THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

SIR RICHARD BLACKMORE.

Containing

CREATION;

A PHILOSOPHICAL POEM, IN SEVEN BOOKS.

To which is prefixed

THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

The themes of vulgar lays, with juſt diſdain
I leave unſung, the flocks, the amorous ſwain,
The pleaſures of the land, and terrors of the main.—
I meditate to ſoar above the ſkies,
To heights unknown, through ways untry'd to riſe;
I would th' Eternal from his works aſſert,
And ſing the wonders of Creating Art.

CREATION, BOOK I.

EDINBURGH:
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Anno 1793.

THE LIFE OF BLACKMORE.

Of Sir Richard Blackmore, eminent as he was, both as a poet and a phyſician, very few memorials have been left by his contemporaries. His writings have attracted much notice; but it has been his lot to be much oftener mentioned by enemies than by friends.

He was the ſon of Robert Blackmore of Corſham, in Wiltſhire, Gent. deſcended from a good family in Dorſetſhire, and ſtyled by Jacob, an "Attorney at Law." The time of his birth is not certainly known.

He received his early education at a private country ſchool, from whence, in the thirteenth year of his age, he was removed to Weſtminſter. Of his ſchool exerciſes tradition has preſerved no account.

In 1668, he was entered a commoner of Edmund Hall, Oxford, where he took the degree of Maſter of Arts, June 3. 1676, and reſided thirteen years; a much longer time than it is uſual to ſpend at the Univerſity, and which ſeems to have been paſſed in the ſtudies preparatory to the profeſſion he intended to follow; which was that of phyſic.

Dr. Johnſon, who has written his life with candour and diſcernment, is of opinion that he ſpent his time at the Univerſity with very little attention to the buſineſs of the place; becauſe, in his poems, the ancient names of nations, or places, which he often introduces, are pronounced by chance. But it may be reaſonably doubted, whether a few inſtances of falſe pronunciation, or capricious orthography, are ſufficient to warrant the ſuppoſition of his being negligent of ſtudy, or deficient in claſſical erudition.

In the early period of his life, he is ſaid to have been engaged for ſome time in the profeſſion of a ſchoolmaſter; a ſituation certainly not in itſelf diſhonourable, though it was often urged as a kind of reproach, when he became conſpicuous enough to excite malevolence. In one of the numerous ſatirical pieces that were written againſt him, are the following pungent lines, attributed by T. Brown, to Colonel Codrington:

By nature form'd, by want a pedant made,
Blackmore at firſt ſet up the whipping trade;
Next quack commenced, then fierce with pride he ſwore,
That toothach, gout, and corns, ſhould be no more.
In vain his drugs, as well as birch he tried;
His boys grew blockheads, and his patients died.

His being a ſchoolmaſter, is alſo alluded to by Garth, in the following lines:

Unwieldly pedant, let thy awkward muſe
With conſcious praiſe, with flatteries abuſe;
To laſh, and not be felt, in thee's an art;
Thou ne'er mad'ſt any but thy ſchool-boys ſmart.

"And let it be remembered," ſays Dr. Johnſon, "for his honour, that to have been once a ſchoolmaſter, is the only reproach which all the perſpicacity of malice, animated by wit, has ever fixed upon his private life."

It is probable that his indigence did not long compel him to teach a ſchool. Some circumſtances concurring, it may be preſumed, in his favour, he travelled into Italy, and took the degree of Doctor of Phyſic, at the Univerſity of Padua.

He alſo viſited France, Germany, and the Low Countries, and, having ſpent about a year and a half abroad, he returned to England.

On his arrival in London, he commenced Phyſician, and obtained high eminence and extenſive practice.

In 1718, he publiſhed a collection of *Poems on various Subjects*, containing, the ſmall pieces formerly printed, together with *Hymn to the Light of the World, with a deſcription of the Cartoons of Raphael*, firſt printed in 1703, *The Nature of Man*, in three books, firſt printed 1711, and *Cremes*, a ſatire, *The Story of Don Carlos, Prince of Spain*, *An Ode to the Creator*, *Hymn to the Sacred Spirit*, *On Repentance*, *On Retirement*, *&c.*

Having ſucceeded ſo well in demonſtrating the exiſtence and providence of God, in his poem on the *Creation*, he now undertook to eſtabliſh the truth of Revelation, and publiſhed, in 1721, *The Redeemer, a Poem* in ſix books.

The ſame year he produced *A new verſion of the Pſalms of David, fitted to the tunes uſed in Churches*, which was recommended by public authority to be uſed in the Churches and Chapels of England.

There was yet another monarch of this iſland whom he conſidered as worthy of the epic muſe, and in 1723, he produced *King Alfred, an Heroic Poem*, in twelve books, which, like *Eliza*, "dropped dead-born from the preſs," and cloſed his epic labours. In the dedication he ſays, that "he had a greater part in the ſucceſſion of the Houſe of Hanover than ever he had boaſted."

"Of his four epic poems," ſays Dr. Johnſon, "the firſt had ſuch reputation and popularity, as enraged the critics; the ſecond was at leaſt known enough to be ridiculed; the two laſt found neither friends nor enemies."

Beſides the original poems and eſſays already enumerated, he wrote a variety of hiſtorical, theological, and medical tracts, which were publiſhed in the following order: *A Diſcourſe on the Plague*, 8vo, 1720; *Modern Arians Unmaſked*, 8vo, 1721; *a Treatiſe on the Small-Pox*, 8vo, 1722; *Hiſtory of the Conſpiracy againſt King William*, 8vo, 1723; *a Treatiſe on Conſumptions*, 8vo, 1724; *a Treatiſe on the Spleen and Vapours*, 8vo, 1725; *a Critical Diſſertation on the Spleen*, 8vo, 1725; *Juſt Prejudices againſt the Arian Hypotheſis*, 8vo, 1725; *Diſcourſes on the Gout, Rheumatiſm, and King's Evil*, 8vo, 1726; *Diſſertations on a Dropſy, a Tympany, the Jaundice, the Stone, and Diabetes*, 8vo, 1727; *Natural Theology*, 8vo, 1728.

His biographers have reported, that the ridicule which was thrown on the poet, was in time followed by the neglect of the phyſician; and that his practice, which was once invidiouſly great, forſook him in the latter part of his life: but the fact may be reaſonably doubted, and ſome communications in the "Gentleman's Magazine," for 1792, ſhew that he was conſulted by perſons of the higheſt rank, and preſerved his profeſſional credit and reputation till the cloſe of his life.

He died on the 8th of October 1729, in an advanced age, and manifeſted in his laſt illneſs the ſame fervent piety which had diſtinguiſhed him in his life. He left behind him *The Accompliſhed Preacher, or an Eſſay upon Divine Eloquence*, which was printed in 8vo, 1731, by the Rev. Mr. John White of Nayland in Eſſex, who attended his death-bed, and bore teſtimony to the elevated piety with which he prepared for his approaching diſſolution.

Since his death, none of his numerous publications have been reprinted, except his *Creation*, which has gone through ſeveral editions, and was recommended by Dr. Johnſon to be inſerted in the collection of "The Engliſh Poets," with the general approbation of the public.

Of the private life and domeſtic character of Blackmore, there are no memorials. As a man he was juſtly entitled to great applauſe: for numerous as his enemies and opponents were, they ſeem to have been incapable of fixing the leaſt imputation on his character; and thoſe who perſonally knew him, ſpoke highly of his virtues. He was the friend of Hughes. Addiſon appears to have had a great perſonal regard for him, and he was in terms of friendſhip with Pope, ſo late as 1714. This friendſhip was broken by his accuſing Pope, in his *Eſſays*, of profaneneſs and immorality, on a report from Curl that he was the author of a "Traveſtie on the Firſt Pſalm." Pope was afterwards the perpetual and inceſſant enemy of Blackmore, and ſatirized him in the "Dunciad," in the following lines:

> But far o'er all, ſonorous Blackmore's ſtrain;
> Walls, ſteeples, ſkies, bray back to him again.
> In Tot'nam fields, the brethren, with amaze!
> Prick all their ears up, and forget to graze,
> Long Chanc'ry-lane retentive rolls the ſound,
> And courts to courts return it round and round;

Thames wafts it thence to Rufus' roaring hall,
And Hungerford re-echoes bawl for bawl.
All hail him victor in both arts of ſong,
Who ſings ſo loudly and who ſings ſo long.

Hardly any writer has ever been more ridiculed than Blackmore; yet there have been few, perhaps none, who have had better intentions. He was certainly a man of conſiderable learning and abilities, and a moſt zealous advocate for the intereſts of religion and virtue. He wrote, indeed, too much, and was deficient in taſte; nor did he take ſufficient time to poliſh his compoſitions; but he was far from being deficient in genius, and, it is evident, that it was not his dullneſs which excited ſo much animoſity againſt him.

His *Creation* is by univerſal conſent accounted the nobleſt production of his genius. Addiſon [*Spect.* 339.] ſays, it "was undertaken with ſo good an intention, and executed with ſo great a maſtery, that it deſerves to be looked upon as one of the moſt uſeful and noble productions in our Engliſh verſe. The reader cannot but be pleaſed to ſee the depths of philoſophy enlivened with all the charms of poetry, and to ſee ſo great a ſtrength of reaſon amidſt ſo beautiful a redundancy of the imagination." Even Dennis calls it a "Philoſophical Poem, which has equalled that of Lucretius, in the beauty of its verſification, and infinitely ſurpaſſed it in the ſolidity and ſtrength of its reaſoning." "This writer," ſays Mr. Duncombe, [*Letters of Eminent Perſons, vol.* 1. p. 82.] "though the butt of the wits, eſpecially Dryden and Pope, was treated with more contempt than he deſerved. In particular, his poem on the *Creation* has much merit. And let it be remembered, that the reſentment of thoſe wits were excited by Sir Richard's zeal for religion and virtue, by cenſuring the libertiniſm of Dryden, and the (ſuppoſed) profaneneſs of Pope."

"Blackmore," ſays Dr. Johnſon, "by the unremitted enmity of the wits, whom he provoked more by his virtue than his dullneſs, has been expoſed to worſe treatment than he deſerved. his name was ſo long uſed to point every epigram upon dull writers, that it became at laſt a bye-word of contempt; but it deſerves obſervation, that malignity takes hold only of his writings, and that his life paſſed without reproach, even when his boldneſs of reprehenſion naturally turned upon him many eyes deſirous to ſpy faults, which many tongues would have made haſte to publiſh.

"As an author, he may juſtly claim the honours of magnanimity. The inceſſant attack of his enemies, whether ſerious or merry, are never diſcovered to have diſturbed his quiet, or to have leſſened his confidence in himſelf; they neither awaked him to ſilence nor to caution; they neither provoked him to petulance, nor depreſſed him to complaint. While the diſtributors of literary fame were endeavouring to depreciate and degrade him, he either deſpiſed or defied them, wrote on as he had written before, and never turned aſide to quiet them by civility or repreſs them by confutation.

"He depended with great ſecurity on his own powers, and perhaps was for that reaſon leſs diligent in peruſing books. His literature was, I think, but ſmall. What he knew of antiquity, I ſuſpect him to have gathered from modern compilers; but though he could not boaſt of much critical knowledge, his mind was ſtored with general principles; and he left minute reproaches to thoſe whom he conſidered as little minds.

"With this diſpoſition he wrote moſt of his poems. Having formed a magnificent deſign, he was careleſs of particular and ſubordinate elegancies; he ſtudied no niceties of verſification; he waited for no felicities of fancy; but caught his firſt thoughts on his firſt words in which they were preſented; nor does it appear that he ſaw beyond his performances, or had ever elevated his ideas to that ideal perfection which every genius born to excel is condemned always to purſue, and never overtake. In the firſt ſuggeſtions of his imagination, he acquieſced; he thought them good, and did not ſeek for better. His works may be read a long time without the occurrence of a ſingle line that ſtands prominent from the reſt.

"The poem on *Creation* has, however, the appearance of more circumſpection; it wants neither harmony of numbers, accuracy of ſtyle, nor elegance of diction; it has either been written with great care, or what cannot be imagined of ſo long a work, with ſuch felicity as made care leſs neceſſary.

" Its two conſtituent parts are ratiocination and deſcription. To reaſon in verſe, is allowed to be difficult; but Blackmore, not only reaſons in verſe, but very often reaſons poetically, and finds the art of uniting ornament with ſtrength, and eaſe with cloſeneſs. This is a ſkill which Pope might have condeſcended to learn from him, when he needed it ſo much in his " Moral Eſſays."

" In his deſcriptions both of life and nature, the poet and the philoſopher happily co-operate; truth is recommended by elegance, and elegance ſuſtained by truth.

" In the ſtructure and order of the poem, not only the greater parts are properly conſecutive, but the dedactic and illuſtrative paragraphs are ſo happily mingled, that labour is relieved by pleaſure, and the attention is led on through a long ſucceſſion of varied excellence, to the original poſition, the fundamental principle of wiſdom and of virtue."

CREATION;

A

PHILOSOPHICAL POEM.

IN SEVEN BOOKS.

BY SIR RICHARD BLACKMORE, KNIGHT, M. D.

AND FELLOW OF THE COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS IN LONDON.

" Principio cœlum, ac terras campoſque liquentes,
" Lucentemque globum Lunæ, Titaniaque aſtra
" Spiritus intus alit, totamque infuſa per artus
" Mens agitat molem, et magno ſe corpore miſcet.
" Inde hominum, pecudumque genus, viteque volantum,
" Et quæ marmoreo fert monſtra ſub æquore pontus." VIRG.

PREFACE.

IT has been the opinion of many perſons of great ſenſe and learning, that the knowledge of a God, as well as ſome other ſelf-evident and unconteſted notions, is born with us, and exiſts antecedent to any perception or operation of the mind. They expreſs themſelves on this ſubject in metaphorical terms, altogether unbecoming philoſophical and judicious inquiries, while they aſſert, that the knowledge of a God is interwoven with our conſtitution, that it is written, engraven, ſtamped, and imprinted in clear and diſcernible characters on the heart; in which manner of ſpeech they affect to follow the great orator of the Romans.

By theſe unartful phraſes they can mean nothing but this, that the propoſition, *There is a God*, is actually exiſtent in the mind, as ſoon as the mind has its being; and is not at firſt acquired, though it may be afterwards confirmed, by any act of reaſon, by any argument or demonſtration. I muſt confeſs my inability to conceive this inbred knowledge, theſe original independent ideas, that owe not their being to the operation of the underſtanding, but are, I know not how, congenite and co-exiſtent with it.

For how a man can be ſaid to have knowledge before he knows, how ideas can exiſt in the mind without and before perception, I muſt own is too difficult for me to comprehend. That a man is born with a faculty or capacity to know, though as yet without any actual knowledge; and that, as the eye has a native diſpoſition and aptitude to perceive the light, when fitly offered, though as yet it never exerciſed any act of viſion, and had no innate images in the womb; ſo the mind is endued with a power and faculty to know and perceive the truth of this propoſition, *There is a God*, as ſoon as it ſhall be repreſented to it; all this is clear and intelligible; but any thing more is, as I have ſaid, above my reach. In this opinion, which I had many years ago entertained, I was afterwards confirmed by the famous author of the Eſſay on Human Underſtanding. Nor can I ſee that, by this doctrine, the argument for the exiſtence of a Deity, drawn from the general aſſent of all nations (excepting perhaps ſome few, who are ſo barbarous that they approach very near the condition of brute animals), is at all invalidated. For ſuppoſing there is no inbred know-

ledge of a God; yet if mankind generally aſſent to it, whether their belief proceeds from their reflection on themſelves, or on the viſible creation about them, it will be certainly true, that the exiſtence of a Deity carries with it the cleareſt and moſt uncontrolable evidence; ſince mankind ſo readily and ſo univerſally perceive and embrace it. It deſerves conſideration, that St. Paul upon this argument does not appeal to the light within, or to any characters of the Divine Being originally engraven on the heart, but deduces the cauſe from the effect, and from the creation infers the Creator.

It is very probable that thoſe who believe an innate idea of a Divine Being, unproduced by any operation of the mind, were led by this to another opinion, namely, that there never was in the world a real Atheiſt in belief and ſpeculation, how many ſoever there may have been in life and practice. But, upon due examination, this opinion, I imagine, will not abide the teſt; which I ſhall endeavour to make evident.

But, before I enter upon this ſubject, it ſeems proper to take notice of the apology, which ſeveral perſons of great learning and candour have made for many famous men, and great philoſophers, unjuſtly accuſed of impiety.

Whoever ſhall ſet about to mend the world, and reform men's notions, as well as their manners, will certainly be the mark of much ſcandal and reproach; and will effectually be convinced, that it is too poſſible the greateſt lovers and benefactors of mankind may be repreſented by the multitude, whoſe opinions they contradict, as the worſt of men. The hardy undertakers, who expreſs their zeal to rectify the ſentiments of a prejudiced people in matters of religion, who labour to ſtem the tide of popular error, and ſtrike at the foundations of any ancient, eſtabliſhed ſuperſtition, muſt themſelves expect to be treated as pragmatical and inſolent innovators, diſturbers of the public peace, and the great enemies of religion. The obſervation of all ages confirms this truth; and, if any man who is doubtful of it would try the experiment, I make no queſtion he will very ſoon be thoroughly convinced.

It is no wonder, therefore, that Anaxagoras, though he was the firſt philoſopher who plainly aſſerted an Eternal Mind by whoſe power the world was made, for oppoſing the public worſhip at Athens, whoſe refined wits were plunged in the moſt ſenſeleſs idolatry, and particularly for denying the divinity of the Sun, ſhould be condemned for irreligion, and treaſon againſt the gods; and be heavily fined and baniſhed the city. It is no wonder, after ſo ſharp a perſecution of this zealous reformer, that Socrates, the next ſucceſſor but one to Anaxagoras, and the laſt of the Ionic ſchool, for oppoſing their ſcandalous rabble of deities, and aſſerting one Divine Being, ſhould be condemned for atheiſm, and put to death, by blind ſuperſtition and implacable bigotry.

Some have been condemned by their antagoniſts for impiety, who maintain poſitions, which thoſe from whom they diſſent imagine have a tendency to the diſbelief of a Deity. But this is a manifeſt violation of juſtice, as well as candour, to impute to any man the remote conſequences of his opinion, which he himſelf diſclaims and deteſts, and who, if he ſaw the connection of his principles with ſuch concluſions, would readily renounce them. No man can be reaſonably charged with more opinions than he owns; and if this juſtice were obſerved in polemical diſcourſes, as well of theology as philoſophy, many perſons had eſcaped thoſe hard names, and terrible cenſures, which their angry antagoniſts have thought fit to fix upon them. No one, therefore, is to be reputed an Atheiſt, or an enemy to religion, upon the account of any erroneous opinion, from which another may, by a long chain of ſequels, draw that concluſion; much leſs for holding any doctrines in philoſophy, which the common people are not able to examine or comprehend, who, when they meddle with ſpeculations, of which they are unqualified to judge, will be as apt to cenſure a philoſopher for an atheiſt, as an aſtronomer for a magician.

I would fain too in this place make ſome apology for the great numbers of looſe and vicious men, who laugh at religion, and ſeem in their converſation to diſclaim the belief of a Deity. I do not mean an apology for their practice, but their opinion. I hope theſe unhappy perſons, at leaſt the greateſt part, who have given up the reins to their paſſions and exorbitant appetites, are, rather than atheiſts, a careleſs and ſtupid ſort of creatures, who, either out of a ſupine temper, or for fear of being diſturbed with remorſe in their unwarrantable enjoyments, never ſoberly conſider with themſelves, or exerciſe their reaſon on things of the higheſt importance. Theſe perſons never examine the arguments that enforce the belief of a Deity, and the obligations of religion: but take the word of their ingenious friends, or ſome atheiſtical pretender to philoſophy, who aſſures them there is no God, and therefore no religion. And notwithſtanding all atheiſts have leave given them by their principles to become libertines, yet it is not true that all libertines are atheiſts. Some plainly aſſert their belief of a God; and others, who deny his exiſtence, yet do not deny it upon any principles, any ſcheme of philoſophy which they have framed, and by which they account for the exiſtence and duration of the world, in the beautiful order in which we ſee it, without the aid of a Divine Eternal Mind.

But there are two ſorts of men, who, without injuſtice, have been called atheiſts; thoſe who frankly and in plain terms have denied the being of a God; and thoſe who, though they aſſerted his being, denied thoſe attributes and perfections, which the idea of a God includes; and ſo, while they acknowledged the name, ſubverted the thing. Theſe are as real atheiſts as the former, but leſs ſincere. If any man ſhould declare he believes a Deity, but affirms that this Deity is of human ſhape, and not eternal; that he derives his being from the fortuitous concourſe and complication of atoms; or, though he allowed him to be eternal,

should maintain, that he showed no wisdom, design, or prudence, in the formation, and no care or providence in the government of the world; that he never reflects on any thing exterior to his own being, nor interests himself in human affairs; does not know, or does not attend to, any of our actions: such a person is, indeed, and in effect, as much an atheist as the former. For though he owns the appellation, yet his description is destructive of the idea of a God. I do not affirm, that the idea of a God implies the relation of a Creator: but, since in the demonstration of the existence of a God, we argue from the effect to the cause, and proceed from the contemplation of the creature to the knowledge of the Creator, it is evident we cannot know there is a God, but we must know him to be the Maker, and, if the Maker, then the Governor and Benefactor of the world. Could there be a God, who is entirely regardless of things without him, who is perfectly unconcerned with the direction and government of the world, is altogether indifferent whether we worship or affront him, and is neither pleased nor displeased with any of our actions; he would certainly to us be the same as no God. The log in the fable would be altogether as venerable a deity; for, if he has no concern with us, it is plain, we have none with him: if we are not subject to any laws he has made for us, we can never be obedient, or disobedient, nor can we need forgiveness, or expect reward. If we are not the subjects of his care and protection, we can owe him no love or gratitude; if he either does not hear, or disregards our prayers, how impertinent is it to build temples, and to worship at his altars! In my opinion, such notions of a Deity, which lay the axe to the root of all religion, and make all the expressions of it idle and ridiculous; which destroy the distinction of good and bad, all morality of our actions, and remove all the grounds and reasons of fear of punishment, and hope of reward; will justly denominate a man an atheist, though he ever so much disclaims that ignominious title.

Thales, the founder of the Ionic school, and the philosophers who succeeded him, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Diogenes, Apollionates, Anaxagoras, and Archelaus, are censured by Aristotle as disbelievers of a Deity; the reason he gives is, that these philosophers, in treating of the principles of the world, never introduce the Deity as the efficient cause. But if it be considered, that natural science was then in its infancy, and that those primitive philosophers only undertook to account for the material principle out of which the world was made, which one asserted to be water, one fire, another air; though this may prove that they formed but a lame and unfinished scheme of philosophy, yet it does not evince, that they denied the being of a God, or that they did not believe him to be the efficient cause of all things. It is indeed a convincing evidence that their philosophy was imperfect, as at first it might well be; but from their silence or omission of him in their systems, when they designed to treat only of the material causes of things, it is unreasonable to affirm that they denied his being: and it is certain Anaxagoras taught, that, besides it matter, was absolutely necessary to assert a Divine Mind, the Contriver and Maker of the world; and for this religious principle, as we said before, he was at Athens an illustrious confessor.

After the death of Socrates, the Ionic school was soon divided into various sects and philosophical parties: of the Cyrenaic school, Theodorus and Dion Boristhenites, were reputed Atheists, contemners of the Gods, and deriders of religion. Yet since it does not appear, that they had formed any impious scheme of philosophy, or maintained their irreligion by any pretended principles of reason, it is not improbable that these men were rather abandoned libertines, without consideration and reflection, than speculative and philosophical Atheists.

The Italic school, to its great dishonour, was more fertile in impiety, and produced a greater number of these irreligious philosophers. The masters, who succeeded their famous founder Pythagoras, soon degenerated from his noble and pious principles, and not only corrupted the purity of his doctrine, but became downright apostates, renouncing the belief of a God, and subverting the foundations of religion. Leucippus, Democritus, Diagoras, and Protagoras, were justly reckoned in this rank; who asserted, that the world was made by the casual combination of atoms, without any assistance or direction of a Divine Mind. They taught their followers this doctrine, supported it with arguments, and so were Atheists on the pretended principles of reason. But among all the ancient obdurate Atheists, and inveterate enemies of religion, no one seems more sincere, or more implacable, than Epicurus.

And though this person was perhaps of as dull an understanding, of as unrefined thought, and as little sagacity and penetration, as any man who was ever complimented with the name of a philosopher; yet several great wits, and men of distinguished learning, in this last age, have been pleased to give the world high encomiums of his capacity and superior attainments.

After a long night of ignorance had overspread the face of Europe, many wise men, from a generous love of truth, resolved to exercise their reason, and free themselves from prejudice, and a servile veneration of great names, and prevailing authority; and, growing impatient of tyrannical impositions, as well in philosophy as religion, to their great honour, separated both from the church of Rome, and the school of Aristotle. These patriots of the commonwealth of learning, combined to reform the corruptions, and redress the grievances of philosophy; to pull down the Peripatetic monarchy, and set up a free and independent state of science; and, being fully convinced of the weakness and unreasonableness of Aristotle's system, which consisted chiefly of words without any determined meaning, and of idle metaphysical definitions, of which many were false, and many unintelligible; they in this case had recourse to

the Corpuſcularian hypotheſis, and revived the obſolete and exploded ſyſtem of Epicurus.

Many of theſe noble leaders, who had declared againſt the Peripatetic uſurpation, and aſſerted the rights and liberties of human underſtanding, called in this philoſopher, for want of a better, to depoſe Ariſtotle. And though a general revolution did not follow, yet the defection from the prince of ſcience, as he was once eſteemed, was very great. When theſe firſt reformers of Ariſtotle's ſchool had eſpouſed the intereſt of Epicurus, and introduced his doctrines, that his hypotheſis might be received with the leſs oppoſition, they thought it neceſſary to remove the ignominious character of impiety, under which their philoſopher had long lain. And it is indeed very natural for a man, who has embraced another's notions and principles, to believe well of his maſter, and to ſtand up in the defence of his reputation. The learned Gaſſendus is eminent above all others for the warm zeal he has expreſſed, and the great pains he has taken, to vindicate the honour of Epicurus, and clear his character from the imputation of irreligion.

After the unhappy fate of Anaxagoras and the great Socrates, it is no wonder that the philoſophers, who ſucceeded ſhould grow more cautious in propagating their opinions, for fear of provoking the magiſtrate, and making themſelves obnoxious to the laws of their country: and, if any had formed irreligious ſchemes, it is to be ſuppoſed, they would take care to guard, as well as they could, againſt the puniſhment to be inflicted on all who denied the gods, and derided the eſtabliſhed worſhip. An atheiſt cannot be ſuppoſed to be fond of ſuffering, when pain and death are what he chiefly abhors: and therefore Epicurus, who, if Cicero and Plutarch knew his opinion, was a downright profeſſed atheiſt, has not in terms denied, but indeed aſſerted, the being of the gods; and ſpeaks honourably of them, ſo far as regards the excellence of their nature, and their happineſs. But when he deſcribes his gods, and gives them a human face and limbs, and ſays they are neither incorporeal nor corporeal, but as it were corporeal; while he excludes them from any hand in making, or care in guiding and governing the world, and undertakes to ſhow that all things were brought about by mere chance, without any help or direction of the gods, who are altogether unconcerned with human affairs, and regardleſs of our actions; he muſt laugh in himſelf, and be ſuppoſed to have formed this ridiculous idea of a Divine Being, merely to eſcape the character of an impious philoſopher. For though he owns the name of a God, by his deſcription he entirely deſtroys the Divine Nature. Nor do I think, that Ariſtotle can be defended from the charge of atheiſm; for while he affirms, that the world, as to its formation, as well as its progreſſion and duration, is independent on the gods, and owes nothing to their power, wiſdom, or providence, he utterly ſubverts all pretence to religion and divine worſhip, and comes at laſt into the dregs of the Epicurean ſcheme: this, I believe, I have plainly proved in the following poem.

As to the modern Atheiſts, Vaninus, Hobbes, and Spinoſa; I have ſpoken of them in their turn, and ſhall not anticipate what is ſaid hereafter.

I have been determined to employ ſome of my leiſure hours in writing on this ſubject, by the melancholy reflection I have often made on the growth of profaneneſs, and the prevailing power of looſe and irreligious principles in this nation.

It is a mortifying conſideration to all who love mankind, and wiſh well to their country, that this opinion has of late years, above the example of paſt ages, ſpread its contagious influence ſo far and wide, that now, emboldened by the power and number of its aſſertors, it becomes inſolent and formidable. Thoſe impious maxims, which a ſmall party in the laſt age, when inflamed with wine, vented in private, are now the entertainment of the coffee-houſe, publicly profeſſed, and in many companies ſpoken of in cool blood, as the ordinary ſubjects of converſation.

All ages have brought forth ſome monſters, ſome profeſſors and patrons of irreligion; monſters in reſpect of their ſcarceneſs, as well as deformity; but the amazing abundance of theſe odious productions is, I believe, peculiar to this fertile age. I am apt to think, that moſt who were reckoned atheiſts in former reigns were rather unbridled libertines, than irreligious in principle: but now we are ſo far advanced, that the infection has ſeized the mind; the Atheiſt in practice is become one in ſpeculation, and looſeneſs of manners improved to intellectual impiety.

Many (which is without example) expreſs an ardent zeal for profaneneſs, are grown bigots in atheiſm, and with great induſtry and application propagate their principles, form parties, and concert meaſures to carry on with vigour the cauſe of irreligion. They careſs, and are very fond of, thoſe who boldly declare for impiety, and mock all religion as cheat and impoſture. Theſe are wits, men of ſenſe, of large and free thoughts, and cannot fail of being men in faſhion. And as the renegades and deſerters of heaven, who renounce their God for the favour of men, and chooſe to grow popular at the deareſt rate, are by many protected and applauded: ſo there are places where a man, that has the aſſurance to own the belief of a Deity and a future ſtate, would be expoſed and laughed out of countenance. Hence many are tempted to conceal their notions of religion, for fear of blaſting their reputation, and of being neglected and deſpiſed by thoſe from whoſe favour they expect profit or promotion.

Immediately after the Reſtoration, the people, intoxicated with the pleaſures of peace, and influenced by the example of a looſe court, as well as from their great averſion to the former fanatical ſtrictneſs and ſeverity of converſation, which they deteſted as hypocriſy, indulged themſelves in ſenſual liberties, and by degrees ſunk deep into luxury and vice. Then it was that ſome irreligious men, taking advantage of this growing diſſolution of manners, began to propagate their deteſtable notions, and ſow the ſeeds of profaneneſs and impiety, which ſprung up apace, and flouriſhed in

proportion to the growth of immorality. Thus vice and irreligion, mutually aſſiſting each other, extended their power by daily encroachments; and the ſolid temper and firmneſs of mind, which the people once poſſeſſed, being ſlackened and diſſolved by the power of riot and forbidden pleaſure, their judgment ſoon became vitiated; which corruption of taſte has ever ſince gradually increaſed, as the confederate powers of vice and profaneneſs have ſpread their infection, and gained upon religion.

While looſe principles and impious opinions pervert the judgment, a petulant humour, that inclines men to give an air of levity and ridicule to all their diſcourſes, and turn every thing to mirth and raillery, does in proportion get ground; this being eſteemed the moſt ſucceſsful method to weaken the power and authority of religion in the minds of men.

I would not here be underſtood as if I condemned the qualifications of wit and pleaſantry, but only the miſapplication of them. I ſhall always retain a great value for ingenious men, provided they do not abuſe and proſtitute their talents to the worſt purpoſes; I mean the deriding all ſobriety of manners, and turning into jeſt the principles which conſtitute our duty here, and aſſure our happineſs hereafter. But can any man who reveres a God, and loves his country, ſtand by unconcerned, while looſe and profane wits ſhow ſo much zeal and diligence in propagating maxims, which tend ſo directly to the diſhonour of the one, and the ruin of the other?

Should Atheiſm and corruption of manners, thoſe inſeparable companions, which, as cauſes and effects, mutually introduce and ſupport each other, prevail much farther; ſhould impious notions in any age hereafter generally infect the higheſt, as well as the inferior ranks of men; what confuſion of affairs muſt enſue! It would be impoſſible to find men of principle to fill the places of truſt and honour, or patrons to promote them: merit would incapacitate and diſqualify for the favour of great men, and a religious character would be an invincible obſtruction to advancement; there would be no perſons of rank to encourage men of worth, and bring neglected virtue into faſhion. On the contrary, the contemners of heaven and deriders of piety would be careſſed, applauded, and promoted; the diſpoſers of preferment would confer all on thoſe who embrace their opinions: and what a terrible temptation would this be to our youth, to accommodate their notions to thoſe of the men in power, when they ſhall ſee that their favour is not otherwiſe to be procured!

Is it not highly probable that, in ſuch an age, clubs and cabals would be formed of ſcoffers and buffoons, to laugh religion out of countenance, and make the profeſſors of it the object of public ſcorn and contempt?

Beſides, it is natural to believe that magiſtrates in a commonwealth, generally compoſed of atheiſts, would likewiſe proceed to violence, and perſecute thoſe whom they could not perſuade to embrace their notions, as much as any ſect of religion has ever done. For it is not religion, but corrupted human nature, that puſhes men on to compulſive methods of obliging their adverſaries to renounce their own, and aſſert the opinions of men in power. It is from the factious temper of a party, not the ſpirit of piety; it is from pride and an impatience of contradiction, or from luſt of dominion, or a violent deſire of engroſſing the places of honour and profit, that men endeavour, by cruel and coercive methods, to ſilence their opponents, and ſuppreſs their competitors. And if it will be allowed that human paſſions will always exert themſelves with uniformity, and therefore ſtill produce the like effects; if we may foretel what atheiſts when in power are like to do, from what they have done, as far as they had ability; we may be aſſured, when they do not want power, they will never want a will to employ violence, to extinguiſh the notions of piety, and the hateful hereſy of religion. It would not be ſtrange if atheiſtical teſts, in ſuch a ſtate of affairs, ſhould be formed and impoſed, to keep men of dangerous principles out of all poſts of power and profit; and all that believed the being of a God, and the rewards and puniſhments of another life, ſhould be looked on as diſaffected to the government, and the diſturbers of the public peace.

And if ſuch notions of impiety, and ſuch a degenerate conſtitution of manners, ſhould ever prevail in this unhappy nation, any man, without the gift of prophecy, and, indeed, with a very moderate penetration, may foreſee, that the public will then be expoſed to inevitable ruin.

But before the intereſts of virtue and religion are reduced to ſo deplorable a ſtate, it is to be hoped this once wiſe and ſober nation will awaken from its lethargy; that, notwithſtanding the preſent popularity of vice, levity, and impiety, it may one day recover its reliſh of ſolid knowledge and real merit; that buffoons themſelves may one day be expoſed, the laughers in their turn become ridiculous, and an atheiſtical ſcoffer be as much out of credit, as a ſober and religious man is at preſent: virtue, ſeriouſneſs, and a due reverence of ſacred and divine things, may revive among us; and it is the duty and intereſt of every man that loves his country, and wiſhes well to mankind, to make his utmoſt efforts to bring about ſuch a happy revolution. This would the ſooner be effected, if the virtuous part of ingenious men (for virtue has ſtill a party) would not ſupinely ſtand by, and ſee the honour and intereſt of religion expoſed and inſulted; but, inſtead of an abject, unactive deſpondence, would unite their endeavours, with vigour and reſolution, againſt the common enemies of God and their country. It is great pity, that in ſo noble a cauſe any ſhould ſhow ſuch poorneſs of ſpirit, as to be aſhamed of aſſerting their religion, and ſtemming the tide of impiety, for fear of becoming the entertainment of ſcoffing libertines.

I know the gentlemen of atheiſtical notions pretend to refined parts, and paſs themſelves upon the world for wits of the firſt rank: yet in debate they decline argument, and rather truſt to the deciſion of raillery. But if it were poſſible for theſe gentlemen to apply themſelves in good earneſt to

the reasons alleged in proof of a Divine Being, in a manner that becomes an inquiry of such consequence, I should believe their conviction were not to be despaired of.

But there is little appearance that they will be ever prevailed on to consider this matter with deliberate and unprejudiced thought; and, therefore, I am not so sanguine to think, that any arguments I can bring, though ever so clear and demonstrative, are like to make any impression upon a veteran atheist. I have, nevertheless, thought it a seasonable service to endeavour to stop the contagion, and, as far as I am able, to preserve those who are not yet infected.

I would entreat these to distinguish between raillery and argument, and not believe that mirth ought to determine in so weighty a case; that they would not admit of principles of the utmost concern without examination, and take impiety upon content; that they would appeal from the buffoon and the mocker, to the impartial decision of right reason, and debate this matter with the gravity that becomes the importance of the subject.

But, since the gentlemen who own no obligations of religion for the rule of behaviour, set up in its stead a spurious principle, which they call honour, and a greatness of mind, that will not descend to a mean or base action; let them reflect, whether that term, as they use it, is not an empty sound without any determined meaning. If honour lays a man under any obligation to perform or forbear any action, then, it is evident, honour is a law or rule, and the transgression of it makes us guilty and obnoxious to punishment: and if it be a law, it must be the declaration of some legislator's will; for this is the definition of a law that regulates the manners of a moral agent. Now, I ask a man of honour, who denies religion, what, or whose law he breaks, if he deviates from what he imagines a point of honour? It is plain there can be no transgression, where there is no law; no irregularity where there is no rule; nor can a man do a base or dishonourable thing, if he lies under no obligation to the contrary. Honour, therefore, abstracted from the notion of religion, which enjoins it, is an idle chimera, which can have little power over any man that does not believe a Divine Legislator, whose authority must enforce it.

It is the same with friendship and gratitude, which are principles that the Atheist will often commend. But how is any man bound to be grateful, or to be a friend? Should he act a contrary part, and be treacherous and ungrateful, what guilt has he contracted? Has he offended against any law? or can he become guilty, without the breach of any? If you say he has broken any law, tell us the law, and by whom it was made. If the laws of the Supreme Being are set aside, we can lie under no regulation, but have an unbounded liberty over all our actions; we may, without the least fault or dishonour, break our oaths, subvert the government, betray our friends, assassinate our parents; in short, commit all kinds of the most detestable crimes without remorse; for, not being controlled by any obligation, we may do whatever our passions or our interests prompt us to, without being accountable to any tribunal for the least transgression.

If it be said, we are obliged by the laws of our country; I answer, that, as to the actions we are speaking of, such as a man of honour, a great and generous mind, a friend, a grateful person, is supposed to think himself obliged to, these are such as are not regulated by municipal laws, and therefore men are at liberty, whether they will act by what they call a principle of honour or not, and can justly incur no censure or reproach, should they have no regard to that pompous and sounding word; for if their actions are not morally determined either by human or divine laws, they may very justly, and honourably too, act with unlimited freedom in these matters. Besides, whoever believes himself free from the obligations of divine precepts, cannot look on himself as bound by any human laws. He may indeed, from the apprehension of punishment, forbear an action thus forbidden, and it is his interest so to do: but, if he thinks no divine authority makes it his duty to submit to the magistrate, and obey the laws of his country, he is at liberty, as to any guilt, whether he will obey or no. If he ventures the punishment, he escapes the sin. If an Atheist swears fidelity to his prince, what controlling power is he under, which affects the mind, not to betray him, if he thinks it fit and safe to do it? If he lets his parents, or his patron, or his friend perish, what iniquity is he accountable for?

The existence of a God has been already cleared, and abundantly demonstrated, by many pious and learned authors; whence this attempt may be censured as impertinent and unnecessary. But all those excellent performances being writ in prose, and the greatest part in the learned languages, or at least in a scholastic manner, are ill-accommodated to great numbers not of a learned education; and many who have more knowledge, and greater genius, will not undergo the trouble of reading and considering the arguments expressed in a manner to them obscure, dry, and disagreeable. I have therefore formed a poem on this great and important subject, that I might give it the advantages peculiar to poetry, and adapt it more to the general apprehension and capacity of mankind. The harmony of numbers engages many to read and retain what they would neglect if written in prose; and I persuade myself the Epicurean philosophy had not lived so long, nor been so much esteemed, had it not been kept alive and propagated by the famous poem of Lucretius.

I have chosen to demonstrate the existence of a God from the marks of wisdom, design, contrivance, and the choice of ends and means, which appear in the universe. Out of the various arguments that evince the truth of this proposition, "There is a God," I have selected this as the most evident and intelligible.

I may with reason presume, that I shall not incur any censure for not employing new arguments to prove the being of a God; none but what have

been produced before by many writers, even from the eldeſt days of philoſophy. It was never objected to Lucretius, that, in his applauded poem, he has not invented a new ſyſtem of philoſophy, but only recited in poetical numbers the ancient doctrines of Democritus and Epicurus. Nor can it with reaſon be ſuppoſed, that the arguments by which he ſupports their opinions were not long before in the ſchools of Greece. Nor have modern writers on this ſubject invented, but purſued the demonſtration of a God, from the evident appearance of contrivance and wiſdom in the viſible world, which they have done with more clearneſs and ſtrength, than thoſe who went before them. And while theſe have attempted to evince the exiſtence of a God only from the contemplation of corporeal nature, I have carried the argument on to the actions of living, ſenſitive, and intelligent beings, ſo far as we are acquainted with them; believing that brighter and more noble ſtrokes of wiſdom and deſign appear in the principles of life, ſenſation, and reaſon, than in all the compaſs of the material world.

I have endeavoured to give the ſubject yet greater degrees of perſpicuity, more variety of argument, as well as eaſy and familiar expreſſion, that, the ſtyle being more pleaſing, and the demonſtration more readily apprehended, it may leave a deeper impreſſion, and its effects and uſefulneſs may become more extenſive. In order to this, I have rarely uſed any term of art, or any phraſe peculiar to the writing and converſation of learned men. I have attempted, as Monſieur Fontenelle has done with great ſucceſs in his plurality of worlds, to bring philoſophy out of the ſecret receſſes of the ſchools, and ſtrip it of its uncouth and myſterious dreſs, that it may become agreeable, and admitted to a general converſation.

I take it for granted, that no judicious reader will expect, in the philoſophical and argumentative parts of this poem, the ornaments of poetical eloquence. In this caſe, where metaphor and deſcription are not admitted leſt they ſhould darken and enfeeble the argument, if the reaſoning be cloſe, ſtrong, and eaſily apprehended; if there be an elegant ſimplicity, purity, and propriety of words, and a juſt order and connection of the parts, mutually ſupporting and enlightening one another, there will be all the perfection which the ſtyle can demand.

I may ſafely conclude, that no man will expect that in this poem I ſhould borrow any embelliſhments from the exploded and obſolete theology of the ancient idolaters of Greece or Rome; that I ſhould addreſs any rapturous invocations to their idle deities, or adorn the ſtyle with alluſions to their fabulous actions. I have more than once publicly declared my opinion, that a Chriſtian poet cannot but appear monſtrous and ridiculous in a Pagan dreſs; that though it ſhould be granted, that the heathen religion might be allowed a place in light and looſe ſongs, mock heroic, and the lower lyric compoſitions; yet, in Chriſtian poems of the ſublime and greater kind, the mixture of the Pagan theology muſt, by all who are maſters of reflection and good ſenſe, be condemned, if not as impious, at leaſt as impertinent and abſurd. And this is a truth ſo clear and evident, that I make no doubt it will by degrees force its way, and prevail over the contrary practice. Should Britons recover their virtue, and reform their taſte, they would no more hear the heathen religion in verſe, than in proſe. Chriſtian poets, as well as Chriſtian preachers, the buſineſs of both being to inſtruct the people, though the laſt only are wholly appropriated to it, ſhould endeavour to confirm and ſpread their own true religion. If a divine ſhould begin his ſermon with a ſolemn prayer to Bacchus, or Apollo, to Mars, or Venus, what would the people think of their preacher? And is it not as really, though not equally, abſurd, for a poet in a great and ſerious poem, wherein he celebrates ſome wonderful and happy event of Divine Providence, or magnifies the illuſtrious inſtrument that was honoured to bring the event about, to addreſs his prayer to falſe deities, and cry for help to the abominations of the heathen?

The deſign of this poem is to demonſtrate the ſelf-exiſtence of an Eternal Mind from the created and dependent exiſtence of the univerſe, and to confute the hypotheſis of the Epicureans and Fataliſts, under whom all the patrons of impiety, ancient or modern, of whatſoever denomination, may be ranged. The firſt of whom affirm the world was in time cauſed by chance; and the other that it exiſted from eternity without a cauſe. It is true, as before mentioned, both theſe acknowledged the exiſtence of gods; but, by their abſurd and ridiculous deſcription of them, it is plain they had nothing elſe in view, but to avoid the obnoxious character of atheiſtical philoſophers.

This likewiſe has been often objected to the deiſts of the preſent times, that at leaſt a great part of them only conceal their notions under that name, while they are really to be numbered among the atheiſts. I have before expreſſed my reaſons, why I cannot embrace this opinion. It is true, indeed, that moſt of the deiſts maintain a particular friendſhip with the atheiſts, are pleaſed with their looſe and impious converſation, and appear very tender of their credit and eſteem. They are charitable in crying up their ſhining qualities, and in concealing, excuſing, or leſſening, their immoral actions; while at the ſame time they ſhow an affectation in expoſing the faults and follies of the Chriſtians, eſpecially thoſe who are the moſt ſtrict and regular in their manners, and appear to be moſt in earneſt. It is likewiſe remarkable, that theſe gentlemen expreſs no zeal for the extirpation of irreligious principles: they have never, as far as I know, written any thing againſt them; nor are they pleaſed in company to declare their deteſtation of ſuch impious maxims, or to produce arguments to confute them; while at the ſame time they take great pains, and ſhow a warm zeal, to weaken the belief of the Chriſtian religion, and to expoſe the pretended errors of its different profeſſors; which ſeems, indeed, ſtrange, ſince he that owns a God and his providence, ſhould in reaſon look upon thoſe who believe neither to be infinitely

more oppoſite to him, than thoſe who agree with him in the belief of a God, and differ only in the point of revealed religion.

Beſides, it is obſervable that the preſent deiſts have not drawn and publiſhed any ſcheme of religion, or catalogues of the duties they are obliged to perform, or whence ſuch obligations ariſe. They do not tell us, that they look on man as an accountable creature; nor, if they do, for what, and to whom, or when, that account is to be made, and what rewards and puniſhments will attend it. I do not affirm they have no ſuch ſcheme in their thoughts; but, ſince they will not let us know their creed, and in the mean time deride and triumph over that of the Chriſtians, I cannot defend them from thoſe who ſay they are juſtly to be ſuſpected.

And that the deiſt may clear himſelf from the ſuſpicion of being an atheiſt, or at leaſt a friend and favourer of their principles; I could wiſh he would in public aſſert and demonſtrate the being of a God and his providence, and declare his abhorrence of the principles of thoſe who diſbelieve them.

It would likewiſe give great ſatisfaction, and remove the objections of thoſe that charge them with direct irreligion, if they would pleaſe to give ſome account of their belief: Whether they look upon God as one who governs mankind by laws to be diſcovered by the light of reaſon, which reſtrain our inclinations and determine our duty; that they would tell us what thoſe laws are, and what ſanctions do enforce them; and until this be done, they cannot well diſcharge themſelves from the ſuſpicion before-mentioned.

And here I would addreſs myſelf to the irreligious gentlemen of the age: and I deſire them not to take up prejudices againſt the exiſtence of a God, and run away with impious maxims, until they have exerciſed their conſideration, and made an impartial inquiry into the grounds and reaſons that ſupport the belief of a Divine Eternal Being. In order to ſuch a reaſonable examination, it is but juſt and decent they ſhould be in earneſt, and hear the arguments we offer with temper and patience; that they ſhould inure themſelves to think, and weigh the force of thoſe arguments, as becomes ſincere inquirers after truth. The being of a God, and the duties that reſult from that principle, are ſubjects of the greateſt excellence and dignity in themſelves, and of the greateſt concern and importance to mankind; and, therefore, ſhould never be treated in mirth and ridicule. Generals of armies and counſellors of ſtate, ſenators, and judges, in the great and weighty affairs that come before them, do not put on the air of jeſters and buffoons, and, inſtead of grave and ſolemn debates, aim at nothing but ſallies of wit, and treat their ſubjects and one another only with raillery and deriſion: yet the buſineſs propoſed to the conſideration of the perſons I ſpeak to is, in every reſpect, infinitely ſuperior to any of theirs before-mentioned.

Are they ſure there is no God, and therefore no religion? If they are not, what a terrible riſque do they run! If their reaſons amount only to a probability, the contrary opinion may be true, and that *may be* is enough to give them the moſt frightful apprehenſions, and diſturb them amidſt all the pleaſures they enjoy. But if they ſay they are aſſured, and paſt doubt, there is no God; let them conſider, confidence in an opinion is not always the effect of certainty and demonſtration. Their predeceſſors, the atheiſts of former ages, were as certain, that is, as confident, they reaſoned right, as they can be. They cannot pretend to clearer light, and greater aſſurance of the truth of their maxims, than Epicurus and Lucretius did; or inſult their adverſaries with greater contempt than thoſe have done: yet theſe men themſelves, at leaſt many of them, allow thoſe philoſophers were groſsly miſtaken, and will by no means truſt to the Epicurean ſcheme, as the foundation of their opinions. If theſe great maſters, notwithſtanding their unexampled confidence, have been miſtaken, why may not their ſucceſſors be ſo?

If they ſet up Ariſtotle's ſcheme, and think they ſecure their principles by making the world to be eternal, and all effects and events the reſult of ſuch a fatal neceſſity, and an indiſſoluble concatenation of cauſes, as render it impoſſible, that things that are ſhould not be, or that they ſhould be otherwiſe than they are; let them conſider, that the greateſt aſſertors of impiety, I mean Democritus, Leucippus, Epicurus, and Lucretius, oppoſed this as an idle and incoherent ſyſtem; and that indeed it is ſo, ſhall be after demonſtrated: and ſhould not this ſhake their confidence, that all their friends in the Epicurean ſchools, who were ſufficiently delivered from the prejudices of education and ſuperſtitious impreſſions, could not ſee the leaſt probability in the ſcheme of the Fataliſts, on which theſe gentlemen are pleaſed to rely in a matter of the higheſt importance?

Will they confide in Mr. Hobbes? has that philoſopher ſaid any thing new? does he bring any ſtronger forces into the field than the Epicureans did before him? will they derive their certainty from Spinoſa? can ſuch an obſcure, perplexed, unintelligible author create ſuch certainty, as leaves no doubt or diſtruſt? If he is indeed to be underſtood, what does he allege more than the ancient Fataliſts have done, that ſhould amount to demonſtration?

Beſides, if, as they pretend, they are eſtabliſhed beyond poſſibility of deception in the truth of their maxims, why are they ſo very fond of thoſe authors, that ſet up any new doctrine? and why do they embrace with ſo much pleaſure their new ſchemes of irreligion? They are very glad to hear of any great genius, that can invent freſh arguments to ſtrengthen their opinions; and does not this betray a ſecret diffidence, that demands further light and confirmation?

But further; ſince theſe gentlemen ſhow ſo much induſtry in propagating their opinions, and are ſo fond of making proſelytes to atheiſm; ſince they affect a zeal in countenancing, applauding, and preferring, thoſe whom they have delivered from religious prejudices, and reformed and

fined with their free, large, and generous principles; how comes it to pass, that they neglect to inform and improve their nearest relations? Are they careful to instruct their wives and daughters, that they need not revere the imaginary phantom of a God; that religion is the creature of a timorous and superstitious mind, or of crafty priests, and cunning politicians; that, therefore, they are free from all restraints of virtue and conscience, and may prostitute their persons in the most licentious manner, without any remorse, or uneasy reflection; that it is idle to fear any divine punishment hereafter; and as to the shame and dishonour that may attend the liberties they take, in case they become public, that scandal proceeds from the gross mistakes of people perverted with religion, and misguided by a belief of a Divine Being, and of rewards and punishments in an imaginary life after this?

Do they take pains to inform their eldest sons, that they owe them no gratitude or obedience; that they may use an uncontrolled freedom in indulging all their appetites, passions, and inclinations; that, if they are willing to possess their father's honour and estate, they may, by poison or the poignard, take away his life: and, if they are careful to avoid the punishment of the magistrate, by their secret conduct, they may be fully satisfied of the innocence of the action; and as they have done themselves much good, so they have done their father no injury, and therefore may enjoy in perfect tranquillity the fruits of their parricide? Whatever they may affirm among their loose friends, I cannot conceive they can be guilty of so much folly, as to propagate these opinions in their own families, and instruct their wives and children in the boundless liberties, which, by the principles of atheism, are their undoubted right; for in all actions, where religion does not interpose and restrain us, we are perfectly, as has been said, free to act as we think best for our profit and pleasure.

Besides, to what a deplorable condition would mankind be reduced, should these opinions be universally embraced! If so many kings and potentates, who yet profess their belief of a God, and of rewards and punishments in a life to come, do notwithstanding, from boundless ambition and a cruel temper, oppress their subjects at home, and ravage and destroy their neighbours abroad, should think themselves free from all divine obligations, and therefore too from the restraints of oaths and solemn contracts; these fences and securities removed, what a deluge of calamities would break in upon the world. what oppression, what violence, what rapine, what devastation, would finish the ruin of human nature! for, if mighty princes are satisfied that it is impossible for them to do any wrong, what bounds are left to insatiable avarice and exorbitant thirst of power! if monarchs may, without the least guilt, violate their treaties, break their vows, betray their friends, and sacrifice their truth and honour at pleasure to their passions, or their interest, what trust, what confidence, could be supported between neighbour potentates! and without this what confusion and distraction must of necessity ensue!

On the other hand, if subjects were universally atheists, and looked on themselves as under no divine obligation to pay any duty or obedience to the supreme magistrate; if they believed that, when they took their oaths of allegiance, they swore by nothing, and invocated a power not in being; that therefore those oaths oblige them no longer than they think it safe, and for their interest, to break them; should such principles obtain, would not the thrones of princes be most precarious: would not ambition, revenge, resentment, or interest continually excite some or other to betray or assault the lives of their sovereigns? and why should they be blamed by the atheist for doing it? why are traitors, assassins, haters of their princes, and enemies to their country, branded with the odious names of ruffians and villains, if they lie under no obligations to act otherwise than they do?

Should conspirators, who assassinate their lawful sovereign, have the good fortune to make their escape, I ask the atheist, if he has in the least an ill opinion of them for being engaged in such an execrable undertaking? If he says he has not, then the point is gained, and an atheist is what I have represented. If he says he has, I next ask him, why? Let him tell me in what their guilt consists? Is it in the breach of any divine law? That cannot be, for he owns none. Is it the transgression of any human law? Tell me what obligation he is under to obey any human law, if no divine law enforces such obedience. Does their guilt consist in the breach of their duty to their prince and their oaths of allegiance? Still the same question recurs, what duty can a subject owe to a prince which divine laws do not constitute and determine? and how can an oath of allegiance bind but by virtue of some divine command, that obliges us not to violate our vows?

By this it appears that an atheist must be the worst of subjects; that his principles subvert the thrones of princes, and undermine the foundations of government and society, on which the happiness of mankind so much depends; and therefore it is not possible to conceive how there can be a greater disturber of the public peace, or a greater enemy to his prince and country, than a professed atheist, who propagates with zeal his destructive opinions.

I have proved, in the following poem, that no hypothesis hitherto invented in favour of impiety has the least strength or solidity, no not the least appearance of truth to recommend it. A man must be deserted of Heaven, and inflexibly hardened, that cannot, or rather will not, see the unreasonableness of irreligious principles. I demand only a candid temper in the reader, and a mind pleased with truth, and delivered from the prejudices of atheistical conversation.

A SUMMARY ACCOUNT OF THE FOLLOWING POEM,

AND OF WHAT IS CONTAINED IN EACH BOOK.

THE deſign of this work is to demonſtrate the exiſtence of a Divine Eternal Mind.

The arguments uſed for this end are taken from the various marks of wiſdom and artful contrivance, which are evident to obſervation in the ſeveral parts of the material world, and the faculties of the human ſoul.

The firſt book contains the proof of a Deity, from the inſtances of deſign and choice, which occur in the ſtructure and qualities of the earth and ſea.

The ſecond purſues the proof of the ſame propoſition, THERE IS A GOD, from the celeſtial motions, and more fully from the appearances in the ſolar ſyſtem, and the air.

In the third, the objections which are brought by atheiſtical philoſophers againſt the hypotheſis eſtabliſhed in the two preceding books, are anſwered.

In the fourth, is laid down the hypotheſis of the Atomiſts or Epicureans, and other irreligious philoſophers, and confuted.

In the fifth, the doctrine of the Fataliſts, or Ariſtotelians, who make the world to be eternal, is conſidered and ſubverted.

In the ſixth, the argument of the two firſt books is reſumed, and the exiſtence of God demonſtrated from the prudence and art diſcovered in the ſeveral parts of the body of man.

In the ſeventh, the ſame demonſtration is carried on from the contemplation of the inſtincts in brute animals, and the faculties and operations of the ſoul of man.

The book concludes with a recapitulation of what has been treated of, and a hymn to the Creator of the World.

CREATION.

BOOK I.

The Argument.

The propoſition. The invocation. The exiſtence of a God demonſtrated, from the marks of wiſdom, choice, and art, which appear in the viſible world, and infer an intelligent and free cauſe. This evinced from the contemplation, I. of the earth. 1. Its ſituation. 2. The coheſion of its parts, not to be ſolved by any hypotheſis yet produced. 3. Its ſtability. 4. Its ſtructure, or the order of its parts. 5. Its motion diurnal and annual, or elſe the motion of the ſun in both thoſe reſpects. The cauſe of theſe motions not yet accounted for by any philoſopher. 6. Its outſide or face; the beauties and conveniencies of it; its mountains, lakes, and rivers. II. The exiſtence of a God proved from the marks and impreſſions of prudence and deſign, which appear in the ſea. 1. In its formation. 2. The proportion of its parts in reſpect of the earthy. 3. Its ſituation. 4. The contexture of its parts. 5. Its brackiſh or briny quality. 6. Its flux and reflux.

No more of courts, of triumphs, or of arms,
No more of valour's force, or beauty's charms;
The themes of vulgar lays, with juſt diſdain,
I leave unſung, the flocks, the amorous ſwain,
The pleaſures of the land, and terrors of the main.
How abject, how inglorious 'tis to lie
Grovelling in duſt and darkneſs, when on high
Empires immenſe, and rolling worlds of light,
To range their heavenly ſcenes, the muſe invite!
I meditate to ſoar above the ſkies,
To heights unknown, through ways untry'd to riſe:
I would th' Eternal from his works aſſert,
And ſing the wonders of creating art.
While I this unexampled taſk eſſay,
Paſs awful gulfs, and beat my painful way;
Celeſtial Dove! divine aſſiſtance bring,
Suſtain me on thy ſtrong-extended wing,
That I may reach th' Almighty's ſacred throne,
And make his cauſeleſs power, the cauſe of all things known.
Thou doſt the full extent of nature ſee,
And the wide realms of vaſt immenſity:
Eternal Wiſdom thou doſt comprehend,
Riſe to her heights, and to her depths deſcend:
The Father's ſacred counſels thou canſt tell,
Who in his boſom didſt for ever dwell.
Thou on the deep's dark face, immortal dove!
Thou with Almighty energy didſt move
On the wild waves, incumbent didſt diſplay
Thy genial wings, and hatch primæval day.
Order from thee, from thee diſtinction came,
And all the beauties of the wond'rous frame.
Hence ſtampt on nature we perfection find,
Fair as th' idea in the Eternal Mind.

See, through this vaſt extended theatre
Of ſkill divine what ſhining marks appear!
Creating pow'r is all around expreſt,
The God diſcover'd, and his care confeſt.
Nature's high birth her heavenly beauties ſhow;
By every feature we the parent know.
Th' expanded ſpheres, amazing to the ſight!
Magnificent with ſtars and globes of light,
The glorious orbs, which heaven's bright hoſt compoſe,
Th' impriſon'd ſea, that reſtleſs ebbs and flows,
The fluctuating fields of liquid air,
With all the curious meteors hovering there,
And the wide regions of the land, proclaim
The Power Divine, that rais'd the mighty frame.
What things ſoe'er are to an end referr'd,
And in their motions ſtill that end regard,
Always the fitneſs of the means reſpect,
Theſe as conducive chooſe, and thoſe reject,
Muſt by a judgment foreign and unknown
Be guided to their end, or by their own;
For to deſign an end, and to purſue
That end by means, and have it ſtill in view,
Demands a conſcious, wiſe, reflecting cauſe,
Which freely moves, and acts by reaſon's laws;
That can deliberate, means elect, and find
Their due connection with the end deſign'd.
And ſince the world's wide frame does not include
A cauſe with ſuch capacities endued;
Some other cauſe o'er nature muſt preſide,
Which gave her birth, and does her motions guide.
And here behold the cauſe, which God we name,
The ſource of beings, and the mind ſupreme;
Whoſe perfect wiſdom, and whoſe prudent care,
With one confederate voice unnumber'd worlds declare.

See, how the earth has gain'd that very place,
Which of all others in the boundleſs ſpace,
Is moſt convenient, and will beſt conduce
To the wiſe ends requir'd for nature's uſe.
You, who the Mind and Cauſe Supreme deny,
Nor on his aid to form the world rely,
Muſt grant, had perfect wiſdom been employ'd
To find, through all th' interminable void,
A ſeat moſt proper, and which beſt became
The earth and ſea, it muſt have been the ſame.
Now who can this ſurpriſing fact conceive,
Who this event fortuitous believe,
That the brute earth, unguided, ſhould embrace
The only uſeful, only proper place
Of all the millions in the empty ſpace?
Could ſtupid atoms with impetuous ſpeed
By different roads and adverſe ways proceed;
From regions oppoſite begin their flight,
That here they might rencounter, here unite?
What charms could theſe terreſtrial vagrants ſee
In this one point of all immenſity,
That all th' enamour'd troops ſhould thither flow?
Did they its uſeful ſituation know?
And, when the ſquadrons with a ſwift career
Had reach'd that point, why did they ſettle there,
When nothing check'd their flight but gulfs of air;
Since Epicurus and his ſcholars ſay
That unobſtructed matter flies away,
Ranges the void, and knows not where to ſtay?
If you, ſagacious ſons of art, pretend
That by their native force they did deſcend,
And ceas'd to move, when they had gain'd their end;
That native force till you enlighten'd know,
Can its myſterious ſpring diſcloſe, and ſhow
How 'tis exerted, how it does impel,
Your uninſtructive words no doubts diſpel.
We aſk you, whence does motive vigour flow?
You ſay, the nature of the thing is ſo.
But how does this relieve th' inquirer's pain?
Or how the dark impulſive power explain?
The Atomiſts, who ſkill mechanic teach,
Who boaſt their clearer ſight, and deeper reach,
Aſſert their atoms took that happy ſeat,
Determin'd thither by their inbred weight;
That downward through the ſpacious void they ſtrove
To that one point, from all the parts above.
Grant this poſition true, though up and down
Are to a ſpace not limited unknown;
But ſince they ſay our earth from morn to morn
On its own axis is oblig'd to turn;
That ſwift rotation muſt diſperſe in air
All things, which on the rapid orb appear:
And if no power that motion ſhould controul,
It muſt diſjoint and diſſipate the whole.
'Tis by experience uncontеſted found,
Bodies orbicular, when whirling round,
Still ſhake off all things on their ſurface plac'd,
And to a diſtance from the centre caſt.
If ponderous atoms are ſo much in love
With this one point, that all will thither move,
Give them the ſituation they deſire;
But let us then, ye ſages next inquire,
What cauſe of their coheſion can you find;
What props ſupport, what chains the fabric bind?
Why do not beaſts that move, or ſtones that lie
Looſe on the field, through diſtant regions fly?
Or why do fragments, from a mountain rent,
Tend to the earth with ſuch a ſwift deſcent?
Thoſe who aſcribe this one determin'd courſe
Of ponderous things to gravitating force,
Refer us to a quality occult,
To ſenſeleſs words, for which while they inſult
With juſt contempt the famous Stagyrite,
Their ſchools ſhould bleſs the world with clearer light.
Some, the round earth's coheſion to ſecure,
For that hard taſk employ magnetic power.
Remark, ſay they, the globe; with wonder own
Its nature, like the fam'd attractive ſtone.
This has its axis, ſo th' obſerver tells,
Meridians, poles, æquator, parallels.
To the terreſtrial poles by conſtant fate
Th' obſequious poles themſelves accommodate,
And, when of this poſition diſpoſſeſt,
They move, and ſtrive, nor ever will they reſt,
Till their lov'd ſituation they regain,
Where pleas'd they ſettle, and unmov'd remain.
And ſhould you, ſo experience does decide,
Into ſmall parts the wondrous ſtone divide,
Ten thouſand of minuteſt ſize expreſs
The ſame propenſion, which the large poſſeſs.
Hence all the globe ('tis ſaid) we may conclude
With this prevailing energy endued:
That this attractive, this ſurpriſing ſtone
Has no peculiar virtue of its own;
Nothing but what is common to the whole,
To ſides, to axis, and to either pole.
The mighty magnet from the centre darts
This ſtrong, though ſubtle force, through all the parts;
Its active rays, ejaculated thence,
Irradiate all the wide circumference.
While every part is in proportion bleſt,
And of its due attractive power poſſeſt;
While adverſe ways the adverſe atoms draw
With the ſame ſtrength, by nature's conſtant law
Balanc'd and fix'd; they can no longer move;
Through gulfs immenſe no more unguided rove.
If cords are pull'd two adverſe ways, we find
The more we draw them, they the faſter bind.
So when with equal vigour nature ſtrains
This way and that theſe fine mechanic chains,
They fix the earth, they part to part unite,
Preſerve their ſtructure, and prevent their flight.
Preſſure, they ſay, and weight, we muſt diſown,
As things occult, by no ideas known,
And on the earth's magnetic power depend
To fix its ſear, its union to defend.
Let us this fam'd hypotheſis ſurvey,
And with attentive thought remark the way,
How earth's attractive parts their force diſplay.
The maſs, 'tis ſaid, from its wide boſom pours
Torrents of atoms, and eternal ſhowers
Of fine magnetic darts, of matter made
So ſubtle, marble they with eaſe pervade:
Reſin'd, and (next to incorporeal) thin,
Not by Auſonian glaſſes to be ſeen.

These emanations take their constant flight
Swift from the earth, as from the sun the light;
To a determin'd distance they ascend,
And there inflect their course, and downward tend.
What can insult unequal reason more,
Than this magnetic, this mysterious power?
That cords and chains, beyond conception small,
Should gird and bind so fast this mighty ball!
That active rays should spring from every part,
And, though so subtle, should such force exert!
That the light legions should be sent abroad,
Range all the air, and traverse every road!
To stated limits should excursions make,
Then backward of themselves their journey take;
Should in their way to solid bodies cling,
And home to earth the captive matter bring;
Where all things on its surface spread are bound
By their coersive vigour to the ground!
Can this be done without a Guide Divine?
Should we to this hypothesis incline,
Say, does not here conspicuous wisdom shine?
Who can enough magnetic force admire?
Does it not counsel and design require
To give the earth this wondrous energy,
In such a measure, such a just degree,
That it should still perform its destin'd task,
As nature's ends and various uses ask?
For, should our globe have had a greater share
Of this strong force, by which the parts cohere,
Things had been bound by such a powerful chain,
That all would fix'd and motionless remain;
All men, like statues, on the earth would stand.
Nor would they move the foot, or stretch the hand;
Birds would not range the skies, nor beasts the woods,
Nor could the fish divide the stiffen'd floods.
Again, had this strange energy been less,
Defect had been as fatal as excess.
For want of cement strong enough to bind
The structure fast, huge ribs of rock, disjoin'd
Without an earthquake, from their base would start,
And hills unhing'd from their deep roots depart.
And, while our orb perform'd its daily race,
All beings, found upon his ample face,
Would, by that motion dissipated, fly
Whirl'd from the globe, and scatter through the sky:
They must, obedient to mechanic laws,
Assemble where the stronger magnet draws;
Whether the sun that stronger magnet proves,
Or else some planet's orb that nearer moves.
Who can unfold the cause that does recall
Magnetic rays, and make them backward fall?
If these effluvia, which do upward tend,
Because less heavy than the air, ascend;
Why do they ever from their height retreat,
And why return to seek their central seat?
From the same cause, ye sons of art, declare
Can they by turns descend, and rise in air?
Prodigious 'tis, that one attractive ray
Should this way bend, the next an adverse way;
For, should th' unseen magnetic jets descend
All the same way, they could not gain their end;
They could not draw and bind the fabric fast,
Unless alike they every part embrac'd
How does Carteſius all his sinews strain,
How much he labours, and how much in vain,
The earth's attractive vigour to explain!
This bold contriver thus his thoughts conveys:
Incessant streams of thin magnetic rays
Gush from their fountains with impetuous force,
In either pole, then take an adverse course:
Those from the southern pole the northern seek;
The southern those that from the northern break;
In either pole these rays emitted meet
Small pores provided, for their figures fit;
Still to and fro they circulating pass,
Hold all the frame, and firmly bind the mass.
Thus he the parts of earth from flight restrains,
And girds it fast by fine imagin'd chains.
But oh! how dark is human reason found!
How vain the man with wit and learning crown'd!
How feeble all his strength when he essays
To trace dark Nature, and detect her ways;
Unless he calls its Author to his aid,
Who every secret spring of motion laid,
Who over all his wondrous works presides,
And to their useful ends their causes guides!
These paths in vain are by inquirers trod;
There's no philosophy without a God.
Admir'd Carteſius, let the curious know,
If your magnetic atoms always flow
From pole to pole, what form'd their double source,
What spurr'd, what gave them their inflected course?
Tell, what could drill and perforate the poles,
And to th' attractive rays adapt their holes?
A race so long what prompts them to pursue?
Have the blind troops th' important end in view?
How are they sure they in the poles shall meet
Pores of a figure to their figure fit?
Are they with such sagacity endued
To know, if this their journey be pursued,
They shall the earth's constructure closely bind,
And to the centre keep the parts confin'd?
Let us review this whole magnetic scheme,
Till wiser heads a wiser model frame.
For its formation let fit atoms start.
To one determin'd point, from every part.
Encountering there from regions opposite,
They clash, and interrupt each other's flight;
And, rendezvousing with an adverse course,
Produce an equal poise, by equal force:
For while the parts by laws magnetic act,
And are at once atttacted, and attract;
While match'd in strength they keep the doubtful field,
And neither overcome, and neither yield,
To happy purpose they their vigour spend;
For these contentions in the balance end,
Which must in liquid air the globe suspend.
Besides materials which are brute and blind,
Did not this work require a knowing mind,
Who for the task should fit detachments choose
From all the atoms, which their host diffuse
Through the wide regions of the boundless space,
And for their rendezvous appoint the place?

Who should command, by his almighty nod,
These chosen troops, unconscious of the road,
And unacquainted with th' appointed end,
Their marches to begin, and thither tend;
Direct them all to take the nearest way,
Whence none of all th' unnumber'd millions stray;
Make them advance with such an equal pace,
From all the adverse regions of the space,
That they at once should reach the destin'd place;
Should muster there, and round the centre swarm,
And draw together in a globous form?
Grant, that by mutual opposition made
Of adverse parts, their mutual flight is staid;
That thus the whole is in a balance laid;
Does it not all mechanic heads confound,
That troops of atoms, from all parts around,
Of equal number, and of equal force,
Should to this single point direct their course;
That so the counter-pressure every way,
Of equal vigour, might their motions stay,
And, by a steady poise, the whole in quiet lay?
Besides, the structure of the earth regard:
For firmness how is all its frame prepar'd!
With what amazing skill is the vast building rear'd!
Metals and veins of solid stone are found
The chief materials which the globe compound.
See, how the hills, which high in air ascend,
From pole to pole their lofty lines extend.
These strong unshaken mounds resist the shocks
Of tides and seas tempestuous, while the rocks,
That secret in a long continued vein
Pass through the earth, the ponderous pile sustain:
These mighty girders, which the fabric bind,
These ribs robust and vast, in order join'd;
These subterranean walls, dispos'd with art,
Such strength, and such stability impart,
That storms above, and earthquakes under ground,
Break not the pillars, nor the work confound.
Give to the earth a form orbicular,
Let it be pois'd, and hung in ambient air;
Give it the situation to the sun
Such as is only fit; when this is done,
Suppose it still remain'd a lazy heap;
From what we grant, you no advantage reap.
You either must the earth from rest disturb,
Or roll around the heavens the solar orb.
Else what a dreadful face will nature wear!
How horrid will these lonesome seats appear!
This ne'er would see one kind refreshing ray;
That would be ruin'd, but a different way,
Condemn'd to light, and curs'd with endless day:
A cold Icelandian desert one would grow;
One, like Sicilian furnaces, would glow.
That nature may this fatal error shun,
Move, which will please you best, the earth or sun.
But, say, from what great builder's magazines
You'll engines fetch, what strong, what vast ma-
Will you employ to give this motion birth, [chines
And whirl so swiftly round the sun or earth?
Yet, learned heads, by what mechanic laws
Will you of either orb this motion cause?
Why do they move? why in a circle? why
With such a measure of velocity?
Say, why the earth—if not the earth, the sun
Does through his winding road the zodiac run?
Why do revolving orbs their tracks sublime
So constant keep, that since the birth of time
They never vary'd their accustom'd place,
Nor lost a minute in so long a race?
But hold! perhaps I rudely press too far;
You are not vers'd in reasoning so severe.
To a first question your reply's at hand;
Ask but a second, and you speechless stand.
You swim at top, and on the surface strive,
But to the depths of nature never dive:
For if you did, instructed you'd explore
Divine contrivance, and a God adore.
Yet sons of art one curious piece devise,
From whose constructure motion shall arise.
Machines, to all philosophers 'tis known,
Move by a foreign impulse, not their own.
Then let Gassendus choose what frame he please,
By which to turn the heavenly orbs with ease;
Those orbs must rest, till by th' exerted force
Of some first mover they begin their course:
Mere disposition, mere mechanic art,
Can never motion to the globes impart;
And, if they could, the marks of wise design
In that contrivance would conspicuous shine.
These questions still recur: we still demand,
What moves them first, and puts them off at hand?
What makes them this one way their race direct,
While they a thousand other ways reject?
Why do they never once their course inflect?
Why do they roll with such an equal pace,
And to a moment still perform their race!
Why earth or sun diurnal stages keep?
In spiral tracks why through the zodiac creep?
Who can account for this, unless they say
These orbs th' Eternal Mind's command obey,
Who bad them move, did all their motions guide,
To each its destin'd province did divide;
Which to complete, he gave them motive power,
That shall, as long as he does will, endure?
Thus we the frame of nature have express;
Now view the earth in finish'd beauty dress;
The various scenes, which various charms display,
Through all th' extended theatre survey.
See how sublime th' uplifted mountains rise,
And with their pointed heads invade the skies!
How the high cliffs their craggy arms extend,
Distinguish states, and sever'd realms defend!
How ambient shores confine the restless deep,
And in their ancient bounds the billows keep!
The hollow vales their smiling pride unfold;
What rich abundance do their bosoms hold!
Regard their lovely verdure, ravish'd view
The party-colour'd flowers of various hue.
Not eastern monarchs, on their nuptial day,
In dazzling gold and purple shine so gay
As the bright natives of th' unlabour'd field,
Unvers'd in spinning, and in looms unskill'd.
See, how the ripening fruits the gardens crown,
Imbibe the sun, and make his light their own!
See the sweet brooks in silver mazes creep,
Enrich the meadows, and supply the deep;
While from their weeping urns the fountains flow,
And vital moisture, where they pass, bestow!

Admire the narrow ſtream, and ſpreading lake,
The proud aſpiring grove, and humble brake:
How do the foreſts and the woods delight!
How the ſweet glades and openings charm the ſight!
Obſerve the pleaſant lawn and airy plain,
The fertile furrows rich with various grain;
How uſeful all! how all conſpire to grace
Th' extended earth, and beautify her face!
Now, ſee, with how much art the parts are made?
With how much wiſdom are the ſtrata laid,
Of different weight, and of a different kind,
Of ſundry forms, for ſundry ends deſign'd!
Here in their beds the finiſh'd minerals reſt,
There the rich wombs the ſeeds of gold digeſt.
Here in fit moulds, to Indian nations known,
Are caſt the ſeveral kinds of precious ſtone;
The diamond here, by mighty monarchs worn,
Fair as the ſtar that beautifies the morn;
And, ſplendid by the ſun's embody'd ray,
The rubies there their crimſon light diſplay;
There marble's various colour'd veins are ſpread;
Here of bitumen unctuous ſtores are bred.
What ſkill on all its ſurface is beſtow'd,
To make the earth for man a fit abode!
The upper moulds, with active ſpirits ſtor'd,
And rich in verdant progeny, afford
The flowery paſture, and the ſhady wood,
To men their phyſic, and to beaſts their food.
Proceed yet farther, and a proſpect take
Of the ſwift ſtream, and of the ſtanding lake.
Had not the deep been form'd, that might contain
All the collected treaſures of the main,
The earth had ſtill o'erwhelm'd with water ſtood,
To man an uninhabitable flood.
Yet had not part as kindly ſtaid behind,
In the wide ciſterns of the lakes confin'd;
Did not the ſprings and rivers drench the land,
Our globe would grow a wilderneſs of ſand;
The plants and groves, the tame and ſavage beaſt,
And man, their lord, would die with drought oppreſt.
Now, as you ſee, the floating element
Part looſe in ſtreams, part in the ocean pent,
So wiſely is diſpos'd, as may conduce
To man's delight, or neceſſary uſe.
See how the mountains in the midſt divide
The nobleſt regions, that from either ſide
The ſtreams, which to the hills their currents owe,
May every way along the valley flow,
And verdant wealth on all the ſoil beſtow!
So Atlas and the mountains of the moon,
From north to ſouth, in lofty ridges run
Through Afric realms, whence falling waters lave
Th' inferior regions with a winding wave.
They various rivers give to various ſoil,
Niger to Guinea, and to Ægypt Nile.
So from the towering Alps on different ſides,
Diſſolving ſnows deſcend in numerous tides,
Which in the vale beneath their parties join
To form the Rhone, the Danube, and the Rhine.
So Caucaſus, aſpiring Taurus ſo,
And fam'd Imaüs, ever white with ſnow,
Through eaſtern climes their lofty lines extend,
And this and that way ample currents ſend.
A thouſand rivers make their crooked way,
And diſembogue their floods into the ſea;
Whence ſhould they ne'er by ſecret roads retire,
And to the hills, from whence they came, aſpire;
They by their conſtant ſtreams would ſo increaſe
The watery ſtores, and raiſe ſo high the ſeas,
That the wide hollow would not long contain
Th' unequal treaſures of the ſwelling main;
Scorning the mounds which now its tide withſtand,
The ſea would paſs the ſhores, and drown the land.
Tell, by what paths, what ſubterranean ways,
Back to the fountain's head the ſea conveys
The refluent rivers, and the land repays?
Tell, what ſuperior, what controlling cauſe
Makes waters, in contempt of nature's laws,
Climb up, and gain th' aſpiring mountains height,
Swift and forgetful of their native weight?
What happy works, what engines under-ground,
What inſtruments of curious art are found,
Which muſt with everlaſting labour play,
Back to their ſprings the rivers to convey,
And keep their correſpondence with the ſea?
Perhaps you'll ſay, their ſtreams the rivers owe
In part to rain, in part to melting ſnow;
And that th' attracted watery vapours riſe
From lakes and ſeas, and fill the lower ſkies:
Theſe when condens'd the airy region pours
On the dry earth in rain, or gentle ſhowers;
Th' inſinuating drops ſink through the ſand,
And paſs the porous ſtrainers of the land;
Which freſh ſupplies of watery riches bring
To every river's head, to each exhauſted ſpring;
The ſtreams are thus, their loſſes to repair,
Back to their ſource tranſmitted to the air;
The waters ſtill their circling courſe maintain,
Flow down in rivers, and return in rain;
And on the ſoil with heat immoderate dry'd,
To which the rain's pure treaſures are deny'd,
The mountains more ſublime in æther riſe,
Tranſfix the clouds, and tower amidſt the ſkies;
The ſnowy fleeces, which their heads involve,
Still ſtay in part, and ſtill in part diſſolve;
Torrents and loud impetuous cataracts
Through roads abrupt, and rude unfaſhion'd tracts,
Roll down the lofty mountain's channell'd ſides,
And to the vale convey their foaming tides;
At length, to make their various currents one,
The congregated floods together run; [head,
Theſe confluent ſtreams make ſome great river's
By ſtores ſtill melting and deſcending fed;
Thus from th' aſpiring mountains of the moon
Diſſolving treaſures ruſh in torrents down,
Which paſs the ſun-burnt realms and ſandy ſoil,
And bleſs th' Ægyptian nation with their Nile;
Then whoſoe'er his ſecret riſe would know,
Muſt climb the hills, and trace his head in ſnow;
And through the Rhine, the Danube, and the Rhone,
All ample rivers of our milder zone,
While they advance along the flats and plains,
Spread by the ſhowers augmented, and the rains;
Yet theſe their ſource and firſt beginning owe
To ſtores, that from the Alpine mountains flow;
Hence, when the ſnows in winter ceaſe to weep,
And undiſſolv'd their flaky texture keep,

The banks with eaſe their humble ſtreams contain,
Which ſwell in ſummer, and thoſe banks diſdain.
Be this account allow'd, ſay, do not here
Th' impreſſions of conſummate art appear?
In every ſpacious realm a riſing ground,
Obſervers tell, is in the middle found;
That all the ſtreams, which flow from either ſide,
May through the valleys unobſtructed glide.
What various kingdoms does the Danube lave,
Before the Euxine ſea receives its wave!
How many nations of the ſun-burnt ſoil
Fam'd Niger bleſs! how many drink the Nile!
Through what vaſt regions near the riſing ſun
Does Indus, Ganges, and Hydaſpes, run!
What happy empires, wide Euphrates, teem,
And pregnant grow by thy prolific ſtream!
How many ſpacious countries does the Rhine,
In winding banks, and mazes ſerpentine,
Traverſe, before he ſplits in Belgia's plain,
And loſt in ſand creeps to the German main!
Floods which through Indian realms their courſe purſue,
That Mexico enrich, and waſh Peru,
With their unwearied ſtreams yet farther paſs,
Before they reach the ſea, and end their race.
And ſince the rivers and the floods demand,
For their deſcent, a prone and ſinking land,
Does not this due declivity declare
A wiſe director's providential care?
See, how the ſtreams advancing to the main
Through crooked channels draw their cryſtal train!
While lingering thus they in meanders glide,
They ſcatter verdant life on either ſide.
The valleys ſmile, and with their flowery face
And wealthy births confeſs the floods embrace.
But this great bleſſing would in part be loſt,
Nor would the meads their blooming plenty boaſt;
Did uncheck'd rivers draw their fluid train
In lines direct, and rapid ſeek the main.
The ſea does next demand our view; and there
No leſs the marks of perfect ſkill appear.
When firſt the atoms to the congreſs came,
And by their concourſe form'd the mighty frame,
What did the liquid to th' aſſembly call,
To give their aid to form the ponderous ball?
Firſt, tell us, why did any come? next, why
In ſuch a diſproportion to the dry?
Why were the moiſt in number ſo outdone,
That to a thouſand dry, they are but one?
When they united, and together clung,
When undiſtinguiſh'd in one heap they hung,
How was the union broke, the knot unty'd?
What did th' entangled elements divide?
Why did the moiſt disjoin'd, without reſpect
To their leſs weight, the loweſt ſeat elect?
Could they diſpenſe to lie below the land,
With nature's law, and unrepeal'd command;
Which gives to lighter things the greateſt height,
And ſeats inferior to ſuperior weight?
Did they foreſee, unleſs they lay ſo low,
The reſtleſs flood the land would overflow,
By which the delug'd earth would uſeleſs grow?
What, but a conſcious agent, could provide
The ſpacious hollow, where the waves reſide?
Where, barr'd with rock, and fenc'd with hills, the deep
Does in its womb the floating treaſures keep;
And all the raging regiments reſtrain
In ſtated limits, that the ſwelling main
May not in triumph o'er the frontier ride,
And through the land licentious ſpread its tide?
What other cauſe the frame could ſo contrive,
That, when tempeſtuous winds the ocean drive,
They cannot break the tye, nor diſunite
The waves which roll connected in their flight?
Their bands, though ſlack, no diſſolution fear,
Th' unſever'd parts the greateſt preſſure bear,
Though looſe, and fit to flow, they ſtill cohere.
This apt, this wiſe contexture of the ſea,
Makes it the ſhips driv'n by the winds obey;
Whence hardy merchants ſail from ſhore to ſhore,
Bring Indian ſpices home, and Guinea's ore.
When you with liquid ſtores have fill'd the deep,
What does the flood from putrefaction keep?
Should it lie ſtagnant in its ample ſeat,
The ſun would through it ſpread deſtructive heat.
The wiſe Contriver, on his end intent,
Careful this fatal error to prevent,
And keep the waters from corruption free,
Mixt them with ſalt, and ſeaſon'd all the ſea.
What other cauſe could this effect produce?
The brackiſh tincture through the main diffuſe?
You, who to ſolar beams this taſk aſſign,
To ſcald the waves, and turn the tide to brine,
Reflect, that all the fluid ſtores, which ſleep
In the remoteſt caverns of the deep,
Have of the briny force a greater ſhare
Than thoſe above, that meet the ambient air.
Others, but oh how much in vain! erect
Mountains of ſalt, the ocean to infect.
Who, vers'd in nature, can deſcribe the land,
Or fix the place on which thoſe mountains ſtand?
Why have thoſe rocks ſo long unwaſted ſtood,
Since, laviſh of their ſtock, they through the flood
Have, ages paſt, their melting cryſtal ſpread,
And with their ſpoils the liquid regions fed?
Yet more, the wiſe Contriver did provide,
To keep the ſea from ſtagnating, the tide;
Which now we ſee advance, and now ſubſide.
If you exclude this great Directing Mind,
Declare what cauſe of this effect you find.
You who this globe round its own axis drive,
From that rotation this event derive:
You ſay, the ſea, which with unequal pace
Attends the earth in this its rapid race.
Does with its waves fall backward to the weſt,
And, thence repell'd, advances to the eaſt:
While this revolving motion does endure,
The deep muſt reel, and ruſh from ſhore to ſhore:
Thus to the ſetting, and the riſing ſun,
Alternate tides in ſtated order run.
Th' experiments you bring us, to explain
This notion, are impertinent and vain:
An orb or ball round its own axis whirl,
Will not the motion to a diſtance hurl,
Whatever duſt or ſand you on it place,
And drops of water from its convex face?
If this rotation does the ſeas affect,
The rapid motion rather would eject

The ſtores the low capacious caves contain,
And from its ample baſon caſt the main;
Aloft in air would make the ocean fly,
And daſh its ſcatter'd waves againſt the ſky.
If you, to ſolve th' appearance, have recourſe
To the bright ſun's or moon's impulſive force;
Do you, who call for demonſtration, tell
How diſtant orbs th' obedient flood impel?
This ſtrong myſterious influence explain,
By which, to ſwell the waves, they preſs the main.
But if you chooſe magnetic power, and ſay
Thoſe bodies by attraction move the ſea;
Till with new light you make this ſecret known,
And tell us how 'tis by attraction done,
You leave the mind in darkneſs ſtill involv'd,
Nor have you, like philoſophers, reſolv'd
The doubts, which we to reaſoning men refer,
But with a cant of words abuſe the ear.
Thoſe who aſſert the lunar orb preſides
O'er humid bodies, and the ocean guides;
Whoſe waves obſequious ebb, or ſwelling run,
With the declining or increaſing moon;
With reaſon ſeem her empire to maintain,
As miſtreſs of the rivers and the main.
Perhaps her active influences cauſe
Th' alternate flood, and give the billow laws;
The waters ſeem her orders to obey,
And ebb and flow, determin'd by her ſway.
Grant that the deep this foreign ſovereign owns,
That mov'd by her it this and that way runs:
Say, by what force ſhe makes the ocean ſwell;
Does ſhe attract the waters, or impel?
How does ſhe rule the rolling waves, and guide
By fixt and conſtant laws the reſtleſs tide?
Why does ſhe dart her force to that degree,
As gives ſo juſt a motion to the ſea,
That it ſhould flow no more, no more retire,
Than nature's various uſeful ends require?
A Mind Supreme you therefore muſt approve,
Whoſe high command caus'd matter firſt to move:
Who ſtill preſerves its courſe, and, with reſpect
To his wiſe ends, all motions does direct.
He to the ſilver moon this province gave,
And fixt her empire o'er the briny wave;
Endued her with ſuch juſt degrees of power,
As might his aims and wiſe deſigns procure,
Might agitate and work the troubled deep,
And rolling waters from corruption keep,
But not impel them o'er their bounds of ſand,
Nor force the waſteful deluge o'er the land.

BOOK II.

The Argument.

The introduction. The numerous and important bleſſings of religion. The exiſtence of a God demonſtrated, from the wiſdom and deſign which appear in the motions of the heavenly orbs; but more particularly in the ſolar ſyſtem. I. In the ſituation of the ſun, and its due diſtance from the earth. The fatal conſequences of its having been placed otherwiſe than it is. II. In its diurnal motion, whence the change of day and night proceeds: then in its annual motion, whence ariſe the different degrees of heat and cold. The confinement of the ſun between the tropics, not to be accounted for by any philoſophical hypotheſis. The difficulties of the ſame, if the earth moves, and the ſun reſts. The ſpring of the ſun's motion, not to be explained by any irreligious philoſophy. The contemplation of the ſolar light, and the uſes made of it for the end propoſed. The appearances in the ſolar ſyſtem not to be ſolved, but by aſſerting a God. The ſyſtems of Ptolemy, Copernicus, Tycho Brahe, and Kepler, conſidered. The ſolar ſyſtem deſcribed, and compared with the fixed ſtars, which are ſuppoſed centres of the like ſyſtems. Reflections on that compariſon. The hypotheſis of Epicurus, in relation to the motion of the ſun. Wiſdom and deſign diſcovered in the air; in its uſeful ſtructure, its elaſticity, its various meteors; the wind, the rain, thunder, and lightning. A ſhort contemplation of the vegetable kind.

CARUS, by hardy Epicurus taught,
From Greece to Rome his impious ſyſtem brought;
Then war with heaven he did inſulting wage,
And breath'd againſt the gods immortal rage:
See, he exclaims, the ſource of all our woe!
Our fears and ſufferings from religion flow
We grant, a train of miſchiefs oft proceeds
From ſuperſtitious rites and penal creeds;
But view religion in her native charms,
Diſperſing bleſſings with indulgent arms;
From her fair eyes what heavenly rays are ſpread,
What blooming joys ſmile round her bliſsful head!
Offspring divine; by thee we bleſs the cauſe,
Who form'd the world, and rules it by his laws;
His independent being we adore,
Extol his goodneſs, and revere his power;
Our wondering eyes his high perfections view,
The lofty contemplation we purſue,
Till raviſh'd we the great idea find,
Shining in bright impreſſions on our mind.

Inſpir'd by thee, gueſt of celeſtial race,
With generous love, we human-kind embrace;
We provocations unprovok'd receive,
Patient of wrong, and eaſy to forgive;
Protect the orphan, plead the widow's cauſe,
Nor deviate from the line unerring juſtice draws.
Thy luſtre, bleſt effulgence, can diſpel
The clouds of error, and the gloom of hell;
Can to the ſoul impart ethereal light,
Give life divine and intellectual ſight;
Before our raviſh'd eyes thy beams diſplay
The opening ſcenes of bliſs, and endleſs day;
By which incited, we with ardour riſe,
Scorn this inferior ball, and claim the ſkies.
Tyrants to thee a change of nature owe,
Diſmiſs their tortures, and indulgent grow.
Ambitious conquerors in their mad career,
Check'd by thy voice, lay down the ſword and ſpear.
The boldeſt champions of impiety,
Scornful of Heaven, ſubdu'd or won by thee,
Before thy hallow'd altars bend the knee;
Looſe wits, made wiſe, a public good become,
The ſons of pride an humble mien aſſume;
The profligate in morals grows ſevere,
Defrauders juſt, and ſycophants ſincere.
With amorous language, and bewitching ſmiles,
Attractive airs, and all the lover's wiles,
The fair Egyptian Jacob's ſon careſs'd,
Hung on his neck, and languiſh'd on his breaſt;
Courted with freedom now the beauteous ſlave,
Now flattering ſued, and threatening now did rave;
But not the various eloquence of love,
Nor power enrag'd, could his fix'd virtue move.
See, aw'd by Heaven, the blooming Hebrew flies
Her artful tongue, and more perſuaſive eyes;
And, ſpringing from her diſappointed arms,
Prefers a dungeon to forbidden charms.
Stedfaſt in virtue's and his country's cauſe,
Th' illuſtrious founder of the Jewiſh laws,
Who, taught by Heaven, at genuine greatneſs aim'd,
With worthy pride imperial blood diſclaim'd;
Th' alluring hopes of Pharaoh's throne reſign'd,
And the vain pleaſures of a court declin'd;
Pleas'd with obſcure receſs, to eaſe the pain
Of Jacob's race, and break their ſervile chains;
Such generous minds are form'd where bleſt religion reigns.
Ye friends of Epicurus, look around,
All nature view with marks of prudence crown'd:
Mind the wiſe ends, which proper means promote;
See how the different parts for different uſe are wrought;
Contemplate all this conduct and deſign,
Then own and praiſe th' Artificer Divine.
Regard the orb ſublime, in æther borne,
Which the blue regions of the ſkies adorn;
Compar'd with whoſe extent this low-hung ball,
Shrunk to a point, is deſpicably ſmall:
Their number, counting thoſe th' unaided eye
Can ſee, or by invented tubes deſcry,
With thoſe which in the adverſe hemiſphere,
Or near each pole to lands remote appear;
The wideſt ſtretch of human thought exceeds,
And in th' attentive mind amazement breeds;
While theſe ſo numerous, and ſo vaſt of ſize,
In various ways roll through the trackleſs ſkies;
Through croſſing roads perplex'd and intricate,
Perform their ſtages, and their rounds repeat;
None by colliſion from their courſe are driven,
No ſhocks, no conflicts, break the peace of heaven;
No ſhatter'd globes, no glowing fragments fall,
No worlds o'erturn'd cruſh this terreſtrial ball;
In beauteous order all the orbs advance,
And in their mazy complicated dance,
Not in one part of all the pathleſs ſky,
Did any ever halt, or ſtep awry.
When twice ten thouſand men depriv'd of ſight,
To ſome wide vale direct their footſteps right;
Shall there a various figur'd dance eſſay,
Move by juſt ſteps, and meaſur'd time obey;
Shall croſs each other with unerring feet,
Never miſtake their place, and never meet:
Nor ſhall in many years the leaſt decline
From the ſame ground, and the ſame winding line:
Then may in various roads the orbs above,
Without a guide, in perfect concord move;
Then beauty, order, and harmonious laws,
May not require a wiſe Directing Cauſe.
See how th' indulgent father of the day
At ſuch due diſtance does his beams diſplay,
That he his heat may give to ſea and land,
In juſt degrees, as all their wants demand!
But had he, in th' unmeaſurable ſpace
Of æther, choſen a remoter place;
For inſtance, pleas'd with that ſuperior ſeat
Where Saturn, or where Jove, their courſe repeat;
Or had he happen'd farther yet to lie,
In the more diſtant quarters of the ſky;
How ſad, how wild, how exquiſite a ſcene
Of deſolation, had this planet been!
A waſteful, cold, untrodden wilderneſs,
The gloomy haunts of horror and diſtreſs:
Inſtead of woods, which crown the mountain's head,
And the gay honours of the verdant mead;
Inſtead of golden fruits, the garden's pride,
By genial ſhow'rs and ſolar heat ſupply'd;
Icelandian cold, and Hyperborean ſnows,
Eternal froſt, with ice that never flows,
Unſufferable winter, had defac'd
Earth's blooming charms, and made a barren waſte:
No mild indulgent gales would gently bear,
On their ſoft wings, ſweet vapours through the air,
The balmy ſpoils of plants and fragrant flowers,
Of aromatic groves, and myrtle bowers,
Whoſe odoriferous exhalations fan
The flame of life, and recreate beaſt and man;
But ſtorms, ev'n worſe than vex Norwegian waves,
That breed in Scythia's hills, or Lapland caves,
Would through this bleak terreſtrial deſart blow,
Glaze it with ice, or whelm it o'er with ſnow.
Or had the ſun, by like unhappy fate,
Elected to the earth a nearer ſeat,
His beams had cleft the hill, the valley dry'd,
Exhal'd the lake, and drain'd the briny tide:
A heat ſuperior far to that which broils
Borneo, or Sumatra, Indian iſles;
Than that which ripens Guinea's golden ore,
Or burns the Lybian hind, or tans the Moor;

Had laid all nature waſte, and turn'd the land
To hills of cinders, and to vales of ſand;
No beaſts could then have rang'd the leafleſs wood,
Nor finny nations cut the boiling flood:
Birds had not beat the airy road, the ſwains
No flocks had tended on the ruſſet plains.
Thus, had the ſun's bright orb been more remote,
The cold had kill'd; and, if more near, the drought.

Next ſee, Lucretian ſages, ſee the ſun
His courſe diurnal and his annual run.
How in his glorious race he moves along,
Gay as a bridegroom, as a giant ſtrong:
How his unvary'd labour he repeats,
Returns at morning, and at eve retreats;
And by the diſtribution of his light,
Now gives to man the day, and now the night;
Night, when the drowſy ſwain and traveller ceaſe
Their daily toil, and ſoothe their limbs with eaſe;
When all the weary ſons of woe reſtrain
Their yielding cares with ſlumber's ſilken chain,
Solace ſad grief, and lull reluctant pain.

And while the ſun, ne'er covetous of reſt,
Flies with ſuch rapid ſpeed from eaſt to weſt,
In tracks oblique he through the zodiac rolls,
Between the northern and the ſouthern poles:
From which revolving progreſs through the ſkies,
The needful ſeaſons of the year ariſe.
And as he now advances, now retreats,
Whence winter colds proceed, and ſummer heats,
He qualifies and cheers the air by turns,
Which winter freezes, and which ſummer burns.
Thus his kind rays the two extremes reduce,
And keep a temper fit for nature's uſe.
The froſt and drought, by this alternate power,
The earth's prolific energy reſtore.
The lives of man and beaſt demand the change;
Hence fowls the air, and fiſh the ocean, range.
Of heat and cold this juſt ſucceſſive reign,
Which does the balance of the year maintain;
The gardener's hope and farmer's patience props,
Gives vernal verdure and autumnal crops.

Should but the ſun his duty once forget,
Nor from the north, nor from the ſouth retreat:
Should not the beams revive, and ſooth the ſoil,
Mellow the furrow for the ploughman's toil;
A teeming vigour ſhould they not diffuſe,
Ferment the glebe, and genial ſpirits looſe,
Which lay impriſon'd in the ſtiffen'd ground,
Congeal'd with cold, in froſty fetters bound;
Unfruitful earth her wretched fate would mourn,
No graſs would clothe the plains, no fruit the trees adorn.

But did the lingering orb much longer ſtay,
Unmindful of his courſe, and crooked way;
The earth, of dews defrauded, would deteſt
The fatal favour of th' effulgent gueſt;
To diſtant worlds implore him to repair,
And free from noxious beams the ſultry air;
His rays productive now of wealth and joy,
Would then the paſture and the hills annoy,
And with too great indulgence would deſtroy:
In vain the labouring hind would till the land,
Turn up the glebe, and ſow his ſeed in ſand;
The meads would crack, in want of binding dews,
The channels would th' exhaling river loſe:
While in their haunts wilds beaſts expiring lie,
The panting herds would on the paſture die.
But now the ſun at neither tropic ſtays
A longer time than his alternate rays
In ſuch proportion heat and luſtre give,
As do not ruin nature, but revive.

When the bright orb, to ſolace ſouthern ſeats,
Inverts his courſe, and from the north retreats;
As he advances, his indulgent beam
Makes the glad earth with freſh conceptions teem;
Reſtores their leafy honours to the woods,
Flowers to the banks, and freedom to the floods;
Unbinds the turf, exhilarates the plain,
Brings back his labour, and recruits the ſwain;
Through all the ſoil a genial ferment ſpreads,
Regenerates the plants, and new adorns the meads.
The birds on branches perch'd, or on the wing,
At nature's verdant reſtoration ſing,
And with melodious lay ſalute the ſpring.

The heats of ſummer benefits produce
Of equal number, and of equal uſe:
The ſprouting births, and beauteous vernal bloom,
By warmer rays to ripe perfection come;
Th' auſtere and ponderous juices they ſublime,
Make them aſcend the porous ſoil, and climb
The orange-tree, the citron, and the lime;
Which, drunk in plenty by the thirſty root,
Break forth in painted flowers, and golden fruit:
They explicate the leaves, and ripen food
For the ſilk-labourers of the mulberry wood;
And the ſweet liquor on the cane beſtow,
From which prepar'd the luſcious ſugars flow;
With generous juice enrich the ſpreading vine,
And in the grape digeſt the ſprightly wine.
The fragrant trees, which grow by Indian floods,
And in Arabia's aromatic woods,
Owe all their ſpices to the ſummer's heat,
Their gummy tears, and odoriferous ſweat.
Now the bright ſun compacts the precious ſtone,
Imparting radient luſtre, like his own:
He tinctures rubies with their roſy hue,
And on the ſapphire ſpreads a heavenly blue;
For the proud monarch's dazzling crown prepares
Rich orient pearl, and adamantine ſtars.

Next autumn, when the ſun's withdrawing ray
The night enlarges, and contracts the day,
To crown his labour to the farmer yields
The yellow treaſures of his fruitful fields:
Ripens the harveſt for the crooked ſteel,
(While bending ſtalks the rural weapon feel;)
The fragrant fruit for the nice palate fits,
And to the preſs the ſwelling grape ſubmits.

At length, forſaken by the ſolar rays,
See, drooping nature ſickens and decays;
While winter all his ſnowy ſtores diſplays,
In hoary triumph unmoleſted reigns
O'er barren hills, and bleak untrodden plains;
Hardens the glebe, the ſhady grove deforms,
Fetters the floods, and ſhakes the air with ſtorms.
Now active ſpirits are reſtrain'd with cold,
And priſons, cramp'd with ice, the genial captives hold.

