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LEONIDAS.

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P O E M.

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P. O. E. M.

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THE SIXTH EDITION.

V O L. II.

L O N D O N :

Printed for T. CADELL, in the Strand; and
RICHARDSON and URQUHART, at the Royal
Exchange.

M.DCC.LXX.

LEONIDAS

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LEONIDAS.

v. 2

BOOK THE SEVENTH.

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

VOL. II.

B

With

With sage Meliffa's words, had now rejoin'd
 The king of Lacedæmon. At his fide
 Was Maron posted, watchful to receive 5
 His high injunctions. In the rear they stood
 Behind two thousand Locrians, deep-array'd
 By warlike Medon, from Oïleus sprung.
 Leonidas to them his anxious mind
 Was thus disclosing. Medon, Maron, hear. 10
 From this low rampart my exploring eye
 But half commands the action, yet hath mark'd
 Enough for caution. Yon barbarian camp,
 Immense, exhaustless, deluging the ground
 With myriads, still o'erflowing, may consume 15
 By endless numbers, and unceasing toil
 The Grecian strength. Not marble is our flesh,
 Nor adamant our sinews. Silvan pow'rs,
 Who dwell on Oeta, your superior aid
 We must solicit. Your stupendous cliffs 20
 In

Book VII. LEONIDAS. 3

In those loose rocks, and branchless trunks contain
More fell annoyance, than the arm of man.

HE ended; when Megistias. Virtuous king,
Melissa, priestess of the tuneful nine,
By their behests invites thy honor'd feet 25
To her chaste dwelling, seated on that hill.
To conference of high import she calls
Thee, first of Grecians. Medon interpos'd.

SHE is my sister. Justice rules her ways
With piety and wisdom. To her voice 30
The nations round give ear. The muses breathe
Their inspiration through her spotless soul,
Which borders on divinity. She calls
On thee. O truly styl'd the first of Greeks,
Regard her call. Yon cliff's projecting head 35
To thy discernment will afford a scope

More full, more certain; thence thy skilful eye
 Will best direct the fight. Meliffa's fire
 Was ever present to the king in thought,
 Who thus to Medon. Lead, Oileus' son. 40
 Before the daughter of Oileus place
 My willing feet. They hasten to the cave,
 Megiftias, Maron follow. Through the rock
 Leonidas, ascending to the fane,
 Rose like the god of morning from the cell 45
 Of night, when, shedding cheerfulness and day
 On hill and vale emblaz'd with dewy gems,
 He gladdens nature. Lacedæmon's king,
 Majestically graceful and serene,
 Dispels the rigour in that solemn seat 50
 Of holy sequestration. On the face
 Of pensive-ey'd religion rapture glows
 In admiration of the god-like man.
 Advanc'd Meliffa. He her proffer'd hand

In hue, in purity like snow, receiv'd. 55

A heav'n-illumin'd dignity of look

On him she fix'd. Rever'd by all, she spake,

HAIL ! chief of men, selected by the gods

For purer fame, than Hercules acquir'd.

This hour allows no pause. She leads the king 60

With Medon, Maron, and Megistias down

A slope, declining to the mossy verge,

Which terminates the mountain. While they pass,

She thus proceeds. These marble masses view, 64

Which lie dispers'd around you. They were hewn

From yonder quarry. Note those pond'rous beams,

The silvan offspring of that hill. With these

At my request th' Amphictyons from their seat

Of gen'ral council piously decreed

To raise a dome, the ornament of Greece. 70

Observe those wither'd firs, those mould'ring oaks,

Down that declivity, half-rooted, bent,
 Inviting human force—Then look below.
 There lies Thermopylæ. I see, exclaims
 The high-conceiving hero. I recal 75
 Thy father's words and forecast. He presag'd,
 I should not find his daughter's counsel vain.
 He to accomplish, what thy wisdom plans,
 Hath amplest means supply'd. Go, Medon, bring
 The thousand peasants from th' Oïlean vale 80
 Detach'd. Their leader Meliboëus bring.
 Fly, Maron. Ev'ry instrument provide
 To fell the trees, to drag the massy beams,
 To lift the broad-hewn fragments. Are not these
 For sacred use reserv'd, Megistias said ? 85
 Can these be 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

Forbear to think, that my unprompted mind, 90
 Calm and sequester'd in religion's peace,
 Could have devis'd a stratagem of war ;
 Or, unpermitted, could resign to Mars
 These rich materials, gather'd to restore
 In strength and splendour yon decrepid walls, 95
 And that time-shaken roof. Rejecting sleep,
 Last night I lay, contriving swift revenge
 On these Barbarians, whose career profane
 O'erturns the Grecian temples, and devotes
 Their holy bow'rs to flames. I left my couch, 100
 Long ere the sun his orient gates unbarr'd.
 Beneath yon beach my pensive head reclin'd,
 The rivulets, the fountzins, warbling round,
 Attracted slumber. In a dream I saw
 Calliopé. Her sisters, all with harps, 105
 Were rang'd around her ; as their Parian forms

Shew 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. Priestesses, let him hurl 110
 These marble heaps, these consecrated beams,
 Our fane itself to crush the impious ranks.
 The hero summon to our sacred hill.
 Reveal the promis'd succour. All is due
 To liberty against a tyrant's pride. 115
 She struck her shell. In concert full reply'd
 The sister lyres. Leonidas they sung
 In ev'ry note and dialect yet known,
 In measures new, in language yet to come.

SHE finish'd. Then Megistias. Dear to heav'n,
 By nation's honor'd, and in tow'ring thought 121
 O'er either sex pre-eminent, thy words
 To me a soldier and a priest suffice.

I hesitate

I hesitate no longer. But the king,
 Wrapt in ecstatic contemplation stood, 125
 Revolving deep an answer, which might suit
 His dignity and hers. At length he spake.

Not Lacedæmon's whole collected state
 Of senate, people, ephori and kings,
 Not the Amphictyons, whose convention holds 130
 The universal majesty of Greece,
 E'er drew such rev'rence, as thy single form,
 O all-surpassing woman, worthy child
 Of time-renown'd Oileus. In thy voice
 I hear the goddess, Liberty. I see 135
 In thy sublimity of look and port
 That daughter bright of Eleutherian Jove.
 Me thou hast prais'd. My conscious spirit feels,
 That not to triumph in thy virtuous praise
 Were want of virtue. Yet, illustrious dame, 140

Were I assur'd, that oracles delude ;
 That, unavailing, I should spill my blood ;
 That all the Muses of subjected Greece
 Hereafter would be silent, and my name
 Be ne'er transmitted to recording time ; 145
 There is in virtue for her sake alone,
 What should uphold my resolution firm.
 My country's laws I never would survive.

MOV'D at his words, reflecting on his fate,
 She had relax'd her dignity of mind, 150
 Had sunk in sadness ; but her 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 155
 Is pierc'd by notes, shrill founding from the vault.
 Upstarts a diff'rent band, alert and light,
 Athenian

Athenian failors. Long and sep'rate files
 Of lusty shoulders, eas'd by union, bear
 Thick, well-compacted cables, wont to heave 160
 The restiff anchor. To a naval pipe,
 As if one soul invigorated all,
 And all compos'd one body, they had trod
 In equal paces, mazy, yet unbroke
 Throughout their passage. So the spinal strength
 Of some portentous serpent, whom the heats 166
 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 170
 Through rocks abrupt and wild. Of stature large,
 In arms, which shew'd simplicity of strength,
 No decoration of redundant art,
 With sable horse-hair, floating down his back,
 A warrior moves behind. Compos'd in gait, 175
 Austerely

Austerely grave and thoughtful, on his shield
 The democratic majesty he bore
 Of Athens. Carv'd in emblematic brass,
 Her image stood with Pallas by her side,
 And trampled under each victorious foot 180
 A regal crown, one Persian, one 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 186
 Of Salamis renown shall echo wide ;
 Shall tell posterity in latest times,
 That naval fortitude controls the world.
 Swift Maron, following, brings a vig'rous band 190
 Of Helots. Ev'ry instrument they wield
 To delve, to hew, to heave ; and active last
 Bounds Melibœus, vigilant to urge

The tardy forward. To Laconia's king
 Advanc'd th' Athenian leader, and began. 195

THOU godlike ruler of Eurotas, hail!
 Thee by my voice Themistocles salutes,
 The admiral of Athens. I conduct
 By public choice the squadron of my tribe,
 And Æschylus am call'd. Our chief hath giv'n 200
 Three days to glory on Eubœa's coast,
 Whose promontories almost rise to meet
 Thy ken from Oeta's cliffs. This morning saw
 The worsted foe, from Artemisium driv'n,
 Leave their disabled ships, and floating wrecks 205
 For Grecian trophies. When the fight was clos'd,
 I was detach'd to bring th' auspicious news,
 To bid thee welcome. Fortunate my keel
 Hath swiftly borne me. Joyful I concur
 In thy attempt. Appris'd by yonder chiefs, 210
 Who

Who met me landing, instant from the ships
 A thousand gallant mariners I drew,
 Who till the setting sun shall lend their toil.

THEMISTOCLES and thou accept my heart,
 Leonidas reply'd, and closely strain'd 215
 The brave, the learn'd Athenian to his breast.
 To envy is ignoble, to admire
 Th' activity of Athens will become
 A king of Sparta, who like thee condemn'd
 His country's sloth. But Sparta now is arm'd. 220
 Thou shalt commend. Behold me station'd here
 To watch the wild vicissitudes of war,
 Direct the course of slaughter. To this post
 By that superior woman I was call'd.
 By long protracted fight left fainting Greece 225
 Should yield, outnumber'd, my enlighten'd soul
 Through her, whom heav'n enlightens, hath devis'd
 To

To whelm the num'rous, persevering foe
 In hideous death, and signalize the day
 With horrors new to war. The Muses prompt 230
 The bright achievement. Lo! from Athens smiles
 Minerva too. Her swift, auspicious aid
 In thee we find, and these, an ancient race,
 By her and Neptune cherish'd. Straight he meets
 The gallant train, majestic with his arms 235
 Outstretch'd, in this applauding strain he spake.

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

THEY hear, they gaze, revering and rever'd.
 Fresh numbers muster, rushing from the hills,
 The thickets round, Melissa, pointing, spake.

I AM their leader. Natives of the hills
 Are these, the rural worshippers of Pan, 245
 Who breathes an ardour through their humble
 minds
 To join you 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, 251
 Fertility they scatter by their toil
 Around this aged temple's wild domain.
 Is Melibœus here ! Thou fence secure
 To old Oileus from the cares of time, 255
 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. 260

TH'

TH' important labour to inspiring airs
 From flutes and harps in symphony with hymns
 Of holy virgins, ardent all perform,
 In bands divided under diff'rent chiefs.
 Huge timbers, blocks of marble to remove 265
 They first attempted ; then assembled stones
 Loose in their beds, and wither'd trunks, upturn
 By tempests ; next dismember'd from the rock
 Broad, rugged fragments ; from the mountains hew'd
 Their venerable firs, and aged oaks, 270
 Which, of their branches by the light'ning 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, 275
 With strong-knit cables drag : till, now dispos'd,
 Where great Leonidas appoints, the piles
 Nod o'er the Streights. This new and sudden scene
 Might

Might lift imagination to belief,
 That Orpheus and Amphion from their beds 280
 Of ever blooming asphodel had heard
 The Muses call ; had brought their fabled harps,
 At whose mellifluent charm once more the trees
 Had burst their fibrous bands, and marbles leap'd
 In rapid motion from the quarry's womb, 285
 That day to follow harmony in aid
 Of gen'rous valour. Fancy might discern
 Cerulean Tethys, from her coral grot
 Emerging, seated on her pearly car,
 With Nereids, floating on the surge below, 290
 To view in wonder from the Malian bay
 The attic sons of Neptune ; who forsook
 Their wooden walls to range th' Oetæan crags,
 To rend the forests, and disjoin the rocks.

MEANTIME a hundred sheep are slain. Their
 limbs 295
 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
 Refection due to this hard-labour'd train, 300
 Due to yourselves. Her hospitable smile
 Wins her well-chosen guests, Laconia's king,
 Her brother, Maron, Æschylus divine
 With Acarnania's priest. Her first commands
 To Melibœus sedulous and blithe 305
 Distribute plenty through the toiling croud.
 Then, skreen'd beneath close umbrage of an oak,
 Each care-divested chief the banquet shares.

