from Greece itself, but from every part of the world, wherever a colony of Grecians was planted, had he greatly exceeded the truth. he must certainly have been detected, and censured by some among so great a multitude; and such a voluntary falsehood must have entirely destroyed that merit and authority, which have procured to Herodotus the veneration of all posterity, with the appellation of the Father of History. On the first news of this attempt on their liberty, a convention, composed of deputies from the several states of Greece, was immediately held at the Isthmus of Corinth, to consult on proper measures for the public safety. The Spartans also sent messengers to inquire of the oracle at Delphi into the event of the war, who returned with an answer from the priestess of Apollo, that either a king, descended from Hercules, must die, or Lacedemon would be entirely destroyed. Leonidas immediately offered to sacrifice his life for the preservation of Lacedemon; and, marching to Thermopylæ, possessed himself of that important pass, with three hundred of his countrymen; who, with the forces of some other cities in the Peloponnesus, together with the Thebans, Thespians, and the troops of those states, which adjoined to Thermopylæ, composed an army of near eight thousand men.

Xerxes was now advanced as far as Thessalia; when, hearing that a small body of Grecians was assembled at Thermopylæ, with some Lacedemonians at their head, and among the rest Leonidas, a descendent of Hercules, he dispatched a single horseman before to observe their numbers, and discover their designs. When this horseman approached, he could not take a view of the whole camp, which lay concealed behind a rampart, formerly raised by the Phocians at the entrance of Thermopylæ on the side of Greece; so that his whole attention was engaged by those who were on guard before the wall, and who at that instant chanced to be the Lacedemonians. Their manner and gestures greatly astonished the Persian. Some were amusing themselves in gymnastic exercises; others were combing their hair; and all discovered a total disregard of him, whom they suffered to depart, and report to Xerxes what he had seen; which appearing to that prince very ridiculous, he sent for Demaratus, who was with him in the camp, and required him to explain this strange behaviour of his countrymen. Demaratus informed him, that it was a custom among the Spartans to comb down and adjust their hair, when they were determined to fight to the last extremity

extremity. Xerxes, notwithstanding, in the confidence of his power, sent ambassadors to the Grecians to demand their arms, to bid them disperse, and become his friends and allies; which proposals being received with disdain, he commanded the Medes and Cissians to seize on the Grecians, and bring them alive into his presence. These nations immediately attacked the Grecians, and were soon repulsed with great slaughter; fresh troops still succeeded, but with no better fortune than the first, being opposed to an enemy not only superior in valour and resolution, but who had the advantage of discipline, and were furnished with better arms, both offensive and defensive.

Plutarch, in his Laconic Apothegms, reports, that the Persian king offered to invest Leonidas with the sovereignty of Greece, provided he would join his arms to those of Persia. This offer was too considerable a condescension to have been made before a trial of their force, and must therefore have been proposed by Xerxes after such a series of ill success, as might probably have depressed the insolence of his temper; and it may be easily admitted, that the virtue of Leonidas was proof against any temptations of that nature. Whether this be a fact or not, thus much is certain, that Xerxes was reduced to extreme difficulties by this resolute defence of Thermopylæ, till he was extricated from his distress by a Malian, named Epialtes, who conducted twenty thousand of the Persian army into Greece through a pass, which lay higher up the country among the mountains of Oeta; whereas the passage at Thermopylæ was situated on the sea-shore, between those mountains and the Malian bay. The defence of the upper pass had been committed to a thousand Phocians, who, upon the first sight of the enemy, inconsiderately abandoned their station, and put themselves in array upon a neighbouring eminence; but the Persians wisely avoided an engagement, and with the utmost expedition marched to Thermopylæ.

Leonidas no sooner received information that the Barbarians had passed the mountains, and would soon be in a situation to surround him, than he commanded the allies to retreat, reserving the three hundred Spartans, and four hundred Thebans, whom, as they followed him with reluctance at first, he now compelled to stay. But the Thebians, whose number amounted to seven hundred, would not be persuaded by Leonidas to forsake him. Their commander was Demophilus; and the most eminent amongst them for his valour was Dithyrambus, the son of Harmatides. Among the Lacedæmonians, the most conspicuous next to Leonidas, was Dieneces, who being told that the

multitude of Persian arrows would obscure the sun, replied, the battle would then be in the shade. Two brothers, named Alpheus and Maron, are also recorded for their valour, and were Lacedemonians. Megistias, a priest, by birth an Arcanian, and held in high honour at Sparta, refused to desert Leonidas, though entreated by him to consult his safety, but sent away his only son, and remained himself behind to die with the Lacedemonians.

Herodotus relates, that Leonidas drew up his men in the broadest part of Thermopylæ, where, being encompassed by the Persians, they fell with great numbers of their enemies; but Plutarch, Diodorus Siculus, and others, affirm, that the Grecians attacked the very camp of Xerxes in the night.—Both these dispositions are reconcileable to probability. He might have made an attack on the Persian camp in the night, and in the morning withdrawn his forces back to Thermopylæ, where they would be enabled to make the most obstinate resistance, and sell their lives upon the dearest terms. The action is thus described by Diodorus: “The Grecians having now rejected all thoughts of safety, preferring glory to life, unanimously called on their general to lead them against the Persians, before they could be apprised that their friends had passed round the mountains. Leonidas embraced the occasion, which the ready zeal of his soldiers afforded, and commanded them forthwith to dine as men who were to sup in Elysium. Himself, in consequence of this command, took a repast, as the means to furnish strength for a long continuance, and to give perseverance, in danger. After a short refreshment, the Grecians were now prepared, and received orders to assail the enemies in their camp, to put all they met to the sword, and force a passage to the royal pavilion; when, formed into one compact body, with Leonidas himself at their head, they marched against the Persians, and entered their camp at the dead of night. The Barbarians, wholly unprepared, and blindly conjecturing that their friends were defeated, and themselves attacked by the united power of Greece, hurry together from their tents with the utmost disorder and consternation.—Many were slain by Leonidas and his party, but much greater multitudes by their own troops, to whom, in the midst of this blind confusion, they were not distinguishable from enemies; for, as night took away the power of discerning truly, and the tumult was spread universally over the camp, a prodigious slaughter must naturally ensue.—The want of command, of a watch word, and of confidence in themselves, reduced the Persians to such a state of confusion, that they destroyed each other without distinction.—

Had

Had Xerxes continued in the royal pavilion, the Grecians, without difficulty, might have brought the war to a speedy conclusion by his death; but he, at the beginning of the tumult, betook himself to flight with the utmost precipitation; when the Grecians, rushing into the tent, put to the sword most of those who were left behind; then, while night lasted, they ranged through the whole camp, in diligent search of the tyrant. When morning appeared, the Persians, perceiving the true state of things, held the inconsiderable number of their enemies in contempt, yet were so terrified at their valour, that they avoided a near engagement; but enclosing the Grecians on every side, showered their darts and arrows upon them at a distance, and in the end destroyed their whole body. In this manner fell the Grecians who, under the conduct of Leonidas, defended the pass of Thermopylæ. All must admire the virtue of these men, who with one consent maintaining the post allotted by their country, cheerfully renounced their lives for the common safety of Greece, and esteemed a glorious death more eligible than to live with dishonour. Nor is the consternation of the Persians incredible. Who among those Barbarians could have conjectured such an event? Who could have expected that five hundred men would have dared to attack a million?—Wherefore shall not all posterity reflect on the virtue of these men as the object of imitation, who, though the loss of their lives was the necessary consequence of their undertaking, were yet unconquered in their spirit, and among all the great names delivered down to remembrance, are the only heroes who obtained more glory in their fall, than others from the brightest victories? With justice may they be deemed the preservers of the Grecian liberty, even preferably to those who were conquerors in the battles fought afterwards with Xerxes; for the memory of that valour exerted in the defence of Thermopylæ, for ever dejected the Barbarians, while the Greeks were fired with emulation to equal such a pitch of magnanimity. Upon the whole, there never were any before these who attained to immortality, through the mere excess of virtue; whence the praise of their fortitude hath not been recorded by historians only, but hath been celebrated by numbers of poets; among others by Simonides the lyric."

Pausanias, in his *Laconics*, considers the defence of Thermopylæ, by Leonidas, as an action superior to any achieved by his contemporaries, and to all the exploits of preceding ages. "Never," says he, "had Xerxes beheld Greece, and laid in ashes the city of Athens, had not his forces, under Hydarnes been conducted through a path over

mount Oeta, and, by that means, encompassing the Greeks, overcome and slay Leonidas." Nor is it improbable, that such a commander, at the head of such troops, should have maintained his post in so narrow a pass, till the whole army of Xerxes had perished by famine. At the same time his navy had been miserably shattered by a storm, and worsted in an engagement with the Athenians at Artemisium.

To conclude, the fall of Leonidas and his brave companions, so meritorious to their country, and so glorious to themselves, hath obtained such a high degree of veneration and applause from past ages, that few among the ancient compilers of history have been silent on this amazing instance of magnanimity and zeal for liberty; and many are the epigrams and inscriptions now extant, some on the whole body, others on particulars, who died at Thermopylæ, still preserving their memory in every nation conversant with learning, and at this distance of time still rendering their virtue the object of admiration and of praise.

I shall now detain the reader no longer, than to take this public occasion of expressing my sincere regard for the Lord Viscount Cobham, and the sense of my obligations for the early honour of his friendship; to him I inscribe the following poem; and herein I should be justified, independent of all personal motives, from his Lordship's public conduct, so highly distinguished by his disinterested zeal and unshaken fidelity to his country, not less in civil life than in the field: to him, therefore, a poem, founded on a character eminent for military glory, and love of liberty, is due from the nature of the subject.

R. GLOVER.



LEONIDAS.

BOOK I.

The Argument.

XERXES, king of Persia, having drawn together the whole force of his empire, and passed over the Hellespont into Thrace, with a design to conquer Greece; the deputies from the several states of that country, who had some time before assembled themselves at the Isthmus of Corinth, to deliberate on proper measures for resisting the invader, were no sooner apprised of his march into Thrace, than they determined, without further delay, to dispute his passage at the streights of Thermopylæ, the most accessible part of Greece on the side of Thrace and Thessaly. Alpheus, one of the deputies from Sparta, repairs to that city, and communicates this resolution to his countrymen; who chanced that day to be assembled in expectation of receiving an answer from Apollo, to whom they had sent a messenger to consult about the event of the war. Leutychides, one of their two kings, counsels the people to advance no farther than the Isthmus of Corinth, which separates the Peloponnesus, where Lacedemon was situated, from the rest of Greece; but Leonidas, the other king, dissuades them from it. Agis the messenger, who had been deputed to Delphi, and brother to the queen of Leonidas, returns with the oracle; which denounces ruin to the Lacedemonians, unless one of their kings lays down his life for the public. Leonidas offers himself for the victim. Three hundred more are appointed, all citizens of Sparta, and heads of families, to accompany and die with him at Thermopylæ. Alpheus returns to the Isthmus. Leonidas, after an interview with his queen, departs from Lacedemon. At the end of six days he encamps near the Isthmus, when he is joined by Alpheus; who describes the auxiliaries, they waiting at the Isthmus; those who are already possessed of Thermopylæ, as also the pass itself; and concludes with relating the captivity of his brother Polydorus, in Persia.

THE virtuous Spartan, who resign'd his life
To save his country at th' Oetæan streights,
Thermopylæ, when all the peopled east
In arms with Xerxes fill'd the Grecian plains,
O muse, record! The Hellespont they pass'd, 5
O'erpow'ring Thrace. The dreadful tidings swift
To Corinth flew. Her Isthmus was the seat
Of Grecian council. Alpheus thence returns
To Lacedemon. In assembly full
He finds the Spartan people with their kings; 10
Their kings, who boast an origin divine,
From Hercules descended. They the sons
Of Lacedemon had conven'd, to learn
The sacred mandates of th' immortal gods,
That morn expected from the Delphian dome. 15
But Alpheus sudden their attention drew,
And thus address'd them: For immediate war,
My countrymen, prepare. Barbarian tents
Already fill the trembling bounds of Thrace.

The Isthmian council hath decreed to guard 20
Thermopylæ, the Locrian gate of Greece.

Here Alpheus paus'd. Leutyichides, who shar'd
With great Leonidas the sway, uprose
And spake. Ye citizens of Sparta, hear.
Why from her bosom should Laconia send 25
Her valiant race to wage a distant war
Beyond the Isthmus? There the gods have plac'd
Our native barrier. In this favour'd land,
Which Pelops govern'd, us of Doric blood
That Isthmus inaccessible secures. 30

There let our standards rest. Your solid strength,
If once you scatter in defence of states
Remote and feeble, you betray your own,
And merit Jove's derision. With assent
The Spartans heard. Leonidas reply'd : 35

O most ungen'rous counsel! most unwise!
Shall we, confining to the Isthmian fence
Our efforts, leave beyond it ev'ry state
Disown'd, expos'd? Shall Athens, while her fleets
Unceasing watch th' innumerable foes, 40
And trust the impending dangers of the field
To Sparta's well-known valour, shall she hear,
'That to barbarian violence we leave

Her unprotected walls? Her hoary fires,
Her helpless matrons, and their infant race, 45
To servitude and shame? Her guardian gods
Will yet preserve them. Neptune o'er his main,
With Pallas, pow'r of wisdom, at their helms,
Will soon transport them to a happier clime,
Safe from insulting foes, from false allies, 50
And eleutherian Jove will bless their flight.

Then shall we feel the unresisted force
Of Persia's navy, deluging our plains
With inexhausted numbers. Half the Greeks,
By us betray'd to bondage, will support 55
A Persian lord, and lift th' avenging spear
For our destruction. But, my friends, reject
Such mean, such dang'rous counsels, which would blast

Your long-establish'd honours, and assist
 The proud invader. O eternal king 60
 Of gods and mortals, elevate our minds!
 Each low and partial passion thence expel!
 Greece is our gen'ral mother. All must join
 In her defence, or, sep'rate, each must fall.

This said, authority and shame controll'd 65
 The mute assembly. Agis too appear'd,
 He from the Delphian cavern was return'd,
 Where, taught by Phœbus on Parnassian cliffs,
 The Pythian maid unfolded Heav'ns decrees.

He came; but discontent and grief o'ercaſt 70
 His anxious brow. Reluctant was his tongue,
 Yet seem'd full charg'd to speak. Religious dread
 Each heart relax'd. On ev'ry visage hung
 Sad expectation. Not a whisper told

The silent fear. Intensely all were fix'd, 75
 All still as death, to hear the solemn tale.

As o'er the western waves, when ev'ry storm
 Is hush'd within its cavern, and a breeze,
 Soft-breathing, lightly with its wings along
 The slacken'd cordage glides, the sailors' ear 80
 Perceives no sound throughout the vast expanse;

None, but the murmurs of the sliding prow,
 Which slowly parts the smooth and yielding main:
 So through the wide and listening crowd no sound,
 No voice, but thine, O Agis, broke the air! 85

While thus the issue of thy awful charge
 Thy lips deliver'd. Spartans, in your name
 I went to Delphi. I enquir'd the doom
 Of Lacedemon from th' impending war,
 When in these words the deity reply'd: 90

"Inhabitants of Sparta, Persia's arms
 Shall lay your proud and ancient seat in dust;
 Unless a king, from Hercules deriv'd,
 Cause Lacedemon for his death to mourn."

As when the hand of Perseus had disclos'd 95
 The snakes of dire Medusa, all who view'd
 The Gorgon features, were congeal'd to stone,

With ghastly eyeballs on the hero bent,
 And horror, living in their marble form;
 Thus with amazement rooted, where they stood, 100
 In speechless terror frozen, on their kings
 The Spartans gaz'd : but soon their anxious looks
 All on the great Leonidas unite,
 Long known his country's refuge. He alone
 Remains unshaken. Rising, he displays 105
 His godlike presence. Dignity and grace
 Adorn his frame, where manly beauty joins
 With strength Herculean. On his aspect shine
 Sublimest virtue, and desire of fame,
 Where justice gives the laurel, in his eye 110
 The inextinguishable spark, which fires
 The souls of patriots ; while his brow supports
 Undaunted valour, and contempt of death.
 Serene he cast his looks around, and spake :
 Why this astonishment on ev'ry face, 115
 Ye men of Sparta ? Does the name of death
 Create this fear and wonder ? O my friends,
 Why do we labour through the arduous paths,
 Which lead to virtue ? Fruitless were the toil,
 Above the reach of human feet were plac'd 120
 The distant summit, if the fear of death
 Could intercept our passage. But a frown
 Of unavailing terror he assumes,
 To shake the firmness of a mind, which knows
 That, wanting virtue, life is pain and woe, 125
 That, wanting liberty, ev'n virtue mourns,
 And looks around for happiness in vain.
 Then speak, O Sparta, and demand my life !
 My heart, exulting, answers to thy call,
 And smiles on glorious fate. To live with fame,
 The gods allow to many ; but to die 131
 With equal lustre is a blessing. Jove
 Among the choicest of his boons reserves,
 Which but on few his sparing hand bestows.
 Salvation thus to Sparta he proclaim'd. 135
 Joy, wrapt awhile in admiration, paus'd,

Suspending praise ; nor praise at last resounds
 In high acclaim to rend the arch of heav'n :
 A reverential murmur breathes applause.
 So were the pupils of Lycurgus train'd 140
 To bridle nature. Public fear was dumb
 Before their senate, ephori, and kings,
 Nor exultation into clamour broke.
 Amidst them rose Dieneces, and thus :

Haste to Thermopylæ. To Xerxes show 145
 The discipline of Spartans, long renown'd
 In rigid warfare, with enduring minds,
 Which neither pain, nor want, nor danger bend.
 Fly to the gate of Greece, which open stands
 To slavery and rapine. They will shrink 150
 Before your standard, and their native seats
 Resume in abject Asia. Arm, ye fires,
 Who with a growing race have blest'd the state.
 That race, your parents, gen'ral Greece forbid
 Delay. Heav'n summons. Equal to the cause 155
 A chief behold. Can Spartans ask for more ?

Bold Alpheus next. Command my swift return
 Amid the Isthmian council, to declare
 Your instant march. His dictates all approve.
 Back to the Isthmus he unweary'd speeds. 160

Now from th' assembly, with majestic steps,
 Forth moves their godlike king, with conscious worth
 His gen'rous bosom glowing. Such the port
 Of his divine progenitor ; impell'd
 By ardent virtue, so Alcides trod, 165
 Invincible to face in horrid war
 The triple form of Geryon, or against
 The bulk of huge Antæus match his strength.

Say Muse, what heroes, by example fir'd,
 Nor less by honour, offer'd now to bleed ? 170
 Dieneces the foremost, brave and staid,
 Of vet'ran skill to range in martial fields,
 Well-order'd lines of battle. Maron next,
 Twin-born with Alpheus, shows his manly frame.
 Him Agis follow'd, brother to the queen 175

Of great Leonidas, his friend in war,
 His try'd companion. Graceful were his steps,
 And gentle his demeanor. Still his soul
 Preserv'd the purest virtue, though refin'd
 By hearts unknown to Lacedemon's race. 180
 High was his office. He, when Sparta's weal
 Support and counsel from the gods requir'd,
 Was sent the hallow'd messenger to learn
 Their mystic will, in oracles declar'd,
 From rocky Delphi, from Dodona's shade, 185
 Or sea-encircled Delos, or the cell
 Of dark Trophonius, round Bœotia known.
 Three hundred more complete th' intrepid band,
 Illustrious fathers all of gen'rous sons,
 The future guardians of Laconia's state. 190
 Then rose Megistias, leading forth his son
 Young Menalippus, Not of Spartan blood
 Were they. Megistias, heav'n enlighten'd seer,
 Had left his native Acarnanian shore;
 Along the border of Eurotas chose 195
 His place of dwelling. For his worth receiv'd,
 And hospitably cherish'd, he the wreath
 Pontific bore in Lacedemon's camp;
 Serene in danger, nor his sacred arm
 From warlike toil secluding, nor untaught 200
 To wield the sword, and poize the weighty spear.
 But to his home Leonidas retir'd.
 There, calm in secret thought he thus explor'd
 His mighty soul, while nature in his breast
 A short emotion rais'd. What sudden grief, 205
 What cold reluctance now unmans my heart,
 And whispers that I fear? Can death dismay
 Leonidas? Death, often seen and scorn'd,
 When clad most dreadful in the battle's front?
 Or to relinquish life in all its pride, 210
 With all my honours blooming round my head,
 Repines my soul, or rather to forsake,
 Eternally forsake my weeping wife,
 My infant offspring, and my faithful friends?

Leonidas, awake. Shall these withstand
 The public safety? Hark! thy country calls,
 O sacred voice, I hear thee! At the sound,
 Reviving virtue brightens in my heart;
 Fear vanishes before her. Death, receive
 My unreluctant hand. Immortal Fame, 220
 Thou too, attendant on my righteous fall,
 With wings unweary'd wilt protect my tomb.

His virtuous soul the hero had confirm'd,
 When Agis enter'd. If my tardy lips
 (He thus began), have hitherto forborne! 225
 To bring their grateful tribute of applause,
 Which, as a Spartan, to thy worth I owe,
 Forgive the brother of thy queen. Her grief
 Detain'd me from thee. O unequall'd man,
 Though Lacedemon call thy prime regard, 230
 Forget not her, sole victim of distress
 Amid the gen'ral safety! To assuage
 Such pain, fraternal tenderness is weak.

The king embrac'd him, and reply'd: O best,
 O dearest man, conceive not, but my soul 235
 To her is fondly bound, from whom my days
 Their largest share of happiness deriv'd!
 Can I, who yield my breath, lest others mourn,
 Lest thousands should be wretched when she pines,
 More lov'd than any, though less dear than all, 240
 Can I neglect her griefs? In future days,
 If thou with grateful memory record
 My name and fate, O Sparta, pass not this
 Unheeded by. Thy life, for thee resign'd,
 Knew not a painful hour to tire my soul, 245
 Nor were they common joys I left behind.

So spake the patriot, and his heart o'erflow'd
 In tend'rest passion. Then in eager haste
 The faithful partner of his bed he sought.
 Amid her weeping children sat the queen 250
 Immoveable and mute. Her swimming eyes
 Bent to the earth. Her arms were folded o'er

Her lab'ring bosom, blotted with her tears.
 As when a dusky mist involves the sky,
 The moon through all the dreary vapours spreads 255
 The radiant vesture of her silver light
 O'er the dull face of nature; so the queen,
 Divinely graceful shining through her grief,
 Brighten'd the cloud of woe. Her lord approach'd.
 Soon, as in gentlest phrase his well-known voice 260
 Awak'd her drooping spirit, for a time
 Care was appeas'd. She lifts her languid head.
 She gives this utterance to her tender thoughts:

O thou, whose presence is my sole delight;
 If thus, Leonidas, thy looks and words 265
 Can check the rapid current of distress,
 How am I mark'd for misery! How long!
 When of life's journey less than half is pass'd,
 And I must hear those calming sounds no more,
 Nor see that face which makes affliction smile. 270

This said, returning grief o'erwhelms her breast.
 Her orphan children, her devoted lord,
 Pale, bleeding, breathless on the field of death,
 Her ever-during solitude of woe,
 All rise in mingled horror to her sight, 275
 When thus in bitt'rest agony she spake:

O whither art thou going from my arms?
 Shall I no more behold thee? Oh! no more,
 In conquest clad, o'erspread with glorious dust,
 Wilt thou return to greet thy native soil, 280
 And find thy dwelling joyful! Ah! too brave,
 Why would'st thou hurry to the dreary gates
 Of death, uncall'd—Another might have bled,
 Like thee a victim of Alcides' race,
 Less dear to all, and Sparta been secure. 285
 Now ev'ry eye with mine is drown'd in tears;
 All with these babes lament a father lost.
 Alas, how heavy is our lot of pain!
 Our sighs must last, when ev'ry other breast
 Exults in safety, purchas'd by our loss. 290
 Thou didst not heed our anguish—didst not seek

One pause for my instruction how to bear
Thy endless absence, or like thee to die.

Unutterable sorrow here confin'd
Her voice. These words Leonidas return'd : 295

I see, I share thy agony. My soul
Ne'er knew how warm the prevalence of love,
How strong a parent's feelings, till this hour ;
Nor was she once insensible to thee
In all her fervour to assert my fame. 300

How had the honours of my name been stain'd
By hesitation ? Shameful life preferr'd
By an inglorious colleague would have left
No choice, but what were infamy to shun,
Not virtue to accept. Then deem no more, 305

That of thy love regardless, or thy tears,
I rush, uncall'd, to death. The voice of fate,
The gods, my fame, my country press my doom.
Oh ! thou dear mourner ! Wherefore swells afresh
That tide of woe ? Leonidas must fall. 310

Alas ! far heavier misery impends
O'er thee and these, if, soften'd by thy tears,
I shamefully refuse to yield that breath,
Which justice, glory, liberty, and heav'n
Claim for my country, for my sons and thee. 315

Think on my long unalter'd love. Reflect
On my paternal fondness. Hath my heart
Ee'r known a pause in love, or pious care ?
Now shall that care, that tenderness be shown
Most warm, most faithful. When thy husband dies
For Lacedemon's safety, thou wilt share, 320

Thou and thy children the diffusive good.
I am selected by th' immortal gods
To save a people. Should my timid heart
That sacred charge abandon, I should plunge 325
Thee too in shame, in sorrow. Thou wouldst mourn
With Lacedemon ; wouldst with her sustain
Thy painful portion of oppression's weight.
Behold thy sons now worthy of their name,
Their Spartan birth. Their glowing bloom would pine

Depress'd, dishonour'd, and their youthful hearts 331
Beat at the sound of liberty no more.

On their own merit, on their father's fame,
When he the Spartan freedom hath confirm'd,
Before the world illustrious will they rise, 335
Their country's bulwark, and their mother's joy.

Here paus'd the patriot. In religious awe
Grief heard the voice of virtue. No complaint
The solemn silence broke. Tears ceas'd to flow;
Ceas'd for a moment soon again to stream. 340

Behold, in arms before the palace drawn,
His brave companions of the war demand
Their leader's presence. Then her griefs renew'd,
Surpassing utterance, intercept her sighs.
Each accent freezes on her falt'ring tongue. 345

In speechless anguish on the hero's breast
She sinks. On ev'ry side his children press,
Hang on his knees, and kiss his honour'd hand.
His soul no longer struggles to confine
Her agitation. Down the hero's cheek, 350

Down flows the manly sorrow. Great in woe
Amid his children, who enclose him round,
He stands indulging tenderness and love
In graceful tears, when thus with lifted eyes,
Address'd to heav'n. Thou ever-living pow'r, 355

Look down propitious, sire of gods and men;
O to this faithful woman, whose desert
May claim thy favour, grant the hours of peace!
And thou, my bright forefather, seed of Jove,
O Hercules, neglect not these thy race! 360

But since that spirit, I from thee derive,
Transports me from them to resistless fate,
Be thou their guardian! Teach them like thyself
By glorious labours to embellish life,
And from their father let them learn to die. 365

Here ending, forth he issues, and assumes
Before the ranks his station of command.
They now proceed. So mov'd the host of heav'n
On Phlegra's plains to meet the giant sons



Down the hero's cheek,
Green flows the manly sorrow, great in woe,
Amid his children who enclose him round,
He stands, exulting tenderness and love
In grateful tears,
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Of Earth and Titan. From Olympus march'd
 The deities embattled ; while their king
 Tower'd in the front with thunder in his grasp.
 Thus through the streets of Lacedemon pass'd
 Leonidas. Before his footsteps bow
 The multitude exulting. On he treads
 Rever'd. Unsated, their enraptur'd sight
 Pursues his graceful stature, and their tongues
 Extol and hail him as their guardian god.
 Firm in his nervous hand he gripes the spear.
 Low as the ankles, from his shoulders hangs
 The massy shield ; and o'er his burnish'd helm
 The purple plumage nods. Harmonious youths,
 Around whose brows entwining laurels play,
 In lofty-sounding strains his praise record ;
 While snowy-finger'd virgins all the way
 Bestrew with od'rous garlands. Now his breast
 Is all possess'd by glory, which dispell'd,
 What'er of grief remain'd, or vain regret
 For those he left behind. The rev'rend train
 Of Lacedemon's senate last appear
 To take their final, solemn leave, and grace
 Their hero's parting steps. Around him flow
 In civil pomp their venerable robes,
 Mix'd with the blaze of arms. The shining troop
 Of warriors press behind him. Maron here
 With Menalippus warm in flow'ry prime,
 There Agis, there Megistias, and the chief,
 Dieneces. Laconia's dames ascend
 The loftiest mansions ; thronging o'er the roofs
 Applaud their sons, their husbands as they march :
 So parted Argo from th' Colchian strand
 To plough the foaming surge. Thessalia's nymphs,
 Rang'd on the cliffs, o'er shading Neptune's face,
 Still on the distant vessel fix'd their eyes
 Admiring, still in pæans bless'd the helm,
 By Greece intrusted with her chosen sons
 For high adventures on the Colchian shore.

Swift on his course Leonidas proceeds.
 Soon is Eurotas pass'd, and Lerna's bank,
 Where his victorious ancestor subdu'd 410
 The many headed Hydra, and the lake
 To endless fame consign'd. Th' unweary'd bands
 Next through the pines of Mænalus he led,
 And down Parthenius urg'd the rapid toil.
 Six days incessant was their march pursu'd, 415
 When to their ear the hoarse-resounding waves
 Beat on the Isthmus. Here the tents are spread.
 Below the wide horizon then the sun
 Had dipt his beamy locks. The queen of night
 Gleam'd from the centre of th' ethereal vault, 420
 And o'er the raven plumes of darkness shed
 Her placid-light. Leonidas detains
 Dienece and Agis. Open stands
 The tall pavilion, and admits the moon.
 As here they sit conversing, from the hill, 425
 Which rose before them, one of noble port
 Is seen descending. Lightly-down the slope
 He treads. He calls aloud. They heard, they knew
 The voice of Alpheus, whom the king address'd.
 O thou, with swiftness by the gods endu'd 430
 To match the ardour of thy daring soul,
 What from the Isthmus draws thee? Do the Greeks
 Neglect to arm and face the public foe?
 Good news give wings, said Alpheus, Greece is arm'd.
 The neighb'ring Isthmus holds th' Arcadian bands.
 From Mantinea Diophantus leads 436
 Five hundred spears; nor less from Tegea's walls
 With Hegesander move. A thousand more,
 Who in Orchomenus reside, and range
 Along Parrhasius, or Cyllene's brow; 440
 Who near the foot of Erymanthus dwell,
 Or on Alphean banks, with various chiefs
 Expect thy presence. Most is Clonius fam'd,
 Of stature huge, unshaken rock of war.
 Four hundred warriors brave Alcmaeon draws 445
 From stately Corinth's tow'rs. Two hundred march

From Philus. Them Eupalamus commands.
 An equal number of Mycenæ's race
 Aristobulus heads. Through fear alone
 Of thee, and threat'ning Greece the Thebans arm.
 A few in Thebes authority and rule 451
 Usurp. Corrupted with Barbarian gold,
 They quench the gen'rous, eleutherian flame
 In ev'ry heart. The eloquent they bribe.
 By specious tales the multitude they cheat, 455
 Establishing base measures on the plea
 Of public safety. Others are immers'd
 In all the sloth of plenty, who unmov'd
 In shameful ease, behold the state betray'd.
 Aw'd by thy name, four hundred took the field. 460
 The wily Anaxander is their chief
 With Leontiades. To see their march
 I staid, then hasten'd to survey the streights,
 Which thou shalt render sacred to renown.
 For ever mingled with the crumbling soil, 465
 Which moulders round th' indented Malian coast,
 The sea rolls slimy. On a solid rock,
 Which forms the inmost limit of a bay,
 Thermopylæ is stretch'd. Where broadest spread,
 It measures threescore paces, bounded here 470
 By the salt ooze, which underneath presents
 A dreary surface; there the lofty cliffs
 Of woody'd Oeta overlook the pass,
 And far beyond o'er half the surge below
 Their horrid umbrage cast. Across the mouth 475
 An ancient bulwark of the Phocians stands,
 A wall with gates and tow'rs. The Locrian force
 Was marching forward. Them I pass'd to greet
 Demophilus of Thespia, who had pitch'd
 Seven hundred spears before th' important fence. 480
 His brother's son attends the rev'rend chief,
 Young Dithyrambus. He for noble deeds,
 Yet more for temperance of mind renown'd,
 In early bloom with brightest honours shines,
 Nor wantons in the blaze. Here Agis spake : 485

Well hast thou painted that illustrious youth.
 He is my host at Thespia. Though adorn'd
 With various wreaths, by fame, by fortune-blest'd,
 His gentle virtues take from Envy's lips
 Their blasting venom; and her baneful eye 490
 Strives on his worth to smile. In silence all
 Again remain, when Alpheus thus proceeds :

Platæa's chosen veterans I saw,
 Small in their number, matchless in their fame.
 Diomedon the leader. Keen his sword 495
 At Marathon was felt, where Asia bled.
 These guard Thermopylæ. Among the hills,
 Unknown to strangers winds an upper streight,
 Which by a thousand Phocians is secur'd.

Ere these brave Greeks I quitted, in the bay 500
 A stately chieftain of th' Athenian fleet
 Arriv'd. I join'd him. Copious in thy praise
 He utter'd rapture, but austere ly blam'd
 Laconia's tardy counsels ; while the ships
 Of Athens long had stemm'd Eubœan tides, 505
 Which flow not distant from our future post.
 This was the far fam'd Æschylus, by Mars,
 By Phœbus lov'd. Parnassus him proclaims
 The first of Attic poets, him the plains
 Of Marathon a soldier, try'd in arms. 510

Well may Athenians murmur, said the king.
 Too long hath Sparta slumber'd on her shield.
 By morn, beyond the Isthmus we will spread
 A gen'rous banner. In Laconian strains 515
 Of Alcman and Terpander lives the fame
 Of our forefathers. Let our deeds attract
 The brighter muse of Athens in the song
 Of Æschylus divine. Now frame thy choice.
 Share in our fate ; or, hastening home report,
 How much already thy discerning mind, 520
 Thy active limbs have merited from me,
 How serv'd thy country. From the impatient lips
 Of Alpheus, swift these fervid accents broke :

I have not measur'd such a tract of land,
 Have not untir'd beheld the setting sun, 525
 Nor through the shade of midnight urg'd my steps
 To animate the Grecians, that myself
 Might be exempt from warlike toil, or death.
 Return! Ah! no. A second time my speed
 Shall visit thee, Thermopylæ. My limbs 530
 Shall at thy side, Leonidas, obtain
 An honourable grave. And oh! amid
 His country's perils, if a Spartan breast
 May feel a private sorrow, fierce revenge
 I seek not only for th' insulted state, 535
 But for a brother's wrongs. A younger hope,
 Than I and Maron, bless'd our father's years,
 Child of his age, and Polydorus nam'd.
 His mind, while tender in his op'ning prime,
 Was bent to strenuous virtue. Gen'rous scorn 540
 Of pain, or danger taught his early strength
 To struggle patient with severest toils.
 Oft, when inclement winter chill'd the air,
 When frozen show'rs had swoln Eurotas' stream,
 Amid th' impetuous channel would he plunge 545
 To breast the torrent. On a fatal day,
 As in the sea his active limbs he bath'd,
 A savage corsair of the Persian king
 My brother naked and defenceless bore,
 E'en in my sight, to Asia; there to waste 550
 With all the promise of its growing worth
 His youth in bondage. Tedious were the tale,
 Should I recount my pains, my father's woes,
 The days he wept, the sleepless nights he beat
 His aged bosom. And shall Alpheus' spear 555
 Be absent from Thermopylæ, nor claim,
 O Polydorus, vengeance for thy wrongs
 In that first slaughter of the barb'rous foe.
 Here interpos'd Dienece. Their hands
 He grasp'd, and cordial transport thus express'd: 560
 O that Lycurgus from the shades might rise
 To praise the virtue which his laws inspire!

Thus till the dead of night these heroes pass'd
The hours in friendly converse, and enjoy'd
Each other's virtue. Happiest of men!
At length with gentle heaviness the pow'r
Of sleep invades their eye-lids, and constrains
Their magnanimity and zeal to rest:
When sliding down the hemisphere, the moon
Immers'd in midnight shade her silver head.

565

570



BOOK II.

The Argument.

LEONIDAS, on his approach to the Isthmus, is met by the leaders of the troops, sent from other Grecian states, and by the deputies who composed the Isthmian council. He harangues them; then proceeds in conjunction with these forces towards Thermopylæ. On the first day he is joined by Dithyrambus; on the third he reaches a valley in Locris, where he is entertained by Oileus, the public host of the Lacedæmonian state; and the next morning is accompanied by him in a car to the temple of Pan: he finds Medon there, the son of Oileus, and commander of two thousand Locrians, already posted at Thermopylæ, and by him is informed, that the army of Xerxes is in sight of the pass.

AURORA spreads her purple beams around,
When move the Spartans, Their approach is
known.

The Isthmian council, and the diff'rent chiefs,
Who lead th' auxiliar bands, advance to meet
Leonidas; Eupalamus the strong, 5
Alcmæon, Clonius, Diophantus brave
With Hegesander. At their head is seen
Aristobulus, whom Mycenæ's ranks
Obey Mycenæ once august in pow'r,
In splendid wealth, and vaunting still the name 10
Of Agamemnon. To Laconia's king
The chieftain spake. Leonidas, survey
Mycenæ's race. Should ev'ry other Greek
Be aw'd by Xerxes, and his eastern host,
Believe not we can fear, deriv'd from those, 15
Who once conducted o'er the foaming surge
The strength of Greece; who desert left the fields
Of ravag'd Asia, and her proudest walls
From their foundations levell'd to the ground.

Leonidas replies not, but his voice 20
Directs to all. Illustrious warriors, hail!
Who thus undaunted signalize your faith,
Your gen'rous ardour in the common cause.
But you, whose counsels prop the Grecian state,
O venerable synod, who consign 25
To our protecting sword the gate of Greece,
Thrice hail! Whate'er by valour we obtain,
Your wisdom must preserve. With piercing eyes

Contemplate ev'ry city, and discern
 Their various tempers. Some with partial care 30
 To guard their own, neglect the public weal.
 Unmov'd and cold are others. Terror here,
 Corruption there presides. O fire the brave
 To gen'ral efforts in the gen'ral cause.
 Confirm the wav'ring. Animate the cold, 35
 The timid. Watch the faithless. Some betray
 Themselves and Greece. Their perfidy prevent,
 Or call them back to honour. Let us all
 Be link'd in sacred union, and this land
 May face the world's whole multitude in arms. 40
 If for the spoil, by Paris borne to Troy,
 A thousand keels the Hellespont o'erspread;
 Shall not again confederated Greece
 Be rous'd to battle, and to freedom give
 What once she gave to fame? Behold, we haste 45
 To stop th' invading tyrant. Till we fall,
 He shall not pour his myriads on your plains.
 But as the gods conceal how long our strength
 May stand unvanquish'd, or how soon may yield;
 Waste not a moment, till consenting Greece 50
 Range all her free-born numbers in the field.
 Leonidas concluded. Awful stepp'd
 Before the sage assembly one supreme
 And old in office, who address'd the king.
 Thy bright example ev'ry heart unites. 55
 From thee her happiest omens Greece derives
 Of concord, safety, liberty, and fame.
 Go then, O first of mortals, go, impress
 Amaze and terror on the barb'rous host;
 The free-born Greeks instructing life to deem 60
 Less dear than honour, and their country's cause.
 This heard, Leonidas, thy secret soul,
 Exulting, taste of the sweet reward
 Due to thy name through endless time. Once more
 His eyes he turn'd, and view'd in rapt'rous thought 65
 His native land, which he alone can save;
 Then summon'd all his majesty, and o'er

The Isthmus trod. The phalanx moves behind
 In deep arrangement. So th' imperial ship
 With stately bulk along the heaving tide 70
 In military pomp conducts the pow'r
 Of some proud navy, bounding from the port
 To bear the vengeance of a mighty state
 Against a tyrant's walls. Till sultry noon
 They march; when halting, as they take repast, 75
 Across the plain before them they descry
 A troop of Thespians. One above the rest
 In eminence precedes. His glitt'ring shield,
 Whose gold-emblazon'd orb collects the beams,
 Cast by meridian Phœbus from his throne 80
 Flames like another sun. A snowy plume,
 With wanton curls disporting in the breeze,
 Floats o'er his dazzling casque. On nearer view
 Beneath the radiant honours of his crest
 A countenance of youth in rosy prime, 85
 And manly sweetness won the fix'd regard
 Of each beholder. With a modest grace
 He came respectful tow'rd the king, and show'd,
 That all ideas of his own desert
 Were sunk in veneration. So the god 90
 Of night salutes his empyreal fire;
 When from his altar in th' embow'ring grove
 Of balmy Delos, or the hallow'd bound
 Of Tenedos, or Claros, where he hears
 In hymns his praises from the sons of men, 95
 He reascends the high, Olympian seats:
 Such reverential homage on his brow,
 O'er shading, softens his effulgent bloom
 With loveliness and grace. The king receives
 Th' illustrious Thespian thus. My willing tongue
 Would style thee Dithyrambus. Thou dost bear 100
 All in thy aspect to become that name,
 Renown'd for worth and valour. O reveal
 Thy birth, thy charge. Whoe'er thou art, my soul
 Desires to know thee, and would call thee friend. 105
 To him the youth. O bulwark of our weal,

My name is Dithyrambus ; which the lips
 Of some benevolent, some gen'rous friend
 To thee have sounded in a partial strain,
 And thou hast heard with favour. In thy sight 110
 I stand, deputed by the Thespian chief,
 The Theban, Locrian, by the fam'd in war,
 Diomedon, to hasten thy approach.

Three days will bring the hostile pow'rs in view.

He said. The ready standards are uprear'd. 115

By zeal enforc'd, till ev'ning shadows fall,
 The march continues, then by day-spring sweeps
 The earliest dews. The van, by Agis led,
 Displays the grisly face of battle rough
 With spears obliquely trail'd in dreadful length 120
 Along th' indented way. Beside him march'd
 His gallant Thespian host. The centre boasts
 Leonidas the leader, who retains

The good Megistias near him. In the rear
 Dieneces commanded, who in charge 125

That Menalippus, offspring of his friend,
 For these instructions. Let thine eye, young man,
 Dwell on the order of our varying march ;
 As champain, valley, mountain, or defile
 Require a change. The eastern tyrant thus 130
 Conducts not his Barbarians like the sands
 In number. Yet the discipline of Greece
 They will encounter feeble, as the sands,
 Dash'd on a rock, and scatter'd in their fall.

To him th' inquiring youth. The martial tread,
 The flute's slow warble, both in just accord, 136
 Entrance my senses ; but let wonder ask,
 Why is that tender vehicle of sound
 Preferr'd in war by Sparta ? Other Greeks
 To more sonorous music rush in fight. 140

Son of my friend, Dieneces rejoins,
 Well dost thou note. I praise thee. Sparta's law
 With human passions, source of human woes,
 Maintains perpetual strife. She sternly curbs
 Our infant hearts, till passion yields its seat 145

To principle and order. Music too,
 By Spartans lov'd, is temper'd by the law ;
 Still to her plan subservient melts in notes,
 Which cool and sooth, not irritate and warm.
 Thus by habitual abstinence, apply'd 150
 To ev'ry sense, suppressing nature's fire,
 By modes of duty, not by ardour sway'd,
 O'er each impetuous enemy abroad,
 At home o'er vice and pleasure we prevail.

O might I merit a Laconian name ! 155
 The Acarnanian answer'd. But explain,
 What is the land we traverse ? What the hill,
 Whose parted summit in a spacious void
 Admits a bed of clouds ; And gracious tell,
 Whose are those suits of armour which I see 160
 Borne by two Helots ? At the questions pleas'd,
 Dieneces continues. Those belong
 To Alpheus and his brother. Light of foot
 They, disencumber'd, all at large precede
 This pond'rous band. They guide a troop of slaves,
 Our missile-weapon'd Helots, to observe, 166
 Provide, forewarn, and obstacles remove.
 This tract is Phocis. That divided hill
 Is fam'd Parnassus. Thence the voice divine
 Was sent by Phœbus, summoning to death 170
 The king of Sparta. From his fruitful blood
 A crop will spring of victory to Greece.

And these three hundred high in birth and rank
 All citizens of Sparta . . . cries the youth,
 They all must bleed, Dieneces subjoins, 175
 All with their leader. So the law decrees.

To him with earnest looks the gen'rous youth.
 Wilt thou not place me in that glorious hour
 Close to thy buckler ? Gratitude will brace
 Thy pupil's arm to manifest the force 180
 Of thy instruction. Menalippus, no,
 Return'd the chief. Not thou of Spartan breed,
 Nor call'd to perish. Thou unwedded too
 Would'st leave no race behind thee. Live to praise,

Live to enjoy our salutary fall. 185
 Reply is needless. See, the sun descends.
 The army halts, I trust thee with a charge,
 Son of Megistias. In my name command
 Th' attendant Helots to erect our camp.
 We pitch our tents in Locris. Quick the youth 190
 His charge accomplish'd. From a gen'rous meal,
 Where at the call of Alpheus, Locris show'r'd
 Her Amalthean plenty on her friends,
 The fated warriors soon in slumber lose
 The memory of toil. His watchful round 195
 Dieneses with Menalippus takes.

The moon rode high and clear. Her light benign
 To their pleas'd eyes a rural dwelling show'd,
 All unadorn'd, but seemly. Either side
 Was fenc'd by trees high-shadowing. The front 200
 Look'd on a crystal pool, by feather'd tribes
 At ev'ry dawn frequented. From the springs
 A small redundance fed a shallow brook,
 O'er smoothest pebbles rippling just to wake,
 Not startle silence, and the ear of night 205
 Entice to listen undisturb'd. Around
 The grass was cover'd by reposing sheep,
 Whole drowsy guard no longer bay'd the moon.

The warriors stopp'd, contemplating the seat
 Of rural quiet. Suddenly a swain 210
 Steps forth. His fingers touch the breathing reed.
 Uprise the fleecy train. Each faithful dog
 Is rous'd. All heedful of the wonted sound
 Their known conductor follow. Slow behind
 Th' observing warriors move. Ere long they reach
 A broad and verdant circle, thick enclos'd 216
 With birches strait and tall, whose glossy rind
 Is clad in silver from Diana's car.

The ground was holy, and the central spot
 An altar bore to Pan. Beyond the orb 220
 Of skreening trees th' external circuit swarm'd
 With sheep and beeves, each neighb'ring hamlet's
 wealth

Collected. Thither soon the swain arriv'd,
 Whom, by the name of Melibœus hail'd,
 A peasant throng surrounded. As their chief, 225
 He nigh the altar to his rural friends
 Address'd these words: O sent from diff'rent lords
 With contribution to the public wants,
 Time presses. God of peasants, bless our course!
 Speed to the slow-pac'd ox, for once impart! 230
 That o'er these valleys, cool'd by dewy night,
 We to our summons true, ere noon-tide blaze
 May join Oileus, and his praise obtain.

He ceas'd. To rustic madrigals and pipes,
 Combin'd with bleating notes and tinkling bells, 235
 With clamour shrill from busy tongues of dogs,
 Or hollow-sounding from the deep-mouth'd ox,
 Along the valley herd and flock are driv'n
 Successive, halting oft to harmless spoil
 Of flow'rs and herbage, springing in their sight. 240
 While Melibœus marshall'd with address
 The inoffensive host, unseen in shades
 Dieneses applauded, and the youth
 Of Menalippus caution'd. Let no word
 Impede the careful peasant. On his charge 245
 Depends our welfare. Diligent and staid
 He suits his godlike master. Thou wilt see
 That righteous hero soon. Now sleep demands
 Our debt to nature. On a carpet dry
 Of moss, beneath a wholesome beech they lay, 250
 Arm'd as they were. Their slumber short retires
 With nights last shadow. At their warning rous'd,
 The troops proceed. Th' admiring eye of youth
 In Menalippus caught the morning rays
 To guide its travel o'er the landscape wide 255
 Of cultivated hillocks, dales and lawns,
 Where mansions, hamlets interpos'd; where domes
 Rose to their gods through consecrated shades.
 He then exclaims. O say, can Jove devote
 These fields to ravage, those abodes to flames? 260
 The Spartan answers: Ravage, sword and fire

Must be endur'd as incidental ills.
 Suffice it, these invaders, soon or late,
 Will leave this soil more fertile by their blood,
 With spoils abundant to rebuild the fanes. 265
 Precarious benefits are these, thou see'st
 So fram'd by heav'n; but virtue is a good
 No foe can spoil, and lasting to the grave.

Beside the public way an oval fount
 Of marble sparkled with a silver spray 270
 Of falling rills, collected from above.

The army halted, and their hollow casques
 Dipp'd in the limpid stream. Behind it rose
 An edifice, compos'd of native roots,
 And oaken trunks of knotted girth unwrought. 275
 Within were beds of moss. Old, batter'd arms
 Hung from the roof. The curious chiefs approach
 These words, engraven on a tablet rude,
 Megistias reads; the rest in silence hear.

"Yon marble fountain, by Oileus plac'd, 280
 "To thirsty lips in living water flows;

"For weary steps he fram'd this cool retreat;

"A grateful off'ring here to rural peace,

"His dinted shield, his helmet he resign'd.

"O passenger, if born to noble deeds 285

"Thou would'st obtain perpetual grace from Jove,

"Devote thy vigour to heroic toils,

"And thy decline to hospitable cares.

"Rest here; then seek Oileus in his vale.

O Jove, burst forth Leonidas, thy grace 290
 Is large and various. Length of days and bliss

To him thou giv'st, to me a shorten'd term,

Nor yet less happy. Grateful we confess

Thy diff'rent bounties, measur'd full to both.

Come let us seek Oileus in his vale. 295

The word is giv'n. The heavy phalanx moves.