The meads their flowery pride no longer wear,
And trees extend their naked arms in air;
The frozen furrow, and the fallow field,
Nor to the spade, nor to the harrow, yield.
Yet in their turn the snows and frosts produce
Various effects, and of important use.
Th' intemperate heats of summer are controll'd
By winter's rigour, and inclement cold,
Which checks contagious spawn, and noxious steams,
The fatal offspring of immoderate beams;
Th' exhausted air with vital nitre fills,
Infection stops, and deaths in embryo kills;
Constrains the glebe, keeps back the hurtful weed,
And fits the furrow for the vernal seed.
The spirits now, as said, imprison'd stay,
Which else, by warmer sun-beams drawn away,
Would roam in air, and dissipated stray.
Thus are the winter frosts to nature kind,
Frosts, which reduce excessive heats, and bind
Prolific ferments in resistless chains,
Whence parent earth her fruitfulness maintains.
To compass all these happy ends, the sun
In winding tracks does through the zodiac run.
You, who so much are vers'd in causes, tell,
What from the tropics can the sun repel?
What vigorous arm, what repercussive blow,
Bandies the mighty globe still to and fro,
Yet with such conduct, such unerring art,
He never did the trackless road desert?
Why does he never in his spiral race
The tropics or the polar circles pass? [trol
What gulfs, what mounds, what terrors can con-
The rushing orb, and make him backward roll?
Why should he halt at either station? why
Not forward run in unobstructive sky?
Can he not pass an astronomic line?
Or does he dread th' imaginary sign;
That he should ne'er advance to either pole,
Nor farther yet in liquid æther roll,
Till he has gain'd some unfrequented place
Lost to the world in vast unmeasur'd space?
If to the old you the new schools prefer,
And to the fam'd Copernicus adhere;
If you esteem that supposition best,
Which moves the earth, and leaves the sun at rest;
With a new veil your ignorance you hide,
Still is the knot as hard to be unty'd;
You change your scheme, but the old doubts remain,
And still you leave th' inquiring mind in pain.
This problem, as philosophers, resolve:
What makes the globe from west to east revolve?
What is the strong impulsive cause, declare,
Which rolls the ponderous orb so swift in air?
To your vain answer will you have recourse,
And tell us 'tis ingenite, active force,
Mobility, or native power to move,
Words which mean nothing, and can nothing prove?
That moving power, that force innate explain,
Or your grave answers are absurd and vain:
We no solution of our question find;
Your words bewilder, not direct the mind.
If you, this rapid motion to procure,
For the hard task employ magnetic power;
Whether that power you at the centre place,
Or in the middle regions of the mass,
Or else, as some philosophers assert,
You give an equal share to every part;
Have you by this the cause of motion shown?
After explaining, is it not unknown?
Since you pretend, by reason's strictest laws,
Of an effect to manifest the cause;
Nature, of wonders so immense a field,
Can none more strange, none more mysterious yield,
None that eludes sagacious reason more
Than this obscure, inexplicable power.
Since you the spring of motion cannot show,
Be just, and faultless ignorance allow;
Say, 'tis obedience to th' Almighty nod,
That 'tis the will, the power, the hand of God.
Philosophers of spreading fame are found,
Who by th' attraction of the orbs around
Would move the earth, and make its course obey
The sun's and moon's inevitable sway.
Some from the pressure and impelling force
Of heavenly bodies would derive its course;
Whilst in the dark and difficult dispute
All are by turns confuted, and confute;
Each can subvert th' opponent's scheme, but none
Has strength of reason to support his own.
The mind employ'd in search of secret things,
To find out motion's cause and hidden springs,
Through all th' ethereal regions mounts on high,
Views all the spheres, and ranges all the sky;
Searches the orbs, and penetrates the air
With unsuccessful toil, and fruitless care;
Till, stopp'd by awful heights, and gulfs immense
Of wisdom, and of vast omnipotence,
She trembling stands, and does in wonder gaze,
Lost in the wide inextricable maze.
See, how the sun does on the middle shine,
And round the globe describe th' æquator line;
By which wise means he can the whole survey
With a direct, or with a slanting ray,
In the succession of a night and day.
Had the north pole been fix'd beneath the sun,
To southern realms the day had been unknown:
If the south pole had gain'd that nearer seat,
The northern climes had met as hard a fate.
And since the space, that lies on either side
The solar orb, is without limits wide;
Grant that the sun had happen'd to prefer
A seat ascant but one diameter,
Lost to the light by that unhappy place
This globe had lain a frozen, lonesome mass.
Behold the light emitted from the sun,
What more familiar, and what more unknown!
While by its spreading radiance it reveals
All nature's face, it still itself conceals.
See how each morn it does its beams display,
And on its golden wings bring back the day!
How soon th' effulgent emanations fly
Through the blue gulf of interposing sky!
How soon their lustre all the region fills,
Smiles on the vallies, and adorns the hills!
Millions of miles, so rapid is their race,
To cheer the earth, they in few moments pass.
Amazing progress! At its utmost stretch,
What human mind can this swift motion reach?
But if, to save so quick a flight, you say
The ever-rolling orb's impulsive ray

On the next threads and filaments does bear
Which form the ſpringy texture of the air,
That thoſe ſtill ſtrike the next, till to the ſight
The quick vibration propagates the light;
'Tis ſtill as hard, if we this ſcheme believe,
The cauſe of light's ſwift progreſs to conceive.
With thought from prepoſſeſſion free, reflect
On ſolar rays, as they the ſight reſpect.
The beams of light had been in vain diſplay'd,
Had not the eye been fit for viſion made:
In vain the author had the eye prepar'd
With ſo much ſkill, had not the light appear'd.
The old and new aſtronomers in vain
Attempt the heavenly motions to explain.
Firſt Ptolemy his ſcheme celeſtial wrought,
And of machines a wild proviſion brought:
Orbs centric and eccentric he prepares,
Cycles and epicycles, ſolid ſpheres,
In order plac'd, and with bright globes inlaid,
To ſolve the tow'rs by heavenly bodies made.
But ſo perplex'd, ſo intricate a frame,
The latter ages with deriſion name.
The comets, which at ſeaſons downward tend,
Then with their flaming equipage aſcend;
Venus, which in the purlieus of the ſun
Does now above him, now beneath him, run;
The ancient ſtructure of the heavens ſubvert,
Rear'd with vaſt labour, but with little art.
Copernicus, who rightly did condemn
This eldeſt ſyſtem, form'd a wiſer ſcheme;
In which he leaves the ſun at reſt, and rolls
The orb terreſtrial on its proper poles;
Which makes the night and day by this career,
And by its ſlow and crooked courſe the year.
The famous Dane, who oft the modern guides,
To earth and ſun their provinces divides:
The earth's rotation makes the night and day;
The ſun revolving through the th' ecliptic way
Effects the various ſeaſons of the year,
Which in their turn for happy ends appear.
This ſcheme or that, which pleaſes beſt, embrace,
Still we the fountain of their motion trace.
Kepler aſſerts theſe wonders may be done
By the magnetic virtue of the ſun,
Which he, to gain his end, thinks fit to place
Full in the centre of that mighty ſpace,
Which does the ſpheres, where planets roll, include,
And leaves him with attractive force endued.
The ſun, thus ſeated, by mechanic laws,
The earth and every diſtant planet draws;
By which attraction all the planets, found
Within his reach, are turn'd in æther round.
If all theſe rolling orbs the ſun obey,
Who holds his empire by magnetic ſway?
Since all are guided with an equal force,
Why are they ſo unequal in their courſe?
Saturn in thirty years his ring completes,
Which ſwifter Jupiter in twelve repeats.
Mars three and twenty months revolving ſpends;
The earth in twelve her annual journey ends.
Venus, thy race in twice four months is run;
For his, Mercurius three demands; the moon
Her revolution finiſhes in one.
If all at once are mov'd, and by one ſpring,
Why ſo unequal is their annual ring?
If ſome, you ſay, preſs'd with a ponderous load
Of gravity, move ſlower in their road,
Becauſe, with weight incumber'd and oppreſt,
Theſe ſluggiſh orbs th' attractive ſun reſiſt;
Till you can weight and gravity explain,
Thoſe words are inſignificant and vain.
If planetary orbs the ſun obey,
Why ſhould the moon diſown his ſovereign ſway?
Why in a whirling eddy of her own
Around the globe terreſtrial ſhould ſhe run?
This diſobedience of the moon will prove
The ſun's bright orb does not the planet move.
Philoſophers may ſpare their toil; in vain
They form new ſchemes, and rack their thoughtful brain,
The cauſe of heavenly motions to explain:
After their various unſucceſsful ways,
Their fruitleſs labour, and inept eſſays,
No cauſe of thoſe appearances they'll find,
But power exerted by th' Eternal Mind;
Which through their roads the orbs celeſtial drives,
And this or that determin'd motion gives.
The Mind Supreme does all his worlds controul,
Which by his order this and that way roll;
From him they take a delegated force,
And by his high command maintain their courſe;
By laws decreed e'er fleeting time begun,
In their fix'd limits they their ſtages run.
But if the earth, and each erratic world,
Around their ſun their proper centre whirl'd,
Compoſe but one extended vaſt machine,
And from one ſpring their motions all begin;
Does not ſo wide, ſo intricate a frame,
Yet ſo harmonious, ſovereign art proclaim?
Is it a proof of judgment to invent
A work of ſpheres involv'd, which repreſent
The ſituation of the orbs above,
Their ſize and number ſhow, and how they move?
And does not in the orbs themſelves appear
A great contrivance, and deſign as clear?
This wide machine the univerſe regard,
With how much ſkill is each apartment rear'd!
The ſun, a globe of fire, a glowing maſs,
Hotter than melting flint, or fluid glaſs,
Of this our ſyſtem holds the middle place.
Mercurius, neareſt to the central ſun,
Does in an oval orbit circling run;
But rarely is the object of our ſight
In ſolar glory ſunk, and more prevailing light.
Venus the next, whoſe lovely beams adorn
As well the dewy eve, as opening morn,
Does her fair orb in beauteous order turn.
The globe terreſtrial next, with ſlanting poles,
And all its ponderous load, unwearied rolls.
Then we behold bright planetary Jove
Sublime in air through his wide province move;
Four ſecond planets his dominion own,
And round him turn, as round the earth the moon.
Saturn, revolving in the higheſt ſphere,
With lingering labour finiſhes his year.
Yet is this mighty ſyſtem, which contains
So many worlds, ſuch vaſt æthereal plains,
But one of thouſands, which compoſe the whole,
Perhaps as glorious, and of worlds as full.

The ſtars, which grace the high expanſion, bright
By their own beams, and unprecarious light,
Though ſome near neighbours ſeem, and ſome diſplay
United luſtre in the milky way,
At a vaſt diſtance from each other lie,
Sever'd by ſpacious voids of liquid ſky.
All theſe illuſtrious worlds, and many more,
Which by the tube aſtronomers explore;
And millions which the glaſs can ne'er deſcry,
Loſt in the wilds of vaſt immenſity;
Are ſuns, are centres, whoſe ſuperior ſway
Planets of various magnitude obey.
If we with one clear comprehenſive ſight
Saw all theſe ſyſtems, all theſe orbs of light;
If we their order and dependence knew,
Had all their motions and their ends in view,
With all the comets which in æther ſtray,
Yet conſtant to their time and to their way;
Which planets ſeem, though rarely they appear,
Rarely approach the radiant ſun ſo near,
That his fair beams their atmoſphere pervade,
Whence their bright hair and flaming trains are made;
Would not this view convincing marks impart
Of perfect prudence, and ſtupendous art?
The maſters form'd in Newton's famous ſchool,
Who does the chief in modern ſcience rule,
Erect their ſchemes by mathematic laws,
And ſolve appearances with juſt applauſe:
Theſe, who have nature's ſteps with care purſued,
That matter is with active force endued,
That all its parts magnetic power exert,
And to each other gravitate, aſſert.
While by this power they on each other act,
They are at once attracted, and attract.
Leſs bulky matter therefore muſt obey
More bulky matter's more engaging ſway;
By this the fabric they together hold,
By this the courſe of heavenly orbs unfold.
Yet theſe ſagacious ſons of ſcience own
Attractive virtue is a thing unknown.
This wondrous power, they piouſly aſſert,
Th' Almighty Author did at firſt impart
To matter in degrees, that might produce
The motions he deſign'd for nature's uſe.
But, leſt we ſhould not here due reverence pay
To learned Epicurus, ſee the way
By which this reaſoner, of ſuch high renown,
Moves through th' ecliptic road the rolling ſun.
Oppreſt with thirſt and heat, to adverſe ſeats
By turns, ſays he, the panting ſun retreats
To ſlake his drought, his vigour to repair
In ſnowy climes, and frozen fields of air;
Where the bright glutton revels without reſt
On his cool banquet, and aërial feaſt;
Still to and fro he does his light convey
Through the ſame track, the ſame unalter'd way,
On luxury intent, and eager of his prey.
But if the ſun is back and forward roll'd,
To treat his thirſty orb with polar cold,
Say, is it not, good Epicurus, ſtrange
He ſhould not once beyond the tropic range,
Where he, to quench his drought ſo much inclin'd,
May ſnowy fields, and nitrous paſtures find,
Meet ſtores of cold ſo greedily purſu'd,
And be refreſh'd with never-waſting food?
Sometimes this wondrous man is pleas'd to ſay,
This way and that ſtrong blaſts the ſun convey:
A northern wind his orb with vigour drives,
Till at the ſouthern tropic it arrives;
Then, wanting breath, and with his toil oppreſt,
He drops his wings, and leaves the air at reſt;
Freſh guſts, now ſpringing from the ſouthern pole,
Aſſault him there, and make him backward roll.
Thus gales alternate through the zodiac blow
The ſailing orb, and waft him to and fro;
While Epicurus, bleſt with thought refin'd,
Makes the vaſt globe the paſtime of the wind.
Were it not idle labour to confute
Notions ſo wild, unworthy of diſpute;
I'd of the learned Epicurus aſk,
If this were for the winds a proper taſk?
Illuſtrious ſage, inform th' inquirer, why
Still from one ſtated point of all the ſky
The fickle meteor ſhould the ſun convey
Through the ſame ſtages of his ſpiral way?
Why in one path, why with ſuch equal pace,
That he ſhould never miſs in all his race,
Of time one minute, or one inch of ſpace?
Remark the air's tranſparent element,
Its curious ſtructure, and its vaſt extent:
Its wondrous web proclaims the loom divine;
Its threads, the hand that drew them out ſo fine.
This thin contexture makes its boſom fit
Celeſtial heat and luſtre to tranſmit;
By which of foreign orbs the riches flow
On this dependent, needy ball below.
Obſerve its parts link'd in ſuch artful ſort,
All are at once ſupported, and ſupport:
The column pois'd ſits hovering on our heads,
And a ſoft burden on our ſhoulders ſpreads;
So the ſide-arches all the weight ſuſtain,
We find no preſſure, and we feel no pain;
Still are the ſubtile ſtrings in tenſion found,
Like thoſe of lutes to juſt proportion wound,
Which of the air's vibration is the ſource,
When it receives the ſtrokes of foreign force.
Let curious minds, who would the air inſpect,
On its elaſtic energy reflect.
The ſecret force through all the frame diffus'd,
By which its ſtrings are from compreſſion loos'd;
The ſpungy parts, now to a ſtraiter ſeat
Are forc'd by cold, and widen'd now by heat;
By turns they all extend, by turns retire,
As nature's various ſervices require;
They now expand to fill an empty ſpace,
Now ſhrink to let a ponderous body paſs.
If raging winds invade the atmoſphere,
Their force its curious texture cannot tear,
Make no diſruption in the threads of air;
Or if it does, thoſe parts themſelves reſtore,
Heal their own wounds, and their own breaches cure.
Hence the melodious tenants of the ſky,
Which haunt inferior ſeats, or ſoar on high,
With eaſe through all the fluid region ſtray,
And through the wide expanſion wing their way;
Whoſe open meſhes let terreſtrial ſteams
Paſs through, entic'd away by ſolar beams;

And thus a road reciprocal displays
To rising vapours, and descending day.
Of heat and light, what ever-during stores,
Brought from the sun's exhaustless golden shores,
Through gulfs immense of intervening air,
Enrich the earth, and every loss repair!
The land, its gainful traffic to maintain,
Sends out crude vapours, in exchange for rain;
The flowery garden, and the verdant mead,
Warm'd by their rays, their exhalations spread,
In showers and balmy dews to be repaid;
The streams, their banks forsaken, upward move,
And flow again in wandering clouds above:
These regions Nature's magazines on high
With all the stores demanded there supply;
Their different steams the air's wide bosom fill,
Moist from the flood, dry from the barren hill;
Materials into meteors to be wrought,
Which back to these terrestrial seats are brought,
By Nature shap'd to various figures, those
The fruitful rain, and these the hail compose,
The snowy fleece, and curious frost-work; these
Produce the dew, and those the gentle breeze:
Some form fierce winds, which o'er the mountain pass,
And beat with vigorous wings the valley's face;
O'er the wide lake and barren desart blow,
O'er Libya's burning sand, and Scythia's snow;
Shake the high cedar, through the forest sweep,
And with their furious breath ferment the deep.
This thin, this soft contexture of the air
Shows the wise Author's providential care,
Who did the wondrous structure so contrive,
That it might life to breathing creatures give;
Might reinspire, and make the circling mass
Through all its winding channels fit to pass.
Had not the Maker wrought the springy frame
Such as it is, to fan the vital flame,
The blood, defrauded of its nitrous food,
Had cool'd and languish'd in th' arterial road:
While the tir'd heart had strove with fruitless pain
To push the lazy tide along the vein.
Of what important use to human kind,
To what great ends subservient, is the wind!
Behold, where'er this active vapour flies,
It drives the clouds, and agitates the skies:
This from stagnation and corruption saves
Th' aërial ocean's ever-rolling waves.
This animals, to succour life, demand;
For, should the air unventilated stand,
The idle deep corrupted would contain
Blue deaths, and secret stores of raging pain;
The scorching sun would with a fatal beam
Make all the void with births malignant teem,
Engender jaundice, spotted torments breed,
And purple plagues, from pestilential seed;
Exhaling vapours would be turn'd to swarms
Of noxious insects, and destructive worms,
More than were rais'd to scourge tyrannic lust,
By Moses' rod, from animated dust.
Another blessing, which the breathing wind
Benevolent conveys to human kind,
Is, that it cools and qualifies the air,
And with soft breezes does the regions cheer,
On which the sun o'er-friendly does display
Heat too prevailing, and redundant day.
Ye swarthy nations of the torrid zone,
How well to you is this great bounty known!
As frequent gales from the wide ocean rise
To fan your air, and moderate your skies;
So constant winds, as well as rivers, flow
From your high hills enrich'd with stores of snow;
For this great end, these hills rise more sublime
Than those erected in a temperate clime.
Had not the Author this provision made,
By which your air is cool'd, your sun allay'd,
Destroy'd by too intense a flame, the land
Had lain a parch'd inhospitable sand.
These districts, which between the tropics lie,
Which scorching beams directly darted fry,
Were thought an uninhabitable seat,
Burnt by the neighbouring orb's immoderate heat:
But the fresh breeze, that from the ocean blows,
From the wide lake, or from the mountain snows,
So sooths the air, and mitigates the sun,
So cures the regions of the sultry zone,
That oft' with Nature's blessings they abound,
Frequent in people, and with plenty crown'd.
As active winds relieve the air and land,
The seas no less their useful blasts demand:
Without this aid, the ship would ne'er advance
Along the deep, and o'er the billow dance,
But lie a lazy and a useless load,
The forest's wasted spoils, the lumber of the flood,
Let but the wind with an auspicious gale,
To shove the vessel, fill the spreading sail,
And see, with swelling canvass wing'd, she flies,
And with her waving streamers sweeps the skies!
Th' adventurous merchant thus pursues his way
Or to the rise, or to the fall of day.
Thus mutual traffic sever'd realms maintain,
And manufactures change to mutual gain;
Each other's growth and arts they sell and buy,
Ease their redundance, and their wants supply.
Ye Britons, who the fruit of commerce find,
How is your isle a debtor to the wind,
Which thither wafts Arabia's fragrant spoils,
Gems, pearls, and spices, from the Indian isles,
From Persia silks, wines from Iberia's shore,
Peruvian drugs, and Guinea's golden ore!
Delights and wealth to fair Augusta flow
From every region whence the winds can blow.
See, how the vapours congregated rear
Their gloomy columns, and obscure the air!
Forgetful of their gravity, they rise,
Renounce the centre, and usurp the skies,
Where, form'd to clouds, they their black lines display,
And take their airy march, as winds convey.
Sublime in air while they their course pursue,
They from their sable fleeces shake the dew
On the parch'd mountain, and with genial rain
Renew the forest, and refresh the plain:
They shed their healing juices on the ground,
Cement the crack, and close the gaping wound.
Did not the vapours, by the solar heat
Thinn'd and exhal'd, rise to their airy seat,
Or not in watery clouds collected fly,
Then form'd to ponderous drops desert the sky;

The fields would no recruits of moiſture find,
But, by the ſun-beams dry'd, and by the wind,
Would never plant, or flower, or fruit, produce,
Or for the beaſt, or for his maſter's uſe.
But in the ſpacious climates, which the rain
Does never bleſs (ſuch is th' Egyptian plain),
With how much art is that defect ſupply'd!
See, how ſome noble river's ſwelling tide,
Augmented by the mountains' melting ſnows,
Breaks from its banks, and o'er the region flows!
Hence fruitful crops and flowery wealth enſue,
And to the ſwain ſuch mighty gains accrue,
He ne'er reproaches Heaven for want of dew.
See, and revere, th' artillery of heaven,
Drawn by the gale, or by the tempeſt driven!
A dreadful fire the floating batteries make,
O'erturn the mountain, and the foreſt ſhake.
This way and that they drive the atmoſphere,
And its wide boſom from corruption clear,
While their bright flame conſumes the ſulphur trains,
And noxious vapours, which infect our veins.
Thus they refine the vital element,
Secure our health, and growing plagues prevent.
Your contemplation farther yet purſue;
The wondrous world of vegetables view!
Obſerve the foreſt oak, the mountain pine,
The towering cedar, and the humble vine,
The bending willow, that o'erſhades the flood,
And each ſpontaneous offspring of the wood!
The oak and pine, which high from earth ariſe,
And wave their lofty heads amidſt the ſkies,
Their parent earth in like proportion wound,
And through crude metals penetrate the ground;
Their ſtrong and ample roots deſcend ſo deep
That fixt and firm they may their ſtation keep,
And the fierce ſhocks of furious winds defy,
With all the outrage of inclement ſky.
But the baſe brier and the noble vine
Their arms around their ſtronger neighbour twine.
The creeping ivy, to prevent its fall,
Clings with its fibrous grapples to the wall.
Thus are the trees of every kind ſecure,
Or by their own, or by a borrow'd power.
But every tree from all its branching roots
Amidſt the glebe ſmall hollow fibres ſhoots;
Which drink with thirſty mouths the vital juice,
And to the limbs and leaves their food diffuſe:
Peculiar pores peculiar juice receive,
To this deny, to that admittance give.
Hence various trees their various fruits produce,
Some for delightful taſte, and ſome for uſe.
Hence ſprouting plants enrich the plain and wood,
For phyſic ſome, and ſome deſign'd for food.
Hence fragrant flowers, with different colours dy'd,
On ſmiling meads unfold their gaudy pride.
Review theſe numerous ſcenes, at once ſurvey
Nature's extended face; then, ſceptics, ſay,
In this wide field of wonders can you find
No art diſcover'd, and no end deſign'd?

BOOK III.

The Argument.

The introduction. Uſeful knowledge firſt purſued by man. Agriculture. Architecture. Sculpture. Painting. Muſic. The Grecian philoſophers firſt engaged in uſeleſs ſpeculations. The abſurdity of aſſerting the ſelf-exiſtent, independent, and eternal being of atoms, according to the ſcheme of Epicurus. Anſwer to the objections of atheiſts to the ſcheme of creation aſſerted in the two former books. The objections brought by Lucretius againſt creation, from the neceſſity of pre-exiſtent matter for the formation of all kinds of beings; from the pretended unartful contrivance of the world; from thorns, briers, and noxious weeds; from ſavage beaſts, ſtorms, thunder, diſeaſes; from the painful birth and the ſhort life of man; from the inequality of heat and cold in different climates; anſwered. The objections of the Pyrrhonians, or Sceptics, anſwered. A reply to thoſe who aſſert all things owe their being and their motions to nature. Their different and ſenſeleſs account of that word. More apparent and eminent ſkill and wiſdom expreſſed in the works of nature than in thoſe of human art. The unreaſonableneſs of denying ſkill and deſign in the author of thoſe works. Vaninus, Hobbes, and Spinoſa, conſidered.

Ere vain philoſophy had rear'd her ſchool,
Whoſe chiefs imagin'd realms of ſcience rule,
With idle toil form viſionary ſchemes,
And wage eternal war for rival dreams;
Studious of good, man diſregarded fame,
And uſeful knowledge was his eldeſt aim:
Through metaphyſic wilds he never flew,
Nor the dark haunts of ſchool chimæras knew,
But had alone his happineſs in view.
He milk'd the lowing herd, he preſs'd the cheeſe,
Folded the flock, and ſpun the woolly fleece.
In urns the bees delicious dews he lay'd,
Whoſe kindling wax invented day diſplay'd;
Wreſted their iron entrails from the hills,
Then with the ſpoils his glowing forges fills;
And ſhap'd with vigorous ſtrokes the ruddy baſe
To rural arms, unconſcious yet of war.

He made the ploughshare in the furrow shine,
And learn'd to sow his bread, and plant his vine.
Now verdant food adorn'd the garden beds,
And fruitful trees shot up their branching heads;
Rich balm from groves, and herbs from grassy plains,
His fever sooth'd, or heal'd his wounded veins.
Our fathers next, in architecture skill'd,
Cities for use, and forts for safety build:
Then palaces and lofty domes arose,
These for devotion, and for pleasure those.
Their thoughts were next to artful sculpture turn'd,
Which now the palace, now the dome adorn'd.
The pencil then did growing fame acquire,
Then was the trumpet heard, and tuneful lyre,
One did the triumph sing, and one the war inspire.

Greece did at length a learned race produce,
Who needful science mock'd, and arts of use,
Consum'd their fruitless hours in eager chase
Of airy notions, through the boundless space
Of speculation, and the darksome void,
Where wrangling wits, in endless strife employ'd,
Mankind with idle subtilties embroil,
And fashion systems with romantic toil;
These with the pride of dogmatizing schools
Impos'd on nature arbitrary rules;
Forc'd her their vain inventions to obey,
And move as learned frenzy trac'd the way:
Above the clouds while they presum'd to soar,
Her trackless heights ambitious to explore,
And heaps of undigested volumes writ,
Illusive notions of fantastic wit;
So long they Nature search'd, and mark'd her laws,
They lost the knowledge of th' Almighty cause.
Th' erroneous dictates of each Grecian sage
Renounc'd the doctrines of the eldest age.
Yet these their matchless science did proclaim,
Usurp distinction, and appropriate fame.
But though their schools produc'd no nobler fruit
Than empty schemes, and triumphs of dispute;
The notions which arise from Nature's light
As well adorn the mind, as guide her right,
Enlarge her compass, and improve her sight.
These ne'er the breast with vain ambition fire,
But banish pride, and modest thoughts inspire.
By her inform'd, we blest religion learn,
Its glorious object by her aid discern;
The rolling worlds around us we survey,
Th' alternate sovereigns of the night and day;
View the wide earth adorn'd with hills and woods,
Rich in her herds, and fertile by her floods;
Walk through the deep apartments of the main,
Ascend the air to visit clouds and rain;
And, while we ravish'd gaze on Nature's face,
Remark her order, and her motions trace,
The long coherent chain of things we find
Leads to a Cause Supreme, a wise Creating Mind.
You, who the being of a God disclaim,
And think mere chance produc'd this wondrous frame;
Say, did you e'er reflect, Lucretian tribe,
To matter what perfections you ascribe?
Can you to dust such veneration show?
An atom with such privilege endow,
That from its nature's pure necessity
It should exist, and no corruption see?
Since your first atoms independent are,
And not each other's being prop and bear,
And since to this it is fortuitous
That others should existence have; suppose
You in your mind one atom should remove
From all the troops, that in the vacant strove,
Cannot our thought conceive one atom less?
If so, you Grecian sages must confess
That matter, which you independent name,
Cannot a being necessary claim;
For what has being from necessity,
It is impossible it should not be.
Why has an atom this one place possest
Of all the empty void, and not the rest?
If by its nature's force 'tis present here,
By the same force it must be every where;
Can beings be confin'd, which necessary are?
If a first body may to any place
Be not determin'd, in the boundless space,
'Tis plain, it then may absent be from all;
Who then will this a self-existence call?
As time does vast eternity regard,
So place is with infinitude compar'd:
A being then, which never did commence,
Must, as eternal, likewise be immense.
What cause within, or what without, is found,
That can a being uncreated bound?
None that's internal, for it has no cause;
Nor can it be controll'd by foreign laws,
For then it clearly would dependent be
On force superior, which will ne'er agree
With self-existence and necessity.
Absurdly then to atoms you assign
Such powers, and such prerogatives divine.
Thus while the notion of a God you flight,
Yourselves (who vainly think you reason right)
Make vile material Gods, in number infinite.
Now let us, as 'tis just, in turn prepare
To stand the foe, and wage defensive war.
Lucretius first, a mighty hero, springs
Into the field, and his own triumph sings.
He brings, to make us from our ground retire,
The reasoner's weapons, and the poet's fire.
The tuneful sophist thus his battle forms,
Our bulwarks thus in polish'd armour storms:
To parent matter things their being owe,
Because from nothing no productions flow;
And, if we grant no pre-existent seed,
Things, different things, from what they do, might breed,
And any thing from any thing proceed;
The spicy groves might Scythia's hills adorn,
The thistle might the amarauth have borne,
The vine the lemon, and the grape the thorn;
Herds from the hills, men from the seas might rise,
From woods the whales, and lions from the skies.
Th' elated bard here, with a conqueror's air,
Disdainful smiles, and bids his foes despair.
But, Carus, here you use poetic charms,
And not assail us with the reasoner's arms.
Where all is clear, you fancy'd doubts remove,
And what we grant with ease, with labour prove;

What you would prove, but cannot, you decline;
But chooſe a thing you can, and there you ſhine.
Tell us, fam'd Roman, was it e'er denied,
That ſeeds for ſuch productions are ſupplied?
That Nature always muſt materials find
For beaſts and trees, to propagate their kind?
All generation, the rude peaſant knows,
A pre-exiſtent matter muſt ſuppoſe.
But what to Nature firſt her being gave?
Tell, whence your atoms their exiſtence have?
We aſk you, whence the ſeeds conſtituent ſpring
Of every plant, and every living thing?
Whence every creature ſhould produce its kind,
And to its proper ſpecies be confin'd?
To anſwer this, Lucretius, will require
More than ſweet numbers and poetic fire.
But ſee how well the poet will ſupport
His cauſe, if we the argument retort.
If chance alone could manage, ſort, divide,
And, beings to produce, your atoms guide;
If caſual concourſe did the world compoſe,
And things from hits fortuitous aroſe;
Then any thing might come from any thing;
For how from chance can conſtant order ſpring?
The foreſt oak might bear the bluſhing roſe,
And fragrant myrtles thrive in Ruſſian ſnows;
The fair pomegranate might adorn the pine,
The grape the bramble, and the ſloe the vine;
Fiſh from the plains, birds from the floods might riſe,
And lowing herds break from the ſtarry ſkies.
But, ſee, the chief does keener weapons chooſe,
Advances bold, and thus the fight renews:
" If I were doubtful of the ſource and ſpring
" Whence things ariſe, I from the ſkies could bring,
" And every part of nature, proofs, to ſhow
" The world to gods cannot its being owe;
" So full of faults is all th' unartful frame:
" Firſt we the air's unpeopled deſert blame.
" Brute beaſts poſſeſs the hill, and ſhady wood;
" Much do the lakes, but more the ocean's flood
" (Which ſevers realms, and ſhores divided leaves)
" Take from the land by interpoſing waves;
" One third, by freezing cold and burning heat,
" Lies a deform'd, inhoſpitable ſeat;
" The reſt, unlabour'd, would by nature breed
" Wild brambles only, and the noxious weed,
" Did not induſtrious man, with endleſs toil,
" Extort his food from the reluctant ſoil;
" Did not the farmer's ſteel the furrow wound,
" And harrows tear the harveſt from the ground,
" The earth would no ſpontaneous fruits afford
" To man, her vain imaginary lord.
" Oft', when the labouring hind has plough'd the field,
" And forc'd the glebe unwillingly to yield,
" When green and flowery nature crowns his hope
" With the gay promiſe of a plenteous crop,
" The fruits (ſad ruin!) periſh on the ground,
" Burnt by the ſun, or by the deluge drown'd;
" Or ſoon decay, by ſnows immoderate chill'd,
" By winds are blaſted, or by lightning kill'd.
" Nature, beſides, the ſavage beaſt ſuſtains,
Breeds in the hills the terror of the plains,
" To man a fatal race. Could this be ſo,
" Did gracious gods diſpoſe of things below?
" Their proper plagues with annual ſeaſons come,
" And deaths untimely blaſt us in the bloom.
" Man at his birth (unhappy ſon of grief!)
" Is helpleſs caſt on the wide coaſts of life,
" In want of all things whence our comforts flow;
" A ſad and moving ſpectacle of woe.
" Infants in ill-prefaging cries complain,
" As conſcious of a coming life of pain.
" All things mean time to beaſts kind Nature grants,
" Prevents their ſufferings, and ſupplies their wants;
" Brought forth with eaſe, they grow, and feed, and ſkip,
" No dangling nurſe, or jingling gewgaw, need;
" In caves they lurk, or o'er the mountains range,
" Nor ever through the year their garment change;
" Unvers'd in arms, and ignorant of war,
" They need no forts, and no invaſion fear;
" Whate'er they want, from Nature's hand they gain;
" The life ſhe gave, ſhe watches to maintain."
Thus impotent in ſenſe, though ſtrong in rage,
The daring Roman does the gods engage:
But undiſmay'd we face th' intrepid foe,
Suſtain his onſet, and thus ward the blow.
Suppoſe defects in this terreſtrial ſeat,
That nature is not, as you urge, complete;
That a divine and wiſe Artificer
Might greater wonders of his art confer,
And might with eaſe on man, and man's abode,
More bounty, more perfection, have beſtow'd;
If in this lower world he has not ſhown
His utmoſt ſkill, ſay, has he therefore none?
We in productions arbitrary ſee
Marks of perfection, different in degree.
Though maſters now more ſkill, now leſs impart,
Yet are not all their works the works of art?
Do poets ſtill ſublimer ſubjects ſing,
Still ſtretch to heaven a bold aſpiring wing,
Nor e'er deſcend to flocks and labouring ſwains,
Frequent the floods, or range the humble plains?
Did, Grecian Phidias, all thy pieces ſhine
With equal beauty? or, Apelles, thine?
Or Raphael's pencil never chooſe to fall?
Say, are his works tranſfigurations all?
Did Buonorota never build, O Rome,
A meaner ſtructure, than thy wondrous dome?
Though, in their works applauded as their beſt,
Greater deſign and genius are expreſt,
Yet is there none acknowledg'd in the reſt?
In all the parts of Nature's ſpacious ſphere
Of art, ten thouſand miracles appear:
And will you not the Author's ſkill adore,
Becauſe you think he might diſcover more?
You own a watch th' invention of the mind,
Though for a ſingle motion 'tis deſign'd,
As well as that, which is with greater thought,
With various ſprings, for various motions wrought.
An independent, wiſe, and conſcious cauſe,
Who freely acts by arbitrary laws,
Who at connexion and at order aims,
Creatures diſtinguiſh'd in perfection frames.
Unconſcious cauſes only ſtill impart
Their utmoſt ſkill, their utmoſt power exert.

Thoſe, which can freely chooſe, diſcern, and know,
In acting can degrees of vigour ſhow,
And more or leſs of art or care beſtow.
If all perfection were in all things ſhown,
All beauty, all variety, were gone.
As this inferior habitable ſeat
By different parts is made one whole complete;
So our low world is only one of thoſe,
Which the capacious univerſe compoſe.
Now to the univerſal whole advert;
The earth regard as of that whole a part,
In which wide frame more noble worlds abound;
Witneſs, ye glorious orbs, which hang around,
Ye ſhining planets, that in æther ſtray,
And thou, bright lord and ruler of the day!
Witneſs, ye ſtars, which beautify the ſkies,
How much do your vaſt globes in height and ſize,
In beauty and magnificence outgo
Our ball of earth, that hangs in clouds below!
Between yourſelves too is diſtinction found,
Of different bulk, with different glory crown'd;
The people, which in your bright regions dwell,
Muſt this low world's inhabitants excel;
And, ſince to various planets they agree,
They from each other muſt diſtinguiſh'd be,
And own perfections different in degree.
When we on fruitful Nature's care reflect,
And her exhauſtleſs energy reſpect,
That ſtocks this globe, which you Lucretians call
The world's coarſe dregs, which to the bottom fall,
With numerous kinds of life, and bounteous fills
With breathing gueſts the vallies, floods, and hills;
We may pronounce each orb ſuſtains a race
Of living things adapted to the place.
Were the refulgent parts and moſt refin'd
Only to ſerve the dark and baſe deſign'd?
Were all the ſtars, whoſe beauteous realms of light,
At diſtance only hung to ſhine by night,
And with their twinkling beams to pleaſe our ſight?
How many roll in æther, which the eye
Could ne'er, till aided by the glaſs, deſcry;
And which no commerce with the earth maintain!
Are all thoſe glorious empires made in vain?
Now, as I ſaid, the globe terreſtrial view,
As of the whole a part, a mean one too.
Though 'tis not like th' æthereal worlds refin'd,
Yet is it juſt, and finiſh'd in its kind;
Has all perfection which the place demands,
Where in coherence with the reſt it ſtands.
Were to your view the univerſe diſplay'd,
And all the ſcenes of nature open laid;
Could you their place, proportion, harmony,
Their beauty, order, and dependence, ſee,
You'd grant our globe had all the marks of art,
All the perfection due to ſuch a part,
Though not with luſtre, or with magnitude,
Like the bright ſtars, or brighter ſun, endued.
You oft' declaim on man's unhappy fate;
Inſulting, oft' demand in this debate,
If the kind gods could ſuch a wretch create?
But whence can this unhappineſs ariſe?
You ſay, as ſoon as born, he helpleſs lies,
And mourns his woes in ill-preſaging cries.
But does not Nature for the child prepare
The parent's love, the nurſe's tender care,
Who, of their own forgetful, ſeek his good,
Enfold his limbs in bands, and fill his veins with food?
That man is frail and mortal, is confeſt;
Convulſions rack his nerves, and cares his breaſt;
His flying life is chas'd by ravening pains,
Through all its doubles in the winding veins;
Within himſelf he ſure deſtruction breeds,
And ſecret torment in his bowels feeds;
By cruel tyrants, by the ſavage beaſt,
Or his own fiercer paſſions he's oppreſt;
Now breathes malignant air, now poiſon drinks;
By gradual death, or by untimely, ſinks.
But theſe objectors muſt the cauſe upbraid
That has not mortal man immortal made;
For, if he once muſt feel the fatal blow,
Is it of great importance when, or how?
Should the Lucretian lingering life maintain
Through numerous ages, ignorant of pain,
Still might the diſcontented murmurer cry,
Ah, hapleſs fate of man! ah, wretch, doom'd once to die!
But oh! how ſoon would you, who thus complain,
And Nature's cauſe of cruelty arraign,
By reaſon's ſtandard this miſtake correct,
And ceaſe to murmur, did you once reflect,
That death removes us only from our ſeat,
Does not extinguiſh life, but change its ſtate.
Then are diſplay'd (oh raviſhing ſurpriſe!)
Fair ſcenes of bliſs, and triumphs in the ſkies;
To which admitted, each ſuperior mind,
By virtue's vital energy refin'd,
Shines forth with more than ſolar glory bright,
And, cloth'd with robes of beatific light,
His hours in heavenly tranſports does employ,
Young with immortal bloom from living ſtreams of joy.
You aſk us, why the ſoil the thiſtle breeds?
Why its ſpontaneous births are thorns and weeds?
Why for the harveſt it the harrow needs?
The Author might a nobler world have made,
In brighter dreſs the hills and vales array'd,
And all its face in flowery ſcenes diſplay'd:
The glebe untill'd might plenteous crops have borne,
And brought forth ſpicy groves inſtead of thorn;
Rich fruit and flowers, without the gardener's pains,
Might every hill have crown'd, have honour'd all the plains:
This nature might have boaſted, had the mind,
Who form'd the ſpacious univerſe, deſign'd
That man, from labour free as well as grief,
Should paſs in lazy luxury his life.
But he his creature gave a fertile ſoil,
Fertile, but not without the owner's toil;
That ſome reward his induſtry ſhould crown,
And that his food in part might be his own.
But while, inſulting, you arraign the land,
Aſk why it wants the plough, or labourer's hand.

Kind to the marble rocks, you ne'er complain
That they without the ſculptor's ſkill and pain
No perfect ſtatue yield, no baſſe relieve,
Or finiſh'd column for the palace give;
Yet if from hills unlabour'd figures came,
Man might have eaſe enjoy'd, though never fame.
You may the world of more defects upbraid,
That other works by Nature are unmade;
That ſhe did never at her own expence
A palace rear, and in magnificence
Out-rival art, to grace the ſtately rooms;
That ſhe no caſtle builds, no lofty domes.
Had Nature's hand theſe various works prepar'd,
What thoughtful care, what labour had been ſpar'd!
But then no realm would one great maſter ſhow,
No Phidias Greece, and Rome no Angelo.
With equal reaſon too you might demand,
Why boats and ſhips require the artiſt's hand?
Why generous Nature did not theſe provide
To paſs the ſtanding lake, or flowing tide?
You ſay the hills, which high in air ariſe,
Harbour in clouds, and mingle with the ſkies,
The earth's diſhonour and encumbering load,
Of many ſpacious regions man defraud,
For beaſts and birds of prey a deſolate abode.
But can th' objector no convenience find
In mountains, hills, and rocks, which gird and bind
The mighty frame, that elſe would be disjoin'd?
Do not thoſe heaps the raging tide reſtrain,
And for the dome afford the marble vein?
Does not the river from the mountain flow,
And bring down riches to the vale below?
See how the torrent rolls the golden ſand
From the high ridges to the flater land.
The lofty lines abound with endleſs ſtore
Of mineral treaſure, and metallic ore;
With precious veins of ſilver, copper, tin,
Without how barren, yet how rich within!
They bear the pine, the oak and cedar yield,
To form the palace, and the navy build.
When the inclement meteors you accuſe,
And aſk if gracious God would ſtorms produce;
You ne'er reflect, that by the driving wind
The air from noxious vapours is refin'd;
Freed from the putrid ſeeds of pain and death,
That living creatures might not, by their breath,
Through their warm veins, inſtead of vital food,
Diſperſe contagion, and corrupt their blood.
Without the wind, the ſhip were made in vain,
Adventurous merchants could not croſs the main,
Nor ſever'd realms their gainful trade maintain.
Then with this wiſe reflection you diſturb
Your anxious thought, that our terreſtrial orb
In many parts is not by man poſſeſt,
With too much heat, or too much cold, oppreſt.
But in miſtake you this objection found:
Unnumber'd iſles and ſpacious tracts of ground,
Which feel the ſcorching ſun's direct beam,
And did to you inhoſpitable ſeem,
With tawny nations, or with black, abound,
With noble rivers lav'd, with plenty crown'd;
And regions too from the bright orb remote
Are peopled, which you unfrequented thought.

But could Lucretius on the ſun reflect,
His proper diſtance from the earth reſpect,
Obſerve his conſtant road, his equal pace,
His round diurnal, and his annual race;
Could he regard the nature of the light,
Its beauteous luſtre, and its rapid flight,
And its relation to the ſenſe of ſight;
Could he to all theſe miracles advert,
And not in all perceive one ſtroke of art?
Grant, that the motions of the ſun are ſuch,
That ſome have light too little, ſome too much:
Grant, that in different tracts he might have roll'd,
And given each clime more equal heat and cold:
Yet view the revolutions, as they are,
Does there no wiſdom, no deſign appear?
Could any but a knowing, prudent Cauſe
Begin ſuch motions, and aſſign ſuch laws?
If the Great Mind had form'd a different frame,
Might not your wanton wit the ſyſtem blame?
Though here you all perfection ſhould not find,
Yet is it all th' Eternal Will deſign'd:
It is a finiſh'd world, and perfect in its kind.
Not that its regions every charm include,
With which celeſtial empires are endued;
Nor is conſummate goodneſs here conferr'd,
If we perfection abſolute regard;
But what's before aſſerted, we repeat,
Of the vaſt whole it is a part complete.
But ſince you are diſpleas'd the partial ſun
Is not indulgent to the frigid zone;
Suppoſe more ſuns in proper orbits roll'd,
Diſſolv'd the ſnows, and chas'd the polar cold;
Or grant that this revolv'd in ſuch a way,
As equal heat to all he might convey,
And give the diſtant poles their ſhare of day;
Obſerve how prudent Nature's icy hoard,
With all her nitrous ſtores, would be devour'd;
Then would unbalanc'd heat licentious reign,
Crack the dry hill, and chap the ruſſet plain;
Her moiſture all exhal'd, the cleaving earth
Would yield no fruit, and bear no verdant birth.
You of the pools and ſpacious lakes complain,
And of the liquid deſerts of the main,
As hurtful theſe, or uſeleſs, you arraign.
Beſides the pleaſure which the lakes afford,
Are not their waves with fiſh delicious ſtor'd?
Does not the wide capacious deep the ſky
With dewy clouds, the earth with rain, ſupply?
Do not the rivers, which the valley lave,
Creep through the ſecret ſubterranean cave,
And to the hills convey the refluent wave?
You then muſt own, the earth the ocean needs,
Which thus the lake recruits, the fountain feeds.
The noxious plant, and ſavage animal,
Which you the earth's reproach and blemiſh call,
Are uſeful various ways; if not for food,
For manufactures or for medicine good.
Thus we repel with reaſon, not evade,
The bold objections by Lucretius made.
Pyrrhonians next, of like ambitious aim,
Wanton of wit, and panting after fame,
Who ſtrove to ſink the ſects of chief renown,
And on their ruin'd ſchools to raiſe their own;
Boldly preſum'd, with rhetorician pride,
To hold of any queſtion either ſide.

They thought, in every ſubject of debate,
In either ſcale the proof of equal weight.
Aſk, if a God exiſtent they allow?
The vain declaimers will attempt to ſhow,
That, whether you renounce him, or aſſert,
There's no ſuperior proof on either part.
Suppoſe a God, we muſt, ſay they, conclude
He lives; if ſo, he is with ſenſe endued;
And, if with ſenſe endued, may pain perceive,
And what can ſuffer pain may ceaſe to live.
Pyrrhonians, we a living God adore,
An unexhauſted ſpring of vital power;
But his immortal, uncreated life
No torment feels, and no deſtructive grief.
Does he by different organs taſte or hear?
Or by an eye do things to him appear?
Has he a muſcle, or extended nerve,
Which to impart or pain or pleaſure ſerve?
Of all perfection poſſible poſſeſt,
He finds no want, nor is with woe oppreſt.
Though we can ne'er explore the life divine,
And ſound the bleſt abyſs by reaſon's line,
Yet 'tis not, mortal man, a tranſient life, like thine.
Others, to whom the whole mechanic tribe
With an harmonious ſympathy ſubſcribe,
Nature with empire univerſal crown,
And this high queen the world's Creator own.
If you what builder rear'd the world demand,
They ſay 'twas done by Nature's powerful hand;
If whence its order and its beauty roſe,
Nature, they ſay, did ſo the frame diſpoſe;
If what its ſteady motions does maintain,
And holds of cauſes and effects the chain,
O'er all her works this Sovereign Cauſe preſides,
Upholds the orbs, and all their motions guides.
Since to her bounty we ſuch bleſſings owe,
Our generous Benefactor let us know.
When the word Nature you expreſs, declare,
Form'd in your minds what image does appear?
Can you that term of doubtful ſound explain?
Show it no idle offſpring of the brain?
Sometimes by Nature your enlighten'd ſchool
Intends of things the univerſal whole;
Sometimes it is the order, that connects,
And holds the chain of cauſes and effects:
Sometimes it is the manner and the way,
In which thoſe cauſes do their force convey,
And in effects their energy diſplay.
That ſhe's the work itſelf, you oft aſſert,
As oft th' artificer, as oft the art;
That is, that we may Nature clearly trace,
And by her marks diſtinctly know her face;
She's now the building, now the architect,
And now the rule which does his hand direct.
But let this empreſs be whate'er you pleaſe;
Let her be all or any one of theſe;
She is with reaſon, or ſhe's not, endu'd!
If you the firſt affirm, we thence conclude
A God, whoſe being you oppoſe, you grant;
But if this mighty queen does reaſon want,
How could this noble fabric be deſign'd,
And faſhion'd by a Maker brute and blind?
Could it of art ſuch miracles invent,
And raiſe a beauteous world of ſuch extent?
Still at the helm does this dark pilot ſtand,
And with a ſteady, never-erring hand,
Steer all the floating worlds, and their ſet courſe command?
That clearer ſtrokes of maſterly deſign,
Of wiſe contrivance, and of judgment, ſhine
In all the parts of Nature, we aſſert,
Than in the brighteſt works of human art:
And ſhall not thoſe be judg'd th' effect of thought,
As well as theſe with ſkill inferior wrought?
Let ſuch a ſphere to India be convey'd,
As Archimede or modern Hugens made;
Will not the Indian, though untaught and rude,
This work th' effect of wiſe deſign conclude?
Is there ſuch ſkill in imitation ſhown?
And in the things, we imitate, is none?
Are not our arts, by artful Nature taught,
With pain and careful obſervation ſought?
Behold the painter, who with Nature vies:
See his whole ſoul exerted in his eyes!
He views her various ſcenes, intent to trace
The maſter lines, that form her finiſh'd face:
Are thought and conduct in the copy clear,
While none in all th' original appear?
Tell us, what maſter, for mechanics fam'd,
Has one machine ſo admirably fram'd,
Where you will art in ſuch perfection grant,
As in a living creature or a plant?
Declare, what curious workmanſhip can vie
Or with a hand or foot, an ear, or eye?
That can for ſkill as much applauſe deſerve,
As the fine texture of the fibrous nerve;
Or the ſtupendous ſyſtem, which contains
Th' arterial channels, or the winding veins?
What artificial frame, what inſtrument,
Did one ſuperior genius yet invent,
Which to the bones or muſcles is preferr'd,
If you their order, form, or uſe, regard?
Why then to works of nature is aſſign'd
An Author unintelligent and blind,
When ours proceed from choice and conſcious mind?
To this you ſay, that Nature's are indeed
Moſt artful works, but then they ne'er proceed
From Nature acting with deſign and art,
Who, void of choice, her vigour does exert;
And by unguided motion things produce,
Regardleſs of their order, end, or uſe.
By Tully's mouth thus Cotta does diſpute,
But thus, with eaſe, the Roman we confute.
Say, if in artful things no art is ſhown,
What are the certain marks, that make it known?
How will you artful from unartful bound,
And not th' ideas in our mind confound?
Than this no truth diſplays before our ſight
A brighter beam, or more convincing light;
That ſkilful works ſuppoſe a ſkilful Cauſe,
Which acts by choice, and moves by prudent laws.
Where you, unleſs you are as matter blind,
Conduct and beauteous diſpoſition find,
Conſpiring order, fitneſs, harmony,
Uſe, and convenience; will you not agree
That ſuch effects could not be undeſign'd,
Nor could proceed but from a knowing mind?

Old ſyſtems you may try, or new ones raiſe,
May ſhift and wind, and plot a thouſand ways;
May various words, and forms of diction uſe,
And with a different cant th' unjudging ear amuſe;
You may affirm, that chance did things create,
Or let it nature be, or be it fate;
Body alone, inert and brute, you'll find,
The cauſe of all things is by you aſſign'd.
And, after all your fruitleſs toil if you
A Cauſe diſtinct from matter will allow,
It muſt be conſcious, not like matter blind,
And ſhow you grant a God, by granting mind.
Vaninus next, a hardy modern chief,
A bold oppoſer of Divine Belief,
Attempts religion's fences to ſubvert,
Strong in his rage, but deſtitute of art:
In impious maxims fix'd, he Heaven defy'd,
An unbelieving, anti-martyr dy'd.
Strange, that an atheiſt pleaſure ſhould refuſe,
Relinquiſh life, and death in torment chooſe!
Of ſcience what a deſpicable ſhare
Vaninus own'd, his publiſh'd dreams declare.
Let impious wits applaud a godleſs mind,
As bleſt with piercing ſight, and ſenſe refin'd,
Contriv'd and wrought by Nature's careful hand,
All the proud ſchools of learning to command;
Let them pronounce each patron of their cauſe
Claims by diſtinguiſh'd merit juſt applauſe;
Yet I this writer's want of ſenſe arraign,
Treat all his empty pages with diſdain,
And think a grave reply miſ-ſpent and vain:
To borrow light, his error to amend,
I would the atheiſt to Vaninus ſend
At length Britannia's ſoil, immortal ſhame!
Brought forth a ſage of celebrated name,
Who with contempt on bleſt religion trod,
Mock'd all her precepts, and renounc'd his God.
As awful ſhades and horrors of the night
Diſturb the mother, and the child affright;
Who ſee dire ſpectres through the gloomy air
In threatening forms advance, and ſhuddering hear
The groans of wandering ghoſts, and yellings of deſpair:
From the ſame ſpring, he ſays, devotion flows,
Conſcience of guilt from dread of vengeance roſe;
Religion is the creature of the ſpleen,
And troubled fancy forms the world unſeen;
That timorous minds, with ſelf-tormenting care,
Create thoſe awful phantoms which they fear.
Such arms were us'd by impious chiefs of old,
Vain as this modern hero, and as bold.
Who would not this philoſopher adore,
For finding worlds diſcover'd long before?
Can he one flower in all his garden ſhow,
Which in his Grecian maſter's did not grow?
And yet, imperious, with a teacher's air,
Boaſtful, he claims a right to wiſdom's chair;
Gaſping with ardent thirſt of falſe renown,
With Grecian wreaths he does his temples crown,
Triumphs with borrow'd ſpoils, and trophies not his own
The world, he grants, with clouds was overſpread;
Truth ne'er erected yet her ſtarry head,
Till he, bright genius, roſe to chaſe the night,
And through all nature ſhone with new-ſprung light.
But let th' inquirer know, proud Briton! why
Hope ſhould not gods, as well as fear ſupply;
Does not th' idea of a God include
The notion of beneficent and good;
Of one to mercy, not revenge, inclin'd,
Able and willing to relieve mankind?
And does not this idea more appear
The object of our hope, than of our fear?
Then tell us, why this paſſion, more than that,
Should build their altars, and the gods create?
But let us grant the weak and timorous mind
To ſuperſtitious terrors is inclin'd;
That horrid ſcenes, and monſters form'd in air,
By night the children and the mother ſcare;
That apparitions, by a fever bred,
Or by the ſpleen's black vapours, fill the head;
Does that affect the ſage of ſenſe refin'd,
Whoſe body's healthful, and ſerene his mind?
Yet more, inſulting Briton! let us try
Your reaſon's force, your arguments apply.
You ſay, ſince ſpectres from the fancy flow,
To timorous fancy gods their being owe;
Since phantoms to the weak ſeem real things,
Religion from miſtake and weakneſs ſprings.
But though the vulgar have illuſions ſeen,
Thought objects were without that were within;
Yet we from hence abſurdly ſhould conclude,
All objects of the mind the mind delude:
That our ideas idle are, that none
Were ever real, and that nothing's known.
But, leaving phantoms and illuſive fear,
Let us at reaſon's judgment-ſeat appear;
There let the queſtion be ſeverely try'd;
By an impartial ſentence we abide:
Th' Eternal Mind's exiſtence we ſuſtain,
By proofs ſo full, by evidence ſo plain,
That none of all the ſciences have ſhown
Such demonſtration of the truths they own.
Spinoſa next, to hide his black deſign,
And to his ſide th' unwary to incline,
For heaven his enſigns treacherous diſplays,
Declares for God, while he that God betrays;
For whom he's pleas'd ſuch evidence to bring,
As ſaves the name, while it ſubverts the thing.
Now hear his labour'd ſcheme of impious uſe:
No ſubſtance can another e'er produce;
Subſtance no limit, no confinement, knows,
And its exiſtence from its nature flows;
The ſubſtance of the univerſe is one,
Which is the ſelf-exiſtent God alone.
The ſpheres of æther, which the world encloſe,
And all th' apartments, which the whole compoſe;
The lucid orbs, the earth, the air, the main,
With every different being they contain,
Are one prodigious aggregated God,
Of whom each ſand is part, each ſtone and clod;
Supreme perfections in each inſect ſhine,
Each ſhrub is ſacred, and each weed divine.
Sages, no longer Egypt's ſons deſpiſe,
For their cheap gods, and ſavoury deities!

No more their coarſe divinities revile!
To leeks, to onions, to the crocodile,
You might your humble adorations pay,
Were you not gods yourſelves, as well as they.
As much you pull religion's altars down,
By owning all things God, as owning none;
For ſhould all beings be alike divine,
Of worſhip if an object you aſſign,
God to himſelf muſt veneration ſhew,
Muſt be the idol and the votary too;
And their aſſertions are alike abſurd,
Who own no God, or none to be ador'd.

BOOK IV.

The Argument.

The introduction. No man happy, that has not conquered the fears of death. The inability of the Epicurean ſcheme to accompliſh that end. Religion only capable of ſubduing thoſe fears. The hypotheſis of Epicurus concerning the formation of the univerſe ſhown to be abſurd. I. In a more general ſurvey of the parts of the univerſe. II. By a more cloſe and ſtrict examination of his ſcheme. The principle of motion not accounted for by that ſcheme; nor the determination of it one way. Pondus, gravity, innate mobility, words without a meaning. Deſcent of atoms; upwards and downwards, a middle or centre abſurdly aſſerted by Epicurus in infinite ſpace. His hypotheſis not to be ſupported, whether his matter be ſuppoſed finite or infinite. His ridiculous aſſertion relating to the diurnal and annual motion of the ſun. The impoſſibility of forming the world by the caſual concourſe of atoms. They could never meet if they moved with equal ſpeed. Primitive atoms, being the ſmalleſt parts of matter, would move more ſlowly than bodies of greater bulk, which have more gravity, yet theſe are abſurdly ſuppoſed to move the ſwifteſt. His aſſertion, that ſome primitive atoms have a direct, and others an inclining motion, implies a contradiction. Lucretius's explanation of this inclining motion of ſome firſt atoms not intelligible. The inexplicable difficulty of ſtopping the atoms in their flight, and cauſing them to ſettle in a formed world. The ponderous earth not to be ſuſtained in liquid air. The Epicurean formation of the heavens very ridiculous. No account given by the Epicureans how the ſun and ſtars are upheld in fluid æther. Their idle account of the formation of the air. The variety of figure and ſize given by Epicurus to his atoms, a convincing proof of wiſdom and deſign. Another proof is the diſproportion of the moiſt and dry atoms in the formation of the earth. His ludicrous and childiſh account of the formation of the hollow for the ſea. No account given by Epicurus, or his followers, of the motion of the heavenly orbs, particularly of the ſun.

Carus, we grant, no man is bleſt, but he
Whoſe mind from anxious thoughts of death is free.
Let laurel wreaths the victor's brows adorn,
Sublime through gazing throngs in triumph borne;
Let acclamations ring around the ſkies,
While curling clouds of balmy incenſe riſe;
Let ſpoils immenſe, let trophies gain'd in war,
And conquer'd kings, attend his rolling car;
If dread of death, ſtill unſubdu'd remains,
And ſecret o'er the vanquiſh'd victor reigns;
Th' illuſtrious ſlave in endleſs thraldom bears
A heavier chain than his led captive wears.
With ſwifteſt wing, the fears of future fate
Elude the guards, and paſs the palace gate;
Traverſe the lofty rooms, and uncontroll'd
Fly hovering round the painted roofs, and bold
To the rich arras cling, and perch on buſts of gold;
Familiar horrors haunt the monarch's head,
And thoughts ill-boding from the downy bed
Chaſe gentle ſleep; black cares the ſoul infeſt,
And broider'd ſtars adorn a troubled breaſt:
In vain they aſk the charming lyre, in vain
The flatterer's ſweeter voice, to lull their pain;
Riot and wine but for a moment pleaſe;
Delights they oft enjoy, but never eaſe.
What are diſtinction, honour, wealth, and ſtate,
The pomp of courts, the triumphs of the great;
The numerous troops, that envy'd thrones ſecure,
And ſplendid enſigns of imperial power?
What the high palace, rear'd with vaſt expence,
Unrivall'd art, and luxury immenſe,
With ſtatutes grac'd by ancient Greece ſupply'd,
With more than Perſian wealth, and Tyrian pride?
What are the foods of all delicious kinds,
Which now the huntſman, now the fowler, finds;
The richeſt wines, which Gallia's happy field,
Which Tuſcan hills, or thine, Iberia, yield?
Nature deprav'd abundance does purſue;
Her firſt and pure demands are cheap and few.
What health promotes, and gives unenvy'd peace,
Is all expenceleſs, and procur'd with eaſe.
Behold the ſhepherd, ſee th' induſtrious ſwain,
Who ploughs the field, or reaps the ripen'd grain,

How mean, and yet how tasteful is their fare!
How sweet their sleep! their souls how free from care!
They drink the streaming crystal, and escape
Th' inflaming juices of the purple grape;
And, to protect their limbs from rigorous air,
Garments, their own domestic work, they wear:
Yet thoughts of death their lonely cots molest,
Affright the hind, and break the labourer's rest.
Since these reflections on approaching fate
Distrust and ill-presaging care create;
'Tis clear we strive for happiness in vain,
While fears of death within insulting reign.
But then Lucretian wits absurdly frame,
To sink these inbred fears, their impious scheme.
To chase the horrors of a conscious mind,
They desperate means and wild expedients find;
The hardy rebels aiming to appease
Their fierce remorse, and dream a while at ease,
Of crying guilt th' avenging power disown,
And pull their high Creator from his throne;
That done, they mock the threats of future pain,
As monstrous fictions of the poet's brain.
Thy force alone, Religion! Death disarms,
Breaks all his darts, and every viper charms;
Soften'd by thee, the grisly form appears
No more the horrid object of our fears;
We undismay'd this awful power obey,
That guides us through the safe, though gloomy way,
Which leads to life, and to the blest abode,
Where ravish'd minds enjoy, what here they own'd, a God.
Regard, ye sages of Lucretian race,
Nature's rich dress, behold her lovely face.
Look all around, terrestrial realms survey,
The isles, the rivers, and the spacious sea;
Observe the air, view with attentive eyes
The glorious concave of the vaulted skies;
Could these from casual hits, from tumult those, arise!
Can rule and beauty from distraction grow?
Can symmetry from wild confusion flow?
When atoms in th' unmeasur'd space did rove,
And in the dark for doubtful empire strove;
Did intervening chance the feuds compose,
Establish friendship, and disarm the foes?
Did this the ancient darksome horrors chase,
Distinction give, and spread celestial grace
O'er the black districts of the empty space?
Could atoms, which, with undirected flight,
Roam'd through the void, and rang'd the realms of night,
Of reason destitute, without intent,
Depriv'd of choice, and mindless of event,
In order march, and to their posts advance,
Led by no guide, but undesigning chance?
What did th' entangled particles divide,
And sort the various seeds of things ally'd?
To make primæval elements select
All the fit atoms, and th' unfit reject?
Distinguish hot from cold, and moist from dry,
Range some to form the earth, and some the sky?
From the embrace, and gloomy arms, of night,
What freed the glimmering fire, and disengag'd the light?
Could chance such just and prudent measures take?
To frame the world, such distribution make?
If to your builder you will conduct give,
A power to choose, to manage, and contrive,
Your idol chance, suppos'd inert and blind,
Must be inroll'd an active conscious mind.
Did this your wise and sovereign architect
Design the model, and the world erect?
Were by her skill the deep foundations laid,
The globes suspended, and the heavens display'd?
By what elastic engines did she rear
The starry roof, and roll the orbs in air?
On the formation of the earth reflect;
Is this a blind fortuitous effect?
Did all the grosser atoms, at the call
Of chance, file off, to form the ponderous ball,
And undetermin'd into order fall?
Did of themselves th' assembled seeds arrive,
And without art this artful frame contrive?
To build the earth, did chance materials choose,
And through the parts cementing glue diffuse;
Adjust the frontier of the sea and soil,
Balance and hang in air the finish'd pile?
Ye towering hills, whose snowy peaks arise
Above the clouds, and winter in the skies;
Ye rocks, which on the shores your heads advance;
Are you the labour and the care of chance?
To draw up stones of such prodigious weight,
And raise the amazing heaps to such a height,
What huge machine, what forceful instrument,
Did your blind builder of the world invent?
Could it distinguish, could it wall around
The damp and dark apartments under ground;
With rocky arches vault the hollow caves,
And form the tracks of subterranean waves;
Extend the different mineral veins, and spread
For rich metallic ores the genial bed?
What could prepare the gulfs to entertain
Between their shores the interposing main;
Disjoin the land, the various realms divide,
And spread with scatter'd isles th' extended tide?
Regard th' unnumber'd wonders of the deep,
Where confluent streams, their race completed, sleep:
Did chance the compass take, and in the dark
The wide dimensions of the ocean mark;
Then dig the ample cave, and stretch the shores
Whose winding arms confine the liquid stores,
Which, gushing from the mountain to the main,
Through verdant vallies draw their humid train?
Did it design the deep abyss, and spread
The ancient waters on their central bed?
To the wild flood did sovereign fortune say,
Thus far advance, and here thy billows stay;
Be this thy barrier, this enclosing sand
Thou shalt not pass, nor overflow the land?
And do the waves revere her high command?
Did chemic chance the furnaces prepare,
Raise all the labour-houses of the air,
And lay crude vapours in digestion there;
Where nature is employ'd, with wondrous skill,
To draw her spirits, and her drops distil;
Meteors for various purposes to form,
The breeze to cheer, to terrify the storm?

Did ſhe extend the gloomy clouds on high,
Where all th' amazing fireworks of the ſky
In unconcocted ſeeds fermenting lie,
Till the impriſon'd flames are ripe for birth,
And ruddy bolts exploded wound the earth?
What ready hand applies the kindled match,
Which evening trains of unctuous vapours catch?
Whence ſhoots with lambent flight the falling ſtar,
And flames unhurtful hovering dance in air?
What curious loom does chance by evening ſpread?
With what fine ſhuttle weave the virgin's thread,
Which, like the ſpider's net, hangs on the graſſy mead?
Let us the moulds to faſhion meteors know,
How theſe produce the hail, and thoſe the ſnow?
What gave the exhalations wings to riſe,
To leave their centre, and poſſeſs the ſkies?
Let us no longer miſſive weapons throw,
But cloſe the fight, and grapple with the foe;
Submit to reaſon's ſtricteſt teſt their ſcheme,
And by mechanic laws purſue the huddled frame.
See, how th' ambitious architects deſign:
To rear the world without the power divine,
As principles, the great contrivers place
Unbounded matter in unbounded ſpace:
Matter was firſt, in parts minute, endued
With various figures, various magnitude;
Some, moving in the ſpacious infinite,
Deſcribe a line oblique, and ſome a right;
For, did not ſome from a ſtrait courſe deflect,
They could not meet, they could no world erect:
While unfatigued from endleſs ages paſt,
They rang'd the dark interminable waſte,
Oft' claſhing and rencountering in their flight,
Some atoms leap aſide, and ſome upright;
They various ways recoil, and ſwiftly flow
By mutual repercuſſions to and fro,
Till, ſhuffled and entangled in their race,
They claſp each other with a cloſe embrace;
Combin'd by concourſe, mingled and compreſt,
They grow in bulk, and complicated reſt.
Hence did the world and all its parts ariſe!
Hence the bright ſun and ſtars, and hence the ſkies!
Hence ſprung the air, the ocean, and the earth!
And hence all nature had its caſual birth!
If you demand what wiſe directing mind
The wondrous platform of the world deſign'd;
Did range, divide, and in their order place,
The crude materials of th' unfaſhion'd maſs;
Did move, direct, and all the parts control,
With perfect ſkill, to ſerve the beauteous whole;
Fortune to this high honour they advance,
And no ſurveyor want, no guide, but chance.
Lucretian maſters, now to make it plain
In building worlds how raw you are, and vain;
Grant that before this mighty frame was rear'd,
Before confuſion fled, and light appear'd,
In the dark void and empty realms of night
Your reſtleſs atoms did purſue their flight;
And in their adverſe paths, and wild career,
By chance rencounter, and by chance cohere;
Thus claſp'd in ſtrict embraces, they produce
Unnumber'd caſual forms for different uſe;
You, who to clearer reaſon make pretence,
Of wit refin'd, and eminent in ſenſe,
Let us, ye ſons of Epicurus, know
The ſpring, whence all theſe various motions flow.
What vigour puſh'd primæval atoms on?
Was it a foreign impulſe, or their own?
If 'twas a foreign delegated force, [courſe;
Which mov'd thoſe bodies, and control'd their
Aſſerting this, you your own ſcheme deſtroy,
And power divine, to form the world, employ.
If from a moving principle within
Your active atoms did their flight begin,
That ſpring, that moving principle explain,
And in the ſchools unrivall'd you ſhall reign;
Declare its nature, and aſſign its name;
For motion, and its cauſe, are not the ſame.
We know, you'll tell us, 'tis impulſive weight,
Mobility, or power to move innate:
Profound ſolution! worthy of your ſchools,
Where reaſon in its boaſted freedom rules.
But thus you mock mankind, and language uſe,
Not to inform the mind, but to amuſe.
Of motion we the principle demand;
You ſay 'tis power to move, and there you ſtand!
But is it to explain, to change the name?
Is not the doubt in different words the ſame?
Do you reveal the ſpring of motion more,
By wiſely calling that a moving power,
Which we had term'd a principle before?
The youngeſt head new-vers'd in reaſoning knows
That motion muſt a power to move ſuppoſe;
Which while in vain you labour to unfold,
You clearly tell us, that Lucretians hold
An active ſpring, a principle approve,
Diſtinct from matter, which muſt matter move.
Matter, as ſuch, abſtracted in the mind,
We from a power to move diveſted find,
Not more to motion than to reſt inclin'd;
The power, which motion does to matter give,
We therefore moſt diſtinct from both conceive;
A power to nature given by Nature's Lord,
When firſt he ſpoke the high creating word,
When for his world materials he prepar'd,
And on each part this energy conferr'd.
Ye vain philoſophers! preſumptuous race!
Who would the Great Eternal Mind diſplace;
Take from the world its Maker, and advance
To his high throne your thoughtleſs idol chance?
Let us th' inquiry by juſt ſteps purſue;
With motion we your atoms will endue,
We aſk, when in the ſpacious void they ſtray,
Why ſtill they beat one track, and move one way?
Still the ſame flight why do their parties take?
Why this, or that way, no digreſſion make?
What will to this our Atomiſts reply?
They anſwer, by an innate gravity
The ponderous bodies ſtill are downward borne,
And never upwards of themſelves return.
Acute and ſolid anſwer! ſee a flight,
Worthy of fineſt wit, and cleareſt ſight!
Do not theſe wiſe mechanic maſters know,
That no man can conceive, or high or low,
Nor find diſtinction of ſuperior place,
Or of inferior, in the empty ſpace

Uncircumſcrib'd, and ignorant of bound,
And where no midſt, no centre, can be found?
Perhaps, your maſter's doctrine to ſuſtain,
And matter's downward motion to explain,
You with this famous Gallic friend aſſert,
That is ſuperior, whence your atoms ſtart,
And that inferior in the empty ſpace
To which they all direct their rapid race.
Now let us recollect, and what you ſay
At large, in one contracted view ſurvey.
You ſay, your atoms move; we aſk you, why?
Becauſe it is their nature, you reply.
But ſince that native power you never ſhow,
You only ſay they move, becauſe they do;
But let your atoms move, we bid you ſay,
Why they move this, and not a different way?
You tell us, 'tis from inbred gravity;
That is, you tell us, 'tis you know not why.
Till what is gravity you let us know,
By ſenſeleſs words how can we wiſer grow?
We give you this ingenite, moving force,
That makes them always downward take their courſe;
We then demand, which place inferior is
Within the ſpacious unconfin'd abyſs?
You ſay 'tis that, to which the atoms bend
Their ſwift career, for ſtill they muſt deſcend;
That is, they downward move, becauſe they downward tend.
Let us, Lucretians, now our taſk purſue,
And of your ſcheme remaining wonders view.
Say, if your atoms of immortal race
Are equal and commenſurate to ſpace:
If ſo, the boundleſs vaſt immenſity
While thus poſſeſt would full of matter be;
For in the vacant (as your ſchools approve)
Should finite matter be ſuppos'd to move,
Not knowing how to ſtop, or where to ſtay,
It unobſtructed muſt purſue its way,
Be loſt in void immenſe, and diſſipated ſtray;
The ſcattering bodies never would combine,
Nor to compoſe a world by concourſe join;
But, if all ſpace is full, if all poſſeſt,
Which ſuppoſition you embrace as beſt,
Then crowded matter would for ever reſt;
Nature no change of place had ever ſeen;
Where all is full, no motion can begin;
For, if it ſhould, you'll be compell'd to ſay,
Body does body pierce, to force its way;
Or unconfin'd immenſity retreats,
To give your atoms room to change their ſeats.
And here with us Lucretius does agree,
That, if ſome place from matter be not free,
In plenitude no motion could commence,
All would be ſtagnate in the vaſt immenſe.
If it be ſaid, ſo all parts of empty ſpace
Are interſpers'd through all the ſpreading maſs,
By which ſome bodies give to others place;
Then matter, you muſt grant, would finite be,
And ſtretch unequal to immenſity;
And then, as Epicurus judges right,
It would for ever take a uſeleſs flight,
Loſt in expanſion void and infinite.
Beſides, allowing through th' extended whole
Small ſcatter'd ſpaces not of body full,
Then matter, you Lucretians muſt agree,
Has not exiſtence from neceſſity;
For, if its being neceſſary were,
Why are ſome parts of ſpace from matter clear?
Why does it here exiſt, and why not there?
Lucretians, now, which ſide you pleaſe, embrace:
If in your void you finite ſubſtance place,
'Tis diſſipated through th' immenſe abyſs,
And you to form the world materials miſs;
You'll not the progreſs of your atoms ſtay,
Nor to collect the vagrants find a way.
Thus too your maſter's ſcheme will be deſtroy'd,
Who, wholly to poſſeſs the boundleſs void,
No leſs than matter infinite employ'd.
If you, in honour to your founder's ſkill,
The boundleſs void with boundleſs ſubſtance fill,
Then tell us, how you can your bodies roll
Through ſpace, of matter ſo completely full?
The force this ſingle reaſon does exert
Will the foundations of your ſcheme ſubvert:
Nor were it needful to purſue the blow,
Or form a freſh attack, unleſs to ſhow
How ſlight your works in every quarter are,
How ill your huddled ſentiments cohere.
Be this, O Greece, thy everlaſting ſhame,
That thoughtleſs Epicurus rais'd a name,
Who built by artleſs chance this mighty frame.
Could one whoſe wit ſuch narrow limits bound,
Nature, thy depths unfathomable ſound?
Of his ſagacious thoughts to give a part,
Does not this wiſe philoſopher aſſert
The radiant ſun's extinguiſh'd every night,
And every morn, rekindled, darts his light?
That the vaſt orb, which caſts ſo far his beams,
Is ſuch, or not, much bigger, than he ſeems?
That the dimenſions of his glorious face
Two geometric feet do ſcarce ſurpaſs?
Does he not make the fickle winds convey
The ſun revolving through his crooked way?
But, ſince his ſchool has gain'd ſuch ſpreading fame,
And modern wits his maſter-ſkill proclaim;
Let us yet farther carry this debate,
And, as you aſk, confer on matter weight,
To make it move within the vaſt abyſs,
And downward too, ev'n where no downward is.
If this be true, as you Lucretians ſay,
That atoms wing with equal ſpeed their way,
Then how could this that atom overtake?
How could they claſh, and how colliſions make?
If in a line oblique your bodies rove,
Or in a perpendicular they move,
If ſome advance not ſlower in their race,
And ſome more ſwift ſhould not purſue the chaſe,
How could they be entangled, how embrace?
'Tis demonſtration, 'tis meridian light,
Thoſe bodies ne'er could juſtle, ne'er could fight,
Nor by their mutual ſhocks be ruffled in their flight.
Since matter of a greater magnitude
Muſt be with greater gravity endued,
Then the minuteſt parts muſt ſtill proceed
With leſs, the greater with the greater ſpeed.

Hence your firſt bodies, which the ſmalleſt are,
On which the ſwifteſt motion you confer,
Muſt be contented with the floweſt pace,
And yield to matter of more bulk the race.
How wondrous little muſt thoſe atoms be,
Which you endow with ſuch velocity!
Minute beyond conception, when we find
Bodies ſo ſmall, where many are combin'd!
How many various figures muſt we take,
What numerous complications uſe, to make
Some compound things, ſo ſmall of magnitude,
That all our ſenſes they with eaſe elude!
Light exhalations, that from earth ariſe,
Attracted by the ſun-beams through the ſkies,
Which the myſterious ſeeds of thunder bear,
Of winds, and all the meteors of the air;
Though they around us take their conſtant flight,
Their little ſize eſcapes the ſharpeſt ſight.
The fragrant vapours breath'd from rich perfumes,
From Indian ſpices, and Arabian gums,
Though many years they flow, will ſcarce abate
The odoriferous body's bulk or weight.
Though antimonial cups, prepar'd with art,
Their force to wine through ages ſhould impart;
This diſſipation, this profuſe expence,
Nor ſhrinks their ſize, nor waſtes their ſtores immenſe.
The powder which deſtructive guns explode,
And by its force their hollow wombs unload,
When rarefy'd of ſpace, poſſeſſes more,
Five hundred times, than what it fill'd before.
The ſeeds of fern, which, by prolific heat
Cheer'd and unfolded, form a plant ſo great,
Are leſs a thouſand times than what the eye
Can unaſſiſted by the tube deſcry.
By glaſſes aided, we in liquor ſee
Some living things minute to that degree,
That a prodigious number muſt unite,
To make the ſmalleſt object of the ſight.
How little bodies muſt the light compound,
Which by your maſters is corporeal own'd;
Since the vaſt deluge of refulgent rays,
Which in a day the ſun a thouſand ways
Through his wide empire laviſhly conveys,
Were they collected in one ſolid maſs,
Might not in weight a ſingle drachm ſurpaſs!
At leaſt thoſe atoms wondrous ſmall muſt be,
Small to an unconceivable degree;
Since though theſe radiant ſpoils, diſpers'd in air,
Do ne'er return, and ne'er the ſun repair,
Yet the bright orb, whence ſtill new torrents flow,
Does no apparent loſs, no diminution know.
Now, curious wits, who nature's work inſpect
With rapture, with aſtoniſhment, reflect
On the ſmall ſize of atoms, which unite
To make the ſmalleſt particle of light!
Then how minute primæval atoms are,
From this account Lucretians may infer:
Yet they on theſe, without regard to right,
Confer the honour of the quickeſt flight.
Within the void, with what a ſwift career
Your rapid matter moves will thus appear.
That all mix'd bodies are in ſpeed outdone
By your firſt atoms, you with eaſe will own;
For componnd beings can no motion have,
But what their firſt conſtituent atoms gave:
Then your primæval ſubſtances exceed
The ſwift-wing'd wind, or ſwifter light, in ſpeed.
How ſoon the ſun-beams at the morning's birth
Leap down from heaven, and light upon the earth!
Prodigious flight! they in few moments paſs
The vaſt æthereal interpoſing ſpace.
Should you enjoin a rock ſo hard a taſk,
It would more years, than light will minutes, aſk.
One atom then (ſo you'll be forc'd to ſay)
Muſt rocks and hills and the whole globe outweigh;
Since it exceeds them by its ſwifter flight,
And ſwifter motion ſprings from greater weight.
If nature's rule your atoms do enjoin
To move directly downward in a line:
Say, how can any from that path decline?
Th' inclining motion then, which you ſuppoſe,
Whence the firſt concourſe of your atoms roſe,
Muſt the great maxim of your ſchools ſubvert,
Which ſtill with one confederate voice aſſert,
That matter by neceſſity deſcends
In lines direct, yet part obliquely tends.
And thus your matter, by its native force,
To different points would ſteer a different courſe;
Determin'd by the ſame impulſive weight,
Move in a line oblique, and in a ſtraight.
To heal your ſyſtem's deep and ghaſtly wound,
Which this objection gives, Lucretius found
A method; who a motion did invent
Not ſtraight entirely, nor entirely bent,
Which forms a line to crooked ſomewhat like,
Slanting almoſt, and, as it were, oblique.
Who does not now this wondrous bard adore?
See reaſon's conquering light, and wit's reſiſtleſs power?
If atoms, after their eternal dance,
Into this beauteous fabric leap'd by chance;
If they combin'd by caſual concourſe; ſay,
What, in a free and unobſtructed way,
Did in a full career your atoms ſtay?
What mounds, what force, when ruſhing from the height
Of ſpace immenſe, could ſtop them in their flight?
Why in their road did they not forward paſs?
But ſay, where now we find the ſettled maſs,
Why did they ceaſe from moving in deſpite
Of their own nature, and impelling weight?
Had the wiſe troops ſagacity to know,
That, there arriv'd, they ſhould no further go?
That, in this point of all the ſpacious void,
To form a world they were to be employ'd?
Did they, in proſpect of ſo great a good,
In this one place of all the liquid road,
All their encumbering gravity unload?
Fatigued, and ſpent with labour infinite.
Did they grow torpid, and unapt for flight?
Or, in th' embrace and downy lap of air
Lull'd and enchanted, did they ſettle there!
Grant in this ſingle place by chance they met,
That there by chance they did their weight forget;
It happen'd there they form'd a mighty maſs,
Where yet no order, no diſtinction, was:

Let this be ſo; we aſk you to explain
The wondrous power that did the parts ſuſtain,
For ſtill their nature and their weight remain.
What from deſcent ſhould ponderous matter ſtay,
When no more ponderous matter ſtops its way?
Can airy columns prop the mighty ball,
Its preſſure balance, and prevent its fall?
And after this remains a mighty taſk,
Which more than human ſkill and power will aſk,
The ſtrong myſterious cements to unfold,
Which atoms ſtrictly complicated hold.
But let us leave the heap in air's embrace,
To reſt unmov'd within the empty ſpace,
Which knows no height, or depth, or middle place:
Tell, how you build the chambers of the ſky,
Extend the ſpheres, and hang the orbs on high?
You ſay, when matter firſt began to fall,
And ſettle into this terreſtrial ball,
Preſs'd from the earth thin exhalations roſe,
Vapours and ſteams, materials to compoſe
The ſpacious regions of the liquid air,
The heavens, and all the luminaries there:
Theſe vapours ſoon (miraculous event!)
Shuffled by chance, and mix'd by accident,
Into ſuch ranks and beauteous order fell,
As no effect of wiſdom can excel.
Hence did the planets, hung in æther, ſtray!
Hence roſe the ſtars, and hence the milky way!
Hence did the ſun along the ſkies advance!
The ſource of day but ſprung from night and chance!
But who can ſhow the legends, that record
More idle tales, or fable ſo abſurd?
Does not your ſcheme affront ev'n vulgar ſenſe;
That ſpheres of ſuch a vaſt circumference,
That all the orbs, which in the regions roll,
Stretching from eaſt to weſt, from pole to pole,
Should their conſtructure, and their beauty, owe
To vapours preſs'd from this poor ball below!
From this ſmall heap could exhalations riſe
Enough, and fit, to ſpread and vault the ſkies?
Lucretius thus the manner has diſplay'd
How meteors, not how heavenly globes, are made.
But grant the ſteams, which by expreſſion roſe,
Did all the ſpheres and every orb compoſe;
Since their ingenite gravity remains,
What girder binds, what prop the frame ſuſtains?
The ſun's bright beams, which you of matter make,
From heaven their downward flight perpetual take:
Why does not then his body, which outweighs
By infinite degrees his golden rays,
By its own force precipitated fall,
And hide in ruins this terreſtrial ball?
Can air, unable to ſuſtain the light,
Support the ſun of ſuch ſuperior weight;
And all the ponderous heavenly orbs ſuſpend
Againſt their nature, which does downward tend?
Tell, wiſe Lucretius, tell the ſecret art,
Which keeps the heavens and earth ſo long apart.
Thus too the air, preſs'd from this maſs, you ſay,
Between the earth and ſkies expanded lay;
Not with intention that the ſolar light
Through the thin gulf might take an eaſy flight;
Or that with nitrous food it ſhould inſpire
The breathing lungs, and feed the vital fire;
But mere contingence did the gulf extend,
Regardleſs of convenience, uſe, or end.
Now, vaunting poet! ſhould it be confeſs'd,
That from the earth the air is thus expreſs'd;
Since things by heavier things are upward thrown,
Which tend with ſtronger gravitation down;
Why are the ſun, and the fair orbs of light,
All which ſo far exceed the air in weight,
Hung from the centre at a greater height?
Why do not theſe their nature's law obey,
Ruſh from above, and near the centre ſtay,
And make all lighter bodies give them way?
Tell us, Lucretius, why they ne'er purſue
This natural bent, and this undoubted due?
Since to the earth you give the middle place,
To which all heavy things direct their race;
If nothing does obſtruct, by certain fate
Things would in order of their different weight
Lie round the earth, and make one mighty heap;
They would their place, as different ſtrata, keep.
Nor would the air, or interceding ſky,
Between the diſtant orbs and worlds divided lie;
Æther and air would claim the higheſt place,
The ſtars and planets would the earth embrace,
As now the ocean floats upon its face.
In vain you labour by mechanic rules,
In vain exhauſt the reaſon of your ſchools,
Theſe queſtions to reſolve, and to explain
How ſeparate worlds were made, and ſeparate ſtill remain.
Since to your uncompounded atoms you
Figures in number infinite allow,
From which, by various combination, ſprings
This unconfin'd diverſity of things;
Are not, in this, deſign and counſel clear?
Does not the wiſe Artificer appear,
Who the corporeal particles endued
With different ſhape, and different magnitude,
That from their mixtures all things might have birth,
In the wide ſea, and air, and heaven, and earth?
To all theſe figures of diſtinguiſh'd kind,
And different ſizes, are not ends aſſign'd?
Then own their cauſe did act with wiſe intent,
Which did thoſe ſizes ſquare, and every ſhape invent.
When atoms firſt the world began to frame,
Is it not ſtrange that every number came
Of ſuch a figure, and of ſuch a ſize,
As ſerv'd to round the earth, and ſpread the ſkies?
Had they not met in ſuch proportion, were
Their form and number not as now they are,
In a rude maſs they had confus'dly join'd,
Not in a finiſh'd world, like this, combin'd.
Did theſe aſſembled ſubſtances reflect,
That here a beauteous frame they muſt erect?
Did they a general council wiſely call,
To lay the platform of each mighty ball;
To ſettle prudent rules, and orders make,
In rearing worlds, what methods they ſhould take?

To every atom was his taſk enjoin'd?
His poſt, and fellow-labourers, aſſign'd?
Did they conſent what parts they ſhould compoſe;
That theſe ſhould æther make, or water thoſe?
That ſome ſhould be the moon, and ſome the earth?
Thoſe give the ſun, and theſe the planet birth?
If all theſe noble worlds were undeſign'd,
And carry'd on without a conſcious mind;
Oh, happy accident! auſpicious chance!
That in ſuch order made the work advance!
At length to ſuch admir'd perfection brought
The finiſh'd ſtructure, as it had been wrought
With art tranſcendent and conſummate thought!
Since 'tis an outrage done to common ſenſe
To fix a central point in ſpace immenſe;
Why is a middle to the earth aſſign'd,
To which your ponderous bodies are inclin'd?
Beſides, reflect how this terreſtrial maſs
Does the whole ſea a thouſand times ſurpaſs;
Which in a line, if drawn directly down,
More than a mile in depth is rarely known.
Now if by chance more watery atoms came
Than earthy, to compoſe this wondrous frame;
Or had they both in equal number met,
Which might as well have been, had chance thought fit;
Or if the watery (we no farther preſs)
Were but an hundred times in number leſs;
This globe had lain, if not a general flood,
At leaſt a fen, a maſs of ooze and mud,
With no rich fruit, or verdant beauty, bleſt,
Wild and unpeopled, or by man, or beaſt.
Who will our orb's unequal face explain,
Which Epicurus made all ſmooth and plain?
How did thy rocks, O earth! thy hills, ariſe?
How did thy giant ſons invade the ſkies?
Lucretius, that it happen'd thus, replies.
Now give us leave, great poet, to demand,
How the capacious hollow in the land
Was firſt produc'd, with eaſe to entertain
All the aſſembled waters of the main?
When earth was made, this hollow for the ſea
Was form'd; but how it happen'd ſo to be?
It on a time fell out, that every wave
Forſook the earth, and fill'd the mighty cave,
Which happen'd opportunely to be there,
Where now their heads the rolling billows rear.
It then fell out, that ſtones did rocks compoſe,
That vales ſubſided, and that hills aroſe.
Thus the formation of the world you know;
So all events fell out, and all things happen'd ſo.
Can tales more ſenſeleſs, ludicrous, and vain,
By winter-fires old nurſes entertain?
Does this unfold how all things firſt were made
Without divine and ſupernatural aid?
His penetration has Lucretius ſhown,
By ſaying things proceed from chance alone,
As their efficient cauſe, that is, from none?
But let your troops, which rang'd the plains of night,
And through the vacant wing'd their careleſs flight,
The high command of ruling chance obey,
Unguided and unconſcious of the way,
Let them advance to one determin'd place,
Preſcrib'd by chance, in all th' unmeaſur'd ſpace;
Their proper ſtations undirected find,
To form a world that never was deſign'd;
Let all the rolling globes, and ſpacious ſkies,
From happy hits of heedleſs atoms riſe;
Be thus the earth's unmov'd foundations laid,
Thus the thin regions of the air diſplay'd;
Chance ſhall the planets in their place ſuſpend,
Between theſe worlds th' æthereal plains extend;
Direct the ſun to that convenient ſeat,
Whence he diſplays his luſtre and his heat.
This labour, all this progreſs, is in vain,
Unleſs the orbs their various motions gain:
For let the ſun in buoyant æther float,
Nor nearer to the earth, nor more remote;
Yet did his orb unmov'd its beams diffuſe,
He'd ſure deſtruction to the earth produce;
One half for heat, and one for cold, would pray;
This would abhor the night, and that the day:
Did he not yearly through the zodiac paſs,
Were he not conſtant to his daily race,
He would not, by alternate ſhade and light,
Produce the needful change of day and night:
Nor would the various ſeaſons of the year,
By turns revolving, riſe and diſappear.
Now can judicious atomiſts conceive,
Chance to the ſun could this juſt impulſe give,
By which the ſource of day ſo ſwiftly flies,
His ſtages keeps, and traverſes the ſkies! [flow?
We aſk you, whence theſe conſtant motions
Will learned heads reply, they happen'd ſo?
You ſay, the ſolar orb, firſt mov'd by chance,
Does north and ſouth, and eaſt and weſt, advance?
We aſk, why firſt in theſe determin'd ways
He choſe to move? Why thence he never ſtrays?
Why did he ne'er, ſince time began, decline
His round diurnal, or his annual line?
So ſteadily does fickle fortune ſteer
Th' obedient orb, that it ſhould never err;
Should never ſtart aſide, and never ſtray;
Never in pathleſs æther miſs his way?
Why does he ne'er beyond the tropics go?
Why ſtill revolve? why travel to and fro?
Will it a wiſe philoſopher content,
To ſay theſe motions came by accident,
That all is undeſign'd, fortuitous event?
But if the ſluggiſh ſun you'll not diſturb,
But motion give to this terreſtrirl orb;
Still of the earth we the ſame queſtion aſk,
Which to explain, you have as hard a taſk.
Can chance this frame, theſe artful ſcenes erect,
Which knows not works leſs artful to effect?
Did it mechanic engines e'er produce,
A globe, or tube of aſtronomic uſe?
Why do not veſſels, built and rigg'd by chance,
Drawn in long order, on the billows dance?
Might not the Sovereign Cauſe with greater eaſe
A navy build, than make the winds and ſeas?
Let atoms once the form of letters take
By chance, and let thoſe huddled letters make
A finiſh'd poem by a lucky hit,
Such as the Grecian, or the Mantuan, writ;
Then we'll embrace the doctrines you advance
And yield the world's fair poem made by chance;

BOOK V.

The Argument.

The introduction. A deſcription of the calamitous ſtate of mankind, by reaſon of innumerable woes and ſufferings to which they are obnoxious. Diſeaſes of the body. Trouble and grief of mind. Violence and oppreſſion. The viciſſitude of human affairs, and the certain proſpect of death. Whence it appears that it ſuits the ſtate of mankind, and therefore is deſirable, there ſhould be a God. Arguments againſt the Fataliſts, who aſſert the eternity of the world. There muſt be granted ſome ſelf-exiſtent and independent being. The corporeal world cannot be that being: proved from its mutability, and the variety of forms riſing and diſappearing in the ſeveral parts of nature; from the poſſibility of conceiving, without any conſequent contradiction, leſs or more parts in the world, than are actually exiſtent; from the poſſibility of plants and animals having had different ſhapes, and limbs, from what they now have. The pretended fatal chain of things not ſelf-exiſtent and independent; becauſe all its links or parts are dependent, and obnoxious to corruption. Fate, a word without ſenſe or meaning. Two more arguments againſt the eternity of the world, from the contemplation of the light of the ſun, and of motion. Ariſtotle's ſcheme conſidered and confuted.

Ah, hapleſs mortal man! ah, rigid fate!
What cares attend our ſhort, uncertain ſtate!
How wide a front, how deep and black a rear,
What ſad varieties of grief and fear,
Drawn in array, exert their fatal rage,
And gall obnoxious life through every ſtage,
From infancy to youth, from youth to age!
Who can compile a roll of all our woes?
Our friends are faithleſs, and ſincere our foes;
The poiſon'd arrows of an envious tongue
Improve our errors, and our virtues wrong;
Th' oppreſſor now with arbitrary might
Tramples on law, and robs us of our right;
Dangers unſeen on every ſide invade,
And ſnares o'er all th' unfaithful ground are laid.
Oft wounds from foreign violence we feel,
Now from the ruffian's, now the warrior's, ſteel;
By bruiſes or by labour we are pain'd;
A bone disjointed, or a ſinew ſtrain'd;
Now feſtering ſores afflict our tortur'd limbs;
Now to the yielding heart the gangrene climbs.
Acute diſtempers fierce our veins aſſail,
Ruſh on with fury, and by ſtorm prevail;
Others with thrift diſpenſe their ſtores of grief,
And by the ſap prolong the ſiege of life;
While to the grave we for deliverance cry,
And, promis'd ſtill, are ſtill denied to die.
See colic, gout, and ſtone, a cruel train,
Oppos'd by all the healing race in vain;
Their various racks and lingering plagues employ,
Relieve each other, and by turns annoy,
And, tyrant like, torment, but not deſtroy.
We noxious inſects in our bowels feed,
Engender deaths, and dark deſtruction breed.
The ſpleen with ſullen vapours clouds the brain,
And binds the ſpirits in its heavy chain:
Howe'er the cauſe fantaſtic may appear,
Th' effect is real, and the pain ſincere.
Hydropic wretches by degrees decay,
Growing the more, the more they waſte away;
By their own ruins they augmented lie,
With thirſt and heat amidſt a deluge fry:
And while in floods of water theſe expire,
More ſcorching periſh by the fever's fire;
Stretch'd on our downy, yet uneaſy beds,
We change our pillows, and we raiſe our heads;
From ſide to ſide in vain for reſt we turn,
With cold we ſhiver, or with heat we burn;
Of night impatient, we demand the day:
The day arrives, and for the night we pray;
The night and day ſucceſſive come and go,
Our laſting pains no interruption know.
Since man is born to ſo much woe and care,
Muſt ſtill new terrors dread, new ſorrows bear;
Does it not ſuit the ſtate of human kind,
There ſhould preſide a good Almighty Mind;
A Cauſe Supreme, that might all nature ſteer,
Avert our danger, and prevent our fear;
Who, when implor'd, might timely ſuccour give,
Solace our anguiſh, and our wants relieve;
Father of comfort, might our ſouls ſuſtain,
When preſt with grief, and mitigate our pain?
'Tis certain ſomething from all ages paſt
Without beginning was, and ſtill will laſt;
For if of time one period e'er had been
When nothing was, then nothing could begin.
That things ſhould to themſelves a being give,
Reluctant reaſon never can conceive.
If you affirm, effects themſelves produce,
You ſhock the mind, and contradiction chooſe;
For they, 'tis clear, muſt act and move, before
They were in being, or had motive power;

As active cauſes muſt of right at once
Exiſtence claim, and as effects renounce.
Then ſomething is, which no beginning had,
A cauſeleſs cauſe, or nothing could be made,
Which muſt by pure neceſſity exiſt,
And whoſe duration nothing can reſiſt.
Let us inquire, and ſearch by due degrees,
What, who, this ſelf-exiſtent being is.
Should this material world's capacious frame
Uncaus'd and independent being claim;
It would, thus form'd and faſhion'd as we ſee,
Derive exiſtence from neceſſity,
And then to ages unconfin'd muſt laſt,
Without the leaſt diverſity or waſte.
Neceſſity, view'd with attentive thought,
Does plain impoſſibility denote,
That things ſhould not exiſt, which actual are,
Or in another ſhape or different modes appear.
But ſee in all corporeal nature's ſcene,
What changes, what diverſities, have been!
Matter not long the ſame appearance makes,
But ſhifts her old, and a new figure takes:
If now ſhe lies in winter's rigid arms,
Diſhonour'd and deſpoil'd of all her charms,
Soft vernal airs will looſe th' unkind embrace,
And genial dews renew her wither'd face;
Like fabled nymphs transform'd, ſhe's now a tree,
Now weeps into a flood, and ſtreaming ſeeks the ſea.
She's now a gaudy fly, before a worm,
Below a vapour, and above a ſtorm;
This ooze was late a monſter of the main,
That turf a lowing grazer of the plain,
A lion this did o'er the foreſt reign.
Regard that fair, that branching laurel plant,
Behold that lovely bluſhing amarant;
One might have William's broken frame aſſum'd,
And one from bright Maria's duſt have bloom'd.
Theſe ſhifting ſcenes, theſe quick rotations, ſhow
Things from neceſſity could never flow,
But muſt to mind and choice precarious being owe.
Let us ſuppoſe, that Nature ever was
Without beginning, and without a cauſe;
As her firſt order, diſpoſition, frame,
Muſt then ſubſiſt unchangeably the ſame;
So muſt our mind pronounce, it would not be
Within the reach of poſſibility,
That e'er the world a being could have had
Different from what it is, or could be made
Of more or leſs, or other parts than thoſe
Which the corporeal univerſe compoſe.
Now, Fataliſt, we aſk, if thoſe ſubvert
Reaſon's eſtabliſh'd maxims, who aſſert
That we the world's exiſtence may conceive,
Though we one atom out of Nature leave;
Though ſome one wandering orb, or twinkling ſtar,
Were abſent from the heavens, which now is there;
Though ſome one kind of plant, or fly, or worm,
No being had, or had another's form?
And might not other animals ariſe,
Of different figure, and of different ſize?
In the wide womb of poſſibility
Lie many things, which ne'er may actual be;
And more productions of a various kind
Will cauſe no contradiction in the mind.

'Tis poſſible the things in Nature found,
Might different forms and different parts have own'd:
The boar might wear a trunk, the wolf a horn,
The peacock's train the bittern might adorn;
Strong tuſks might in the horſe's mouth have grown,
And lions might have ſpots, and leopards none.
But, if the world knows no ſuperior cauſe,
Obeys no ſovereign's arbitrary laws;
If abſolute neceſſity maintains
Of cauſes and effects the fatal chains;
What could one motion ſtop, change one event?
It would tranſcend the wide, the vaſt extent,
The utmoſt ſtretch of poſſibility,
That things, from what they are, ſhould diſagree.
If, to elude this reaſoning, you reply,
Things what they are, are by neceſſity;
Which never elſe ſo aptly could conſpire
To ſerve the whole, and Nature's ends acquire;
To form the beauty, order, harmony,
Which we through all the works of Nature ſee:
Ready we this aſſertion will allow,
For what can more exalted wiſdom ſhow?
With zeal we this neceſſity defend,
Of means directed to their uſeful end:
But 'tis not that which fataliſts intend,
Nor that which we oppoſe in this debate,
An uncontrol'd neceſſity of fate,
Which all things blindly does and muſt produce,
Unconſcious of their goodneſs and their uſe,
Which cannot ends deſign, nor means convenient chooſe.
If you perſiſt, and fondly will maintain
Of cauſes and effects an endleſs train;
That this ſucceſſive ſeries ſtill has been,
Will never ceaſe, and never did begin;
That things did always, as they do, proceed,
And no firſt cauſe, no wiſe director, need:
Say, if no links of all your fatal chain
Free from corruption, and unchang'd remain;
If of the whole each part in time aroſe,
And to a cauſe its borrow'd being owes;
How then the whole can independent be?
How have a being from neceſſity?
Is not the whole, ye learned heads, the ſame
With all the parts, and different but in name?
Could e'er that whole the leaſt perfection ſhow,
Which from the parts, that form it, did not flow,
Then, tell us, can it from its parts derive,
What in themſelves thoſe parts had not to give?
Farther to clear the ſubject in debate,
Inform us, what you underſtand by fate.
Have you a juſt idea in the mind
Of this great cauſe of things by you aſſign'd?
If you the order and dependence mean,
By which effects upon their cauſes lean,
The long ſucceſſion of th' efficient train,
And firm coherence of th' extended chain;
Then fate is nothing but a mode of things,
Which from continued revolution ſprings;
A pure relation and a mere reſpect
Between the cauſe effective and th' effect.
If cauſes and effects themſelves are that
Which your clear-ſighted ſchools intend by fate;

Then fate by no idea can be known,
'Tis one thing only, as a heap is one:
You no diſtinguiſh'd being by it mean,
But all th' effects and cauſes that have been.
If you aſſert, that each ſufficient cauſe
Muſt act by fix'd inevitable laws;
If you affirm this neceſſary ſtate,
And tell us this neceſſity is fate;
When will you bleſs the world with light to ſee
The ſpring and ſource of this neceſſity?
Say, what did ſo diſpoſe, ſo things ordain,
To form the links of all the caſual chain,
That nature by inevitable force
Should run one ring, and keep one ſteady courſe?
That things muſt needs in one ſet order flow,
And all events muſt happen as they do?
Can you no proof of your aſſertion find?
Produce no reaſon to convince the mind,
That nature this determin'd way muſt go?
Are all things thus, becauſe they muſt be ſo?
We grant with eaſe, there is neceſſity,
The ſource of things ſhould ſelf-exiſtent be.
But then he's not a neceſſary cauſe;
He freely acts by arbitrary laws:
He gave to beings motive energy,
And active things to paſſive did apply;
In ſuch wiſe order all things did diſpoſe,
That of events neceſſity aroſe:
Without his aid, ſay, how will you maintain
Your fatal link of cauſes? Hence 'tis plain,
While the word fate you thus affect to uſe,
You coin a ſenſeleſs term, th' unwary to amuſe.

You, who aſſert the world did ne'er commence,
Prepare againſt this reaſoning your defence.
If ſolar beams, which through th' expanſion dart,
Corporeal are, as learned ſchools aſſert;
Since ſtill they flow, and no ſupply repays
The laviſh ſun his diſſipated rays;
Grant, that his radiant orb did ne'er begin,
And that his motions have eternal been;
Then, by eternal, infinite expence,
By unrecruited waſte, and ſpoils immenſe,
By certain fate to ſlow deſtruction doom'd,
His glorious ſtock long ſince had been conſum'd;
Of light unthrifty, and profuſe of day,
The ruin'd globe had ſpent his lateſt ray,
Diſpers'd in beams eternally diſplay'd,
Had loſt in æther roam'd, and looſe in atoms ſtray'd.

Grant, that a grain of matter would outweigh
The light the ſun diſpenſes in a day
Through all the ſtages of his heavenly way;
That in a year the golden torrents, ſent
From the bright ſource, its loſſes ſcarce augment:
Yet without end if you the waſte repeat,
Th' eternal loſs grows infinitely great.
Then, ſhould the ſun of finite bulk ſuſtain
In every age the loſs but of a grain;
If we ſuppoſe thoſe ages infinite,
Could there remain one particle of light?

Reflect, that motion muſt abate its force,
As more or leſs obſtructed in its courſe;
That all the heavenly orbs, while turning round,
Have ſome reſiſtance from the medium found:
Be that reſiſtance ne'er ſo faint and weak,
If 'tis eternal, 'twill all motion break;
If in each age you grant the leaſt decreaſe,
By infinite ſucceſſion it muſt ceaſe.
Hence, if the orbs have ſtill reſiſted been
By air, or light, or æther, ne'er ſo thin;
Long ſince their motion muſt have been ſuppreſt,
The ſtars had ſtood, the ſun had lain at reſt;
So vain, ſo wild a ſcheme, you fataliſts have dreſs'd.

Let us the wiſe poſitions now ſurvey
Of Ariſtotle's ſchool, who's pleas'd to ſay
Nothing can move itſelf, no inward power
To any being motion can procure.
Whate'er is mov'd, its motion muſt derive
From ſomething elſe, which muſt an impulſe give:
And yet no being motion could begin;
Elſe motion might not have eternal been.
That matter never did begin to move,
But in th' immenſe from endleſs ages ſtrove,
The Stagyrite thus undertakes to prove.
He ſays, of motion time the meaſure is;
Then that's eternal too, as well as this.
Motion through ages without limit flows,
Since time, its meaſure, no beginning knows.
This feeble baſe upholds our author's hopes,
And all his mighty ſuperſtructure props.
On this he all his towering fabric rears,
Sequel on ſequel heaps to reach the ſpheres.
But if this definition you deny
Of time, on which his building does rely,
You bring his lofty Babel from the ſky:
A thouſand fine deductions you confound,
Scatter his waſte philoſophy around,
And level all his ſtructure with the ground.

We then this definition thus defeat:
Time is no meaſure, which can motion meet;
For men of reaſoning faculties will ſee,
That time can nothing but duration be
Of beings; and duration can ſuggeſt
Nothing or of their motion, or their reſt;
Only prolong'd exiſtence it implies,
Whether the thing is mov'd, or quiet lies.
This ſingle blow will all the pile ſubvert,
So proudly rais'd, but with ſo little art.

But, ſince the Author has ſuch fame acquir'd,
And as a God of ſcience been admir'd,
A ſtricter view we'll of his ſyſtem take,
And of the parts a ſhort examen make.
Let us obſerve, what light his ſcheme affords,
His undigeſted heap of doubtful words.
Great Stagyrite, the loſt inquirer ſhow
The ſpring whence motion did for ever flow;
Since nothing of itſelf e'er moves or ſtrives,
Tell what begins, what the firſt impulſe gives.

Hear how the man, who all in fame ſurmounts,
For motion's ſpring and principle accounts.
To his ſupreme, unmov'd, unactive God,
He the firſt ſphere appoints, a bleſt abode;
Who ſits ſupinely on his azure throne,
In contemplation of himſelf alone;
Is wholly mindleſs of the world, and void
Of providential care, and unemploy'd.
To all the ſpheres inferior are aſſign'd
Gods ſubaltern, and of inferior kind:
On theſe he ſelf-exiſtence does confer,
Who, as the God ſupreme, eternal are;

With admiration mov'd, and ardent love,
They all their ſpheres around in order move;
And from theſe heavenly revolutions flow
All motions, which are found in things below.
If you demand by what impulſive force
The under-gods begin their circling courſe:
He ſays, as things deſirable excite
Deſire, and objects move the appetite;
So his firſt God, by kindling ardent love,
Does all the gods in ſeats inferior move:
Thus mov'd, they move around their mighty ſpheres,
With their refulgent equipage of ſtars;
From ſphere to ſphere communicate the dance,
Whence all in heavenly harmony advance;
And from this motion propagated riſe
All motions in the earth, and air, and ſkies.
And thus by learned Ariſtotle's mind
All things were form'd, yet nothing was deſign'd.
He owns no choice, no arbitrary will,
No artiſt's hand, and no exerted ſkill;
All motion flows from neceſſary fate,
Which nothing does reſiſt, or can abate;
Things ſink and riſe, a being loſe or gain
In a coherent, undiſſolving chain
Of cauſes and effects, which Nature's courſe ſuſtain.
Th' unmoveable Supreme the reſt does move,
As proper objects raiſe deſire and love;
They, mov'd without their choice, without conſent
Move all their ſpheres around without intent;
Whate'er he calls his moving cauſe, to chooſe
He gives that cauſe no power, or to refuſe.
And thus from fate all artful order ſprings,
This rear'd the world, this is the riſe of things.
Now give us leave to aſk, great Stagyrite,
How the firſt God th' inferior does excite?
Of his own ſubſtance does he parts convey,
Whoſe motive force the under-gods obey?
If ſo, he may be chang'd, he may decay.
But if by ſteadfaſt gazing they are mov'd,
And admiration of the object lov'd;
If thoſe below their motive force acquire
From the ſtrong impulſe of divine deſire;
Tell us, what good your God Supreme can grant,
Which thoſe beneath, to make them happy, want.
If admiration of the God Supreme,
And heavenly raptures ſhould their breaſts inflame,
Is that of motion a reſiſtleſs cauſe,
Of motion conſtant to eternal laws?
Might not each ſecond god inactive lie
On his blue ſphere, and fix his raviſh'd eye
On the Supreme Unmoveable, and ne'er
Be forc'd to roll around his ſolid ſphere?
Say, how could wonder drive them from their place?
How in a circle make them run their race?
How keep them ſteady in one certain pace?
He this a fundamental maxim lays,
That Nature wiſely acts in all her ways;
That ſhe purſues the things which moſt conduce
To order, beauty, decency, and uſe.
Who can to reaſon this affront endure?
Should it deriſion cauſe, or anger more,
To hear a deep philoſopher aſſert
That nature, not endu'd with ſkill or art,
Of liberty of choice, of reaſon void,
Still wiſely acts, wherever ſhe's employ'd?
Can actions be denominated wiſe,
Which from a brute neceſſity ariſe,
Which the blind agent never did intend,
The means unchoſen, and unknown the end?
On this be laid the ſtreſs of this debate;
What wiſely acts can never act by fate.
The means and end muſt firſt be underſtood;
The means, as proper; and the end, as good;
The act muſt be exerted with intent
By uſing means to gain the wiſh'd event.
But can a ſenſeleſs and unconſcious cauſe,
By foreign impulſe mov'd, and fatal laws,
This thing as good, and that as fit, reſpect,
Deſign the end, and then the means elect?
Nature, you grant, can no event intend,
Yet that ſhe acts with prudence you pretend:
So nature wiſely acts, yet acts without an end!
Yet while this prince of ſcience does declare
That means or ends were never nature's care;
That things which ſeem with perfect art contriv'd,
By the reſiſtleſs force of fate arriv'd;
This cautious maſter, to ſecure his fame,
And 'ſcape the atheiſt's ignominious name,
Did to his gods of all degrees allow
Counſel, deſign, and power to chooſe and know.
Yet, ſince he's pleas'd ſo plainly to aſſert,
His gods no act of reaſoning power exert,
No mark of choice, or arbitrary will,
Employ'd no prudence, and expreſs'd no ſkill,
In making or directing Nature's frame,
Which from his fate inevitable came;
Theſe gods muſt, as to us, be brute and blind,
And as unuſeful, as if void of mind:
Acting without intent, or care, or aim,
Can they our prayer regard, or praiſes claim?
Of all the irreligious in debate,
This ſhameful error is the common fate;
That though they cannot but diſtinctly ſee
In Nature's works, and whole œconomy,
Deſign and judgment in a high degree;
This judgment, this deſign, they ne'er allow
Do from a cauſe endued with reaſon flow.
The art they grant, th' artificer reject,
The ſtructure own, and not the architect;
That unwiſe nature all things wiſely makes,
And prudent meaſures without prudence takes.
Grant that their admiration and their love
Of the firſt God may all th' inferior move;
Grant, too, though no neceſſity appears,
That, with their rapture mov'd, they move their ſpheres:
Theſe queſtions let the Stagyrite reſolve,
Why they at all, why in this way revolve?
Declare by what neceſſity control'd,
In one determin'd manner they are roll'd?
Why is their ſwift rotation weſt and eaſt,
Rather than north and ſouth, or eaſt and weſt
Why do not all th' inferior ſpheres obey
The higheſt ſphere's inevitable ſway?
Tell us, if all celeſtial motions riſe
From revolutions of the ſtarry ſkies,
Whence of the orbs the various motions come?
Why ſome the general road purſue; and ſome
In æther ſtray, and diſobedient roam?

