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1844

OVID'S METAMORPHOSES:
BY
VARIOUS AUTHORS.



*Relenting gods in pity fix'd her there
And to a fountain turn'd the weeping fair*
Book IX line 891

London;

FOR THE PROPRIETORS OF THE ENGLISH CLASSICS.



Wm. M. Pullington
OVID'S

METAMORPHOSES:

TRANSLATED

BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

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1826.



OVID'S METAMORPHOSES.

BOOK I.

TRANSLATED BY MR. DRYDEN.

The creation of heaven and earth. The golden age. The silver age. The brazen age. The iron age. The giant's war. The transformation of Daphnè into a laurel. The transformation of Iö into a heifer. The eyes of Argus transformed into a peacock's train. The transformation of Syrinx into reeds.

OF bodies chang'd to various forms I sing:
Ye gods, from whom these miracles did spring,
Inspire my numbers with celestial heat,
Till I my long, laborious work complete:
And add perpetual tenor to my rhymes, 5
Deduc'd from Nature's birth to Cæsar's times.

Before the seas, and this terrestrial ball,
And heav'n's high canopy, that covers all,
One was the face of nature—if a face;
Rather a rude and indigested mass; 10
A lifeless lump, unfashion'd and unfram'd,
Of jarring seeds; and justly Chaos nam'd.
No sun was lighted up, the world to view;
No moon did yet her blunted horns renew;
Nor yet was earth suspended in the sky; 15
Nor pois'd, did on her own foundations lie:
Nor seas about their shores the arms had thrown;
But earth, and air, and water were in one.
Thus air was void of light, and earth unstable,
And water's dark abyss unnavigable. 20
No certain form on any was imprest;
All were confus'd, and each disturb'd the rest.
For hot and cold were in one body fixt;
And soft with hard, and light with heavy mixt.

But God, or Nature, while they thus contend, 25
To these intestine discords put an end:
Then earth from air, and seas from earth were driv'n,
And grosser air sunk from ethereal heav'n.
Thus disembroil'd, they take their proper place;
The next of kin, contiguously embrace; 30
And foes are sunder'd, by a larger space.

The force of fire ascended first on high,
 And took its dwelling in the vaulted sky :
 Then air succeeds, in lightness next to fire ;
 Whose atoms from unactive earth retire. 35
 Earth sinks beneath, and draws a num'rous throng
 Of pond'rous, thick, unwieldy seeds along.
 About her coasts unruly waters roar ;
 And, rising on a ridge, insult the shore.
 Thus when the God, whatever God was he, 40
 Had form'd the whole, and made the parts agree,
 That no unequal portions might be found,
 He moulded earth into a spacious round :
 Then with a breath, he gave the winds to blow ;
 And bade the congregated waters flow. 45
 He adds the running springs, and standing lakes ;
 And bounding banks for winding rivers makes.
 Some part in earth are swallow'd up; the most
 In ample oceans disembogu'd, are lost.
 He shades the woods, the valleys he restrains 50
 With rocky mountains, and extends the plains.
 And as five zones th' ethereal regions bind,
 Five, correspondent, are to earth assign'd :
 The sun with rays, directly darting down,
 Fires all beneath, and fries the middle zone : 55
 The two beneath the distant poles, complain
 Of endless winter, and perpetual rain.
 Betwixt th' extremes, two happier climates hold
 The temper that partakes of hot and cold.
 The fields of liquid air, inclosing all, 60
 Surround the compass of this earthly ball :
 The lighter parts lie next the fires above ;
 The grosser near the wat'ry surface move :
 Thick clouds are spread, and storms engender there,
 And thunder's voice, which wretched mortals fear, 65
 And winds that on their wings cold winter bear.
 Nor were those blust'ring brethren left at large,
 On seas and shores their fury to discharge :
 Bound as they are, and circumscrib'd in place,
 They rend the world, resistless, as they pass ; 70
 And mighty marks of mischief leave behind ;
 Such is the rage of their tempestuous kind.
 First, Eurus to the rising morn is sent

(The regions of the balmy Continent);
 And eastern realms, where early Persians run, 75
 To greet the blest appearance of the sun.
 Westward, the wanton Zephyr wings his flight,
 Pleas'd with the remnants of departing light :
 Fierce Boreas, with his offspring, issues forth
 T' invade the frozen waggon of the North: 80
 While frowning Auster seeks the southern sphere ;
 And rots, with endless rain, th' unwholesome year.
 High o'er the clouds, and empty realms of wind,
 The God a clearer space for heav'n design'd ;
 Where fields of light, and liquid ether flow, 85
 Purg'd from the pond'rous dregs of earth below.
 Scarce had the Pow'r distinguish'd these, when
 The stars, no longer overlaid with weight, [straight
 Exert their heads from underneath the mass,
 And upward shoot, and kindle as they pass, 90
 And with diffusive light adorn their heavenly place.
 Then, every void of nature to supply,
 With forms of gods he fills the vacant sky :
 New herds of beasts, he sends the plains to share ;
 New colonies of birds to people air : 95
 And to their oozy beds the finny fish repair.
 A creature of a more exalted kind
 Was wanting yet, and then was Man design'd :
 Conscious of thought, of more capacious breast,
 For empire form'd, and fit to rule the rest : 100
 Whether with particles of heavenly fire
 The god of nature did his soul inspire,
 Or earth, but new-divided from the sky,
 And, pliant still, retain'd th' ethereal energy ;
 Which wise Prometheus temper'd into paste, 105
 And mixt with living streams the godlike image cast.
 Thus, while the mute creation downward bend
 Their sight, and to their earthy mother tend,
 Man looks aloft ; and with erected eyes,
 Beholds his own hereditary skies. 110
 From such rude principles our form began ;
 And earth was metamorphos'd into Man.

The Golden Age was first ; when man, yet new,
 No rule but uncorrupted reason knew ;

And, with a native bent, did good pursue. 115
 Unforc'd by punishment, unaw'd by fear,
 His words were simple, and his soul sincere ;
 Needless was written law, when none oppress'd :
 The law of man was written in his breast :
 No suppliant crowds before the judge appear'd, 120
 No court erected yet, nor cause was heard ;
 But all was safe, for conscience was their guard.
 The mountain trees in distant prospect please,
 Ere yet the pine descended to the seas :
 Ere sails were spread, new oceans to explore ; 125
 And happy mortals, unconcern'd for more,
 Confin'd their wishes to their native shore.
 No walls were yet ; nor fence, nor mote, nor mound,
 Nor drum was heard, nor trumpet's angry sound ;
 Nor swords were forg'd ; but, void of care and crime,
 The soft creation slept away their time. 131
 The teeming earth, yet guiltless of the plough,
 And unprovok'd, did fruitful stores allow :
 Content with food, which nature freely bred,
 On wildings, and on strawberries they fed ; 135
 Cornels and bramble-berries gave the rest,
 And falling acorns furnish'd out a feast.
 The flowers unsown, in fields and meadows reign'd ;
 And western winds immortal spring maintain'd.
 In following years the bearded corn ensu'd, 140
 From earth unask'd, nor was that earth renew'd.
 From veins of valleys milk and nectar broke,
 And honey sweating through the pores of oak.

But when good Saturn, banish'd from above,
 Was driv'n to hell, the world was under Jove. 145
 Succeeding times a Silver Age behold,
 Excelling brass, but more excell'd by gold.
 Then summer, autumn, winter did appear,
 And spring was but a season of the year.
 The sun his annual course obliquely made, 150
 Good days contracted, and enlarg'd the bad.
 Then air, with sultry heats, began to glow ;
 The wings of winds were clogg'd with ice and snow ;
 And shivering mortals, into houses driv'n,
 Sought shelter from th' inclemency of heav'n. 155

Those houses, then, were caves, or homely sheds ;
 With twining osiers fenc'd, and moss their beds.
 Then ploughs, for seed, the fruitful furrows broke,
 And oxen labour'd first beneath the yoke.

To this came next in course, the Brazen Age: 160
 A warlike offspring, prompt to bloody rage,
 Not impious yet:—

—————Hard Steel succeeded then:

And stubborn as the metal were the men.
 Truth, modesty, and shame the world forsook ; 165
 Fraud, avarice, and force, their places took.
 Then sails were spread to every wind that blew,
 Raw were the sailors, and the depths were new :
 Trees, rudely hollow'd, did the waves sustain,
 Ere ships in triumph plough'd the wat'ry plain. 170

Then landmarks limited to each his right ;
 For all before was common as the light:

Nor was the ground alone requir'd to bear
 Her annual income to the crooked share,
 But greedy mortals, rummaging her store, 175
 Digg'd from her entrails first the precious ore,
 Which next to hell the prudent gods had laid,
 And that alluring ill to sight display'd.

Thus cursed steel, and more accursed gold,
 Gave mischief birth, and made that mischief bold,
 And double death did wretched man invade, 181
 By steel assaulted, and by gold betray'd.

Now (brandish'd weapons glittering in their hands)
 Mankind is broken loose from moral bands :
 No rights of hospitality remain ; 185

The guest, by him who harbour'd him, is slain.
 The son-in-law pursues the father's life ;
 The wife her husband murders, he the wife.
 The stepdame poison for the son prepares ;
 The son inquires into his father's years. 190

Faith flies, and piety in exile mourns ;
 And justice, here opprest, to heav'n returns.

Nor were the gods themselves more safe above ;
 Against beleagur'd heav'n the Giants move.
 Hills pil'd on hills, on mountains mountains lie, 195
 To make their mad approaches to the sky.

Till Jove, no longer patient, took his time
 T' avenge, with thunder, their audacious crime ;
 Red lightning play'd along the firmament,
 And their demolish'd works to pieces rent. 200
 Sing'd with the flames, and with the bolts transfixt,
 With native earth their blood the monsters mixt :
 The blood, endu'd with animating heat,
 Did in th' impregnant earth new sons beget :
 They, like the seed from which they sprung accurst
 Against the gods immortal hatred nurs'd. 206
 An impious, arrogant, and cruel brood,
 Expressing their original from blood.

Which when the King of Gods beheld from high
 (Withal revolving in his memory, 210
 What he himself had found on earth of late,
 Lycæon's guilt, and his inhuman treat),
 He sigh'd: nor longer with his pity strove ;
 But kindled to a wrath becoming Jove :
 Then call'd a general council of the gods ; 215
 Who, summon'd, issue from their blest abodes,
 And fill th' assembly with a shining train.