The light-pac'd Helots long ere morning dawn'd,

Had recommenc'd their progress. They o'ertook

Blithe Melibœus in a spacious vale,

The fruitfullest in Locris, ere the sun 300

Shot forth his noon-tide beams. On either side
 A surface scarce perceptibly ascends.
 Luxuriant vegetation crowds the soil
 With trees close-rang'd and mingling. Rich the loads
 Of native fruitage to the sight reveal 305
 Their vig'rous nurture. There the flushing peach,
 The apple, citron, almond, pear, and date,
 Pomegranates, purple mulberry, and fig
 From interlacing branches mix their hues
 And scents, the passenger's delight; but leave 310
 In the mid vale a pasture long and large,
 Exuberant in vivid verdure cropp'd
 By herds, by flocks innum'rous. Neighb'ring knolls
 Are speckled o'er with cots, whose humble roofs
 To herdsmen, shepherds, and laborious hinds 315
 Once yielded rest unbroken, till the name
 Of Xerxes shook their quiet. Yet this day
 Was festive. Swains and damsels, youth and age,
 From toil, from home enlarg'd, disporting, fill'd
 The enliven'd meadow. Under ev'ry shade 320
 A hoary minstrel sat; the maidens danc'd,
 Flocks bleated; oxen low'd; the horses neigh'd;
 With joy the vale resounded; terror fled;
 Leonidas was nigh. The welcome news
 By Melibœus, hast'ning to his lord, 325
 Was loudly told. The Helots too appear'd.
 While with his brother Alpheus thus discours'd.
 In this fair valley old Oileus dwells,
 The first of Locrians, of Laconia's state
 The public host. Yon large pavilions mark. 330
 They promise welcome. Thither let us bend,
 There tell our charge. This said, they both advance.
 A hoary band receives them. One, who seem'd
 In rank, in age superior, wav'd his hand
 To Melibœus, standing near, and spake. 335
 By this my faithful messenger I learn,
 That you are friends. Nor yet th' invader's foot
 Hath pass'd our confines. Else, o'ercast by time,

My sight would scarce distinguish friend or foe,
A Grecian or Barbarian. Alpheus then. 340

We come from Lacedemon, of our king
Leonidas forerunners. Is he nigh?
The cordial senior tenderly exclaims,
I am Oileus. Him a beardless boy
I knew in Lacedemon. Twenty years 345

Are since elaps'd. He scarce remembers me.
But I will feast him, as becomes my zeal,
Him and his army. You, my friends, repose.
They sit. He still discourses. Spartan guests,
In me an aged foldier you behold. 350

From Ajax, fam'd in Agamemnon's war,
Oilean Ajax flows my vital stream,
Unmix'd with his presumption. I have borne
The highest functions in the Locrian state,
Not with dishonour. Self-dismis'd, my age 355

Hath in this valley on my own demesne
Liv'd tranquil, not recluse. My comrades these,
Old magistrates and warriors like myself,
Releas'd from public care, with me retir'd
To rural quiet. Through our last remains 360

Of time in sweet garrulity we slide,
Recounting past achievements of our prime;
Nor wanting lib'ral means for lib'ral deeds,
Here blest'd, here blessing we reside. These flocks,
These herds and pastures, these our num'rous hinds,
And poverty, hence exil'd, may divulge 366

Our generous abundance. We can spread
A banquet for an army. By the state
Once more entreated, we accept a charge,
To age well-suited. By our watchful care 370

The goddess Plenty in your tents shall dwell.
He scarce had finish'd, when the ensigns broad
Of Lacedemon's phalanx down the vale
Were seen to wave, unfolding at the sound
Of flutes, soft warbling in th' expressive mood 375

Of Dorian sweetness unadorn'd. Around,
In notes of welcome ev'ry shepherd tun'd

His sprightly reed. The damiels show'd their hair,
Diversify'd with flow'rets. Garlands gay,
Rush-woven baskets, glowing with the dyes 380

Of amarintus, of jafmin, roses, pinks,
And violets they carry, tripping light
Before the steps of grimly-featur'd Mars
To blend the smiles of Flora with his frown.
Leonidas they chaunt in fylvan lays, 385

Him the defender of their meads and groves,
Him more than Pan, a guardian to their flocks.
While Philomela, in her poplar shade
Awaken'd, ftrains her emulating throat,
And joins with liquid trills the fwelling founds. 390

Behold Oileus and his ancient train
Accoft Laconia's king, whole looks and words
Confeis remembrance of the Locrian chief.

Thrice hail! Oileus, Sparta's noble hoft.
Thou art of old acquainted with her fons, 395
Their laws, their manners. Mufical as brave,
Train'd to delight in finooth Terpander's lay,
In Alcman's Dorian meafure, we enjoy
In thy melodious vale th' unlabour'd ftrains
Of rural pipes, to nightingales attun'd. 400

Our heart-felt gladnefs deems the golden age
Subfifting where thou govern'ft. Still thefe tones
Of joy continu'd, may thy dwelling here!
Still may this plenty, unmolefted, crown
The favour'd diftrict! May thy rev'rend duft 405
Have peaceful fhelter in thy father's tomb!
Kind heav'n, that merit to my fword impart!

By joy uplifted, forth Oileus broke.
Thou doft recal me then! O fent to guard
Thefe fruits from fpoil, thefe hoary locks from fhame,
Permit thy weary'd fouldiers to partake 410
Of Locrian plenty. Enter thou my tents,
Thou and thy captains. I falute them all.

The hero full of dignity and years,
Once bold in action, placed now in eafe, 415
E'en by his look, benignly caft around,

Gives lassitude relief. With native grace,
 With heart-effus'd complacency the king
 Accepts the lib'ral welcome, while his troops,
 To relaxation and repast dismifs'd, 420
 Pitch on the wounded green their bristled spears.

Still is the evening. Under chesnut shades
 With interweaving poplars spacious stands
 A well-fram'd tent. There calm the heroes sit,
 The genial board enjoy, and feast the mind 425
 On sage discourse; which thus Oileus clos'd.

Behold, night lifts her signal to invoke
 That friendly god, who owns the drowly wand.
 'To Mercury this last libation flows.
 Farewel till morn. They separate, they sleep 430
 All but Oileus, who forsakes the tent.

On Melibœus, in these words he calls.
 Approach my faithful friend. To him the swain.
 Thy bondman hears thy call. The chief replies,
 Loud for the gath'ring peasantry to heed. 435

Come, Melibœus, it is surely time,
 That my repeated gift, the name of friend
 Thou shouldst accept. The name of bondman wounds
 My ear. Be free. No longer, best of men,
 Reject that boon, nor let my feeble head, 440

To thee a debtor, as to gracious heaven,
 Descend and sleep unthankful in the grave.
 Though yielding nature daily feels decay;
 Thou dost prevent all care. The gods estrange
 Pain from my pillow, have secur'd my breast 445

From weeds too oft in aged soil profuse,
 From self-tormenting petulance and pride,
 From jealousy and envy at the fame
 Of younger men. Leonidas will dim
 My former lustre, as that silver orb 450
 Outshines the meanest star; and I rejoice.

O Melibœus, these elect of Jove
 To certain death advance. Immortal powers!
 How social, how endearing is their speech!
 How flow in lib'ral cheerfulness their hearts! 455

To such a period verging men like these
 Age well may envy, and that envy take
 The genuine shape of virtue. Let their span
 Of earthly being, while it lasts, contain
 Each earthly joy. Till blest'd Elysium spread 460
 Her ever-blooming, inexhausted stores
 To their glad sight, be mine the grateful task
 To drain my plenty. From the vaulted caves
 Our vessels large of well-fermented wine,
 From all our gran'ries lift the treasur'd corn. 465
 Go, load the groaning axles. Nor forget
 With garments new to greet Melissa's nymphs.
 To her a triple change of vestments bear
 With twenty lambs, and twenty speckled kids.
 Be it your care, my peasants, some to aid 470
 Him your director, others to select
 Five hundred oxen, thrice a thousand sheep,
 Of lusty swains a thousand. Let the morn,
 When first she blushes, see my will perform'd.

They heard. Their lord's injunctions to fulfil 475
 Was their ambition. He, unresting, mounts
 A ready car. The coursers had enroll'd
 His name in Isthmian and Nemean games.
 By moonlight, floating on the splendid reins,
 He o'er the busy vale intent is borne 480
 From place to place, o'erlooks, directs, forgets
 That he is old. Meantime the shades of night,
 Retiring, wake Dienece. He gives
 The word. His pupil seconds. Ev'ry hand
 Is arm'd. Day opens. Sparta's king appears. 485
 Oileus greets him. In his radiant car
 The senior stâys reluctant; but his guest
 So wills in Spartan reverence to age.
 Then spake the Locrian. To assist thy camp
 A chosen band of peasants I detach. 490
 I trust thy valour. Doubt not thou my care,
 Nor doubt that swain. Oileus, speaking, look'd
 On Melibœus. Skilful he commands
 These hinds. Him wise, him faithful I have prov'd

More than Eumæus to Laertes' son. 495
 To him th' Oetæan woods, their devious tracks
 Are known, each rill and fountain. Near the pass
 Two thousand Locrians wilt thou find encamp'd,
 My eldest born their leader, Medon nam'd,
 Well exercis'd in arms. My daughter dwells 500
 On Oeta. Sage Melissa she is call'd,
 Enlighten'd priestess of the tuneful nine.
 She haply may accost thee. Thou wilt lend
 An ear. Not fruitless are Melissa's words.
 Now, servants, bring the sacred wine. Obey'd, 505
 He, from his seat uprising, thus proceeds:
 Lo! from this chalice a libation pure
 To Mars, to Grecian liberty and laws,
 To their protector eleutherian Jove,
 To his nine daughters, who record the brave, 510
 To thy renown, Leonidas, I pour;
 And take an old man's benediction too.
 He stopp'd. Affection, struggling in his heart,
 Burst forth again. Illustrious guest, afford
 Another hour. That slender space of time 515
 Yield to my sole possession. While the troops,
 Already glitt'ring down the dewy vale,
 File through its narrow'd outlet; near my side
 Deign to be carry'd, and my talk endure.
 The king, well pleas'd, ascends. Slow move the
 steeds 520
 Behind the rear. Oileus grasps his hand,
 Then in the fulness of his soul pursues.
 Thy veneration for Laconia's laws
 That I may strengthen, may to rapture warm,
 Hear me display the melancholy fruits 525
 Of lawless will. When o'er the Lydian plains
 Th' innumerable tents of Xerxes spread,
 His vassal Pythius, who in affluent means
 Surpasses me, as that Barbarian prince
 Thou dost in virtue, entertain'd the host, 530
 And proffer'd all his treasures. These the king
 Refusing, c'en augmented from his own.

An act of fancy, not habitual grace,
 A sparkling vapour through the regal gloom
 Of cruelty and pride. He now prepar'd 535
 To march from Sardis, when with humble tears
 The good old man besought him. Let the king
 Propitious hear a parent. In thy train
 I have five sons. Ah! leave my eldest born,
 Thy future vassal, to sustain my age! 540
 The tyrant fell reply'd: Presumptuous man,
 Who art my slave, in this tremendous war,
 Is not my person hazarded, my race,
 My consort? Former merit saves from death
 Four of thy offspring. Him, so dearly priz'd, 545
 Thy folly hath destroy'd. His body straight
 Was hewn asunder. By the public way
 On either side a bleeding half was cast,
 And millions pass'd between. O Spartan king,
 Taught to revere the sanctity of laws, 550
 The acts of Xerxes with thy own compare,
 His fame with thine. The curses of mankind
 Give him renown. He marches to destroy,
 But thou to save. Behold the trees are bent,
 Each eminence is loaded thick with crowds, 555
 From cots, from ev'ry hamlet pour'd abroad,
 To bless thy steps, to celebrate thy praise.
 Oft times the king his decent brow inclin'd,
 Mute and obsequious to an elder's voice,
 Which through th' instructed ear, unceasing flow'd
 In eloquence and knowledge. Scarce an hour 561
 Was fled. The narrow dale was left behind.
 A causeway broad disclos'd an ancient pile
 Of military fame. A trophy large,
 Compact with crested morions, targets rude, 565
 With spears and corslets, dimm'd by eating age,
 Stood near a lake pellucid, smooth, profound,
 Of circular expanse, whose bosom show'd
 A green slop'd island, figur'd o'er with flow'rs,
 And from its centre lifting high to view 570
 A marble chapel, on the massy strength

Of Doric columns rais'd. A full wrought freeze
 Display'd the sculptor's art. In solemn pomp
 Of obelisks and busts, and story'd urns
 Sepulchral mansions of illustrious dead 575
 Were scatter'd round, o'ercastr'd with shadows black
 Of yew and cypress. In a serious note
 Oileus, pointing, opens new discourse.
 Beneath yon turf my ancestors repose.
 Oilean Ajax singly was depriv'd 580
 Of fun'ral honours there. With impious lust
 He stain'd Minerva's temple. From the gulf
 Of briny waters by their god preserv'd,
 That god he brav'd. He lies beneath a rock,
 By Neptune's trident in his wrath o'erturn'd. 585
 Shut from Elysium for a hundred years,
 The hero's ghost bewail'd his oozy tomb.
 A race more pious on the Oilean house
 Felicity had drawn. To ev'ry god
 I owe my bliss, my early fame to Pan, 590
 Once on the margin of that silent pool
 In their nocturnal camp Barbarians lay,
 Awaiting morn to violate the dead.
 My youth was fir'd. I summon'd from their cots
 A rustic host. We sacrific'd to Pan, 595
 Assail'd th' unguarded ruffians in his name.
 He with his terrors smote their yielding hearts.
 Not one surviv'd the fury of our swains.
 Rich was the pillage. Hence that trophy rose;
 Of costly blocks constructed, hence that fane, 600
 Inscrib'd to Pan th' armipotent. O king,
 Be to an old man's vanity benign.
 This frowning emblem of terrific war
 Proclaims the ardour and exploits of youth.
 This, to Barbarian strangers, ent'ring Greece, 605
 Shows what I was. The marble fount thou saw'st,
 Of living water, whose transparent flow
 Reliev'd thy march in yester sultry sun,
 The cell, which offer'd rest on beds of moss,
 Show what I am, to Grecian neighbours show 610

The hospitality of age. O age,
 Where are thy graces, but in lib'ral deeds,
 In bland deportment? Would thy furrow'd cheeks
 Lose the deformity of time? Let smiles
 Dwell in thy wrinkles. Then, rever'd by youth, 615
 Thy feeble steps will find——Abruptly here
 He paus'd. A manly warrior full in sight
 Beside the trophy on his target lean'd,
 Unknown to Sparta's leader, who address'd
 His rev'rend host. Thou pausest. Let me ask, 620
 Whom do I see, resembling in his form
 A demigod? In transport then the sage.

It is my son, discover'd by his shield,
 Thy brave auxiliar Medon. He sustains
 My ancient honours in his native state, 625
 Which kindly chose my offspring to replace
 Their long-sequester'd chief. Heart-winning guest!
 My life, a tide of joy, which never knew
 A painful ebb, beyond its wonted mark
 Flows in thy converse. Could a wish prevail, 630
 My long and happy course should finish here.

The chariot rested. Medon now approach'd,
 Saluting thus Leonidas: O king
 Of warlike Sparta, Xerxes' host in sight
 Begin to spread their multitude, and fill 635
 The spacious Malian plain. The king replies:

Accept, illustrious messenger, my thanks.
 With such a brave assistant, as the son
 Of great Oïleus, more assur'd I go
 To face those numbers. With this godlike friend 640
 The father, now dismounting from his car,
 Embraces Medon. In a sliding bark
 They all are wafted to the island fane,
 Erected by Oïleus, and enrich'd
 With his engrav'd achievements. Thence the eye 645
 Of Sparta's gen'ral in extensive scope
 Contemplates each battalion, as they wind
 Along the pool; whose limpid face reflects
 Their weapons, glitt'ning in the early sun.

Them he to Pan armipotent commends, 650
 His favour thus invoking. God, whose pow'r
 By rumour vain, or Echo's empty voice
 Can sink the valiant in desponding fear,
 Can disarray whole armies, smile on these,
 Thy worshippers. Thy own Arcadians guard. 655
 Through thee Oileus triumph'd. On his son,
 On me look down. Our shields auxiliar join
 Against profane Barbarians, who insult
 The Grecian gods, and meditate the fall
 Of this thy shrine. He said, and now intent 660
 To leave the island, on Oileus call'd.

He, Medon answer'd, by his joy and zeal
 Too high transported, and discoursing long,
 Felt on his drowsy lids a balmy down
 Of heaviness descending. He, unmark'd 665
 Amid thy pious commerce with the god,
 Was silently remov'd. The good old chief
 On carpets rais'd by tender menial hands,
 Calm in the secret sanctuary is laid.

His hast'ning step Leonidas restrains, 670
 Thus fervent prays: O Maia's son best pleas'd,
 When calling slumber to a virtuous eye,
 Watch o'er my venerable friend. Thy balm
 He wants, exhausted by his love to me.
 Sweet sleep, thou soft'nest that intruding pang, 675
 Which gen'rous breasts so parting must admit.

He said, embark'd, relanded. To his side 678
 Inviting Medon, he rejoin'd the host.



BOOK III.

The Argument.

LEONIDAS arrives at Thermopylæ about noon on the fourth day of his departure from the isthmus. He is received by Demophilus, the commander of Thespia, and by Anaxander the Theban, treacherously recommending Epialtes, a Malian, who seeks, by a pompous description of the Persian power, to intimidate the Grecian leaders, as they are viewing the enemy's camp from the top of mount Oeta. He is answered by Dienece and Diomedon. Xerxes sends Tigranes and Phraortes to the Grecian camp, who are dismissed by Leonidas, and conducted back by Dithyrambus and Diomedon; which last, incensed at the arrogance of Tigranes, treats him with contempt and menaces. This occasions a challenge to single combat between Diomedon and Tigranes, Dithyrambus and Phraortes. Epialtes, after a conference with Anaxander, declares his intention of returning to Xerxes. Leonidas dispatches Agis with Menobrus, a faithful slave of Oileus, and high in the estimation of his lord, to view a body of Phocians, who had been posted at a distance from Thermopylæ for the defence of another pass in mount Oeta.

NOW in the van Leonidas appears,
 With Medon still conferring. Hast thou heard,
 He said, among th' innumerable toes
 What chiefs are most distinguish'd? Might we trust
 To fame, reply'd the Locrian, Xerxes boasts 5
 His ablest, bravest counsellor and chief
 In Artemisia, Caria's matchless queen.
 To old Darius benefits had bound
 Her lord, herself to Xerxes. Not compell'd,
 Except by magnanimity, she leads 10
 The best appointed squadron in his fleet.
 No female softness Artemisia knows,
 But in maternal love. Her widow'd hand
 With equity and firmness for her son
 Administers the sway. Of Doric race 15
 She still retains the spirit, which from Greece
 Her ancestors transplanted. Other chiefs
 Are all Barbarians, little known to fame,
 Save one, whom Sparta hath herself supply'd,
 Not less than Demaratus, once her king, 20
 An exile now. Leonidas rejoins.

Son of Oileus, like thy father wise,
 Like him partake my confidence. Thy words
 Recal an era, sadd'ning all my thoughts.
 That injur'd Spartan shar'd the regal sway 25

With one—Alas! my brother, eldest born,
 Unblest'd by nature, favour'd by no god,
 Cleomenes. Insanity of mind,
 Malignant passions, impious acts deform'd
 A life, concluded by his own fell hand.

30

Against his colleague envious he suborn'd
 Leutychides. Him perjury and fraud
 Plac'd on the seat, by Demaratus held
 Unstain'd in lustre. Here Oïleus' son.

My future service only can repay
 Thy confidential friendship. Let us close
 The gloomy theme. Thermopylæ is nigh.
 Each face in transport glows. Now Oeta rear'd
 His tow'ring forehead. With impatient steps
 On rush'd the phalanx, sounding pæans high;

40

As if the present deity of fame
 Had from the summit shown her dazzling form,
 With wreaths unfading on her temples bound,
 Her adamant trumpet in her hand,

To celebrate their valour. From the van
 Leonidas advances like the sun,

45

When through dividing clouds his presence stays
 Their sweeping rack, and stills the clam'rous wind.

The army silent halt. Their ensigns fan
 The air no longer. Motionless their spears.

50

His eye reveals the ardour of his soul,
 Which thus finds utterance from his eager lips.

All hail! Thermopylæ, and you, the pow'rs
 Presiding here. All hail! ye sylvan gods,

Ye fountain nymphs, who send your lucid rills
 In broken murmurs down the rugged steep.

55

Receive us, O benignant, and support

The cause of Greece. Conceal the secret paths,

Which o'er these crags, and through their forests wind,

Untrod by human feet, and trac'd alone

60

By your immortal footsteps. O defend

Your own recesses, nor let impious war

Profane the solemn silence of your groves.

Then on your hills your praises shall you hear

From those, whose deeds shall tell th' approving world,
 That not to undeservers did ye grant 66
 Your high protection. You, my valiant friends,
 Now rouse the gen'rous spirit, which inflames
 Your hearts; exert the vigour of your arms:
 That in the bosoms of the brave and free 70
 Your memorable actions may survive;
 May sound delightful in the ear of Time,
 Long as blue Neptune beats the Malian strand,
 Or those tall cliffs erect their shaggy tops
 So near to heav'n, your monuments of fame. 75

As in some torrid region, where the head
 Of Ceres bends beneath her golden load;
 If from a burning brand a scatter'd spark
 Invade the parching ground; a sudden blaze
 Sweeps o'er the crackling champain: through his host
 Not with less swiftness to the furthest ranks 81
 The words of great Leonidas diffus'd
 A more than mortal fervour. Ev'ry heart
 Distends with thoughts of glory, such as raise
 The patriot's virtue, and the soldier's fire; 85
 When Danger, most tremendous in his form,
 Seems in their sight most lovely. On their minds
 Imagination pictures all the scenes
 Of war, the purple field, the heaps of dead,
 The glitt'ring trophy, pil'd with Persian arms. 90

But lo! the Grecian leaders, who before
 Were station'd near Thermopylæ, salute
 Laconia's king. The Thespian chief, ally'd
 To Dithyrambus, first the silence breaks,
 An ancient warrior. From behind his casque, 95
 Whose crested weight his aged temples bore,
 The slender hairs, all silver'd o'er by time,
 Flow'd venerable down. He thus began:

Joy now shall crown the period of my days;
 And whether nigh my father's urn I sleep; 100
 Or, slain by Persia's sword, embrace the earth,
 Our common parent; be it as the gods
 Shall best determine. For the present hour

I bless their bounty, which hath giv'n my age
 To see the brave Leonidas, and bid 105
 That hero welcome on this glorious shore,
 To fix the basis of the Grecian weal.

Here too the crafty Anaxander spake.
 Of all the Thebans, we, rejoicing, hail
 The king of Sparta. We obey'd his call. 110
 O may oblivion o'er the shame of Thebes
 A dark'ning veil extend ! or those alone
 By Fame be curs'd, whose impious councils turn
 Their countrymen from virtue ! Thebes was sunk,
 Her glory bury'd in dishonest sloth. 115
 To wake her languor gen'rous Alphæus came,
 The messenger of freedom. O accept
 Our grateful hearts ; thou, Alpheus, art the cause
 That Anaxander from his native gates
 Not single joins this host, nor tamely these, 120
 My chosen friends behind their walls remain.
 Enough of words. Time presses. Mount, ye chiefs,
 This lostiest part of Oeta. This o'erlooks
 The streights, and far beyond their northern mouth
 Extends our sight across the Malian plain. 125
 Behold a native, Epialtes call'd,
 Who with the foe from Thracia's bounds hath
 march'd.

Disguis'd in seeming worth, he ended here.
 The camp not long had Epialtes reach'd,
 By race a Malian. Eloquent his tongue, 130
 His heart was false and abject. He was skill'd
 To grace perfidious councils, and to clothe
 In swelling phrase the baseness of his soul,
 Foul nurse of treasons. To the tents of Greece,
 Himself a Greek, a faithless spy he came. 135
 Soon to the friends of Xerxes he repair'd,
 The Theban chiefs, and nightly councils held
 How to betray the Spartans, or deject
 By consternation. Up the arduous slope
 With him each leader to the summit climbs. 140
 Thence a tremendous prospect they command,

Where endless plains, by white pavilions hid,
 Spread like the vast Atlantic, when no shore,
 No rock, no promontory stops the sight
 Unbounded, as it wanders; while the moon, 145
 Resplendent eye of night, in fullest orb
 Surveys th' interminate expanse, and throws
 Her rays abroad to deck in snowy light
 The dancing billows. Such was Xerxes' camp;
 A pow'r unrivall'd by the mightiest king, 150
 Or fiercest conqu'ror, whose blood-thirsty pride,
 Dissolving all the sacred ties which bind
 The happiness of nations, hath upcall'd
 The sleeping fury, Discord, from her den.
 Not from the hundred brazen gates of Thebes, 155
 The tow'rs of Memphis, and those pregnant fields,
 Enrich'd by kindly Nile, such armies swarm'd
 Around Sesostris; who with trophies fill'd
 The vanquish'd east, who o'er the rapid foam
 Of distant Tanais, o'er the surface broad 160
 Of Ganges, sent his formidable name.
 Nor yet in Asia's far extended bounds
 E'er met such numbers, not when Ninus led
 Th' Assyrian race to conquest. Not the gates
 Of Babylon along Euphrates pour'd 165
 Such myriads arm'd; when, emptying all her streets,
 The rage of dire Semiramis they bore
 Beyond the Indus; there defeated, left
 His blood stain'd current turbid with their dead.
 Yet of the chiefs, contemplating this scene, 170
 Not one is shaken. Undismay'd they stand;
 Th' immeasurable camp with fearless eyes
 They traverse: while in meditation near
 The treach'rous Malian waits, collecting all
 His pomp of words to paint the hostile pow'r; 175
 Nor yet with falsehoods arms his fraudulent tongue
 To feign a tale of terror. Truth herself
 Beyond the reach of fiction to enhance
 New aids his treason, and with cold dismay
 Might pierce the boldest heart, unless secur'd 180

By dauntless virtue, which disdains to live,
 From liberty divorc'd. Requested soon,
 He breaks his artful silence. Greeks and friends,
 Can I behold my native Malian fields,
 Presenting hostile millions to your sight, 185
 And not in grief suppress the horrid tale,
 Which you exact from these ill-omen'd lips.
 On Tracia's sea-beat verge I watch'd the foes;
 Where, joining Europe to the Asian strand,
 A mighty bridge restrain'd th' outrageous waves, 190
 And stemm'd the impetuous current: while in arms
 The universal progeny of men
 Seem'd trampling o'er the subjugated flood
 By thousands, by ten thousands. Persians, Medes,
 Assyrians, Saces, Indians, swarthy files 195
 From Ethiopia, Egypt's tawny sons,
 Arabians, Bactrians, Parthians, all the strength
 Of Asia, and of Libya. Neptune groan'd
 Beneath their number, and indignant heav'd
 His neck against th' incumbent weight. In vain 200
 The violence of Eurus and the north,
 With rage combin'd, against th' unyielding pile
 Dash'd half the Hellespont. The eastern world
 Seven days and nights uninterrupted pass
 To cover Thracia's regions. They accept 205
 A Persian lord. They range their hardy race
 Beneath his standards. Macedonia's youth,
 The brave Thessalian horse with ev'ry Greek,
 Who dwells beyond Thermopylæ, attend,
 Assist a foreign tyrant. Sire of gods, 210
 Who in a moment by thy will supreme
 Canst quell the mighty in their proudest hopes,
 Canst raise the weak to safety, Oh! impart
 Thy instant succour! Interpose thy arm!
 With lightning blast their standards! Oh! confound
 With triple-bolted thunder Asia's tents, 216
 Whence rushing millions by the morn will pour
 An inundation to o'erwhelm the Greeks.
 Resistance else were vain against a host,

Which overspreads Theffalia. Far beyond 220
 That Malian champain, ftretching wide below,
 Beyond the utmoft measure of the fight
 From this afpiring cliff, the hostile camp
 Contains yet mightier numbers ; who have drain'd
 The beds of copious rivers with their thirft, 225
 Who with their arrows hide the mid-day fun.

Then we fhall give them battle in the fhade,
 Dieneses reply'd. Not calmly thus
 Diomedon. On Perfia's camp he bent
 His low'ring brow, which frowns had furrow'd o'er,
 Then fierce exclaim'd. Bellona, turn and view 231
 With joyful eyes that field, the fatal ftage,
 By regal madnefs for thy rage prepar'd
 To exercife its horrors. Whet thy teeth,
 Voracious Death. All Afia is thy prey, 235
 Contagion, famine, and the Grecian fword,
 For thy infatiate hunger will provide
 Variety of carnage. He concludes;
 While on the hoft immense his cloudy brow
 Is fix'd difdainful, and their ftrength defies. 240

Meantime an eastern herald down the pafs
 Was feen, flow moving towards the Phocian wall
 From Afia's monarch delegated, came
 Tigranes and Phraortes. From the hill
 Leonidas conducts th' impatient chiefs. 245
 By them environ'd, in his tent he fits;
 Where thus Tigranes their attention calls.

Ambaffadors from Perfia's king we ftand
 Before you, Grecians. To difplay the pow'r
 Of our great mafter, were a needlefs task. 250
 The name of Xerxes, Afia's mighty lord,
 Invincible, exalted on a throne,
 Surpaffing human luftre, muft have reach'd
 'To ev'ry clime, and ev'ry heart impreff'd
 With awe, and low fubmiffion. Yet I fwear 255
 By yon refulgent orb, which flames above,
 The glorious fymbol of eternal pow'r,
 This military throng, this fhew of war

Well nigh persuade me, you have never heard
That name, at whose commanding sound the banks
Of Indus tremble, and the Caspian wave, 261
Th' Egyptian flood, the Hellespontic surge
Obedient roll. O impotent and rash ;
Whom yet the large beneficence of heav'n,
And heav'nly Xerxes, merciful and kind, 265
Deign to preserve. Resign your arms. Disperse
All to your cities. There let humblest hands
With earth and water greet your destin'd lord.

As through th' extensive grove, whose leafy boughs
Entwining, crown some eminence with shade, 270
The tempests rush sonorous, and between
The crashing branches roar ; by fierce disdain,
By indignation, thus the Grecians rous'd,
In loudest clamour close the Persian's speech :
But ev'ry tongue was hush'd, when Sparta's king 275
This brief reply deliver'd from his seat.

O Persian ! when to Xerxes thou return'st,
Say, thou hast told the wonders of his pow'r,
Then say, thou saw'st a slender band of Greece,
Which dares his boasted millions to the field. 280

He adds no more. Th' ambassadors retire.
Them o'er the limits of the Grecian lines
Diomedon and Thespia's youth conduct.
In slow solemnity they all proceed,
And sullen silence ; but their looks denote 285
Far more than speech could utter. Wrath contracts
The forehead of Diomedon. His teeth
Gnash with impatience of delay'd revenge.
Disdain, which sprung from conscious merit, flush'd
The cheek of Dithyrambus. On the face 290
Of either Persian arrogance, incens'd
By disappointment, lour'd. The utmost freight
They now attain'd, which open'd to the tents
Of Asia, there discov'ring wide to view
Her deep, immense arrangement. Then the heart 295
Of vain Tigranes, swelling at the sight,
Thus overflows in loud and haughty phrase.

O Arimanius ! origin of ill,
 Have we demanded of thy ruthless pow'r
 Thus with the curse of madness to afflict 300
 These wretched men ? But since thy dreadful ire
 To irresistible perdition dooms
 The Grecian race, we vainly should oppose.
 Be thy dire will accomplish'd. Let them fall,
 Their native soil be fatten'd with their blood. 305

Enrag'd, the stern Diomedon replies.
 Thou base dependant on a lawless king,
 Thou purple slave, thou boaster, dost thou know
 That I beheld the Marathonian field ?
 Where, like the Lybian sands before the wind, 310
 Your host was scatter'd by Athenian spears ;
 Where thou, perhaps, by ignominious flight
 Didst from this arm protect thy shiv'ring limbs.
 O let me find thee in to-morrow's fight !
 Along this rocky pavement shalt thou lie, 315
 To dogs a banquet. With uplifted palms
 Tigranes then. Omnipotent support
 Of scepter'd Xerxes, Horomazes, hear !
 To thee his first victorious fruits of war
 Thy worshipper devotes, the gory spoils, 320
 Which from this Grecian, by the rising dawn,
 In sight of either host my strength shall rend.

At length Phraortes, interposing, spake.
 I too would find among the Grecian chiefs
 One, who in battle dares abide my lance. 325

The gallant youth of Thespia swift reply'd.
 Thou look'st on me, O Persian. Worthier far
 Thou might have singled from the ranks of Greece,
 Not one more willing to essay thy force.
 Yes, I will prove before the eye of Mars, 330
 How far the prowess of her meanest chief
 Beyond thy vaunts deserves the palm of fame.

This said, the Persians to their king repair,
 Back to their camp the Grecians. There they find
 Each soldier, poising his extended spear, 335
 His weighty buckler bracing on his arm

In warlike preparation. Through the files
 Each leader, moving vigilant, by praise,
 By exhortation aids their native warmth.
 Alone the Theban Anaxander pin'd, 340
 Who thus apart his Malian friend bespake.

What has thy lofty eloquence avail'd,
 Alas! in vain attempting to confound
 'The Spartan valour? With redoubled fires,
 See, how their bosoms glow. They wish to die; 345
 They wait impatient for th' unequal fight.
 Too soon th' insuperable foes will spread
 Promiscuous havoc round, and Thebans share
 The doom of Spartans. Through the guarded pass
 Who will adventure Asia's camp to reach 350
 In our behalf? That Xerxes may be warn'd
 To spare his friends amid the gen'ral wreck;
 When his high-swoln resentment, like a flood,
 Increas'd by stormy show'rs, shall cover Greece
 With desolation. Epialtes here. 355

Whence, Anaxander, this unjust despair?
 Is there a path on Oeta's hills unknown
 To Epialtes? Over trackless rocks
 Through mazy woods my secret steps can pass.
 Farewel. I go. Thy merit shall be told 360
 To Persia's king. Thou only watch the hour;
 When wanted most, thy ready succour lend.

Meantime a wary, comprehensive care
 To ev'ry part Leonidas extends;
 As in the human frame through ev'ry vein, 365
 And artery minute, the ruling heart
 Its vital pow'rs disperses. In his tent
 The prudent chief of Locris he consults;
 He summons Melibœus by the voice
 Of Agis. In humility not mean, 370
 By no unseemly ignorance depress'd,
 Th' ingenuous swain, by all th' illustrious house
 Of Ajax honour'd, bows before the king,
 Who gracious spake. The confidence bestow'd,
 The praise by sage Oileus might suffice 375

To verify thy worth. Myself have watch'd,
Have found thee skilful, active, and discreet.
Thou know'st the region round. With Agis go,
The upper streights, the Phocian camp explore.

O condescension ! Melibœus then, 380
More ornamental to the great, than gems,
A purple robe, or diadem. The king
Accepts my service. Pleasing is my task.
Spare not thy servant. Exercise my zeal.
Oileus will rejoice, and smiling, say, 385
An humble hand may smooth a hero's path.

He leads the way, while Agis following, spake.
O swain ! distinguish'd by a lib'ral mind,
Who were thy parents ? Where thy place of birth ?
What chance depriv'd thee of a father's house ? 390
Oileus sure thy liberty would grant,
Or Sparta's king solicit for that grace ;
When in a station equal to thy worth
'Thou may'it be rank'd. The prudent hind began.

In diff'rent stations diff'rent virtues dwell, 395
All reaping diff'rent benefits. The great
Indignity and honours meet reward
For acts of bounty, and heroic toils.
A servant's merit is obedience, truth,
Fidelity ; his recompense content. 400

Be not offended at my words, O chief !
They, who are free, with envy may behold
This bondman of Oileus. To his trust,
His love exalted, I by nature's pow'r
From his pure model could not fail to mould 405
What—thou entitlest lib'ral. Whence I came,
Or who my parents, is to me unknown.

In childhood seiz'd by robbers, I was sold.
They took their price. They hush'd th' atrocious deed.
Dear to Oileus and his race I throve ; 410
And whether noble, or ignoble born,
I am contented, studious of their love
Alone. Ye sons of Sparta, I admire
Your acts, your spirit, but confine my own

To their condition, happy in my lord, 415
 Himself of men most happy. Agis bland
 Rejoins. O! born with talents to become
 A lot more noble, which, by thee refus'd,
 Thou dost the more deserve. Laconia's king
 Discerns thy merit through its modest veil. 420
 Consummate prudence in thy words I hear.
 Long may contentment, justly priz'd, be thine.
 But should the state demand thee, I foresee,
 Thou wouldst like others in the field excel,
 Wouldst share in glory. Blithe return'd the swain. 425
 Not ev'ry service is confin'd to arms.
 Thou shalt behold me in my present state
 Not useless. If the charge Oileus gave
 I can accomplish, meriting his praise,
 And thy esteem, my glory will be full. 430
 Both pleas'd in converse, thus pursue their way,
 Where Oeta lifts her summits huge to heav'n
 In rocks abrupt, pyramidal, or tower'd
 Like castles. Sudden from a tufted crag,
 Where goats are browsing, Melibœus hears
 A call of welcome. There his course he stays. 436



BOOK IV.

The Argument.

TIGRANES and Phraortes repair to Xerxes, whom they find seated on a throne, surrounded by his Satraps in a magnificent pavilion; while the Magi stand before him, and sing a hymn, containing the religion of Zoroastres. Xerxes, notwithstanding the arguments of his brothers, Hyperanthes and Abrocomes, gives no credit to the ambassadors, who report, that the Grecians are determined to maintain the pass against him; but by the advice of Artemisia, the queen of Caria, ascends his chariot to take a view of the Grecians himself, and commands Demaratus, an exiled king of Sparta, to attend him. He passes through the midst of his army, consisting of many nations, differing in arms, customs, and manners. He advances to the entrance of the streights, and, surpris'd at the behaviour of the Spartans, demands the reason of it from Demaratus; which occasions a conversation between them on the mercenary forces of Persia, and the militia of Greece. Demaratus, weeping at the sight of his countrymen, is comforted by Hyperanthes. Xerxes, still incredulous, commands Tigranes and Phraortes to bring the Grecians bound before him the next day, and retires to his pavilion. Artemisia remains behind with her son, and communicates to Hyperanthes her apprehensions of a defeat at Thermopylæ. She takes an accurate view of the pass, chooses a convenient place for an ambuscade, and her departure to the Persian camp is surpris'd by a reproof from a woman of an awful appearance on a cliff of mount Oeta.

THE plain beyond Thermopylæ is girt
 Half round by mountains, half by Neptune lav'd,
 The arduous ridge is broken deep in clefts,
 Which open channels to pellucid streams
 In rapid flow sonorous. Chief in fame 5
 Spercheos, boasting once his poplars tall,
 Foams down a stony bed. Throughout the face
 Of this broad champain numberless are pitch'd
 Barbarian tents. Along the winding flood
 To rich Theffalia's confines they extend. 10
 They fill the vallies, late profusely blest'd
 In Nature's vary'd beauties. Hostile spears
 Now bristle horrid through her languid shrubs.
 Pale die her flowrets under barb'rous feet.
 Embracing ivy from its rock is torn. 15
 The lawn, dismantled of its verdure, fades.
 The poplar groves, uprooted from the banks,
 Leave desolate the stream. Elab'rate domes,
 To heav'n devoted in recesses green,
 Had felt rude force, insensible and blind 20
 To elegance and art. The statues, busts,
 The figur'd vases, mutilated lie
 With chisell'd columns, their engraven freeze,

Their architrave and cornice, all disjoin'd.
 Yet unpolluted is a part reserv'd 25
 In this deep vale, a patrimonial spot
 Of Aleuadian princes, who, allies
 To Xerxes, reign'd in Theffaly. There glow
 Inviolatè the shrubs. There branch the trees,
 Sons of the forest. Over downy moss 30
 Smooth walks and fragrant, lucid here and broad,
 There clos'd in myrtle under woodbine roofs,
 Wind to retreats-delectable, to grotts,
 To sylvan structures, bow'rs, and cooling dells,
 Enliven'd all and musical with birds 35
 Of vocal sweetness, in relucènt plumes
 Innumèrably various. Lulling falls
 Of liquid crystal from perennial founts
 Attune their pebbled channels. Here the queen,
 The noble dames of Persia, here the train 40
 Of royal infants, each with eunuch guards,
 In rich pavilions, dazzling to the sight,
 Possess'd, remote from onset and surprise,
 A tranquil station. Ariana here,
 Ill-destin'd princess, from Darius sprung, 45
 Hangs, undelighted, o'er melodious rills
 Her drooping forehead. Love-afflicted fair!
 All inharmonious are the feather'd choirs
 To her sad ear. From flow'rs, and florid plants
 To her the breezes, wafting fresh perfumes, 50
 Transmit no pleasure. Sedulous in vain,
 Her tender slaves in harmony, with lutes
 Of soothing sound, their warbled voices blend
 To charm her sadness. This, the precious part
 Of Asia's camp, Artuchus holds in charge, 55
 A satrap, long experienc'd, who presides
 O'er all the regal palaces. High rank'd,
 Bold, resolute and faithful, he commands
 The whole Sperchean vale. In prospect rise
 The distant navy, dancing on the foam, 60
 Th' unbounded camp, enveloping the plain,
 With Xerxes' tent, august in structure plac'd

A central object to attract the eyes
 Of subject millions. Thither now resort
 Tigranes and Phraortes. Him they find 65
 Enclos'd by princes, by illustrious chiefs,
 The potentates of Asia. Near his side
 Abrocomes and Hyperanthes wait,
 His gallant brothers, with Mazæus brave,
 Pandates, Itaphernes, mighty lords. 70
 Their scepter'd master from his radiant seat
 Looks down imperious. So the stately tow'r
 Of Belus, mingling its majestic brow
 With heav'n's bright azure, from on high survey'd
 The huge extent of Babylon, with ail 75
 Her sumptuous domes and palaces beneath.
 This day his banners to unfurl in Greece
 The monarch's will decides : but first ordains,
 That grateful hymns should celebrate the name
 Of Horomazes : So the Persians call'd 80
 The world's great author. Rob'd in purest white,
 The Magi rang'd before th' unfolded tent.
 Fire blaz'd beside them. Tow'rd the secret flame
 They turn'd, and sent their tuneful praise to heav'n.
 From Zoroastres was the song deriv'd, 85
 Who on the hills of Persia, from his cave,
 By flow'rs environ'd, and melodious founts,
 Which sooth the solemn mansion, had reveal'd,
 How Horomazes, radiant source of good,
 Original, immortal, fram'd the globe, 90
 In fruitfulness and beauty : how with stars
 By him the heavens were spangled : how the sun,
 Refulgent Mithra, purest spring of light,
 And genial warmth, whence teeming nature smiles,
 Burst from the east at his creating voice ; 95
 When straight beyond the golden verge of day
 Night show'd the horrors of her distant reign,
 Where black and hateful Arimanius frown'd,
 The author foul of evil : how with shafts
 From his dire mansion, he deform'd the work 100

Of Horomazes, turn'd to noxious heat
 The solar beam, that foodful earth might parch,
 That streams exhaling might forsake their beds,
 Whence pestilence and famine: how the pow'r
 Of Horomazes in the human breast 105
 Benevolence and equity infus'd,
 Truth, temperance, and wisdom, sprung from heav'n:
 When Arimanius blacken'd all the soul
 With falsehood and injustice, with desires
 Insatiable, with violence and rage, 110
 Malignity and folly. If the hand
 Of Horomazes on precarious life
 Sheds wealth and pleasure; swift th' infernal god
 With wild excess, or av'rice, blasts the joy.
 Thou Horomazes, victory dost give. 115
 By thee with fame the regal head is crown'd.
 Great Xerxes owns thy succour. When in storms
 The hate of direful Arimanius swell'd
 The Hellespont, thou o'er its chafing breast
 The destin'd master of the world didst lead, 120
 This day his promis'd glories to enjoy:
 When Greece affrighted to his arm shall bend;
 Ev'n as at last shall Arimanius fall
 Before thy might, and evil be no more.
 The Magi ceas'd their harmony. Behold, 125
 From her tall ship, between a double row;
 Of naval warriors, while a golden ray
 Shoots from her standard, Artemisia lands.
 In her enrich'd accoutrements of war,
 The full-wrought buckler, and high-crested helm, 130
 In Caria first devis'd, across the beach
 Her tow'ring form advances. So the pine,
 From Taurus hewn mature in spiry pride,
 Now by the sailor in its canvass wings
 Voluminous, and dazzling pendants dress'd, 135
 On Artemisia's own imperial deck
 Is seen to rise, and overtop the grove
 Of crowded masts surrounding. In her heart
 Deep scorn of courtly counsellors she bore,

Who fill with impious vanity their king ;
 As when he lash'd the Hellesport with rods,
 Amid the billows cast a golden chain
 To fetter Neptune. Yet her brow severe
 Unbent its rigour often, as she glanc'd
 On her young son, who, pacing near in arms
 Of Carian guise, proportion'd to his years,
 Look'd up, and waken'd by repeated smiles
 Maternal fondness, melting in that eye,
 Which scowl'd on purpled flatterers. Her seat
 At the right hand of Xerxes she assumes,
 Invited ; while in adoration bow'd
 Tigranes and Phraortes. Prone they lay,
 Across their foreheads spread their servile palms,
 As from a present deity, too bright
 For mortal vision, to conceal their eyes.

140

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155

At length in abject phrase Tigranes thus.
 O Xerxes, live for ever ! Gracious lord,
 Who dost permit thy servants to approach
 Thy awful sight, and prostrate to confess
 Thy majesty and radiance. May the pow'r
 Of Hormazes stretch thy regal arm
 O'er endless nations, from the Indian shores
 To those wide floods, which beat Iberian strands,
 From northern Tanais to the source of Nile !
 Sill from thy head may Arimanius bend
 Against thy foes his malice ! Yonder Greeks,
 Already smit with frenzy by his wrath,
 Reject thy proffer'd clemency. They choose
 To magnify thy glory by their fall.

160

165

The monarch, turning to his brothers, spake.
 Say, Hyperanthes, can thy soul believe
 These tidings ? Sure these slaves have never dar'd
 To face the Grecians, but delude our ears
 With base impostures, which their fear suggests.

170

He frown'd, and Hyperanthes calm reply'd.
 O from his servants may the king avert
 His indignation ! Greece was fam'd of old
 For martial spirit, and a dauntless breed.

175

I once have try'd their valour. To my words
 Abrocomes can witness. When thy fire 180
 And ours, Darius, to Athenian shores
 With Artaphernes brave, and Datis, sent
 Our tender youth; at Marathon we found
 How weak the hope that numbers could dismay
 A foe, resolved on victory, or death. 185
 Yet not, as one contemptible, or base,
 Let me appear before thee. Though the Greeks
 With such persisting courage be endu'd,
 Soon as the king shall summon to the field,
 He shall behold me in the dang'rous van 190
 Exalt my spear, and pierce the hostile ranks,
 Or sink beneath them. Xerxes swift rejoin'd.

Why over Asia, and the Libyan soil,
 With all their nations, doth my potent arm
 Extend its sceptre? Wherefore do I sweep 195
 Across the earth with millions in my train?
 Why shade the ocean with unnumber'd sails?
 Why all this pow'r, unless th' Almighty's will
 Decreed one master to the subject world;
 And that the earth's extremity alone 200
 Should bound my empire? He for this reduc'd
 The Nile's revolted sons, enlarg'd my sway
 With sandy Libya, and the sultry clime
 Of Æthiopia. He for this subdu'd
 The Hellepontic foam, and taught the sea 205
 Obedience to my nod. Then dream no more,
 That heav'n, deserting my imperial cause,
 With courage more than human, will inspire
 Yon despicable Grecians, and expunge
 The common fears of nature from their breasts. 210

The monarch ceas'd. Abrocomes began.
 The king commands us to reveal our thoughts.
 Incredulous he hears. But time and truth
 Not Horomazes can arrest. Thy beams
 To instant lightning, Mithra, may'st thou change
 For my destruction; may th' offended king 216
 Frown on his servant, cast a lothing eye;

If the assertion of my lips be false :

Our further march those Grecians will oppose.

Amid th' encircling peers Argestes sat, 220
A potent prince. O'er Sipylus he reign'd,
Whose verdant summits overlook'd the waves
Of Hermus and Pactolus. Either stream,
Enrich'd by golden sands, a tribute pay'd
To this great satrap. Through the servile court 225
Yet none was found more practis'd in the arts
Of mean submission ; none more skill'd to gain
The royal favour ; none, who better knew
The phrase, the look, the gesture of a slave ;
None more detesting Artemisia's worth, 230
By her none more despis'd. His master's eye
He caught, then spake. Display thy dazzling state,
Thou deity of Asia. Greece will hide
Before thy presence her dejected face.

Last Artemisia, rising stern, began : 235
Why sits the lord of Asia in his tent,
Unprofitably wasting precious hours
In vain discussion, whether yonder Greeks,
Rang'd in defence of that important pass,
Will fight, or fly ? A question by the sword 240
To be decided. Still to narrow streights
By land, by sea, thy council hath confin'd
Each enterprise of war. In numbers weak
Twice have th' Athenians in Eubœa's frith
Repuls'd thy navy—But whate'er thy will, 245
Be it enforc'd by vigour. Let the king
The difference see by trial in the field
Between smooth sound and valour. Then dissolve
These impotent debates. Ascend thy car.
The future stage of war thyself explore. 250
Behind thee leave the vanity of hope,
That such a foe to splendour will submit,
Whom steel, not gold, must vanquish. Thou provide
Thy male, Argestes. Not in silken robes,
Not as in council with an oily tongue, 255

But spear to spear, and clanging shield to shield,
Thou soon must grapple on a field of blood.

The king arose—No more. Prepare my car.
The Spartan exile, Demaratus, call.