If yours the ſource of motion is, declare,
Why this is fix'd, and that a wandering ſtar?
Tell by what fate, by what reſiſtleſs force,
This orb has one, and that another courſe?
How does the learned Greek the cauſe unfold
With equal ſwiftneſs why the ſun is roll'd
Still eaſt and weſt, to mark the night and day?
To form the year, why through th' ecliptic way?
What magic, what neceſſity, confines
The ſolar orb between the tropic lines?
What charms in thoſe enchanted circles dwell,
That with controlling power the ſun repel?
The Stagyrite to this no anſwer makes;
Of the vaſt globe ſo little thought he takes,
That he to ſolve theſe queſtions never ſtrives,
No cauſe or of its place or motion gives.
But farther yet, applauded Greek, ſuppoſe
Celeſtial motions from your ſpring aroſe;
That motion down to all the worlds below
From the firſt ſphere may propagated flow:
Since you of things to ſhow th' efficient ſource
Have always to neceſſity recourſe;
From what neceſſity do ſpheres proceed
With ſuch a meaſur'd, ſuch a certain ſpeed?
We fain would this myſterious cauſe explore,
Why motion was not either leſs or more,
But in this juſt proportion and degree,
As ſuits with nature's juſt œconomy.
This is a cauſe, a right one too, we grant,
But 'tis the final, we th' efficient want;
With greater ſwiftneſs if the ſpheres were whirl'd,
The motion given to this inferior world
Too violent had been for nature's uſe,
Of too great force mix'd bodies to produce;
The elements, air, water, earth, and fire,
Which now to make compounded things conſpire,
By their rude ſhocks could never have combin'd,
Or had been diſengag'd as ſoon as join'd:
But then had motion in a leſs degree
Been given, than that which we in nature ſee;
Of greater vigour we had ſtood in need,
To mix and blend the elemental ſeed,
To temper, work, incorporate, and bind
Thoſe principles, that thence of every kind
The various compound beings might ariſe,
Which fill the earth and ſea, and ſtore the ſkies.
Say, what neceſſity, what fatal laws,
Did in ſuch due proportion motion cauſe,
Nor more or leſs, but juſt ſo much as tends
To frame the world, and ſerve all nature's ends?
Aſk why the higheſt of the rolling ſpheres,
Deck'd to profuſion with refulgent ſtars,
And all with bright excreſcences emboſt,
Has the whole beauty of the heavens engroſt;
When of the others, to diſpel the night,
Each owns a ſingle, ſolitary light;
Only one planet in a ſphere is found,
Marching in air his melancholy round:
Nature, he tells us, took this prudent care,
That the ſublimeſt and the nobleſt ſphere
Should be with nobler decoration bleſt,
And in magnificence outſhine the reſt;
That ſo its greater ornament and ſtate
Should bear proportion with its greater height.
It ſeems then nature does not only find
Means to be good, beneficent, and kind,
But has for beauty and for order car'd,
Does rank, and ſtate, and decency, regard.
Now, ſhould he not conſidering men forgive,
If, ſway'd by this aſſertion, they believe
That nature, which does decency reſpect,
Is ſomething which can reaſon, chooſe, reflect?
Or that ſome wiſe director muſt preſide
O'er nature's works, and all her motions guide?
You here ſhould that neceſſity declare,
Why all the ſtars adorn the higheſt ſphere;
Say, how is this th' effect of fatal laws,
Without reflecting on a final cauſe?
One ſphere has all the ſtars; we aſk you, why?
When you to beauty and to order fly,
You plain aſſert the truth which you deny;
That is, that Nature has wiſe ends in view,
With foreſight works, and does deſigns purſue.
Thus all the mighty wits that have eſſay'd
To explicate the means how things are made
By nature's power, without the Hand Divine,
The final cauſes of effects aſſigri.
They ſay, that this or that is ſo or ſo,
That ſuch events in ſuch ſucceſſion flow;
Becauſe convenience, decency, and uſe,
Require that nature things ſhould thus produce.
They in their demonſtrations always vaunt
Efficient cauſes, which they always want.
But thus they yield the queſtion in debate,
And grant the impotence of chance and fate;
For, till they ſhow by what neceſſity
Things have the diſpoſition which we ſee,
Whether it be deriv'd from fate or chance,
Not the leaſt ſtep in ſcience they advance.
Grant Nature furniſh'd, at her vaſt expence,
One room of ſtate with ſuch magnificence,
That it might ſhine above the others bright,
Adorn'd with numerous burniſh'd balls of light;
Does ſhe on one by decent rules diſpenſe
Of conſtellations ſuch a wealth immenſe,
While the next ſphere in amplitude and height
Rolls on with one erratic lonely light?
But be it ſo, the queſtion's ſtill the ſame,
Tell us, from what neceſſity it came?
Let us the great philoſopher attend,
While to the worlds below his thoughts deſcend:
His elements, earth, water, air, and fire,
He ſays, to make all compound things conſpire;
He in the midſt leaves the dull earth at reſt,
In the ſoft boſom of the air careſs'd;
The red-wing'd fire muſt to the moon ariſe,
Hover in air, and lick contiguous ſkies;
No charms, no force, can make the fire deſcend,
Nor can the earth to ſeats ſuperior tend;
Both unmoleſted peace for ever own,
This in the middle, that beneath the moon:
Water and air not ſo; for they, by fate
Aſſign'd to conſtant duty, always wait;
Ready by turns to riſe or to deſcend,
Nature againſt a vacant to defend;
For ſhould a void her monarchy invade,
Should in her works the ſmalleſt breach be made,
That breach the mighty fabric would diſſolve,
And in immediate ruin all involve.

A conſequence ſo diſmal to prevent,
Water and air are ſtill (as ſaid) intent
To mount or fall, this way or that to fly,
Seek ſubterranean vaults, or climb the ſky;
While theſe with ſo much duty are oppreſt,
The earth and fire are privileg'd with reſt.
Theſe elements, 'tis clear, have not diſcern'd
The intereſt of the whole, nor are concern'd
Leſt they, when once an interpoſing void
Has nature's frame o'erturn'd, ſhould be deſtroy'd.
Tell, why theſe ſimple elements are four?
Why juſt ſo many? why not leſs or more?
Does this from pure neceſſity proceed?
Or ſay, does nature juſt that number need?
If this, you mock us, and decline the taſk;
You give the final cauſe, when we th' efficient aſk.
If that, how often ſhall we call in vain,
That you would this neceſſity explain?
But here forgive me, famous Stagyrite,
If I eſteem it idle to recite
The reaſons (ſo you call them) which you give,
To make us this neceſſity believe;
Reaſons ſo trifling, ſo abſurd, and dry,
That thoſe ſhould bluſh, who make a grave reply.
Your elements we grant: but now declare,
How you to form compounded things prepare,
And mix your fire and water, earth and air?
The ſwift rotation of the ſpheres above,
You ſay, muſt all inferior bodies move;
The elements in ſublunary ſpace
Are by this impulſe forc'd to leave their place;
By various agitations they combine
In different forms, by different mixtures join;
Blended and juſtly temper'd, they compound
All things in all th' inferior regions found:
Thus beings from th' incorporated four
Reſult, by undeſigning Nature's power.
Hence metals, plants, and minerals ariſe,
The clouds and all the meteors of the ſkies!
Hence all the clans that haunt the hill or wood,
That beat the air, or cut the limpid flood!
Ev'n man, their lord, hence into being came,
Breath'd the pure air, and felt the vital flame!
Say, is not this a noble ſcheme, a piece
Worthy the Stagyrite, and worthy Greece?
But now, acute philoſopher, declare
How this rotation of the heavenly ſphere
Can mingle fire and water, earth and air?
The fire that dwells beneath the lunar ball,
To meet aſcending earth, muſt downward fall.
Now turn your ſphere contiguous to the fire,
Will from its ſeat that element retire?
The ſphere could never drive its neighbour down,
But give a circling motion, like its own.
So give the air impreſſion from above,
It in a whirl vertiginous would move;
And thus the rolling ſpheres can ne'er diſplace
The fire or air, to make a mingled maſs;
The elements diſtinct might keep their ſeat,
Elude the roffle, and your ſcheme defeat.
But ſince th' applauded author will demand
For complex bodies no director's hand;
Since art without an artiſt he maintains,
A building rears without a builder's pains;
He comes at length to Epicurus' ſcheme,
Pleas'd by his model compound works to frame.
One all his various atoms does unite
To form mixt things; the famous Stagyrite,
By his invented elements combin'd,
Compoſes beings of each different kind;
But both agree, while both alike deny
The gods did e'er their care or thought apply
To form or rule this univerſal frame,
Which or from fate or caſual concourſe came.
Whether to raiſe the world you are inclin'd
By this man's chance, or that man's fate, as blind;
If ſtill mechanic, neceſſary laws
Of moving matter muſt all beings cauſe;
If artful works from a brute cauſe reſult,
From ſprings unknown, and qualities occult;
With ſchemes alike abſurd our reaſon you inſult.
And now, to finiſh this leſs pleaſant taſk,
Of our renown'd philoſopher we aſk,
How was the earth determin'd to its place?
Why did it firſt the middle point embrace?
What blandiſhments, what ſtrong attractive power,
What happy arts adapted to allure,
Were by that ſingle point of all the void,
To captivate and charm the maſs employ'd?
Or what machines, what grapples did it caſt
On earth, to fix it to the centre faſt?
But if the earth, by ſtrong enchantment caught,
This point of all the vacant fondly ſought,
Since it is unintelligent and blind,
Could it the way, the neareſt could it find?
When at that point arriv'd, how did it know
It was arriv'd, and ſhould no farther go?
When in a globous form collected there,
What wondrous cement made the parts cohere?
Why did the orb ſuſpended there remain
Fix'd and unmov'd? what does its weight ſuſtain?
Tell what its fall prevents; can liquid air
The ponderous pile on its weak columns bear?
The earth muſt, in its gravity's deſpight,
Uphold itſelf; our careleſs Stagyrite
For its ſupport has no proviſion made,
No pillar rear'd, and no foundation laid:
When by occult and unknown gravity
'Tis to its ſtation brought, it there muſt lie
In undiſturb'd repoſe: in vain we aſk him, why?
Say, if the world uncaus'd did ne'er begin,
If nature what it is has always been;
Why do no arms the poet's ſong employ,
Before the Theban war, or ſiege of Troy?
And why no elder hiſtories relate
The riſe of empires, and the turns of ſtate?
If generations infinite are gone,
Tell, why ſo late were arts and letters known?
Their riſe and progreſs is of recent date,
And ſtill we mourn their young imperfect ſtate.
If unconfin'd duration we regard,
And time be with eternity compar'd,
But yeſterday the ſages of the eaſt
Firſt ſome crude knowledge of the ſtars expreſt.
In ſacred emblems Egypt's ſons conceal'd
Their myſtic learning, rather than reveal'd.
Greece after this, for ſubtle wit renown'd,
The ſciences and arts improv'd or found;

First, causes search'd, and Nature's secret ways;
First taught the bards to sing immortal lays;
The charms of music and of painting rais'd,
And was for building first, and first for sculpture prais'd.
Man in mechanic arts did late excel,
That succour life, and noxious power repel;
Which yield supplies for necessary use,
Or which to pleasure or to pomp conduce.
How late was found the loadstone's magic force,
That seeks the north, and guides the sailor's course!
How newly did the printer's curious skill
Th' enlighten'd world with letter'd volumes fill!
But late the kindled powder did explode
The massy ball, and the brass tube unload;
The tube, to whose loud thunder Albion owes
The laurel honours that adorn her brows;
Which awful, during eight renown'd campaigns,
From Belgia's hills, and Gallia's frontier plains,
Did through th' admiring realms around proclaim
Marlborough's swift conquests, and great Anna's name!
By this the leader of the British powers
Shook Menin, Lilla, and high Ganda's towers;
Next his wide engines level'd Tournay's pride,
Whose lofty walls advancing foes defy'd:
Though nitrous tempests, and clandestine death,
Fill'd the deep caves and numerous vaults beneath,
Which, form'd with art, and wrought with endless toil,
Ran through the faithless excavated soil.
See, the intrepid Briton delves his way,
And to the caverns lets in war and day;
Quells subterranean foes, and rises crown'd
With spoils, from martial labour under ground.
Mons, to reward Blarignia's glorious field,
To Marlborough's terrors did submissive yield.
The hero next assail'd proud Doway's head;
And, spite of confluent inundations spread
Around, in spite of works for sure defence
Rais'd with consummate art, and cost immense,
With unexampled valour did succeed:
(Villars, thy host beheld the hardy deed!)
Aria, Venantia, Bethune, and Bouchain,
Of his long triumphs close th' illustrious train.
While thus his thunder did his wrath declare,
And artful lightnings flash'd along the air,
Somona's castles with th' impetuous roar
Astonish'd tremble, but their warriors more;
Lutetia's lofty towers, with terror struck,
Caught the contagion, and at distance shook.
Tell, Gallic chiefs, for you have often heard
His dreadful cannon, and his fire rever'd,
Tell, how you rag'd, when your pale cohorts run
From Marlborough's sword, the battle scarce begun.
Tell, Scaldis! Legia, tell! how to their head
Your frighted waves in refluent errors fled.
While Marlborough's cannon thus prevails by land,
Britain's sea-chiefs, by Anna's high command,
Resistless o'er the Tuscan billows ride,
And strike rebellowing caves on either side;
Their sulphur tempests ring from shore to shore,
Now make the Ligur start, and now the Moor.
Hark how the sound disturbs imperious Rome,
Shakes her proud hills, and rolls from dome to dome!
Her mitred princes hear the echoing noise,
And, Albion, dread thy wrath, and awful voice.
Aided by thee, the Austrian eagles rise
Sublime, and triumph in Iberian skies.
What panic fear, what anguish, what distress,
What consternation, Gallia's sons express,
While trembling on the coast, they from afar
View the wing'd terrors and the floating war!

BOOK VI.

The Argument.

The fabulous account of the first rise of mankind, given by the ancient poets. The opinions of many of the Greek philosophers concerning that point not less ridiculous. The assertion of Epicurus and his followers, that our first parents were the spontaneous production of the earth, most absurd and incredible. The true origin of man inquired into. He is proved to be at first created by an intelligent, arbitrary cause; from the characters and impressions of contrivance, art, and wisdom, which appear in his formation. The wonderful progress of it. The figure, situation, and connection of the bones. The system of the veins, and that of the arteries. The manner of the circulation of the blood described. Nutrition, how performed. The system of the nerves. Of the animal spirits, how made, and how employed in muscular motion and sensation. A wise, intelligent cause inferred from these appearances.

The pagan world, to Canaan's realms unknown,
Where knowledge reign'd, and light celestial shone,
Lost by degrees their parent Adam's name,
Forgot their stock, and wonder'd whence they came;
Unguided, in the dark they strove to find,
With fruitless toil, the source of human kind.
The heathen bards, who idle fables dress't,
Illusive dreams in mystic verse express'd,

And, foes to natural ſcience and divine,
In beauteous phraſe made impious notions ſhine;
In ſtrains ſublime their different fictions ſung,
Whence the firſt parents of our ſpecies ſprung.
Prometheus (ſo ſome elder poets ſay)
Temper'd and form'd a paſte of purer clay,
To which, well mingled with the river's ſtream,
His artful hand gave human ſhape and frame;
Then, with warm life his figures to inſpire,
The bold projector ſtole celeſtial fire.
While others tell us how the human brood
Ow'd their production to the fruitful wood;
How from the laurel and the aſh they ſprung,
And infants on the oak, like acorns hung:
The crude conceptions preſt the bending trees,
Till cheriſh'd by the ſun-beams, by degrees,
Ripe children dropp'd on all the ſoil around,
Peopled the woods, and overſpread the ground.
Great Jupiter (ſo ſome were pleas'd to ſing),
Of fabled gods the father and the king,
The moving prayer of Æacus did grant,
And into men and women turn'd the ant.
Some tell, Deucalion and his Pyrrha threw
Obdurate ſtones, which o'er their ſhoulders flew,
Then ſhifting ſhape receiv'd a vital flame,
And men and women (wondrous change!) became.
And thus the hard and ſtubborn race of man
From animated rock and flint began.
Now to the learned ſchools of Greece repair,
Who chance the author of the world declare:
Then judge if wiſe philoſophers excel
Thoſe idle tales, which wanton poets tell.
They ſay, at firſt to living things the earth
At her formation gave ſpontaneous birth;
When youthful heat was through the glebe diffus'd,
Mankind, as well as inſects, ſhe produc'd;
That genial wombs by parent chance were form'd
Adapted to the ſoil, which, after warm'd
And cheriſh'd by the ſun's enlivening beam,
With human offſprings did in embryo teem;
Theſe nouriſh'd there a while impriſon'd lay,
Then broke their yielding bands, and forc'd their way;
The field a crop of reaſoning creatures crown'd,
And crying infants grovel'd on the ground;
A milky ſtore was by the mother earth
Pour'd from her boſom, to ſuſtain the birth;
In ſtrength and bulk increas'd, the earth-born race
Could move, and walk, and ready change their place,
O'er every hill and verdant paſture ſtray,
Skip o'er the lawns, and by the rivers play,
Could eat the tender plant, and by degrees
Browſe on the ſhrubs, and crop the budding trees;
The fragrant fruit from bending branches ſhake,
And with the cryſtal ſtream their thirſt at pleaſure ſlake.
The earth by theſe applauded ſchools, 'tis ſaid,
This ſingle crop of men and women bred;
Who grown adult (ſo chance it ſeems enjoin'd)
Did male and female propagate their kind.
This wiſe account Lucretian ſages give,
Whence our firſt parents their deſcent derive.

Severely on this ſubject to diſpute,
And tales ſo wild, ſo ſenſeleſs, to confute,
Were with inglorious labour to diſgrace
The ſchools, and reaſon's dignity debaſe.
But ſince, with this of man's original,
The parts remaining of their ſcheme muſt fall
(Yet farther to purſue the preſent theme),
Behold how vain philoſophers may dream.
Grant, Epicurus, that by caſual birth
Men ſprung ſpontaneous from the fruitful earth.
When on the glebe the naked infants lay,
How were the helpleſs creatures fed? You ſay,
The teeming ſoil did from its breaſts exude
A ſoft and milky liquor for their food.
I will not aſk what this apt humour made,
Nor by what wondrous channels 'twas convey'd;
For, if we ſuch inquiries make, we know
Your ſhort reply, It happen'd to be ſo;
Without aſſigning once a proper cauſe,
Or ſolving queſtions by mechanic laws,
To every doubt your anſwer is the ſame,
It ſo fell out, and ſo by chance it came.
How ſhall the new-born race their food command,
Who cannot change their place, or move a hand?
Grant that the glebe beneath will never drink,
Nor through its pores let the ſoft humour ſink;
Will not the ſun with his exhaling ray
Defraud the babe, and draw his food away?
Since for ſo long a ſpace the human birth
Muſt lie expos'd and naked on the earth;
Say, could the tender creature, in deſpite
Of heat by day, and chilling dews by night,
In ſpite of thunder, winds, and hail, and rain,
And all inclement air, its life maintain?
In vain, you ſay, in earth's primæval ſtate,
Soft was the air, and mild the cold and heat;
For did not then the night ſucceed the day?
The ſun as now roll through its annual way?
Th' effects then on the air muſt be the ſame,
The froſts of winter, and the ſummer's flame.
In the firſt age, you ſay, the pregnant ground
With human kind in embryo did abound,
And pour'd her offſpring on the ſoil around.
But tell us, Epicurus, why the field
Did never ſince one human harveſt yield?
And why we never ſee one ripening birth
Heave in the glebe, and ſtruggle through the earth?
You ſay, that, when the earth was freſh and young,
While her prolific energy was ſtrong,
A race of men ſhe in her boſom bred,
And all the fields with infant people ſpread;
But that firſt birth her ſtrength did ſo exhauſt,
The genial mother ſo much vigour loſt,
That, waſted now by age, in vain we hope
She ſhould again bring forth a human crop.
Mean time, ſhe's not with labour ſo much worn,
But ſhe can ſtill the hills with woods adorn.
See, from her fertile boſom how ſhe pours
Verdant conceptions, and, refreſh'd with ſhowers,
Covers the field with corn, and paints the mead with flowers.

See, her tall ſons, the cedar, oak, and pine,
The fragrant myrtle, and the juicy vine,
Their parent's undecaying ſtrength declare,
Which with freſh labour, and unwearied care,
Supplies new plants, her loſſes to repair.
Then, ſince the earth retains her fruitful power
To procreate plants, the foreſt to reſtore;
Say, why to nobler animals alone
Should ſhe be feeble, and unfruitful grown?
After one birth ſhe ceas'd not to be young,
The glebe was ſucculent, the mould was ſtrong.
Could ſhe at once fade in her perfect bloom,
Waſte all her ſpirits, and her wealth conſume?
Grant that her vigour might in part decreaſe,
From like productions muſt ſhe ever ceaſe?
To form a race ſhe might have ſtill inclin'd,
Though of a monſtrous, or a dwarfiſh kind.
Why did ſhe never, by one crude eſſay,
Imperfect lines and rudiments diſplay?
In ſome ſucceeding ages had been found
A leg or arm unfiniſh'd in the ground;
And ſometimes in the fields might plowing ſwains
Turn up ſoft bones, and break unfaſhion'd veins.
But grant the earth was laviſh of her power,
And ſpent at once her whole prolific ſtore;
Would not ſo long a reſt new vigour give,
And all her firſt fertility revive?
Learn, Epicurus, of th' experienc'd ſwain,
When frequent wounds have worn th' impoveriſh'd plain:
Let him a while the furrow not moleſt,
But leave the glebe to heavenly dews and reſt;
If then he till and ſow the harrow'd field,
Will not the ſoil a plenteous harveſt yield?
The ſun, by you, Lucretius, is aſſign'd
The other parent of all human kind.
But does he ever languiſh or decay?
Does he not equal influence diſplay,
And pierce the plains with the ſame active ray?
If then the glebe, warm'd with the ſolar flame,
Men once produc'd, it ſtill ſhould be the ſame.
You ſay, the ſun's prolific beams can form
Th' induſtrious ant, the gaudy fly, and worm;
Can make each plant, and tree, the gardener's care,
Beſide their leaves, their proper inſects bear:
Then might the heavens, in ſome peculiar ſtate,
Or lucky aſpect, beaſts and men create.
But late inquirers by their glaſſes find
That every inſect of each different kind,
In its own egg, cheer'd by the ſolar rays,
Organs involv'd and latent life diſplays:
This truth, diſcover'd by ſagacious art,
Does all Lucretian arrogance ſubvert.
Proud wits, your frenzy own, and, overcome
By reaſon's force, be now for ever dumb.
If, learned Epicurus, we allow
Our race to earth primæval being owe,
How did ſhe male and female ſexes frame?
Say, if from fortune this diſtinction came?
Or did the conſcious parent then foreſee
By one conception ſhe ſhould barren be,
And therefore, wiſely provident, deſign'd
Prolific pairs to propagate the kind;
That, thus preſerv'd, the godlike race of man
Might not expire e'er yet it ſcarce began?

Since, by theſe various arguments, 'tis clear
The teeming mould did not our parents bear;
By more ſevere inquiries let us trace
The origin and ſource of human race.
I think, I move, I therefore know I am;
While I have been, I ſtill have been the ſame,
Since, from an infant, I a man became.
But though I am, few circling years are gone,
Since I in nature's roll was quite unknown.
Then, ſince 'tis plain I have not always been,
I aſk, from whence my being could begin?
I did not to myſelf exiſtence give,
Nor from myſelf the ſecret power receive,
By which I reaſon, and by which I live.
I did not build this frame, nor do I know
The hidden ſprings from whence my motions flow.
If I had form'd myſelf, I had deſign'd
A ſtronger body, and a wiſer mind,
From ſorrow free, nor liable to pain;
My paſſions ſhould obey, and reaſon reign.
Nor could my being from my parents flow,
Who neither did the parts or ſtructure know,
Did not my mind or body underſtand,
My ſex determine, nor my ſhape command:
Had they deſign'd and rais'd the curious frame,
Inſpir'd my branching veins with vital flame,
Faſhion'd the heart, and hollow channels made,
Through which the circling ſtreams of life are play'd;
Had they the organs of my ſenſes wrought,
And form'd the wondrous principle of thought;
Their artful work they muſt have better known,
Explain'd its ſprings, and its contrivance ſhown.
If they could make, they might preſerve me too,
Prevent my fears, or diſſipate my wo.
When long in ſickneſs languiſhing I lay,
They with compaſſion touch'd did mourn and pray,
To ſooth my pain, and mitigate my grief,
They ſaid kind things, yet brought me no relief.
But whatſoever cauſe my being gave,
The power that made me can its creature ſave.
If to myſelf I did not being give,
Nor from immediate parents did receive;
It could not from my predeceſſors flow,
They, than my parents, could not more beſtow.
Should we the long depending ſcale aſcend
Of ſons and fathers, will it never end?
If 'twill, then muſt we through the order run
To ſome one man, whoſe being ne'er begun:
If that one man was ſempiternal, why
Did he, ſince independent, ever die?
If from himſelf his own exiſtence came,
The cauſe, that could deſtroy his being, name.
To ſeek my maker, thus in vain I trace
The whole ſucceſſive chain of human race.
Bewilder'd I my Author cannot find,
Till ſome Firſt Cauſe, ſome Self-exiſtent Mind,
Who form'd, and rules all nature, is aſſign'd.
When firſt the womb did the crude embryo hold,
What ſhap'd the parts? what did the limbs unfold?
O'er the whole work in ſecret did preſide,
Give quickening vigour, and each motion guide?

What kindled in the dark the vital flame,
And, ere the heart was form'd, push'd on the reddening stream?
Then for the heart the aptest fibres strung?
And in the breast th' impulsive engine hung?
Say, what the various bones so wisely wrought?
How was their frame to such perfection brought?
What did their figures for their uses fit,
Their number fix, and joints adapted knit;
And made them all in that just order stand,
Which motion, strength, and ornament, demand?
What for the sinews spun so strong a thread,
The curious loom to weave the muscles spread;
Did the nice strings of tended membranes drill,
And perforate the nerve with so much skill,
Then with the active stream the dark recesses fill?
The purple mazes of the veins display'd,
And all th' arterial pipes in order laid,
What gave the bounding current to the blood,
And to and fro convey'd the restless flood?
The living fabric now in pieces take,
Of every part due observation make;
All which such art discover, so conduce
To beauty, vigour, and each destin'd use;
The atheist, if to search for truth inclin'd,
May in himself his full conviction find,
And from his body teach his erring mind.
When the crude embryo careful nature breeds,
See how she works, and how her work proceeds;
While through the mass her energy she darts,
To free and swell the complicated parts,
Which only does unravel and untwist
Th' invelop'd limbs, that previous there exist.
And as each vital speck, in which remains
Th' entire, but rumpled animal, contains
Organs perplex'd, and clues of twining veins;
So every fœtus bears a sacred hoard,
With sleeping, unexpanded issue stor'd;
Which numerous, but unquicken'd progeny,
Clasp'd and inwrapt within each other lie:
Engendering heats these one by one unbind,
Stretch their small tubes, and hamper'd nerves unwind:
And thus, when time shall drain each magazine,
Crowded with men unborn, unripe, unseen,
Nor yet of parts unfolded; no increase
Can follow, all prolific power must cease.
Th' elastic spirits, which remains at rest
In the strait lodgings of the brain compress,
While by the ambient womb's enlivening heat,
Cheer'd and awaken'd, first themselves dilate;
Then quicken'd and expanded every way,
The genial labourers all their force display:
They now begin to work the wondrous frame,
To shape the parts, and raise the vital flame;
For when th' extended fibres of the brain
Their active guests no longer can restrain,
They backward spring, which due effort compels
The labouring spirits to forsake their cells;
The spirits thus exploded from their seat,
Swift from the head to the next parts retreat,
Force their admission, and their passage beat:
Their tours around th' unopen'd mass they take,
And by a thousand ways their inroads make,
Till there resisted they their race inflect,
And backward to their source their way direct.
Thus with a steady and alternate toil
They issue from, and to the head recoil;
By which their plastic function they discharge,
Extend their channels, and their tracts enlarge;
For, by the swift excursions which they make,
Still sallying from the brain, and leaping back,
They pierce the nervous fibre, bore the vein,
And stretch th' arterial channels which contain
The various streams of life, that to and fro
Through dark meanders undirected flow;
Th' inspected egg this gradual change betrays,
To which the brooding hen expanding heat conveys.
The beating heart, demanded first for use,
Is the first muscle nature does produce;
By this impulsive engine's constant aid,
The tepid floods are every way convey'd;
And did not nature's care at first provide
The active heart, to push the circling tide,
All progress to her work would be denied.
The salient point, so first is call'd the heart,
Shap'd and suspended with amazing art,
By turns dilated, and by turns compress'd,
Expels and entertains the purple guest;
It sends from out its left contracted side
Into th' arterial tube its vital pride;
Which tube, prolong'd but little from its source,
Parts its wide trunk, and takes a double course.
One channel to the head its way directs,
One to th' inferior limbs its path inflects:
Both smaller by degrees, and smaller grow,
And on the parts, through which they branching go,
A thousand secret subtle pipes bestow;
From which, by numerous convolutions wound,
Wrapt with th' attending nerve, and twisted round,
The complicated knots and kernels rise,
Of various figures, and of various size.
Th' arterial ducts, when thus involv'd, produce
Unnumber'd glands, and of important use;
But after, as they farther progress make,
The appellation of a vein they take;
For though th' arterial pipes themselves extend
In smallest branches, yet they never end;
The same continued circling channels run
Back to the heart, where first their course begun.
The heart, as said, from its contractive cave
On the left side, ejects the bounding wave;
Exploded thus, as splitting channels lead,
Upward it springs, or downward is convey'd;
The crimson jets with force elastic thrown
Ascend, and climb the mind's imperial throne;
Arterial streams through the soft brain diffuse,
And water all its fields with vital dews:
From this o'erflowing tide the curious brain
Does through its pores the purer spirits strain;
Which to its inmost seats their passage make,
Whence their dark rise th' extended sinews take;
With all their mouths the nerves these spirits drink,
Which through the cells of the fine strainer sink;
These all the channel'd fibres every way
For motion and sensation still convey.

The greateſt portion of th' arterial blood,
By the cloſe ſtructure of the parts withſtood,
Whoſe narrow meſhes ſtop the groſſer flood,
By apt canals and furrows in the brain,
Which here diſcharge the office of a vein,
Invert their current, and the heart regain.
The ſhooting ſtreams, which through another road
The beating engine downward did explode,
To all th' inferior parts deſcend, and lave
The members with their circulating wave:
To make th' arterial treaſure move as ſlow,
As nature's ends demand, the channels grow
Still more contracted, as they farther go:
Beſides, the glands, which o'er the body ſpread
Fine complicated clues of nervous thread,
Involv'd and twiſted with th' arterial duct,
The rapid motion of the blood obſtruct:
Theſe labyrinths the circling current ſtay
For noble ends, which after we diſplay.
Soon as the blood has paſs'd the winding ways,
And various turnings of the wondrous maze,
From the entangled knot of veſſels freed,
It runs its vital race with greater ſpeed;
And from the parts and members moſt remote,
By theſe canals the ſtreams are backward brought,
Which are of thinner coats and fewer fibres wrought;
Till all the confluent rills their current join,
And in the ample Porta vein combine.
This larger channel by a thouſand roads
Enters the liver, and its ſtore unloads;
Which from that ſtore by proper inlets ſtrains
The yellow dregs, and ſends them by the veins
To the large ciſtern, which the gall contains;
Then to the vein we Cava name, the blood
Calls in the ſcatter'd ſtreams, and re-collects the flood.
As when the Thames advances through the plain,
With his freſh waters to dilute the main;
He turns and winds amidſt the flowery meads,
And now contracts, and now his water ſpreads;
Here in a courſe direct he forward tends,
There to his head his waves retorted bends:
See, now the ſportive flood in two divides
His ſilver train, now with uniting tides
He wanton claſps the intercepted ſoil,
And forms with erring ſtreams the reedy iſle;
At length collecting all his watery band,
The ocean to augment he leaves the land.
So the red currents in their ſecret maze
In various rounds through dark meanders paſs,
Till all, aſſembled in the Cava vein,
Bring to the heart's right ſide their crimſon train,
Which now compreſt with force elaſtic drives
The flood, that through the ſecret paſſes ſtrives;
The road that to the lungs this ſtore tranſmits
Into unnumber'd narrow channels ſplits;
The venal blood crowds through the winding ways,
And through the tubes the broken tide conveys;
Thoſe numerous ſtreams, their roſy beauty gone,
Poor by expence, and faint with labour grown,
Are in the lungs enrich'd, which reinſpire
The languid liquors, and reſtore their fire.

The large arterial ducts that thither lead,
By which the blood is from the heart convey'd,
Through either lobe ten thouſand branches ſpread.
Here its bright ſtream the bounding current parts,
And through the various paſſes ſwiftly darts,
Each ſubtle pipe, each winding channel, fills
With ſprightly liquors, and with purple rills;
The pipe, diſtinguiſh'd by its griſtly rings,
To cheriſh life aërial paſture brings,
Which the ſoft breathing lungs with gentle force
Conſtant embrace by turns, by turns divorce;
The ſpringy air this nitrous food impels
Through all the ſpungy parts and bladder'd cells,
And with dilating breath the vital billows ſwells;
Th' admitted nitre agitates the flood,
Revives its fire, and re-ferments the blood.
Behold, the ſtreams now change their languid blue,
Regain their glory, and their flame renew;
With ſcarlet honours re-adorn'd, the tide
Leaps on, and, bright with more than Tyrian pride,
Advances to the heart, and fills the cave
On the left ſide, which the firſt motion gave;
Now through the ſame involv'd arterial ways,
Again th' exploded jets th' impulſive engine plays.
No ſons of wiſdom could this current trace,
Or of th' Ionic, or Italic race:
From thee, Democritus, it lay conceal'd,
Though yielding nature much to thee reveal'd;
Though with the curious knife thou didſt invade
Her dark receſſes, and haſt oft' diſplay'd
The crimſon mazes, and the hollow road,
Which to the heart conveys the refluent blood.
It was to thee, great Stagyrite, unknown,
And thy preceptor of divine renown.
Learning did ne'er this ſecret truth impart
To the Greek maſters of the healing art.
'Twas by the Coan's piercing eye unview'd,
And did attentive Galen's ſearch elude.
Thou, wondrous Harvey! whoſe immortal fame,
By thee inſtructed, grateful ſchools proclaim;
Thou, Albion's pride, didſt firſt the winding way,
And circling life's dark labyrinth diſplay;
Attentive from the heart thou didſt purſue
The ſtarting flood, and keep it ſtill in view;
Till thou with rapture ſaw'ſt the channels bring
The purple currents back, and form the vital ring.
See, how the human animal is fed,
How nouriſhment is wrought, and how convey'd:
The mouth, with proper faculties endued,
Firſt entertains, and then divides the food;
Two adverſe rows of teeth the meat prepare,
On which the glands fermenting juice confer;
Nature has various tender muſcles plac'd,
By which the artful gullet is embrac'd;
Some the long funnels curious mouth extend,
Through which ingeſted meats with eaſe deſcend;
Other confederate pairs for nature's uſe
Contract the fibres, and the twitch produce,
Which gently puſhes on the grateful food
To the wide ſtomach, by its hollow road:
That this long road may unobſtructed go,
As it deſcends, it bores the midriff through;

The large receiver for concoction made
Behold amidſt the warmeſt bowels laid;
The ſpleen to this, and to the adverſe ſide
The glowing liver's comfort is apply'd;
Beneath, the pancreas has its proper ſeat,
To cheer its neighbour, and augment its heat;
More to aſſiſt it for its deſtin'd uſe,
This ample bag is ſtor'd with active juice,
Which can with eaſe ſubdue, with eaſe unbind,
Admitted meats of every different kind;
This powerful ferment, mingling with the parts,
The leaven'd maſs to milky chyle converts;
The ſtomach's fibres this concocted food,
By their contraction's gentle force, exclude,
Which by the mouth on the right ſide deſcends
Through the wide paſs, which from that mouth depends;
In its progreſſion ſoon the labour'd chyle
Receives the confluent rills of bitter bile,
Which by the liver ſever'd from the blood,
And ſtriving through the gall-pipe, here unload
Their yellow ſtreams, more to refine the flood;
The complicated glands, in various ranks
Diſpos'd along the neighbouring channel's banks,
By conſtant weeping mix their watery ſtore
With the chyle's current, and dilute it more;
Th' inteſtine roads, inflected and inclin'd,
In various convolutions turn and wind,
That theſe meanders may the progreſs ſtay,
And the deſcending chyle by this delay
May through the milky veſſels find its way,
Whoſe little mouths in the large channel's ſide
Suck in the flood, and drink the cheering tide:
Theſe numerous veins (ſuch is the curious frame!)
Receive the pure inſinuating ſtream;
But no corrupt or dreggy parts admit,
To form the blood, or feed the limbs unfit;
Th' inteſtine ſpiral fibres theſe protrude,
And from the winding tubes at length exclude.

Obſerve, theſe ſmall canals conſpire to make
With all their treaſure one capacious lake,
Whoſe common receptacle entertains
Th' united ſtreams of all the lacteal veins.
Hither the rills of water are convey'd
In curious aqueducts by nature laid,
To carry all the limpid humour ſtrain'd,
And from the blood divided by the gland;
Which mingling currents with the milky juice
Makes it more apt to flow, more fit for uſe;
Theſe liquors, which the wide receiver fill,
Prepar'd with labour, and refin'd with ſkill,
Another courſe to diſtant parts begin,
Through roads that ſtretch along the back within;
This uſeful channel, lately known, aſcends,
And in the vein near the left ſhoulder ends,
Which there unloads its wealth, that with the blood
Now flows in one incorporated flood;
Soon by the vein 'tis to the heart convey'd,
And is by that elaſtic engine play'd
Into the lungs, whence, as deſcrib'd before,
It onward ſprings, and makes the wondrous tour.

Now all the banks the branching river laves
With dancing ſtreams, and animated waves;
New florid honours and gay youth beſtows,
Diffuſing vital vigour, where it flows;
Supplies freſh ſpirits to the living frame,
And kindles in the eyes a brighter flame;
Muſcles impair'd receive new fibrous thread,
And every bone is with rich marrow fed;
Nature revives, cheer'd with the wealthy tide,
And life regal'd diſplays its purple pride.

But how the wondrous diſtribution's made,
How to each part its proper food convey'd;
How fibrous ſtrings for nouriſhment are wrought,
By what conveyance to the muſcles brought;
How rang'd for motion, how for beauty mix'd;
With vital cement how th' extremes are fix'd;
How they agree in various ways to join
In a tranſverſe, a ſtraight, and crooked line;
Here loſt in wonder we adoring ſtand
With rapture own the wiſe Director's hand,
Who nature made, and does her works command.

Let us howe'er the theme as far purſue,
As learn'd obſervers know, or think they do.

Mix'd with the blood in the ſame circling tide,
The rills nutritious through the veſſels glide:
Thoſe pipes, ſtill leſſening as they further paſs,
Retard the progreſs of the flowing maſs.
The glands, that nature o'er the body ſpreads,
All artful knots of various hollow threads,
Which lymphæducts, on artery, nerve, and vein,
Involv'd and cloſe together wound, contain,
Make yet the motion of the ſtreams more ſlow,
Which through thoſe mazes intricate muſt flow:
And hence it comes the interrupted blood
Diſtends its channels with its ſwelling flood;
Thoſe channels, turgid with th' obſtructive tide,
Stretch their ſmall holes, and make their meſhes wide,
By ſkilful nature pierc'd on every ſide.
Mean time, the labour'd chyle pervades the pores
In all th' arterial perforated ſhores;
The liquid food, which through thoſe paſſes ſtrives,
To every part juſt reparation gives;
Through holes of various figures various juice
Inſinuates, to ſerve for nature's uſe.
See ſofter fibres to the fleſh are ſent,
While the thin membrane finer ſtrings augment;
The tough and ſtrong are on the ſinews laid,
And to the bones the harder are convey'd;
But what the maſs nutritious does divide,
To different parts the different portions guide,
What makes them aptly to the limbs adhere,
In youth augment them, and in age repair,
The deepeſt ſearch could never yet declare.

Nor leſs contrivance, nor leſs curious art,
Surpriſe and pleaſe in every other part.
See, how the nerves, with equal wiſdom made,
Ariſing from the tender brain, pervade,
And ſecret paſs in pairs the channel'd bone,
And thence advance through paths and roads unknown;
Form'd of the fineſt complicated thread,
Theſe numerous cords are through the body ſpread;
A thouſand branches from each trunk they ſend,
Some to the limbs, ſome to the bowels tend;

Some in ſtrait lines, ſome in tranſverſe, are found,
One forms a crooked figure, one a round;
The entrails theſe embrace in ſpiral ſtrings,
Thoſe claſp th' arterial tubes in tender rings;
The tendons ſome compacted cloſe produce,
And ſome thin fibres for the ſkin diffuſe.
Theſe ſubtle channels (ſuch is every nerve!)
For vital functions, ſenſe, and motion ſerve;
Included ſpirits through their ſecret road
Paſs to and fro, as through the veins the blood;
Some to the heart advancing take their way,
Which move and make the beating muſcle play;
Part to the ſpleen, part to the liver, flows,
Theſe to the lungs, and to the ſtomach thoſe;
They help to labour and concoct the food,
Refine the chyle, and animate the blood;
Exalt the ferments, and the ſtrainers aid,
That, by a conſtant ſeparation made,
They may a due œconomy maintain,
Exclude the noxious parts, the good retain.
Yet we theſe wondrous functions ne'er perceive,
Functions, by which we move, by which we live;
Unconſcious we theſe motions never heed,
Whether they err, or by juſt laws proceed.
But other ſpirits, govern'd by the will,
Shoot through their tracks, and diſtant muſcles fill:
This Sovereign by his arbitrary nod
Reſtrains, or ſends his miniſters abroad;
Swift and obedient to his high command,
They ſtir a finger, or they lift a hand;
They tune our voices, or they move our eyes;
By theſe we walk, or from the ground ariſe;
By theſe we turn, by theſe the body bend;
Contract a limb at pleaſure, or extend.
And though theſe ſpirits, which obſequious go,
Know not the paths through which they ready flow,
Nor can our mind inſtruct them in their way,
Of all their roads as ignorant as they;
Yet ſeldom erring they attain their end,
And reach that ſingle part, which we intend;
Unguided they a juſt diſtinction make,
This muſcle ſwell, and leave the other ſlack;
And when their force this limb or that inflects,
Our will the meaſure of that force directs;
The ſpirits which diſtend them, as we pleaſe,
Exert their power, or from their duty ceaſe.
Theſe out-guards of the mind are ſent abroad,
And ſtill patrolling beat the neighbouring road;
Or to the parts remote obedient fly,
Keep poſts advanc'd, and on the frontier lie.
The watchful centinels at every gate,
At every paſſage to the ſenſes wait;
Still travel to and fro the nervous way,
And their impreſſions to the brain convey.
Where their report the vital envoys make,
And with new orders are remanded back;
Quick, as a darted beam of light, they go,
Through different paths to different organs flow,
Whence they reflect as ſwiftly to the brain,
To give it pleaſure, or to give it pain.
Thus has the muſe a daring wing diſplay'd,
Through trackleſs ſkies ambitious flight eſſay'd,
To ſing the wonders of the human frame;
But, oh! bewails her weak, unequal flame.
Ye ſkilful maſters of Machaon's race,
Who nature's mazy intricacies trace,
And to ſublimer ſpheres of knowledge riſe,
By manag'd fire, and late-invented eyes;
Tell, how your ſearch has here eluded been,
How oft amaz'd and raviſh'd you have ſeen
The conduct, prudence, and ſtupendous art,
And maſter-ſtrokes in each mechanic part.
Tell, what delightful myſteries remain
Unſung, which my inferior voice diſdain.
Who can this field of miracles ſurvey
And not with Galen all in rapture ſay
Behold a God, adore him, and obey!

BOOK VII.

The Argument.

The introduction, in imitation of King Solomon's ironical conceſſions to the libertine. The Creator aſſerted, from the contemplation of animals. Of their ſenſe of hearing, taſting, ſmelling, and eſpecially of ſeeing. Of the nobler operations of animals, commonly called inſtincts. The Creator demonſtrated farther, from the contemplation of human underſtanding, and the perfections of the mind. The vigour and ſwiftneſs of thought. Simple perception. Reflection. Of the mind's power of abſtracting, uniting, and ſeparating ideas. Of the faculty of reaſoning, or deducing one propoſition from two others. The power of human underſtanding, in inventing ſkilful works, and in other inſtances. The mind's ſelf-determining power, or freedom of choice. Her power of electing an end, and chooſing means to attain that end. Of controlling our appetites, rejecting pleaſures, and chooſing pain, want, and death itſelf, in hopes of happineſs in a diſtant unknown ſtate of life. The concluſion, being a ſhort recapitulation of the whole; with a hymn to the Creator of the world.

While roſy youth in perfect bloom maintains,
Thoughtleſs of age, and ignorant of pains;
While from the heart rich ſtreams with vigour ſpring,
Bound through their roads, and dance their vital ring;
And ſpirits, ſwift as ſun-beams through the ſkies,
Dart through thy nerves, and ſparkle in thy eyes;
While nature with full ſtrength thy ſinews arms,
Glows in thy cheeks, and triumphs in her charms;

Indulge thy inſtincts, and intent on eaſe
With raviſhing delight thy ſenſes pleaſe.
Since no black clouds diſhonour now the ſky,
No winds, but balmy genial zephyrs, fly,
Eager embark, and to th' inviting gale
Thy pendants looſe, and ſpread thy ſilken ſail;
Sportive advance on pleaſure's wanton tide
Through flowery ſcenes, diffus'd on either ſide.
See how the hours their painted wings diſ-
play,
And draw, like harneſs'd doves, the ſmiling day!
Shall this glad ſpring, when active ferments climb,
Theſe months, the faireſt progeny of time,
The brighteſt parts in all duration's train,
Aſk thee to ſeize thy bliſs, and aſk in vain?
To their prevailing ſmiles thy heart reſign,
And wiſely make the proffer'd bleſſings thine.
Near ſome fair river, on reclining land,
'Midſt groves and fountains let thy palace ſtand;
Let Parian walls unrivall'd pomp diſplay,
And gilded towers repel augmented day;
Let porphyry pillars in high rows uphold
The azure roof enrich'd with veins of gold;
And the fair creatures of the ſculptor's art
Part grace thy palace, and thy garden part;
Here let the ſcentful ſpoils of opening flowers
Breathe from thy citron walks, and jaſmine bowers;
Heſperian bloſſoms in thy boſom ſmell;
Let all Arabia in thy garments dwell.
That coſtly banquets and delicious feaſts
May crown thy table, to regale thy gueſts,
Ranſack the hills, and every park and wood,
The lake unpeople, and deſpoil the flood;
Procure each feather'd luxury, that beats
Its native air, or from its clime retreats,
And by alternate tranſmigration flies
O'er interpoſing ſeas, and changes ſkies;
Let artful cooks to raiſe their reliſh ſtrive,
With all the ſpicy taſtes the Indies give.
While wreaths of roſes round thy temples twine,
Enjoy the ſparkling bleſſings of the vine;
Let the warm nectar all thy veins inſpire,
Solace thy heart, and raiſe the vital fire.
Next let the charms of heavenly muſic cheer
Thy ſoul with rapture liſtening in thy ear;
Let tuneful chiefs exert their ſkill, to ſhow
What artful joys from manag'd ſound can flow;
Now hear the melting voice and trembling ſtring;
Let Pepuſch touch the lyre, and Margarita ſing.
While wanton ferments ſwell thy glowing veins,
To the warm paſſion give the ſlacken'd reins;
Thy gazing eyes with blooming beauty feaſt,
Receive its dart, and hug it in thy breaſt;
From fair to fair with gay inconſtance rove,
Taſte every ſweet, and cloy thy ſoul with love.
But 'midſt thy boundleſs joys, unbridled youth,
Remember ſtill this ſad, but certain truth,
That thou at laſt ſeverely muſt account;
To what will thy congeſted guilt amount!
Allow a God; he muſt our deeds regard;
A righteous Judge muſt puniſh and reward:
Yet that he rears no high tribunal here,
Impartial juſtice to diſpenſe, is clear.
His ſword unpuniſh'd criminals defy,
Nor by his thunder does the tyrant die;
While Heaven's adorer's preſt with want and pain,
Their unrewarded innocence maintain.
See his right hand he unextended keeps, [ſleeps.
Though long provok'd, th' unactive vengeance
Hence we a world ſucceeding this inſer,
Where he his juſtice will aſſert; prepare
To ſtand arraign'd before his awful bar,
Where wilt thou hide thy ignominous head?
Shuddering with horror, what haſt thou to plead?
Deſpairing wretch! he'll frown thee from his
throne,
And by his wrath will make his being known.
Yet more Religion's empire to ſupport,
To puſh the foe, and make our laſt effort;
Let beings with attention be review'd,
Which, not alone with vital power endued,
Can move themſelves, can organiz'd perceive
The various ſtrokes, which various objects give.
By laws mechanic can Lucretius tell
How living creatures ſee, or hear, or ſmell?
How is the image to the ſenſe convey'd?
On the tun'd organ how the impulſe made?
How, and by which more noble part, the brain
Perceives th' idea, can their ſchools explain?
'Tis clear, in that ſuperior ſeat alone
The judge of objects has her ſecret throne:
Since, a limb ſever'd by the wounding ſteel,
We ſtill may pain, as in that member, feel.
Mark how the ſpirits watchful in the ear
Seize undulating ſounds, and catch the vocal air.
Obſerve how others, that the tongue poſſeſs,
Which ſalts of various ſhape and ſize impreſs,
From their affected fibres upward dart,
And different taſtes by different ſtrokes impart.
Remark, how thoſe, which in the noſtril dwell,
That artful organ deſtin'd for the ſmell,
By vapours mov'd, their paſſage upward take,
And ſcents unpleaſant or delightful make.
If in the tongue, the noſtril, and the ear,
No ſkill, no wiſdom, no deſign, appear;
Lucretians, next, regard the curious eye;
Can you no art, no prudence, there deſcry?
By your mechanic principles, in vain
The ſenſe of ſight you labour to explain.
You ſay, from all the objects of the eye
Thin colour'd ſhapes uninterrupted fly.
As wandering ghoſts (ſo ancient poets feign)
Skim through the air, and ſweep th' infernal
plain;
So theſe light figures roam by day and night,
But undiſcover'd till betray'd by light.
But can corporeal forms with ſo much eaſe
Meet in their flight a thouſand images,
And yet no conflict, no colliſive force,
Break their thin texture, and diſturb their courſe?
What fix'd their parts, and made them ſo cohere,
That they the picture of the object wear?
What is the ſhape, that from a body flies?
What moves, what propagates, what multiplies,
And paints one image in a thouſand eyes?
When to the eye the crowding figures paſs,
How in a point can all poſſeſs a place,
And lie diſtinguiſh'd in ſuch narrow ſpace?
Since all perception in the brain is made,
(Though where and how was never yet diſplay'd)

And ſince ſo great a diſtance lies between
The eye-ball, and the ſeat of ſenſe within;
While in the eye th' arreſted object ſtays,
Tell, what th' idea to the brain conveys?
You ſay, the ſpirits in the optic nerve,
Mov'd by the intercepted image, ſerve
To bear th' impreſſion to the brain, and give
The ſtroke, by which the object we perceive.
How does the brain, touch'd with a different ſtroke,
The whale diſtinguiſh from the marble rock?
Pronounce this tree a cedar, that an oak?
Can ſpirits weak or ſtronger blows expreſs,
One body greater, and another leſs?
How do they make us ſpace and diſtance know?
At once diſtinct a thouſand objects ſhow?
Lucretians, now proceed; contemplate all
The nobler actions of the animal,
Which inſtinct ſome, ſome lower reaſon, call,
Say, what contexture did by chance arrive,
Which to brute creatures did that inſtinct give,
Whence they at ſight diſcern and dread their foe,
Their food diſtinguiſh, and their phyſic know?
By which the lion learns to hunt his prey,
And the weak herd to fear and fly away?
The birds contrive inimitable neſts?
And dens are haunted by the foreſt beaſts?
Whence ſome in ſubterranean dwellings hide,
Theſe in the rocks, and thoſe in woods abide?
Whence timorous beaſts, through hills and lawns purſued,
By artful ſhifts the ravening foe elude?
What various wonders may obſervers ſee
In a ſmall inſect, the ſagacious bee!
Mark, how the little untaught builders ſquare
Their rooms, and in the dark their lodgings rear!
Nature's mechanics, they unwearied ſtrive,
And fill with curious labyrinths the hive.
See, what bright ſtrokes of architecture ſhine
Through the whole frame, what beauty, what deſign!
Each odoriferous cell, and waxen tower,
The yellow pillage of the rifled flower,
Has twice three ſides, the only figure fit
To which the labourers may their ſtores commit,
Without the loſs of matter, or of room,
In all the wondrous ſtructure of the comb.
Next view, ſpectator, with admiring eyes,
In what juſt order all th' apartments riſe!
So regular their equal ſides cohere,
Th' adapted angles ſo each other bear,
That, by mechanic rules refin'd and bold,
They are at once upheld, at once uphold.
Does not this ſkill ev'n vie with reaſon's reach?
Can Euclid more, can more Palladin, teach?
Each verdant hill th' induſtrious chemiſts climb,
Extract the riches of the blooming thyme,
And, provident of winter long before,
They ſtock their caves, and hoard their flowery ſtore;
In peace they rule their ſtate with prudent care,
Wiſely defend, or wage offenſive war.
Maro, theſe wonders offer'd to his thought,
Felt his known ardour, and the rapture caught:
Then rais'd his voice, and, in immortal lays,
Did high as heaven the inſect nation raiſe.

If, Epicurus, this whole artful frame
Does not a wiſe Creator's hand proclaim,
To view the intellectual world advance;
Is this the creature too of fate or chance?
Turn on itſelf thy godlike reaſon's ray,
Thy mind contemplate, and its power ſurvey.
What high perfections grace the human mind,
In fleſh impriſon'd, and to earth confin'd!
What vigour has ſhe! what a piercing ſight!
Strong as the winds, and ſprightly as the light!
She moves unweary'd as the active fire,
And, like the flame, her flights to heaven aſpire:
By day her thoughts in never-ceaſing ſtreams
Flow clear; by night they ſtrive in troubled dreams.
She draws ten thouſand landſcapes in the brain,
Dreſſes of airy forms an endleſs train,
Which all her intellectual ſcenes prepare,
Enter by turns the ſtage, and diſappear.
To the remoter regions of the ſky
Her ſwift-wing'd thought can in a moment fly;
Climb to the heights of heaven, to be employ'd
In viewing thence th' interminable void;
Can look beyond the ſtream of time, to ſee
The ſtagnant ocean of eternity.
Thoughts in an inſtant through the zodiac run,
A year's long journey for the labouring ſun;
Then down they ſhoot, as ſwift as darting light,
Nor can oppoſing clouds retard their flight;
Through ſubterranean vaults with eaſe they ſweep,
And ſearch the hidden wonders of the deep.
When man with reaſon dignify'd is born,
No images his naked mind adorn;
No ſciences or arts enrich his brain,
Nor fancy yet diſplays her pictur'd train:
He no innate ideas can diſcern,
Of knowledge deſtitute, though apt to learn.
Our intellectual, like the body's, eye,
Whilſt in the womb, no object can deſcry;
Yet is diſpos'd to entertain the light,
And judge of things when offer'd to the ſight.
When objects through the ſenſes paſſage gain,
And fill with various imagery the brain,
Th' ideas, which the mind does thence perceive,
To think and know the firſt occaſion give.
Did ſhe not uſe the ſenſes' miniſtry,
Nor ever taſte, or ſmell, or hear, or ſee,
Could ſhe poſſeſt of power perceptive be?
Wretches, who ſightleſs into being came,
Of light or colour no idea frame.
Then grant a man his being did commence,
Deny'd by Nature each external ſenſe,
Theſe ports unopen'd, diffident we gueſs,
Th' unconſcious ſoul no image could poſſeſs;
Though what in ſuch a ſtate the reſtleſs train
Of ſpirits would produce, we aſk in vain.
The mind proceeds, and to reflection goes,
Perceives ſhe does perceive, and knows ſhe knows;
Reviews her acts, and does from thence conclude
She is with reaſon and with choice endued.
From individuals of diſtinguiſh'd kind,
By her abſtracting faculty, the mind
Preciſely general natures can conceive,
And birth to notions univerſal give;

The various modes of things distinctly shows,
A pure respect, a nice relation knows, [flows;
And sees whence each respect and each relation
By her abstracting power in pieces takes [makes;
The mix'd and compound whole, which Nature
On objects of the senses she refines,
Beings by Nature separated joins,
And severs qualities, which that combines.
The mind, from things repugnant, some respects
In which their natures are alike selects,
And can some difference and unlikeness see
In things which seem entirely to agree:
She does distinguish here, and there unite;
The mark of judgment that, and this of wit.
As she can reckon, separate, and compare,
Conceive what order, rude, proportion, are,
So from one thought she still can more infer;
Maxim from maxim can by force express,
And make discover'd truths associate truths confess:
On plain foundations, which our reason lays,
She can stupendous frames of science raise;
Notion on notion built will towering rise,
Till th' intellectual fabrics reach the skies;
The mathematic axioms, which appear
By scientific demonstration clear,
The master-builders on two pillars rear:
From two plain problems by laborious thought
Is all the wondrous superstructure wrought.
The soul, as mention'd, can herself inspect,
By acts reflex can view her acts direct;
A task too hard for sense; for though the eye
Its own reflected image can descry,
Yet it ne'er saw the sight by which it sees,
Vision can show no colour'd images.
The mind's tribunal can reports reject
Made by the senses, and their faults correct;
The magnitude of distant stars it knows,
Which erring sense, as twinkling tapers, shows:
Crooked the shape our cheated eye believes,
Which through a double medium it receives;
Superior mind does a right judgment make,
Declares its straight, and mends the eye's mistake.
Where dwells this sovereign arbitrary soul,
Which does the human animal control,
Inform each part, and agitate the whole?
O'er ministerial senses does preside,
To all their various provinces divide,
Each member move, and every motion guide?
Which, by her secret uncontested nod,
Her messengers the spirits sends abroad,
Through every nervous pass, and every vital road,
To fetch from every distant part a train
Of outward objects, to enrich the brain?
Where sits this bright intelligence enthron'd,
With numberless ideas pour'd around?
Where sciences and arts in order wait,
And truths divine compose her godlike state?
Can the dissecting steel the brain display,
And the august apartment open lay,
Where this great queen still chooses to reside
In intellectual pomp, and bright ideal pride?
Or can the eye, assisted by the glass,
Discern the strait, but hospitable place,
In which ten thousand images remain,
Without confusion, and their rank maintain?

How does this wondrous principle of thought
Perceive the object by the senses brought?
What philosophic builder will essay
By rules mechanic to unfold the way
How a machine must be dispos'd to think,
Ideas how to frame, and how to link?
Tell us, Lucretius, Epicurus, tell,
And you in wit unrival'd shall excel;
How through the outward sense the object flies,
How in the soul her images arise;
What thinking, what perception is, explain;
What all the airy creatures of the brain;
How to the mind a thought reflected goes,
And how the conscious engine knows it knows.
The mind a thousand skilful works can frame,
Can form deep projects to procure her aim.
Merchants for eastern pearl and golden ore
To cross the main, and reach the Indian shore,
Prepare the floating ship, and spread the sail,
To catch the impulse of the breathing gale.
Warriors in framing schemes their wisdom show,
To disappoint or circumvent the foe.
Th' ambitious statesman labours dark designs,
Now open force employs, now undermines;
By paths direct his end he now pursues,
By side approaches now, and slanting views.
See, how resistless orators persuade,
Draw out their forces, and the heart invade;
Touch every spring and movement of the soul,
This appetite excite, and that controul;
Their powerful voice can flying troops arrest,
Confirm the weak, and melt th' obdurate breast;
Chase from the sad their melancholy air,
Sooth discontent, and solace anxious care.
When threatening tides of rage and anger rise,
Usurp the throne, and reason's sway despise,
When in the seats of life this tempest reigns,
Beats through the heart, and drives along the veins;
See, eloquence with force persuasive binds
The restless waves, and charms the warring winds,
Resistless bids tumultuous uproar cease,
Recalls the calm, and gives the bosom peace.
Did not the mind, on heavenly joy intent,
The various kinds of harmony invent?
She the theorbo, she the viol found,
And all the moving melody of sound;
She gave to breathing tubes a power unknown,
To speak inspir'd with accents not their own;
Taught tuneful sons of music how to sing,
How, by vibrations of th' extended string,
And manag'd impulse on the suffering air,
T' extort the rapture, and delight the ear.
See, how celestial reason does command
The ready pencil in the painter's hand;
Whose strokes affect with Nature's self to vie,
And with false life amuse the doubtful eye:
Behold the strong emotions of the mind
Exerted in the eyes, and in the face design'd.
Such is the artist's wondrous power, that we
Ev'n picture souls and colour'd passions see,
Where without words (peculiar eloquence)
The busy figures speak their various sense.
What living face does more distress or woe,
More finish'd shame, confusion, horror, know,
Than what the masters of the pencil show?

Mean time the chisel with the pencil vies;
The sister arts dispute the doubtful prize.
Are human limbs, ev'n in their vital state,
More just and strong, more free and delicate,
Than Buonorota's curious tools create?
He to the rock can vital instincts give,
Which, thus transform'd, can rage, rejoice, or grieve:
His skilful hand does marble veins inspire
Now with the lover's, now the hero's fire;
So well th' imagin'd actors play their part,
The silent hypocrites such power exert,
That passions, which they feel not, they bestow,
Affright us with their fear, and melt us with their woe.
There Niobe leans weeping on her arm:
How her sad looks and beauteous sorrow charm!
See, here a Venus soft in Parian stone;
A Pallas there to ancient fables known;
That from the rock arose, not from the main,
This not from Jove's, but from the sculptor's brain.
Admire the carver's fertile energy,
With ravish'd eyes his happy offspring see.
What beauteous figures by th' unrival'd art
Of British Gibbons from the cedar start!
He makes that tree unnative charms assume,
Usurp gay honours, and another's bloom;
The various fruits, which different climates bear,
And all the pride the fields and gardens wear;
While from unjuicy limbs without a root
New buds devis'd, and leafy branches, shoot.
As human kind can by an act direct,
Perceive and know, then reason and reflect:
So the self-moving spring has power to choose,
These methods to reject, and those to use;
She can design and prosecute an end,
Exert her vigour, or her act suspend;
Free from the insults of all foreign power,
She does her godlike liberty secure;
Her right and high prerogative maintains,
Impatient of the yoke, and scorns coercive chains;
She can her airy train of forms disband,
And makes new levees at her own command;
O'er her ideas sovereign she presides,
At pleasure these unites, and those divides.
The ready phantoms at her nod advance,
And form the busy intellectual dance;
While her fair scenes to vary, or supply,
She singles out fit images, that lie
In memory's records, which faithful hold
Objects immense in secret marks inroll'd;
The sleeping forms at her command awake,
And now return, and now their cells forsake,
On active fancy's crowded theatre,
As she directs, they rise or disappear.
Objects, which through the senses make their way,
And just impressions to the soul convey,
Give her occasion first herself to move,
And to exert her hatred, or her love;
Ideas, which to some impulsive seem,
Act not upon the mind, but that on them.
When she to foreign objects audience gives,
Their strokes and motions in the brain perceives;
As these perceptions, we ideas name,
From her own power and active nature came,
So when discern'd by intellectual light,
Herself her various passions does excite,
To ill her hate, to good her appetite;
To shun the first, the latter to procure,
She chooses means by free elective power;
She can their various habitudes survey,
Debate their fitness, and their merit weigh,
And, while the means suggested she compares,
She to the rivals this or that prefers.
By her superior power the reasoning soul
Can each reluctant appetite controul;
Can every passion rule, and every sense,
Change Nature's course, and with her laws dispense;
Our breathing to prevent, she can arrest
Th' extension, or contraction, of the breast;
When pain'd with hunger, we can food refuse;
And wholesome abstinence, or famine choose.
Can the wild beast his instinct disobey,
And from his jaws release the captive prey?
Or hungry herds on verdant pastures lie,
Mindless to eat, and resolute to die?
With heat expiring, can the panting hart
Patient of thirst from the cool stream depart?
Can brutes at will imprison'd breath detain?
Torment prefer to ease, and life disdain?
From all restraint, from all compulsion free,
Unforc'd, and unnecessitated, we
Ourselves determine, and our freedom prove,
When this we fly, and to that object move.
Had not the mind a power to will and choose,
One object to embrace, and one refuse;
Could she not act, or not her act suspend,
As it obstructed, or advanc'd her end;
Virtue and vice were names without a cause,
This would not hate deserve, nor that applause;
Justice in vain has high tribunals rear'd,
Whom can her sentence punish, whom reward?
If impious children should their father kill,
Can they be wicked, when they cannot will;
When only causes foreign and unseen
Strike with resistless force the springs within,
Whence in the engine man all motion must begin?
Are vapours guilty which the vintage blast?
Are storms proscrib'd, which lay the forest waste?
Why lies the wretch then tortur'd on the wheel,
If forc'd to treason, or compell'd to steal?
Why does the warrior, by auspicious fate
With laurels crown'd, and clad in robes of state,
In triumph ride amidst the gazing throng,
Deaf with applauses, and the poet's song;
If the victorious, but the brute machine
Did only wreaths inevitable win,
And no wise choice or vigilance has shown,
Mov'd by a fatal impulse, not his own?
Should trains of atoms human sense impel,
Though not so fierce, so strong, so visible
As soldiers arm'd, and do not men arrest
With clubs upheld, and daggers at their breast?
Yet means compulsive are not plainer shown,
When ruffians drive, or conquerors drag us on;
As much we're forc'd, when by an atom's sway
Control'd, as when a tyrant we obey;
And, by whatever cause constrain'd to act,
We merit no reward, no guilt contract.

Our mind of rulers feels a conſcious awe,
Reveres their juſtice, and regards their law:
She rectitude and deviation knows,
That vice from one, from one that virtue flows;
Of theſe ſhe feels unlike effects within,
From virtue pleaſure, and remorſe from ſin;
Hopes of a juſt reward by that are fed,
By this, of wrath vindictive, ſecret dread.
The mind, which thus can rules of duty learn,
Can right from wrong, and good from ill diſcern;
Which, the ſharp ſtroke of juſtice to prevent,
Can ſhame expreſs, can grieve, reflect, repent;
From fate or chance her riſe can never draw,
Thoſe cauſes know not virtue, vice, or law.
She can a life ſucceeding this conceive,
Of bliſs or woe an endleſs ſtate believe.
Dreading the juſt and univerſal doom,
And aw'd by fears of puniſhment to come,
By hopes excited of a glorious crown,
And certain pleaſures in a world unknown:
She can the fond deſires of ſenſe reſtrain,
Renounce delight, and chooſe diſtreſs and pain;
Can ruſh on danger, can deſtruction face,
Joyful relinquiſh life, and death embrace:
She to afflicted virtue can adhere,
And chains and want to proſperous guilt prefer;
Unmov'd, theſe wild tempeſtuous ſteps ſurvey,
And view ſerene this reſtleſs rolling ſea.
In vain the monſters, which the coaſt infeſt,
Spend all their rage to interrupt her reſt;
Her charming ſong the ſyren ſings in vain,
She can the tuneful hypocrite diſdain;
Fix'd and unchang'd the faithleſs world behold,
Deaf to its threats, and to its favour cold.
Sages, remark, we labour not to ſhow
The will is free, but that the man is ſo;
For what enlighten'd reaſoner can declare
What human will and underſtanding are?
What ſcience from thoſe objects can we frame
Of which we little know, beſides the name?
The learned, who with anatomic art
Diſſect the mind, and thinking ſubſtance part,
And various powers and faculties aſſert,
Perhaps by ſuch abſtraction of the mind,
Divide the things that are in nature join'd.
What maſters of the ſchools can make it clear
Thoſe faculties, which two to them appear,
Are not reſiding in the ſoul the ſame,
And not diſtinct, but by a different name?
Thus has the muſe purſu'd her hardy theme,
And ſung the wonders of this artful frame.
Ere yet one ſubterranean arch was made,
One cavern vaulted, or one girder laid;
Ere the high rocks did o'er the ſhores ariſe,
Or ſnowy mountains tower'd amidſt the ſkies;
Before the wat'ry troops fil'd off from land,
And lay amidſt the rocks entrench'd in ſand;
Before the air its boſom did unfold,
Or burniſh'd orbs in blue expanſion roll'd,
She ſung how Nature then in embryo lay,
And did the ſecrets of her birth diſplay.
When after, at th' Almighty's high command,
Obedient waves divided from the land;
And ſhades and lazy miſts were chas'd away,
While roſy light diffus'd the tender day;
When uproar ceas'd, and wild confuſion fled,
And new-born Nature rais'd her beauteous head;
She ſung the frame of this terreſtrial pile,
The hills, the rocks, the rivers, and the ſoil:
She view'd the ſandy frontiers, which reſtrain
The noiſy inſults of th' impriſon'd main;
Rang'd o'er the wide diffuſion of the waves,
The moiſt cœrulean walks, and ſearch'd the coral caves.
She then ſurvey'd the fluid fields of air,
And the crude ſeeds of meteors faſhion'd there;
Then with continued flight ſhe ſped her way,
Mounted, and bold purſu'd the ſource of day;
With wonder of celeſtial motions ſung,
How the pois'd orbs are in the vacant hung;
How the bright ſluices of æthereal light,
Now ſhut, defend the empire of the night;
And now, drawn up with wiſe alternate care,
Let floods of glory out, and ſpread with day the air.
Then, with a daring wing, ſhe ſoar'd ſublime,
From realm to realm, from orb to orb did climb:
Swift through the ſpacious gulf ſhe urg'd her way,
At length emerg'd in empyrean day;
Where far, oh far, beyond what mortals ſee,
In the void diſtricts of immenſity;
The mind new ſuns, new planets, can explore,
And yet beyond can ſtill imagine more.
Thus in bold numbers did th' adventurous muſe
To ſing the lifeleſs parts of Nature chooſe;
And then advanc'd to wonders yet behind,
Survey'd and ſung the vegetable kind;
Did lofty woods, and humble brakes review,
Along the valley ſwept, and o'er the mountain flew.
Then left the muſe, the field, and waving grove,
And, unfatigu'd with grateful labour, ſtrove
To climb th' amazing heights of ſenſe, and ſing
The power perceptive, and the inward ſpring
Which agitates and guides each living thing.
She next eſſay'd the embryo's riſe to trace
From an unfaſhion'd, rude, unchannel'd maſs;
Sung how the ſpirits waken'd in the brain,
Exert their force, and genial toil maintain;
Erect the beating heart, the channels frame,
Unfold entangled limbs, and kindle vital flame:
How the ſmall pipes are in meanders laid,
And bounding life is to and fro convey'd;
How ſpirits, which for ſenſe and motion ſerve,
Unguided find the perforated nerve,
Through every dark receſs purſue their flight,
Unconſcious of the road, and void of ſight,
Yet certain of the way, ſtill guide their motions right.
From thence a nobler flight ſhe did eſſay,
The mind's extended empire to ſurvey.
She ſung the godlike principle of thought,
And how, from objects by the ſenſes brought,
The intellectual imagery is wrought;
How ſhe the modes of beings can diſcern,
A nice reſpect, a mere relation learn;
Can all the thin abſtracted notions reach,
Which Grecian wits, or, Britain, thine can teach
Thus has the muſe ſtrove to diſplay a part
Of thoſe unnumber'd miracles of art;

Of prudence, conduct, and a wise design,
Which to th' attentive thought conspicuous shine.
Still, vanquish'd atheists! will you keep the field,
And, hard in error, still refuse to yield?
See, all your broken arms lie spread around,
And ignominious rout deforms the ground;
Be wise, and, once admonish'd by a foe,
Where lies your strength, and where your weakness know;
No more at reason's solemn bar appear,
Hardy no more scholastic weapons bear;
Disband your feeble forces, and decline
The war; no more in tinsel armour shine;
Nor shake your bulrush spears, but swift repair
To your strong place of arms, the scoffer's chair;
And thence, supported with a mocking ring,
Sarcastic darts, and keen invectives fling
Against your foes, and scornful at your feasts
Religion vanquish with decisive jests;
Arm'd with resistless laughter, heaven assail,
Relinquish reason, and let mirth prevail. [sight,
Good Heav'n! that men, who vaunt discerning
And arrogant from wisdom's distant height
Look down on vulgar mortals, who revere
A Cause Supreme, should their proud building rear
Without one prop the ponderous pile to bear!
How much the Judge, who does in heaven preside,
Re-mocks the scoffer, and contemns his pride!
Behold, the sad, unsufferable hour
Advances near, which will his error cure;
When he compell'd shall drink the wrathful
And ruin'd feel immortal vengeance roll [bowl,
Through all his veins, and drench his inmost soul.
O'erwhelm'd with horror, sunk in deep despair,
And lost for ever, will the wretch forbear
To curse his madness, and blaspheme the power
Of his just Sovereign, which he mock'd before?
Hail, King Supreme! of Power immense Abyss!
Father of Light! Exhaustless Source of Bliss!
Thou uncreated, Self-existent Cause,
Control'd by no superior being's laws,
Ere infant light essay'd to dart the ray,
Smil'd heav'nly sweet, and try'd to kindle day:
Ere the wide fields of æther were display'd,
Or silver stars cœrulean spheres inlaid;
Ere yet the eldest child of time was born,
Or verdant pride young nature did adorn;
Thou art; and didst eternity employ
In unmolested peace, in plenitude of joy.
In its ideal frame the world, design'd
From ages past, lay finish'd in thy mind.
Conform to this divine imagin'd plan,
With perfect art th' amazing work began.
Thy glance survey'd the solitary plains,
Where shapeless shade inert and silent reigns;
Then in the dark and undistinguish'd space,
Unfruitful, unenclos'd, and wild of face,
Thy compass for the world mark'd out the destin'd place.
Then didst thou through the fields of barren night
Go forth, collected in Creating Might.
Where Thou almighty vigour didst exert,
Which emicant did this and that way dart
Through the black bosom of the empty space:
The gulfs confess th' omnipotent embrace,
And, pregnant grown with elemental seed,
Unfinish'd orbs and worlds in embryo breed.
From the crude mass, Omniscient Architect,
Thou for each part materials did select,
And with a master-hand thy world erect.
Labour'd by Thee, the globes, vast lucid buoys,
By Thee uplifted, float in liquid skies:
By Thy cementing word their parts cohere,
And roll by Thy impulsive nod in air.
Thou in the vacant didst the earth suspend,
Advance the mountains, and the vales extend:
People the plains with flocks, with beasts the wood,
And store with scaly colonies the flood.
Next, man arose at Thy Creating Word,
Of Thy terrestrial realms vicegerent lord.
His soul, more artful labour, more refin'd,
And emulous of bright Seraphic Mind,
Ennobled by Thy image, spotless shone,
Prais'd Thee her author, and ador'd Thy throne;
Able to know, admire, enjoy her God,
She did her high felicity applaud.
Since Thou didst all the spacious worlds display,
Homage to Thee let all obedient pay.
Let glittering stars, that dance their destin'd ring
Sublime in sky, with vocal planets sing [King!
Confederate praise to Thee, O Great Creator
Let the thin districts of the waving air,
Conveyancers of sound, Thy skill declare.
Let winds, the breathing creatures of the skies,
Call in each vigorous gale, that roving flies
By land or sea; then one loud triumph raise,
And all their blasts employ in songs of praise.
While painted herald-birds Thy deeds proclaim,
And on their spreading wings convey Thy fame;
Let eagles, which in heaven's blue concave soar,
Scornful of earth, superior seats explore,
And rise with breasts erect against the sun,
Be ministers to bear Thy bright renown,
And carry ardent praises to Thy throne.
Ye fish, assume a voice; with praises fill
The hollow rock, and loud reactive hill.
Let lions with their roar their thanks express,
With acclamations shake the wilderness.
Let thunder clouds, that float from pole to pole,
With salvos loud salute Thee as they roll.
Ye monsters of the sea, ye noisy waves,
Strike with applause the repercussive caves.
Let hail and rain, let meteors form'd of fire,
And lambent flames, in this blest work conspire.
Let the high cedar and the mountain pine
Lowly to thee, Great King, their heads incline.
Let every spicy odoriferous tree
Present its incense and its balm to Thee. [low;
And thou, Heaven's viceroy o'er this world be-
In this blest task superior ardour show:
To view thyself, inflect thy reason's ray,
Nature's repleniish'd theatre survey;
Then all on fire the Author's skill adore,
And in loud songs extol Creating Power.
Degenerate minds, in mazy error lost,
May combat Heaven, and impious triumphs boast;
But, while my veins feel animating fires,
And vital air this breathing breast inspires,
Grateful to Heaven, I'll stretch a pious wing,
And sing His praise, who gave me power to sing.

THE SONG OF MOPUS*.

But that which Arthur with moſt pleaſure heard,
Were noble ſtrains, by Mopus ſung, the bard
Who to his harp in lofty verſe began,
And through the ſecret maze of Nature ran.
He the great Spirit ſung, that all things fill'd,
That the tumultuous waves of Chaos ſtill'd;
Whoſe nod diſpos'd the jarring ſeeds to peace,
And made the wars of hoſtile atoms ceaſe.
All beings we in fruitful nature find,
Proceeded from the great Eternal Mind;
Streams of his unexhauſted ſpring of power,
And cheriſh'd with his influence, endure.
He ſpread the pure cœrulean fields on high,
And arch'd the chambers of the vaulted ſky,
Which he, to ſuit their glory with their height,
Adorn'd with globes, that reel, as drunk with light.
His hand directed all the tuneful ſpheres,
He turn'd their orbs, and poliſh'd all the ſtars.
He fill'd the ſun's vaſt lamp with golden light,
And bid the ſilver moon adorn the night.
He ſpread the airy ocean without ſhores,
Where birds are wafted with their feather'd oars.
Then ſung the bard how the light vapours riſe
From the warm earth, and cloud the ſmiling ſkies.
He ſung how ſome, chill'd in their airy flight,
Fall ſcatter'd down in pearly dew by night.
How ſome, rais'd higher, fit in ſecret ſteams
On the reflected points of bounding beams;
Till, chill'd with cold, they ſhade th' ætherial plain,
Then on the thirſty earth deſcend in rain.
How ſome, whoſe parts a ſlight contexture ſhow,
Sink hovering through the air, in fleecy ſnow.
How part is ſpun in ſilken threads, and clings
Entangled in the graſs in glewy ſtrings.
How others ſtamp to ſtones, with ruſhing ſound
Fall from their cryſtal quarries to the ground.
How ſome are laid in trains, that kindled fly
In harmleſs fires by night, about the ſky.
How ſome in winds blow with impetuous force,
And carry ruin where they bend their courſe:
While ſome conſpire to form a gentle breeze,
To fan the air, and play among the trees.
How ſome, enrag'd, grow turbulent and loud,
Pent in the bowels of a frowning cloud;
That cracks, as if the axis of the world
Was broke, and heaven's bright towers were downwards hurl'd.
He ſung how earth's wide ball, at Jove's command,
Did in the midſt on airy columns ſtand.
And how the ſoul of plants, in priſon held,
And bound with ſluggiſh fetters, lies conceal'd,
Till with the ſpring's warm beams, almoſt releaſt
From the dull weight, with which it lay oppreſt,
Its vigour ſpreads, and makes the teeming earth
Heave up, and labour with the ſprouting birth:
The active ſpirit freedom ſeeks in vain,
It only works and twiſts a ſtronger chain.
Urging its priſon's ſides to break away,
It makes that wider, where 'tis forced to ſtay:
Till, having form'd its living houſe, it rears
Its head, and in a tender plant appears.
Hence ſprings the oak, the beauty of the grove,
Whoſe ſtately trunk fierce ſtorms can ſcarcely move.
Hence grows the cedar, hence the ſwelling vine
Does round the elm its purple cluſters twine.
Hence painted flowers the ſmiling gardens bleſs,
Both with their fragrant ſcent and gaudy dreſs.
Hence the white lily in full beauty grows,
Hence the blue violet, and bluſhing roſe.
He ſung how ſun beams brood upon the earth,
And in the glebe hatch ſuch a numerous birth;
Which way the genial warmth in ſummer ſtorms
Turns putrid vapours to a bed of worms;
How rain, transform'd by this prolific power,
Falls from the clouds an animated ſhower.
He ſung the embryo's growth within the womb,
And how the parts their various ſhapes aſſume.
With what rare art the wondrous ſtructure's wrought,
From one crude maſs to ſuch perfection brought;
That no part uſeleſs none miſplac'd we ſee,
None are forgot, and more would monſtrous be.

* As the heroic poems of Blackmore are now little read, it is thought proper to inſert, as a ſpecimen from Prince Arthur, the above ſong, which is mentioned by Molyneux in his letter to Locke. [*Locke's Works, Vol.* iii. *p.* 568, 569, *Edit.* 1714.]

THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

WILLIAM WILKIE, D.D.

Containing

THE EPIGONIAD, ‖ FABLES,

&c. &c. &c.

To which is prefixed,

THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

This theme did once your fav'rite bard employ,
Whoſe verſe immortaliz'd the fall of Troy:
But time's oblivious gulf, whoſe circle draws
All mortal things by fate's eternal laws,
This ſong has ſnatch'd. I now reſume the ſtrain,
Not from proud hope and emulation vain,
By this attempt to merit equal praiſe
With worth heroic, born in happier days.
But love excites me, and deſire to trace
His glorious ſteps, though with unequal pace.

EPIGONIAD, BOOK I.

EDINBURGH:
PRINTED BY *MUNDELL AND SON*, ROYAL BANK CLOSE,
Anno 1795.

THE LIFE OF WILKIE.

Of the perſonal hiſtory of WILKIE, "the Scottiſh Homer," there is no written memorial. Though his writings are not more diſtinguiſhed for learning and genius, than his life was remarkable for originality of manners, his name is not to be found in any collection of literary biography.

In 1783, a deſign was formed of writing his life, to be prefixed to a new edition of his poems, by the Rev. Dr. William Thomſon, whoſe abilities, in other literary provinces, have juſtly obtained him the ſanction of public applauſe. In the proſecution of this deſign, Dr. Thomſon was encouraged, by the approbation of the late Earl of Lauderdale, and aſſiſted by information obtained by Mr. Andrew Dalzel, Profeſſor of Greek in the Univerſity of Edinburgh, from his couſin, the Rev. Robert Liſton, miniſter of Aberdour, the Rev. James Robertſon, miniſter of Ratho, and the Rev. Dr. Thomas Robertſon, miniſter of Dalmeny. After having made ſome progreſs in digeſting the materials, the intended edition of his poems not meeting with ſuitable encouragement, Dr. Thomſon was compelled to deſiſt; and his friends are diſappointed in the hope of ſeeing juſtice done to his memory, by the ſame maſterly pen that has enriched Engliſh literature by the "Continuation of Watſon's Hiſtory of Philip III." the "Tranſlation of Cuningham's Hiſtory of Great Britain," and other ingenious and elegant performances.

It is with becoming diffidence the preſent writer takes upon him a taſk which has been declined by Dr. Thomſon; but, in collecting the works of this poet with thoſe of other eminent poets of our nation, it is incumbent upon him to prefix ſome account of his life, which, however inadequate to his merits, or unſatisfactory to his friends, may not be altogether unwelcome to the public, who, it has been often obſerved, will always take an intereſt in thoſe perſons from whoſe labours they have derived profit or delight.

The facts ſtated in the preſent account, are partly taken from ſome detached portions of Dr. Thomſon's unfiniſhed narrative, and partly from the original information furniſhed by Mr. Robertſon, Mr. Liſton, and Dr. Robertſon, obligingly communicated to the preſent writer, by Dr. Thomſon, through the kindneſs of Profeſſor Dalzel, whoſe laudable endeavours to vindicate the fame, and to preſerve the memory of this poet, entitle him to the gratitude of the lovers of claſſical and polite literature.

William Wilkie was born at Echlin, in the pariſh of Dalmeny, in the county of Weſt-Lothian, October 5. 1721. His great-grandfather was a younger ſon of the family of Wilkie, of Rathobyres, in the pariſh of Ratho, one of the oldeſt families in Mid-Lothian, and the undoubted chief of the Wilkies. His grandfather rented the farm of Echlin, and purchaſed a part of the eſtate of Rathobyres, which he tranſmitted with the farm to his ſon, the poet's father, who was a worthy, liberal, and intelligent man, never opulent, on the contrary, poor, and rather unfortunate through life. His mother was a woman of diſtinguiſhed prudence and underſtanding, and able, it is ſaid, to expreſs her thoughts in the moſt grammatical manner, and proper words on every ſubject.

He received his early education at the pariſh ſchool of Dalmeny, under the care of Mr. Riddel, a very reſpectable and ſucceſsful teacher. At ſchool, he obtained the reputation of a boy of excellent parts, and on many occaſions diſcovered marks of that peculiarity and fertility of genius that ſo remarkably characteriſed his future life.

He diſcovered an early propenſity to the ſtudy of poetry, and began to write verſes in his tenth year, as appears by the following deſcription of a *Storm*, written at that age, and publiſhed by Dr. Robertſon, in the 9th vol. of "The Statiſtical Account of Scotland," which muſt be allowed to be a very correct and manly performance for a boy of ten.

What penetrating mind can rightly form
A faint idea of a raging ſtorm?
Who can expreſs of elements the war;
And noiſy thunder roaring from afar?
This ſubject is ſuperior to my ſkill;
Yet I'll begin, to ſhow I want not will.
A pitchy cloud diſplays itſelf on high;
And with its ſable mantle veils the ſky:
Fraught with the magazine of heaven does throw
Bolts barb'd with fire upon the world below.
All nature ſhakes and the whole heavens ſmoke;
Nor can the groſs black cloud ſuſtain the ſhock:
But op'ning from his magazines doth roll,
Thick ſmoke and flames of fire from pole to pole.
Thence hail, ſnow, vapour, mix'd with flames of fire,
With conjunct force againſt the earth conſpire.
Monſters of ſea and land do loudly roar,
And make the deep reſound from ſhore to ſhore.
The ſpumy waves come rolling from afar,
And with loud jars declare the wat'ry war.
They upward mount, and raiſe their creſts on high,
And beat the middle regions of the ſky.
Downwards they fall upon the ſwelling deep,
And toſs the rigging of ſome low ſunk ſhip:
Upwards they tow'r and falling down again,
They bury men and cargo in the main.
The boiling deep doth from her low ſunk cell
Throw out black waves reſembling thoſe of hell.
They forward roll and hideouſly do roar,
And vent their rage againſt the rocky ſhore.

At the age of thirteen, he was ſent to the Univerſity of Edinburgh, where he diſtinguiſhed himſelf in the different claſſes of languages, philoſophy and theology; and formed many of thoſe friendſhips and connections which afforded him much happineſs through life.

Among the number of his fellow collegians, with whom he lived in habits of the cloſeſt intimacy, were Dr. Robertſon, Mr. John Home, Dr. M'Ghie, and Profeſſor Cleghorn. Dr. Robertſon afterwards and Mr. Home figured high in the literary world. Dr. M'Ghie went to London, obtained the friendſhip of Dr. Johnſon, and became a member of the Ivy-lane Club. Profeſſor Cleghorn, a man of great promiſe, died young.

His intellectual faculties of every ſort now began to make a rapid progreſs, the cauſe of which may, in a great meaſure, be attributed to the converſation of the companions he chanced to find in the univerſity, and to the ſocieties which, about that time, began to be formed among the ſtudents for their mutual improvement in literary compoſition, philoſophical diſquiſition, and public ſpeaking, in which his talents found ample ſcope and encouragement.

His converſation with men of taſte and learning, and the excitement which their example would give to his emulation, would do more towards the improvement of his mind than any lectures he could attend, or any mode of ſtudy he could purſue. The preſent writer would not, however, have it thought, that he conceives either of theſe to be without their uſe; he would only affirm, that they hold a ſecondary place, when compared with the ſociety of ſuch men as it was his felicity to find contemporary ſtudents in the univerſity.

It was likewiſe very fortunate for him, that, during the courſe of his education at Edinburgh, he became known to David Hume and Dr. Ferguſon, and, at a later period, to Dr. Smith, by all of whom he was held in a higher light than a common acquaintance.

In literary ſocieties, and private converſation, he had an opportunity of being thoroughly acquainted with the capacities, as well as the tempers and diſpoſitions of his contemporaries.

Of all his acquaintance, he regarded Dr. Smith with the greateſt admiration, and Dr. Fergufon with the greateſt affection. He conſidered Dr. Smith as a ſuperior genius to Mr. Hume. He poſſeſſed, in his opinion, equal learning, and greater originality and invention; for what may appear ſtrange, he by no means conſidered Mr. Hume as an original or inventive genius. The ſubtlety of his reaſoning, the extent of his reading, the depth and ſolidity of his reflections, he greatly admired, but ſtill he thought that he did not draw ſo much as Dr. Smith, or even Lord Kames, from the ſtores of his own mind. He ſaid that he trod in the footſteps of Bolingbroke, and certain French philoſophers; that he greedily imbibed their ideas, and was ſtudious to glean what they left behind them; that he informed himſelf with great induſtry of the opinions and views of great men, in all ages of the world, compared them together, preferred what he thought beſt, drew corollaries from their reaſoning, and, on the whole, exhibited a ſtriking example of induſtry and of judgment. But he availed himſelf of the ignorance of the world to paſs that as new, which in reality was old; and that his ideas were either borrowed from other writers, or deductions and improvements on concluſions already eſtabliſhed.

Such was the opinion entertained by Wilkie concerning Mr. Hume. Invention is a power which muſt needs ſtand high in the admiration of a poet, and Wilkie ſpoke like a poet, when he magnified its praiſe, as if it had been a divine impulſe, an immediate inſpiration, which operated its effects inſtantaneouſly, and without that leiſurely and gradual proceſs which takes place in every production of human genius.

The ideas of men are linked together by a chain of aſſociation. Wilkie, perceiving, or thinking that he perceived the ſteps by which Mr. Hume was led to the doctrines he advanced, but not diſcerning, in like manner, the proceſs by which Dr. Smith was led to the formation of his theories, pronounced the former a man of induſtry and judgment, and the latter a man of induſtry and genius.

It certainly matters not whether a hint be derived from a book, or from converſation, or an accidental occurrence in the material or moral world. Every idea is derivative. What is ſaid of genius and invention, in contradiſtinction to memory and judgment, is commonly vague and indefinite.

Wilkie appears to have had a predilection for Dr. Smith, otherwiſe in the exuberance of his own invention, he might have diſcovered or conjectured that the firſt hints of the "Theory of Moral Sentiments," a theory ſo amiable, ſo uſeful in life, and to a certain and important extent, ſo juſt, may have been originally ſuggeſted by ſome thoughts in the "*De Augmentis Scientiarum*" of Bacon, or from Dr. Butler's "Sermons on Human Nature."

While he was proſecuting his literary ſtudies at Edinburgh, his father died, and left him no other inheritance than the ſtock and unexpired leaſe of his farm at the Fiſher's Tryſte, about two miles weſt from that city, and the charge of his three ſiſters; having ſold his property at Rathobyres, a ſhort time before his death, and applied the purchaſe-money to the payment of his debts.

For the occupation of a farmer, which this melancholy event devolved upon him, he was eminently qualified, both by his habits of ſpeculation and experience; having been accuſtomed, as he grew up, to divide with his father the buſineſs of the farm, which, as is uſual in thoſe of ſmall extent, was chiefly cultivated by the common labour of the family.

Confiding, however, in the powers of which he was conſcious, he ſeems not to have truſted for his future maintenance to his exertions as a farmer; for, while he managed his farm, he proſecuted his ſtudies in divinity, and commenced preacher of the goſpel.

The narrowneſs of his circumſtances obliged him to live with great economy, and it was during this period, owing particularly to the neceſſities of his ſituation, that he contracted an uncommon degree of parſimony, which he practiſed more than was neceſſary in his future life.

About this time one of his ſiſters was married to Mr. John Cleghorn, farmer at Granton, in the pariſh of Cramond, a man of ſtrong parts, very amiable diſpoſition, and great ability in his profeſſion. With him he contracted the moſt intimate habits of friendſhip and correſpondence. In all matters of huſbandry and common life, he quoted Mr. Cleghorn's practice and maxims, as the

ſtandard of perfection in every converſation. He was his moſt confidential friend through life, and they died about the ſame time.

From Mr. Cleghorn he probably derived many of thoſe maxims and principles in huſbandry which he practiſed with amazing ſucceſs in the management of his farm. He became eminent in many branches of ſcience; but in nothing did he excel more than in a thorough and profound knowledge of the art of huſbandry. He uſed often to ſay, that to diſcern properly the real qualities of different ſoils, and to apply, with ſucceſs, the culture proper for each, required the higheſt exertion of the human underſtanding.

Though he was, in many reſpects, the moſt ſpeculative and fanciful man in the world, yet he was very careful, in the character of a farmer, to avoid the chemical theories, and to adhere to the plain, direct, and ſure road of experience. He was fully convinced that, to open the earth for the admiſſion of the foſtering influences of heaven, and to return into her lap her own produce, whether in the form of vegetables or animals, was the great art of promoting her fertility, and preparing her for the important work of reproduction. Dead horſes, dogs, cats, and animals of all kinds, he was at pains to pick up, and to convert them into a *pabulum* for uſeful vegetables. Every thing that abounded with the principles of vegetation he was eager to add to his dunghill. He watched his people, often ſhared in their labour, and made it a rule to encourage good ſervants, both by better wages, and by encomiums and little premiums; but, on no account, would ſuffer the vicious, or the ſlothful, to live with him on any terms. He ſeemed to be particularly ſucceſsful in the culture of potatoes, and was often, from this circumſtance, denominated the *Potatoe-Miniſter*.

In this courſe of life, he had much intercourſe with the country people in the way of making bargains; from which he took occaſion to make many curious remarks on human nature. There was nothing about the lower ranks of men that ſtruck him ſo much as their cunning. "I can raiſe crops," he would exclaim, "better than any of my neighbours; but I am always cheated in the market."

In the midſt of all theſe operations of agriculture, he found leiſure to cultivate the ſtudy of polite literature, and aſpired to the renown of an epic poet.

There is not a doubt that poets are moved by the divine impulſe of the "heavenly muſe;" the "ſpirit that inſpired on Horeb the choſen ſhepherd;" the "powers of ſong;" the "philoſophic power of melancholy;" or by whatever name that inviſible cauſe is called, which produces that inward thrilling which ſeeks to expreſs itſelf in verſe; yet do local and political circumſtances incline the poet to ſtir up the gift that is within him; and, but for theſe circumſtances, Wilkie would not perhaps have known that he was born a poet. He made no ſcruple of confeſſing, that he thought it good policy to rouſe his poetical talents, and to liſten to the dictates of the "powers of ſong."

When he had quitted the college, and found himſelf deſtitute of powerful friends, he began to meditate on the moſt probable means of introducing himſelf to the notice of the great. To compoſe a book in philoſophy would be doing nothing: It might be read by a few men of learning, moſt of whom had, in all likelihood, fixed their philoſophical creed, and imagined, that whatever was contradictory to their notions was falſe, and whatever paſſed the circle of their knowledge, ſuperfluous. He once intended to write a novel; but that ſpecies of writing, though it required the fineſt parts, was not likely to lead to any preferment. The world, though well pleaſed to laugh at the fancies of the noveliſt, would not, he apprehended, think of rewarding him. In the whole circle of ſcience and art, there was not any ſtudy that appeared to him at once ſo congenial to his powers, and ſo conducive to his intereſt, as poetry. He, therefore, determined to write an epic poem.

Among the various analogies which the active fancy of man delights to trace between political and human bodies, there is none more ſtriking than that ſimilarity which is remarked between their different geniuſes in the different ſtages of their exiſtence. In youth, and in manhood, we look forward to ſome object which is to increaſe our happineſs, and to raiſe our

ſame. Animated by ſuch pleaſing hopes, our ſpirits are lively, and our purſuits are active; but, in more advanced years, men turn back their attention to the more early period of their lives, and are fond of recollecting and relating the joys and the achievements of their youth. There is, in like manner, a time when nations look forward to future glory, when they are emulous to excel in every honourable enterpriſe, and are eager to ſtrike out new paths in ſcience and art. And there is alſo a time when, either through ſatiety or deſpair, they are more inclined to remember what has been, than to anticipate what ſhall be; when hiſtory becomes the favourite ſtudy, and is deemed the moſt entertaining ſubject, as well as the moſt uſeful object of human attention and reaſon. Such is the genius of our nation at the preſent moment. And this turn of the nation, coinciding with that ardour for literary fame, which, for more than forty years paſt has diſtinguiſhed the northern part of this iſland, has determined the moſt eminent Scottiſh writers to try their ſtrength in the arduous attempt of hiſtory.

Had Wilkie been born and educated in the preſent reign, it is probable that he would have courted the hiſtoric muſe. But the general taſte for poetry which prevailed when he received the firſt impreſſions of education, a ſprightly and luxuriant imagination, and the political motive, which has been already mentioned, conſpired to raiſe his views to Parnaſſus. A few years before his birth, ſenators and ſtateſmen were proud of writing verſes; and a talent for poetry was conſidered as a requiſite, as it was in reality a ſtep to preferment in the offices of government. The princes, in whoſe reign he was born and educated, were not indeed patrons of the muſes: But poetry continued to be in faſhion. The tranſlations of Pope had excited a general admiration of his own powers, and revived a veneration for thoſe of Homer. Criticiſms were written on the Epopiœa, and compariſons made between Homer, Virgil, Lucan, Camoens, Arioſto, Taſſo, Milton, Voltaire, and Glover.

In ſuch circumſtances, Wilkie conceived the deſign of writing a poem after that great poet, whoſe praiſes were re-echoed throughout the world, and for whom he entertained the higheſt veneration. He drew the ſubject of his poem from the fourth book of the "Iliad," where Sthenelus gives Agamemnon a ſhort account of the ſacking of Thebes. After the fall of thoſe heroes celebrated by Statius, their ſons, and, among the reſt, *Diomed*, undertook the ſiege of that city, and were ſo fortunate as to ſucceed in their enterpriſe, and to revenge, on the Thebans and the tyrant *Creon*, the death of their fathers. Theſe young heroes were known to the Greeks under the title of the *Epigoni*, or the *Deſcendents*; and, for this reaſon, Wilkie gave to his poem the title of the *Epigoniad*.

There remained a tradition among the Greeks, that Homer had taken this ſecond ſiege of Thebes for the ſubject of a ſecond poem, which is loſt; and Wilkie ſeems to have pleaſed himſelf with the thoughts of reviving the work, as well as of treading in the ſteps of his favourite author.

The principles upon which, as a Chriſtian and a philoſopher, in an age which rejects ancient fable as wholly incredible, he engaged in an undertaking, the nature of which was intimately connected with ancient mythology, may be collected from the following eulogium on the influence of poetry, more particularly that ſpecies of poetry which ſuppoſes the truth of heathen fables, pronounced in converſation with Dr. Thomſon, many years after, in the Earl of Kinnoul's library at Dupplin-Caſtle, which, though long, is too valuable to be withheld.

"There cannot be a more proper amuſement for a perſon whoſe office it is to humaniſe the mind by inculcating the Chriſtian graces and virtues than the poets. All literature has a tendency to purify the mind from diſingenuity and brutality, by habituating it to the contemplation of truth, in contradiſtinction to falſehood and error; of fitneſs and propriety, as diſtinguiſhed from what is incongruous, monſtrous, and abſurd; and of human nature placed in ſituations fitted to excite our ſympathetic feelings, and to exerciſe our noble and virtuous emotions and paſſions. It is in this laſt manner, it is by a conſtant appeal to our moral feelings, that poetry, eſpecially the ſublimer kinds of poetry, wears off the antipathies of the barbarian, and diſpoſes the man of letters and taſte in the intercourſe of life, to overlook many cauſes of animoſity and reſentment, and to ſympathize with human nature in the midſt of a thouſand frailties and follies. By the ſublime kinds of poetry I underſtand the ode, tragedy, and epopœa: Theſe not only recommend whatever is excellent and

great in human conduct, to the cool and diſpaſſionate views of reaſon, but powerfully impreſs it on the heart, and gradually incorporate it with the moral character. In human events and actions there is a fameneſs which cloys, and an imperfection which diſpleaſes the mind. Heroic or epic poetry remedies theſe defects, by exhibiting a picture as various as the wanderings of the imagination, and examples of virtue that correſpond to thoſe abſtracted ideas of excellence that are formed by the intellect, and which alone come up to the deſires of the ſoul. Although the whole of a compoſition of this kind abounds in grave inſtructions, yet there is one leſſon which is taught above all others, one truth which it principally inculcates, and which is called the moral of the poem. This truth or moral is illuſtrated by a ſtory or fable; and as the heroic poet does not ſhoot directly and rapidly towards the end he has in view, but, on the contrary, keeps long on the wing, and aims, in his flight, to warm the mind, and to gratify its vaſt deſires by frequent views of the grandeur, magnificence, and beauty of nature. This fable, ſtory, or plot, various and intricate in itſelf, is ſtill farther diverſified by manifold incidents and digreſſions; various ſcenes are opened, various actors introduced, various characters and manners, and, correſponding to theſe, various ſentiments. The variety and gravity of the diction are ſuited to the variety and gravity of the ſubject; and muſical numbers, with beautiful imagery, adorn every part of the complicated production."

" He illuſtrated the truth of theſe ſentiments" ſays Dr. Thomſon, by whom the converſation is reported, " from the works of Taſſo and of Milton, but chiefly from the " Iliad" of Homer. I mentioned the incredibility of Homer's fables, and hinted that they were ſcarcely proper for the contemplation of a Chriſtian. On this head, I was not myſelf very ſcrupulous, being convinced that, to ſuffer the imagination to wander, for a time, over the fields of fancy, is no crime. It is eaſy to call back the wanderer, and to diſmiſs the illuſion: But I wiſhed to draw an anſwer from Wilkie. With reſpect to the incredibility of fable, the imagination, he anſwered, can render any thing credible, if it is well deſcribed, that is not abſurd or impoſſible. As to the unchriſtianneſs of attending to heathen fables, he ſaid that there were many fables in the Bible, introduced for the expreſs purpoſe of conveying and inculcating truths, religious and moral. Many of the heathen fables, he maintained, had, in like manner, a moral tendency: For example, the furious Achilles and Diomed are about to vent their rage in ſome act of cruelty and injuſtice. Minerva preſents herſelf in ſome form or other that they reſpect, and diverts their purpoſe. That is, the voice of reaſon reſtrains the impetuoſity of paſſion."

The differences of time and place had no effect upon Wilkie's genius. While he cultivated the ground, his poem of *The Epigoniad* was going forward; and, with the ſcythe in his hand, he meditated on the times when princes and heroes boaſted of their powers and ſkill, in cutting hay, ploughing land, and feeding ſwine. The rural ſcenes and ſimple manners that were ever preſent in his imagination, accorded well with the tone of a poem, the ſubject of which was taken from a very early period of ſociety, and contributed to give a juſtneſs and exactneſs to his images, which are not to be found in the compoſitions of city poets, who draw little from nature, and take every thing at ſecond hand.

It was reported, that while he was writing the *Epigoniad*, it is ſaid, he read it in pieces to an old woman in the neighbourhood, named Margaret Paton, without communicating to any other perſon what he was doing; and what ſhe diſapproved of, he ſcored and altered, till pure nature was pleaſed. A ſimilar ſtory is told of Moliere, with more probability.

There is a tradition alſo, that, upon ſome occaſion, he ſubmitted his verſes to the correction of Mr. Hume. Mr. Hume addreſſed Wilkie, by telling him, that he had made a great many emendations. Wilkie, upon looking ſlightly at them, replied: " Well, I will be even with you; for I will not adopt ſo much as one of your corrections."

His manner of life at the Fiſher's Tryſte was the moſt reſpectable that could be imagined. He proſecuted his literary ſtudies, he tilled the ground, employed the poor, provided for his ſiſters, and on Sundays occaſionally preached the goſpel. This, indeed, was no hardſhip to him; for ſo general was his knowledge, ſo lively his imagination, and ſo quick his recollection, that he preached not only without writing his ſermons, but ſometimes even without longer premeditation than that of eight or ten minutes. He went one day to hear ſermon in the church of Ratho, and, as he

walked along with the minister from the manse to the church, was closely pressed by him to preach for him. He at first made many excuses, but was so extremely urged, that he at last consented, provided the minister would name the text; a condition which was readily complied with. This anecdote is related by Dr. Thomson, who was told by a nobleman who was present, and who was a good judge, that the sermon was excellent.

In the rebellion 1745, a generous start of loyal fervour had excited the young people about Edinburgh, many of them Wilkie's companions, to take the field; but the absurdity of risking the flower of the country made it soon be overruled; and Wilkie was remarked to have been the only person who left the ranks: Hence insinuations against his personal courage. Perhaps he saw the foolishness of the thing: At least, there are no other evidences of the kind against him; and it is certain, that being once dogged by a foot-pad, in a dark night, on his way to Ratho, he turned upon him, and, with one blow of his cane across the temples, brought him to the ground. This anecdote is related upon the authority of Dr. Robertson.

After the close of the rebellion, and the restoration of the peace of the country, he returned to his farm, and resumed the quiet occupations of agriculture and literature, in which he spent several years, little known to the world, and holding little intercourse with it, excepting with a few literary friends and companions.

The Fisher's Tryste, lying in the immediate vicinity of Gorgie, the property of Mr. Lind sheriff-substitute of Mid-Lothian, he became acquainted with Wilkie at an early period, and, from their first acquaintance, strongly attached himself to his interests.

Mr. Lind was very capable of discerning his merit, gave him a general invitation to his house, introduced him into the company of his numerous acquaintance, and made him known to the Duke of Argyll, the Earl of Lauderdale, Lord Milton, Lord Kames, Mr. Charles Townshend, and many other persons of rank.

In 1752, Mr. Guthrie, minister of Ratho, being rendered incapable, by age and infirmities, of discharging the duties of his office, an assistant was found necessary. Mr. Lind recommended Wilkie to the Earl of Lauderdale, the patron of that parish, for that office, and obtained his Lordship's consent to allow him to preach at Ratho.

When Wilkie was introduced at Hatton, Lord Lauderdale was much pleased with the originality of his genius and extensive knowledge; and so much entertained with a thousand peculiarities in his manner of thinking and reasoning on every subject, that he resolved immediately to make him assistant and successor to Mr. Guthrie; and, for this purpose, he generously established a fund of 30 l. for his annual support, without diminishing the stipend during the life of the old man.

Accordingly, on the 17th of May 1753, Wilkie was ordained, by the Presbytery of Edinburgh, assistant and successor to the minister of Ratho. In this situation, he continued three years and a half, living all that time on his little farm, about four miles distant, and faithfully performing the duties of his office in the parish. On the death of Mr. Guthrie, Feb. 28th 1756, he came into possession of the whole living, and settled, with his sisters, in the manse of Ratho.