A way there is, in heaven's expanded plain,
 Which, when the skies are clear, is seen below,
 And mortals, by the name of Milky, know. 220
 The groundwork is of stars; through which the road
 Lies open to the Thunderer's abode.
 The gods of greater nations dwell around,
 And, on the right and left, the palace bound ;
 The commons where they can: the nobler sort, 225
 With winding-doors, wide open front the court.
 This place, as far as earth with heav'n may vie,
 I dare to call the *Louvre* of the sky.

When all were plac'd, in seats distinctly known,
 And he, their father, had assum'd the throne, 230
 Upon his iv'ry sceptre first he leant,
 Then shook his head, that shook the firmament ;
 Air, earth, and seas, obey'd th' almighty nod ;
 And, with a general fear, confess'd the God.
 At length, with indignation, thus he broke 235
 His awful silence, and the pow'rs bespoke :

I was not more concern'd in that debate
 Of empire, when our universal state

Was put to hazard, and the giant race
 Our captive skies were ready to embrace: 240
 For though the foe was fierce, the seeds of all
 Rebellion sprang from one original;
 Now, wheresoever ambient waters glide,
 All are corrupt, and all must be destroy'd.
 Let me this holy protestation make,— 245
 By hell, and hell's inviolable lake,
 I try'd whatever in the godhead lay:
 But gangrened members must be lopt away,
 Before the nobler parts are tainted to decay.
 There dwells below, a race of demi-gods, 250
 Of nymphs in waters, and of fawns in woods:
 Who, though not worthy yet in heav'n to live,
 Let 'em, at least, enjoy that earth we give.
 Can these be thought securely lodg'd below,
 When I myself, who no superior know— 255
 I, who have heav'n and earth at my command,
 Have been attempted by Lycæon's hand?
 At this a murmur through the synod went,
 And, with one voice, they vote his punishment.—
 Thus, when conspiring traitors dar'd to doom 260
 The fall of Cæsar, and, in him, of Rome,
 The nations tremble with a pious fear;
 All anxious for their earthly thunderer:
 Nor was their care, O Cæsar, less esteem'd
 By thee, than that of heav'n for Jove was deem'd;
 Who with his hand, and voice, did first restrain 266
 Their murmurs, then resumed his speech again.
 The gods to silence were compos'd, and sate
 With reverence, due to his superior state.
 Cancel your pious cares; already he 270
 Has paid his debt to justice, and to me.
 Yet what his crimes, and what my judgments were
 Remains for me thus briefly to declare.
 The clamours of this vile degen'rate age,
 The cries of orphans, and th' oppressor's rage, 275
 Had reach'd the stars:—I will descend, said I,
 In hope to prove this loud complaint a lie.
 Disguis'd in human shape, I travell'd round
 The world, and more than what I heard I found.
 O'er Mænalus I took my steepy way, 280

10 OVID'S METAMORPHOSES.

By caverns infamous for beasts of prey:
 Then cross'd Cyllenè, and the piny shade,
 More infamous by curst Lycæon made.
 Dark night had cover'd heaven, and earth, before
 I enter'd his unhospitable door. 285

Just at my entrance, I display'd the sign
 That somewhat was approaching of divine.
 The prostrate people pray; the tyrant grins,
 And, adding profanation to his sins,
 I'll try, said he, and if a god appear, 290
 To prove his deity shall cost him dear.

'Twas late: the graceless wretch my death prepares,
 When I should soundly sleep, opprest with cares:
 This dire experiment he chose, to prove
 If I were mortal, or undoubted Jove: 295
 But first he had resolv'd to taste my pow'r:
 Not long before, but in a luckless hour
 Some legates, sent from the Molossian state,
 Were on a peaceful errand come to treat:
 Of these, he murders one; he boils the flesh, 300
 And lays the mangled morsels in a dish:
 Some part he roasts; then serves it up, so drest,
 And bids me welcome to this human feast.
 Mov'd with disdain, the table I o'erturn'd,
 And with avenging flames the palace burn'd. 305
 The tyrant in a fright for shelter gains
 The neighb'ring fields, and scours along the plains.
 Howling he fled, and fain he would have spoke;
 But human voice his brutal tongue forsook.
 About his lips the gather'd foam he churns, 310
 And, breathing slaughters, still with rage he burns,
 But on the bleating flock his fury turns.
 His mantle, now his hide, with rugged hairs,
 Cleaves to his back; a famish'd face he bears;
 His arms descend, his shoulders sink away 315
 To multiply his legs for chace of prey.
 He grows a wolf; his hoariness remains,
 And the same rage in other members reigns.
 His eyes still sparkle in a narrower space;
 His jaws retain the grin and violence of his face. 320

This was a single ruin; but not one
 Deserves so just a punishment alone. 2r

Mankind's a monster, and th' ungodly times
 Confed'rate into guilt, are sworn to crimes.
 All are alike involv'd in ill, and all 325
 Must by the same relentless fury fall.
 Thus ended he; the greater gods assent,
 By clamorous urging his severe intent;
 The less fill up the cry for punishment.
 Yet still with pity they remember man, 330
 And mourn as much as heav'nly spirits can.
 They ask, when those were lost of human birth,
 What he would do with all this waste of earth:
 If his dispeopled world he would resign
 To beasts, a mute, and more ignoble line? 335
 Neglected altars must no longer smoke,
 If none were left to worship and invoke.
 To whom the father of the gods reply'd:
 Lay that unnecessary fear aside;
 Mine be the care, new people to provide. 340
 I will from wondrous principles ordain
 A race unlike the first, and try my skill again.
 Already had he toss'd the flaming brand,
 And roll'd the thunder in his spacious hand,
 Preparing to discharge on seas and land; 345
 But stopt, for fear, thus violently driv'n,
 The sparks should catch his axle-tree of heaven.
 Rememb'ring, in the fates, a time when fire
 Should to the battlements of heav'n aspire;
 And all his blazing worlds above should burn, 350
 And all th' inferior globe to cinders turn.
 His dire artill'ry thus dismiss, he bent
 His thoughts to some securer punishment:
 Concludes to pour a wat'ry deluge down,
 And what he durst not burn, resolves to drown. 355
 The northern breath, that freezes floods, he binds;
 With all the race of cloud-dispelling winds:
 The south he loos'd, who night and horror brings;
 And fogs are shaken from his flaggy wings.
 From his divided beard two streams he pours, 360
 His head, and rheumy eyes distil in show'rs.
 With rain his robe and heavy mantle flow:
 And lazy mists are low'ring on his brow:
 Still as he swept along, with his clench'd fist

He squeez'd the clouds, th' imprison'd clouds resist :
 The skies, from pole to pole, with peals resound; 366
 And show'rs enlarg'd, come pouring on the ground.

Then clad in colours of a various dye,

Junonian Iris breeds a new supply

To feed the clouds; impetuous rain descends; 370

The bearded corn beneath the burthen bends :

Defrauded clowns deplore their perish'd grain,

And the long labours of the year are vain.

Nor from his patrimonial heaven alone

Is Jove content to pour his vengeance down; 375

Aid from his brother of the seas he craves,

To help him with auxiliary waves.

The wat'ry tyrant calls his brooks and floods,

Who roll from mossy caves (their moist abodes),

And with perpetual urns his palace fill: 380

To whom in brief, he thus imparts his will:

Small exhortations need; your pow'rs employ:

And this bad world, so Jove requires, destroy.

Let loose the reins to all your wat'ry store;

Bear down the dams, and open ev'ry door. 385

The floods, by nature enemies to land,

And proudly swelling with their new command,

Remove the living stones that stopp'd their way,

And gushing from their source augment the sea. 389

Then, with his mace, their monarch struck the ground;

With inward trembling, earth receiv'd the wound,

And rising streams a ready passage found.

Th' expanded waters gather on the plain: ✓

They float the fields, and overtop the grain;

Then rushing onwards, with a sweepy sway, 395

Bear flocks, and folds, and lab'ring hinds away.

Nor safe their dwellings were, for, sapp'd by floods,

Their houses fell upon their household gods.

The solid piles, too strongly built to fall,

High o'er their heads behold a wat'ry wall: 400

Now seas and earth were in confusion lost;

A world of waters, and without a coast.

One climbs a cliff; one in his boat is borne:

And ploughs above, where late he sow'd his corn.

Others o'er chimney-tops and turrets row, 405

And drop their anchors on the meads below;

Or downward driv'n, they bruise the tender vine,
 Or tost aloft, are knock'd against a pine.
 And where of late the kids had cropt the grass,
 The monsters of the deep now take their place. 410
 Insulting Nereids on the cities ride,
 And wond'ring dolphins o'er the palace glide.
 On leaves, and masts of mighty oaks they browse,
 And their broad fins entangle in the boughs.
 The frighted wolf now swims amongst the sheep; 415
 The yellow lion wanders in the deep:
 His rapid force no longer helps the boar:
 The stag swims faster than he ran before.
 The fowls, long beating on their wings in vain,
 Despair of land, and drop into the main. 420
 Now hills and vales no more distinction know,
 And levell'd nature lies oppress'd below:
 The most of mortals perish in the flood,
 The small remainder dies for want of food.

A mountain of stupendous height there stands 425
 Betwixt th' Athenian and Bœotian lands,
 The bound of fruitful fields, while fields they were,
 But then a field of waters did appear:
 Parnassus is its name; whose forky rise
 Mounts through the clouds, and mates the lofty skies.
 High on the summit of this dubious cliff, 431
 Deucalion wafting, moor'd his little skiff.
 He with his wife were only left behind
 Of perish'd man: they two were human kind.
 The mountain nymphs, and Themis they adore, 435
 And from her oracles relief implore.
 The most upright of mortal men was he;
 The most sincere, and holy woman, she.

When Jupiter, surveying earth from high,
 Beheld it in a lake of water lie, 440
 That where so many millions lately liv'd,
 But two, the best of either sex, surviv'd;
 He loos'd the northern wind; fierce Boreas flies,
 To puff away the clouds, and purge the skies:
 Serenely, while he blows, the vapours driv'n, 445
 Discover heav'n to earth, and earth to heav'n.
 The billows fall, while Neptune lays his mace
 On the rough sea, and smooths its furrow'd face.