We will ourselves advance to view the foe. 260

The monarch will'd; and suddenly he heard
His trampling horses. High on silver wheels

The iv'ry car with azure sapphires shone.

Cærulean beryls, and the Jasper green,

The emerald, the ruby's glowing blush, 265

The flaming topaz with its golden beam,

The pearl, th' empurpled amethyst, and all

The various gems, which India's mines afford

To deck the pomp of kings. In burnish'd gold
A sculptur'd eagle from behind display'd 270

His stately neck, and o'er the royal head

Outstretch'd his dazzling wings. Eight gen'rous
steeds,

Which on the fam'd Nisæan plain were nurs'd

In wint'ry Media, drew the radiant car.

Not those of old, to Hercules refus'd 275

By false Laomedon, nor they, which bore

The son of Thetis through the scatter'd rear

Of Troy's devoted race, with these might vie

In strength, or beauty. In obedient pride

They hear their lord. Exulting, in the air 280

They toss their foreheads. On their glitt'ning chests

The silver manes disport. The king ascends.

Beside his footstool Demaratus sits.

Th' charioteer now shakes th' effulgent reins,

Strong Patiramphes. At the signal bound 285

Th' attentive steeds; the chariot flies: behind

Ten thousand horse in thunder sweep the field.

Down to the sea-beat margin, on a plain

Of vast expansion in battalia wait

The eastern bands. To these th' imperial wheels, 290

By princes follow'd in a hundred cars,

Proceed. The queen of Caria and her son

With Hyperanthes rode. The king's approach

Swift through the wide arrangement is proclaim'd.
 He now draws nigh. Th' innumerable host 295
 Roll back by nations, and admit their lord
 With all his satraps. As from crystal domes,
 Built underneath an arch of pendent seas,
 When that stern pow'r, whose trident rules the floods,
 With each cerulean deity ascends, 300
 Thron'd in his pearly chariot, all the deep
 Divides its bosom to th' emerging god;
 So Xerxes rode between the Asian world,
 On either side receding: when, as down
 Th' immeasurable ranks his sight was lost, 305
 A momentary gloom o'ercast his mind,
 While this reflection fill'd his eyes with tears:
 That, soon as Time a hundred years had told,
 Not one among those millions should survive.
 Whence to obscure thy pride arose that cloud? 310
 Was it, that once humanity could touch
 A tyrant's breast? or rather did thy soul
 Repine, O Xerxes, at the bitter thought,
 That all thy pow'r was mortal? but the veil
 Of sadness soon forsook his brightning eye, 315
 As with adoring awe those millions bow'd,
 And to his heart relentless pride recall'd.
 Elate the mingled prospect he surveys
 Of glitt'ring files unnumber'd, chariots scyth'd,
 On thundring axles roll'd, and haughty steeds, 320
 In sumptuous trappings clad, Barbaric pomp.
 While gorgeous banners to the sun expand
 Their streaming volumes of relucant gold,
 Pre-eminent amidst tiaras gemm'd,
 Engraven helmets, shields emboss'd, and spears 325
 In number equal to the bladed grass,
 Whose living green in vernal beauty clothes
 Thessalia's vale. What pow'rs of sounding verse
 Can to the mind present th' amazing scene?
 Not thee, whom Rumour's fabling voice delights, 330
 Poetic Fancy, to my aid I call;
 But thou, historic Truth, support my song,

Which shall the various multitude display,
 Their arms, their manners, and their native feats.
 The Persians first in scaly corselets shone, 335
 A gen'rous nation, worthy to enjoy
 The liberty their injur'd fathers lost,
 Whose arms for Cyrus overturn'd the strength
 Of Babylon and Sardis. Pow'r advanc'd
 The victor's head above his country's laws. 340
 Their tongues were practis'd in the words of truth,
 Their limbs inur'd to ev'ry manly toil,
 To brace the bow, to rule th' impetuous steed,
 To dart the javelin; but untaught to form
 The ranks of war, with unconnected force, 345
 With ineffectual fortitude they rush'd,
 As on a fence of adamant, to pierce
 Th' indissoluble phalanx. Lances short,
 And osier-woven targets they oppos'd
 To weighty Grecian spears, and massy shields. 350
 On ev'ry head tiaras rose like tow'rs,
 Impenetrable. With a golden gloss
 Blaz'd their gay sandals, and the floating reins
 Of each proud courser. Daggers on their thighs,
 Well furnish'd quivers on their shoulders hung, 355
 And strongest bows of mighty size they bore.
 Resembling these in arms, the Medes are seen,
 The Cissians and Hyrcanians. Media once
 From her bleak mountains aw'd the subject east.
 Her kings in cold Ecbatana were thron'd. 360
 The Cissians march'd from Susa's regal walls,
 From sultry fields, o'erspread with branching palms,
 And white with lilies, water'd by the floods
 Of fam'd Choaspes. His transparent wave
 The costly goblet wafts to Persia's kings. 365
 All other streams the royal lip disdains.
 Hyrcania's race forsook their fruitful clime,
 Dark in the shadows of expanding oaks,
 To Ceres dear and Bacchus. There the corn,
 Bent by its foodful burden sheds, unrep'd, 370
 Its plenteous seed, impregnating the soil

With future harvests ; while in ev'ry wood
 Their precious labours on the loaden boughs
 The honey'd swarms pursue. Assyria's sons
 Display their brazen casques, unskilful work 375
 Of rude Barbarians. Each sustains a mace,
 O'erlaid with iron. Near Euphrates' banks
 Within the mighty Babylonian gates
 They dwell, and where, still mightier once in sway,
 Old Ninus rear'd its head, th' imperial seat 380
 Of eldest tyrants. These Chaldæa joins,
 The land of shepherds. From the pastures wide
 There Belus first discern'd the various course
 Of Heav'n's bright planets, and the clust'ring stars
 With names distinguish'd, whence himself was deem'd
 The first of gods. His sky-ascending fane 386
 In Babylon the proud Assyrians rais'd
 Drawn from the bounteous soil, by Ochus lav'd,
 The Bactrians stood, and rough in skins of goats
 The Paricanian archers. Caspian ranks 390
 From barren mountains, from the joyless coast
 Around the stormy lake, whose name they bore,
 Their scymetars upheld, and cany bows.
 The Indian tribes, a threefold host compose.
 Part guide the courser, part the rapid car ; 395
 The rest on foot within the bending cane
 For slaughter fix the iron-pointed reed.
 They o'er the Indus from the distant verge
 Of Ganges passing, left a region, lov'd
 By lavish Nature. There the season bland 400
 Bestows a double harvest. Honey'd shrubs,
 The cinnamon, the spikenard blest their fields.
 Array'd in native wealth, each warrior shines ;
 His ears bright beaming pendants grace ; his hands,
 Encircled, wear a bracelet, starr'd with gems. 405
 Such were the nations, who to Xerxes sent
 Their mingled aids of infantry and horse.
 Now, Muse, recite what multitudes obscur'd
 The plain on foot, or elevated high
 On martial axles, or on camels beat 410

The loosen'd mold. The Parthian's first appear,
 Then weak in numbers, from unfruitful hills,
 From woods, nor yet for warlike steeds renown'd.
 Near them the Sogdians, Dadices arrange,
 Gandarians, and Chorasmiens. Sacian throngs 415
 From cold Imaus pour'd, from Oxus' wave,
 From Cyra, built on Iaxartes' brink,
 A bound of Persia's empire. Wild, untam'd,
 To fury prone, their desarts they forsook.
 A bow, a faulchion, and a pond'rous axe, 420
 The savage legions arm'd. A pointed casque
 O'er each grim visage rear'd an iron cone,
 In arms like Persians the Saranges stood.
 High as their knees the shapely buskins clung
 Around their legs. Magnificent they trod 425
 In garments richly tinctur'd. Next are seen
 The Pactian, Mycian, and the Utian train,
 In skins of goats rude-vested. But in spoils
 Of tawny lions, and of spotted pards,
 The graceful range of Ethiopians shows 430
 Anequal stature, and a beauteous frame.
 Their torrid region had imbrown'd their cheeks,
 And curl'd their jetty locks. In ancient song
 Renown'd for justice, riches they disdain'd,
 As foes to virtue. From their seat remote, 435
 On Nilus' verge above th' Egyptian bound,
 Forc'd by their king's malignity and pride,
 These friends of hospitality and peace,
 Themselves uninjur'd wage reluctant war
 Against a land, whose climate, and whose name, 440
 To them were strange. With hardest stone they point
 The rapid arrow. Bows four cubits long,
 Form'd of elastic branches from the palm,
 They carry, knotted clubs, and lances, arm'd
 With horns of goats. The Paphlagonians march'd,
 From where Carambis, with projected brows, 446
 O'erlooks the dusky Euxine, wrapt in mists, [banks,
 From where, through flow'rs which paint his vary'd
 Parthenius flows. The Ligyan bands succeed ;

The Martienians, Mariandenians next ;
 To them the Syrian multitudes, who range 450
 Among the cedars on the shaded ridge
 Of Libanus ; who cultivate the glebe,
 Wide water'd by Orontes, who reside
 Near Daphne's grove, or pluck, from loaded palms,
 The foodful date, which clusters on the plains 456
 Of rich Damascus. All who bear the name
 Of Cappadocians, swell the Syrian host,
 With those who gather, from the fragrant shrub,
 The aromatic balsam, and extract 460
 Its milky juice, along the lovely side
 Of Jordan, winding till immers'd he sleeps
 Beneath a pitchy surface, which obscures
 Th' Asphaltic pool. The Phrygians then advance ;
 To them their ancient colony are join'd, 465
 Armenia's sons. These see the gushing founts
 Of strong Euphrates cleave the yielding earth,
 Then, wide in lakes expanding, hide the plain ;
 Whence, with collected waters, fierce and deep,
 His passage rending through diminish'd rocks, 470
 To Babylon he foams. Not so the stream
 Of soft Araxes to the Caspian glides ;
 He, stealing unperceptibly, sustains
 The green profusion of Armenia's meads.
 Now, strange to view, in similar attire, 475
 But far unlike in manners, to the Greeks,
 Appear the Lydians. Wantonness and sport
 Were all their care. Beside Cayster's brink,
 Or smooth Mæander, winding silent by,
 Beside Pactolean waves, among the vines 480
 Of Timolus rising, or the wealthy tide
 Of golden-fanded Hermus, they allure
 The sight, enchanted by the graceful dance ;
 Or with melodious sweetness charm the air,
 And melt to softest languishment the soul. 485
 What to the field of danger could incite
 These tender sons of Luxury ? The last
 Of their fell sov'reign drove their shiv'ring backs

Through hail and tempest, which enrag'd the main,
 And shook beneath their trembling steps the pile 490
 Conjoining Asia and the western world.
 To them Mæonia, hot with sulph'rous mines,
 Unites her troops. No tree adorns their fields,
 Unblest'd by verdure. Ashes hide the soil:
 Black are the rocks, and ev'ry hill deform'd 495
 By conflagration. Helmets press their brows.
 Two darts they brandish. On their woolly vests
 A sword is girt; and airy hides compose
 Their bucklers round and small. The Mysians left
 Olympus, wood-envelop'd, left the meads, 500
 Wash'd by Caïcus, and the baneful tide
 Of Lycus, nurse to serpents. Next advance
 An ancient nation, who in early times
 By Trojan arms assail'd, their native land
 Esteem'd less dear than freedom, and exchang'd 505
 Their seat on Strymon, where in Thrace he pours
 A freezing current, for the distant flood
 Of fishy Sangar. These, Bithynians nam'd,
 Their habitation to the sacred feet
 Of Dindymus extend. Yet there they groan 510
 Beneath oppression, and their freedom mourn,
 On Sangar now, as once on Strymon lost,
 The ruddy skins of foxes cloath'd their heads:
 Their shields were fashion'd like the horned moon;
 A vest embrac'd their bodies; while abroad, 515
 Ting'd with unnumber'd hues, a mantle flow'd.
 But other Thracians, who their former name
 Retain'd in Asia, fulgent morions wore,
 With horns of bulls, in imitating brass,
 Curv'd o'er the crested ridge. Phœnician cloth 520
 Their legs infolded. Wont to chase the wolf,
 A hunter's spear they grasp'd. What nations still
 On either side of Xerxes, while he pass'd,
 Their huge array discovering, swell his soul
 With more than mortal pride? The cluster'd bands
 Of Moschians and Macronians now appear, 525
 The Mosynoecians, who, on berries fed,

In wooden towers along the Pontic sands
 Repose their painted limbs ; the mirthful race
 Of Tibarenians next, whose careless minds
 Delight in play and laughter. Then advance 530
 In garments buckled on their spacious chests,
 A people, destin'd in eternal verse,
 E'en thine, sublime Mœonides, to live.
 These are the Mylians. Solymi their name
 In thy celestial strains ; Pisidia's hills 535
 Their dwelling. Once a formidable train,
 They fac'd the strong Bellerophon in war.
 Now doom'd a more tremendous foe to meet,
 Themselves unnerv'd by thraldom, they must leave
 Their putrid bodies to the dogs of Greece. 540
 The Marians follow. Next is Aria's host,
 Drawn from a region horrid all in thorn,
 A dreary waste of sands, which mock the toil
 Of patient Culture ; save one favour'd spot,
 Which from the wild emerges like an isle, 545
 Attir'd in verdure, interspers'd with vines
 Of gen'rous nurture, yielding juice which scorns
 The injuries of Time : yet Nature's hand
 Had sown their rocks with coral ; had enrich'd
 Their desert hills with veins of sapphires blue, 550
 Which on the turbant shine. On ev'ry neck
 The coral blushes through the num'rous throng.
 The Allarodians, and Sasperian bands,
 Equipp'd like Colchians, wield a falchion small.
 Their heads are guarded by a helm of wood, 555
 Their lances short, of hides undress'd their shields.
 The Colchians march'd from Phasis, from the strand
 Where once Medea, fair enchantress stood,
 And, wond'ring, view'd the first adventurous keel
 Which cut the Pontic foam. From Argo's side 560
 The demigods descended, they repair'd
 To her fell fire's inhospitable hall.
 His blooming graces Jason there disclos'd,
 With ev'ry art of eloquence divine
 He claim'd the golden fleece. The virgin heard, 565

She gaz'd in fatal ravishment, and lov'd;
 Then to the hero she resigns her heart.
 Her magic tames the brazen-footed bulls.
 She lulls the sleepless dragon. O'er the main
 He wafts the golden prize, and gen'rous fair, 50
 The destin'd victim of his treach'rous vows.
 The hostile Colchians then pursu'd their flight
 In vain. By ancient enmity inflam'd,
 Or to recal the long forgotten wrong
 Compell'd by Xerxes, now they menace Greece 575
 With desolation. Next in Median garb
 A crowd appear'd, who left the peopled isles
 In Persia's gulf, and round Arabia strewn.
 Some in their native topaz were adorn'd,
 From Ophiodes, from Topazos sprung; 580
 Some in the shells of tortoises, which brood
 Around Casitis' verge. For battle range
 Those, who reside, where, all beset with palms,
 Erythras lies entomb'd, a potent king,
 Who nam'd of old the Erythræan main. 585
 On chariots scyth'd the Libyans sat array'd
 In skins terrific, brandishing their darts
 Of wood, well-temper'd in the hard'ning flames.
 Not Lybia's deserts from tyrannic sway
 Could hide her sons; much less could Freedom dwell
 Amid the plenty of Arabia's fields: 591
 Where spicy Cassia, where the fragrant reed,
 Where myrrh, and hallow'd frankincense perfume
 The Zephyr's wing. A bow of largest size
 Th' Arabian carries. O'er his lucid vest 595
 Loose floats a mantle, on his shoulder clasp'd.
 Two chosen myriads on the lofty backs
 Of camels rode, who match'd the fleetest horse.
 Such were the numbers, which, from Asia led,
 In base prostration bow'd before the wheels 600
 Of Xerxes' chariot. Yet what legions more
 The Malian sand o'ershadow? Forward rolls
 The regal car through nations, who in arms,
 In order'd ranks unlike the orient tribes,

Upheld the spear and buckler. But, untaught 605
 To bend the servile knee, erect they stood;
 Unless that, mourning o'er the shameful weight
 Of their new bondage, some their brows depress'd,
 Their arms with grief distaining. Europe's sons
 Were these, whom Xerxes by resistless force 610
 Had gather'd round his standards. Murm'ring here,
 The sons of Thrace and Macedonia rang'd;
 Here on his steed the brave Thessalian frown'd;
 There pin'd reluctant multitudes, of Greece
 Redundant plants, in colonies dispers'd 615
 Between Byzantium, and the Malian bay.

Through all the nations, who ador'd his pride,
 Or fear'd his pow'r, the monarch now was pass'd;
 Nor yet among those millions could be found
 One, who in beauteous feature might compare, 620
 Or tow'ring size with Xerxes. O possess'd
 Of all, but virtue, doom'd to show, how mean,
 How weak without her is unbounded pow'r,
 The charm of beauty, and the blaze of state,
 How insecure of happiness, how vain! 625
 Thou, who couldst mourn the common lot, by heav'n
 From none withheld, which oft to thousands proves
 Their only refuge from a tyrant's rage;
 Which in consuming sickness, age, or pain,
 Becomes at last a soothing hope to all: 630
 Thou, who couldst weep, that nature's gentle hand
 Should lay her weary'd offspring in the tomb;
 Yet couldst remorseless from their peaceful seats
 Lead half the nations, victims to thy pride,
 To famine, plague, and massacre a prey: 635
 What didst thou merit from the injur'd world?
 What sufferings to compensate for the tears
 Of Asia's mothers, for unpeopled realms,
 For all this waste of nature? On his host
 Th' exulting monarch bends his haughty sight, 640
 To Demaratus then directs his voice.

My father, great Darius, to thy mind
 Recal, O Spartan. Gracious he receiv'd

Thy wand'ring steps, expell'd their native home.
My favour too remember. To beguile 645
Thy benefactor, and disfigure truth
Would ill become thee. With confid'rate eyes
Look back on these battalions. Now declare,
If yonder Grecians will oppose their march.
To him the exile. Deem not, mighty lord, 650
I will deceive thy goodness by a tale
To give them glory, who degraded mine.
Nor be the king offended, while I use
The voice of truth. The Spartans never fly.
Contemptuous smil'd the monarch, and resum'd.
Wilt thou, in Lacedemon once supreme, 656
Encounter twenty Persians? Yet these Greeks
In greater disproportion must engage
Our host to-morrow. Demaratus then.
By single combat were the trial vain 660
To show the pow'r of well-united force,
Which oft by military skill surmounts
The weight of numbers. Prince, the diff'rence learn
Between thy warriors, and the sons of Greece.
The flow'r, the safeguard of thy num'rous camp 665
Are mercenaries. These are canton'd round
Thy provinces. No fertile field demands
Their painful hand to break the fallow glebe.
Them to the noon-day toil no harvest calls.
Nor on the mountain falls the stubborn oak 670
By their laborious ax. Their watchful eyes
Observe not how the flocks and heifers feed.
To them, of wealth, of all possessions void,
The name of country with an empty sound
Flies o'er the ear, nor warms their joyless hearts, 675
Who share no country. Needy, yet in scorn
Rejecting labour, wretched by their wants,
Yet profligate through indolence, with limbs
Enervated and soft, with minds corrupt,
From misery, debauchery, and sloth, 680
Are these to battle drawn against a foe,
Train'd in gymnastic exercise and arms,

Inur'd to hardship, and the child of toil.
 Wont through the freezing show'r, the wint'ry storm,
 O'er his own glebe the tardy ox to goad, 685
 Or in the sun's impetuous heat to glow
 Beneath the burden of his yellow sheaves ;
 Whence on himself, on her, whose faithful arms
 Infold him joyful on a growing race,
 Which glad his dwelling, plenty he bestows 690
 With independence. When to battle call'd,
 For them his dearest comfort, and his care,
 And for the harvest, promis'd to his toil,
 He lifts the shield, nor shuns unequal force.
 Such are the troops of ev'ry state in Greece. 695
 One only yields a breed more warlike still,
 Of whom selected bands appear in fight,
 All citizens of Sparta. They the glebe
 Have never turn'd, nor bound the golden sheaf,
 They are devoted to severer tasks, 700
 For war alone, their sole delight and care.
 From infancy to manhood they are train'd
 To winter watches, to inclement skies,
 To plunge through torrents, brave the tusky boar,
 To arms and wounds ; a discipline of pain 705
 So fierce, so constant, that to them a camp
 With all its hardships is a seat of rest,
 And war itself remission from their toil.

Thy words are folly, with redoubled scorn
 Returns the monarch. Doth not freedom dwell. 710
 Among the Spartans ? Therefore will they shun
 Superior foes. The unrestrain'd and free
 Will fly from danger ; while my vassals, born
 To absolute controlment from their king,
 Know, if th' allotted station they desert, 715
 The scourge awaits them, and my heavy wrath.

To this the exile. O conceive not prince
 That Spartans want an object, where to fix
 Their eyes in rev'rence, in obedient dread.
 To them more awful than the name of king 720
 To Asia's trembling millions, is the law :

Whose sacred voice enjoins them to confront
Unnumber'd foes, to vanquish, or to die.

Here Demaratus pauses. Xerxes halts.
Its long defile Thermopylæ presents. 725

The satraps leave the cars. On foot they form
A splendid orb around their lord. By chance
The Spartans then compos'd th' external guard.
They, in a martial exercise employ'd

Heed not the monarch, or his gaudy train; 730

But poise the spear, protended, as in fight;

Or lift their adverse shields in single strife;

Or, trooping, forward rush, retreat and wheel

In ranks unbroken, and with equal feet:

While others calm beneath their polish'd helms 735

Draw down their hair, whose length of sable curls

O'erspread their necks with terror. Xerxes here

The exile questions. What do these intend,

Who with assiduous hands adjust their hair?

To whom the Spartan. O imperial lord, 740

Such is their custom, to adorn their heads,

When full determin'd to encounter death.

Bring down thy nations in resplendent steel;

Arm, if thou canst, the gen'ral race of man,

All, who possess the regions unexplor'd 745

Beyond the Ganges, all whose wand'ring steps

Above the Caspian range the Scythian wild,

With those, who drink the secret fount of Nile:

Yet to Laconian bosoms shall dismay

Remain a stranger. Fervour from his lips 750

Thus breaks aloud; when, gushing from his eyes,

Resistless grief o'erflows his cheeks. Aside

His head he turns. He weeps in copious streams.

The keen remembrance of his former state,

His dignity, his greatness, and the sight 755

Of those brave ranks, which thus unshaken stood,

And spread amazement through the world in arms,

Excite these sorrows. His impassion'd looks

Review the godlike warriors, who beneath

His standard once victorious fought, who call'd 760

Him once their king, their leader ; then again,
 O'ercharg'd with anguish, he bedews with tears
 His rev'rend beard, in agony bemoans
 His faded honours, his illustrious name
 Forgotten long, his majesty defil'd 765

By exile, by dependence. So obscur'd
 By sordid moss, and ivy's creeping leaf,
 Some princely palace, or stupendous fane
 Magnificent in ruin nods ; where time
 From under shelving architraves hath mow'd 770
 The column down, and cleft the pond'rous dome.

Not unobserv'd by Hyperanthes, mourn'd
 Th' unhappy Spartan. Kindly in his own
 He press'd the exile's hand, and thus humane.
 O Demaratus, in this grief I see 775

How just thy praises of Laconia's state,
 Though cherish'd here with universal love,
 Thou still deplor'st thy absence from her face,
 How e'er averse to thine. But swift relief
 From indignation borrow. Call to mind 780
 Thy injuries. Th' auspicious fortune bless
 Which led thee, far from calumny and fraud,
 To peace, to honour in the Persian court.

As Demaratus with a grateful mind
 His answer was preparing, Persia's king 785
 Stern interrupted. Soon as morning shines,
 Do you, Tigranes and Phraortes, head
 The Medes and Cissians. Bring these Grecians bound.

This said, the monarch to his camp returns.
 Th' attendant princes re-ascend their cars, 790
 Save Hyperanthes, by the Carian queen
 Detain'd, who thus began. Impartial, brave,
 Nurs'd in a court, yet virtuous, let my heart
 To thee its feelings undisguis'd reveal.

Thou hear'st thy royal brother. He demands 795
 These Grecians bound. Why stops his mandate there?
 Why not command the mountains to remove,
 Or sink to level plains. Yon Spartans view,
 Their weighty arms, their countenance. To die

My gratitude instructs me in the cause 800
 Of our imperial master. To succeed
 Is not within the shadow of my hopes
 At this dire pass. What evil genius sways?
 Tigranes, false Argestes, and the rest
 In name a council, ceaseless have oppos'd 805
 My dictates oft repeated in despight
 Of purple flatt'ers, to embark a force,
 Which, pouring on Laconia, might confine
 These sons of valour to their own defence.
 Vain are my words. The royal ear admits 810
 Their sound alone; while Adulation's notes
 In syren sweetness penetrate his heart,
 There lodge ensnaring mischief. In a sigh
 To her the prince. O faithful to thy lord,
 Discreet adviser, and in action firm, 815
 What can I answer? My afflicted soul
 Must seek its refuge in a feeble hope.
 Thou mayst be partial to thy Doric race,
 Mayst magnify our danger. Let me hope,
 Whate'er the danger, if extreme, believe 820
 That Hyperanthes for his prince can bleed
 Not with less zeal than Spartans for their laws.
 They separate. To Xerxes he repairs.
 The queen, surrounded by the Carian guard,
 Stays and retraces with sagacious ken 825
 The destin'd field of war, the vary'd space,
 Its depth, its confines both of hill and sea.
 Meantime a scene more splendid hath allur'd
 Her son's attention. His transported sight
 With ecstasy like worship long pursues 830
 The pomp of Xerxes in retreat, the throne,
 Which show'd their idol to the nations round,
 The bounding steeds, caparison'd in gold,
 The plumes, the chariots, standards. He excites
 Her care, expels'd in these pathetic strains. 835
 Look on the king with gratitude. His fire
 Protected thine. Himself upholds our state.
 By loyalty inflexible repay

The obligation. To immortal pow'rs
 The adoration of thy soul confine ; 840
 And look undazzling on the pomp of man
 Most weak, when highest. Then the jealous gods
 Watch to supplant him. They his paths, his courts,
 His chambers fill with Flatt'ry's pois'nous swarms,
 Whose honey'd bane, by kingly pride devour'd, 845
 Consumes the health of kingdoms. Here the boy,
 By an attention, which surpass'd his years,
 Unlocks her inmost bosom. Thrice accurs'd
 Be those, th' indignant heroine pursues,
 Those who have tempted their imperial lord 850
 To that prepost'rous arrogance, which cast
 Chains in the deep to manacle the waves,
 Chastis'd with stripes in heav'n's offended sight
 The Hellespont, and fondly now demands
 The Spartans bound. O child, my soul's delight,
 Train'd by my care to equitable sway, 856
 And imitation of the gods, by deeds
 To merit their protection, heed my voice.
 They, who alone can tame, or swell the floods,
 Compose the winds, or guide their strong career, 860
 O'erwhelming human greatness, will confound
 Such vanity in mortals. On our fleet
 Their indignation hath already fall'n.
 Perhaps our boasted army is prepar'd
 A prey, for death to vindicate their pow'r. 865
 This said, a curious search in ev'ry part
 Her eye renews. Adjoining to the streights,
 Fresh bloom'd a thicket of entwining shrubs,
 A seeming fence to some sequester'd ground,
 By travelers unbeaten. Swift her guards 870
 Address'd their spears to part the pliant boughs.
 Held back, they yield a passage to the queen
 And princely boy. Delicious to their sight
 Soft dales, meand'ring, show their flow'ry laps
 Among rude piles of nature. In their sides 875
 Of rock are mansions hewn ; nor loaden trees
 Of cluster'd fruit are wanting : but no sound,

Except of brooks in murmur, and the song
 Of winged warblers, meets the list'ning ear.
 No grazing herd, no flock, nor human form 880
 Is seen, no careful husband at his toil,
 Beside her threshold no industrious wife,
 No playful child. Instructive to her son
 The princess then. Already these abodes
 Are desolate. Once happy in their homes 885
 Th' inhabitants forsake them. Pleasing scene
 Of Nature's bounty, soon will savage Mars
 Deform the lovely ringlets of thy shrubs,
 And coarsely pluck thy violated fruits
 Unripe; will deafen with his clangour fell 890
 Thy tuneful choirs. I mourn thy destin'd spoil,
 Yet come thy first despoiler. Captains, plant,
 Ere morning breaks, my secret standard here.
 Come, boy, away. Thy safety will I trust
 To Demaratus; while thy mother tries, 895
 With these her martial followers, what sparks,
 Left by our Doric fathers, yet inflame
 Their sons and daughters in a stern debate
 With other Dorians, who have never breath'd
 The soft'ning gales of Asia, never bow'd 900
 In forc'd allegiance to Barbarian thrones.
 Thou heed my order. Those ingenuous looks
 Of discontent suppress. For thee this fight
 Were too severe a lesson. Thou might'st bleed
 Among the thousands, fated to expire 905
 By Sparta's lance. Let Artemisia die,
 Ye all-disposing rulers, but protect
 Her son. She ceas'd. The lioness, who reigns
 Queen of the forest, terrible in strength,
 And prone to fury, thus by nature taught, 910
 Melts o'er her young in blandishment and love.
 Now slowly tow'rd's the Persian camp her steps
 In silence she directed; when a voice,
 Sent from a rock, accessible which seem'd
 To none, but feather'd passengers of air, 915
 By this reproof detain'd her. Caria's queen

Art thou, to Greece by Doric blood ally'd?
 Com'st thou to lay her fruitful meadows waste,
 Thou homager of tyrants? Upward gaz'd
 Th' astonish'd princess. Lo! a female shape, 920
 Tall and majestic, from th' impendent ridge
 Look'a awful down. A holy fillet bound
 Her graceful hair, loose flowing. Seldom wept
 Great Artemisia. Now a springing tear
 Between her eyelids gleam'd Too true, she sigh'd,
 A homager of tyrants! Voice austere, 926
 And presence half divine! Again the voice.

O Artemisia, hide thy Doric sword.
 Let no barbarian tyrant, through thy might,
 Thy counsels, valiant as thou art and wise, 930
 Consume the holy fanes, deface the tombs,
 Subvert the laws of Greece, her sons enthrall.

The queen made no reply. Her breast-plate heav'd.
 The tremulous attire of cov'ring mail
 Confess'd her struggle. She at length exclaim'd. 935

Olympian thund'rer, from thy neighb'ring hill
 Of sacred oaths remind me! Then aside
 She turns to shun that majesty of form,
 In solemn sounds upbraiding. Torn her thoughts
 She feels. A painful conflict she endures 940
 With recollection of her Doric race;
 Till gratitude, reviving, arms her breast.
 Her royal benefactor she recalls,
 Back to his sight precipitates her steps. 944



BOOK V.

The Argument.

LEONIDAS, rising by break of day, hears the intelligence which Agis and Melibœus bring from the upper pass, then commands a body of Arcadians, with the Plateans and Thebians, to be drawn out for battle, under the conduct of Demophilus, in that part of Thermopylæ which lies close to the Phocian wall, from whence he harangues them. The enemy approaches. Diomedon kills Tigranes in single combat. Both armies join battle. Dithyrambus kills Phraortes. The Persians, entirely defeated, are pursued by Demophilus to the extremity of the pass. The Arcadians, inconsiderately advancing beyond it, fall into ambush, which Artemisia had laid to cover the retreat of the Persians. She kills Cloaius, but is herself repulsed by Demophilus. Diomedon and Dithyrambus give chase to her broken forces over the plains, in the sight of Persia's camp, whence she receives no assistance. She rallies a small body, and, facing the enemy, disables Dithyrambus by a blow on his helmet. This puts the Grecians into some confusion, and gives her an opportunity of preserving the remainder of the Carians by a timely retreat. She gains the camp, accuses Argestes of treachery, but pacified by Demaratus, is accompanied by him with a thousand horse, to collect the dead bodies of her soldiers for sepulchre.

AURORA dawn'd. Leonidas arose.
 With Melibœus Agis, now return'd,
 Address'd the king. Along the mountain's side
 We bent our journey. On our way a voice,
 Loud from a crag, on Melibœus call'd. 5
 He look'd and answer'd. Mycon, ancient friend!
 Far hast thou driv'n thy bearded train to-day;
 But fortunate thy presence. None-like thee,
 Inhabitant of Oeta from thy birth,
 Can furnish that intelligence, which Greece 10
 Wants for her safety. Mycon show'd a track.
 We mounted high. The summit where we stopp'd
 Gave to the sight a prospect wide o'er hills,
 O'er dales and forests, rocks, and dashing floods
 In cataracts. The object of our search 15
 Beneath us lay, the secret pass to Greece,
 Where not five warriors in a rank can tread.
 We thence descended to the Phocian camp,
 Beset with scatter'd oaks, which rose and spread
 In height and shade; on whose sustaining boughs 20
 Were hung in snowy folds a thousand tents,
 Containing each a Phocian heavy-mail'd,
 With two light-weapon'd menials. Northward ends
 The vale, contracted to that narrow streight,
 Which first we saw with Mycon. Prudent care 25

Like yours alleviates mine, well pleas'd the king
 Reply'd. Now, Agis, from Arcadia's bands
 Select a thousand spears. To them unite
 The Thespians and Platæans. Draw their lines
 Beneath the wall, which fortifies the pass. 30
 There, close embody'd, will their might repulse
 The num'rous foe. Demophilus salute.
 Approv'd in martial service him I name
 The chief supreme. Obedient to his will
 Th' appointed warriors, issuing from the tents, 35
 Fill their deep files, and watch the high command.
 So round their monarch, in his stormy hall,
 The winds assemble. From his dusky throne
 His dreadful mandates Æolus proclaims
 To swell the main, or heav'n with clouds deform, 40
 Or bend the forest from the mountain's brow.
 Laconia's leader from the rampart's height
 To battle thus the list'ning host inflames.

This day, O Grecians, countrymen, and friends,
 Your wives, your offspring, your paternal seats, 45
 Your parents, country, liberty, and laws,
 Demand your swords. You, gen'rous, active, brave,
 Vers'd in the various discipline of Mars,
 Are now to grapple with ignoble foes
 In war unskilful, nature's basest dross, 50
 And thence a monarch's mercenary slaves.
 Relax'd their limbs, their spirits are deprav'd
 By eastern sloth and pleasures. Hire their cause,
 Their only fruit of victory is spoil.
 They know not freedom, nor its lib'ral cares. 55
 Such is the flow'r of Asia's host. The rest,
 Who fill her boasted numbers, are a crowd,
 Forc'd from their homes; a populace in peace
 By jealous tyranny disarm'd, in war
 Their tyrant's victims. Taught in passive grief 60
 To bear the rapine, cruelty, and spurns
 Of Xerxes' mercenary band, they pine
 In servitude to slaves. With terror sounds
 The trumpet's clangour in their trembling ears.

Unwonted loads, the buckler and the lance 65
 Their hands sustain, encumber'd, and present
 The mockery of war.---But ev'ry eye
 Shoots fourth impatient flames. Your gallant breasts
 Too long their swelling spirit have confin'd.
 Go then, ye sons of liberty; go sweep 70
 These bondmen from the field. Resistless rend
 The glitt'ring standard from their servile grasp.
 Hurl to the ground their ignominious heads,
 The warrior's helm profaning. Think, the shades
 Of your forefathers lift their sacred brows, 75
 Here to enjoy the glory of their sons.
 He spake. Loud pæans issue from the Greeks.
 In fierce reply barbarian shouts ascend
 From hostile nations, thronging down the pass.
 Such is the roar of Ætna, when his mouth 80
 Displodes combustion from his sulph'rous depths,
 To blast the smiles of nature. Dauntless stood,
 In deep array before the Phocian wall,
 The phalanx, wedg'd with implicated shields,
 And spears protended, like the graceful range 85
 Of arduous elms, whose interwoven boughs
 Before some rural palace, wide expand
 Their venerable umbrage, to retard
 The North's impetuous wing. As o'er the main,
 In lucid rows, the rising waves reflect 90
 The sun's effulgence; so the Grecian helms
 Return'd his light, which o'er their convex pour'd
 A splendour, scatter'd through the dancing plumes.
 Down rush the foes. Exulting in their van,
 Their haughty leader shakes his threatening lance, 95
 Provoking battle. Instant from his rank
 Diomedon bursts furious. On he strides,
 Confronts Tigranes, whom he thus defies.
 Now art thou met, barbarian. Wouldst thou prove
 Thy actions equal to thy vaunts, command 100
 Thy troops to halt, while thou and I engage.
 Tigranes, turning to the Persians, spake.
 My friends and soldiers, check your martial haste,

While my strong lance that Grecian's pride confounds.
 He ceas'd. In dreadful opposition soon 105
 Each combatant advanc'd. Their finewy hands
 Grip'd fast their spears, high brandish'd. Thrice they
 With well directed force the pointed steel [drove,
 At either's throat, and thrice their wary shields
 Repell'd the menac'd wound. The Asian chief, 110
 At length, with pow'rs collected for the stroke,
 His weapon rivets in the Grecian targe.
 Aside Diomedon inclines, and shuns
 Approaching fate; then all his martial skill
 Undaunted summons. His forsaken spear 115
 Beside him cast, his faulchion he untheaths.
 The blade, descending on Tigranes' arm,
 That instant struggling to redeem his lance,
 The nervous hand dislevers. Pale affright
 Unmans the Persian; while his active foe 120
 Full on his neck discharg'd the rapid sword,
 Which open'd wide the purple gates of Death.
 Low sinks Tigranes in eternal shade.
 His prostrate limbs the conqueror bestrides;
 Then in a tuft of blood-distilling hair 125
 His hand entwining, from the mangled trunk
 The head disjoins, and whirls with matchless strength
 Among the adverse legions. All in dread
 Recoil'd, where'er the ghastly visage flew
 In sanguine circles, and pursu'd its track 130
 Of horror through the air. Not more amaz'd,
 A barb'rous nation, whom the cheerful dawn
 Of science ne'er illumin'd, view on high
 A meteor, waving its portentous fires;
 Where oft, as superstition vainly dreams, 135
 Some demon sits amid the baneful blaze,
 Dispersing plague and desolation round.
 A while the stern Diomedon remain'd
 Triumphant o'er the dire dismay, which froze
 The heart of Persia; then with haughty pace 140
 In sullen joy among his gladsome friends
 Resum'd his station. Still the hostile throng

In consternation motionless suspend
The charge. Their drooping hearts Phraortes warms.

Heav'n! can one leader's fate appal this host, 145
Which counts a train of princes for its chiefs?

Behold Phraortes. From Niphates' ridge
I draw my subject files. My hardy toil
Through pathless woods and deserts hath explor'd
The tiger's cavern. This unconquer'd hand 150
Hath from the lion rent his shaggy hide.

So through this field of slaughter will I chase
Yon vaunting Greek. His ardent words revive
Declining valour in the van. His lance
Then in the rear he brandishes. The crowd 155

Before his threat'ning ire, affrighted, roll
'Their numbers headlong on the Grecian steel.
Thus, with his trident, Ocean's angry god
From their vast bottom turns the mighty mass
Of waters upward, and o'erwhelms the beach. 160

Tremendous frown'd the fierce Platæan chief
Full in the battle's front. His ample shield
Like a strong bulwark prominent he rais'd
Before the line. There thunder'd all the storm
Of darts and arrows. His undaunted train 165
In emulating ardour charg'd the foe.

Where'er they turn'd the formidable spears,
Which drench'd the glebe of Marathon in blood,
Barbarian dead lay heap'd. Diomedon
Led on the slaughter. From his nodding crest 170

The sable plumes shook terror. Asia's host
Shrunk back, as blasted by the piercing beams
Of that unconquerable sword, which fell
With lightning's swiftness on dissever'd helms,
And, menacing Tigranes' doom to all, 175

Their multitude dispers'd. The furious chief,
Encompass'd round by carnage, and besmear'd
With sanguine drops, enflames his warlike friends.

O Dithyrambus, let thy deeds this day
Surmount their wonted lustre. Thou in arms, 180
Demophilus, worn grey, thy youth recal.

Behold, these slaves without resistance bleed.
 Advance, my hoary friend. Propitious Fame
 Smiles on thy years. She grants thy aged hand
 To pluck fresh laurels for thy honour'd brow. 185

As, when endu'd with Promethean heat,
 The molten clay respir'd, a sudden warmth
 Glows in the venerable Thespian's veins;
 In ev'ry sinew new-born vigour swells;
 His falchion, thund'ring on Cherasmes' helm, 190

The forehead cleaves. Ecbatana to war
 Sent forth Cherasmes. From her potent gates
 He proud in hope her swarming numbers led.
 Him Ariazus and Peucestes join'd,

His martial brothers. They attend his fate, 195
 By Dithyrambus pierc'd. Their hoary fire
 Shall o'er his solitary palace roam;

Lamenting loud his childless years, shall curse
 Ambition's fury, and the lust of war,
 Then, pining, bow in anguish to the grave. 200

Next by the fierce Platæan's fatal sword
 Expir'd Damates, once the host and friend
 Of fall'n Tigranes. By his side to fight
 He left his native bands. Of Syrian birth,
 In Daphné he resided, near the grove 205

Whose hospitable laurels in their shade
 Conceal'd the virgin fugitive averse
 To young Apollo. Hither she retir'd
 Far from her parent stream. Here fables feign,
 Herself a laurel chang'd her golden hair 210

To verdant leaves in this retreat, the grove
 Of Daphné call'd, the seat of rural bliss,
 Fann'd by the breath of zephyrs, and with rills
 From bubbling founts irriguous, Syria's boast
 The happy rival of Thessalia's vale, 215
 Now hid for ever from Damates' eyes.

Demophilus, wise leader, soon improves
 Advantage. All the vet'rans of his troop,
 In age his equals, to condense the files,
 To rivet close their bucklers, he commands. 220

As some broad vessel, heavy in her strength,
 But well-compacted, when a fav'ring gale
 Invites the skilful master to expand
 The sails at large, her slow but steady course
 Impels through myriads of dividing waves ; 225
 So, unresisted, through Barbarian throngs
 The hoary phalanx pass'd. Arcadia's sons
 Pursu'd more swift. Gigantic Clonius press'd
 The yielding Persians, who before him sunk,
 Crush'd like vile stubble underneath the steps 230
 Of some glad peasant, visiting his fields
 Of new-thorn harvest. On the gen'ral rout
 Phraortes look'd, intrepid still. He sprang
 O'er hills of carnage to confront the foe.
 His own inglorious friends he thus reproach'd. 235
 Fly then, ye cowards, and desert your chief.
 Yet single here my target shall oppose
 The shock of thousands. Raging, he impels
 His deathful point through Aristander's breast.
 Him Dithyrambus lov'd. A sacred bard, 240
 Rever'd for justice, for his verse renown'd,
 He sung the deeds of heroes, those who fell,
 Or those who conquer'd in their country's cause,
 Th' enraptur'd soul inspiring with the love
 Of glory, earn'd by virtue. His high strain 245
 The muses favour'd from their neighb'ring bow'rs,
 And bless'd with heav'nly melody his lyre.
 No more from Thespia shall his feet ascend
 The shady steep of Helicon ; no more
 The stream divine of Aganippe's fount 250
 Bedew his lip harmonious : nor his hands,
 Which, dying, grasp the unforfeited lance,
 And prostrate buckler, evermore accord
 His lofty numbers to the sounding shell.
 Lo ! Dithyrambus weeps. Amid the rage 255
 Of war and conquest swiftly-gushing tears
 Find one sad moment's interval to fall
 On his pale friend. But soon the victor proves
 His stern revenge. Through shield and corselet plung'd

His forceful blade divides the Persian's chest;
 Whence issue streams of royal blood, deriv'd
 From ancestors, who sway'd in Ninus old
 Th' Assyrian sceptre. He to Xerxes' throne
 A tributary satrap rul'd the vales,
 Where Tigris swift between the parted hills
 Of tall Niphates drew his foamy tide,
 Impregnating the meads. Phraortes sinks,
 Not instantly expiring. Still his eyes
 Flash indignation, while the Persians fly.

265

Beyond the Malian entrance of the freights 270

Th' Arcadians rush; when, unperceiv'd till felt,
 Spring from concealment in a thicket deep
 New swarms of warriors, clust'ring on the flank
 Of these unwary Grecians. Tow'rd the bay
 They shrink; they totter on the fearful edge,

275

Which overhangs a precipice. Surpris'd,
 The strength of Clonius fails. His giant bulk
 Beneath the chieftain of th' assailing band
 Falls prostrate. Thespians and Platæans wave
 Auxiliar ensigns. They encounter foes
 Resembling Greeks in discipline and arms.

280

Dire is the shock. What less, than Caria's queen
 In her career of victory could check

Such warriors? Fierce she struggles; while the rout
 Of Medes and Cissians carry to the camp

285

Contagious terror; thence no succour flows.

Demophilus stands firm; the Carian band

At length recoil before him. Keen pursuit

He leaves to others, like th' Almighty Sire,

Who sits unshaken on his throne, while floods,

290

His instruments of wrath, o'erwhelm the earth,

And whirlwinds level on her hills the growth

Of proudest cedars. Through the yielding crowd

Platæa's chief and Dithyrambus range

Triumphant side by side. Thus o'er the field,

295

Where bright Alpheus heard the rattling car

And concave hoof along his echoing banks,

Two gen'rous couriers, link'd in mutual reins,

In speed, in ardour equal, beat the dust
 To reach the glories of Olympia's goal. 300
 Th' intrepid heroes on the plain advance;
 They press the Carian rear. Not long the queen
 Endures that shame. Her people's dying groans
 Transpierce her bosom. On their bleeding limbs
 She looks maternal, feels maternal pangs. 305
 A troop she rallies. Goddess-like she turns
 Not less than Pallas with her Gorgon shield.
 Whole ranks she covers, like th' imperial bird
 Extending o'er a nest of callow young
 Her pinion broad, and pointing fierce her beak, 310
 Her claws outstretch'd. The Thespian's ardent hand,
 From common lives refraining, hastes to snatch
 More splendid laurels from that nobler head.
 His pond'rous falchion, swift descending, bears
 Her buckler down, thence glancing, cuts the thong,
 Which holds her headpiece fast. That golden fence
 Drops down. Thick tresses, unconfin'd, disclose
 A female warrior; one whose summer pride
 Of fleeting beauty had begun to fade,
 Yet by th' heroic character supply'd, 820
 Which grew more awful, as the touch of Time
 Remov'd the soft'ning graces. Back he steps,
 Unmann'd by wonder. With indignant eyes,
 Fire-darting, she advances. Both her hands
 Full on his crest discharge the furious blade. 325
 The forceful blow compels him to recede
 Yet further back, unwounded, though confus'd.
 His soldiers flock around him. From a scene
 Of blood more distant, speeds Plataea's chief.
 The fair occasion of suspended fight 330
 She seizes, bright in glory wheels away,
 And saves her Carian remnant; while his friend
 In fervent sounds Diomedon bespake.
 If thou art slain, I curse this glorious day.
 Be all thy trophies, be my own accurs'd. 335
 The youth, recover'd, answers in a smile.
 I am unhurt. The weighty blow proclaim'd

The queen of Caria, or Bellona's arm.
 Our longer stay Demophilus may blame.
 Let us prevent his call. This said, their steps 340
 They turn, both striding through empurpled heaps
 Of arms, and mangled slain, themselves with gore
 Distain'd like two grim tigers, who have forc'd
 A nightly mansion, on the desert rais'd
 By some lone-wand'ring traveller, then dy'd 345
 In human crimson, through the forest deep
 Back to their covert's dreary gloom retire.

Stern Artemisia, sweeping o'er the field,
 Bursts into Asia's camp. A furious look
 She casts around. Abrocomes remote 350
 With Hyperanthes from the king were sent.
 She sees Argestes in that quarter chief,
 Who from battalions numberless had spar'd
 Not one to succour, but his malice gorg'd
 With her distress. Her anger now augments. 355
 Revenge frowns gloomy on her darken'd brow.
 He cautious moves to Xerxes, where he sat
 High on his car. She follows. Lost her helm,
 Resign'd to sportive winds her cluster'd locks,
 Wild, but majestic, like the waving boughs 360
 Of some proud elm, the glory of the grove,
 And full in foliage. Her emblazon'd shield
 With gore is tarnish'd. Pale around are seen
 All faint, all ghastly from repeated wounds
 Her bleeding soldiers. Brandishing her sword, 365
 To them she points, to Xerxes thus she speaks.

Behold these mangled Carians, who have spent
 Their vital current in the king's defence,
 E'en in his sight; while Medes and Cissians fled,
 By these protected, whom Argestes saw 370
 Pursu'd by slaughter to thy very camp,
 Yet left unhelp'd to perish. Ruling sire,
 Let Horomazes be thy name, or Jove,
 To thee appealing, of the king I claim
 A day for justice. Monarch, to my arm 375
 Give him a prey. Let Artemisia's truth

Chastise his treason. With an eye submissive,
 A mien obsequious, and a soothing tone,
 To cheat the king, to moderate her ire,
 Argestes utters these fallacious words. 380

May Horomazes leave the fiend at large
 To blast my earthly happiness, confine
 Amid the horrors of his own abode
 My ghost hereafter, if the sacred charge
 Of Xerxes' person was not my restraint, 385

My sole restraint! To him our all is due,
 Our all how trifling, with his safety weigh'd.
 His preservation I prefer to fame,
 And bright occasion for immortal deeds
 Forego in duty. Else my helpful sword, 390

Fair heroine of Asia, hadst thou seen
 Among the foremost blazing. Lo! the king
 A royal present will on thee bestow,
 Perfumes and precious unguents on the dead,
 A golden wreath to each survivor brave. 395

Aw'd by her spirit, by the flatt'ers spell
 Deluded, languid through dismay and shame
 At his defeat, the monarch for a time
 Sat mute, at length unlock'd his falt'ring lips.