Agriculture had been a peculiar object of his attention from his youth; and he now gave full scope to his genius for improvement, though on a small scale. His glebe, which he found in great disorder, he immediately enclosed in a judicious manner, and cultivated it with such ability, that it continued to produce the most abundant crops.

A piece of marshy ground belonging to the glebe, in the name of pasture-ground, of near five acres, which, from time immemorial, had been of so little value, that the highest rent given for it was half-a-guinea yearly, he enclosed with a deep ditch and hedge; and intersected it with such a variety of drains, most judiciously disposed, that it became matter of astonishment to the country in general, and of ridicule to many; but the event justified his ability, for it produced a series of most beneficial crops, and still continues valuable.

He also projected a society for the improvement of agriculture and rural economy, called *The Husbandry Club*, which met at Ratho, and consisted of a great number of the gentlemen and principal farmers in the neighbourhood. The excellent regulations, established for the government of

the club, and the great variety of intereſting and judicious queſtions, propoſed as ſubjects of their deliberation and diſcuſſion, in all which he had a principal ſhare, will long continue to do honour to his memory.

This ſociety, of which Wilkie may be conſidered as the founder, was conducted, for many years, with great ſpirit and ſucceſs. Its records, according to the information of Mr. Robertſon, contain diſſertations on many practical ſubjects in agriculture, of much merit. The name of the celebrated Dr. Cullen appears in the liſt of the members.

While he reſided at Ratho, he had much intercourſe with the Lauderdale family, and was, at all times, a welcome viſitant at Hatton. His noble patron was fond of his converſation, and often engaged him in diſputation; and, perhaps, he never met with an antagoniſt who afforded him greater ſcope for the exertion of all his powers. Through life, he retained the ſtrongeſt attachment to the Earl of Lauderdale, and valued him more for his good underſtanding, his great knowledge of men and manners, and his uncommon humanity, than for his high rank. His ſentiments, with reſpect to the Earl, were well known to all his acquaintances; for there was nothing more common than his retailing his Lordſhip's maxims and opinions in every company and converſation.

In 1757, he publiſhed at Edinburgh *The Epigoniad, a Poem, in Nine Books*, 12mo, the reſult of fourteen years ſtudy and application, and claimed the honours of an epic poet. His claim, however, to this diſtinction was not generally allowed. His work was applauded by a few men of taſte and learning, but was coldly received by the public, and cenſured, with great ſeverity, by the writers of periodical criticiſm, on account of a few miſtakes in expreſſion and proſody, excuſable in a Scottiſh poet, who had never been out of his own country. The title, it muſt be confeſſed, was ſomewhat unfortunately choſen; for as the ſtory of the *Epigoni* was known only to a very few of the learned, the public were not able to conjecture what could be the ſubject of the poem, and were apt to neglect what it was impoſſible to underſtand. The *Preface* contained ſome judicious and ſpirited remarks on the beauties and defects of epic poetry, but afforded little information concerning the ſubject of the poem. There was no general plan prefixed to the whole, nor argument, as might be expected, at the head of each book. It was inſcribed, in the manner of Camoens and Taſſo, to Archibald Duke of Argyll, a nobleman, who, by patronizing the arts and ſciences, rivalled the glory of his elder brother Duke John, whoſe political and military talents made him to be deſervedly eſteemed one of the firſt ſtateſmen and heroes of his time.

> *Argyll*, the ſtate's whole thunder born to wield,
> And ſhake alike the ſenate and the field.
>
> POPE.

In 1759, he publiſhed a ſecond edition of *The Epigoniad, &c. by William Wilkie, V. D. M. Carefully corrected and improved. To which is added, a Dream, in the manner of Spenſer*, 12mo. In this edition, all or moſt of the Scoticiſms, and other trivial miſtakes in the firſt edition, were corrected. A paſſage alſo in the *Preface*, containing a raſh cenſure of "the quaintneſs of Mr. Pope's expreſſion, in his tranſlation of the "Iliad" and "Odyſſey," as not at all ſuitable either to the antiquity or majeſtic gravity of his author," was very properly omitted. Mr. Hume gives the following account of its reception in London, in a letter to Dr. Smith, dated April 12. 1759: "The *Epigoniad*, I hope, will do, but it is ſomewhat up-hill work. You will ſee in the "Critical Review," a letter upon that poem, and I deſire you to employ your conjectures in finding out the author." The letter in the "Critical Review," was written by Mr. Hume, to recommend *The Epigoniad* to the public, "as one of the ornaments of our language." The ſucceſs was not anſwerable to his expectations. Too antique to pleaſe the unlettered reader, and too modern for the ſcholar, it was neglected by both, read by few, and ſoon forgotten by all.

Soon after his coming to Ratho, he was ſeized with an unformed ague, from which he was never perfectly relieved during the reſt of his life. For this complaint, he thought an extraordinary perſpiration was neceſſary. He ſlept with an immoderate quantity of bed-clothes, and ſweated ſo much, that it was thought to have had an effect in relaxing his conſtitution. The blankets under which he ſlept became a wonder to the country; ſtories are told of twenty-four pair of blankets being above him: And this may have been the caſe when he was not in his own bed; but, in general, his covering was much lighter.

The ſuppoſed unhealthineſs of the manſe of Ratho gave him the firſt inclination to change his ſituation, and the profeſſorſhip of Natural Philoſophy in the Univerſity of St. Andrew's becoming vacant in May 1759, by the death of Mr. David Young, he became a candidate for that office. Several candidates appeared, and Wilkie was not then acquainted with one member in the Univerſity. As it happened to be the time of the meeting of the General Aſſembly, he was introduced to ſuch of them as were then at Edinburgh, and found avenues of application to them all; but Dr. Watſon was the only member who diſcerned his merit, and effectually promoted his intereſt; for, when the day of election came (July 1759), the other profeſſors had attached themſelves, in equal numbers, to two other candidates; and when neither party could, by any influence, alter Dr. Watſon, one of the parties joined him, and gave the election in favour of Wilkie.

When he left Ratho, he was worth about 200l. from the ſale of the ſtock upon his farm, and ſavings from his ſtipend. With this money he purchaſed ſome acres of land in the neighbourhood of St. Andrew's. He encloſed and cultivated his little fields with ſuch judgment and ſucceſs, as excited the aſtoniſhment, commanded the imitation, and promoted the improvement of the country round him, and contributed, in a high degree, to his own emolument. He gradually extended his purchaſes, his improvements, and his profits, and is ſuppoſed to have acquired a property in land worth 3000l.; and has, in his ſo rapid accumulation, left an equally eminent example of ability and economy.

As a teacher of natural philoſophy, his uſual merit did not forſake him. Natural philoſophy, he ſaid himſelf, was his *forte*. Though, by an univerſal genius, he ſhone in this department of ſcience, yet his friends generally imagined that languages, logic, metaphyſics, or moral philoſophy, would have been more ſuitable to his taſte and inclinations.

In 1768, he publiſhed his *Fables*, 8vo. They are ſixteen in number, and a frontiſpiece, deſigned by Wale, is prefixed to each fable. Previous to the publication of his *Fables*, the Univerſity of St. Andrew's conferred upon him the degree of Doctor in Divinity.

From this time nothing of importance occurred in the life of Wilkie. He is ſaid to have broke off connection with Mr. Hume and Dr. Robertſon, ſome time before his death.

After a lingering indiſpoſition, he died at St. Andrew's, October 10th 1772, in the 51ſt year of his age. His two ſiſters, to whom he left his property, are ſtill living at St. Andrew's. He left his MSS to the care of Mr. Liſton, who has not publiſhed any of his literary remains.

No edition of his *Epigoniad* or *Fables* has been called for ſince his death. They are now, reprinted from the edition 1759 and 1768, for the firſt time, received into collection of claſſical Engliſh poetry.

In 1768, when the preſent writer was at Lanark ſchool, his admiration of Wilkie induced him to tranſcribe from a manuſcript in the Earl of Hyndford's library at Carmichael-houſe, a poem, intituled, "Whitton, a deſcriptive poem, with notes, inſcribed to the Duke of Argyll, by W. W." ſuppoſed to mean *William Wilkie*; but he has not ventured to give it to Wilkie upon ſuppoſition.

Of his character, private habits, domeſtic manners, and opinions, curioſity will require more ample information than is to be found in the following notices, which the diligence of Profeſſor Dalzel has collected, and the zeal and veneration of Mr. Robertſon, Mr. Liſton, Dr. Thomſon, and Dr. Robertſon, have ſupplied.

"He was always," ſays a paper, communicated by an ingenious but not literary friend of Wilkie, to Profeſſor Dalzel, "fond of being in the company of old men and old women, from the 8th year of his age; and they always liked him, as he delighted in their converſation; and he *rapt* out ſomething new, whatever was the ſubject. He had read the ancient philoſophers and poets very early. Heſiod was a favourite poet of his, and he very often quoted him to perſons who knew nothing about him. His converſation was moſt original and ingenious. It had a mixture of knowledge, acuteneſs and ſingularity, which rendered it peculiarly delightful; and every perſon who ſpent an hour with him, carried away ſomething which he was glad to repeat. He had a firm faith in the truth of the Chriſtian religion. He employed a conſiderable portion of his time in reading the

Scriptures, and he kept up the worſhip of God regularly in his family. While he was a pariſh miniſter, he was acceptable to his people; and, in every ſituation of his life, he was kind to perſons in diſtreſs, and very liberal in his private charity. His temper was haſty, but void of malice or fourneſs; and he was always cheerful. He was fond of agriculture, and remarkable for his knowledge of the different branches of it. The people in the neighbourhood of St. Andrew's acknowledge to this day, that they have derived many uſeful leſſons from Dr. Wilkie's management of his farm."

"In his public capacity as a preacher," ſays Mr. Robertſon, "he was rather original and ingenious than eloquent; and, though he never purſued the ordinary acts of popularity, never failed to fix the attention of his audience. The peculiarity, variety, and even eccentricity of his ſentiments or reaſoning, invariably procured him approbation. In his public character, he obſerved a thouſand oddities and inattentions. He generally preached with his hat on his head, and often forgot to pronounce the bleſſing after public ſervice. Once I ſaw him diſpenſe the ſacrament without conſecrating the elements. On being told, he made a public apology, conſecrated, and ſerved the ſecond table; after which, he went to the pulpit to ſuperintend the ſervice, forgetting to communicate himſelf, till informed of the omiſſion by his elders. In his dreſs, he was uncommonly negligent and ſlovenly, and, in his whole manner of life, totally inattentive to all thoſe little formalities on which the generality of mankind are apt to value themſelves. He was immoderately addicted to the uſe of tobacco, particularly chewing, in which he went to ſuch extreme exceſs, that it was thought, by all his acquaintance, highly prejudicial to his health, and perhaps a cauſe of his premature death. He was fond of medical aid, but always diſputed, and often rejected the preſcriptions of doctors: Hence was thought whimſical, both in his compliments, and in his management of them. He ſlept with an immoderate quantity of bed-clothes. One day he viſited a farmer in the neighbourhood, a relation of his own; when prevailed on to ſtay all night, he begged he might have plenty of bed-clothes. His female friends in the family collected and put on his bed 24 pair of blankets. When aſked, next morning, if he had plenty of bed-clothes, he anſwered, he had juſt enough, and had ſlept well. He abhorred nothing ſo much as clean ſheets, and whenever he met with ſuch, he wrapt them up, threw them aſide, and ſlept in the blankets. One evening, at Hatton, being aſked by Lady Lauderdale to ſtay all night, he expreſſed an attachment to his own bed, but ſaid, if her ladyſhip would give him a pair of foul ſheets, he would ſtay."

"Hard circumſtances," ſays Dr. Robertſon, "oppreſſed Wilkie for the greater part of his life, and produced that ſtrong attention to money-matters, with which he has been reproached by thoſe who could not explain it. It proceeded, in fact, from a ſingular love of *independence*, the paſſion of a ſtately mind. He ſhuddered at the thought of coming under the power of any man, and could hardly think of walking the ſtreets, leſt any perſon, to whom he was indebted, ſhould meet him. When his father died, he had to borrow the money that was to bury him. He went to an uncle for 10 l. and was refuſed. Theſe events could but ill ſit upon *his* mind. After he came to better days, "I have often heard him ſay," ſays Mr. Liſton, "I have ſhaken hands with poverty up to the very elbow, and I wiſh never to ſee her face again." Hence a parſimony to the extreme. Yet, in wealth, would we brand him with the love of money for its own ſake. Another paſſion came in: He loved his relations; and it was his common maxim, that no man ſhould ever break with his kindred. He was not long miniſter of Ratho, till he apprehended his life would be ſhort: He had two ſiſters that he feared would be left deſtitute, immediately upon his death. Apprehenſive on their account, he always lived plain, heaped up every penny, and at laſt died worth two or three thouſand pounds; not ſo much acquired by ſavings, however, as by a rapid profit from his own favourite act of agriculture, in the perfect ſkill of which no man excelled him. At the ſame time, after the ſhort period that he became poſſeſſed of money, his friends could ſee that he could part with it. It was his cuſtom to pay the bill, even when travelling with ſeveral of his relations that could afford their ſhare. After he ſettled at St. Andrew's, his private charities were not leſs than 20 l. a year. Born for intenſe thought; for total abſence of mind upon ordinary matters; plunged in poverty in early life, without a domeſtic about his perſon, and even without the means of any elegance whatever, he naturally became ſlovenly, dirty, and even nauſeous. He

chewed tobacco to excefs, and at laft made himfelf believe, that it was good for his health. It feems, on all hands agreed, that no mortal was equal to him in converfation and argument. His own explanation of it was, that he took the right fide, while his antagonifts took the wrong, to difplay their ingenuity and learning. I have heard the late Dr. Wallace, author of the "Differtation on the Numbers of Mankind," fay, nobody could venture to cope with him. His knowledge, in almoft all things, was deep, folid, and unanfwerable. His reafoning was plain to a child. In fhrewdnefs, he had no rival. Both his manner and thoughts were mafculine, in a degree peculiar to himfelf. Dr. Smith fays, it was an obfervation of the late Lord Elibank, that wherever Wilkie's name happened to be mentioned in a company, learned or unlearned, it was not foon dropped: Every body had much to fay. In fhort, he was a great and an odd man. His character, I will venture to fay, will never be fuccefsfully written, but by a great hand; and even, when written, the theory of the man is above common comprehenfion."

"With regard to Wilkie's faith in Chriftianity," fays Dr. Thomfon, "I know, that he faid prayers in his family every evening, after he had laid afide the character of a divine, and grace at table, with his eyes fhut, and his hands folded together, in a poflure of fupplication, and with every mark of the greateft fervour. He would fometimes prolong his graces, at the College-table, beyond the bounds that the keen appetites of the hungry ftudents would have prefcribed to it. Even in thefe fhort prayers there was often fome thought not more devout than pleafing and ingenious. For example: "O Lord! thou art the author of all our wants, and thou fupplieft them, from the inexhaufted ftores of thy bounty." He appeared to be a firm believer in God. The exiftence of a deity he confidered as the fimpleft, and, therefore, the moft rational method of folving the phenomena of the univerfe. This was agreeable to the Newtonian Syftem, which fuppofes a *vacuum* and liberty of action; and that a voluntary *fiat* of God launched forth the heavenly orbs with that degrree of impulfe or momentum precifely, which correfponded with centripetal force, and which would not carry them beyond their orbits. The moral doctrines of Chriftianity, the divine character of Jefus Chrift, he held in the moft profound veneration. That facred perfon he undoubtedly confidered as an angel fent from God, to enlighten and to blefs the world. Whether he believed in the *neceffity of an atonement* (a doctrine which, as Dr. Smith obferves in his "Theory of Moral Sentiments," is fo conftent with the natural fentiments of mankind), and the other peculiar doctrines of the Chriftian religion, I cannot, with certainty, affirm. He fometimes lamented, that he doubted. But whether this doubt fettled into fcepticifm, or that reafon, and an imagination, fenfible in the higheft degree, to the raviftiing profpects held out in the gofpel, triumphed over doubt, and confirmed his wavering mind in the Chriftian faith, I know not. He would often exclaim to his moft intimate friends: "O! if I could firmly believe all the doctrines of Chriftianity, how vain and infipid every enjoyment and every purfuit in this world would appear!"

"It was remarkable," fays Profeffor Dalzel, "that Wilkie, with all his learning, could neither read nor fpell. I myfelf was witnefs to his ignorance of the art of reading. When I was a very young man, refiding at Hatton, Wilkie came from St. Andrew's, on a vifit to Lord Lauderdale. He ftaid a few days, and all the perfonal knowledge I had of Wilkie was acquired during that time. "The Judgment of Paris," a poem by Dr. Beattie, was brought to Hatton one of thofe days, as a new publication. Wilkie afked me to retire with him, that we might read and criticife the poem together. At firft, when he began to read, I imagined he did not underftand the verfes at all, as he furely committed the faddeft havoc, in point of quantity and pronunciation, that can well be imagined, and even mifcalled feveral of the words: And yet his criticifms were fo juft, and fo happily expreffed, that I was charmed with the elegance of his tafte, and the propriety of his obfervations."

As a poet, his compofitions are not lefs diftinguifhed by imagination and judgment, than his manners were remarkable for eccentricity and originality. In both, we are pleafed to find that feeling difpofition which characterifes the good man, and the ingenious, fublime and moral poet.

His *Epigoniad*, if he had written nothing elfe, is fufficient to entitle him to an honourable rank among the poets of our nation, with whom he is now affociated. It is a legitimate epic poem, of

the ſame ſpecies of compoſition with the "Iliad" and the "Æneid," which is univerſally allowed to be, of all poetical works, the moſt dignified, and, at the ſame time, the moſt difficult in execution.

"To contrive a ſtory," ſays Dr. Blair, in his excellent "Lectures," "which ſhall pleaſe and intereſt all readers, by being at once entertaining, important, and inſtructive, to fill it with ſuitable incidents, to enliven it with a variety of characters and of deſcriptions, and, throughout a long work, to maintain that propriety of ſentiment, and that elevation of ſtyle, which the epic character requires, is unqueſtionably the higheſt effort of poetical genius."

What talents are neceſſary to ſo arduous an attempt! What vigour of imagination, extent of knowledge, ſolidity of underſtanding, and powers of language! In order to judge whether Wilkie has ſucceeded in this exalted ſpecies of writing, or not, an appeal ſhould be made, not ſo much to the abſtracted rules of criticiſm, as to the taſte and feeling of the ſympathetic and judicious reader: For it is ſentiment only that can judge of ſentiment. When the heart of the reader remains cold and unaffected, the moſt elaborate performance is defended, in vain, by all the art of the moſt expert rhetorician; and, on the contrary, where nature is diſplayed in juſt colours, and the imagination aſtoniſhed by ſcenes of terror, or expanded by ſuch as are ſublime, a ſatisfaction is enjoyed, which is but little marred by a deviation from unity of time, place, or action.

In forming an eſtimate of the epic poem of Wilkie, we are to conſider what degree of importance there is in his moral, and what of artifice in his fable; what kind of manners and characters he has exhibited, and if his characters are properly ſupported by their ſentiments and actions. Are his digreſſions natural? Are his views ſublime? Is his imagery beautiful, and his diction varied with his varying ſubject?

It would extend this narrative to an undue length, to examine the *Epigoniad*, with reſpect to each of theſe heads, particularly. We ſhall, therefore, content ourſelves with briefly running over the *moral*, and giving a ſhort analyſis of the *fable*, occaſionally obſerving on other particulars, as we go along, and collecting a few ſpecimens of thoſe great beauties in which it abounds.

As the end or moral of the "Paradiſe Loſt" is to ſhow the bitter fruits that ſpring from diſobedience to the laws of God; and as the end or moral of the "Iliad" is to diſplay the fatal effects of furious and deep reſentment and diſcord, ſo the *moral* of the *Epigoniad* teaches the dire diſaſters that flow from the paſſion of love. This leſſon is inculcated by a ſtory interwoven with primeval manners, and with Grecian mythology. The firſt of theſe circumſtances is rather an advantage than a diſadvantage, as we are acquainted with the manners deſcribed, not only from the writings of Homer, but alſo from thoſe of Moſes, and as they diffuſe over the poem an air of venerable ſimplicity: The ſecond could not, be avoided, it being an article in the Grecian creed, that the gods often interpoſe viſibly and bodily in human affairs: nor is the incredibility of mythology ſo great a diſadvantage in poetry, as may be imagined: For, firſt, as there is a degree of belief that attends the vivid perception of every object, the beautiful and conſiſtent tales that are told by the poets, of the gods and other ſuperior beings, gain a temporary credit; and this is ſufficient for the purpoſe of the poet. Secondly, The heathen mythology operates on our minds, with the more facility that it has been impreſſed on our minds in our youth. We are acquainted with the different characters of the gods and goddeſſes; we know, beforehand, what part they are likely to act on particular occaſions, and are pleaſed when we find the poet ſupporting, with propriety, the character of each. A like obſervation may be extended to the heroes and other famous perſonages of antiquity. We are acquainted, as it were, with their perſons; we are intereſted in their fortunes, and, therefore, we are infinitely more affected by ſcenes in which they appear as actors, than we would be by ſcenes in which a poet ſhould introduce perſons and fictions with which we are wholly unacquainted. Boileau, the greateſt critic of the French nation, was of this opinion;

> "La fable offre a l'eſprit mille agréments divers,
> Là tous les noms heureux ſemblent nez pour les vers.
> Ulyſſe, Agamemnon, Oreſte, Idomenée,
> Helene, Menelas, Paris, Hector, Enée."

It is certain, that there is, in that poetic ground, a kind of enchantment which allures every perſon of a tender and lively imagination. nor is this impreſſion diminiſhed, but rather much increaſed by our early introduction to the knowledge of it, in our peruſal of the Greek and Latin claſſics. The ſame great French critic makes the apology of Wilkie in his uſe of the ancient mythology.

" Ainſi dans cet amas de noble fictions,
Le poete s'egaye en mille inventions,
Orne, eleve, embellit, agrandit toutes choſes,
Et trouve s'ons ſa main des fleurs toujours ecloſes."

It would ſeem, indeed, that, if ſome ſupernatural machinery be not admitted, epic poetry, at leaſt all the marvellous part of it, muſt be entirely abandoned. " Without *admiration*," ſays Dr. Hurd, in his " Letters on Chivalry and Romance" (which cannot be effected but by the marvellous of celeſtial intervention, I mean the agency of ſuperior natures really exiſting, or by the illuſion of the fancy taken to be ſo), no epic poem can be long-lived. The Chriſtian religion, for many reaſons, is unfit for the fabulous ornaments of poetry: The plan of Milton's work being altogether theological, his ſupernatural beings form not the machinery, but are the principal actors in the poem. The introduction of allegory, after the manner of Voltaire, is liable to many objections; and though a mere hiſtorical epic poem like " Leonidas," may have its beauties, it will always be inferior to the force and pathetic words of tragedy, and muſt reſign to that ſpecies of poetry the precedency which the former compoſition has always challenged among the productions of human genius

The *fable* of the *Epigoniad* is this: The poet ſuppoſes, that *Caſſandra*, the daughter of Alcander king of Peligninm in Italy, was purſued by the love of Echetus, a barbarous tyrant in the neighbourhood; and as her father rejected his addreſſes, he drew on himſelf the reſentment of the tyrant, who made war upon him, and forced him to retire into Etolia, where *Diomed* gave him protection. This hero falls himſelf in love with *Caſſandra* and is ſo fortunate as to make equal impreſſions on her heart; but, before the completion of his marrriage, he is called to the ſiege of Thebes, and leaves, as he ſuppoſes, *Caſſandra* in Etolia with her father. But *Caſſandra*, anxious for her lover's ſafety, and unwilling to part from the object of her affections, had ſecretly put on a man's habit, had attended him in the camp, and had fought by his ſide in all his battles. The poem opens with the appearance of the *Epigoni* before the walls of Thebes, reſolute to ſignalize their own names, and to redeem the *Argive* glory, by its reduction. The gods, aſſembled on the hundred heads of high Olympus view from afar Thebes doomed to periſh by the *Argives*, and principally by the hands of *Diomed*. *Juno* and *Pallas*, favourable to the *Argives*, ſeek the ruin of *Thebes*. *Venus*, in order to fruſtrate the deſign of both *Juno* and *Pallas*, deliberates concerning the proper method of raiſing the ſiege. The fitteſt expedient ſeems to be the exciting in *Diomed* a jealouſy of *Caſſandra* and perſuading him, that her affections were ſecretly engaged to Echetus, and that the tyrant had invaded Etolia in purſuit of his miſtreſs. *Zelotype*, a Paphian nymph, ſprung from Cupid and Alecto, offers her ſervices, for this end, to the goddeſs.

Goddeſs theſe ſhafts ſhall compaſs what you aim,
My mother dipt their points in Stygian flame;
Where'er my father's darts their way have found,
Mine follow deep, and poiſon all the wound.
By theſe we ſoon, with triumph, ſhall behold
Pallas deceiv'd, and Juno's ſelf controll'd.

Her perſon and flight are painted in the moſt characteriſtic habiliments and ſplendid colours that poetry affords.

Firſt to her feet the winged ſhoes ſhe binds,
Which tread the air and mount the rapid winds;
Aloft they bear her through th' ethereal plain,
Above the ſolid earth and liquid main;

Her arrows next ſhe takes, of pointed ſteel,
For fight too ſmall, but terrible to feel.—
A figur'd zone, myſterially deſign'd,
Around her waiſt her yellow robe confin'd;
There dark Suſpicion lurk'd, of ſable hue,
There haſty Rage, her deadly dagger drew;
Pale Envy inly pin'd, and by her ſide
Stood Frenzy raging with his arms unty'd.
Affronted Pride, with thirſt of vengeance burn'd,
And Love's exceſs to deepeſt hatred turn'd.
The virgin laſt, around her ſhoulders flung
The bow and by her ſide the quiver hung:
Then, ſpringing up, her airy courſe ſhe bends
For Thebes; and lightly o'er the tents deſcends.
The ſon of Tydeus 'midſt his bands ſhe found
In arms complete, repoſing on the ground;
And as he ſlept, the hero thus addreſs'd;
Her form to fancy's waking eye expreſs'd.

Diomed, moved by the inſtigations of jealouſy, and eager to defend his miſtreſs and his country, calls an aſſembly of the confederated kings, and propoſes to raiſe the ſiege of Thebes, on account of the difficulty of the enterpriſe and dangers which ſurround the army. The kings debate concerning the propoſal; and here appears a great diverſity of characters and ſentiments, ſuitable to each. *Theſeus*, the general, breaks out into a paſſion at the propoſal; but is pacified by *Neſtor*. *Idomeneus* riſes, and reproaches *Diomed* for his diſhonourable counſel; and, among other topics, upbraids him with his degeneracy from his father's bravery. The debate is cloſed by *Ulyſſes*, who informs the princes, that the Thebans are preparing to march out in order to attack them, and that it is vain to deliberate any longer concerning the continuance of the war. The kings reſolve to proſecute the war, and *Diomed*, though ſtung with love, and jealouſy of Echetus, yields to their voice. The nations and tribes that oppreſſed the *Argives*, being deſcribed in the manner of Homer, a battle commences before the walls of *Thebes*; and the Theban troops, led on by the brave *Leophron*, the ſon of *Creon* the king, repulſe the enemy. *Pallas* deſcends to the aid of the *Argives*, in the form of *Homoleon*, *Diomed's* charioteer being ſlain. *Caſſandra*, ſtill concealed under the arms and dreſs of a ſoldier, preſenting herſelf to *Diomed*, offers to take that office upon herſelf. *Diomed* declines the offer. *Pallas* herſelf aſſumes the reins, and conducts *Diomed* in the fight. He kills *Leophron*. Every thing gives way to this chief, guided by the wiſdom, and fortified by the arms of the immortal goddeſs of Prudence and Wiſdom: But *Mercury*, at the command of *Jupiter*, gives order to *Phœbus* to laſh his ſteeds, and to conclude the day, leſt the rapid ſucceſs of *Diomed* ſhould precipitate the fall of *Thebes* before the time fixed by Fate. The darkneſs of the night interrupts the fight, and *Diomed* is ſtripped by *Mercury* of his divine armour. This battle is full of the ſpirit of Homer. And now the Theban princes, according to ancient cuſtom, ſat in council in the gate; the king oppreſſed with public cares, and with private grief for the death of his ſon *Leophron*, propoſes to ſue for a truce of ſeven days, that they might grace the dead with funeral obſequies. The prieſt of Apollo, accompanied by *Clytophon*, repairs to the *Argive* tents, to aſk a truce; and here follows a long, but very intereſting epiſode, that enchants the reader with the wildneſs of Salvator Roſa, and aſtoniſhes him with the terrors of Sophocles. This epiſode is intended as an experiment in that kind of fiction which diſtinguiſhes the "Odyſſey." The *Theban* heralds are conducted, with ſafety, to the royal tent, where the *Argive* princes receive them with marks of kindneſs. After a ſplendid repaſt, *Clytophon*, with great art, addreſſes the Pylian chief *Neſtor*, reminds him that he was his gueſt (a circumſtance which formed a ſtrong band of friendſhip, as it does ſtill among barbarous nations) when he fled from the deſert ſhores of Trinacria: Having gained the favour and the attention of *Neſtor*, he relates the wonderful ſtory of his life. *Clytophon* was the youngeſt ſon of Orſilochus, king of Rhodes.

His youngeſt hope I was, and ſcarce had ſeen
The tenth returning ſummer clothe the green,
When pirates ſnatch'd me from my native land, &c.

He relates how he arrived at *Trinacria*, eſcaped from the pirates, and how that lawleſs crew periſhed by the inhuman hands of a *Cyclops*. In this deſert iſland he remained for ten years. His ſolitary life, his terror of the *Cyclops*, his eſcape from the domain and from the threats of that monſter, who diſcovered him in his flight, form a wild and romantic tale, which affords a ſatisfaction of a pleaſing though melancholy nature. The *Argive* chiefs, won by the eloquence of *Neſtor*, agree to the truce. *Diomed* alone remonſtrates, and retires ſullenly to his tent. The poet, in imitation of Homer, deſcribes the funeral obſequies and various games in honour of the dead. The games he has choſen are different from thoſe which are to be found among the ancients, and the incidents are new and curious. He meditates a deſign to attack the unarmed Thebans, confiding in the truce, and buſied in burying their dead. His friend, and the guardian of his youth, *Deiphobus*, diſſuades him from ſuch enormous injuſtice, and expoſtulates on this ſubject, with a freedom which provokes the fiery temper of *Diomed* to lift his hand againſt his friend, and to put him to death. This incident, which is apt to ſurpriſe us, ſeems to have been copied by the poet from that circumſtance in the life of Alexander, where the heroic conqueror, moved by a ſudden paſſion, ſtabs Clytus, his ancient friend, by whom his life had been formerly ſaved in battle. The repentance of *Diomed* is equal to that of Alexander. No ſooner had he ſtruck the fatal blow than his eyes are opened; he is ſenſible of his guilt and ſhame; he refuſes all conſolation; abſtains even from food, and ſhuts himſelf up alone in his tent. His followers, ſtruck with horror at the violence of his paſſion, keep at a diſtance from him. A tumult enſues, which is quelled by the eloquence of *Ulyſſes*. While *Diomed*, abandoned by all, lay outſtretched in the duſt, reſigned to melancholy, remorſe, and deſpair, *Caſſandra* enters his tent with a potion, which ſhe had prepared for him. The virgin endeavours, by an artful tale, to ſhun diſcovery, and to conceal her love. While ſhe ſtands before him alone, her timidity and paſſion betray her ſex; and *Diomed* immediately perceives her to be *Caſſandra*. As his repentance for the murder of *Deiphobus* was now the ruling paſſion in his mind, he is not moved by tenderneſs for *Caſſandra*; on the contrary, he conſiders her as the cauſe, however innocent, of the murder of his friend, and of his own guilt.

Thoſe eyes I ſee, whoſe ſoft enchantment ſtole
My peace, and ſtirr'd a tempeſt in my ſoul;
By their mild light, in innocence array'd,
To guilty madneſs was my heart betray'd.
Dëiphobus is dead: his mournful ghoſt
Lamenting, wanders on the Stygian coaſt;
And blames my wrath. Oh! that the ſun which gave
Light to thy birth, had ſet upon thy grave:
And he had liv'd! now lifeleſs on the plain,
A corſe he lies, and number'd with the ſlain.

Overwhelmed with grief at the treatment ſhe received, *Caſſandra* repairs to a rural temple, ſacred to Ceres, whoſe protection ſhe implores, proſtrate on the ground, and bathed in a flood of tears. At this inſtant, *Zelotype* deſcended from *Venus*, but her counſels were overthrown by *Pallas*, diſguiſed in the ſhape of *Amyclea*, *Caſſandra*'s mother. *Caſſandra*'s addreſs to *Amyclea* will not loſe, by a compariſon, with the addreſs of Anchiſes to Æneas in the Elyſian fields. She reſolves to return to her father's houſe, and had begun to put her deſign in execution, when ſhe fell into the hands of the Thebans. The fierce chiefs decree, that ſhe ſhall fall a ſacrifice to the ghoſts of *Leophron* and *Andremon*. This ſtern purpoſe is oppoſed by *Pbericles*, who inſiſts upon the faith of treaties. A diſpute ariſes on the ſubject; ſome of the princes inſiſt on the death of *Caſſandra*, others declare themſelves ready to protect her life, at the riſk of their own. And this diſcord had raged in civil blood, had not *Clytophon* appeaſed the tumult, by propoſing to practiſe on th

paſſions of *Diomed*, by means of ſo dear a pledge of his love, and to engage him to withdraw his forces from the walls of *Thebes*. *Diomed*, his rage ſubſiding into grief, inquires at every leader for *Caſſandra*, and is ſtung with compunction for his barbarous uſage of that lovely, affectionate, and patient maid. Whilſt his mind is thus ſoftened, an herald appears from the gates of *Thebes*, relates the fate of *Caſſandra*, and delivers the king's meſſage, threatening to put her to death if *Diomed* would not agree to a ſeparate truce with *Thebes*. This propoſal raiſes in the mind of *Diomed* oppoſite contending paſſions. Agreeably to the furious character of that chief, the poet ſuppoſes that his predominant paſſion for revenge is firſt excited. He rages and vows vengeance, if the Thebans ſhould dare to violate the captive. An embroidered ſcarf, a preſent from *Caſſandra*, brings her full into the view of *Diomed*, with all her charms. His rage is ſuſpended, and he reſigns his mind to love, to grief, and tender fear. He propoſes a truce of twenty days, which the Thebans accept. In the mean time, *Dienices* returns, who had been ſent to the wilderneſs of Œta to recal *Hercules* for the protection of his native city. He relates the death of *Hercules*, and the excruciating pains of the envenomed robe, which had been ſent him by the hands of the jealous *Dejanira*. He relates alſo the fate of *Cleon*, ſon of the king of Thebes, ſlain by *Philoctetes* for an attempt to ſteal away the arms of his friend *Hercules*, now enrolled among the gods This epiſode is an attempt towards heroic tragedy, in the manner of Sophocles, and breathes all the horrors, and vehemence and atrocity of that great poet. If the ſublimity of his imagination, and the energy of his ſtyle appear any where conſpicuous, it is in this epiſode, which we ſhall not ſcruple to compare with any poetry in the Engliſh language. Nothing can be more pathetic than the complaints of *Hercules*, when the poiſon of the envenomed robe begins firſt to prey upon him.

O cool my boiling blood, ye winds that blow
From mountains loaded with eternal ſnow,
And crack the icy cliffs; in vain! in vain!
Your rigour cannot quench my raging pain!
For round this heart the furies wave their brands,
And wring my entrails with their burning hands.

The virtue of *Hercules*, ſuſtaining him under the weight of infernal pain, is deſcribed in a manner not unworthy of the ſupreme grandeur of the ſubject; and is a ſpectacle, if we may be allowed, with Wilkie, to adopt the ſentiments and the ſtyle of the ancients, we would ſay even the immortal gods would regard with complacency and approbation.

The Theban king, enraged by the death of his ſons, even to madneſs, deſpair, and hatred of the gods, inſtigates his martial powers to attack the *Argives*, ſecure in the truce, and employed in burying the dead. The *Argives*, encouraged by *Pallas*, in the form of *Mentor*, rally their forces and reſiſt the Thebans with bravery, but without ſucceſs. The *Argive* bands give way, and would have periſhed by the hands of an enraged victorious enemy, had not *Pallas* diſpatched *Ulyſſes* to ſolicit the aid of *Diomed*. The ſpeech of *Ulyſſes*, in which the character of the ſpeaker is well ſupported, had its full influence on the mind of a generous warrior, ambitious of glory, and quickly ſenſible to the ſtings of reproach. He confeſſes his paſſion for the captive *Caſſandra*; whom he deſcribes with all the exaggerations of love. *Ulyſſes*, having now learned the cauſe of *Diomed's* inactivity, addreſſes himſelf to him with ſucceſs He ſhows, that no faith was to be expected from the perfidious Thebans, and that the ſafety of *Caſſandra* might be obtained by force, but was not to be hoped for from a regard to juſtice. Moved by this reaſoning, *Diomed* takes the field. The *Thebans* are forced to retreat, and the ruthleſs *Creon* diſpatches an aſſaſſin to murder *Caſſandra*. Here opens a ſcene truly affecting. The queen of Thebes and her maids ſat lamenting with the fair captive, talking to her in the language of complacency and tenderneſs, aſſuring her that her innocence, her ſex, would protect her, and that nine ſhort days would reſtore her freedom: But *Caſſandra*, prepared to meet her fate, by a dream, arms herſelf with magnanimous reſolution, and, when the murderer approached, with the ſword bared for execution, in the midſt of her weeping attendants, ſhe alone appeared erect and undaunted.

———For the blow prepar'd,
With both her hands her ſhining neck ſhe bar'd,
And round her head a purple garment roll'd,
With leaves of ſilver mark'd, and flowing gold.
Rais'd for the ſtroke, the glittering faulchion hung,
And ſwift deſcending, bore the head along.
A tide of gore, diffus'd in purple ſtreams,
Daſhes the wall, and o'er the pavement ſwims.
Prone to the ground, the headleſs trunk reclines,
And life, in long convulſive throbs, reſigns.

In the mean time, *Diomed* adviſes the *Argive* chiefs to take *Thebes* by aſſault. *Idomeneus* oppoſes ſo raſh a deſign; and, in the midſt of this diſpute, *Creon* diſplays, on the point of a ſpear, the head of *Caſſandra*. *Diomed* leads on his powers to the aſſault of *Thebes*, while the other *Argive* bands, in favour of his attempt, diſtract the foe by mock approaches. The city is taken. The queen, made captive, implores the mercy of *Diomed*. *Ulyſſes* adviſes him to offer her up a victim to the manes of *Caſſandra*. The generous hero rejects the barbarous counſel; and the poem concludes with the death of *Creon*.

It is a manifeſt advantage in the *Epigoniad*, that the ſcenes it deſcribes lie within a very narrow ſpace of time; that events follow events in rapid ſucceſſion; and that, on the whole, it maintains the cloſeſt and moſt perfect unity of time, place, and action. The moral is no other than what is the moral of many tragedies, the fatal effects of love. But the poet has found means artfully to extend the moral to paſſion in general: For *Diomed*, in a kind of peroration to the whole of what had paſſed, deplores the predominancy of paſſion, ever deaf to reaſon and cool reflection.

While I, unhappy, by its dictates ſway'd,
My guardian murder'd, and the hoſt betray'd.

The fable is evidently ingeniouſly artificial; but the execution is better than the deſign, the poetry ſuperior to the fable, and the colouring of the particular parts more excellent than the general plan of the whole. Of the four great epic poems which have been the admiration of mankind, the "Iliad," "Æneid," "Jeruſalem," and "Paradiſe Loſt," the "Jeruſalem" alone would make a tolerable novel, if reduced to proſe, and related without that ſplendour of verſification and imagery by which it is ſupported; yet, in the opinion of many great judges, the "Jeruſalem" is the leaſt perfect of theſe productions, chiefly becauſe it has leaſt nature and ſimplicity in the ſentiments, and is moſt liable to the objection of affectation and conceit. The ſtory of a poem, whatever may be imagined, is the leaſt eſſential part of it; the force of the verſification, the vivacity of the images, the juſtneſs of the deſcriptions, the natural play of the paſſions, are the chief circumſtances which diſtinguiſh the great poet from the proſaic noveliſt; and we will venture to affirm, that all theſe advantages, eſpecially the three former, are to be found in an eminent degree in the *Epigoniad*. Wilkie, inſpired with the true genius of Greece, and ſmit with the moſt profound veneration for Homer, diſdains all frivolous ornaments; and, relying entirely on his ſublime imagination and his nervous and harmonious expreſſion, has ventured to preſent to his reader the naked beauties of nature, and challenges, for his partizans, all the admirers of genuine antiquity.

There is one circumſtance in which Wilkie has carried his boldneſs of copying antiquity beyond the practice of many, even judicious moderns. He has drawn his perſonages, not only with all the ſimplicity of the Grecian heroes, but alſo with ſome degree of their roughneſs, and even of their ferocity. This is a circumſtance which a mere modern is apt to find fault with in Homer, and which, perhaps, he will not eaſily excuſe in his imitator. It is certain that the ideas of manners are much changed ſince the age of Homer, and though the "Iliad" was always, among the ancients, conceived to be a panegyric on the Greeks, yet the reader is now almoſt always on the ſide of the Trojans, and is much more intereſted for the humane and ſoft manners of Priam, Hector, Andromache, Sarpedon, Æneas, Glaucus, nay, even of Paris and Helen, than for the ſevere and cruel bravery of Achilles,

Agamemnon, and the other Grecian heroes. Senſible of this inconvenience, Fenelon, in his "Telemaque," has ſoftened extremely the harſh manners of the heroic ages, and has contented himſelf with retaining that amiable ſimplicity by which theſe ages were diſtinguiſhed. If the reader be diſpleaſed that the Britiſh poet has not followed the example of the French writer, he muſt at leaſt allow, that he has drawn a more exact and faithful copy of antiquity, and has made fewer ſacrifices of truth to ornament.

The characters of the *Epigoniad* are moſtly the ſame with thoſe of the "Iliad." *Diomed*, *Agamemnon*, *Menelaus*, *Ulyſſes*, *Neſtor*, *Idomeneus*, *Merion*, and even *Therſites*, all appear in different parts of the poem, and, in general, act parts ſuitable to the characters drawn of them by Homer. The epiſodes are artfully inſerted, intereſting and natural The language is ſimple and artleſs in narration; but in deſcription, often bold, figurative and ſublime. The images are taken from rural life, or the great and beautiful objects of nature. There is a littleneſs in the moſt ingenious arts. Nature only correſponds to the elevated tone of the epic poet. The ſimiles are perhaps too frequent. This frequency Wilkie would doubtleſs have defended by the example of Homer; but Homer himſelf ſeems to offend in this particular. The numbers are elaborately correct, delicately poliſhed, and exquiſitely harmonious. Pope ſeems to have been his model for verſification, and he has borrowed many lines and expreſſions from him. But he is not a ſervile imitator. He has judiciouſly diverſified the uniformity of Pope, by adopting the variety of pauſe, accent, cadence, and diction, ſo eminently conſpicuous in Dryden, and ſo abſolutely eſſential to the harmony of true poetry.

An ingenious foreigner, whoſe mind ſeems far ſuperior to bigotry and national prejudice, in his "Eſſay on the Revolutions of Literature," has mentioned the *Epigoniad* in terms of high reſpect, and accounted for the fewneſs of its readers, not from any fault in the poem, but from the circumſtance that the Engliſh are acquainted with Homer, not only in the original, but by means of the celebrated tranſlation of Pope.

"The *Epigoniad* of Wilkie," ſays Profeſſor Denina, "would have been a moſt admirable poem, had it been written 2000 years ago. But as Homer is now ſo well known in England, we cannot be ſurpriſed that Wilkie has not a greater number of readers. We Italians, at preſent, neglect the *Avarchide di Lingi Almanni*, which, like the *Epigoniad*, is too cloſe an imitation of the "Iliad."

There are others, no doubt, beſides Profeſſor Denina, who, while they will not heſitate to allow no ſmall ſhare of merit to this poet, will yet be ready to conſider his poem as too cloſe an imitation of Homer, and think that he has been unfortunate in the choice of his ſubject.

Wilkie, aware of theſe objections, has endeavoured to obviate them in his *Preface*, which has been univerſally admired, and than which there has not appeared a piece of juſter or more manly criticiſm ſince the times of Ariſtotle and Horace. He juſtifies himſelf, at great length, in having formed his poem upon hiſtorical circumſtances already known, and introduced characters with which the reader is before acquainted, and alſo ſhows the neceſſity he was under of taking many of the hiſtorical circumſtances from the ancient poets; for tradition, the proper foundation of epic poetry, is only to be found in their writings, and, therefore, muſt be uſed like a common ſtock, and not conſidered as the property of individuals.

"Tradition," ſays the *Preface*, "is the beſt ground on which a fable can be built, not only becauſe it gives the appearance of reality to things that are merely fictitious, but likewiſe becauſe it ſupplies a poet with the moſt proper materials for his invention, to work upon."

We might have expected, from this remark, that he had not only taken tradition as the ground of his fable, but employed it alſo to guide him through the narration: But we find that he has not only forſook, but contradicted it on ſeveral occaſions.

Euſtathius, in his Commentary upon the fourth book of the "Iliad," gives us a liſt of the nine warriors who were called the *Epigoni*, moſt of whom Wilkie never mentions in the *Epigoniad*, but inſtead of them, introduces, not the deſcendants of thoſe unfortunate heroes who fell before Thebes in a former expedition, but ſeveral of their contemporaries; as *Theſeus* and *Neſtor*, who had no motives of revenge to prompt their undertaking. *Theſeus*, in particular, was not there, for we

find in the "Suppliants" of Euripides, that *Theseus* went upon a former expedition to *Thebes*, to procure funeral honours for the seven fathers of the *Epigoni*, who lay unburied before the walls of that city; and, at the end of the same tragedy, we are told, that the capture of the city was reserved for the *Epigoni* alone. Wilkie also gives *Theseus* the conduct of the war, in contradiction to Diodorus Siculus, who affirms, that by the advice of the oracle of Apollo, Alcmæon was constituted generalissimo: He likewise makes *Creon* king of Thebes, but *Creon* had been dead four years before; and Eustathius positively says, that *Laodamas* was, at that time, their king. Contrary to all order of time, *Agamemnon* and *Menelaus* are introduced as principal characters, an anachronism which he endeavours to excuse, by alleging that it was a fact of little consequence, and that he did not therefore choose to deprive himself of two illustrious names. Instead of *Sthenelus*, who is said to have accompanied *Diomed* in this expedition, he has substituted "*Ulysses*, a first-rate hero, in the place of a second-rate one, and a name which every body is acquainted with, in the place of one little known."

But though Wilkie's disagreement with Homer in point of fact, is not more remarkable than his disregard of the traditions of the ancients, we must acknowledge, that, in giving up the conduct of his poem to an invention fruitful of incidents, he has given us a regular heroic story, well connected in its parts, adorned with characters which strongly attach the reader, and make him take part in the dangers they encounter, embellished by mythological fictions, which gratify and fill the imagination, and abounding in interesting situations, which awaken the feelings of humanity. He is some times awful and august; often tender and pathetic; and intermingles valiant achievements with the gentle and pleasing scenes of love, friendship, and affection.

There is nothing more wonderful, in this admirable poem, than the intimate acquaintance it displays, not only with human nature, but with the turn and manner of thinking of the ancients, their history, opinions, manners, and customs. There are few books that contain more ancient learning than the *Epigoniad*. To the reader, acquainted with remote antiquity, it yields high entertainment; and we are so far from thinking, that an acquaintance with Homer hinders men from reading this poem, that we are of opinion it is chiefly by such as are conversant in the writings of that poet, that the *Epigoniad* is, or will be read. And as the manners therein described are not founded on any circumstances that are temporary and fugacious, but arise from the original frame and constitution of human nature, and are consequently the same in all nations and periods of the world; it is probable, if the English language shall not undergo very material and sudden changes, that the epic poem of Wilkie will be read and admired, when others, that are in greater vogue in the present day, shall be overlooked and forgotten.

In the *Epigoniad*, Wilkie has, in general, followed successfully the footsteps of Homer. In the *Dream* annexed to that poem, he has chosen Spenser for his model, and ventured to engage in a rivalship with the great father of allegorical poetry. In this small poem, in which the manner of Spenser is finely imitated, the poet supposes himself to be introduced to Homer, who censures his poem in some particulars, and excuses it in others. It is, indeed, a species of apology for the *Epigoniad*, written in a very lively and elegant manner. It may be compared to a well-polished gem of the purest water, and cut into the most beautiful form. He apologises for so closely imitating, and even borrowing from Homer. He alleges, that *Plato* and *Virgil* did so before him. His praise of *Hesiod* and *Theocritus* is such as might be expected from an agriculturist and a poet. Those who would judge of Wilkie's talents for poetry, without perusing his larger work, may satisfy their curiosity by running over this short poem They will see the same force of imagination and harmony of numbers, which distinguish his longer performance, and may thence, with small application, receive a favourable impression of his genius.

His *Fables* discover an ingenious and acute turn of mind, and a thorough acquaintance with the nature and ways of men; but they are not recommended by any great degree of poignancy or poetical spirit. Simplicity is, indeed, the greatest excellence of fable: But, in the *Fables* of Wilkie,

there is ſuch an exceſs of ſimplicity, that they do not ſufficiently command attention. They do not ſufficiently rouſe and exerciſe the mind; and this defect is the more inexcuſable, that to rouſe attention is the very end of fable: For the leſſons that fable teaches are ſufficiently obvious, and what ſhe pretends to is only to incline men, by a ſpecies of ſurpriſe, to attend to them. If Wilkie cannot boaſt the eaſe of Gay, the elegance of Moore, or the humour and poignancy of Smart, yet he is, by no means, a contemptible fabuliſt. His *Fables* have the merit of an artleſs and eaſy verſification, of juſt obſervation, and even, occaſionally, of deep reaſoning, and abound in ſtrokes of a pathetic ſimplicity. The fable of the *Rake and the Hermit* poſſeſſes the two laſt mentioned qualities in an eminent degree.

THE WORKS OF WILKIE.

PREFACE.

As there is no clafs of writers more freely cenfured than poets, and that by judges of all forts, competent and incompetent: I fhall attempt to anfwer fome objections that may be made to the following performance, by perfons not fufficiently acquainted with epic poetry, and the rules upon which it ought to be formed.

The beauties of the piece, if it has any, fhall be left to be difcovered by the reader for himfelf. This is his undoubted privilege; and I have no intention to break in upon it: neither would it be of any advantage to do fo; for poetical beauties, if they are real, will make themfelves obferved, and have their full effect without a comment.

Some will object to the choice of the fubject that it is taken from the hiftory of an age and nation, the particular manners of which are not now well known, and therefore incapable of being juftly repreſented by any modern author. This objection will appear to be of little conſequence, when we conſider that the fact upon which it proceeds is fo far from being ſtrictly true, that there are none who have any tolerable fhare of claffical learning, that are not better acquainted with the manners and cuſtoms of the heroic ages, than with thofe of their own country, at the diſtance of a few centuries. Neither is this knowledge of ancient manners confined to the learned; the vulgar themfelves, from the books of Moſes, and other accounts of the firſt periods of the Jewiſh ſtate, are ſufficiently inſtructed in the cuſtoms of the earlieſt times, to be able to reliſh any work where theſe are juſtly repreſented. With what favour, for inſtance, has Mr. Pope's tranſlation of the Iliad been received by perſons of all conditions? and how much is it commonly preferred to the Faery Queen, a poem formed upon manners of a much more modern caſt. But ſuppoſing the fact upon which the objection proceeds to be true, and that the cuſtoms and manners peculiar to the times from which the ſubject of the poem is taken, are not now well underſtood, I do not apprehend, that, even with this confeſſion, the objection amounts to any thing conſiderable; for manners are to be diſtinguiſhed into two kinds, univerſal and particular. Univerſal manners, are thoſe which ariſe from the original form and conſtitution of the human nature, and which conſequently are the ſame in all nations and periods of the world. Particular manners, on the other hand, conſiſt of ſuch cuſtoms and modes of behaviour, as proceed from the influence of partial cauſes, and that ſhift and vary as thoſe cauſes do upon which they depend. To make myſelf underſtood by an example; it is agreeable to common or univerſal manners, to be angry and reſent an injury; but particular manners, in ordinary caſes, determine the methods of revenge. For great offences, an Italian poiſons his enemy; a Spaniard ſtabs him over the ſhoulder; and a Frenchman ſeeks ſatisfaction in duel. From this example, it will be eaſy to ſee that particular manners ought to appear but very little, either in epic poetry, tragedy, or any other of the higher kinds of poetical compoſition; for they are vulgar, and depend upon cuſtom; but great paſſions and high characters reject ordinary forms; and therefore muſt, upon every occaſion, break through all the common modes both of ſpeech and behaviour. Though ancient manners, therefore, were not ſo preciſely known as they are, I ſhould imagine, that a ſtory taken from the accounts which we have of the heroic ages, might very well ſerve for the ſubject of an epic poem, and have all the advantges neceſſary in reſpect of that ſpecies of compoſition.

It may likewiſe be alleged, that I have done wrong in chooſing for my ſubject a piece of hiſtory which has no connection with preſent affairs; and that, if I had done otherwiſe my work would have been more intereſting and uſeful.

This objection, ſeemingly a very material one, admits, notwithſtanding, of an eaſy anſwer, viz. that ſubjects for epic poetry ought always to be taken from periods too early to fall within the reach of true hiſtory. And, if this rule is ſhown to be eſſential, which I ſhall attempt to do in what follows, it will be found to be impoſſible that any ſubject proper for that kind of writing ſhould have a connection with preſent affairs. The proper buſineſs of epic poetry, is to extend our ideas of human perfection, or, as the critics expreſs it, to excite admiration. In order to do this in any tolerable degree, characters muſt be magnified, and accommodated rather to our notions of heroic greatneſs, than to the real ſtate of human nature. There appears a certain littleneſs in all men when truly known, which checks admiration, and confines it to very narrow limits; heroes, themſelves, though poſſeſſed of the greateſt qualities, are, in moſt circumſtances of their condition, ſo much up-

on a level with the ordinary run of mankind, that such as have an opportunity of being intimately acquainted with them, do not admire them at the same rate that others do, who view them only at a distance. The common conditions of humanity lessen every man; and there are many little circumstances inseparably connected with our state of being, which we cannot easily reconcile with our idea of Epaminoudas, Plato, Scipio, or Cæsar. From all this it plainly appears, that admiration claims for its object something superior to mere humanity; and therefore such poems as have it for their end to excite admiration, ought to celebrate those persons only that never have been treated of by regular historians. For history gives to all things their just and natural dimensions; and, if it should interfere with poetical fiction, would effectually confute those beautiful legends which are invented to raise our ideas of character and action, above the standard at which experience has fixed them.

Let it be observed, as a further confirmation of the maxim which I am establishing, that there is in our minds a principle which leads us to admire past times, especially those which are most remote from our own. This prejudice is strong in us; and, without being directed or assisted by art, forms in the mere vulgar of all countries, the most extravagant notions of the stature, strength, and other heroic qualities of their remote ancestors. This prejudice, so favourable to poetical fiction, true history effectually destroys: and therefore poets, that they may have the advantage of it, ought to celebrate those persons and events only that are of so great antiquity, as not to be remembered with any degree of certainty and exactness.

But, instead of a thousand arguments to this purpose, let us only consider the machinery which must be employed in an epic poem: how heaven and hell must both be put in motion, and brought into the action; how events altogether out of the common road of human affairs, and no ways countenanced either by reason or by experience, must be offered to mens imaginations, so as to be admitted for true. Let us consider all this, and it will appear, that there is nothing which poets ought more carefully to avoid, than interfering with such regular and well-vouched accounts of things as would effectually confute their fable, and make the meanest reader reject it with contempt. This is a point of prudence which no poet has yet neglected with impunity. Lucan, according to his usual rashness, has taken, for the subject of an epic poem, one of the best known events which he could have pitched upon in the whole series of human affairs; and, in order to distinguish himself from a mere historian, is often under the necessity of starting from his subject, and employing the whole force of a very lively and fruitful invention in unnecessary descriptions and trifling digressions. This, besides other inconveniencies of greater importance, gives such an appearance of labour and straining to his whole performance, as takes much from the merit of it, with all who have any notion of ease, majesty, and simplicity of writing. He, and all other poets who have fallen into the same error, find always this disadvantage attending it, that the true and fictitious parts of their work refuse to unite, and standing as it were at a distance, upon terms of mutual aversion, reproach each other with their peculiar defects. Fiction accuses truth of narrowness and want of dignity; and this again represents the other as vain and extravagant. Spenser, who, in his Faery Queen, not only treats of matters within the sphere of regular history, but describes even the transactions of his own time, in order to avoid the inconveniencies which he knew to be almost inseparable from such an attempt, covers his story with a veil of allegory, that few of his readers are able to penetrate. This stratagem leaves him at full liberty in the exercise of his invention; but he pays, in my opinion, too dear for that privilege, by sacrificing to it all the weight and authority which a mixture of received tradition and real geography would have given to his fable. Milton takes the subjects of both his great poems from true history, yet does not succeed the worse upon that account. But it is to be remembered, that his chief actors are not men, but divine and angelic beings; and that it is the human nature only which suffers by a just representation, and loses in point of dignity, when truly known. Besides, the historical circumstances upon which he builds are so few, and of so extraordinary a nature, that they are easily accommodated to poetical fiction; and, therefore, instead of limiting him, and setting bounds to his invention, they serve only to countenance, and give a degree of credibility to whatever he pleases to feign. Shakspeare may likewise be quoted as an exception to the general rule, who takes the subjects of many of his pieces from periods of the English history not very remote, and, notwithstanding, succeeds remarkably in exciting the heroic passion. That Shakspeare makes us admire his heroes, is undeniable; and no man of common sense will ever pretend to assert, that real characters of great men, touched up and heightened by a poetical fancy, will not very naturally excite admiration. But there are different degrees of this passion, as well as of all others; and it is evident that the degree of it which Shakspeare intends to raise, is not equal to that which Homer aims at, and the other writers of the epic tribe. We admire no character in Shakspeare's works more than that of Henry V., but the idea which Homer gives us of Achilles, is still more noble and august. The tragedian mixes so much of the ordinary man in the character of his hero, that we become too familiar with him to admire him in a high degree: for in those very pieces in which he is represented as performing his most remarkable exploits, he is often found at his leisure hours amusing himself with a knot of humourists, pickpockets, and buffoons. I do not pretend to censure Shakspeare for this conduct; because it is not the business of a tragedian to make us admire, but to interest our other affections: and, to make his heroes very much objects of admiration, would possibly be one of the greatest errors that an author of that kind could fall into: for the principle of compassion, to which tragedy is peculiarly addressed, is incompatable with high admiration; and a man, in order either to be loved or pitied,

muſt appear with evident ſymptoms of the weakneſſes common to the reſt of the human kind. It is our own image in diſtreſs which afflicts us; and we never pity one under calamities, who is not weak enough to be moved by them. Homer upon this account, never attempts to excite pity, but from ſuch private and domeſtic diſtreſſes as ſhow his heroes in the light of ordinary men. Sophocles likewiſe, from a juſt apprehenſion that the heroic paſſion interferes with the proper ſpirit of tragedy, leſſens on purpoſe the great characters which he introduces, and ſtrips them of more than half their dignity. Though therefore Shakſpeare makes us admire his heroes as much as a tragedian ought to do, and even more in ſome inſtances than the rules of art would juſtify; yet as the degree of admiration which he excites is leſs by far than that which epic poetry aims at, it may well be raiſed from ſubjects that are ſtrictly hiſtorical, though the higher degrees of that paſſion cannot. Were my judgment of ſufficient authority in matters of criticiſm, I would have it underſtood as a rule, that the ſubjects of epic poetry ſhould be taken from tradition only: that tragedy ſhould keep within the limits of true hiſtory; and that comedy, without meddling at all with hiſtorical facts, ſhould expoſe vice and folly in recent inſtances, and from living examples. That part of the rule which regards epic poetry, is ſufficiently juſtified from what has been already ſaid; and concerning tragedy, I have likewiſe obſerved, that it ought not to exalt its greateſt characters above the ſtandard of real life. From this it will follow that it may be ſtrictly hiſtorical without loſing any real advantage, and attain its full perfection without the aſſiſtance of fable. I believe it will be eaſily allowed, that where truth and fiction are equally ſubſervient to the purpoſes of poetry, the firſt ought always to be preferred; for true hiſtory carries a weight and authority with it, which ſeldom attend ſtories that are merely fictitious, and has many other advantages for intereſting our affections above the legends of remote antiquity. But as tragedy ſhould never go ſo far back as the fabulous ages, neither ſhould it, in my opinion, approach too near to preſent times; for though it does not aim at raiſing and gratifying the paſſion of admiration, yet it has a degree of dignity to maintain, which it would endanger by treating of events too recent, and characters too particularly remembered. Comedy, on the other hand, and indeed every ſpecies of ſatire whatſoever, ought to attack living characters only, and the vices and folly of preſent times. That imperfection which appears in every thing when viewed near, a circumſtance ſo unfavourable to the genius of epic poetry and tragedy falls in preciſely with that of comedy, a kind of writing which has no dignity to ſupport, points always at what is ridiculous, and marks its objects with characters of littleneſs and contempt. We naturally admire paſt times, and reverence the dead; and conſequently are not ſo much diſpoſed to laugh at fools who have already finiſhed their parts, and retired, as at fools who are yet upon the ſtage. The ancient comedy of the Greeks, which proceeded upon this maxim, was certainly, upon that account, the moſt perfect ſpecies of ſatire that ever was invented. Homer, as he exceeds all other poets in merit, has likewiſe the advantage of them in point of good fortune; the condition of the age in which he wrote gave him an opportunity of celebrating in his poems, events, which though they were in his days of no great antiquity, and conſequently the more intereſting, yet had fallen, through the want of authentic records, into ſo happy a degree of obſcurity, that he was at full liberty to feign concerning them what he pleaſed, without any danger of confutation. This is an advantage which ſucceeding poets could not boaſt of; and therefore have found themſelves under a neceſſity, either of taking their ſubjects from remote antiquity, as I have done, or (which in my opinion is worſe) of attempting to mix fable with hiſtory, which never can be done with ſucceſs.

The mythology in the following poem will probably give offence to ſome readers, who will think it indecent for a Chriſtian to write in ſuch a manner as to ſuppoſe the truth of a heathen religion. They will be of opinion, that it would have been better, either to have introduced no religious ſyſtem at all, or to have choſen ſuch a ſubject as would have admitted of the true ſyſtem. I ſhall endeavour to anſwer this objection, by eſtabliſhing two maxims directly oppoſite to what is propoſed in the preceding alternative, and ſhow not only that divine beings are neceſſary characters in an epic poem, but likewiſe that it is highly improper to introduce the true God into a work of that nature. If theſe two points are fully made out, the force of the objection will be taken away. As to the firſt of them, let us again conſider the end which epic poetry propoſes to itſelf: it aims at exciting admiration, by ſetting before us images of whatever is great and noble in the human character: it is neceſſary for this purpoſe that a poet ſhould give his heroes, not only all thoſe intrinſic qualities which make men admired, but that he ſhould magnify them likewiſe by a skilful management of outward circumſtances. We do not form our notions either of perſons or things from their real qualities only; circumſtances of a foreign nature, and merely acceſſory, have as great an influence as theſe in determining our approbation and diſlike. This obſervation ſhows the importance of mythology to epic poetry; for nothing can render a perſon of greater conſequence in the eye of the world, than an opinion that the gods regard him with a peculiar degree of attention, and are much intereſted in all that relates to him. If people are once conſidered as the favourites of heaven, or inſtruments choſen for the accompliſhment of its important purpoſes; poets may tell of them what great things they pleaſe, without ſeeming to exaggerate, or ſay any thing that exceeds the bounds of probability. Homer was certainly of this opinion, when he aſcribed to his heroes, valour and other great qualities in ſo immoderate a degree: for, had the gods never interpoſed in any of the events which he celebrates; had his chief actors been nowiſe connected with them, either in point of favour or conſanguinity, and repreſented, at the ſame time, as performing the high exploits which he aſcribes

to them instead of being applauded as the first of poets, he would have been censured as the most false and most credulous of historians. This argument in favour of poetical mythology, with another which might be taken from the advantage it is of in point of ornament, and a third from its use in allegory, has determined almost all the writers who have followed the epic or heroic style, to allow it a place in their compositions; such of them as have taken their subject from Greek or Roman story, have adopted the mythology of Homer; and the rest, in celebrating more modern heroes, have, instead of that, made use of the true religion, corrupted by an unnatural mixture of northern superstition and Grecian fable. From a practice therefore so universal, we may justly infer, that poets have looked upon mythology as a thing of great use in their compositions, and almost essential to the art.

It may be alleged, after all that has been said, that, to bring gods into epic poetry, is inconvenient on many accounts; that it prevents a proper display of character in the human actors, turning them all into so many machines, to be moved and guided by the immediate impulses of deity: that it breaks in upon the order of natural causes, and renders all art, either in plan or conduct of a work, superfluous and unnecessary. If what this objection supposes were true, and that the mixing of gods with men in the action of an epic poem, necessarily turned the whole into miracle; if it were an unavoidable consequence of this method, that the human actors should be governed in all they do by divine impulse determining them, without regard to their natural characters, and the probable motives which ought to influence them; in short, if mythology could have no place in a poem, but at the expence of manners, order, connection, and every other thing that can render a work either beautiful or instructive, it would be an argument against it of such weight, as nothing alleged in its favour would be able to counterbalance. But the objection is by no means well founded; for, though there may be an indiscreet application of mythology, productive of all those ill effects which have been mentioned; yet it is obvious, both from reason and experience, that mythology may be managed in such a manner as to be attended with none of them. And this will appear from a very obvious example: the greatest part of mankind, in every age, have believed that gods and superior beings govern and direct the course of human affairs. Many individuals, and even whole nations, have thought that all the actions and events of our lives are predetermined by an overruling power, and that we suffer the controul of an irresistible necessity in all we do: yet this opinion never changes the moral feelings of such as entertain it, and their judgment of characters and actions; they love and hate, approve, and disapprove, admire and despise, in the same manner as others do who believe that men are absolutely free, and that their final determinations proceed only from themselves. But when it is understood, that people act without consciousness, or that the organs of their bodies are not under the dominion of their own wills, but actuated by some other being without their consent: in short, when mere physical necessity is substituted in place of moral, all idea of character, all sense of approbation and disapprobation immediately ceases. From this fact, the truth of which nobody will dispute, it is easy to judge in what cases the interposition of gods in the action of a poem will prevent a proper display of the human characters; and when not. Volition, as appears by the example now given, is that upon which our moral ideas are founded: so long then as volition is exerted, there is a character, and, when that ceases, the character is lost. If therefore the deities in a poem are employed in animating and deterring the heroes, only by suggesting such motives as are proper to influence their wills; such interposition by no means interferes with the display of character, but rather favours it; for the quality of every mind may be known from the motives by which it is determined; and Minerva's prevailing with Pindarus to be guilty of a piece of treachery, by suggesting that Paris would reward him for it, discovered the venality of his temper as much as if he had done the same action from a like motive occuring to himself.

Poets often make the gods infuse an uncommon degree of vigour into their heroes, for answering some great occasion, and add to the grace and dignity of their figure. Sometimes they make a second rate heroe the first in a particular action, and, with their assistance, he distinguishes himself above such as are at other times more remarkable for valour and success: all this is so agreeable to what happens naturally, and from mere mechanical causes, that we forget the gods, and interpret what happens as if they had not interposed at all. For every body knows, that when people are roused to any remarkable exertion of force, they become stronger than they are at other times; and that, when in this manner the spirits rise to an uncommon height, the whole body acquires new graces. Valour is not a fixed and permanent quality, nor is it found in any one always in the same degree. Plutarch observes that of all the virtues it exerts itself most irregularly, and rises by fits like a divine inspiration. The sense which every man has of these things, makes him look upon the interposition of gods in such cases as a mythological way of expressing what is merely natural, and allow such as perform the great actions in a poem to possess the whole merit of them. It never lessens our opinion of Hector's valour, for instance, that Apollo often assists him; nor do we think Ulysses less prudent, because he is guided by the influence of Minerva. We have as clear impressions of those, and the other Homeric characters as we have of any characters whatsoever, and discern their limits and distinguishing marks as clearly as if they had acted altogether of themselves. That superior beings should be employed in governing the events of things, and interposing by thunder, earthquakes, inundations, pestilences, and the like, can never be thought unnatural in poetry, by any one who believes that Providence actually manages the affairs of the world by such means. It belongs to men to design and act, but to Heaven alone to determine

events. Though a poet, therefore ſhould repreſent an army weaker and worſe conducted, prevailing, in conſequence of that kind of interpoſition which has been mentioned, over another, evidently better and ſtronger, there would be nothing unnatural in ſuch an account, or contrary to what is often experienced in real affairs.

After all that has been ſaid, it muſt be owned, that if gods are brought in upon ſlight occaſions, and for trifling purpoſes; if they are put upon working miracles in order to cover blunders, either in the plan or execution of a poem, and employed in cutting ſuch knots as the author himſelf has not the ſkill or patience to untie; it muſt be owned, I ſay, that this is a very wrong application of mythology, and attended with all the diſadvantages which the objection mentions. It is a ſtratagem, which, if often practiſed, would teach the reader at laſt to diſregard all appearances, and, when the moſt important periods of affairs were approaching, to remain quite ſecure and unintereſted; truſting that a god would always be at hand, in time of need, to manage every thing as the poet would have it, and put all to rights by the ſhorteſt and moſt effectual methods. I have conſidered this objection at greater length, becauſe at firſt view it appears very plauſible; and ſhall proceed to what remains, after I have taken notice of another, which has likewiſe ſome appearance of force. It will be thought inconvenient, as it is the deſign of epic poetry to raiſe and dignify human characters, that gods ſhould appear with men in the ſame ſcenes of action. It will be alleged, that in this caſe the divine perſons will neceſſarily overſhadow the human, leſſen them by a compariſon, and conſequently produce an effect directly oppoſite to what is intended. This objection, however plauſible, does not ſeem to be ſupported by experience; at leaſt I never found in any inſtance, that the ſplendour of divine characters in a poem, eclipſed the human. Beſides, this is what cannot eaſily happen; for, let us ſuppoſe two parties of boys engaged in ſome trial, either of force or ſkill, and that a few men take part in the debate, dividing themſelves between the oppoſite ſides, and aſſiſting them againſt each other, would the exploits of the full-grown men, however remarkable, leſſen thoſe of the boys? by no means; for things that are confeſſedly unequal, never come into competition, and therefore cannot be either leſſened or magnified by appearing together. Are we leſs diſpoſed to admire the valour of Achilles, becauſe it is underſtood he was not a match for Jupiter? Or the ſagacity of Ulyſſes, becauſe his penetration was not equal to that of Minerva? But there is one circumſtance which renders it abſolutely impoſſible for the gods in epic poetry to eclipſe the men in point of heroiſm; and it is this, that the gods are immortal, and conſequently cannot exert that in which heroiſm chiefly conſiſts, viz. the contempt of death. Homer, in order to give his deities as much of that quality as poſſible, has made them vulnerable and ſuſceptible of pain; a freedom which has ſhocked ſome of the critics, who did not attend to the reaſon of his doing ſo. But Homer was too good a judge of propriety, not to be ſenſible that no perſon could appear with advantage in military actions who ventured nothing in point of perſonal ſafety; and that ſtature, force, magnificent armour, and even the higheſt atchievements, will never conſtitute the heroic character, where patience and contempt of danger have no opportunity of appearing. It is this circumſtance which gives the mortals in epic poetry a manifeſt advantage over the immortals; and Mars when uſhered into the field with all the pomp and magnificence of Homeric deſcription, is an object leſs to be admired than Diomed, Ajax, and many others who combat bravely, though conſcious of mortality. Homer, who has managed his great characters with the trueſt judgment and ſtricteſt attention to circumſtances, takes care to have Achilles early informed that he was to periſh at Troy, elſe he might ſeem too conſcious of ſafety, from his matchleſs valour and the armour which he wore, to be great in that which is to be admired, the contempt of death, when the danger of it is imminent. It muſt be acknowledged, that in Milton's Paradiſe Loſt, the perſons in the machinery overſhadowed the human characters, and that the heroes of the poem are all of them immortals: but then it is to be remembered, that Paradiſe Loſt is a work altogether irregular; that the ſubject of it is not epic, but tragic; and that Adam and Eve are not deſigned to be objects of admiration, but of pity: it is tragic in its plot, and epic in its dreſs and machinery: as a tragedy, it does not fall under the preſent queſtion; and, as an epic poem, it evades it likewiſe, by a circumſtance very uncommon, viz. that in the part of it which is properly epic, there are no human perſons at all.

I have in this manner endeavoured to prove that mythology is neceſſary to an epic poem, and that the chief objections to the uſe of it are of little conſequence. I proceed to eſtabliſh the other propoſition which I mentioned, and ſhow, that the true God ought not to be brought into a work of that nature. And if this propoſition can be made out, it will eaſily appear from it, and the preceding one taken together, that poets are under a neceſſity of having recourſe to a falſe theology, and that they are not to be blamed for doing what the nature of epic poetry on the one hand, and reſpect to the true religion on the other, render neceſſary and unavoidable. For proving the point in queſtion, I need only obſerve, that no perſon can appear with advantage in poetry, who is not repreſented according to the form and condition of a man. This art addreſſes itſelf chiefly to the imagination, a faculty which apprehends nothing in the way of character that is not human, and according to the analogy of that nature, of which we ourſelves are conſcious. But it would be equally impious and abſurd to repreſent the Deity in this manner, and to contrive for him a particular character and method of acting, agreeable to the prejudices of weak and ignorant mortals. In the early ages of the church, he thought fit to accommodate himſelf, by ſuch a piece of condeſcenſion, to the notions and apprehenſions of his creatures: but it would be indecent in any man to uſe the ſame freedom

and do that for God, which he only has a right to do for himself. The author of Paradise Loft has offended notoriouſly in this reſpect; and, though no encomiums are too great for him as a poet, he is juſtly chargeable with impiety, for preſuming to repreſent the Divine Nature, and the myſteries of religion, according to the narrowneſs of human prejudice: his dialogues between the Father and the Son; his employing a Being of infinite wiſdom in diſcuſſing the ſubtleties of ſchool divinity; the ſenſual views which he gives of the happineſs of heaven, admitting into it, as a part, not only real eating and drinking, but another kind of animal pleaſure, too, by no means more refined: theſe, and ſuch like circumſtances, though perfectly poetical and agreeable to the genius of an art which adapts every thing to the human model, are, at the ſame time, ſo inconſiſtent with truth, and the exalted ideas which we ought to entertain of divine things, that they muſt be highly offenſive to all ſuch as have juſt impreſſions of religion, and would not chooſe to ſee a ſyſtem of doctrine revealed from heaven, reduced to a ſtate of conformity with heathen ſuperſtition. True theology ought not to be uſed in an epic poem, for another reaſon, of no leſs weight than that which has been mentioned, viz. That the human characters which it repreſents ſhould never be formed upon a perfect moral plan, but have their piety (for inſtance) tinctured with ſuperſtition, and their general behaviour influenced by affection, paſſion, and prejudice. This will be thought a violent paradox, by ſuch as do not know that imperfect characters intereſt us more than perfect ones, and that we are doubly inſtructed, when we ſee, in one and the ſame example, both what we ought to follow, and what we ought to avoid. Accordingly, Horace, in his epiſtle to Lollius, where he beſtows the higheſt encomiums upon the Iliad, as a work which delineated vice and virtue better than the writings of the moſt celebrated philoſophers, ſays of it, notwithſtanding, That it is taken up in deſcribing the animoſities of fooliſh kings and infatuated nations. To go to the bottom of this matter, it will be proper to obſerve, that men are capable of two ſorts of character, which may be diſtinguiſhed by the names of natural and artificial. The natural character implies all thoſe feelings, paſſions, deſires, and opinions which men have from nature and common experience, independent of ſpeculation and moral refinement. A perſon of this character looks upon outward proſperity as a real good, and conſiders the calamities of life as real evils; loves his friends, hates his enemies, admires his ſuperiors, is aſſuming with reſpect to his inferiors, and ſtands upon terms of rivalſhip with his equals; in ſhort, is governed by all thoſe paſſions and opinions that poſſeſs the hearts, and determine the actions of ordinary men. The force and magnitude of this character is in proportion to the ſtrength of theſe natural diſpoſitions; and its virtue conſiſts in having the generous and beneficent ones predominant. As to that ſort of character, again, which I diſtinguiſhed by the name of artificial: it conſiſts in a habit of mind formed by diſcipline, according to the cool and diſpaſſionate dictates of reaſon. This character is highly moral, but, in my opinion, far leſs poetical than the other, by being leſs fit for intereſting our affections, which are formed by the wiſe author of our nature for embracing ſuch beings which are of the ſame temper and complexion with ourſelves, and are marked with the common infirmities of human nature. Perſons of the high philoſophic character, are too firm and unmoved, amidſt the calamities they meet with, to excite much ſympathy, and are too much ſuperior to the ſallies of paſſion and partial affection, the popular marks of generoſity and greatneſs of mind, ever to be much admired by the bulk of mankind. If the moſt accompliſhed poet in the world ſhould take a rigid philoſopher for the chief character either of an epic poem or a tragedy, it is eaſy to conjecture what would be the ſucceſs of ſuch an attempt; the work would aſſume the character of its hero, and be cold, diſpaſſionate, and unintereſting. There is, however, a ſpecies of panegyric proper for ſuch ſort of perfection, and it may be repreſented to advantage, either in hiſtory or proſe dialogue, but it will never ſtrike the bulk of mankind. Plato, in his apology of Socrates, deceives us: as Mr. Addiſon likewiſe does in his tragedy of Cato: for both of them attempt to perſuade us, that we are affected with the contemplation of unſhaken fortitude, while we are only ſympathiſing with ſuffering innocence. The tenderneſs of humanity appearing through the hardneſs of the philoſophic character, is that which affects us in both inſtances, and not that unconquered greatneſs of mind, which occaſions rather wonder and aſtoniſhment than genuine affection.

From what has been ſaid, it is eaſy to infer, that the great characters, both in epic poetry and tragedy, ought not to be formed upon a perfect moral plan; and therefore heroes themſelves muſt often be repreſented as acting from ſuch motives, and governed by ſuch affections as impartial reaſon cannot approve of: but it would be highly indecent to make a being, whom religion teaches us to conſider as perfect, enter into the views of ſuch perſons, and exert himſelf in order to promote their extravagant enterpriſes. This would be to bring down the infinite wiſdom of God to the level of human folly, and to make him altogether ſuch an one as ourſelves.

A falſe theology, therefore, ought rather to be employed in poetical compoſitions than the true; for, as the ſuperior beings which are introduced, muſt of neceſſity be repreſented as aſſuming the paſſions and opinions of thoſe whom they favour, it is ſurely much fairer to employ a ſet of imaginary beings for this purpoſe, than God himſelf, and the bleſſed angels, who ought always to be objects of our reverence.

The ſame reaſoning which leads to this concluſion, will likewiſe make us ſenſible, that among falſe religions, theſe ought to be preferred which are leaſt connected with the true; for the ſuperſtitions which prieſts and poets have built upon the Chriſtian faith, diſhonour it, and therefore ſhould, if poſſible, be buried in oblivion. The ancient Greek theology ſeems upon all accounts the

fitteſt. It has no connection with the true ſyſtem, and therefore may be treated with the greateſt freedom, without indecency or ground of offence: It conſiſts of a number of beautiful fables, ſuited to the taſte of the moſt lively and ingenious people that ever exiſted, and ſo much calculated to raviſh and tranſport a warm imagination, that many poets in modern times, who proceeded upon a different theology, have, notwithſtanding, been ſo bewitched with its charms, as to admit it into their works, though it claſhed violently with the ſyſtem which they had adopted. Milton is remarkable in this reſpect; and the more ſo, as his poem is altogether of a religious nature, and the ſubject of it taken from holy writ.

Some may poſſibly imagine, that the following work would have had greater merit, if it had offered to the world a ſet of characters entirely new, and a ſtory nowiſe connected with any thing that is already known. I am not of this opinion; but perſuaded, on the contrary, that, to invent a ſtory quite new, with a catalogue of names never before heard of, would be an attempt of ſuch a nature, as could not be made with tolerable ſucceſs; for every man muſt be ſenſible, that the wonders which epic poetry relates, will ſhock even the ignorant vulgar, and appear altogether ridiculous, if they are not founded upon ſomething which has already gained a degree of credit. Our firſt ideas are taken from experience; and though we may be brought to receive notions, not only very different from thoſe which experience ſuggeſts, but even directly contrary to them, yet this is not to be done ſuddenly and at one attempt: ſuch, therefore, as would have their fictions favourably received, muſt lay it down as a rule, to accommodate what they feign to eſtabliſhed prejudices, and build upon ſtories which are already in ſome meaſure believed. With this precaution, they may go great lengths without appearing abſurd, but will ſoon ſhock the meaneſt underſtandings, if they neglect it. Had there been no fabulous accounts concerning the Trojan expedition current in Greece and Aſia, at the time when Homer wrote, the ſtories which he tells, though the moſt beautiful that ever were invented, would have appeared to his cotemporaries altogether ridiculous and never been admired, till antiquity had procured them credit, or a tradition been formed afterwards to vouch for them to the world; for, in matters of an extraordinary kind, not only reaſon, but even imagination, requires more than a ſingle teſtimony to ground its aſſent upon; and therefore, though I ſhould have invented a ſet of characters entirely new, and framed a ſtory for the ſubject of my poem nowiſe connected with any thing that has yet been heard of, and been ſo happy in this attempt as to produce what might equal, in point of perfection, any of the moſt beautiful fables of antiquity; it would have wanted, notwithſtanding, what is abſolutely neceſſary in order to ſucceſs, viz. that credit which new invented fictions derive from their connection with ſuch as are already become familiar to mens imaginations.

Tradition is the beſt ground upon which fable can be built, not only becauſe it gives the appearance of reality to things that are merely fictitious, but likewiſe becauſe it ſupplies a poet with the moſt proper materials for his invention to work upon. There are ſome fabulous ſtories that pleaſe more univerſally than others; and of this kind are the wonders which tradition reports; for they are accommodated to the affections and paſſions of the bulk of mankind, in the ſame manner as national proverbs are to their underſtandings. The ſtrict accommodation in both inſtances proceeds from the ſame cauſe, viz. that nothing of either ſort is the work of one man, or of one age, but of many. Traditions are not perfected by their firſt inventors, nor proverbs eſtabliſhed upon a ſingle authority. Proverbs derive their credit from the general conſent of mankind; and tradition is gradually corrected and improved in the hands of ſuch as tranſmit it to each other through a ſucceſſion of ages. In its firſt periods, it is a narrow thing, but extends itſelf afterwards, and, with the advantage of time, and experiments often repeated, adapts itſelf ſo preciſely to the affections, paſſions, and prejudices, natural to the human ſpecies, that it becomes at laſt perfectly agreeable to the ſentiments of every heart. No one man, therefore, can pretend to invent fables that will pleaſe ſo univerſally, as thoſe which are formed by the progreſs of popular tradition. The faculties of any individual muſt be too narrow for that purpoſe, and have too much of a peculiar caſt to be capable of producing what will be ſo ſtrictly adapted to the common feelings and ſentiments of all. It is this ſort of perfection which pleaſes us in archæology, or the traditional accounts which we have of the origins of nations; for we are often more agreeably entertained with ſtories of that kind, though we know them to be abſolutely falſe, than with the juſteſt repreſentations of real events. But as tradition, while it continues in the hands of the people, muſt be rude and diſagreeable in reſpect of its form, and have many things low and abſurd in it, neceſſary to be palliated or ſuppreſſed, it does not arrive at that perfection of which it is capable, till it comes under the management of the poets, and from them receives its laſt improvement. By means of this progreſs, tales, that in the mouths of their firſt inventors, were the moſt abſurd that can be imagined, the effects of mere ſuperſtition, ignorance, and national prejudice, riſe up at laſt to aſtoniſh the world, and draw the admiration of all ages, in the form of an Iliad or Odyſſey. It is not the buſineſs of a poet, then, to make fable, but to form, correct, and improve tradition: and it is to his following this method, that Homer undoubtedly owes his ſucceſs: for it is obvious to any one who conſiders his works with attention, that he only collected the various traditions that were current in his days, and reduced them to a ſyſtem. That infinite variety of independent ſtories which occur in his works, is a proof of this: theſe are told with ſo minute, and often ſo unneceſſary a detail of circumſtances, that it is eaſy to ſee that he followed accounts already current, and did not invent what he has recorded. I could as eaſily believe that Prometheus made a man of clay, and

put life into him, or aſſent to any other of the moſt abſurd fictions of antiquity; I could even as ſoon be perſuaded that all that Homer has written is ſtrict matter of fact, as believe that any one mortal man was capable of inventing that infinite variety of hiſtorical circumſtances which occur in the works of that celebrated poet; for invention is by no means an eaſy thing; and to contrive a tale that will pleaſe univerſally is certainly one of the moſt difficult undertakings that can be imagined. Poets, therefore, have found themſelves under a neceſſity of truſting to ſomething more powerful than their own invention in this important article, viz. the joint endeavours of many, regulated and directed by the cenſure of ages.

What has been ſaid, is not only ſufficient to juſtify me in forming my poem upon hiſtorical circumſtances already known, and introducing characters which the reader is before acquainted with; but ſhows the neceſſity likewiſe of taking many of the hiſtorical circumſtances from the ancient poets. For tradition, the proper foundation of epic poetry, is now to be found only in their writings; and therefore muſt be uſed like a common ſtock, and not conſidered as the property of individuals.

For the immoderate length of the two epiſodes, viz. thoſe in the fourth and ſeventh books, all that I can ſay, is, that they are both brought in for very important purpoſes, and therefore may be permitted to take up more room than is ordinarily allowed to things of that ſort. Beſides, the firſt of them is intended as an experiment in that kind of fiction which diſtinguiſhes Homer's Odyſſey, and the other as an attempt to heroic tragedy, after the manner of Sophocles.

The language is ſimple and artleſs. This I take to be an advantage, rather than a defect; for it gives an air of antiquity to the work, and makes the ſtyle more ſuitable to the ſubject.

My learned readers will be ſurpriſed to find Agamemnon and Menelaus at the ſiege of Thebes, when, according to Homer, they were not there: and, at the ſame time, no notice taken of Sthenelus, the friend and companion of Diomed, whom the ſame author mentions as preſent in that expedition.

With reſpect to the firſt circumſtance, I did not chooſe, for the ſake of a fact of ſo little conſequence, and that too depending only upon poetical authority, to deprive myſelf of two illuſtrious names very proper for adorning my catalogue of heroes. And as to the ſecond; it will be eaſily allowed, that I could not have made Sthenelus appear, without aſſigning him that place in Diomed's friendſhip, and conſequently in the action of the poem, which Ulyſſes now poſſeſſes; and which is the only part in the whole ſuited to his peculiar character. I muſt have put a ſecond-rate hero in the place of a firſt-rate one; and a name little known, in the place of one which every body is acquainted with. Beſides, I muſt have transferred, to Sthenelus, the valour, firmneſs, and addreſs of Ulyſſes; becauſe the part he was to act would have required theſe, and muſt, at the ſame time, have ſunk Ulyſſes into the character of Sthenelus, for want of a proper opportunity of diſplaying him in his own. Theſe are inconveniencies too great to be incurred for the ſake of a ſcrupulous agreement with Homer in point of fact; and are therefore, in my opinion, better avoided.

I have explained myſelf upon the foregoing particulars, for the ſake of the learned part of my readers only: and ſhall now drop a hint for ſuch of them as do not fall under that denomination.

The following poem is called the Epigoniad, becauſe the heroes, whoſe actions it celebrates, have got the name of the Epigoni (or Deſcendants), being the ſons of thoſe who attempted the conqueſt of Thebes in a former expedition.

Thus far I have endeavoured to apologiſe for the following performance. It may be cenſured, no doubt, upon many accounts beſides thoſe that have been mentioned: but I am perſuaded, that what has been ſaid will determine every candid reader, not to be peremptory in condemning what at firſt view he may diſlike; for the ſpecimen of criticiſm which has been given, will convince him that the real faults of epic poetry are not eaſily aſcertained, and diſtinguiſhed from theſe inconveniences that muſt be allowed to take place, in order to prevent greater faults, and produce, upon the whole, a higher degree of perfection.

THE EPIGONIAD.

BOOK I.

YE pow'rs of ſong! with whoſe immortal fire
Your bard enraptur'd ſung Pelides' ire,
To Greece ſo fatal, when in evil hour,
He brav'd, in ſtern debate, the ſov'reign pow'r,
By like example, teach me now to ſhow
From love, no leſs, what dire diſaſters flow.
For when the youth of Greece, by Theſus led,
Return'd to conquer where their fathers bled,
And puniſh guilty Thebes, by Heav'n ordain'd
For perfidy to fall, and oaths profan'd;
Venus, ſtill partial to the Theban arms,
Tydeus' ſon ſeduc'd by female charms;
Who, from his plighted faith by paſſion ſway'd,
The chiefs, the army, and himſelf betray'd.
This theme did once your fav'rite bard employ,
Whoſe verſe immortaliz'd the fall of Troy:
But time's oblivious gulf, whoſe circle draws
All mortal things by fate's eternal laws,
In whoſe wide vortex worlds themſelves are toſt,
And rounding ſwift ſucceſſively are loſt,
This ſong hath ſnatch'd. I now reſume the ſtrain,
Not from proud hope and emulation vain,
By this attempt to merit equal praiſe
With worth heroic, born in happier days.
Sooner the weed, that with the ſpring appears,
And in the ſummer's heat its bloſſom bears,
But, ſhriv'ling at the touch of winter hoar,
Sinks to its native earth, and is no more;
Might match the lofty oak, which long hath ſtood,
From age to age, the monarch of the wood.
But love excites me, and deſire to trace
His glorious ſteps, though with unequal pace.
Before me ſtill I ſee his awful ſhade,
With garlands crown'd, of leaves which never fade;
He points the path to fame, and bids me ſcale
Parnaſſus' ſlipp'ry height, where thouſands fail:
I follow trembling; for the cliffs are high,
And hov'ring round them watchful harpies fly,
To ſnatch the poets wreath with envious claws,
And hiſs contempt for merited applauſe.
But if great Campbel, whoſe auſpicious ſmile
Bids genius yet revive to bleſs our iſle,
Who, from the toils of ſtate and public cares,
Oft with the muſes to the ſhade repairs,
My numbers ſhall approve, I riſe to fame;
For what he praiſes, envy dares not blame.
Where high Olympus' hundred heads ariſe,
Divide the clouds, and mingle with the ſkies,
The gods aſſembled met; and view'd, from far,
Thebes and the various combats of the war.
From all apart the Paphian goddeſs ſat,
And pity'd in her heart her fav'rite ſtate,
Decreed to periſh, by the Argive bands,
Pallas's art, Tydides' mighty hands:
Penſive ſhe ſat, and ev'ry art explor'd
To charm the victor, and reſtrain his ſword;
But veil'd her purpoſe from the piercing ray
Of Pallas, ever jealous of her ſway:
Unſeen the goddeſs, from th' Olympian height
To ſhady Cyprus bent her rapid flight,
Down the ſteep air, as, from the ſetting ſkies,
At ev'n's approach, a ſtreaming meteor flies.
Where lofty ſhores the tempeſt's rage reſtrain,
And ſleeps, in peace diſſolv'd, the hoary main;
In love's fam'd iſle a deep receſs is found,
Which woods embrace, and precipices bound,
To Venus ſacred; there her temple ſtands,
Where azure billows waſh the golden ſands,
A hollow cave; and lifts its rocky head,
With native myrtle crown'd, a lofty ſhade:
Whither reſort the Naiads of the flood,
Aſſembl'd with the nymphs from ev'ry wood
Her heifers there they tend, and fleecy ſtore,
Along the windings of the deſert ſhore.
Thither the goddeſs, from th' Olympian height
Deſcending ſwift, precipitates her flight;
Conſpicuous, on the yellow ſand, ſhe ſtood,
Above the margin of the azure flood.
From ev'ry grove and ſtream the nymphs attend,
And to their queen in cheerful homage bend.
Some haſtening to the ſacred grot repair,
And deck its rocky walls with garlands fair;
Others produce the gift which Autumn brings,
And ſparkling nectar quench'd with mountain ſprings.
And now the queen, impatient to explain
Her ſecret griefs, addreſs'd her liſt'ning train:
Ye rural goddeſſes, immortal fair!
Who all my triumphs, all my ſorrows ſhare;
I come, afflicted, from th' ethereal tow'rs,
Where Thebes is doom'd to fall by partial pow'rs.
Nor can entreaty ſave my fav'rite ſtate,
Avert or change the rigour of her fate;
Though, breathing incenſe, there my altar ſtands,
With daily gifts ſupply'd from virgins hands.
Juno now rules the ſenate of the ſkies,
And with her dictates ev'ry pow'r complies;
Her jealous hate the guiltleſs town condemns
To waſteful havock, and the rage of flames;
Since, thither tempted by a ſtranger's charms,
The mighty thunderer forſook her arms.
Jove's warlike daughter too promotes her aim,
Who, for Tydides, ſeeks immortal fame;
For him employs a mother's watchful cares,
And the firſt honours of the war prepares:
To fruſtrate both, a monument would raiſe
Of laſting triumph, and immortal praiſe,
To draw the ſon of Tydeus from the field,
To whoſe victorious hands the town muſt yield;
For, by the all-decreeing will of fate,
He only can o'erthrow the Theban ſtate.

A way which promiſes ſucceſs I'll name:
The valiant youth adores a lovely dame,
Alcander's daughter, whom the graces join'd
With gifts adorn, above the human kind:
She with her ſire forſook th' Heſperian ſtrand,
By hoſtile arms expell'd their native land:
For Echetus who rules, with tyrant force,
Where Auſidus directs his downward courſe,
And high Garganus th' Apulian plain,
Is mark'd by ſailors, from the diſtant main;
Oft from her ſire had claim'd the lovely maid,
Who, ſtill averſe, to grant his ſuit delay'd:
For, barb'rous in extreme, the tyrant feeds
With mangl'd limbs of men his hungry ſteeds:
Impatient of his love, by hoſtile arms
And force declar'd, he claim'd her matchleſs charms.
Pelignium raz'd the hero's royal ſeat,
Who ſought in foreign climes a ſafe retreat;
His flight Ætolia's friendly ſhore receives,
Her gen'rous lord protects him and relieves;
Three cities to poſſeſs the chief obtains,
With hills for paſture fit, and fruitful plains.
Caſſandra for his bride Tydides claim'd;
For hymeneal rites the hour was nam'd,
When call'd to arms againſt the Theban tow'rs
The chief reluctant led his martial pow'rs.
Hence jealouſy and fear his breaſt divide,
Fear for the ſafety of an abſent bride;
Leſt, by his paſſion rous'd, the tyrant riſe,
And unoppos'd uſurp the lovely prize.
He knows not, that, in martial arms conceal'd,
With him ſhe braves the terrors of the field;
True to his ſide, noon's fultry toil endures,
And the cold damps that chill the midnight hours.
If dreams, or ſigns, could jealouſy impart,
And whet the cares that ſting the hero's heart,
Impatient of his pain he'd ſoon prepare,
With all his native bands, to quit the war.
The goddeſs thus: a Paphian nymph reply'd,
And drew the liſt'ning crowd on ev'ry ſide,
Zelotypé, whom fell Alecto bore,
With Cupid mixing on th' infernal ſhore.
Goddeſs! theſe ſhafts ſhall compaſs what you aim,
My mother dipt their points in Stygian flame;
Where'er my father's darts their way have found,
Mine follow deep and poiſon all the wound.
By theſe we ſoon with triumph ſhall behold
Pallas deceiv'd, and Juno's ſelf controul'd.
They all approve; and to the rural fane,
Around their ſov'reign, moves the joyful train;
The goddeſs plac'd in order each ſucceeds,
With ſong and dance the genial feaſt proceeds;
While to the ſprightly harp the voice explains
The loves of all the gods in wanton ſtrains:
But when arriv'd the ſilent hour, which brings
The ſhades of ev'ning on its dewy wings,
Zelotypé, impatient to purſue
Her journey, haſt'ning to her cave, withdrew;
Firſt to her feet the winged ſhoes ſhe binds,
Which tread the air, and mount the rapid winds;
Aloft they bear her through th' ethereal plain,
Above the ſolid earth and liquid main:
Her arrows next ſhe takes of pointed ſteel,
For ſight too ſmall, but terrible to feel;
Rous'd by their ſmart, the ſavage lion roars,
And mad to combat ruſh the tuſky boars,
Of wounds ſecure; for where their venom lights,
What feels their power all other torment ſlights.
A figur'd zone, myſteriouſly deſign'd,
Around her waiſt her yellow robe confin'd:
There dark ſuſpicion lurk'd, of ſable hue;
There haſty rage his deadly dagger drew;
Pale envy inly pin'd; and by her ſide
Stood phrenzy, raging with his chains unty'd;
Affronted pride with thirſt of vengeance burn'd,
And love's exceſs to deepeſt hatred turn'd.
All theſe the artiſt's curious hand expreſs'd,
The work divine his matchleſs ſkill confeſs'd.
The virgin laſt, around her ſhoulders flung
The bow; and by her ſide the quiver hung:
Then, ſpringing up, her airy courſe ſhe bends
For Thebes; and lightly o'er the tents deſcends.
The ſon of Tydeus, 'midſt his bands, ſhe found
In arms complete, repoſing on the ground;
And, as he ſlept, the hero thus addreſs'd,
Her form to fancy's waking eye expreſs'd.
Thrice happy youth! whoſe glory 'tis to ſhare
The Paphian goddeſs's peculiar care;
But happy only, as you now improve
The warning ſent, an earneſt of her love.
Her meſſenger I am: if in your heart
The fair Heſperian virgin claims a part;
If, with regret, you'd ſee her matchleſs charms
Deſtin'd to bleſs a happier rival's arms;
Your coaſts defenceleſs, and unguarded tow'rs
Conſum'd and ravag'd by the Latian pow'rs;
Withdraw your warriors from the Argive hoſt,
And ſave whate'er you value, ere 'tis loſt.
For Echetus, who rules with tyrant force,
Where Auſidus directs his downward courſe;
And high Garganus, on th' Apulian ſtrand,
Marks to the mariner the diſtant land,
Prepares, by ſwift invaſion, to remove
Your virgin bride, and diſappoint your love.
Before, excited by her matchleſs charms,
He claim'd her from her ſire by hoſtile arms;
Pelignium raz'd, the hero's royal ſeat,
When in your land he ſought a ſafe retreat.
Caſſandra follow'd with reluctant mind,
To love the tyrant ſecretly inclin'd;
Though fierce and barb'rous in extreme, he feeds,
With mangl'd limbs of men, his hungry ſteeds.
And now at anchor on the Latian tide,
With all their train on board, his galleys ride:
Prepar'd, when favour'd by the weſtern breeze,
With courſe direct to croſs the narrow ſeas.
This to your ear the Paphian goddeſs ſends;
The reſt upon your timely care depends.
She ſaid; and, turning, fix'd upon the bow
A venom'd ſhaft, the cauſe of future woe:
Then, with reverted aim, the ſubtile dart
Diſmiſs'd, and fix'd it in the hero's heart.
Amaz'd he wak'd; and, on his arm reclin'd,
With ſighs thus ſpoke the anguiſh of his mind:
What dire diſaſters all my ways beſet!
How cloſe around me pitch'd the fatal net!
Here if I ſtay, nor quit the Argive hoſt,
Ætolia's ravag'd, and Caſſandra's loſt:
For ſure the pow'rs immortal ne'er in vain
To mortals thus the ſecret fates explain.
If I retire, the princes muſt upbraid
My plighted faith infring'd, the hoſt betray'd;

And, to ſucceeding times, the voice of fame,
With cowardice and ſloth, will blot my name.
Between theſe ſad alternatives I find
No diſtant hopes to ſooth my anxious mind;
Unleſs I could perſuade the Argive pow'rs
To quit at once theſe long-conteſted tow'rs:
Nor want I reaſons ſpecious in debate
To move the boldeſt warriors to retreat.
Divided thus, the ſhame would lighter fall;
Reproach is ſcarce reproach which touches all.
Thus pond'ring in his mind the hero lay,
Till darkneſs fled before the morning ray:
Then roſe; and, graſping in his mighty hand
The regal ſtaff, the ſign of high command,
Penſive and ſad forſook his lofty tent,
And ſought the ſon of Dares as he went;
Talthybius he ſought, nor ſought in vain;
He found the hero 'midſt his native train;
And charg'd him to convene, from tent to tent,
The kings to Eteon's lofty monument.
Obedient to the charge, he took his way,
Where Theleus 'midſt the bold Athenians lay,
The king of men; in whoſe ſuperior hand,
Conſenting princes plac'd the chief command.
Adraſtus next he call'd, whoſe hoary hairs
By age were whiten'd and a length of cares;
Who firſt to Thebes the Argive warriors led:
In vain for Polynices' right they bled,
By fate decreed to fall; he now inſpires
The ſons to conquer, and avenge their ſires.
Ulyſſes heard, who led his martial train,
In twenty ſhips, acroſs the ſounding main:
The youth, in Ithaca, Zacynthus, bred,
And Cephalenia crown'd with lofty ſhade.
The Spartan monarch, with his brother, heard
The herald's call; and at the call appear'd:
Yet young in arms, but deſtin'd to command
All Greece, aſſembled on the Trojan ſtrand,
The Cretan chief appear'd; and he whoſe ſway
Meſſenia and the Pylian realms obey.
Oileus next he call'd, whoſe martial pow'rs
From Beſſa move and Scarphe's lofty tow'rs.
Elpenor too, who from the Chalcian ſtrand
And fair Eretria led his martial band,
Appear'd: and all who merited renown
In ten years war before the Trojan town.
Achilles only, yet unfit to wield
The Pelian jav'lin, and the pond'rous ſhield,
In Phthia ſtaid; to Chiron's care reſign'd,
Whoſe wiſe inſtructions form'd his mighty mind.
The chiefs were plac'd. Superior to the reſt
The monarch ſat, and thus the peers addreſs'd:
Princes! let Tydeus' valiant ſon declare
What cauſe convenes the ſenate of the war.
If of himſelf, or from advice he knows
Some ſecret miſchief plotted by our foes,
Which prudence may prevent, or force reſiſt,
We come prepar'd to counſel and aſſiſt:
The monarch thus. Tydides thus reply'd,
And drew attention deep on ev'ry ſide.
Princes! I have not now the hoſt conven'd,
For ſecrets by intelligence obtain'd;
But openly my judgment to expreſs
Of miſchiefs ſeen, which prudence muſt redreſs:
By war's devouring rage, our martial pow'rs
Grow thin and waſte before theſe hoſtile tow'rs;
While Thebes, ſecure, our vain attempts with-
ſtands,
By daily aid ſuſtain'd from diſtant lands.
Shall we proceed to urge this dire debate,
And preſs, with hoſtile arms, the Theban ſtate?
Or, by experience taught the worſt to fear,
Conſult the public ſafety, and forbear?
Had our great ſires, by happier counſels ſway'd,
As prudence taught, neceſſity obey'd;
Renounc'd in time this fatal ſtrife, which brings
Alike to nations miſchief, and to kings;
Thoſe heroes had not, with their martial train,
Diſtinguiſh'd by their fall a foreign plain.
The gods themſelves in vengeance for our crimes,
With ſuch diſaſters laſh the guilty times;
In judgment juſt, they ſow'd the ſeeds of ſtrife,
To ſweep tranſgreſſors from the ſeats of life.
Let him, who obſtinately will, proceed,
And wait the vengeance hov'ring o'er his head;
Since Thebes grows ſtronger and the Argive pow'rs
Decreaſe, as famine or the ſword devours,
To-morrow I withdraw my martial train;
Nor ſtay to periſh, like my ſire, in vain.
Thus as the hero ſpoke, the kings divide,
And mingled murmurs round th' aſſembly glide,
Heard like the ſound which warn the careful
ſwain
Of ſudden winds or thick deſcending rain;
When mountain echoes catch the ſullen roar
Of billows burſting on the ſandy ſhore,
And hurl it round in airy circles toſs'd,
Till in the diſtant clouds the voice is loſt.
The king of men to ſudden rage reſign'd
At once, the empire of his mighty mind,
With ſharp reproaches haſt'ning to reply;
But, more ſedate, the Pylian monarch nigh,
To act to riſe, the angry chief confin'd: [clin'd;
And, whiſp'ring, thus addreſs'd with head de-
It ill becomes the prince, whoſe ſov'reign hand
Sways the dread ſceptre of ſupreme command,
To be the firſt in diſcord; and obey
As headlong paſſion blindly leads the way.
For when the kings in raſh debate engage,
'Tis yours to check and moderate their rage;
Since, of the various ills that can diſtreſs
Conſed'rate councils and prevent ſucceſs,
Diſcord is chief; where'er the fury ſways,
The parts ſhe ſevers, and the whole betrays.
The hero thus. The king of men remain'd
By ſound advice perſuaded, and reſtrain'd.
Crete's valiant monarch roſe; and to the reſt,
Thus ſpoke the dictates of his gen'rous breaſt:
Confed'rate kings, when any leader here
The war diſſuades, and wants you to forbear,
I might approve; for, ſafe beyond the ſea,
Creon and Thebes can never injure me.
And when the barb'rous tyrant, unwithſtood,
His hot revenge ſhall quench in Grecian blood;
When Thrace and Macedon, by his command,
Shall ravage Argos and the Pylian ſtrand;
Secure and guarded by the ocean's ſtream,
Crete's hundred towns ſhall know it but by fame.
Yet would not I, though many ſuch were found,
For open war, adviſe a peace unſound,
Let Macedon to Thebes her ſuccours ſend, [ſcend;
And Thrace, with all her barb'rous tribes, de-

By foreign aids the more our foes increaſe,
The greater glory waits us from ſucceſs.
You all remember, on the Iſthmean ſtrand
Where neighb'ring ſeas beſiege the ſtrait'ned land,
When Greece enleagu'd a full aſſembly held,
By public juſtice to the war compell'd;
That blood of ſlaughter'd victims drench'd the ground,
While oaths divine the willing nations bound,
Ne'er to return, till our victorious pow'rs,
Had levell'd with the duſt the Theban tow'rs.
Jove heard, and bid applauding thunders roll,
Loud on the right; they ſhook the ſtarry pole:
For Jove himſelf is witneſs of our vows,
And him, who violates, his wrath purſues.
Our joyful ſhouts the earth, the ocean heard;
We claim'd the omen, and the god rever'd;
In confidence of full ſucceſs we came,
To conquer Thebes, and win immortal fame.
But if the gods and fate our fears diſtruſt,
To public juſtice and ourſelves unjuſt;
Diſhonour'd to our native ſeats we go,
And yield a laſting triumph to the foe. [ghoſt
Should now, from hence arriv'd, ſome warrior's
Greet valiant Tydeus on the Stygian coaſt,
And tell, when danger of diſtreſs is near,
That Diomed purſues the reſt to fear;
He'd ſhun the ſynod of the mighty dead,
And hide his anguiſh in the deepeſt ſhade:
Nature in all an equal courſe maintains;
The lion's whelp ſucceeds to awe the plains;
Pards gender pards; from tygers tygers ſpring;
No doves are hatch'd beneath a vulture's wing:
Each parent's image in his offſpring lives;
But nought of Tydeus in his ſon ſurvives.
He ſaid; and by his ſharp reproaches ſtung,
And wav'ring in ſuſpenſe the hero hung,
In words now prone to vent his kindl'd ire.
Or fix'd in ſullen ſilence to retire.
As when a current, from the ocean wide,
Rolls, through the Cyclades, its angry tide;
Now here, now there, in circling eddies toſs'd,
The certain tenor of its courſe is loſt,
Each wary pilot for his ſafety fears
In mute ſuſpenſe, and trembles as he ſteers:
Such ſeem'd the tumult of the hero's breaſt,
And ſuch amazement long reſtrain'd the reſt.
Laertes' ſon at laſt the ſilence broke,
And, riſing, thus with prudent purpoſe ſpoke:
Princes! I counſel war; but will not blame
The chief diſſenting, whoſe illuſtrious name
We all muſt honour: yet, with patience, hear
What now I offer to the public ear.
I freely own the unnumber'd ills that wait
On ſtrife prolong'd, and war's diſaſtrous ſtate.
With war lean famine and diſeaſes dwell,
And diſcord fierce, eſcap'd the bounds of hell.
Where'er on earth her courſe the fury bends
A crowd of miſchiefs ſtill her ſteps attends;
Fear flies before her ſwifter than the wind,
And deſolation marks her path behind.
Yet her, attended thus, the gods ordain
Stern arbitreſs of right to mortal men;
To awe injuſtice with her lifted ſpear,
And teach the tyrants of the earth to fear.
If Thebes is perjur'd, and exerts her might
For uſurpation in contempt of right;
(If oaths deſpis'd, and all the ties which bind
The great ſociety of human kind)
For Eteocles in the war ſhe ſtood,
And drench'd her thirſty fields with Grecian blood; [vain
The gods themſelves have err'd, and plac'd in
The ſcepter'd kings injuſtice to reſtrain;
Elſe ſhe deſerves the laſt extremes to feel
Of waſteful fire and keen devouring ſteel.
Though prudence urg'd and equity approv'd,
Joining to ſecond what Tydides mov'd,
We could not hope the war for peace to change,
Thebes thinks not now of ſafety but revenge.
Laſt night, diſguis'd, I mingled with the foe,
Their ſecret hopes and purpoſes to know;
And found that Creon, with his martial train,
This day intends to brave us on the plain. [claim'd,
Greece too, I heard, by barb'rous ſovereigns
Some Athens, Argos, ſome Mycæne nam'd;
Sparta and Pylos, with the various towns
Which grace, in proſpect fair, th' Arcadian downs:
Others Ætolia challeng'd for their lot;
Nor was ev'n Ithaca itſelf forgot.
From ſuch vain hopes to boaſting they proceed;
Each promiſes to win ſome hero's head.
Leophron too, diſtinguiſh'd from the reſt,
Superior pride and inſolence expreſs'd;
In form a god he 'midſt th' aſſembly ſtood,
By all ador'd the idol of the crowd;
And promis'd, if he chanc'd in fight to meet
Th' Ætolian chief, to ſtretch him at his feet;
Unleſs ſome god oppos'd, or daſtard fear,
By ſudden flight, ſhould ſnatch him from his ſpear.
Can we then hope by peace to end our toils,
When foes ſecure already ſhare our ſpoils?
Peace to expect from flight itſelf were vain;
And flight, I know, your gen'rous ſouls diſdain.
He ſaid. The chiefs with indignation burn'd;
And Diomed ſubmitting thus return'd:
Princes! I need not for myſelf profeſs,
What all have witneſs'd, all muſt ſure confeſs;
That in the front of battle ſtill engag'd,
I never ſhunn'd to mingle where it rag'd.
Nor now does fear perſuade me to retire,
Falſe Creon ſafe, and guilty Thebes entire;
But war and famine thin our martial pow'rs,
Whilſt adverſe fates protect the Theban tow'rs.
And as the careful ſhepherd turns his flock
Back from the dangers of the ſlipp'ry rock,
And from the haunts where foxes mark the ground,
Or rapid rivers flow with banks unſound;
So kings ſhould warn the people to forbear
Attempts, when ſymptoms mark deſtruction near.
But ſince the leaders, with conſenting voice,
For war already fix the public choice;
I freely yield, nor ever will divide,
Where all deliberate, and all decide.
The hero thus, and ceas'd. And thus the reſt,
From his high ſeat, the king of men addreſs'd:
Since war is now decreed, 'tis next our care
That all ſhould ſpeedily for fight prepare.
Creon, this day, intends with all his train
To try our valour on the equal plain;
And will, with diligence, improve an hour,
Which finds us inattentive and ſecure.