Already Triton, at his call, appears
 Above the waves ; a Tyrian robe he wears ; 450
 And in his hand a crooked trumpet bears.
 The sov'reign bids him peaceful sounds inspire ;
 And give the waves the signal to retire.
 His writhen shell he takes ; whose narrow vent
 Grows by degrees into a large extent ; 455
 Then gives it breath : the blast with doubling sound
 Runs the wide circuit of the world around :
 The sun first heard it, in his early east,
 And met the rattling echoes in the west.
 The waters, list'ning to the trumpet's roar, 460
 Obey the summons, and forsake the shore.
 A thin circumference of land appears ;
 And earth, but not at once, her visage rears,
 And peeps upon the seas from upper grounds ;
 The streams, but just contain'd within their bounds,
 By slow degrees into their channels crawl ; 466
 And earth increases, as the waters fall.
 In longer time the tops of trees appear,
 Which mud on their dishonour'd branches bear.
 At length the world was all restor'd to view ; 470
 But desolate, and of a sickly hue :
 Nature beheld herself, and stood aghast,
 A dismal desert, and a silent waste.
 Which when Deucalion, with a piteous look
 Beheld, he wept, and thus to Pyrrha spoke : 475
 Oh wife, oh sister, oh of all thy kind
 The best, and only creature left behind,
 By kindred, love, and now by dangers join'd ;
 Of multitudes, who breath'd the common air,
 We two remain ; a species in a pair : 480
 The rest the seas have swallow'd ; nor have we
 Ev'n of this wretched life a certainty.
 The clouds are still above ; and, while I speak,
 A second deluge o'er our heads may break.
 Should I be snatch'd from hence, and thou remain,
 Without relief, or partner of thy pain, 486
 How could'st thou such a wretched life sustain ?
 Should I be left, and thou be lost, the sea
 That bury'd her I lov'd, should bury me.
 Oh, could our father his old arts inspire, 490

And make me heir of his informing fire,
 That so I might abolish'd man retrieve,
 And perish'd people in new souls might live!
 But Heav'n is pleas'd, nor ought we to complain,
 That we, th' examples of mankind, remain. 495

He said: the careful couple join their tears,
 And then invoke the gods with pious pray'rs.
 Thus, in devotion having eas'd their grief,
 From sacred oracles they seek relief;
 And to Cephysus' brook their way pursue: 500
 The stream was troubled, but the ford they knew.
 With living waters, in the fountain bred,
 They sprinkle first their garments, and their head,
 Then took the way which to the temple led.
 The roofs were all defil'd with moss and mire, 505
 The desert altars void of solemn fire.

Before the Gradual, prostrate they ador'd;
 The pavement kiss'd, and thus the saint implor'd:
 O righteous Themis, if the pow'rs above
 By pray'rs are bent to pity, and to love; 510
 If human miseries can move their mind;
 If yet they can forgive, and yet be kind:
 Tell how we may restore, by second birth,
 Mankind, and people desolated earth.

Then thus the gracious goddess, nodding, said: 515
 Depart, and with your vestments veil your head;
 And stooping lowly down, with loosen'd zones, [bones.
 Throw each behind your backs, your mighty mother's
 Amaz'd the pair, and mute with wonder stand,
 Till Pyrrha first refus'd the dire command. 520
 Forbid it heav'n, said she, that I should tear
 Those holy reliques from the sepulchre!

They ponder'd the mysterious words again,
 For some new sense; and long they sought in vain:
 At length Deucalion clear'd his cloudy brow, 525
 And said, The dark enigma will allow
 A meaning, which if well I understand,
 From sacrilege will free the god's command:
 This earth our mighty mother is; the stones
 In her capacious body, are her bones: 530
 These we must cast behind.—With hope and fear
 The woman did the new solution hear:

The man diffides in his own augury,

And doubts the gods; yet both resolve to try.

Descending from the mount, they first unbind 535

Their vests, and, veil'd, they cast the stones behind:

The stones (a miracle to mortal view,

But long tradition makes it pass for true)

Did first the rigour of their kind expel,

And suppl'd into softness, as they fell; 540

Then swell'd, and swelling, by degrees grew warm;

And took the rudiments of human form.

Imperfect shapes: in marble such are seen,

When the rude chisel does the man begin;

While yet the roughness of the stone remains, 545

Without the rising muscles, and the veins.

The sappy parts, and next resembling juice,

Were turn'd to moisture, for the body's use,

Supplying humours, blood, and nourishment;

The rest, too solid to receive a bent, 550

Converts to bones; and what was once a vein,

Its former name and nature did retain.

By help of pow'r divine, in little space,

What the man threw, assum'd a manly face;

And what the wife, renew'd the female race. 555

Hence we derive our nature; born to bear

Laborious life, and harden'd into care.

The rest of animals, from teeming earth

Produc'd, in various forms receiv'd their birth.

The native moisture, in its close retreat, 560

Digested by the sun's ethereal heat,

As in a kindly womb, began to breed;

Then swell'd, and quicken'd by the vital seed.

And some in less, and some in longer space,

Were ripen'd into form, and took a several face. 565

Thus when the Nile from Pharian fields is fled,

And seeks, with ebbing tides, his ancient bed,

The fat manure with heav'nly fire is warm'd:

And crusted creatures, as in wombs are form'd;

These, when they turn the glebe, the peasants find;

Some rude, and yet unfinish'd in their kind: 571

Short of their limbs, a lame imperfect birth;

One half alive, and one of lifeless earth.

For heat, and moisture, when in bodies join'd,

The temper that results from either kind 275
 Conception makes; and, fighting till they mix,
 Their mingled atoms in each other fix.
 Thus nature's hand the genial bed prepares
 With friendly discord, and with fruitful wars.

From hence the surface of the ground, with mud
 And slime besmear'd (the fæces of the flood), 581
 Receiv'd the rays of heav'n; and sucking in
 The seeds of heat, new creatures did begin:
 Some were of sev'ral sorts produc'd before,
 But of new monsters, earth created more, 585
 Unwillingly; but yet she brought to light
 Thee, Python, too, the wond'ring world to fright,
 And the new nations, with so dire a sight;
 So monstrous was his bulk, so large a space
 Did his vast body and long train embrace. 590
 Whom Phœbus basking on a bank espy'd:
 Ere now the god his arrows had not try'd
 But on the trembling deer, or mountain goat;
 At this new quarry he prepares to shoot.
 Though ev'ry shaft took place, he spent the store 595
 Of his full quiver; and 'twas long before
 Th' expiring serpent wallow'd in his gore.
 Then, to preserve the fame of such a deed,
 For Python slain, he Pythian games decreed,
 Where noble youths for mastership should strive, 600
 To quoit, to run, and steeds and chariots drive.
 The prize was fame: in witness of renown,
 An oaken garland did the victor crown.
 The laurel was not yet for triumphs born;
 But ev'ry green alike by Phœbus worn, 605
 Did, with promiscuous grace, his flowing locks adorn.

The first and fairest of his loves, was she
 Whom not blind fortune, but the dire decree
 Of angry Cupid forc'd him to desire:
 Daphnè her name, and Peneus was her sire. 610
 Swell'd with the pride, that new success attends,
 He sees the stripling, while his bow he bends,
 And thus insults him; Thou lascivious boy,
 Are arms like these for children to employ?
 Know, such achievements are my proper claim; 615

Due to my vigour and unerring aim :
 Resistless are my shafts, and Python late,
 In such a feather'd death has found his fate.
 Take up the torch (and lay my weapons by),
 With that the feeble souls of lovers fry. 620

To whom the son of Venus thus reply'd:
 Phœbus, thy shafts are sure on all beside,
 But mine on Phœbus, mine the fame shall be
 Of all thy conquests, when I conquer thee.

He said, and soaring, swiftly wing'd his flight; 625
 Nor stopp'd, but on Parnassus' airy height.
 Two diff'rent shafts he from his quiver draws:
 One to repel desire, and one to cause;
 One shaft is pointed with refulgent gold;
 To bribe the love, and make the lover bold; 630
 One blunt, and tipt with lead, whose base alloy
 Provokes disdain, and drives desire away.
 The blunted bolt against the nymph he drest;
 But with the sharp transfix'd Apollo's breast.

Th' enamour'd deity pursues the chace; 635
 The scornful damsel shuns his loath'd embrace:
 In hunting beasts of prey, her youth employs;
 And Phœbè rivals in her rural joys.
 With naked neck she goes, and shoulders bare;
 And with a fillet binds her flowing hair. 640
 By many suitors sought, she mocks their pains,
 And still her vow'd virginity maintains;
 Impatient of a yoke, the name of bride
 She shuns, and hates the joys she never try'd.
 On wilds and woods she fixes her desire; 645
 Nor knows what youth and kindly love inspire.
 Her father chides her oft;—Thou ow'st (says he)
 A husband to thyself, a son to me.

She, like a crime, abhors the nuptial bed;
 She glows with blushes, and she hangs her head; 650
 Then casting round his neck her tender arms,
 Soothes him with blandishments and filial charms:—
 Give me, my lord (she said), to live and die
 A spotless maid, without the marriage tie.
 'Tis but a small request; I beg no more 655
 Than what Diana's father gave before.

The good old sire was soften'd to consent;

But said her wish would prove her punishment:
 For so much youth, and so much beauty join'd,
 Oppos'd the state, which her desires design'd. 660

The God of Light, aspiring to her bed,
 Hopes what he seeks, with flatt'ring fancies fed ;
 And is, by his own oracles, misled.

And as in empty fields the stubble burns,
 Or nightly travellers, when day returns, 665

Their useless torches on dry hedges throw,
 That catch the flames, and kindle all the row ;

So burns the god, consuming in desire,
 And feeding in his breast a fruitless fire :

Her well-turn'd neck he view'd (her neck was bare),
 And on her shoulders her dishevell'd hair;— 671

O, were it comb'd (said he), with what a grace
 Would ev'ry waving curl become her face!

He view'd her eyes, like heav'nly lamps that shone ;

He view'd her lips, too sweet to view alone ; 675

Her taper fingers, and her panting breast ;

He praises all he sees, and for the rest

Believes the beauties yet unseen are best.

Swift as the wind the damsel fled away,
 Nor did for these alluring speeches stay : 680

Stay, nymph (he cry'd), I follow, not a foe :

Thus from the lion trips the trembling doe ;

Thus from the wolf the frightened lamb removes,

And, from pursuing falcons, fearful doves ; 684

Thou shunn'st a god, and shunn'st a god that loves.

Ah, lest some thorn should pierce thy tender foot,

Or thou should'st fall in flying my pursuit ;

To sharp uneven ways thy steps decline ;

Abate thy speed, and I will bate of mine.