Thou hear'st, great princess. Rest content. His
 words 400

I ratify. Yet farther, I proclaim
 Thee of my train first counsellor and chief.

O eagle ey'd discernment in the king!
 O wisdom equal to his boundless power! 405

The purpled sycophant exclaims. Thou seest
 Her matchless talents. Wanting her, thy fleet,
 The floating bulwark of our hopes, laments,
 Foil'd in her absence, in her conduct safe.
 Thy penetrating sight directs the field;
 There let her worth be hazarded no more. 410

Thy words are wise, the blinded prince rejoins.
 Return, brave Carian, to thy naval charge.

Thus to remove her from the royal ear
 Malicious guile prevails. Redoubled rage

Swells in her bosom. Demaratus sees
And calms the storm, by rendering up his charge
To her maternal hand. Her son belov'd
Dispels the furies. Then the Spartan thus :

415

O Artemisia, of the king's command
Be thou observant. To thy slaughter'd friends
Immediate care, far other than revenge,
Is due. The ravens gather. From his nest
Among those cliffs the eagle's rapid flight
Denotes his scent of carnage. Thou, a Greek,
Well know'st the duty sacred to the dead.
Depart ; thy guide is Piety. Collect,
For honourable sepulchres prepare
Those bodies, mark'd with honourable wounds.
I will assist thee. Xerxes will entrust
To my command a chosen guard of horse.

420

425

430

As oft, when storms in summer have o'ercaст
The night with double darkness, only pierc'd
By heav'n's blue fire, while thunder shakes the pole,
The orient sun, diffusing genial warmth,
Refines the troubled air ; the blast is mute ;
Death-pointed flames disperse ; and placid Jove
Looks down in smiles : so prudence from the lips
Of Demaratus, by his tone, his mien,
His aspect strength'ning smooth Persuasion's flow,
Compos'd her spirit. She with him departs.
The king assigns a thousand horse to guard
Th' illustrious exile and heroic dame.

435

440

4. 2



BOOK VI.

The Argument.

THE Grecian commanders, after the pursuit, retire for refreshment to cave in the side of Mount Oera. Demophilus returns to the camp; Diomedon remains in the cave; while Dithyrambus, discovering a passage through it, ascends to the temple of the Muses. After a long discourse with Megistias, the daughter of Oileus, she intrusts him with a solemn message to Leonidas. Dithyrambus deposes this charge to Megistias, the augur. Leonidas, recalling the forces first engaged, sends down a fresh body. Diomedon and Dithyrambus are permitted, on their own request, to continue in the field with the Platæans. By the advice of Diomedon, the Grecians advance to the broadest part of Thermopylæ, where they form a line of twenty in depth, consisting of the Platæans, Mantineans, Tegæans, Thebans, Corinthians, Phliasians, and Mycenæans. The Spartans compose a second line in a narrower part. Behind them are placed the light armed troops under Alpheus, and further back a phalanx of Locriæ under Medon, the son of Oileus. Dienece commands the whole.

NOW Dithyrambus and Platæa's chief,
 Their former post attaining, had rejoin'd
 Demophilus. Recumbent on his shield
 Phraortes, gasping there, attracts their sight.
 To him in pity Thespiæ's gallant youth
 Approaching, thus his gen'rous soul express'd.
 Liv'it thou, brave Persian? By propitious Jove,
 From whom the pleasing stream of mercy flows
 Through mortal bosoms, less my soul rejoic'd,
 When Fortune bless'd with victory my arm,
 Than now to raise thee from this field of death.

His languid eyes the dying prince unclos'd,
 Then with expiring voice. Vain man, forbear
 To proffer me, what soon thyself must crave.
 The day is quite extinguish'd in these orbs.
 One moment fate allows me to disdain
 Thy mercy, Grecian. Now I yield to death.

This effort made, the haughty spirit fled.
 So shoots a meteor's transitory gleam
 Through nitrous folds of black nocturnal clouds,
 Then dissipates for ever. O'er the corse
 His rev'rend face Demophilus inclin'd,
 Pois'd on his lance! and thus address'd the slain.

Alas! how glorious were that bleeding breast,
 Had Justice brac'd the buckler on thy arm,
 And to preserve a people bade thee die.
 Who now shall mourn thee! Thy ungrateful king

Will soon forget thy worth. Thy native land
 May raise an empty monument, but feel
 No public sorrow. Thy recorded name 30
 Shall wake among thy countrymen no sighs
 For their lost hero. What to them avail'd
 Thy might, thy dauntless spirit? Not to guard
 Their wives, their offspring from th' oppressor's hand;
 But to extend oppression didst thou fall, 35
 Perhaps with inborn virtues in thy soul,
 Which, but thy froward destiny forbade,
 By freedom cherish'd, might have bless'd mankind.
 All-bounteous Nature, thy impartial laws
 To no selected race of men confine 40
 The sense of glory, fortitude, and all
 The nobler passions, which exalt the mind,
 And render life illustrious. These thou plant'st
 In ev'ry soil. But freedom, like the sun,
 Must warm the gen'rous seeds. By her alone 45
 They bloom, they flourish: while oppression blasts
 The tender virtues: hence a spurious growth,
 False honour, savage valour, taint the soul,
 And wild ambition: hence rapacious pow'r
 The ravag'd earth unpeoples, and the brave, 50
 A feast for dogs, th' ensanguin'd field bestrew.

He said. Around the venerable man
 The warriors throng'd attentive. Conquest hush'd
 Its joyful transports. O'er the horrid field,
 Rude scene so late of tumult, all was calm. 55
 So, when the song of Thracian Orpheus drew
 To Hebrus' margin from their dreary seats
 The savage breed, which Hæmus, wrapp'd in clouds,
 Pangæus cold, and Rhodopean snows
 In blood and discord nurs'd, the soothing strain 60
 Flow'd with enchantment through the ravish'd ear,
 Their fierceness melted, and, amaz'd, they learn'd
 The sacred laws of justice, which the bard
 Mix'd with the music of his heavenly string.

Meantime th' Arcadians with inverted arms 65
 And banners, sad and solemn on their shields

The giant limbs of Clonius bore along
 To spread a gen'ral woe. The nobler corse,
 Dire spectacle of carnage, passing by
 To those last honours, which the dead partake, 70
 Struck Dithyrambus. Swift his melted eye
 Review'd Phraortes on the rock supine;
 Then on the sage Demophilus he look'd
 Intent, and spake. My heart retains thy words.
 This hour may witness how rapacious pow'r 75
 The earth unpeoples. Clonius is no more.
 But he, by Greece lamented, will acquire
 A signal tomb. 'This gallant Persian, crush'd
 Beneath my fortune, bath'd in blood still warm,
 May lie forgotten by his thankless king; 80
 Yet not by me neglected shall remain
 A naked corse. The good old man replies.

My gen'rous child, deserving that success
 Thy arm hath gain'd! When vital breath is fled,
 Our friends, our foes, are equal dust. Both claim 85
 The fun'ral passage to that future seat
 Of being, where no enmity revives.
 There Greek and Persian will together quaff
 In amaranthine bow'rs the cup of bliss
 Immortal. Him thy valour slew on earth, 90
 In that bless'd region thou may'st find a friend.

This said, the ready Thespians he commands
 To lift Phraortes from his bed of death,
 Th' empurpled rock. Outstretch'd on targets broad,
 Sustain'd by hands late hostile, now humane, 95
 He follows Clonius to the fun'ral pyre.

A cave not distant from the Phocian wall
 Through Oeta's cloven side had nature form'd
 In spacious windings. This in moss she clad;
 O'er half the entrance downward from the roots 100
 She hung the shaggy trunks of branching firs,
 To heav'n's hot ray impervious. Near the mouth
 Relucent laurels spread before the sun
 A broad and vivid foliage. High above,
 The hill was darken'd by a solemn shade, 105

Diffus'd from ancient cedars. To this cave
 Diomedon, Demophilus resort,
 And Thespia's youth. A deep recess appears,
 Cool as the azure grot, where Thetis sleeps
 Beneath the vaulted ocean. Whisper'd sounds 110
 Of waters, trilling from the riven stone
 To feed a fountain on the rocky floor,
 In purest streams o'erflowing to the sea,
 Allure the warriors hot with toil and thirst
 To this retreat serene. Against the sides 115
 Their disencumber'd hands repose their shields;
 The helms they loosen from their glowing cheeks;
 Propp'd on their spears, they rest: when Agis brings
 From Lacedemon's leader these commands.

Leonidas recalls you from your toils, 120
 Ye meritorious Grecians. You have reap'd
 The first bright harvest on the field of fame.
 Our eyes in wonder from the Phocian wall
 On your unequall'd deeds incessant gaz'd.

To whom Platæa's chief. Go, Agis, say 125
 To Lacedemon's ruler, that, untir'd,
 Diomedon can yet exalt his spear,
 Nor feels the armour heavy on his limbs.
 Then shall I quit the contest? Ere he sinks,
 Shall not this early sun again behold 130
 The slaves of Xerxes tremble at my lance,
 Should they adventure on a fresh assault?

To him the Thespian youth. My friend, my guide
 To noble actions, since thy gen'rous heart
 Intent on fame disdains to rest, O grant 135
 I too thy glorious labours may partake,
 May learn once more to imitate thy deeds.
 Thou, gentlest Agis, Sparta's king entreat
 Not to command us from the field of war.

Yes, persevering heroes, he reply'd 140
 I will return, will Sparta's king entreat
 Not to command you from the field of war.

Then interpos'd Demophilus. O friend,
 ho lead'st to conquest brave Platæa's son;

Thou too, lov'd offspring of the dearest man, 145
 Who dost restore a brother to my eyes ;
 My soul your magnanimity applauds :
 But, O reflect, that unabating toil
 Subdues the mightiest. Valour will repine,
 When the weak hand obeys the heart no more. 150
 Yet I, declining through the weight of years,
 Will not assign a measure to your strength.
 If still you find your vigour undecay'd,
 Stay and augment your glory. So, when time
 Casts from your whiten'd heads the helm aside, 155
 When in the temples your enfeebled arms
 Have hung their consecrated shields, the land
 Which gave you life, in her defence employ'd,
 Shall then by honours, doubled on your age,
 Bequit the gen'rous labours of your prime. 160
 So spake the senior, and forsook the cave.
 But from the fount Diomedon receives
 Th' o'erflowing waters in his concave helm,
 Addressing thus the genius of the stream.
 Whoe'er thou art, divinity unstain'd 165
 Of this fair fountain, till unsparing Mars
 Heap'd carnage round thee, bounteous are thy streams
 To me, who ill repay thee. I again
 Thy silver-gleaming current must pollute,
 Which, mix'd with gore, shall tinge the Malian slime.
 He said, and lifted in his brimming casque 170
 The bright, refreshing moisture. Thus repairs
 The spotted panther to Hydaspes' side,
 Or eastern Indus, feasted on the blood
 Of some torn deer, which nigh his cruel grasp 175
 Had roam'd unheeding in the secret shade ;
 Rapacious o'er the humid brink he stoops,
 And in the pure and fluid crystal cools
 His reeking jaws. Meantime the Thespian's eye
 Roves round the vaulted space ; when sudden sounds
 Of music, utter'd by melodious harps, 180
 And melting voices, distant, but in tones
 By distance soften'd, while the echoes sigh'd

In lulling replication, fill the vault
 With harmony. In admiration mute, 185
 With nerves unbrac'd by rapture, he, entranc'd,
 Stands like an eagle, when his parting plumes
 The balm of sleep relaxes, and his wings
 Fall from his languid side. Plataea's chief,
 Observing, rous'd the warrior. Son of Mars, 190
 Shall music's softness from thy bosom steal
 The sense of glory? From his neighb'ring camp
 Perhaps the Persian sends fresh nations down.
 Soon in bright steel Thermopylæ will blaze.
 Awake. Accustom'd to the clang of arms, 195
 Intent on vengeance for invaded Greece,
 My ear, my spirit in this hour admit
 No new sensation, nor a change of thought.

The Thespian, starting from oblivious sloth
 Of ravishment and wonder, quick reply'd. 200
 These sounds were more than human. Hark! Again!

O honour'd friend, no adverse banner streams
 In sight. No shout proclaims the Persian freed
 From his late terror. Deeper let us plunge
 In this mysterious dwelling of the nymphs, 205
 Whose voices charm its gloom. In smiles rejoin'd
 Diomedon. I see thy soul enthrall'd.
 Me thou would'st rank among th' unletter'd rout
 Of yon barbarians, should I press thy stay.
 Time favours too. Till Agis be return'd, 210
 We cannot act. Indulge thy eager search.
 Here will I wait, a sentinel unmov'd,
 To watch thy coming. In exploring haste
 Th' impatient Thespian penetrates the cave.
 He finds it bounded by a steep ascent 215
 Of rugged steps; where down the hollow rock
 A modulation clear, distinct and slow
 In movement solemn from a lyric string,
 Dissolves the stagnant air to sweet accord
 With these sonorous lays. Celestial maids! 220
 While, from our cliffs contemplating the war,
 We celebrate our heroes, O impart

Orphean magic to the pious strain!
 That from the mountain we may call the groves.
 Swift motion through these marble fragments breathe
 To overleap the high Oetæan ridge, 226
 And crush the fell invaders of our peace.

The animated hero upward springs,
 Light as a kindled vapour, which, confin'd
 In subterranean cavities, at length 230
 Pervading, rives the surface to enlarge
 The long-imprison'd flame. Ascending soon,
 He sees, he stands abash'd, then rev'rend kneels.

An aged temple with insculptur'd forms
 Of Jove's harmonious daughters, and a train 235
 Of nine bright virgins, round their priestesses rang'd,
 Who stood in awful majesty, receive
 His unexpected feet. The song is hush'd.
 The measur'd movement on the lyric chord
 In faint vibration dies. The priestess sage, 240
 Whose elevated port and aspect rose
 To more than mortal dignity, her lyre
 Consigning graceful to attendant hands,
 Looks with reproof. The loose, uncover'd hair
 Shades his inclining forehead, while a flush 245
 Of modest crimson dyes his youthful cheek.
 Her pensive visage softens to a smile,
 On worth so blooming, which she thus accosts.

I should reprove thee, inadvertent youth,
 Who through the sole access, by nature left 250
 To this pure mansion, with intruding steps
 Dost interrupt our lays. But rise. Thy sword
 Perhaps embellish'd that triumphant scene,
 Which wak'd these harps to celebrating notes.
 What is the impress on thy warlike shield? 255

A golden eagle on my shield I bear,
 Still bending low, he answers. She pursues.

Art thou possessor of that glorious orb,
 By me distinguish'd in the late defeat
 Of Asia, driven before thee? Speak thy name. 260
 Who is thy sire? Where lies thy native seat?

Com'st thou for glory to this fatal spot,
Or from barbarian violence to guard
A parent's age, a spouse, and tender babes.
Who call thee father? Humbly he again.

265

I am of Thespia, Dithyrambus nam'd,
The son of Harmatides. Snatch'd by fate,
He to his brother, and my second sire,
Demophilus, consign'd me. Thespia's sons
By him are led. His dictates I obey,
Him to resemble strive. No infant voice
Calls me a father. To the nuptial vow
I am a stranger, and among the Greeks
The least entitled to thy partial praise.

270

None more entitled, interpos'd the dame.

275

Deserving hero, thy demeanour speaks;
It justifies the fame, so widely spread,
Of Harmatides' heir. O grace and pride
Of that fair city, which the muses love,
Thee an acceptant visitant I hail

280

In this their ancient temple. Thou shalt view
Their sacred haunts. Descending from the dome,
She thus pursues. First known, my youthful hours
Were exercis'd in knowledge. Homer's muse

To daily meditation won my soul,

285

With my young spirit mix'd undying sparks

Of her own rapture. By a father sage

Conducted, cities, manners, men I saw,

Their institutes and customs. I return'd.

The voice of Locris call'd me to sustain

290

The only function here. Now throw thy sight

Across that meadow, whose enliven'd blades

Wave in the breeze, and glisten in the sun,

Behind the hoary fane. My bleating train

Are nourish'd there, a spot of plenty spar'd,

295

From this surrounding wilderness. Remark

That fluid mirror, edg'd by shrubs and flow'rs,

Shrubs of my culture, flow'rs by Iris dress'd.

Nor pass that smiling concave on the hill,

Whose pointed crags are soften'd to the sight

300

By figs and grapes. She pauses ; while around
 His eye, delighted, roves in more delight
 Soon to the spot returning, where she stood
 A deity in semblance, o'er the place 305
 Presiding awful, as Minerva wise,
 August like Juno, like Diana pure,
 But not more pure than fair. The beauteous lake
 The pines wide-branching, falls of water clear,
 The multifarious glow on Flora's lap
 Lose all attraction, as her gracious lips 310
 Resume their tale. In solitude remote
 Here I have dwelt contemplative, serene,
 Oft through the rocks responsive to my lyre,
 Oft to th' Amphictyons in assembly full,
 When at his shrine their annual vows they pay, 315
 In measur'd declamation I repeat
 The praise of Greece, her liberty and laws.
 From me the hinds, who tend their wand'ring goats
 In these rude purlieus, modulate their pipes
 To smother cadence. Justice from my tongue 320
 Dissentions calms, which e'en in deserts rend
 Th' unquiet heart of man. Now furious war
 My careful thoughts engages, which delight
 To help the free, th' oppressor to confound,
 Thy feet auspicious fortune hither brings. 325
 In thee a noble messenger I find.
 Go, in these words Leonidas address.
 " Melissa, priestess of the tuneful nine,
 " By their behests invites thy honour'd feet
 " To her divine abode. Thee, first of Greeks, 330
 " To conference of high import she calls."
 Th' obedient Thespian down the holy cave
 Returns. His swiftness suddenly prevents
 His friend's impatience, who salutes him thus.
 Let thy adventure be hereafter told. 335
 Look yonder. Fresh battalions from the camp
 File through the Phocian barrier to construct
 Another phalanx, moving tow'r of war,
 Which scorns the strength of Asia. Let us arm ;

That, ready station'd in the glorious van,
 We may secure permission from the king
 There to continue, and renew the fight.

340

That instant brings Megistias near the grot.
 To Sparta's phalanx his paternal hand
 Was leading Menalippus. Not unheard
 By Dithyrambus in their slow approach,
 The father warns a young and lib'ral mind.

345

Sprung from a distant boundary of Greece,
 A foreigner in Sparta, cherish'd there,
 Instructed, honour'd, nor unworthy held
 To fight for Lacedemon in her line
 Of discipline and valour, lo! my son,
 The hour is come to prove thy gen'rous heart :
 That in thy hand, not ill-intrusted, shine
 The spear and buckler to maintain the cause
 Of thy protectress. Let thy mind recal
 Leonidas. On yonder bulwark plac'd,
 He overlooks the battle ; he discerns
 The bold and fearful. May the gods I serve
 Grant me to hear Leonidas approve
 My son ! No other boon my age implores.

350

355

360

The augur paus'd. The animated cheek
 Of Menalippus glows. His eager look
 Demands the fight. This struck the tender fire,
 Who then with moisten'd eyes. Remember too,
 A father sees thy danger. O! my child,
 To me thy honour, as to thee is dear ;
 Yet court not death. By ev'ry filial tie,
 By all my fondness, all my cares I sue!
 Amid the conflict, or the warm pursuit,
 Still by the wise Dienece's abide.

365

370

His prudent valour knows th' unerring paths
 Of glory. He admits thee to his side.
 He will direct thy ardour. Go——They part.

Megistias, turning, is accosted thus
 By Dithyrambus. Venerable seer,
 So may that son, whose merit I esteem,
 Whose precious head in peril I would die

375

To guard, return in triumph to thy breast,
 As thou deliver'st to Laconia's king 380
 A high and solemn message. While anew
 The line is forming, from th' embattled field
 I must not stray, uncall'd. A sacred charge
 Through hallow'd lips will best approach the king.

The Acarnanian in suspense remains 385
 And silence. Dithyrambus quick relates
 Melissa's words, describes the holy grot,
 Then quits th' instructed augur, and attends
 Diomedon's loud call. That fervid chief
 Was reassuming his distinguish'd arms, 390
 Which, as a splendid recompense, he bore
 From grateful Athens, for achievements bold;
 When he with brave Miltiades redeem'd
 Her domes from Asian flames. The sculptur'd helm
 Enclos'd his manly temples. From on high 395
 A four-fold plumage nodded; while beneath
 A golden dragon with effulgent scales,
 Itself the crest, shot terror. On his arm
 He brac'd his buckler. Bord'ring on the rim,
 Gorgonian serpents twin'd. Within, the form 400
 Of Pallas, martial goddess, was emboss'd.
 Low, as her feet, the graceful tunic flow'd.
 Betwixt two griffins on her helmet sat
 A sphynx with wings expanded; while the face
 Of dire Medusa on her breast-plate frown'd. 405
 One hand supports a javelin, which confounds
 The pride of kings. The other leads along
 A blooming virgin, Victory, whose brow
 A wreath encircles. Laurels she presents;
 But from her shoulders all her plumes were storn, 410
 In favour'd Athens ever now to rest.

This dread of Asia on his mighty arm
 Diomedon uprear'd. He snatch'd his lance,
 Then spake to Dithyrambus. See, my friend,
 Alone of all the Grecians, who sustain'd 415
 The former onset, inexhausted stand
 Plataea's sons. They well may keep the field,

Who with unslacken'd nerves endur'd that day,
Which saw ten myriads of Barbarians driv'n
Back to their ships, and Athens left secure. 420
Charge in our line. Amid the foremost rank
Thy valour shall be plac'd to share command,
And ev'ry honour with Platæa's chief.

He said no more, but tow'rd's the Grecian van
Impetuous, ardent strode. Nor slow behind 425
The pride of Thespia, Dithyrambus mov'd
Like youthful Hermes in celestial arms,
When lightly graceful with his feather'd feet
Along Scamander's flow'ry verge he pass'd
To aid th' incens'd divinities of Greece 430
Against the Phrygian tow'rs. Their eager haste
Soon brings the heroes to th' embattling ranks,
Whom thus the brave Diomedon exhorts.

Not to contend, but vanquish, are ye come.
Here in the blood of fugitives your spears 435
Shall, unoppos'd, be stain'd. My valiant friends,
But chief, ye men of Sparta, view that space,
Where from the Malian gulf more distant rise
Th' Oetæan rocks, and less confine the streights.
There if we range, extending our wide front, 440
An ampler scope to havoc will be giv'n.

To him Dienece. Platæan friend,
Well dost thou counsel. On that widening ground
Close to the mountain place thy vet'ran files.
Proportion'd numbers from thy right shall stretch 445
Quite to the shore in phalanx deep like thine.
The Spartans wedg'd in this contracted part
Will I contain. Behind me Alpheus waits
With lighter bodies. Further back the line
Of Locris forms a strong reserve. He said. 450
The diff'rent bands, confiding in his skill,
Move on successive. The Platæans first
Against the hill are station'd. In their van
Dithyrambus rank'd. Triumphant joy
Diffends their bosoms, sparkles in their eyes. 455

Bless'd be the great Diomedon, they shout,

Who brings another hero to our line.
 Hail! Dithyrambus. Hail! illustrious youth.
 Had tender age permitted, thou hadst gain'd
 An early palm at Marathon. His post 460
 He takes. His gladness blushes on his cheek
 Amid the foremost rank. Around him crowd
 The long-try'd warriors. Their unnumber'd scars
 Discovering, they in ample phrase recount
 Their various dangers. He their wounds surveys 465
 In veneration, nor disdains to hear
 The oft-repeated tale. From Sparta's king
 Return'd, the gracious Agis these address'd.
 Leonidas salutes Plataea's chief,
 And Dithyrambus. To your swords he grants 470
 A further effort with Plataea's band,
 If yet by toil unconquer'd—but I see,
 That all, unyielding, court the promis'd fight.
 Hail! glorious veterans. This signal day
 May your victorious arms augment the wreaths 475
 Around your venerable heads, and grace
 Thermopylae with Marathonian fame.
 This said, he hastens back. Meantime advance
 The Mantinean, Diophantus brave,
 Then Hegesander, Tegea's dauntless chief, 480
 Who near Diomedon in equal range
 Erect their standards. Next the Thebans form
 Alcmaeon, bold Eupalamus succeed.
 With their Corinthian and Phliasian bands.
 Last on the Malian shore Mycenaea's youth 485
 Aristobulus draws. From Oeta's side
 Down to the bay in well-connected length
 Each gleaming rank contains a hundred spears,
 While twenty bucklers ev'ry rank condense.
 A sure support, Dienece behind 490
 Arrays the Spartans. Godlike Agis here,
 There Menalippus by their leader stand
 Two bulwarks. Breathing ardour in the rear,
 The words of Alpheus fan the growing flame
 O! Expectation through his light arm'd force; 495

While Polydorus, present in his thoughts,
 To vengeance sharpens his indignant soul.
 No foe is seen. No distant shout is heard.
 This pause of action Dithyrambus chose.
 The solemn scene on Oeta to his friend
 He open'd large; pourtray'd Melissa's form,
 Reveal'd her mandate; when Plataea's chief.

500

Such elevation of a female mind
 Bespeaks Melissa worthy to obtain
 The conference she asks. This wond'rous dame
 Amid her hymns conceives some lofty thought
 To make these slaves, who loiter in their camp,
 Dread e'en our women. But, my gentle friend,
 Say, Dithyrambus, whom the liquid spell
 Of song enchants, should I reproach the gods,
 Who form'd me cold to music's pleasing pow'r,
 Or should I thank them, that the soft'ning charm
 Of sound or numbers ne'er dissolv'd my soul!
 Yet I confess, thy valour breaks that charm,
 Which may enrapture, not unman thy breast.

510

515

To whom his friend, Doth he, whose lays record
 The woes of Priam, and the Grecian fame,
 Doth he dissolve thy spirit? Yet he flows
 In all the sweetness harmony can breathe.

No, by the gods, Diomedon rejoins.
 I feel that mighty muse. I see the car
 Of fierce Achilles, see th' encumber'd wheels
 O'er heroes driv'n, and clotted with their gore.
 Another too demands my soul's esteem,
 Brave Æschylus of Athens. I have seen
 His muse begirt by furies, while she swell'd
 Her tragic numbers. Him in equal rage
 His country's foes o'erwhelming I beheld
 At Marathon. If Phœbus would diffuse
 Such fire through ev'ry bard, the tuneful band
 Might in themselves find heroes for their songs.
 But, son of Harmatides, lift thine eye
 To yonder point, remotest in the bay.
 Those seeming clouds, which o'er the billows fleet

520

525

530

Succeſſive round the jutting land, are ſails, 535
Th' Athenian pendant haſtens to ſalute
Leonidas. O *Æſchylus*, my friend,
Firſt in the train of *Phœbus* and of *Mars*,
Be thou on board! Swift bounding o'er the waves,
Come, and be witneſs to heroic deeds! 540
Brace thy ſtrong harp with loftier ſounding chords
To celebrate this battle! Fall who may;
But if they fall with honour, let their names
Round feſtive goblets in thy numbers ring,
And joy, not grief, accompany the ſong. 545
Converſing thus, their courage they beguil'd,
Which elſe impatient of inactive hours
At long-ſuſpended glory had repin'd. 548



BOOK VII.

The Argument.

MEGISTIAS delivers Melissa's message to Leonidas. Medon her brother conducts him to the temple. She furnishes Leonidas with the means of executing a design he had premeditated to annoy the enemy. They are joined by a body of mariners under the command of Æschylus, a celebrated poet and warrior among the Athenians. Leonidas takes the necessary measures; and, observing from a summit of Oeta the motions of the Persian army, expects another attack: this is renewed with great violence by Hyperanthes, Abrocômes, and the principal Persian leaders, at the head of some chosen troops.

MEGISTIAS, urging to unwonted speed
 His aged steps, by Dithyrambus charg'd
 With sage Melissa's words, had now rejoin'd
 The king of Lacedemon. At his side
 Was Maron posted, watchful to receive 5
 His high injunction. In the rear they stood
 Behind two thousand Locrians, deep-array'd
 By warlike Medon, from Oileus sprung:
 Leonidas to them his anxious mind
 Was thus disclosing. Medon, Maron, hear. 10
 From this low rampart my exploring eye
 But half commands the action, yet hath mark'd
 Enough for caution. Yon barbarian camp,
 Immense, exhaustless, deluging the ground
 With myriads, still o'erflowing, may consume 15
 By endless numbers, and unceasing toil
 The Grecian strength. Not marble his our flesh,
 Nor adamant our sinews. Sylvan pow'rs,
 Who dwell on Oeta, your superior aid
 We must solicit. Your stupendous cliffs 20
 In those loose rocks, and branchless trunks contain
 More fell annoyance than the arm of man.

He ended, when Megistias. Virtuous king,
 Melissa, priestess of the tuneful nine,
 By their behests invites thy honour'd feet 25
 To her chaste dwelling, seated on that hill.
 To conference of high import she calls
 Thee, first of Grecians. Medon interpos'd.
 She his my sister. Justice rules her ways

With piety and wisdom. To her voice 30
 The nations round give ear. The muses breathe
 Their inspiration through her spotless soul,
 Which borders of divinity. She calls
 On thee. O truly styl'd the first of Greeks,
 Regard her call. Yon cliff's projecting head 35
 To thy discernment will afford a scope
 More full, more certain; thence thy skilful eye
 Will best direct the sight. Melissa's fire
 Was ever present to the king in thought,
 Who thus to Medon. Lead, Oileus' son. 40
 Before the daughter of Oileus place
 My willing feet. They hasten to the cave.
 Megistias, Maron follow. Through the rock
 Leonidas, ascending to the fane,
 Rose like the god of morning from the cell 45
 Of night, when, shedding cheerfulness and day
 On hill and vale emblaz'd with dewy gems,
 He gladdens nature. Lacedemon's king,
 Majestically graceful and serene,
 Dispels the rigour in that solemn seat 50
 Of holy sequestration. On the face
 Of pensive-ey'd religion rapture glows
 In admiration of the godlike man.
 Advanc'd Melissa. He her proffer'd hand
 In hue, in purity like snow, receiv'd. 55
 A heav'n-illumin'd dignity of look
 On him she fix'd. Rever'd by all, she spake.
 Hail! chief of men, selected by the gods
 For purer fame than Hercules acquir'd.
 This hour allows no pause. She leads the king 60
 With Medon, Maron, and Megistias, down
 A slope, declining to the mossy verge,
 Which terminates the mountain. While they pass,
 She thus proceeds. These marble masses view,
 Which lie dispers'd around you. They were hewn 65
 From yonder quarry. Note those pond'rous beams,
 The sylvan offspring of that hill. With these
 At my request th' Amphictyons from their seat

Of gen'ral council piously decreed
 To raise a dome, the ornament of Greece. 70
 Observe those wither'd firs, those mould'ring oaks,
 Down that declivity, half-rooted, bent,
 Inviting human force---Then look below.
 There lies Thermopylæ. I see, exclaims
 The high-conceiving hero. I recal 75
 Thy father's words and forecast. He presag'd,
 I should not find his daughter's council vain.
 He to accomplish what thy wisdom plans,
 Hath amplest means supply'd. Go, Medon, bring
 The thousand peasants from th' Oïlean vale 80
 Detach'd. Their leader Melibœus bring.
 Fly, Maron. Ev'ry instrument provide
 To fell the trees, to drag the massy beams,
 To lift the broad-hewn fragments. Are not these
 For sacred use reserv'd, Megistias said? 85
 Can these be yielded by the hand of Mars
 Without pollution? In a solemn tone
 The priestess answer'd. Rev'rend man, who bear'st
 Pontific wreaths, and thou, great captain, hear.
 Forbear to think that my unprompted mind, 90
 Calm and sequester'd in religion's peace,
 Could have devis'd a stratagem of war,
 Or, unpermitted, could resign to Mars
 These rich materials, gather'd to restore
 In strength and splendour yon decrepid walls, 95
 And that time-shaken roof. Rejecting sleep,
 Last night I lay, contriving swift revenge
 On these barbarians, whose career profane
 O'erturns the Grecian temples, and devotes
 Their holy bow'rs to flames. I left my couch, 100
 Long ere the sun his orient gates unbarr'd.
 Beneath yon beach my pensive head reclin'd,
 The rivulets, the fountains, warbling round,
 Attracted slumber. In a dream I saw
 Calliope. Her sisters, all with harps, 105
 Were rang'd around her as their Parian forms
 Show in the temple. Dost thou sleep, she said?

Melissa, dost thou sleep? The barb'rous host
 Approaches Greece. The first of Grecians comes
 By death to vanquish. Priests, let him hurl 110
 These marble heaps, these consecrated beams,
 Our fane itself, to crush the impious ranks.
 The hero summon to our sacred hill.
 Reveal the promis'd succour. All is due
 To liberty against a tyrant's pride. 115
 She struck her shell. In concert full reply'd
 The sister lyres. Leonidas they sung
 In ev'ry note and dialect yet known,
 In measures new, in language yet to come.
 She finish'd. Then Megistias. Dear to heav'n,
 By nations honour'd, and in tow'ring thought 121
 O'er either sex pre-eminent, thy words
 To me a soldier and a priest suffice.
 I hesitate no longer. But the king,
 Wrapt in ecstatic contemplation, stood, 125
 Revolving deep an answer, which might suit
 His dignity and hers. At length he spake.
 Not Lacedemon's whole collected state
 Of senate, people, ephori, and kings;
 Not the Amphictyons, whose convention holds 130
 The universal majesty of Greece,
 E'er drew such rev'rence, as thy single form,
 O all-surpassing woman, worthy child
 Of time renown'd Oileus. In thy voice
 I hear the goddess, Liberty. I see 135
 In thy sublimity of look and port
 That daughter bright of Eleutherian Jove.
 Me thou hast prais'd. My conscious spirit feels,
 That not to triumph in thy virtuous praise
 Were want of virtue. Yet, illustrious dame, 140
 Were I assur'd, that oracles delude;
 That, unavailing, I should spill my blood;
 That all the mules of subjected Greece
 Hereafter would be silent, and my name
 Be ne'er transmitted to recording time; 145
 There is in virtue, for her sake alone,

What should uphold my resolution firm.
 My country's laws I never would survive.
 Mov'd at his words, reflecting on his fate,
 She had relax'd her dignity of mind, 150
 Had sunk in sadness ; but her brothers helm
 Before her beams. Relumining her night
 He through the cave like Hesperus ascends,
 Th' Oilean hinds conducting to achieve
 The enterprize, she counsels. Now her ear 155
 Is pierc'd by notes, shrill sounding from the vault.
 Up starts a diff'rent band, alert and light,
 Athenian sailors. Long and sep'rate files
 Of lusty shoulders, eas'd by union, bear
 Thick, well-compacted cables, wont to heave 160
 The restiff anchor. To a naval pipe,
 As if one soul invigorated all,
 And all compos'd one body, they had trod
 In equal paces, mazy, yet unbroke,
 Throughout their passage. So the spinal strength 165
 Of some portentous serpent, whom the heats
 Of Lybia breed, indissolubly knit,
 But flexible, a cross the sandy plain,
 Or up the mountain, draws his spotted length,
 Or where a winding excavation leads 170
 Through rocks abrupt and wild. Of stature large,
 In arms, which show'd simplicity of strength,
 No decoration of redundant art,
 With sable horse-hair, floating down his back,
 A warrior moves behind. Compos'd in gait, 175
 Austerely grave and thoughtful, on his shield
 The democratic majesty he bore
 Of Athens. Carv'd in emblematic brass,
 Her image stood, with Pallas by her side,
 And trampled under each victorious foot 180
 A regal crown, one Persian, one usurp'd
 By her own tyrants on the well-fought plain
 Of Marathon confounded. He commands
 These future guardians of their country's weal,
 Of gen'ral Greece the bulwarks. Their high deeds

From Artemisium, from th' empurpled shores 186
 Of Salamis renown shall echo wide;
 Shall tell posterity, in latest times,
 That naval fortitude controls the world.
 Swift Maron, following, brings a vig'rous band 190
 Of Helots. Ev'ry instrument they wield
 To delve, to hew, to heave; and active last
 Bounds Melibœus, vigilant to urge
 The tardy forward. To Laconia's king
 Advanc'd th' Athenian leader, and began: 195
 Thou godlike ruler of Eurotas hail!
 Thee, by my voice, Themistocles salutes,
 The admiral of Athens. I conduct
 By public choice the squadron of my tribe,
 And Æschylus am call'd. Our chief hath giv'n 200
 Three days to glory on Eubœa's coast,
 Whose promontories almost rise to meet
 Thy ken from Oeta's cliffs. This morning saw
 The worsted foe, from Artemisium driv'n,
 Leave their disabled ships, and floating wrecks 205
 For Grecian trophies. When the fight was clos'd,
 I was detach'd to bring th' auspicious news,
 To bid thee welcome. Fortunate my keel
 Hath swiftly borne me. Joyful I concur
 In thy attempt. Appris'd by yonder chiefs, 210
 Who met me landing, instant from the ships
 A thousand gallant mariners I drew,
 Who till the setting sun shall lend their toil.
 Themistocles and thou accept my heart,
 Leonidas reply'd, and closely strain'd 215
 The brave, the learn'd Athenian to his breast.
 To envy is ignoble, to admire
 Th' activity of Athens will become
 A king of Sparta, who like thee condemn'd
 His country's sloth. But Sparta now is arm'd. 220
 Thou shalt commend. Behold me station'd here
 To watch the wild vicissitudes of war,
 Direct the course of slaughter. To this post
 By that superior woman I was call'd,

By long protracted fight left fainting Greece 225
 Should yield, outnumber'd, my enlighten'd soul
 Through her, whom heav'n enlightens, hath devis'd
 To whelm the num'rous, persevering foe
 In hideous death, and signalize the day
 With horrors new to war. The muses prompt 230
 The bright achievement. Lo! from Athens smiles
 Minerva too. Her swift auspicious aid
 In thee we find, and these, an ancient race,
 By her and Neptune cherish'd. Straight he meets
 The gallant train, majestic with his arms 235
 Outstretch'd, in this applauding strain he spake :

O lib'ral people, earliest arm'd to shield
 Not your own Athens more, than gen'ral Greece,
 You best deserve her gratitude. Her praise
 Will rank you foremost on the rolls of fame. 240

They hear, they gaze, revering and rever'd.
 Fresh numbers mutter, rushing from the hills,
 The thickets round. Melissa, pointing, spake :
 I am their leader. Native of the hills
 Are these, the rural worshippers of Pan, 245
 Who breaths an ardour through their humble minds
 To join your warriors. Vassals these not mine,
 But of the muses, and their hallow'd laws,
 Administer'd by me. Their patient hands
 Make culture smile, where nature seems to chide 250
 Nor wanting my instructions, or my pray'rs,
 Fertility they scatter by their toil
 Around this aged temple's wild domain.
 Is Melibæus here! Thou fence secure
 To old Oïleus from the cares of time, 255
 Thrice art thou welcome. Useful, wise, belov'd,
 Where'er thou sojourne'st, on Oeta known,
 As oft the bounty of a father's love
 Thou on Melissa's solitude dost pour,
 Be thou director of these mountain hinds. 260

Th' important labour to inspiring airs
 From flutes and harps in symphony with hymns
 Of holy virgins, ardent all perform,

In bands divided under diff'rent chiefs.
Huge timbers, blocks of marble to remove 265
They first attempted ; then assembled stones
Loose in their beds, and wither'd trunks, upturn
By tempests, next dismember'd from the rock
Broad, rugged fragments ; from the mountains hew'd
Their venerable firs, and aged oaks, 270
Which, of their branches by the lightning bar'd,
Presented still against the blasting flame
The hoary pride unshaken. These the Greeks,
But chief th' Athenian mariners, to force
Uniting skill, with massy levers heave. 275
With strong-knit cables drag : till now dispos'd
Where great Leonidas appoints, the piles
Nod o'er the Streights. This new and sudden scene
Might lift imagination to belief
That Orpheus and Amphion from their beds 280
Of ever blooming asphodel had heard
The muses call ; had brought their fabled harps,
At whose mellifluent charm once more the trees
Had burst their fibrous bands, and marbles leap'd
In rapid motion from the quarry's womb, 285
That day to follow harmony in aid
Of gen'rous valour. Fancy might discern
Cerulean Tethys, from her coral grot
Emerging, seated on her pearly car,
With Nereids, floating on the surge below, 290
To view in wonder from the Malian bay
The attic sons of Neptune ; who forsook
Their wooden walls to range th' Oetæan crags,
To rend the forests, and disjoin the rocks. 294
Meantime a hundred sheep are slain. Their limbs
From burning piles fume grateful. Bounty spreads
A decent board. Simplicity attends.
Then spake the priestess. Long enduring chiefs,
Your efforts, now accomplish'd, may admit
Reflection due to this hard labour'd train, 300
Due to yourselves. Her hospitable smile
Wins her well-chosen guests, Laconia's king,

Her brother, Maron, Æschylus divine
 With Acarnania's priest. Her first commands
 To Melibœus sedulous and blithe 305
 Distribute plenty through the toiling crowd.
 Then, skreen'd beneath close umbrage of an oak,
 Each care-divested chief the banquet shares.

Cool breezes, whisp'ring, flutter in the leaves
 Whose verdure, pendent in an arch, repel 310
 The west'ring sun's hot glare. Favonius bland
 His breath impregnates with exhaling sweets
 From flow'ry beds, whose scented clusters deck
 The gleaming pool in view. Fast by, a brook
 In limpid lampses over native steps 315
 Attunes his cadence to sonorous strings,
 And liquid accents of Melissa's maids.
 The floating air in melody reîpires.

A rapture mingles in the calm repast.
 Uprises Æschylus. A goblet full 320
 He grasps. To those divinities, who dwell
 In yonder temple, this libation first,
 To thee benignant hostess, next I pour,
 Then to thy fame, Leonidas. He said.
 His breast, with growing heat distended, prompts 325
 His eager hand, to whose expressive sign
 One of the virgins cedes her sacred lyre.
 Their choral song complacency restrains
 The soul of music, bursting from his touch,
 At once gives birth to sentiment sublime. 330

O Hercules, and Perseus, he began,
 Star-spangled twins of Leda, and the rest
 Of Jove's immediate seed, your splendid acts
 Mankind protected, while the race was rude ;
 While o'er the earth's unciviliz'd extent 335
 The savage monster, and the ruffian sway'd,
 More savage still. No policy, nor laws
 Had fram'd societies. By single strength
 A single ruffian, or a monster fell.
 The legislator rose. Three lights in Greece, 340
 Lycurgus, Solon and Zaleucus blaz'd.
 Then, substituting wisdom, Jove profuse

Of his own blood no longer, gave us more
 In discipline and manners, which can form
 A hero like Leonidas, than all 345
 The god-begotten progeny before.
 The pupils next of Solon claim the muse.
 Sound your hoarse conchs, ye Tritons. You beheld
 The Atlantean shape of Slaughter wade
 Through your astonish'd deeps, his purple arm 350
 Uplifting high before th' Athenian line.
 You saw bright Conquest, riding on the gale,
 Which swell'd their sails ; saw Terror at their helms
 To guide their brazen beaks on Asia's pride.
 Her adamantine grapple from their decks 355
 Fate threw, and Ruin on the hostile fleet
 Inextricably fasten'd. Sound, ye nymphs
 Of Oeta's mountains, of her woods and streams,
 Who hourly witness to Melissa's worth,
 Ye oreads, dryads, naiads, sound her praise. 360
 Proclaim Zaleucus by his daughter grac'd,
 Like Solon and Lycurgus by their sons.
 Laconia's hero, and the priestess bow'd
 Their foreheads grateful to the bard sublime.
 She, rising, takes the word. More sweet thy lyre 365
 To friendship's ear, than terrible to foes
 Thy spear in battle, though the keenest point
 Which ever pierc'd Barbarians. Close we here
 The song and banquet. Hark ! a distant din
 From Asia's camp requires immediate care. 370
 She leads. Along the rocky verge they pass.
 In calm delight Leonidas surveys
 All in the order which he last assign'd ;
 As o'er Thermopylæ beneath he cast
 A wary look. The mountain's furthest crag 375
 Now reach'd, Melissa to the king began :
 Observe that space below, dispers'd in dales,
 In hollows, winding through dissever'd rocks,
 The slender outlet, screen'd by yonder shrubs,
 Leads to the pass. There stately to my view 380

The martial queen of Caria yester fun,
 Descending, show'd. Her loudly I reprov'd.
 But she, devoted to the Persian king,
 In ambush there preserv'd his flying host.
 She last retreated ; but, retreating, prov'd 385
 Her valour equal to a better cause.
 Again I see the heroine approach.

Megistias then. I see a powerful arm,
 Sustaining firm the large, emblazon'd shield,
 Which, fashion'd first in Caria, we have learn'd 390
 To imitate in Greece. Sublime her port
 Bespeaks a mighty spirit. Priestesses, look.
 An act of piety she now performs,
 Directing those, perhaps her Carian band,
 To bear dead brethren from the bloody field, 395
 Among the horsemen an exalted form
 Like Demaratus strikes my searching eye.
 To me, recalling his transcendent rank,
 In Sparta once, he seems a languid sun,
 Which dimly sinks in exhalations dark, 400
 Enveloping his radiance. While he spake,
 Intent on martial duty Medon views
 The dang'rous thicket ; Lacedemon's chief,
 Around the region his consid'rate eye
 Extending, marks each movement of the foe. 405

Th' imperial Persian from his lofty car
 Had in the morning's early conflict seen
 His vanquish'd army, pouring from the streights
 Back to their tents, and o'er his camp dispers'd
 In consternation ; as a river bursts 410
 Impetuous from his fountain, then, enlarg'd,
 Spreads a dead surface o'er some level marsh.
 Th' astonish'd king thrice started from his seat ;
 Shame, fear, and indignation rent his breast ;
 As ruin irresistible were near 415
 To overwhelm his millions. Haste, he call'd
 To Hyperanthes, haste and meet the Greeks.
 Their daring rage, their insolence repel.
 From such dishonour vindicate our name.

His royal brother through th' extensive camp 520
Obedient mov'd. Deliberate and brave,
Each active prince from ev'ry tent remote,
The hardiest troops he summon'd. Caria's queen,
To Hyperanthes bound by firm esteem
Of worth, unrivall'd in the Persian court, 425
In solemn pace was now returning slow
Before a band, transporting from the field
Their slain companions to the sandy beach.

She stopp'd, and thus address'd him.

rn, O

prince,

Lea

From one, whose wishes on thy merit wait, 430
The only means to bind thy gallant brow
In fairest wreathes. To break the Grecian line
In vain ye struggle, unarray'd and lax,
Depriv'd of union. Try to form one band
In order'd ranks, and emulate the foe. 435
Nor to secure a thicket next the pass
Forget. Selected numbers station there.
Farewel, young hero. May thy fortune prove
Unlike to mine. Had Asia's millions spar'd
One myriad to sustain me, none had seen 440
Me quit the dang'rous contest. But the head
Of base Argestes on some future day
Shall feel my treasur'd vengeance. From the fleet
I only stay, till burial rites are paid
To these dead Carians. On this fatal strand 445
May Artemisia's grief appease your ghosts.
My faithful subjects, sacrific'd in vain.
The hero grateful and respectful heard,
What soon his warmth neglected at the sight
Of spears, which flam'd innumerable round. 450
Beyond the rest in lustre was a band,
The satellites of Xerxes. They forsook
Their constant orbit round th' imperial throne
At this dread crisis. To a myriad fix'd,
From their unchanging number they deriv'd 455
The title of Immortals. Light their spears;
Set in pomegranats of resplendent gold,

Or burnish'd silver, were the slender blades.
 Magnificent and stately were the ranks.
 The prince, commanding mute attention, spake. 460
 In two divisions part your number, chiefs.
 One will I lead to onset. In my ranks
 Abrocomes, Hydarnes shall advance,
 Pandates, Mindus, Intaphernes brave,
 To wrest this short-liv'd victory from Greece. 465
 Thou, Abradates, by Sofarnes join'd,
 Orontes and Mazæus, keep the rest
 From action. Future succour they must lend,
 Should envious fate exhaust our num'rous files.
 For, O pure Mithra, may thy radiant eye 470
 Ne'er see us, yielding to ignoble flight,
 The Persian name dishonour. May the acts
 Of our renown'd progenitors, who, led
 By Cyrus, gave one monarch to the east,
 In us revive. O think, ye Persian lords, 475
 What endless infamy will blast your names ;
 Should Greece, that narrow portion of the earth,
 Your pow'r defy : when Babylon hath low'r'd
 Her tow'ring crest, when Lydia's pride is quell'd
 In Cræsus vanquish'd, when her empire lost 480
 Ecbatana deplores. Ye chosen guard,
 Your king's immortal bulwark, O reflect,
 What deeds from your superior swords he claims.
 You share his largest bounty. To your faith,
 Your constancy and prowess he commits 485
 His throne, his person, and this day his fame.
 They wave their banners, blazing in the sun,
 Who then three hours tow'rd Hesperus had driv'n
 From his meridian height. Amid their shouts
 The hoarse-resounding billows are not heard. 490
 Of different nations, and in different garb,
 Innumerable and vary'd like the shells,
 By restless Tethys scatter'd on the beach,
 O'er which they trod, the multitude advanc'd,
 Straight by Leonidas descry'd. The van 495
 Abrocomes and Hyperanthes led,

Pandates, Mindus. Violent their march
Sweeps down the rocky, hollow-sounding pass.
So, where th' unequal globe in mountains swells,
A torrent rolls his thund'ring surge between 500
The steep-erected cliffs; tumultuous dash
The waters, bursting on the pointed crags:
The valley roars; the marble channel foams.
Th' undaunted Greeks immoveably withstand
The dire encounter. Soon th' impetuous shock 505
Of thousands and of myriads shakes the ground.
Stupendous scene of terror! Under hills,
Whose sides, half-arching, o'er the hosts project,
The unabating fortitude of Greece
Maintains her line, th' untrain'd Barbarians charge
In savage fury. With inverted trunks, 510
Or bent obliquely from the shagged ridge,
The silvan horrors overshadow the fight.
The clanging trump, the crash of mingled spears,
The groan of death, and War's discordant shouts 515
Alarm the Echoes in their neighb'ring caves;
Woods, cliffs, and shores return the dreadful sound.