COOL breezes, whisp'ring, flutter in the leaves,
 Whose verdure, pendent in an arch, repel 310

The west'ring sun's hot glare. Favonius bland
 His breath impregnates with exhaling sweets
 From flow'ry beds, whose scented clusters deck
 The gleaming pool in view. Fast by, a brook
 In limpid lampses over native steps 315
 Attunes his cadence to sonorous strings,
 And liquid accents of Melissia's maids.
 The floating air in melody respire.
 A rapture mingles in the calm repast.
 Uprises Æschylus. A goblet full 320
 He grasps. To those divinities, who dwell
 In yonder temple, this libation first,
 To thee, benignant hostess, next I pour,
 Then to thy fame, Leonidas. He said.
 His breast, with growing heat distended, prompts 325
 His eager hand, to whose expressive sign
 One of the virgins cedes her sacred lyre.
 Their choral song complacency restrains.

The soul of music, bursting from his touch,
 At once gives birth to sentiment sublime. 330

O HERCULES, and Perseus, he began,
 Star-spangled twins of Leda, and the rest
 Of Jove's immediate seed, your splendid acts
 Mankind protected, while the race was rude;
 While o'er the earth's unciviliz'd extent 335

The savage monster, and the ruffian sway'd,
 More savage still. No policy, nor laws
 Had fram'd societies. By single strength
 A single ruffian, or a monster fell.

The legislator rose. Three lights in Greece, 340
 Lycurgus, Solon and Zaleucus blaz'd.

Then, substituting wisdom, Jove profuse
 Of his own blood no longer, gave us more
 In discipline and manners, which can form
 A hero like Leonidas, than all 345

The

The god-begotten progeny before,

The pupils next of Solon claim the muse.

Sound your hoarse conchs, ye Tritons. You beheld

The Atlantēan shape of slaughter wade

Through your astonish'd deeps, his purple arm 350

Uplifting high before th' Athenian line.

You saw bright conquest, riding on the gale,

Which swell'd their sails; saw terror at their helms

To guide their brazen beaks on Asia's pride.

Her adamantin grapple from their decks 355

Fate threw, and ruin on the hostile fleet

Inextricably fasten'd. Sound, ye nymphs

Of Oeta's mountains, of her woods and streams,

Who hourly witness to Melissa's worth,

Ye Oreads, Dryads, Naiads, sound her praise. 360

Proclaim Zaleucus by his daughter grac'd

Like Solon and Lycurgus by their sons.

LACONIA'S hero, and the priestess bow'd
 Their foreheads grateful to the bard sublime.
 She, rising, takes the word. More sweet thy lyre 365
 To friendship's ear, than terrible to foes
 Thy spear in battle, though the keenest point,
 Which ever pierc'd Barbarians. Close we here
 The song and banquet. Hark! a distant din
 From Asia's camp requires immediate care. 370

SHE leads. Along the rocky verge they pass.
 In calm delight Leonidas surveys
 All in the order, which he last assign'd ;
 As o'er Thermopylæ beneath he cast
 A wary look. The mountain's furthest crag 375
 Now reach'd, Melissa to the king began.

OBSERVE that space below, dispers'd in dales,
 In hollows, winding through dissever'd rocks.

The slender outlet, skreen'd by yonder shrubs,
 Leads to the pass. There stately to my view 380
 The martial queen of Caria yester sun,
 Descending, shew'd. Her loudly I reprov'd.
 But she, devoted to the Persian king,
 In ambush there preserv'd his flying host.
 She last retreated ; but, retreating, prov'd 385
 Her valour equal to a better cause.
 Again I see the heroine approach.

MEGISTIAs then. I see a powerful arm,
 Sustaining firm the large, emblazon'd shield,
 Which, fashion'd first in Caria, we have learn'd 390
 To imitate in Greece. Sublime her port
 Bespeaks a mighty spirit. Priests, look.
 An act of piety she now performs,
 Directing those, perhaps her Carian band,
 To bear dead brethren from the bloody field. 395

Among

Among the horsemen an exalted form
 Like Demeratus strikes my searching eye.
 To me, recalling his transcendent rank
 In Sparta once, he seems a languid sun,
 Which dimly sinks in exhalations dark, 400
 Enveloping his radiance. While he spake,
 Intent on martial duty Medon views
 The dang'rous thicket ; Lacedæmon's chief,
 Around the region his consid'rate eye
 Extending, marks each movement of the foe. 405

TH' imperial Persian from his lofty car
 Had in the morning's early conflict seen
 His vanquish'd army, pouring from the streights
 Back to their tents, and o'er his camp dispers'd
 In consternation ; as a river bursts 410
 Impetuous from his fountain, then, enlarg'd,
 Spreads a dead surface o'er some level marsh.

Th' astonish'd king thrice started from his seat;
 Shame, fear and indignation rent his breast;
 As ruin irresistable were near 415
 To overwhelm his millions. Haste, he call'd
 To Hyperanthes, haste and meet the Greeks.
 Their daring rage, their insolence republ.
 From such dishonor vindicate our name.

His royal brother through th' extensive camp 420
 Obedient mov'd. Deliberate and brave,
 Each active prince from ev'ry tent remote,
 The hardiest troops he summon'd. Caria's queen,
 To Hyperanthes bound by firm esteem
 Of worth, unrivall'd in the Persian court, 425
 In solemn pace was now returning slow
 Before a band, transporting from the field
 Their slain companions to the sandy beach.

SHE stopp'd, and thus address'd him. Learn, O
prince,

From one, whose wishes on thy merit wait,
The only means to bind thy gallant brow 431
In fairest wreaths. To break the Grecian line
In vain ye struggle, unarray'd and lax,
Depriv'd of union. Try to form one band
In order'd ranks, and emulate the foe. 435
Nor to secure a thicket next the pass
Forget. Selected numbers station there.
Farewel, young hero. May thy fortune prove
Unlike to mine. Had Asia's millions spar'd
One myriad to sustain me, none had seen 440
Me quit the dang'rous contest. But the head
Of base Argestes on some future day
Shall feel my treasur'd vengeance. From the fleet
I only stay, till burial rites are paid
To these dead Carians. On this fatal strand 445

May Artemisia's grief appease your ghosts,
My faithful subjects, sacrific'd in vain.

THE hero grateful and respectful heard,
What soon his warmth neglected at the fight
Of spears, which flam'd innumerable round. 450

Beyond the rest in lustre was a band,
The Satellites of Xerxes. They forsook

Their constant orbit round th' imperial throne
At this dread crisis. To a myriad fix'd,

From their unchanging number they deriv'd 455
The title of immortals. Light their spears;

Set in pomegranates of refulgent gold,
Or burnish'd silver, were the slender blades.

Magnificent and stately were the ranks.
The prince, commanding mute attention, spake. 460

IN two divisions part your number, chiefs.
One will I lead to onset. In my ranks

Abrocomes, Hydarnes shall advance,
 Pandates, Mindus, Intaphernes brave
 To wrest this short-liv'd victory from Greece. 465
 Thou, Abradates, by Sofarnes join'd,
 Orontes and Mazæus, keep the rest
 From action. Future succour they must lend,
 Should envious fate exhaust our num'rous files.
 For, O pure Mithra, may thy radiant eye 470
 Ne'er see us, yielding to ignoble flight,
 The Persian name dishonor. May the acts
 Of our renown'd progenitors, who, led
 By Cyrus, gave one monarch to the east,
 In us revive. O think, ye Persian lords, 475
 What endless infamy will blast your names ;
 Should Greece, that narrow portion of the earth,
 Your pow'r defy : when Babylon hath low'rd
 Her towring crest, when Lydia's pride is quell'd
 In Croesus vanquish'd, when her empire lost 480

Ecbatana deplores. Ye chosen guard,
 Your king's immortal bulwark, O reflect,
 What deeds from your superior swords he claims.
 You share his largest bounty. To your faith,
 Your constancy and prowess he commits. 485
 His throne, his person, and this day his fame.

THEY wave their banners, blazing in the sun,
 Who then three hours tow'r'd Hesperus had driv'n
 From his meridian height. Amid their shouts
 The hoarse-resounding billows are not heard. 490
 Of diff'rent nations, and in diff'rent garb,
 Innumerable and vary'd like the shells,
 By restless Tethys scatter'd on the beach,
 O'er which they trod, the multitude advanc'd,
 Straight by Leonidas descry'd. The van 495
 Abrocomes and Hyperanthes led,

Pindates,

Pandates, Mindus. Violent their march
Sweeps down the rocky, hollow-sounding pass.
So, where th' unequal globe in mountains swells,
A torrent rolls his thund'ring surge between 500
The steep-erected cliffs; tumultuous dash
The waters, bursting on the pointed crags:
The valley roars; the marble channel foams.
Th' undaunted Greeks immoveably withstand
The dire encounter. Soon th' impetuous shock 505
Of thousands and of myriads shakes the ground.
Stupendous scene of terror! Under hills,
Whose sides, half-arching, o'er the hosts project,
The unabating fortitude of Greece
Maintains her line, th' untrain'd Barbarians charge
In savage fury. With inverted trunks, 511
Or bent obliquely from the shagged ridge,
The silvan horrors overshadow the fight.

The clanging trump, the crash of mingled spears,
The groan of death, and war's discordant shouts 515
Alarm the echoes in their neighb'ring caves;
Woods, cliffs and shores return the dreadful sound.

The END of the Seventh Book.



LEONIDAS.

BOOK the EIGHTH.

The Argument.

Hyperanthes, discontinuing the fight, while he waits for re-enforcements, 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 Lacedaemonians. Hyperanthes composes a select body out of the Persian standing forces, and, making an improvement in their discipline, renews the attack; upon which Leonidas changes the disposition of his

army: Hyperanthes and the ablest Persian generals are driven out of the field, and several thousands of the Barbarians, circumvented in the pass, are entirely destroyed.

A MID the van of Persia was a youth,
 Nam'd Teribazus, not for golden stores,
 Not for wide pastures, travers'd o'er by herds,
 By fleece-abounding sheep, or gen'rous steeds,
 Nor yet for pow'r, nor splendid honors fam'd. 5
 Rich was his mind in ev'ry art divine ;
 Through ev'ry path of science had he walk'd,
 The votary of wisdom. In the years,
 When tender down invests the ruddy cheek,
 He with the Magi turn'd the hallow'd page 10
 Of Zoroastres. Then his tow'ring thoughts
 High on the plumes of contemplation soar'd.
 He from the lofty Babylonian fane
 With learn'd Chaldæans trac'd the heav'nly sphere,
 There number'd o'er the vivid fires, which gleam 15

On night's bespangled bosom. Nor unheard
Were Indian sages from sequester'd bow'rs,
While on the banks of Ganges they disclos'd
The pow'rs of nature, whether in the woods,
The fruitful glebe, or flow'r, the healing plant, 20
The limpid waters, or the ambient air,
Or in the purer element of fire.

The realm of old Sesostris next he view'd,
Mysterious Ægypt with her hidden rites
Of Isis and Osiris. Last he sought 25
Th' Ionian Greeks, from Athens sprung, nor pass'd
Miletus 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. 30

Th' enlighten'd youth to Sufa 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, 36
 Whom Xerxes held by promis'd nuptial ties
 With his own blood. To this Ægyptian prince
 Bright Ariana was the destin'd spouse,
 From the same bed with Hyperanthes born. 40
 Among her guards was Teribazus nam'd.
 By that fond brother, tender of her weal.