Yet think from whom thou dost so rashly fly : 690

Nor basely born, nor shepherd's swain am I.

Perhaps thou know'st not my superior state ;

And from that ignorance proceeds thy hate.

Me Claros, Delphi, Tenedos obey ;

These hands the Patareian sceptre sway. 695

The king of gods begot me : what shall be,

Or is, or ever was, in fate, I see.

Mine is the invention of the charming lyre ;

Sweet notes, and heav'nly numbers I inspire.

Sure is my bow, unerring is my dart; 700
 But, ah! more deadly his, who pierc'd my heart.
 Med'cine is mine; what herbs and simples grow
 In fields, and forests, all their pow'rs I know;
 And am the great physician call'd, below.
 Alas! that fields and forests can afford 705
 No remedies to heal their love-sick lord;
 To cure the pains of love, no plant avails;
 And his own physic, the physician fails.
 She heard not half, so furiously she flies;
 And on her ear th' imperfect accent dies. 710
 Fear gave her wings: and as she fled, the wind
 Increasing, spread her flowing hair behind,
 And left her legs and thighs expos'd to view;
 Which made the god more eager to pursue.
 The god was young, and was too hotly bent 715
 To lose his time in empty compliment:
 But led by love, and fir'd with such a sight,
 Impetuously pursu'd his near delight.
 As when th' impatient greyhound slipt from far,
 Bounds o'er the glebe to course the fearful hare, 720
 She in her speed does all her safety lay;
 And he with double speed pursues the prey;
 O'erruns her at the sitting turn, and licks
 His chaps in vain, and blows upon the flix:
 She 'scapes, and for the neighb'ring covert strives,
 And gaining shelter, doubts if yet she lives: 726
 If little things with great we may compare,
 Such was the god, and such the flying fair.
 She urg'd by fear, her feet did swiftly move,
 But he more swiftly, who was urg'd by love. 730
 He gathers ground upon her in the chase;
 Now breathes upon her hair, with nearer pace;
 And just is fast'ning on the wish'd embrace.
 The nymph grew pale, and in a mortal fright,
 Spent with the labour of so long a flight; 735
 And now despairing, cast a mournful look
 Upon the streams of her paternal brook:—
 O help (she cry'd), in this extremest need,
 If water-gods are deities indeed:
 Gape, earth, and this unhappy wretch entomb; 740
 Or change my form, whence all my sorrows come.

Scarce had she finish'd, when her feet she found
 Benumb'd with cold, and fasten'd to the ground :
 A filmy rind about her body grows ;
 Her hair to leaves, her arms extend to boughs : 745
 The nymph is all into a laurel gone :
 The smoothness of her skin remains alone.
 Yet Phœbus loves her still, and casting round
 Her bole, his arms, some little warmth he found.
 The tree still panted in th' unfinish'd part : 750
 Not wholly vegetive, and heav'd her heart.
 He fix'd his lips upon the trembling rind ;
 It swerv'd aside, and his embrace declin'd.
 To whom the god : Because thou can'st not be
 My mistress, I espouse thee for my tree : 755
 Be thou the prize of honour and renown ;
 The deathless poet, and the poem crown.
 Thou shalt the Roman festivals adorn,
 And, after poets, be by victors worn.
 Thou shalt returning Cæsar's triumph grace ; 760
 When pomps shall in a long procession pass ;
 Wreath'd on the posts before his palace wait ;
 And be the sacred guardian of the gate.
 Secure from thunder, and unharm'd by Jove,
 Unfading as th' immortal pow'rs above : 765
 And as the locks of Phœbus are unshorn,
 So shall perpetual green thy boughs adorn.
 The grateful tree was pleas'd with what he said ;
 And shook the shady honours of her head.

An ancient forest in Thessalia grows ; 770
 Which Tempè's pleasing valley does inclose.
 Through this the rapid Peneus takes his course ;
 From Pindus rolling with impetuous force ;
 Mists from the river's mighty fall arise ;
 And deadly damps inclose the cloudy skies : 775
 Perpetual fogs are hanging o'er the wood ;
 And sounds of waters deaf the neighbourhood.
 Deep, in a rocky cave, he makes abode
 (A mansion proper for a mourning god):
 Here he gives audience ; issuing out decrees 780
 To rivers, his dependent deities.
 On this occasion hither they resort,

To pay their homage, and to make their court.
 All doubtful, whether to congratulate
 His daughter's honour, or lament her fate. 785
 Sperchæus, crown'd with poplar, first appears ;
 Then old Apidanus came crown'd with years ;
 Enipeus turbulent; Amphrysos tame ;
 And Æas last with lagging waters came.
 Then, of his kindred brooks, a num'rous throng 790
 Condole his loss ; and bring their urns along.
 Not one was wanting of the wat'ry train,
 That fill'd his flood, or mingled with the main :
 But Inachus, who in his cave, alone,
 Wept not another's losses, but his own. 795
 For his dear Iö, whether stray'd, or dead,
 To him uncertain, doubtful tears he shed.
 He sought her through the world ; but sought in vain ;
 And no where finding, rather fear'd her slain.
 Her, just returning from her father's brook, 800
 Jove had beheld with a desiring look ;—
 And, O fair daughter of the flood (he said),
 Worthy alone of Jove's imperial bed,
 Happy whoever shall those charms possess ;
 The King of Gods (nor is thy lover less) 805
 Invites thee to yon cooler shades ; to shun
 The scorching rays of the meridian sun.
 Nor shalt thou tempt the dangers of the grove
 Alone, without a guide ; thy guide is Jove.
 No puny pow'r, but he whose high command 810
 Is unconfi'd, who rules the seas and land,
 And tempers thunder in his awful hand.
 O, fly not: for she fled from his embrace
 O'er Lerna's pastures : he pursu'd the chase
 Along the shades of the Lyrœan plain ; 815
 At length the god, who never asks in vain,
 Involv'd with vapours, imitating night,
 Both air, and earth ; and then suppress'd her flight,
 And mingling force with love, enjoy'd the full delight.
 Meantime the jealous Juno, from on high, 820
 Survey'd the fruitful fields of Arcady :
 And wonder'd that the mist should overrun
 The face of daylight, and obscure the sun.
 No nat'ral cause she found, from brooks, or bogs,

Or marshy lowlands, to produce the fogs ; 825
 Then round the skies she sought for Jupiter,
 Her faithless husband ; but no Jove was there.
 Suspecting now the worst,—Or I (she said),
 Am much mistaken, or am much betray'd.

With fury she precipitates her flight ; 830
 Dispels the shadows of dissembled night ;
 And to the day restores his native light.

Th' almighty lecher, careful to prevent
 The consequence, foreseeing her descent,
 Transforms his mistress in a trice ; and now 835
 In Iö's place appears a lovely cow.

So sleek her skin, so faultless was her make,
 Ev'n Juno did unwilling pleasure take
 To see so fair a rival of her love :
 And what she was, and whence, inquir'd of Jove ;
 Of what fair herd, and from what pedigree ? 841

The god, half caught, was forc'd upon a lie ;
 And said she sprang from earth. She took the word,
 And begg'd the beauteous heifer of her lord.

What should he do ? 'twas equal shame to Jove 845
 Or to relinquish, or betray his love :

Yet to refuse so slight a gift would be
 But more t'increase his consort's jealousy:
 Thus fear, and love, by turns his heart assail'd :
 And stronger love had, sure, at length prevail'd :
 But some faint hope remain'd, his jealous queen 851

Had not the mistress through the heifer seen.
 The cautious goddess, of her gift possess'd,
 Yet harbour'd anxious thoughts within her breast ;

As she who knew the falsehood of her Jove ; 855
 And justly fear'd some new relapse of love.

Which to prevent, and to secure her care,
 To trusty Argus she commits the fair.

The head of Argus (as with stars the skies)
 Was compass'd round, and wore a hundred eyes.
 But two by turns their lids in slumber steep ; 861

The rest on duty still their station keep ;
 Nor could the total constellation sleep.

Thus, ever present, to his eyes, and mind,
 His charge was still before him, though behind. 865

In fields he suffer'd her to feed by day ;

But when the setting sun to night gave way,
 The captive cow he summon'd with a call,
 And drove her back, and ty'd her to the stall.
 On leaves of trees, and bitter herbs she fed, 870
 Heav'n was her canopy, bare earth her bed :
 So hardly lodg'd, and to digest her food,
 She drank from troubled streams, defil'd with mud.
 Her woful story fain she would have told,
 With hands upheld, but had no hands to hold. 875
 Her head to her ungentle keeper bow'd,
 She strove to speak, she spoke not, but she low'd :
 Affrighted with the noise, she look'd around,
 And seem'd t' inquire the author of the sound.

Once on the banks where often she had play'd 880
 (Her father's banks), she came, and there survey'd
 Her alter'd visage, and her branching head ;
 And starting, from herself she would have fled.
 Her fellow nymphs, familiar to her eyes,
 Beheld, but knew her not in this disguise. 885
 Ev'n Inachus himself was ignorant ;
 And in his daughter did his daughter want.
 She follow'd where her fellows went, as she
 Were still a partner of the company :
 They stroke her neck, the gentle heifer stands, 890
 And her neck offers to their stroking hands.
 Her father gave her grass ; the grass she took ;
 And lick'd his palms, and cast a piteous look ;
 And in the language of her eyes, she spoke.
 She would have told her name, and ask'd relief, 895
 But wanting words, in tears she tells her grief,
 Which, with her foot she makes him understand ;
 And prints the name of Iô in the sand.

Ah wretched me ! her mournful father cry'd ;
 She, with a sigh, to ' wretched me ' reply'd ; 900
 About her milk-white neck his arms he threw ;
 And wept, and then these tender words ensue :
 And art thou she, whom I have sought around
 The world, and have at length so sadly found ?
 So found, is worse than lost: with mutual words
 Thou answer'st not, no voice thy tongue affords: 906
 But sighs are deeply drawn from out thy breast ;
 And speech deny'd, by lowing is exprest.

Unknowing I prepar'd thy bridal bed,
 With empty hopes of happy issue fed. 910
 But now the husband of a herd must be
 Thy mate, and bellowing sons thy progeny.
 O! were I mortal, death might bring relief;
 But now my godhead but extends my grief;
 Prolongs my woes, of which no end I see; 915
 And makes me curse my immortality!