BOOK VIII.

The Argument.

HYPERANTHES discontinuing the fight, while he waits for reinforcements, Teribazus, a Persian remarkable for his merit and learning, and highly beloved by Hyperanthes, but unhappy in his passion for Ariana, a daughter of Darius, advances from the rest of the army to the rescue of a friend in distress, who lay wounded on the field of battle. Teribazus is attacked by Diophauntus, the Mantinean, whom he overcomes; then engaging with Dithyrambus, is himself slain. Hyperanthes hastens to his succour. A general battle ensues, where Diomedon distinguishes his valour. Hyperanthes and Abrocomes, partly by their own efforts, and partly by the perfidy of the Thebans, who desert the line, being on the point of forcing the Grecians, are repulsed by the Lacedemonians. Hyperanthes composes a select body out of the Persian standing forces, and, making an improvement in their discipline, renews the attack; upon which Leonidas changes the disposition of his army. Hyperanthes and the ablest Persian generals are driven out of the field, and several thousands of the Barbarians, circumvented in the pass, are entirely destroyed.

A MID the van of Persia was a youth,
 Nam'd Teribazus, not for golden stores,
 Not for wide pastures, travers'd o'er by herds,
 By fleece-abounding sheep, or gen'rous steeds,
 Nor yet for pow'r, nor splendid honours fam'd. 5
 Rich was his mind in ev'ry art divine;
 Through ev'ry path of science had he walk'd,
 The votary of wisdom. In the years,
 When tender down invests the ruddy cheek,
 He with the Magi turn'd the hollow'd page 10
 Of Zoroastres. Then his tow'ring thoughts
 High on the plumes of contemplation soar'd.
 He from the lofty Babylonian fane
 With learn'd Chaldæans trac'd the heav'nly sphere,
 There number'd o'er the vivid fires, which gleam 15
 On Night's bespangled bosom. Nor unheard
 Were Indian sages from sequester'd bow'rs,
 While on the banks of Ganges they disclos'd
 The pow'rs of nature, whether in the woods,
 The fruitful glebe, or flow'r, the healing plant, 20
 The limpid waters, or the ambient air,
 Or in the purer element of fire.
 The realm of old Sesostris next he view'd,
 Mysterious Egypt with her hidden rites
 Of Isis and Osiris. Last he sought 25
 Th' Ionian Greeks, from Athens sprung, nor pass'd

Miletis by, which once in rapture heard
The tongue of Thalès, nor Priene's walls,
Where Wisdom dwelt with Bias, nor the seat
Of Pittacus, rever'd on Lesbian shores. 30
Th' enlighten'd youth to Susa now return'd,
Place of his birth. His merit soon was dear
To Hyperanthes. It was now the time,
That Discontent and Murmur on the banks
Of Nile were loud and threat'ning. Chembes there 35
The only faithful stood, a potent lord,
Whom Xerxes held by promis'd nuptial ties
With his own blood. To this Egyptian prince
Bright Ariana was the destin'd spouse,
From the same bed with Hyperanthes born. 40
Among her guards was Teribazus nam'd
By that fond brother, tender of her weal.

Th' Egyptian boundaries they gain. They hear
Of insurrection, of the Pharian tribes
In arms, and Chembes in the tumult slain. 45
They pitch their tents, at midnight are assail'd,
Surpris'd, their leaders massacred, the slaves
Of Ariana captives borne away,
Her own pavilion forc'd, her person seiz'd
By ruffian hands: when timely to redeem 50
Her and th' invaded camp from further spoil
Flies Teribazus with a rally'd band,
Swift on her chariot seats the royal fair,
Nor waits the dawn. Of all her menial train
None, but three female slaves, are left. Her guide, 55
Her comforter and guardian fate provides
In him, distinguish'd by his worth alone,
No prince, nor satrap, now the single chief
Of her surviving guard. Of regal birth,
But with excelling graces in her soul, 60
Unlike an eastern princess she inclines
To his consoling, his instructive tongue
An humbled ear. Amid the converse sweet
Her charms, her mind, her virtues he explores,
Admiring. Soon is admiration chang'd 65

To love ; nor loves he sooner than despairs.
 From morn till ev'n her passing wheels he guards
 Back to Euphrates. Often, as she mounts,
 Or quits the car, his arm her weight sustains
 With trembling pleasure. His assiduous hand 70
 From purest fountains wafts the living flood.
 Nor seldom by the fair one's soft command
 Would he repose him, at her feet reclin'd ;
 While o'er his lips her lovely forehead bow'd,
 Won by his grateful eloquence, which sooth'd 75
 With sweet variety the tedious march,
 Beguiling time. He too would then forget
 His pains a while, in raptures vain entranc'd,
 Delusion all, and fleeting rays of joy,
 Soon overcast by more intense despair : 80
 Like wint'ry clouds, which, op'ning for a time,
 Tinge their black folds with gleams of scatter'd light,
 Then, swiftly closing, on the brow of morn
 Condense their horrors, and in thickest gloom
 The ruddy beauty veil. They now approach 85
 The tow'r of Belus. Hyperanthes leads
 Through Babylon an army to chastise
 The crime of Egypt. Teribazus here
 Parts from his princess, marches bright in steel
 Beneath his patron's banner, gathers palms 90
 On conquer'd Nile. To Susa he returns,
 To Ariana's residence, and bears
 Deep in his heart th' immedicable wound.
 But unreveal'd and silent was his pain ;
 Nor yet in solitary shades he roam'd, 95
 Nor shunn'd resort : but o'er his sorrows cast
 A sickly dawn of gladness, and in smiles
 Conceal'd his anguish ; while the secret flame
 Rag'd in his bosom, and its peace consum'd :
 His soul still brooding o'er these mournful thoughts.
 Can I, O Wisdom, find relief in thee, 101
 Who dost approve my passion ? From the snares
 Of beauty only thou wouldst guard my heart.
 But here thyself art charm'd ; where softness, grace,
 O

And ev'ry virtue dignify desire. 105
 Yet thus to love, despairing to possess,
 Of all the torments, by relentless fate
 On life inflicted, is the most severe.
 Do I not feel thy warnings in my breast,
 That flight alone can save me? I will go 110
 Back to the learn'd Chaldeans, on the banks
 Of Ganges seek the sages; where to heav'n
 With thee my elevated soul shall tow'r.
 O wretched Teribazus! all conspires
 Against thy peace. Our mighty lord prepares 115
 To overwhelm the Grecians. Ev'ry youth
 Is call'd to war; and I, who lately pois'd
 With no inglorious arm the soldier's lance,
 Who near the side of Hyperanthes fought,
 Must join the throng. How therefore can I fly 120
 From Ariana, who with Asia's queens
 The splendid camp of Xerxes must adorn?
 Then be it so. Again I will adore
 Her gentle virtues. Her delightful voice,
 Her gracious sweetness shall again diffuse 125
 Reluctant magic through my ravish'd heart;
 Till passion, thus with double rage inflam'd,
 Swells to distraction in my tortur'd breast,
 Then—but in vain through darkness do I search
 My fate—Despair and Fortune be my guides. 130
 The day arriv'd, when Xerxes first advanc'd
 His arms from Susa's gates. The Persian dames,
 So were accusom'd all the eastern fair,
 In sumptuous cars accompany'd his march.
 A beauteous train, by Ariana grac'd. 135
 Her Teribazus follows, on her wheels
 Attends and pines. Such woes oppress the youth,
 Oppress, but not enervate. From the van
 He in this second conflict had withstood
 The threat'ning frown of adamantin Mars, 140
 He singly, while his bravest friends recoil'd.
 His manly temples no tiara bound.
 The slender lance of Asia he disdain'd,

And her light target. Eminent he tow'r'd
 In Grecian arms, the wonder of his foes; 145
 Among th' Ionians were his strenuous limbs
 Train'd in the gymnic school. A fulgent casque
 Enclos'd his head. Before his face and chest
 Down to his knees an ample shield was spread.
 A pond'rous spear he shook. The well-aim'd point
 Sent two Phlians to the realms of death 151
 With four Tegæans, whose indignant chief,
 Brave Hegesander, vengeance breath'd in vain,
 With streaming wounds repuls'd. Thus far un-
 match'd,

His arm prevail'd; when Hyperanthes call'd 155
 From fight his fainting legions. Now each band
 Their languid courage reinforc'd by rest.
 Meantime with Teribazus thus conferr'd
 Th' applauding prince. Thou much deserving youth,
 Had twenty warriors in the dang'rous van 160
 Like thee maintain'd the onset, Greece had wept
 Her prostrate ranks. The weary'd fight awhile
 I now relax, till Abradates strong,
 Orontes and Mazæus are advanc'd.
 Then to the conflict will I give no pause. 165
 If not by prowess, yet by endless toil
 Successive numbers shall exhaust the foe.

He said. Immers'd in sadness, scarce reply'd,
 But to himself complain'd the am'rous youth.

Still do I languish, mourning o'er the same 170
 My arm acquires. Tormented heart! thou seat
 Of constant sorrow, what deceitful smiles
 Yet canst thou borrow from unreal hope
 To flatter life? At Ariana's feet
 What if with supplicating knees I bow, 175
 Implore her pity, and reveal my love.
 Wretch! canst thou climb to yon effulgent orb,
 And share the splendours which irradiate heav'n?
 Dost thou aspire to that exalted maid,
 Great Xerxes' sister, rivalling the claim 180
 Of Asia's proudest potentates and kings?

Unless within her bosom I inspir'd
A passion, fervent as my own, nay more,
Such, as dispelling ev'ry virgin fear,
Might, unrestrain'd, disclose its fond desire, 185
My love is hopeless; and her willing hand,
Should she bestow it, draws from Asia's lord
On both perdition. By despair benumb'd,
His limbs their action lose. A wish for death
O'ercasts and chills his soul. When sudden cries 190
From Ariamnes rouse his drooping pow'rs.
Alike in manners, they, of equal age,
Were friends, and partners in the glorious toil
Of war. Together they victorious chas'd
The bleeding sons of Nile, when Egypt's pride 195
Before the sword of Hyperanthes fell.
That lov'd companion Teribazus views
By all abandon'd, in his gore outstretch'd
The victor's spoil. His languid spirit starts;
He rushes ardent from the Persian line; 200
The wounded warrior in his strong embrace
He bears away. By indignation stung,
Fierce from the Grecians Diophantus sends
A loud defiance. Teribazus leaves
His rescu'd friend. His massy shield he rears; 205
High-brandishing his formidable spear,
He turns intrepid on th' approaching foe.
Amazement follows. On he strides, and shakes
The plumed honours of his shining crest.
Th' ill-fated Greek awaits th' unequal fight, 210
Pierc'd in the throat, with sounding arms he falls,
Through ev'ry file the Mantineans mourn.
Long on the slain the victor fix'd his sight
With these reflections. By thy splendid arms
Thou art a Greek of no ignoble rank: 215
From thy ill fortune I perhaps derive
A more conspicuous lustre.—What if heav'n
Should add new victims, such as thou, to grace
My undeserving hand? who knows, but she
Might smile upon my trophies. Oh! vain thought!

I see the pride of Asia's monarch swell
 With vengeance fatal to her beauteous head.
 Disperse, ye phantom hopes. Too long, torn heart,
 Hast thou with grief contended. Lo! I plant
 My foot this moment on the verge of death, 225
 By Fame invited, by Despair impell'd
 To pass th' irremeable bound. No more
 Shall Teribazus backward turn his step,
 But here conclude his doom. Then cease to heave
 Thou troubled bosom, ev'ry thought be calm 230
 Now at th' approach of everlasting peace.

He ended; when a mighty foe drew nigh,
 Not less than Dithyrambus. Ere they join'd,
 The Persian warrior to the Greek began:
 Art thou th' unconquerable chief, who mow'd 235
 Our battle down. That eagle on thy shield
 Too well proclaims thee. To attempt thy force
 I rashly purpos'd. That my single arm
 Thou deign'st to meet, accept my thanks, and know,
 The thought of conquest less employs my soul, 240
 Than admiration of thy glorious deeds,
 And that by thee I cannot fall disgrac'd.

He ceas'd. These words the Thespian youth re-
 turn'd:
 Of all the praises from thy gen'rous mouth,
 The only portion my desert may claim, 245
 Is this, my bold adventure to confront
 Thee, yet unmatch'd. What Grecian hath not
 mark'd

Thy flaming steel? from Asia's boundless camp
 Not one hath equall'd thy victorious might.
 But whence thy armour of the Grecian form? 250
 Whence thy tall spear, thy helmet? Whence the
 weight

Of that strong shield? Unlike thy eastern friends.
 O if thou be'st some fugitive, who, lost
 To liberty and virtue, art become
 A tyrant's vile stipendiary, that arm, 255
 That valour thus triumphant I deplore,

Which, after all their efforts and success,
Deserve no honour from the gods or men.

Here Teribazus in a sigh rejoin'd.

I am to Greece a stranger, am a wretch 260
To thee unknown, who courts this hour to die,
Yet not ignobly, but in death to raise
My name from darkness, while I end my woes.

The Grecian then: I view thee, and I mourn.
A dignity, which virtue only bears, 265
Firm resolution, seated on thy brow,
Though grief hath dimm'd thy drooping eye, de-
mand

My veneration: and whatever be
The malice of thy fortune, what the cares,
Infesting thus thy quiet, they create 270
Within my breast the pity of a friend.
Why then, constraining my reluctant hand
To act against thee will thy might support
Th' unjust ambition of malignant kings,
The foes to virtue, liberty and peace? 275
Yet free from rage or enmity I lift
My adverse weapon. Victory I ask.
Thy life may fate for happier days reserve.

This said, their beaming lances they protend,
Of hostile hate, or fury both devoid, 280
As on the Isthmian, or Olympic sands
For fame alone contending. Either host,
Pois'd on their arms, in silent wonder gaze.
The fight commences. Soon the Grecian spear,
Which all the day in constant battle worn, 285
Unnumber'd shields and corselets had transfix'd,
Against the Persian buckler, shiv'ring, breaks,
Its master's hand disarming. Then began
The sense of honour, and the dread of shame
To swell in Dithyrambus. Undismay'd, 290
He grappled with his foe, and instant seiz'd
His threat'ning spear, before th' uplifted arm
Could execute the meditated wound.

The weapon burst between their struggling grasp.

Their hold they loosen, bare their shining swords. 295
 With equal swiftneſs to defend, or charge,
 Each active youth advances and recedes.
 On ev'ry ſide they traVERSE. Now direct,
 Obliquely now the wheeling blades deſcend.
 Still is the conflict dubious; when the Greek, 300
 Diſſembling, points his falchion to the ground,
 His arm depreſſing, as o'ercome by toil:
 While with his buckler cautious he repels
 The blows, repeated by 'his active foe.
 Greece trembles for her hero. Joy pervades 305
 The ranks of Aſia; Hyperanthes ſtrides
 Before the line, preparing to receive
 His friend triumphant: while the wary Greek
 Calm and deſenſive bears th' aſſault. At laſt,
 As by th' incautious fury of his ſtrokes, 310
 The Perſian ſwung his cov'ring ſhield aſide,
 The fatal moment Dithyrambus ſeiz'd.
 Light darting forward with his feet outſtretch'd,
 Between th' unguarded ribs he plung'd his ſteel.
 Affection, grief, and terror, wing the ſpeed 315
 Of Hyperanthes. From his bleeding foe!
 The Greek retires not diſtant, and awaits
 The Perſian prince. But he with wat'ry cheeks
 In ſpeechleſs anguiſh claſps his dying friend;
 From whoſe cold lip with interrupted phraſe 320
 Theſe accents break: O deareſt, beſt of men!
 Ten thouſand thoughts of gratitude and love
 Are ſtruggling in my heart—O'erpow'ring fate
 Denies my voice the utt'rance—O my friend!
 O Hyperanthes! Hear my tongue unfold 325
 What, had I liv'd, thou never ſhould'ſt have known.
 I lov'd thy ſiſter. With deſpair I lov'd.
 Soliciting this honourable doom,
 Without regret in Perſia's fight and thine
 I fall. Th' inexorable hand of fate 330
 Weighs down his eyelids, and the gloom of death
 His fleeting light eternally o'erſhades.
 Him on Choaspes o'er the blooming verge

A frantic mother shall bewail ; shall strew
 Her silver tresses in the crystal wave : 335
 While all the shores re echo to the name
 Of Teribazus lost. Th' afflicted prince,
 Contemplating in tears the pallid corse,
 Vents in these words the bitterness of grief :

Oh, Teribazus ! Oh ! my friend, whose loss 340
 I will deplore for ever. Oh ! what pow'r,
 By me, by thee offended, clos'd thy breast
 To Hyperanthes in distrust unkind !

She should, she must have lov'd thee—Now no
 more

Thy placid virtues, thy instructive tongue 345
 Shall drop their sweetness on my secret hours.
 But in complaints doth friendship waste the time,
 Which to immediate vengeance should be giv'n.

He ended, rushing furious on the Greek ;
 Who, while his gallant enemy expir'd, 350
 While Hyperanthes tenderly receiv'd
 The last embraces of his gasping friend,
 Stood nigh, reclin'd in sadness on his shield,
 And in the pride of victory repin'd.
 Unmark'd, his foe approach'd. But forward sprung
 Diomedon. Before the Thespian youth 355
 Aloft he rais'd his targe, and loudly thus :

Hold thee Barbarian, from a life more worth,
 Than thou and Xerxes with his host of slaves.

His words he seconds with his rapid lance. 360

Soon a tremendous conflict had ensu'd ;
 But Itaphernes, Mindus, and a crowd
 Of Persian lords, advancing, fill the space
 Betwixt th' encount'ring chiefs. In mutual wrath,
 With fruitless efforts they attempt the fight. 365

So rage two bulls along th' opposing banks
 Of some deep flood, which parts the fruitful mead.
 Defiance thunders from their angry mouths
 In vain : in vain the furrow'd sod they rend ;
 Wide rolls the stream, and intercepts the war. 370

As by malignant fortune, if a drop

Of moisture mingles with a burning mass
 Of liquid metal, instant show'rs of death
 On ev'ry side th' exploding fluid spreads ;
 So disappointment irritates the flame 375
 Of fierce Plataea's chief, whose vengeance bursts
 In wide destruction. Embas, Daucus fall,
 Arseus, Ochos, Mendus, Artias die ;
 And ten most hardy of th' immortal guard,
 To shivers breaking on the Grecian shield 380
 Their gold embellish'd weapons, raise a mound
 O'er thy pale body, O in prime destroy'd,
 Of Asia's garden once the fairest plant,
 Fall'n Teribazus ! Thy distracted friend
 From this thy temporary tomb is dragg'd 385
 By forceful zeal of satraps to the shore ;
 Where then the brave Abrocomes arrang'd
 The succours new, by Abradates brought,
 Orontes and Mazæus. Turning swift,
 Abrocomes inform'd his brother thus : 390

Strong reinforcement from th' immortal guard
 Pandates bold to Intaphernes leads,
 In charge to harra'ss by perpetual toil
 Those Grecians next the mountain. Thou unite
 To me thy valour : Here the hostile ranks 395
 Less stable seem. Our joint impression try ;
 Let all the weight of battle here impend.
 Rouse, Hyperanthes. Give regret to winds.
 Who hath not lost a friend this direful day ?
 Let not our private cares assist the Greeks, 400
 Too strong already ; or let sorrow act :
 Mourn and revenge. These animating words
 Send Hyperanthes to the foremost line :
 His vengeful ardour leads. The battle joins.

Who stemm'd this tide of onset ? Who imbru'd
 His shining spear the first in Persian blood ? 406
 Eupalamus. Artembares he slew,
 With Derdas fierce, whom Caucasus had rear'd
 On his tempestuous brow, the savage sons
 Of violence and rapine. But their doom 410

Fires Hyperanthes, whose vindictive blade
 Arrests the victor in his haughty course.
 Beneath the strong Abrocomes o'erwhelm'd,
 Melissus swells the number of the dead.
 None could Mycenæ boast of prouder birth, 415
 Than young Melissus, who in silver mail
 The line embellish'd. He in Cirrha's mead,
 Where high Parnassus from his double top
 O'er shades the Pythian games, the envy'd prize
 Of fame obtain'd. Low sinks his laurell'd head 420
 In Death's cold night; and horrid gore deforms
 The graceful hair. Impatient to revenge
 Aristobulus strides before the van.
 A storm of fury darkens all his brow.
 Around he rolls his gloomy eye. For death 425
 Is Alyattes mark'd, of regal blood,
 Deriv'd from Croesus, once imperial lord
 Of nations. Him the nymphs of Halys wept;
 When, with delusive oracles beguil'd,
 By Delphi's god, he pass'd their fatal waves 430
 A mighty empire to dissolve: nor knew
 Th' ill-destin'd prince, that envious Fortune watch'd
 That direful moment from his hand to wrest
 The sceptre of his fathers. In the shade
 Of humble life, his race on Timolus' brow 435
 Lay hid; till, rous'd to battle, on this field
 Sinks Alyattes, and a royal breed,
 In him extinct for ever. Lycis dies,
 For boist'rous war ill-chosen. He was skill'd
 To tune the lulling flute, and melt the heart; 440
 Or with his pipe's awak'ning strain allure
 The lovely dames of Lydia to the dance.
 They on the verdant level graceful mov'd
 In vary'd measures; while the cooling breeze
 Beneath their swelling garments wanton'd o'er 445
 Their snowy breasts, and smooth Cayster's stream,
 Soft-gliding, murmur'd by. The hostile blade
 Draws forth his entrails. Prone he falls. Not long
 The victor triumphs. From the prostrate corse

Of Lycis, while insulting, he extracts
 The reeking weapon. Hyperanthes' steel
 Invades his knee, and cuts the finewy cords,
 The Mycenæans, with uplifted shields,
 Corinthians and Phliasians close around
 The wounded chieftain. In redoubled rage
 The contest glows. Abrocomes incites
 Each noble Persian. Each his voice obeys.
 Here Abradates, there Mazæus press,
 Orontes and Hydarnes. None retire
 From toil, or peril. Urg'd on ev'ry side,
 Mycenæ's band to fortune leave their chief.
 Dispairing, raging, destitute he stands,
 Propt on his spear. His wound forbids retreat.
 None but his brother, Eumenes, abides
 The dire extremity. His studded orb
 Is held defensive. On his arm the sword
 Of Hyperanthes rapidly descends.
 Down drops the buckler, and the sever'd hand
 Resigns its hold. The unprotected pair
 By Asia's hero to the ground are swept;
 As to a reaper crimson poppies low'r
 Their heads luxuriant on the yellow plain.
 From both their breasts the vital currents flow,
 And mix their streams. Elate the Persians pour
 Their numbers, deep'ning on the foe dismay'd.
 The Greeks their station painfully maintain.
 This Anaxander saw, whose faithless tongue
 His colleague Leontiades bespake:

The hour his come to serve our Persian friends.
 Behold, the Greeks are press'd. Let Thebes retire,
 A bloodless conquest yielding to the king.

This said, he drew his Thebans from their post,
 Not with unpunish'd treachery. The lance
 Of Abradates gor'd their foul retreat;
 Nor knew the Asian chief, that Asia's friends
 Before him bled. Meantime, as mighty Jove,
 Or he more ancient on the throne of heav'n,
 When from the womb of Chaos dark the world

Emerg'd to birth, where'er he view'd the jar
 Of atoms yet discordant and unform'd, 490
 Confusion thence with pow'rful voice dispell'd,
 Till light and order universal reign'd;
 So from the hill Leonidas survey'd
 The various war. He saw the Theban rout;
 That Corinth, Philius and Mycenæ look'd 495
 Affrighted backward. Instantly his charge
 Is borne by Maron, whom obedience wings,
 Precipitating down the sacred cave,
 That Sparta's ranks, advancing, should repair
 The disunited phalanx. Ere they move, 500
 Dieneses inspires them. Fame, my friends,
 Calls forth your valour in a signal hour.
 For you this glorious crisis she reserv'd
 Laconia's splendour to assert. Young man,
 Son of Megistias, follow. He conducts 505
 Th' experienc'd troop. They lock their shields,
 And wedg'd in dense arrangement repossess the void.
 Left by the faithless Thebans, and repulse
 Th' exulting Persians. When, with efforts vain
 They oft renew'd the contest, and recoil'd, 510
 As oft confounded with diminish'd ranks;
 Lo! Hyperanthes blush'd, repeating late
 The words of Artemisia. Learn, O chiefs,
 The only means of glory and success.
 Unlike the others, whom we newly chas'd, 515
 These are a band selected from the Greeks,
 Perhaps the Spartans, whom we often hear
 By Demaratus prais'd. To break their line
 In vain we struggle, unarray'd and lax,
 Depriv'd of union. Do not we preside 520
 O'er Asia's armies, and our courage boast,
 Our martial art above the vulgar herd?
 Let us, ye chiefs, attempt in order'd ranks
 To form a troop, and emulate the foe.
 They wait not dubious. On the Malian shore 525
 In gloomy depth a column soon is form'd
 O' all the nobles, Abradates strong,

Orontes bold, Mazæus, and the might
 Of brave Abrocomes, with each, who bore
 The highest honours, and excell'd in arms ; 530
 Themselves the lords of nations, who before
 The throne of Xerxes tributary bow'd.
 To these succeed a chosen number, drawn
 From Asia's legions, vaunted most in fight ;
 Who from their kind perpetual stipends share ; 535
 Who, station'd round the provinces, by force
 His tyranny uphold. In ev'ry part
 Is Hyperanthes active, ardent seen
 Throughout the huge battalion. He adjusts
 Their equal range, then cautions, lest on march 540
 Their unaccustom'd order should relax,
 Full in the centre of the foremost rank
 Orontes plants, committing to his hand
 Th' imperial standard ; whose expanded folds
 Glow'd in the air, presenting to the sun 545
 The richest dye of Tyre. The royal bird
 Amid the gorgeous tincture shone express'd
 In high embroider'd gold. The wary prince
 On this conspicuous, leading sign of war
 Commands each satrap, posted in the van, 550
 To fix his eye regardful to direct,
 By this alone his even pace, and slow,
 Retiring, or advancing. So the star,
 Chief of the spangles on that fancy'd bear,
 Once an Idæan nymph, and nurse of Jove, 555
 Bright Cynosura to the Boreal pole
 Attracts the sailor's eye ; when distance hides
 The headland signals, and her guiding ray,
 New-ris'n, she throws. The hero next appoints,
 That ev'ry warrior through the length'ning files 560
 Observing none but those before him plac'd,
 Shall watch their motions, and their steps pursue.
 Nor is th' important thicket next the pass
 Forgot. Two thousand of th' immortal guard
 That station seize. His orders all perform'd, 565

Close by the standard he assumes his post.
Intrepid thence he animates his friends.

Heroic chieftains, whose unconquer'd force,
Rebellious Egypt, and the Lybian felt,
Think what the splendour of your former deeds 570
From you exacts. Remember, from the great
Illustrious actions are a debt to fame.

No middle path remains for them to tread,
Whom she hath once ennobled. Lo! this day
By trophies new will signalize your names, 575
Or in dishonour will for ever cloud.

He said, and vig'rous all to fight proceed.
As when tempestuous Eurus stems the weight
Of western Neptune, struggling through the streights
Which bound Alcides' labours, here the storm 580
With rapid wing reverberates the tide ;

There the contending surge with furrow'd tops
To mountains swells, and, whelming o'er the beach
On either coast, impels the hoary foam
On Mauritanian and Iberian strands : 585

Such is the dreadful onset. Persia keeps
Her foremost ranks unbroken, which are fill'd
By chosen warriors ; while the num'rous crowd,
Though still promiscuous pouring from behind,
Give weight and pressure to th' embattled chiefs 590
Despising danger. Like the mural strength
Of some proud city, bulwark'd round, and arm'd
With rising tow'rs to guard her wealthy stores,
Immoveable, impenetrable stood

Laconia's ferry'd phalanx. In their face 595
Grim Tyranny her threat'ning fetters shakes,
Red Havoc grinds insatiable his jaws.

Greece is behind, intrusting to their swords
Her laws, her freedom, and the sacred urns
Of their forefathers. Present now to thought 600
Their altars rise, the mansions of their birth,
Whate'er they honour, venerate and love.

Bright in the Persian van th' exalted lance
Of Hyperanthes flam'd. Beside him press'd

Abrocomes, Hydarnes, and the bulk 605

Of Abradates, terrible in war.

Firm, as a Memphian pyramid, was seen

Dieneces ; while Agis close in rank

With Menalippus, and the added strength

Of dauntless Maron, their connected shields 610

Upheld. Each unrelax'd array maintains

The conflict undecided ; nor could Greece

Repel the adverse numbers, nor the weight

Of Asia's band select remove the Greeks.

Swift from Laconia's king, perceiving soon 615

The Persian's new arrangement, Medon flew,

Who thus the staid Dieneces address'd :

Leonidas commands the Spartan ranks

To measure back some paces. Soon, he deems,

The unexperienc'd foes in wild pursuit 620

Will break their order. Then the charge renew.

This heard, the signal of retreat is giv'n.

The Spartans seem to yield. The Persians stop.

Astonishment restrains them, and the doubt

Of unexpected victory. Their sloth 625

Abrocomes awakens. By the sun

They fly before us. My victorious friends,

Do you delay to enter Greece. Away,

Rush on intrepid. I already hear

Our horse, our chariots, thund'ring on her plains. 630

I see her temples wrapt in Persian fires.

He spake. In hurry'd violence they roll

Tumultuous forward. All in headlong pace

Disjoin their order, and the line dissolve.

This when the sage Dieneces descries, 635

The Spartans halt, returning to the charge

With sudden vigour. In a moment pierc'd

By his resistless steel, Orontes falls,

And quits th' imperial banner. This the chief

In triumph waves. The Spartans press the foe, 640

Close-wedg'd and square, in slow, progressive pace,

O'er heaps of mangled carcases and arms

Invincible they tread. Composing flutes

Each thought, each motion harmonize. No rage
 Untunes their souls. The phalanx yet more deep 645
 Of Medon follows; while the lighter bands
 Glide by the flanks, and reach the broken foe.
 Amid their flight what vengeance from the arm
 Of Alpheus falls? O'er all in swift pursuit
 Was he renown'd. His active feet had match'd 650
 The son of Peleus in the dusty course;
 But now the wrongs, the long-remember'd wrongs
 Of Polydorus animate his strength
 With tenfold vigour. Like th' empurpled moon,
 When in eclipse her silver disk hath lost 655
 The wonted light, his buckler's polish'd face
 Is now obscur'd; the figur'd bosses drop
 In crimson, spouting from his deathful strokes.
 As, when with horror wing'd, a whirlwind rends
 A shatter'd navy; from the ocean cast, 660
 Enormous fragments hide the level beach;
 Such as dejected Persia late beheld
 On Thessaly's unnavigable strand:
 Thus o'er the champain satraps lay bestrewn
 By Alpheus, persevering in pursuit 665
 Beyond the pass. Not Phœbus could inflict
 On Niobé more vengeance, when, incens'd
 By her maternal arrogance, which scorn'd
 Latona's race, he twang'd his ireful bow,
 And one by one from youth and beauty hurl'd 670
 Her sons to Pluto; nor severer pangs
 That mother felt, than pierc'd the gen'rous soul
 Of Hyperanthes, while his noblest friends
 On ev'ry side lay gasping. With despair
 He still contends. Th' immortals from their stand
 Behind th' entangling thicket next the pass 676
 His signal rouses. Ere they clear their way,
 Well-caution'd Medon from the close defile
 Two thousand Locrians pours. An aspect new
 The fight assumes. Through implicated shrubs 680
 Confusion waves each banner. Falchions, spears,
 And shields are all encumber'd, till the Greeks

Had forc'd a passage to the yielding foe.
 Then Medon's arm is felt. The dreadful boar,
 Wide-wasting once the Calydonian fields, 685
 In fury breaking from his gloomy lair,
 Rang'd with less havoc through unguarded folds,
 Than Medon, sweeping down the glitt'ring files
 So vainly styl'd immortal. From the cliff
 Divine Melissa, and Laconia's king, 690
 Enjoy the glories of Oïleus' son.

Fierce Alpheus too, returning from his chase,
 Joins in the slaughter. Ev'ry Persian falls.
 To him the Locrian chief. Brave Spartan, thanks.
 Through thee my purpose is accomplish'd full. 695
 My phalanx here with levell'd rows of spears
 Shall guard the shatter'd bushes. Come what may
 From Asia's camp, th' assailant, flank'd and driv'n
 Down yonder slope, shall perish. Gods of Greece
 You shall behold your fanes profusely deck'd 700
 In splendid off'rings from barbarian spoils,
 Won by your free-born supplicants this day.

This said, he forms his ranks. Their threat'ning
 points

Gleam through the thicket, whence the shiv'ring foes
 Avert their sight, like passengers dismay'd, 705
 Who on their course by Nile's portentous banks
 Descry in ambush of perfidious reeds
 The crocodile's fell teeth. Contiguous lay
 Thermopylæ. Dieneces secur'd
 The narrow mouth. Two lines the Spartans show'd,
 One tow'rd the plain observ'd the Persian camp; 711
 One, led by Agis, fac'd th' interior pass.

Not yet discourag'd, Hyperanthes strives
 The scatter'd host to rally. He exhorts,
 Entreats, at length indignant thus exclaims. 715

Degen'rate Persians! to sepulchral dust
 Could breath return, your fathers from the tomb
 Would utter groans. Inglorious, do ye leave
 Behind you Persia's standard to adorn
 Some Grecian temple? Can your splendid cars, 720

Voluptuous couches, and delicious boards,
 Your gold, your gems, ye satraps, be preserv'd
 By cowardice and flight? The eunuch slave
 Will scorn such lords, your women lothe your beds.

Few hear him, fewer follow; while the fight 725
 His unabating courage oft renews,
 As oft repuls'd with danger: till, by all
 Deserted, mixing in the gen'ral rout,
 He yields to fortune, and regains the camp.
 In short advances thus the dying tide 730
 Beats for a while against the shelving strand,
 Still by degrees retiring, and at last
 Within the bosom of the main subsides.

Though Hyperanthes from the fight was driv'n,
 Close to the mountain, whose indented side 735
 There gave the widen'd pass an ample space
 For numbers to embattle, still his post
 Bold Intaphernes underneath a cliff
 Against the firm Platæan line maintain'd.
 On him look'd down Leonidas like death, 740
 When, from his iron cavern call'd by Jove,
 He stands gigantic on a mountain's head;
 Whence he commands th' affrighted earth to quake,
 And, crags and forests in his direful grasp,
 High-wielding, dashes on a town below, 745
 Whose deeds of black impiety provoke
 The long-enduring gods. Around the verge
 Of Oeta, curving to a crescent's shape,
 The marbles, timbers, fragments, lay amass'd.
 The Helots, peasants, mariners, attend 750
 In order nigh Leonidas. They watch
 His look. He gives the signal. Rous'd at once
 The force, the skill, activity and zeal
 Of thousands are combin'd. Down rush the piles.
 Trees, roll'd on trees, with mingled rock descend,
 Unintermitted ruin. Loud resound 756
 The hollow trunks against the mountain's side.
 Swift bounds each craggy mass. The foes below
 Look up aghast, in horror shrink and die.

Whole troops, o'erwhelm'd beneath th' enormous load,
 Lie hid and lost, as never they had known 761
 A name or being. Intaphernes clad
 In regal splendour, progeny of kings,
 Who rul'd Damascus, and the Syrian palms,
 Here slept for ever. Thousands of his train 765
 In that broad space the ruins had not reach'd.
 Back to their camp a passage they attempt
 Through Lacedemon's line. Them Agis stopp'd,
 Before his powerful arm Pandates fell,
 Sofarmes, Tachos. Menalippus dy'd 770
 His youthful steel in blood. The mightier spear
 Of Maron pierc'd battalions, and enlarg'd
 The track of slaughter. Backward turn'd the rout,
 Nor found a milder fate. Th' unwearied swords
 Of Dithyrambus and Diomedon, 775
 Who from the hill are wheeling on their flank,
 Still flash tremendous. To the shore they fly,
 At once envelop'd by successive bands
 Of diff'rent Grecians. From the gulf profound
 Perdition here inevitable frowns. 780
 While there, encircled by a grove of spears,
 They stand devoted hecatombs to Mars:
 Now not a moment's interval delays
 Their gen'ral doom; but down the Malian steep
 Prone are they hurry'd to th' expanded arms 785
 Of horror, rising from the oozy deep,
 And grasping all their numbers as they fall.
 The dire confusion like a storm invades
 The chasing surge. Whole troops Bellona rolls
 In one vast ruin from the craggy ridge. 790
 O'er all their arms, their enigns, deep-ingulf'd,
 With hideous roar the waves for ever close. 792

BOOK IX.

The Argument.

NIGHT coming on, the Grecians retire to their tents. A guard is placed on the Phocian wall under the command of Agis. He admits into the camp a lady, accompanied by a single slave, and conducts them to Leonidas; when she discovers herself to be Ariana, sister of Xerxes and Hyperanthes, and sues for the body of Teribazus; which being found among the slain, she kills herself upon it. The slave who attended her proves to be Polydorus, brother to Alpheus and Maron, and who had been formerly carried into captivity by a Phœnician pirate. He relates, before an assembly of the chiefs, a message from Demaratus to the Spartans, which discloses the treachery of the Thebans, and of Epialtes, the Malian, who had undertaken to lead part of the Persian army through a pass among the mountains of Oeta. This information throws the council into a great tumult, which is pacified by Leonidas, who sends Alpheus to observe the motions of these Persians, and Dieneceæ with a party of Lacedæmonians to support the Phocians, with whom the defence of these passages in the hills had been intrusted. In the mean time, Agis sends the bodies of Teribazus and Ariana to the camp of Xerxes.

IN sable vesture, spangled o'er with stars
The night assum'd her throne. Recall'd from war,
Their toil, protracted long, the Greeks forget,
Dissolv'd in silent slumber all, but those
Who watch th' uncertain perils of the dark, 5
A hundred warriors. Agis was their chief.
High on the wall intent the hero sat.
Fresh winds across the undulating bay
From Asia's host the various din convey'd
In one deep murmur, swelling on his ear. 10
When by the sound of footsteps down the pass
Alarm'd he calls aloud. What feet are these
Which beat the echoing payment of the rock?
Reply, nor tempt inevitable fate.

A voice reply'd. No enemies we come, 15
But crave admittance in an humble tone.
The Spartan answers. Through the midnight shade
What purpose draws your wand'ring steps abroad?

To whom the stranger. We are friends to Greece.
Through thy assistance we implore access 20
To Lacedemon's king. The cautious Greek
Still hesitates; when musically sweet
A tender voice his wond'ring ear allures.

O gen'rous warrior, listen to the pray'r
Of one distress'd, whom grief alone hath led 25

Through midnight shades to these victorious tents,
A wretched woman, innocent of fraud.

The chief, descending, through th' unfolded gates
Upheld a flaming torch. The light disclos'd
One first in servile garments. Near his side 30

A woman graceful and majestic stood,
Not with an aspect rivalling the pow'r
Of fatal Helen, or th' ensnaring charms
Of love's soft queen, but such as far surpass'd,
Whate'er the lily, blending with the rose, 35

Spreads on the cheek of beauty soon to fade ;
Such as express'd a mind by wisdom rul'd,
By sweetness temper'd ; virtue's purest light
Illumining the countenance divine :

Yet could not soften rig'rous fate, nor charm
Malignant fortune to revere the good ;
Which oft with anguish rends a spotless heart,
And oft associates wisdom with despair.

In courteous phrase began the chief humane.

Exalted fair, whose form adorns the night,
Forbear to blame the vigilance of war. 45

My slow compliance, to the rigid laws
Of Mars impute. In me no longer pause
Shall from the presence of our king withhold
This thy apparent dignity and worth. 50

Here ending, he conducts her. At the call
Of his lov'd brother from his couch arose
Leonidas. In wonder he survey'd

Th' illustrious virgin, whom his presence aw'd.
Her eye submissive to the ground declin'd,
In veneration of the godlike man. 55

His mien, his voice, her anxious dread dispel,
Benevolent and hospitable thus.

Thy looks, fair stranger, amiable and great,
A mind delineate, which from all commands
Supreme regard. Relate, thou noble dame,
By what relentless destiny compell'd,
Thy tender feet the paths of darkness tread ;
Rehearse th' afflictions whence thy virtue mourns. 60

On her wan cheek a sudden blush arose 65
 Like day, first dawning on the twilight pale ;
 When, wrapt in grief, these words a passage found.

If to be most unhappy, and to know
 That hope is irrecoverably fled ;
 If to be great and wretched may deserve 70
 Commiseration from the brave ; behold,
 Thou glorious leader of unconquer'd bands,
 Behold, descended from Darius' loins,
 Th' afflicted Ariana ; and my pray'r
 Accept with pity, nor my tears disdain. 75
 First, that I lov'd the best of human race,
 Heroic, wise, adorn'd by ev'ry art,
 Of shame unconscious doth my heart reveal.
 This day, in Grecian arms conspicuous clad,
 He fought, he fell. A passion, long conceal'd, 80
 For me, alas ! within my brother's arms
 His dying breath resigning, he disclos'd.
 Oh ! I will stay my sorrows ! will forbid
 My eyes to stream before thee, and my breast,
 O'erwhelm'd by anguish, will from sighs restrain !
 For why should thy humanity be griev'd 86
 At my distress ? why learn from me to mourn
 The lot of mortals, doom'd to pain and woe.
 Hear then, O king, and grant my sole request ;
 To seek his body in the heaps of slain. 90

Thus to the hero su'd the royal maid,
 Resembling Ceres in majestic woe,
 When supplicating Jove from Stygian gloom,
 And Pluto's black embraces to redeem
 Her lov'd and lost Proserpina. A while 95
 On Ariana fixing stedfast eyes,
 These tender thoughts Leonidas recall'd.

Such are thy sorrows, O for ever dear,
 Who now at Lacedemon dost deplore
 My everlasting absence. Then aside 100
 He turn'd and sigh'd. Recov'ring, he address'd
 His brother. Most beneficent of men,
 Attend, assist this princess. Night retires

Before the purple-winged morn. A band
 Is call'd. The well remember'd spot they find, 105
 Where Teribazus from his dying hand
 Dropt in their sight his formidable sword.
 Soon from beneath a pile of Asian dead
 They draw the hero, by his armour known.

Then, Ariana, what transcending pangs 110
 Were thine! what horrors! In thy tender breast
 Love still was mightiest. On the bosom cold
 Of Teribazus, grief-distracted maid,
 Thy beauteous limbs were thrown. Thy snowy hue
 The clotted gore disfigur'd. On his wounds 115
 Loose flow'd thy hair; and, bubbling from thy eyes,
 Impetuous sorrow lav'd th' enpurpled clay.
 When forth in groans these lamentations broke.

O torn for ever from these weeping eyes!
 Thou, who despairing to obtain a heart, 120
 Which then most lov'd thee, didst untimely yield
 Thy life to Fate's inevitable dart
 For her, who now in agony reveals
 Her tender passion, who repeats her vows
 To thy deaf ear, who fondly to her own 125
 Unites thy cheek, insensible and cold.
 Alas! do those unmoving, ghastly orbs
 Perceive my gushing sorrow! Can that heart
 At my complaint dissolve the ice of death
 To share my sufferings! Never, never more 130
 Shall Ariana bend a list'ning ear
 To thy enchanting eloquence, nor feast
 Her mind on wisdom from thy copious tongue!
 Oh! bitter, insurmoutable distress!

She could no more. Invincible despair 135
 Suppress'd all utterance. As a marble form,
 Fix'd on the solemn sepulchre, inclines
 The silent head in imitated woe
 O'er some dead hero, whom his country lov'd;
 Entranc'd by anguish, o'er the breathless clay 140
 So hung the princess. On the gory breach,
 Whence life had issu'd by the fatal blow,

Mute for a space and motionless she gaz'd ;
 When thus in accents firm. Imperial pomp,
 Foe to my quiet, take my last farewell. 145
 There is a state, where only virtue holds
 The rank supreme. My Teribazus there
 From his high order must descend to mine.
 Then with no trembling hand, no change of
 look,

She drew a poignard, which her garment veil'd ; 150
 And instant sheathing in her heart the blade,
 On her slain lover silent sunk in death.
 The unexpected stroke prevents the care
 Of Agis, pierc'd by horror and distress,
 Like one, who, standing on a stormy beach, 155
 Beholds a found'ring vessel, by the deep
 At once engulf'd ; his pity feels and mourns,
 Depriv'd of pow'r to save : so Agis view'd
 The prostrate pair. He dropp'd a tear, and thus.

Oh ! much lamented ! Heavy on your heads 160
 Hath evil fall'n, which o'er your pale remains
 Commands this sorrow from a stranger's eye.
 Illustrious ruins ! May the grave impart
 That peace which life deny'd ! and now receive
 This pious office from a hand unknown. 165

He spake unclasping from his shoulders broad
 His ample robe. He strew'd the waving folds
 O'er each wan visage, turning then, address'd
 The slave, in mute dejection standing near.

Thou, who attendant on this hapless fair, 170
 Hast view'd this dreadful spectacle, return.
 These bleeding relics bear to Persia's king,
 Thou with four captives, whom I free from bonds.

Art thou a Spartan, interrupts the slave ?
 Dost thou command me to return, and pine 175
 In climes unblest'd by liberty, or laws ?
 Grant me to see Leonidas. Alone
 Let him decide, if wretched, as I seem,
 I may not claim protection from this camp.

Whoe'er thou art, rejoins the chief, amaz'd, 180



GLOVER'S POEMS.

Then with no trembling hand no change of look
She drew againard which her garment veild
And instant the stilet in her heart the blade
On her slain lover sunk in silent death.

See Legend Book II. Canto 140. Page 140.

Designed by J. Thomson. Engraved by Chiswick for George Routledge.



But not offended, thy ignoble garb
 Conceal'd a spirit, which I now revere.
 Thy countenance demands a better lot
 Than I, a stranger to thy hidden worth,
 Unconscious offer'd. Freedom dwells in Greece, 185
 Humanity and justice. Thou shalt see
 Leonidas their Guardian. To the king
 He leads him straight, presents him in these words.

In mind superior to the base attire
 Which marks his limbs with shame, a stranger comes,
 Who thy protection claims. The slave subjoins. 191

I stand thy suppliant now. Thou soon shalt learn,
 If I deserve thy favour. I request
 To meet th' assembled chieftains of this host.
 Oh ! I am fraught with tidings, which import 195
 The weal of ev'ry Grecian. Agis, swift,
 Appointed by Leonidas, convenes
 The diff'rent leaders. To the tent they speed.
 Before them call'd, the stranger thus began.

O Alpheus ! Maron ! Hither turn your sight, 200
 And know your brother. From their seats they start.
 From either breaks in ecstasy the name
 Of Polydorus. To his dear embrace
 Each fondly strives to rush ; but he withstands :
 While down his cheeks a flood of anguish pours 205
 From his dejected eyes, in torture bent
 On that vile garb, dishonouring his form.
 At length these accents, intermix'd with groans,
 A passage found, while mute attention gaz'd.

You first should know, if this unhappy slave 210
 Yet merits your embraces. Then approach'd
 Leonidas. Before him all recede,
 Ev'n Alpheus' self, and yields his brother's hand,
 Which in his own the regal hero press'd.
 Still Polydorus on his gloomy front 215
 Repugnance stern to consolation bore ;
 When thus the king with majesty benign.

Lo ! ev'ry heart is open to thy worth.
 Injurious fortune, and enfeebling time,

By servitude and grief severely try 220
 A lib'ral spirit. Try'd but not subdu'd,
 Do thou appear. Whatever be our lot,
 Is Heav'n's appointment. Patience best becomes
 The citizen and soldier. Let the sight
 Of friends and brethren dissipate thy gloom. 225
 Of men the gentlest, Agis too advanc'd,
 Who with increas'd humanity began.
 Now is thy native liberty secure,
 Smile on thy pass'd affliction, and relate
 What chance restores thy merit to the arms 230
 Of friends and kindred. Polydorus then.
 I was a Spartan. When my tender prime
 On manhood border'd, from Laconia's shores,
 Snatch'd by Phœnician pirates, I was sold
 A slave, by Hyperanthes bought, and giv'n 235
 To Ariana. Gracious was her hand.
 But I remain'd a bondman, still estrang'd
 From Lacedemon. Demaratus oft
 In friendly sorrow would my lot deplore;
 Nor less his own ill-fated virtue mourn'd, 240
 Lost to his country in a servile court,
 The centre of corruption; where in smiles
 Are painted envy, treachery, and hate,
 With rankling malice; where alone sincere
 The dissolute seek no disguise: where those, 245
 Possessing all a monarch can bestow,
 Are far less happy, than the meanest heir
 To freedom, far more grovelling than the slave,
 Who serves their cruel pride. Yet here the sun
 Ten times his yearly circle hath renew'd, 250
 Since Polydorus hath in bondage groan'd.
 My bloom is pass'd, or, pining in despair,
 Untimely wither'd. I at last return
 A messenger of fate, who tidings bear
 Of desolation. Here he paus'd in grief 255
 Redoubled; when Leonidas. Proceed.
 Should from thy lips inevitable death
 To all be threaten'd, thou art heard by none

Whose dauntless hearts can entertain a thought,
 But how to fall the noblest. Thus the king. 260
 The rest in speechless expectation wait.
 Such was the solemn silence, which o'erspread
 The shrine of Ammon, or Dodona's shades,
 When anxious mortals from the mouth of Jove
 Their doom explor'd. Nor Polydorus long 265
 Suspends the counsel, but resumes his tale.