First let each leader with his hands in haste
Snatch, as the time allows, a short repast;
Then arm for fight, and to the field proceed,
The phalanx following as the chariots lead.
Who arms the first, and first to combat goes,
Though weaker, seems superior to his foes;
But such as lag are more than half o'erthrown,
Less in the eyes of others and their own.
The monarch thus. The princes all assent.
Straight from the council through the host they went,
To arm their bands with diligence and care;
They all obey, and all for fight prepare.

BOOK II.

Assembled on the plain, the Theban pow'rs
In order'd ranks appear before the tow'rs;
Creon their leader, whose superior sway
The partial sons of sacred Thebes obey.
The chiefs obedient to his high command,
Rul'd the whole war, and marshall'd every band.
His valiant son the first, his country's boast,
Her noblest hope, the bulwark of her host,
Leophron, to the field the warriors led,
Whom Thebes herself within her ramparts bred:
Peneleus, who from Medeon led his pow'rs,
Œchalia low, and Arne's lofty tow'rs:
Leitus from Thespia, where the verdant shades
Of Helicon invite the tuneful maids:
Porthenus rich, whose wide possessions lay
Where fam'd Æsopus winds his wat'ry way;
Beneath Cytheron's height, the lofty mound
Which parts Bœotian plains from hostile ground:
Phericles, who the valiant warriors led
In Mycalessus, Harma, Aulis, bred:
Andremon, leader of his native band,
From lofty Schœnus on th' Ismenian strand:
And Anthedon, where swift Euripus pent
Divides Eubœa from the continent.
These rul'd the Theban pow'rs, beneath the care
Of Creon, chief and sov'reign of the war.
The aids from Macedon the next were plac'd;
Their shining casques with waving plumage grac'd;
A wolf's gray hide, around their shoulders slung,
With martial grace above their armour hung:
From high Dodona's sacred shades they came;
Cassander led them to the fields of fame.
The Thracians next, a formidable band;
Nations and tribes distinct, in order stand:
Byzantines fierce, whose crooked keels divide
The Pontic gulf, and stem the downward tide:
In Grecian arms the hardy warriors move,
With pond'rous shields and glitt'ring spears above.
The Thynians next were marshall'd on the field;
Each with a faulchion arm'd, and lunar shield,
Whose bending horns a verge of silver bound;
And figures fierce their brazen helmets crown'd:
With these the Daci came, a martial race;
Fierce as their clime, they rear the pond'rous mace;
In giant strength secure, they scorn the spear,
And crush, with weighty blows, the ranks of war;
From Ister's icy streams, a barb'rous crowd,
In shaggy furs, a herd promiscuous stood;
Swift as their savage game: for wide they roam
In tribes and nations, ignorant of home;
Excelling all who boast superior skill
To send the winged arrow swift to kill:
These Rhœsus rul'd, of various tribes compos'd,
By various leaders on the field dispos'd.
To fight the Argives mov'd in close array:
Bright shone their arms, and flash'd redoubled day;
Resolv'd, and still as silent night, they go;
Nor with insulting shouts provoke the foe.
Thick from their steps, in dusky volumes, rise
The parched fields, and darken all the skies.
Beneath the shade, the ardent warriors close;
Their shields and helmets ring with sounding blows.
First Menelaus struck a Theban lord;
His armed breast the weighty lance explor'd;
Burst the close mail; the shining breastplate tore;
And from life's fountain drew a stream of gore.
Supine he fell amidst his native bands,
And wrench'd the fixed dart with dying hands.
To spoil the slain the son of Atreus flies;
The Thebans interpose with hostile cries;
And Creon's valiant son his buckler spread,
An orb of triple brass to guard the dead:
As Jove's imperial bird her wings extends,
And from the shepherds' rage her young defends;
So stern Leophron bore his ample shield;
Like Mars, he stood the terror of the field.
With dread unusual check'd, the Spartan band
Recoil'd; Atrides only dar'd to stand.
He thus began. Presumptuous youth! forbear
To tempt the fury of my flying spear.
That warrior there was by my javelin slain,
His spoils to guard you interpose in vain.
Atrides thus; and Creon's son replies:
Thy lance I dread not, and thy threats despise.
This hand hath many a chief of high renown,
And braver warriors oft in fight o'erthrown:
Like theirs, thy fall shall dignify my spear,
And future boasters thence be taught to fear.
Thus as he spoke, his weighty lance he threw
At Atreus' son; which rising as it flew
Upon the hero's crest with furious sway,
Glanc'd as it pass'd, and shav'd the plumes away.
Hissing amidst the Spartan ranks it came,
And struck a youth of undistinguish'd name:
Cold, through his breast, the steel and polish'd wood
A passage forc'd, and drew a stream of blood.
His lance Atrides next prepares to throw;
Poises it long, and meditates the blow.
Then, from his hand dismiss'd with happier aim,
Thund'ring against the Theban shield it came;
Where wreath'd around a mimic serpent twin'd,
With plates of polish'd silver lightly join'd.
Thence turn'd with course oblique it drove along,
And spent its fury on the vulgar throng.

Leophron ſtraight his flaming faulchion drew,
And at his foe with eager fury flew:
As ſtooping from above, an eagle ſprings
To ſnatch his prey, and ſhoots upon his wings.
The Spartan warrior dreads impending fate;
And, turning, meditates a quick retreat.
As when a ſhepherd ſwain, in deſert ſhades,
The blood-nurs'd offſpring of the wolf invades;
If, from the opening of ſome thicket near,
With rage inflam'd, the angry dam appear,
With darts at firſt, and threat'ning ſhouts he tries
To awe the guardian, and aſſert the prize:
But, when ſhe ſprings, the cloſe encounter dreads,
And, trembling, from the angry foe recedes.
So Menelaus fled. His native train,
In wild diſorder, ſcatters o'er the plain.

His valiant brother heard upon the right,
Where in his lofty car he rul'd the fight;
And to his 'ſquire Nicomachus. With ſpeed,
Turn to the left, and urge the flying ſteed:
For, if theſe ſounds deceive not, Sparta fails;
And, with a tide of conqueſt, Thebes prevails.
Quick as the word, the ſilver reins he drew,
And through the fight the bounding chariot flew.
Like ſome ſwift veſſel, when a proſp'rous gale
Favours her courſe, and ſtretches ev'ry ſail;
Above the parting waves ſhe lightly flies,
And ſmooth behind a track of ocean lies:
So, 'midſt the combat, ruſh'd the lofty car,
Pierc'd the thick tumult, and disjoin'd the war.
But Clytodemon's ſon a jav'lin threw;
With force impell'd, it lighten'd as it flew,
And ſtruck the right-hand courſer to the ground,
Ethon, for ſwiftneſs in the race renown'd.
Behind his ear the deadly weapon ſtood
Looſ'd his high neck, and drew a ſtream of blood.
Groaning he ſunk; and ſpread his flowing mane,
A ſhining circle on the duſty plain.
Entangled deep the royal chariot ſtood,
With hoſtile ſpears beſet, an iron wood.

From his high ſeat the Spartan hero ſprung
Amid the foe; his clanging armour rung,
Before the king, the armed bands retire;
As ſhepherd ſwains avoid a lion's ire,
When fierce from famine on their darts he turns,
And rage indignant in his eyeballs burns.
Amid the fight, diſtinguiſh'd like the ſtar
Of ev'ning, ſhone his ſilver arms afar;
Which, o'er the hills, its ſetting light diſplays;
And marks the ruddy weſt with ſilver rays.
Pale and amaz'd his brother chief he found,
An armed circle of his friends around.
Alas, my brother, have I liv'd to ſee
Thy life redeem'd with deathleſs infamy!
(The hero cry'd), far better that a ghoſt
You now had wander'd on the Stygian coaſt,
And by a glorious fall preſerv'd your name
Safe and unblaſted by the breath of fame;
Which ſoon ſhall tell the world, amaz'd to hear,
That Menelaus taught the hoſt to fear.

By conſcious guilt ſubdu'd, the youth appear'd;
Without reply, the juſt reproach he heard:
Confounded, to the ground he turn'd his eyes;
Indignant thus the great Atrides cries:
Myceneans! Spartans! taught to ſeek renown
From dangers greatly brav'd, and battles won;
Ah warriors! will ye fly, when cloſe behind
Diſhonour follows ſwifter than the wind?
Return to glory: whether Jove ordains,
With wreaths of conqueſt, to reward your pains,
Or dooms your fall; he merits equal praiſe,
With him who conquers, he who bravely dies.
The hero thus; and, like ſwift light'ning driv'n
Through ſcatter'd clouds along the vault of heav'n
By Jove's dread arm, his martial voice inſpir'd
The fainting hoſt, and ev'ry boſom fir'd.
Again upon the conqu'ring foe they turn'd:
The war again in all its fury burn'd.
As when the deep, which ebbing from the land
Along the coaſt diſplays a waſte of ſand,
Returns; and, blown by angry tempeſts, roars
A ſtormy deluge 'gainſt the rocky ſhores:
So, ruſhing to the fight, the warriors came;
Ardent to conquer, and retrieve their fame.

Before his hoſt the ſon of Creon ſtood,
With labour'd duſt obſcure, and hoſtile blood;
He thus exclaim'd: And ſhall this daſtard train
(Warriors of Thebes)! diſpute the field again?
Their better chief, I know him, leads the band;
But fate ſhall ſoon ſubdue him by my hand.
He ſaid; and at the king his jav'lin threw;
Which, aim'd amiſs, with erring fury flew.
Acroſs the armed ranks it ſwiftly drove,
The warriors ſtooping as it ruſh'd above.
The Spartan hero aim'd his weighty ſpear;
And thus to Jove addreſs'd an ardent prayer:
Hear me, great ſire of gods! whoſe boundleſs ſway
The fates of men and mortal things obey;
Whoſe ſov'reign hand, with unreſiſted might,
Depreſſes or exalts the ſcales of fight:
Now grant ſucceſs to my avenging hand,
And ſtretch this dire deſtroyer on the ſand.
Jove, grant me now to reach his hated life,
And ſave my warriors in this doubtful ſtrife.
The hero thus; and ſent his weighty ſpear,
With ſpeed it flew, and pierc'd the yielding air;
Swift as a falcon to her quarry ſprings,
When down the wind ſhe ſtretches on her wings.
Leophron, ſtooping, ſhunn'd the deadly ſtroke,
Which on the ſhield of Hegiſander broke.
Vain now his lute; in vain his melting ſtrains,
Soft as Apollo's on the Lycian plains:
His ſoul excluded, ſeeks the dark abodes
By Styx embrac'd, the terror of the gods;
Where ſurly Charon, with his lifted oar,
Drives the light ghoſts, and rules the dreary ſhore.

With grief Leophron ſaw the warrior ſlain.
He ſnatch'd a pond'rous mace from off the plain,
Cut in the Thracian woods, with ſnags around
Of pointed ſteel, with iron circles bound.
Heav'd with gigantic force the club to throw,
He ſwung it thrice, and hurl'd it at his foe.
Thund'ring upon his armed head it fell;
The brazen helmet rang with ſtunning knell.
As when a rock by forceful engines thrown,
Where hoſtile arms inveſt a frontier town,
Threat'ning deſtruction, rolls along the ſkies;
And war itſelf ſtands wond'ring as it flies:
Falls on ſome turret's top, the ſtructure bends
Beneath the tempeſt, and at once deſcends
With hideous craſh: thus, ſtooping to the ground,
Atrides ſunk; his ſilver arms reſound.
But Pallas, mixing in the dire debate,
A life to reſcue yet not due to fate,
Had o'er his head her cloudy buckler held;
And half the fury of the blow repell'd.

The son of Creon rush'd to seize his prize,
The hero's spoils; and thus exulting cries:
Warriors of Thebes! your labours soon shall cease,
And final victory restore your peace;
For great Atrides, by my valour slain,
A lifeless corse, lies stretch'd upon the plain.
Only be men! and make the Argive bands
Dread in succeeding times your mighty hands;
That foes no more, when mad ambition calls,
With dire alarms may shake your peaceful walls.
Exulting thus, the hero rush'd along;
And kindled, with his shouts, the vulgar throng.
Resolv'd and firm the Spartan warriors stand
Around their king, a formidable band.
Their spears, protended thick, the foe restrain'd;
Their bucklers join'd, the weighty war sustain'd.
But as a mountain wolf, from famine bold,
On prey intent, surveys the midnight fold;
Where, in the shelter of some arching rock,
At ev'n the careful shepherd pens his flock:
On spoil and ravage bent, he stalks around,
And meditates to spring the lofty mound:
Impatient thus the Theban chief survey'd
The close-compacted ranks on ev'ry side;
To find where least the ferred orb could bear
The strong impression of a pointed war.
Him Menelaus saw, with anguish stung;
And, from amidst his armed warriors, sprung
With wrath inflam'd; as starting from a brake,
Against some trav'ller, darts a crested snake.
His rage in vain the Theban ranks withstand;
The bravest warriors sink beneath his hand.
Clytander, Iphitus, Palemon, fam'd
For chariots rul'd and fiery coursers tam'd;
And Iphialtes, like the god of light,
Whose pointed arrows thinn'd the lines of fight:
These the first transports of his fury feel.
Against Leophron now he lifts his steel,
And speeds to vengeance; but, in full career,
He stood arrested by a vulgar spear.
Fix'd in his thigh the barbed weapon hung,
Relax'd the muscles, and the nerves unstrung.
The Spartan warriors to his succour flew;
Against the darts their ample shields they threw,
Which storm'd around; and, from the rage of war,
Convey'd the wounded hero to his car.
With fierce impatience Creon's son beheld
The Spartan warriors still dispute the field.
Before their leader fall'n, the hero stood;
Their spears erected, like the sacred wood
Which round some altar rises on the plain,
The mystic rites to hide from eyes profane.
Thither his native bands the hero turn'd;
Drawn to a wedge, again the combat burn'd.
Through all the air a storm of jav'lins sung;
With sounding blows each hollow buckler rung.
First Leopæus felt a deadly wound,
Who in Amycle till'd the fruitful ground;
To great Andremon's spear he yields his breath,
And starts and quivers in the grasp of death.
Next Hegesippus press'd th' insanguin'd plain;
Leophron's jav'lin mix'd him with the slain.
On Malea's cliffs he fed his fleecy store,
Along the windings of the craggy shore.
He vow'd to Phœbus, for a safe return,
An hundred victims on his hearth to burn.
In vain! the god, in justice, had decreed,
His gifts contemn'd, the offerer to bleed:
For violence augmented still his store;
And, unreliev'd, the stranger left his door.
Prone on the bloody ground the warrior fell;
His soul indignant sought the shades of hell.
Next Arcas, Cleon, valiant Chromius, dy'd;
With Dares, to the Spartan chiefs ally'd.
And Phœmius, whom the gods in early youth
Had form'd for virtue and the love of truth;
His gen'rous soul to noble deeds they turn'd,
And love to mankind in his bosom burn'd:
Cold through his throat the hissing weapon glides,
And on his neck the waving locks divides.
His fate the graces mourn'd. The gods above,
Who sit around the starry throne of Jove,
On high Olympus bending from the skies,
His fate beheld with sorrow-streaming eyes.
Pallas alone, unalter'd and serene,
With secret triumph saw the mournful scene:
Not hard of heart; for none of all the pow'rs,
In earth or ocean, or th' Olympian tow'rs,
Holds equal sympathy with human grief,
Or with a freer hand bestows relief;
But conscious that a mind by virtue steel'd,
To no impression of distress will yield;
That, still unconquer'd, in its awful hour
O'er death it triumphs with immortal pow'r.
Now Thebes prevailing, Sparta's host retreats;
As falls some rampart where the ocean beats:
Unable to resist its stormy way,
Mounds heap'd on mounds, and bars of rock give way;
With inundation wide the deluge reigns,
Drowns the deep valleys, and o'erspreads the plains.
Thus o'er the field, by great Leophron led,
Their foes repuls'd, the Theban squadrons spread.
The hero, stooping where Atrides lay,
Rent from his head the golden casque away;
His mail unlock'd; and loos'd the golden chains,
The zone which by his side the sword sustains.
The monarch now amid the vulgar dead,
For wheels to crush and armed hoofs to tread,
Defenceless lay. But stern Leophron's hate
Retriev'd him, thus expos'd, from certain fate.
In semblance dead, he purpos'd to convey
The body naked to some public way;
Where dogs obscene, and all the rav'nous race,
With wounds unsightly, might his limbs disgrace.
Straight he commands; and to a neighb'ring grove,
His warriors, charg'd, the Spartan chief remove.
On their broad shields they bore him from the plain,
To sense a corse, and number'd with the slain.
His fixed eyes in hov'ring shades were drown'd;
His mighty limbs in death-like fetters bound.
The shouts tumultuous, and the din of war,
His ear receiv'd like murmurs from afar;
Or as some peasant hears, securely laid
Beneath a vaulted cliff or woodland-shade,
When o'er his head unnumber'd insects sing
In airy rounds, the children of the spring.
Adrastus' valiant son, with grief, beheld
The Spartans to inglorious flight compell'd;
Their valiant chief resign'd to hostile hands,
He thus aloud address'd the scatt'ring bands:
What shame, ye warriors! if ye thus expose
Your leader to the injuries of foes!
Though all should quit him, honour bids you bring
His relics back, or perish with your king.

Leophron ſure injuriouſly ordains,
With inſults, to deface his dear remains;
Spurn'd by the feet of men, expos'd and bare,
For dogs obſcene, and rav'nous birds to ſhare.
Exclaiming thus, through all the field he flew;
And call'd the hoſt the conflict to renew.
They ſtop, they charge; again the combat burns:
They bleed, they conquer, and retreat by turns.
Hegialus excites the dire debate;
And, by example, leads the work of fate:
For now he ſees Atrides borne afar,
By hoſtile hands, beyond the lines of war.
With indignation fierce his boſom glows;
He ruſhes fearleſs 'midſt a hoſt of foes;
And now had merited a deathleſs name,
And with a deed immortal crown'd his fame,
Atrides liv'd; but fate's ſupreme command
That honour deſtin'd for a mightier hand.

Leophron vex'd, that twice conſtrain'd to yield,
The Spartan warriors re-aſſum'd the field,
His pow'rs addreſs'd: For ever loſt our fame,
Diſhonour foul will blot the Theban name;
If daſtard foes, twice routed and purſu'd,
Shall brave the victors, ſtill with rage renew'd.
Your glory gain'd with vigour now maintain;
Nor let us conquer thus and bleed in vain.
He ſaid, and 'gainſt the Argive hero turn'd;
With martial wrath his ardent boſom burn'd;
Who, fearleſs and undaunted, dar'd to wait;
Nor by ignoble flight declin'd his fate.
For at the Theban chief his lance he threw,
Which, aim'd amiſs, with erring fury flew:
Beyond the hoſtile ranks the weapon drove;
The warriors ſtooping as it ruſh'd above.
Not ſo the Theban ſpear; with happier aim,
Full to the centre of the ſhield, it came;
And, riſing ſwiftly from the poliſh'd round,
His throat transfix'd, and bent him to the ground.
To ſpoil the ſlain the ardent victor flew:
The Spartan bands the bloody ſhock renew;
Fierce to the charge with tenfold rage return,
And all at once with thirſt of vengeance burn.
O'er all the field the raging tumult grows;
And ev'ry helmet rings with ſounding blows;
But moſt around the Argive hero dead;
There toil the mightieſt, there the braveſt bleed.
As when outrageous winds the ocean ſweep,
And from the bottom ſtir the hoary deep;
O'er all the wat'ry plain the tempeſt raves,
Mixing in conflict loud the angry waves:
But where ſome pointed cliff the ſurface hides,
Whoſe top unſeen provokes the angry tides,
With tenfold fury there the billows fly,
And mount in ſmoke and thunder to the ſky.

Adraſtus, by unactive age reſtrain'd,
Behind the army on a mount remain'd;
Under an oak the hoary warrior ſat,
And look'd and liſten'd to the dire debate.
Now, tam'd by age, his courſers ſtood unbound;
His uſeleſs arms lay ſcatter'd on the ground;
Two aged heralds there the chief obey'd;
The 'ſquire attending by his maſter ſtay'd.
And thus the king: What ſounds invade mine ear?
My friends! what ſad diſaſter muſt we hear?
Some hero's fall; for with the ſhouts, I know
Loud lamentation mixt, and ſounds of woe.
So were we told, when mighty Tydeus fell,
And Polynices trod the path to hell;
So rag'd the combat o'er the hero ſlain,
And ſuch the din and tumult of the plain.
He ſaid; and liſt'ning (what he greatly fear'd)
Hegialus's name at leaſt he heard
Mix'd with the noiſe; and, ſick'ning at the ſound
By grief ſubdu'd, fell proſtrate on the ground.
But rage ſucceeding, and deſpair, he roſe
Eager to ruſh amid the thickeſt foes.
His ſpear he graſp'd, impatient for the fight;
And pond'rous ſhield, unequal to the weight.
Him frantic thus, his wife attendants held;
And to retire with prudent care compell'd,
Impatient of his ſtate, by quick returns,
With grief he melts, with indignation burns.
And thus at laſt: Stern ruler of the ſky!
Whoſe ſport is man, and human miſery;
What deed of mine has ſtirr'd thy boundleſs rage,
And call'd for vengeance on my helpleſs age?
Have I, by ſacrilege, your treaſures drain'd;
Your altars ſlighted, or your rites profan'd?
Did I forget my holy vows to pay?
Or bid you witneſs, and my faith betray?
Has lawleſs rapine e'er increas'd my ſtore,
Or, unreliev'd, the ſtranger left my door?
If not; in juſtice, can your ſtern decree
With wrath purſue my guiltleſs race and me?
Here valiant Tydeus, Polynices fell;
In one ſad hour they trod the path to hell:
For them my daughters mourn, their ſorrows flow
Still freſh, and all their days are ſpent in woe.
Hegialus remain'd my hopes to raiſe;
The only comfort of my joyleſs days:
In whom I ſaw my vigorous youth return,
And all our native virtues brighter burn.
He's now no more; and to the nether ſkies,
Baniſh'd by fate, a bloodleſs ſpectre flies.
For what, ye gods! has unrelenting fate
Curs'd my misfortunes with ſo long a date?
That thus I live to ſee our ancient race
At once extinguiſh'd, and for ever ceaſe!
Gods! grant me now, the only boon I crave,
For all my ſorrows paſt, a peaceful grave:
Now let me periſh, that my fleeting ghoſt
May reach my ſon in Pluto's ſhady coaſt;
Where join'd for ever, kindred ſouls enjoy
An union fix'd, which nothing can deſtroy.
He ſaid; and ſinking proſtrate on the ground,
His furrow'd cheeks with floods of ſorrow drown'd;
And, furious in the rage of grief, o'erſpread
With duſt the reverend honours of his head.

BOOK III.

The Spartan bands, with thirſt of vengeance fir'd,
The fight maintain'd; nor from their toils reſpir'd.
Before the hero fall'n the warriors ſtand,
Firm as the chains of rock which guard the ſtrand;
Whoſe rooted ſtrength the angry ocean braves,
And bounds the fury of his burſting waves.
So Sparta ſtood; their ſerred bucklers bar
The Theban phalanx, and exclude the war.
While from the field, upon their ſhoulders laid,
His warriors ſad the Argive prince convey'd;
Leophron ſaw, with indignation fir'd,
And with his ſhouts the ling'ring war inſpir'd.
Again the rigour of the ſhock returns;
The ſlaughter rages, and the combat burns;
Till, puſh'd and yielding to ſuperior ſway,
In ſlow retreat the Spartan ranks give way.
As, in ſome channel pent, entangled wood
Reluctant ſtirs before the angry flood;
Which, on its loaded current, ſlowly heaves
The ſpoils of foreſts mix'd with harveſt ſheaves.
Pallas obſerv'd, and from th' Olympian height
Precipitated ſwift her downward flight.
Like Cleon's valiant ſon, the goddeſs came;
The ſame her ſtature, and her arms the ſame.
Deſcending from his chariot to the ground,
The ſon of Tydeus, 'midſt his bands, ſhe found;
His ſteeds unrul'd: for, ſtretch'd before the wheel,
Lay the bold driver pierc'd with Theban ſteel.
On the high car her mighty hand ſhe laid,
And thus addreſs'd the valiant Diomed:
The Spartan warriors, prince! renounce the fight,
O'ermatch'd by numbers and ſuperior might:
While adverſe fate their valiant chief reſtrains,
Who dead or wounded with the foe remains;
Hegialus lies lifeleſs on the earth,
Brother to her from whom you claim your birth:
The great Atrides, as he preſs'd to ſave,
Leophron's jav'lin mark'd for him the grave.
To vengeance haſte; and, ere it is too late,
With ſpeedy ſuccour ſtop impending fate:
For ſtern Leophron, like the rage of flame,
With ruin threatens all the Spartan name.
The goddeſs thus: Tydides thus replies:
How partial are the counſels of the ſkies!
For vulgar merit oft the gods with care
Honour, and peace, and happineſs prepare;
While worth, diſtinguiſh'd by their partial hate,
Submits to all the injuries of fate.
Adraſtus thus with juſtice may complain
His daughters widow'd, ſons in battle ſlain.
In the devoted line myſelf I ſtand,
And here muſt periſh by ſome hoſtile hand:
Yet not for this I ſhun the works of war,
Nor ſkulk inglorious when I ought to dare.
And now I'll meet yon terror of the plain,
To crown his conqueſts, or avenge the ſlain.
But wiſh ſome valiant youth to rule my car,
And puſh the horſes through the ſhock of war,
W re preſent; for, extended in his gore,
The brave Spenſippus knows his charge no more.

Thus as the hero ſpoke, Caſſandra heard,
And preſent, to aſſume the charge, appear'd,
By love inſpir'd, ſhe ſought the fields of war;
Her hero's ſafety was her only care.
A poliſh'd caſque her lovely temples bound,
With flowers of gold and various plumage crown'd;
Confus'dly gay the peacock's changeful train,
With gaudy colours mix'd of ev'ry grain:
The virgin white, the yellow's golden hue,
The regal purple, and the ſhining blue;
With female ſkill compos'd. The ſhield ſhe bore
With flow'rs of gold was mark'd and ſpangled o'er:
Light and of ſlend'reſt make, ſhe held a launce;
Like ſome mock warrior armed for the dance,
When ſpring's return and muſic's cheerful ſtrain
The youth invite to frolic on the plain.
Illuſtrious chief, the armed virgin ſaid,
To rule your ſteeds on me the taſk be laid;
Skill'd to direct their courſe with ſteady rein,
To wake their fiery mettle, or reſtrain;
To ſtop, to turn, the various arts I know;
To puſh them on direct, or ſhun the foe.
With ready hand your voice I ſhall obey,
And urge their fury where you point the way.
The virgin thus: and thus Tydides ſaid:
Your zeal I honour, but reject your aid.
Fierce are my ſteeds; their fury to reſtrain
The ſtrongeſt hand requires, and ſtiffeſt rein:
For oft, their mettle rous'd, they ruſh along;
Nor feel the biting curb, or ſounding thong.
Oft have I ſeen you brave the toils of fight,
With dauntleſs courage, but unequal might.
Small is your force; and, from your arm unſtrung,
The harmleſs launce is impotently flung.
Yet not for this you ſhun the martial ſtrife,
Patient of wounds, and prodigal of life.
Where'er I combat, faithful to my ſide,
No danger awes you, and no toils divide.
Yet grudge not that your ſervice I decline;
Homocleon's better hand ſhall guide the rein:
His manly voice my horſes will obey,
And move ſubmiſſive to his firmer ſway.
Th' Ætolian warrior thus; and, with a bound,
Roſe to his lofty chariot from the ground.
The goddeſs to the driver's ſeat proceeds,
Aſſumes the reins, and winds the willing ſteeds.
On their ſmooth ſides the ſounding laſh ſhe plies,
And through the fight the ſmoking chariot flies.
Th' Athenians ſoon they paſs'd; and Phocians ſtrong,
Who from fair Criſſa led their martial throng.
Th' Arcadians next, from Alpheus' ſilver flood,
And hardy Eleans, grim with duſt and blood,
In order rang'd. As when ſome pilot ſpies
The rocky cliffs in long ſucceſſion riſe,
When near the land his galley ſcours the ſhores,
By proſp'rous winds impell'd and ſpeeding oars;
So, haſtening to the fight, the hero flew;
And now the Spartan hoſt appears in view:

By wounds ſubdu'd, their braveſt warriors lay;
Others, by ſhameful flight, their fear obey;
The reſt in ſlow retreat forſake the field;
O'ermatch'd by numbers, and conſtrain'd to yield.
Th' Ætolian hero ſaw, and rais'd his voice,
Loud as the ſilver trumpet's martial noiſe,
And ruſh'd to fight: through all the field it flew;
The hoſt at once the happy ſignal knew,
And joy'd, as they who, from the found'ring ſhip
Eſcap'd, had ſtruggled long amid the deep:
Faint from deſpair, when hope and vigour fail,
If, haſt'ning to their aid, appears a ſail;
With force renew'd their weary limbs they ſtrain,
And climb the ſlipp'ry ridges of the main.
So joy'd the Spartans to repulſe the foe;
With hope reſtor'd their gen'rous boſoms glow:
While Thebes, ſuſpended 'midſt her conqueſt, ſtands,
And feels a ſudden check through all her bands.
Leophron only, far before the reſt,
Tydides waited with a dauntleſs breaſt.
Firm and unaw'd the hardy warrior ſtood,
Like ſome fierce boar amid his native wood,
When armed ſwains his gloomy haunts invade,
And trace his footſteps through the lonely ſhade;
Reſolv'd he hears approach the hoſtile ſound,
Grinds his white teeth, and threat'ning glares around;
So ſtood Leophron, truſting in his might,
And ſhook his armour, eager for the fight.
Tydides ſaw; and, ſpringing from his car,
Thus brav'd the hero, as he ruſh'd to war:
O ſon unhappy, of a ſire accurſt!
The plague of all, and fated to the worſt!
The injuries of Greece demand thy breath;
See in my hand the inſtrument of death.
Hegialus's ghoſt ſhall leſs deplore
His fate untimely on the Stygian ſhore,
When baniſh'd from the light, your ſhade ſhall come
To mingle with the dark infernal gloom.
Tydides thus: and Creon's ſon replies:
Your fear in vain by boaſting you diſguiſe;
Such vulgar art a novice oft confounds,
To ſcenes of battle new and martial ſounds;
Though loſt on me, who dwell amid alarms,
And never met a greater yet in arms.
Thus as the warrior ſpoke, his launce with care
He aim'd, and ſent it hiſſing through the air.
On Diomed's broad ſhield the weapon fell;
Loud rung the ſtunning braſs with echoing knell:
But the ſtrong orb, by Vulcan's labour bound,
Repell'd, and ſent it blunted to the ground.
Tydides next his pond'rous jav'lin threw:
With force impell'd, it brighten'd as it flew;
And pierc'd the border of the Theban ſhield,
Where, wreath'd around, a ſerpent guards the field;
Through the cloſe mail an eaſy paſſage found,
And mark'd his thigh, in paſſing, with a wound.
Now in cloſe fight the angry chiefs engage,
Like two fell griffins rous'd to equal rage;
Pois'd on their rolling trains they fiercely riſe
With blood-beſpotted creſts and burning eyes:
With poiſon fraught they aim their deadly ſtings,
Claſp their ſharp fangs, and mix their rattling wings.
In combat thus, the ardent warriors clos'd,
With ſhield to ſhield, and foot to foot oppos'd.
Firſt at his foe Leophron aim'd a ſtroke,
But on his poliſh'd caſque the faulchion broke:
From the ſmooth ſteel the ſhiver'd weapon ſprung,
Aloft in air its hiſſing ſplinters ſung.
Not ſo, Tydides, did thy weapon fail;
With force impell'd, it pierc'd the ſilver mail,
Whoſe gliding plates the warrior's neck ſurround:
A tide of gore came ruſhing from the wound.
Stagg'ring to earth, he ſunk with head declin'd,
And life in long convulſive throbs reſign'd.
Nor ſtoop'd Tydides to deſpoil the ſlain;
The warrior goddeſs led him, croſs the plain,
Towards the grove where great Atrides lay;
Th' immortal ſpear ſhe ſtretch'd, and mark'd the way.
Thither amid ſurrounding foes they haſte,
Who ſhunn'd them, ſtill retreating as they paſs'd;
And ent'ring found the Spartan hero laid
On the green ſward, beneath the bow'ring ſhade.
The guard ſecure, lay ſtretch'd upon the ground;
Their ſhields reſign'd, their launces pitch'd around:
One only near a winding riv'let ſtood,
Which turn'd its wand'ring current through the wood;
His helmet fill'd with both his hands he rear'd,
In act to drink, when in the grove appear'd
Th' Ætolian prince. His armour's fiery blaze
The dark receſs illumin'd with its rays.
Amaz'd the Theban ſtood; and from his hand
The helmet ſlipp'd, and roll'd upon the ſand.
Not more afraid the wond'ring ſwain deſcries
'Midſt night's thick gloom a flaming meteor riſe;
Sent by the furies, as he deems, to ſow
Death and diſeaſes on the earth below.
Tydides comes! with fault'ring voice he cry'd,
And ſtraight to flight his willing limbs apply'd.
With ſudden dread ſurpris'd the guards retire,
As ſhepherd ſwains avoid a lion's ire,
Who roams the heights and plains, from famine bold,
The ſtall to ravage, or aſſault the fold.
Now, lifeleſs as he lay, the martial maid
Atrides with a pitying eye ſurvey'd;
And with her ſpear revers'd, the hero ſhook:
The touch divine his iron ſlumber broke;
As when his drowſy mate the ſhepherd ſwain
Stirs with his crook, and calls him to the plain;
When in the eaſt he ſees the morning riſe,
And redd'ning o'er his head the colour'd ſkies.
When from the ground his head the hero rais'd,
In full divinity the goddeſs blaz'd;
Her left, reveal'd, the dreadful Ægis rears,
Whoſe ample field the ſnaky Gorgon bears;
Th' immortal launce ſtood flaming in the right,
Which ſcatters and confounds the ranks of fight.
Speechleſs the chiefs remain'd; amazement ſtrong,
In mute ſuſpenſe and ſilence, held them long.
And thus the goddeſs: Atteus' ſon! ariſe,
Confeſs the partial favour of the ſkies.
For thee I leave the thund'rer's lofty ſeat,
To wake the ſlumb'ring on the verge of fate:
To you let Diomed his arms reſign;
Unequal were your force to govern mine:
His ſtronger arm ſhall bear this pond'rous ſhield,
His better hand the weighty jav'lin wield.
Ariſe! be ſudden, for your foes draw near;
Affur'd to conquer when the gods appear.
The goddeſs thus; and, mixing with the wind,
Left in a heap her ſhining arms behind

Upon the field; with loud harmonious peal,
Th' immortal buckler rung, and golden mail.
And thus Atrides, rising from the ground:
In this, approv'd is hoar tradition found;
That oft, descending from th' ethereal tow'rs,
To mix with mortals, come the heav'nly pow'rs:
But ne'er till now I saw a god appear,
Or more than human voice did ever hear.
Do you, my friend, assume these arms divine;
The mortal and inferior shall be mine.
Atrides thus; and Diomed reply'd:
To heav'n obedience must not be deny'd;
Else you yourself th' immortal arms should wield,
And I with these attend you on the field.
But of the pow'rs above, whose sov'reign sway
The fates of men and mortal things obey,
Pallas, with surest vengeance still pursues
Such as obedience to her will refuse.

He said, and straight his shining arms unbound,
The casque, the mail, the buckler's weighty round;
With secret joy th' immortal helmet took:
High on its crest the waving plumage shook.
This whosoever wears, his sharp'ned eyes
All dangers mock of ambush and surprise;
Their ray unquench'd, the midnight shade divides:
No cunning covers, and no darkness hides.
The breast-plate next he takes, whose matchless
Firm courage fixes in the bounding heart; [art
The rage of war, unmov'd, the wearer braves,
And rides serene amid the stormy waves!
The glitt'ring mail a starry baldric bound,
His arm sustain'd the buckler's weighty round;
Impenetrably strong, its orb can bear
And turn, like softest lead, the pointed spear;
Nor yields to aught, in earth or heav'n above,
But the dread thunder of almighty Jove.
Th' immortal spear the hero last did wield,
Which fixes conquest, and decides a field;
Nor strength nor numbers can its rage withstand,
Sent by a mortal or immortal hand.

Thus arm'd to meet the foe Tydides mov'd,
And glory'd, conscious of his might improv'd;
Like the proud steed rejoicing in his force,
When the shrill trumpet wakes him to the course:
Fierce and impatient of restraint, he strains
With stiffen'd neck against the galling reins.
Taller he seem'd; as when the morning, spread
With golden lustre, crowns some mountain's head
In early spring; when, from the meads below,
A wreath of vapours binds his rocky brow;
In cloudy volumes settling as they rise,
They lift the lofty prospect to the skies.
So in immortal arms the chief appear'd,
His stature broad display'd, and higher rear'd.

Now from the field approaching to the grove,
Embattel'd thick, the Theban warriors move;
Slowly they move, as swains with doubtful steps
Approach the thicket where a lion sleeps.
Tydides saw; and, rushing from the shade,
The Spartan call'd, and to the combat led.
Unaw'd the hero met the hostile band;
Nor could united force his rage withstand.
They wheel'd aloof; as when a dragon springs
From his dark den, and rears his pointed wings
Against approaching swains, when summer burns,
And the fresh lakes to parched desert turns;
They fly dispers'd, nor tempt his fatal ire,
His wrath-swoln neck and eyes of living fire:
So fled the Thebans, nor escap'd by flight.
Amid their squadrons, like a falcon light,
The hero sprung; who, stooping from the skies,
The feather'd race dispierces as he flies.
Still from his hand th' immortal weapon flew;
And ev'ry flight an armed warrior slew.
Andremon first, beneath his mighty hand,
Of life bereft, lay stretch'd upon the sand.
Pherecydes gigantic press'd the plain;
And valiant Tereus sunk amid the slain.
Warriors to those of vulgar names succeed;
And all his path is mark'd with heaps of dead.
As when some woodman, by incessant strokes,
Bestrews a mountain with its falling oaks;
Fells the thick plains, the hawthorn's flow'ry shade,
The poplar fair by passing currents fed,
The laurel with unfading verdure crown'd;
Heaps roll'd on heaps, the forest sinks around:
So spreads the slaughter, as the chief proceeds;
At every stroke an armed warrior bleeds.
Atrides combats by the hero's side,
To share his glory, and the toil divide:
Unmov'd amid the hostile ranks they go;
Before them far retreats the routed foe.

And now the Spartan host appear'd in sight,
By toil subdu'd, and ling'ring in the fight.
Their valiant leader saw, and rais'd his voice,
Loud as the silver trumpet's martial noise,
With hopes of victory his bands to cheer;
It swiftly flew: the distant Spartans hear
With glad surprise. Polyctes thus addrest,
And rous'd the languid valour of the rest.
Myceneans! Spartans! taught to seek renown
From dangers greatly brav'd, and battles won;
With sorrow and regret I see you yield,
And Thebes victorious drive you from the field.
Atrides calls us; to his aid repair:
No foe subdues you but your own despair.
He yet survives, beset with hostile bands,
And, from your valour, present aid demands.
He said. The rigour of the shock returns;
The slaughter rages, and the combat burns.
As when a reaping train their sickles wield,
Where yellow harvest loads some fruitful field;
The master's heart, with secret joy, o'erflows;
He prompts the work, and counts the length'ning rows;
So 'midst the war, the pow'r of battles stood,
Pleas'd with the carnage and the streams of blood.

Elpenor first lay lifeless on the plain,
By stern Plexippus with a jav'lin slain,
A grief to Thebes. Euryalus the bold,
Rich in his flocks, and rich in sums of gold,
Beneath the arm of Aristæus fell;
Loud rung his silver arms with echoing knell:
And like some flow'r, whose painted foliage fair
With fragrant breath perfumes the vernal air,
If the rude scythe its tender root invades,
It falls dishonour'd, and its lustre fades.
Thus fell Euryalus; whose matchless grace,
In youth's full bloom, surpass'd the human race;
For Cynthius only could with him compare,
In comely features, shape, and flowing hair.

Now o'er the fields the rage of war is spread;
And heaps on heaps ascend the hills of dead.
Ranks meeting ranks oppose with equal rage:
As when the north and stormy south engage,

Beneath their ſtrife the troubled ocean roars;
And ruſhing waves o'erwhelm the rocky ſhores;
So rag'd the fight; when burſting from a crowd
Of thick oppoſing foes the princes ſtood
Between the hoſts. And thus th' Ætolian lord:
Spartans! behold your valiant chief reſtor'd;
Ye owe his ſafety to Minerva's care;
Let hecatombs your gratitude declare,
Soon as from Thebes you reach your native ground,
Where flocks and herds for ſacrifice abound;
Now fight and conquer: let this ſignal day
Your tedious toils, with victory repay;
And, for Hegialus, let thouſands dead
With ample vengeance gratify his ſhade.
As thus the hero ſpoke, the warriors heard,
And hope rekindling through the hoſt appear'd;
With joyful ſhouts they rent the trembling air,
And bleſs'd the gods, and own'd Minerva's care.
Now, tow'ring in the midſt, Atrides ſtood,
And call'd his warriors to the fight aloud;
As mariners with joy the ſun deicry,
Aſcending, in his courſe, the eaſtern ſky;
Who, all night long, by angry tempeſts toſt,
Shunn'd with inceſſant toil ſome faithleſs coaſt;
So to his wiſhing friends Atrides came;
Their danger ſuch before, their joy the ſame.
Again the rigour of the ſhock returns;
The ſlaughter rages, and the comat burns;
With thirſt of vengeance ev'ry boſom glows.
Tydides leads, and ruſhes on his foes;
Around his head a ray of lightning ſhone
From the ſmooth helmet and the glitt'ring cone;
Like that by night which ſtreams with fiery glare,
When ſome red meteor glides along the air,
Sent by the angry gods, with tainted breath,
To ſow the ſeeds of peſtilence and death:
From look to look infectious terror ſpreads;
And ev'ry wretch th' impending vengeance dreads.
Before the chief the Theban bands retire,
As ſhepherd ſwains avoid the lion's ire.
Clytander only, by the fates impell'd,
Oppos'd him ſingle, and diſdain'd to yield;
Lycaon's ſon; deceiv'd by glory's charms,
Superior might be brav'd and matchleſs arms.
Nor was his brother preſent by his ſide,
To ſhare the danger, and the toil divide;
Himſelf a youth, and yet by time unſteel'd,
Single, he met Tydides in the field.
Againſt th' immortal ſhield his lance he flung,
Whoſe hollow orb with deaf'ning clangour rung:
The tow'rs of Thebes re-echo'd to the ſound;
The ſpear repuls'd, fell blunted on the ground.
Tydides next th' immortal jav'lin threw;
With force impell'd, it brighten'd as it flew:
And pierc'd the Theban helmet to the cone;
Behind his ear the ſtarting weapon ſhone.
Supine the warrior fell, his ſpirit fled,
And mix'd with heroes in th' Elyſian ſhade.
To ſpoil the ſlain the ardent victor flew:
Firſt from the wound the fixed lance he drew,
The helmet loos'd, the coſtly mail unbound,
And ſhining ſhield with ſculptor'd figures crown'd.
Theſe ſpoils the hero, in his grateful mind,
A preſent for the gen'rous youth deſign'd;
Who ſtill in perilous battle fought his ſide,
And proffer'd late his warlike ſteeds to guide.
Fatal the gift, the cauſe of future woe!
But good and ill th' immortals only know.
The armour to a vulgar hand conſign'd,
Again the hero, ſwifter than the wind,
To combat ruſh'd.
But, from his throne above
Declin'd, the all-ſurveying eye of Jove
His progreſs mark'd. The herald pow'r, who brings
His ſov'reign mandates on immortal wings,
He thus addreſs'd: To yonder ſphere deſcend;
Bid Phœbus ſtraight his ev'ning charge attend:
For, with reverted eye, he views the war,
And checks the progreſs of his downward car.
Let him not linger in th' ethereal way,
But laſh his ſteeds, and ſtraight conclude the day;
For, if the gods deſcend not to her aid,
Or ev'ning interpoſe with friendly ſhade,
Thebes now muſt periſh; and the doom of fate,
Anticipated, have an earlier date
Than fate ordains; for, like devouring flame,
Tydides threatens all the Theban name;
Immortal arms his native force improve,
Conferr'd by Pallas, partial in her love.
Theſe to retrieve muſt be your next eſſay;
Win them by art, and hither ſtraight convey:
For man with man an equal war ſhall wage:
Nor with immortal weapons arm his rage.
He ſaid. And Maia's ſon, with ſpeed, addreſt
His flight to Phœbus hov'ring in the weſt.
Upon a cloud his winged feet he ſtay'd;
And thus the mandates of his ſire convey'd.
Ruler of light! let now thy car deſcend,
And ſilent night her peaceful ſhade extend,
Elſe Thebes muſt periſh; and the doom of fate,
Anticipated, have an earlier date
Than fate decrees; for, like devouring flame,
Tydides threatens all the Theban name;
Immortal arms his native force improve,
Conferr'd by Pallas, partial in her love.
The ſon of Maia thus. The god obey'd;
The ſounding laſh upon his ſteeds he laid.
Swift to the goal with winged feet they flew;
The night aſcending as the day withdrew.
To Thebes the herald next purſu'd his way;
Shot like a meteor with the ſetting ray.
Behind Tydides in the fight he ſtay'd;
And on his head the potent ſceptre laid:
Whoſe magic pow'r on waking ſenſe prevails;
Or, in profoundeſt ſleep, the eye unſeals;
The ſtruggling ghoſt unbinds from mortal clay.
And drives it down the dark Tartarean way.
Subdu'd the hero ſtood by pow'rful charms,
Till Hermes ſtript him of th' immortal arms;
And, mounting to the ſtarry roofs above,
Diſpos'd them in the armory of Jove.
And, recollected, thus Tydides ſpoke:
Whate'er they give, th' immortals may revoke.
I own their favour; that, of mortal line
The firſt, I wore a panoply divine.
But if the day were lengthen'd to my will,
With light to point my jav'lin where to kill,
Thebes now ſhould periſh; but the morning ray
Shall finiſh what the ev'ning ſhades delay.
And now the night began her ſilent reign;
Aſcending, from the deep, th' ethereal plain,
O'er both the hoſts ſhe ſtretch'd her ample ſhade,
Their conflict to ſuſpend: the hoſts obey'd.

The field no more a noiſy ſcene appears,
With ſteeds and chariots throng'd and glitt'ring ſpears;
But ſtill, and ſilent: like the hoary deep,
When, in their caves, the angry tempeſts ſleep,
Peaceful and ſmooth it ſpreads from ſhore to ſhore,
Where ſtorms had rag'd and billows ſwell'd before:
Such ſeem'd the field; the martial clangors ceaſe;
And war tumultuous lulls itſelf to peace.

BOOK IV.

And now the princes of the Theban ſtate
In council ſat aſſembled in the gate,
Where rows of marble pillars bound the ſpace,
To judgment ſacred in the days of peace.
And Creon thus, with public care oppreſs'd
And private griefs the ſenators addreſs'd:
Princes of Thebes, and valiant aids from far,
Our firm aſſociates in the works of war,
Heroes, attend! I ſhall not now propoſe
To ſupplicate for peace, our haughty foes:
No peace can grow, no friendſhip e'er be found,
When mutual hate has torn ſo wide a wound.
Yet for a truce of ſeven days ſpace I plead,
And fun'ral obſequies to grace the dead.
Nor were it juſt, that they, who greatly fall
From rage of foes to guard their native wall,
Should want the honours which their merits claim,
Sepulchral rites deny'd and fun'ral flame.
Thus as he ſpoke, parental grief ſuppreſt
His voice, and ſwell'd within his lab'ring breaſt.
Silent amid the aſſembled peers he ſtands;
And wipes his falling tears with trembling hands;
For great Leophron, once his country's boaſt,
The glory and the bulwark of her hoſt,
Pierc'd by a foe and lifeleſs on the plain,
Lay drench'd in gore and mix'd with vulgar ſlain:
Silent he ſtood; the Theban lords around
His grief partake, in ſtreams of ſorrow drown'd;
Till ſage Palantes roſe, and to the reſt,
The monarch ſeconding, his words addreſt.
Princes! renown'd for wiſdom and for might,
Rever'd in council, and approv'd in fight;
What Creon moves the laws themſelves require,
With obſequies to grace, and funeral fire,
Each warrior, who in battle bravely falls
From rage of foes to guard his native walls.
If all approve, and none will ſure withſtand
What Creon counſels and the laws command,
Charg'd with the truce, Apollo's prieſt ſhall go
To offer and conclude it with the foe.
His ſilver hairs a mild reſpect may claim,
And great Apollo's ever honour'd name.
The reſt aſſent. The venerable man,
Slow from his ſeat ariſing, thus began: [hand
Princes of Thebes! and thou, whoſe ſov'reign
Sways the dread ſceptre of ſupreme command;
Though well I might this perilous taſk refuſe,
And plead my feeble age a juſt excuſe;
Yet nothing ſhall reſtrain me, for I go,
Pleas'd with the pious charge, to meet the foe.
Willing I go; our bleeding warriors claim
Sepulchral honours and the fun'ral flame.
If all approve, let Clytophon attend;
With juſt ſucceſs our labours thus ſhall end:
For ſure no Theban boaſts an equal ſkill,
With pleaſing words to bend the fixed will.
Sooth'd with the friendly praiſe, the hero ſaid,
No ſelf-regard ſhall hold me or diſſuade;
The pious charge my inmoſt thoughts approve,
He ſaid; and ſlow through yielding crowds they move;
While Thebes on every ſide aſſembled ſtands,
And ſupplicates the gods with lifted hands:
O grant that wrathful enemies may ſpare
Theſe rev'rend heads, nor wrong the ſilver hair!
And now they paſs'd the lofty gates, and came
Where ſlow Iſmenus winds his gentle ſtream;
Amphion's grove they paſs'd, whoſe umbrage wide
His rural tomb defends on every ſide! [ſhade
The ſcene of fight they reach'd, and ſpacious fields
With mangled ſlaughter heap'd, and ſpears and ſhields.
Under their feet the hollow bucklers ſound;
And ſplinter'd ſaulchions glitter'd on the ground.
And now the ſtations of the camp appear,
Far as a ſhaft can wound the flying deer.
Thither, amid the wrecks of war, they go
With ſilent ſteps, and 'ſcape the watchful foe.
Now full in view before the guards they ſtand;
The prieſt diſplays his enſigns in his hand,
The laurel wreath, the gold-beſpangled rod
With ſtars adorn'd the ſymbols of his god.
He thus began: ye Argive warriors! hear:
A peaceful meſſage to your tents we bear:
A truce is aſk'd, till the revolving ſun,
Seven times from eaſt to weſt his journey run,
Again aſcends; and, from the ocean's ſtreams,
Crowns the green mountains with his golden beams:
That mutually ſecure, with pious care,
Both hoſts funereal honours may prepare
For every hero, whom the raging fight
Has ſwept to darkneſs and the ſhores of night.
Thus as he ſpoke, the liſt'ning warriors heard
With approbation, and the prieſt rever'd,
The chief of Salamis, their leader, went
Himſelf to guide them to the royal tent; [night
Which ſhone conſpicuous; through the ſhades of
Its ſpacious portal pour'd a ſtream of light.
Thither conducted by the chief they found
The king of men with all his peers around,
On thrones with purple ſpread each royal gueſt
In order ſat, and ſhar'd the genial feaſt.
Silent they enter'd. From his chair of ſtate,
Full in the midſt oppoſed to the gate,
The monarch ſaw; and riſing thus expreſt
The gen'rous dictates of his royal breaſt.
My gueſts, approach! no enemy is near;
This roof protects you, ſtraight forget your fear,

Ev'n though from yon devoted walls you come,
For vengeance mark'd by fate's eternal doom;
Here in my tent, with safety you shall rest,
And with the princes share the genial feast.
You freely then your message may propose,
When round the board the cheering vintage flows,
Which soothes impatience, and the open'd ear,
With favour and attention bends to hear.

The hero thus. Apollo's priest replies:
Humane thy manners, and thy words are wise;
With thee the noblest gifts the gods have plac'd,
And pow'r supreme with equal wisdom grac'd:
Though oft, by parts, for others they ordain,
The arts of sway, the privilege to reign;
In thee their partial favour has combin'd
The highest fortune with the greatest mind.

As thus the sage reply'd, the princely band
By turns presented each his friendly hand,
The sign of peace. For each a splendid throne,
Where fring'd with gold the purple covering shone,
The ready waiters, by command, prepar'd;
There sat the envoys and the banquet shar'd.
On ev'ry side the sparkling vintage flows,
The momentary cure of human woes.
The rage of thirst and hunger thus suppreſt,
To Nestor turning, Clytophon addresſ'd.

Illustrious chief! an honour now I'll claim,
Which not to publish, sure, would merit blame.
Your father's guest I was; by fortune led,
When from Trinacria's desert shores I fled
With ills beset: but in his friendly land,
His gen'rous heart I prov'd and lib'ral hand.
A grateful mind excites me to reveal
His sov'reign bounty, and attempt a tale
Of dear remembrance. But the fond design
Prudence dissenting, warns me to decline:
For when to public cares your thoughts you bend
A private story mingled must offend.

The artful Theban thus. The chief reply'd,
Whose sov'reign mandates all the host obey'd:
My honour'd guest! proceed, nor aught conceal
Which gratitude enjoins you to reveal:
For gen'rous deeds, improperly suppreſt,
Lie unapplauded in the grateful breast;
And now the feast, short interval of care,
To vocal symphony unbends the ear;
Or sweet discourse, which to the soul conveys
Sublimer joys than music's tuneful lays.
The monarch thus. The prudent sage suppreſs'd
His inward joy, and thus the peers addresſ'd:
Each chief he strove to gain, but Nestor most,
Whose wisdom sway'd the councils of the host.

Confed'rate kings! and thou whose sov'reign hand
Sways the dread sceptre of supreme command,
Attend and hearken! since you seek to know
The sad beginnings of a life of woe.
In Rhodes my father once dominion claim'd,
Orsilochus, for deeds of valour fam'd,
The Sporades his sov'reign sceptre own'd,
And Carpa thus with waving forests crown'd.
His youngest hope I was, and scarce had seen
The tenth returning summer clothe the green,
When pirates snatch me from my native land:
While with my infant equals on the strand
I play'd, of harm secure, and from the deep
With pleasure saw approach the fatal ship;
Pleas'd with the whiteness of the sails we stood,
And the red streamers shining on the flood:
And fearless saw the hostile galley land,
Where from the hills a current seeks the strand.
They climb'd the rocky beach, and far around,
Intent on spoil and rapine, view'd the ground;
If any herd were near, or fleecy store,
Or lonely mansion on the winding shore.
My young companions straight their fear obey.
I, bold and unsuspecting, dar'd to stay.
Me straight they seiz'd: and doom'd to servile toil
A wretched captive in a foreign soil.
Struggling in vain, they bore me down the bay,
Where, anchor'd near the beach, their vessel lay;
And plac'd me on the deck. With bitter cries,
To speeding gales I saw the canvass rise:
The boundless ocean far before me spread;
And from my reach the shores at distance fled.
All day I wept; but when the setting light
Retir'd, and yielded to the shades of night,
Sleep stole upon my grief with soft surprise,
Which care ne'er banish'd long from infant eyes.

Nine days we sail'd; the tenth returning ray
Show'd us Trinacria rising in our way,
Far in the west; where, with his ev'ning beams,
The sun descending gilds the ocean's streams.
Thither the sailors ply, and blindly run
On hidden dangers which they ought to shun;
For whom the gods distinguish'd by their hate,
They first confound, and then resign to fate.
All day we sail'd; and with the evening hour,
Which calls the shepherd to his rural bow'r,
Approach'd the shore. The forests on the land
We mark'd, and rivers op'ning from the strand.
Then gladness touch'd my heart; the first I knew
Since fate had mix'd me with that lawless crew:
With joy I saw the rising shores appear,
And hop'd to find some kind deliverer near;
Some gen'rous lord, to whom I might relate,
Low bending on my knees, my wretched fate.
Vain was the hope; the Cyclopes ne'er know
Compassion, not to melt at human woe.

Near on the left, and where the parted tides
A promontory's rocky height divides,
A bay they found; and on the fatal strand
Descending, fix'd their vessel to the land.
They valleys straight and mountains they explore,
And the long windings of the desert shore;
And find, of sheep and goats, a mingled flock,
Under the shelter of a cavern'd rock.
The largest and the best the pirate band
Seiz'd, and prepar'd a banquet on the strand.
With joy they feasted; while the goblet, crown'd
With Mithymnean vintage, flow'd around.
Of harm secure they sat; and void of fear
To mirth resign'd; nor knew destruction near.

Amid them there I meditating sat;
Some god inspir'd me, or the power of fate,
To 'scape their hated hands: and soon I found
The wish'd occasion; when along the ground,
Each where he sat, the ruffians lay supine,
With sleep oppresſ'd, and sense-subduing wine;
Softly I rose, and to a lofty grove,
Which shaded all the mountain tops above,
Ascending, in a rocky cavern lay,
Till darkness fled before the morning ray.
Then from above I saw the pirate band,
In parties, roaming o'er the desart strand;
The mountain-goats they drove, and fleecy store,
From all the pastures, crowded to the shore.

Me too by name they call'd; and oft, in vain,
Explor'd each grove and thicket on the plain;
While from above I saw, with careless eye,
Them searching round and list'ning for reply.
Some to the ship the bleating spoil convey'd;
While others to prepare a banquet stay'd,
And call'd their mates: to share the full repast
With mirth they came, nor knew it was their last.
Then from the rocky summit where I lay,
A flock appear'd descending to the bay;
Which through a narrow valley rush'd along,
Oxen and sheep, an undistinguish'd throng.
With these the sloping hills were cover'd o'er,
And the long windings of the sandy shore.
Behind a Cyclops came; and, by degrees,
Rose to my view, and tower'd above the trees.
His giant stature, like a lofty rock,
Appear'd: and in his hand a knotted oak
Of tallest growth; around his shoulder slung
His bag enormous, by a cable hung.
Panting I lay; as when a lurking deer,
From some close thicket, sees the hunter near.
By dread subdu'd, confounded and amaz'd,
My fixed eye-balls darken'd as I gaz'd.
Soon from above my wretched mates he knew,
As on the level shore in open view,
They sat secure, with flow'ry garlands crown'd;
The signs of spoil and ravage scatter'd round.
With indignation, for his wasted flock,
Inflam'd he thus like distant thunder spoke.
Whoe'er these are, who from their native soil
To foreign climates thus, in quest of spoil,
Licentious roam; they soon shall feel my hand,
And rue that e'er they touch'd Trinacria's strand.
As mutt'ring thus, along the craggy road
He came, the mountain trembled as he trod.
The wretches saw with horror and affright;
Each limb enfeebled lost the power of flight.
Their cries in vain the monster mov'd to spare;
His club he rear'd and swung it thrice in air,
Then hurld it cross the bay: it swiftly drove
O'er the smooth deep, and raz'd the beach above.
Threat'ning it rush'd along; but, bending low,
Each, where he sat, escap'd the weighty blow.
Beyond them far it pitch'd upon the sand,
Tore the green sward, and heav'd a mount of sand.
Now starting from the ground they strove to fly,
Press'd by despair and strong necessity;
The woody summits of the cliffs to gain,
With fault'ring haste they fled across the plain.
But the impending mountains barr'd their flight,
High and projecting from their airy height,
Back from the slipp'ry arch, in heaps, they fall;
And with imploring cries for mercy call,
In vain. The monster with gigantic strides,
At twenty steps, the spacious bay divides;
Around his knees the whit'ning billows roar,
And his rude voice like thunder shakes the shore.
There thirty youths he slew; against the stones
And ragged cliffs he dash'd their crackling bones.
Twenty his feet and heavy hands pursue,
As to the ocean in despair they flew;
Striving the summit of the beach to gain,
With headlong course to rush into the main:
For there they hop'd a milder fate to have,
And less abhorr'd, beneath the whelming wave.
These too he reach'd; and, with his weighty hand,
Their flight oppress'd, and mix'd them with the sand.
Two yet survive'd; who supplicating strove,
With humble suit, his barb'rous soul to move.
With trembling knees the sandy beach they press'd;
And, as he came, the monster thus address'd:
O thou! with whom no mortal can compare
For strength resistless, pity now and spare.
O let the blood, already shed, atone,
For our provoking guilt, and trespass done!
O spare and pity! sure, the gods above,
Who sit around the starry throne of Jove,
Are won by pray'r; and he whose matchless might
The solid earth sustains and starry height,
Oft spares the guilty; for his soul approves
Compassion, and the works of mercy loves.
Let sov'reign pity touch thy mighty breast;
And him revere, the greatest and the best:
Who pardons oft, but measures grief and pain
To such as hear the wretched plead in vain.
As thus to touch his iron heart they try'd,
The Cyclops smiling, scornful thus reply'd:
The praise of mercy well your words proclaim;
And vengeance mark, though merited, with blame.
Well have you spoken; therefore, from my hand,
More favour hope than any of your band;
They, on the desert shore expos'd and bare,
The wolves shall feast and ev'ry bird of air;
But ye, prefer'd above the rest, shall have
This body for your monument and grave.
He said, and seizing lifts them both on high,
With hands and feet extended in the sky;
Then dash'd them thrice against the rocky shore;
Gnaw'd their warm flesh, and drank their streaming gore.
Oft have I seen the havoc of the plain,
The rage of tempests and the stormy main;
But fate, in such a form, ne'er meet my eyes,
And, while I speak, afresh its horrors rise
To chill my veins; nor can the vary'd state
Of sprightly youth, and middle age sedate,
Or life's last stage with all its griefs oppress,
Banish the dire impression from my breast.
For still I see the monster, as he stood,
His hairy visage dy'd in human blood:
As the grim lion leaves the wasted plains,
Red from the ravage of the flocks and swains.
With vengeance pleas'd he view'd the shores around;
And, riding near the beech, our vessel found:
Her by the mast he seiz'd; and to the land,
With all her anchors, dragg'd along the strand.
Exploring, next the solid deck he tore,
And found, conceal'd below, his fleecy store.
With scornful smiles he saw the theft bewray'd;
And sidelong on the beach the galley laid;
And call'd his flock: to open light they strain,
Through the wide beach, and crowd upon the plain:
Still, as they pass'd, his weighty hand he laid
On their soft backs, and, stroaking gently, said:
Go now, my flock! enjoy the verdant hills,
The rivers cool, the sweet refreshing rills,
The meads and shady forests, safe from harm;
Your foes lie crush'd beneath your master's arm.
The giant thus; and next the hold explor'd:
Four jars he found with Lesbian vintage stor'd.
These first he drain'd; then to his lips apply'd
His flute, which like a quiver by his side,
Of size enormous, hung. Its hollow sound
The woods repeated and the caves around.

Its muſic ſuch, as when a ſtormy gale
Roars through a hollow cliff with hideous peal,
Reſounding deep, along the level ſhore:
He ply'd, and drove his paſt'ring flock before.
Horror and grief at once my heart aſſail'd;
Preſages ſad o'er ev'ry hope prevail'd.
My diſtant country ruſh'd upon my mind;
My friends, my weeping parents, left behind.
Now loſt to hope, and furious from deſpair,
With both my hands I rent my rooted hair;
And in an agony of ſorrow preſt,
With ſtrokes repeated oft, my heaving breaſt.
All day I mourn'd; but when the ſetting ray
Retir'd, and ev'ning ſhades expell'd the day;
Encourag'd by the night, I fought the plain;
And, wand'ring anxious 'midſt the mangled ſlain
Oft call'd, to know if any of the band
Did yet ſurvive, eſcap'd the monſter's hand;
But none reply'd. Along the deſert ſhore
All night I wander'd, 'midſt the ſullen roar
Of burſting billows; till the morning ray
Appear'd to light my ſolitary way.
'Twas then I reach'd a mountain's height, o'erſpread
With thickets cloſe, and dark impending ſhade,
Hung o'er the valley, where a river leads
His wand'ring current through a grove of reeds.
Thither I went; and, op'ning to the deep,
A cavern found beneath the rocky ſteep;
The haunt of mountain goats, when wint'ry rains
Have chas'd them from the hills and naked plains.
Gladly I enter'd; for, deceiv'd by fear,
I always thought the barb'rous Cyclops near;
His form deſcry'd in ev'ry tree behind,
And heard his voice approaching in the wind.
Of honey there a ſweet repaſt I found,
In cluſters hanging from the cliffs around,
My hunger ſoon appeas'd, the gentle pow'r
Of ſleep ſubdu'd me till the ev'ning hour.
'Twas then I wak'd; and to the deep below, [flow;
Through thickets, creep'd with careful ſteps and
And gaz'd around if any hut were there,
Or ſolitary wretch my grief to ſhare:
But none appear'd. I climb'd a mountain's head
Where, wide before me, lay the ocean ſpread;
And there no object met my wiſhing eyes,
But billows bounded by the ſetting ſkies.
Yet ſtill I gaz'd, till night's prevailing ſway
Extinguiſh'd, in the weſt, the evening ray.
Hopeleſs and ſad, deſcending from my ſtand,
I wander'd on the ſolitary ſtrand,
Through the thick gloom; and heard the ſullen roar
Of billows burſting on the deſert ſhore,
Thus ten long years I liv'd, conceal'd by day,
Under a rock on wither'd leaves I lay;
At dawn and twilight on the mountains ſtood,
Exploring with my eyes the pathleſs flood;
Impatient till ſome friendly ſail ſhould come,
To waft me to my ſire and native home;
But none appear'd. The pilots ſhun the ſhores
Where Ætna flames and dire Charibdis roars;
And where the curs'd Cyclopean brothers reign,
The lonely tyrants of the deſert plain.
Preſs'd by deſpair, at laſt I dar'd to brave,
Ev'n in a ſkiff, the terrors of the wave;
Contemning all the perils in my way,
For worſe it ſeem'd than death itſelf to ſtay.
Of oziers ſoft the bending hull I wove;
And ply'd the ſkins of mountain goats above.
A ſlender fir, ten cubit lengths, I found
Fall'n from a mould'ring bank, and ſtript it round.
This for the maſt, with bulruſh ropes I ty'd;
A pole to ſteer the rudder's uſe ſupply'd:
Four goat-ſkins join'd I fitted for the ſail,
And ſpread it with a pole to catch the gale.
Each chink with gum againſt the brine, I clos'd:
And the whole work beneath a ſhade diſpos'd,
Where, from the hills deſcending to the main,
A winding current cuts the ſandy plain.
Nuts and dry'd figs in baſkets next I ſtor'd;
And liquid ſtores in bags of ſkin prepar'd:
And waited anxious till the ſouthern gale,
From the dire coaſt, ſhould bear my flying ſail.
Nine days I ſtay'd; and ſtill the northern breeze,
From great Heſperia, ſwept the whit'ning ſeas:
But on the tenth it chang'd; and, when the hour
Of twilight call'd the giant to his bow'r,
Down from my grotto to the ſhore I came,
And call'd the God who rules the ocean's ſtream;
Oblations vow'd, if, by his mighty hand
Conducted ſafe, I found my native land.
And, turning where conceal'd my veſſel lay,
The rope I loos'd, and puſh'd her to the bay;
The ſail unfurl'd, and, ſteering from the ſtrand,
Behind me left with joy the hated land.
All night, by breezes ſped, the prow divides
The deep and o'er the billows lightly glides.
But when the dawn, prevailing o'er the night,
Had ting'd the glowing eaſt with purple light,
The air was huſh'd: deſerted by the gale,
Looſe to the maſt deſcends the empty ſail.
And full againſt my courſe a current came,
Which hurl'd me backwards, floating on its ſtream.
Towards the land. I ſaw the ſhores draw near;
And the long billows on the beach appear.
The cruel Cyclops ſpy'd me as he drove
His paſt'ring flock along the hills above;
And winding through the groves his ſecret way,
Conceal'd behind a promontory lay;
Prepar'd to ſnatch me, when his arm could reach
My ſkiff, which drove ungovern'd to the beach.
I mark'd his purpoſe; furious from deſpair,
With both my hands I rent my rooted hair;
And on the poop with deſp'rate purpoſe ſtood,
Prepar'd to plunge into the whelming flood.
But Neptune ſav'd me in that perilous hour;
The headlong current felt his preſent pow'r:
Back from the ſhore it turn'd, at his command,
And bore me joyful from the fatal ſtrand.
The Cyclops vex'd; as when ſome fowler ſpies,
Safe from his cover'd ſnares the quarry riſe:
His ſeat forſook, and, leaning o'er the ſteep,
Strove with ſoft words to lure me, from the deep.
Stranger, approach! nor fly this friendly ſtrand;
Share the free bleſſings of a happy land:
Here, from each cliff, a ſtream of honey flows;
And ev'ry hill with purple vintage glows.
Approach; your fear forget; my bounty ſhare;
My kindneſs prove and hoſpitable care.
As to allure me thus the monſter try'd,
His fraud I knew; and raſhly thus reply'd:
Talk not of friendſhip; well I know the doom
Of ſuch as to your dire dominions come.
Theſe eyes beheld when, with a ruthleſs hand,
My wretched mates you murder'd on the ſtrand.

Two fu'd for mercy; but their limbs you tore
With brutal rage, and drank their ſtreaming gore.
If heav'n's dread Sov'reign to my vengeful hand
His waſting flames would yield, and forked brand,
Scorch'd on the cliffs, your giant limbs ſhould feed
The mountain wolves, and all the rav'nous breed.
I ſaid; and from the ſouth a riſing breeze
Bruſh'd the thick woods, and ſwept the curling ſeas.
Above the waves my veſſel lightly flew;
The ocean widen'd, and the ſhores withdrew.
Enrag'd the Cyclops, ruſhing down the ſteep,
Eager to ſnatch me, plung'd into the deep:
My flight he follow'd with gigantic ſtrides,
And ſtem'd with both his knees the ruſhing tides.
Soon had I periſh'd, but eſcap'd again,
Protected by the god who rules the main.
He ſent a ſpectre from his wat'ry caves;
Like miſt it roſe, and hover'd o'er the waves.
A ſkiff like mine, by art divine, it grew;
And to the left acroſs the ocean flew.
With courſe divided, where the pilot ſpies
Amid the deep two deſert iſlands riſe,
In ſhape like altars, ſo by ſailors nam'd,
A mark for pilots, elſe for nothing fam'd;
The angry giant doubting ſtood, nor knew
Which to forſake, the ſhadow or the true:
For both ſeem'd equal. By the fates miſled,
He chas'd the airy image as it fled:
Nor reach'd it: for it led him through the main,
As the bright rainbow mocks ſome ſimple ſwain;
Who ſtill intent to catch it where it ſtands,
And graſp the ſhining meteor with his hands,
Along the dewy meadows holds his way;
But ſtill before him flies the coloured ray.
The Cyclops ſo, along the wat'ry plain,
The ſhadowy phantom chas'd, and chas'd in vain;
The billows burſted on his hairy ſides,
And far behind him ruſh'd the parted tides.
Diſſolv'd at laſt, its airy ſtructure broke,
And vaniſh'd hov'ring like a cloud of ſmoke.
His error then, and my eſcape he knew;
For, favour'd by the breeze, my veſſel flew
Far to the deep: yet plunging in the waves,
Torn from its bed a pond'rous rock he heaves,
Craggy and black, with dangling ſea-weed hung;
Puſh'd from his hand the weighty maſs he flung,
To cruſh my flight: along the ethereal plain
It roll'd, and thund'ring downwards ſhook the main.
Behind it fell; and farther from the ſhore,
Hurl'd on the mounting waves, my veſſel bore
Towards the deep. The giant ſaw with pain,
His fraud detected, force eſſay'd in vain.
He curs'd the partial pow'rs, and laſh'd on high,
With both his hands, the ocean to the ſky.
Now ſafe beyond his reach, a proſp'rous gale
Blew freſh behind, and ſtretch'd my flying ſail:
The ſhores retir'd; but, from the diſtant main,
I ſaw him towering on the watery plain,
Like a tall ſhip; and moving to the ſhore.
Sullen and ſad, to tend his fleecy ſtore.
Seven days I ſail'd; the eighth returning light
The Pylian ſhores preſented to my ſight,
Far in the eaſt; and where the ſun diſplays,
Along the glitt'ring waves, his early rays.
Thither I ſteer'd, and where a point divides
Extended in the deep, the parted tides,
A fane I mark'd; whoſe tow'ring ſummit, rear'd
High in the air, with gilded ſpires appear'd,
To Neptune ſacred on the beach it ſtands,
Conſpicuous from the ſea and diſtant lands.
Aſſembled on the ſhore the people ſtood,
On ev'ry ſide extended, like a wood:
And in the midſt I ſaw a pillar riſe,
Of ſacred ſmoke, aſcending to the ſkies.
'Twas there I reach'd the hoſpitable ſtrand,
And, joyful, fix'd my veſſel to the land.
There, with his peers, your royal ſire I found;
And fell before him proſtrate on the ground,
Imploring aid; my lineage I reveal'd,
Nor aught of all my tedious toils conceal'd.
Attentive, as I ſpoke, the hero heard,
Nor credulous nor diffident appear'd;
For prudence taught him, neither to receive
With eaſy faith, or raſhly diſbelieve.
O ſon of Neleus! though you juſtly claim,
For eloquence and ſkill, ſuperior fame:
Yet to an equal glory ne'er aſpire:
Vain were the hope to emulate your ſire.
Eight days we feaſted: ſtill the flowing bowl
Return'd, and ſweet diſcourſe, to glad the ſoul,
With pleaſure heard; as comes the ſound of rain,
In ſummer's drought, to cheer the careful ſwain.
And when the ninth returning morn aroſe,
Sixty bold mariners the hero choſe,
Skill'd, through the deep, the flying keel to guide,
And ſweep, with equal oars, the hoary tide:
They trimm'd a veſſel, by their lord's command,
To waft me to my ſire and native land.
With gifts enrich'd of robes and precious ore,
He ſent me joyful from the Pylian ſhore.
Such Neleus was! and ſuch his matchleſs praiſe
For hoſpitable deeds in former days;
The friend, the patron, deſtin'd to redreſs
The wrongs of fate, and comfort my diſtreſs.
But what is man! a reptile of the earth;
To toils ſucceſſive fated from his birth;
Few are our joys; in long ſucceſſion flow
Our griefs; we number all our days in woe.
Misfortune enter'd with my infant years;
My feeble age a load of ſorrow bears.
Driv'n from my country by domeſtic foes,
Thebes but receiv'd me to partake her woes.
The ſword I've ſeen, and wide devouring fire,
Againſt her twice in fatal league conſpire.
The public griefs, which ev'ry heart muſt ſhare,
By nature taught to feel another's care,
Augment my own: our matrons weeping ſtand;
Our rev'rend elders mourn a ruin'd land:
Their furrow'd cheeks with ſtreams of ſorrow flow;
And wailing orphans ſwell the gen'ral woe;
They mourn their deareſt hopes, in battle ſlain,
Whoſe limbs, unbury'd, load their native plain;
And now by us entreat that war may ceaſe,
And, for ſeven days ſucceſſive, yield to peace:
That mutually ſecure, with pious care,
Both hoſts funereal honours may prepare
For ev'ry warrior, whom the rage of fight
Has ſwept to darkneſs and the coaſts of night.
To ratify the truce, if ye approve,
We come alike commiſſion'd, as to move.
Thus Clytophon; and he, whoſe ſov'reign ſway
The warriors of the Pylian race obey,

Neſtor, his partial favour thus expreſs'd;
And to the Theban chief himſelf addreſs'd:
The truth you ſpeak, nor do your words appear
Prepar'd with art, or dictated by fear;
For what you tell, my memory recals,
When young I ſaw you at my native walls,
Yourſelf a youth: though now a length of years,
Imprinted deep, in all your form appears;
Yet ſtill, with ſure remembrance, can I trace
Your voice the ſame and lineaments of face.
An infant then upon your knees I hung,
And catch'd the pleaſing wonders from your tongue:
Your woes I pity'd, as I pity ſtill;
And, were the chiefs determin'd by my will,
The truce ſhould ſtand: for piety conſpires
With juſtice, to demand what Thebes requires.
The hero thus; the king of men replies:
Princes, in fight approv'd, in council wiſe!
What Thebes propounds, 'tis yours alone to chooſe,
Whether ye will accept it, or refuſe:
For though your votes conſenting, in my hand
Have plac'd the ſceptre of ſupreme command;
Yet ſtill my pow'r, obedient to my choice,
Shall with its ſanction join the public voice.
The monarch thus; and thus the chief reply'd,
Whom fair Ætolia's martial ſons obey'd:
Princes, attend! and thou, whoſe ſov'reign hand
Sways the dread ſceptre of ſupreme command!
What Thebes requires, I do not now oppoſe,
Becauſe, inſenſible to human woes,
The widow's tears I ſcorn, the mother's ſighs,
The groans of ſiſters, or the orphan's cries,
Whoſe deareſt hopes, in rage of battle ſlain,
With wounds defac'd, lie ſcatter'd on the plain:
Compaſſion for the hoſt, which fruitleſs toil
So long has waſted in a foreign ſoil,
What Thebes propounds, impels me to diſſuade,
And for the living, diſregard the dead.
How long has war and famine thinn'd our pow'rs,
Inactive camp'd around the Theban tow'rs?
And peſtilence, whoſe dire infection flies,
Blown by the furies through the tainted ſkies?
Many now wander on the Stygian ſhore,
Whom ſires and conſorts ſhall behold no more:
And many ſtill, who yet enjoy the day,
Muſt follow down the dark Tartarean way,
If, blinded by the fates, our counſels bar
The courſe of conqueſt, and protract the war.
Since equity and public right demands
That Thebes ſhould fall by our avenging hands,
Now let us combat, till the gods above,
Who ſit around the ſtarry throne of Jove,
The judges of the nations, crown our toil,
So long endur'd, with victory and ſpoil;
Or deſtine us to fall in glorious fight,
Elate and dauntleſs in the cauſe of right.
Shall we delay till dire infection ſpreads
Her raven wings o'er our devoted heads?
Till gen'rous wrath, by ſlow diſeaſe ſuppreſt,
Expires inactive in the warrior's breaſt,
And life, the price of glory, paid in vain,
Who die forgotten on a foreign plain.
Tydides thus; and he, whoſe ſovereign ſway
The warriors of the Pylian race obey,
Neſtor reply'd, for eloquence approv'd,
By Pallas and the tuneful ſiſters lov'd:
Confed'rate kings! and thou, whoſe ſov'reign hand
Sways the dread ſceptre of ſupreme command,
With patience hear the reaſons which I plead
For funeral rites, the honours of the dead.
Well have you heard the various ills that wait
On ſtrife prolong'd, and war's diſaſtrous ſtate:
And they who chooſe to dwell amid alarms,
The rage of ſlaughter and the din of arms,
Know little of the joys, when combats ceaſe,
That crown with milder bliſs the hours of peace.
Though gladly would I ſee, in vengeance juſt,
The Theban tow'rs confounded with the duſt;
That from the war releas'd, we might again
Each ſhare the pleaſures of his native reign:
Yet let us not preſumptuouſly withſtand
What piety alike and right command,
The honours of the dead: nor tempt the gods
To curſe our labours, from their bright abodes.
Far in the heav'ns, above this mortal ſcene,
In boundleſs light, the thund'rer ſits ſerene;
He views the works of men: the good he knows,
And on their juſt attempts ſucceſs beſtows;
But blaſts impiety, and mocks its aim,
With diſappointment ſure, and laſting ſhame.
Attend, ye princes! and I ſhall unfold
What ſage Harmodius taught my ſire of old.
The Locri ſummon'd all their martial pow'rs,
And fought around the Orchomenian tow'rs.
From oxen ſeiz'd began the dire debate;
And wide and waſteful was the work of fate.
The Orchomenians oft a truce propos'd
For fun'ral rites; the Locrian chiefs oppos'd.
Nine days expir'd, the bleeding warriors lay;
Their wounds hot ſtreaming to the ſolar ray.
From Styx's ſable ſhore their ghoſts implor'd,
With ſuppliant cries, hell's dread avenging lord.
He heard, and from the gloomy deep below
Of Erebus profound, the houſe of woe,
A fury ſent, the fierceſt of the crew,
Whoſe iron ſcourges human crimes purſue:
Diſcord her name; among th' infernal gods
She dwells, excluded from the bleſt abodes;
Though oft on earth ſhe rears her baleful head,
To kindle ſtrife, and make the nations bleed.
The fury came; and, hov'ring o'er the plain
Devoted with her eyes the Locrian train.
In form a raven, to a tow'r ſhe flew,
Which roſe upon a precipice in view,
And on the airy ſummit took her ſeat,
With potent charms, to kindle dire debate.
The howling dogs her preſence firſt declare;
The war horſe trembling ſnorts aloft in air;
On man at laſt the dire infection fell,
The awful vengeance of the pow'rs of hell.
Confuſion ſtraight through all the camp is found;
The wand'ring centinel deſerts his ground,
Fatally gay and crown'd with every weed,
Which weeping matrons ſcatter o'er the dead;
Of dire portent: but when the ſilent reign
Of night poſſeſs'd the mountains and the plain,
Above the camp her torch the fury rear'd,
Red, in the air, its baleful flame appear'd.
Kindling debate: outrageous ſtrife aroſe,
Loud as the ocean when a tempeſt blows,
O'er all the plain, and ſtun'd the ear of night
With ſhouts tumultuous and the din of fight.

Down from her airy stand the goddess came,
Shot like a meteor, with a stream of flame,
To kindle fiercer strife with stronger charms,
To swell the tumult and the rage of arms.
The combat burn'd; the Orchomenians heard
With horror, nor beyond their walls appear'd,
By awe divine restrain'd: but when the light
Return'd successive on the steps of night,
From ev'ry tow'r they saw the spacious plain
With havoc heap'd, and mountains of the slain.
The secret cause the augurs first declar'd;
The justice of the gods they own'd and fear'd.
No fun'ral rite the Orchomenian state
On them bestow'd, the vulgar or the great;
In one deep pit, whose mouth extended wide
Four hundred cubit length from side to side,
They whelm'd them all; their bucklers and their spears,
The steeds, the chariots, and the charioteers,
One ruin mix'd; for so the will of Jove
The priests declar'd: and heap'd a mount above:
Such was the fate, by heav'n and hell decreed,
To punish bold contemners of the dead.
And let not us their fatal wrath provoke,
Nor merit by our guilt an equal stroke;
But seal the truce, and piously bestow
What to the reliques of the dead we owe.
He said; the peers their joint assent declare,
The dead to honour, and the gods revere.
The king of men commands a herald straight
The priests to call, and hasten ev'ry rite.
While thus the sov'reign mandate they obey'd,
Th' Ætolian leader rose, and frowning said:
O blind to truth! and fated to sustain
A length of woes, and tedious toils in vain!
By sounds deceiv'd, as to her fatal den
Some vocal sorc'ress lures the steps of men;
O eloquence! thou fatal charm! how few,
Guided by thee, their real good pursue!
By thee, our maids, with magic fetters bound,
In all decisions, true and false confound.
Not the unnumber'd wrecks, which lie along
The Syrens' coast the trophies of their song,
Nor there where Circe from the neighb'ring deep,
With strong inchantments, draws the passing ship,
Can match thy spoils: O let me ne'er obey,
And follow blindly, as you point the way!
Confed'rate kings! since nothing can oppose
The truce you purpose with our treach'rous foes,
With mischief pregnant; I alone am free,
Nor these my eyes the fatal rite shall see;
Lest it be said, when mischief shall succeed,
Tydides saw it, and approv'd the deed.
Speaking he grasp'd his spear and pond'rous shield; [field,
And mov'd like Mars, when, 'midst th' embattell'd
Sublime he stalks to kindle fierce alarms,
To swell the tumult and the rage of arms.
Such seem'd the chief: the princes with surprise
Turn'd on the king of men, at once their eyes.
He thus began: Since now the public choice
The truce approves, with one consenting voice;
Tydides only, with superior pride,
Though youngest, still the readiest to decide,
Our gen'ral sense condemns; his haughty soul
Must not the counsels of the host controul,
Brave though he is: the altars ready stand;
In order waits the consecrated band;
Straight let us seal the truce with blood and wine,
And, to attest it, call the pow'rs divine.
The monarch thus; Tydides to his tent,
Through the still host, in sullen sorrow went.
Fix'd in his mind the fatal vision stay'd,
Snatch'd by invading force his lovely maid;
The fraud of Cytherea; still his heart
Incessant anguish felt, and lasting smart;
And, as a lion, when his side retains
A barbed shaft, the cause of bitter pains,
Growls in some lonely shade; his friends declin'd,
He breath'd in groans the anguish of his mind.
Now round the flaming hearth th' assembly stands,
And Theseus thus invokes with lifted hands:
Hear me, ye pow'rs, that rule the realms of light!
And ye dread sov'reigns of the shades of night!
If, till the eighth succeeding sun displays,
Above the eastern hills his early rays,
Any bold warrior of the Argive bands,
Against a Theban lifts his hostile hands
By us approv'd; let ev'ry curse succeed
On me, and all, for perjury decreed.
And as by blood our mutual oath we seal,
The blood of victims drawn by deathful steel;
So let their blood be shed, who, scorning right,
Profanely shall presume its ties to slight.
Apollo's priest, for Thebes resum'd the vow,
The gods above, invoking, and below,
Their vengeance to inflict, if force, or art,
The truce should violate on either part.
The rites concluded thus, the king commands
Two younger warriors of his native bands
A chariot to prepare; the driver's place
Sophronimus assum'd; with tardy pace,
Ascend the sage ambassadors; before
A lighted torch Asteropæus bore,
And led the way; the tents, the fields of war,
They pass'd, and at the gate dismiss'd the car.

BOOK V.

Soon as the sun display'd his orient ray,
And crown'd the mountain tops with early day;
Through ev'ry gate the Theban warriors flow,
Unarm'd, and fearless of th' invading foe:
As when, in early spring, the shepherd sees
Rush from some hollow rock a stream of bees,
Long in the cliffs, from winter's rage conceal'd,
New to the light, and strangers to the field;
In compass wide their mazy flight they steer,
Which wings of balmy zephyrs lightly bear
Along the meads, where some soft river flows,
Or forests, where the flow'ry hawthorn blows;

To taſte the early ſpring their courſe they bend,
And lightly with the genial breeze deſcend:
So o'er the heights and plains the Thebans ſpread;
Some, 'midſt the heaps of ſlaughter, ſought their dead;
Others with axes to the woods repair'd,
Fell'd the thick foreſts, and the mountains bar'd.
With like intent the Argive warriors mov'd,
By Theſeus led, whom virgin Pallas lov'd.
Ten thouſand oxen drew the harneſs'd wains,
In droves collected from the neighb'ring plains;
Slow up the mountains move the heavy wheels,
The ſteep aſcent each groaning axle feels:
In ev'ry grove the temper'd axes ſound;
The thick trees crackle, and the caves reſound.
Now to the plain the moving woods deſcend,
Under their weight a thouſand axles bend:
And round the camp, and round the Theban wails,
Heaps roll'd on heaps, the mingled foreſt falls.
Of this the Spartan chief, his native bands,
With ſpeed to rear a lofty pile, commands;
Which for Hegialus, with grateful mind,
Adraſtus' valiant ſon, the chief deſign'd;
Who to his aid, when ev'ry warrior fled,
Repair'd, and for his reſcue greatly bled:
His native bands the hero thus addreſs'd,
While ſighs inceſſant labour'd from his breaſt.
The chief of Argos, warriors! firſt demands
Funereal honours from our grateful hands;
For him this lofty ſtructure is decreed,
And ev'ry rite in order ſhall ſucceed:
His dear remains in my pavilion reſt;
Nor can Adraſtus at the rites aſſiſt;
Who to deſpair and frenzy has reſign'd,
By age and grief ſubdu'd, his generous mind:
The other princes of the army wait
The obſequies to grace, with mournful ſtate.
He ſaid; and to his tent the warriors led,
Where ſtood already deck'd the ſun'ral bed:
With Syrian oil bedew'd, the corſe they ſound
Freſh from the bath, and breathing fragrance round:
For Menelaus, with divided care,
Each rite domeſtic haſten'd to prepare.
Twelve princes to the pile the corſe ſuſtain'd:
The head on Agamemnon's hand reclin'd;
With mournful pomp the ſlow proceſſion mov'd;
For all the hero honour'd and approv'd.
Firſt on the top the ſun'ral bed they place;
And next, the ſad ſolemnity to grace,
And gratify the manes of the ſlain,
The blood of ſteeds and bullocks drench'd the plain.
The four fair ſteeds which drew the rapid car,
That bore the hero through the ranks of war,
Their lofty necks the pointed faulchion tore,
With force impell'd, and drew a ſtream of gore:
Three groaning fell; but, fiercer from the ſtroke,
The ſilver reins the fourth with fury broke,
And fled around the field: his ſnowy cheſt,
Was daſh'd with ſtreaming blood, and lofty creſt.
In circles ſtill he wheel'd! at ev'ry round,
Still nearer to the pile himſelf he found;
'Till drain'd of life, by blood alone ſupply'd,
Juſt where he felt the blow, he ſunk, and dy'd.

By awe divine ſubdu'd, the warriors ſtand;
And ſilent wonder fixes ev'ry band:
Till thus Atrides: Sure th' immortal gods,
The glorious ſynod of the bleſt abodes,
Approve our rites; the good their favour ſhare,
In death and life the objects of their care.
Atrides thus: and, further to augment
The mournful pomp, the martial goddeſs went
Through all the camp, in Merion's form expreſs'd,
And thus aloud the public ear addreſs'd:
Warriors and friends! on yonder lofty pyre,
Hegialus expects the fun'ral fire.
For ſuch high merit, public tears ſhould flow;
And Greece aſſembled pour a flood of woe.
Now let us all his obſequies attend;
And, with the mournful rites, our ſorrows blend.
Proclaiming thus aloud the goddeſs went;
The army heard; and each forſakes his tent;
Her voice had touch'd their hearts; they mov'd along,
Nations and tribes, an undiſtinguiſh'd throng.
Around the pile the wid'ning circle grows;
As ſpreading in ſome vale, a deluge flows,
By mountain torrents fed, which ſtretches wide,
And floats the level lands on ev'ry ſide.
Diſtinguiſh'd in the midſt the princes ſtand,
With ſceptres grac'd, the enſigns of command.
Atrides, with ſuperior grief oppreſs'd,
Thus to the fire of gods his pray'r addreſs'd.
Dread ſov'reign, hear! whoſe unreſiſted ſway
The fates of men and mortal things obey:
From thee the virtue of the hero ſprings;
Thine is the glory and the pow'r of kings.
If e'er by thee, and virgin Pallas, led,
To noble deeds this gen'rous youth was bred:
If love to men, or piety, poſſeſs'd,
With higheſt purpoſe, his undaunted breaſt;
Command the winds in bolder guſts to riſe,
And bear the flames I kindle to the ſkies.
The hero thus; and with the fun'ral brand
The ſtructure touch'd; aſcending from his hand,
Spreads the quick blaze: the ruler of the ſky
Commands; at once the willing tempeſts fly:
Ruſhing in ſtreams inviſible, they came,
Drove the light ſmoke, and rais'd the ſheeted flame.
The favour of the gods the nations own,
And, with their joint applauſe, the hero crown.
From morn till noon the roaring flames aſpire,
And fat of victims added feeds the fire;
Then fall their lofty ſpires, and, ſinking low,
O'er the pale aſhes tremulouſly glow.
With wine, the ſmoke, and burning embers lay'd;
The bones they glean'd, and to a tomb convey'd
Under an oak, which, near the public way,
Invites the ſwains to ſhun the noontide ray.
Now twenty warriors of Atrides' train,
Loaded with treaſure, brought a harneſs'd wain;
Vaſes and tripods in bright order plac'd,
And ſplendid arms with fair devices grac'd:
Theſe for the games the Spartan chief decreed,
The fun'ral games in honour of the dead.
Amid the princes firſt a poliſh'd yew,
Unbent upon the ground the hero threw,
Of work divine; which Cynthius claim'd before,
And Chiron next upon the mountains bore;

His fire the third receiv'd it: now it lies,
For him who fartheſt ſhoots, the deſtin'd prize.
Heroes, approach! Atrides thus aloud,
Stand forth, diſtinguiſh'd from the circling crowd,
Ye, who, by ſkill or manly force, may claim
Your rivals to ſurpaſs, and merit fame.
This bow, worth twenty oxen, is decreed
For him who fartheſt ſends the winged reed:
This bowl, worth eight, ſhall be reſerv'd to grace
The man whoſe merit holds the ſecond place.
He ſpoke. His words the bold Ajaces fir'd;
Crete's valiant monarch to the prize aſpir'd;
Teucer for ſhooting fam'd; and Merion ſtrong,
Whoſe force enormous dragg'd a bull along;
Prompt to contend, and rais'd with hope, they ſtood;
Laertes' ſon the laſt forſook the crowd.
Tydides too had join'd them, and obtain'd
Whatever could by ſkill or force be gain'd;
But in his tent, indulging ſad deſpair,
He ſat, ſubdu'd by heart-conſuming care.
Straight in a caſque the equal lots were thrown;
Each hero with his name had mark'd his own:
Theſe, mix'd with care, the chief of Sparta drew;
Idomeneus the firſt he knew:
Teucer, with hope inſpir'd, the ſecond claim'd;
The third Oileus, much for ſhooting fam'd:
Next claim'd the wearer of the ſeven-fold ſhield,
Though young in arms, diſtinguiſh'd in the field:
Ulyſſes! then came next, and, laſt of all,
Bold Merion with a ſmile receiv'd his ball.
Preſs'd with incumbent force, the Cretan lord
Strain'd the ſtiff bow, and bent it to the cord;
Then from the full ſtor'd quiver, cloſe with art,
Wing'd for the aerial flight a pointed dart.
Theſeus commands the warriors to divide,
Who crowded thick and preſs'd on ev'ry ſide;
Straight they retire; as, at the word of Jove,
From day's bright face the ſcatt'ring clouds remove;
And through the hoſt appear'd a ſpacious way,
Where woods and fields in diſtant proſpect lay.
With force immenſe, the Cretan monarch drew,
Stretch'd the tough cord, and ſtrain'd the circling yew,
From his firm gripe the ſtarting arrow ſprung,
The ſtiff bow crack'd, the twanging cordage ſung.
Up the light air the hiſſing weapon flies,
Pierces the winds, and ſtreams along the ſkies:
Far to the diſtant plain it ſwiftly drove:
The hoſt ſtood wond'ring as it ruſh'd above:
Deſcending there upon a mount it ſtood:
A depth of ſoil receiv'd the trembling wood.
Applauſe from all, tumultuous ſhouts declare,
By echoes wafted through the trembling air.
Such joy the hero feels, as praiſe inſpires,
And to the circle of the kings retires.
The valiant Teucer next receiv'd the bow,
And to Apollo thus addreſs'd a vow:
Hear me, dread king! whoſe unreſiſted ſway
Controuls the ſun, and rules the courſe of day;
Great patron of the bow! this ſhaft impell;
And hecatombs my gratitude ſhall tell;
Soon as to Salamis our martial pow'rs
Return victorious, from the Theban tow'rs.
He ſaid, and bid the winged arrow fly
It pierc'd the winds, and ſwept a length of ſky;

In compaſs, like the coloured arch, which ſhines
Exalted as the ſetting ſun declines;
From north to ſouth it marks th' ethereal ſpace,
And woods and mountains fill its wide embrace;
Beyond the Cretan ſhaft, it reach'd the plain;
As far before, as now a ſhepherd ſwain,
Hurl'd from a ſling, the ſounding flint can throw,
From his young charge, to drive the deadly crow.
Oilean Ajax next the weapon claim'd,
For ſkill above the reſt, and practice fam'd;
But Phœbus, chief and patron of the art,
Retarded in its flight the winged dart:
For, nor by prayers, nor holy vows, he ſtrove,
Of grateful ſacrifice, the god to move.
Downwards he turn'd it, where a cedar fair
Had ſhot its ſpiring top aloft in air;
Caught in a bough the quiv'ring weapon ſtood,
Nor fore'd a paſſage through the cloſing wood.
Ajax the next appear'd upon the plain,
With ſtrength untaught, and emulous in vain;
With ſinewy arms the ſolid yew he bends;
Near and more near approach the doubling ends:
The arrow ſprung; but erring took its way,
Far to the left, where oozy marſhes lay,
And groves of reeds; where flow Iſmenus ſtrays,
And winds, through thickets green, his wat'ry maze.
Abaſh'd the youth, with painful ſteps, retires;
And now Ulyſſes to the prize aſpires.
In ſilence thus the prudent warrior pray'd,
And, in his heart, addreſſed the martial maid:
Great queen of arts! on thee my hopes depend:
With favour to thy ſuppliant's ſuit, attend!
By thee my infant arms were taught to throw
The dart with certain aim, and bend the bow:
Oft on my little hands, immortal maid!
To guide the ſhaft, thy mighty hands were laid:
Now, goddeſs, aid me, while I ſtrive for fame;
Wing the ſwift weapon, and aſſert my claim.
He pray'd: the goddeſs, at his ſuit, deſcends;
And preſent from th' Olympian courts attends.
With force divine his manly limbs ſhe ſtrung,
The bow he ſtrain'd: the ſtarting arrow ſung;
As when the fire of gods, with wrathful hand,
Drives the ſwift lightning and the forked brand,
To waſte the labours of the careful ſwains,
Conſume the mountain flocks, or ſcorch the plains;
With ſudden glare appears the fiery ray;
No thought can trace it through th' ethereal way:
So ſwift thy winged ſhaft, Ulyſſes! flew,
Nor could the following eye its ſpeed purſue.
The flight of Teucer's arrow far ſurpaſs'd,
Upon a rural heath it pitch'd at laſt,
To Ceres built; where ſwains, in early ſpring,
With joy were wont their annual gifts to bring;
When firſt to view, above the furrow'd plain,
With pleaſing verdure, roſe the ſpringing grain.
Through all the hoſt applauding ſhouts reſound;
The hills repeat them, and the woods around.
The bended bow bold Merion next aſſumes,
A ſhaft ſelects, and ſmooths its purple plumes:
He plac'd it on the ſtring, and bending low,
With all his force collected, ſtrain'd the bow.
Up the light air the ſtarting arrow ſprung;
The tough bow crack'd; the twanging cordage ſung.