TH' Ægyptian boundaries they gain. They hear
 Of insurrection, of the Pharian tribes
 In arms, and Chembes in the tumult slain. 45
 They pitch their tents, at midnight are assail'd,
 Surpris'd, their leaders massacred, the slaves
 Of Ariana captives borne away,
 Her own pavilion forc'd, her person seiz'd

By ruffian hands: when timely to redeem 50
 Her and th' invaded camp from further spoil
 Flies Teribazus with a rally'd band,
 Swift on her chariot feats 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 58
 In him, distinguish'd by his worth alone,
 No prince, nor satrap, now the single chief
 Of her surviving guard. Of regal birth,
 But with excelling graces in her soul, 60
 Unlike an eastern princess she inclines
 To his consoling, his instructive tongue
 An humbled ear. Amid the converse sweet
 Her charms, her mind, her virtues he explores,
 Admiring. Soon is admiration chang'd 65
 To love; nor loves he sooner, than despairs.
 From morn till ev'n her passing wheels he guards

Back to Euphrates. Often, as she mounts,
Or quits the car, his arm her weight sustains
With trembling pleasure. His assiduous hand 70
From purest fountains wafts the living flood.
Nor seldom by the fair-one's soft command
Would he repose him, at her feet reclin'd ;
While o'er his lips her lovely forehead bow'd,
Won by his grateful eloquence, which sooth'd 75
With sweet variety the tedious march,
Beguiling time. He too would then forget
His pains awhile, in raptures vain entranc'd,
Delusion all, and fleeting rays of joy,
Soon overcast by more intense despair ; 80
Like wintry clouds, which, op'ning for a time,
Tinge their black folds with gleams of scatter'd light,
Then, swiftly closing, on the brow of morn
Condense their horrors, and in thickest gloom
The ruddy beauty veil. They now approach 85

The

The tow'r of Belus. Hyperanthes leads
Through Babylon an army to chastise
The crime of Ægypt. Teribazus here
Parts from his princess, marches bright in steel
Beneath his patron's banner, gathers palms 90
On conquer'd Nile. To Susa he returns,
To Ariana's residence, and bears
Deep in his heart th' immedicable wound.
But unreveal'd and silent was his pain ;
Nor yet in solitary shades he roam'd, 95
Nor shun'd resort : but o'er his sorrows cast
A sickly dawn of gladness, and in smiles
Conceal'd his anguish ; while the secret flame
Rag'd in his bosom, and its peace consum'd : 99
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. 100

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 105

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 110

To overwhelm the Grecians. Ev'ry youth

Is call'd to war ; and I, who lately pois'd

With no inglorious arm the soldier's lance,

Who near the side of Hyperanthes fought,

Must join the throng. How therefore can I fly 120

From

From Ariana, who with Asia's queens
The splendid camp of Xerxes must adorn ?
Then be it so. Again I will adore
Her gentle virtues. Her delightful voice,
Her gracious sweetness shall again diffuse 125
Resistless magic through my ravish'd heart ;
Till passion, thus with double rage inflam'd,
Swells to distraction in my tortur'd breast,
Then—but in vain through darkness do I search
My fate—Despair and fortune be my guides. 130

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. 135
Her Teribazus follows, on her wheels
Attends and pines. Such woes oppress the youth,
Oppress

Oppress, but not enervate. From the van
 He in this second conflict had withstood
 The threat'ning frown of adamantine Mars, 140
 He singly, while his bravest friends recoil'd.
 His manly temples no tiara bound.
 The slender lance of Asia he disdain'd,
 And her light target. Eminent he tow'r'd
 In Grecian arms the wonder of his foes ; 145
 Among th' Ionians were his strenuous limbs
 Train'd in the gymnic school. A fulgent casque
 Inclos'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 150
 Sent two Phliasiens to the realms of death
 With four Tegæans, whose indignant chief,
 Brave Hegesander, vengeance breath'd in vain,

With

With streaming wounds repuls'd. - Thus far un-
match'd,

His arm prevail'd ; when Hyperantbes call'd 155

From fight his fainting legions. Now each band

Their languid courage reenforc'd by rest.

Mean time with Teribazus thus conferr'd

Th' applauding prince. Thou much deserving
youth,

Had twenty warriors in the dang'rous van 160

Like thee maintain'd the onset, Greece had wept

Her prostrate ranks. The weary'd fight awhile

I now relax, till Abradates strong,

Orontes and Mazæus are advanc'd.

Then to the conflict will I give no pause. 165

If not by prowess, yet by endless toil

Successive numbers shall exhaust the foe.

He said. Immers'd in sadness, scarce reply'd,

But to himself complain'd the am'rous youth. 169

STILL

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, 175
Implore her pity, and reveal my love.
Wretch ! canst thou climb to yon effulgent orb,
And share the splendours, which irradiate heav'n ?
Dost thou aspire to that exalted maid,
Great Xerxes' sister, rivalling the claim 180
Of Asia's proudest potentates and kings ?
Unless within her bosom I inspir'd
A passion fervent, as my own, nay more,
Such, as dispelling ev'ry virgin fear,
Might, unrestrain'd, disclose its fond desire, 185
My love is hopeless ; and her willing hand,
Should she bestow it, draws from Asia's lord

On both perdition. By despair benumb'd,
 His limbs their action lose. A wish for death
 O'ercasts and chills his soul. When sudden cries
 From Ariamnes rouse his drooping pow'rs. 191
 Alike in manners they of equal age
 Were friends, and partners in the glorious toil
 Of war. Together they victorious chac'd
 The bleeding sons of Nile, when Ægypt's pride 200
 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; 205
 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; 210

High brandishing his formidable spear,
 He turns intrepid on th' approaching foe.
 Amazement follows. On he strides, and shakes
 The plumed honors of his shining crest.
 Th' ill-fated Greek awaits th' unequal fight, 215
 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. 220
 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! 225
 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, 230
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 235
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 241
Too well proclaims thee. To attempt thy force
I rashly

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, 245
 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 250

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. 255

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 260
 A tyrant's vile stipendiary, that arm,
 That valour thus triumphant I deplore,
 Which after all their efforts and success
 Deserve no honor from the gods, or men.

HERE Teribazus in a sigh rejoin'd. 265
 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, 271
 Firm resolution, seated on thy brow,

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Though grief hath dimm'd thy drooping eye,
demand

My veneration : and, whatever be

The malice of thy fortune, what the cares, 275

Infesting 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, 280

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, 286

As on the Isthmian, or Olympic sands

For fame alone contending. Either host,

Pois'd

Pois'd on their arms, in silent wonder gaze.

The fight commences. Soon the Grecian spear,

Which, all the day in constant battle worn, 291

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 honor, and the dread of shame 295

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. 299

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. 305

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. 310

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, 315

As by th' incautious fury of his strokes,

The Persian swung his cov'ring shield aside,

The fatal moment Dithyrambus seiz'd.

Lightdarting forward with his feet outstretch'd,

Between th' unguarded ribs he plung'd his steel. 320

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 watry cheeks

In speechless anguish clasps his dying friend ; 325

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 ! 330

O Hyperanthes ! Hear my tongue unfold

What, had I liv'd, thou never shouldst have known.

I lov'd thy sister. With despair I lov'd.

Soliciting this honorable doom,

Without regret in Persia's fight and thine 335

I fall. Th' inexorable hand of fate

Weighs down his eye-lids, and the gloom of death

His fleeting light eternally o'er shades.

Him on Choaspes o'er the blooming verge

A frantic mother shall bewail ; shall strew 340

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. 345

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 351
 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 ; 355
 Who, while his gallant enemy expir'd,
 While Hyperanthes tenderly receiv'd
 The last embraces of his gasping friend,

Stood

Stood nigh, reclin'd in sadness on his shield,
 And in the pride of victory repin'd. 360
 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. 365

HIS words he seconds with his rapid lance.
 Soon a tremendous conflict had ensu'd ;
 But Intaphernes, Mindus, and a croud
 Of Persian lords, advancing, fill the space
 Betwixt th' encount'ring chiefs. In mutual wrath,
 With fruitless efforts they attempt the fight. 371
 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 ; 375

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 380

On ev'ry side th' exploding fluid spreads ;

So disappointment irritates the flame

Of fierce Plataea's chief, whose vengeance bursts

In wide destruction. Embas, Daucus fall,

Arsæus, Ochus, Mendes, Artias die ; 385

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 fairest plant, 390

Fall'n Teribazus ! Thy distracted friend

From this thy temporary tomb is dragg'd

By

By forceful zeal of satraps to the shore ;
 Where then the brave Abrocomes arrang'd
 The succours new, by Abradates brought, 395
 Orontes and Mazæus. Turning swift,
 Abrocomes inform'd his brother thus.

STRONG reenforcement from th' immortal guard
 Pandates bold to Intaphernes leads,
 In charge to harass by perpetual toil 400
 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 ? 405
 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. 410

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 415

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. 420

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'er shades the Pythian games, the envy'd prize 425

Of

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. 430
 Around he rolls his gloomy eye. For death
 Is Alyattes mark'd, of regal blood,
 Deriv'd from Cræsus, once imperial lord
 Of nations. Him the nymphs of Halys wept ;
 When, with delusive oracles beguil'd 435
 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 440
 Of humble life his race on Tmolus' 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 445
 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 450
 Beneath their swelling garments wanton'd o'er
 Their snowy breasts; and smooth Cæster'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 455
 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 Phlians close around 450
 The wounded chieftain. In redoubled rage

The

The contest glows. Abrocomes incites
 Each noble Persian. Each his voice obeys.
 Here Abradates, there Mazæus press,
 Orontes and Hydarnes. None retire 455
 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 460
 The dire extremity. His studded orb
 Is held defensive. On his arm the sword
 Of Hyperanthes rapidly descends.
 Down drops the buckler, and the fever'd hand
 Relinquishes its hold. The unprotected pair 465
 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

And mix their streams. Elate the Persians pour 470
 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. 477

THIS said, he drew his Thebans from their post,
 Not with unpunish'd trechery. The lance
 Of Abradates gor'd their foul retreat; 480
 Nor knew the Asian chief, that Asia's friends
 Before him bled. Mean time, 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 485

Of

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 ; 490
 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 495
 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, 500
 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 505
 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. 510
 Unlike the others, whom we newly chac'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, 515
 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. 520

THEY

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 honors, 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 king 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 center of the foremost rank

Orontes plants, committing to his hand
Th' imperial standard; whose expanded folds 540
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 545
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, 550
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

Observing none, but those before him plac'd, 557
 Shall watch their motions, and their steps pursue,
 Nor is th' important thicket next the pass
 Forgot. Two thousand of th' immortal guard 560
 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 Ægypt, and the Libyan felt, 565
 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, 570
 Or in dishonor will forever cloud.

HE said, and vig'rous all to fight proceed.
As, when tempestuous Eurus stems the weight
Of western Neptune, struggling through the streights,
Which bound Alcides' labours; here the storm 575
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, impells the hoary foam
On Mauritanian and Iberian strands : 580
Such is the dreadful onset. Persia keeps
Her foremost ranks unbroken, which are fill'd
By chosen warriors ; while the num'rous croud,
Though still promiscuous pouring from behind,
Give weight and pressure to th' embattled chiefs, 585
Despising danger. Like the mural strength
Of some proud city, bulwark'd round and arm'd
With rising tow'rs to guard her wealthy stores,
Immoveable, impenetrable stood

Laconia's ferry'd phalanx. In their face 590

Grim tyranny her threat'ning fetters shakes,

Red havoc grinds insatiable his jaws.

Greece is behind, entrusting to their swords

Her laws, her freedom, and the sacred urns

Of their forefathers. Present now to thought 595

Their altars rise, the mansions of their birth,

Whate'er they honor, venerate and love.

BRIGHT in the Persian van th' exalted lance

Of Hyperanthes flam'd. Beside him pres'd

Abrocomes, Hydarnes, and the bulk 600

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 605

Upheld. Each unrelax'd array maintains

The conflict undecided; nor could Greece

Repel

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, 611
Who thus the staid Dienece's address'd.

LEONIDAS commands the Spartan ranks
To measure back some paces. Soon, he deems,
The unexperienc'd foes in wild pursuit 615
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 620
They fly before us. My victorious friends,
Do you delay to enter Greece. Away,

Rush

Rush on intrepid. I already hear
 Our horse, our chariots thund'ring on her plains.
 I see her temples wrapt in Persian fires. 625

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, 630
 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. 635
 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

Of Medon follows; while the lighter bands 641

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 645

The son of Peleus in the dusty course;

But now the wrongs, the long-remember'd wrongs

Of Polydorus animate his strength

With ten fold vigour. Like th' empurpled moon,

When in eclipse her silver disk hath lost 650

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, 655

Enormous fragments hide the level beach;

Such as dejected Persia late beheld

On Thessaly's unnavigable strand;

Thus

Thus o'er the champain satraps lay bestrewn
 By Alpheus, persevering in pursuit 660
 Beyond the pass. Not Phoebus 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 665
 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 671
 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. 678

Then Medon's arm is felt. The dreadful boar,
Wide-wasting once the Calydonian fields, 680

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 685
Enjoy the glories of Oileus' son.

Fierce Alpheus too, returning from his chace,
Joins in the slaughter. Ev'ry Persian falls.

To him the Locrian chief. Brave Spartan,
thanks.

Through thee my purpose is accomplish'd full. 690

My phalanx here with levell'd rows of spears

Shall guard the shatter'd bushes. Come what may

From

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 695
 In splendid offerings 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 fight, like passengers dismay'd, 700
 Who on their course by Nile's portentous banks
 Descry in ambush of perfidious reeds
 The crocodile's fell teeth. Contiguous lay
 Thernopylæ. Dieneces secur'd
 The narrow mouth. Two lines the Spartans
 shew'd, 705

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. 710

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, 715
 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 loath your
 beds.

FEW hear him, fewer follow ; while the fight
 His unabating courage oft renews, 721
 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 725
 Beats for awhile 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 730
 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, 735
 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, 740
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 745
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 751
The hollow trunks against the mountain's side.
Swift bounds each craggy mass. The foes below
Look up aghast, in horror shrink and die.

Whose

Whole troops, o'erwhelm'd beneath th' enormous
load, 755

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 forever. Thousands of his train 760

In that broad space the ruins had not reach'd.
Back to their camp a passage they attempt
Through Lacedæmon's line. Them Agis stopp'd.
Before his powerful arm Pandates fell,
Sofarmes, Tachos. Menalippus dy'd 765

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, 770
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 different Grecians. From the gulph profound
Perdition here inevitable frowns, 775
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 780
Of horror, rising from the oozy deep,
And grasping all their numbers, as they fall.
The dire confusion like a storm invades
The chafing surge. Whole troops Bellona rolls
In one vast ruin from the craggy ridge. 785
O'er all their arms, their ensigns, deep-engulph'd,
With hideous roar the waves forever close.