As I this night accompany'd the steps
 Of Ariana, near the pass we saw
 A restless form, now traversing the way,
 Now as a statue, rivetted by doubt, 270
 Then on a sudden starting, to renew
 An eager pace. As nearer we approach'd,
 He by the moon, which glimmer'd on our heads,
 Descry'd us. Straight advancing, whither bent
 Our midnight course, he ask'd. I knew the voice 275
 Of Demaratus. To my breast I clasp'd
 The venerable exile, and reply'd.

Laconia's camp we seek. Demand no more.
 Farewel. He wept. Be heav'n thy guide, he said,
 Thrice happy Polydorus. Thou again 280
 May'st visit Sparta, to these eyes deny'd.
 Soon as arriv'd at those triumphant tents,
 Say to the Spartans, from their exil'd king,
 Although their blind credulity depriv'd
 The wretched Demaratus of his home ; 285
 From ev'ry joy secluded, from his wife,
 His offspring torn, his countrymen, and friends,
 Him from his virtue they could ne'er divide.
 Say, that ev'n here, where all are kings, or slaves,
 Amid the riot of flagitious courts, 290
 Not quite extinct his Spartan spirit glows,
 Though grief hath dimm'd its fires. Rememb'ring
 this,

Report, that newly to the Persian host
 Return'd a Malian, Epialtes nam'd,
 Who, as a spy, the Grecian tents had sought. 295
 He to the monarch magnify'd his art,

Which by delusive eloquence had wrought
 The Greeks to such despair ; that ev'ry band
 To Persia's sov'reign standard would have bow'd ;
 Had not the spirit of a single chief, 300
 By fear unconquer'd, and on death resolv'd,
 Restor'd their valour ; therefore would the king
 Trust to his guidance a selected force,
 They soon should pierce th' unguarded bounds of
 Greece,

Through a neglected aperture above, 305
 Where no Leonidas should bar their way :
 Meantime by him the treach'rous Thebans sent
 Assurance of their aid. Th' assenting prince
 At once decreed two myriads to advance
 With Hyperanthes. Ev'ry lord besides, 310
 Whom youth, or courage, or ambition warm,
 Rous'd by the traitor's eloquence, attend
 From all the nations with a rival zeal
 To enter Greece the foremost. In a sigh
 He clos'd---like me. Tremendous from his seat 315
 Uprose Diomedon. His eyes were flames,
 When swift on trembling Anaxander broke
 These ireful accents from his livid lips.

Yet ere we fall, O traitor ! shall this arm
 To hell's avenging furies sink thy head. 320

All now is tumult. Ev'ry bosom swells
 With wrath untam'd, and vengeance. Half unsheath'd,
 Th' impetuous falchion of Platæa flames,
 But, as the Colchion forcerefs, renown'd
 In legends old, or Circe, when they fram'd 325
 A potent spell, to smoothness charm'd the main,
 And lull'd Æolian rage by mystic song ;
 Till not a billow heav'd against the shore,
 Nor ev'n the wanton-winged zephyr breath'd
 The lightest whisper through the magic air : 330
 So when thy voice, Leonidas, is heard,
 Confusion listens ; Ire in silent awe
 Subsides. Withhold this rashness, cries the king,
 To proof of guilt let punishment succeed.



Not yet barbarian shouts our camp alarm. 335
 We still have time for vengeance, time to know,
 If menac'd ruin we may yet repel,
 Or how most glorious perish. Next arose
 Dieneces, and thus th' experienc'd man.

Ere they surmount our fences, Xerxes' troops 340
 Must learn to conquer, and the Greeks to fly,
 The spears of Phocis guard that secret pass.
 To them let instant messengers depart,
 And note the hostile progress. Alpheus here.

Leonidas, behold! my willing feet 345
 Shall to the Phocians bear thy high commands;
 Shall climb the hill to watch th' approaching foe.

Thou active son of valour, quick returns
 The chief of Lacedemon, in my thoughts
 For ever present, when the public weal 350
 Requires the swift, the vigilant, and bold.
 Go climb, surmount the rock's aerial height.
 Observe the hostile march. A Spartan band,
 Dieneces, provide. Thyself conduct
 Their speedy succour to our Phocian friends. 355

The council rises. For his course prepar'd,
 While day, declining, prompts his eager feet,
 O Polydorus! Alpheus thus in haste,
 Long lost, and late recover'd, we must part
 Again, perhaps for ever. Thou return 360
 To kiss the sacred soil which gave thee birth,
 And calls thee back to freedom. Brother dear,
 I should have sighs to give thee--but farewell.
 My country chides me, loit'ring in thy arms.

This said, he darts along, nor looks behind, 365
 When Polydorus answers. Alpheus; no.
 I have the marks of bondage to erase.
 My blood must wash the shameful stain away.

We have a father, Maron interpos'd.
 Thy unexpected presence will revive 370
 His heavy age, now childless and forlorn.

To him the brother with a gloomy frown.
 Ill should I comfort others. View these eyes.

aint is their light, and vanish'd was my bloom
 Before its hour of ripeness. In my breast 375
 Grief will retain a mansion, nor by time
 Be dispossest'd. Unceasing shall my soul
 Brood o'er the black remembrance of my youth,
 In slavery exhausted. Life to me
 Hath lost its flavour. Then in sullen woe 380
 His head declines. His brother pleads in vain.

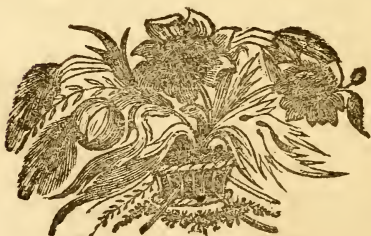
Now in his view Dienece appears'd
 With Sparta's band. Immoveable his eyes
 On them he fix'd, revolving these dark thoughts.
 I too, like them, from Lacedemon spring, 385
 Like them instructed once to poise the spear,
 To lift the pond'rous shield. Ill destin'd wretch!
 Thy arm is grown enervate, and would sink
 Beneath a buckler's weight. Malignant fates!
 Who have compell'd my free-born hand to change
 The warrior's arms for ignominious bonds; 391
 Would you compensate for my chains, my shame,
 My ten years anguish, and the fell despair,
 Which on my youth have prey'd; relenting once,
 Grant I may bear my buckler to the field, 395
 And, known a Spartan, seek the shades below.

Why, to be known a Spartan must thou seek
 The shades below? Impatient Maron, spake.
 Live, and be known a Spartan by thy deeds;
 Live, and enjoy thy dignity of birth; 400
 Live, and perform the duties which become
 A citizen of Sparta. Still thy brow
 Frowns gloomy, still unyielding. He, who leads
 Our band, all fathers of a noble race,
 Will ne'er permit thy barren day to close 405
 Without an offspring to uphold the state.

He will, replies the brother in a glow,
 Prevailing o'er the paleness of his cheek,
 He will permit me to complete by death
 The measure of my duty; will permit 410
 Me to achieve a service, which no hand
 But mine can render, to adorn his fall

With double lustre, strike the barb'rous foe
 With endless terror, and avenge the shame
 Of an enslav'd Laconian. Closing here 415
 His words mysterious, quick he turn'd away
 To find the tent of Agis. There his hand
 In grateful sorrow minister'd her aid ;
 While the humane, the hospitable care
 Of Agis, gently by her lover's corse 420
 On one sad bier the pallid beauties laid
 Of Ariena. He from bondage freed
 Four eastern captives, whom his gen'rous arm
 That day had spar'd in battle ; then began
 This solemn charge. You, Persians, whom my sword
 Acquir'd in war, unransom'd, shall depart. 426
 To you I render freedom which you sought
 To wrest from me. One recompence I ask,
 And one alone. Transport to Asia's camp
 This bleeding princess. Bid the Persian king 430
 Weep o'er this flow'r, untimely cut in bloom.
 Then say, th' all-judging pow'rs have thus ordain'd.
 Thou, whose ambition o'er the groaning earth
 Leads desolation ; o'er the nations spreads
 Calamity and tears ; thou first shalt mourn, 435
 And through thy house destruction first shall range.
 Dismiss'd, they gain the rampart, where on guard
 Was Dithyrambus posted. He perceiv'd
 The mournful bier approach. To him the fate
 Of Ariana was already told. 440
 He met the captives with a moisten'd eye,
 Full bent on Teribazus, sigh'd and spake.
 O that, assuming with those Grecian arms
 A Grecian spirit, thou in scorn hadst look'd
 On princes ! Worth like thine, from slavish courts
 Withdrawn, had ne'er been wasted to support 446
 A king's injustice. Then a gentler lot
 Had bless'd thy life, or dying, thou hadst known
 How sweet is death for liberty. A Greek
 Affords these friendly wishes, though his head 450
 Had lost the honours, gather'd from thy fall,

When fortune favour'd, or propitious Jove
Smil'd on the better cause. Ill-fated pair,
Whom in compassion's purest dew I lave,
But that my hand infix'd the deathful wound, 455
And must be grievous to your lothing shades,
From all the neighb'ring valleys would I cull
Their fairest growth, to strew your hearse with flow'rs.
Yet, O accept these tears and pious pray'rs!
May peace surround your ashes! May your shades 460
Pass o'er the silent pool to happier seats!
He ceas'd in tears. The captives leave the wall,
And slowly down Thermopylæ proceed. 463



BOOK X.

The Argument.

MEDON convenes the Locrian commanders, and harangues them; repairs at midnight to his sister Melissa in the temple, and receives from her the first intelligence, that the Persians were in actual possession of the upper streight, which had been abandoned by the Phocians. Melibeus brings her tidings of her father's death. He strictly enjoins her brother to preserve his life by a timely retreat, and recommends the enforcement of her advice to the prudence and zeal of Melibeus. In the morning the bodies of Teribazus and Ariana are brought into the presence of Xerxes, soon after a report had reached the camp, that great part of his navy was shipwrecked. The Persian monarch, quite dispirited, is persuaded by Argeſtes to send an ambassador to the Spartan king. Argeſtes himself is deputed, who, after revealing his embassy in secret to Leonidas, is by him led before the whole army, and there receives his answer. Alpheus returns, and declares, that the enemy was master of the passages in the hills, and would arrive at Thermopylae the next morning; upon which Leonidas offers to send away all the troops, except his three hundred Spartans; but Diomedon, Demophilus, Dithyrambus, and Megistias refuse to depart: then to relieve the perplexity of Medon, on this occasion, he transfers to him the supreme command, dismisses Argeſtes, orders the companions of his own fate to be ready in arms by sunset, and retires to his pavillion.

THE Grecian leaders, from the council ris'n,
 Among the troops dispersing, by their words,
 Their looks undaunted warm the coldest heart
 Against new dangers threat'ning. To his tent
 The Locrian captains Medon swift convenes, 5
 Exhorting thus. O long approv'd my friends,
 You, who have seen my father in the field
 Triumphant, bold assistants of my arm
 In labours not inglorious, who this day
 Have rais'd fresh trophies, be prepar'd. If help 10
 Be further wanted in the Phocian camp,
 You will the next be summon'd. Locris lies
 To ravage first expos'd. Your ancient fane,
 Your goddesses, your priestess half-ador'd,
 The daughter of Oileus, from your swords 15
 Protection claim against an impious foe.

All anxious for Melissa, he dismiss'd
 Th' applauding vet'rans; to the sacred cave
 Then hasten'd. Under heav'n's night-shaded cope
 He mus'd. Melissa in her holy place, 20
 How to approach with inauspicious steps,
 How to accost, his pensive mind revolv'd:
 When Mycon, pious vassal of the fane,
 Descending through the cavern, at the sight

Of Medon stopp'd, and thus. Thy presence, lord, 25
 The priestess calls. To Lacedemon's king
 I bear a message, suff'ring no delay.

He quits the chief, whose rapid feet ascend,
 Soon ent'ring, where the pedestals displays
 Thy form, Calliope sublime. The lyre, 30
 Whose accents immortality confer,
 Thy fingers seem to wake. On either side,
 The snowy gloss of Parian marble shows
 Four of thy sisters through surrounding shade.
 Before each image is a virgin plac'd. 35
 Before each virgin dimly burns a lamp,
 Whose livid spires just temper with a gleam
 The dead obscurity of night. Apart
 The priestess thoughtful sits. Thus Medon breaks
 The solemn silence. Anxious for thy state, 40
 Without a summons to thy pure abode,
 I was approaching. Deities, who know
 The present, past, and future, let my lips,
 Unblam'd, have utterance. Thou, my sister, hear.
 Thy breast let wisdom strengthen. Impious foes 45
 Through Oeta now are passing. She replies.

Are passing, brother! They, alas! are pass'd,
 Are in possession of the upper Streight.
 Hear in thy turn. A dire narration hear.
 A favour'd goat, conductor of my herd, 50
 Stray'd to a dale, whose outlet is the post
 To Phocian's left, and penetrates to Greece.
 Him Mycon following by a hostile band,
 Light-arm'd forerunners of a num'rous host,
 Was seiz'd. By fear of menac'd torments forc'd, 55
 He show'd a passage up that mountain's side,
 Whose length of wood o'er shades the Phocian land.
 To dry and sapless trunks in diff'rent parts
 Fire, by the Persians artfully apply'd,
 Soon grew to flames. This done, the troop return'd,
 Detaining Mycon. Now the mountain blaz'd. 61
 The Phocians, ill-commanded, left their post,
 Alarm'd, confus'd. More distant ground they chose.

In blind delusion forming there, they spread
 Their ineffectual banners to repel 65
 Imagin'd peril from those fraudulent lights,
 By stratagem prepar'd. A real foe
 Meantime secur'd the undefended pass.
 This Mycon saw. Escaping thence to me,
 He by my orders hastens to inform 70
 Leonidas. She paus'd. Like one, who sees
 The forked light'ning into shivers rive
 A knotted oak, or crumble tow'rs to dust,
 Aghast was Medon; then recov'ring, spake.
 Thou boasted glory of the Oïlean house, 75
 If e'er thy brother bow'd in rev'rence due
 To thy superior virtues, let his voice
 Be now regarded. From th' endanger'd fane,
 My sister fly. Whatever be my lot,
 A troop select of Locrians shall transport 80
 Thy sacred person, where thy will ordains.
 Think not of me, returns the dame. To Greece
 Direct thy zeal. My peasants are conven'd,
 That by their labour, when the fatal hour
 Requires, with massy fragments I may bar 85
 That cave to human entrance. Best lov'd
 Of brothers, now a serious ear incline,
 A while in Greece to fortune's wanton gale
 His golden banner shall the Persian king,
 Deluded, wave. Leonidas, by death 90
 Preserving Sparta, will his spirit leave
 To blast the glitt'ring pageant. Medon, live
 To share that glory. Thee to perish here,
 No law, no oracle enjoins. To die,
 Uncall'd, is blameful. Let thy pious hand 95
 Secure Oïleus from barbarian force.
 To Sparta mindful of her noble host
 Intrust his rev'rend head. Th' assembled hinds,
 Youths, maidens, wives, with nurseries at their
 breasts,
 Around her now in consternation stood, 100
 The women weeping, mute, aghast the men.

To them she turns. You never, faithful race,
 Your priestesses shall forsake. Melissa here,
 Despairing never of the public weal,
 For better days in solitude shall wait, 105
 Shall cheer your sadness. My prophetic soul
 Sees through time's cloud the liberty of Greece
 More stable, more effulgent. In his blood
 Leonidas cements th' unshaken base
 Of that strong tow'r, which Athens shall exalt 110
 To cast a shadow o'er the eastern world.

This utter'd, tow'rd the temple's inmost seat
 Of sanctity her solemn step she bends,
 Devout, enraptur'd. In their dark'ning lamps
 The pallid flames are fainting. Dim through mists
 The morning peeps. An awful silence reigns. 116
 While Medon pensive from the fane descends,
 But instant re-appears. Behind him close
 Treads Melibœus, through the cavern's mouth,
 Ascending pale in aspect, not unlike 120

What legends tell of spectres, by the force
 Of necromantic sorcery constrain'd; [join'd,
 Through earth's dark bowels, which the spell dis-
 They from death's mansion in reluctant sloth
 Rose to divulge the secrets of their graves, 125
 Or mysteries of fate. His cheerful brow,
 O'erclouded, paleness on his healthful cheek,
 A dull, unwonted heaviness of pace
 Portend disasterous tidings. Medon spake.

Turn, holy sister. By the gods below'd, 130
 May they sustain thee in this mournful hour.
 Our father, good Oïleus is no more.
 Rehearse thy tidings, twain. He takes the word.

Thou wast not present when his mind, outstretch'd
 By zeal for Greece, transported by his joy 235
 To entertain Leonidas, refus'd
 Due rest. Old age his ardour had forgot,
 To his last waking moment with his guest
 In rapt'rous talk redundant. He at last,
 Compos'd and smiling in th' embrace of sleep, 140

To Pan's protection at the island fane
 Was left. He wak'd no more. The fatal news
 To you discover'd, from the chiefs I hide.

Melissa heard, inclin'd her forehead low
 Before th' insculptur'd deities. A sigh 145
 Broke from her heart, these accents from her lips.

The full of days and honours through the gate
 Of painless slumber is retir'd. His tomb
 Shall stand among his fathers, in the shade
 Of his own trophies. Placid were his days, 150
 Which flow'd through blessings. As a river pure,
 Whose sides are flow'ry, and whose meadows fair,
 Meets in his course a subterranean void ;
 There dips his silver head, again to rise,
 And, rising, glide through flow'rs and meadows new :
 So shall Oileus in those happier fields, 156

Where never tempests roar, nor humid clouds
 In mists dissolve, nor white-descending flakes
 Of winter violate th' eternal green ;
 Where never gloom of trouble shades the mind, 160
 Nor gust of passion heaves the quiet breast,
 Nor dews of grief are sprinkled. Thou art gone,
 Host of divine Leonidas on earth,
 Art gone before him to prepare the feast,
 Immortalizing virtue. Silent here, 165
 Around her head she wraps her hallow'd pall.

Her prudent virgins interpose a hymn,
 Not in a plaintive, but majestic flow,
 To which their fingers, sweeping o'er the chords,
 The lyre's full tone attemper. She unveils, 170
 Then with a voice, a countenance compos'd.

Go, Medon, pillar of th' Oilean house.
 New cares, new duties claim thy precious life.
 Perform the pious obsequies. Let tears,
 Let groans be absent from the sacred dust, 175
 Which Heav'n in life so favour'd, more in death.
 A term of righteous days, an envy'd urn
 Like his, for Medon is Melissa's pray'r.
 Thou, Melibœus, cordial, high in rank

Among the prudent, warn and watch thy lord. 180
My benediction shall reward thy zeal.

Sooth'd by the blessing of such perfect lips,
They both depart. And now the climbing sun
To Xerxes' tent discover'd from afar
The Persian captives with their mournful load. 185

Before them Rumour through her sable trump
Breathes lamentation. Horror lends his voice]
To spread the tidings of disastrous fate
Along Spercheos. As a vapour black,
Which from the distant, horizontal verge 190

Ascending, nearer still and nearer bends
To higher lands its progress, there condens'd,
Throws darkness o'er the valleys, while the face
Of nature saddens round; so step by step,
In motion slow th' advancing bier diffus'd 195
A solemn sadness o'er the camp. A hedge
Of trembling spears on either hand is form'd.

Tears underneath his iron-pointed cone
The Scian drops. The Caspian savage feels
His heart transpierc'd, and wonders at the cause. 200
In Xerxes' presence are the bodies plac'd,

Nor he forbids. His agitated breast
All night had weigh'd against his future hopes
His present losses, his defeated ranks,
By myriads thinn'd, their multitude abash'd, 205

His fleet thrice worsted, torn by storms, reduc'd
To half its number. When he slept, in dreams
He saw the haggard dead, which floated round
Th' adjoining strands. Disasters new their ghosts,
In sullen frowns, in shrill upbraidings, bode. 210

Thus, ere the gory bier approach'd his eyes,
He in dejection had already lost
His kingly pride, the parent of disdain,
And cold indifference to human woe.

Not e'en beside his sister's nobler corpse 215
Her humble lover could awake his scorn.

The captives told their piercing tale. He heard;
He felt a while compassion. But ere long

Those traces vanish'd from the tyrant's breast.
 His former gloom redoubles. For himself
 His anxious bosom heaves, oppress'd by fear,
 Lest he with all his splendour should be cast
 A prey to fortune. Thoughtful near the throne
 Laconia's exile waits. To whom the king.

220

O Demaratus, what will Fate ordain? 225

Lo, Fortune turns against me! What will check
 Her further malice, when her daring stride
 Invades my house with ravage, and profanes
 The blood of great Darius. I have sent
 From my unguarded side the chosen band, 230

My bravest chiefs to pass the desert hill;
 Have to the conduct of a Malian spy
 My hopes intrusted. May not there the Greeks
 In opposition more tremendous still,
 More ruinous than yester sun beheld, 235

Maintain their post invincible, renew
 Their stony thunder in augmented rage,
 And send whole quarries down the craggy steeps
 Again to crush my army? Oh, unfold
 Thy secret thoughts, nor hide the harshest truth! 240

Say, what remains to hope? The exile here.

Too well, O monarch, do thy fears presage,
 What may befall thy army! If the Greeks,
 Arrang'd within Thermopylæ, a pass
 Accessible and practis'd, could repel 245

With such destruction their unnumber'd foes;
 What scenes of havoc may untrodden paths,
 Confin'd among the craggy hills, afford?

Lost in despair, the monarch silent sat.
 Not less unmann'd than Xerxes, from his place. 250

Uprose Argestes; but concealing fear,
 These artful words deliver'd. If the king
 Propitious wills to spare his faithful bands,
 Nor spread at large the terror of his pow'r;
 More gentle means of conquest than by arms, 255

Nor less secure may artifice supply.
 Renown'd Darius, thy immortal fire

Bright in the spoil of kingdoms, long in vain
 The fields of proud Euphrates with his host
 O'erspread. At length, confiding in the wiles 260
 Of Zopyrus, the mighty prince subdu'd
 The Babylonian ramparts. Who shall count
 The thrones and states by Stratagem o'erturn'd?
 But if Corruption join her pow'rful aid,
 Not one can stand. What race of men possess 265
 That probity, that wisdom, which the veil
 Of craft shall never blind, nor proffer'd wealth,
 Nor splendid pow'r seduce? O Xerxes! born
 To more than mortal greatness, canst thou find
 Through thy unbounded sway no dazzling gift, 270
 Which may allure Leonidas? Dispel
 The cloud of sadness from those sacred eyes.
 Great monarch, proffer to Laconia's chief,
 What may thy own magnificence declare,
 And win his friendship. O'er his native Greece 275
 Invest him sov'reign. Thus procure his sword
 For thy succeeding conquests. Xerxes here,
 As from a trance awak'ning, swift replies.
 Wise are thy dictates. Fly to Sparta's chief.
 Argestes, fall upon him. Bid him join 280
 My arms, and reign o'er ev'ry Grecian state.
 He scarce had finish'd, when in haste approach'd
 Artuchus. Startled at the ghastly stage
 Of death, that guardian of the Persian fair
 Thus in a groan. Thou deity malign, 285
 O Arimanus, what a bitter draught
 For my sad lips thy cruelty hath mix'd!
 Is this the flow'r of women, to my charge
 So lately giv'n? Oh princess! I have rang'd
 The whole Sperchean valley, woods, and caves, 290
 In quest of thee, found here a lifeless corse.
 Astonishment and horror lock my tongue.
 Pride now reviving in the monarch's breast,
 Dispell'd his black despondency a while,
 With gall more black effacing from his heart 295
 Each merciful impression. Stern he spake,

Remove her, satrap, to the female train.

Let them the due solemnities perform.

But never she, by Mithra's light I swear,
Shall sleep in Susa with her kindred dust ; 300

Who by ignoble passions hath debas'd

The blood of Xerxes. Greece beheld her shame ;

Let Greece behold her tomb. The low-born slave,

Who dar'd to Xerxes' sister lift his hopes,

On some bare crag expose. The Spartan here. 305

My royal patron, let me speak—and die,

If such they will. This cold, disfigur'd clay

Was late thy soldier, gallantly who fought,

Who nobly perish'd, long the dearest friend

Of Hyperanthes, hazarding his life 310

Now in thy cause. O'er Persians thou dost reign ;

None more than Persians venerate the brave.

Well hath he spoke, Atruchus firm subjoins.

But if the king his rigour will inflict

On this dead warrior—Heav'n o'erlook the deed, 315

Nor on our heads accumulate fresh woes !

The shatter'd fleet, th' intimidated camp,

The band select, through Oeta's dang'rous wilds

At this dread crisis struggling, must obtain

Support from Heav'n, or Asia's glory falls. 320

Fell pride, recoiling at these awful words

In Xerxes' frozen bosom, yields to fear,

Resuming there the sway. He grants the corse

To Demaratus. Forth Artuchus moves

Behind the bier, uplifted by his train. 325

Argelles, parted from his master's side,

Ascends a car ; and speeding o'er the beach,

Sees Artemisia. She the ashes pale

Of slaughter'd Carians on the pyre consum'd,

Was then collecting for the fun'ral vase 330

In exclamation thus. My subjects lost

On earth, descend to happier climes below——

The fawning, dastard counsellors, who left

Your worth deserted in the hour of need,

May kites disfigure, may the wolf devour—— 335

Shade of my husband, thou salute in smiles
 These gallant warriors, faithful once to thee,
 Nor less to me. They tidings will repeat
 Of Artemisia, to revive thy love——
 May wretches like Argestes never clasp 340
 Their wives, their offspring! Never greet their homes!
 May their unbury'd limbs dismiss their ghosts
 To wait for ever on the banks of Styx!

Then, turning tow'rd her son. Come, virtuous
 boy,

Let us transport these relics of our friends 345
 To yon tall bark, in pendent sable clad.
 They, if her keel be destin'd to return,
 Shall in paternal monuments repose.
 Let us embark. Till Xerxes shuts his ear
 To false Argestes; in her vessel hid, 350
 Shall Artemisia's gratitude lament
 Her bounteous sov'reign's fate. Leander, mark,
 The Doric virtues are not eastern plants.
 Them foster still within thy gen'rous breast,
 But keep in covert from the blaze of courts; 355
 Where flatt'ry's guile in oily words profuse,
 In action tardy, o'er th' ingenuous tongue,
 The arm of valour, and the faithful heart
 Will ever triumph. Yet my soul enjoys
 Her own presage, that destiny reserves 360
 An hour for my revenge. Concluding here,
 She gains the fleet. Argestes sweeps along
 On rapid wheels from Artemisia's view,
 Like night, protectress foul of heinous deeds,
 With treason, rape, and murder at her heel, 365
 Before the eye of morn retreating swift
 To hide her loathsome visage. Soon he reach'd
 Thermopylæ; descending from his car,
 Was led by Dithyrambus to the tent
 Of Sparta's ruler. Since the fatal news 370
 By Mycon late deliver'd, he apart
 With Polydorus had consulted long
 On high attempts; and now sequester'd, sat

To ruminate on vengeance. At his feet
 Prone fell the satrap, and began. 'The will 375
 Of Xerxes bends me prostrate to the earth
 Before thy presence. Great and matchless chief,
 Thus says the lord of Asia. Join my arms;
 Thy recompense is Greece. Her fruitful plains,
 Her gen'rous steeds, her flocks, her num'rous towns,
 Her sons, I render to thy sov'reign hand. 381

And, O illustrious warrior, heed my words!
 Think on the bliss of royalty, the pomp
 Of courts, their endless pleasures, trains of slaves,
 Who restless watch for thee, and thy delights: 185
 Think on the glories of unrival'd sway.

Look on th' Ionic, on th' Æolian Greeks.
 From them their phantom liberty is flown?
 While in each province, rais'd by Xerxes' pow'r,
 Some favour'd chief presides; exalted state, 390
 Ne'er giv'n by envious freedom. On his head

He bears the gorgeous diadem; he sees
 His equals once in adoration stoop
 Beneath his footstool. What superior beams
 Will from thy temples blaze, when gen'ral Greece,
 In noblest states abounding, calls thee lord, 396
 Thee only worthy. How will each rejoice
 Around thy throne, and hail th' auspicious day,
 When thou, distinguish'd by the Persian king,
 Didst in thy sway consenting nations bless, 400
 Didst calm the fury of unsparing war,
 Which else had delug'd all with blood and flames.

Leonidas replies not, but commands
 The Thespian youth, still watchful near the tent
 To summon all the Grecians. He obeys. 405
 The king up rises from his seat, and bids
 The Persian follow. He, amaz'd, attends,
 Surrounded soon by each assembling band;
 When thus at length the godlike Spartan spake:

Here, Persian, tell thy embassy. Repeat, 410
 That to obtain my friendship Asia's Prince
 To me hath proffer'd sov'reignty o'er Greece.

Then view these bands, whose valour shall preserve
 That Greece unconquer'd, which your king bestows ;
 Shall strew your bodies on her crimson'd plains ; 415
 The indignation, painted on their looks,
 Their gen'rous scorn may answer for their chief.
 Yet from Leonidas, thou wretch, inur'd
 To vassalage and baseness, hear. The pomp,
 The arts of pleasure in despotic courts 420
 I spurn abhorrent. In a spotless heart
 I look for pleasure. I from righteous deeds
 Derive my splendour. No adoring crowd,
 No purpled slaves, no mercenary spears
 My state embarrass. I in Sparta rule 425
 By laws, my rulers, with a guard unknown
 To Xerxes, public confidence and love.
 No pale suspicion of th'empoison'd bowl,
 Th' assassin's poniard, or provok'd revolt,
 Chase from my decent couch the peace deny'd 430
 To his resplendent canopy. Thy king,
 Who hath profan'd by proffer'd bribes my ear,
 Dares not to meet my arms. Thee, trembling slave,
 Whose embassy was treason, I despise,
 And therefore spare. Diomedon subjoins : 435
 Our marble temples these Barbarians waste,
 A crime less impious, than a bare attempt
 Of sacrilege on virtue. Grant my suit,
 Thou living temple, where the goodest dwells,
 To me consign the caitiff. Soon the winds 440
 Shall parch his limbs on Oeta's tallest pine.
 Amidst his fury suddenly return'd
 The speed of Alpheus. All, suspended, fix'd
 On him their eyes impatient. He began :
 I am return'd a messenger of ill. 445
 Close to the passage, op'ning into Greece,
 That post committed to the Phocian guard,
 O'erhangs a bushy cliff. A station there
 Behind the shrubs, by dead of night I took,
 Though not in darkness. Purple was the face 450
 Of heav'n. Beneath my feet the valleys glow'd.

A range immense of wood-invested hills,
The boundaries of Greece, were clad in flames ;
An act of froward chance, or crafty foes
To cast dismay. The crackling pines I heard ; 455
Their branches sparkled, and the thickets blaz'd.
In hillocks embers rose. Embodiy'd fire,
As from unnumber'd furnaces, I saw
Mount high through vacant trunks of headless oaks,
Broad-bas'd, and dry with age. Barbarian helms,
Shields, javelins, sabres, gleaming from below, 461
Full soon discover'd to my tortur'd sight
The streights in Persia's pow'r. The Phocian chief,
Whate'er the cause, relinquishing his post,
Was to a neighb'ring eminence remov'd ; 465
There by the foe neglected, or contemn'd,
Remain'd in arms, and neither fled, nor fought.
I stay'd for day spring. Then the Persians mov'd.
To-morrow's sun will see their numbers here.

He said no more. Unutterable fear 470
In horrid silence wraps the list'ning crowd,
Aghast, confounded. Silent are the chiefs,
Who feel no terror ; yet in wonder fix'd,
Thick-wedg'd, enclose Leonidas around,
Who thus in calmest elocution spake : 475

I now behold the oracle fulfill'd.
Then art thou near, thou glorious, sacred hour,
Which shalt my country's liberty secure.
Thrice hail ! thou solemn period. Thee the tongues
Of virtue, fame and freedom shall proclaim, 480
Shall celebrate in ages yet unborn.
Thou godlike offspring of a godlike fire,
To him my kindest greetings, Medon, bear.
Farewel, Megistias, holy friend and brave.
Thou too, experienc'd, venerable chief, 485
Demophilus, farewel. Farewel to thee,
Invincible Diomedon, to thee,
Unequall'd Dithyrambus, and to all,
Ye other dauntless warriors, who may claim
Praise from my lips, and friendship from my heart.

You after all the wonders which your swords 493
 Have here accomplish'd, will enrich your names
 By fresh renown. Your valour must complete
 What ours begins. Here first th' astonish'd foe
 On dying Spartans shall with terror gaze, 500
 And tremble while he conquers. Then, by fate,
 Led from his dreadful victory to meet
 United Greece in phalanx o'er the plain,
 By your avenging spears himself shall fall.

Forth from the assembly strides Plataea's chief. 505
 By the twelve gods, enthron'd in heav'n supreme;
 By my fair name, unsway'd yet, I swear,
 Thine eye, Leonidas; shall ne'er behold
 Diomedon forsake thee. First, let strength
 Desert my limbs, and fortitude my heart. 510
 Did I not face the Marathonian war?
 Have I not seen Thermopylae? What more
 Can fame bestow, which I should wait to share?
 Where can I, living, purchase brighter praise,
 Than dying here? What more illustrious tomb 515
 Can I obtain, than, bury'd in the heaps
 Of Persians, fall'n my victims, on this rock
 To lie distinguish'd by a thousand wounds?

He ended; when Demophilus. O king
 Of Lacedemon, pride of human race, 520
 Whom none e'er equall'd, but the seed of Jove,
 Thy own forefather, number'd with the gods,
 Lo! I am old. With fault'ring steps I tread
 The prone descent of years. My country claim'd
 My youth, my ripeness. Feeble age but yields 525
 An empty name of service. What remains
 For me unequal to the winged speed
 Of active hours, which court the swift and young!
 What eligible wish can wisdom form,
 But to die well? Demophilus shall close 530
 With thee, O hero, on this glorious earth
 His eve of life. The youth of Thespia next
 Address'd Leonidas. O first of Greeks,
 Me too think worthy to attend thy fame,

With this most dear, this venerable man,
 For ever honour'd from my tend'rest age,
 Ev'n till on life's extremity we part.
 Nor too aspiring let my hopes be deem'd ;
 Should the Barbarian in his triumph mark
 My youthful limbs among the gory heaps, 540
 Perhaps remembrance may unnerve his arm
 In future fields of contest with a race,
 To whom the flow'r, the blooming joys of life
 Are less illuring than a noble death.

To him his second parent. Wilt thou bleed, 545
 My Dithyrambus ? But I here withhold
 All counsel from thee, who art wise as brave.
 I know thy magnanimity. I read
 Thy gen'rous thoughts. Decided is thy choice.
 Come then, attendants on a godlike shade, 550
 When to th' Elysian ancestry of Greece
 Descends her great protector, we will show
 To Harmatides an illustrious son,
 And no unworthy brother. We will link
 Our shields together. We will press the ground, 555
 Still undivided in the arms of death.

So if th' attentive traveller we draw
 To our cold reliques, wond'ring shall he trace
 The diff'rent scene, then pregnant with applause,
 O wise old man, exclaim, the hour of fate 560
 Well didst thou choose ; and, O unequall'd youth,
 Who for thy country didst thy bloom devote,
 May'st thou remain for ever dear to fame !
 May time rejoice to name thee ! O'er thy urn
 May everlasting peace her pinion spread. 565

This said, the hero with his lifted shield
 His face o'er shades ; he drops a secret tear,
 Not this a tear of anguish, but deriv'd
 From fond affection, grown mature with time,
 Awak'd a manly tenderness alone, 570
 Unmix'd with pity, or with vain regret.

A stream of duty, gratitude, and love,
 Flow'd from the heart of Harmatides' son,

Addressing straight Leonidas, whose looks
 Declar'd unspeakable applause. O king 575
 Of Lacedemon, now distribute praise
 From thy accustom'd justice, small to me,
 To him a portion large. His guardian care
 His kind instruction, his example train'd 580
 My infancy, my youth. From him I learn'd
 To live unspotted. Could I less than learn
 From him to die with honour? Medon hears
 Shook by a whirlwind of contending thoughts
 Strong heaves his manly bosom, under awe 585
 Of wise Melissa, torn by friendship, fir'd
 By such example high. In dubious state
 So rolls a vessel, when th' inflated waves
 Her planks assail, and winds her canvas rend;
 The rudder labours, and requires a hand
 Of firm, delib'rate skill. The gen'rous king 590
 Perceives the hero's struggle, and prepares
 To interpose relief; when instant came
 Dieneses before them. Short he spake:
 Barbarian myriads through the secret pass
 Have enter'd Greece. Leonidas, by morn 595
 Expect them here. My slender force I spar'd.
 There to have died was useless. We return
 With thee to perish. Union of our strength
 Will render more illustrious to ourselves,
 And to the foe more terrible our fall, 600
 Megistias last accosts Laconia's king.
 Thou, whom the gods have chosen to exalt
 Above mankind in virtue and renown,
 O call not me presumptuous, who implore 605
 Among these heroes thy regardful ear.
 To Lacedemon I a stranger came,
 There found protection. There to honours rais'd,
 I have not yet the benefit repaid.
 That now the gen'rous Spartans may behold
 In me their large beneficence not vain, 610
 Here to their cause I consecrate my breath.

Not so, Megistias, interpos'd the king.
 Thou and thy son retire. Again the seer :
 Forbid it, thou eternally ador'd,
 O Jove, confirm my persevering soul ! 615
 Nor let me these auspicious moments lose,
 When to my bounteous patrons I may show,
 That I deserve their favour. Thou, my child,
 Dear Menalippus, heed the king's command,
 And my paternal tenderness revere. 620
 Thou from these ranks withdraw thee, to my use
 Thy arms surrend'ring. Fortune will supply
 New proofs of valour. Vanquish then, or find
 A glorious grave ; but spare thy father's eye
 The bitter anguish to behold thy youth 625
 Untimely bleed before him. Grief suspends
 His speech, and interchangeably their arms
 Impart the last embraces. Either weeps,
 The hoary parent, and the blooming son.
 But from his temples the pontific wreath 630
 Megistias now unloosens. He resigns
 His hallow'd vestments ; while the youth in tears
 The helmet o'er his parent's snowy locks,
 O'er his broad chest adjusts the radiant mail.
 Dieneces was nigh. Oppress'd by shame, 635
 His downcast visage Menalippus hid
 From him, who cheerful thus : Thou need'st not blush,
 Thou hear'st thy father and the king command
 What I suggested, thy departure hence.
 Train'd by my care, a soldier thou return'st. 640
 Go practise my instructions. Oft in fields
 Of future conflict may thy prowess call
 Me to remembrance. Spare thy words. Farewel,
 While such contempt of life, such fervid zeal
 To die with glory animate the Greeks, 645
 Far diff'rent thoughts possess Argeste's soul.
 Amaze and mingled terror chill his blood.
 Cold drops, distill'd from ev'ry pore, bedew
 His shiv'ring flesh. His bosom pants. His knees
 Yield to their burden. Ghastly pale his cheeks, 650

Pale are his lips and trembling. Such the minds
Of slaves corrupt ; on them the beauteous face
Of virtue turns to horror. But these words
From Lacedemon's chief the wretch relieve :

Return to Xerxes. Tell him, on this rock 655
The Grecians faithful to their trust await
His chosen myriads. Tell him, thou hast seen
How far the lust of empire is below
A freeborn spirit ; that my death, which seals
My country's safety is indeed a boon, 660
His folly gives a precious boon, which Greece
Will by perdition to his throne repay.

He said. The Persian hastens through the pass.
Once more the stern Diomedon arose.
Wrath overcast his forehead while he spake : 665

Yet more must stay and bleed. Detested Thebes
Ne'er shall receive her traitors back. This spot
Shall see their perfidy aton'd by death,
E'en from that pow'r, to which their abject hearts
Have sacrific'd their faith. Nor dare to hope, 670
Ye vile deserters of the public weal,
Ye coward slaves, that mingled in the heaps
Of gen'rous victims to their country's good,
You shall your shame conceal. Whoe'er shall pass
Along this field of glorious slain, and mark 675
For veneration ev'ry nobler corse ;

His heart, though warm in rapturous applause,
A while shall curb the transport to repeat,
His execrations o'er such impious heads,
On whom that fate, to others yielding fame, 680
Is infamy and vengeance. Dreadful thus

On the pale Thebans sentence he pronounc'd,
Like Rhadamanthus from th' infernal seat
Of judgment, which inexorably dooms
The guilty dead to ever-during pain ; 685

While Phlegethon his flaming volumes rolls
Before their sight, and ruthless furies shake
Their hissing serpents. All the Greeks assent
In clamours, echoing through the concave rock.

Forth Anaxander in th' assembly stood,
 Which he address'd with indignation feign'd :
 If yet your clamours, Grecians, are allay'd,
 Lo ! I appear before you to demand,
 Why these my brave companions, who alone
 Among the Thebans through dissuading crowds 695
 Their passage forc'd to join your camp, should bear
 The name of traitors ? By an exil'd wretch
 We are traduc'd, by Demaratus, driv'n
 From Spartan confines, who hath meanly fought
 Barbarian courts for shelter. Hath he drawn 700
 Such virtues thence, that Sparta, who before
 Held him unworthy of his native sway,
 Should trust him now, and doubt auxiliar friends ?
 Injurious men ! We scorn the thoughts of flight.
 Let Asia bring her numbers ; unconstrain'd, 705
 We will confront them, and for Greece expire.

Thus in the garb of virtue he adorn'd
 Necessity. Laconia's king perceiv'd
 Through all its fair disguise the traitor's heart.
 So, when at first, mankind in science rude 710
 Rever'd the moon, as bright in native beams,
 Some sage, who walk'd with Nature through her
 works,

By wisdom led, discern'd the various orb,
 Dark in itself, in foreign splendours clad.
 Leonidas concludes. Ye Spartans, hear ; 715
 Hear you, O Grecians, in our lot by choice
 Partakers, destin'd to enrol your names
 In Time's eternal record, and enhance
 Your country's lustre : lo ! the noontide blaze
 Inflames the broad horizon. Each retire ; 720

Each in his tent invoke the pow'r of sleep
 To brace his vigour, to enlarge his strength
 For long endurance. When the sun descends,
 Let each appear in arms. You, brave allies
 Of Corinth, Phlius, and Mycenæ's tow'rs, 725
 Arcadians, Locrians, must not yet depart.
 While we repose, embattled wait. Retreat

When we our tents abandon. I resign
 To great Oïleus son supreme command.
 Take my embraces, Æschylus. The fleet 730
 Expects thee. To Themistocles report,
 What thou hast seen and heard. O thrice farewell!
 Th' Athenian answer'd: To yourselves, my friends,
 Your virtues immortality secure,
 Your bright examples victory to Greece. 735

Retaining these injunctions, all dispers'd;
 While in his tent Leonidas remain'd
 Apart with Agis, whom he thus bespake:
 Yet in our fall the pond'rous hand of Greece
 Shall Asia feel. This Persian's welcome tale 740
 Of us, inextricably doom'd her prey,
 As by the force of sorcery will wrap
 Security around her, will suppress
 All sense, all thought of danger. Brother, know,
 That soon as Cynthia from the vault of heav'n 745
 Withdraws her shining lamp, through Asia's host
 Shall massacre and desolation rage.
 Yet not to base associates will I trust
 My vast design. Their perfidy might warn
 The unsuspecting foe, our fairest fruits 750
 Of glory thus be wither'd. Ere we move,
 While on the solemn sacrifice intent,
 As Lacedemon's ancient laws ordain,
 Our pray'rs we offer to the tuneful nine,
 Thou whisper through the willing ranks of Thebes
 Slow and in silence to disperse and fly. 756

Now left by Agis, on his couch reclin'd,
 The Spartan king thus meditates alone:
 My fate is now impending. O my soul,
 What more auspicious period couldst thou choose 760
 For death, than now, when beating high in joy,
 Thou tell'st me I am happy? If to live,
 Or die, as virtue dictates, be to know
 The purest bliss; if she her charms displays
 Still lovely, still unfading, still serene 765
 To youth, to age, to death: whatever be

Those other climes of happiness unchang'd,
 Which heav'n in dark futurity conceals,
 Still here, O virtue, thou art all our good !
 Oh, what a black, unspeakable reverse 770
 Must the unrighteous, must the tyrant prove ?
 What in the struggle of departing day,
 When life's last glimpse, extinguishing, presents
 Unknown, inextricable gloom ? But how
 Can I explain the terrors of a breast, 775
 Where guilt resides. Leonidas, forego
 The horrible conception, and again
 Within thy own felicity retire ;
 Bow grateful down to him, who form'd thy mind
 Of crimes unfruitful, never to admit 780
 The black impression of a guilty thought.
 Else could I fearless by delib'rate choice
 Relinquish life ? This calm from minds deprav'd
 Is ever absent. Oft in them the force
 Of some prevailing passion for a time 785
 Suppresses fear. Precipitate they lose
 The sense of danger ; when dominion, wealth,
 Or purple pomp, enchant the dazzled sight,
 Pursuing still the joys of life alone.
 But he, who calmly seeks a certain death, 790
 When duty only, and the gen'ral good
 Direct his courage, must a soul possess,
 Which all content deducing from itself,
 Can by unerring virtue's constant light
 Discern when death is worthy of his choice. 795
 The man, thus great and happy in the scope
 Of his large mind, is stretch'd beyond his date,
 E'en on this shore of being, he in thought
 Supremely blest'd, anticipates the good
 Which late posterity from him derives. 800
 At length the hero's meditations close.
 The swelling transport of his heart subsides
 In soft oblivion ; and the silken plumes
 Of sleep envelop his extended limbs. 804

BOOK XI.

The Argument.

LÉONIDAS, rising before sunset, dismisses the forces under the command of Medon: but observing a reluctance in him to depart, reminds him of his duty, and gives him an affectionate farewell. He then relates to his own select band a dream, which is interpreted by Megistias, arms himself, and marches in procession with his whole troop to an altar, newly raised on a neighbouring meadow; there offers a sacrifice to the Muses; he invokes the assistance of those goddesses; he animates his companions; then, placing himself at their head, leads them against the enemy in the dead of the night.

THE day was closing. Agis left his tent.
 He fought his godlike brother. Him he found
 Stretch'd o'er his tranquil couch. His looks retain'd
 The cheerful tincture of his waking thoughts
 To gladden sleep. So smile soft evening skies, 5
 Yet streak'd with ruddy light, when summer's suns
 Have veil'd their beaming foreheads. Transport fill'd
 The eye of Agis. Friendship swell'd his heart.
 His yielding knee in veneration bent.
 The hero's hand he kiss'd, then fervent thus: 10
 O excellence ineffable, receive
 This secret homage; and may gentle sleep
 Yet longer seal thine eyelids, that, unblam'd,
 I may fall down before thee. He concludes
 In adoration of his friend divine,
 Whose brow the shades of slumber now forsake.
 So, when the rising sun resumes his state,
 Some white-rob'd magnus on Euphrates side,
 Or Indian seer on Ganges prostrate falls
 Before th' emerging glory, to salute 20
 That radiant emblem of th' immortal mind.
 Uprise both heroes. From their tents in arms
 Appear the bands elect. The other Greeks
 Are filing homeward. Only Medon stops.
 Melissa's dictates he forgets a while. 25
 All inattentive to the warning voice
 Of Melibœus, earnest he surveys
 Leonidas. Such constancy of zeal
 In good Oïleus' offspring brings the fire

To full remembrance in that solemn hour,
And draws these cordial accents from the king :
Approach me, Locrian. In thy look I trace
Consummate faith and love. But, vers'd in arms,
Against thy gen'ral's orders would'st thou stay ?
Go, prove to kind Oileus, that my heart
Of him was mindful, when the gates of death
I barr'd against his son. Yon gallant Greeks,
To thy commanding care from mine transferr'd,
Remove from certain slaughter. Last repair
To Lacedemon. Thither lead thy fire.
Say to her senate, to her people tell,
Here didst thou leave their countrymen and king
On death resolv'd, obedient to the laws.
The Locrian chief, restraining tears, replies :
My fire, left slumb'ring in the island-fane,
Awoke no more. Then joyful I shall meet
Him soon, the king made answer. Let thy worth
Supply thy father's. Virtue bids me die,
Thee live. Farewel. Now Medon's grief, o'eraw'd
By wisdom, leaves his long-suspended mind
To firm decision. He departs, prepar'd
For all the duties of a man, by deeds
To prove himself the friend of Sparta's king,
Melissa's brother, and Oileus' son.
The gen'rous victims of the public weal,
Assembled now, Leonidas salutes,
His pregnant soul disburd'ning. O thrice hail !
Surround me, Grecians ; to my words attend.
This evening's sleep no sooner press'd my brows,
Than o'er my head the empyreal form
Of heav'n-enthron'd Alcides was display'd,
I saw his magnitude divine. His voice
I heard, his solemn mandate to arise.
I rose. He bade me follow. I obey'd.
A mountain's summit, clear'd from mist, or cloud,
We reach'd in silence. Suddenly the howl
Of wolves and dogs, the vulture's piercing shriek,
The yell of ey'ry beast and bird of prey

Discordant grated on my ear. I turn'd.
 A surface hideous, delug'd o'er with blood, 70
 Beyond my view illimitably stretch'd,
 One vast expanse of horror. There supine,
 Of huge dimension, cov'ring half the plain,
 A giant corse lay mangled, red with wounds,
 Delv'd in th' enormous flesh, which, bubbling, fed 75
 Ten thousand thousand grisly beaks and jaws,
 Insatiably devouring. Mute I gaz'd ;
 When from behind I heard a second sound
 Like surges, tumbling o'er a craggy shore.
 Again I turn'd. An ocean there appear'd 80
 With riven keels and shrouds, with shiver'd ~~oars~~,
 With arms and welt'ring carcasses bestrewn
 Innumerable. The billows foam'd in blood.
 But where the waters, unobserv'd before,
 Between two adverse shores, contracting, roll'd 85
 A stormy current, on the beach forlorn
 One of majestic stature I descry'd
 In ornaments imperial. Oft he bent
 On me his clouded eyeballs. Oft my name
 He sounded fourth in execrations loud ; 90
 Then rent his splendid garments ; then his head
 In rage divested of its graceful hairs.
 Impatient now he ey'd a slender skiff,
 Which, mounted high on boistrous waves, approach'd.
 With indignation, with reluctant grief 95
 Once more his sight reverting, he embark'd
 Amid the perils of the frowning-deep.
 O thou, by glorious actions rank'd in heav'n,
 I here exclaim'd, instruct me. What produc'd
 This desolation ? Hercules reply'd : 100
 Let thy astonish'd eye again survey
 The scene, thy soul abhorr'd. I look'd. I saw
 A land, where plenty with disporting hands
 Pour'd all the fruits of Amalthea's horn ;
 Where bloom'd the olive ; where the clust'ring vine
 With her broad foliage mantled ev'ry hill ; 106
 Where Ceres with exuberance enrob'd

The pregnant bosoms of the fields in gold ;
 Where spacious towns, whose circuits proud contain'd
 The dazzling works of wealth along the banks 110
 Of copious rivers shew'd their stately tow'rs,
 The strength and splendour of the peopled land.
 Then in a moment clouds obscur'd my view ;
 At once all vanish'd from my waking eyes.