Beyond the reach of ſight the weapon drove,
And tow'r'd amid th' ethereal ſpace above:
But as it roſe, a heron croſs'd before,
From inland marſhes ſteering to the ſhore;
Under the wing it reach'd her with a wound;
Screaming, ſhe wheel'd, then tumbled to the ground.
And thus the youth: Illuſtrious chiefs! I claim,
If not the prize, at leaſt ſuperior fame:
Ungovern'd ſtrength alone the arrow ſends:
To hit the mark, the ſhooter's art commends.
In mirthful mood the hero thus addreſs'd;
And all their favour and applauſe expreſs'd.
Ulyſſes! take the bow, Atrides cries,
The ſilver bowl, brave Teucer! be thy prize.
In ev'ry art, my friends! you all excel;
And each deſerves a prize for ſhooting well:
For though the firſt rewards the victor's claim,
Glory ye merit all, and laſting fame.
He ſaid; and pond'ring in his grateful mind,
Diſtinguiſh'd honours for the dead deſign'd.
Warriors of Greece, and valiant aids from far,
Our firm aſſociates in the works of war!
Here from a rock the Theban ſtream deſcends,
And to a lake its ſilver current ſends;
Whoſe ſurface ſmooth, unruffled by the breeze,
The hills inverted ſhows and downward trees:
Ye daring youths! whoſe manly limbs divide
The mountain ſurge, and brave the ruſhing tide;
All ye, whom hopes of victory inſpire,
Stand forth diſtinguiſh'd; let the crowd retire.
This coſtly armour ſhall the youth obtain,
Who comes victorious from the wat'ry plain;
That iſland compaſs'd, where the poplar grows,
And in the lake its wav'ring image ſhows,
Who meaſuring back the liquid ſpace, before
His rivals, ſhall regain the flow'ry ſhore.
This golden bowl is fix'd the ſecond prize,
Eſteem'd alike for faſhion and for ſize.
The hero thus: with thirſt of glory fir'd,
Crete's valiant monarch to the prize aſpir'd;
With Sparta's younger chief; Ulyſſes came;
And brave Clearchus emulous of fame,
A wealthy warrior from the Samian ſhore,
In cattle rich, and heaps of precious ore:
Diſtinguiſh'd in the midſt the heroes ſtood,
Eager to plunge into the ſhining flood.
His brother's ardour purpos'd to reſtrain,
Atrides ſtrove, and counſell'd thus in vain:
Deſiſt, my brother! ſhun th' unequal ſtriſe;
For late you ſtood upon the verge of life:
No mortal man his vigour can retain,
When flowing wounds have empty'd ev'ry vein.
If now you periſh in the wat'ry way,
Grief upon grief ſhall cloud this mournful day:
Deſiſt, reſpect my counſel, and be wiſe;
Some other Spartan in your place will riſe.
To change his brother's purpoſe, thus he try'd;
But nothing mov'd: the gen'rous youth reply'd:
Brother! in vain you urge me to forbear,
From love and fond affection prompt to fear;
For firm, as e'er before, my limbs remain,
To daſh the fluid waves, or ſcour the plain.
He ſaid, and went before. The heroes move
To the dark covert of a neighb'ring grove;
Which to the bank its ſhady walk extends,
Where mixing with the lake a riv'let ends.
Prompt to contend, their purple robes they looſe,
Their figur'd veſts and gold embroider'd ſhoes;
And through the grove deſcending to the ſtrand,
Along the flow'ry bank in order ſtand.
As when, in ſome fair temple's ſacred ſhrine,
A ſtatue ſtands, expreſs'd by ſkill divine,
Apollo's or the herald powr's, who brings
Jove's mighty mandates on his airy wings;
The form majeſtic awes the bending crowd:
In port and ſtature ſuch, the heroes ſtood.
Starting at once, with equal ſtrokes, they ſweep
The ſmooth expanſe, and ſhoot into the deep;
The Cretan chief, exerting all his force,
His rivals far ſurpaſs'd, and led the courſe;
Behind Atrides, emulous of fame;
Clearchus next, and laſt Ulyſſes came.
And now they meaſur'd back the wat'ry ſpace,
And ſaw from far the limits of the race.
Ulyſſes then with thirſt of glory fir'd,
The Samian left, and to the prize aſpir'd;
Who, emulous, and dreading to be laſt,
With equal ſpeed the Spartan hero paſs'd.
Alarm'd, the Cretan monarch ſtrove, with pain,
His doubtful hopes of conqueſt to maintain;
Exerting ev'ry nerve, his limbs he ply'd,
And wiſhing, from afar the ſhore deſcry'd:
For near and nearer ſtill Ulyſſes preſt;
The waves he felt rebounding from his breaſt.
With equal zeal for victory they ſtrove;
When, glidding ſudden from the roofs of Jove,
Pallas approach'd; behind a cloud conceal'd,
Ulyſſes only ſaw her form reveal'd.
Majeſtic by the hero's ſide ſhe ſtood;
Her ſhining ſandals preſs'd the trembling flood.
She whiſper'd ſoft, as when the weſtern breeze
Stirs the thick reeds, or ſhakes the ruſtling trees:
Still ſhall thy ſoul, with endleſs thirſt of fame,
Aſpire to victory, in ev'ry game.
The honours, which from bones and ſinews riſe,
Are lightly valu'd by the good and wiſe:
To envy ſtill they rouſe the human kind;
And oft, than courted, better far declin'd.
To brave Idomeneus yield the race;
Contented to obtain the ſecond place.
The goddeſs thus: while ſtretching to the land,
With joy the Cretan chief approach'd the ſtrand;
Ulyſſes next arriv'd; and, ſpent with toil,
The weary Samian graſp'd the welcome ſoil.
But far behind the Spartan warrior lay,
Fatigu'd, and fainting, in the wat'ry way.
Thrice ſtruggling, from the lake, his head he rear'd;
And thrice, imploring aid, his voice was heard.
The Cretan monarch haſtes the youth to ſave,
And Ithacus again divides the wave;
With force renew'd their manly limbs they ply;
And from their breaſts the whit'ning billows fly.
Full in the midſt a rocky iſle divides
The liquid ſpace, and parts the ſilver tides;
Once cultivated, now with thickets green
O'erſpread, two hillocks, and a vale between.
Here dwelt an aged ſwain; his cottage ſtood
Under the cliffs, encompaſs'd by a wood.
From poverty ſecure, he heard afar,
In peace profound, the tumults of the war.
Mending a net before his rural gate,
From other toils repos'd the peaſant ſat;

When firſt the voice of Menelaus came,
By ev'ning breezes waſted from the ſtream.
Haſt'ning, his ſkiff he loos'd, and ſpread the ſail;
Some preſent god ſupply'd a proſp'rous gale:
For as the Spartan chief, with toil ſubdu'd,
Hopeleſs of life, was ſinking in the flood;
The ſwain approach'd, and in his barge receiv'd
Him ſafe from danger imminent retriev'd.
Upon a willow's trunk Therſites ſat,
Contempt and laughter fated to create,
Where, bending from a hollow bank it hung,
And rooted to the mould'ring ſurface clung;
He ſaw Atrides ſafe; and thus aloud,
With leer malign, addreſs'd the liſt'ning crowd.
Here on the flow'ry turf a hearth ſhall ſtand;
A hecatomb the fav'ring gods demand,
Who ſav'd Atrides in this dire debate,
And ſnatch'd the hero from the jaws of fate:
Without his aid we all might quit the field;
Ulyſſes, Ajax, and Tydides, yield:
His mighty arm alone the hoſt defends,
But dire diſaſter ſtill the chief attends:
Laſt ſun beheld him vanquiſh'd on the plain;
Then warriors ſav'd him, now a ſhepherd ſwain.
Defend him ſtill from perſecuting fate!
Protect the hero who protects the ſtate;
In martial conflicts watch with prudent fear,
And, when he ſwims, let help be always near!
He ſaid; and, ſcorn and laughter to excite,
His features foul he writh'd, with envious ſpite,
Smiling contempt; and pleas'd his ranc'rous heart
With aiming thus oblique a venom'd dart.
But joy'd not long; for ſoon the faithleſs wood,
Strain'd from the root, reſign'd him to the flood.
Plunging and ſputt'ring as his arms he ſpread,
A load of ſoil came thund'ring on his head,
Slipt from the bank: along the winding ſhore,
With laughter loud he heard the echoes roar,
When from the lake his crooked form he rear'd,
With horror pale, with blotting clay beſmear'd;
Then clamb'ring by the trunk, in ſad diſmay,
Which half immers'd with all its branches lay,
Confounded, to the tents he ſkulk'd along,
Amid the ſhouts and inſults of the throng.
Now cloth'd in public view the heroes ſtand,
With ſceptres grac'd the enſigns of command.
The Cretan monarch, as his prize, aſſumes
The poliſh'd helmet, crown'd with waving plumes,
The ſilver mail, the buckler's weighty round,
Th' embroider'd belt, with golden buckles bound.
The ſecond prize Laertes' ſon receiv'd,
With leſs applauſe from multitudes deceiv'd;
The firſt he could have purchas'd; but declin'd,
And yielded, to the martial maid reſign'd.
Thus they. The Thebans, near the eaſtern gate,
Around their pyres in ſilent ſorrow wait:
Hopeleſs and ſad they mourn'd their heroes ſlain,
The beſt and braveſt on their native plain.
The king himſelf, in deeper ſorrow, mourn'd;
With rage and mingled grief his boſom burn'd.
Like the grim lion, when his offspring ſlain
He ſees, and round him drawn the hunter's train;
Couch'd in the ſhade with fell intent he lies,
And glares upon the foes with burning eyes:
Such Creon ſeem'd: hot indignation drain'd
Grief's wat'ry ſources, and their flow reſtrain'd.
Upon a turret o'er the gate he ſtood,
And ſaw the Argives, like a ſhady wood,
Extended wide; and dreading fraud deſign'd,
Still to the plain his watchful eyes confin'd,
Suſpicious from his hatred, and the pow'r
Of reſtleſs paſſions, which his heart devour:
And when at ev'n's approach the hoſt retir'd,
And from the labours of the day reſpir'd,
Within the walls he drew his martial pow'rs,
And kept with ſtricteſt watch the gates and tow'rs.
Soon as the night poſſeſt th' ethereal plain,
And o'er the nations ſtretch'd her ſilent reign,
The guards were plac'd, and to the gentle ſway
Of ſleep ſubdu'd, the weary warriors lay.
Tydides only wak'd, by anxious care
Diſtracted, ſtill he mourn'd his abſent fair,
Deeming her loſt; his ſlighted counſel mov'd
Laſting reſentment, and the truce approv'd;
Contending paſſions ſhook his mighty frame;
As warring winds impel the ocean's ſtream,
When ſouth and eaſt with mingled rage contend,
And in a tempeſt on the deep deſcend:
Now, ſtretch'd upon the couch, ſupine he lay;
Then, riſing anxious, wiſh'd the morning ray.
Impatient thus, at laſt, his turbid mind,
By various counſels variouſly inclin'd,
The chief addreſt: Or ſhall I now recal
Th' Ætolian warriors from the Theban wall;
Obey the warning by a goddeſs giv'n,
Nor ſlight her counſel dictated from heav'n?
Or ſhall I try, by one deciding blow,
The war at once to end, and cruſh the foe?
This pleaſes moſt; nor ſhall the voice of fame
The daring deed, in after ages, blame.
No truce I ſwore, but ſhunn'd it, and remov'd,
Alone diſſenting while the reſt approv'd.
Soon as the morn, with early light reveal'd,
Has call'd the Theban warriors to the field;
Againſt the town I'll lead my martial pow'rs,
And fire with flaming brands her hated tow'rs:
The bane of Greece, whence dire debate aroſe
To bid the peaceful nations firſt be foes;
Where Tydeus fell, and many heroes more,
Baniſh'd untimely to the Stygian ſhore.
The public voice of Greece for vengeance calls;
And ſhall applaud the ſtroke by which ſhe falls.
He purpos'd: but the gods, who honour right,
Deny'd to treaſon what is due to might.
When from the eaſt appear'd the morning fair,
The Theban warriors to the woods repair,
Fearleſs, unarm'd; with many a harneſs'd wain,
The woody heights were crowded and the plain.
Tydides ſaw; and, iſſuing from his tent,
In arms complete, to call his warriors, went.
Their leader's martial voice the ſoldiers heard
Each in his tent, and at the call appear'd
In ſhining arms. Deiphobus began,
For virtue fam'd, a venerable man.
Him Tydeus lov'd; and in his faithful hand
Had plac'd the ſceptre of ſupreme command,
To rule the ſtate; when, from his native tow'rs,
To Thebes the hero led his martial pow'rs;
His ſon, an infant, to his care reſign'd,
With ſage advice to form his tender mind.
The hero thus: Illuſtrious chief! declare
What you intend, and whither point the war.

The truce commenc'd, you cannot, and be juſt,
The Thebans now aſſault, who freely truſt
To public faith engag'd: unarm'd they go
Far through the woods and plains, nor fear a foe.
His leader's purpoſe thus the warrior try'd;
And, inly vex'd, Tydides thus reply'd:
Father! thy words from ignorance proceed;
The truce I ſwore not, nor approv'd the deed.
The reſt are bound, and therefore muſt remain
Ling'ring inactive on this hoſtile plain:
The works of war abandon'd, let them ſhed
Their unavailing ſorrows o'er the dead:
Or aim the dart, or hurl the diſk in air;
Some paltry preſents ſhall the victor ſhare.
Warriors we came, in nobler ſtrifes to dare;
To fight and conquer in the liſts of war;
To conquer Thebes: and Jove himſelf ordains,
With wreaths of triumph, to reward our pains.
Wide to receive us ſtand the Theban gates;
A ſpacious entry, open'd by the fates,
To take deſtruction in; their turrets ſtand
Defenceleſs, and expect the flaming brand.
Now let us ſnatch th' occaſion while we may,
Years waſte in vain, and periſh by delay,
That Thebes o'erthrown, our tedious toils may ceaſe,
And we behold our native walls in peace.
Tydides thus: the ancient warrior burns
With indignation juſt, and thus returns:
O ſon! unworthy of th' illuſtrious line
From which you ſpring: your ſire's reproach and mine!
Did I e'er teach you juſtice to diſclaim;
And ſteal, by treachery, diſhoneſt fame?
The truce ſubſiſts with all the reſt; are we
Alone excepted, unengag'd and free?
Why, warriors! do not then theſe hoſtile tow'rs,
Againſt us ſend at once their martial pow'rs?
And are we ſafe but that the treaty ſtands,
And from unequal force protects our bands?
In this our foes confide; the dead they burn,
And mix with tears their aſhes in the urn.
Their tow'rs defenceleſs, and their gates unbarr'd,
Shall we with wrongs their confidence reward?
No; though each warrior of this num'rous band
Should yield to execute what you command;
Yet would not I, obedient to thy will,
Blot my long labours with a deed ſo ill.
Whatever hard or dang'rous you propoſe,
Though old and weak, I ſhun not, nor oppoſe:
But what the gods command us to forbear,
The prudent will avoid, the braveſt fear.
He ſaid; and to the ground his buckler flung;
On the hard ſoil the brazen orbit rung:
The reſt approving, dropt upon the field
His pond'rous jav'lin, each, and ſhining ſhield.
The warlike ſon of Tydeus ſtraight reſign'd,
To dire diſorder, all his mighty mind,
And ſudden wrath; as when the troubled air,
From kindled lightning ſhines with fiery glare:
With fury ſo inflam'd, the hero burn'd,
And frowning to Deiphobus return'd:
I know thee, wretch! and mark thy conſtant aim,
To teach the hoſt their leader thus to blame.
Long have I borne your pride, your reverend age,
A guardian's name, ſuppreſs'd my kindling rage:
But to protect your inſolence, no more
Shall theſe avail, and ſcreen it as before.
He ſaid; and more his fury to provoke,
Replying thus, the aged warrior ſpoke:
Vain youth! unmov'd thy angry threats I hear;
When tyrants threaten, ſlaves alone ſhould fear:
To me is ev'ry ſervile part unknown,
To glory in a ſmile, or fear a frown.
Your mighty ſire I kne v by counſel rul'd;
His fierceſt tranſports ſooner reaſon cool'd.
But wild and lawleſs, like the ſtormy wind,
The ſport of paſſion, impotent and blind,
The deſp'rate paths of folly you purſue,
And ſcorn inſtruction with a lofty brow:
Yet know, proud prince! my purpoſe I retain,
And ſee thy threat'ning eye-balls roll in vain:
Never, obſequious to thy mad command,
Againſt the foe I lift a hoſtile hand;
Till, righteouſly fulfill'd, the truce expires
Which heav'n has witneſs'd and the ſacred fires.
He ſaid; and, by his ſharp reproaches ſtung,
With ſudden hand, his lance the hero flung:
Too ſure the aim; his faithful friend it found,
And open'd in his ſide a deadly wound:
Stagg'ring he fell; and, on the verge of death,
In words like theſe reſign'd his parting breath:
O Diomed, my ſon! for thee I fear:
Sure heav'n is angry, and its vengeance near:
For whom the gods diſtinguiſh by their hate,
Themſelves are made the miniſters of fate;
For from their ſide, the deſtin'd victims drive
Their friends intent to ſuccour and retrieve.
Ere yet their vengeance falls, the pow'rs invoke,
While uninflicted hangs the fatal ſtroke;
And rule the tranſports of your wrath, leſt fear
Make ſound advice a ſtranger to your ear.
Speaking he dy'd; his gen'rous ſpirit fled
To mix with heroes in th' Elyſian ſhade.
Amaz'd, at firſt, th' Ætolian warriors ſtood;
No voice, no action, through the wond'ring crowd;
Silent they ſtood, like rows of foreſt trees,
When Jove's dread thunder quells the ſummer breeze:
But ſoon on ev'ry ſide a tumult roſe,
Loud as the ocean when a tempeſt blows:
Diſorder wild the mingling ranks confounds,
The voice of ſorrow mix'd with angry ſounds.
On ev'ry ſide againſt the chief appears
A brazen bulwark, rais'd of ſhields and ſpears,
Faſt cloſing round. But from his thigh he drew
His ſhining blade, and on the phalanx flew;
With geſture fierce the threat'ning ſteel he wav'd;
But check'd its fury, and the people ſav'd:
As the good ſhepherd ſpares his tender flock,
And lightens, when he ſtrikes, the falling crook.
The crowd dividing, ſhunn'd the hero's ire;
As from a lion's rage the ſwains retire,
When dreadful o'er the mangled prey he ſtands,
By brandiſh'd darts unaw'd and flaming brands.
And now the flame of ſudden rage ſuppreſt,
Remorſe and ſorrow ſtung the hero's breaſt.
Diſtracted through the ſcattering crowd he went,
And ſought the dark receſſes of his tent;
He enter'd: but the menial ſervants, bred
To wait his coming, ſtraight with horror fled.
Againſt the ground he daſh'd his bloody dart;
And utter'd thus the ſwellings of his heart:

Why fly my warriors? why the menial train,
Who joy'd before to meet me from the plain,
Why ſhun they now their lord's approach, nor bring,
To waſh my bloody hands, the cleanſing ſpring?
Too well, alas! my fatal rage they know,
To them more dreadful now than to the foe;
No enemy, alas! this ſpear has ſtain'd,
With hoſtile gore in glorious battle drain'd:
My guardian's blood it ſhows, whoſe hoary hairs
Still watch'd my welfare with a father's cares.
Thou Pow'r ſupreme! whoſe unreſiſted ſway
The fates of men and mortal things obey!
If wiſe and good, why did thy hand impart
So fierce an impulſe to this bounding heart?
By fury rul'd, and impotent of mind,
No awe reſtrains me, and no tie can bind:
Hence, by the madneſs of my rage o'erthrown,
My father's friend lies murder'd, and my own.
He ſaid; and, yielding to his fierce deſpair,
With both his hands he rent his rooted hair;
And, where his locks in ſhining ringlets grew,
A load of aſhes from the hearth he threw,
Rolling in duſt: but now around the ſlain
His warriors ſtood, aſſembled on the plain;
For total inſurrection ripe they ſtood;
Their angry murmurs roſe to tumult loud.
Ulyſſes ſoon the dire diſorder heard,
And preſent to explore the cauſe appear'd:
The hero came, and, 'midſt the warriors, found
Deiphobus extended on the ground.
A flood of ſorrow ſtarted to his eyes,
But ſoon he check'd each ſymptom of ſurpriſe
With prudent care, while preſſing round the chief
Each ſtrove to ſpeak the univerſal grief:
Their mingled ſpears in wild diſorder ſhook,
Like the ſharp reeds along ſome winding brook,
When through the leafleſs woods the north wind blows,
Parent of ice and thick deſcending ſnows:
Now fell revenge had bath'd in ſtreams of blood,
And pow'r in vain her deſp'rate courſe withſtood:
But Ithacus, well ſkill'd in ev'ry art
To fix or change each purpoſe of the heart,
Their ſtern decrees by ſoft perſuaſion broke,
And anſw'ring, thus with prudent purpoſe ſpoke:
Warriors! your gen'rous rage approve I muſt;
Dire was the deed, the purpos'd vengeance juſt:
But, when the kings in full aſſembly ſit,
To them the crime and puniſhment commit:
For raſh procedure wrongs the faireſt cauſe,
And private juſtice ſtill inſults the laws.
Now to your tents your ſhields and lances bear:
Theſeus expects us, and the hour is near:
The altars flame, the prieſts in order ſtand,
With ſacrifice, to hallow ev'ry band:
But to the covert of a tent convey,
Sav'd from the ſcorching winds and ſolar ray,
Theſe dear remains; till Theſeus has decreed
Diſtinguiſh'd obſequies to grace the dead.
The hero thus; and from his ſhoulders threw
The regal cloak of gold, and ſhining blue,
Which o'er the ſlain with prudent care he ſpread,
His ghaſtly features from the crowd to ſhade.
Thrice to his eyes a flood of ſorrow came;
Thrice on the brink he check'd the guſhing ſtream
In act to flow; his riſing ſighs ſuppreſt;
Patient of grief, he lock'd it in his breaſt.

BOOK VI.

To ſad deſpair th' Ætolian chief reſign'd,
And dire remorſe, which ſtung his tortur'd mind,
From early dawn in duſt extended lay,
By all abandon'd till the ſetting ray.
'Twas then Caſſandra came; and, at the door,
Thrice call'd her lord: he ſtarted from the floor:
In ſullen majeſty his chair of ſtate,
Full in the midſt oppoſed to the gate,
The hero preſs'd: the anxious maid drew near,
By love excited, and reſtrain'd by fear:
Trembling before the chief ſhe ſtood, and held
A bowl of wine with temp'ring mixtures quell'd;
The fragrant juice which ſam'd Theſprotia yields,
The vintage of her cliffs and ſunny fields.
And thus: Dread lord! reject not with diſdain
A preſent offer'd by a humble ſwain.
This bowl receive, of gentle force to charm
Diſtreſs, and of its rigour grief diſarm.
How vain to grieve for ever for the paſt!
No hour recals the actions of the laſt:
Nor groans, nor ſighs, nor ſtreams of ſorrow ſhed,
From their long ſlumber can awake the dead.
When death's ſtern pow'r his iron ſceptre lays
On the cold lips, the vital ſpirit ſtrays
To worlds unknown: nor can the dead perceive
The tears of friends or lovers when they grieve.
To ſooth his paſſion, thus the virgin try'd;
With wonder thus th' Ætolian chief reply'd:
Say who you are, who thus approach my ſeat,
Unaw'd by good Deiphobus's fate?
When all avoid my preſence, nor appear,
By indignation baniſh'd, or by fear.
What is thy name? what deed of mine could bind
To friendſhip ſo unchang'd thy conſtant mind;
Still to ſurvive the horror of a crime,
Whoſe colour blots the regiſters of time?
The hero thus: Caſſandra thus replies:
Iphicles is my name; my country lies
Where Antirrihum's rocky ſhores divide,
Extended in the deep th' Ionian tide.
There dwells my ſire, poſſeſt of ample ſtore,
In flocks and herds, and gold's refulgent ore.
Oeneus his name: his veſſels on the main,
From rich Heſperia waft him yearly gain,
And that fam'd land, whoſe promontories run
Far to the weſt, beneath the ſetting ſun;
Where ev'ry cliff with veins of ſilver gleams,
And ſands of gold lie glitt'ring in the ſtreams.

In Hymen's sacred ties two sons he bred,
Me, and my valiant brother Lycomed.
The youngest I, was charg'd his flocks to keep:
My brother rul'd his galleys on the deep.
Once as he left Iberia's wealthy shore,
With Bœtic fleeces fraught and precious ore;
Phœnician pirates waited on the strand,
Where high Pachynus stretches from the land;
In that fam'd isle where Ætna lifts his spires,
With smoke obscure, and blows his sulph'rous fires.
Behind the cliffs conceal'd, the treach'rous band
Waited the Greeks, descending on the strand:
My brother there with twenty youths they slew;
Their sudden arrows from an ambush flew.
Dire was the deed: and still my sorrows stream,
Whene'er that argument of woe I name,
And grief prevails; but in your presence most;
You still recal the brother whom I lost:
For such he was in lineaments of face,
In martial stature, and majestic grace;
Though less in all; in form inferior far;
And still, though valiant, less in works of war.
Hence, deeply rooted in my constant heart,
You challenge, as your own, a brother's part:
And I alone, of all the host, remain
To share your grief and suffer in your pain.
Thus by an artful tale, the virgin strove
To shun discov'ry, and conceal her love.
Yet still her looks, her gestures, all express'd
The maid; her love in blushes stood confess'd.
Tydides saw; and quickly, to his thought,
Each circumstance the fair Cassandra brought.
Silent he sat; and fix'd in deep surprise,
Her flushing features mark'd and downcast eyes.
He thus reply'd: The native truth reveal,
And, what I ask you, hope not to conceal.
Or shall I credit what you now have said,
Oeneus your sire, your brother Lycomed?
Or art thou she, whose beauty first did move,
Within my peaceful breast, the rage of love?
With look and voice severe the hero spoke.
Aw'd and abash'd, the conscious virgin shook;
She dropt the silver goblet on the ground;
The fragrant liquor drench'd the pavement round.
And thus Tydides with a frown address'd:
Thy art is useless, and the truth confess'd;
Nor can that fair disguise of martial arms,
And male attire, conceal thy fatal charms.
Those eyes I see, whose soft enchantment stole
My peace, and stirr'd a tempest in my soul:
By their mild light, in innocence array'd,
To guilty madness was my heart betray'd.
Deiphobus is dead; his mournful ghost,
Lamenting, wanders on the Stygian coast,
And blames my wrath. Oh! that the sun which gave
Light to thy birth, had set upon thy grave;
And he had liv'd! now lifeless on the plain
A corse he lies, and number'd with the slain.
The hero ended thus; with melting eye,
The virgin turn'd, unable to reply.
In sorrow grateful, as the queen of love
Who mourn'd Adonis in the Syrian grove,
Confounded and abash'd, she left the tent,
And through the host in silent anguish went,
Far to the left; where, in a lonely wood,
To Ceres built, a rural temple stood;
By swains frequented once, but now the place
Unsightly shrubs o'erspread and weeds disgrace.
Thither Cassandra went; and at the shrine,
With suppliant voice address'd the pow'r divine:
Hear me, dread genius of this sacred grove!
Let my complaints thy sov'reign pity move;
To seek the friendly shelter of thy dome,
With heart unstain'd, and guiltless hands, I come:
Love is my crime; and, in thy rural seat,
From infamy I seek a safe retreat.
By blame unmerited, and cold neglect,
Banish'd I come; receive me, and protect!
She pray'd; and, ent'ring, 'gainst a pillar staid
Her lance, and on the floor her armour laid.
Then falling prostrate pour'd a flood of tears,
With present ills oppress'd, and future fears.
'Twas then the herald of the queen of love,
Zelotypé, descended in the grove,
By Venus sent; but still her counsels fail'd;
And Pallas with superior sway prevail'd:
The phantom enter'd, and assum'd a form,
Pale as the moon appearing through a storm;
In Amyclea's shape disguis'd she came;
The same her aspect, and her voice the same.
Cassandra saw; a sudden horror froze
Her veins; erect her parted locks arose,
Stirr'd from the root: impatient thus the maid,
With trembling lips, in fault'ring accents, said:
My lov'd, my honour'd parent! have my groans,
From death's deep slumber, rous'd thy sacred bones:
I hop'd that nothing could your peace molest,
Nor mortal cares disturb eternal rest;
That, safe for ever on th' Elysian shore,
You heard of human misery no more.
Cassandra thus: and thus the Paphian maid:
Your gen'rous love, my child, is ill repaid;
Your griefs I feel, and bear a parent's part,
Though blood no more returns to warm my heart;
And that, which first your mortal being bred,
To dust lies mould'ring, in its earthy bed.
To Calydon, my child, with speed return;
Your father grieves, your gay companions mourn;
He deems you lost, and desp'rate of his state,
By grief subdu'd, invokes his ling'ring fate:
Incessant tears bedew his wrinkled face,
And ashes foul his hoary locks disgrace.
Return, return! nor let misjudging pride,
With further errors strive the past to hide.
Return, once more to bless his aged eyes,
Or, by your guilty stay a parent dies.
She ended thus. Her arms Cassandra spread
To fold, in close embrace, the parting shade;
In vain; for, starting from her grasp, it flew,
And, gliding through the shady walks, with-drew.
The virgin now awaits the rising morn,
With purpose fix'd impatient to return:
And when, through broken clouds, a glimm'ring ray
Of early dawn foretold approaching day;
The spear she grasp'd, and on her temples plac'd
The golden casque, with various plumage grac'd;
Tydides' gift; when in the ranks of fight
The brave Clytander sunk beneath his might.
The gods she call'd; and, bending to the ground,
Their aid invok'd with reverence profound.

Then left the dome; and where Ismenus strays,
Winding through thickest woods his wat'ry maze,
Her way pursu'd; a hostile band drew near;
Their tread she heard, and saw their armour clear,
Chief of the Theban youth; the herds they drove,
And flocks collected from the hills above.
For thus the Paphian goddess had betray'd,
To hands of cruel foes, the guiltless maid.
By sudden terror check'd, at first she stood;
Then turn'd, and fought the covert of the wood;
Nor so escap'd: her glitt'ring armour shone,
The starry helmet, and the lofty cone,
Full to the glowing east; its golden rays
Her winding flight betray'd through all its maze.
The Thebans saw; and, rushing 'midst the shade
With shouts of triumph, seiz'd the trembling maid.
Amaz'd and pale, before the hostile band,
She stood; and dropp'd the jav'lin from her hand:
O spare my life! she cry'd, nor wealth, nor fame
To purchase in the works of war, I came.
No hate to you I bear, or Creon's sway,
Whose sov'reign will the sons of Thebes obey:
Me, hapless friendship hither led, to share,
With Diomed, the dangers of the war.
I now return and quit the martial strife,
My sire to succour on the verge of life;
Who crush'd beneath a load of sorrow bends,
And to the grave, with painful steps, descends.
But if the plea of pity you reject,
The stronger ties of equity respect:
A truce we swore; Jove witnesses the deed;
On him who breaks it, vengeance will succeed.
Thus as the virgin spoke, Phericles ey'd
The arms she wore; and sternly thus reply'd:
Ill-fated wretch! that panoply to wear:
The same my brother once in fight did bear;
Whom fierce Tydides, with superior might,
O'erthrew and vanquish'd in the ranks of fight.
If with his foe my brother's spoils you shar'd,
A mark of love, or merited reward;
Prepare to yield them and resign thy breath;
To vengeance due: Clytander claims thy death.
Frowning he spoke, and drew his shining blade;
Beneath the lifted steel, th' unhappy maid
Confounded stoop'd: Menœtius caught the stroke
On his broad shield; and, interposing, spoke:
Brave youth! respect my counsel, and suspend
The sudden vengeance which you now intend.
The chiefs of Thebes, the rulers of the state,
In full assembly, at the Cadmean gate,
A monument for great Leophron rear;
His name, atchievements, and descent to bear.
Thither let this devoted youth be led,
An off'ring grateful to the hero's shade:
Nor shall Clytander less the deed approve;
Or friendly zeal applaud, and feel our love;
When fame shall tell, in Pluto's gloomy reign,
How stern Tydides mourns this warrior slain.
Thus ignorantly they; nor knew the peace
Of happy patriots, when their labours cease;
That fell revenge and life consuming hate
Find no admittance to molest their state.
And now they led the captive cross the plain;
Scarce could her trembling knees their load sustain;
Thrice had her fault'ring tongue her sex reveal'd,
But conscious shame oppos'd it and conceal'd.
Their monarch at the Cadmean gate they found,
In mournful state, with all his peers around.
Oblations to Leophron's mighty shade,
In honey, milk, and fragrant wines they paid.
And thus Lycaon's son address'd the king:
A grateful off'ring to your rites we bring.
This youth, the friend of Diomed, we found
Clad in the armour which Clytander own'd;
My brother's spoils, by Diomed possess'd,
When his keen jav'lin pierc'd the hero's breast.
Soon had my rage the hostile deed repaid,
With vengeance grateful to his kindred shade;
But public griefs the first atonements claim,
And heroes of a more distinguish'd name.
Leophron, once his country's pride and boast;
Andremon too, the bulwark of the host,
His blood demands; for when their souls shall know
The sweet revenge, in Pluto's shades below,
Pleas'd with our zeal, will each illustrious ghost,
With lighter footsteps, press th' Elysian coast.
He spoke; the princes all at once incline;
The rest, with shouts, applaud the dire design.
An altar soon of flow'ry turf they raise:
On ev'ry side the sacred torches blaze:
The bowls, in shining order, plac'd around;
The fatal knife was whetted for the wound.
Decreed to perish, stood the helpless fair;
Like some soft fawn, when, in the hunter's snare
Involv'd, she sees him from his seat arise,
His brandish'd truncheon dreads, and hears his cries;
Silent she stands, to barb'rous force resign'd,
In anguish soft, dissolv'd her tender mind.
The priests in order ev'ry rite prepar'd;
Her neck and bosom, for the blow, they bar'd;
The helmet loos'd, the buckled mail unbound,
Whose shining circles fenc'd her neck around.
Down sunk the fair disguise; and full to sight
The virgin stood, with charms divinely bright.
The comely ringlets of her flowing hair,
Such as the wood-nymphs wear, and naiads fair,
Hung loose; her middle by a zone embrac'd,
Which fix'd the floating garment round her waist.
Venus herself divine effulgence shed
O'er all her stature, and her lovely head;
Such as in spring the colour'd blossoms show,
When on their op'ning leaves the zephyrs blow:
Amazement seiz'd the chiefs; and all around,
With murmurs mix'd the wond'ring crowds resound.
Most vote to spare: the angry monarch cries:
Ye ministers, proceed! the captive dies.
Shall any here, by weak compassion mov'd,
A captive spare by stern Tydides lov'd?
The scourge of Thebes, whose wide-destroying hand
Has thinn'd our armies in their native land,
And slain my son: by all the gods I swear,
Whose names, to cite in vain, the nations fear,
That none he loves, shall ever 'scape my rage:
The vulgar plea I scorn, of sex, or age.
Ev'n she, who now appears with ev'ry grace
Adorn'd, each charm of stature and of face;

Ev'n though from Venus she could claim the prize,
Her life to vengeance forfeited, she dies.
Sternly the monarch ended. All were still,
With mute submission to the sov'reign will:
Lycaon's valiant son except; alone
His gen'rous ardour thus oppos'd the throne:
Dread sov'reign! listen with a patient ear,
And what I now shall offer, deign to hear.
When first by force we seiz'd this captive maid,
The truce was vi'lated, our faith betray'd;
And justice, which, in war and peace, prevails
Alike, and weighs their deeds with equal scales,
Her freedom claims, with presents to atone
For what our rage perfidiously has done:
Let us not, now, to further wrongs proceed;
But fear the curse for perjury decreed.
Phericles thus: and, with a stern regard,
His indignation thus the king declar'd:
Vain giddy youth! forbear, with factious breath,
To rouse my justice to pronounce thy death:
In opposition, first of all you move,
While others hear in silence, and approve.
Your bold presumption check, and learn to dread
My vengeance thunder'd on your wretched head.
Frowning he ended thus: his threats defy'd,
With gen'rous heat Phericles thus reply'd:
Princes! attend, and trust my words sincere;
The king I honour, and his will revere,
When truth gives sanction to his just commands,
Nor common right in opposition stands:
Yet gen'rous minds a principle retain,
Which promises and threats attempt in vain,
Which claims dominion, by the gods impress,
The love of justice in the human breast:
By this inspir'd, against superior might,
I rise undaunted in the cause of right.
And now, by all th' avenging gods I swear,
Whose names, to cite in vain, the nations fear;
That no bold warrior of the Theban bands,
This maid shall violate with hostile hands;
While these my arms have force the lance to wield,
And lift in her defence this pond'rous shield,
Not ev'n the king himself, whose sov'reign sway
The martial sons of sacred Thebes obey.
He said: and, by his bold example fir'd,
Twelve warriors rose, with equal zeal inspir'd.
With shining steel the altar they surround,
The fire now flaming, and the victim crown'd.
On ev'ry side in wild disorder move
The thick compacted crowds; as when a grove,
Rock'd by a sudden whirlwind, bends and strains,
From right to left, along the woodland plains:
Fell discord soon had rag'd, in civil blood,
With wide destruction not to be withstood;
For from his seat the angry monarch sprung,
And lifted, for the blow, the sceptre hung:
But 'midst the tumult, Clytophon appear'd,
Approv'd for wisdom, and with rev'rence heard.
Straight, by the robe, the furious chief he seiz'd,
And thus, with sage advice, his wrath appeas'd:
Hear, mighty prince! respect the words of age,
And calm the wasteful tempest of thy rage;
The public welfare to revenge prefer,
For nations suffer when their sov'reigns err.
It ill becomes us now, when hostile pow'rs
With strictest siege invest our straiten'd tow'rs;
It ill becomes us thus, thus with civil arms,
To wound the state, and aggravate our harms.
Hear, all ye princes! what to me appears
A prudent counsel, worthy of your ears:
Let us inquire, if in our hands we hold
A life esteem'd by Diomed the bold:
If, in his breast, those tender passions reign,
Which charms like these must kindle and maintain;
Our mandates freely to his tent we send,
For to our will his haughty soul must bend:
Nor dares he, while the Theban walls enclose
A pledge so dear, invade us or oppose;
But must submit, whenever we require,
Or with his pow'rs to aid us, or retire.
He said; the monarch painfully suppress'd
His burning rage, and lock'd it in his breast.
He thus reply'd: Thy prudent words inspire
Pacific counsels, and subdue mine ire:
But if in peace I rul'd the Theban state,
Nor hostile armies thunder'd at my gate;
They had not dar'd, with insolence and spite,
My purpose to oppose and scorn my might.
He said, and to his seat again retir'd;
While suden transport ev'ry breast inspir'd;
As swains rejoice, when, from the troubled skies,
By breezes swept, a gather'd tempest flies;
With wish'd return the sun exerts his beams,
To cheer the woods and gild the shining streams.
Meanwhile, the son of Tydeus, through the plain,
With wishing eyes, Cassandra sought in vain;
At ev'ry leader of the bands inquir'd;
Then, sad and hopeless, to his tent retir'd.
'Twas then his grief the bounds of silence broke,
And thus in secret to himself he spoke:
Me sure, of all mens sons, the gods have curs'd
With their chief plagues, the greatest and the worst;
Doom'd to disasters, from my earliest hour;
Not wise to shun, nor patient to endure.
From me the source, unnumber'd ills proceed
To all my friends; Dëiphobus is dead!
His soul excluded, seeks the nether skies,
And wrong'd Cassandra from my presence flies.
Me surely, at my birth, the gods design'd
Their rod of wrath, to scourge the human kind;
For slaughter form'd, with brutal fury brave,
Prompt to destroy, but impotent to save.
How could my madness blame thee, gen'rous maid!
And, with my crime, thy innocence upbraid!
Dëiphobus is fall'n! but not by thee;
Thy only fault, alas! was love to me:
For this, in plated steel thy limbs were dress'd,
A weighty shield thy tender arm oppress'd:
For this thou didst to hostile fields repair,
And court such objects as distract the fair;
Patient above thy sex! an ill reward,
Blame and unjust reproach, was all you shar'd.
By my unkindness banish'd, now you roam,
And seek, through paths unknown, your distant home:
To mountain wolves expos'd, a helpless prey,
And men unjust, more terrible than they.
Save her, ye gods! and let me stand the aim
Of Jove's all-dreaded bolt, and scorching flame.

hus plain'd the hero till the ſetting ray
W hdrew, and ev'ning ſhades expell'd the day;
Th n in his tent, before his lofty ſeat,
Appear'd a herald from the Theban ſtate;
The hero's knees, with trembling hands, he
preſs'd,
And with his meſſage thus the chief addreſs'd:
Hear, mighty prince! the tidings which I bring,
From Thebes aſſembled, and the Theban king.
An armed warrior of your native train,
At early dawn, was ſeiz'd upon the plain.
What others did, forgive, if I relate;
Creon commands me and the Theban ſtate.
A fairer youth, in martial arms, ne'er came
To court bright honour in the fields of fame.
A caſque of poliſh'd ſteel his temples preſs'd,
The golden cone with various plumage dreſs'd;
A ſilver mail embrac'd his body round,
And greaves of braſs his ſlender ancles bound:
To Thebes well-known the panoply he wore,
The ſame, which once, renown'd Clytander bore.
Our warriors dragg'd him to the Cadmean gate,
Where Creon, with the rulers of the ſtate,
Aſſembled ſat; the trembling captive ſtood,
With arms ſurrounded, and th' inſulting crowd.
O ſpare my life! he cry'd, nor wealth nor fame
To purchaſe in the works of war, I came.
No hate to you, I bear, or Creon's ſway,
Whoſe ſov'reign will the ſons of Thebes obey.
Me luckleſs friendſhip hither led, to ſhare,
With Diomed, the dangers of the war.
I now return, and quit the martial ſtrife,
My ſire to ſuccour on the verge of life;
Whoſe feeble age the preſent aid demands,
And kind aſſiſtance of my filial hands.
His words inclin'd the wiſeſt and the beſt,
And ſome their gen'rous ſympathy expreſs'd:
But others, nothing mov'd, his guiltleſs head
With threats demanded, to avenge the dead:
And thus the king: My countrymen, attend!
In this, let all your loud contention end:
If Diomed, to ſave this valu'd life,
The field abandons and the martial ſtrife;
The captive ſafe, with preſents, I'll reſtore,
Of braſs, and ſteel, and gold's refulgent ore:
But if theſe terms the haughty chief ſhall ſlight,
And for the Argives ſtill exert his might;
Before our heroes' tombs, this youth ſhall bleed,
To pleaſe the living, and avenge the dead.
His ſentence all approv'd; and to your ear,
As public herald, I the meſſage bear;
And muſt your anſwer crave, without delay;
Creon and Thebes already blame my ſtay.
Thus as he ſpoke, contending paſſions ſtrove,
With force oppos'd, the hero's ſoul to move;
As ſhifting winds impel the ocean's tide,
And ſway the reeling waves from ſide to ſide:
Rage dictated revenge; but tender fear,
From love and pity, warn'd him to forbear:
Till, like a lion, fiercer from his pain,
Theſe words broke forth in wrath and high diſdain:
Go, tell your tyrant, that he tempts a ſoul,
Which preſents cannot win, nor threats controul:
Not form'd, like his, to mock at ev'ry tie;
With perjury to ſport, and heav'n defy.
A common league the Argive warriors ſwore,
And ſeal'd the ſacred tie with wine and gore:
My faith was plighted then, and ne'er ſhall fail,
Nor Creon's arts, to change me, aught avail.
But tell him loud, that all the hoſt may hear,
And Thebes through all her warriors learn to fear;
If any, from himſelf, or by command,
The captive violates with hoſtile hand;
That all ſhall quickly rue the guilty deed,
When, to requite it, multitudes ſhall bleed.
Sternly the hero ended, and reſign'd,
To fierce diſorder, all his mighty mind.
Already in his thoughts, with vengeful hands,
He dealt deſtruction 'midſt the Theban bands,
In fancy ſaw the tott'ring turrets fall,
And led his warriors o'er the levell'd wall.
Rous'd with the thought, from his high ſeat he
ſprung:
And graſp'd the ſword, which on a column hung;
The ſhining blade he balanc'd thrice in air;
His lances next he view'd and armour fair.
When, hanging 'midſt the coſtly panoply,
A ſcarf embroider'd met the hero's eye,
Which fair Caſſandra's ſkilful hands had wrought;
A preſent for her lord, in ſecret brought,
That day, when firſt he led his martial train
In arms to combat on the Theban plain.
As ſome ſtrong charm, which magic ſounds com-
poſe,
Suſpends a downward torrent as it flows;
Checks in the precipice its headlong courſe,
And calls it trembling upwards to its ſource:
Such ſeem'd the robe, which, to the hero's eyes,
Made the fair artiſt in her charms to riſe.
His rage, ſuſpended in its full career,
To love reſigns, to grief and tender fear.
Glad would he now his former words revoke,
And change the purpoſe which in wrath he
ſpoke;
From hoſtile hands his captive fair to gain,
From fate to ſave her, or the ſervile chain:
But pride, and ſhame, the fond deſign ſuppreſt;
Silent he ſtood, and lock'd it in his breaſt.
Yet had the wary Theban well divin'd,
By ſymptoms ſure, each motion of his mind:
With joy he ſaw the heat of rage ſuppreſs'd;
And thus again his artful words addreſs'd:
Illuſtrious prince! with patience bend thine ear,
And what I now ſhall offer, deign to hear.
Of all the griefs, diſtreſsful mortals prove,
The woes of friendſhip moſt my pity move.
You much I pity, and the youth regret,
Whom you too rigidly reſign to fate;
Expos'd, alone, no hope of comfort near,
The ſcorn and cruelty of foes to bear.
O that my timely counſel might avail,
For love, and ſympathy, to turn the ſcale!
That Thebes releas'd from thy devouring ſword,
The captive honour'd, and with gifts reſtor'd,
We yet might hope for peace, and you again
Enjoy the bleſſings of your native reign.
Inſinuating thus, the herald try'd
His aim to compaſs; and the chief reply'd:
In vain you ſtrive to ſway my conſtant mind;
I'll not depart while Theſeus ſtays behind:
Me nothing e'er, to change my faith, ſhall move,
By men atteſted, and the gods above:
But ſince your lawleſs tyrant has detain'd
A valu'd hoſtage, treacherouſly gain'd;

And dire injuſtice only will reſtore
When force compels, or proffer'd gifts implore:
A truce I grant, till the revolving ſun,
Twice ten full circuits of his journey run,
From the red ocean, points the morning ray,
And on the ſteps of darkneſs pours the day:
Till then, from fight and council I abſtain,
Nor lead my pow'rs to combat on the plain:
For this, your monarch to my tent ſhall ſend
The captive, and from injuries defend.
This proffer is my laſt; in vain will prove
All your attempts my fixed mind to move:
If Thebes accepts it, let a ſign declare,
A flaming torch, diſplay'd aloft in air,
From that high tow'r, whoſe airy top is known
By travellers from afar, and marks the town;
The fane of Jove: but if they ſhall reject
The terms I ſend, nor equity reſpect,
They ſoon ſhall feel the fury of mine ire,
In waſteful havoc, and the rage of fire.

The hero thus; and round his ſhoulders flung
A ſhaggy cloak, with vulgar trappings hung;
And on his head a leathern helmet plac'd,
A boar's rough front with griſly terrors grac'd;
A ſpear he next aſſum'd, and pond'rous ſhield,
And led the Theban, iſſuing to the field.
Amid ſurrounding guards they paſs'd unſeen:
For night had ſtretch'd her friendly ſhade between;
Till nearer, through the gloom, the gate they knew;
The herald enter'd, and the chief withdrew:
But turning oft to Thebes his eager eyes,
The ſignal on the tow'r at laſt he ſpies;
A flaming torch upon the top expos'd,
Its ray at once his troubled mind compos'd:
Such joy he felt, as when a watch-tow'r's light,
Seen through the gloom of ſome tempeſtuous night,
Glads the wet mariner, a ſtar to guide
His lab'ring veſſel, through the ſtormy tide.

BOOK VII.

Now ſilent night the middle ſpace poſſeſt,
Of heaven, or journey'd downwards to the weſt:
But Creon, ſtill with thirſt of vengeance fir'd,
Repoſe declin'd, nor from his toils reſpir'd;
But held his peers in council to debate
Plans for revenge ſuggeſted by his hate.
Before the king Dienices appear'd;
To ſpeak his tidings ſad the hero fear'd;
Return'd from Oeta, thither ſent to call
Alcides to protect his native wall.

And Creon thus: Dienices! explain
Your ſorrow; are our hopes of aid in vain?
Does Hercules neglect his native ſoil;
While ſtrangers reap the harveſt of his toil?
We from your ſilence cannot hope ſucceſs;
But further ills your falling tears confeſs;
Cleon my ſon is dead; his fate you mourn;
I muſt not hope to ſee his fate return.
Sure if he liv'd, he had not come the laſt;
But found his father with a filial haſte.
His fate, at once, declare, you need not fear,
With any tale of grief to wound mine ear,
Proof to misfortune: for the man who knows
The whole variety of human woes
Can ſtand unmov'd though loads of ſorrow preſs;
Practis'd to bear, familiar with diſtreſs.

The monarch queſtion'd thus; and thus the youth:
Too well thy boding fear has found the truth.
Cleon is dead; the hero's aſhes lie
Where Pelion's lofty head aſcends the ſky.
For as, on Oeta's top, he vainly ſtrove
To win the arrows of the ſon of Jove;
Compelling Philoctetes, to reſign,
The friend of Hercules, his arms divine;
The inſult to repel, an arrow flew,
And from his heart the vital current drew:
Proſtrate he ſunk; and welling from the wound,
A flood of gore impurpled all the ground.

Thus ſpoke Dienices. The king ſuppreſt
His big diſtreſs, and lock'd it in his breaſt:
Sighing he thus reply'd: The cauſe declare,
Which holds the great Alcides from the war;
And why another now, the bow commands
And arrows ſacred, from his mighty hands.
Nor fear my valiant ſon's untimely fate,
With all its weight of ſorrow, to relate:
All I can bear. Againſt my naked head,
I ſee the vengeance of the gods decreed;
With hoſtile arms beſet my tott'ring reign;
The people waſted, and my children ſlain.
Attempts prove fruitleſs; ev'ry hope deceives;
Succeſs in proſpect diſappointment gives;
With ſwift approach, I ſee deſtruction come;
But with a mind unmov'd, I'll meet my doom;
Nor ſtain this war-worn viſage with a tear,
Since all that Heav'n has purpos'd, I can bear.
The monarch thus his riſing grief ſuppreſs'd;
And thus the peers Dienices addreſs'd:
Princes of Thebes! and thou, whoſe ſov'reign hand
Sways the dread ſceptre of ſupreme command!
To what I offer, lend an equal ear;
The truth I'll ſpeak, and judge me when you hear.
If Cleon, by my fault, no more returns,
For whom, her ſecond hope, his country mourns;
No doom I deprecate, no torture fly,
Which juſtice can denounce, or rage ſupply:
But if my innocence appears, I claim
Your cenſure to eſcape, and public blame.

From Marathon by night our courſe we ſteer'd,
And paſs'd Geraſtus when the day appear'd;
Andros we ſaw, with promontories ſteep,
Aſcend; and Delos level with the deep.
A circuit wide; for where Euripus roars
Between Eubœa and the Theban ſhores,
The Argives had diſpos'd their naval train;
And prudence taught to ſhun the hoſtile plain.

Four days we fail'd; the fifth our voyage ends,
Where Oeta, ſloping to the ſea, deſcends.
The vales I ſearch'd, and woody heights above,
Guided by fame, to find the ſon of Jove,
With Cleon only; for we charg'd the band
To ſtay, and guard our veſſel on the ſtrand.
In vain we ſearch'd: but when the lamp of day
Approach'd the ocean with its ſetting ray,
A cave appear'd, which from a mountain ſteep,
Through a low valley, look'd into the deep.
Thither we turn'd our weary ſteps, and found
The cavern hung with ſavage ſpoils around;
The wolf's gray fur, the wild boar's ſhaggy hide,
The lion's mane, the panther's ſpeckled pride:
Theſe ſigns we mark'd; and knew the rocky ſeat,
Some ſolitary hunter's wild retreat.
Farther invited by a glimm'ring ray,
Which through the darkneſs ſhed uncertain day,
In the receſſes of the cave we found
The club of Hercules; and wrapt around,
Which, ſeen before, we knew, the lion's ſpoils,
The mantle which he wore in all his toils.
Amaz'd we ſtood; in ſilence, each his mind
To fear and hope alternately reſign'd:
With joy we hop'd to find the hero near;
The club and mantle found, diſpos'd to fear.
His force invincible in fight we knew,
Which nought of mortal kind could e'er ſubdue.
But fear'd Apollo's might, or his who heaves
The ſolid earth, and rules the ſtormy waves.

Pond'ring we ſtood, when on the roof above,
The tread of feet deſcending through the grove
Which crown'd the hollow cliff, amaz'd we heard;
And ſtraight before the cave a youth appear'd.
A bleeding buck acroſs his ſhoulders flung,
Ty'd with a rope of twiſted ruſhes hung.
He dropt his burden in the gate, and plac'd
Againſt the pillar'd cliff his bow unbrac'd.
'Twas then our footſteps in the cave he heard,
And through the gloom our ſhining arms appear'd.
His bow he bent; and backwards from the rock
Retir'd, and, of our purpoſe queſt'ning, ſpoke:
Say who you are, who ſeek this wild abode,
Through deſert paths, by mortals rarely trod?
If juſt, and with a fair intent you come,
Friendſhip expect, and ſafety in my dome:
But if for violence, your danger learn,
And truſt my admonition when I warn:
Certain as fate, where'er this arrow flies,
The hapleſs wretch who meets its fury dies:
No buckler to reſiſt its point avails,
The hammer'd cuiraſs yields, the breaſt-plate fails;
And where it once has drawn the purple gore,
No charm can cure, no med'cine health reſtore.

With threats he queſtion'd thus; and Cleon ſaid
We come to call Alcides to our aid;
By us the ſenators of Thebes entreat
The hero to protect his native ſtate:
For hoſtile arms inveſt the Theban tow'rs;
Famine within, without the ſword devours.
If you have learn'd where Hercules remains,
In mountain caves, or hamlets on the plains,
Our way direct; for, led by gen'ral fame,
To find him in theſe defert wilds we came.

He ſpoke: and Philoctetes thus again:
May Jove for Thebes ſome other aid ordain;
For Hercules no more exerts his might
Againſt oppreſſive force, for injur'd right:
Retir'd, among the gods, he ſits ſerene,
And views, beneath him far, this mortal ſcene:
But enter now this grotto, and partake
What I can offer for the hero's ſake:
With you from ſacred Thebes he claim'd his birth,
For godlike virtue fam'd through all the earth;
Thebes therefore and her people ſtill ſhall be
Like fair Trachines and her ſons to me.
Enter, for now the doubtful twilight fails,
And o'er the ſilent earth the night prevails:
From the moiſt valleys noxious fogs ariſe,
To wrap the rocky heights, and ſhade the ſkies.

The cave we enter'd, and his bounty ſhar'd;
A rural banquet by himſelf prepar'd.
But ſoon the rage of thirſt and hunger ſtaid,
My mind ſtill doubtful, to the youth I ſaid:
Muſt hapleſs Thebes, deſpairing and undone,
Want the aſſiſtance of her braveſt ſon?
The hero's fate explain, nor grudge mine ear
The ſad aſſurance of our loſs to hear.
I queſtion'd thus. The youth with horror pale
Attempted to recite an awful tale;
Above the fabled woes which bards rehearſe,
When ſad Melpomene inſpires the verſe.

The wife of Jove (Pœonides reply'd)
All arts in vain to cruſh the hero try'd;
For brighter from her hate his virtue burn'd;
And diſappointed ſtill, the goddeſs mourn'd.
His ruin to effect at laſt ſhe ſtrove
By jealouſy, the rage of injur'd love.
The bane to Deianira's breaſt convey'd,
Who, as a rival, fear'd th' Oechalian maid.
The goddeſs knew, that jealous of her lord,
A robe ſhe kept with latent poiſons ſtor'd;
The Centaur's gift, bequeath'd her, to reclaim
The hero's love, and light his dying flame;
If e'er, devoted to a ſtranger's charms,
He ſtray'd inconſtant from her widow'd arms;
But giv'n with treacherous intent to prove
The death of nature, not the life of love.
Mad from her jealouſy, the charm ſhe try'd;
His love to change, the deadly robe apply'd:
And guiltleſs of the preſent which he bore,
Lychas convey'd it to Cenæum's ſhore:
Where to the pow'rs immortal for their aid,
A grateful hecatomb the hero paid:
When favour'd from above, his arm o'erthrew
The proud Eurytus, and his warriors ſlew.
The venom'd robe the hero took, nor fear'd
A gift by conjugal reſpects endear'd:
And ſtraight reſign'd the lion's ſhaggy ſpoils,
The mantle which he wore in all his toils.
No ſign of harm the fatal preſent ſhow'd,
Till rous'd by heat its ſecret venom glow'd;
Straight on the fleſh it ſeiz'd like ſtiffeſt glue,
And ſcorching deep to ev'ry member grew.
Then tearing with his hands th' infernal ſnare,
His ſkin he rent, and laid the muſcles bare,
While ſtreams of blood deſcending from the wound,
Mix'd with the gore of victims on the ground.
The guiltleſs Lychas, in his furious mood,
He ſeiz'd, as trembling by his ſide he ſtood:
Him by the ſlender ancle ſnatch'd, he ſwung,
And 'gainſt a rocky promontory flung:
Which, from the dire event, his name retains;
Through his white locks impurpl'd ruſh the brains.
Aw'd by the deed, his deſp'rate rage to ſhun,
Our bold companions from his preſence run.

I too, conceal'd behind a rock, remain'd;
My love and ſympathy by fear reſtrain'd:
For furious 'midſt the ſacred fires he flew;
The victims ſcatter'd, and the hearths o'erthrew.
Then ſinking proſtrate, where a tide of gore
From oxen ſlain had blacken'd all the ſhore,
His form divine he roll'd in duſt and blood;
His groans the hills re-echo'd and the flood.
Then riſing furious, to the ocean's ſtreams
He ruſh'd, in hope to quench his raging flames;
But burning ſtill the unextinguiſh'd pain,
The ſhore he left, and ſtretch'd into the main.
A galley anchor'd near the beach we found;
Her curled canvaſs to the breeze unbound;
And trac'd his deſp'rate courſe, till far before
We ſaw him land on Oeta's deſert ſhore.
Towards the ſkies his furious hands he rear'd,
And thus, acroſs the deep his voice we heard:
Sov'reign of heav'n and earth! whoſe bound-
leſs ſway
The fates of men and mortal things obey!
If e'er delighted from the courts above,
In human form, you fought Alcmena's love;
If fame's unchanging voice to all the earth,
With truth, proclaims you author of my birth;
Whence from a courſe of ſpotleſs glory run,
Succeſsful toils and wreaths of triumph won,
Am I thus wretched? better, that before
Some monſter fierce had drunk my ſtreaming
gore;
Or cruſh'd by Cacus, foe to gods and men,
My batter'd brains had ſtrew'd his rocky den:
Than from my glorious toils and triumphs paſt,
To fall ſubdu'd by female arts at laſt.
O cool my boiling blood, ye winds, that blow
From mountains loaded with eternal ſnow,
And crack the icy cliffs; in vain! in vain!
Your rigour cannot quench my raging pain!
For round this heart the furies wave their brands,
And wring my entrails with their burning hands.
Now bending from the ſkies, O wife of Jove!
Enjoy the vengeance of thy injur'd love:
For fate, by me, the thund'rer's guilt atones;
And, puniſh'd in her ſon, Alcmena groans:
The object of your hate ſhall ſoon expire;
Fix'd on my ſhoulders preys a net of fire:
Whom nor the toils nor dangers could ſubdue,
By falſe Euryſtheus dictated from you;
Nor tyrants lawleſs, nor the monſtrous brood,
Which haunts the deſert or infeſts the flood,
Nor Greece, nor all the barb'rous climes that lie
Where Phœbus ever points his golden eye;
A woman hath o'erthrown! ye gods! I yield
To female arts, unconquer'd in the field.
My arms—alas! are theſe the fame that bow'd
Anteus, and his giant force ſubdu'd?
That dragg'd Nemea's monſter from his den;
And ſlew the dragon in his native fen?
Alas, alas! their mighty muſcles fail,
While pains infernal ev'ry nerve aſſail:
Alas, alas! I feel in ſtreams of woe
Theſe eyes diſſolv'd, before untaught to flow.
Awake my virtue, oft in dangers try'd,
Patient in toils, in deaths unterrify'd,
Rouſe to my aid; nor let my labours paſt,
With fame atchiev'd, be blotted by the laſt;
Firm and unmov'd, the preſent ſhock endure;
Once triumph, and for ever reſt ſecure.

The hero thus; and graſp'd a pointed rock
With both his arms, which ſtraight in pieces broke,
Cruſh'd in his agony; then on his breaſt
Deſcending proſtrate, further plaint ſuppreſt.
And now the clouds, in duſky volumes ſpread,
Had darken'd all the mountains with their ſhade:
The winds withhold their breath; the billows reſt;
The ſky's dark image on the deep impreſt.
A bay for ſhelter op'ning in the ſtrand,
We ſaw, and ſteer'd our veſſel to the land.
Then mounting on the rocky beach above,
Through the thick gloom deſcry'd the ſon of Jove.
His head, declin'd between his hands, he lean'd;
His elbows on his bended knees ſuſtain'd.
Above him ſtill a hov'ring vapour flew,
Which, from his boiling veins, the garment drew.
Through the thick woof we ſaw the fumes aſpire;
Like ſmoke of victims from the ſacred fire.
Compaſſion's keeneſt touch my boſom thrill'd;
My eyes, a flood of melting ſorrow fill'd:
Doubtful I ſtood: and, pond'ring in my mind,
By fear and pity variouſly inclin'd,
Whether to ſhun the hero, or eſſay,
With friendly words, his torment to allay:
When burſting from above with hideous glare,
A flood of lightning kindled all the air.
From Oeta's top it ruſh'd in ſudden ſtreams;
The ocean redden'd at its fiery beams.
Then, bellowing deep, the thunder's awful ſound,
Shook the firm mountains and the ſhores around.
Far to the eaſt it roll'd, a length of ſky;
We heard Euboea's rattling cliffs reply,
As at his maſter's voice a ſwain appears,
When wak'd from ſleep his early call he hears,
The hero roſe; and to the mountain turn'd,
Whoſe cloud-involved top with lightning burn'd:
And thus his fire addreſs'd: With patient mind,
Thy call I hear, obedient and reſign'd;
Faithful and true the oracle! which ſpoke,
In high Dodona, from the ſacred oak;
"That twenty years of painful labours paſt,
"On Oeta's top I ſhould repoſe at laſt:"
Before, involv'd, the meaning lay conceal'd;
But now I find it in my fate reveal'd.
Thy ſov'reign will I blame not, which denies,
With length of days to crown my victories:
Though ſtill with danger and diſtreſs engag'd,
For injur'd right eternal war I wag'd;
A life of pain, in barb'rous climates led,
The heav'ns my canopy, a rock my bed:
More joy I've felt than delicacy knows,
Or all the pride of regal pomp beſtows.
Dread ſire! thy will I honour and revere,
And own thy love with gratitude ſincere, [boaſt
Which watch'd me in my toils, that none could
To raiſe a trophy from my glory loſt:
And though at laſt, by female arts, o'ercome,
And unſuſpected fraud, I find my doom;
There to have fail'd, my honour ne'er can ſhake,
Where vice is only ſtrong and virtue weak.
He ſaid: and turning to the cloudy height,
The ſeat of thunder, wrapt in ſable night,
Firm and undaunted trod the ſteep aſcent;
An earthquake rock'd the mountain as he went.
Back from the ſhaking ſhores retir'd the flood;
In horror loſt, my bold companions ſtood,
To ſpeech or motion; but the preſent pow'r
Of love inſpir'd me, in that awful hour;

With trembling steps I trac'd the son of Jove;
And saw him darkly on the steep above, [noise
Through the thick gloom, the thunder's awful
Ceas'd; and I call'd him thus with feeble voice;
O son of mighty Jove! thy friend await;
Who comes to comfort thee, or share thy fate:
In ev'ry danger and distress before,
His part your faithful Philoctetes bore.
O let me still attend you, and receive
The comfort which a present friend can give,
Who come obsequious for your last commands,
And tenders to your need his willing hands.
My voice he heard; and from the mountains
Saw me ascending on the steep below. [brow
To favour my approach his steps he stay'd;
And pleas'd, amidst his anguish smiling, said:
Approach, my Philoctetes! Oft I've known
Your friendly zeal in former labours shown:
The present, more than all, your love proclaims,
Which braves the thunderer's bolts and volley'd
flames;
With daring step the rocking earthquake treads,
While the firm mountains shake their trembling
heads.
As my last gift, these arrows with the bow,
Accept the greatest which I can bestow;
My glory, all my wealth; of pow'r to raise
Your name to honour and immortal praise;
If for wrong'd innocence your shafts shall fly,
As Jove by signs directs them from the sky.
Straight from his mighty shoulders, as he spoke,
He loos'd and lodg'd them in a cavern'd rock;
To lie untouch'd, till future care had drain'd
Their poison from the venom'd robe retain'd.
And thus again: the only aid I need,
For all my favours past, the only meed,
Is, that, with vengeful hand, you fix a dart
In cruel Deianira's faithless heart:
Her treach'rous messenger already dead,
Let her, the author of his crime, succeed.
This awful scene forsake without delay;
In vain to mingle with my fate you stay:
No kind assistance can my state retrieve,
Nor any friend attend me, and survive.
The hero thus his tender care express,
And spread his arms to clasp me to his breast;
But soon withdrew them, least his tainted veins
Infection had convey'd and mortal pains:
Silent I stood in dreams of sorrow drown'd,
Till from my heart these words a passage found:
O bid me not forsake thee, nor impose
What wretched Philoctetes must refuse.
By him I swear, whose presence now proclaim
The thunders awful voice and forked flame,
Beneath whose steps the trembling desert quakes,
And earth affrighted to her centre shakes;
I never will forsake thee, but remain
While struggling life these ruin'd limbs retain:
No form of fate shall drive me from thy side,
Nor death with all its terrors e'er divide;
Tho' the same stroke our mortal lives should end,
One flash consume us, and our ashes blend.
I spoke; and to the cloudy steep we turn'd;
Along its brow the kindled forest burn'd.
The savage brood, descending to the plains,
The scatter'd flocks, and dread distracted swains,
Rush'd from the shaking cliffs: we saw them come,
In wild disorder mingled, through the gloom.
And now appear'd the desert's lofty head,
A narrow rock with forests thinly spread.
His mighty hands display'd aloft in air,
To Jove the hero thus address'd a pray'r: [skies,
Hear me, dread pow'r! whose nod controls the
At whose command the winged lightning flies:
Almighty sire; if yet you deign to own
Alcmena's wretched offspring as your son;
Some comfort in my agony impart,
And bid thy forked thunder rend this heart:
Round my devoted head it idly plays;
And aids the fire, which wastes me with its rays:
By heat inflam'd, this robe exerts its pow'r,
My scorched limbs to shrivel and devour;
Upon my shoulders, like a dragon, clings,
And fixes in my flesh a thousand stings.
Great sire! in pity to my suit attend,
And with a sudden stroke my being end.
As thus the hero pray'd, the lightning ceas'd,
And thicker darkness all the hill embrac'd.
He saw his suit deny'd: in fierce despair,
The rooted pines he tore, and cedars fair;
And from the crannies of the rifted rocks,
Twisted with force immense the stubborn oaks.
Of these upon the cliff a heap he laid,
And thus address'd me, as I stood dismay'd:
Behold, my friend! the ruler of the skies,
In agony invok'd, my suit denies;
But sure the oracle inspir'd from heaven,
Which in Dodona's sacred grove was given,
The truth declar'd; "that now my toils shall cease,
"And all my painful labours end in peace:
Peace, death can only bring: the raging smart,
Wrapt with my vitals, mocks each healing art.
Not all the plants that clothe the verdant field,
Not all the health a thousand mountains yield,
Which on their tops the sage physician finds,
Or digging from the veins of flint unbinds,
This fire can quench. And therefore, to obey
My last commands, prepare without delay.
When on this pile you see my limbs compos'd,
Shrink not, but bear what must not be oppos'd;
Approach, and, with an unrelenting hand,
Fix in the boughs beneath, a flaming brand.
I must not longer trust this madding pain,
Lest some rash deed should all my glory stain.
Lychas I slew upon the Cœnian shore,
Who knew not, sure, the fatal gift he bore:
His guilt had taught him else to fly, nor wait,
Till from my rage he found a sudden fate.
I will not Deianira's action blame;
Let heav'n decide which only knows her aim:
Whether from hate with treacherous intent,
This fatal garment to her lord she sent;
Or, by the cunning of a foe betray'd,
His vengeance thus imprudently convey'd.
If this, or that, I urge not my command,
Nor claim her fate from thy avenging hand:
To lodge my lifeless bones is all I crave,
Safe and uninjur'd in the peaceful grave.
This with a hollow voice and alter'd look,
In agony extreme, the hero spoke.
I pour'd a flood of sorrow, and withdrew,
Amid the kindled groves, to pluck a bough;
With which the structure at the base I fir'd:
On ev'ry side the pointed flames aspir'd.
But ere involving smoke the pile enclos'd,
I saw the hero on the top repos'd;

Serene as one who, near the fountain laid,
At noon enjoys the cool refreshing shade.
The venom'd garment his's'd; its touch the fires
Avoiding, slop'd oblique their pointed spires:
On ev'ry side the pointed flame withdrew,
And levell'd, round the burning structure flew.
At last victorious to the top they rose;
Firm and unmov'd the hero saw them close.
His soul unfetter'd, fought the bleft abodes,
By virtue rais'd to mingle with the gods.
His bones in earth, with pious hands, I laid;
The place to publish nothing shall persuade;
Lest tyrants now unaw'd, and men unjust,
With insults, should profane his sacred dust.
E'er since, I haunt this solitary den,
Retir'd from all the busy paths of men;
For these wild mountains only suit my state,
And sooth with kindred gloom my deep regret.

He ended thus: amazement long suppress'd
My voice; but Cleon answ'ring thus address'd:
Brave youth! you offer to our wond'ring ears,
Events more awful than tradition bears.
Fix'd in my mind the hero's fate remains,
I see his agonies, and feel his pains.
Yet suffer, that for hapless Thebes I mourn,
Whose fairest hopes the envious fates o'erturn.
If great Alcides liv'd, her tow'rs should stand
Safe and protected by his mighty hand;
On you, brave youth! our second hopes depend;
To you the arms of Hercules descend;
He did not, sure, those glorious gifts bestow,
The shafts invincible, the mighty bow;
From which the innocent protection claim,
To dye the hills with blood of savage game.
Such toils as these your glory ne'er can raise,
Nor crown your merit with immortal praise;
And with the great Alcides place your name,
To stand distinguish'd in the rolls of fame.

The hero thus: The son of Pœan said:
Myself, my arms, I offer for your aid;
If fav'ring from the skies, the signs of Jove
Confirm what thus I purpose and approve.
For when Alcides, with his last commands,
His bow and shafts committed to my hands;
In all attempts he charg'd me to proceed
As Jove by signs and auguries should lead.
But these the rising sun will best disclose;
The season now invites to soft repose.

He said; and from the hearth a flaming bough,
To light us through the shady cavern drew.
Far in the deep recess, a rocky bed
We found, with skins of mountain monsters spread.
There we compos'd our weary limbs, and lay,
Till darkness fled before the morning ray.
Then rose and climb'd a promontory steep,
Whose rocky brow, impending o'er the deep,
Shoots high into the air, and lifts the eye,
In boundless stretch, to take a length of sky.
With hands extended to th' ethereal height,
The pow'r we call'd who rules the realms of light;
That symbols sure his purpose might explain,
Whether the youth should aid us, or refrain:
We pray'd; and on the left along the vales,
With pinions broad display'd, an eagle sails.
As near the ground his level flight he drew,
He stoop'd, and brush'd the thickets as he flew,
When starting from the centre of a brake,
With horrid hiss appear'd a crested snake;
Her young to guard, her venom'd fangs she rear'd;
Above the shrubs her wavy length appear'd;
Against his swift approaches, as he flew,
On ev'ry side her forked tongue she through,
And armed jaws; but wheeling from the snare
The swift assailant still escap'd in air;
But stooping from his pitch, at last he tore
Her purple crest, and drew a stream of gore.
She wreath'd; and, in the fierceness of her pain,
Shook the long thickets with her twisted train:
Relax'd at last, its spires forgot to roll,
And, in a hiss, she breath'd her fiery soul:
In haste to gorge his prey, the bird of Jove
Down to the bottom of the thicket drove;
The young defenceless from the covert drew;
Devour'd them straight, and to the mountains flew.
This omen seen, another worse we hear;
The subterraneous thunder greets our ear:
The worst of all the signs which augurs know;
A dire prognostic of impending woe.

Amaz'd we stood, till Philoctetes broke
Our long dejected silence thus, and spoke:
Warriors of Thebes! the auguries dissuade
My purpose, and withhold me from your aid;
Though pity moves me, and ambition draws,
To share your labours, and assert your cause;
In fight the arms of Hercules to show,
And from his native ramparts drive the foe.
But vain it is against the gods to strive;
Whose counsels ruin nations or retrieve;
Without their favour, valour nought avails,
And human prudence self-subverted fails;
For irresistibly their pow'r presides
In all events, and good and ill divides.
Let Thebes assembled at the altars wait,
And long processions crowd each sacred gate:
With sacrifice appeas'd, and humble pray'r,
Their omens frustrated, the gods may spare.
To-day, my guests, repose; to-morrow sail,
If heav'n propitious sends a prosp'rous gale:
For, shifting to the south, the western breeze
Forbids you now to trust the faithless seas.

The hero thus; in silence sad we mourn'd;
And to the solitary cave return'd,
Despairing of success; our grief he shar'd,
And for relief a cheering bowl prepar'd;
The vintage which the grape spontaneous yields,
By art untutor'd, on the woodland fields,
He sought with care, and mingled in the bowl,
A plant, of pow'r to calm the troubled soul;
Its name Nepenthe; swains, on desert ground,
Do often glean it, else but rarely found;
This in the bowl he mix'd; and soon we found,
In soft oblivion, all our sorrows drown'd:
We felt no more the agonies of care,
And hope, succeeding, dawn'd upon despair.
From morn we feasted, till the setting ray
Retir'd, and ev'ning shades expell'd the day;
Then in the dark recesses of the cave,
To slumber soft, our willing limbs we gave:
But ere the morning, from the east, appear'd,
And sooner than the early lark is heard,
Cleon awak'd, my careless slumber broke,
And bending to my ear, in whispers spoke:
Dienices! while slumbering thus secure,
We think not what our citizens endure.
The worst the signs have threaten'd, nought appears
With happier aspect to dispel our fears;

Alcides lives not, and his friend in vain
To arms we call, while auguries reſtrain:
Returning thus, we bring the Theban ſtate
But hopes deceiv'd, and omens of her fate:
Better ſucceſs our labours ſhall attend,
Nor all our aims in diſappointment end;
If you approve my purpoſe, nor diſſuade
What now I counſel for your country's aid.
Soon as the ſun diſplays his early beam,
The arms of great Alcides let us claim;
Then for Bœotia's ſhores direct our ſails;
And force muſt ſecond if perſuaſion fails:
Againſt reproach neceſſity ſhall plead;
Cenſure confute, and juſtify the deed.
The hero thus, and ceas'd: with pity mov'd,
And zeal for Thebes, I raſhly thus approv'd.
You counſel well; but prudence would adviſe
To work by cunning rather, and ſurpriſe,
Than force declar'd; his venom'd ſhafts you know,
Which fly reſiſtleſs from th' Herculean bow;
A ſafe occaſion now the ſilent hour
Of midnight yields; when, by the gentle pow'r
Of careleſs ſlumber bound, the hero lies,
Our neceſſary fraud will 'ſcape his eyes;
Without the aid of force ſhall reach its aim,
With danger leſs incurr'd, and leſs of blame.
I counſell'd thus; and Cleon ſtraight approv'd.
In ſilence from the dark receſs we mov'd;
Towards the hearth, with wary ſteps, we came,
The aſhes ſtirr'd, and rous'd the ſlumb'ring flame.
On every ſide in vain we turn'd our eyes,
Nor, as our hopes had promis'd, found the prize:
Till to the couch where Philoctetes lay,
The quiver led us by its ſilver ray;
For in a panther's fur together ty'd,
His bow and ſhafts, the pillow's place ſupply'd;
Thither I went with careful ſteps and ſlow;
And by degrees obtain'd th' Herculean bow:
The quiver next to diſengage eſſay'd;
It ſtuck entangled, but at laſt obey'd.
The prize obtain'd, we haſten to the ſtrand,
And rouſe the mariners and ſtraight command
The canvaſs to unfurl: a gentle gale
Favour'd our courſe, and fill'd the ſwelling ſail:
The ſhores retir'd; and when the morning ray
Aſcended, from the deep, th' ethereal way;
Upon the right Cenæum's beach appear'd,
And Pelion on the left his ſummit rear'd.
All day we ſail'd; but when the ſetting light
Approach'd the ocean, from th' Olympian height,
The breeze was huſh'd: and, ſtretch'd acroſs the main,
Like mountains riſing on the wat'ry plain,
The clouds collected on the billows ſtood,
And, with incumbent ſhade, obſcur'd the flood.
Thither a current bore us; ſoon we found
A night of vapour cloſing faſt around.
Looſe hung the empty ſail: we ply'd our oars,
And ſtrove to reach Eubœa's friendly ſhores;
But ſtrove in vain: for erring from the courſe,
In mazes wide, the rower ſpent his force.
Seven days and nights we try'd ſome port to gain,
Where Greek or barb'rous ſhores exclude the main;
But knew not, whether backwards or before,
Or on the right or left to ſeek the ſhore:
Till, riſing on the eighth, a gentle breeze
Drove the light fog, and bruſh'd the curling ſeas.
Our canvaſs to its gentle pow'r we ſpread,
And fix'd our oars, and follow'd as it led.
Before us ſoon, impending from above,
Through parting clouds, we ſaw a lofty grove,
Alarm'd, the ſail we ſlacken, and explore
The deeps and ſhallows of the unknown ſhore.
Near on the right a winding creek appear'd,
Thither, directed by the pole, we ſteer'd;
And landed on the beach, by fate miſled,
Nor knew again the port from which we fled.
The gods themſelves deceiv'd us: to our eyes
New caverns open, airy cliffs ariſe;
That Philoctetes might again poſſeſs
His arms, and heav'n our injury redreſs.
The unknown region purpos'd to explore,
Cleon, with me alone, forſakes the ſhore;
Back to the cave we left by angry fate
Implicitely conducted, at the gate
The injur'd youth we found; a thick diſguiſe
His native form conceal'd, and mock'd our eyes;
For the black locks in waving ringlets ſpread,
A wreath of hoary white involv'd his head,
Beneath a load of years, he ſeem'd to bend,
His breaſt to ſink, his ſhoulders to aſcend.
He ſaw us ſtraight, and, riſing from his ſeat,
Began with ſharp reproaches to repeat
Our crime; but could not thus ſuſpicion give;
So ſtrong is error, when the gods deceive!
We queſtion'd of the country as we came,
By whom inhabited, and what its name;
How far from Thebes: that thither we were bound;
And thus the wary youth our error found.
Smooth'd to deceive, his accent ſtraight he turn'd,
While in his breaſt the thirſt of vengeance burn'd:
And thinking now his bow and ſhafts regain'd,
Reply'd with hoſpitable kindneſs feign'd:
On Ida's ſacred height, my gueſts! you ſtand;
Here Priam rules, in peace, a happy land.
Twelve cities own him, on the Phrygian plain,
Their lord, and twelve fair iſlands on the main.
From hence to Thebes in ſeven days ſpace you'll ſail,
If Jove propitious ſends a proſp'rous gale.
But now accept a homely meal, and deign
To ſhare what heav'n affords a humble ſwain.
He ſaid; and brought a bowl with vintage fill'd,
From berries wild, and mountain grapes diſtill'd,
Of largeſt ſize; and plac'd it on a rock,
Under the covert of a ſpreading oak;
Around it autumn's mellow ſtores he laid,
Which the ſun ripens in the woodland ſhade.
Our thirſt and hunger thus at once allay'd,
To Cleon turning, Philoctetes ſaid:
The bow you wear, of ſuch unuſual ſize,
With wonder ſtill I view, and curious eyes;
For length, for thickneſs, and the workman's art,
Surpaſſing all I've ſeen in ev'ry part.
Diſſembling, thus inquir'd the wary youth,
And thus your valiant ſon declar'd the truth:
Father! the weapon which you thus commend,
The force of great Alcides once did bend; [du'd,
Theſe ſhafts the ſame which monſters fierce ſub-
And lawleſs men with vengeance juſt purſu'd.
The hero thus; and Pœan's ſon again:
What now I aſk, refuſe not to explain:
Whether the hero ſtill exerts his might,
For innocence oppreſs'd, and injur'd right?

Or yields to fate; and with the mighty dead,
From toil repoſes in the Elyſian ſhade!
Sure, if he liv'd, he would not thus forgo
His ſhafts invincible and mighty bow,
By which, he oft immortal honour gain'd
For wrongs redreſs'd and lawleſs force reſtrain'd.
The rage ſuppreſs'd which in his boſom burn'd,
He queſtion'd thus; and Cleon thus return'd:
What we have heard of Hercules, I'll ſhow
What by report we learn'd, and what we know.
From Thebes to Oeta's wilderneſs we went,
With ſupplications, to the hero, ſent
From all our princes; that he would exert
His matchleſs valour on his country's part,
Againſt whoſe ſtate united foes conſpire,
And waſte her wide domain with ſword and fire.
There on the cliffs which bound the neighb'ring main,
We found the manſion of a lonely ſwain;
Much like to this, but that its rocky mouth
The cooling north reſpects, as this the ſouth;
And, in a corner of the cave conceal'd,
The club which great Alcides us'd to wield.
Wrapt in his ſhaggy robe, the lion's ſpoils,
The mantle which he wore in all his toils.
At ev'n a hunter in the cave appear'd;
From whom the fate of Hercules we heard.
He told us that he ſaw the chief expire,
That he himſelf did light his fun'ral fire;
And boaſted, that the hero had reſign'd
To him, this bow and quiver, as his friend:
Oft ſeen before, theſe deadly ſhafts we know,
And tip'd with ſtars of gold th' Herculean bow:
But of the hero's fate, the tale he told,
Whether 'tis true I cannot now unfold.
He ſpoke. The youth with indignation burn'd,
Yet calm in outward ſemblance, thus return'd:
I muſt admire the man who could reſign
To you theſe arms ſo precious and divine,
Which, to the love of ſuch a friend, he ow'd,
Great was the gift if willingly beſtow'd:
By force they could not eaſily be gain'd,
And fraud, I know, your gen'rous ſouls diſdain'd.
Severely ſmiling, thus the hero ſpoke;
With conſcious ſhame we heard, nor ſilence broke:
And thus again: The only boon I claim,
Which, to your hoſt deny'd, would merit blame;
Is, that my hands that weapon may embrace,
And on the ſlaxen cord an arrow place;
An honour which I covet; though we mourn'd,
By great Alcides, once our ſtate o'erturn'd:
When proud Laomedon the hero brav'd,
Nor paid the ranſom for his daughter ſav'd.
Diſſembling thus, did Philoctetes ſtrive
His inſtruments of vengeance to retrieve:
And, by the fates deceiv'd, in evil hour,
The bow and ſhafts we yielded to his pow'r,
In mirthful mood, provoking him to try
Whether the weapon would his force obey;
For weak he ſeem'd, like thoſe whoſe nerves have loſt, [boaſt.
Through age, the vigour which in youth they
The belt around his ſhoulders firſt he flung,
And glitt'ring by his ſide the quiver hung:
Compreſs'd with all his force the ſtubborn yew
He bent, and from the caſe an arrow drew:
And yielding to his rage, in furious mood,
With aim direct againſt us full he ſtood,
For vengeance arm'd; and now the thick diſguiſe,
Which veil'd his form before, and mock'd our eyes,
Vaniſh'd in air; our error then appear'd;
I ſaw the vengeance of the gods, and fear'd.
Before him to the ground my knees I bow'd,
And, with extended hands, for mercy ſu'd.
But Cleon, fierce and ſcorning to entreat,
His weapon drew, and ruſh'd upon his fate:
For as he came, the fatal arrow flew,
And from his heart the vital current drew;
Supine he fell; and, welling from the wound,
A tide of gore impurpled all the ground.
The ſon Pœan ſtooping drew the dart,
Yet warm with ſlaughter, from the hero's heart;
And turn'd it full on me: with humble pray'r
And lifted hands, I mov'd him ſtill to ſpare.
At laſt he yielded, from his purpoſe ſway'd,
And anſw'ring thus in milder accents, ſaid:
No favour ſure you merit; and the cauſe,
Of right infring'd and hoſpitable laws,
Would juſtify revenge; but as you claim,
With Hercules, your native ſoil the ſame;
I now ſhall pardon for the hero's ſake,
Nor, though the gods approve it, vengeance take.
But ſtraight avoid my preſence; and unbind,
With ſpeed, your flying canvaſs to the wind:
For if again to meet thoſe eyes you come,
No pray'rs ſhall change, or mitigate your doom.
With frowning aſpect thus the hero ſaid,
His threats I fear'd, and willingly obey'd.
Straight in his purple robe the dead I bound,
Then to my ſhoulders rais'd him from the ground;
And from the hills deſcending to the bay,
Where anchor'd near the beach our galley lay,
The reſt conven'd, with ſorrow to relate
This anger of the gods and Cleon's fate:
The hero's fate his bold companions mourn'd,
And ev'ry breaſt with keen reſentment burn'd.
They in their heady tranſports ſtraight decreed,
His fall with vengeance to requite or bleed.
I fear'd the angry gods; and gave command,
With ſail and oar, to fly the fatal ſtrand;
Enrag'd and ſad, the mariners obey'd,
Unfurl'd the canvaſs, and the anchor weigh'd.
Our courſe, behind, the weſtern breezes ſped,
And from the coaſt with heavy hearts we fled.
All day they favour'd, but with evening ceas'd;
And ſtraight a tempeſt, from the ſtormy eaſt,
In oppoſition full, began to blow,
And rear in ridges high the deep below.
Againſt its boiſt'rous ſway in vain we ſtrove;
Obliquely to the Thracian coaſt we drove:
Where Pelion lifts his head aloft in air,
With painted cliffs and precipices bare;
Thither our courſe we ſteer'd, and on the ſtrand
Deſcending, fix'd our cable to the land.
There twenty days we ſtay'd, and wiſh'd in vain
A favourable breeze, to croſs the main;
For with unceaſing rage the tempeſt rav'd,
And o'er the rocky beach the ocean heav'd.
At laſt with care the hero's limbs we burn'd,
And, water'd with our tears, his bones inurn'd.
There, where a promontory's height divides,
Extended in the deep, the parted tides,
His tomb is ſeen, which, from its airy ſtand,
Marks to the mariner the diſtant land.
'This, princes! is the truth; and though the will
Of heav'n, the ſov'reign cauſe of good and ill.

Has daſh'd our hopes, and, for the good in view,
With griefs afflicts us and diſaſters new:
Yet, innocent of all, I juſtly claim
To ſtand exempt from puniſhment or blame.
That zeal for Thebes 'gainſt hoſpitable laws
Prevail'd, and ardour in my country's cauſe,
I freely have confeſs'd; but ſure if wrong
Was e'er permitted to inducement ſtrong,
This claims to be excus'd: our country's need,
With all who hear it will for favour plead.
He ended thus. Unable to ſubdue [drew:
His grief: the monarch from the throne with-
In ſilent wonder fix'd, the reſt remain'd;
Till Clytophon the gen'ral ſenſe explain'd;
Your juſt defence, we mean not to refuſe:
Your prudence cenſure, or your zeal accuſe:
To heav'n we owe the valiant Cleon's fate,
With each diſaſter which afflicts the ſtate.
Soon as the ſun forſakes the eaſtern main,
At ev'ry altar let a bull be ſlain;
And Thebes aſſembled, move the pow'rs to ſpare,
With vows of ſacrifice and humble pray'r:
But now the night invites to ſoft repoſe,
The momentary cure of human woes;
The ſtars deſcend; and ſoon the morning ray
Shall rouſe us to the labours of the day.
The hero thus. In ſilence all approv'd,
And riſing, various, from th' aſſembly mov'd.

BOOK VIII.

Behind the palace, where a ſtream deſcends,
Its lonely walks a ſhady grove extends;
Once ſacred, now for common uſe ordain'd,
By war's wide licence and the axe profan'd:
Thither the monarch from th' aſſembly went
Alone, his fury and deſpair to vent,
And thus to Heav'n: Dread pow'r! whoſe ſove-
reign ſway
The fates of men and mortal things obey!
From me expect not ſuch applauſe to hear,
As fawning vot'ries to thine altars bear;
But truth ſevere. Although the forked brand,
Which for deſtruction arms thy mighty hand,
Were levell'd at my head; a mind I hold,
By preſent ills, or future, uncontroul'd.
Beneath thy ſway the race of mortals groan;
Felicity ſincere is felt by none:
Deluſive hope th' unpractis'd mind aſſails,
And, by ten thouſand treach'rous arts prevails:
Through all the earth the fair deceiver ſtrays,
And wretched man to miſery betrays.
Our crimes you puniſh, never teach to ſhun,
When, blind to folly, on our fate we run:
Hence ſighs and groans thy tyrant reign confeſs,
With ev'ry rueful ſymptom of diſtreſs.
Here war unchain'd exerts his waſteful pow'r;
Here famine pines; diſeaſes there devour,
And lead a train of all the ills that know
To ſhorten life, or lengthen it in woe.
All men are curſt; but I, above the reſt,
With tenfold vengeance for my crimes oppreſs'd:
With hoſtile pow'rs befet my tott'ring reign,
The people waſted, and my children ſlain;
In ſwift approach, I ſee deſtruction come,
But, with a mind unmov'd, I meet my doom;
For know, ſtern pow'r! whoſe vengeance has
decreed
That Creon, after all his ſons, ſhould bleed;
As from the ſummit of ſome deſert rock,
The ſport of tempeſts, falls the leafleſs oak,
Of all his honours ſtript, thou ne'er ſhalt find,
Weakly ſubmiſs, or ſtupidly reſign'd
This dauntleſs heart; but purpos'd to debate
Thy ſtern decrees, and burſt the chains of fate.

He ſaid; and turning where the heralds ſtand
All night by turns, and wait their lord's command;
Meneſtheus there and Hegeſander found,
And Phæmius ſage, for valour once renown'd,
He charg'd them thus: Beyond the eaſtern tow'rs,
Summon to meet in arms our martial pow'rs.
In ſilence let them move; let ſigns command,
And mute obedience reign through ev'ry band;
For when the eaſt with early twilight glows,
We ruſh, from cover'd ambuſh, on our foes
Secure and unprepar'd: the truce we ſwore,
Our plighted faith, the ſeal of wine and gore,
No ties I hold; all piety diſclaim:
Adverſe to me the gods, and I to them.
The angry monarch thus his will declar'd;
His rage the heralds fear'd, and ſtraight repair'd
To rouſe the warriors. Now the morning light
Begins to mingle with the ſhades of night:
In ev'ry ſtreet a glitt'ring ſtream appears,
Of poliſh'd helmets mix'd with ſhining ſpears:
Towards the eaſtern gate they drive along,
Nations and tribes, an undiſtinguiſh'd throng?
Creon himſelf ſuperior, in his car,
Receiv'd them coming, and diſpos'd the war.
And now the Argives from their tents proceed,
With rites ſepulchral to entomb the dead.
The king of men, amid the fun'ral fires,
The chiefs aſſembles, and the work inſpires.
And thus the Pelian ſage, in council wiſe:
Princes! I view, with wonder and ſurpriſe,
Yon field abandon'd, where the foe purſu'd
Their fun'ral rites before, with toil renew'd:
Nor half their dead interr'd, they now abſtain,
And ſilence reigns through all the ſmoky plain,
Thence jealouſy and fear poſſeſs my mind
Of faith infring'd, and treachery deſign'd:
Behind thoſe woody heights, behind thoſe tow'rs,
I dread, in ambuſh laid, the Theban pow'rs;
With purpoſe to aſſault us, when they know
That we, confiding, leaſt expect a foe:
Let half the warriors arm, and ſtand prepar'd,
For ſudden violence, the hoſt to guard;
While, in the mournful rites, the reſt proceed,
Due to the honour'd relics of the dead.

Thus as he ſpoke; approaching from afar,
The hoſtile pow'rs, embattled for the war,
Appear'd; and ſtreaming from their poliſh'd ſhields,
A blaze of ſplendour brighten'd all the fields.
And thus the king of men, with lifted eyes,
And both his hands extended to the ſkies:
Ye pow'rs ſupreme! whoſe unreſiſted ſway
The fate of men and mortal things obey!
Let all the plagues, which perjury attend,
At once, and ſudden, on our foes deſcend:
Let not the ſacred ſeal of wine and gore,
The hands we plighted, and the oaths we ſwore,
Be now in vain; but from your bright abodes,
Confound the bold deſpiſers of the gods.
He pray'd; and nearer came the hoſtile train,
With ſwift approach advancing on the plain;
Embattled thick, as when, at fall of night,
A ſhepherd, from ſome promontory's height,
Approaching from the deep, a fog deſcries,
Which hov'ring lightly o'er the billows flies;
By breezes borne, the ſolid ſoon it gains,
Climbs the ſteep hills, and darkens all the plains!
Silent and ſwift the Theban pow'rs drew near;
The chariots led, a phalanx clos'd the rear.
Confuſion ſtraight through all the hoſt aroſe,
Stirr'd like the ocean when a tempeſt blows.
Some arm for fight; the reſt to terror yield,
Inactive ſtand, or trembling quit the field.
On ev'ry ſide, aſſaults the deafen'd ear
The diſcord loud of tumult, rage, and fear.
Superior in his car, with ardent eyes,
The king of men through all the army flies:
The raſh reſtrains, the cold with courage fires,
And all with hope and confidence inſpires;
As when the deep, in liquid mountains hurl'd,
Aſſaults the rocky limits of the world:
When tempeſts with unlicenc'd fury rave,
And ſweep from ſhore to ſhore the flying wave:
If he, to whom each pow'r of ocean bends,
To quell ſuch uproar, from the deep aſcends,
Serene, amidſt the wat'ry war, he rides,
And fixes, with his voice, the moving tides:
Such ſeem'd the monarch. From th' Olympian height,
The martial maid precipitates her flight;
To aid her fav'rite hoſt the goddeſs came,
Mentor ſhe ſeem'd, her radiant arms the ſame;
Who with Ulyſſes brought a choſen band
Of warriors from the Cephalenian ſtrand;
Already arm'd, the valiant youth ſhe found,
And arming for the fight his warriors round.
And thus began: Brave prince! our foes appear
For battle order'd, and the fight is near.
Dauntleſs they come ſuperior and elate,
While fear unmans us, and reſigns to fate.
Would ſome immortal from th' Olympian height
Deſcend, and for a moment ſtop the fight;
From ſad dejection rous'd, and cold deſpair,
We yet might arm us, and for war prepare;
But if on human aid we muſt depend,
Nor hope to ſee the fav'ring gods deſcend,
Great were the hero's praiſe, who now could boaſt
From ruin imminent to ſave the hoſt!
The danger near ſome prompt expedient claims,
And prudence triumphs oft in worſt extremes.

Thus, in a form aſſum'd, the martial maid;
The generous warrior, thus replying, ſaid:
In youth, I cannot hope to win the praiſe,
With which experience crowns a length of days:
Weak are the hopes that on my counſels ſtand,
To combats, nor practis'd in command:
But as the gods, to ſave a ſinking ſtate,
Or ſnatch an army from the jaws of fate,
When prudence ſtands confounded, oft ſuggeſt
A prompt expedient to ſome vulgar breaſt;
To your diſcerning ear I ſhall expoſe
What now my mind excites me to diſcloſe.
Sav'd from th' unfiniſh'd honours of the ſlain,
The mingled ſpoils of foreſts load the plain:
In heaps contiguous round the camp they lie,
A fence too weak to ſtop the enemy:
But if we mix them with the ſeeds of fire,
Which unextinguiſh'd glow in ev'ry pyre,
Againſt the foe a ſudden wall ſhall riſe,
Of flame and ſmoke aſcending to the ſkies:
The ſteed diſmay'd ſhall backward hurl the car;
Mix with the phalanx, and confound the war.
He ſaid. The goddeſs, in her conſcious breaſt,
A mother's triumph for a ſon poſſeſs'd,
Who emulates his ſire in glorious deeds,
And, with his virtue, to his fame ſucceeds:
Graceful the goddeſs turn'd, and with a voice,
Bold, and ſuperior to the vulgar noice,
O'er all the field commands the woods to fire;
Straight to obey a thouſands hands conſpire.
On ev'ry ſide the ſpreading flame extends,
And, roll'd in cloudy wreaths, the ſmoke aſcends.
Creon beheld, enrag'd to be withſtood:
Like ſome fierce lion when he meets a flood
Or trench defenſive, which his rage reſtrains
For flocks unguarded, left by careleſs ſwains;
O'er all the field he ſends his eyes afar,
To mark fit entrance for a pointed war:
Near on the right a narrow ſpace he found,
Where fun'ral aſhes ſmok'd upon the ground:
Thither the warriors of the Theban hoſt,
Whoſe martial ſkill he priz'd and valour moſt,
The monarch ſent, Chalcidamus the ſtrong,
Who from fair Theſpia led his martial throng,
Where Helicon erects his verdant head,
And crowns the champaign with a lofty ſhade:
Oechalia's chief was added to the band,
For valour fam'd and ſkilful in command;
Eritheus, with him, his brother came,
Of worth unequal, and unequal fame.
Rheſus, with theſe, the Thracian leader, went,
To merit fame, by high atchievements, bent;
Of ſtature tall, he ſcorns the pointed ſpear,
And cruſhes with his mace the ranks of war:
With him twelve leaders of his native train,
In combats, taught the bounding ſteed to rein,
By none ſurpaſs'd who boaſt ſuperior ſkill
To ſend the winged arrow ſwift to kill,
Mov'd to the fight. The reſt of vulgar name,
Though brave in combat, were unknown to fame.
Their bold invaſion dauntleſs to oppoſe,
Full in the midſt the bulk of Ajax roſe;
Unarm'd he ſtood; but, in his mighty hand,
Brandiſh'd, with geſture fierce, a burning brand,
Snatch'd from the aſhes of a fun'ral fire;
An olive's trunk, five cubit lengths entire.

Arm'd for the fight, the Cretan monarch ſtood;
And Merion, thirſting ſtill with hoſtile blood;
The prince of Ithaca, with him who led
The youth, in Sicyon, and Pellene, bred.
But ere they clos'd, the Thracian leader preſs'd,
With eager courage, far before the reſt;
Him Ajax met, inflam'd with equal rage:
Between the wond'ring hoſts the chiefs engage:
Their weighty weapons round their heads they throw,
And ſwift, and heavy falls each thund'ring blow;
As when in Ætna's caves the giant brood,
The one-ey'd ſervants of the Lemnian god,
In order round the burning anvil ſtand,
And forge, with weighty ſtrokes, the forked brand:
The ſhaking hills their fervid toil confeſs,
And echoes rattling through each dark receſs:
So rag'd the fight; their mighty limbs they ſtrain;
And oft their pond'rous maces fall in vain:
For neither chief was deſtin'd yet to bleed;
But fate at laſt the victory decreed.
The Salaminian hero aim'd a ſtroke,
Which thund'ring on the Thracian helmet broke:
Stunn'd by the boiſt'rous ſhock, the warrior reel'd
With giddy poiſe, then ſunk upon the field.
Their leader to defend, his native train
With ſpeed advance, and guard him on the plain.
Againſt his foe, their threat'ning lances riſe,
And aim'd at once, a ſtorm of arrows flies;
Around the chief on ev'ry ſide they ſing;
One in his ſhoulder fix'd its barbed ſting.
Amaz'd he ſtood, nor could the fight renew:
But ſlow and ſullen from the foe withdrew.
Straight to the charge Idomeneus proceeds,
With hardy Merion try'd in martial deeds,
Laertes' valiant ſon, and he who led
The youth in Sicyon, and Pellene, bred;
With force united, theſe the foe ſuſtain,
And waſteful havoc loads the purple plain:
In doubtful poiſe the ſcales of combat ſway'd,
And various fates alternately obey'd. [foe,
But now the flames, which barr'd th' invading
Sunk to the waſted wood, in aſhes glow:
Thebes ruſhes to the fight; their poliſh'd ſhields
Gleam through the ſmoke, and brightens all the fields;
Thick fly the embers, where the courſers tread,
And cloudy volumes all the welkin ſhade.
The king of men, to meet the tempeſt, fires
His wav'ring bands, and valour thus inſpires.
Gods! ſhall one fatal hour deface the praiſe
Of all our ſleepleſs nights, and bloody days?
Shall no juſt meed for all our toils remain?
Our labours, blood, and victories in vain?
Shall Creon triumph, and his impious brow
Claim the fair wreath, to truth and valour due?
No, warriors! by the heav'nly pow'rs, is weigh'd
Juſtice with wrong, in equal balance laid:
From Jove's high roof depend th' eternal ſcales,
Wrong mounts defeated ſtill, and right prevails.
Fear then no odds; on heav'n itſelf depend,
Which falſehood will confound, and truth defend.
He ſaid; and ſudden in the ſhock they cloſe,
Their ſhields and helmets ring with mutual blows,
Diſorder dire the mingling ranks confounds,
And ſhouts of triumph mix with dying ſounds;
As fire, with waſteful conflagration ſpreads,
And kindles, in its courſe, the woodland ſhades,
When, ſhooting ſudden from the clouds above,
On ſome thick foreſt fall the flames of Jove;
The lofty oaks, the pines and cedars burn,
Their verdant honours all to aſhes turn;
Loud roars the tempeſt; and the trembling ſwains
See the wide havoc of the waſted plains:
Such ſeem'd the conflict; ſuch the dire alarms,
From ſhouts of battle mix'd with din of arms.
Phericles firſt, Lycaon's valiant ſon,
The ſage whoſe counſels propp'd the Theban throne,
Roſe in the fight, ſuperior to the reſt,
And brave Democleon's fall his might confeſs'd,
The chief and leader of a valiant band,
From fair Eione and th' Aſinian ſtrand.
Next Aſius, Iphitus, and Crates fell;
Terynthian Podius trode the path of hell:
And Schedius, from Mazeta's fruitful plain,
Met there his fate, and periſh'd with the ſlain.
Aw'd by their fall, the Argive bands give way;
As yields ſome rampart to the ocean's ſway,
When rous'd to rage, it ſcorns oppoſing mounds,
And ſweeps victorious through forbidden grounds.
But Pallas, anxious for her fav'rite hoſt,
Their beſt already wounded, many loſt,
Ulyſſes ſought: ſhe found him, in the rear,
Wounded and faint, and leaning on his ſpear.
And thus in Mentor's form: Brave prince! I dread
Our hopes defeated, and our fall decreed:
For conqu'ring on the right the foe prevails,
And all defence againſt their fury fails;
While here, in doubtful poiſe, the battle ſways,
And various fates alternately obeys;
In great Tydides, who beholds from far
Our danger imminent, yet ſhuns the war,
Held by reſentment, or ſome cauſe unknown,
Regardleſs of our ſafety and his own,
Would riſe to aid us; yet we might reſpire,
And Creon, fruſtrated, again retire.
Great were his praiſe, who could the chief perſuade,
In peril ſo extreme, the hoſt to aid.
The fitteſt you, who boaſt the happy ſkill,
With pleaſing words, to move the fixed will;
Though Neſtor juſtly merits equal fame,
A friend the ſooneſt will a friend reclaim.
And thus Ulyſſes to the martial maid:
I cannot hope the hero to perſuade:
The ſource unknown from which his rage proceeds,
Reaſon in vain from looſe conjecture pleads;
The fatal truce, with faithleſs Creon made,
Provokes him not, nor holds him from our aid;
He eaſily reſign'd whate'er he mov'd,
Till now approving as the reſt approv'd,
Some dire diſaſter, ſome diſgrace unſeen,
Confounds his ſteady temper, elſe ſerene:
But with my utmoſt ſearch, I'll ſtrive to find
The ſecret griefs which wound his gen'rous mind;
If drain'd of blood, and ſpent with toils of war,
My weary limbs can bear their load ſo far.
He ſpoke; his words the martial maid admir'd;
With energy divine his breaſt inſpir'd;

Lightly the hero mov'd, and took his way
Where broad encamp'd th' Ætolian warriors lay:
Already arm'd he found the daring band,
Fierce and impatient of their lord's command;
Some, murm'ring, round the king's pavilion stood,
While others, more remote, complain'd aloud:
With pleasing words he sooth'd them as he went,
And sought their valiant leader in his tent:
Him pond'ring deep in his distracted mind,
He found, and sitting sad, with head declin'd.
He thus address'd him: Will the news I bring,
Afflict, or gratify, th' Ætolian king?
"That wav'ring on the brink of foul defeat,
Without the hopes of success or retreat,
Our valiant bands th' unequal fight maintain;
Their best already wounded, many slain."
If treach'rous Thebes has brib'd you with her store, [swore;
And bought the venal faith which once you
Has promis'd precious ore, or lovely dames,
And pays to lust the price which treason claims:
Name but the proffers of the perjur'd king,
And more, and better, from your friends I'll bring;
Vast sums of precious ore, and greater far
Than Thebes, in peace, had treasur'd for the war;
Or, though, to gratify thy boundless mind,
Her private wealth and public were combin'd.
If beauty's pow'r your am'rous heart inflames,
Unrivall'd are Achaia's lovely dames;
Her fairest dames Adrastus shall bestow,
And purchase thus the aid you freely owe.
Gods! that our armies e'er should need to fear
Destruction, and the son of Tydeus near!
Ulysses thus; and Tydeus' son again:
Your false reproaches aggravate my pain
Too great already: in my heart I feel
Its venom'd sting, more sharp than pointed steel.
No bribe persuades, or promise from the foe,
My oath to vi'late, and the war forego:
In vain for this were all the precious store,
Which trading Zidon wafts from shore to shore;
With all that rich Iberia yet contains,
Safe and unrifled in her golden veins.
The source from which my miseries arise,
The cause, which to the host my aid denies,
With truth I shall relate; and hope to claim
Your friendly sympathy, for groundless blame.
In yonder walls a captive maid remains,
To me more dear than all the world contains;
Fairer she is than nymph was ever fair;
Pallas in stature, and majestic air;
As Venus soft, with Cynthia's sprightly grace,
When on Taigetus she leads the chase,
Or Erymanthus; while in fix'd amaze,
At awful distance heard, the satyrs gaze.
With oaths divine our plighted faith we bound;
Hymen had soon our mutual wishes crown'd;
When, call'd to arms, against the Theban tow'rs,
From Calydon I led my martial pow'rs.
Her female form in martial arms conceal'd,
With me she brav'd the terrors of the field:
Unknown and unrewarded, from my side
No toil could drive her, and no shock divide.
But now proud Thebes injuriously detains
The lovely virgin, lock'd in hostile chains;
Doom'd, and reserv'd to perish, for my sake,
If of your counsels, I, or works, partake;
Till twenty mornings in the east shall rise,
And twenty ev'nings gild the western skies.
See then the cause which holds me, and confines
My arm, to aid you, though my heart inclines;
Love mix'd with pity, whose restraints I feel
Than adamant more strong, and links of steel.
The hero thus. Laertes' son reply'd:
Oft have I heard what now is verify'd;
That still when passion reigns without controul,
Its sway confounds and darkens all the soul.
If Thebes, by perjury, the gods provok'd,
The vengeance slighted, by themselves invok'd;
Assaulted us, secure, with hostile arms,
And mix'd our pious rites with dire alarms:
With better faith, by faithless Creon sway'd,
Will they at last restore the captive maid?
When from their battlements and lofty spires,
They see their champaign shine with hostile fires;
And, pitch'd around them, hosts of armed foes,
With strict embrace, their straiten'd walls enclose:
The gods they scorn as impotent and vain:
What will they do, when you alone remain?
Our princes fall'n, the vulgar warriors fled,
Shall to your tent the captive fair be led?
Or rather must you see her matchless charms
Reserv'd to bless some hapless rival's arms;
While rage and jealousy divide your breast,
No present friend to pity, or assist?
Now rather rise: and, ere it is too late,
Rescue our armies from impending fate.
The captive maid uninjur'd you'll regain;
Force oft obtains what justice asks in vain.
With success thus your wishes shall be crown'd,
Which trust in Thebes would frustrate and confound.
Ulysses thus: his weighty words inclin'd,
Long tortur'd with suspense, the hero's mind;
As settling winds the moving deep controul,
And teach the wav'ring billows how to roll:
Straight from his seat th' Ætolian warrior rose;
His mighty limbs the martial greaves enclose;
His breast and thighs in polish'd steel he dress'd;
A plumed helmet next his temples press'd:
From the broad baldric, round his shoulders flung,
His shining sword and starry faulchion hung:
The spear he last assum'd, and pond'rous shield,
With martial grace, and issu'd to the field:
To mingle in the fight, with eager haste
He rush'd, nor call'd his warriors as he past.
Ulysses these conven'd; his prudent care
Their ranks dispos'd, and led them to the war.
Afar distinguish'd by his armour bright,
With shouts Tydides rous'd the ling'ring fight;
Through all the host his martial voice resounds,
And ev'ry heart with kindling ardour bounds;
As when the sun ascends, with gladsome ray,
To light the weary trav'ller on his way;
Or cheer the mariner by tempest toss'd
Amidst the dangers of some per'lous coast:
So to his wishing friends Tydides came;
Their danger such before, their joy the same.
Phericles saw; and, springing from the throng,
Call'd the bold Thebans, as he rush'd along:
Ye gen'rous youths! whom fair Bœotia breeds,
The nurse of valour and heroic deeds:

Let not, though oft renew'd, theſe tedious toils
Your martial ardour quench, and damp your ſouls.
Tydides comes; and leads, in armour bright,
His native bands, impatient for the fight:
Myſelf the firſt the hero's arm ſhall try,
And teach you how to conquer, or to die.
We ſtrive not now, as when, in days of peace,
Some prince's hymeneal rites to grace,
In liſted fields bedew'd with fragrant oil,
In combat feign'd, the mimic warriors toil;
Alike the victors, and the vanquiſh'd fare,
And genial feaſts, to both, conclude the war:
We now muſt conquer: or it ſtands decreed
That Thebes ſhall periſh, and her people bleed.
No hopes of peace remain; nor can we find
New gods to witneſs, or new oaths to bind,
The firſt infring'd: and therefore muſt prepare
To ſtand or periſh by the lot of war:
Then let us all undaunted brave our fate:
To ſtop is doubtful, deſp'rate to retreat.
The hero thus; and to the battle led:
Like Mars, he ſeem'd, in radiant armour clad,
Tow'ring ſublime: behind his ample ſhield
He mov'd to meet Tydides on the field:
As when at noon, deſcending to the rills,
Two herds encounter, from the neighbouring hills:
Before the reſt, the rival bulls prepare,
With awful prelude, for th' approaching war;
With deſp'rate horns they plough the ſmoking ground;
Their hideous roar the hollow caves reſound;
Heav'd o'er their backs the ſtreaming ſand aſcends;
Their ſtern encounter both the herds ſuſpends:
So met the chiefs; and ſuch amazement quell'd
The reſt, and in ſuſpenſe the combat held.
Tydides firſt his weighty weapon threw,
Wide of the mark with erring force it flew.
Phericles! thine ſucceeds with happier aim,
Full to the centre of the ſhield it came:
But ſlightly join'd, unequal to the ſtroke,
Short from the ſteel, the ſtaff in ſplinters broke.
With grief Tydides ſaw his aim deceiv'd;
From off the field a pond'rous rock he heav'd;
With figures rude of antique ſculpture grac'd,
It mark'd the reliques of a man deceas'd;
Puſh'd at his foe the weighty maſs he flung;
Thund'ring it fell; the Theban helmet rung:
Deep with the brain the dinted ſteel it mix'd,
And lifeleſs, on the ground, the warrior fix'd
Aw'd by his fall, the Theban bands retire;
As flocks defenceleſs ſhun a lion's ire;
At once they yield, unable to withſtand
The wide deſtruction of Tydides' hand.
Diſorder ſoon, the form of war confounds,
And ſhouts of triumph mix with dying ſounds.
Creon perceiv'd, where ruling on the right
In equal poiſe he held the ſcales of fight,
Blaſpheming heav'n, he impiouſly reſign'd,
To ſtern diſpair, his unſubmitting mind:
Yet, vers'd in all the various turns of fate,
The briſk aſſault to rule, or ſafe retreat,
He drew his firm battalions from the foe,
In martial order, regularly ſlow.
The Argive leaders, thund'ring in the rear,
Still forwards on the yielding ſquadrons bear:
The ſtrife with unabated fury burns,
They ſtop, they combat, and retreat by turns;
As the grim lion ſourly leaves the plains,
By dogs compell'd, and bands of armed ſwains;
Indignant to his woody haunts he goes,
And with retorted glare reſtrains his foes.
Meanwhile Tydides, near the Cadmean gate,
Urg'd with inceſſant toil the work of fate;
Towards the walls, an undiſtinguiſh'd throng,
The victors and the vanquiſh'd, ruſh'd along.
Acceſs to both the guarded wall denies;
From ev'ry tow'r, a ſtorm of jav'lins flies;
Thick as the hail deſcends, when Boreas flings
The rattling tempeſt from his airy wings:
So thick the jav'lins fell, and pointed ſpears;
Behind them cloſe, another hoſt appears,
In order'd columns rang'd, by Creon led:
Ulyſſes ſaw; and thus to Diomed:
Bold as you are, avoid theſe guarded tow'rs:
From looſe purſuit recal your ſcatter'd pow'rs:
See Creon comes; his thick embattled train,
In phalanx join'd, approaches from the plain.
Here if we ſtay th' unequal fight to prove,
The tow'rs and ramparts threaten from above
With darts and ſtones; while to th' invading foe,
In order looſe, our ſcatter'd ranks we ſhow;
Nor by your matchleſs valour hope, in vain,
Such odds to conquer, and the fight maintain;
Againſt an army ſingle force muſt loſe;
Immod'rate courage ſtill like folly ſhows.
See where into the field yon turret calls,
Drawn to a point the long-extended walls:
There force your way, and ſpeedily regain
The ſpace, and ſafety of the open plain.
Ulyſſes thus; and by his prudence ſway'd,
The martial ſon of Tydeus ſtrait obey'd.
Thrice to the height the hero rais'd his voice,
Loud as the ſilver trumpet's martial noiſe,
The ſignal of retreat; his warriors heard,
And round their chief in order'd ranks appear'd,
Drawn from the mingled tumult of the plain;
As, ſever'd on the floor, the golden grain
Swells to a heap; while, whirling through the ſkies,
The duſty chaff in thick diſorder flies;
Tydides leads; between the guarded tow'rs
And hoſtile ranks, he draws his martial pow'rs
Towards the plain; as mariners, with oar
And ſail, avoid ſome promontory's ſhore;
When caught between the ocean and the land,
A ſudden tempeſt bears them on the ſtrand;
The ſtem oppoſing to its boiſt'rous ſway,
They ſhun the cape and ſtretch into the bay:
So 'ſcap'd Tydides. Cover'd by their tow'rs,
In ſafety ſtood retir'd the Theban pow'rs,
For from above an iron tempeſt rain'd,
And the incurſions of the foe reſtrain'd.