The END of the Eighth Book.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK the NINTH.

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 conduets 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 trechery of the Thebans, and of Epialtes, the Malian, who had undertaken to lead part of the Persian army through a pass among the mountains of Oeta. This information throws the council into a great tu-

mult, which is pacified by Leonidas, who sends Alpheus to observe the motions of these Persians, and Dienece with a party of Lacedæmonians to support the Phocians, with whom the defence of these passages in the hills had been entrusted. In the mean time Agis sends the bodies of Teribazus and Ariana to the camp of Xerxes.

IN fable vesture, spangled o'er with stars,
The night assum'd her throne. Recali'd from
war,

Their toil, protracted long, the Greeks forget,
Dissolv'd in silent slumber, all, but those,
Who watch th' uncertain perils of the dark, 5
A hundred warriors. Agis was their chief.
High on the wall, intent the hero sat.
Fresh winds across the undulating bay
From Asia's host the various din convey'd
In one deep murmur, swelling on his ear. 10
When by the sound of footsteps down the pass
Alarm'd, he calls aloud. What feet are these,

Which

Which beat the echoing pavement of the rock ?

Reply, nor tempt inevitable fate.

A VOICE reply'd. No enemies we come, 15
But crave admittance in an humble tone.

THE Spartan answers. Through the midnight
shade
What purpose draws your wand'ring steps abroad ?

To whom the stranger. We are friends to
Greece.

Through thy assistance we implore access 20
To Lacedæmon'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 25
Of

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 30
 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' insnaring charms
 Of love's soft queen, but such, as far surpass'd, 35
 Whate'er the lilly, 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 ; virtues's purest light
 Illumining the countenance divine : 40
 Yet could not soften rig'rous fate, nor charm

Malig-

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. 45

EXALTED fair, 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 50
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. 55
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, 60
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 66
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 ; 70
If to be great and wretched may deserve
Commiseration from the brave : behold,

Thou

Thou glorious leader of unconquer'd bands,
 Behold, descended from Darius' loins,
 Th' afflicted Ariana; and my pray'r 75
 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, 80
 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, 85
 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, 90
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 95
Her lov'd and lost Proserpina. Awhile
On Ariana fixing stedfast eyes,
These tender thoughts Leonidas recall'd.

SUCH are thy sorrows, O for ever dear,
Who now at Lacedæmon dost deplore 100
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 105

Is call'd. The well-remember'd spot they find,
Where Teribazus from his dying hand
Dropt in their fight his formidable fword.
Soon from beneath a pile of Asian dead
They draw the hero, by his armour known. 110

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 115

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 ! 120

Thou,

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 125
 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 130
 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! 135

SHE could no more. Invincible despair
 Suppress'd all utt'rance. As a marble form,

Fix'd on the solemn sepulcher, inclines

The silent head in imitated woe

O'er some dead hero, whom his country lov'd; 140

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, 145

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 150

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

The unexpected stroke prevents the care
 Of Agis, pierc'd by horror and distress 155
 Like one, who, standing on a stormy beach,
 Beholds a found'ring vessel, by the deep
 At once engulph'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. 160

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. 166

HE spake, unclasping from his shoulders broad
 His ample robe. He strew'd the waving folds

O'er

O'er each wan visage, turning then, address'd
The slave, in mute dejection standing near. 170

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

ART thou a Spartan, interrupts the slave? 175
Dost thou command me to return, and pine
In climes unblest'd by liberty, or laws?
Grant me to see Leonidas. Alone
Let him decide, if wretched, as I seem,
I may not claim protection from this camp. 180

WHOE'ER thou art, rejoins the chief, amaz'd,
But not offended, thy ignoble garb
Conceal'd a spirit, which I now revere.

Thy

Thy countenance demands a better lot,
 Than I, a stranger to thy hidden worth, 185
 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, 190
 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 favor. I request
 To meet th' assembled chieftains of this host. 195
 Oh ! I am fraught with tidings, which import
 The weal of ev'ry Grecian. Agis swift,
 Appointed

Appointed by Leonidas, convenes
 The diff'rent leaders. To the tent they speed.
 Before them call'd, the stranger thus began. 200

O ALPHEUS! Maron! Hither turn your sight,
 And know your brother. From their seats they
 start.

From either breaks in ecstacy the name
 Of Polydorus. To his dear embrace
 Each fondly strives to rush; but he withstands: 205
 While down his cheek a flood of anguish pours
 From his dejected eyes, in torture bent
 On that vile garb, dishonoring his form.
 At length these accents, intermix'd with groans,
 A passage found, while mute attention gaz'd. 210

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. 215
 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 220
 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 fight 225
 Of friends and brethren dissipate thy gloom.

Of men the gentlest, Agis too advanc'd,
 Who with increas'd humanity began.

Now

Now in thy native liberty secure,
 Smile on thy pass'd affliction, and relate, 230
 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 235
 A slave, by Hyperanthes bought and giv'n
 To Ariana. Gracious was her hand.
 But I remain'd a bondman, still estrang'd
 From Lacedæmon. Demaratus oft
 In friendly sorrow would my lot deplore ; 240
 Nor less his own ill-fated virtue mourn'd,
 Lost to his country in a servile court,
 The center of corruption ; where in smiles
 Are painted envy, treachery and hate
 With rankling malice ; where alone sincere 245

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 groveling, than the slave,
Who serves their cruel pride. Yet here the sun 250
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 255
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, 260
But how to fall the noblest. Thus the king.
The rest in speechless expectation wait.
Such was the solemn silence, which o'erspread

The

The shrine of Ammon, or Dodona's shades,
 When anxious mortals from the mouth of Jove
 Their doom explor'd. Nor Polydorus long 265
 Suspends the counsel, but resumes his tale.

As I this night accompany'd the steps
 Of Ariana, near the pafs we saw
 A restless form, now traversing the way,
 Now, as a statue, rivetted by doubt, 270
 Then on a sudden starting to renew
 An eager pace. As nearer we approach'd,
 He by the moon, which glimmer'd on our heads,
 Descry'd us. Straight advancing, whither bent
 Our midnight course, he ask'd. I knew the voice
 Of Demaratus. To my breast I clasp'd 276
 The venerable exile, and reply'd.
 Laconia's camp we seek. Demand no more.
 Farewel. He wept. Be heav'n thy guide, he said,

Thrice happy Polydorus. Thou again 280
Mayst visit Sparta, to these eyes deny'd.
Soon as arriv'd at those triumphant tents,
Say to the Spartans from their exil'd king,
Although their blind credulity depriv'd
The wretched Demaratus of his home ; 285
From ev'ry joy secluded, from his wife,
His offspring torn, his countrymen and friends,
Him from his virtue they could ne'er divide.
Say, that ev'n here, where all are kings, or slaves,
Amid the riot of flagitious courts 290
Not quite extinct his Spartan spirit glows,
Though grief hath dimm'd its fires. Rememb'ring
this,
Report, that newly to the Persian host
Return'd a Malian, Epialtes nam'd,
Who, as a spy, the Grecian tents had fought. 295
He to the monarch magnify'd his art,

Which

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

Through a neglected aperture above, 305
 Where no Leonidas should bar their way :
 Meantime by him the trech'rous Thebans sent
 Assurance of their aid. Th' assenting prince
 At once decreed two myriads to advance
 With Hyperanthes. Ev'ry lord besides, 310
 Whom youth, or courage, or ambition warm,
 Rous'd by the traitor's eloquence, attend
 From all the nations with a rival zeal.

To enter Greece the foremost. In a sigh
 He clos'd—like me. Tremendous from his feat 315
 Uprose Diomedon. His eyes were flames.
 When swift on trembling Anaxander broke
 These ireful accents from his livid lips.

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

ALL now is tumult. Ev'ry bosom swells
 With wrath untam'd and vengeance. Half un-
 sheath'd,

Th' impetuous falchion of Platæa flames.
 But, as the Colchian forceress, renown'd
 In legends old, or Circé, when they fram'd 325
 A potent spel, to smoothness charm'd the main,
 And lull'd Æolian rage by mystic song ;
 Till not a billow heav'd against the shore,

Not

Nor ev'n the wanton-winged zephyr breath'd
The lightest whisper through the magic air : 330
So, when thy voice, Leonidas, is heard,
Confusion listens ; ire in silent aw
Subsides. Withhold this rashness, cries the king.
To proof of guilt let punishment succeed.
Not yet Barbarian shouts our camp alarm. 335
We still have time for vengeance, time to know,
If menac'd ruin we may yet repel,
Or how most glorious perish. Next arose
Dioneces, and thus th' experienc'd man.

ERE they surmount our fences, Xerxes' troops
Must learn to conquer, and the Greeks to fly. 341
The spears of Phocis guard that secret pass.
To them let instant messengers depart,
And note the hostile progress. Alpheus here.

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

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

THE council rises. For his course prepar'd,
 While day, declining, prompts his eager feet,
 O Polydorus, Alpheus thus in haste,
 Long lost, and late-recover'd, we must part
 Again, perhaps for ever. Thou return 360

To kiss the sacred soil, which gave thee birth,
 And calls thee back to freedom. Brother dear,
 I should have sighs to give thee—but farewell.
 My country chides me, loit'ring in thy arms.

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

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

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 375
 Be dispossefs'd. Unceasing shall my soul
 Brood o'er the black remembrance of my youth,
 In slavery exhausted. Life to me
 Hath lost its favour. Then in fullen woe
 His head declines. His brother pleads in vain. 380

Now in his view Dienece appears'd
 With Sparta's band. Immoveable his eyes
 On them he fix'd, revolving these dark thoughts.

I too like them from Lacedæmon spring,
 Like them instructed once to poise the spear, 385
 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; 390
 Would

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. 395

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 400
 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. 405

He will, replies the brother in a glow,

Prevailing

Prevailing o'er the paleness of his cheek,
He will permit me to compleat by death
The measure of my duty ; will permit
Me to achieve a service, which no hand 410
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 415
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 420
Of Ariana. He from bondage freed
Four eastern captives, whom his gen'rous arm
That day had spar'd in battle ; then began

This

This solemn charge. You, Persians, whom my
 sword

Acquir'd in war, unransom'd, shall depart. 425

To you I render freedom, which you fought

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. 430

Then say, th' all-judging pow'rs have thus ordain'd.

Thou, whose ambition o'er the groaning earth

Leads desolation ; o'er the nations spreads

Calamity and tears ; thou first shalt mourn,

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, 440

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 waded to support 445

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 honors, gather'd from thy fall, 450

When fortune favor'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 loathing shades, 455

From

From all the neighb'ring valleys would I cull
Their fairest growth to strew your hearse with
flow'rs.

Yet, O accept these tears and pious pray'rs !
May peace surround your ashes ! May your shades
Pass o'er the silent pool to happier seats ! 460

He ceas'd in tears. The captives leave the wall,
And slowly down Thermopylæ proceed.

The END of the Ninth Book.



LEONIDAS.

BOOK the TENTH.

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 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.

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 counsel ris'n,
 Among the troops dispersing, by their
 words,

Their looks undaunted warm the coldest heart
 Against new dangers threat'ning. To his tent
 The Locrian captains Medon swift convenes, 5
 Exhorting thus. O long-approv'd my friends,
 You, who have seen my father in the field
 Triumphant, bold assistants of my arm

In

In labours not inglorious, who this day
 Have rais'd fresh trophies, be prepar'd. If help 10
 Be further wanted in the Phocian camp,
 You will the next be summon'd. Locris lies
 To ravage first expos'd. Your ancient fane,
 Your goddesses, your priestesses half-ador'd,
 The daughter of Oileus, from your swords 15
 Protection claim against an impious foe.

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

The priestess calls. To Lacedæmon's king 26

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, 30
Whose accents immortality confer,
Thy fingers seem to wake. On either side,
The snowy gloss of Parian marble shews
Four of thy sisters through surrounding shade.
Before each image is a virgin plac'd. 35
Before each virgin dimly burns a lamp,
Whose livid spires just temper with a gleam
The dead obscurity of night. Apart
The priestess thoughtful sits. Thus Medon breaks
The solemn silence. Anxious for thy state 40
Without a summons to thy pure abode
I was approaching. Deities, who know

The present, pass'd 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. 46

ARE passing, brother! They alas! are pass'd,
 Are in possession of the upper Streight.
 Hear in thy turn. A dire narration hear.
 A favor'd goat, conductor of my herd, 50
 Stray'd to a dale, whose outlet is the post
 To Phocians 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 shew'd a passage up that mountain's side, 56
 Whose length of wood o'er shades the Phocian land.
 To dry and sapless trunks in diff'rent parts
 Fire, by the Persians artfully apply'd,

Soon

Soon grew to flames. This done, the troop re-
turn'd, 60

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 65

Imagin'd peril from those fraudulent lights,

By stratagem prepar'd. A real foe

Meantime secur'd the undefended pass.