More had he said, but fearful of her stay,
 The starry guardian drove his charge away,
 To some fresh pasture; on a hilly height
 He sate himself, and kept her still in sight. 920

Now Jove no longer could her suff'rings bear;
 But call'd in haste his airy messenger,
 The son of Maia, with severe decree,
 To kill the keeper, and to set her free.
 With all his harness soon the god was sped, 925
 His flying hat was fasten'd on his head,
 Wings on his heels were hung, and in his hand
 He holds the virtue of the snaky wand.
 The liquid air his moving pinions wound,
 And, in the moment, shoot him on the ground. 930
 Before he came in sight, the crafty god
 His wings dismiss'd, but still retain'd his rod:
 That sleep-procuring wand wise Hermès took,
 But made it seem to sight a shepherd's hook.
 With this he did a herd of goats control; 935
 Which by the way he met, and slily stole.
 Clad like a country swain, he pip'd, and sung;
 And playing drove his jolly troop along.

With pleasure, Argus the musician heeds;
 But wonders much at those new vocal reeds.
 And whosoe'er thou art, my friend (said he), 940
 Up hither drive thy goats, and play by me:
 This hill has browze for them, and shade for thee.

That god, who was with ease induc'd to climb,
 Began discourse to pass away the time;
 And still betwixt his tuneful pipe he plies, 945
 And watch'd his hour to close the keeper's eyes.
 With much ado, he partly kept awake;
 Not suff'ring all his eyes repose to take;

And ask'd the stranger, who did reeds invent,
And whence began so rare an instrument? 950

Then Hermès thus : A nymph of late there was,
Whose heav'nly form her fellows did surpass.
The pride and joy of fair Arcadia's plains,
Belov'd by deities, ador'd by swains :
Syrinx her name, by sylvans oft pursu'd, 955
As oft she did the lustful gods delude :
The rural, and the woodland pow'rs disdain'd ;
With Cynthia hunted, and her rites maintain'd :
Like Phœbè clad, e'en Phœbè's self she seems,
So tall, so straight, such well-proportion'd limbs. 960
The nicest eye did no distinction know,
But that the goddess bore a golden bow.
Distinguish'd thus, the sight she cheated too.
Descending from Lycæus, Pan admires
The matchless nymph, and burns with new desires.
A crown of pine upon his head he wore ; 966
And thus began her pity to implore.
But ere he thus began, she took her flight
So swift, she was already out of sight,
Nor staid to hear the courtship of the god ; 970
But bent her course to Ladon's gentle flood :
There by the river stopp'd ; and tir'd before,
Relief from water-nymphs her pray'rs implore.
Now while the lustful god with speedy pace,
Just thought to strain her in a strict embrace, 975
He fill'd his arms with reeds, new-rising on the place.
And while he sighs, his ill success to find,
The tender canes were shaken by the wind ;
And breath'd a mournful air, unheard before ;
That much surprising Pan, yet pleas'd him more.
Admiring this new music, Thou (he said), 981
Who canst not be the partner of my bed,
At least shall be the consort of my mind :
And often, often to my lips be join'd.
He form'd the reeds, proportion'd as they are, 985
Unequal in their length, and wax'd with care,
They still retain the name of his ungrateful fair.

While Hermès pip'd, and sang, and told his tale,
The keeper's winking eyes began to fail,

And drowsy slumber on the lids to creep; 990
 Till all the watchmen were at length asleep.
 Then soon the god his voice and song suppress'd;
 And, with his pow'rful rod, confirm'd his rest:
 Without delay his crooked falchion drew,
 And at one fatal stroke the keeper slew. 995
 Down from the rock fell the dissever'd head,
 Opening its eyes in death; and falling, bled;
 And mark'd the passage with a crimson trail:
 Thus Argus lies in pieces, cold, and pale;
 And all his hundred eyes, with all their light, 1000
 Are clos'd at once, in one perpetual night.
 These Juno takes, that they no more may fail,
 And spreads them in her peacock's gaudy tail.
 Impatient to revenge her injur'd bed,
 She wreaks her anger on her rival's head; 1005
 With furies frights her from her native home,
 And drives her gadding round the world to roam.
 Nor ceas'd her madness, and her flight, before
 She touch'd the limits of the Pharian shore.
 At length, arriving on the banks of Nile, 1010
 Wearied with length of ways, and worn with toil,
 She laid her down; and, leaning on her knees,
 Invok'd the cause of all her miseries;
 And cast her languishing regards above,
 For help from heav'n, and her ungrateful Jove. 1015
 She sigh'd, she wept, she low'd, 'twas all she could;
 And with unkindness seem'd to tax the god.
 Last, with an humble pray'r, she begg'd repose,
 Or death at least, to finish all her woes.
 Jove heard her vows, and, with a flatt'ring look, 1020
 In her behalf, to jealous Juno spoke.
 He cast his arms about her neck, and said,
 Dame, rest secure; no more thy nuptial bed
 This nymph shall violate; by Styx I swear,
 And every oath that binds the Thunderer. 1025
 The goddess was pleas'd; and at the word
 Was Iö to her former shape restor'd.
 The rugged hair began to fall away;
 The sweetness of her eyes did only stay,
 Though not so large: her crooked horns decrease;
 The wideness of her jaws and nostrils cease: 1031

Her hoofs to hands return, in little space :
 The five long taper fingers take their place ;
 And nothing of the heifer now is seen,
 Beside the native whiteness of the skin. 1035

Erected on her feet she walks again ;
 And two, the duty of the four sustain.
 She tries her tongue ; her silence softly breaks,
 And fears her former lowings when she speaks :
 A goddess now, through all th' Ægyptian state ; 1040
 And serv'd by priests, who in white linen wait.

Her son was Epaphus, at length believ'd
 The son of Jove, and as a god receiv'd,
 With sacrifice ador'd, and public pray'rs,
 He common temples with his mother shares. 1045

Equal in years, and rival in renown
 With Epaphus, the youthful Phaëton
 Like honour claims ; and boasts his sire the Sun.
 His haughty looks, and his assuming air,
 The son of Isis could no longer bear : 1050

Thou tak'st thy mother's word too far, said he,
 And hast usurp'd thy boasted pedigree.
 Go, base pretender to a borrow'd name.
 Thus tax'd, he blush'd with anger and with shame ;
 But shame repress'd his rage : the daunted youth
 Soon seeks his mother, and inquires the truth. 1056

Mother (said he), this infamy was thrown
 By Epaphus on you, and me, your son.
 He spoke in public, told it to my face ;
 Nor durst I vindicate the dire disgrace : 1060

E'en I, the bold, the sensible of wrong,
 Restrain'd by shame, was forc'd to hold my tongue.
 To hear an open slander is a curse ;
 But not to find an answer is a worse.

If I am heav'n-begot, assert your son 1065
 By some sure sign ; and make my father known,
 To right my honour, and redeem your own.
 He said, and saying, cast his arms about
 Her neck, and begg'd her to resolve the doubt.

'Tis hard to judge if Clyménè were mov'd 1070
 More by his pray'r, whom she so dearly lov'd,
 Or more with fury fir'd, to find her name
 Traduc'd, and made the sport of common fame.

She stretch'd her arms to heav'n, and fix'd her eyes
 On that fair planet, that adorns the skies ;— 1075
 Now by those beams (said she), whose holy fires
 Consume my breast, and kindle my desires ;
 By him, who sees us both, and cheers our sight ;
 By him, the public minister of light,
 I swear that Sun begot thee ; if I lie, 1080
 Let him his cheerful influence deny :
 Let him no more this perjur'd creature see ;
 And shine on all the world, but only me.
 If still you doubt your mother's innocence,
 His eastern mansion is not far from hence ; 1085
 With little pains you to his Levè go,
 And from himself your parentage may know.
 With joy th' ambitious youth his mother heard,
 And eager, for the journey soon prepar'd.
 He longs the world beneath him to survey ; 1090
 To guide the chariot ; and to give the day.
 From Merœ's burning sands he bends his course,
 Nor less in India feels his father's force ;
 His travel urging, till he came in sight,
 And saw the palace by the purple light. 1095

BOOK II.

TRANSLATED BY MR. ADDISON.

The story of Phaëton. Phaëton's sisters transformed into trees.
 The transformation of Cyncus into a swan. The story of Calisto.
 The story of Coronis, and birth of Æsculapius. Ocyrrhoë
 transformed into a mare. The transformation of Battus into a
 touchstone. The story of Aglauros, transformed into a statue.
 The rape of Europa.

THE Sun's bright palace, on high columns rais'd,
 With burnish'd gold and flaming jewels blaz'd ;
 The folding gates diffus'd a silver light,
 And with a milder gleam refresh'd the sight :
 Of polish'd iv'ry was the cov'ring wrought : 5
 The matter vied not with the sculptor's thought,
 For in the portal was display'd on high
 (The work of Vulcan) a fictitious sky ;
 A waving sea th' inferior earth embrac'd,
 And gods and goddesses the waters grac'd. 10

Ægeon here a mighty whale bestrode ;
 Triton, and Proteus (the deceiving god),
 With Doris, here were carv'd, and all her train,
 Some loosely swimming in the figur'd main,
 While some on rocks their drooping hair divide, 15
 And some on fishes through the waters glide :
 Though various features did the sisters grace,
 A sister's likeness was in ev'ry face.
 On earth a diff'rent landscape courts the eyes,
 Men, towns, and beasts, in distant prospects rise, 20
 And nymphs, and streams, and woods, and rural deities.
 O'er all, the heav'n's refulgent image shines :
 On either gate were six engraven signs.

Here Phaëton, still gaining on th' ascent,
 To his suspected father's palace went, 25
 Till pressing forward through the bright abode,
 He saw at distance the illustrious god ;
 He saw at distance, or the dazzling light
 Had flash'd too strongly on his aching sight.

The god sits high, exalted on a throne 30
 Of blazing gems, with purple garments on ;
 The Hours, in order rang'd on either hand,
 And Days, and Months, and Years, and Ages stand.
 Here Spring appears, with flow'ry chaplets bound ;
 Here Summer, in her wheaten garland crown'd ; 35
 Here Autumn the rich trodden grapes besmear ;
 And hoary Winter shivers in the rear.

Phœbus beheld the youth from off his throne ;
 That eye, which looks on all, was fix'd on one.
 He saw the boy's confusion in his face, 40
 Surpris'd at all the wonders of the place ;
 And cries aloud, What wants my son ? for know,
 My son thou art, and I must call thee so.

Light of the world, the trembling youth replies,
 Illustrious parent! since you don't despise 45
 The parent's name, some certain token give,
 That I may Clyménè's proud boast believe,
 Nor longer under false reproaches grieve.