BOOK IX.

And now the king of men his army calls,
Back from the danger of th' impending walls;
They quit the combat, and in order long
The field poſſeſs, a phalanx deep and ſtrong.
Rank following rank, the Theban ſquadrons move
Still to the rampart, and the tow'rs above:
Creon himſelf, unwilling, quits the field,
Enrag'd, defeated, and conſtrain'd to yield,
Gainſt all his foes his indignation burns,
But firſt on Diomed its fury turns.
He call'd a vulgar warrior from the crowd,
A villain dark, and try'd in works of blood,
Erembus nam'd, of huge gigantic ſize,
With cloudy features mark'd, and downcaſt eyes;
Cold and inactive ſtill in combat found,
Nor wont to kindle at the trumpet's ſound;
But bold in villany when pow'r commands;
A weapon fitted for a tyrant's hands.
And thus the wrathful monarch: take this ſword,
A ſign, to all my ſervants, from their lord;
And hither bring the fair Ætolian's head;
I, who command you, will reward the deed:
But let not pity or remorſe prevail;
Your own ſhall anſwer, if in aught you fail.
He ſaid; the murd'rer, practis'd to obey,
The royal ſword receiv'd, and took his way
Straight to the palace, where the captive fair,
Of hope bereft, and yielding to deſpair,
Lamenting ſat. Their mutual griefs to blend,
The queen and all the royal maids attend.
And thus the queen: fair ſtranger! ſhall your grief
All hopes reject of comfort and relief?
Your woes I've meaſur'd, all your ſorrows known;
And find them light when balanc'd with my own.
In one ſad day my valiant fire I mourn'd;
My brothers ſlain; my native walls o'erturn'd;
Myſelf a captive deſtin'd to fulfil,
In ſervile drudgery, a maſter's will;
Yet to a fall ſo low, the gods decreed
This envy'd height of greatneſs to ſucceed.
The pow'rs above, for purpoſes unknown,
Oft raiſe the fall'n, and bring the lofty down;
Elude the vigilance of all our care:
Our ſureſt hopes deceive, and mock deſpair.
Let no deſponding thoughts your mind poſſeſs,
To baniſh hope, the med'cine of diſtreſs:
For nine ſhort days your freedom will reſtore,
And break the bondage which you thus deplore.
But I, alas! unhappy ſtill, muſt mourn,
Joys once poſſeſs'd, which never can return;
Four valiant ſons, who periſh'd on the plain
In this dire ſtrife, a fifth on Oeta ſlain:
Theſe ſhall return to bleſs my eyes no more;
The grave's dark manſion knows not to reſtore,
For time, which bids ſo oft the ſolar ray
Repeat, with light renew'd, th' ethereal way,
And from the ſoil, by heat and vernal winds,
To ſecond life the latent plant unbinds,
Again to flouriſh, nurs'd by wholeſome dews,
Never to mortal man his life renews.
Theſe griefs are ſure; but others ſtill I fear;
A royal huſband loſt, and bondage near;
Myſelf, my daughters, dragg'd by hoſtile hands;
Our dignity exchang'd for ſervile bands:
All this the gods may purpoſe and fulfil;
And we with patience muſt endure their will.
As thus Laodice her ſorrow try'd
With ſympathy to ſooth; the maid reply'd:
Great queen! on whom the ſov'reign pow'rs beſtow
A gen'rous heart to feel another's woe;
Let ſtill untouch'd through life your honours laſt,
With happier days to come for ſorrows paſt!
Yet ſtrive not thus a hopeleſs wretch to cheer,
Whom ſure conjecture leads the worſt to fear.
Shall Diomed a public cauſe forego,
His faithful friends betray, and truſt a foe?
By treachery behold the hoſt o'erthrown,
Renounce the public intereſt and his own?
Shall kings and armies, in the balance laid,
Avail not to outweigh a ſingle maid?
One, whom his fury falſely did reprove
For crimes unknown, whoſe only crime was love:
No, ſure ere this he triumphs in the field;
Your armies to his matchleſs valour yield:
And ſoon ſubmitting to the fatal blow,
This head muſt gratify a vanquiſh'd foe.
If ſymbols e'er the ſecret fates explain,
If viſions do not always warn in vain,
If dreams do ever true prognoſtics prove,
And dreams, the ſages ſay, deſcend from Jove,
My fate approaches: late at dead of night:
My veins yet freeze with horror and affright!
I thought that, all forſaken and alone,
Penſive I wander'd far through ways unknown,
A gloomy twilight, neither night nor day
Frown'd on my ſteps, and ſadden'd all the way:
Long dreary vales I ſaw on ev'ry ſide,
And caverns ſinking deep, with entrance wide;
On ragged cliffs the blaſted foreſts hung;
Her baleful note the boding ſcreech-owl ſung.
At laſt, with many a weary ſtep, I found
This melancholy country's outmoſt bound,
An ocean vaſt: upon a cliff I ſtood,
And ſaw, beneath me far, the ſable flood;
No iſlands roſe the dull expanſe to grace,
And nought was ſeen through all the boundleſs ſpace,
But low-brow'd clouds, which on the billows frown'd,
And, in a night of ſhade, the proſpect drown'd.
The winds, which ſeem'd around the cliffs to blow,
With doleful cadence, utter'd ſounds of woe,
Wafting, from ev'ry cave and dreary den,
The wail of infants mix'd with groans of men:
Amaz'd, on ev'ry ſide my eyes I turn,
And ſee depending from the craggy bourn

Wretches unnumber'd; ſome the mould'ring foil,
Some graſp'd the ſlipp'ry rock, with fruitleſs toil;
Some hung ſuſpended by the roots, which paſs
Through crannies of the cliffs, or wither'd graſs.
Still from the ſteep they plung'd into the main;
As from the eyes deſcends the trickling rain.
Amaz'd I turn'd, and ſtrove in vain to fly;
Thickets oppos'd, and precipices high
To ſtop my flight: and, from the airy ſteep,
A tempeſt ſnatch'd, and hurl'd me to the deep.
The ſudden violence my ſlumber broke;
The waves I ſeem'd to touch, and ſtraight awoke.
With ſleep the viſion fled; but, in my mind
Imprinted deep, its image left behind.
For had the frightful ſcene which fancy drew,
And what I ſeem'd to ſuffer, all been true;
Had fate appear'd, in blackeſt colours dreſs'd,
No deeper had its horrors been impreſs'd.
When thus the gods by certain ſymbols warn,
And ſure, from dreams, their purpoſes we learn,
No blame I merit, that to fear reſign'd,
Fate's dread approach ſits heavy on my mind.
Caſſandra thus; Laodice again:
Futurity, in dreams, we ſeek in vain;
For oft, from thoughts diſturb'd, ſuch phantoms riſe,
As fogs from marſhes climb, to blot the ſkies:
With a dark veil, the cheerful face of day
They ſadden, and eclipſe the ſolar ray;
But ſoon in dews and ſoft-deſcending rains,
Fall to refreſh the mountains and the plains.
For Diomed's offence you ne'er can bleed;
Favour, your ſex and innocence will plead,
Ev'n, with the worſt; nor will a gen'rous foe
His rage, in cruelty and baſeneſs ſhow.
Now to the tow'rs I haſte, to view from far
The danger, or ſucceſs of this day's war.
Let Clymene with me the walls aſcend;
The reſt at home domeſtic cares attend.
She ended thus; and from her ſeat aroſe;
The royal maid attends her, as ſhe goes
Towards the weſtern gate; where full to view
Expos'd, the armies and the camp ſhe knew.
And now appear'd within the lofty gate,
By Creon ſent, the meſſenger of fate.
His ſhining blade, for execution bar'd,
And aſpect dark, his purpoſe ſtraight declar'd.
Alarm'd, at once the royal virgins riſe,
And, ſcatt'ring, fill the dome with female cries:
But, bolder from deſpair, Caſſandra ſtaid,
And to th' aſſaſſin thus, undaunted, ſaid:
Approach! divide this neck with deathful ſteel,
A tyrant's vaſſal no remorſe ſhould feel.
O Diomed! let this example prove,
In man, that ſtubborn honour conquers love:
With weight ſuperior, great ambition draws
The ſcale for glory, and a public cauſe.
I blame thee not for this; nor will impeach
A great example, which I could not reach:
For had whole armies, in the balance laid,
And kings and mighty ſtates with thee been weigh'd,
And I the judge appointed to decree,
They all had periſhed to ranſom thee.
Caſſandra thus; and for the blow prepar'd,
With both her hands her ſhining neck ſhe bar'd,
And round her head a purple garment roll'd,
With leaves of ſilver mark'd, and flow'rs of gold.
Rais'd for the ſtroke, the glittering faulchion hung,
And ſwift deſcending, bore the head along.
A tide of gore, diffus'd in purple ſtreams,
Daſhes the wall, and o'er the pavement ſwims.
Prone to the ground the headleſs trunk reclines,
And life, in long convulſive throbs, reſigns.
Now on the open plain before the walls,
The king of men the chiefs to council calls.
And Diomed, with ſecret griefs oppreſs'd,
Impatient, thus the public ear addreſs'd:
Confed'rate kings! and thou, whoſe ſov'reign hand
Sways the dread ſceptre of ſupreme command!
What holds us, and reſtrains our martial pow'rs;
While haughty Thebes inſults us from her tow'rs?
In vain we conquer thus, and bleed in vain,
If victory but yields the empty plain.
Behind his walls, perfidious Creon lies,
And ſafely meditates a new ſurpriſe:
When on the urn our pious tears we pour;
Or mirth diſarms us, and the genial hour;
No; let us rather, now when fortune calls,
With bold aſſault, attempt to mount the walls;
Myſelf the firſt a choſen band ſhall lead,
Where you low rampart ſinks into the mead:
There will I gain the battlements, and lay,
For others to ſucceed, an open way,
If bars of ſteel have force their works to tear,
Or, from their hinges heav'd the gates, can bear:
Tydides thus. His counſel to oppoſe,
The leader of the Cretan warriors roſe:
Confed'rate kings! and thou, whoſe ſov'reign hand
Sways the dread ſceptre of ſupreme command!
Let not Tydides now, with martial rage,
In meaſures hot and raſh, the hoſt engage;
To ſober reaſon ſtill let paſſion yield,
Nor here admit the ardour of the field:
If Thebes could thus with one aſſault be won,
Her armies vanquiſh'd, and her walls o'erthrown:
Could this one ſingle day reward our toil,
So long endur'd, with victory and ſpoil:
No ſoldier in the ranks, no leader here,
Would ſhun the fight, or counſel to forbear.
But if for victory, a foul defeat,
With all the ſhame and danger of retreat,
Should be the iſſue, which the wiſe muſt dread,
To ſtop is better, ſure, than to proceed.
On yonder walls, and lofty turrets ſtand,
Not ſav'd from ſhameful flight, a heartleſs band,
Who, deſp'rate of their ſtate, would ſoon forego
Their laſt defences, and admit a foe;
But who, from fight recall'd, without diſmay,
A ſafe retreat maintain'd, in firm array.
Secure they combat from protecting walls;
Thrown from above each weapon heavier falls;
Againſt ſuch odds, can we the fight maintain,
And with a foe found equal on the plain?
Though we deſiſt, no leader will oppoſe
That thus the fruits of victory we loſe;
When, pent within their battlements and tow'rs,
In narrow ſpace, we hold the Theban pow'rs:
For oftner, than by arms, are hoſts o'erthrown
By dearth and ſickneſs, in a ſtraiten'd town.
He who can only wield the ſword and ſpear,
Knows leſs than half the inſtruments of war,

Heart-gnawing hunger, enemy to life,
Wide-waſting peſtilence, and civil ſtrife,
By want inflam'd, to all our weapons claim
Superior force, and ſtrike with ſurer aim:
With theſe, whoever arm'd to combat goes,
Inſtructed how to turn them on his foes,
Shall ſee them ſoon laid proſtrate on the ground,
His aims accompliſh'd, and his wiſhes crown'd.
Our warriors, therefore, let us ſtraight recal,
Nor, by aſſault, attempt to force the wall;
But with a rampart, to the gates oppos'd,
Beſiege, in narrow ſpace, our foes enclos'd.
The hero thus; and, eager to reply,
Tydides roſe: when on a turret high
Creon appear'd: Caſſandra's head, diſplay'd
Upon a lance's point, he held, and ſaid:
Ye Argive warriors! view the ſign; and know,
That Creon never fails to quit a foe.
This bloody trophy mark'd; and if it brings
Grief and deſpair to any of the kings,
Let him revenge it on the man who broke
His faith, and dar'd my fury to provoke.
He ended thus. Tydides, as he heard,
With rage diſtracted, and deſpair, appear'd.
Long on the tow'r he fix'd his burning eyes;
The reſt were mute with wonder and ſurpriſe;
But, to the council turning, thus at laſt:
If any favour claim my merits paſt;
If, by a preſent benefit, ye'd bind
To future ſervices a grateful mind;
Let what I urge, in council, now prevail,
With hoſtile arms yon rampart to aſſail:
Elſe, with my native bands, alone I'll try
The combat, fix'd to conquer or to die.
The hero thus. Ulyſſes thus expreſs'd
The prudent dictates of his generous breaſt:
Princes! ſhall dire contention ſtill preſide
In all our councils, and the kings divide?
Sure, of the various ills that can diſtreſs
United armies, and prevent ſucceſs,
Diſcord is chief: where'er the fury ſtrays,
The parts ſhe ſevers, and the whole betrays.
Now let Tydides lead his native pow'rs
To combat, and aſſault the Theban tow'rs;
The reſt, on various parts their forces ſhow,
By mock approaches to diſtract the foe.
If he prevails, to victory he leads;
And ſafe behind him all the hoſt ſucceeds:
If Jove forbids and all-decreeing fate,
The field is open, and a ſafe retreat.
Ulyſſes thus. The princes all aſſent;
Straight from the council through the hoſt they went,
Review'd its order, and in front diſpos'd
The ſlingers, and the rear with bowmen clos'd;
Arming the reſt with all that could avail,
The tow'rs and battlements to ſap or ſcale.
Tydides firſt his martial ſquadrons leads;
Ulyſſes, with his native band, ſucceeds.
Upon them, as they came, the Thebans pour
A ſtorm of jav'lins, ſhot from ev'ry tow'r;
As from the naked heights the feather'd kind,
By bitter ſhow'rs compell'd, and wint'ry wind,
In clouds aſſembled, from ſome mountain's head,
To ſhelter crowd, and dive into the ſhade;
Such and ſo thick the winged weapons flew,
And many warriors wounded, many ſlew.
Now on their ranks, by forceful engines thrown,
Springs, from the twiſted rope, the pond'rous ſtone,
With wide deſtruction through the hoſt to roll,
To mix diſorder and confound the whole.
Intrepid ſtill th' Ætolian chief proceeds;
And ſtill Ulyſſes follows as he leads.
They reach'd the wall. Tydides, with a bound,
Twice ſtrove in vain to mount it from the ground.
Twice fled the foe; as, to the boiſt'rous ſway
Of ſome proud billow, mariners give way;
Which, rous'd by tempeſts, 'gainſt a veſſel bends
Its force, and, mounting o'er the deck, aſcends:
Again he roſe: the third attempt prevail'd;
But, crumbling in his graſp, the rampart fail'd:
For thunder there its fury had impreſs'd,
And loos'd a ſhatter'd fragment from the reſt.
Supine upon the earth the hero falls,
Mix'd with the ſmoke and ruin of the walls.
By diſappointment chaſt'd, and fierce from pain,
Unable, now the rampart to regain,
He turn'd, and ſaw his native bands afar,
By fear reſtrain'd, and ling'ring in the war.
From Creon ſtraight and Thebes, his anger turns,
And 'gainſt his friends, with equal fury, burns;
As when, from ſnows diſſolv'd, or ſudden rains,
A torrent ſwells and roars along the plains;
If, riſing to oppoſe its angry tide,
In full career, it meets a mountain's ſide;
In foaming eddies, backwards to its ſource,
It wheels, and rages with inverted courſe;
So turn'd at once, the fury, in his breaſt,
Againſt Ulyſſes, thus itſelf expreſs'd:
Author accurs'd, and ſource of all my woes!
Friend more pernicious than the worſt of foes!
By thy ſuggeſtions from my purpoſe ſway'd,
I ſlew Caſſandra, and myſelf betray'd;
Hence, lodg'd within this tortur'd breaſt, remains
A fury, to inflict eternal pains.
I need not follow, with vindictive ſpear,
A traitor abſent, while a worſe is near;
Creon but acted what you well foreknew,
When me unwilling to the fight you drew.
To you the firſt my vengeance ſhall proceed,
And then on Creon and myſelf ſucceed:
Such ſacrifice Caſſandra's ghoſt demands,
And ſuch I'll offer with determin'd hands.
Thus as he ſpoke, Ulyſſes pond'ring ſtood,
Whether by art to ſooth his furious mood,
Or, with a ſudden hand, his lance to throw,
Preventing, ere it fell, the threaten'd blow.
But, gliding from above, the martial maid
Between them ſtood, in majeſty diſplay'd;
Her radiant eyes with indignation burn'd,
On Diomed their piercing light ſhe turn'd:
And frowning thus: Thy frantic rage reſtrain;
Elſe by dread Styx I ſwear, nor ſwear in vain,
That proof ſhall teach you whether mortal might
This arm invincible can match in fight.
Is't not enough that he, whoſe hoary hairs
Still watch'd your welfare with a father's cares,
Who dar'd, with zeal and courage, to withſtand
Your fatal phrenzy, periſh'd by your hand?
That, ſlighting ev'ry tie which princes know,
You leagu'd in ſecret with a public foe?
And, from your faith by fond affection ſway'd,
The kings, the army, and yourſelf betray'd?

Yet, ſtill unaw'd, from ſuch atrocious deeds,
To more and worſe your deſp'rate rage proceeds,
And dooms to periſh, by a mad decree,
The chief who ſav'd alike the hoſt and thee.
Had Thebes prevail'd, and one deciſive hour
The victory had fix'd beyond thy pow'r;
Theſe limbs, ere now, had captive fetters worn,
To infamy condemn'd, and hoſtile ſcorn;
While fair Caſſandra, with her virgin charms,
A prize decreed, had bleſt ſome rival's arms.
Did not the worth of mighty Tydeus plead,
Approv'd when living, and rever'd when dead,
For favour to his guilty ſon, and ſtand
A rampart to oppoſe my vengeful hand;
You ſoon had found how mad it is to wage
War with the gods, and tempt immortal rage.
This Thebes ſhall know, ere to the ocean's ſtreams
The ſun again withdraws his ſetting beams;
For now the gods conſent, in vengeance juſt,
For all her crimes, to mix her with the duſt.
The goddeſs thus; and turning to the field,
Her deity in Mentor's form conceal'd:
With courage new each warrior's heart inſpires,
And wakes again, in all their martial fires.
Conſcious of wrong, and ſpeechleſs from ſurpriſe,
Tydides ſtood, nor dar'd to lift his eyes,
Of fate regardleſs; though from ev'ry tow'r,
Stones, darts, and arrows fell, a mingled ſhow'r:
For awe divine ſubdu'd him, and the ſhame
Which virtue ſuffers from the touch of blame.
But to Ulyſſes turning, thus at laſt:
Prince! can thy gen'rous love forget the paſt;
And all remembrance baniſh from thy mind,
Of what my fury and deſpair deſign'd?
If you forgive me, ſtraight our pow'rs recal
Who ſhun the fight, while I attempt the wall.
Some preſent god inſpires me; for I feel
My heart exulting knock the plated ſteel:
In briſker rounds the vital ſpirit flies,
And ev'ry limb with double force ſupplies.
Tydides thus. Ulyſſes thus again
Shall heav'n forgive offences, man retain;
Though born to err, by jarring paſſions toſs'd?
The beſt, in good, no ſteadineſs can boaſt:
No malice, therefore, in my heart ſhall live;
To ſin is human; human to forgive.
But do not now your ſingle force oppoſe
To lofty ramparts and an hoſt of foes;
Let me at leaſt, attending at your ſide,
Partake the danger, and the toil divide:
For ſee our pow'rs advancing to the ſtorm!
Pallas excites them in a mortal form.
Let us, to mount the rampart, ſtraight proceed;
They of themſelves will follow as we lead.
Ulyſſes thus; and, ſpringing from the ground,
Both chiefs at once aſcend the lofty mound.
Before him each his ſhining buckler bears
'Gainſt flying darts, and thick portended ſpears.
Now, on the bulwark's level top they ſtand,
And charge on ev'ry ſide the hoſtile band:
There many warriors in cloſe fight they ſlew,
And many headlong from the rampart threw.
Pallas her fav'rite champions ſtill inſpires,
Their nerves confirms, and wakes their martial fires.
With courſe divided, on the foe they fall,
And bare between them leave a length of wall;
As fire, when kindled on ſome mountain's head,
Where runs, in long extent, the woodland ſhade,
Conſumes the middle foreſt, and extends
Its parted progreſs to the diſtant ends:
So fought the leaders, while their ſcatter'd pow'rs,
In phalanx join'd, approach'd the Theban tow'rs;
With hands and heads againſt the rampart lean'd,
The firſt, upon their ſhields, the reſt ſuſtain'd:
Rank above rank, the living ſtructure grows,
As ſettling bees the pendent heap compoſe,
Which to ſome cavern's roof united clings,
Woven thick with complicated feet and wings:
Thus mutually ſuſtain'd, the warriors bend;
While o'er their heads the order'd ranks aſcend.
And now the martial goddeſs with delight,
Plac'd on a turret's top, ſurvey'd the fight.
Thrice to the height ſhe rais'd her awful voice;
The tow'rs and bulwarks trembled at the noiſe:
Both warring hoſts alike the ſignal hear;
To this the cauſe of hope, to that, of fear.
And Theſeus thus addreſs'd his martial train:
Here ſhall we wage a diſtant war in vain,
When now, Tydides, from the conquer'd tow'rs
Deſcending, on the town his warriors pours?
Your glory, if ye would aſſert, nor yield
At once the praiſe of many a well-fought field;
Aſcend theſe lofty battlements, and claim
With thoſe who conquer, now an equal fame.
The monarch thus; and to the combat leads;
With emulation fir'd, the hoſt proceeds;
Under a ſhow'r of falling darts they go,
Climb the ſteep ramparts, and aſſault the foe;
As winds outrageous, from the ocean wide,
Againſt ſome mole impel the ſtormy tide,
Whoſe rocky arms, oppoſed to the deep,
From tempeſts ſafe the anchoring veſſel keep;
Wave heap'd on wave, the ſtormy deluge tow'rs,
And o'er it, with reſiſtleſs fury, pours:
Such ſeem'd the fight, the Theban hoſt o'erthrown,
The wall deſerts, and mingles with the town.
Creon in vain the deſp'rate rout withſtands,
With ſharp reproaches and vindictive hands;
His rage they ſhun not, nor his threat'nings hear,
From ſtunning clamours deaf, and blind from fear.
And thus the monarch with uplifted eyes,
And both his hands extended to the ſkies:
Ye pow'rs ſupreme, whoſe unreſiſted ſway
The fates of men and mortal things obey!
Againſt your counſels, vain it is to ſtrive,
Which only ruin nations or retrieve.
Here in your ſight, with patience, I reſign
That envy'd royalty which once was mine;
Renounce the cares that wait upon a crown,
And make my laſt attention all my own.
Seven virgin daughters in my houſe remain,
Who muſt not live to ſwell a victor's train;
Nor ſhall my wretched queen, in triumph borne,
Be lifted to the eye of public ſcorn:
One common fate our miſeries ſhall end,
And, with the duſt of Thebes, our aſhes blend.
His fix'd decree the monarch thus expreſs'd
One half the fates confirm'd, deny'd the reſt:

For now surrounded by the hostile crowd
His captive queen an humble suppliant stood.
Tydides found her as she left the walls;
Before the hero to the ground she falls; [press'd,
With trembling hands, his mighty knees she
And, supplicating, thus with tears address'd:
Illustrious chief! for sure your gallant mien
No less proclaims you, spare a wretched queen;
One whom the gods with endless hate pursue,
To griefs already sumless adding new;
O spare a helpless wretch, who humbly bends,
And for protection on thy might depends!
As supplicating thus her suit she press'd,
Ulysses heard, and thus the chief address'd:
See how th' immortals, by a just decree,
Cassandra's fall avenge, and honour thee!
See, at thy feet, the wife of Ceron laid,
A victim offer'd for the injur'd maid.
Let her the first your just resentment feel;
By heav'n presented to your vengeful steel.
Ulysses thus. With sighs the hero said:
Enough is offer'd to Cassandra's shade;
With wide destruction, wasting sword and fire,
To plague the authors of her fall, conspire.
Yet all in vain. No sacrifice recalls
The parted ghost from Pluto's gloomy walls.
Too long, alas! has lawless fury rul'd,
To reason deaf, by no reflection cool'd:
While I unhappy, by its dictates sway'd,
My guardian murder'd, and the host betray'd,
No victim, therefore, to my rage I'll pay;
Nor ever follow as it points the way.
The son of Tydeus thus; and to his tent,
From insults safe, the royal matron sent.
Himself again the course of conquest led
Till Thebes was overthrown, and Creon bled.

A DREAM.

IN THE MANNER OF SPENSER.

I.

One ev'ning as by pleasant Forth I stray'd,
In pensive mood, and meditated still
On poets' learned toil, with scorn repaid
By envy's bitter spite, and want of skill;
A cave I found, which open'd in a hill.
The floor was sand, with various shells yblended,
Through which, in slow meanders, crept a rill;
The roof, by nature's cunning slight suspended:
Thither my steps I turn'd, and there my journey ended.

II.

Upon the ground my listless limbs I laid,
Lull'd by the murmur of the passing stream:
Then sleep, soft stealing, did my eyes invade;
And waking thought, soon ended in a dream.
Transported to a region I did seem,
Which with Thessalian Tempe might compare;
Of verdant shade compos'd, and wat'ry gleam:
Not even Valdarna, thought so passing fair,
Might match this pleasant land, in all perfections rare.

III.

One, like a hoary palmer, near a brook,
Under an arbour, seated did appear;
A shepherd swain, attending, held a book,
And seem'd to read therein that he mote hear.
From curiosity I stepped near;
But ere I reach'd the place where they did sit,
The whisp'ring breezes wafted to my ear
The sound of rhymes which I myself had writ:
Rhymes much, alas, too mean, for such a judge unfit.

IV.

For him he seem'd who sung Achilles' rage,
In lofty numbers that shall never die,
And wise Ulysses' tedious pilgrimage,
So long the sport of sharp adversity:
The praises of his merit, fame on high,
With her shrill trump, for ever loud doth sound;
With him no bard for excellence can vie,
Of all that late or ancient e'er were found;
So much he doth surpass ev'n bards the most renown'd.

V.

The shepherd swain invited me to come
Up to the arbour where they seated were;
For Homer call'd me: much I fear'd the doom
Which such a judge seem'd ready to declare.
As I approach'd, with mickle dread and care,
He thus address'd me: Sir, the cause explain
Why all your story here is told so bare?
Few circumstances mix'd of various grain;
Such, surely, much enrich and raise a poet's strain.

VI.

Certes, quoth I, the critics are the cause
Of this, and many other mischiefs more;
Who tie the Muses to such rigid laws,
That all their songs are frivolous and poor.
They cannot now, as oft they did before,
Ere pow'rful prejudice had clipt their wings,
Nature's domain with boundless flight explore,
And traffic freely in her precious things:
Each bard now fears the rod, and trembles while he sings.

VII.

Though Shakspeare, still disdaining narrow rules,
His bosom fill'd with Nature's sacred fire,
Broke all the cobweb limits fix'd by fools,
And left the world to blame him and admire.
Yet his reward few mortals would desire;
For, of his learned toil, the only meed
That ever I could find he did acquire,
Is that our dull, degenerate, age of lead,
Says that he wrote by chance, and that he scarce could read.

VIII.

I ween, quoth he, that poets are to blame
When they ſubmit to critics' tyranny:
For learned wights there is no greater ſhame,
That blindly with their dictates to comply.
Who ever taught the eagle how to fly,
Whoſe wit did e'er his airy tract define,
When with free wing he claims his native ſky,
Say, will he ſteer his courſe by rule and line?
Certes, he'd ſcorn the bounds that would his flight confine.

IX.

Not that the Muſes' art is void of rules:
Many there are, I wot, and ſtricter far,
Than thoſe which pedants dictate from the ſchools,
Who wage with wit and taſte eternal war:
For foggy ignorance their ſight doth mar;
Nor can their low conception ever reach
To what dame Nature, crown'd with many a ſtar,
Explains to ſuch as know her learned ſpeech;
But few can comprehend the leſſons ſhe doth teach.

X.

As many as the ſtars that gild the ſky,
As many as the flow'rs that paint the ground,
In number like the inſect tribes that fly,
The various forms of beauty ſtill are found;
That with ſtrict limits no man may them bound,
And ſay that this, and this alone, is right:
Experience ſoon ſuch raſhneſs would confound,
And make its folly obvious to the light;
For ſuch preſumption ſure becomes not mortal wight.

XI.

Therefore each bard ſhould freely entertain
The hints which pleaſing fancy gives at will;
Nor curb her ſallies with too ſtrict a rein,
Nature ſubjecting to her hand-maid ſkill:
And you yourſelf in this have done but ill;
With many more, who have not comprehended
That genius, cramp't, will rarely mount the hill,
Whoſe forked ſummit with the clouds is blended:
Therefore, when next you write, let this defect be mended.

XII.

But, like a friend, who candidly reproves
For faults and errors which he doth eſpy,
Each vice he freely marks; yet always loves
To mingle favour with ſeverity.
Certes, quoth he, I cannot well deny,
That you in many things may hope to pleaſe:
You force a barbarous northern tongue to ply,
And bend it to your purpoſes with eaſe;
Though rough as Albion's rocks, and hoarſer than her ſeas.

XIII.

Nor are your tales, I wot, ſo looſely yok'd,
As thoſe which Colin Clout * did tell before;
Nor with deſcription crowded ſo, and chok'd,
Which, thinly ſpread, will always pleaſe the more.
Colin, I wot, was rich in Nature's ſtore;
More rich than you, had more than he could uſe:
But mad Orlando † taught him had his lore;
Whoſe flights, at random, oft miſled his muſe:
To follow ſuch a guide, few prudent men would chooſe.

XIV.

Me you have follow'd: Nature was my guide;
To this the merit of your verſe is owing:
And know for certain, let it check your pride,
That all you boaſt of is of my beſtowing.
The flow'rs I ſee, through all your garden blowing,
Are mine; moſt part, at leaſt: I might demand,
Might claim them, as a crop of my own ſowing,
And leave but few, thin ſcatter'd o'er the land:
A claim ſo juſt, I wot, you could not well withſtand.

XV.

Certes, quoth I, that juſtice were full hard,
Which me alone would ſentence to reſtore;
When many a learned ſage, and many a bard,
Are equally your debtors, or much more.
Let Tityrus * himſelf produce his ſtore,
Take what is thine, but little will remain:
Little, I wot, and that indebted ſore
To Aſcra's bard †, and Arethuſa's ſwain ‡;
And others too beſide; who lent him many a ſtrain.

XVI.

Nor could the modern bards afford to pay,
Whoſe ſongs exalt the champions of the Croſs;
Take from each hoard thy ſterling gold away,
And little will remain but worthleſs droſs.
Not bards alone could ill ſupport the loſs;
But ſages too, whoſe theft ſuſpicion ſhunn'd:
Ev'n that ſly Greek, §, who ſteals and hides ſo cloſe,
Were half a bankrupt, if he ſhould refund,
While theſe are all forborn, ſhall I alone be dunn'd.

XVII.

He ſmil'd; and from his wrath, which well could ſpare
Such boon, the wreath with which his locks were clad,
Pluck'd a few leaves to hide my temples bare;
The preſent I receiv'd with heart full glad.
Henceforth, quoth I, I never will be ſad;
For now I ſhall obtain my ſhare of fame:
Nor will licentious wit, or envy bad,
With bitter taunts, my verſes dare to blame:
This garland ſhall protect them, and exalt my name.

XVIII.

But dreams are ſhort; for as I thought to lay
My limbs, at eaſe, upon the flow'ry ground,
And drink, with greedy ear, what he might ſay,
As murm'ring waters ſweet, or muſic's ſound,
My ſleep departed; and I, waking, found
Myſelf again by Fortha's pleaſant ſtream.
Homewards I ſtepp'd, in meditation drown'd,
Reflecting on the meaning of my dream;
Which let each wight interpret as him beſt doth ſeem.

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* *Spenſer.*
† *Ariosto, ſo called from his hero.*

* *Virgil.* † *Heſiod.* ‡ *Theocritus.*
§ *Plato, reckoned by Longinus one of the greateſt imitators of Homer.*

FABLES.

TO THE EARL OF LAUDERDALE.

MY LORD,

IT is undoubtedly an uneasy situation to lie under great obligations, without being able to make suitable returns: all that can be done in this case, is, to acknowledge the debt, which (though it does not entitle to an acquittance) is looked upon as a kind of compensation, being all that gratitude has in its power.

This is in a peculiar manner my situation with respect to your Lordship. What you have done for me with the most uncommon favour and condescension is what I shall never be able to repay; and, therefore, have used the freedom to recommend the following performance to your protection, that I might have an opportunity of acknowledging my obligations in the most public manner.

It is evident, that the world will hardly allow my gratitude upon this occasion to be disinterested. Your distinguished rank, the additional honours derived from the lustre of your ancestors, your own uncommon abilities, equally adapted to the service of your country in peace and in war, are circumstances sufficient to make any author ambitious of your Lordship's patronage. But I must do myself the justice to insist, it is upon the account of distinctions less splendid, though far more interesting (those, I mean, by which you are distinguished as the friend of human nature, the guide and patron of unexperienced youth, and the father of the poor), that I am zealous of subscribing myself,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's

Most humble, and

Most devoted Servant,

WILLIAM WILKIE.

FABLE I.

THE YOUNG LADY AND THE LOOKING-GLASS.

YE deep philosophers who can
Explain that various creature, man,
Say, is there any point so nice,
As that of offering an advice?
To bid your friend his errors mend,
Is almost certain to offend:
Though you in softest terms advise,
Confess him good; admit him wise;
In vain you sweeten the discourse,
He thinks you call him fool, or worse;
You paint his character, and try
If he will own it, and apply.
Without a name reprove and warn:
Here none are hurt, and all may learn;
This, too, must fail, the picture shown,
No man will take it for his own.
In moral lectures treat the case,
Say this is honest, that is base;
In conversation none will bear it;
And for the pulpit, few come near it.
And is there then no other way
A moral lesson to convey?
Must all that shall attempt to teach,
Admonish, satirize, or preach?
Yes, there is one, an ancient art,
By sages found to reach the heart,
Ere science with distinctions nice,
Had fix'd what virtue is and vice,
Inventing all the various names
On which the moralist declaims:
They would by simple tales advise,
Which took the hearer by surprise;
Alarm'd his conscience, unprepar'd,
Ere pride had put it on its guard;
And made him from himself receive
The lessons which they meant to give.
That this device will oft prevail,
And gain its end when others fail,
If any shall pretend to doubt,
The tale which follows it makes out.

There was a little stubborn dame
Whom no authority could tame,
Restive by long indulgence grown,
No will she minded but her own:

At trifles oft she'd scold and fret,
Then in a corner take a seat,
And sourly moping all the day
Disdain alike to work or play.
Papa all softer arts had try'd,
And sharper remedies apply'd;
But both were vain, for every course
He took still made her worse and worse.
'Tis strange to think how female wit,
So oft should make a lucky hit,
When man with all his high pretence
To deeper judgment, sounder sense,
Will err, and measures false pursue—
'Tis very strange I own, but true—
Mama observ'd the rising lass,
By stealth retiring to the glass,
To practise little airs unseen,
In the true genius of thirteen:
On this a deep design she laid
To tame the humour of the maid;
Contriving like a prudent mother
To make one folly cure another.
Upon the wall against the seat
Which Jessy us'd for her retreat,
Whene'er by accident offended,
A looking-glass was straight suspended,
That it might show her how deform'd
She look'd, and frightful when she storm'd;
And warn her as she priz'd her beauty,
To bend her humour to her duty,
All this the looking-glass atchiev'd,
Its threats were minded and believ'd.
The maid who spurn'd at all advice,
Grew tame and gentle in a trice;
So when all other means had fail'd
The silent monitor prevail'd.
Thus, fable to the human kind
Presents an image of the mind,
It is a mirror where we spy
At large our own deformity,
And learn of course those faults to mend
Which but to mention would offend.

FABLE II.

THE KITE AND THE ROOKS.

You say 'tis vain in verse or prose
To tell what ev'ry body knows,
And stretch invention to express
Plain truths which all men will confess:
Go on the argument to mend,
Prove that to know is to attend,
And that we ever keep in sight
What reason tells us once is right;
Till this is done you must excuse
The zeal and freedom of my muse
In hinting to the human-kind,
What few deny but fewer mind:
There is a folly which we blame,
'Tis strange that it should want a name,
For sure no other finds a place
So often in the human race,
I mean the tendency to spy
Our neighbour's faults with sharpen'd eye,
And make his lightest failings known,
Without attending to our own.
The prude in daily use to vex
With groundless censure half the sex,
Of rigid virtue honour nice,
And much a foe to every vice,
Tells lies without remorse and shame,
Yet never thinks herself to blame.
A scriv'ner, though afraid to kill,
Yet scruples not to forge a will;
Abhors the soldier's bloody feats,
While he as freely damns all cheats:
The reason's plain, 'tis not his way
To lie, to cozen and betray.
But tell me if to take by force,
Is not as bad at least, or worse.
The pimp who owns it as his trade
To potch for letchers, and be paid,
Thinks himself honest in his station,
But rails at rogues that sell the nation
Nor would he stoop in any case,
And stain his honour for a place.
To mark this error of mankind
The tale which follows is design'd.
A flight of rooks one harvest morn
Had stopt upon a field of corn,
Just when a kite as authors say,
Was passing on the wing that way:
His honest heart was fill'd with pain,
To see the farmer lose his grain,
So lighting gently on a shock
He thus the foragers bespoke:
"Believe me, Sirs, your much to blame,
'Tis strange that neither fear nor shame
Can keep you from your usual way
Of stealth, and pilf'ring every day.
No sooner has the industrious swain
His field turn'd up and sow'd the grain,
But ye come flocking on the wing,
Prepar'd to snatch it ere it spring:
And after all his toil and care
Leave every furrow spoil'd and bare:
If ought escapes your greedy bills,
Which nurs'd by summer grows and fills,
'Tis still your prey: and though ye know
No rook did ever till or sow,
Ye boldly reap, without regard
To justice, industry's reward,
And use it freely as your own,
Though men and cattle shou'd get none.
I never did in any case
Descend to practices so base.
Though stung with hunger's sharpest pain
I still have scorn'd to touch a grain,
Ev'n when I had it in my pow'r
To do't with safety every hour:
For, trust me, nought that can be gain'd
Is worth a character unstain'd."
Thus with a face austerely grave
Harangu'd the hypocrite and knave;
And answering from amidst the flock
A rook with indignation spoke.
"What has been said is strictly true,
Yet comes not decently from you;
For sure it indicates a mind
From selfish passions more than blind,
To miss your greater crimes, and quote
Our lighter failings thus by rote.

I muſt confeſs we wrong the ſwain
Too oft by pilf'ring of his grain:
But is our guilt like yours, I pray,
Who rob and murder every day?
No harmleſs bird can mount the ſkies
But you attack him as he flies;
And when at eve he lights to reſt,
You ſtoop and ſnatch him from his neſt.
The huſbandman who ſeems to ſhare
So large a portion from your care,
Say, is he ever off his guard,
While you are hov'ring o'er the yard?
He knows too well your uſual tricks
Your ancient ſpite to tender chicks,
And that you like a felon watch,
For ſomething to ſurpriſe and ſnatch."
At this rebuke ſo juſt, the kite
Surpris'd, abaſh'd, and ſilenc'd quite,
And prov'd a villain to his face,
Straight ſoar'd aloft and left the place.

FABLE III.

THE MUSE AND THE SHEPHERD.

Let every bard who ſeeks applauſe
Be true to virtue and her cauſe,
Nor ever try to raiſe his fame
By praiſing that which merits blame;
The vain attempt he needs muſt rue,
For diſappointment will enſue.
Virtue with her ſuperior charms
Exalts the poet's ſoul and warms,
His taſte refines, his genius fires,
Like Phœbus and the nine inſpires;
While vice though ſeemingly approv'd
Is coldly flatter'd, never lov'd.
Palemon once a ſtory told,
Which by conjecture muſt be old:
I have a kind of half conviction
That at the beſt 'tis but a fiction;
But taken right and underſtood.
The moral certainly is good.
A ſhepherd ſwain was wont to ſing
The infant beauties of the ſpring,
The bloom of ſummer, winter hoar,
The autumn rich in various ſtore;
And prais'd in numbers ſtrong and clear
The Ruler of the changeful year.
To human themes he'd next deſcend,
The ſhepherd's harmleſs life commend,
And prove him happier than the great
With all their pageantry and ſtate;
Who oft for pleaſure and for wealth,
Exchange their innocence and health;
The Muſes liſten'd to his lays;
And crown'd him as he ſung with bays.
Euterpe, goddeſs of the lyre,
A harp beſtow'd with golden wire:
And oft wou'd teach him how to ſing,
Or touch with art the trembling ſtring.
His fame o'er all the mountains flew,
And to his cot the ſhepherds drew;
They heard his muſic with delight,
Whole ſummer days from morn to night:
Nor did they ever think him long,
Such was the magic of his ſong:
Some rural preſent each prepar'd,
His ſkill to honour and reward;
A flute, a ſheep-hook or a lamb,
Or kidling follow'd by its dam:
For bards it ſeems in earlier days,
Got ſomething more than empty praiſe.
All this continued for a while,
But ſoon our ſongſter chang'd his ſtyle,
Infected with the common itch,
His gains to double and grow rich:
Or fondly ſeeking new applauſe,
Or this or t'other was the cauſe;
One thing is certain that his rhimes
Grew more obſequious to the times,
Leſs ſtiff and formal, alter'd quite
To what a courtier calls polite.
Whoe'er grew rich, by right or wrong,
Became the hero of a ſong:
No nymph or ſhepherdeſs could wed,
But he muſt ſing the nuptial bed,
And ſtill was ready to recite
The ſecret tranſports of the night,
In ſtrains too luſcious for the ear
Of ſober chaſtity to bear.
Aſtoniſh'd at a change ſo great,
No more the ſhepherds ſought his ſeat,
But in their place a horned crowd
Of ſatyrs flock'd from every wood,
Drawn by the magic of his lay,
To dance, to frolic, ſport, and play.
The goddeſs of the lyre diſdain'd
To ſee her ſacred gift profan'd,
And gliding ſwiftly to the place,
With indignation in her face,
The trembling ſhepherd thus addreſs'd,
In awful majeſty confeſs'd.
" Thou wretched fool, that harp reſign,
For know it is no longer thine;
It was not given you to inſpire
A herd like this with looſe deſire,
Nor to aſſiſt that venal praiſe
Which vice may purchaſe, if it pays;
Such offices my lyre diſgrace;
Here take this bagpipe in its place.
'Tis fitter far, believe it true,
Both for theſe miſcreants and you."
The ſwain diſmay'd, without a word,
Submitted, and the harp reſtor'd.

FABLE IV.

THE GRASHOPPER AND THE GLOWWORM.

When ignorance poſſeſs'd the ſchools,
And reign'd by Ariſtotle's rules,
Ere Verulam, like dawning light,
Roſe to diſpel the Gothic night:
A man was taught to ſhut his eyes,
And grow abſtracted to be wiſe.
Nature's broad volume fairly ſpread,
Where all true ſcience might be read,
The wiſdom of th' Eternal Mind,
Declar'd and publiſh'd to mankind,

Was quite neglected, for the whims
Of mortals and their airy dreams:
By narrow principles and few,
By haſty maxims, oft untrue,
By words and phraſes ill-defin'd,
Evaſive truth they hop'd to bind;
Which ſtill eſcap'd them, and the elves
At laſt caught nothing but themſelves.
Nor is this folly modern quite,
'Tis ancient too; the Stagyrite
Improv'd at firſt, and taught his ſchool
By rules of art to play the fool.
Ev'n Plato, from example bad,
Would oft turn ſophiſt, and run mad:
Makes Socrates himſelf diſcourſe
Like Clarke and Leibnitz, oft-times worſe;
'Bout quirks and ſubtilties contending,
Beyond all human comprehending.
From ſome ſtrange bias men purſue
Falſe knowledge ſtill in place of true,
Build airy ſyſtems of their own,
This moment rais'd, the next pull'd down;
While few attempt to catch thoſe rays
Of truth which nature ſtill diſplays
Throughout the univerſal plan,
From moſs and muſhrooms up to man.
This ſure were better, but we hate
To borrow when we can create;
And therefore ſtupidly prefer
Our own conceits, by which we err,
To all the wiſdom to be gain'd
From nature and her laws explain'd.
One ev'ning, when the ſun was ſet,
A graſhopper and glowworm met
Upon a hillock in a dale,
As Mab the fairy tells the tale.
Vain and conceited of his ſpark,
Which brighten'd as the night grew dark,
The ſhining reptile ſwell'd with pride
To ſee his rays on every ſide,
Mark'd by a circle on the ground
Of livid light, ſome inches round.
Quoth he, if glowworms never ſhone,
To light the earth when day is gone,
In ſpite of all the ſtars that burn,
Primeval darkneſs would return:
They're leſs and dimmer, one may ſee,
Beſides much farther off than we;
And therefore through a long deſcent
Their light is ſcatter'd quite and ſpent:
While ours, compacter and at hand,
Keeps night and darkneſs at a ſtand,
Diffus'd around in many a ray,
Whoſe brightneſs emulates the day.
This paſs'd and more without diſpute,
The patient graſhopper was mute:
But ſoon the eaſt began to glow
With light appearing from below,
And level from the ocean's ſtreams
The moon emerging ſhot her beams,
To gild the mountains and the woods,
And ſhake and glitter on the floods.
The glowworm, when he found his light
Grow pale, and faint, and vaniſh quite,
Before the moon's prevailing ray,
Began his envy to diſplay.

That globe, quoth he, which ſeems ſo fair,
Which brightens all the earth and air,
And ſends its beams ſo far abroad,
Is nought, believe me, but a clod;
A thing, which, if the ſun were gone,
Has no more light in't than a ſtone,
Subſiſting merely by ſupplies
From Phœbus in the nether ſkies:
My light, indeed, I muſt confeſs,
On ſome occaſions will be leſs;
But ſpite itſelf will hardly ſay
I'm debtor for a ſingle ray;
'Tis all my own, and on the ſcore
Of merit mounts to ten times more
Than any planet can demand
For light diſpens'd at ſecond hand.
To hear the paltry inſect boaſt
The graſhopper all patience loſt.
Quoth he, my friend, it may be ſo,
The moon with borrow'd light may glow;
That your faint glimm'ring is your own,
I think is queſtion'd yet by none:
But ſure the office to collect
The ſolar brightneſs and reflect,
To catch thoſe rays that would be ſpent
Quite uſeleſs in the firmament,
And turn them downwards on the ſhade
Which abſence of the ſun has made,
Amounts to more, in point of merit,
Than all your tribe did e'er inherit:
Oft by that planet's friendly ray
The midnight traveller finds his way;
Safe by the favour of his beams
'Midſt precipices, lakes, and ſtreams;
While you miſlead him, and your light,
Seen like a cottage lamp by night,
With hopes to find a ſafe retreat,
Allures and tempts him to his fate:
As this is ſo, I needs muſt call
The merit of your light but ſmall:
You need not boaſt on't though your own;
'Tis light, indeed, but worſe than none;
Unlike to what the moon ſupplies,
Which you call borrow'd, and deſpiſe.

FABLE V.

THE APE, THE PARROT, AND THE JACKDAW.

I HOLD it raſh at any time
To deal with fools diſpos'd to rhime;
Diſſuaſive arguments provoke
Their utmoſt rage as ſoon as ſpoke;
Encourage them, and for a day
Or two you're ſafe, by giving way:
But when they find themſelves betray'd,
On you at laſt the blame is laid.
They hate and ſcorn you as a traitor,
The common lot of thoſe who flatter:
But can a ſcribbler, Sir, be ſhunn'd?
What will you do when teaz'd and dunn'd?
When watch'd, and caught, and cloſely preſs'd,
When complimented and addreſs'd:
When Bavius greets you with a bow,
"Sir, pleaſe to read a line or two."
If you approve, and ſay they're clever,
"You make me happy, Sir, for ever."

What can be done? the case is plain,
No methods of escape remain:
You're fairly noos'd, and must consent
To bear, what nothing can prevent,
A coxcomb's anger; and your fate
Will be to suffer soon or late.
An ape, that was the sole delight
Of an old woman day and night,
Indulg'd at table and in bed,
Attended like a child, and fed:
Who knew each trick, and twenty more
Than ever monkey play'd before,
At last grew frantic, and would try,
In spite of nature's laws, to fly.
Oft from the window would he view
The passing swallows as they flew,
Observe them fluttering round the walls,
Or gliding o'er the smooth canals:
He too must fly, and cope with these;
For this and nothing else would please:
Oft thinking from the window's height,
Three stories down to take his flight:
He still was something loth to venture,
As tending strongly to the centre:
And knowing that the least mistake
Might cost a limb, perhaps his neck:
The case you'll own was something nice;
He thought it best to ask advice;
And to the parrot straight applying,
Allow'd to be a judge of flying,
He thus began: "You'll think me rude,
Forgive me if I do intrude,
For you alone my doubts can clear
In something that concerns me near:
Do you imagine, if I try,
That I shall e'er attain to fly?
The project's whimsical no doubt,
But, ere you censure, hear me out:
That liberty's our greatest blessing
You'll grant me without farther pressing;
To live confin'd, 'tis plain and clear
Is something very hard to bear:
This you must know, who for an age
Have been kept pris'ner in a cage,
Deny'd the privilege to soar
With boundless freedom as before.
I have, 'tis true, much greater scope
Than you, my friend, can ever hope;
I traverse all the house, and play
My tricks and gambols every day:
Oft with my mistress in a chair
I ride abroad to take the air:
Make visits with her, walk at large,
A maid or footman's constant charge.
Yet this is nothing, for I find
Myself still hamper'd and confin'd;
A grov'ling thing: I fain would rise
Above the earth, and mount the skies:
The meanest birds, and insects too,
This feat with greatest ease can do.
To that gay creature turn about
That's beating on the pane without!
Ten days ago, perhaps but five,
A worm, it scarcely seem'd alive:
By threads suspended, tough and small,
Midst dusty cobwebs on a wall;
Now dress'd in all the diff'rent dyes
That vary in the ev'ning skies,
He soars at large, and on the wing
Enjoys with freedom all the spring;
Skims the fresh lakes, and rising sees
Beneath him far the loftiest trees:
And when he rests, he makes his bow'r
The cup of some delicious flow'r.
Shall creatures so obscurely bred,
On mere corruption nurs'd and fed,
A glorious privilege obtain,
Which I can never hope to gain?
Shall I, like man's imperial race
In manners, customs, shape, and face,
Expert in all ingenious tricks,
To tumble, dance, and leap o'er sticks;
Who know to sooth and coax my betters,
And match a beau, at least in letters;
Shall I despair, and never try
(What meanest insects can) to fly?
Say, mayn't I without dread or care
At once commit me to the air,
And not fall down and break my bones
Upon those hard and flinty stones?
Say, if to stir my limbs before
Will make me glide along or soar?
All things they say are learn'd by trying:
No doubt it is the same with flying.
I wait your judgment with respect,
And shall proceed as you direct.
Poor poll, with gen'rous pity mov'd,
The ape's fond rashness thus reprov'd:
For, though instructed by mankind,
Her tongue to candour still inclin'd.
My friend, the privilege to rise
Above the earth, and mount the skies,
Is glorious sure, and 'tis my fate
To feel the want on't with regret;
A pris'ner to a cage confin'd,
Though wing'd and of the flying kind.
With you the case is not the same,
You're quite terrestrial by your frame,
And should be perfectly content
With your peculiar element:
You have no wings, I pray reflect,
To lift you and your course direct;
Those arms of yours will never do,
Not twenty in the place of two;
They ne'er can lift you from the ground,
For broad and long, they're thick and round,
And therefore if you choose the way,
To leap the window, as you say,
'Tis certain that you'll be the jest
Of every insect, bird, and beast;
When you lie batter'd by your fall
Just at the bottom of the wall.
Be prudent then, improve the pow'rs
Which nature gives in place of ours.
You'll find them readly conduce
At once to pleasure and to use.
But airy whims and crotchets lead
To certain loss, and ne'er succeed;
As folks, though inly vex'd and teaz'd,
Will oft seem satisfy'd and pleas'd.
The ape approv'd of every word
At this time utter'd by the bird:

But nothing in opinion chang'd,
Thought only how to be reveng'd.
It happen'd when the day was fair,
That Poll was ſet to take the air,
Juſt where the Monkey oft ſat poring
About experiments in ſoaring:
Diſſembling his contempt and rage,
He ſtept up ſoftly to the cage,
And with a ſly malicious grin,
Accoſted thus the bird within.
You ſay, I am not form'd for flight;
In this you certainly are right:
'Tis very plain upon reflection,
But to yourſelf there's no objection,
Since flying is the very trade
For which the winged race is made;
And therefore for our mutual ſport,
I'll make you fly, you can't be hurt.
With that he ſlyly ſlipt the ſtring
Which held the cage up by the ring.
In vain the Parrot begg'd and pray'd,
No word was minded that ſhe ſaid:
Down went the cage, and on the ground
Bruis'd and half-dead poor Poll was found.
Pug who for ſome time had attended
To that alone which now was ended,
Again had leiſure to purſue
The project he had firſt in view.
Quoth he, a perſon, if he's wiſe
Will only with his friends adviſe,
They know his temper and his parts,
And have his intereſt near their hearts.
In matters which he ſhould forbear,
They'll hold him back with prudent care,
But never from an envious ſpirit
Forbid him to diſplay his merit;
Or judging wrong from ſpleen and hate
His talents ſlight or underrate;
I acted ſure with ſmall reflection
In aſking counſel and direction
From a ſly minion whom I know
To be my rival and my foe:
One who will conſtantly endeavour
To hurt me in our lady's favour,
And watch and plot to keep me down,
From obvious intereſts of her own:
But on the top of that old tow'r
An honeſt Daw has made his bow'r;
A faithful friend whom one may truſt,
My debtor too for many a cruſt;
Which in the window oft I lay,
For him to come and take away:
From gratitude no doubt he'll give
Such counſel as I may receive;
Well back'd with reaſons ſtrong and plain
To puſh me forward or reſtrain.
One morning when the Daw appear'd,
The project was propos'd and heard:
And though the bird was much ſurpris'd
To find friend Pug ſo ill adviſ'd,
He rather choſe that he ſhould try
At his own proper riſk to fly,
Than hazard, in a caſe ſo nice,
To ſhock him by too free advice.
Quoth he, I'm certain that you'll find
The project anſwer to your mind;
Without ſuſpicion, dread or care,
At once commit you to the air;
You'll ſoar aloft, or, if you pleaſe,
Proceed ſtraight forwards at your eaſe:
The whole depends on reſolution,
Which you poſſeſs from conſtitution;
And if you follow as I lead,
'Tis paſt a doubt you muſt ſucceed.
So ſaying, from the turret's height,
The Jackdaw ſhot with downward flight,
And on the edge of a canal,
Some fifty paces from the wall,
'Lighted, obſequious to attend
The Monkey when he ſhould deſcend:
But he, although he had believ'd
The flatterer and was deceiv'd,
Felt ſome miſgivings at his heart
In vent'ring on ſo new an art:
But yet at laſt 'tween hope and fear
Himſelf he truſted to the air,
But far'd like him whom poets mention
With Dedalus's old invention:
Directly downwards on his head
He fell, and lay an hour for dead.
The various creatures in the place
Had diff'rent thoughts upon the caſe,
From ſome his fate compaſſion drew,
But thoſe I muſt confeſs were few:
The reſt eſteem'd him rightly ſerv'd,
And in the manner he deſerv'd,
For playing tricks beyond his ſphere,
Nor thought the puniſhment ſevere.
They gather'd round him as he lay,
And jeer'd him when he limp'd away.
Pug diſappointed thus and hurt,
And grown beſides the public ſport,
Found all his different paſſions change
At once to fury and revenge:
The Daw 'twas uſeleſs to purſue,
His helpleſs brood as next in view,
With unrelenting paws he ſeiz'd,
One's neck he wrung, another ſqueez'd,
Till of the number four or five,
No ſingle bird was left alive.
Thus counſellors, in all regards
Though different, meet with like rewards:
The ſtory ſhows the certain fate
Of every mortal ſoon or late,
Whoſe evil genius for his crimes
Connects with any fop that rhimes.

FABLE VI.

THE BOY AND THE RAINBOW.

Declare, ye ſages, if ye find
'Mongſt animals of ev'ry kind,
Of each condition ſort and ſize,
From whales and elephants to flies,
A creature that miſtakes his plan,
And errs ſo conſtantly as man.
Each kind purſues his proper good,
And ſeeks for pleaſure, reſt and food,
As nature points, and never errs
In what it chooſes and prefers;
Man only blunders, though poſſeſt
Of talents far above the reſt.
Deſcend to inſtances and try;
An ox will ſcarce attempt to fly,
Or leave his paſture in the wood
With fiſhes to explore the flood.

Man only acts of every creature,
In oppoſition to his nature.
The happineſs of human-kind
Conſiſts in rectitude of mind,
A will ſubdu'd to reaſon's ſway,
And paſſions practis'd to obey;
An open and a gen'rous heart,
Refin'd from ſelfiſhneſs and art;
Patience which mocks at fortune's pow'r,
And wiſdom never ſad nor ſour:
In theſe conſiſt our proper bliſs;
Elſe Plato reaſons much amiſs:
But fooliſh mortals ſtill purſue
Falſe happineſs in place of true;
Ambition ſerves us for a guide,
Or luſt, or avarice, or pride;
While reaſon no aſſent can gain,
And revelation warns in vain.
Hence through our lives in ev'ry ſtage,
From infancy itſelf to age,
A happineſs we toil to find,
Which ſtill avoids us like the wind;
Ev'n when we think the prize our own,
At once 'tis vaniſh'd, loſt and gone.
You'll aſk me why I thus rehearſe,
All Epictetus in my verſe,
And if I fondly hope to pleaſe
With dry reflections, ſuch as theſe,
So trite, ſo hackny'd, and ſo ſtale?
I'll take the hint and tell a tale.

One ev'ning as a ſimple ſwain
His flock attended on the plain,
The ſhining bow he chanc'd to ſpy,
Which warns us when a ſhow'r is nigh;
With brighteſt rays it ſeem'd to glow,
Its diſtance eighty yards or ſo.
This bumpkin had it ſeems been told
The ſtory of the cup of gold,
Which fame reports is to be found
Juſt where the rainbow meets the ground;
He therefore felt a ſudden itch
To ſeize the goblet and be rich;
Hoping, yet hopes are oft but vain,
No more to toil through wind and rain,
But ſit indulging by the fire,
'Midſt eaſe and plenty, like a 'ſquire:
He mark'd the very ſpot of land
On which the rainbow ſeem'd to ſtand,
And ſtepping forwards at his leiſure
Expected to have found the treaſure.
But as he mov'd, the colour'd ray
Still chang'd its place and ſlipt away,
As ſeeming his approach to ſhun;
From walking he began to run,
But all in vain, it ſtill withdrew
As nimbly as he could purſue;
At laſt through many a bog and lake,
Rough craggy rock and thorny brake,
It led the eaſy fool, till night
Approach'd, then vaniſh'd in his ſight,
And left him to compute his gains,
With nought but labour for his pains.

FABLE VII.

CELIA AND HER MIRROR.

As there are various ſorts of minds,
So friendſhips are of diff'rent kinds:
Some, conſtant when the object's near,
Soon vaniſh if it diſappear.
Another ſort, with equal flame,
In abſence will be ſtill the ſame:
Some folks a trifle will provoke,
Their weak attachment ſoon is broke;
Some great offences only move
To change in friendſhip or in love.
Affection when it has its ſource
In things that ſhift and change of courſe,
As theſe diminiſh and decay,
Muſt likewiſe fade and melt away.
But when 'tis of a nobler kind,
Inſpir'd by rectitude of mind,
Whatever accident arrives,
It lives, and death itſelf ſurvives;
Thoſe different kinds reduc'd to two,
Falſe friendſhip may be call'd and true.

In Celia's drawing-room of late
Some female friends were met to chat;
Where after much diſcourſe had paſt,
A portrait grew the theme at laſt:
'Twas Celia's you muſt underſtand,
And by a celebrated hand.
Says one, that picture ſure muſt ſtrike,
In all reſpects it is ſo like:
Your very features, ſhape and air
Expreſs'd, believe me, to a hair:
The price I'm ſure could not be ſmall—
Juſt fifty guineas frame and all—
That Mirror there is wond'rous fine
I own the bauble coſt me nine;
I'm fairly cheated you may ſwear,
For never was a thing ſo dear:
Dear—quoth the Looking-glaſs—and ſpoke,
Madam, it would a ſaint provoke:
Muſt that ſame gaudy thing be own'd
A pennyworth at fifty pound;
While I at nine am reckon'd dear,
'Tis what I never thought to hear.
Let both our merits now be try'd,
This fair aſſembly ſhall decide;
And I will prove it to your face,
That you are partial in the caſe.
I give a likeneſs far more true
Than any artiſt ever drew:
And what is vaſtly more, expreſs
Your whole variety of dreſs:
From morn to noon, from noon to night,
I watch each change and paint it right;
Beſides I'm miſtreſs of the art,
Which conquers and ſecures a heart.
I teach you how to uſe thoſe arms,
That vary and aſſiſt your charms,
And in the triumphs of the fair,
Claim half the merit for my ſhare:
So when the truth is fairly told,
I'm worth at leaſt my weight in gold:
But that vain thing of which you ſpeak
Becomes quite uſeleſs in a week.
For, though it had no other vice,
'Tis out of faſhion in a trice,
The cap is chang'd, the cloak, the gown;
It muſt no longer ſtay in town?
But goes in courſe to hide a wall
With others in our country-hall.

The Mirror thus:—the nymph reply'd,
Your merit cannot be deny'd;

The portrait too, I muſt confeſs,
In ſome reſpects has vaſtly leſs.
But you yourſelf will freely grant
That it has virtues which you want.
'Tis certain that you can expreſs
My ſhape, my features, and my dreſs,
Not juſt as well, but better too
Than Kneller once or Ramſay now.
But that ſame image in your heart
Which thus excels the painter's art,
The ſhorteſt abſence can deface,
And put a monkey's in its place:
That other which the canvaſs bears,
Unchang'd and conſtant, laſts for years,
Would keep its luſtre and its bloom
Though it were here and I at Rome.
When age and ſickneſs ſhall invade
Thoſe youthful charms and make them fade,
You'll ſoon perceive it, and reveal
What partial friendſhip ſhould conceal:
You'll tell me, in your uſual way,
Of furrow'd cheeks and locks grown gray;
Your gen'rous rival, not ſo cold,
Will ne'er ſuggeſt that I am old;
Nor mark when time and ſlow diſeaſe
Has ſtol'n the graces won't pleaſe;
But keep my image to be ſeen
In the full bloſſom of ſixteen:
Beſtowing freely all the praiſe
I merited in better days.
You will (when I am turn'd to duſt,
For beauties die, as all things muſt,
And you remember but by ſeeing)
Forget that e'er I had a being;
But in that picture I ſhall live,
My charms ſhall death itſelf ſurvive,
And figur'd by the pencil there
Tell that your miſtreſs once was fair.
Weigh each advantage and defect,
The portrait merits moſt reſpect:
Your qualities would recommend
A ſervant rather than a friend;
But ſervice ſure in ev'ry caſe,
To friendſhip yields the higher place.

FABLE VIII.

THE FISHERMEN.

Imitated from Theocritus.

By all the ſages 'tis confeſt
That hope when moderate is beſt:
But when indulg'd beyond due meaſure
It yields a vain deceitful pleaſure,
Which cheats the ſimple, and betrays
To miſchief in a thouſand ways;
Juſt hope aſſiſts in all our toils,
The wheels of induſtry it oils;
In great attempts the boſom fires,
And zeal and conſtancy inſpires.
Falſe hope, like a deceitful dream,
Reſts on ſome viſionary ſcheme,
And keeps us idle to our loſs,
Enchanted with our hands acroſs.
A tale an ancient bard has told
Of two poor fiſhermen of old,
Their names were (leſt I ſhould forget
And put the reader in a pet,
Leſt critics too ſhould make a pother)
The one Aſphelio, Gripus t' other.
The men were very poor, their trade
Could ſcarce afford them daily bread:
Though ply'd with induſtry and care
Through the whole ſeaſon, foul and fair.
Upon a rock their cottage ſtood,
On all ſides bounded by the flood:
It was a miſerable ſeat,
Like cold and hunger's worſt retreat:
And yet it ſerv'd them both for life,
As neither could maintain a wife;
Two walls were rock, and two were ſand,
Ramm'd up with ſtakes and made to ſtand.
A roof hung threat'ning o'er their heads
Of boards half-rotten, thatch'd with reeds.
And as no thief e'er touch their ſtore,
A hurdle ſerv'd them for a door.
Their beds were leaves; againſt the wall
A ſail hung drying, yard and all.
On one ſide lay an old patch'd wherry,
Like Charon's on the Stygian ferry:
On t' other, baſkets and a net,
With ſea-weed foul and always wet.
Theſe ſorry inſtruments of trade
Were all the furniture they had:
For they had neither ſpit nor pot,
Unleſs my author has forgot.
Once ſome few hours ere break of day,
As in their hut our fiſhers lay,
The one awak'd, and wak'd his neighbour,
That both might ply their daily labour;
For cold and hunger are confeſt
No friends to indolence or reſt.
Friend, quoth the drowſy ſwain, and ſwore,
What you have done has hurt me more
Than all your ſervice can repay
For years to come by night and day;
You've broke—the thought on't makes me mad—
The fineſt dream that e'er I had.
Quoth Gripus: friend your ſpeech would prove
You mad indeed, or elſe in love;
For dreams ſhould weigh but light with thoſe
Who feel the want of food and clothes:
I gueſs, though ſimple and untaught,
You dream'd about a lucky draught,
Or money found by chance: they ſay
That "hungry foxes dream of prey."
You're wond'rous ſhrewd, upon my troth,
Aſphelio cry'd, and right in both:
My dream had gold in't, as you ſaid,
And fiſhing too, our conſtant trade;
And ſince your gueſs has hit ſo near,
In ſhort, the whole on't you ſhall hear.
"Upon the ſhore I ſeem'd to ſtand,
My rod and tackle in my hand;
The baited hook full oft I threw,
But ſtill in vain, I nothing drew:
A fiſh at laſt appear'd to bite,
The cork div'd quickly out of ſight,
And ſoon the dipping rod I found
With ſomething weighty bent half round:
Quoth I, good luck has come at laſt,
I've ſurely made a happy caſt:
This fiſh, when in the market ſold,
In place of braſs will ſell for gold:
To bring it ſafe within my reach,
I drew it ſoftly to the beach:

But long ere it had come ſo near
The water gleam'd with ſomething clear;
Each paſſing billow caught the blaze,
And glitt'ring, ſhone with golden rays.
Of hope and expectation full
Impatient, yet afraid to pull,
To ſhore I ſlowly brought my prize,
A golden fiſh of largeſt ſize:
'Twas metal all from head to tail,
Quite ſtiff and glitt'ring ev'ry ſcale.
Thought I, my fortune now is made;
'Tis time to quit the fiſhing trade,
And chooſe ſome other, where the gains
Are ſure, and come for half the pains.
Like creatures of amphibious nature
One hour on land, and three on water;
We live 'midſt danger, toil, and care,
Yet never have a groat to ſpare;
While others not expos'd to harm,
Grow rich though always dry and warm;
This treaſure will ſuffice, and more,
To place me handſomely on ſhore,
In ſome ſnug manor; now a ſwain,
My ſteers ſhall turn the furrow'd plain,
While on a mountain's graſſy ſide
My flocks are paſt'ring far and wide:
Beſide all this, I'll have a ſeat
Convenient, elegant, and neat,
A houſe not over great nor ſmall,
Three rooms, a kitchen, and a hall.
The offices contriv'd with care,
And fitted to complete a ſquare;
A garden well laid out; a wife,
To double all the joys of life;
With children prattling at my knees,
Such trifles as are ſure to pleaſe.
Thoſe gay deſigns, and twenty more,
I in my dream was running o'er,
While you, as if you ow'd me ſpite,
Broke in and put them all to flight,
Blew the whole viſion into air,
And left me waking in deſpair.
Of late we have been poorly fed,
Laſt night went ſupperleſs to bed:
Yet, if I had it in my pow'r
My dream to lengthen for an hour,
The pleaſure mounts to ſuch a ſum,
I'd faſt for fifty yet to come.
Therefore to bid me riſe is vain,
I'll wink and try to dream again.
If this, quoth Gripus, is the way
You chooſe, I've nothing more to ſay;
'Tis plain that dreams of wealth will ſerve
A perſon who reſolves to ſtarve;
But ſure to hug a fancy'd caſe,
That never did nor can take place,
And for the pleaſures it can give
Neglect the trade by which we live,
Is madneſs in its greateſt height,
Or I miſtake the matter quite:
Leave ſuch vain fancies to the great,
For folly ſuits a large eſtate:
The rich may ſafely deal in dreams,
Romantic hopes and airy ſchemes;
But you and I, upon my word,
Such paſtime cannot well afford;
And therefore if you would be wiſe,
Take my advice, for once, and riſe.

FABLE IX.

CUPID AND THE SHEPHERD.

Who ſets his heart on things below
But little happineſs ſhall know;
For every object he purſues
Will vex, deceive him, and abuſe:
While he on hopes and wiſhes riſe
To endleſs bliſs above the ſkies,
A true felicity ſhall gain,
With freedom from both care and pain.
He ſeeks what yields him peace and reſt,
Both when in proſpect and poſſeſt.
A ſwain whoſe flock had gone aſtray,
Was wand'ring far out of his way
Through deſerts wild, and chanc'd to ſee
A ſtripling leaning on a tree,
In all things like the human kind,
But that upon his back behind
Two wings were from his ſhoulders ſpread
Of gold and azure, ting'd with red;
Their colour like the ev'ning ſky:
A golden quiver grac'd his thigh:
His bow unbended in his hand
He held, and wrote with on the ſand;
As one whom anxious cares purſue,
In muſing oft is wont to do.
He ſtarted ſtill with ſudden fear,
As if ſome danger had been near,
And turn'd on every ſide to view
A flight of birds that round him flew,
Whoſe preſence ſeem'd to make him ſad,
For all were ominous and bad;
The hawk was there, the type of ſpite,
The jealous owl that ſhuns the light,
The raven, whoſe prophetic bill
Denounces woe and miſchief ſtill;
The vulture hungry to devour,
Though gorg'd and glutted ev'ry hour;
With theſe confus'd an ugly crew
Of harpies, bats, and dragons flew,
With talons arm'd, and teeth, and ſtings,
The air was darken'd with their wings.
The ſwain, though frighten'd, yet drew near,
Compaſſion roſe in place of fear,
He to the winged youth began,
"Say, are you mortal and of man,
Or ſomething of celeſtial birth,
From heaven deſcended to the earth?
I am not of terreſtrial kind,
Quoth Cupid, nor to earth confin'd:
Heav'n is my true and proper ſphere,
My reſt and happineſs are there:
Through all the boundleſs realms of light
The phœnix waits upon my flight,
With other birds whoſe names are known
In that delightful place alone.
But when to earth my courſe I bend,
At once they leave me and aſcend;
And for companions in their ſtead,
Thoſe winged monſters there ſucceed,
Who hov'ring round me night and day,
Expect and claim me as their prey.
Sir, quoth the ſhepherd, if you'll try,
Your arrows ſoon will wake them fly;
Or if they brave them and reſiſt,
My ſling is ready to aſſiſt.

Incapable of wounds and pain,
Reply'd the winged youth again,
Theſe foes our weapons will defy;
Immortal made, they never die;
But live to haunt me every where,
While I remain within their ſphere.
Sir, quoth the ſwain, might I adviſe,
You ſtraight ſhould get above the ſkies:
It ſeems indeed your only way,
For nothing here is worth your ſtay;
Beſide, when foes like theſe moleſt,
You'll find but little peace or reſt.

FABLE X.

THE SWAN AND THE OTHER BIRDS.

Each candidate for public fame
Engages in a deſp'rate game:
His labour he will find but loſt,
Or leſs than half repaid at moſt:
To prove this point I ſhall not chooſe
The arguments which Stoics uſe;
That human life is but a dream,
And few things in it what they ſeem;
That praiſe is vain and little worth,
An empty bauble, and ſo forth.
I'll offer one, but of a kind
Not half ſo ſubtle and refin'd;
Which, when the reſt are out of ſight,
May ſometimes chance to have its weight.
The man who ſets his merits high,
To glitter in the public eye,
Should have defects but very ſmall,
Or ſtrictly ſpeaking, none at all:
For that ſucceſs which ſpreads his fame,
Provokes each envious tongue to blame,
And makes his faults and failings known
Where'er his better parts are ſhown.
Upon a time, as poets ſing,
The birds all waited on their king,
His hymeneal rites to grace;
A flow'ry meadow was the place;
They all were frolickſome and gay
Amidſt the pleaſures of the day,
And ere the feſtival was clos'd,
A match at ſinging was propos'd;
The queen herſelf a wreath prepar'd,
To be the conqueror's reward;
With ſtore of pinks and daiſies in it,
And many a ſongſter try'd to win it;
But all the judges ſoon confeſt
The ſwan ſuperior to the reſt;
He got the garland from the bride,
With honour and applauſe beſide:
A tattling gooſe, with envy ſtung,
Although herſelf ſhe ne'er had ſung,
Took this occaſion to reveal
What ſwans ſeem ſtudious to conceal,
And, ſkill'd in ſatire's artful ways,
Invective introduc'd with praiſe.
The ſwan, quoth ſhe, upon my word,
Deſerves applauſe from ev'ry bird:
By proof his charming voice you know,
His feathers ſoft and white as ſnow;
And if you ſaw him when he ſwims
Majeſtic on the ſilver ſtreams,
He'd ſeem complete in all reſpects:
But nothing is without defects;
For that is true, which few would think,
His legs and feet are black as ink—
As black as ink—if this be true,
To me 'tis wonderful and new,
The ſov'reign of the birds reply'd;
But ſoon the truth on't ſhall be try'd.
Sir, ſhow your limbs, and for my ſake,
Confute at once this foul miſtake,
For I'll maintain, and I am right,
That, like your feathers, they are white.
Sir, quoth the ſwan, it would be vain
For me a falſehood to maintain;
My legs are black, and proof will ſhow
Beyond diſpute that they are ſo:
But if I had not got a prize
Which glitters much in ſome folk's eyes,
Not half the birds had ever known
What truth now forces me to own.

FABLE XI.

THE LOVER AND HIS FRIEND.

To the Poets.

'Tis not the point in works of art
With care to furniſh every part,
That each to high perfection rais'd,
May draw attention and be prais'd,
An object by itſelf reſpected,
Though all the others were neglected;
Not maſters only this can do,
But many a vulgar artiſt too:
We know diſtinguiſh'd merit moſt,
When in the whole the parts are loſt,
When nothing riſes up to ſhine,
Or draw us from the chief deſign,
When one united full effect
Is felt, before we can reflect
And mark the cauſes that conſpire
To charm and force us to admire.
This is indeed a maſter's part,
The very ſummit of his art;
And, therefore, when ye ſhall rehearſe
To friends for trial of your verſe,
Mark their behaviour and their way,
As much, at leaſt, as what they ſay;
If they ſeem'd pleas'd, and yet are mute,
The poem's good beyond diſpute;
But when they babble all the while,
Now praiſe the ſenſe, and now the ſtyle,
'Tis plain that ſomething muſt be wrong,
This too weak or that too ſtrong.
The art is wanting which conveys
Impreſſions in myſterious ways,
And makes us from a whole receive
What no divided parts can give:
Fine writing, therefore, ſeems of courſe,
Leſs fit to pleaſe at firſt than worſe.
A language fitted to the ſenſe
Will hardly paſs for eloquence.
One feels its force, before he ſees
The charm which gives it pow'r to pleaſe,
And ere inſtructed to admire,
Will read and read, and never tire.
But when the ſtyle is of a kind
Which ſoars and leaves the ſenſe behind,
'Tis ſomething by itſelf, and draws
From vulgar judges dull applauſe;

They'll yawn, and tell you as you read,
" Thoſe lines are mighty fine indeed;"
But never will your works peruſe
At any time, if they can chooſe.
'Tis not the thing which men call wit,
Nor characters, though truly hit,
Nor flowing numbers ſoft or ſtrong,
That bears the raptur'd ſoul along;
'Tis ſomething of a diff'rent kind,
'Tis all thoſe ſkilfully combin'd,
To make what critics call a whole,
Which raviſhes and charms the ſoul.
Alexis by fair Celia's ſcorn
To grief abandon'd and forlorn,
Had ſought in ſolitude to cover
His anguiſh, like a hopeleſs lover:
With his fond paſſion to debate,
Gay Strephon ſought his rural ſeat,
And found him with the ſhepherds plac'd
Far in a ſolitary waſte.—
My friend, quoth he, you're much to blame;
This fooliſh ſoftneſs quit for ſhame;
Nor fondly doat upon a woman,
Whoſe charms are nothing more than common.
That Celia's handſome I agree,
But Clara's handſomer than ſhe:
Euanthe's wit, which all commend,
Does Celia's certainly tranſcend:
Nor can you find the leaſt pretence
With Phebe's to compare her ſenſe;
With better taſte Belinda dreſſes.
With truer ſtep the floor ſhe preſſes;
And for behaviour ſoft and kind,
Meliſſa leaves her far behind:
What witchcraft then can fix the chain
Which makes you ſuffer her diſdain,
And not attempt the manly part
To ſet at liberty your heart?
Make but one ſtruggle, and you'll ſee
That in a moment you'll be free.
This Strephon urg'd, and ten times more,
From topics often touch'd before:
In vain his eloquence he try'd;
Alexis, ſighing, thus reply'd:
If Clara's handſome and a toaſt,
'Tis all the merit ſhe can boaſt:
Some fame Euanthe's wit has gain'd,
Becauſe by prudence not reſtrain'd.
Phebe I own is wondrous wiſe,
She never acts but in diſguiſe:
Belinda's merit all confeſs
Who know the myſtery of dreſs:
But poor Meliſſa on the ſcore
Of mere good-nature pleaſes more:
In thoſe the reigning charm appears
Alone, to draw our eyes and ears,
No other riſes by its ſide
And ſhines, attention to divide;
Thus ſeen alone it ſtrikes the eye,
As ſomething exquiſite and high:
But in my Celia you will find
Perfection of another kind;
Each charm ſo artfully expreſt
As ſtill to mingle with the reſt:
Averſe and ſhunning to be known,
An object by itſelf alone,
But thus combin'd they make a ſpell
Whoſe force no human tongue can tell;
A pow'rful magic which my breaſt
Will ne'er be able to reſiſt:
For as ſhe flights me or complies,
Her conſtant lover lives or dies.

FABLE XII.

THE RAKE AND THE HERMIT.

A YOUTH, a pupil of the town,
Philoſopher and atheiſt grown,
Benighted once upon the road,
Found out a hermit's lone abode,
Whoſe hoſpitality in need
Reliev'd the trav'ler and his ſteed,
For both ſufficiently were tir'd,
Well drench'd in ditches and bemir'd.
Hunger the firſt attention claims;
Upon the coals a raſher flames,
Dry cruſts, and liquor ſomething ſtale,
Were added to make up a meal;
At which our trav'ler as he ſat
By intervals began to chat.—
'Tis odd, quoth he, to think what ſtrains
Of folly govern ſome folk's brains!
What makes you chooſe this wild abode?
You'll ſay, 'tis to converſe with God:
Alas, I fear, 'tis all a whim:
You never ſaw or ſpoke with him.
They talk of Providence's pow'r,
And ſay it rules us every hour;
To me all nature ſeems confuſion,
And ſuch weak fancies mere deluſion.
Say, if it rul'd and govern'd right,
Could there be ſuch a thing as night;
Which, when the ſun has left the ſkies,
Puts all things in a deep diſguiſe?
If then a trav'ler chance to ſtray
The leaſt ſtep from the public way,
He's ſoon in endleſs mazes loſt,
As I have found it to my coſt.
Beſides, the gloom which nature wears
Aſſiſts imaginary fears
Of ghoſts and goblins from the waves
Of ſulph'rous lakes, and yawning graves;
All ſprung from ſuperſtitious ſeed,
Like other maxims of the creed.
For my part, I reject the tales
Which faith ſuggeſts when reaſon fails:
And reaſon nothing underſtands,
Unwarranted by eyes and hands.
Theſe ſubtle eſſences, like wind,
Which ſome have dreamt of, and call mind,
It ne'er admits; nor joins the lie
Which ſays men rot, but never die.
It holds all future things in doubt,
And therefore wiſely leaves them out:
Suggeſting what is worth our care,
To take things preſent as they are,
Our wiſeſt courſe: the reſt is folly,
The fruit of ſpleen and melancholy.—
Sir, quoth the hermit, I agree
That reaſon ſtill our guide ſhould be:
And will admit her as the teſt,
Of what is true, and what is beſt:
But reaſon ſure would bluſh for ſhame
At what you mention in her name;
Her dictates are ſublime and holy;
Impiety's the child of folly:

Reaſon with meaſur'd ſteps and ſlow,
To things above from things below
Aſcends, and guides us through her ſphere
With caution, vigilance, and care.
Faith in the utmoſt frontier ſtands,
And reaſon puts her in her hands,
But not till her commiſſion giv'n
Is found authentic, and from heav'n.
'Tis ſtrange that man, a reas'ning creature,
Should miſs a god in viewing nature:
Whoſe high perfections are diſplay'd
In ev'ry thing his hands have made:
Ev'n when we think their traces loſt,
When found again, we ſee them moſt;
The night itſelf which you would blame
As ſomething wrong in nature's frame,
Is but a curtain to inveſt
Her weary children, when at reſt:
Like that which mothers draw to keep
The light off from a child aſleep.
Beſide, the fears which darkneſs breeds
At leaſt augments in vulgar heads,
Are far from uſeleſs, when the mind
Is narrow, and to earth confin'd;
They make the worldling think with pain
On frauds and oaths, and ill-got gain;
Force from the ruffian's hand the knife
Juſt rais'd againſt his neighbour's life;
And in defence of virtue's cauſe
Aſſiſt each ſanction of the laws.
But ſouls ſerene, where wiſdom dwells,
And ſuperſtitious dread expells,
The ſilent majeſty of night
Excites to take a nobler flight:
With ſaints and angels to explore
The wonders of creating pow'r;
And lifts on contemplation's wings
Above the ſphere of mortal things:
Walk forth and tread thoſe dewy plains
Where night in awful ſilence reigns;
The ſky's ſerene, the air is ſtill,
The woods ſtand lift'ning on each hill,
To catch the ſounds that ſink and ſweil
Wide-floating from the ev'ning bell,
While foxes howl and beetles hum,
Sounds which make ſilence ſtill more dumb:
And try if folly raſh and rude
Dares on the ſacred hour intrude.
Then turn your eyes to heav'n's broad frame,
Attempt to quote thoſe lights by name,
Which ſhine ſo thick and ſpread ſo far;
Conceive a ſun in every ſtar,
Round which unnumber'd planets roll,
While comets ſhoot athwart the whole.
From ſyſtem ſtill to ſyſtem ranging,
Their various benefits exchanging,
And ſhaking from their flaming hair
The things moſt needed every where.
Explore this glorious ſcene, and ſay
That night diſcovers leſs than day;
That 'tis quite uſeleſs, and a ſign
That chance diſpoſes, not deſign:
Whoe'er maintains it, I'll pronounce
Him either mad or elſe a dunce.
For reaſon, though 'tis far from ſtrong,
Will ſoon find out that nothing's wrong,
From ſigns and evidences clear,
Of wiſe contrivance every where.

The hermit ended; and the youth
Became a convert to the truth;
At leaſt he yielded, and confeſt
That all was order'd for the beſt.

FABLE XIII.

PHOEBUS AND THE SHEPHERD.

I CANNOT think but more or leſs
True merit always gains ſucceſs;
That envy, prejudice, and ſpite,
Will never ſink a genius quite.
Experience ſhows beyond a doubt,
That worth, though clouded, will ſhine out.
The ſecond name for epic ſong,
Firſt claſſic of the Engliſh tongue,
Great Milton, when he firſt appear'd,
Was ill receiv'd and coldly heard:
In vain did faction damn thoſe lays,
Which all poſterity ſhall praiſe:
Is Dryden or his works forgot,
For all that Buckingham has wrote?
The peer's ſharp ſatire, charg'd with ſenſe,
Give's pleaſure at no one's expence:
The bard and critic both inſpir'd
By Phœbus, ſhall be ſtill admir'd:
'Tis true that cenſure, right or wrong,
May hurt at firſt the nobleſt ſong,
And for a while defeat the claim
Which any writer has to fame:
A mere book-merchant with his tools
Can ſway with eaſe the herd of fools:
Who on a moderate computation
Are ten to one in every nation—
Your ſtyle is ſtiff—your periods halt—
In every line appears a fault—
The plot and incidents ill-ſorted—
No ſingle character ſupported—
Your ſimiles will ſcarce apply;
The whole miſhapen, dark, and dry.
All this will paſs, and gain its end
On the beſt poem e'er was penn'd:
But when the firſt aſſaults are o'er,
When fops and witlings prate no more,
And when your works are quite forgot
By all who praiſe or blame by rote:
Without ſelf-intereſt, ſpleen, or hate,
The men of ſenſe decide your fate:
Their judgment ſtands, and what they ſay
Gains greater credit ev'ry day;
Till groundleſs prejudices paſt,
True merit has its due at laſt.
The hackney ſcribblers of the town,
Who were the firſt to write you down,
Their malice chang'd to admiration,
Promote your growing reputation,
And to exceſs of praiſe proceed;
But this ſcarce happens till you're dead,
When fame for genius, wit, and ſkill,
Can do you neither good nor ill;
Yet, if you would not be forgot,
They'll help to keep your name afloat.

An aged ſwain that us'd to feed
His flock upon a mountain's head,
Drew crowds of ſhepherds from each hill,
To hear and profit by his ſkill;
For ev'ry ſimple of the rock,
That can offend or cure a flock,

He us'd to mark, and knew its pow'r
In ſtem and foliage, root and flow'r.
Beſide all this, he could foretel
Both rain and ſunſhine paſſing well;
By deep ſagacity he'd find,
The future ſhiftings of the wind;
And gueſs moſt ſhrewdly ev'ry year
If mutton would be cheap or dear.
To tell his ſkill in ev'ry art,
Of which he underſtood a part,
His ſage advice was wrapt in tales,
Which oft perſuade when reaſon fails;
To do him juſtice every where,
Would take more time than I can ſpare,
And therefore now ſhall only touch
Upon a fact which authors vouch;
That Phœbus oft would condeſcend
To treat this ſhepherd like a friend:
Oft when the ſolar chariot paſt,
Provided he was not in haſte,
He'd leave his ſteeds to take freſh breath,
And crop the herbage of the heath;
While with the ſwain a turn or two
He'd take, as landlords uſe to do,
When ſick of finer folks in town,
They find amuſement in a clown.
One morning when the god alighted,
His winged ſteeds look'd wild and frighted;
The whip it ſeems had not been idle,
One's traces broke, another's bridle:
All four were ſwitch'd in every part,
Like common jades that draw a cart,
Whoſe ſides and haunches all along
Show the juſt meaſure of the thong.

Why, what's the matter, quoth the ſwain,
My lord, it gives your ſervant pain;
Sure ſome offence is in the caſe,
I read it plainly in your face.---

Offence, quoth Phœbus, vex'd and heated;
'Tis one indeed, and oft repeated:
Since firſt I drove through heav'n's high-way,
That's before yeſterday, you'll ſay,
The envious clouds in league with night
Conſpire to intercept my light;
Rank vapours breath'd from putrid lakes,
The ſteams of common ſew'rs and jakes,
Which under ground ſhould be confin'd,
Nor ſuffer'd to pollute the wind;
Eſcap'd in air by various ways,
Extinguiſh or divert my rays.
Oft in the morning, when my ſteeds
Above the ocean lift their heads,
And when I hope to ſee my beams
Far glittering on the woods and ſtreams;
A ridge of lazy clouds that ſleep
Upon the ſurface of the deep,
Receive at once, and wrap me round
In fogs extinguiſh'd half and drown'd.
But mark my purpoſe, and by Styx
I'm not ſoon alter'd when I fix;
If things are ſuffer'd at this paſs,
I'll fairly turn my nags to graſs:
No more this idle round I'll dance,
But let all nature take its chance.

If, quoth the ſhepherd, it were fit
To argue with the god of wit,
I could a circumſtance ſuggeſt
That would alleviate things at leaſt,
That clouds oppoſe your riſing light
Full oft, and lengthen out the night,
Is plain; but ſoon they diſappear,
And leave the ſky ſerene and clear;
We ne'er expect a finer day,
Than when the morning has been gray;
Beſides, thoſe vapours which confine
You iſſuing from your eaſtern ſhrine,
By heat ſublim'd, and thinly ſpread,
Streak all the ev'ning ſky with red:
And when your radiant orb in vain
Would glow beneath the weſtern main,
And not a ray could reach our eyes,
Unleſs reflected from the ſkies,
Thoſe wat'ry mirrors ſend your light
In ſtreams amidſt the ſhades of night:
Thus length'ning out your reign much more
Than they had ſhorten'd it before.
As this is ſo, I muſt maintain
You've little reaſon to complain:
For when the matter's underſtood,
The ill ſcenes balanc'd by the good;
The only diff'rence in the caſe
Is that the miſchief firſt takes place,
The compenſation when you're gone
Is rather ſomewhat late, I own:
But ſince 'tis ſo, you'll own 'tis fit
To make the beſt on't, and ſubmit.

FABLE XIV.

THE BREEZE AND THE TEMPEST.

THAT nation boaſts a happy fate,
Whoſe prince is good, as well as great;
Calm peace at home with plenty reigns,
The law its proper courſe obtains;
Abroad the public is reſpected,
And all its int'reſts are protected:
But when his genius, weak or ſtrong,
Is by ambition pointed wrong,
When private greatneſs has poſſeſs'd,
In place of public good, his breaſt,
'Tis certain, and I'll prove it true,
That ev'ry miſchief muſt enſue.
On ſome pretence a war is made,
The citizen muſt change his trade;
His ſteers the huſbandman unyokes,
The ſhepherd too muſt quit his flocks,
His harmleſs life and honeſt gain,
To rob, to murder, and be ſlain:
The fields, once fruitful, yield no more
Their yearly produce as before:
Each uſeful plant neglected dies,
While idle weeds licentious riſe
Unnumber'd, to uſurp the land
Where yellow harveſts us'd to ſtand.
Lean famine ſoon in courſe ſucceeds;
Diſeaſes follow as ſhe leads.
No infant bands at cloſe of day
In ev'ry village ſport and play.
The ſtreets are throng'd with orphans dying
For want of bread, and widows crying;
Fierce rapine walks abroad unchain'd,
By civil order not reſtrain'd:
Without regard to right and wrong,
The weak are injur'd by the ſtrong.

The hungry mouth but rarely taſtes
The fatt'ning food which riot waſtes;
All ties of conſcience loſe their force,
Ev'n ſacred oaths grow words of courſe.
By what ſtrange cauſe are kings inclin'd
To heap ſuch miſchief on mankind?
What pow'rful arguments controul
The native dictates of the ſoul?
The love of glory and a name
Loud-ſounded by the trump of fame:
Nor ſhall they miſs their end, unleſs
Their guilty projects want ſucceſs.
Let one poſſeſs'd of ſov'reign ſway
Invade, and murder, and betray,
Let war and rapine fierce be hurl'd
Through half the nations of the world;
And prove ſucceſsful in a courſe
Of bad deſigns, and actions worſe,
At once a demigod he grows,
And incens'd both in verſe and proſe,
Becomes the idol of mankind;
Though to what's good he's weak and blind;
Approv'd, applauded, and reſpected,
While better rulers are neglected.

Where Shott's airy tops divide
Fair Lothian from the vale of Clyde,
A tempeſt from the eaſt and north
Fraught with the vapours of the Forth,
In paſſing to the Iriſh ſeas,
Once chanc'd to meet the weſtern breeze.
The tempeſt hail'd him with a roar,
"Make haſte and clear the way before;
No paltry zephyr muſt pretend
To ſtand before me, or contend:
Begone, or in a whirlwind toſt
Your weak exiſtence will be loſt."

The tempeſt thus:—The breeze reply'd
"If both our merits ſhould be try'd,
Impartial juſtice would decree
That you ſhould yield the way to me."

At this the tempeſt rav'd and ſtorm'd,
Grew black and ten times more deform'd.
What qualities, quoth he, of thine,
Vain flatt'ring wind, can equal mine?
Breath'd from ſome river, lake or bog,
Your riſe at firſt is in a fog;
And creeping ſlowly o'er the meads
Scarce ſtir the willows or the reeds;
While thoſe that feel you hardly know
The certain point from which you blow.
From earth's deep womb, the child of fire,
Fierce, active, vigorous, like my ſire,
I ruſh to light; the mountains quake
With dread, and all their foreſts ſhake:
The globe itſelf convuls'd and torn,
Feels pangs unuſual when I'm born:
Now free in air with ſov'reign ſway,
I rule, and all the clouds obey:
From eaſt to weſt my pow'r extends,
Where day begins, and where it ends:
And from Bootes downwards far,
Athwart the track of ev'ry ſtar.
Through me the polar deep diſdains
To ſleep in winter's froſty chains;
But rous'd to rage indignant heaves
Huge rocks of ice upon its waves:
While dread tornados lift on high
The broad Atlantic to the ſky.
I rule the elemental roar,
And ſtrew with ſhipwrecks ev'ry ſhore:
Nor leſs at land my pow'r is known
From Zembla to the burning zone.
I bring Tartarian froſts to kill
The bloom of ſummer; when I will
Wide deſolation doth appear
To mingle and confound the year:
From cloudy Atlas wrapt in night,
On Barka's ſultry plains I light,
And make at once the deſert riſe
In duſty whirlwinds to the ſkies;
In vain the traveller turns his ſteed,
And ſhuns me with his utmoſt ſpeed;
I overtake him as he flies,
O'erblown he ſtruggles, pants, and dies.
Where ſome proud city lifts in air
Its ſpires, I make a deſart bare;
And when I chooſe, for paſtimes ſake,
Can with a mountain ſhift a lake;
The Nile himſelf, at my command,
Oft hides his head beneath the ſand,
And 'midſt dry deſarts blown and toſt,
For many a ſultry league is loſt.
All this I do with perfect eaſe,
And can repeat whene'er I pleaſe:
What merit makes you then pretend
With me to argue and contend,
When all you boaſt of force or ſkill
Is ſcarce enough to turn a mill,
Or help the ſwain to clear his corn,
The ſervile taſks for which you're born?

Sir, quoth the breeze, if force alone
Muſt paſs for merit, I have none;
At leaſt I'll readily confeſs
That your's is greater, mine is leſs.
But merit rightly underſtood
Conſiſts alone in doing good;
And therefore you yourſelf muſt ſee
That preference is due to me:
I cannot boaſt to rule the ſkies
Like you, and make the ocean riſe,
Nor e'er with ſhipwreck's ſtrew the ſhore,
For wives and orphans to deplore.
Mine is the happier taſk, to pleaſe
The mariner, and ſmooth the ſeas,
And waft him ſafe from foreign harms
To bleſs his conſort's longing arms.
With you I boaſt not to confound
The ſeaſons in their annual round,
And mar that harmony in nature
That comforts ev'ry living creature.
But oft from warmer climes I bring
Soft airs to introduce the ſpring;
With genial heat unlock the ſoil,
And urge the ploughman to his toil:
I bid the op'ning blooms unfold
Their ſtreaks of purple, blue, and gold,
And waft their fragrance to impart
That new delight to ev'ry heart,
Which makes the ſhepherd all day long
To carol ſweet his vernal ſong:
The ſummer's ſultry heat to cool,
From ev'ry river, lake and pool,

I skim fresh airs. The tawny swain,
Who turns at noon the furrow'd plain,
Refresh'd and trusting in my aid,
His task pursues and scorns the shade:
And ev'n on Afric's sultry coast,
Where such immense exploits you boast,
I blow to cool the panting flocks
'Midst desarts brown and sun-burnt rocks,
And health and vigour oft supply
To such as languish, faint and die:
Those humbler offices you nam'd,
To own I'll never be asham'd,
With twenty others that conduce
To public good or private use,
The meanest of them far outweighs
The whole amount of all your praise;
If to give happiness and joy,
Excels the talent to destroy.
The tempest, that till now had lent
Attention to the argument,
Again began (his patience lost)
To rage, to threaten, huff and boast:
Since reasons fail'd, resolv'd in course
The question to decide by force,
And his weak opposite to brave—
The breeze retreated to a cave
To shelter, till the raging blast
Had spent its fury and was past.

FABLE XV.

THE CROW AND THE OTHER BIRDS.

Containing an useful hint to the Critics.

In ancient times, tradition says,
When birds like men would strive for praise;
The bulfinch, nightingale, and thrush,
With all that chant from tree or bush,
Would often meet in song to vie;
The kinds that sing not, sitting by.
A knavish crow, it seems, had got
The nack to criticise by rote:
He understood each learned phrase,
As well as critics now-a-days:
Some say, he learn'd them from an owl,
By list'ning where he taught a school.
'Tis strange to tell, this subtle creature,
Though nothing musical by nature,
Had learn'd so well to play his part,
With nonsense couch'd in terms of art,
As to be own'd by all at last
Director of the public taste.
Then puff'd with insolence and pride,
And sure of numbers on his side,
Each song he freely criticis'd;
What he approv'd not, was despis'd:
But one false step in evil hour
For ever stript him of his pow'r.
Once when the birds assembled sat,
All list'ning to his formal chat;
By instinct nice he chanc'd to find
A cloud approaching in the wind,
And ravens hardly can refrain
From croaking when they think of rain;
His wonted song he sung: the blunder
Amaz'd and scar'd them worse than thunder;
For no one thought so harsh a note
Could ever sound from any throat:
They all at first with mute surprise
Each on his neighbour turn'd his eyes:
But scorn succeeding soon took place,
And might be read in ev'ry face.
All this the raven saw with pain,
And strove his credit to regain.
Quoth he, The solo which ye heard
In public should not have appear'd:
The trifle of an idle hour,
To please my mistress once when sour:
My voice, that's somewhat rough and strong,
Might chance the melody to wrong,
But, try'd by rules, you'll find the grounds
Most perfect and harmonious sounds.
He reason'd thus; but to his trouble,
At every word the laugh grew double:
At last o'ercome with shame and spite,
He flew away quite out of sight.

FABLE XVI.

THE HARE AND THE PARTAN (*a*).

The chief design of this fable is to give a true specimen of the Scotch dialect, where it may be supposed to be most perfect, namely, in Mid-Lothian, the seat of the capital. The style is precisely that of the vulgar Scotch; and that the mattter might be suitable to it, I chose for the subject a little story adapted to the ideas of peasants. It is a tale commonly told in Scotland among the country people; and may be looked upon as of the kind of those *Aniles Fabellæ*, in which *Horace* observes his country neighbours were accustomed to convey their rustic philosophy.

A CANNY man (*b*) will scarce provoke
Ae (*c*) creature livin, for a joke;
For be they weak or be they strang (*d*)
A jibe (*e*) leaves after it a stang (*f*)
To mak them think on't; and a laird (*g*)
May find a beggar sae prepair'd,
Wi pawks (*h*) and wiles, whar pith (*i*) is wantin,
As soon will mak him rue his tauntin.
Ye hae my moral, if am able
All fit it nicely wi a fable.

(*a*) *A crab.*

(*b*) *A canny man signifies nearly the same thing as a prudent man: but when the Scotch say that a person is* not *canny, they mean not that they are imprudent, but mischievous and dangerous. If the term* not canny *is applied to persons without being explained, it charges them with sorcery and witchcraft.*

(*c*) *One.*

(*d*) *The Scotch always turn* o *in the syllable* ong, *into* a. *In place of* long, *they say* lang; *in place of* tongs, tangs; *as here* strang, *for* strong.

(*e*) *A satirical jest.*

(*f*) *Sting.*

(*g*) *A gentleman of an estate in land.*

(*h*) *Stratagems.*

(*i*) *Strength.*

A hare, ae morning, chanc'd to ſee
A partan creepin on a lee (*k*),
A fiſhwife (*l*) wha was early oot
Had drapt (*m*) the creature thereaboot.
Mawkin (*n*) bumbas'd (*o*) and frighted ſair (*p*)
To ſee a thing but hide and hair (*q*),
Which if it ſtur'd not might be ta'en (*r*)
For naething ither than a ſtane (*s*),
A ſquunt-wiſe (*t*) wambling (*u*), ſair beſet
Wi gerſe and raſhes (*w*) like a net,
Firſt thought to rin (*x*) for't; for bi kind
A hare's nae fetcher (*y*), ye maun mind (*z*).
But ſeeing that wi (*a*) aw its ſtrength
It ſcarce could creep a tether length (*b*),
The hare grew baulder (*c*) and cam near,
Turn'd playſome, and forgat her fear.
Quoth Mawkin, Was there ere in nature
Sae feckleſs (*d*) and ſae poor a creature?
It ſcarcely kens (*e*), or am miſtaen
The way to gang (*f*) or ſtand its lane (*g*).

(*k*) *A piece of ground let run into graſs for paſture.*

(*l*) *A woman that ſells fiſh. It is to be obſerved, that the Scotch always uſe the word wife where the Engliſh would uſe the word woman.*

(*m*) *Dropt.*

(*n*) *A cant name for a Hare, like that of Reynard for a Fox, or Grimalkin for a Cat, &c.*

(*o*) *Aſtoniſh'd.*

(*p*) *Sore. I ſhall obſerve, once for all, that the Scotch avoid the vowels* o *and* u; *and have in innumerable inſtances ſupplied their places with* a *and* e, *or diphthongs in which theſe letters are predominant.*

(*q*) *Without hide and hair.*

(*r*) *Taken.*

(*s*) *Nothing other than a ſtone.*

(*t*) *Obliquely or aſquat.*

(*u*) *A feeble motion like that of a worm or ſerpent.*

(*w*) *Graſs and ruſhes. The vowel* e *which comes in place of* a, *is by a metatheſis put between the conſonants* g *and* r, *to ſoften the ſound.*

(*x*) *Run.*

(*y*) *Fighter.*

(*z*) *You muſt remember.*

(*a*) *With all.*

(*b*) *The length of a rope uſed to confine cattle when they paſture, to a particular ſpot.*

(*c*) *Bolder.*

(*d*) *Feeble.* Feckful *and* feckleſs *ſignify ſtrong and weak, I ſuppoſe from the verb to* effect.