This Mycon saw. Escaping thence to me,

He by my orders hastens to inform 70

Leonidas. She paus'd. Like one, who sees

The forked light'ning into shivers rive

A knotted oak, or crumble tow'rs to dust,

Aghast was Medon ; then, recov'ring, spake.

THOU boasted glory of th' Oilean house, 75

If

If e'er thy brother bow'd in rev'rence due
 To thy superior virtues, let his voice
 Be now regarded. From th' endanger'd fane,
 My sister, fly. Whatever be my lot,
 A troop select of Locrians shall transport 80
 Thy sacred person, where thy will ordains.

THINK not of me, returns the dame. To
 Greece

Direct thy zeal. My peasants are conven'd,
 That by their labour, when the fatal hour
 Requires, with massy fragments I may bar 85
 That cave to human entrance. Best lov'd
 Of brothers, now a serious ear incline.
 Awhile in Greece to fortune's wanton gale
 His golden banner shall the Persian king,
 Deluded, wave. Leonidas, by death 90
 Preserving Sparta, will his spirit leave

To

To blast the glitt'ring pageant. Medon, live
To share that glory. Thee to perish here
No law, no oracle enjoins. To die,
Uncall'd, is blameful. Let thy pious hand 95
Secure Oileus from Barbarian force.
To Sparta mindful of her noble host
Entrust his rev'rend head. Th' assembled hinds,
Youths, maidens, wives with nurselfings at their
breasts,
Around her now in consternation stood, 100
The women weeping, mute, aghast the men.
To them she turns. You never, faithful race,
Your priestesses shall forsake. Melissa here,
Despairing never of the public weal,
For better days in solitude shall wait, 105
Shall cheer your sadness. My prophetic soul
Sees through time's cloud the liberty of Greece
More stable, more effulgent. In his blood

Leonidas cements th' unshaken base
Of that strong tow'r, which Athens shall exalt 110
To cast a shadow o'er the eastern world.

THIS utter'd, tow'rd the temple's inmost seat
Of sanctity her solemn step she bends,
Devout, enraptur'd. In their dark'ning lamps
The pallid flames are fainting. Dim through mists
The morning peeps. An awful silence reigns. 116
While Medon pensive from the fane descends,
But instant reappears. Behind him close
Treads Melibœus, through the cavern's mouth
Ascending pale in aspect, not unlike 120
What legends tell of spectres, by the force
Of necromantic forcery constrain'd ;
Through earths dark bowels, which the spell dis-
join'd,
They from death's mansion in reluctant sloth

Rose to divulge the secrets of their graves, 125

Or mysteries of fate. His cheerful brow,
O'erclouded, paleness on his healthful cheek,
A dull, unwonted heaviness of pace
Portend disast'rous tidings. Medon spake.

TURN, holy sister. By the gods belov'd, 130
May they sustain thee in this mournful hour.
Our father, good Oileus is no more.
Rehearse thy tidings, swain. He takes the word.

THOU wast not present, when his mind, out-
stretch'd

By zeal for Greece, transported by his joy 135
To entertain Leonidas, refus'd
Due rest. Old age his ardour had forgot,
To his last waking moment with his guest
In rapt'rous talk redundant. He at last,

Compos'd and smiling in th' embrace of sleep, 140
 To Pan's protection at the island fane
 Was left. He wak'd no more. The fatal news,
 To you discover'd, from the chiefs I hide.

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

THE full of days and honors through the gate
 Of painless slumber is retir'd. His tomb
 Shall stand among his fathers in the shade
 Of his own trophies. Placid were his days, 150
 Which flow'd through blessings. As a river pure,
 Whose sides are flow'ry, and whose meadows fair,
 Meets in his course a subterranean void ;
 There dips his silver head, again to rise,

And,

And, rising, glide through flow'rs and meadows

new :

155

So shall Oileus 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, 160

Nor gust of passion heaves the quiet breast,

Nor dews of grief are sprinkled. Thou art gone,

Host of divine Leonidas on earth,

Art gone before him to prepare the feast,

Immortalizing virtue. Silent here,

165

Around her head she wraps her hallow'd pall.

Her prudent virgins interpose a hymn,

Not in a plaintive, but majestic flow,

To which their fingers, sweeping o'er the chords,

The lyre's full tone attemper. She unveils, 170

Then with a voice, a countenance compos'd.

Go, Medon, pillar of th' Oïlean house.
New cares, new duties claim thy precious life.
Perform the pious obsequies. Let tears,
Let groans be absent from the sacred dust, 175
Which heav'n in life so favor'd, more in death.
A term of righteous days, an envy'd urn
Like his, for Medon is Melissa's pray'r.
Thou, Melibœus, cordial, high in rank
Among the prudent, warn and watch thy lord. 180
My benediction shall reward thy zeal.

SOOTH'D by the 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. 185
Before them rumour through her sable trump
Breathes lamentation. Horror lends his voice
To spread the tidings of disastrous fate

Along

Along Spercheos. As a vapour black,
Which, from the distant, horizontal verge 190
Ascending, nearer still and nearer bends
To higher lands its progress, there condens'd,
Throws darkness o'er the valleys, while the face
Of nature saddens round; so step by step,
In motion slow th' advancing bier diffus'd 195
A solemn sadness o'er the camp. A hedge
Of trembling spears on either hand is form'd.
Tears underneath his iron-pointed cone
The Sacian drops. The Caspian savage feels
His heart transpierc'd, and wonders at the pain. 200
In Xerxes' presence are the bodies plac'd,
Nor he forbids. His agitated breast
All night had weigh'd against his future hopes
His present losses, his defeated ranks,
By myriads thinn'd, their multitude abash'd, 205
His fleet thrice-worsted, torn by storms, reduc'd

To half its number. When he slept, in dreams
He saw the haggard dead, which floated round
Th' adjoining strands. Disasters new their ghosts
In sullen frowns, in shrill upbraidings bode. . . 210
Thus, ere the gory bier approach'd his eyes,
He in dejection had already lost
His kingly pride, the parent of disdain,
And cold indifference to human woes.
Not ev'n beside his sister's nobler corse . . . 215
Her humble lover could awake his scorn.
The captives told their piercing tale. He heard;
He felt awhile compassion. But ere long
Those traces vanish'd from the tyrant's breast.
His former gloom redoubles. For himself . . . 220
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.

ODEMARATUS, what will fate ordain? 225

Lo! fortune turns against me. What shall check

Her further malice, when her daring stride

Invades my house with rage, and profanes

The blood of great Darius. I have sent

From my unguarded side the chosen band, 230

My bravest chiefs to pass the desert hill;

Have to the conduct of a Malian spy

My hopes entrusted. May not there the Greeks

In opposition more tremendous still,

More ruinous, than yester sun beheld, 235

Maintain their post invincible, renew

Their stony thunder in augmented rage,

And send whole quarries down the craggy steep

Again to crush my army? Oh! unfold

Thy secret thoughts, nor hide the hardest truth.

Say, what remains to hope? The exile here. 241

Too well, O monarch, do thy fears presage,
 What may befall thy army. If the Greeks,
 Arrang'd within Thermopylæ, a pass
 Accessible and practic'd, could repel 245
 With such destruction their unnumber'd foes ;
 What scenes of havoc may untrodden paths,
 Confin'd among the craggy hills, afford ?

Lost in despair, the monarch silent sat. 250
 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 ; 255
 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 260
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, 265
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 270
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, 175
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. 280.
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 285.
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 290
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 awhile, 295
 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, 300
 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, 305
 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

Who nobly perish'd, long the dearest friend 310
 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 315
 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 320
 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 325
 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, 330
 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, 335
 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—— 340
 May wretches like Argestes never clasp

Their

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'r'd her son. Come, virtuous
boy. 345

Let us transport these reliques 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 350

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, 355

But keep in covert from the blaze of courts;

Where

Where flatt'ry's guile in oily words profuse,
 In action tardy, o'er-th' ingenuous tongue,
 The arm of valour, and the faithful heart
 Will ever triumph. Yet my soul enjoys
 Her own presage, that destiny reserves 360
 An hour for my revenge. Concluding here,
 She gains the fleet. Argestes sweeps along
 On rapid wheels from Artemisia's view,
 Like Night, protectress foul of heinous deeds,
 With treason, rape and murder at her heel, 365
 Before the eye of morn retreating swift.
 To hide her loathsome visage. Soon he reach'd
 Thermopylæ; descending from his car,
 Was led by Dithyrambus to the tent
 Of Sparta's ruler. Since the fatal news 370
 By Mycon late deliver'd, he apart
 With Polydorus had consulted long
 On high attempts; and, now sequester'd, sat

To ruminatè on vengeance. At his feet
Prone fell the satrap, and began. The will 375
Of Xerxes bends me prostrate to the earth
Before thy presence. Great and matchless chief,
Thus says the lord of Asia. Join my arms ;
Thy recompense is Greece. Her fruitful plains,
Her gen'rous flocks, her flocks, her num'rous
towns, 380
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 : 385
Think on the glories of unrivall'd sway.
Look on th' Ionic, on th' Æolian Greeks.
From them their phantome liberty is flown ;
While in each province, rais'd by Xerxes' pow'r,
Some favor'd chief presides ; exalted state, 390
Ne'er

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

LEONIDAS replies not, but commands

The Thespian youth, still watchful near the tent,
To summon all the Grecians. He obeys. 405
The king uprises from his seat, and bids
The Persian follow. He, amaz'd, attends,

Sur-

Surrounded soon by each assembling band ;
 When thus at length the godlike Spartan spake.

HERE, Persian, tell thy embassy. Repeat, 410
 That to obtain my friendship Asia's prince
 To me hath proffer'd sov'reignty o'er Greece.
 Then view these bands, whose valour shall preserve
 That Greece unconquer'd, which your king be-
 stows ;
 Shall strew your bodies on her crimson'd plains : 415
 The indignation, painted on their looks,
 Their gen'rous scorn may answer for their chief.
 Yet from Leonidas, thou wretch, inur'd
 To vassalage and baseness, hear. The pomp,
 The arts of pleasure in despotic courts 420
 I spurn abhorrent. In a spotless heart
 I look for pleasure. I from righteous deeds
 Derive my splendour. No adoring croud,

No purpled slaves, no mercenary spears
 My state embarrass. I in Sparta rule 425
 By laws, my rulers, with a guard unknown
 To Xerxes, public confidence and love.
 No pale suspicion of th' empoison'd bowl,
 Th' assassin's poniard, or provok'd revolt
 Chace from my decent couch the peace, deny'd 430
 To his resplendent canopy. Thy king,
 Who hath profan'd by proffer'd bribes my ear,
 Dares not to meet my arm. Thee, trembling
 slave,
 Whose embassy was treason, I despise,
 And therefore spare. Diomedon subjoins. 435

OUR marble temples these Barbarians waste,
 A crime less impious, than a bare attempt
 Of sacrilege on virtue. Grant my suit,
 Thou living temple, where the goddess dwells.

To me consign the caitiff. Soon the winds 440
 Shall parch his limbs on Oeta's tallest pine.

AMIDST his fury suddenly return'd
 The speed of Alpheus. All, suspended, fix'd
 On him their eyes impatient. He began.

I AM return'd a messenger of ill. 445
 Close to the passage, op'ning into Greece,
 That post committed to the Phocian guard,
 O'erhangs a bushy cliff. A station there
 Behind the shrubs by dead of night I took,
 Though not in darkness. Purple was the face 450
 Of heav'n. Beneath my feet the valleys glow'd.
 A range immense of wood-invested hills,
 The boundaries of Greece, were clad in flames;
 An act of froward chance, or crafty foes
 To cast dismay. The crackling pines I heard; 455
 Their

Their branches sparkled, and the thickets blaz'd.
In hillocks embers rose. Embod'y'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 helmets,
Shields, javelins, sabres, gleaming from below, 461
Full soon discover'd to my tortur'd sight
The streights in Persia's pow'r. The Phocian
chief,
Whate'er the cause, relinquishing his post,
Was to a neighb'ring eminence remov'd; 465
There, by the foe neglected, or contemn'd,
Remain'd in arms, and neither fled, nor fought.
I stay'd for day spring. Then the Persian mov'd.
To-morrow's sun will see their numbers here.

He said no more. Unutterable fear 470

In

In horrid silence wraps the list'ning croud, 475
 Aghast, confounded. Silent are the chiefs,
 Who feel no terror; yet in wonder fix'd,
 Thick-wedg'd, inclose Leonidas around,
 Who thus in calmest elocution spake.