The tender sire was touched with what he said,
 And flung the blaze of glories from his head, 50
 And bade the youth advance ;—My son (said he),
 Come to thy father's arms ! for Clyménè

Has told thee true; a parent's name I own,
 And deem thee worthy to be call'd my son.
 As a sure proof, make some request, and I, 55
 Whate'er it be, with that request comply;
 By Styx I swear, whose waves are hid in night,
 And roll impervious to my piercing sight.

The youth, transported, asks, without delay,
 To guide the Sun's bright chariot for a day. 60

The god repented of the oath he took,
 For anguish thrice his radiant head he shook;—
 My son (says he), some other proof require,
 Rash was my promise, rash is thy desire:
 I'd fain deny this wish, which thou hast made, 65
 Or, what I can't deny, would fain dissuade.
 Too vast and hazardous the task appears,
 Nor suited to thy strength, nor to thy years.

Thy lot is mortal, but thy wishes fly
 Beyond the province of mortality: 70

There is not one of all the gods that dares
 (However skill'd in other great affairs)
 To mount the burning axle-tree, but I;
 Not Jove himself, the ruler of the sky,
 That hurls the three-fork'd thunder from above, 75
 Dares try his strength; yet who as strong as Jove?

The steeds climb up the first ascent with pain,
 And, when the middle firmament they gain,
 If downward from the heav'ns my head I bow,
 And see the earth and ocean hang below, 80
 Ev'n I am seiz'd with horror and affright,
 And my own heart misgives me at the sight.

A mighty downfall steps the ev'ning stage,
 And steady reins must curb the horses' rage.
 Tethys herself has fear'd to see me driv'n 85
 Down headlong from the precipice of heav'n.
 Besides, consider what impetuous force
 Turns stars and planets in a diff'rent course.

I steer against their motions; nor am I
 Borne back by all the current of the sky: 90
 But how could you resist the orbs that roll
 In adverse whirls, and stem the rapid pole?
 But you perhaps may hope for pleasing woods,
 And stately domes, and cities fill'd with gods;

While through a thousand snares your progress lies, 95
 Where forms of starry monsters stock the skies:
 For, should you hit the doubtful way aright,
 The Bull with stooping horns stands opposite;
 Next him the bright Hæmonian bow is strung,
 And next, the Lion's grinning visage hung; 100
 The Scorpion's claws here clasp a wide extent,
 And here the Crab's in lesser clasps are bent.
 Nor would you find it easy to compose
 The mettled steeds, when from their nostrils flows
 The scorching fire that in their entrails glows. 105
 Ev'n I their headstrong fury scarce restrain,
 When they grow warm and restive to the rein.
 Let not my son a fatal gift require,
 But, O! in time, recal your rash desire;
 You ask a gift that may your parent tell, 110
 Let these my fears your parentage reveal;
 And learn a father from a father's care:
 Look on my face; or if my heart lay bare,
 Could you but look, you'd read the father there.
 Choose out a gift from seas, or earth, or skies, 115
 For, open to your wish all nature lies,
 Only decline this one unequal task,
 For 'tis a mischief, not a gift you ask.
 You ask a real mischief, Phaëton:
 Nay hang not thus about my neck, my son: 120
 I grant your wish, and Styx has heard my voice,
 Choose what you will, but make a wiser choice.
 Thus did the god th' unwary youth advise;
 But he still longs to travel through the skies;
 When the fond father (for in vain he pleads) 125
 At length to the Vulcanian chariot leads.
 A golden axle did the work uphold,
 Gold was the beam, the wheels were orb'd with gold.
 The spokes in rows of silver pleas'd the sight,
 The seat with parti-colour'd gems was bright; 130
 Apollo shone amid the glare of light.
 The youth with secret joy the work surveys,
 When now the Morn disclos'd her purple rays;
 The stars were fled, for Lucifer had chas'd
 The stars away, and fled himself at last. 135
 Soon as the father saw the rosy morn,

And the moon shining with a blunter horn,
 He bade the nimble Hours, without delay,
 Bring forth the steeds; the nimble Hours obey:
 From their full racks, the gen'rous steeds retire, 140
 Dropping ambrosial foams, and snorting fire.
 Still anxious for his son, the God of Day,
 To make him proof against the burning ray,
 His temples with celestial ointment wet,
 Of sov'reign virtue to repel the heat: 145
 Then fix'd the beamy circle on his head,
 And fetch'd a deep, foreboding sigh, and said:
 Take this at least, this last advice, my son;
 Keep a stiff rein, and move but gently on:
 The coursers of themselves will run too fast, 150
 Your art must be to moderate their haste.
 Drive 'em not on directly through the skies,
 But where the zodiac's winding circle lies,
 Along the midmost zone: but sally forth
 Nor to the distant South, nor stormy North. 155
 The horses' hoofs a beaten track will shew,
 But neither mount too high, nor sink too low.
 That no new fires, or heav'n or earth infest;
 Keep the midway, the middle way is best.
 Nor, where in radiant folds the serpent twines, 160
 Direct your course, nor where the altar shines.
 Shun both extremes; the rest let fortune guide,
 And better for thee than thyself provide!
 See, while I speak, the shades disperse away,
 Aurora gives the promise of a day; 165
 I'm call'd, nor can I make a longer stay.
 Snatch up the reins; or still th' attempt forsake,
 And not my chariot, but my counsel take,
 While yet securely on the earth you stand;
 Nor touch the horses with too rash a hand: 170
 Let me alone to light the world, while you
 Enjoy those beams which you may safely view.
 He spoke in vain; the youth with active heat
 And sprightly vigour vaults into the seat;
 And joys to hold the reins, and fondly gives 175
 Those thanks his father with remorse receives.
 Meanwhile the restless horses neigh'd aloud,
 Breathing out fire, and pawing where they stood.

Tethys, not knowing what had pass'd, gave way,
And all the waste of heav'n before 'em lay. 180

They spring together out, and swiftly bear
The flying youth through clouds and yielding air;
With wingy speed outstrip the eastern wind,
And leave the breezes of the morn behind.

The youth was light, nor could he fill the seat, 185
Or poise the chariot with its wonted weight:

But as at sea th' unballast'd vessel rides,
Cast to and fro, the sport of winds and tides;
So in the bounding chariot toss'd on high,
The youth is hurried headlong through the sky. 190

Soon as the steeds perceive it, they forsake
Their stated course, and leave the beaten track.
The youth was in a maze, nor did he know
Which way to turn the reins, or where to go;
Nor would the horses, had he known, obey. 195

'Then the sev'n stars first felt Apollo's ray,
And wish'd to dip in the forbidden sea.
The folded serpent next the frozen pole,
Stiff and benumb'd before, began to roll,
And rag'd with inward heat, and threaten'd war, 200

And shot a redder light from ev'ry star;
Nay, and 'tis said, Boötes, too, that fain [wane.

Thou would'st have fled, though cumber'd with thy
Th' unhappy youth then, bending down his head,
Saw earth and ocean far beneath him spread. 205

His colour chang'd, he started at the sight,
And his eyes darken'd by too great a light.
Now could he wish the fiery steeds untry'd,
His birth obscure, and his request deny'd:
Now would he Merops for his father own, 210
And quit his boasted kindred to the Sun.

So fares the pilot, when his ship is tost
In troubled seas, and all its steerage lost,
He gives her to the winds, and in despair
Seeks his last refuge in the gods and pray'r. 215

What could he do? his eyes, if backward cast,
Find a long path he had already pass'd;
If forward, still a longer path they find:
Both he compares, and measures in his mind;
And sometimes casts an eye upon the East, 220

And sometimes looks on the forbidden West.
 The horses' names he knew not in the fright;
 Nor would he loose the reins, nor could he hold 'em right.

Now all the horrors of the heav'ns he spies,
 And monstrous shadows of prodigious size, 225
 That, deck'd with stars, lie scatter'd o'er the skies.

There is a place above, where Scorpio bent,
 In tail and arms surrounds a vast extent;
 In a wide circuit of the heav'ns he shines,
 And fills the place of two celestial signs. 230

Soon as the youth beheld him, vex't with heat,
 Brandish his sting, and in his poison sweat,
 Half dead, with sudden fear, he dropp'd the reins;

The horses felt 'em loose upon their manes,
 And, flying out through all the plains above, 235
 Ran uncontroll'd where'er their fury drove;

Rush'd on the stars, and through a pathless way,
 Of unknown regions, hurry'd on the day.
 And now above, and now below they flew,
 And near the earth the burning chariot drew. 240

The clouds disperse in fumes, the wond'ring Moon
 Beholds her brother's steeds beneath her own;
 The highlands smoke, cleft by the piercing rays,
 Or, clad with woods, in their own fuel blaze.

Next o'er the plains, where ripen'd harvests grow,
 The running conflagration spreads below: 246
 But these are trivial ills; whole cities burn,
 And peopled kingdoms into ashes turn.

The mountains kindle as the car draws near,
 Athos and Tmolus red with fires appear; 250
 Cæagrian Hæmus (then a single name)

And virgin Helicon increase the flame;
 Taurus and Cète glare amid the sky,
 And Ida, spite of all her fountains, dry.

Eryx, and Othrys, and Cithæron, glow, 255
 And Rhodopè, no longer cloth'd in snow;
 High Pindus, Mimas, and Parnassus sweat,
 And Ætna rages with redoubled heat.

Ev'n Scythia, through her hoary regions warm'd,
 In vain with all her native frost was arm'd. 260

Cover'd with flames, the tow'ring Apennine,
 And Caucasus, and proud Olympus shine;

And, where the long-extended Alps aspire,
Now stands a huge continu'd range of fire.

Th' astonish'd youth, where'er his eyes could turn,
Beheld the universe around him burn : 266

The world was in a blaze; nor could he bear
The sultry vapours, and the scorching air,
Which from below, as from a furnace, flow'd;
And now the axle-tree beneath him glow'd: 270

Lost in the whirling clouds, that round him broke,
And white with ashes, hov'ring in the smoke,
He flew where'er the horses drove, nor knew
Whither the horses drove, or where he flew.

'Twas then, they say, the swarthy moor begun 275
To change his hue, and blacken in the sun.

Then Libya first, of all her moisture drain'd,
Became a barren waste, a wild of sand.
The water-nymphs lament their empty urns,
Bœotia, robb'd of silver Dircè mourns, 280
Corinth Pyrénè's wasted spring bewails,
And Argos grieves whilst Amymonè fails.