Thrice I salute the omen, loud began 115
 The sage Megistias. In this mystic dream
 I see my country's victories. The land,
 The deep shall own her triumphs ; while the tears
 Of Asia and of Libya shall deplore
 Their offspring, cast before the vulture's beak, 120
 And every monstrous native of the main.
 Those joyous fields of plenty picture Greece,
 Enrich'd by conquest, and barbarian spoils.
 He, whom thou saw'st, in regal vesture clad,
 Print on the sand his solitary step, 125
 Is Xerxes, foil'd and fugitive. So spake
 The rev'rend augur. Ev'ry bosom felt
 Enthusiastic rapture, joy beyond
 All sense, and all conception, but of those
 Who die to save their country. Here again 130
 Th' exulting band Leonidas address'd.

Since happiness from virtue is deriv'd,
 Who for his country dies, that moment proves
 Most happy, as most virtuous. Such our lot.
 But go, Megistias. Instantly prepare 135
 'The sacred fuel, and the victim due ;
 That to the Muses (so by Sparta's law
 We are enjoin'd) our off'rings may be paid,
 Before we march. Remember, from the rites
 Let ev'ry sound be absent ; not the fife, 140
 Not e'en the music breathing flute be heard.
 Meantime, ye leaders, every band instruct
 To move in silence. Mindful of their charge
 The chiefs depart. Leonidas provides
 His various armour. Agis close attends, 145
 His best assistant. First a breast-plate arms

The spacious chest. O'er this the hero spreads
 The mailed cuirass, from his shoulders hung.
 A shining belt infolds his mighty loins.
 Next on his stately temples he erects 150
 The plumed helm; then grasps his pond'rous shield:
 Where nigh the centre, on projecting brass,
 Th' inimitable artist had emboss'd
 The shape of great Alcides; whom to gain
 Two goddesses contended. Pleasure here 155
 Won by soft wiles th' attracted eye; and there
 The form of Virtue dignify'd the scene.
 In her majestic sweetness was display'd
 The mind sublime and happy. From her lips
 Seem'd eloquence to flow. In look serene, 160
 But fix'd intensely on the son of Jove,
 She wav'd her hand, where, winding to the skies,
 Her paths ascended. On the summit stood,
 Supported by a trophy near to heav'n,
 Fame, and protended her eternal trump. 165
 The youth, attentive to her wisdom, own'd
 The prevalence of virtue; while his eye,
 Fill'd by that spirit, which redeem'd the world
 From tyranny and monsters, darted flames;
 Not undescry'd by Pleasure, where she lay 170
 Beneath a gorgeous canopy. Around
 Were flowrets strewn, and wantonly in rills
 A fount meander'd. All relax'd her limbs;
 Nor wanting yet solicitude to gain,
 What lost she fear'd, as struggling with despair, 175
 She seem'd collecting every pow'r to charm:
 Excess of sweet allurements she diffus'd
 In vain. Still virtue sway'd Alcides' mind.
 Hence all his labours. Wrought with vary'd art,
 The shield's external surface they enrich'd. 180
 This portraiture of glory on his arm
 Leonidas displays, and, tow'ring, strides
 From his pavillion. Ready are the bands.
 The chiefs assume their station. Torches blaze
 Through ev'ry file. All now in silent pace 185

To join in solemn sacrifice proceed.

First Polydorus bears the hallow'd knife,

The sacred salt and barley. At his side

Diomedon sustains a weighty mace.

The priest, Megistias, follows like the rest

190

In polish'd armour. White as winter's fleece,

A fillet round his shining helm reveals

The sacerdotal honours. By the horns,

Where laurels twine, with Alpheus Maron leads

The consecrated ox. And lo! behind,

295

Leonidas advances. Never he

In such transcendent majesty was seen,

And his own virtue never so enjoy'd.

Successive move Dienece the brave,

In hoary state Demophilus, the bloom

200

Of Dithyrambus, glowing in the hope

Of future praise, the gen'rous Agis next

Serene and graceful, last the Theban chiefs,

Repining, ignominious: then slow march

The troops all mute, nor shake their brazen arms. 205

Not from Thermopylæ remote the hills

Of Oeta, yielding to a fruitful dale,

Within their side, half-circling, had enclos'd

A fair expanse in verdure smooth. The bounds

Were edg'd by wood. o'erlook'd by snowy cliffs, 210

Which from the clouds bent frowning. Down a
rock

Above the loftiest summit of the grove

A tumbling torrent wore the shaggy stone;

Then, gleaming through the intervals of shade,

Attain'd the valley, where the level stream

215

Diffus'd refreshment. On its banks the Greeks

Had rais'd a rustic altar, fram'd of turf.

Broad was the surface, high in piles of wood,

All interspers'd with laurel. Purer deem'd,

Than river, lake, or fountain, in a vase

220

Old Ocean's briny element was plac'd

Before the altar; and of wine unmix'd

Capacious goblets stood. Megistias now

His helm unloosen'd. With his snowy head
 Uncover'd, round the solemn pile he trod. 225
 He shook a branch of laurel, scatt'ring wide
 The sacred moisture of the main. His hand
 Next on the altar, on the victim strew'd
 'The mingled salt and barley. O'er the horns
 Th' inverted chalice, foaming from the grape, 230
 Discharg'd a rich libation. Then approach'd
 Diomedon. Megistias gave the sign.
 Down sunk the victim by a deathful stroke,
 Nor groan'd. The augur bury'd in the throat
 His hallow'd steel. A purple current flow'd. 235
 Now smok'd the structure, now it flam'd abroad
 In sudden splendour. Deep in circling ranks
 The Grecians press'd. Each held a sparkling brand ;
 The beaming lances intermix'd ; the helmets,
 The burnish'd armour multiply'd the blaze. 240
 Leonidas drew nigh. Before the pile
 His feet he planted. From his brows remov'd,
 The casque to Agis he consign'd, his shield,
 His spear to Dithyrambus ; then, his arms
 Extending, forth in supplications broke. 245
 Harmonious daughters of Olympian Jove,
 Who, on the top of Helicon ador'd,
 And high Parnassus, with delighted ears
 Bend to the warble of Castalia's stream,
 Or Aganippe's murmur, if from thence 250
 We must invoke your presence ; or along
 The neighb'ring mountains with propitious steps
 If now you grace your consecrated bow'rs,
 Look down, ye muses ; nor disdain to stand
 Each an immortal witness of our fate. 255
 But with you bring fair Liberty, whom Jove,
 And you must honour. Let her sacred eyes
 Approve her dying Grecians ; let her voice
 exultation tell the earth and heav'ns,
 These are her sons. Then strike your tuneful shells.
 Record as guardians of our parent's age, 261
 Our matron's virtue, and our children's bloom,

The glorious bulwarks of our country's laws,
 Who shall ennoble the historian's page,
 Shall on the joyous festival inspire
 With loftier strains the virgin's choral song. 265
 Then, O celestial maids, on yonder camp
 Let night sit heavy. Let a sleep like death
 Weigh down the eye of Asia. O infuse
 A cool, untroubled spirit in our breasts, 270
 Which may in silence guide our daring feet,
 Control our fury, nor by tumult wild
 The friendly dark affright; till dying groans
 Of slaughter'd tyrants into horror wake
 The midnight calm. Then turn destruction loose. 275
 Let terror, let confusion rage around,
 In one vast ruin heap the barb'rous ranks,
 Their horse, their chariots. Let the spurning steed
 Imbrue his hoofs in blood, the shatter'd cars
 Crush with their brazen weight the prostrate necks 280
 Of chiefs and kings, encircled, as they fall,
 By nations slain. You, countrymen and friends,
 My last commands retain. Your gen'ral's voice
 Once more salutes you, not to rouse the brave,
 Or minds, resolv'd and dauntless, to confirm. 285
 Too well by this expiring blaze I see
 Impatient valour flash from ev'ry eye.
 O temper well that ardour, and your lips
 Close on the rising transport. Mark, how sleep
 Hath folded millions in his black embrace. 290
 No sound is wasted from th' unnumber'd foe.
 The winds themselves are silent. All conspires
 To this great sacrifice, where thousands soon
 Shall only wake to die. Their crowded train
 This night perhaps to Pluto's dreary shades 295
 Ev'n Xerxes' ghost may lead, unless reserv'd
 From this destruction to lament a doom
 Of more disgrace, when Greece confounds that pow'r
 Which we shall shake. But look, the setting moon
 Shuts on our darksome paths her waning horns. 300
 Let each his head distinguish by a wreath

Of well-earn'd laurel. Then the victim share,
 Then crown the goblet. Take your last repast;
 With your forefathers and the heroes old
 You next will banquet in the blest'd abodes. 305

Here ends their leader. Through th' encircling crowd
 The agitation of their spears denotes
 High ardour. So the spiry growth of pines
 Is rock'd, when Æolus in eddies winds
 Among their stately trunks on Pelion's brow. 310

The Acarnanian seer distributes swift
 The sacred laurel. Snatch'd in eager zeal,
 Around each helm the woven leaves unite,
 Their glossy verdure to the floating plumes.
 Then is the victim portion'd. In the bowl 315
 Then flows the vine's empurpled stream. Aloof

The Theban train in wan dejection mute
 Brood o'er their shame, or cast affrighted looks
 On that determin'd courage, which, unmov'd
 At fate's approach, with cheerful lips could taste 320
 The sparkling goblet, could in joy partake
 That last, that glorious banquet. Ev'n the heart
 Of Anaxander had forgot its wiles,
 Dissembling fear no longer. Agis here,
 Regardful ever of the king's command, 325
 Accosts the Theban chiefs in whispers thus:

Leonidas permits you to retire.
 While on the rites of sacrifice employ'd,
 None heed your motions. Separate and fly
 In silent pace. This heard, th' inglorious troop, 330
 Their files dissolving, from the rest withdraw.
 Unseen they moulder from the host like snow,
 Freed from the rigour of constraining frost;
 Soon as the sun exerts his orient beam,
 The transitory landscape melts in rills 335
 Away, and structures, which delude the eye,
 Insensibly are lost. The solemn feast
 Was now concluded. Now Laconia's king
 Had reassum'd his arms. Before his step
 The crowd roll backward. In their gladden'd sight 340

His crest, illumin'd by uplifted brands,
 Its purple splendour shakes. The tow'ring oak
 Thus from a lofty promontory waves
 His majesty of verdure. As with joy
 The sailors mark his heav'n-ascending pride, 345
 Which from afar directs their foamy course
 Along the pathless ocean; so the Greeks
 In transport gaze, as down their op'ning ranks
 The king proceeds: from whose superior frame
 A soul like thine, O Phidias, might conceive 350
 In Parian marble, or effulgent brass
 The form of great Apollo; when the god,
 Won by the pray'rs of man's afflicted race,
 In arms forsook his lucid throne to pierce
 The monster Python in the Delphian vale. 355
 Close by the hero Polydorus waits
 To guide destruction through the Asian tents.
 As the young eagle near his parent's side
 In wanton flight essays his vig'rous wing,
 Ere long with her to penetrate the clouds, 360
 To dart impetuous on the fleecy train,
 And dye his beak in gore; by Sparta's king
 The injur'd Polydorus thus prepares
 His arm for death. He feasts his angry soul
 On promis'd vengeance. His impatient thoughts 365
 Ev'n now transport him furious to the seat
 Of his long sorrows, not with fetter'd hands,
 But now once more a Spartan with his spear,
 His shield restor'd, to lead his country's bands,
 And with them devastation. Nor the rest 370
 Neglect to form. Thick-rang'd, the helmets blend
 Their various plumes, as intermingling oaks
 Combine their foliage in Dodona's grove;
 Or as the cedars on the Syrian hills
 Their shady texture spread. Once more the king, 375
 O'er all the phalanx his consid'rate view
 Extending, through the ruddy gleam descries
 One face of gladness; but the godlike van
 He most contemplates: Agis, Alpheus there,

Megistias, Maron with Platæa's chief, 380
 Dieneses, Demophilus are seen
 With Thespia's youth : nor they their steady sight
 From his remove, in speechless transport bound
 By love, by veneration ; till they hear
 His last injunction. To their diff'rent posts 385
 They sep'rate. Instant on the dewy turf
 Are cast th' extinguish'd brands. On all around
 Drops sudden darkness, on the wood, the hill,
 The snowy ridge, the vale, the silver stream.
 It verg'd on midnight. Tow'rd the hostile camp 390
 In march compos'd and silent down the pass
 The phalanx mov'd. Each patient bosom hush'd
 Its struggling spirit, nor in whispers breath'd
 The rapt'rous ardour, virtue then inspir'd.
 So low'ring clouds along th' ethereal void 395
 In slow expansion from the gloomy north
 A while suspend their horrors, destin'd soon
 To blaze in lightnings, and to burst in storms. 398



BOOK XII.

The Argument.

Leonidas and the Grecians penetrate through the Persian camp to the very pavilion of Xerxes, who avoids destruction by flight. The barbarians are slaughtered in great multitudes, and their camp is set on fire. Leonidas conducts his men in good order back to Thermopylae, engages the Persians, who were descended from the hills, and after numberless proofs of superior strength and valour, sinks down covered with wounds, and expires the last of all the Grecian commanders.

A CROSS th' unguarded bound of Asia's camp
Slow pass the Grecians. Through unnum'rous
tents,

Where all is mute and tranquil, they pursue
Their march sedate. Beneath the leaden hand
Of sleep lie millions motionless and deaf,
Nor dream of fate's approach. Their wary foes,
By Polydorus guided, still proceed.

5

Ev'n to the centre of th' extensive host
They pierce unseen; when lo! th' imperial tent
Yet distant rose before them. Spreading round
Th' august pavillion, was an ample space

10

For thousands in arrangement. Here a band
Of chosen Persians, watchful o'er the king,
Held their nocturnal station, As the hearts
Of anxious nations, whom th' unsparing sword,
Or famine threaten, tremble at the sight
Of fear engender'd phantoms in the sky.

15

Aerial hosts amid the clouds array'd,
Portending woe and death; the Persian guard
In equal consternation now descri'd

The glimpse of hostile armour. All disband,
As if auxiliar to his favour'd Greeks.

20

Pan held their banner, scatt'ring from its folds
Fear and confusion, which to Xerxes couch
Swift-winged, fly; thence shake the gen'ral camp,

Whose numbers issue naked, pale, unarm'd,
Wild in amazement, blinded by dismay,

25

To every foe obnoxious. In the breasts
Of thousands, gor'd at once, the Grecian steel
Reeks in Destruction. Deluges of blood

Float o'er the field, and foam around the heaps 30
 Of wretches, slain unconscious of the hand,
 Which wastes their helpless multitude. Amaze,
 Affright, distraction from his pillow chase
 The lord of Asia, who in thought beholds
 United Greece in arms. Thy lust of pow'r! 35
 Thy hope of glory! whither are they flown
 With all thy pomp? In this disastrous hour
 What could avail the immeasurable range
 Of thy proud camp, save only to conceal
 Thy trembling steps, O Xerxes, while thou fly'st? 40
 To thy deserted couch with other looks
 With other steps Leonidas is nigh.
 Before him terror strides. Gigantic death,
 And desolation at his side attend.

The vast pavillion's empty space, where lamps 45
 Of gold shed light and odours, now admits
 The hero. Ardent throngs behind him press,
 But miss their victim. To the ground are hurl'd
 The glitt'ring ensigns of imperial state.
 The diadem, the sceptre, late ador'd 50
 Through boundless kingdoms, underneath their feet
 In mingled rage and scorn the warriors crush
 A sacrifice to freedom. They return
 Again to form. Leonidas exalts,
 For new destruction his resistless spear; 55
 When double darkness suddenly descends.
 The clouds, condensing, intercept the stars.
 Black o'er the furrow'd main the raging east
 In whirlwinds sweeps the surge. The coasts resound.
 The cavern'd rocks, the crashing forests roar. 60
 Swift through the camp the hurricane impels
 Its rude career; when Asia's numbers, veil'd
 Amid the shelt'ring horrors of the storm,
 Evade the victor's lance. The Grecians halt;
 While to their gen'ral's pregnant mind occurs 65
 A new attempt and vast. Perpetual fire
 Beside the tent of Xerxes from the hour,
 He lodg'd his standards on the Malian plains,

Had shone. Among his Magi to adore
Great Hormazes was the monarch wont 70
Before the sacred light. Huge piles of wood
Lay nigh, prepar'd to feed the-constant flame.
On living embers these are cast. So wills
Leonidas. The phalanx then divides.
Four troops are form'd, by Dithyrambus led, 75
By Alpheus, by Diomedon. The last
Himself conducts. The word is giv'n. They seize
The burning fuel. Sparkling in the wind,
Destructive fire is brandish'd. All, enjoin'd
To re-assemble at the regal tent, 80
By various paths the hostile camp invade.

Now devastation, unconfin'd, involves
The Malian fields. Among Barbarian tents
From diff'rent stations fly consuming flames.
The Greeks afford no respite; and the storm 85
Exasperates the blaze. To ev'ry part
The conflagration like a sea expands,
One waving surface of unbounding fire,
In ruddy volumes mount the curling flames
To heav'n's dark vault, and paint the midnight clouds.
So, when the north emits his purpled lights,
The undulated radiance, streaming wide,
As with a burning canopy invests
Th' ethereal concave. Oeta now disclos'd
His forehead, glitt'ring in eternal frost; 95
While down his rocks the foamy torrents shone.
Far o'er the main the pointed rays were thrown;
Night snatch'd her mantle from the ocean's breast;
The billows glimmer'd from the distant shores.

But lo! a pillar huge of smoke ascends, 100
Which overshades the field. There horror, there
Leonidas presides. Command he gave
To Polydorus, who, exulting, show'd
Where Asia's horse, and warlike cars possess'd
A crowded station. At the hero's nod 105
Devouring Vulcan riots on the stores
Of Ceres, empty'd of the ripen'd grain,

On all the tribute from her meadows brown,
 By rich Thessalia render'd to the scythe.
 A flood of fire envelopes all the ground. 110
 The cordage bursts around the blazing tents.
 Down sink the roofs on suffocated throngs,
 Close-wedg'd by fear. The Lybian chariot burns.
 Th' Arabian camel, and the Persian steed
 Bound through a burning deluge. Wild with pain
 They shake their singed manes. Their madding hoofs
 Dash through the blood of thousands, mix'd with flames
 Which rage, augmented by the whirlwind's blast.
 Meantime the scepter'd lord of half the globe
 From tent to tent precipitates his flight. 120
 Dispers'd are all his satraps. Pride herself
 Shuns his dejected brow. Despair alone
 Waits on th' imperial fugitive, and shows,
 As round the camp his eye, distracted, roves,
 No limits to destruction. Now is seen 125
 Aurora, mounting from her eastern hill
 In rosy sandals, and with dewy locks.
 The winds subside before her; darkness flies;
 A stream of light proclaims the cheerful day,
 Which sees at Xerxes' tent the conqu'ring bands, 130
 All reunited. What could fortune more
 To aid the valiant, what to gorge revenge?
 Lo! desolation o'er the adverse host
 Hath empty'd all her terrors. Ev'n the hand
 Of languid Slaughter dropt the crimson steel 135
 Nor nature longer can sustain the toil
 Of unremitting conquest. Yet what pow'r
 Among these sons of liberty reviv'd
 Their drooping warmth, new-strung their nerves,
 recall'd
 Their weary'd swords to deeds of brighter fame? 140
 What, but th' inspiring hope of glorious death
 To crown their labours, and th' auspicious look
 Of their heroic chief, which, still unchang'd,
 Still in superior majesty declar'd,
 No toil had yet relax'd his matchless strength, 145

Nor worn the vigour of his godlike soul.
Back to the pass in gentle march he leads
Th' embattled warriors. They behind the shrubs,
Where Medon sent such numbers to the shades,
In ambush lie. 'The tempest is o'erblown. 150
Soft breezes only from the Malian wave
O'er each grim face, besmear'd with smoke and gore,
Their cool refreshment breathe. The healing gale,
A crystal rill near Oeta's verdant feet
Dispel the languor from their harra's'd nerves, 155
Fresh brac'd by strength returning. O'er their heads,
Lo! in full blaze of majesty appears
Melissa, bearing in her hand divine
Th' eternal guardian of illustrious deeds,
The sweet Phœbean lyre. Her graceful train 160
Of white-rob'd virgins, seated on a range
Half down the cliff, o'ershadowing the Greeks,
All with concordant strings, and accents clear
A torrent pour of melody, and swell
A high, triumphal, solemn dirge of praise, 165
Anticipating fame. Of endless joys
In blest'd Elysium was the song. Go, meet
Lycurgus, Solon and Zaleucus sage,
Let them salute the children of their laws.
Meet Homer, Orpheus and th' Ascrean bard, 170
Who, with a spirit, by ambrosial food
Refin'd, and more exalted, shall contend
Your splendid fate to warble through the bow'rs
Of amaranth and myrtle ever young
Like your renown. Your ashes we will cult. 175
In yonder fane deposited, your urns
Dear to the muses shall our lays inspire.
Whatever off'rings, genius, science, art
Can dedicate to virtue, shall be yours,
The gifts of all the muses, to transmit 180
You on th' enliven'd canvass, marble, brass,
In wisdom's volume, in the poet's song,
In ev'ry tongue, through ev'ry age and clime,
You of this earth the brightest flow'rs, not cropt,

Transplanted only to immortal bloom 185
Of praise with men, of happiness with gods.

The Grecian valour on religion's flame
To ecstasy is wafted. Death is nigh.
As by the graces fashion'd, he appears
A beauteous form. His adamant gate 190
Is half unfolded. All in transport catch
A glimpse of immortality. Elate
In rapturous delusion they believe,
That to behold and solemnize their fate
The goddesses are present on the hills 195
With celebrating lyres. In thought serene
Leonidas the kind deception blest'd,
Nor undeceiv'd his soldiers. After all
Th' incessant labours of the horrid night,
Through blood, through flames continu'd, he prepares
In order'd battle to confront the pow'rs
Of Hyperanthes from the upper streights.

Not long the Greeks in expectation wait
Impatient. Sudden with tumultuous shouts
Like Nile's rude current, where in deaf'ning roar 205
Prone from the steep of Elephantis falls
A sea of waters, Hyperanthes pours
His chosen numbers on the Grecian camp
Down from the hills precipitant. No foes
He finds. The Thebans join him. In his van 210
They march conductors. On, the Persians roll
In martial thunder through the sounding pass.
They issue forth impetuous from its mouth.
That moment Sparta's leader gave the sign;
When, as th' impulsive ram in forceful sway 215
O'erturns a nodding rampart from its base,
And strews a town with ruin, so the band
Of ferry'd heroes down the Malian steep,
Tremendous depth, the mix'd battalions swept
Of Thebes and Persia. There no waters flow'd. 220
Abrupt and naked all was rock beneath.
Leonidas, incens'd, with grappling strength
Dash'd Anaxander on a pointed crag;

Compos'd, then gave new orders. At the word
His phalanx, wheeling, penetrates the pass. 225
Astonish'd Persia stops in full career.
Ev'n Hyperanthes shrinks in wonder back.
Confusion drives fresh numbers from the shore.
The Malian ooze o'erwhelms them. Sparta's king
Still presses forward, till an open breadth 230
Of fifty paces yields his front extent
To proffer battle. Hyperanthes soon
Recals his warriors, dissipates their fears.
Swift on the great Leonidas a cloud
Of darts is show'r'd. Th' encount'ring armies close. 235
Who first, sublimest hero, felt thy arm?
What rivers heard along their echoing banks
Thy name, in curses sounded from the lips
Of noble mothers, wailing for their sons?
What towns with empty monuments were fill'd 240
For those, whom thy unconquerable sword
This day to vultures cast? First Bessus died
A haughty satrap, whose tyrannic sway
Despoil'd Hyrcania of her golden sheaves,
And laid her forests waste. For him the bees 245
Among the branches interwove their sweets;
For him the fig was ripen'd, and the vine
In rich profusion o'er the goblet foamed.
Then Dinis bled. On Hermus' side he reign'd;
He long assiduous, unavailing woo'd 250
The martial queen of Caria. She disdain'd
A lover's soft complaint. Her rigid ear
Was fram'd to watch the tempest, while it rag'd,
Her eye accusom'd on the rolling deck
To brave the turgid billow. Near the shore 255
She now is present in her pinnace light.
The spectacle of glory crowds her breast
With diff'rent passions. Valiant, she applauds
The Grecian valour; faithful, she laments
Her sad presage of Persia; prompts her son 260
To emulation of the Greeks in arms,
And of herself in loyalty. By fate

Is she reserv'd to signalize that day
 Of future shame, when Xerxes must behold
 The blood of nations overflow his decks, 265
 And to their bottom tinge the briny floods
 Of Salamis; whence she with Asia flies,
 She only not inglorious. Low reclines
 Her lover now, on Hermus to repeat
 Her name no more, nor tell the vocal groves 270
 His fruitless sorrows. Next Maduces fell,
 A Paphlagonian. Born amid the sound
 Of chafing surges, and the roar of winds,
 He o'er th' inhospitable Euxine foam
 Was wont from high Carambis' rock to ken 275
 Ill-fated keels, which cut the Pontic stream,
 Then with his dire associates through the deep
 For spoil and slaughter guide his savage prow.
 Him dogs will rend ashore. From Medus far,
 Their native current, two bold brothers died, 280
 Sisamnes and Tithraustes, potent lords
 Of rich domains. On these Mithrines grey,
 Cilician prince, Lilæus, who had left
 The balmy fragrance of Arabia's fields
 With Babylonian Tenagon expir'd. 285
 The growing carnage Hyperanthes views
 Indignant, fierce in vengeful ardour strides
 Against the victor. Each his lance protends;
 But Asia's numbers interpose their shields,
 Solicitous to guard a prince rever'd: 290
 Or thither fortune whelm'd the tide of war,
 His term protracting for augmented fame.
 So two proud vessels, lab'ring on the foam,
 Present for battle their destructive beaks;
 When ridgy seas, by hurricanes uptorn, 295
 In mountainous commotion dash between,
 And either deck, in black'ning tempests veil'd,
 Waft from its distant foe. More fiercely burn'd
 Thy spirit, mighty Spartan. Such dismay
 Relax'd thy foes, that each Barbarian heart 300
 Resign'd all hopes of victory. The steeds

Of day were climbing their meridian height ;
 Continu'd shouts of onset from the pass
 Resounded o'er the plain. Artuchus heard.
 When first the spreading tumult had alarm'd 305
 His distant quarter, starting from repose,
 He down the valley of Spercheos rush'd
 To aid his regal master. Asia's camp
 He found the seat of terror and despair.
 As in some fruitful clime, which late hath known 310
 The rage of winds and floods, although the storm
 Be heard no longer, and the deluge fled,
 Still o'er the walled region nature mourns
 In melancholy silence ; through the grove
 With prostrate glories lie the stately oak, 315
 Th' uprooted elm and beach ; the plain is spread
 With fragments, swept from villages o'erthrown,
 Around the pastures flocks and herds are cast
 In dreary piles of death : so Persia's host
 In terror mute one boundless scene displays 320
 Of devastation. Half-devour'd by fire,
 Her tall pavilions, and her martial cars
 Deform the wide encampment. Here in gore
 Her princes welter, nameless thousands there,
 Not victims all to Greeks. In gasping heaps 325
 Barbarians, mangled by Barbarians, show'd
 The wild confusion of that direful night ;
 When, wanting signals, and a leader's care,
 They rush'd on mutual slaughter. Xerxes' tent
 On its exalted summit, when the dawn 330
 First streak'd the orient sky, was wont to bear
 The golden form of Mithra, clos'd between
 Two lucid crystals. This the gen'ral host
 Observ'd, their awful signal to arrange
 In arms complete, and numberless to watch 335
 Their monarch's rising. This conspicuous blaze
 Artuchus places in th' accustomed seat.
 As, after winds have ruffled by a storm
 The plumes of darkness, when her welcome face 340

The morning lifts serene, each wary swain
 Collects his flock dispers'd; the neighing steed,
 The herds forsake their shelter: all return
 To well-known pastures, and frequented streams:
 So now this cheerful signal on the tent 345
 Revives each leader. From inglorious flight
 Their scatter'd bands they call, their wonted ground
 Resume, and hail Artuchus. From their swarms
 A force he culls. Thermopylæ he seeks.
 Fell shouts in horrid dissonance precede. 350

His phalanx swift Leonidas commands
 To circle backward from the Malian bay.
 Their order changes. Now, half-orb'd, they stand
 By Oeta's fence protected from behind,
 With either flank united to the rock. 355
 As by th' excelling architect dispos'd
 To shield some haven, a stupendous mole,
 Fram'd of the grove and quarry's mingled strength,
 In ocean's bosom penetrates afar:
 There, pride of art, immoveable it looks 360
 On Eolus and Neptune; there defies
 Those potent gods combin'd: unyielding thus,
 The Grecians stood a solid mass of war
 Against Artuchus, join'd with numbers new
 To Hyperanthes. In the foremost rank 365
 Leonidas his dreadful station held.

Around him soon a spacious void was seen
 By flight, or slaughter in the Persian van.
 In gen'rous shame and wrath Artuchus burns,
 Discharging full at Lacedemon's chief 370
 An iron-studded mace. It glanc'd aside,
 Turn'd by the massy buckler. Prone to earth
 The satrap fell. Alcander aim'd his point,
 Which had transfix'd him prostrate on the rock,
 But for th' immediate succour, he obtain'd 375
 From faithful soldiers, lifting on their shields
 A chief belov'd. Not such Alcander's lot.
 An arrow wounds his heart. Supine he lies,
 The only Theban who to Greece preserv'd

Unviolated faith. Physician sage,
 On pure Cithæron healing herbs to cull
 Was he accustom'd, to expatiate o'er
 The Heliconian pastures, where no plants
 Of poison spring, of juice salubrious all,
 Which vipers, winding in their verdant track,
 Drink and expel the venom from their tooth,
 Dipt in the sweetness of that soil divine.
 On him the brave Artontes sink in death,
 Renown'd through wide Bithynia, ne'er again
 The clam'rous rites of Cybele to share;
 While echo murmurs through the hollow caves
 Of Berecynthian Dindimus. The strength
 Of Alpheus sent him to the shades of night.
 Ere from the dead was disengag'd the spear,
 Huge Abradates, glorying in his might,
 Surpassing all of Cissian race, advanc'd
 To grapple; planting firm his foremost step,
 The victor's throat he grasp'd. At Nemea's games
 The wrestler's chaplet Alpheus had obtain'd.
 He summons all his art. Oblique the stroke
 Of his swift foot supplants the Persian's heel.
 He, falling, clings by Alpheus' neck, and drags
 His foe upon him. In the Spartan's back
 Enrag'd Barbarians fix their thronging spears.
 To Abradates' chest the weapons pass;
 They rivet both in death. This Maron sees,
 This Polydorus, frowning. Victims, strewn
 Before their vengeance, hide their brother's corse.
 At length the gen'rous blood of Maron warms
 The sword of Hyperanthes. On the spear
 Of Polydorus falls the pond'rous ax
 Of Sacian Mardus. From the yielding wood
 The steely point is sever'd. Undismay'd,
 The Spartan stoops to rear the knotted mace,
 Left by Artuchus; but thy fatal blade,
 Abrocomes, that dreadful instant watch'd
 To rend his op'ning side. Unconquer'd still,
 Swift he discharges on the Sacian's front

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A pond'rous blow, which burst the scatter'd brain.
 Down his own limbs meantime a torrent flows 420
 Of vital crimson. Smiling, he reflects
 On sorrow finish'd, on his Spartan name,
 Renew'd in lustre. Sudden to his side
 Springs Dithyrambus. Through th' uplifted arm
 Of Mindus, pointing a malignant dart 435
 Against the dying Spartan, he impell'd
 His spear. The point with violence unspent,
 Urg'd by such vigour, reach'd the Persian's throat,
 Above his corselet. Polydorus stretch'd
 His languid hand to Thelpia's friendly youth, 430
 Then bow'd his head in everlasting peace.
 While Mindus, waded by his streaming wound,
 Beside him faints and dies. In flow'ring prime
 He, lord of Colchis, from a bride was torn
 His tyrant's hasty mandate to obey. 435
 She tow'rd the Euxine sends her plaintive sighs;
 She woos in tender piety the winds:
 Vain is their favour; they can never breathe
 On his returning sail. At once a crowd
 Of eager Persians seize the victor's spear. 440
 One of his nervous hands retains it fast.
 The other bares his falchion. Wounds and death
 He scatters round. Sofarnes feels his arm
 Lopt from the shoulder. Zatis leaves entwin'd
 His fingers round the long-disputed lance. 445
 On Marden's reins descends the pond'rous blade,
 Which half divides his body. Pheron strides
 Across the pointed ash. His weight o'ercomes
 The weary'd Theipian, who resigns his hold;
 But cleaves th' elate barbarian to the brain. 450
 Abrocomes darts forward, shakes his steel,
 Whose lightning threatens death. The wary Greek
 Wards with his sword the well directed stroke.
 Then, closing, throws the Persian. Now what aid
 Of mortal force, or interposing heav'n 455
 Preserves the eastern hero? Lo! the friend
 Of Teribazus. Eager to avenge

That lov'd, that lost companion, and defend
 A brother's life, beneath the sinewy arm,
 Outstretch'd, the sword of Hyperanthes pass'd 460
 Through Dithyrambus. All the strings of life
 At once relax; nor fame, nor Greece demand
 More from his valour. Prostrate now he lies
 In glories, ripen'd on his blooming head.
 Him shall the Thespian maidens in their songs 465
 Record once loveliest of the youthful train,
 The gentle, wise, beneficent and brave,
 Grace of his lineage, and his country's boast,
 Now fall'n. Elysium to his parting soul
 Uncloses. So the cedar, which supreme 470
 Among the groves of Libanus hath tow'r'd,
 Uprooted, low'rs his graceful top, prefer'd
 For dignity of growth some royal dome,
 Or heav'n devoted fabric to adorn.
 Diomeden bursts forward. Round his friend 475
 He heaps destruction. Troops of wailing ghosts
 Attend thy shade, fall'n hero! Long prevail'd
 His furious arm in vengeance uncontroll'd;
 Till four Assyrians on his shelving spear,
 Ere from a Cassian's prostrate body freed, 480
 Their pond'rous maces all discharge. It broke.
 Still with a shatter'd truncheon he maintains
 Unequal fight. Impetuous through his eye
 The well-aim'd fragment penetrates the brain
 Of one bold warrior; there the splinter'd wood, 485
 Infix'd, remains. The hero last unsheaths
 His falchion broad. A second sees aghast
 His entrails open'd. Sever'd from a third,
 The head, steel cas'd descends. In blood is roll'd
 The grizly beard. That effort breaks the blade 490
 Short from its hilt. The Grecian stands disarm'd.
 The fourth, Astaspes, proud Chaldean lord,
 Is nigh. He lifts his iron-plated mace.
 This, while a cluster of auxiliar friends
 Hang on the Grecian shield, to earth depress'd, 495
 Loads with unerring blows the batter'd helm;

Till on the ground Diomedon extends
 His mighty limbs. So waken'd by the force
 Of some tremendous engine, which the hand
 Of Mars impels, a citadel, high-tow'r'd, 500
 Whence darts, and fire, and ruins, long have aw'd
 Begirding legions, yields at last, and spreads
 Its disuniting ramparts on the ground;
 Joy fills th' assailants, and the battle's tide
 Whelms o'er the widening breach: the Persian thus 505
 O'er the late-fear'd Diomedon advanc'd
 Against the Grecian remnant: when behold
 Leonidas. At once their ardour froze.
 He had awhile behind his friends retir'd,
 Oppress'd by labour. Pointless was his spear, 510
 His buckler cleft. As, overworn by storms,
 A vessel steers to some protecting bay;
 Then, soon as timely gales inviting, curl
 The azure floods, to Neptune shows again
 Her masts apparell'd fresh in shrouds and sails, 515
 Which court the vig'rous wind: So Sparta's king,
 In strength repair'd, a spear and buckler new
 Presents to Asia. From her bleeding ranks
 Hydarnes, urg'd by destiny, approach'd.
 He, proudly vaunting, left an infant race, 520
 A spouse lamenting on the distant verge
 Of Bactrian Ochus. Victory in vain
 He, parting, promis'd. Wanton hope will sport
 Round his cold heart no longer. Grecian spoils,
 Imagin'd triumphs, pictur'd on his mind, 525
 Fate will erase for ever. Through the targe,
 The thick-mail'd corselet his divided chest
 Of bony strength admits the hostile spear.
 Leonidas draws back the steely point,
 Bent and enfeebled by the forceful blow. 530
 Meantime within his buckler's rim unseen,
 Amphisteus stealing, in th' unguarded flank
 His dagger struck. In slow effusion ooz'd
 The blood, from Hercules deriv'd; but death
 Not yet had reach'd his mark. Th' indignant king 535

Gripen irresistibly the Persian's throat.
 He drags him prostrate. False, corrupt, and base,
 Fallacious, fell, pre-eminent was he
 Among tyrannic satraps. Phrygia pin'd 540
 Beneath th' oppression of his ruthless sway.
 Her soil had once been fruitful. Once her towns
 Were populous and rich. The direful change
 To naked fields and crumbling roofs declar'd
 Th' accurs'd Amphistreu's govern'd. As the spear 545
 Of Tyrian Cadmus riveted to earth
 The pois'nous dragon, whose infectious breath
 Had blasted all Bœotia; so the king,
 On prone Amphistreu's trampling, to the rock
 Nails down the tyrant, and the fractur'd staff 550
 Leaves in his panting body. But the blood,
 Great hero, dropping from thy wound, revives
 The hopes of Persia. Thy unyielding arm
 Upholds the conflict still. Against thy shield 555
 The various weapons shiver, and thy feet
 With glitt'ring points surround. The Lydian sword,
 The Persian dagger leave their shatter'd hilts;
 Bent is the Caspian scimitar: the lance,
 The javelin, dart, and arrow all combine 560
 Their fruitless efforts. From Alcides sprung,
 Thou stand'st unshaken like a Thracian hill,
 Like Rhodope, or Hæmus; where in vain
 The thund'rer plants his livid bolt: in vain
 Keen pointed lightnings pierce th' incrust'd snow; 565
 And winter, beating with eternal war,
 Shakes from his dreary wings discordant storms,
 Chill sleet, and clatt'ring hail. Advancing bold,
 His rapid lance Abrocomes in vain
 Aims at the forehead of Laconia's chief. 570
 He, not unguarded, rears his active blade
 Athwart the dang'rous blow, whose fury wastes
 Above his crest in air. Then swiftly wheel'd,
 The pond'rous weapon cleaves the Persian's knee
 Sheer through the parted bone. He sidelong falls. 575

Crush'd on the ground beneath contending feet,
 Great Xerxes' brother yields the last remains
 Of tortur'd life. Leonidas persists;
 Till Agis calls Dienece, alarms
 Demophilus, Megistias: they o'er piles 580
 Of Allarodian and Sasperian dead
 Haste to their leader: They before him raise
 The brazen bulwark of their massy shields.
 The foremost rank of Asia stands and bleeds;
 The rest recoil: but Hyperanthes swift 585
 From band to band his various host pervades,
 Their drooping hopes rekindles, in the brave
 New fortitude excites: the frigid heart
 Of fears he warms. Astaspes first obeys.
 Vain of his birth, from ancient Belus drawn, 590
 Proud of his wealthy stores, his stately domes,
 More proud in recent victory: his might
 Had foil'd Platæ's chief. Before the front
 He strides impetuous. His triumphant mace
 Against the brave Dienece he bends. 595
 The weighty blow bears down th' opposing shield.
 And breaks the Spartan's shoulder. Idle hangs
 The weak defence, and loads th' inactive arm.
 Depriv'd of every function. Agis bares
 His vengeful blade. At two well level'd strokes 600
 Of both his hands, high brandishing the mace,
 He mutilates the foe. A Sacian chief
 Springs on the victor. Jaxartes' banks
 To this brave savage gave his name and birth.
 His look erect, his bold deportment spoke 605
 A gallant spirit, but untam'd by laws,
 With dreary wilds familiar, and a race
 Of rude barbarians, horrid, as their clime.
 From its direction glanc'd the Spartan spear,
 Which, upward borne, o'erturned his iron cone. 610
 Black o'er his forehead fall the naked locks;
 They aggravate his fury: while his foe
 Repeats the stroke, and penetrates his chest,
 The intrepid Sacian through his breast and back

LEONIDAS.

237

Receives the girding steel. Along the staff
 He writhes his tortur'd body; in his grasp
 A barbed arrow from his quiver shakes;
 Deep in the streaming throat of Agis hides
 The deadly point; then grimly smiles and dies.

615

From him fate hastens to a nobler prey.

620

Dieneces. His undefended frame
 The shield abandons, sliding from his arm.
 His breast is gor'd by javelins. On the foe
 He hurls them back, extracted from his wounds.

Life, yielding slow to destiny, at length

625

Forfakes his riven heart; nor less in death

Thermopylæ he graces, than before

By martial deeds and conduct. What can stem

The barb'rous torrent? Agis bleeds. His spear

Lies useleſs, irrecoverably plung'd

630

In Jaxares' body. Low reclines

Dieneces. Leonidas himself,

O'erlabour'd, wounded with his dinted sword

The rage of war can exercise no more.

One last, one glorious effort age performs.

635

Demophilus, Megistias join their might.

They check the tide of conquest; while the spear

Of slain Dieneces to Sparta's chief

The fainting Agis bears. The pointed ash.

In that dire hand for battle rear'd anew,

640

Blasts ev'ry Persian's valour. Back in heaps

They roll confounded, by their gen'ral's voice

In vain exhorted longer to endure

The ceaseleſs waſte of that unconquer'd arm.

So, when the giants from Olympus chas'd

645

Th' inferior gods, themselves in terror shunn'd

Th' incessant ſtreams of lightning, where the hand

Of heav'ns great father with eternal might

Sustain'd the dreadful conflict. O'er the field

Awhile Bellona gives the battle reſt;

650

When Theſpia's leader and Megiſtias drop

At either ſide of Lacedemon's king.

Beneath the weight of years and labour bend

The hoary warriors. Not a groan molests
 Their parting spirits; but in death's calm night 655
 All silent sinks each venerable head:
 Like aged oaks, whose deep-descending roots
 Had pierc'd resistless through a craggy slope;
 There during three long centuries have brav'd
 Malignant Eurus, and the boisterous north; 660
 Till bare and sapless by corroding time
 Without a blast their mossy trunks recline
 Before their parent hill. Not one remains,
 But Agis, near Leonidas, whose hand
 The last kind office to his friend performs, 665
 Extracts the Sacian's arrow. Life, releas'd
 Pours forth in crimson floods. O Agis, pale
 Thy placid features, rigid are thy limbs;
 They lose their graces. Dimm'd, thy eyes reveal
 The native goodness of thy heart no more. 670
 Yet other graces spring. The nobler corse
 Leonidas surveys. A pause he finds
 To mark, how lovely are the patriot's wounds,
 And see those honours on the breast he lov'd.
 But Hyperanthes from the trembling ranks 675
 Of Asia tow'rs, inflexibly resolv'd
 The Persian glory to redeem, or fall.
 The Spartan, worn by toil, his languid arm
 Uplifts once more. He waits the dauntless prince.
 The heroes stand adverse. Each awhile 680
 Restrains his valour. Each, admiring, view
 His godlike foe. At length their brandish'd points
 Provoke the contest, fated soon to close
 The long-continu'd horrors of the day.
 Fix'd in amaze and fear, the Asian throng, 685
 Unmov'd and silent on their bucklers pause.
 Thus on the wastes of India, while the earth
 Beneath him groans, the elephant is seen,
 His huge proboscis writhing, to defy
 The strong rhinoceros, whose pond'rous horn 690
 Is newly whetted on a rock. Anon
 Each hideous bulk encounters. Earth her groan

Redoubles. Trembling, from their covert gaze
 The savage inmates of surrounding woods
 In distant terror. By the vary'd art 695
 Of either chief the dubious combat long
 Its great event retarded. Now his lance
 Far through the hostile shield Laconia's king
 Impell'd. Aside the Persian swung his arm.
 Beneath it pass'd the weapon, which his targe 700
 Encumber'd. Hopes of conquest and renown
 Elate his courage. Sudden he directs
 His rapid javelin to the Spartan's throat.
 But he his wary buckler upward rais'd,
 Which o'er his shoulder turn'd the glancing steel; 705
 For one last effort then his scatter'd strength
 Collecting, levell'd with resistless force,
 The massive orb, and dash'd its brazen verge
 Full on the Persian's forehead. Down he sunk,
 Without a groan expiring, as o'erwhelm'd 710
 Beneath a marble fragment, from his seat
 Heav'd by a whirlwind, sweeping o'er the ridge
 Of some aspiring mansion. Generous prince!
 What could his valour more? His single might
 He match'd with great Leonidas, and fell 715
 Before his native bands. The Spartan king
 Now stands alone. In heaps his slaughter'd friends,
 All stretch'd around him lie. The distant foes
 Show'r on his head innumerable darts.
 From various sluices gush the vital floods; 720
 They stain his fainting limbs. Nor yet with pain
 His brow is clouded; but those beauteous wounds,
 The sacred pledges of his own renown,
 And Sparta's safety, in sereneest joy
 His closing eye contemplates. Fame can twine 725
 No brighter laurels round his glorious head;
 His virtue more to labour fate forbids,
 And lays him now in honourable rest
 To seal his country's liberty by death. 729

MISCELLANIES:

POEM ON SIR ISAAC NEWTON.

TO Newton's genius and immortal fame,
 Th' advent'rous muse with trembling pinions soars.
 Thou heav'nly truth, from thy seraphic throne
 Look favourable down, do thou assist
 My lab'ring thought, do thou inspire my song. 5
 Newton, who first th' Almighty's works display'd,
 And smooth'd that mirror, in whose polish'd face
 The great Creator now conspicuous shines;
 Who open'd nature's adamantine gates,
 And to our minds her secret powers expos'd; 10
 Newton demands the muse; his sacred hand
 Shall guide her infant steps; his sacred hand
 Shall raise her to the Heliconian height,
 Where, on its lofty top enthron'd, her head
 Shall mingle with the stars. Hail nature, hail, 15
 O goddess, handmaid of th' ethereal power,
 Now lift thy head, and to th' admiring world
 Show thy long hid-den beauty. Thee the wise
 Of ancient fame, immortal Plato's self,
 The Stagyrte, and Syracusan sage, 22
 From black obscurity's abyss to raise,
 (Drooping and mourning o'er thy wondrous works)
 With vain inquiry fought. Like meteors these
 In their dark age bright sons of wisdom shone:
 But at thy Newton all their laurels fade, 25
 They shrink from all the honours of their names.
 So glimm'ring stars contract their feeble rays,
 When the swift lustre of Aurora's face
 Flows o'er the skies, and wraps the heav'ns in light.
 The Deity's omnipotence, the cause, 30
 Th' original of things long lay unknown.
 Alone the beauties prominent to sight
 (Of the celestial power the outward form)
 Drew praise and wonder from the gazing world.