I now behold the oracle fulfill'd. 480

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. 485

Thou godlike offspring of a godlike sire,
 To him my kindest greetings, Medon, bear.

Farewel, Megistias, holy friend and brave.

Thou too, experienc'd, venerable chief,

Demophilus, farewel. Farwel to thee, 490

Invia-

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 495
Have here accomplish'd, will enrich your names
By fresh renown. Your valour must compleat,
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 501
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, 505
Thine eye, Leonidas, shall ne'er behold
Diomedon forsake thee. First let strength

Desert

Desert my limbs, and fortitude my heart.

Did I not face the Marathonian war ?

Have I not seen the Thermopylæ ? What more 510

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 515

To lie distinguish'd by a thousand wounds ?

HE ended ; when Demophilus. O king

Of Lacedæmon, pride of human race,

Whom none e'er equal'd, but the seed of Jove, 520

Thy own forefather, number'd with the gods,

Lo ! I am old. With falt'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 525

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 530
His eve of life. The youth of Thespia next
Address'd Leonidas. O first of Greeks,
Me too think worthy to attend thy fame
With this most dear, this venerable man,
Forever honor'd from my tend'rest age, 535
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 540
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 545
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 550
Descends her great protector, we will shew
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. 555
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 chuse; and, O unequal'd youth,
Who for thy country didst thy bloom devote, 361
May'st

May'st thou remain forever 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 565
 His face o'er shades ; he drops a secret tear :
 Not this a tear of anguish, but deriv'd
 From fond affection, grown mature with time,
 Awak'd a manly tenderness alone,
 Unmix'd with pity, or with vain regret. 570

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 Lacedæmon, now distribute praise 575
 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 580
 From him to die with honor. Medon hears.
 Shook by a whirlwind of contending thoughts
 Strong heaves his manly bosom, under aw
 Of wise Melissa, torn by friendship, fir'd
 By such example high. In dubious state 585
 So rolls a vessel, when th' inflated waves
 Her planks assail, and winds her canvass rend ;
 The rudder labours, and requires a hand
 Of firm, delib'rate skill. The gen'rous king
 Perceive's the hero's struggle, and prepares 590
 To interpose relief ; when instant came
 Dienece before them. Short he spake.

BARBARIAN myriads through the secret pass
 Have enter'd Greece. Leonidas, by morn

Expect

Expect them here. My slender force I spar'd. 595
 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. 600
 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 Lacedæmon I a stranger came, 605
 There found protection. There to honors rais'd,
 I have not yet the benefit repaid.
 That now the gen'rous Spartans may behold
 In me their large beneficence not vain,
 Here to their cause I consecrate my breath. 610

NOT so, Megistias, interpos'd the king.
 Thou and thy son retire. Again the fear.

FORBID it, thou eternally ador'd,
 O Jove, confirm my persevering soul !
 Nor let me these auspicious moments lose, 615
 When to my bounteous patrons I may show,
 That I deserv'd their favor. 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 621
 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 625
 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 630
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 635
From him, who cheerful thus. Thou needst not
blush.

Thou hearst thy father and the king command,
What I suggested, thy departure hence.
Train'd by my care, a soldier thou return'st.
Go, practice my instructions. Oft in fields 640

Of future conflict may thy prowess call
Me to remembrance. Spare thy words. Farewel,

WHILE such contempt of life, such fervid zeal
To die with glory animate the Greeks,
Far diff'rent thoughts possess Argestes' soul. 645
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 651
Of virtue turns to horror. But these words
From Lacedæmon's chief the wretch relieve.

RETURN to Xerxes. Tell him, on this rock
The Grecians faithful to their trust await 655
His chosen myriads. Tell him, thou hast seen,
How

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 660

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

665

Ne'er shall receive her traitors back. This spot

Shall see their perfidy atton'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, 670

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; 675
His heart, though warm in rapturous applause,
Awhile 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 680
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 685
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. 690

If yet your clamours, Grecians, are allay'd,
Lo ! I appear before you to demand,
Why these my brave companions, who alone
Among the Thebans through dissuading crowds
Their passage forc'd to join your camp, should bear
The name of traitors ? By an exil'd wretch 696
We are traduc'd, by Demaratus, driv'n
From Spartan confines, who hath meanly fought
Barbarian courts for shelter. Hath he drawn
Such virtues thence, that Sparta, who before 700
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. 705

THUS.

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, 710
 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 715
 Partakers, destin'd to enroll 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 720
 To brace his vigour, to enlarge his strength

For

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. 725
 While we repose, embattled wait. Retreat,
 When we our tents abandon. I resign
 To great Oileus' son supreme command.
 Take my embraces, Æschylus. The fleet
 Expects thee. To Themistocles report, 730
 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 ; 735
 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, 740
 As by the force of forcery 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. 746
 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, 750
 While on the solemn sacrifice intent,
 As Lacedæmon'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, 755

Now

Now left by Agis, on his couch reclin'd,
The Spartan king thus meditates alone.

MY fate is now impending. O my soul,
What more auspicious period couldst thou chuse
For death, than now, when, beating high in joy,
Thou tell'ft me, I am happy? If to live, 761
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 765
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? 770
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 775
 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. 780
 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 785
 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 ' 790
 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 795
 Of his large mind is stretch'd beyond his date.
 Ev'n on this shore of being he in thought,
 Supremely blest'd, anticipates the good,
 Which late posterity from him derives.

AT length the hero's meditations close. 800
 The swelling transport of his heart subsides
 In soft oblivion; and the silken plumes
 Of sleep envelop his extended limbs.

The END of the Tenth Book.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK the ELEVENTH.

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 fought his god-like brother. Him he
found

Stretch'd

Stretch'd o'er his tranquil couch, His looks re-
tain'd

The cheerful tincture of his waking thoughts
To gladden sleep. So smile soft evening skies, 5
Yet streak'd with ruddy light, when summer's suns
Have veil'd their beaming foreheads. Transport
fill'd

The eye of Agis. Friendship swell'd his heart.
His yielding knee in veneration bent.

The hero's hand he kiss'd, then fervent thus. 10

O EXCELLENCE ineffable, receive
This secret homage ; and may gentle sleep
Yet longer seal thine eyelids, that, unblam'd,
I may fall down before thee. He concludes
In adoration of his friend divine, 15
Whose brow the shades of slumber now forsake.
So, when the rising sun resumes his state,

Some

Some white-rob'd magus on Euphrates side,
 Or Indian seer on Ganges prostrate falls
 Before th' emerging glory, to salute 20
 That radiant emblem of th' immortal mind.

UPRISE both heroes. From their tents in arms
 Appear the bands elect. The other Greeks
 Are filing homeward. Only Medon stops.
 Meliffa's dictates he forgets awhile. 25
 All inattentive to the warning voice
 Of Meliboeus, earnest he surveys
 Leonidas. Such constancy of zeal
 In good Oileus' offspring brings the fire
 To full remembrance in that solemn hour, 30
 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

Against thy gen'ral's orders wouldst thou stay ?
 Go, prove to kind Oileus, that my heart 35
 Of him was mindful, when the gates of death
 I barr'd against his son. Yon gallant Greeks,
 To thy commanding care from mine transfer'd,
 Remove from certain slaughter. Last repair
 To Lacedæmon. Thither lead thy fire. 40
 Say to her senate, to her people tell,
 Here didst thou leave their countrymen and king
 On death resolv'd, obedient to the laws.

THE Locrian chief, restraining tears, replies.
 My fire, left slumb'ring in the island-fane, 45
 Awoke no more. Then joyful I shall meet
 Him soon, the king made answer. Let thy worth
 Supply thy father's. Virtue bids me die,
 Thee live. Farewel. Now Medon's grief, o'er-
 aw'd

By

By wisdom, leaves his long-suspended mind 50
 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,
 Meliffa's brother, and Oileus' son.

THE gen'rous victims of the public weal, 55
 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 60
 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 66
 Of

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, 74

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, 76

Insatiably devouring. Mute I gaz'd ;

When from behind I heard a second sound

Like surges, tumbling o'er a craggy shore.

Again I turn'd. An ocean there appear'd 80

With riven keels and shrouds, with shiver'd oars,

With arms and wel'tring carcasses bestrewn

Innumerable. The billows foam'd in blood.

But where the waters, unobserv'd before,

Between two adverse shores, contracting, roll'd 85

A stormy current, on the beach forlorn

One of majestic stature I descry'd

In ornaments imperial. Oft he bent

On me his clouded eyeballs. Oft my name

He founded forth in execrations loud ; 90

'Then rent his splendid garments ; then his head

In rage divested of its graceful hairs.

Impatient now he ey'd a slender skiff,

Which, mounted high on boistrous waves, ap-
proach'd.

With indignation, with reluctant grief 95

Once more his sight reverting, he embark'd

Amid the perils of the frowning deep.

O thou, by glorious actions rank'd in heav'n,

I here exclaim'd, instruct me. What produc'd

This desolation ? Hercules reply'd. 100

Let thy astonish'd eye again survey

The

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 clustering vine
With her broad foliage mantled ev'ry hill ; 106
Where Ceres with exuberance enrob'd
The pregnant bosoms of the fields in gold ;
Where spacious towns, whose circuits proud contain'd
The dazzling works of wealth along the banks 110
Of copious rivers shew'd their stately tow'rs,
The strength and splendour of the peopled land.
Then in a moment clouds obscur'd my view ;
At once all vanish'd from my waking eyes.

THRICE I salute the omen, loud began 115
The sage Megistias. In this mystic dream
I see my country's victories. The land,

The deep shall own her triumphs ; while the
tears

Of Asia and of Libya shall deplore

Their offspring, cast before the vulture's beak, 120

And 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,

Print on the sand his solitary step, 125

Is Xerxes, foil'd and fugitive. So spake

The rev'rend augur. Ev'ry bosom felt

Enthusiastic rapture, joy beyond

All sense, and all conception, but of those,

Who die to save their country. Here again 130

Th' exulting band Leonidas address'd.

SINCE happiness from virtue is deriv'd,

Who for his country dies, that moment proves

Most

Most happy, as most virtuous. Such our lot.
 But go, Megistias. Instantly prepare 135
 The sacred fuel, and the victim due ;
 That to the muses (so by Sparta's law
 We are enjoin'd) our off'rings may be paid,
 Before we march. Remember, from the rites
 Let ev'ry sound be absent ; not the fife, 140
 Not 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, 145
 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 loyns.
 Next on his stately temples he erects 150

The plumed helmet ; then grasps his pond'rous
 shield :

Where nigh the center on projecting brass

Th' inimitable artist had emboss'd

The shape of great Alcides ; whom to gain

Two goddesses contended. Pleasure here 155

Won by soft wiles th' attracted eye ; and there

The form of Virtue dignify'd the scene.

In her majestic sweetness was display'd

The mind sublime and happy. From her lips

Seem'd eloquence to flow. In look serene, 160

But fix'd intensely on the son of Jove,

She wav'd her hand, where, winding to the skies,

Her paths ascended. On the summit stood,

Supported by a trophy near to heav'n,

Fame, and protended her eternal trump. 165

The youth attentive to her wisdom own'd

The prevalence of Virtue ; while his eye,

Fill'd

Fill'd by that spirit, which redeem'd the world
 From tyranny and monsters, darted flames ;
 Not undescry'd by Pleasure, where she lay 170
 Beneath a gorgeous canopy. Around
 Were flowrets strewn, and wantonly in rills'
 A fount meander'd. All relax'd her limbs ;
 Nor wanting yet sollicitude to gain,
 What lost she fear'd, as struggling with despair, 175
 She seem'd collecting ev'ry pow'r to charm :
 Excess of sweet allurements she diffus'd
 In vain. Still Virtue sway'd Alcides' mind.
 Hence all his labours. Wrought with vary'd art,
 The shield's external surface they enrich'd. 180

THIS portraiture of glory on his arm
 Leonidas displays, and, tow'ring, strides
 From his pavilion. Ready are the bands.
 The chiefs assume their station. Torches blaze

Through ev'ry file. All now in silent pace 185

To join in solemn sacrifice proceed.

First Polydorus bears the hallow'd knife,

The sacred salt and barley. At his side

Diomedon sustains a weighty mace.

The priest, Megistias, follows like the rest 190

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

A fillet round his shining helm reveals

The sacerdotal honors. By the horns,

Where laurels twine, with Alpheus Maron leads

The consecrated ox. And lo ! behind, 195

Leonidas advances. Never he

In such transcendent majesty was seen,

And his own virtue never so enjoy'd.

Successive move Dienece the brave,

In hoary state Demophilus, the bloom 200

Of Dithyrambus, glowing in the hope

Of future praise, the gen'rous Agis next

Serene and graceful, last the Theban chiefs,
 Repining, ignominious : then slow march
 The troops all mute, nor shake their brazen arms.