The floods are drain'd from ev'ry distant coast,
Ev'n Tanais, though fix'd in ice, was lost:
Enrag'd Caïcus and Lycormas roar, 285

And Xanthus, fated to be burnt once more.
The fam'd Mæander, that unwearied strays
Through mazy windings, smokes in ev'ry maze.
From his lov'd Babylon Euphratès flies:
The big-swoln Ganges and the Danube rise 290

In thick'ning fumes, and darken half the skies.
In flames Ismenos and the Phasis roll'd,
And Tagus floating in his melted gold.
The swans, that on Cäyster often try'd
Their tuneful songs, now sung their last, and dy'd.

The frightened Nile ran off, and under ground 296
Conceal'd his head, nor can it yet be found:
His sev'n divided currents all are dry,

And where they roll'd, sev'n gaping trenches lie:
No more the Rhine or Rhone their course maintain,
Nor Tiber, of his promis'd empire vain. 301

The ground, deep-cleft, admits the dazzling ray,
And startles Pluto with the flash of day.
The seas shrink in, and to the sight disclose

Wide naked plains, where once their billows rose ;
 Their rocks are all discover'd, and increase 306
 The number of the scatter'd Cycladès.
 The fish in shoals about the bottom creep,
 Nor longer dares the crooked dolphin leap :
 Gasping for breath, th' unshapen Phocæ die, 310
 And on the boiling wave extended lie.
 Nereus, and Doris, with her virgin train,
 Seek out the last recesses of the main ;
 Beneath unfathomable depths they faint,
 And secret in their gloomy caverns pant. 315
 Stern Neptune thrice above the waves upheld
 His face, and thrice was by the flames repell'd.
 The Earth at length, on ev'ry side embrac'd
 With scalding seas that floated round her waist,
 When now she felt the springs and rivers come, 320
 And crowd within the hollow of her womb,
 Uplifted to the heav'ns her blasted head,
 And clapt her hand upon her brows, and said
 (But first impatient of the sultry heat,
 Sunk deeper down, and sought a cooler seat) : 325
 If you, great king of gods, my death approve,
 And I deserve it, let me die by Jove ;
 If I must perish by the force of fire,
 Let me transfix'd with thunderbolts expire.
 See whilst I speak, my breath the vapours choke 330
 (For now her face lay wrapt in clouds of smoke),
 See my sing'd hair, behold my faded eye,
 And wither'd face, where heaps of cinders lie !
 And does the plough for this my body tear ?
 This the reward for all the fruits I bear, 335
 Tortur'd with rakes, and harass'd all the year ?
 That herbs for cattle daily I renew,
 And food for man, and frankincense for you ?
 But grant me guilty ; what has Neptune done ?
 Why are his waters boiling in the sun ? 340
 The wavy empire, which by lot was giv'n,
 Why does it waste, and farther shrink from heav'n ?
 If I nor he your pity can provoke,
 See your own heav'ns, the heav'ns begin to smoke !
 Should once the sparkles catch those bright abodes,
 Destruction seizes on the heavens and gods ; 346

Atlas becomes unequal to his freight,
 And almost faints beneath the glowing weight.
 If heav'n, and earth, and sea, together burn,
 All must again into their chaos turn. 350

Apply some speedy cure, prevent our fate,
 And succour nature, ere it be too late.

She ceas'd; for, choked with vapours round her
 spread,

Down to the deepest shades she sunk her head.

Jove call'd to witness ev'ry pow'r above, 355
 And ev'n the god, whose son the chariot drove,
 That what he acts he is compell'd to do,
 Or universal ruin must ensue.

Straight he ascends the high ethereal throne,
 From whence he us'd to dart his thunder down, 360
 From whence his show'rs and storms he used to pour;
 But now could meet with neither storm nor show'r.
 Then, aiming at the youth, with lifted hand,
 Full at his head he hurl'd the forky brand,
 In dreadful thund'rings. Thus th' almighty sire 365
 Suppress'd the raging of the fires with fire.

At once from life and from the chariot driv'n,
 Th' ambitious boy fell thunder-struck from heaven.
 The horses started with a sudden bound,
 And flung the reins and chariot to the ground: 370
 The studded harness from their necks they broke;
 Here fell a wheel, and here a silver spoke;
 Here were the beam and axle torn away;
 And scatter'd o'er the earth, the shining fragments lay.
 The breathless Phaëton, with flaming hair 375
 Shot from the chariot like a falling star,
 That in a summer's ev'ning from the top
 Of heav'n drops down, or seems at least to drop;
 Till on the Po his blasted corse was hurl'd,
 Far from his country, in the western world. 380

The Latian nymphs came round him, and amaz'd,
 On the dead youth, transfix'd with thunder, gaz'd;
 And, whilst yet smoking from the bolt he lay,
 His shatter'd body to a tomb convey,
 And o'er the tomb an epitaph devise: 385
 ' Here he who drove the Sun's bright chariot lies;

His father's fiery steeds he could not guide,
But in the glorious enterprize he died.'

Apollo hid his face, and pin'd for grief,
And, if the story may deserve belief, 390
The space of one whole day is said to run,
From morn to wonted ev'n, without a sun :
The burning ruins, with a fainter ray,
Supply the sun, and counterfeit a day,—
A day, that still did nature's face disclose : 395
This comfort from the mighty mischief rose.

But Clyménè, enrag'd with grief, laments,
And as her grief inspires, her passion vents :
Wild for her son, and frantic in her woes,
With hair dishevell'd round the world she goes, 400
To seek where'er his body might be cast ;
Till on the borders of the Po, at last,
The name inscrib'd on the new tomb appears.
The dear, dear name, she bathes in flowing tears,
Hangs o'er the tomb, unable to depart, 405
And hugs the marble to her throbbing heart.

Her daughters too lament, and sigh, and mourn
(A fruitless tribute to their brother's urn),
And beat their naked bosoms, and complain,
And call aloud for Phaëton, in vain : 410
All the long night their mournful watch they keep,
And all the day stand round the tomb and weep.

Four times, revolving, the full moon return'd ;
So long the mother and the daughters mourn'd :
When now the eldest, Phaëthûsa, strove 415
To rest her weary limbs, but could not move ;
Lampetia would have helped her, but she found
Herself withheld, and rooted on the ground :
A third in wild affliction, as she grieves,
Would rend her hair, but fills her hand with leaves ;
One sees her thighs transform'd, another views 421
Her arms shot out, and branching into boughs.
And now their legs and breasts, and bodies stood
Crusted with bark, and hard'ning into wood ;
But still above were female heads display'd, 425
And mouths that call'd the mother to their aid.
What could, alas ! the weeping mother do ?
From this to that with eager haste she flew,

And kiss'd her sprouting daughters as they grew.
 She tears the bark that to each body cleaves, 430
 And from their verdant fingers strips the leaves:
 The blood came trickling, where she tore away
 The leaves and bark: The maids were heard to say,
 Forbear, mistaken parent, O! forbear;
 A wounded daughter in each tree you tear; 435
 Farewell! for ever. Here the bark increas'd,
 Clos'd on their faces, and their words suppress'd.

The new-made trees in tears of amber run;
 Which, harden'd into value by the sun,
 Distil for ever on the streams below: 440
 The limpid streams their radiant treasure shew,
 Mixt in the sand; whence the rich drops convey'd,
 Shine in the dress of the bright Latian maid.

Cycnus beheld the nymphs transform'd, ally'd
 To their dead brother on the mortal side, 445
 In friendship and affection nearer bound;
 He left the cities, and the realms he own'd,
 Through pathless fields, and lonely shores to range,
 And woods, made thicker by the sisters' change.
 Whilst here, within the dismal gloom alone, 450
 The melancholy monarch made his moan;
 His voice was lessen'd, as he try'd to speak,
 And issu'd through a long extended neck:
 His hair transforms to down, his fingers meet,
 In skinny films, and shape his oary feet; 455
 From both his sides the wings and feathers break:
 And from his mouth proceeds a blunted beak:
 All Cycnus now into a swan was turn'd,
 Who, still rememb'ring how his kinsman burn'd,
 To solitary pools and lakes retires, 460
 And loves the waters as oppos'd to fires.

Meanwhile Apollo in a gloomy shade
 (The native lustre of his brows decay'd),
 Indulging sorrow, sickens at the sight
 Of his own sunshine, and abhors the light: 465
 The hidden griefs, that in his bosom rise,
 Sadden his looks, and overcast his eyes,
 As when some dusky orb obstructs his ray,
 And sullies in a dim eclipse the day.

Now secretly with inward griefs he pin'd, 470
 Now warm resentments to his griefs he join'd,
 And now renounc'd his office to mankind.
 E'er since the birth of time (said he), I've borne
 A long ungrateful toil without return;
 Let now some other manage, if he dare, 475
 The fiery steeds, and mount the burning car;
 Or, if none else, let Jove his fortune try,
 And learn to lay his murd'ring thunder by;
 Then will he own, perhaps but own too late,
 My son deserv'd not so severe a fate. 480

The gods stand round him, as he mourns, and pray
 He would resume the conduct of the day,
 Nor let the world be lost in endless night:
 Jove too himself, descending from his height,
 Excuses what had happen'd, and intreats, 485
 Majestically mixing pray'rs and threats.
 Prevail'd upon, at length, again he took
 The harness'd steeds, that still with horror shook.
 And plies 'em with the lash, and whips 'em on,
 And, as he whips, upbraids 'em with his son. 490

The day was settled in its course; and Jove
 Walk'd the wide circuit of the heav'ns above,
 To search if any cracks or flaws were made;
 But all was safe: the earth he then survey'd,
 And cast an eye on ev'ry different coast, 495
 And ev'ry land; but on Arcadia most.
 Her fields he cloth'd, and cheer'd her blasted face,
 With running fountains, and with springing grass.
 No tracts of heav'n's destructive fire remain,
 The fields and woods revive, and nature smiles again.

But as the god walk'd to and fro the earth, 501
 And rais'd the plants, and gave the spring its birth,
 By chance a fair Arcadian nymph he view'd,
 And felt the lovely charmer in his blood.
 The nymph nor spun, nor dress'd with artful pride,
 Her vest was gather'd up, her hair was ty'd; 506
 Now in her hand a slender spear she bore,
 Now a light quiver on her shoulders wore;
 To chaste Diana from her youth inclin'd,
 The sprightly warriors of the wood she join'd. 510

Diana too the gentle huntress lov'd,
 Nor was there one of all the nymphs that rov'd
 O'er Mænalus, amid the maiden throng,
 More favour'd once;—but favour lasts not long.