(*e*) *Knows, or I am in a miſtake.*

(*f*) *Go.*

(*g*) *Alone, or without aſſiſtance.*

See how it ſteitters (*b*); all be bund (*i*)
To rin a mile of up-hill grund
Before it gets a rig-braid frae (*k*)
The place its in, though doon the brae (*l*).
Mawkin wi this began to friſk,
And thinkin (*m*) there was little riſk,
Clapt baith her feet on Partan's back,
And turn'd him awald (*n*) in a crack.
To ſee the creature ſprawl, her ſport
Grew twice as good, yet prov'd but ſhort.
For parting wi her fit (*o*), in play,
Juſt whar the partan's nippers lay,
He gript it faſt, which made her ſqueel,
And think ſhe bourded (*p*) wi the deil.
She ſtravé to rin, and made a fiſtle:
The tither catch'd a tough bur thriſtle (*q*);
Which held them baith, till o'er a dyke
A herd cam ſtending (*r*) wi his tyke (*s*),
And fell'd poor mawkin, fairly ruein,
Whan forc'd to drink of her ain brewin (*t*).

(*b*) *Walks in a weak ſtumbling way.*

(*i*) *I will be bound.*

(*k*) *The breadth of a ridge from. In Scotland about four fathoms.*

(*l*) *An aſcent or deſcent. It is worth obſerving, that the Scotch when they mention a riſing ground with reſpect to the whole of it, they call it a* knau, *if ſmall, and a* hill, *if great; but if they reſpect only one ſide of either, they call it a* brae, *which is probably a corruption of the Engliſh word* brow, *according to the analogy I mentioned before.*

(*m*) *Thinking. When polyſyllables terminate in* ing, *the Scotch almoſt always neglect the* g, *which ſoftens the ſound.*

(*n*) *Topſy-turvy.*

(*o*) *Foot.*

(*p*) *To* bourd *with any perſon is to attack him in the way of jeſt.*

(*q*) *Thiſtle. The Scotch, though they commonly affect ſoft ſounds, and throw out conſonants and take in vowels, in order to obtain them, yet in ſome caſes, of which this is an example, they do the very reverſe; and bring in ſuperfluous conſonants to roughen the ſound, when ſuch ſounds are more agreeable to the roughneſs of the thing repreſented.*

(*r*) *Leaping.*

(*s*) *Dog.*

(*t*) *Brewing.* "*To drink of one's own brewing,*" *is a proverbial expreſſion, for ſuffering the effects of one's own miſconduct. The Engliſh ſay,* "*As they bake, ſo let them brew.*"

A DIALOGUE.

THE AUTHOR AND A FRIEND.

HERE take your papers.—Have you look'd them o'er?
Yes, half a dozen times, I think, or more.
And will they paſs?—They'll ſerve but for a day;
Few books can now do more: You know the way;
A triſle's puff'd till one edition's ſold,
In half a week at moſt a book grows old.
The penny turn'd's the only point in view;
So ev'ry thing will paſs if 'tis but new.—
By what you ſay I eaſily can gueſs
You rank me with the drudges for the preſs;
Who from their garrets ſhow'r Pindarics down,
Or plaintive elegies to lull the town.
You take me wrong: I only meant to ſay,
That ev'ry book that's new will have its day;
The beſt no more: for books are ſeldom read:
The world's grown dull, and publiſhing a trade.
Were this not ſo, could Oſſian's deathleſs ſtrains,
Of high heroic times the ſole remains,
Strains which diſplay perfections to our view,
Which poliſh'd Greece and Italy ne'er knew,
With modern epics ſhare one common lot,
This day applauded, and the next forgot?
Enough of this; to put the queſtion plain,
Will men of ſenſe and taſte approve my ſtrain?
Will my old-faſhion'd ſenſe and comic eaſe
With better judges have a chance to pleaſe?
The queſtion's plain, but hard to be reſolv'd;
One little leſs important can be ſolv'd:
The men of ſenſe and taſte believe it true,
Will ne'er to living authors give their due.
They're candidates for fame in diff'rent ways;
One writes romances, anſl another plays,
A third preſcribes you rules for writing well,
Yet burſts with envy if you ſhould excel.
Through all fame's walks, the college and the court,
The field of combat and the field of ſport;
The ſtage, the pulpit, ſenate-houſe and bar,
Merit with merit lives at conſtant war.
All who can judge, affect not public fame;
Of thoſe that do the paths are not the ſame:
A grave hiſtorian hardly needs to fear
The rival glory of a ſonneteer:
The deep philoſopher who turns mankind
Quite inſide outwards, and diſſects the mind,
Would look but whimſical and ſtrangely out,
To grudge ſome quack his treatiſe on the gout.—
Hold, hold, my friend, all this I know, and more;
An ancient bard * has told us long before;
And by examples eaſily decided,
That folks of the ſame trades are moſt divided.
But folks of diff'rent trades that hunt for fame,
Are conſtant rivals, and their ends the ſame:
It needs no proof, you'll readily confeſs,
That merit envies merit more or leſs:
The paſſion rules alike in thoſe who ſhare
Of public reputation, or deſpair.
Varrus has knowledge, humour, taſte and ſenſe,
Could purchaſe laurels at a ſmall expence;
But wiſe and learn'd, and eloquent in vain,
He ſleeps at eaſe in pleaſure's ſilken chain:
Will Varrus help you to the muſe's crown,
Which, but for indolence might be his own?
Timon with art and induſtry aſpires
To fame; the world applauds him, and admires:
Timon has ſenſe, and will not blame a line
He knows is good, from envy or deſign:
Some general praiſe he'll careleſsly expreſs,
Which juſt amounts to none, and ſometimes leſs:
But if his penetrating ſenſe ſhould ſpy
Such beauties as eſcape a vulgar eye,
So finely couch'd, their value to enhance,
That all are pleas'd, yet think they're pleas'd by chance;
Rather than blab ſuch ſecrets to the throng,
He'd loſe a finger, or bite off his tongue.
Narciſſus is a beau, but not an aſs,
He likes your works, but moſt his looking-glaſs;
Will he to ſerve you quit his favourite care,
Turn a book-pedant and offend the fair?
Clelia to taſte and judgment may pretend
She will not blame your verſe, nor dares commend:
A modeſt virgin always ſhuns diſpute;
Soft Strephon likes you not, and ſhe is mute.
Stern Ariſtarchus, who expects renown
From ancient merit rais'd, and new knock'd down,
For faults in every ſyllable will pry,
Whate'er he finds is good he'll paſs it by.
Hold, hold, enough! All act from private ends;
Authors and wits were ever ſlipp'ry friends:
But ſay, will vulgar readers like my lays?
When ſuch approve a work, they always praiſe.
To ſpeak my ſentiments, your tales I fear
Are but ill ſuited to a vulgar ear.
Will city readers, us'd to better ſport,
The politics and ſcandals of a court,
Well vouch'd from Grub-ſtreet, on your pages pore,
For what they ne'er can know, or knew before?
Many have thought, and I among the reſt,
That fables are but uſeleſs things at beſt:
Plain words without a metaphor may ſerve
To tell us that the poor muſt work or ſtarve.
We need no ſtories of a cock and bull
To prove that graceleſs ſcribblers muſt be dull.
That hope deceives; that never to excel,
'Gainſt ſpite and envy is the only ſpell.—
All this, without an emblem, I ſuppoſe
Might paſs for ſterling truth in verſe or proſe.—

* *Heſiod.*

Sir, take a ſeat, my anſwer will be long;
Yet weigh the reaſons and you'll find them ſtrong.
At firſt * when ſavage men in queſt of food,
Like lions, wolves and tigers, rang'd the wood,
They had but juſt what ſimple nature craves,
Their garments ſkins of beaſts, their houſes caves.
When prey abounded, from its bleeding dam
Pity would ſpare a kidling or a lamb,
Which, with their children nurs'd and fed at home,
Soon grew domeſtic and forgot to roam:
From ſuch beginnings flocks and herds were ſeen
To ſpread and thicken on the woodland green:
With property, injuſtice ſoon began,
And they that prey'd on beaſts now prey'd on man.
Communities were fram'd, and laws to bind
In ſocial intercourſe the human kind.
Theſe things were new, they had not got their names,
And right and wrong were yet uncommon themes:
The ruſtic ſenator, untaught to draw
Concluſion in morality or law,
Of every term of art and ſcience bare,
Wanted plain words his ſentence to declare;
Much more at length to manage a diſpute,
To clear, enforce, illuſtrate, and confute;
Fable was then found out, 'tis worth your heeding,
And anſwer'd all the purpoſes of pleading.
It won the head with unſuſpected art,
And touch'd the ſecret ſprings that move the heart:
With this premis'd, I add, that men delight
To have their firſt condition ſtill in ſight.
Long ſince the fires of Brunſwick's line forſook
The hunter's bow, and dropp'd the ſhepherd's crook:
Yet, 'midſt the charms of royalty, their race
Still loves the foreſt, and frequents the chaſe.
The high-born maid, whoſe gay apartments ſhine
With the rich produce of each Indian mine,
Sighs for the open fields, the paſt'ral hook,
To ſleep delightful near a warbling brook;
And loves to read the ancient tales that tell
How queens themſelves fetch'd water from the well.
If this is true, and all affect the ways
Of patriarchal life in former days,
Fable muſt pleaſe the ſtupid, the refin'd,
Wiſdom's firſt dreſs to court the op'ning mind.
You reaſon well, could nature hold her courſe,
Where vice exerts her tyranny by force:
Are natural pleaſures ſuited to a taſte,
Where nature's laws are alter'd and defac'd?
The healthful ſwain who treads the dewy mead,
Enjoys the muſic warbl'd o'er his head:
Feels gladneſs at his heart while he inhales
The fragrance wafted in the balmy gales.
Not ſo Silenus from his night's debauch,
Fatigu'd and ſick, he looks upon his watch
With rheumy eyes and forehead aching ſore,
And ſtaggers home to bed to belſh and ſnore;
For ſuch a wretch in vain the morning glows,
For him in vain the vernal zephyr blows:
Groſs pleaſures are his taſte, his life a chain
Of feveriſh joys, of laſſitude and pain.
Truſt not to nature in ſuch times as theſe,
When all is off the hinge, can nature pleaſe?
Diſcard all uſeleſs ſcruples, be not nice;
Like ſome folks laugh at virtue, flatter vice,
Boldly attack the mitre or the crown;
Religion ſhakes already, puſh it down:
Do every thing to pleaſe?—You ſhake your head:
Why then 'tis certain that you'll ne'er ſucceed:
Diſmiſs your muſe, and take your full repoſe;
What none will read 'tis uſeleſs to compoſe.—
A good advice! to follow it is hard.—
Quote one example, name me but a bard
Who ever hop'd Parnaſſus' heights to climb,
That dropp'd his muſe, till ſhe deſerted him.
A cold is caught, this med'cine can expel,
The doſe is thrice repeated, and you're well.
In man's whole frame there is no crack or flaw
But yields to Bath, to Briſtol, or to Spa:
No drug poetic frenzy can reſtrain,
Ev'n hellebore itſelf is try'd in vain:
'Tis quite incurable by human ſkill;
And though it does but little good or ill,
Yet ſtill it meets the edge of reformation,
Like the chief vice and nuiſance of the nation.
The formal quack, who kills his man each day,
Paſſes uncenſur'd, and receives his pay.
Old Aulus, nodding 'midſt the lawyers ſtriſe,
Wakes to decide on property and life.
Yet not a ſoul will blame him, and inſiſt
That he ſhould judge to purpoſe, or deſiſt.
At this addreſs how would the courtiers laugh!
My lord, you're always blundering: quit your ſtaff:
You've loſt ſome reputation, and 'tis beſt
To ſhift before you grow a public jeſt.
This none will think of, though 'tis more a crime
To mangle ſtate-affairs, than murder rhyme.
The quack, you'll ſay, has reaſon for his killing,
He cannot eat unleſs he earns his ſhilling.
The worn-out lawyer clambers to the bench
That he may live at eaſe, and keep his wench;
The courtier-toils for ſomething higher far,
And hopes for wealth, new titles and a ſtar;
While moon-ſtruck poets in a wild-gooſe chaſe
Purſue contempt, and begg'ry, and diſgrace.
Be't ſo: I claim'd by precedent and rule
A free-born Briton's right, to play the fool:
My reſolution's fix'd, my courſe I'll hold,
In ſpite of all your arguments when told:
Whether I'm well and up, or keep my bed,
Am warm and full, or neither cloth'd nor fed,
Whether my fortune's kind, or in a pet
Am baniſh'd by the laws, or fled for debt;
Whether in Newgate, Bedlam, or the Mint,
I'll write as long as publiſhers will print.
Unhappy lad, who will not ſpend your time
To better purpoſe than in uſeleſs rhyme:
Of but one remedy your caſe admits,
The king is gracious, and a friend to wits;
Pray write for him, nor think your labour loſt,
Your verſe may gain a penſion or a poſt.

* *The author ſpeaks of thoſe only, who, upon the diſperſion of mankind, fell into perfect barbariſm, and emerged from it again in the way which he deſcribes, and not of thoſe who had laws and arts from the beginning by divine tradition.*

May Heav'n forbid that this auſpicious reign
Should furniſh matter for a poet's ſtrain;
The praiſe of conduct ſteady, wiſe, and good,
In proſe is beſt expreſs'd and underſtood.
Nor are thoſe ſov'reigns bleſſings to their age
Whoſe deeds are ſung, whoſe actions grace the ſtage.
A peaceful river, whoſe ſoft current feeds
The conſtant verdure of a thouſand meads,
Whoſe ſhaded banks afford a ſafe retreat
From winter's blaſts and ſummer's ſultry heat,
From whoſe pure wave the thirſty peaſant drains
Thoſe tides of health that flow within his veins,
Paſſes unnotic'd; while the torrent ſtrong
Which bears the ſhepherds and their flocks along,
Arm'd with the vengeance of the angry ſkies,
Is view'd with admiration and ſurpriſe;
Employs the painter's hand, the poet's quill,
And riſes to renown by doing ill.
Verſe form'd for falſehood makes ambition ſhine,
Dubs it immortal, and almoſt divine;
But qualities which fiction ne'er can raiſe
It always leſſens when it ſtrives to praiſe.
Then take your way, 'tis folly to contend
With thoſe who know their faults, but will not mend.

THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

RICHARD GLOVER, ESQ.

Containing

LEONIDAS, ‖ LONDON,
POEM ON NEWTON, ‖ HOSIER'S GHOST,

&c. &c. &c.

To which is prefixed,

THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

GLOVER! thy mind in various virtue wiſe,
Each ſcience claims, and makes each art thy prize;
With 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 breaſt,
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.

THOMPSON'S EPISTLE TO GLOVER.

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED BY *MUNDELL AND SON*, ROYAL BANK CLOSE.

Anno 1795.

THE LIFE OF GLOVER.

RICHARD GLOVER was born in St. Martin's Lane, Cannon Street, London, in 1712. He was the ſon of Richard Glover, Eſq. an eminent Hamburgh merchant in the city.

He received the whole of his education under the Rev. Daniel Sanxay, at Cheam ſchool, a place which he afterwards delighted to viſit, and ſometimes attended the anniverſary, held of late years in London, where he ſeemed happy in relating his juvenile adventures.

At this ſeminary he diſtinguiſhed himſelf by the quickneſs of his progreſs, and early began to exhibit ſpecimens of his poetical powers.

At the age of 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 preſent Earl of Orford ſaid of his friend Gray, "that he never was a boy."

Though poſſeſſed of talents which were calculated to excel in literature, he was content to devote his attention to commerce, and at a proper period commenced a Hamburgh merchant; as appears from the following lines, with which he begins his poem called *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———

As a merchant he ſoon made a conſpicuous figure; but his commercial affairs did not occupy his whole attention. He ſtill found leiſure to cultivate the ſtudy of poetry; and continued to aſſociate with thoſe who were eminent in literature and ſcience; eſpecially among the party in oppoſition to the adminiſtration of Walpole.

One of his earlieſt friends was Green, the ingenious but obſcure author of that truly original poem, intituled "The Spleen," which, in 1737, ſoon after his death, was publiſhed by Glover. This excellent performance contains the following preſage of his literary eminence, with an evident alluſion to his *Leonidas*, which he had begun when very young.

> 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.

On the 21ſt of May 1737, he married Miſs Nunn, with whom he received a fortune of 12,cool. and in the ſame month he publiſhed his *Leonidas*, an epic poem in nine books, 4to, which completely eſtabliſhed his poetical reputation.

Leonidas was inſcribed to Lord Cobham, and on its firſt appearance, was received by the public with great approbation; though it has ſince been unaccountably neglected.

But its favourable reception was not entirely owing to its intrinſic merits. At the time of its publication, a zeal, or rather rage for liberty, prevailed in England; a conſtellation of great men, diſtinguiſhed by their virtues as well as their talents, ſet themſelves in oppoſition to the Court; every ſpecies of compoſition that bore the ſacred name of freedom, recommended itſelf to their protection, and ſoon obtained poſſeſſion of the public favour. Hence a poem founded on the nobleſt principles of liberty, and diſplaying the moſt brilliant examples of patriotiſm, ſoon found its way into the world.

Lyttleton, then high in the ranks of oppoſition, in a popular publication called *Common Senſe*, under the ſignature of *Philo Muſæus*, No. 10. April 9. 1737, praiſed it in the warmeſt terms. Dr. Pemberton publiſhed "Obſervations on Poetry, eſpecially epic, occaſioned by the late poem upon *Leonidas*," 12mo, 1738, merely with a view to point out its beauties; and it was praiſed by Thompſon, of Queen's College, and other poets. It paſſed through three editions in 1737, and 1738; but it afterwards experienced the fate of thoſe literary productions, which owe a temporary celebrity to the influence of party-principles, without deſerving it.

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*.

In 1739, he publiſhed his *London, or the Progreſs of Commerce*, 4to; and ſoon after his ballad intituled *Hoſier's Ghoſt*; both theſe pieces ſeem to have been written with a view to incite the nation to reſent the depredations of the Spaniards; and the latter had a very conſiderable effect.

His connection with Cobham, Lyttleton, Pitt, and other leaders of the oppoſition, introduced him to the notice of Frederick Prince of Wales, then ſtruggling for popularity, and profeſſing himſelf the patron of wit; who diſtinguiſhed him by his countenance and patronage; and once, it is ſaid, preſented him with a complete ſet of the claſſics, elegantly bound.

The political diſſentions at this period, raged with great violence, and more eſpecially in the metropolis. In 1739, Sir George Champion, who was next in rotation for the mayoralty, had offended a majority of his conſtituents, by voting with the Court party in the buſineſs of the Spaniſh convention. This determined them to ſet him aſide, and chooſe the next to him in ſeniority; accordingly Sir John Salter was choſen on Michaelmas day; and on this occaſion Glover took a very active part; 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 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 adapted.

His talents for public ſpeaking, his knowledge of political affairs, and his information concerning trade and commerce, ſoon after pointed him out to the merchants of London, as a proper perſon to conduct their application to Parliament, on the ſubject of the neglect of their trade. He accepted the office, and in ſumming up the evidence, gave very ſtriking proofs of his oratorical powers.

This remarkable ſpeech was pronounced at the bar of the Houſe of Commons, January 27. 1742, and ſoon afterwards 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.

By his appearance in behalf of the merchants of London, he acquired, and with great juſtice, the character of an able and ſteady patriot; and, indeed, on every occaſion, he ſhowed a moſt perfect knowledge of, joined to the moſt ardent zeal for, the commercial intereſts of the nation, and inviolable attachment to the welfare of his countrymen in general, and that of the city of London in particular.

In 1744, died Sarah Ducheſs of Marlborough, and by her will left to Glover and Mallet, 500l. each, to write the hiſtory of the Duke of Marlborough. Of Glover, her grace ſays, "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."

This bequeſt never took place. It is ſuppoſed that Glover very early renounced his ſhare; and Mallet, though he continued to talk of performing the talk, almoſt as long as he lived, is now known never to have made the leaſt progreſs in it.

About this period, having in conſequence of unavoidable loſſes in trade, and perhaps, in ſome meaſure, of his zealous warmth for the public intereſts, to the neglect of his own private emoluments, ſomewhat reduced his fortunes, he withdrew a good deal from public notice, and preferred, with a very laudable delicacy, an obſcure retreat to popular obſervation, until his affairs ſhould put on a more proſperous appearance.

While he lived in obſcurity, known only to his friends, and declining to take any active part in public affairs, the Prince of Wales, it is ſaid, ſent him, on account of the embarraſſment of his circumſtances, 500l.

The Prince died in March 1751, and in May following, Glover was once more drawn from his retreat by the importunity of his friends, and condeſcended to ſtand candidate for the place of Chamberlain of the City of London, in oppoſition to Thomas Harriſon, Eſq.

It unfortunately happened, that he did not declare himſelf till moſt of the Livery had engaged their votes. After a few days, finding that his antagoniſt gained ground upon the poll, he gave up the conteſt on the 6th of May. Mr. Deputy Harriſon was declared duly elected, May 7th, and on this occaſion, Glover made the following ſpeech to the Livery, which exhibits the feelings of a manly, reſigned, philoſophical mind, in unproſperous circumſtances.

"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 has been paid to the ſentiments and choice of the citizens and traders of London, it was impoſſible but ſome faint luſtre muſt have glanced on me, whom, weak as he 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 and conſcientious intention of acquitting every private obligation, as ſoon as my good fortune ſhould pleaſe to return; a diſtant appearance of which ſeemed to invite me, and awakened ſome flattering expectations on the rumour of the vacancy of the Chamberlain's office; but always apprehending the imputation of preſumption, and that a higher degree of delicacy and caution would be requiſite in me than in any other candidate, I forbore, till late, to preſent myſelf once more to your notice, and then, for the firſt time, abſtracted from a public conſideration, ſolicited your favour for my own private advantage. My want of ſucceſs ſhall not prevent my cheerfully congratulating this gentleman on his election, and you on your choice of ſo worthy a magiſtrate; and if I may indulge a hope of departing this place with a ſhare of your approbation and eſteem, I ſolemnly from my heart declare, that I ſhall not bear away with me the leaſt trace of diſappointment."

In his retirement, he finiſhed the tragedy of *Boadicea*, which he had begun many years before, and in 1753, it was brought on the ſtage at Drury-Lane, and acted nine nights, with great ſucceſs. From the following lines in the prologue, it appears to have been patroniſed by his friends in the city.

Beſide his native Thames, our poet long
Hath hung his ſilent harp, and huſh'd his tongue;
At length his muſe from exile he recals,
Urg'd by his patrons in Auguſta's walls,
Thoſe generous traders, who alike ſuſtain
Their nation's glory on th' obedient main,
And bounteous raiſe affliction's drooping train;
They who, benignant to his toils, afford
Their ſheltering favour, have his muſe reſtor'd,
They in her future fame will juſtly ſhare,
But her diſgrace, herſelf muſt ſingly bear;
Calm hours of learned leiſure they have given,
And could no more, for genius is from heav'n

Though there is rather a deficiency, both as to incident and characters in this play, yet the language is very poetical, and the descriptions beautiful. It is such a production as might be expected from the author of *Leonidas;* but it seems better adapted to give pleasure in the closet than the theatre. "To the most material objections," says Archbishop Herring, writing to a friend, of this play, "the author would say (a Shakespeare must in some instances) that he did not make, but told it as he found it. The first page of the play shocked me, and the sudden and heated answer of the Queen to the Roman ambassador's gentle address, is arrant madness; it is, indeed, unnatural. It is another objection in my opinion, that *Boadicea* is really not the object of crime and punishment, so much as pity; and notwithstanding the strong paintings of her savageness, I cannot help wishing she had got the better. She had been most unjustly and outrageously injured by those universal tyrants, who ought never to be mentioned without horror. However, I admire the play in many passages, and think the two last acts admirable. In the fifth, particularly, I hardly ever found myself so strongly touched." Dr. Pemberton published "Some Reflections on the Tragedy of Boadicea," 8vo, 1753, to recommend this play, upon the principle, that dramatic dialogue without incidents, and poetry without description, metaphor, or similes, approach nearest to perfection, because they approach nearest to nature. From tragedies written on this principle, verse should also be rejected, as nothing can be a more evident or perpetual deviation from nature, than dialogue in verse. Mr. Crisp Mills addressed "A Letter to Mr. Glover, on occasion of his tragedy of Boadicea," 8vo, 1753, in which he applauds him for the regularity of his piece, but censures him for omitting to introduce into it a *plot* or *intrigue;* without which, he thinks, *a set of connected dialogues can never be a play.* A pamphlet intituled "Female Revenge, or the British Amazon, exemplified in the life of Boadicea; with observations on 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 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 lightnings 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.

At length, having ſurmounted the difficulties of his ſituation, he again relinquiſhed the pleaſures of retirement; and in the parliament which met at the acceſſion of his preſent Majeſty, 1761, he was elected for Weymouth. About this time, he intereſted himſelf about India affairs, at one of Mr. Sullivan's elections, and in a ſpeech introduced the fable of the "Man, Horſe, and Boar," and drew this concluſion, that whenever merchants made uſe of armed forces to maintain their trade, it would end in their deſtruction.

In 1770, he publiſhed a new edition (the fifth) of *Leonidas*, in 2 vols. 12mo, corrected throughout, and extended from nine books to twelve. It had alſo ſeveral new characters added, beſides placing the old ones in new ſituations. The improvments made in it were very conſiderable; but the public curioſity was not ſufficiently alive to recompence the pains beſtowed on this once popular performance.

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 thoſe 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 in 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 aſſiſtance he afforded the merchants in this buſineſs, he was complimented by them with a ſervice of plate of the value of 300l. The ſpeech which he delivered in the Houſe was printed in that year. This was the laſt opportunity he had of diſplaying his oratorical talents 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 his muſe. He died at his houſe in Albemarle-Street, November 25. 1785, in the 73d 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 Athenaid*, a ſequel to *Leonidas*, which he bequeathed, with his other manuſcripts, to his daughter Mrs. Halſey, 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 3 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 Hoſier's Ghoſt*, are now, for the firſt time, 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 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 50 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 none 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 free-born men. Suffice this 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 40 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 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 about 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 towards 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 Lysias 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 of the epic muse. It abounds in the affecting, the tender, and the beautiful, more than in the heroic and sublime. Some of the characters are well-drawn, and supported with proper dignity and elevation. The episode of *Teribasus* and *Ariana*, is poetical and pleasing. In its machinery and incident it 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 le-

gends 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, or 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, Camoen'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 a citizen of London had paid his addreſſes 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 even *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 ſhow 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 as this to Common Senſe; the author of it not having allowed himſelf the liberty ſo largely taken by his 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 abſolute 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 order 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 indued 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 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 *Teribaſus*.

" *Teribaſus* 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 for pleaſure in an Aſiatic court muſt have greatly increaſed. But *Teribaſus* 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 ſhun'd reſort; but o'er his ſorrows caſt
> A fickly dawn of gladneſs, and in ſmiles
> Conceal'd his anguiſh; B. v. ver. 50.

though ſtill

> ——————the ſecret flame
> Rag'd in his boſom, and its peace conſum'd.
> Ibid. ver. 54.

" *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.

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

" In *Demaratus*, the exiled king of Sparta, we have another example of unmerited diſtreſs, but of a more delicate kind. He, cheriſhed in a luxurious court, with all the ordinary means of enjoyment in his power, 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.

——————————Aſide
His head he turn'd, and wept in copious ſtreams, &c.

" 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 *Dieneces*.

" 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 fame 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 genteel turn of mind diſtinguiſh themſelves among his more ſublime virtues.

" 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 *Ditbyrambus*.

" 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 *Teribaſus*, 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 *Teribaſus*, 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 expires, 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.

" 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.

" 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 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 tender-

neſs, 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 of a ſkilful and prudent commander, to contemn 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.

"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, 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.

THE WORKS OF GLOVER.

LEONIDAS: A POEM.

IN TWELVE BOOKS.

——Θανεῖν δ' οἵοισιν ἀνάγκα,
Τί κε τις ἀνώνυμον γῆρας, ἐν σκότῳ
Καθήμενος, ἕψοι 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 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 quite 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 till the last 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 seashore 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 Thespians, 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 Lacedemonians, 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 Acarnanian, 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 o-
" ther without diſtinction. Had Xerxes conti-
" nued in the royal pavilion, the Grecians, with-
" out 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 Gre-
" cians, 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 num-
" ber 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 de-
" ſtroyed their whole body. In this manner fell
" the Grecians, who, under the conduct of Leo-
" nidas, 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 Per-
" ſians 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? Where-
" fore 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 un-
" conquered 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 vic-
" tories? With juſtice may they be deemed the
" preſervers of the Grecian liberty, even prefer-
" ably to thoſe who were conquerors in the bat-
" tles fought afterwards with Xerxes; for the
" memory of that valour, exerted in the defence
" of Thermopylæ, for ever dejected the Barba-
" rians, while the Greeks were fired with emu-
" lation 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 cotemporaries, 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 Hy-
" darnes been conducted through a path over
" mount Oeta, and by that means encompaſſing
" the Greeks, overcome and ſlain 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.

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, then 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,
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;
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.
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
Thermopylæ, the Locrian gate of Greece.
Here Alpheus paus'd. Leutychides, who ſhar'd
With great Leonidas the ſway, uproſe
And ſpake. Ye citizens of Sparta, hear.
Why from her boſom ſhould Laconia ſend
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.
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:
O moſt ungen'rous counſel! Moſt unwiſe!
Shall we, confining to that Iſthmian fence
Our efforts, leave beyond it ev'ry ſtate
Diſown'd, expos'd? Shall Athens, while her fleets
Unceaſing watch th' innumerable foes,
And truſt th' 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 ſires,
Her helpleſs matrons, and their infant race,
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,
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
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
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 controul'd
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'n's decrees.
He came; but diſcontent and grief o'ercaſt
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,
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 ſailor's ear
Perceives no ſound throughout the vaſt expanſe;
None, but the murmurs of the gliding 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!
While thus the iſſue of thy awful charge
Thy lips deliver'd. Spartans, in your name
I went to Delphi. I inquir'd the doom
Of Lacedemon from th' impending war,
When in theſe words the deity reply'd:
"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
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,
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
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

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,
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
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,
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
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.
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
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
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
Before your ſtandard, and their native ſeats
Reſume in abject Aſia. Arm, ye fires,
Who with a growing race have bleſs'd the ſtate.
That race, your parents, gen'ral Greece forbid
Delay. Heav'n ſummons. Equal to the cauſe
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.
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,
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?
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
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 arts unknown to Lacedemon's race.
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,
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.
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
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
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,
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,
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,
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
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,
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
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,
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. The life, for thee resign'd,
Knew not a painful hour to tire my soul,
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
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
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
Awak'd her drooping spirit, for a time
Care was appeas'd. She lifts her languid head.
She gives this utt'rance to her tender thoughts:
'O thou, whose presence is my sole delight;
If thus, Leonidas, thy looks and words
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.
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,
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,
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.
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.
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:
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.
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,
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.
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.
Think on my long unalter'd love. Reflect
On my paternal fondness. Hath my heart
E'er 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,
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
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 growing bloom would pine
Depress'd, dishonour'd, and their youthful hearts
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,
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;
Cea'd for a moment soon again to stream.
Behold, in arms before the palace drawn,
His brave companions of the war demand
Their leader's presence. Then her griefs renew'd,
Surpassing utt'rance, intercept her sighs.
Each accent freezes on her falt'ring tongue.
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,
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,
Look down propitious, fire 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, feed of Jove,
O Hercules, neglect not these thy race!
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.
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
Of Earth and Titan. From Olympus march'd
The deities embattel'd; 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. Unfated, their enraptur'd sight

Purfues 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
Whate'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, their 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'erſhading 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
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,
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 dipp'd his beamy locks. The queen of night
Gleam'd from the centre of th' ethereal vault,
And o'er the raven plumes of darkneſs ſhed
Her placid light. Leonidas detains
Dieneces and Agis. Open ſtands
The tall pavilion, and admits the moon.
As here they ſit converſing, from the hill,
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
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
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;
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 Alcmæon draws
From ſtately Corinth's towr's. Two hundred march
From Phlius. 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
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,
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.
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.

Forever mingled with a crumbling ſoil,
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
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
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.
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:

Well haſt thou painted that illuſtrious youth.
He is my hoſt at Theſpia. Though adorn'd
With various wreaths, by fame, by fortune bleſs'd,
His gentle virtues take from envy's lips
Their blaſting venom; and her baneful eye
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
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
A ſtately chieftain of th' Athenian fleet
Arriv'd. I join'd him. Copious in thy praiſe
He utter'd rapture, but auſterely blam'd
Laconia's tardy counſels; while the ſhips
Of Athens long had ſtemm'd Euboean tides,
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.
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
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, haſt'ning home, report,
How much already thy diſcerning mind,
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,
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
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,
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
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
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,
Ev'n in my ſight, to Aſia; there to waſte
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
Be abſent from Thermopylæ, nor claim,
O Polydorus, vengeance for thy wrongs
In that firſt ſlaughter of the barb'rous foe.
Here interpos'd Dieneces. Their hands
He graſp'd, and cordial tranſport thus expreſs'd:
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.

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 Lacedemonian 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,
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
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,
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
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
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
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,
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.
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
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
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.
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
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
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
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,
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,
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,
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
Of night ſalutes his empyreal ſire;
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,
He reaſcends the high, Olympian ſeats:
Such reverential homage on his brow,
O'erſhading, 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
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.
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
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.
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
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
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
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,
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.
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
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
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!
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
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,
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
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,
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
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.
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
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
Dieneces 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
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
Entice to liſten undiſturb'd. Around
The graſs was cover'd by repoſing ſheep,
Whoſe drowſy guard no longer bay'd the moon.

The warriors ſtopp'd, contemplating the ſeat
Of rural quiet. Suddenly a ſwain
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
With birches ſtraight 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
Of ſtreening 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 Meliboeus hail'd,
A peaſant throng ſurrounded. As their chief,
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!
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,
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.
While Meliboeus marſhall'd with addreſs
The inoffenſive hoſt, unſeen in ſhades
Dieneces applauded, and the youth
Of Menalippus caution'd. Let no word
Impede the careful peaſant. On his charge
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,
Arm'd as they were. Their ſlumber ſhort retires
With night's 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
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?

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.
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
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.
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,
"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
"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
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.

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 Meliboeus in a ſpacious vale,
The fruitfulleſt in Locris, ere the ſun
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
Their vig'rous nurture. There the flaſhing 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
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
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
Th' enliven'd meadow. Under evy ſhade
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,
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.
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.
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.
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
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 ſoldier you behold.
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-diſmiſs'd, my age
Hath in this valley on my own demeſn
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
Of time in ſweet garrulity we ſlide,
Recounting paſt atchievements of our prime;
Nor wanting lib'ral means far lib'ral deeds,
Here bleſs'd, here bleſſing we reſide. Theſe flocks,
Theſe herds and paſtures, theſe our num'rous hinds,
And poverty, hence exil'd, may divulge
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
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
Of Dorian ſweetneſs unadorn'd. Around,
In notes of welcome ev'ry ſhepherd tun'd
His ſprightly reed. The damſels ſhow'd their hair,
Diverſify'd with flow'rets. Garlands gay,
Ruſh-woven baſkets, glowing with the dyes
Of amaranths, of jaſmin, roſes pink
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 ſilvan lays,
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 ſtrains her emulating throat,
And joins with liquid trills the ſwelling ſounds.
Behold Oileus and his ancient train
Accoſt Laconia's king, whoſe looks and words
Confeſs remembrance of the Locrian chief.
Thrice hail! Oileus, Sparta's noble hoſt.
Thou art of old acquainted with her ſons,
Their laws, their manners. Muſical as brave,
Train'd to delight in ſmooth Terpander's lay,
In Alcman's Dorian meaſure, we enjoy
In thy melodious vale th' unlabour'd ſtrains
Of rural pipes, to nightingales attun'd.
Our heart-felt gladneſs deems the golden age
Subſiſting where thou govern'ſt. Still theſe tones
Of joy continu'd may thy dwelling hear!
Still may this plenty, unmoleſted, crown
The favour'd diſtrict! May thy rev'rend duſt
Have peaceful ſhelter in thy father's tomb!
Kind heav'n, that merit to my ſword impart!
By joy uplifted, forth Oileus broke.
Thou doſt recal me then! O ſent to guard
Theſe fruits from ſpoil, theſe hoary locks from ſhame,
Permit thy weary'd ſoldiers to partake
Of Locrian plenty. Enter thou my tents,
Thou and thy captains. I ſalute them all.
The hero full of dignity and years,
Once bold in action, plac'd now in eaſe,
Ev'n by his look, benignly caſt 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 diſmiſs'd,
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
On ſage diſcourſe; which thus Oileus cloſ'd.
Behold, night lifts her ſignal to invoke
That friendly god, who owns the drowſy wand.
To Mercury this laſt libation flows.
Farewell till morn. They ſeparate, they ſleep
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.
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,
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
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
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!
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 bleſs'd Elyſium ſpread
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.
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
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
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
From place to place, o'erlooks, directs, forgets
That he is old. Meantime the ſhades of night,
Retiring, wake Dieneces. He gives
The word. His pupil ſeconds. Ev'ry hand
Is arm'd. Day opens. Sparta's king appears.
Oïleus greets him. In his radiant car
The ſenior ſtays 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.
I truſt thy valour. Doubt not thou my care,
Nor doubt that ſwain. Oïleus, ſpeaking, look'd
On Melibœus. Skilful he commands
Theſe hinds. Him wiſe, him faithful I have prov'd
More than Eumæus to Laertes' ſon.
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
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,
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,
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
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
Behind the rear. Oïleus 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
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,
And proffer'd all his treaſures. Theſe the king
Refuſing, ev'n 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
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!
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,
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,
The acts of Xerxes with thine 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,
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
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,
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
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
Were ſcatter'd round, o'ercaſt with ſhadows black
Of yew and cypreſs. In a ſerious note
Oïleus, pointing, opens new diſcourſe.
Beneath yon turf my anceſtors repoſe.
Oïlean Ajax ſingly was depriv'd
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.
Shut from Elyſium for a hundred years,
The hero's ghoſt bewail'd his oozy tomb.
A race more pious on the Oïlean houſe
Felicity have drawn. To ev'ry god
I owe my bliſs, my early fame to Pan.
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,
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,
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,
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 neighbour's ſhow
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,
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,
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,
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,
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 fight
Begin to ſpread their multitude, and fill
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
The father, now diſmounting from his car,
Embraces Medon. In a gliding bark
They all are wafted to the iſland fane,
Erected by Oïleus, and enrich'd
With his engrav'd achievements. Thence the eye
Of Sparta's gen'ral in extenſive ſcope
Contemplates each battalion, as they wind
Along the pool; whoſe limpid face reflects
Their weapons, gliſt'ning in the early ſun.
Them he to Pan armipotent commends,
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.
Through thee Oïleus 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
To leave the iſland, on Oïleus 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
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,
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,
Which gen'rous breaſts ſo parting muſt admit.

He ſaid, embark'd, relanded. To his ſide
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 Dieneces and Diomedon. Xerxes ſends Tygranes 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 Tygranes, treats him with contempt and menaces. This occaſions a challenge to ſingle combat between Diomedon and Tygranes, Dithyrambus and Phraortes. Epialtes after a conference with Anaxander declares his intention of returning to Xerxes. Leonidas diſpatches Agis with Melibœus, a faithful ſlave of Oïleus, 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 foes [truſt
What chiefs are moſt diſtinguiſh'd? Might we
To fame, reply'd the Locrian, Xerxes boaſts
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
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
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,
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
With one—Alas! my brother, eldeſt born,
Unbleſs'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.
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 Oileus' 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;
As if the preſent deity of fame
Had from the ſummit ſhown her dazzling form,
With wreaths unfading on her temples bound,
Her adamantine trumpet in her hand
To celebrate their valour. From the van
Leonidas advances like the ſun,
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.
His eye reveals the ardour of his ſoul,
Which thus finds utt'rance 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 ruggid ſteep.
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
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
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
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.
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 champaine: through his hoſt
Not with leſs ſwiftneſs to the furtheſt ranks
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;
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 death,
The glitt'ring trophy, pil'd with Perſian arms.
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,
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;
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
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.
O may oblivion o'er the ſhame of Thebes
A dark'ning veil extend! or thoſe alone
By fame be curs'd, whoſe impious counſels turn
Their countrymen from virtue! Thebes was ſunk,
Her glory bury'd in diſhoneſt ſloth.
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,
My choſen friends behind their walls remain.
Enough of words. Time preſſes. Mount, ye chiefs,
This loftieſt part of Oeta. This o'erlooks
The ſtreights, and far beyond their northern mouth
Extends our ſight acroſs the Malian plain.
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,
His heart was falſe and abject. He was ſkill'd
To grace perfidious counſels, 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.
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.
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,
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,
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,
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
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
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,
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;
Nor yet with falſehood arms his fraudful tongue
To feign a tale of terror. Truth herſelf
Beyond the reach of fiction to enhance
Now aids his treaſon, and with cold diſmay
Might pierce the boldeſt heart, unleſs ſecur'd
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,
And not in grief ſuppreſs the horrid tale,
Which you exact from theſe ill-omen'd lips.
On Thracia's ſea-beat verge I watch'd the foes;
Where, joining Europe to the Aſian ſtrand,
A mighty bridge reſtrain'd th' outrageous waves,
And ſtemm'd th' 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
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
The violence of Eurus and the north,
With rage combin'd, againſt th' unyielding pile
Daſh'd half the Helleſpont. The eaſtern world
Sev'n days and nights uninterrupted paſs
To cover Thracia's regions. They accept
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,
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,
Whence ruſhing millions by the morn will pour
An inundation to o'erwhelm the Greeks.
Reſiſtance elſe were vain againſt a hoſt,
Which overſpreads Theſſalia. Far beyond
That Malian champain, ſtretching wide below,
Beyond the utmoſt meaſure of the ſight
From this aſpiring cliff, the hoſtile camp
Contains yet mightier numbers; who have drain'd
The beds of copious rivers with their thirſt,
Who with their arrows hide the mid-day ſun.
Then we ſhall give them battle in the ſhade,
Dieneces reply'd. Not calmly thus
Diomedon. On Perſia's camp he bent [o'er,
His low'ring brow, which frowns had furrow'd
Then fierce exclaim'd. Bellona, turn and view
With joyful eyes that field, the fatal ſtage,
By regal madneſs for thy rage prepar'd
To exerciſe its horrors. Whet thy teeth,
Voracious death. All Aſia is thy prey.
Contagion, famine, and the Grecian ſword,
For thy inſatiate hunger will provide
Variety of carnage. He concludes;
While on the hoſt immenſe his cloudy brow
Is fix'd diſdainful, and their ſtrength defies.
Meantime an eaſtern herald down the paſs
Was ſeen, ſlow-moving tow'rds the Phocian wall
From Aſia's monarch delegated, came
Tigranes and Phraortes. From the hill
Leonidas conducts th' impatient chiefs.
By them environ'd, in his tent he ſits;
Where thus Tigranes their attention calls.
Ambaſſadors from Perſia's king we ſtand
Before you, Grecians. To diſplay the pow'r
Of our great maſter were a needleſs taſk.
The name of Xerxes, Aſia's mighty lord,
Invincible, exalted on a throne,
Surpaſſing human luſtre, muſt have reach'd
To ev'ry clime, and ev'ry heart impreſs'd
With awe, and low ſubmiſſion. Yet I ſwear
By yon refulgent orb, which flames above,
The glorious ſymbol of eternal pow'r,
This military throng, this ſhow 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,
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,
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,

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
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.
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
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
Of either Perſian arrogance, incens'd
By diſappointment, lour'd. The utmoſt ſtreight
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
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
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.
Enrag'd, the ſtern Diomedon replies.
Thou baſe dependent on a lawleſs king,
Thou purple ſlave, thou boaſter, doſt thou know,
That I beheld the Marathonian field?
Where, like the Libyan ſands before the wind,
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,
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,
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.
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,
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,
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,
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;
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
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.
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.
Farewell. I go. Thy merit ſhall be told
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,
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,
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 Oïleus might ſuffice
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,
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.
Oïleus will rejoice, and ſmiling, ſay,
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?
Oïleus ſure thy liberty would grant,
Or Sparta's king ſolicit for that grace;
When in a ſtation equal to thy worth
Thou may'ſt be rank'd. The prudent hind began.
In diff'rent ſtations diff'rent virtues dwell,
All reaping diff'rent benefits. The great
In dignity and honours meet reward
For acts of bounty, and heroic toils.
A ſervant's merit is obedience, truth,
Fidelity; his recompenſe content.
Be not offended at my words, O chief!
They, who are free, with envy may behold
This bondman of Oïleus. To his truſt,
His love exalted, I by nature's pow'r

From his pure model could not fail to mould
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 Oïleus and his race I throve;
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,
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.
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.
Not ev'ry ſervice is confin'd to arms.
Thou ſhalt behold me in my preſent ſtate
Not uſeleſs. If the charge Oïleus gave
I can accompliſh, meriting his praiſe,
And thy eſteem, my glory will be full.
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.

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 ſurpriſed 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
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 Theſſalia's confines they extend.
They fill the vallies, late profuſely bleſs'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.
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
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
In this deep vale, a patrimonial ſpot
Of Aleuadian princes, who, allies
To Xerxes, reign'd in Theſſaly. There glow
Inviolate the ſhrubs. There branch the trees,
Sons of the foreſt. Over downy moſs
Smooth walks and fragrant, lucid here and broad,
There clos'd in myrtle under woodbine roofs,
Wind to retreats delectable, to grots,
To ſilvan ſtructures, bow'rs, and cooling dells,
Enliven'd all and muſical with birds
Of vocal ſweetneſs, in relucent plumes
Innumerably various. Lulling falls
Of liquid cryſtal from perennial founts
Attune their pebbled channels. Here the queen,
The noble dames of Perſia, here the train
Of royal infants, each with eunuch guards,
In rich pavilions, dazzling to the ſight,
Poſſeſs'd, remote from enſet and ſurpriſe,
A tranquil ſtation. Ariana here,
Ill-deſtin'd princeſs, from Darius ſprung,
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,
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,
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,
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

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, Intaphernes, mighty lords.
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 all
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
The world's great author. Rob'd in pureſt white,
The Magi rang'd before th' unfolded tent.
Fire blaz'd beſide them. Tow'rds the ſacred flame
They turn'd, and ſent their tuneful praiſe to heav'n.
From Zoroaſtres was the ſong deriv'd,
Who on the hills of Perſia, from his cave,
By ſtow'rs environ'd, and melodious founts,
Which ſooth'd the ſolemn manſion, had reveal'd,
How Horomazes, radiant ſource of good,
Original, immortal, fram'd the globe
In fruitfulneſs and beauty: how with ſtars
By him the heav'ns 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;
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 ſhades
From his dire manſion, he deform'd the works
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
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,
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.
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 chaſing breaſt
The deſtin'd maſter of the world didſt lead,
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,
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,
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,
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 Helleſpont 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.
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 Horomazes 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!
Still from thy head may Arimanius bend
Againſt thy foes his malice! Yonder Greeks,
Already ſmit with frenzy by his wrath,
Reject thy profer'd clemency. They chooſe
To magnify thy glory by their fall.
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.
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.
I once have try'd their valour. To my words
Abrocomes can witneſs. When thy ſire
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, reſolv'd on victory, or death.
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
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
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
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 Helleſpontic foam, and taught the ſea
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.
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
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,
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
Yet none was found more practic'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,
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:
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
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 ſtrith
Repuls'd thy navy—But whate'er thy will,
Be it enforc'd by vigour. Let the king
The diff'rence 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.
Behind thee leave the vanity of hope,
That ſuch a foe to ſplendour will ſubmit,
Whom ſteel, not gold muſt vanquiſh. Thou provide
Thy mail, Argeſtes. Not in ſilken robes,
Not as in council with an oily tongue,
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.
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,
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
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
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
They toſs their foreheads. On their gliſt'ning cheſts
The ſilver manes diſport. The king aſcends.
Beſide his footſtool Demaratus ſits.
The charioteer now ſhakes th' effulgent reins,
Strong Patiramphes. At the ſignal bound
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,
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
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,
Throu'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,
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?
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,
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,
In ſumptuous trappings clad, Barbaric pomp.
While gorgeous banners to the ſun expand
Their ſtreaming volumes of relucent gold,
Pre-eminent amidſt tiaras gemm'd,
Engraven helmets, ſhields embоſs'd, and ſpears
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,
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 ſeats.
The Perſians firſt in ſcaly corſelets ſhone,
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.
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,
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.
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,
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.
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.
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, unreap'd,
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
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
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
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
From barren mountains, from the joyleſs coaſt
Around the ſtormy lake, whoſe name they bore,
Their ſcimiters upheld, and cany bows.
The Indian tribes, a threefold hoſt compoſe.
Part guide the courſer, part the rapid car;
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
Beſtows a double harveſt. Honey'd ſhrubs,
The cinnamon, the ſpikenard bleſs 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.
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
The looſen'd mold. The Parthians 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 Choraſmians. Sacian throngs
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 deſerts they forſook.
A bow, a falchion, and a pond'rous ax
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
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
An equal 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
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
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
O'erlooks the duſky Euxine, wrapt in miſts,
From where through flow'rs, which paint his vary'd banks,
Parthenius flows. The Ligyan bands ſucceed;
The Martienians, Mariandenians next;
To them the Syrian multitudes, who range
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
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
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,
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,
To Babylon he foams. Not ſo the ſtream
Of ſoft Araxes to the Caſpian glides;
He, ſtealing imperceptibly, ſuſtains
The green profuſion of Armenia's meads.
Now ſtrange to view, in ſimilar attire,
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
Of Timolus riſing, or the wealthy tide
Of golden-ſanded Hermus they allure
The ſight, enchanted by the graceful dance;
Or with melodious ſweetneſs charm the air,
And melt to ſofteſt languiſhment the ſoul.
What to the field of danger could incite
Theſe tender ſons of luxury? The laſh
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,
Conjoining Aſia and the weſtern world.
To them Mœonia hot with ſulph'rous mines
Unites her troops. No tree adorns their fields,
Unbleſs'd by verdure. Aſhes hide the ſoil;
Black are the rocks, and ev'ry hill deform'd
By conflagration. Helmets preſs their brows.
Two darts they brandiſh. On their woolly veſts
A ſword is girt; and hairy hides compoſe
Their bucklers round and ſmall. The Myſians left
Olympus wood-envelop'd, left the meads,
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
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
Beneath oppreſſion, and their freedom mourn
On Sangar now, as once on Strymon loſt.
The ruddy ſkins of foxes cloth'd their heads.
Their ſhields were faſhion'd like the horned moon.
A veſt embrac'd their bodies; while abroad,
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
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 diſcov'ring, ſwell his ſoul
With more than mortal pride? The cluſter'd bands
Of Moſchians and Macronians now appear,
The Moſyncœcians, 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
In garments, buckled on their ſpacious cheſts,
A people, deſtin'd in eternal verſe,
Ev'n thine, ſublime Mœonides, to live.
Theſe are the Milyans. Solymi their name
In thy celeſtial ſtrains, Piſidia's hills
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.
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,
Attir'd in verdure, interſper'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,
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,
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 advent'rous keel,
Which cut the Pontic foam. From Argo's ſide
The demigods deſcended. They repair'd
To her fell ſire'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,
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,
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
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;
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.
On chariots ſcyth'd the Libyans ſat array'd
In ſkins terrifio, brandiſhing their darts
Of wood, well-temper'd in the hard'ning flames.
Not Libya's deſerts from tyrannic ſway
Could hide her ſons; much leſs could freedom dwell
Amid the plenty of Arabia's fields:
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
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
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
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
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
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,
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!
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:
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;
What didſt thou merit from the injur'd world?
What ſuff'rings 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,
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
Thy benefactor, and diſfigure truth
Would ill become thee. With conſid'rate eyes
Look back on theſe battalions. Now declare,
If yonder Grecians will oppoſe their march.
To him the exile. Deem not, mighty lord,
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,
Encounter twenty Perſians? Yet theſe Greeks
In greater diſproportion muſt engage
Our hoſt to-morrow. Demaratus then.
By ſingle combat were the trial vain
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 ſlow'r, the ſafeguard of thy num'rous camp
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
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,
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
Are theſe to battle drawn againſt a foe,
Train'd in gymnaſtic exerciſe and arms,
Inur'd to hardſhip, and the child of toil. [ſtorm
Wont through the freezing ſhow'r, the wint'ry
O'er his own glebe the tardy ox to goad,
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
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.
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,
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
So fierce, ſo conſtant, that to them a camp
With all its hardſhips is a feat of reſt,
And war itſelf remiſſion from their toil.
Thy words are folly, with redoubled ſcorn
Returns the monarch. Doth not freedom dwell

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' alloted ſtation they deſert,
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
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.
The ſatraps leave their 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;
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
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,
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
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
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
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
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. 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
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,
How juſt thy praiſes of Laconia's ſtate.
Though cheriſh'd here with univerſal love,
Thou ſtill deplor'ſt thy abſence from her face,
Howe'er averſe to thine. But ſwift relief
From indignation borrow. Call to mind
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
Stern interrupted. Soon as morning ſhines,
Do you, Tigranes and Phraortes, head [bound.
The Medes and Ciſſians. Bring theſe Grecians
This ſaid, the monarch to his camp returns.
Th' attendant princes reaſcend their cars,
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
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
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
My dictates, oft repeated in deſpight
Of purple flatt'rers, 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
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,
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,
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
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
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, expreſs'd in theſe pathetic ſtrains.
Look on the king with gratitude. His ſire
Protected thine. Himſelf upholds our ſtate.
By loyalty inflexible repay
The obligation. To immortal pow'rs
The adoration of thy ſoul confine;
And look undazzled 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,

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
To that prepoſt'rous arrogance, which caſt
Chains in the deep to manacle the waves,
Chaſtis'd with ſtripes in heav'ns 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,
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,
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.
This ſaid, a curious ſearch in ev'ry part
Here eye renews. Adjoining to the ſtreights,
Freſh bloom'd a thicket of entwining ſhrubs,
A ſeeming fence to ſome ſequeſter'd ground,
By travellers unbeaten. Swift her guards
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 meandring, ſhow their flow'ry laps
Among rude piles of nature. In their ſides
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
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
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
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
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
In forc'd allegiance to Barbarian thrones.
Thou heed my order. Thoſe ingenuous looks
Of diſcontent ſuppreſs. For thee this ſight
Were too ſevere a leſſon. Thou might'ſt bleed
Among the thouſands, fated to expire
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,
Melts o'er her young in blandiſhment and love.
Now ſlowly tow'rds 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,
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,
Tall and majeſtic, from th' impendent ridge
Look'd 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,
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,
Conſume the holy fanes, deface the tombs,
Subvert the laws of Greece, her ſons enthral.
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.
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
With recollection of her Doric race;
Till gratitude, reviving, arms her breaſt.
Her royal benefactor ſhe recals,
Back to his ſight precipitates her ſteps.

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 Platæans and Theſpians, 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 an ambuſh, which Artemiſia had laid to cover the retreat of the Perſians. She kills Clonius, 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 her 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.
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
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
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
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
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.
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,
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,
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,
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 pleaſures. Hire their cauſe,
Their only fruit of victory is ſpoil.
They know not freedom, nor its lib'ral cares.
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
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
Their hands ſuſtain, encumber'd, and preſent
The mockery of war.——But ev'ry 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.

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
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
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
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 threat'ning lance,
Provoking battle. Inſtant from his rank
Diomedon burſts furious. On he ſtrides,
Confronts Tigranes, whom he thus defies.

Now art thou met, barbarian. Would'ſt thou prove
Thy actions equal to thy vaunts, command
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
Each combatant advanc'd. Their ſinewy hands
Grip'd faſt their ſpears, high brandiſh'd. Thrice they drove,
With well-directed force, the pointed ſteel
At either's throat, and thrice their wary ſhields
Repell'd the menac'd wound. The Aſian chief
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
Beſide him caſt, his faulchion he unſheaths.
The blade, deſcending on Tigranes' arm,
That inſtant ſtruggling to redeem his lance,
The nervous hand diſſevers. Pale affright
Unmans the Perſian; while his active foe
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
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
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,
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
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,
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
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
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.

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
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
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,
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,
Demophilus, worn gray, 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.

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,
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,
By Dithyrambus pierc'd. Their hoary ſire
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.

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,
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
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,
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.
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;
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
Of ſome glad peaſant, viſiting his fields
Of new-ſhorn 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.

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,
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
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
Bedew his lip harmonious: nor his hands,
Which, dying, graſp the unforſaken lance,
And proſtrate buckler, evermore accord
His lofty numbers to the ſounding ſhell.
Lo! Dithyrambus weeps. Amid the rage
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.
Beyond the Malian entrance of the ſtreights
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'rds the bay
They ſhrink; they totter on the fearful edge,
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.
Dire is the ſhock. What leſs, than Caria's queen
In their career of victory could check
Such warriors? Fierce ſhe ſtruggles; while the rout
Of Medes and Ciſſians carry to the camp
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 fire,
Who ſits unſhaken on his throne, while floods,
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,
Where bright Alpheus heard the rattling car,
And concave hoof along his echoing banks,
Two gen'rous courſers, link'd in mutual reins,
In ſpeed, in ardour equal, beat the duſt,
To reach the glories of Olympia's goal.
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.
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,
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,
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.
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 Platæa's chief.
The fair occaſion of ſuſpended fight
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.
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
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
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
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.
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
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,
To them ſhe points, to Xerxes thus ſhe ſpeaks.
Behold theſe mangled Carians, who have ſpent
Their vital current in the king's defence,
Ev'n in his ſight; while Medes and Ciſſians fled,
By theſe protected, whom Argeſtes ſaw
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
Give him a prey. Let Artemiſia's truth
Chaſtiſe his treaſon. With an eye ſubmiſs,
A mien obſequious, and a ſoothing tone
To cheat the king, to moderate her ire
Argeſtes utters theſe fallacious words.
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,
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,
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.
Aw'd by her ſpirit, by the flatt'rers 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
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!
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.
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 rend'ring up his charge
To her maternal hand. Her ſon belov'd
Diſpels the furies. Then the Spartan thus:
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 clifts 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 intruſt
To my command a choſen guard of horſe.
As oft, when ſtorms in ſummer have o'ercaſt
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.

BOOK VI.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE Grecian commanders, after the purſuit, retire for refreſhment to a cave in the ſide of mount Oeta. 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 Meliſſa, the daughter of Oïleus, ſhe intruſts him with a ſolemn meſſage to Leonidas. Dithyrambus deputes 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 Locrians under Medon, the ſon of Oïleus. Dieneces 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 Theſpia's gallant youth
Approaching, thus his gen'rous ſoul expreſs'd.
Liv'ſt 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
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,
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
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
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,
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.
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

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
And banners, ſad and ſolemn on their ſhields
The giant limbs of Clonius bore along
To ſpread a gen'ral woe. The noble corſe,
Dire ſpectacle of carnage, paſſing by
To thoſe laſt honours, which the dead partake,
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
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;
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
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 flew on earth,
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,
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
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,
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
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
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 recals you from your toils,
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
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
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
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,
I will return, will Sparta's king entreat
Not to command you from the field of war.
Then interpos'd Demophilus. O friend,
Who lead'ſt to conqueſt brave Platæa's ſons;
Thou too, lov'd offſpring of the deareſt man,
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.
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;
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.
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
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
The bright, refreſhing moiſture. Thus repairs
The ſpotted panther to Hydaſpes' ſide,
Or caſtern Indus, feaſted on the blood
Of ſome torn deer, which nigh his cruel graſp
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,
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,
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. Platæa's chief,
Obſerving, rous'd the warrior. Son of Mars,

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,
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.
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,
Whoſe voices charm its gloom. In ſmiles re-join'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,
We cannot act. Indulge thy eager ſearch.
Here will I wait, a centinel unmov'd,
To watch thy coming. In exploring haſte
Th' impatient Theſpian penetrates the cave.
He finds it bounded by a ſteep aſcent
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!
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,
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
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
Of nine bright virgins, round their prieſteſs 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,
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
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
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?
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.
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.
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.
None more entitled, interpos'd the dame.
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
In this their ancient temple. Thou ſhalt view
Their ſacred haunts. Deſcending from the dome,
She thus purſues. Firſt know, my youthful hours
Were exerciſ'd in knowledge. Homer's muſe
To daily meditation won my ſoul,
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
The holy 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,
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
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
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
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 this ſhrine their annual vows they pay,
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 ſmoother cadence, Juſtice from my tongue
Diſſentions calms, which ev'n 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.
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,
" 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.
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.
That inſtant brings Megiſtias near the grot.
To Sparta's phalanx his paternal hand
Was leading Menalippus. Not unheard
By Dithyrambus in their flow approach,
The father warns a young and lib'ral mind.
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-intruited, 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.
The augur paus'd. The animated cheek
Of Menalippus glows. His eager look
Demands the fight. This ſtruck the tender ſire,
Who then with moiſten'd eyes. Remember too,
A father ſees thy danger. Oh! 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 Dieneces abide.
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
To guard, return in triumph to thy breaſt,
As thou deliver'ſt to Laconia's king
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
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,
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
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
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 breaſtplate frown'd.
One hand ſupports a javelin, which confounds
The pride of kings. The other leads along
A blooming virgin, Victory, whoſe brow
A wreath encirles. Laurels ſhe preſents;
But from her ſhoulders all her plumes were ſhorn,
In favour'd Athens ever now to reſt.
This dread of Aſia on his mighty arm
Diomedon uprear'd. He match'd his lance,
Then ſpake to Dithyrambus. See my friend,
Alone of all the Grecians, who ſuſtain'd
The former aſſet, inexhauſted ſtand
Platæa's ſons. They well may keep the field,
Who with unſlaken'd nerves endur'd that day,
Which ſaw ten myriads of Barbarians driv'n
Back to their ſhips, and Athens left ſecure.
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'rds the Grecian van
Impetuous, ardent ſtrode. Nor ſlow behind
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
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
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,
An ampler ſcope to havoc will be giv'n.
To him Dieneces. 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
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.
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
Diſtends their boſoms, ſparkles in their eyes.
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
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
In veneration, nor diſdains to hear
The oft-repeated tale. From Sparta's king
Return'd, the gracious Agis theſe addreſs'd.
Leonidas ſalutes Platæa's chief
And Dithyrambus. To your ſwords he grants
A further effort with Platæa'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
Around your venerable heads, and grace
Thermopylæ with Marathonian fame.
This ſaid, he haſtens back. Meantime advance
The Mantinean, Diophantus brave,
Then Hegeſander, Tegea's dauntleſs chief,
Who near Diomedon in equal range
Erect their ſtandards. Next the Thebans form.
Alcmæon, bold Eupalamus ſucceed
With their Corinthian and Phliaſian bands.
Laſt on the Malian ſhore Mycenæs youth
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, Dieneces behind
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
Of expectation through his light arm'd force;
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 Platæa's chief.
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 ev'n 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.
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
Succeſſive round the jutting land are ſails.
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!
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.
Converſing thus, their courage they beguil'd,
Which elſe impatient of inactive hours
At long-ſuſpended glory had repin'd.

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, Abrocomes, 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
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.
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
By endleſs numbers, and unceaſing toil

The Grecian ſtrength. Not marble is our fleſh,
Nor adamant our ſinews. Sylvan pow'rs,
Who dwell on Oeta, your ſuperior aid
We muſt ſolicit. Your ſtupendous cliffs
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 behеſts invites thy honour'd feet
To her chaſte dwelling, ſeated on that hill.
To conference of high import ſhe calls
Thee, firſt of Grecians. Medon interpos'd.
She is my ſiſter. Juſtice rules her ways
With piety and wiſdom. To her voice
The nations round give ear. The muſes breathe
Their inſpiration through her ſpotleſs ſoul
Which borders on divinity. She calls
On thee. O truly ſtyl'd the firſt of Greeks,
Regard her call. Yon cliff's projecting head
To thy diſcernment will afford a ſcope
More full, more certain; thence thy ſkilful eye
Will beſt direct the fight. Meliſſa's ſire
Was ever preſent to the king in thought,
Who thus to Medon. Lead, Oïleus' ſon.
Before the daughter of Oïleus 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
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
Of holy ſequeſtration. On the face
Of penſive-ey'd religion rapture glows
In admiration of the goldlike man.
Advanc'd Meliſſa. He her proffer'd hand
In hue, in purity like ſnow, receiv'd.
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
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
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.
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
Thy father's words and forecaſt. He preſag'd,
I ſhould not find his daughter's counſel vain.
He to accompliſh what thy wiſdom plans,
Hath ampleſt means ſupply'd. Go, Medon, bring
The thouſand peaſants from th' Oïlean vale
Detach'd. Their leader Meliboeus 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?
Can theſe be wielded 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,
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,
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,
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,
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. Prieſteſs, let him hurl
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.
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
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,
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
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 Oïleus. In thy voice
I hear the goddeſs, Liberty. I ſee
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,
Were I aſſur'd, that oracles delude;
That, unavailing, I ſhould ſpill my blood;
That all the muſes of ſubjected Greece
Hereafter would be ſilent, and my name
Be ne'er tranſmitted to recording time;

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,
Had ſunk in ſadneſs; but her brother's helm
Before her beams. Relumining her night,
He through the cave like Heſperus aſcends,
Th' Oilean hinds conducting to achieve
The enterpriſe, ſhe counſels. Now her ear
Is pierc'd by notes, ſhrill ſounding from the vault.
Upſtarts a diſt'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
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
Of ſome portentous ſerpent, whom the heats
Of Libya breed, indiſſolubly knit,
But flexible, a-croſs the ſandy plain,
Or up the mountain draws his ſpotted length,
Or where a winding excavation leads.
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,
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
A regal crown, one Perſian, one uſurpt
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
Of Salamis renown ſhall echo wide;
Shall tell poſterity in lateſt times,
That naval fortitude controuls the world.
Swift Maron, following, brings a vig'rous band
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:
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
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
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,
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
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.
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
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
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
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.
They hear, they gaze, revering and rever'd.
Freſh numbers muſter, 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,
Who breathes 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;
Nor wanting my inſtructions, or my pray'rs,
Fertility they ſcatter by their toil
Around this aged temple's wild domain.
Is Melibœus here! Thou fence ſecure
To old Oïleus from the cares of time,
Thrice art thou welcome. Uſeful, wiſe, belov'd,
Where'er thou ſojourneſt, 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.
Th' important labour to inſpiring airs
From flutes and harps in ſymphony with hymns
Of holy virgins, ardent all perform,
In bands divided under diſt'rent chiefs.
Huge timbers, blocks of marble to remove
They firſt attempted; then aſſembled ſtones
Looſe in their beds, and wither'd trunks, uptorn
By tempeſts; next diſmember'd from the rock
Broad, rugged fragments; from the mountains hew'd
Their venerable firs, and aged oaks,
Which, of their branches by the lightning bar'd,
Preſented ſtill againſt the blaſting flame
Their hoary pride unſhaken. Theſe the Greeks,
But chief th' Athenian mariners, to force
Uniting ſkill, with maſſy leavers heave,

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
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,
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,
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.
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,
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
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
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
Attunes his cadence to ſonorous ſtrings,
And liquid accents of Meliſſa's maids.
The floating air in melody reſpires.
A rapture mingles in the calm repaſt.
Upriſes Æſchylus. A goblet full
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
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.
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
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,
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
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
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
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.
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
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.
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
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, ſkreen'd by yonder ſhrubs,
Leads to the paſs. There ſtately to my view
The martial queen of Caria yeſter ſun,
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
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
To imitate in Greece. Sublime her port
Beſpeaks a mighty ſpirit. Prieſteſs, look.
An act of piety ſhe now performs,
Directing thoſe, perhaps her Carian band,
To bear dead brethren from the bloody field.
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,
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.

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
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
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
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,
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. Learn, O prince,
From one, whoſe wiſhes on thy merit wait,
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.
Nor to ſecure a thicket next the paſs
Forget. Selected numbers ſtation there.
Farewell, young hero. May thy fortune prove
Unlike to mine. Had Aſia's millions ſpar'd
One myriad to ſuſtain me, none had ſeen
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
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 fight
Of ſpears, which flam'd innumerable round.
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
The title of Immortals. Light their ſpears;
Set in pomegranates of refulgent gold,
Or burniſh'd ſilver, were the ſlender blades.
Magnificent and ſtately were the ranks.
The prince, commanding mute attention, ſpake.
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.
Thou, Abradates, by Sofarmes 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
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,
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 Crœſus vanquiſh'd, when her empire loſt
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
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.
Of diff'rent nations, and in diff'rent garb,
Innumerous 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
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
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
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,
Or bent obliquely from the ſhagged ridge,
The ſilvan horrors overſhade the fight.
The clanging trump, the craſh of mingled ſpears,
The groan of death, and war's diſcordant ſhouts
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 Diophantus, 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.

Amid 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.
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 hallow'd page
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
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,
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
Th' Ionian Greeks, from Athens ſprung, nor paſs'd
Miletis by, which once in rapture heard
The tongue of Thales, nor Priene's walls,
Where wiſdom dwelt with Bias, nor the ſeat
Of Pittacus, rever'd on Leſbian ſhores.
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
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.
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.
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
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,
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,
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
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
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
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;
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
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
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,
Nor ſhun'd reſort: but o'er his ſorrows caſt
A fickly 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,
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 ev'ry 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 Chaldæans, 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
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 enflam'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.
The day arriv'd, when Xerxes firſt advanc'd
His arms from Suſa's gates. The Perſian dames,
So were accuſtom'd all the eaſtern fair,
In ſumptuous cars accompany'd his march,
A beauteous train, by Ariana grac'd.
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 adamantine Mars,
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;
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 the knees an ample ſhield was ſpread.
A pond'rous ſpear he ſhook. The well-aim'd point
Sent two Phliaſians to the realms of death
With four Tegæans, whoſe indignant chief,
Brave Hegeſander, vengeance breath'd in vain,
With ſtreaming wounds repuls'd. Thus far unmatch'd,
His arm prevail'd; when Hyperanthes call'd
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
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.
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 fame.
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,
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
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,
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
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
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;
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;
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,
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.
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,
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
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
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,
Than admiration of thy glorious deeds,
And that by thee I cannot fall diſgrac'd.
He ceas'd. Theſe words the Theſpian youth return'd:
Of all the praiſes from thy gen'rous mouth
The only portion, my deſert may claim,
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?
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,
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
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,
Firm reſolution, ſeated on thy brow,
Though grief hath dimm'd thy drooping eye, demand
My veneration: and whatever be
The malice of thy fortune, what the cares,
Inſeſting thus thy quiet, they create
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?
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,
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,
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,
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.
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,
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
The ranks of Aſia; Hyperanthes ſtrides
Before the line, preparing to receive
His friend triumphant: while the wary Greek
Calm and defenſive bears th' aſſault. At laſt,
As by th' incautious fury of his ſtrokes,
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
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
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
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
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:
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
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
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,
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
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.
Soon a tremendous conflict had enſu'd;
But Intaphernes, 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.
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.
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
Of fierce Platæa's chief, whoſe vengeance burſts
In wide deſtruction. Embas, Daucus fall,
Arſæus, Ochos, Mendus, Artias die;
And ten moſt hardy of th' immortal guard,
To ſhivers breaking on the Grecian ſhield
Their gold-embelliſh'd weapons, raiſe a mound
O'er thy pale body, O in prime deſtroy'd,
Of Aſia's garden once the fai eſt plant,
Fall'n Teribazus! Thy diſtracted friend
From this thy temporary tomb is dragg'd
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:
Strong reinforcement from th' immortal guard
Pandates bold to Intaphernes leads,
In charge to haraſs by perpetual toil
Thoſe Grecians next the mountain. Thou unite
To me thy valour: Here the hoſtile ranks
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,
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?
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
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,
Than young Meliſſus, who in ſilver mail
The line embelliſh'd. He in Cirrha's mead,
Where high Parnaſſus from his double top
O'erſhades the Pythian games, the envy'd prize
Of fame obtain'd. Low ſinks his laurell'd head
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
Is Alyattes mark'd, of regal blood,
Deriv'd from Crœſus, 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
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
Lay hid; till, rous'd to battle, on this field
Sinks Alyattes, and a royal breed,
In him extinct forever. Lycis dies,
For boiſt'rous war ill-choſen. He was ſkill'd
To tune the lulling flute, and melt the heart;
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
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 ſinewy 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.
Deſpairing, 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 is 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,
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, Phlius and Mycenæ look'd
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,
Dieneces 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
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,
Theſe oft renew'd the conteſt, and recoil'd,
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,
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
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
In gloomy depth a column soon is form'd
Of 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;
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;
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 cautious, lest on march
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
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,
To fix his eye regardful, to direct
By this alone his even pace and flow,
Retiring, or advancing. So the star,
Chief of the spangles on that fancy'd bear,
Once an Idæan nymph, and nurse of Jove,
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,
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,
Close by the standard he assumes his post.
Intrepid thence he animates his friends.
Heroic chieftains, whose unconquer'd force
Rebellious Egypt, and the Libyan felt,
Think what the splendour of your former deeds
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,
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 straights,
Which bound Alcides' labours, here the storm
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:
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,
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 serry'd phalanx. In their face
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
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
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
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
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
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
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.
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,
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.
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
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
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
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,
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
Beyond the paſs. Not Phœbus could inflict
On Niobè 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
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
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
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,
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,
Enjoy the glories of Oileus' 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.
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
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,
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'rds the plain obſerv'd the Perſian camp;
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.
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,
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
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
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
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,
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,
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
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
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
A name or being. Intaphernes clad
In regal ſplendour, progeny of kings,
Who rul'd Damaſcus, and the Syrian palms,
Here ſlept for ever. Theuſands of his train
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,
Soſarmes, Tachos. Menalippus dy'd
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' unweary'd ſwords
Of Dithyrambus and Diomedon,
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,
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
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.
O'er all their arms, their enſigns, deep-ingulf'd,
With hideous roar the waves for ever cloſe.

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 amoung the mountains of Oeta. This information throws the council into a great tumult, which is paçified by Leonidas, who ſends Alpheus to obſerve the motions of theſe Perſians, and Dieneces with a party of Lacedemonians 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,
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.
When by the ſound of footſteps down the paſs
Alarm'd, he calls aloud. What feet are theſe
Which beat . . echoing pavement of the rock?
Reply, nor tempt inevitable fate.
A voice reply'd. No enemies we come,
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
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
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
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,
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 ſtate, whoſe form adorns the night,
Forbear to blame the vigilance of war.
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.
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.
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.
On her wan cheek a ſudden bluſh aroſe
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
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.
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,
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
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.
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
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
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,
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
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
Looſe flow'd thy hair; and, bubbling from thy eyes,
Impetuous ſorrow lav'd th' empurpled clay.
When forth in groans theſe lamentations broke.
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 ſuff'rings! 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 utt'rance. 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 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.
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 poniard, which her garment veil'd;
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,
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
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.
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,
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
In climes unbleſs'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,
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,
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.
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
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,
And know your brother. From their ſeats they ſtart.
From either breaks in eccſtaſy the name
Of Polydorus. To his dear embrace
Each fondly ſtrives to ruſh; but he withſtands:
While down his cheek a flood of anguiſh pours
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
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
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
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 ſighs

Of friends and brethren diſſipate thy gloom.
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
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
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,
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,
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,
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
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.
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
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,
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
Of Demaratus. To my breaſt I claſp'd
The venerable exile, and reply'd.
Laconia's camp we ſeek. Demand no more.
Farewell. He wept. Be heav'n thy guide, he ſaid,
Thrice happy Polydorus. Thou again
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;
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,
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.
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,
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,
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,
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
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.
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 Colchian ſorcereſs, renown'd
In legends old, or Circé, when they fram'd
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.
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.
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
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
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
Requires the ſwift, the vigilant, and bold.
Go climb, ſurmount the rock's aërial height.
Obſerve the hoſtile march. A Spartan band,
Dieneces, provide. Thyſelf conduct
Their ſpeedy ſuccour to our Phocian friends.
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
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,
When Polydorus answers. Alpheus; no.
I have the marks of bondage to eraze.
My blood must wash the shameful stain away.
We have a father, Maron interpos'd.
Thy unexpected presence will revive
His heavy age, now childless and forlorn.
To him the brother with a gloomy frown.
Ill should I comfort others. View these eyes.
Faint is their light; and vanish'd was my bloom
Before its hour of ripeness. In my breast
Grief will retain a mansion, nor by time
Be dispossess'd. Unceasing shall my soul
Brood o'er the black remembrance of my youth,
In slavery exhausted. Life to me
Hath lost its savour. Then in sullen woe
His head declines. His brother pleads in vain.
Now in his view Dieneces appear'd
With Sparta's band. Immoveable his eyes
On them he fix'd, revolving these dark thoughts.
I too, like them, from Lacedemon spring,
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;
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,
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;
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
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
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
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
On one sad bier the pallid beauties laid
Of Ariana. 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,
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
Weep o'er this flow'r, untimely cut in bloom.
Then say, th' all-juding 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,
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.
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
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
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,
And must be grievous to your lothing shades,
From all the neighb'ring valleys would I cull
Their fairest growth, to strew your herse with flow'rs.
Yet, O accept these tears and pious pray'rs!
May peace surround your ashes! May your shades
Pass o'er the silent pool to happier seats!
He ceas'd in tears. The captives leave the wall,
And slowly down Thermopylæ proceed.

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 Streights, which which had been abandoned by the Phocians. Melibœus brings her tidings of her father's death. She 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 Melibœus. 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 Thermopylæ 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 pavilion.

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,
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
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 Oïleus, from your ſwords
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,
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,
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 pedeſtal diſplays
Thy form, Calliopè ſublime. The lyre,
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.
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,
Without a ſummons to thy pure abode,
I was approaching. Deities, who know
The preſent, paſt, and future, let my lips,
Unblam'd, have utt'rance. Thou, my ſiſter, hear.
Thy breaſt let wiſdom ſtrengthen. Impious foes
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,
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,
He ſhow'd a paſſage up that mountain's ſide,
Whoſe length of wood o'erſhades 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.
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
Imagin'd peril from thoſe fraudful 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
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,
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
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
That cave to human entrance. Beſt belov'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
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
Secure Oïleus from barbarian force.
To Sparta mindful of her noble hoſt
Intruſt his rev'rend head. Th' aſſembled hinds,
Youths, maidens, wives, with nurſelings at their breaſts,
Around her now in conſternation ſtood,
The women weeping, mute, aghaſt the men.
To them ſhe turns. You never, faithful race,
Your prieſteſs ſhall forſake. Meliſſa here,
Deſpairing never of the public weal,
For better days in ſolitude ſhall wait,
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
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.
While Medon penſive from the fane deſcends,
But inſtant reappears. Behind him cloſe
Treads Meliboeus, through the cavern's mouth,
Aſcending pale in aſpect, not unlike
What legends tell of ſpectres, by the force
Of necromantic ſorcery conſtrain'd;
Through earth's dark bowels, which the ſpell diſjoin'd,
They from death's manſion in reluctant ſloth
Roſe to divulge the ſecrets of their graves,
Or myſteries of fate. His cheerful brow,

O'erclouded, paleneſs on his healthful cheek,
A dull, unwonted heavineſs of pace
Portend diſaſt'rous tidings. Medon ſpake.
Turn, holy ſiſter. By the gods belov'd,
May they ſuſtain thee in this mournful hour.
Our father, good Oïleus is no more.
Rehearſe thy tidings, ſwain. He takes the word.
Thou waſt not preſent when his mind, outſtretch'd
By zeal for Greece, tranſported by his joy
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,
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
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,
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 Oïleus in thoſe happier fields,
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,
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,
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,
Then with a voice, a countenance compos'd.
Go, Medon, pillar of th' Oïlean houſe.
New cares, new duties claim thy precious life.
Perform the pious obſequies. Let tears,
Let groans be abſent from the ſacred duſt,
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.
My benediction ſhall reward thy zeal.
Sooth'd by the bleſſings 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.
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
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
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 Sacian drops. The Caſpian ſavage feels
His heart tranſpierc'd, and wonders at the
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,
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.
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 woes.
Not ev'n beſide his ſiſter's nobler corſe
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.
O Demaratus, what will fate ordain?
Lo, fortune turns againſt me! What ſhall 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,
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 fun beheld,
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!
Say, what remains to hope? The exile here.
Too well, O monarch, do thy fears preſage,
What may befal thy army! If the Greeks,
Arrang'd within Thermopylæ, a paſs
Acceſſible and practis'd, could repel
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
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 terrors of his pow'r;
More gentle means of conqueſt than by arms,
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

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
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,
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
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 before him. Bid him join
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,
O Arimanius, 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,
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
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;
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.
My royal patron, let me ſpeak—and die,
If ſuch thy 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
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,
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.
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.
Argeſtes, 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
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——
Shade of my huſband, thou ſalute in ſmiles
Theſe gallant warriors, faithful once to thee,
Nor leſs to me. They tidings will report
Of Artemiſia, to revive thy love——
May wretches like Argeſtes never claſp
Their wives, their offspring! Never greet their homes!
May their unbury'd limbs diſmiſs their ghoſts
To wail for ever on the banks of Styx!
Then, turning tow'rd her ſon. Come, virtuous boy,
Let us tranſport theſe relics of our friends
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,
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;
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
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,
Before the eye of morn retreating ſwift
To hide her lothſome 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
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
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.
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:
Think on the glories of unrivall'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,
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,
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,
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.
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,
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:
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
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
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
To his reſplendent canopy. Thy king,
Who hath profan'd by proffer'd bribes my ear,
Dares not to meet my arm. Thee, trembling ſlave,
Whoſe embaſſy was treaſon, I deſpiſe,
And therefore ſpare. Diomedon ſubjoins:
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 goddeſs dwells.
To me conſign the caitiff. Soon the winds
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.
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
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;
Their branches ſparkled, and the thickets blaz'd.
In hillocks embers roſe. Embody'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,
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;
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
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:
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,
Shall celebrate in ages yet unborn.
Thou godlike offspring of a godlike ſire,
To him my kindeſt greetings, Medon, bear.
Farewell, Megiſtias, holy friend and brave.
Thou too, experienc'd, venerable chief,
Demophilus, farewell. Farewell 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
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,
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 Platæa's chief.
By the twelve gods, enthron'd in heav'n ſupreme;
By my fair name, unfully'd yet, I ſwear,
Thine eye, Leonidas, ſhall ne'er behold
Diomedon forſake thee. Firſt, let ſtrength
Deſert my limbs, and fortitude my heart.
Did I not face the Marathonian war?
Have I not ſeen Thermopylæ? 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
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,
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
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
With thee, O hero, on this glorious earth

His eve of life. The youth of Thespia next
Addres'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,
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 alluring than a noble death.
To him his second parent. Wilt thou bleed,
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,
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,
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
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.
This said, the hero with his lifted shield
His face o'ershades; 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,
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
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
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
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
Perceives the hero's struggle, and prepares
To interpose relief; when instant came
Dieneces before them. Short he spake:
Barbarian myriads through the secret pass
Have enter'd Greece. Leonidas, by morn
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.
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
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 yet the gen'rous Spartans may behold
In me their large beneficence not vain,
Here to their cause I consecrate my breath.
Not so, Megistias, interpos'd the king.
Thou and thy son retire. Again the secr:
Forbid it, thou eternally ador'd,
O Jove, confirm my persevering soul!
Nor let me these auspicious moments lose,
When to my bounteous patrons I may show,
That I deserv'd their favour. Thou, my child,
Dear Menalippus, heed the king's command,
And my paternal tenderness revere.
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
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
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,
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.
Go, practise my instructions. Oft in fields
Of future conflict may thy proweſs call
Me to remembrance. Spare thy words. Farewell.
While such contempt of life, such fervid zeal
To die with glory animate the Greeks,
Far diff'rent thoughts possess Argestes' 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,
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
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,
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:
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,

Ev'n from that pow'r, to which their abject hearts
Have sacrific'd their faith. Nor dare to hope,
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
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,
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;
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 diffuading crowds
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 sought
Barbarian courts for shelter. Hath he drawn
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,
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
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;
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;
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,
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
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.
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
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
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
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.

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 could'st thou choose
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
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
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,
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
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
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,
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.

The man, thus great and happy in the scope
Of his large mind, is stretch'd beyond his date.
Ev'n on this shore of being, he in thought
Supremely bless'd, anticipates the good
Which late posterity from him derives.

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.

BOOK XI.

THE ARGUMENT.

Leonidas, riſing before ſun-ſet, 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 ſought 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,
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:
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
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.
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 Oïleus, 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 ſire, 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. Farewell. 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 Oïleus' 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 ev'ry beaſt and bird of prey
Diſcordant grated on my ear. I turn'd.
A ſurface hideous, delug'd o'er with blood,
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
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
With riven keels and ſhrouds, with ſhiver'd oars,
With arms and welt'ring carcaſſes beſtrewn
Innumerous. The billows foam'd in blood.
But where the waters, unobſerv'd before,
Between two adverſe ſhores, contracting, roll'd
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 forth in execrations loud;
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
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:
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;
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
Of copious rivers ſhow'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
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,
And ev'ry 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,
Priut on the ſand his ſolitary ſtep,
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
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
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,
Not ev'n the muſic-breathing flute be heard.
Meantime, ye leaders, ev'ry band inſtruct
To move in ſilence. Mindful of their charge
The chiefs depart. Leonidas provides
His various armour. Agis cloſe attends,
His beſt aſſiſtant. Firſt a breaſtplate 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
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
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,
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.
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
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,
She ſeem'd collecting ev'ry pow'r to charm:
Exceſs of ſweet allurement 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.
This portraiture of glory on his arm
Leonidas diſplays, and, tow'ring, ſtrides
From his pavilion. Ready are the bands.
The chiefs aſſume their ſtation. Torches blaze
Through ev'ry file. All now in ſilent pace
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
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,
Leonidas advances. Never he
In ſuch tranſcendent majeſty was ſeen,
And his own virtue never ſo enjoy'd.
Succeſſive move Dieneces the brave,
In hoary ſtate Demophilus, the bloom
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.
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,
Which from the clouds bent frowning. Down a rock
Above the loftieſt ſummit of the grove
A tumbling torrent wore the ſhagged ſtone;
Then, gleaming through the intervals of ſhade,
Attain'd the valley, where the level ſtream
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
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.
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,
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.
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 helms,
The burnish'd armour multiply'd the blaze.
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.
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
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.
But with you bring fair Liberty, whom Jove,
And you must honour. Let her sacred eyes
Approve her dying Grecians; let her voice
In exultation tell the earth and heav'ns,
These are her sons. Then strike your tuneful shells.
Record us guardians of our parent's age,
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.
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,
Which may in silence guide our daring feet,
Controul 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.
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
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.
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.
No sound is wafted 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
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 waining horns.
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 bless'd abodes.
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.
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
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
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,
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,
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
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
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,
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
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.
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,
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
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
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,
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,
Dieneces, Demophilus are ſeen
With Theſpia's youth: nor they their ſteady fight
From his remove, in ſpeechleſs tranſport bound
By love, by veneration; till they hear
His laſt injunction. To their diff'rent poſts
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
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 lowring clouds along th' ethereal void
In ſlow expanſion from the gloomy north
A while ſuſpend their horrors, deſtin'd ſoon
To blaze in lightnings, and to burſt in ſtorms.

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 Thermopylæ, 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.

Across 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.
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 pavilion, was an ample ſpace
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 fight
Of fear engender'd phantoms in the ſky,
Aerial hoſts amid the clouds array'd,
Portending woe and death; the Perſian guard
In equal conſternation now deſcry'd
The glimpſe of hoſtile armour. All diſband,
As if auxiliar to his favour'd Greeks
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,
To ev'ry 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
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!
Thy hope of glory! whither are they flown
With all thy pomp? In this diſaſt'rous hour
What could avail the immeaſurable range
Of thy proud camp, ſave only to conceal
Thy trembling ſteps, O Xerxes, while thou fly'ſt?
To thy deſerted couch with other looks
With other ſteps Leonidas is nigh.
Before him terror ſtrides. Gigantic death,
And defolation at his ſide attend.
The vaſt pavilion's empty ſpace, where lamps
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 [feet
Through boundleſs kingdoms, underneath their
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;
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.
Swift through the camp the hurricane impells
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
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 Horomazes was the monarch wont
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,
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 reaſſemble at the regal tent,
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
Exaſperates the blaze. To ev'ry part
The conflagration like a ſea expands,

One waving furface of unbounded 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;
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,
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
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.
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.
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
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,
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;
Nor nature longer can ſuſtain the toil
Of unremitted 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?
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,
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.
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 haraſs'd nerves,
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
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,
Anticipating fame. Of endleſs joys
In bleſs'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' Aſcræan bard,
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 cull.
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
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
Of praiſe with men, of happineſs with gods.
The Grecian valour on religion's flame
To ecſtaſy is waſted. Death is nigh.
As by the graces faſhion'd, he appears
A beauteous form. His adamantine gate
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
With celebrating lyres. In thought ſerene
Leonidas the kind deception bleſs'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
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
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
O'erturns a nodding rampart from its baſe,

And ſtrews a town with ruin, ſo the band
Of ſerry'd heroes down the Malian ſteep,
Tremendous depth, the mix'd battalions ſwept
Of Thebes and Perſia. There no waters flow'd.
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.
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
Of fifty paces yields his front extent
To proffer battle. Hyperanthes ſoon
Recalls his warriors, diſſipates their fears.
Swift on the great Leonidas a cloud [cloſe.
Of darts is ſhow'r'd. Th' encount'ring armies
Who firſt, ſublimeſt hero, felt thy arm?
What rivers heard along their echoing banks
Thy name, in curſes founded from the lips
Of noble mothers, wailing for their ſons?
What towns with empty monuments were fill'd
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
Among the branches interwove their ſweets;
For him the fig was ripen'd, and the vine
In rich profuſion o'er the goblet foam'd.
Then Dinis bled. On Hermus' ſide he reign'd;
He long aſſiduous, unavailing woo'd
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 accuſtom'd on the rolling deck
To brave the turgid billow. Near the ſhore
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
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,
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
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
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,
Siſamnes and Tithrauſtes, potent lords
Of rich domains. On theſe Mithrines gray,
Cilician prince, Lilæus, who had left
The balmy fragrance of Arabia's fields
With Babylonian Tenagon expir'd.

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:
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,
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
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
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
The rage of winds and floods, although the ſtorm
Be heard no longer, and the deluge fled,
Still o'er the waſted region nature mourns
In melancholy ſilence; through the grove
With proſtrate glories lie the ſtately oak,
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
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
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
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
Their monarch's riſing. This conſpicuous blaze
Artuchus places in th' accuſtom'd ſeat.
As, after winds have ruffled by a ſtorm
The plumes of darkneſs, when her welcome face
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 cheering ſignal on the tent
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.

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.
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
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
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
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
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 sinks in death,
Renown'd through wide Bithynia, ne'er again
The clam'rous rites of Cybelé to share;
While echo murmurs through the hollow caves
Of Berecynthian Dindymus. 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' cheft 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
A pond'rous blow, which burst the scatter'd brain.
Down his own limbs meantime a torrent flows
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
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 Thespia's friendly youth,
Then bow'd his head in everlasting peace.
While Mindus, wasted 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.
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.
One of his nervous hands retains it fast.
The other bares his falchion. Wounds and death
He scatters round. Sosarmes feels his arm
Lopt from the shoulder. Zatis leaves entwin'd
His fingers round the long-disputed lance.
On Mardon'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 Thespian, who resigns his hold;
But cleaves th' elate barbarian to the brain.
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
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
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
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
Among the groves of Libanus hath tow'r'd,
Uprooted, low'rs his graceful top, preferr'd
For dignity of growth some royal dome,
Or heav'n-devoted fabric to adorn.
Diomeden bursts forward. Round his friend
He heaps destruction. Troops of wailing ghosts
Attend thy shade, fall'n hero! Long prevail'd
His furious arm in vengeance uncontroul'd;
Till four Assyrians on his shelving spear,
Ere from a Cissian's prostrate body freed,
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,
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
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,
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,
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 [thus
Whelms o'er the widening breach: the Perſian
O'er the late-fear'd Diomedon advanc'd
Againſt the Grecian remnant: when behold
Leonidas. At once their ardour froze.
He had a while behind his friends retir'd,
Oppreſs'd by labour. Pointleſs was his ſpear,
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 ſhrowds and ſails,
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,
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,
Fate will eraſe for ever. Through the targe,
The thick-mail'd corſelet his divided cheſt
Of bonny ſtrength admits the hoſtile ſpear.
Leonidas draws back the ſteely point,
Bent and enfeebled by the forceful blow.
Meantime within his buckler's rim unſeen,
Amphiſteus ſtealing, in th' unguarded flank
His dagger ſtruck. In flow effuſion ooz'd
The blood, from Hercules deriv'd; but death
Not yet had reach'd his mark. Th' indignant king
Gripes 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
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 Amphiſtreus govern'd. As the ſpear
Of Tyrian Cadmus rivetted to earth
The pois'nous dragon, whoſe infectious breath
Had blaſted all Bœotia; ſo the king,
On prone Amphiſtreus trampling, to the rock
Nails down the tyrant, and the fractur'd ſtaff
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
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
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' incruſted ſnow;
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.
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.
Cruſh'd on the ground beneath contending feet,
Great Xerxes' brother yields the laſt remains
Of tortur'd life. Leonidas perſiſts;
Till Agis calls Dieneces, alarms
Demophilus, Megiſtias: they o'er piles
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
From band to band his various hoſt pervades,
Their drooping hopes rekindles, in the brave
New fortitude excites: the frigid heart
Of fear he warms. Aſtaſpes firſt obeys,
Vain of his birth, from ancient Belus drawn,
Proud of his wealthy ſtores, his ſtately domes,
More proud in recent victory: his might
Had foil'd Platæa's chief. Before the front
He ſtrides impetuous. His triumphant mace
Againſt the brave Dieneces he bends.
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 ev'ry function. Agis bares
His vengeful blade, At two well levell'd ſtrokes
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
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'erturn'd his iron cone.
Black o'er his forehead fall the naked locks;
They aggravate his fury: while his foe
Repeats the ſtroke, and penetrates his cheſt.
Th' intrepid Sacian through his breaſt and back
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.
From him fate haſtens to a nobler prey,
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
Forſakes 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
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.
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,
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
Th' inferior gods, themſelves in terror ſhunn'd
Th' inceſſant ſtreams of lightning, where the hand
Of heav'n's great father with eternal might
Suſtain'd the dreadful conflict. O'er the field
A while Bellona gives the battle reſt;
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
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;
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,
Extracts the Sacian's arrow. Life, releas'd,
Pours forth in crimſon floods. O Agis, pale
Thy placid features, rigid are thy limbs; [veal
They loſe their graces. Dimm'd, thy eyes re-
The native goodneſs of thy heart no more.
Yet other graces ſpring. The noble corſe
Leonidas ſurveys. A pauſe he finds
To mark, how lovely are the patriot's wounds,
And ſee thoſe honours on the breaſt he lo'vd
But Hyperanthes from the trembling ranks
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 a while
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,
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
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
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
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;
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
Beneath a marble fragment, from his ſeat
Heav'd by a whirlwind, ſweeping o'er the ridge
Of ſome aſpiring manſion. Gen'rous prince!
What could his valour more? His ſingle might
He match'd with great Leonidas, and fell
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;
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 ſereneſt joy
His cloſing eye contemplates. Fame can twine
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.

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.
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;
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,
O goddeſs, handmaid of th' ethereal power,
Now lift thy head, and to th' admiring world
Show thy long hidden beauty. Thee the wiſe
Of ancient fame, immortal Plato's ſelf,
The Stagyrite, and Syracuſian ſage,
From black obſcurity's abyſs to raiſe,
(Drooping and mourning o'er thy wondrous works)
With vain inquiry ſought. Like meteors theſe
In their dark age bright ſons of wiſdom ſhone:
But at thy Newton all their laurels fade,
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,
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
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,
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
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
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,
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,
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,
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,
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,
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,
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
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
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,
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 ſeas obey, at your reſiſtleſs ſway
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.
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
Back to th' abandon'd ſhores impell 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,
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,
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,
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
Propitious, who with inſpiration taught'ſt
Our greateſt bard to ſend thy praiſes forth;
Thou, who gav'ſt Newton thought; who ſmil'dſt ſerene,
When to its bounds he ſtretch'd his ſwelling ſoul;
Who ſtill benignant ever bleſt his toil,
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,
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,
To where the frozen hyperborean blaſts,
To where th' boiſt'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
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 vitag'd comets form'd
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,
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
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
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
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?
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.
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 perpiſcuous ſaw,
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
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 riſes from her pearly couch
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
In white tranſparent intermixt with gold,
With bright variety of ſplendour clothe
All the illuminated face above.
When hoary-headed winter back retires
To the chill'd pole, there ſolitary ſits
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;
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 Theſſalia's plain extend her view,
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
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,
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,
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,
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
The trembling walls of Potidæaſhook.
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
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,
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 ſacred high-erected fanes,
Fair citadels, and marble-crowned towers,
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,
Up to the ſkies th' imperious mountain heaves;
The ſhining verdure of the nodding woods.
See where the ſilver Hippocrene flows,
Behold each glitt'ring rivulet and rill
Through mazes wander down the green deſcent,
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.
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 thy hallow'd eyes
The deeds of gods; thee wiſe Minerva taught
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
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
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
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,
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.
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
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,
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 Marlb'rough led
Th' embattled numbers of Britannia's ſons,
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
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
Expoſing horrible the gulf of fate;
Or roaring Danube ſpread his arms abroad,
And overwhelm'd their legions with his floods.
But let the wand'ring muſe at length return;
Nor yet, angelic genius of the ſun,
In worthy lays her high-attempting ſong
Has blazon'd forth thy venerated name.
Then let her ſweep the loud-reſounding lyre
Again, again o'er each melodious ſtring
Teach harmony to tremble with thy praiſe.
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,
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,
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 name ſhall I invoke thee, ſay,
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,
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,
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;
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 whoſe ſpacious view,
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,
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
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
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
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,
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
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;
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,
And clad with power, which form'd th' extenſive heavens.
O happy he, whoſe enterpriſing hand
Unbars the golden and relucid gates
Of th' empyrean dome, where thou enthron'd
Philoſophy art ſeated. Thou ſuſtain'd
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,
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,
And Danube, thou that from Germania's ſoil
To the black Euxine's far remoted ſhore,
O'er the wide bounds of mighty nations ſweep'ſt
In thunder loud thy rapid floods along.
Ev'n you ſhall feel inexorable time;
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;
Or through the year's reiterated courſe
When time himſelf grows old, your wond'rous ſtreams
Loſt ev'n to memory ſhall lie unknown
Beneath obſcurity, and chaos whelm'd.
But ſtill thou ſun illumineſt all
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,
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,
E'en to th' extremeſt bounds of knowledge reach,
To thoſe unknown innumerable ſuns, [worlds,
Whoſe light but glimmers from thoſe diſtant
Ev'n to thoſe utmoſt boundaries, thoſe bars
That ſhut the entrance of th' illumin'd ſpace
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.
And lo, th' all-potent goddeſs nature takes
With her own hand thy great, thy juſt reward
Of immortality; aloft in air
See ſhe diſplays, and with eternal graſp
Uprears the trophies of great Newton's fame.

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,
Safe o'er th' unruffled main; let every thought,
Which may diſquiet, and alarm my breaſt,
Be abſent now; that diſpoſſeſs'd of care,
And free from every tumult of the mind,
With each diſturbing paſſion huſh'd to peace,
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 heaven,
Diſdains all objects but the golden ſun,
Full on th' effulgent orb directs his eye,
And fails 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,

(*a*) *The eaſt wind.*
(*b*) *Bremen is ſituated on the Weſer, and Hamburgh on the Elbe.*

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,
That ſhe abandon'd her maternal clime;
Neptunian commerce, whom Phœnice bore,
Illuſtrious nymph, that nam'd the fertile plains
Along the ſounding main extended far,
Which flowery Carmel with its ſweet perfumes,
And with its cedars Libanus o'erſhades:
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
Of Neptune view'd enamour'd: from the deep
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
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:
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,
Once faithful partners of my chaſter hours,
Farewell! 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,
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
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
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
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-gliding car, impell'd
Along the level azure by the ſtrength
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,
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
To ſmile, (d) Eucarpé, (e) Dapſiléa dwelt,
With all the nymphs, whoſe ſacred care had nurs'd
The eldeſt Bacchus. From the flow'ry ſhore
A turf-clad valley opens, and along
Its verdure mild the willing feet allures;
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, whoſe forehead glows
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
Pours his meridian blaze! rever'd abode
Of Nyſa's nymphs, with every plant attir'd,
That wears undying green, refreſh'd with rills
From ever-living fountains, and enrich'd
With all Pomona's bloom: unfading flowers
Glow on the mead, and ſpicy ſhrubs perfume
With unexhauſted ſweets the cooling gale,
Which breathes inceſſant there; while every bird
Of tuneful note his gay or plaintive ſong
Blends with the warble of meandring ſtreams,
Which o'er their pebbled channels murm'ring
The fruit-inveſted hills, that riſe around.
The gentle Nereids to this calm receſs [lave
Phœnice bear; nor Dapſiléa bland,
Nor good Eucarpé, ſtudious to obey
Great Neptune's will, their hoſpitable care
Refuſe; nor long Lucina is invok'd.
Soon as the wondrous infant ſprung to day,
Earth rock'd around; with all their nodding woods,
And ſtreams reverting to their troubled ſource,
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
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;
She ſhall enlighten man's unletter'd race,
And with endearing intercourſe unite
Remoteſt nations, ſcorch'd by ſultry ſuns,
Or freezing near the ſnow-incruſted pole:
Where'er the joyous vine diſdains to grow,
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
From her exhauſtleſs bounty all ſhall flow.
The heavenly prophet ceas'd. Olympus heard.
Straight from their ſtar-beſpangled thrones deſcend

(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. pag. 202.

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

On blooming Nyſa a celeſtial band
The ocean's lord to honour in his child;
When o'er his offspring ſmiling thus began
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,
From chilling Boreas to extremeſt ſouth
Thy ſire's obſequious billows ſhall extend
Thy univerſal reign. Minerva next
With wiſdom bleſs'd her, Mercury with art,
(*b*) The Lemnian god with induſtry, and laſt
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,
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
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;
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
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
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
Of mightieſt cities roſe, and o'er the main
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 Albion's tin-embowell'd fields,
And oft beneath the ſea-obſcuring 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;
Then all the latent and myſterious powers
Of number didſt unravel: laſt to crown
Thy bounties, goddeſs, thy unrivall'd toils
For man, ſtill urging thy inventive mind,
Thou gav'ſt him (*i*) letters; there imparting all,
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,
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
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
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:
Thus, when Pygmalion from Phœnician Tyre
Had baniſh'd freedom, with diſdainful ſteps
Indignant commerce, turning from the walls
Herſelf had rais'd, her welcome ſway enlarg'd
Among the nations, ſpreading round the globe
The fruits of all its climes; (*k*) Cecropian oil,
The Thracian vintage, and Panchaian gums,
Arabia's ſpices, and the golden grain,
Which old Oſiris to his Egypt gave,
And Ceres to (*l*) Sicania. Thou didſt raiſe
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
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 Nyſa hail
Thy glad return, and echoing joy reſounds
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:
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,
And theſe thy periſh'd honours long deplore.
What though rich (*n*) Gades, what though poliſh'd Rhodes,
With Alexandria, Egypt's ſplendid mart, [towers,
The learn'd (*o*) Maſſylians, and (*p*) Ligurian
What though the potent Hanſeatic league,
And Venice, miſtreſs of the Grecian iſles,
With all the Ægean floods, a while might ſooth
The ſad remembrance; what though led through climes
And ſeas unknown, with thee th' advent'rous ſons

(*b*) *Vulcan, the tutelary deity of Lemnos.*

(*i*) *Here the opinion of Sir Iſaac Newton is followed, that letters were firſt invented amongſt the trading parts of the world.*

(*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.*

(*q*) Tagus paſs'd the ſtormy cape, which braves
The huge Atlantic; what though Antwerp grew
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
Of Aſdrubal 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
Alarm'd thy langour; 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,
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 enflam'd revenge
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
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,
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
Thee firſt to plough the undiſcover'd ſurge,
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,
For mutual aids, and hoſpitable ties
From ſhore to ſhore? Or, that pernicious hour,
Was heaven diſguſted with its wondrous works,
That to thy fell exterminating hand
Th' immenſe Peruvian empire it reſign'd,
And all, which lordly (*s*) Montezuma ſway'd?
And com'ſt thou, ſtrengthen'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
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
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
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,
Deſpiſing fortune, from repeated foils
More fierce, and braving famine's keeneſt rage,
At length through deluges of blood ſhe led
To envied greatneſs; ev'n while clamorous Mars
With loudeſt clangor bade his trumpet ſhake
The Belgian champain, ſhe 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,
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 ſuns,
Still thither be extended thy renown,
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
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,
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
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,
Who with melodious praiſe to nobleſt deeds
Charm'd the Iölchian 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

(*q*) *The Portugueſe diſcovered the Cape of Good Hope in* 1487.

(*r*) *The Dutch.*

(*s*) *Montezuma, emperor of Mexico.*

(*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.*

(*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.*

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
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 though the infant oak,
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
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
To circumscribe, or conquering to depose
Their sceptre'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
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,
While every arm was chill'd with cold amaze,
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.
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,
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,
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;
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
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,

(*b*) *The act of navigation.*

(*c*) *Queen Elizabeth was the first of our princes, who gave any considerable encouragement to trade.*

Illustrious city, thou dost raise to fame:
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,
Which forth for commerce, for Britannia's rights,
And her insulted majesty he pour'd,
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,
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:
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,
And grace a mortal mansion; thou divide
With them my labours; pleasure I resign,
And, all devoted to my midnight lamp,
Ev'n 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
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,
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
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 Nysa's cave
Th' ethereal train, in honour to thy sire,
Shower'd on thy birth their blended gifts, the power
Of war was absent; hence, unbless'd by Mars,
Thy sons relinquish'd arms, on other arts
Intent, and still to mercenary hands
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,
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 fame alone of great Amilcar's son
Enlarg'd, while still undisciplin'd, dismay'd,
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.

(*d*) *Sir John Barnard.*

(*e*) *Trebia, Trasimenus lacus, and Cannæ, famous for the victories gained by Annibal over the Romans.*

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,
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
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' aërial ſeat
Of long-ſupported liberty, who thence,
Securely reſting on her faithful ſhield,
The warrior's corſelet flaming on her breaſt,
Looks down with ſcorn on ſpacious realms, which groan
In ſervitude around her, and her ſword
With dauntleſs ſkill high brandiſhing, defies
The Auſtrian eagle, and imperious Gaul:
And O! could thoſe ill-fated ſhades ariſe,
Whoſe valiant ranks along th' enſanguin'd duſt
Of (*g*) Newbery lay crowded, they could tell,
How their long-matchleſs cavalry, ſo oft
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
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;
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,
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;
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
Thoſe daring boſoms, which alike diſdain
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;
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;
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
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:
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
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
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
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;
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,
With all th' attendance on deſpotic thrones,
Prieſts, ignorance, and bonds; with watchful ſtep
Gigantic terror, ſtriding round our coaſt,
Shall ſhake his Gorgon ægis, and the hearts
Of proudeſt kings appal; to other ſhores
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.

(*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.*

(*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. book 7. page 347.

(*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 ſubſiſt in an enemy's country greater numbers, than they would find oppoſed to them here.*

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
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;
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
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.

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.

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.

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;

For reſiſtance I could fear none,
But with twenty ſhips had done
What thou, brave and happy Vernon,
Haſt achiev'd with ſix alone.
Then the Baſtimentos never
Had our foul diſhonour ſeen,
Nor the ſea the ſad receiver
Of this gallant train had been.

Thus, like thee, proud Spain diſmaying,
And her galleons leading home,
Though condemn'd for diſobeying,
I had met a traitor's doom.
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,
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,
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,
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.

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;
After this proud foe ſubduing,
When your patriot friends you ſee,
Think on vengeance for my ruin,
And for England ſham'd in me.