Not from Thermopylæ remote the hills 206
 Of Oeta, yielding to a fruitful dale,
 Within their side, half-circling, had inclos'd
 A fair expanse in verdure smooth. The bounds
 Were edg'd by wood, o'erlook'd by snowy cliffs, 210
 Which from the clouds bent frowning. Down a
 rock

Above the loftiest summit of the grove
 A tumbling torrent wore the shagged stone ;
 Then, gleaming through the intervals of shade,
 Attain'd the valley, where the level stream 215
 Diffus'd refreshment. On its banks the Greeks
 Had rais'd a rustic altar, fram'd of turf.
 Broad was the surface, high in piles of wood,

All interspers'd with laurel. Purer deem'd,
Than river, lake, or fountain, in a vase 220
Old Ocean's briny element was plac'd
Before the altar ; and of wine unmix'd
Capacious goblets stood. Megistias now
His helm unloosen'd. With his snowy head,
Uncover'd, round the solemn pile he trod. 225
He shook a branch of laurel, scatt'ring wide
The sacred moisture of the main. His hand
Next on the altar, on the victim strew'd
The mingled salt and barley. Oe'r the horns
Th' inverted chalice, foaming from the grape, 230
Discharg'd a rich libation. Then approach'd
Diomedon. Megistias gave the sign.
Down sunk the victim by a deathful stroke,
Nor groan'd. The augur bury'd in the throat
His hallow'd steel. A purple current flow'd. 235
Now smok'd the structure, now it flam'd abroad

In sudden splendour. Deep in circling ranks
 The Grecians press'd. Each held a sparkling
 brand ;

The beaming lances intermix'd ; the helms,
 The burnish'd armour multiply'd the blaze. 240

Leonidas drew nigh. Before the pile
 His feet he planted. From his brows remov'd,
 The casque to Agis he consign'd, his shield,
 His spear to Dithyrambus ; then, his arms
 Extending, forth in supplication broke. 245

HARMONIOUS daughters of Olympian Jove,
 Who, on the top of Helicon ador'd,
 And high Parnassus, with delighted ears
 Bend to the warble of Castalia's stream,
 Or Aganippe's murmur, if from thence 250
 We must invoke your presence ; or along
 The neighb'ring mountains with propitious steps

If now you grace your consecrated bow'rs,
Look down, ye Muses ; nor disdain to stand
Each an immortal witness of our fate. 255

But with you bring fair Liberty, whom Jove,
And you most honor. 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. 260

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 265

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,

A cool, untroubled spirit in our breasts, 270

Which may in silence guide our daring feet,

Controll 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, 276

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, 281

By nations slain. You, countrymen and friends,

My last commands retain. Your gen'ral's voice

Once more salutes you, not to rouse the brave,

Or minds, resolv'd and dauntless, to confirm. 285

Too well by this expiring blaze I see

Impatient valour flash from ev'ry eye.

O temper:

O temper well that ardour, and your lips
Close on the rising transport. Mark, how sleep
Hath folded millions in his black embrace. 293
No sound is wasted from th' unnumber'd foe.
The winds themselves are silent. All conspires
To this great sacrifice, where thousands soon
Shall only wake to die. Their crowded train
This night perhaps to Pluto's dreery shades 295
Ev'n Xerxes' ghost may lead, unless reserv'd
From this destruction to lament a doom
Of more disgrace, when Greece confounds that
pow'r,
Which we will shake. But look, the setting moon
Shuts on our darksome paths her waning horns. 300
Let each his head distinguish by a wreath
Of well-earn'd laurel. Then the victim share,
Then crown the goblet. Take your last repast ;

With your forefathers, and the heroes old
 You next will banquet in the blest'd abodes. 305

HERE ends their leader. Through th' encircling
 croud

The agitation of their spears denotes
 High ardour. So the spiry growth of pines
 Is rock'd, when Æolus in eddies winds
 Among their stately trunks on Pelion's brow. 310
 The Acarnanian fear distributes swift
 The sacred laurel. Snatch'd in eager zeal,
 Around each helm the woven leaves unite
 Their glossy verdure to the floating plumes.
 Then is the victim portion'd. In the bowl 315
 Then flows the vine's empurpled stream. Aloof
 The Theban train in wan dejection mute
 Brood o'er their shame, or cast affrighted looks
 On that determin'd courage, which, unmov'd

At fate's approach, with cheerful lips could taste 320
 The sparkling goblet, could in joy partake
 That last, that glorious banquet. Ev'n the heart
 Of Anaxander had forgot its wiles,
 Dissembling fear no longer. Agis here,
 Regardful ever of the king's command, 325
 Accosts the Theban chiefs in whispers thus.

LEONIDAS permits you to retire.

While on the rites of sacrifice employ'd,
 None heed your motions. Separate and fly
 In silent pace. This heard, th' inglorious troop,
 Their files dissolving, from the rest withdraw. 330
 Unseen they moulder from the host like snow,
 Freed from the rigour of constraining frost ;
 Soon as the sun exerts his orient beam,
 The transitory landscape melts in rills 335
 Away, and structures, which delude the eye,

Insensibly are lost. The solemn feast
Was now concluded. Now Latonia's king
Had reassum'd his arms. Before his step
The croud roll backward. In their gladden'd fight
His crest, illumin'd by uplifted brands, 341:
Its purple splendour shakes. The tow'ring oak
Thus from a lofty promontory waves
His majesty of verdure. As with joy
The sailors mark his heav'n-ascending pride, 345:
Which from afar directs their foamy course
Along the pathless ocean; so the Greeks
In transport gaze, as down their op'ning ranks
The king proceeds: from whose superior frame
A soul like thine, O Phidias, might conceive 350:
In Parian marble, or effulgent brass
The form of great Apollo; when the god,
Won by the pray'rs of man's afflicted race,
In arms forsook his lucid throne to pierce

The

The monster Python in the Delphian vale. 355

Close by the hero Polydorus waits

To guide destruction through the Asian tents.

As the young eagle near his parent's side

In wanton flight essays his vig'rous wing,

Ere long with her to penetrate the clouds, 360

To dart impetuous on the fleecy train,

And dye his beak in gore ; by Sparta's king

The injur'd Polydorus thus prepares

His arm for death. He seasts his angry soul

On promis'd vengeance. His impatient thoughts

Ev'n now transport him furious to the seat 366

Of his long sorrows, not with fetter'd hands,

But now once more a Spartan with his spear,

His shield restor'd, to lead his country's bands,

And with them devastation. Nor the rest 370

Neglect to form. Thick-rang'd, the helmets blend

Their various plumes, as intermingling oaks

Combine

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 confid'rate view 376
 Extending, through the ruddy gleam descries
 One face of gladness ; but the godlike van
 He most contemplates : Agis, Alpheus there,
 Megistias, Maron with Platæa's chief, 380
 Dieneces, Demophilus are seen
 With Thespia's youth : nor they their steady sight
 From his remove, in speechless transport bound
 By love, by veneration ; till they hear
 His last injunction. To their diff'rent posts 385
 They sep'rate. Instant on the dewy turf
 Are cast th' extinguish'd brands. On all around
 Drops sudden darkness, on the wood, the hill,
 The snowy ridge, the vale, the silver stream.
 It verg'd on midnight. Towr'd the hostile camp

In march compos'd and silent down the pass 391

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 louring clouds along th' etherial void 395

In slow expansion from the gloomy north

Awhile suspend their horrors, destin'd soon

To blaze in lightnings, and to burst in storms.

The END of the Eleventh Book.



LEONIDAS.

BOOK the TWELFTH.

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.

A CROSS th' unguarded bound of Asia's
camp

Slow pass the Grecians. Through innum'rous
tents,

Where

Where all is mute and tranquil, they pursue
Their march sedate. Beneath the leaden hand
Of sleep lie millions motionless and deaf, 5
Nor dream of fate's approach. Their wary foes,
By Polydorus guided, still proceed.
Ev'n to the center of th' extensive host
They pierce unseen; when lo! th' imperial tent
Yet distant rose before them. Spreading round 10
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, 15
Or famine threaten, tremble at the sight
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 20

The

The glimpse of hostile armour. All disband,
 As if auxiliar to his favor'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, 26
 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 30
 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 chace
 The lord of Asia, who in thought beholds 35
 United Greece in arms. Thy lust of pow'r !
 Thy hope of glory ! whither are they flown
 With all thy pomp ? In this disastrous hour

What

What could avail th' immeasurable range
 Of thy proud camp, save only to conceal 40
 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 desolation at his side attend. 45

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. 50
 The diadem, the scepter, late ador'd
 Through boundless kingdoms, underneath their
 feet
 In mingled rage and scorn the warriors crush
 A sacrifice to freedom. They return
Again

Again to form. Leonidas exalts, 55

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 furge. The coasts re-
found. 60

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 ; 65

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 70

Great Horomazes was the monarch wont

Before

Before the sacred light. Huge piles of wood
 Lay nigh, prepar'd to feed the constant flame.
 On living embers these are cast. So will
 Leonidas. The phalanx then divides. 75
 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 80
 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. 85
 The Greeks afford no respite; and the storm
 Exasperates the blaze. To ev'ry part
 The conflagration like a sea expands,

One waving surface of unbounded fire.
 In ruddy volumes mount the curling flames 90
 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' etherial concave. Oëta now disclos'd 95
 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, 100

BUT lo ! a pillar huge of smoke ascends,
 Which overshades the field. There horror, there
 Leonidas presides. Command he gave
 To Polydorus, who, exulting, shew'd,

Where Asia's horse, and warlike cars possess'd 105

A crouded 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 Theffalia render'd to the scythe. 110

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 Libyan chariot burns.

Th' Arabian camel, and the Persian steed 115

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. 121

Dispers'd are all his satraps. - Pride herself
Shuns his dejected brow. Despair alone
Waits on th' imperial fugitive, and shews,

As round the camp his eye, distracted, roves, 125
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, 130

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 135
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 140
 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, 145
 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, 150
 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

Their cool refreshment breathe. The healing gale,
A crystal rill near Octa's verdant feet 155

Dispel the languor from their harrass'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, 160

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, 165

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, 170
 Who with a ſpirit, by ambroſial food
 Refin'd, and more exalted, ſhall contend
 Your ſplendid fate to warble through the bow'rs
 Of amaranth and myrtle ever young
 Like your renown. Your aſhes we will cull. 175
 In yonder fane deposited, your urns
 Dear to the Muſes ſhall our lays inſpire.
 Whatever off'rings, genius, ſcience, art
 Can dedicate to virtue, ſhall be yours,
 The gifts of all the Muſes, to tranſmit 180
 You on th' enliven'd canvafs, marble, braſs,
 In wiſdom's volume, in the poet's ſong,
 In ev'ry tongue, through ev'ry age and clime,
 You of this earth the brighteſt flow'rs, not cropt,
 Tranſplanted only to immortal bloom 185
 Of praiſe with men, of happineſs with gods.

THE Grecian valour on religion's flame
 To ecstasy is wafted. Death is nigh,
 As by the Graces fashion'd, he appears
 A beauteous form. His adamantin 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 pre-
 pares
 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 deafning roar
Prone from the steep of Elephantis falls 206
A sea of waters, Hyperanthes pours
His chosen numbers on the Grecian camp
Down from the hills precipitant. No foes
He finds. The Thebans join him. In his van 210
They march conductors. On, the Persians roll
In martial thunder through the sounding pass.
They issue forth impetuous from its mouth.
That moment Sparta's leader gave the sign;
When, as th' impulsive ram in forceful sway 215
O'erturns a nodding rampart from its base,
And strews a town with ruin, so the band
Of ferry'd heroes down the Malian steep,
Tremendous depth, the mix'd battalions swept
Of Thebes and Persia. There no waters flow'd.

Abrupt

Abrupt and naked all was rock beneath. 221

Leonidas, incens'd, with grappling strength

Dash'd Anaxander on a pointed crag ;

Compos'd, then gave new orders. At the word

His phalanx, wheeling, penetrates the pass. 225

Astonish'd Persia stops in full career.

Ev'n Hyperanthes shrinks in wonder back.

Confusion drives fresh numbers from the shore.

The Malian ooze o'erwhelms them. Sparta's king

Still presses forward, till an open breadth 230

Of fifty paces yields his front extent

To proffer battle. Hyperanthes soon

Recalls his warriors, dissipates their fears.

Swift on the great Leonidas a cloud

Of darts is show'r'd. Th' encount'ring armies

close. 235

Who first, sublimest hero, felt thy arm ?