As when the deluge overspread the earth,
 Whilst yet the mountains only rear'd their heads 35
 Above the surface of the wild expanse,
 Whelm'd deep below the great foundations lay,
 Till some kind angel at heav'n's high command
 Roll'd back the rising tides, and haughty floods, 40
 And to the ocean thunder'd out his voice :
 Quick all the swelling and imperious waves,
 The foaming billows and obscuring surge,
 Back to their channels and their ancient seats
 Recoil affrighted : from the darksome main 45
 Earth raises smiling, as new-born, her head,
 And with fresh charms her lovely face arrays.
 So his extensive thought accomplish'd first
 The mighty task to drive th' obstructing mists
 Of ignorance away, beneath whose gloom 50
 Th' unshrouded majesty of nature lay.
 He drew the veil and swell'd the spreading scene.
 How had the moon around th' ethereal void
 Rang'd, and eluded lab'ring mortals care,
 Till his invention trac'd her secret steps, 55
 While she inconstant with unsteady rein
 Through endless mazes and meanders guides
 In its unequal course her changing car :
 Whether behind the sun's superior light
 She hides the beauties of her radiant face, 60
 Or, when conspicuous, smiles upon mankind,
 Unveiling all her night-rejoicing charms.
 When thus the silver-tressed moon dispels
 The frowning horrors from the brow of night,
 And with her splendours cheers the sullen gloom, 65
 While sable-mantled darkness with his veil
 The visage of the fair horizon shades,
 And over nature spreads his raven wings ;
 Let me upon some unfrequented green
 While sleep sits heavy on the drowsy world, 70
 Seek out some solitary peaceful cell,
 Where darksome woods around their gloomy brows
 Bow low, and ev'ry hill's protended shade

Obscures the dusky vale, there silent dwell,
 Where contemplation holds its still abode, 75
 There trace the wide and pathless void of heav'n,
 And count the stars that sparkle on its robe,
 Or else in fancy's wild'ring mazes lost
 Upon the verdure see the fairy elves
 Dance o'er their magic circles, or behold, 80
 In thought enraptur'd with the ancient bards,
 Medea's baleful incantations draw
 Down from her orb the paly queen of night.
 But chiefly Newton let me soar with thee,
 And while surveying all yon starry vault 85
 With admiration I attentive gaze,
 Thou shalt descend from thy celestial seat,
 And waft aloft my high-aspiring mind,
 Shalt show me there how nature has ordain'd
 Her fundamental laws, shalt lead my thought 90
 Through all the wand'rings of th' uncertain moon,
 And teach me all her operating powers.
 She and the sun with influence conjoint
 Wield the huge axle of the whirling earth,
 And from their just direction turn the poles, 95
 Slow urging on the progress of the years.
 The constellations seem to leave their seats,
 And o'er the skies with solemn pace to move.
 You, splendid rulers of the day and night,
 The sea's obey, at your resistless sway 100
 Now they contract their waters, and expose
 The dreary desert of old ocean's reign.
 The craggy rocks their horrid sides disclose;
 Trembling the sailor views the dreadful scene,
 And cautiously the threat'ning ruin shuns. 105
 But where the shallow waters hide the sands,
 There ravenous destruction lurks conceal'd,
 There the ill-guided vessel falls a prey,
 And all her numbers gorge his greedy jaws.
 But quick returning see th' impetuous tides 110
 Back to th' abandon'd shores impel the main.
 Again the foaming seas extend their waves.

Again the rolling floods embrace the shores,
 And veil the horrors of the empty deep.
 Thus the obsequious seas your power confess, 115
 While from the surface healthful vapours rise,
 Plenteous throughout the atmosphere diffus'd,
 Or to supply the mountain's heads with springs,
 Or fill the hanging clouds with needful rains,
 That friendly streams, and kind refreshing show'rs,
 May gently lave the sun-burnt thirsty plains, 121
 Or to replenish all the empty air
 With wholesome moisture to increase the fruits
 Of earth, and bless the labours of mankind.
 O Newton, whither flies thy mighty soul, 125
 How shall the feeble muse pursue through all
 The vast extent of thy unbounded thought,
 That even seeks th' unseen recesses dark
 To penetrate of Providence immense.
 And thou the great Dispenser of the world 130
 Propitious, who with inspiration taught'st
 Our greatest bard to send thy praises forth;
 Thou, who gav'st Newton thought; who smil'd'st
 serene,
 When to its bounds he stretch'd his swelling soul;
 Who still benignant ever blest his toil, 135
 And deign'd to his enlight'ned mind t' appear
 Confess'd around th' interminated world:
 To me, O thy divine infusion grant
 (O thou in all so infinitely good)
 That I may sing thy everlasting works, 140
 Thy unexhausted store of providence,
 In thought effulgent and resounding verse,
 O could I spread the wond'rous theme around,
 Where the wind cools the oriental world,
 To the calm breezes of the Zephyr's breath, 145
 To where the frozen hyperborean blasts,
 To where th' hoist'rous tempest-leading south
 From their deep hollow caves send forth their storms.
 Thou still indulgent Parent of mankind,
 Lest humid emanations should no more 15

Flow from the ocean, but dissolve away
 Through the long series of revolving time ;
 And lest the vital principle decay,
 By which the air supplies the springs of life ;
 Thou hast the fiery visag'd comets form'd 155
 With vivifying spirits all replete
 Which they abundant breathe about the void,
 Renewing the prolific soul of things.
 No longer now on thee amaz'd we call,
 No longer tremble at imagin'd ills, 160
 When comets blaze tremendous from on high,
 Or when extending wide their flaming trains
 With hideous grasp the skies engirdle round,
 And spread the terrors of their burning locks.
 For these through orbits in the length'ning space 165
 Of many tedious rolling years complete
 Around the sun move regularly on ;
 And with the planets in harmonious orbs,
 And mystic periods their obeisance pay
 To him majestic Ruler of the skies 170
 Upon his throne of circled glory fixt.
 He or some god conspicuous to the view,
 Or else the substitute of nature seems,
 Guiding the courses of revolving worlds.
 He taught great Newton the all-potent laws 175
 Of gravitation, by whose simple power
 The universe exists. Nor here the sage
 Big with invention still renewing staid.
 But, O bright angel of the lamp of day,
 How shall the muse display his greatest toil ? 180
 Let her plunge deep in Aganippe's waves,
 Or in Castalia's ever flowing stream,
 That reinspired she may sing to thee,
 How Newton dar'd advent'rous to unbraid
 The yellow tresses of thy shining hair. 185
 Or did'st thou gracious leave thy radiant sphere,
 And to his hand thy lucid splendours give,
 T' unweave the light-diffusing wreath, and part
 The blended glories of thy golden plumes?

He with laborious and unerring care
 How diff'rent and imbodied colours form
 Thy piercing light, with just distinction found.
 He with quick sight pursu'd thy darting rays,
 When penetrating to th' obscure recess
 Of solid matter, there perspicuous saw, 195
 How in the texture of each body lay
 The power that separates the diff'rent beams.
 Hence over nature's unadorned face
 Thy bright diversifying rays dilate
 Their various hues : and hence when vernal rains 200
 Descending swift have burst the low'ring clouds,
 Thy splendours through the dissipating mists
 In its fair vesture of unnumber'd hues
 Array the show'ry bow. At thy approach
 The morning risen from her pearly couch 205
 With rosy blushes decks her virgin cheek ;
 The ev'ning on the frontispiece of heav'n
 His mantle spreads with many colours gay ;
 The mid-day skies in radiant azure clad,
 The shining clouds. And silver vapours rob'd, 210
 In white transparent intermixt with gold,
 With bright variety of splendour clothe
 All the illuminated face above.
 When hoary-headed winter back retires
 To thee chill'd pole, there solitary sits 215
 Encompass'd round with winds and tempests bleak
 In caverns of impenetrable ice,
 And from behind the dissipated gloom
 Like a new Venus from the parting surge
 The gay-apparell'd spring advances on ; 220
 When thou in thy meridian brightness sitt'st,
 And from thy throne pure emanations flow
 Of glory bursting o'er the radiant skies :
 Then let the muse Olympus' top ascend,
 And o'er Thessali's plain extend her view, 225
 And count, O Tempe, all thy beauties o'er.
 Mountains, whose summits grasp the pendant clouds,
 Between their wood-invelop'd slopes embrace

The green-attired vallies. Every flow'r
Here in the pride of bounteous nature clad 230
Smiles on the bosom of th' enamell'd meads.
Over the smiling lawn the silver floods
Of fair Peneus gently roll along,
While the reflected colours from the flow'rs,
And verdant borders pierce the limpid waves, 235
And paint with all their variegated hue
The yellow sands beneath. Smooth gliding on
The waters hasten to the neighbouring sea.
Still the pleas'd eye the floating plain pursues
At length, in Neptune's wide dominion lost 240
Surveys the shining billows, that arise
Apparell'd each in Phœbus' bright attire ;
Or from afar some tall majestic ship,
Or the long hostile lines of threat'ning fleets.
Which o'er the bright uneven mirror sweep, 245
In dazzling gold and waving purple deck'd ;
Such as of old, when haughty Athens pour
Their hideous front and terrible array
Against Pallene's coast extended wide,
And with tremendous war and battle stern 250
The trembling walls of Potidæa shook.
Crested with pendants curling with the breeze
The upright masts high bristle in the air,
Aloft exalting proud their gilded heads.
The silver waves against the painted prows 255
Raise their resplendent bosoms, and impearl
The fair vermilion with their glist'ring drops :
And from on board the iron-clothed host
Around the main a gleaming horror casts ;
Each flaming buckler like the mid day sun, 260
Each plumed helmet like the silver moon,
Each moving gauntlet like the lightning's blaze,
And like a star each brazen pointed spear.
But, lo ! the facied high-erected fanes,
Fair citadels, and marble-crowned towers, 265
And sumptuous palaces of stately towns
Magnificent arise, upon their heads

Bearing on high a wreath of silver light.
 But see my muse the high Pierian hill,
 Behold its shaggy locks and airy top, 270
 Up to the skies th' imperious mountain heaves ;
 The shining verdure of the nodding woods.
 See where the silver Hippocrene flows,
 Behold its glitt'ring rivulet and rill
 Through mazes wander down the green descent, 275
 And sparkle through the interwoven trees,
 Here rest a while and humble homage pay,
 Here, where the sacred genius, that inspir'd
 Sublime Mæonides and Pindar's breast,
 His habitation once was fam'd to hold. 280
 Here thou, O Homer, offer'dst up thy vows ;
 Thee, the kind muse Calliopæa heard,
 And led thee to the empyrean seats,
 There manifested to the hallow'd eyes
 The deeds of gods ; thee wise Minerva taught 285
 The wondrous art of knowing human kind ;
 Harmonious Phœbus tun'd thy heav'nly mind,
 And swell'd to rapture each exalted sense ;
 Even Mars the dreadful battle-ruling god,
 Mars taught thee war, and with his bloody hand 290
 Instructed thine, when in thy sounding lines
 We hear the rattling of Bellona's car,
 The yell of discord, and the din of arms.
 Pindar, when mounted on his fiery steed,
 Soars to the sun opposing eagle-like 295
 His eyes undazzled to the fiercest rays.
 He, firmly seated, not like Glaucus' son,
 Strides his swift-winged and fire breathing horse,
 And borne aloft strikes with his ringing hoofs
 The brazen vault of heav'n, superior there 300
 Looks down upon the stars, whose radiant light
 Illuminates innumerable worlds,
 That through eternal orbits roll beneath.
 But thou all hail immortalized son.
 Of harmony all hail thou Thracian bard, 305
 To whom Apollo gave his tuneful lyre !

O might'st thou, Orpheus, now again revive,
 And Newton should inform thy list'ning ear
 How the soft notes, and soul-inchanting strains
 Of thy own lyre were on the wind convey'd, 310
 He taught the muse, how sound progressive floats
 Upon the waving particles of air,
 When harmony in ever pleasing strains,
 Melodious melting at each lulling fall,
 With soft alluring penetration steals 315
 Through the enraptur'd ear to inmost thought,
 And folds the senses in its silken bands.
 So the sweet music, which from Orpheus' touch
 And fam'd Amphion's, on the sounding string
 Arose harmonious, gliding on the air, 320
 Pierc'd the tough bark'd and knotty-ribbed woods,
 Into their saps soft inspiration breath'd,
 And taught attention to the stubborn oak.
 Thus when great Henry, and brave Marlborough led
 Th' embattled numbers of Britannia's sons, 325
 The trump, that swells th' expanded cheek of fame,
 That adds new vigour to the gen'rous youth,
 And rouses sluggish cowardice itself
 The trumpet with its Mars-inciting voice 330
 The winds broad breast impetuous sweeping o'er
 Fill'd the big note of war. Th' inspired host
 With new-born ardour press the trembling Gaul;
 Nor greater throngs had reach'd eternal night,
 Not if the fields of Agincourt had yawn'd, 335
 Exposing horrible the gulf of fate;
 Or roaring Danube spread his arms abroad,
 And overwhelm'd their legions with his floods.
 But let the wond'ring muse at length return;
 Nor yet, angelic genius of the sun, 340
 In worthy lays her high-attempting song
 Has blazon forth thy venerated name.
 Then let her sweep the loud-sounding lyre
 Again, again o'er each melodious string
 Teach harmony to tremble with thy praise. 345
 And still thine ear, O favourable grant,

And she shall tell thee, that whatever charms,
Whatever beauties bloom on nature's face
Proceed from thy all-influencing light.
That when arising with tempestuous rage, 350
The north impetuous rides upon the clouds
Dispersing round the heav'ns obstructive gloom,
And with his dreaded prohibition stays
The kind effusion of thy genial beams;
Pale are the rubies on Aurora's lips, 355
No more the roses blush upon her cheeks,
Black are Peneus' streams and golden sands,
In Tempe's vale dull Melancholy sits,
And every flower reclines its languid head.
By what high names shall I invoke thee, say, 360
Thou life-infusing deity, on thee
I call, and look propitious from on high,
While now to thee I offer up my prayer.
O had great Newton, as he found the cause,
By which sound rolls through th' undulating air, 365
O had he, baffling time's resistless power;
Discover'd what that subtle spirit is,
Or whatsoe'er diffusive else is spread
Over the wide extended universe,
Which causes bodies to reflect the light, 370
And from their straight direction to divert
The rapid beams, that through their surface pierce,
But since embrac'd by th' icy arms of age,
And his quick thought by time's cold hand congeal'd,
Ev'n Newton left unknown this hidden power; 375
Thou from the race of human kind select
Some other worthy of an angel's care,
With inspiration animate his breast.
And him instruct in these thy secret laws.
O let not Newton, to whole spacious view, 380
Now unobstructed, all th' extensive scenes
Of the ethereal ruler's works arise;
When he beholds this earth he late adorn'd,
Let him not see philosophy in tears,
Like a fond mother solitary sit, 385

Lamenting him her dear, and only child.
 But as the wise Pythagoras, and he,
 Whose birth with pride the fam'd Abdera boasts,
 With expectation having long survey'd
 This spot their ancient seat, with joy beheld 390
 Divine Philosophy at length appear
 In all her charms majestically fair,
 Conducted by immortal Newton's hand :
 So may he see another sage arise,
 That shall maintain her empire : then no more 395
 Imperious ignorance with haughty sway
 Shall stalk rapacious o'er the ravag'd globe :
 Then thou, O Newton, shalt protect these lines,
 The humble tribute of the grateful muse ;
 Ne'er shall the sacrilegious hand despoil 400
 Her laurell'd temples, whom his name preserves.
 And were she equal to the mighty theme.
 Futurity should wonder at her song :
 Time should receive her with extended arms,
 Seat her conspicuous in his rolling car, 405
 And bear her down to his extremest bound.

Fables with wonder tell how Terra's sons
 With iron force unloos'd the stubborn nerves
 Of hills, and on the cloud-inshrouded top
 Of Pelion Ossa pil'd. But if the vast 410
 Gigantic deeds of savage strength demand
 Astonishment from men, what then shalt thou,
 O what expressive rapture of the soul,
 When thou before us, Newton, dost display
 The labours of thy great excelling mind ; 415
 When thou unveilest all the wondrous scene,
 The vast idea of th' eternal King,
 Not dreadful bearing in his angry arm
 The thunder hanging o'er our trembling heads ;
 But with th' effulgency of love replete, 420
 And clad with power, which form'd th' extensive hea-
 vens.

O happy he, whose enterprising hand
 Unbars the golden and relucid gates

Of th' empyrean dome, where thou enthron'd
 Philosophy art sealed. Thou sustain'd 425
 By the firm hand of everlasting truth
 Despisest all the injuries of time :
 Thou never know'st decay when all around,
 Antiquity obscures her head. Behold
 Th' Egyptian towers, the Babylonian walls, 430
 And Thebes with all her hundred gates of brass,
 Behold them scatter'd like the dust abroad.
 Whatever now is flourishing and proud,
 Whatever shall, must know devouring age.
 Euphrates' stream, and seven-mouthed Nile, 435
 And Danube, thou that from Germania's soil
 To the black Euxine's far remotest shore,
 O'er the wide bounds of mighty nations sweep'st
 In thunder loud thy rapid floods along.
 E'en you shall feel inexorable time ; 440
 To you the fatal day shall come ; no more
 Your torrents then shall shake the trembling ground,
 No longer then to inundations swol'n
 Th' imperious waves the fertile pastures drench,
 But shrunk within a narrow channel glide ; 445
 Or through the year's reiterated course,
 When Time himself grows old, your wond'rous
 streams
 Lost e'en to memory shall lie unknown
 Beneath obscurity, and chaos whelm'd.
 But still thou sun illuminatest all 450
 The azure regions round, thou guidest still
 The orbits of the planetary spheres :
 The moon still wanders o'er her changing course,
 And still, O Newton, shall thy name survive
 As long as nature's hand directs the world, 455
 When ev'ry dark obstruction shall retire,
 And ev'ry secret yield its hidden store,
 Which thee dim-sighted age forbade to see,
 Age that alone could stay thy rising soul,
 And could mankind among the fixed stars, 460
 E'en to th' extremest bounds to knowledge reach

To those unknown innumerable suns,
Whose light but glimmers from those distant worlds
Ev'n to those utmost boundaries, those bars
That shut the entrance of th' illumin'd space 465
Where angels only tread the vast unknown
Thou ever should'st be seen immortal there
In each new sphere, each new-appearing sun,
In farthest regions at the very verge
Of the wide universe shoul'dst thou be seen 470
And lo! th' all-potent goddess nature takes
With her own hand thy great, thy just reward
Of immortality; aloft in air
See the displays, and with eternal grasp,
Uprears the trophies of great Newton's fame. 475



LONDON:

OR, THE PROGRESS OF COMMERCE.

YE northern blasts, and (a) Eurus wont to sweep
 With rudest pinions o'er the furrow'd waves,
 A while suspend your violence, and waft
 From sandy (b) Weser and the broad mouth'd Elbe
 My freighted vessels to the destin'd shore. 5
 Safe o'er th' unruffled main; let every thought,
 Which may disquiet, and alarm my breast,
 Be absent now; that, dispossest'd of care,
 And free from ev'ry tumult of the mind,
 With each disturbing passion hush'd to peace, 10
 I may pour all my spirit on the theme,
 Which opens now before me, and demands
 The loftiest strain. The eagle, when he tow'rs
 Beyond the clouds, the fleecy robes of heav'n,
 Disdains all objects but the golden sun; 15
 Full on th' effulgent orb directs his eye,
 And sails exulting through the blaze of day;
 So, while her wing attempts the boldest flight,
 Rejecting each inferior theme of praise,
 Thee, ornament of Europe, Albion's pride, 20
 Fair seat of wealth and freedom, thee my muse
 Shall celebrate, O London: thee she hails.
 Thou lov'd abode of commerce, last retreat,
 Whence she contemplates with a tranquil mind
 Her various wanderings from the fated hour, 25
 That she abandon'd her maternal clime;
 Neptunian commerce, whom Phoenix bore,
 Illustrious nymph, that nam'd the fertile plains
 Along the sounding main extended far,
 Which flowery Carmel with its sweet perfumes, 30
 And with its cedars Libanus o'er shades:
 Her from the bottom of the wat'ry world,
 As once she stood, in radiant beauties grac'd,
 To mark the heaving tide, the piercing eye

(a) The east wind.

(b) Bremen is situated on the Weser, and Hamburgh on the Elbe.

Of Neptune view'd enamour'd: from the deep 35
The god ascending rushes to the beach,
And clasps the affrighted virgin. From that day,
Soon as the paly regent of the night
Nine times her monthly progress had renew'd
Through heaven's illumin'd vault, Phœnice, led 40
By shame, once more the sea-worn margin sought:
There pac'd with painful steps the barren sands,
A solitary mourner, and the surge,
Which gently roll'd beside her, now no more
With placid eyes beholding, thus exclaim'd: 45
Ye fragrant shrubs and cedars, lofty shade,
Which crown my native hills, ye spreading palms,
That rise majestic on these fruitful meads,
With you who gave the lost Phœnice birth,
And you, who bear th' endearing name of friends, 50
Once faithful partners of my chaster hours,
Farewel! To thee, perfidious god, I come,
Bent down with pain and anguish on thy sands,
I come thy suppliant: death is all I crave;
Bid thy devouring waves inwrap my head, 55
And to the bottom whelm my cares and shame!
She ceas'd, when sudden from th' enclosing deep
A crystal car emerg'd, with glitt'ring shells,
Cull'd from their oozy beds by Tethys' train,
And blushing coral deck'd, whose ruddy glow 60
Mix'd with the wat'ry lustre of the pearl.
A smiling band of sea born nymphs attend,
Who from the shore with gentle hands convey
The fear-subdu'd Phœnice, and along
The lucid chariot place. As there with dread 65
All mute, and struggling with her painful throes,
She lay, the winds by Neptune's high command
Were silent round her; not a zephyr dar'd
To wanton o'er the cedar's branching top.
Nor on the plain the stately palm was seen 70
To wave its graceful verdure; o'er the main
No undulation broke the smooth expanse,
But all was hush'd and motionless around,

All but the lightly-sliding car, impell'd
 Along the level azure by the strength 75
 Of active Tritons, rivalling in speed
 The rapid meteor, whose sulphureous train
 Glides o'er the brow of darkneſs, and appears
 The livid ruins of a falling ſtar.
 Beneath the Lybian ſkies, a bliſſful iſle, 80
 By (c) Triton's floods encircled, Nyſa lay.
 Here youthful nature wanton'd in delights,
 And here the guardians of the bounteous horn,
 While it was now the infancy of time,
 Nor yet th' uncultivated globe had learn'd 85
 To ſmile, (d) Eucarpé, (e) Daphiléa dwelt,
 With all the nymphs, whole ſacred care had nurs'd
 The eldeſt Bacchus. From the dowy ſhore
 A turf-clad valley opens, and along
 Its verdure mild the willing feet allures; 90
 While on its ſloping ſides aſcends the pride
 Of hoary groves, high-arching o'er the vale
 With day-rejecting gloom. The ſolemn ſhade
 Half round a ſpacious lawn at length expands,
 (f) Clos'd by a tow'ring cliff, whole forehead glows 95
 With azure, purple, and ten thouſand dyes,
 From its reſplendent fragments beaming round;
 Nor leſs irradiate colours from beneath
 On every ſide an ample grot reflects,
 As down the perforated rock the ſun 100
 Pours his meridian blaze! rever'd abode
 Of Nyſa's nymphs, with every plant attir'd,
 That wears undying green, reſreſh'd with rills
 From ever-living fountains, and enrich'd
 With all Pomona's bloom: unfading flowers 105
 Glow on the mead, and ſpicy ſhrubs perfume
 With unexhausted ſweets the cooling gale,
 Which breathes inceſſant there; while ev'ry bird
 Of tuneful note his gay or plaintive ſong

(c) Triton, a river and lake of ancient Lybia.

(d) Fruitfulneſs.

(e) Plenty.

(f) This whole deſcription of the rock and grotto is taken from Diod. Siculus, lib. 3. 2 ag. 202.

Blends with the warble of meandering streams, 110
 Which o'er their pebbled channels murmur'ing lave
 The fruit-invested hills, that rise around.
 The gentle Nereids to this calm recess
 Phoenix bear; nor Daphiléa bland,
 Nor good Eucarpé, studious to obey 115
 Great Neptune's will, their hospitable care
 Refuse; nor long Lucina is invoc'd.
 Soon as the wond'rous infant sprung to day,
 Earth rock'd around; with all their nodding woods,
 And streams reverting to their troubled source, 120
 The mountain shook, while Lybia's neighb'ring god,
 Mysterious Ammon, from his hollow cell
 With deep resounding accent thus to heaven,
 To earth, and sea, the mighty birth proclaim'd.

A new-born power behold! whom fate hath call'd 125
 The god's imperfect labour to complete
 This wide creation. She in lonely sands
 Shall bid the tower-encircled city rise,
 The barren sea shall people, and the wilds
 Of dreary nature shall with plenty clothe; 130
 She shall enlighten man's unletter'd race,
 And with endearing intercourse unite
 Remotest nations, scorched by sultry suns,
 Or freezing near the snow-incrusted pole:
 Where'er the joyous vine disdains to grow, 135
 The fruitful olive, or the golden ear;
 Her hand divine, with interposing aid,
 To every climate shall the gifts supply
 Of Ceres, Bacchus, and (g) the Athenian maid;
 The graces, joys, emoluments of life 140
 From her exhaustless bounty all shall flow.

The heavenly prophet ceas'd. Olympus heard.
 Straight from their star-bespangled thrones descend
 On blooming Nyssa a celestial band,
 The ocean's lord to honour in his child; 145
 When o'er his offspring smiling thus began

(g) Minerva, the tutelary goddess of the Athenians, to whom she gave the olive.

The trident-ruler : Commerce be thy name :
 To thee I give the empire of the main,
 From where the morning breathes its eastern gale,
 To th' undiscover'd limits of the west, 150
 From chilling Boreas to extremest south
 Thy fire's oblique billows shall extend
 Thy universal reign. Minerva next
 With wisdom blest'd her, Mercury with art,
 (b) The Lemnian god with industry, and last 155
 Majestic Phœbus, o'er the infant long
 In contemplation pausing, thus declar'd
 From his enraptur'd lip his matchless boon :

Thee, with divine invention I endow,
 That secret wonder, goddess, to disclose, 160
 By which the wise, the virtuous, and the brave,
 The heaven-taught poet and exploring sage
 Shall pass recorded to the verge of time.

Her years of childhood now were number'd o'er,
 When to her mother's natal soil repair'd 165
 The new divinity whose parting step
 Her sacred nurses follow'd, ever now
 To her alone inseparably join'd ;
 Then first deserting their Nyseian shore
 To spread their hoarded blessings round the world ; 170
 Who with them bore the unexhausted horn
 Of ever-smiling plenty. Thus adorn'd,
 Attended thus, great goddess, thou began'st
 Thy all enlivening progress o'er the globe,
 Then rude and joyless, destin'd to repair 175
 The various ills which earliest ages ru'd
 From one, like thee, distinguish'd by the gifts
 Of heaven, Pandora, whose pernicious hand
 From the dire vase releas'd th' imprison'd woes.

Thou gracious commerce, from his cheerless caves 180
 In horrid rocks and solitary woods,
 The helpless wand'rer, man, forlorn and wild,
 Didst charm to sweet society ; didst cast
 The deep foundations, where the future pride

(b) Vulcan, the tutelar deity of Lemnos.

Of mightiest cities rose, and o'er the main 185
 Before the wond'ring Nereids didst present
 The surge-dividing keel, and stately mast,
 Whose canvass wings, distending with the gale,
 The bold Phœnician through Alcides' straits
 To northern Albions tin-embowell'd fields, 190
 And oft beneath the sea-obscur'ing brow
 Of cloud-envelop'd Teneriff convey'd.
 Next in sagacious thought th' ethereal plains
 Thou trod'st, exploring each propitious star
 The danger-braving mariner to guide ; 195
 Then all the latent and mysterious powers
 Of number didst unravel: last to crown
 Thy bounties, goddess, thy unrival'd toils
 For man, still urging thy inventive mind,
 Thou gav'st him (*i*) letters ; there imparting all 200
 Which lifts the ennobled spirit near to heaven,
 Laws, learning, wisdom, Nature's works reveal'd
 By godlike sages, all Minerva's arts,
 Apollo's music, and th' eternal voice
 Of virtue sounding from the historic roll, 205
 The philosophic page, and poet's song.
 Now solitude and silence from the shores
 Retreat, on pathless mountains to reside,
 Barbarity is polish'd, infant arts
 Bloom in the desert, and benignant peace 210
 With hospitality begin to sooth
 Unsocial rapine, and the thirst of blood ;
 As from his tumid urn when Nilus spreads
 His genial tides abroad, the favour'd soil
 That joins his fruitful border, first imbibes 215
 The kindly stream: anon the bounteous god
 His waves extends, embracing Egypt round,
 Dwells on the teeming champain, and endows
 The sleeping grain with vigour to attire
 In one bright harvest all the Pharian plains: 220
 Thus, when Pygmalion from Phœnician Tyre
 Had banish'd freedom, with disdainful steps

(*i*) Here the opinion of Sir Isaac Newton is followed, that letters were first invented amongst the trading parts of the world.

Indignant commerce, turning from the walls
 Herself had rais'd, her welcome sway enlarg'd
 Among the nations, spreading round the globe 225
 The fruits of all its climes; (*k*) Cecropian oil,
 The Thracian vintage, and Panchaïan gums,
 Arabia's spices, and the golden grain,
 Which old Osiris to his Egypt gave,
 And Ceres to (*l*) Sicania. Thou didst raise 230
 Th' Ionian name, O commerce, thou the domes
 Of sumptuous Corinth, and the ample round
 Of Syracuse didst people.—All the wealth
 Now thou assemblest from Iberia's mines,
 And golden-channell'd Tagus, all the spoils 235
 From fair (*m*) Trinacria wasted, all the powers,
 Of conquer'd Afric's tributary realms
 To fix thy empire on the Lybian verge,
 Thy native tract; the nymphs of Nyssa hail
 Thy glad return, and echoing joy resounds 240
 O'er Triton's sacred waters, but in vain:
 The irreversible decrees of heaven
 To far more northern regions had ordain'd
 Thy lasting seat; in vain th' imperial port
 Receives the gather'd riches of the world: 245
 In vain whole climates bow beneath its rule;
 Behold the toil of centuries to Rome
 Its glories yield, and mould'ring leaves no trace
 Of its deep-rooted greatness; thou with tears
 From thy extinguish'd Carthage didst retire, 250
 And these thy perish'd honours long deplore.
 What though rich (*n*) Gades, what though polish'd
 Rhodes,
 With Alexandria, Egypt's splendid mart,
 The learn'd (*o*) Massylians, and (*p*) Ligurian tow'rs,

(*k*) Athenian. Athens was called Cecropia, from Cecrops, its first king.

(*l*) Sicily.

(*m*) Another name of Sicily, which was frequently ravaged by the Carthaginians.

(*n*) Cadiz.

(*o*) Marseilles, a Grecian colony, the most civilized as well as the greatest trading city of ancient Gaul.

(*p*) Genoa.

What though the potent Hanseatic league, 255
 And Venice, mistress of the Grecian isles,
 With all the Ægean floods, awhile might sooth
 The sad remembrance; what though led through climes
 And seas unknown, with thee th' advent'rous sons.

(q) Tagus pass'd the stormy cape, which braves
 The huge Atlantic; what though Antwerp grew 261
 Beneath thy smiles, and thou propitious there
 Didst shower thy blessings with unsparing hands:
 Still on thy grief-indented heart impress'd
 The great Amilcar's valour, still the deeds 265
 Of Aldrubal and Mago, still the loss
 Of thy unequal, Annibal, remain'd:
 Till from the sandy mouths of echoing Rhine,
 And sounding margin of the Scheldt and Maese,
 With sudden roar the angry voice of war 270
 Alarm'd thy languor; wonder turn'd thy eye.
 Lo! in bright arms a bold militia stood,
 Arrang'd for battle: from afar thou saw'st
 The snowy ridge of Appenine, the fields
 Of wild Calabria, and Pyrene's hills, 275
 The Guadiana, and the Duro's banks,
 And rapid Ebro gath'ring all their powers
 To crush this daring populace, the pride
 Of fiercest kings with more inflam'd revenge 279
 Ne'er menac'd freedom; nor, since dauntless Greece,
 And Rome's stern offspring, none hath e'er surpass'd
 The bold (r) Batavian in his glorious toil
 For liberty, or death. At once the thought
 Of long lamented Carthage flies thy breast,
 And ardent, goddess, thou dost speed to save 285
 The generous people. Not the vernal showers,
 Distilling copious from the morning clouds,
 Descend more kindly on the tender flower,
 New-born and opening on the lap of spring,
 Than on this rising state thy cheering smile, 290

(q) The Portuguese discovered the Cape of Good Hope in 1487.

(r) The Dutch.

And animating presence ; while on Spain,
 Prophetic thus, thy indignation broke :

Infatiate race ! the shame of polish'd lands !
 Disgrace of Europe ! for inhuman deeds
 And insolence renown'd ! what demon led 295

Thee first to plough the undiscover'd furge,
 Which lav'd an hidden world ? whose malice taught
 Thee first to taint with rapine, and with rage,
 With more than savage thirst of blood the arts,
 By me for gentlest intercourse ordain'd, 300
 For mutual aids, and hospitable ties

From shore to shore ? Or, that pernicious hour,
 Was heaven disgusted with its wond'rous works,
 That to thy fell exterminating hand
 Th' immense Peruvian empire it resign'd, 305

And all, which lordly (s) Montezuma sway'd ?
 And com'st thou, strength'd with the shining stores
 Of that gold teeming hemisphere, to waste
 The smiling fields of Europe, and extend
 Thy bloody shackles o'er these happy seats 310

Of liberty ? Presumptuous nation, learn,
 From this dire period shall thy glories fade,
 Thy slaughter'd youth shall fatten Belgium's sands,
 And victory against her Albion's cliffs
 Shall see the blood empurpl'd ocean dash 315

Thy weltering hosts, and stain the chalky shore :
 Ev'n those, whom now thy impious pride would bind
 In servile chains, hereafter shall support

Thy weaken'd throne ; when heaven's afflicting hand
 Of all thy power despoils thee, when alone 320
 Of all, which e'er hath signaliz'd thy name,
 Thy insolence and cruelty remain.

Thus with her clouded visage, wrapt in frowns,
 The goddess threaten'd, and the daring train
 Of her untam'd militia, torn with wounds, 325
 Despising fortune, from repeated foils
 More fierce, and braving famine's keenest rage,
 At length through deluges of blood she led

(s) Montezuma, emperor of Mexico.

To envied greatness ; ev'n while clamorous Mars
 With loudest clangor bade his trumpet shake 330
 The Belgian champain, the their standard rear'd
 On tributary Java, and the shores
 Of huge Borneo ; thou, Sumatra, heard'st
 Her naval thunder, Ceylon's trembling sons
 Their fragrant stores of cinnamon resign'd ; 335
 And odour-breathing Ternate and Tidore
 Their spicy groves. And O whatever coast
 The Belgians trace, where'er their power is spread
 To hoary Zembla, or to Indian fens,
 Still thither be extended thy renown, 340
 O William, pride of Orange, and ador'd
 Thy virtues, which disdaining life, or wealth,
 Or empire, whether in thy dawn of youth
 Thy glorious noon of manhood, or the night,
 (t) The fatal night of death, no other care 345
 Besides the public own'd. And dear to fame
 Be thou harmonious (u) Douza ; every muse,
 Your laurel strow around this hero's urn
 Whom fond Minerva grac'd with all her arts.
 Alike in letters and in arms to shine, 350
 A dauntless warrior, and a learned bard.
 Him Spain's surrounding host for slaughter mark'd,
 With massacre yet reeking from the streets
 Of blood-stain'd Harlem : he on Leyden's tow'rs,
 With famine his companion, wan, subdu'd 355
 In outward form, with patient virtue stood
 Superior to despair ; the heavenly nine
 His suffering soul with great examples cheer'd
 Of memorable bards, by Mars adorn'd
 With wreaths of fame ; (x) Oeagrus tuneful son, 360

(t) He was assassinated at Delf. His dying words were, Lord have mercy upon this people.

See Grot. de Bell. Belg.

(u) Janus Douza, a famous poet, and the most learned man of his time. He commanded in Leyden when it was so obstinately besieged by the Spaniards in 1570.

See Meursii Athen. Bat.

(x) Orpheus, one of the Argonauts, who set sail from Iolcos, a town in Thessalia.

Who with melodious praise to noblest deeds
 Charm'd the Iolchian heroes, and himself
 Their danger shar'd ; (y) Tyrtæus, who reviv'd
 With animating verse the Spartan hopes ;
 Brave (z) Æschylus and (a) Sophocles, around 365
 Whose sacred brows the tragic ivy twin'd,
 Mix'd with the warrior's laurel ; all surpass'd
 By Douza's valour : and the generous toil,
 His and his country's labours soon receiv'd
 Their high reward, when favouring commerce rais'd,
 Th' invincible Batavians, till, rever'd 371
 Among the mightiest on the brightest roll
 Of fame they shone, by splendid wealth and power
 Grac'd and supported ; thus a genial soil
 Diffusing vigour through the infant oak, 375
 Affords it strength to flourish, till at last
 Its lofty head, in verdant honours clad,
 It rears amidst the proudest of the grove.
 Yet here th' eternal fates thy last retreat
 Deny, a mightier nation they prepare 380
 For thy reception, sufferers alike
 By th' unremitted insolence of power
 From reign to reign, nor less than Belgium known
 For bold contention oft on crimson fields,
 In free-tongu'd senates oft with nervous laws 385
 To circumscribe, or conquering to depose
 Their scepter'd tyrants : Albion sea-embrac'd,
 The joy of freedom, dread of treacherous kings,
 The destin'd mistress of the subject main,
 And arbitress of Europe, now demands 390
 Thy presence, goddess. It was now the time,
 Ere yet perfidious Cromwell dar'd profane
 The sacred senate, and with impious feet
 Tread on the powers of magistrates and laws,

(y) When the Spartans were greatly distressed in the Messenian war, they applied to the Athenians for a general, who sent them the poet Tyrtæus.

(z) Æschylus, one of the most ancient tragic poets, who signalized himself in the battles of Marathon and Salamis.

(a) Sophocles commanded his countrymen the Athenians, in several expeditions.

While every arm was chill'd with cold amaze, 395
 Nor one in all that dauntless train was found
 To pierce the ruffian's heart ; and now thy name
 Was heard in thunder through th' affrighted shores
 Of pale Iberia, of submissive Gaul,
 And Tagus, trembling to his utmost source. 400
 O ever faithful, vigilant, and brave,
 Thou bold assertor of Britannia's fame,
 Unconquerable Blake : propitious heaven
 At this great era, and (b) the sage decree
 Of Albion's senate, perfecting at once 405
 What by (c) Eliza was so well begun,
 So deeply founded, to this favour'd shore
 The goddess drew, where grateful she bestow'd
 Th' unbounded empire of her father's floods,
 And chose thee, London, for her chief abode, 410
 Pleas'd with the silver Thames, its gentle stream,
 And smiling banks, its joy diffusing hills,
 Which clad with splendour, and with beauty grac'd,
 O'erlook his lucid bosom ; pleas'd with thee,
 Thou nurse of arts, and thy industrious race ; 415
 Pleas'd with their candid manners, with their free
 Sagacious converse, to inquiry led,
 And zeal for knowledge ; hence the opening mind
 Resigns its errors, and unseals the eye
 Of blind opinion ; merit hence is heard 420
 Amidst its blushes, dawning arts arise,
 The gloomy clouds, which ignorance or fear
 Spread o'er the paths of virtue are dispell'd,
 Servility retires, and every heart
 With public cares is warm'd ; thy merchants hence,
 Illustrious city, thou dost raise to fame. 426
 How many names of glory may'st thou trace
 From earliest annals down to (d) Barnard's times !
 And, O ! if like that eloquence divine,

(b) The act of navigation.

(c) Queen Elizabeth was the first of our princes, who gave any considerable encouragement to trade.

(d) Sir John Barnard.

Which forth for commerce, for Britannia's rights,
 And her insulted majesty he pour'd, 431
 These humble measures flow'd, then too thy walls
 Might undisgrac'd resound thy poet's name,
 Who now all-fearful to thy praise attunes
 His lyre, and pays his grateful song to thee, 435
 Thy votary, O commerce! Gracious power,
 Continue still to hear my vows, and bless
 My honourable industry, which courts
 No other smile but thine; for thou alone
 Can'st wealth bestow with independence crown'd. 440
 Nor yet exclude contemplative repose,
 But to my dwelling grant the solemn calm
 Of learned leisure, never to reject
 The visitation of the tuneful maids,
 Who seldom deign to leave their sacred haunts, 445
 And grace a mortal mansion; thou divide
 With them my labours; pleasure I resign,
 And, all devoted to my midnight lamp,
 E'en now, when Albion o'er the foaming breast
 Of groaning Tethys spreads its threat'ning fleets,
 I grasp the sounding shell, prepar'd to sing 451
 That hero's valour, who shall best confound
 His injur'd country's foes; ev'n now I feel
 Celestial fires descending on my breast,
 Which prompt thy daring suppliant to explore, 455
 Why, though deriv'd from Neptune, though rever'd
 Among the nations, by the gods endow'd,
 Thou never yet from eldest times hast found
 One permanent abode; why oft expell'd,
 Thy favour'd seats, from clime to clime hast borne 460
 Thy wandering steps; why London late hath seen
 (Thy lov'd, thy last retreat), desponding care
 O'ercloud thy brow: O listen, while the muse,
 Th' immortal progeny of Jove, unfolds
 The fatal cause. What time in Nyssa's cave 465
 Th' ethereal train, in honour to thy sire,
 Shower'd on thy birth their blended gifts, the power
 Of war was absent; hence, unblest'd by Mars,

Thy sons relinquish'd arms, on other arts
 Intent, and still to mercenary hands 470
 The sword intrusting, vainly deem'd that wealth
 Could purchase lasting safety, and protect
 Unwarlike freedom; hence the Alps in vain
 Were pass'd, their long impenetrable snows,
 And dreary torrents; swoln with Roman dead, 475
 Astonish'd (e) Trebia overflow'd its banks
 In vain, and deep-dy'd Trasimenus roll'd
 Its crimson waters; Cannæ's signal day
 The same alone of great Amilcar's son
 Enlarg'd, while still undisciplin'd, dismay'd, 480
 Her head commercial Carthage bow'd at last
 To military Rome: th' unalter'd will
 Of Heaven in every climate hath ordain'd,
 And every age, that empire shall attend
 The sword, and steel shall ever conquer gold. 485
 Then from thy sufferings learn; th' auspicious hour
 Now smiles; our wary magistrates have arm'd
 Our hands; thou, goddess, animate our breasts
 To cast inglorious indolence aside,
 That once again, in bright battalions rang'd, 490
 Our thousands and ten thousands may be seen
 Their country's only rampart, and the dread
 Of wild ambition. Mark the Swedish hind;
 He, on his native soil should danger lowr,
 Soon from the entrails of the dusky mine 495
 Would rise to arms; and other fields and chiefs
 With Helsingburg (f) and Steinboch soon would share
 The admiration of the northern world:
 Helvetia's hills behold, th' aerial seat
 Of long-supported liberty, who thence, 500
 Securely resting on her faithful shield,
 The warrior's corselet flaming on her breast,

(e) Trebia, Trasimenus Iacus, and Cannæ, famous for the victories gained by Hannibal over the Romans.

(f) Helsingburg a small town in Schonem, celebrated for the victory which Count Steinboch gained over the Danes, with an army for the most part composed of Swedish peasants, who had never seen an enemy before: it is remarkable, that the defeated troops were as complete a body of regular forces as any in all Europe.

Looks down with scorn on spacious realms, which
groan

In servitude around her, and her sword
With dauntless skill high brandishing, defies 505

The Austrian eagle, and imperious Gaul :
And O ! could those ill-fated shades arise,
Whose valiant ranks along th' entanguin'd dust
Of (g) Newbury lay crowded, they could tell,
How their long-matchless cavalry, so oft 510

O'er hills of slain by ardent Rupert led,
Whose dreaded standard victory had wav'd,
Till then triumphant, there with noblest blood
From their gor'd squadrons dy'd the restive spear
Of London's firm militia, and resign'd 515

The well-disputed field ; then goddess, say,
Shall we be now more timid, when, behold,
The black'ning storm now gathers round our heads,
And England's angry genius sounds to arms ?
For thee, remember, is the banner spread ; 520

The naval tower to vindicate thy rights
Will sweep the curling foam : the thund'ring bomb
Will roar, and startle in the deepest grots
Old Nereus' daughters ; with combustion stor'd,
For thee our dire volcanos of the main, 525

Impregnated with horror, soon will pour
Their flaming ruin round each hostile fleet :
Thou then, great goddess, summon all thy powers,
Arm all thy sons, thy vassals, every heart
Inflame : and you, ye fear-disclaiming race, 530

Ye mariners of Britain, chosen train
Of liberty and commerce, now no more
Secrete your generous valour ; hear the call
Of injur'd Albion ; to her foes present

(g) The London train'd-band, and auxiliary regiments (of whose inexperience of danger, or any kind of service, beyond the easy practice of their postures in the Artillery-Ground, had till then too cheap an estimation), behaved themselves to wonder ; and were, in truth, the preservation of that army that day. For they stood as a bulwark and rampire to defend the rest ; and when their wings of horse were scattered and dispersed, kept their ground so steadily, that though Prince Rupert himself led up the choice horse to charge them, and endured the storm of small shot, he could make no impression on their stand of pikes : but was forced to wheel about. *Clarend.*

**ibid* 7. page 347.

Those daring bosoms, which alike disdain 535
 The death-disploding cannon, and the rage
 Of warring tempests, mingling in their strife
 The seas and clouds: though long in silence hush'd
 Hath slept the British thunder; though the pride
 Of weak Iberia hath forgot the roar; 540
 Soon shall her ancient terrors be recall'd,
 When your victorious shouts affright her shores:
 None now ignobly will your warmth restrain,
 Nor hazard more indignant valour's curse,
 Their country's wrath, and time's eternal scorn 545
 Then bid the furies of Bellona wake,
 And silver-mantled peace with welcome steps
 Anon shall visit your triumphant isle.
 And that perpetual safety may possess
 Our joyous fields, thou, genius, who presid'st 550
 O'er this illustrious city, teach her sons
 To wield the noble instruments of war;
 And let the great example soon extend
 Through every province, till Britannia sees
 Her docile millions fill the martial plain: 555
 Then, whatsoe'er our terrors now suggest
 Of desolation, and th' invading sword;
 Though with his massy trident Neptune heav'd
 A new-born isthmus from the British deep,
 And to its parent continent rejoin'd 560
 Our chalky shore; though Mahomet could league
 His powerful crescent with the hostile Gaul,
 And that new Cyrus of the conquer'd east,
 Who now in trembling vassalage unites
 The Ganges and Euphrates, could advance 565
 With his auxiliar host; our warlike youth
 With (b) equal numbers, and with keener zeal
 For children, parents, friends, for England fir'd,
 Her fertile glebe, her wealthy towns, her laws,
 Her liberty, her honour, should sustain 570

(b) If the computation, which allots near two millions of fighting men to this kingdom may be relied on, it is not easy to conceive, how the united force of the whole world could assemble together, and subside in an enemy's country, greater numbers than they would find opposed to them here.

The dreadful onset, and resistless break
 Th' immense array : thus ev'n the lightest thought
 E'er to invade Britannia's calm repose,
 Must die the moment that auspicious Mars
 Her sons shall bless with discipline and arms ; 575
 That exil'd race, in superstition nurs'd,
 The servile pupils of tyrannic Rome,
 With distant gaze despairing, shall behold
 The guarded splendours of Britannia's crown ;
 Still from their abdicated sway estrang'd, 580
 With all th' attendance on despotic thrones,
 Priests, ignorance, and bonds ; with watchful step
 Gigantic terror, striding round our coast,
 Shall shake his Gorgan ægis, and the hearts
 Of proudest kings appal ; to other shores 585
 Our angry fleets, when insolence and wrongs
 To arms awaken our vindictive power,
 Shall bear the hideous waste of ruthless war ;
 But liberty, security, and fame,
 Shall dwell for ever on our chosen plains. 590

ADMIRAL HOSIER'S GHOST.

As near Porto-Bello lying
 On the gently-swelling flood,
 At midnight with streamers flying
 Our triumphant navy rode ;
 There while Vernon sat all-glorious 5
 From the Spaniards' late defeat :
 And his crews, with shouts victorious,
 Drank success to England's fleet :
 On a sudden, shrilly sounding,
 Hideous yells and shrieks were heard ; 10
 Then each heart with fear confounding,
 A sad troop of ghosts appear'd,
 All in dreary hammocks shrouded,
 Which for winding sheets they wore,
 And with looks by sorrow clouded 15
 Frowning on that hostile shore.

On them gleam'd the moon's wan lustre,
 When the shade of Hosier brave
 His pale bands was seen to muster,
 Rising from their wat'ry grave :
 O'er the glimmering wave he hy'd him,
 Where the Burford rear'd her sail,
 With three thousand ghosts besides him,
 And in groans did Vernon hail.

22

Heed, O heed, our fatal story,
 I am Hosier's injur'd ghost,
 You, who now have purchas'd glory
 At this place where I was lost ;
 Though in Porto-Bello's ruin
 You now triumph free from fears,
 When you think on our undoing,
 You will mix your joy with tears.

25

30

See these mournful spectres sweeping
 Ghastly o'er this hated wave,
 Whose wan cheeks are stain'd with weeping ;
 These were English captains brave :
 Mark those numbers pale and horrid,
 Those were once my sailors bold,
 Lo, each hangs his drooping forehead,
 While his dismal tale is told.

35

44

I, by twenty sail attended,
 Did this Spanish town affright ;
 Nothing then its wealth defended
 But my orders not to fight :
 O ! that in this rolling ocean
 I had cast them with disdain,
 And obey'd my heart's warm motion,
 To have quell'd the pride of Spain ;

45

For resistance I could fear none,
 But with twenty ships had done
 What thou, brave and happy Vernon,
 Hast achiev'd with six alone.

50

Then the Bastimentos never
 Had our foul dishonour seen,
 Nor the sea the sad receiver
 Of this gallant train had been. 55

Thus, like thee, proud Spain dismaying,
 And her galleons leading home,
 Though condemn'd for disobeying,
 I had met a traitor's doom. 60
 To have fallen, my country crying
 He has play'd an English part,
 Had been better far than dying
 Of a griev'd and broken heart.

Unrepining at thy glory, 65
 Thy successful arms we hail;
 But remember our sad story,
 And let Hosier's wrongs prevail.
 Sent in this foul clime to languish,
 Think what thousands fell in vain, 70
 Wasted with disease and anguish,
 Not in glorious battle slain.

Hence with all my train attending,
 From their oozy tombs below,
 Through the hoary foam ascending, 75
 Here I feed my constant woe;
 Here the Bastimentos viewing,
 We recal our shameful doom,
 And our plaintive cries renewing,
 Wander through the midnight gloom. 80

O'er these waves for ever mourning
 Shall we roam depriv'd of rest,
 If to Britain's shores returning
 You neglect my just request; 85
 After this proud foe subduing,
 When your patriot friends you see,
 Think on vengeance for my ruin,
 And for England sham'd in me. 88

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