What rivers heard along their echoing banks
Thy name, in curses founded from the lips
Of noble mothers, wailing for their sons?
What towns with empty monuments were fill'd 240
For those, whom thy unconquerable sword
This day to vultures cast? First Bessus died,
A haughty satrap, whose tyrannic sway
Despoil'd Hyrcania of her golden sheaves,
And laid her forests waste. For him the bees 245
Among the branches interwove their sweets;
For him the fig was ripen'd, and the vine
In rich profusion o'er the goblet foam'd.
Then Dinis bled. On Hermus' side he reign'd;
He long assiduous, unavailing woo'd 250
The martial queen of Caria. She disdain'd
A lover's soft complaint. Her rigid ear
Was fram'd to watch the tempest, while it rag'd,
Her eye accusom'd on the rolling deck

To

To brave the turgid billow. Near the shore, 255
 She now is present in her pinnace light.
 The spectacle of glory crouds her breast
 With diff'rent passions. Valiant, she applauds
 The Grecian valour ; faithful, she laments
 Her sad presage of Persia ; prompts her son 260
 To emulation of the Greeks in arms,
 And of herself in loyalty. By fate
 Is she reserv'd to signalize that day
 Of future shame, when Xerxes must behold
 The blood of nations overflow his decks, 265
 And to their bottom tinge the briny floods
 Of Salamis ; whence she with Asia flies,
 She only not inglorious. Low reclines
 Her lover now, on Hermus to repeat
 Her name no more, nor tell the vocal groves 270
 His fruitless sorrows. Next Maduces fell,
 A Paphlagonian. Born amid the sound

Of chafing furies, and the roar of winds,
 He o'er th' inhospitable Euxin foam
 Was wont from high Carambis' rock to ken 275
 Ill-fated keels, which cut the Pontic stream,
 Then with his dire associates through the deep
 For spoil and slaughter guide his savage prow.
 Him dogs will rend ashore. From Medus far,
 Their native current, two bold brothers died, 280
 Sisamnes and Tithraustes, potent lords
 Of rich domains. On these Mithrines grey,
 Cilician prince, Lilaëus, who had left
 The balmy fragrance of Arabia's fields
 With Babylonian Tenagon expir'd. 285

THE growing carnage Hyperæthes views
 Indignant, fierce in vengeful ardour strides
 Against the victor. Each his lance protends;
 But Asia's numbers interpose their shields,

Solicitous to guard a prince rever'd : 290

Or thither fortune whelm'd the tide of war,

His term protracting for augmented fame.

So two proud vessels, lab'ring on the foam,

Present for battle their destructive beaks ;

When ridgy seas, by hurricanes uptorn, 295

In mountainous commotion dash between,

And either deck, in black'ning tempests veil'd,

Waft from its distant foe. More fiercely burn'd

Thy spirit, mighty Spartan. Such dismay

Relax'd thy foes, that each Barbarian heart 300

Resign'd all hopes of victory. The steeds

Of day were climbing their meridian height,

Continu'd shouts of onset from the pass

Resounded o'er the plain. Artuchus heard.

When first the spreading tumult had alarm'd 305

His distant quarter, starting from repose,

He down the valley of Spercheos rush'd

To aid his regal master. Asia's camp
 He found the seat of terror and despair. 309
 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, 315
 Th' uprooted elm and beach; the plain is spread
 With fragments, swept from villages o'erthrown,
 Around the pastures flocks and herds are cast
 In dreery piles of death: so Persia's host
 In terror mute one boundless scene displays 320
 Of devastation. Half-devour'd by fire,
 Her tall pavilions, and her martial cars
 Deform the wide encampment. Here in gore
 Her princes welter, nameless thousands there,
 Not victims all to Greeks. In gasping heaps 325

Barbarians, mangled by Barbarians, shew'd
 The wild confusion of that direful night ;
 When, wanting signals, and a leader's care,
 They rush'd on mutual slaughter. Xerxes' tent
 On its exalted summit, when the dawn 330
 First streak'd the orient sky, was wont to bear
 The golden form of Mithra, clos'd between
 Two lucid crystals. This the gen'ral host
 Observ'd, their awful signal to arrange
 In arms compleat, and numberless to watch 335
 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 340
 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 345
 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 350
 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' excell'ing architect dispos'd 355
 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 360

Those

Those potent gods combin'd : unyielding thus,
 The Grecians flood a solid mass of war
 Against Artuchus, join'd with numbers new
 To Hyperanthes. In the foremost rank
 Leonidas his dreadful station held. 365

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 Lacedæmon's chief
 An iron-studded mace. It glanc'd aside, 370

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 375

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

Unviolated faith. Physician sage,
 On pure Cithæron healing herbs to cull 380
 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, 385
 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 390
 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 395
 To grapple ; planting firm his foremost step,

The

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. 400
 He, falling, clings by Alpheus' neck, and drags
 His foe upon him. In the Spartan's back
 Enrag'd Barbarians fix their thronging spears.
 To Abradates' chest the weapons pass ;
 They rivet both in death. This Maron sees, 405
 This Polydorus, frowning. Victims, strewn
 Before their vengeance, hide their brother's corpse.
 At length the gen'rous blood of Maron warms
 The sword of Hyperanthes. On the spear
 Of Polydorus falls the pond'rous ax 410
 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 415
 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, 420
 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, 425
 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, waded by his streaming wound, 430
 Beside him faints and dies. In flow'ring prime

He

He, lord of Colchis, from a bride was torn

His tyrant's hasty mandate to obey.

She tow'rd the Euxin sends her plaintive sighs ;

She woos in tender piety the winds : 435

Vain is their favor ; they can never breathe

On his returning sail. At once a croud

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. Sofarmes feels his arm 441

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 445

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

Whose lightning threatens death. The wary
Greek. 450

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 455

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 460
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, 465
Grace of his lineage, and his country's boast,

Now

Now fall'n. Elysium to his parting soul
 Uncloses. So the cedar, which supreme
 Among the groves of Libanus hath tow'rd,
 Uprooted, low'rs his graceful top, prefer'd 470
 For dignity of growth some royal dome,
 Or heav'n-devoted fabric to adorn.

Diomedon bursts forward. Round his friend
 He heaps destruction. Troops of wailing ghosts
 Attend thy shade, fall'n hero ! Long prevail'd 475
 His furious arm in vengeance uncontroll'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 480
 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

His falchion broad. A second sees aghast 485
 His entrails open'd. Sever'd from a third,
 The head, steel-cas'd, descends. In blood is roll'd
 The grizzly beard. That effort breaks the blade
 Short from its hilt. The Grecian stands disarm'd.
 The fourth, Astaspes, proud Chaldæan lord, 490
 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 495
 His mighty limbs. So, weaken'd by the force
 Of some tremendous engine, which the hand
 Of Mars impells, a citadel, high-tow'rd,
 Whence darts and fire and ruins long have aw'd
 Begirding legions, yields at last, and spreads 500
 Its disuniting ramparts on the ground ;
 Joy fills th' assailants, and the battle's tide

Whelms

Whelms o'er the widening breach : the Persian
 thus

O'er the late-fear'd Diomedon advanc'd
 Against the Grecian remnant : when behold 505

Leonidas. At once their ardour froze.

He had awhile 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 ; 510

Then, soon as timely gales, inviting, curl

The azure floods, to Neptune shews again

Her masts apparell'd fresh in shrouds and sails,

Which court the vig'rous wind : so Sparta's king,

In strength repair'd, a spear and buckler new 515

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 520

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 forever. Through the targe,

The thick-mail'd corselet his divided chest 525

Of bony 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,

Amphitreus stealing, in th' unguarded flank 530

His dagger struck. In slow effusion ooz'd

The blood, from Hercules deriv'd ; but death

Not yet had reach'd his mark. Th' indignant king

Gripes irresistibly the Persian's throat.

He drags him prostrate. False, corrupt and base,

Fallacious, fell, preeminent was he 536

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 540

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, 545

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 550

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 scymetar : the lance, 555

The javelin, dart and arrow all combine
Their fruitless efforts. From Alcides sprung,
Thou standst unshaken like a Thracian hill,
Like Rhodope, or Hæmus; where in vain
The thund'rer plants his livid bolt; in vain 560
Keen-pointed lightnings pierce th' encrusted snow;
And winter, beating with eternal war,
Shakes from his dreery wings discordant storms,
Chill fleet, and clatt'ring hail. Advancing bold,
His rapid lance Abrocomes in vain 565
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 570
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 575
 Demophilus, Megiftias : 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 ; 580
 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, 585
 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 Plataea's chief. Before the front
 He ſtrides impetuous. His triumphant mace 590
 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 595
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. 600
His look erect, his bold deportment spoke
A gallant spirit, but untam'd by laws,
With dreery wilds familiar, and a race
Of rude Barbarians, horrid, as their clime.
From its direction glanc'd the Spartan spear, 605
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 610
Receives the griding steel. Along the staff
He writhes his tortur'd body ; in his grasp
A barbed arrow from his quiver shakes ;
Deep in the streaming throat of Agis hides
The deadly point ; then grimly smiles and dies. 615

FROM him fate hastens to a nobler prey,
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. 620
Life, yielding slow to destiny, at length
Forfakes his riven heart ; nor less in death
Thermopylæ he graces, than before
By martial deeds and conduct. What can stem
The barb'rous torrent ? Agis bleeds. His spear 625
Lies useless, irrecoverably plung'd

In Jaxartes' body. Low reclines
Dieneces. Leonidas himself,
O'erlabour'd, wounded, with his dinted sword
The rage of war can exercise no more. 630
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, 635
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. 640
So, when the giants from Olympus chac'd
Th' inferior gods, themselves in terror shun'd
Th' incessant streams of lightning, where the hand
Of heav'n's great father with eternal might

Sustain'd

Sustain'd the dreadful conflict. O'er the field 645

Awhile Bellona gives the battle rest ;

When Thespia's leader and Megistias drop

At either side of Lacedæmon's king.

Beneath the weight of years and labour bend

The hoary warriors. Not a groan molests 650

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 655

Malignant Eurus, and the boist'rous 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 660

The last kind office to his friend performs,

Extracts the Sacian's arrow. Life, releas'd,

Pours

Pours forth in crimson floods. O Agis, pale
Thy placid features, rigid are thy limbs ;
They lose their graces. Dimm'd, thy eyes reveal
The native goodness of thy heart no more. 666
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 honors on the breast, he lov'd. 670

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 now stand adverse. Each awhile 675
Restrains his valour. Each, admiring, views
His godlike foe. At length their brandish'd points
Provoke the contest, fated soon to close

The

The long-continu'd horrors of the day. 680

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 685

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 690

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. 695

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, 700
 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, 705
 Without a groan expiring, as o'erwhelm'd
 Beneath a marble fragment, from its 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 710
 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. 715

From

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 720
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 honorable reſt
To ſeal his country's liberty by death. 725

The END of the Twelfth and laſt Book.

The first of these is the...

The second is the...

The third is the...

The fourth is the...

The fifth is the...

ERRATA

The first error is...

The second error is...

The third error is...

The fourth error is...

The fifth error is...

The sixth error is...

The seventh error is...

The eighth error is...

The ninth error is...

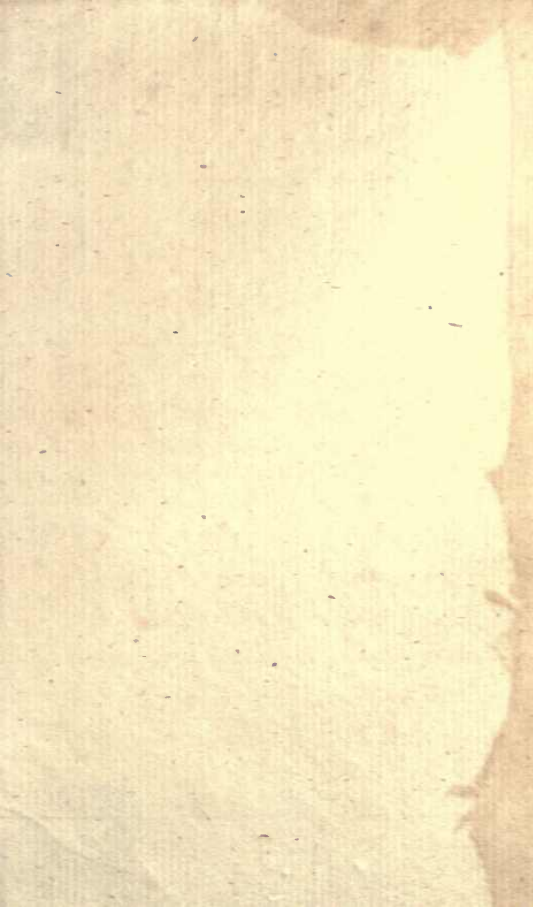
The tenth error is...

E R R A T A:

- Page 14. line 222 for . *put* ,
141. line 464 *relinguishing* *read* *relinquishing*
465 *Persian* *read* *Persians*

E R A T A

Page 22. line 22 for "and"
Page 23. line 10 for "and"
Page 24. line 10 for "and"



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