The sun now shone in all its strength, and drove
 The heated virgin, panting to a grove; 516

The grove around a grateful shadow cast:
 She dropp'd her arrows, and her bow unbrac'd;
 She flung herself on the cool grassy bed;
 And on the painted quiver rais'd her head. 520

Jove saw the charming huntress unprepar'd,
 Stretch'd on the verdant turf without a guard.—
 Here I am safe (he cries) from Juno's eye;
 Or, should my jealous queen the theft descry,
 Yet would I venture on a theft like this, 525

And stand her rage for such, for such a bliss!—
 Diana's shape and habit straight he took,
 Soften'd his brows, and smooth'd his awful look,
 And mildly in a female accent spoke :

How fares my girl? how went the morning chase?
 To whom the virgin, starting from the grass, 531
 All hail, bright deity, whom I prefer

To Jove himself, though Jove himself were here.
 The god was nearer than she thought, and heard,
 Well pleas'd, himself before himself preferr'd. 535

He then salutes her with a warm embrace;
 And, ere she half had told the morning chase,
 With love inflam'd, and eager on his bliss,
 Smother'd her words and stopp'd her with a kiss;
 His kisses with unwonted ardour glow'd, 540
 Nor could Diana's shape conceal the god.

The virgin did whate'er a virgin could
 (Sure Juno must have pardon'd, had she view'd);
 With all her might against his force she strove;
 But how can mortal maids contend with Jove? 545

Possest at length of what his heart desir'd,
 Back to his heav'ns th' exulting god retir'd.
 The lovely huntress, rising from the grass,
 With downcast eyes, and with a blushing face,
 By shame confounded, and by fear dismay'd, 550
 Flew from the covert of the guilty shade,
 And almost, in the tumult of her mind,

Left her forgotten bow and shafts behind.

But now Diana, with a sprightly train
Of quiver'd virgins, bounding o'er the plain, 555
Call'd to the nymph; the nymph began to fear
A second fraud, a Jove disguis'd in her;
But, when she saw the sister nymphs, suppress'd
Her rising fears, and mingled with the rest.

How in the look does conscious guilt appear! 560
Slowly she mov'd, and loiter'd in the rear;
Nor lightly tripp'd, nor by the goddess ran,
As once she used, the foremost of the train.
Her looks were flush'd, and sullen was her mien,
That sure the virgin goddess (had she been 565
Aught but a virgin) must the guilt have seen:
'Tis said the nymphs saw all, and guess'd aright.
And now the Moon had nine times lost her light,
When Dian, fainting in the mid-day beams,
Found a cool covert, and refreshing streams, 570
That in soft murmurs through the forest flow'd,
And a smooth bed of shining gravel shew'd.

A covert so obscure, and streams so clear,
The goddess praised:—And now no spies are near,
Let's strip, my gentle maids, and wash (she cries).
Pleas'd with the motion, ev'ry maid complies: 576
Only the blushing huntress stood confus'd,
And form'd delays, and her delays excus'd;
In vain excus'd: her fellows round her press'd,
And the reluctant nymph by force undress'd. 580
The naked huntress all her shame reveal'd,
In vain her hands the pregnant womb conceal'd;
Begone! the goddess cries, with stern disdain;
Begone! nor dare the hallow'd stream to stain;
She fled, for ever banish'd from the train. 585

This, Juno heard, who long had watch'd her time
To punish the detested rival's crime;
The time was come: for, to enrage her more,
A lovely boy the teeming rival bore.
The goddess cast a furious look, and cry'd, 590
It is enough! I'm fully satisfied!
This boy shall stand a living mark, to prove
My husband's baseness, and the strumpet's love:
But vengeance shall awake: those guilty charms

That drew the Thunderer from Juno's arms, 595
 No longer shall their wonted force retain,
 Nor please the god, nor make the mortal vain.

This said, her hand within her hair she wound,
 Swung her to earth, and dragg'd her on the ground;
 The prostrate wretch lifts up her arms in pray'r; 600
 Her arms grow shaggy, and deform'd with hair,
 Her nails are sharpen'd into pointed claws,
 Her hands bear half her weight, and turn to paws;
 Her lips, that once could tempt a god, begin
 To grow distorted in an ugly grin. 605

And, lest the supplicating brute might reach
 The ears of Jove, she was depriv'd of speech:
 Her surly voice through a hoarse passage came,
 In savage sounds: her mind was still the same.
 The furry monster fix'd her eyes above, 610
 And heav'd her new, unwieldy paws to Jove,
 And begg'd his aid with inward groans; and though
 She could not call him false, she thought him so.

How did she fear to lodge in woods alone,
 And haunt the fields and meadows, once her own!
 How often would the deep-mouth'd dogs pursue, 616
 Whilst from her hounds the frighted huntress flew!
 How did she fear her fellow-brutes, and shun
 The shaggy bear, though now herself was one!
 How from the sight of rugged wolves retire, 620
 Although the grim Lycæon was her sire!

But now her son had fifteen summers told,
 Fierce at the chase, and in the forest bold;
 When as he beat the woods in quest of prey,
 He chanc'd to rouse his mother where she lay. 625
 She knew her son, and kept him in her sight,
 And fondly gaz'd: the boy was in a fright,
 And aim'd a pointed arrow at her breast,
 And would have slain his mother in the beast;
 But Jove forbad, and snatch'd 'em through the air
 In whirlwinds up to heav'n, and fix'd 'em there; 631
 Where the new constellations nightly rise,
 And add a lustre to the northern skies.

When Juno saw the rival in her height,
 Spangled with stars, and circled round with light,
 She sought old Ocean in his deep abodes, 636

And Tethys, both rever'd among the gods.
 They ask what brings her there? Ne'er ask (says she),
 What brings me here; heav'n is no place for me.
 You'll see, when night has cover'd all things o'er, 640
 Jove's starry bastard, and triumphant whore,
 Usurp the heavens; you'll see 'em proudly roll
 In their new orbs, and brighten all the pole.

And who shall now on Juno's altars wait,
 When those she hates grow greater by her hate? 645
 I on the nymph a brutal form impress'd,
 Jove to a goddess has transform'd the beast;
 This, this was all my weak revenge could do:
 But let the god his chaste amours pursue,
 And as he acted after Iö's rape, 650
 Restore th' adultrous to her former shape;
 Then may he cast his Juno off, and lead
 The great Lycäon's offspring to his bed.
 But you, ye venerable pow'rs, be kind,
 And, if my wrongs a due resentment find, 655
 Receive not in your waves their setting beams,
 Nor let the glaring strumpet taint your streams.

The goddess ended, and her wish was giv'n:
 Back she returned in triumph up to heav'n;
 Her gaudy peacocks drew her through the skies, 660
 Their tails were spotted with a thousand eyes;
 The eyes of Argus on their tails were rang'd,
 At the same time the raven's colour chang'd.

The raven once in snowy plumes was drest,
 White as the whitest dove's unsully'd breast, 665
 Fair as the guardian of the Capitol,
 Soft as the swan; a large and lovely fowl;
 His tongue, his prating tongue, had chang'd him quite
 To sooty blackness from the purest white.

The story of his change shall here be told: 670
 In Thessaly there liv'd a nymph of old,
 Coronis nam'd; a peerless maid she shin'd,
 Confest the fairest of the fairer kind.
 Apollo lov'd her, till her guilt he knew,
 While true she was, or whilst he thought her true;
 But his own bird, the raven, chanc'd to find 676
 The false one with a secret rival join'd.

Coronis begg'd him to suppress the tale,
 But could not with repeated pray'rs prevail.
 His milk-white pinions to the god he ply'd; 680
 The busy daw flew with him side by side,
 And by a thousand teasing questions drew
 Th' important secret from him as they flew.
 The daw gave honest counsel, though despis'd,
 And, tedious in her tattle, thus advis'd: 685
 Stay, silly bird, th' ill-natur'd task refuse,
 Nor be the bearer of unwelcome news.
 Be warn'd by my example: you discern
 What now I am, and what I was shall learn.
 My foolish honesty was all my crime; 690
 Then hear my story.—Once upon a time,
 The two-shap'd Ericthonius had his birth
 (Without a mother) from the teeming Earth;
 Minerva nurs'd him, and the infant laid
 Within a chest of twining osiers made. 695
 The daughters of king Cecrops undertook
 To guard the chest, commanded not to look
 On what was hid within. I stood to see
 The charge obey'd, perch'd on a neighb'ring tree.
 The sisters Pandrosos and Hersè keep 700
 The strict command; Aglauros needs would peep,
 And saw the monstrous infant in a fright,
 And call'd her sisters to the hideous sight:
 A boy's soft shape did to the waist prevail,
 But the boy ended in a dragon's tail. 705
 I told the stern Minerva all that pass'd;
 But for my pains, discarded and disgrac'd,
 The frowning goddess drove me from her sight,
 And for a fav'rite chose the bird of night.
 Be then no tell-tale: for I think my wrong 710
 Enough to teach a bird to hold her tongue.
 But you, perhaps, may think I was remov'd,
 As never by the heav'nly maid belov'd:
 But I was lov'd; ask Pallas if I lie;
 Though Pallas hate me now, she won't deny: 715
 For I, whom in a feather'd shape you view,
 Was once a maid, (by heav'n the story's true!)
 A blooming maid, and a king's daughter too.
 A crowd of lovers own'd my beauty's charms;

My beauty was the cause of all my harms : 720
 Neptune, as on his shores I wont to rove,
 Observ'd me in my walks, and fell in love.
 He made his courtship, he confess'd his pain,
 And offer'd force when all his arts were vain :
 Swift he pursu'd; I ran along the strand, 725
 Till, spent and weary'd on the sinking sand,
 I shriek'd aloud, with cries I fill'd the air
 To gods and men: nor god nor man was there:
 A virgin goddess heard a virgin's pray'r.
 For, as my arms I lifted to the skies, 730
 I saw black feathers from my fingers rise:
 I strove to fling my garment on the ground ;
 My garment turn'd to plumes, and girt me round :
 My hands to beat my naked bosom try;
 Nor naked bosom now nor hands had I : 735
 Lightly I tripp'd, nor weary as before
 Sunk in the sand, but skimm'd along the shore ;
 Till, rising on my wings, I was preferr'd
 To be the chaste Minerva's virgin bird :
 Preferr'd in vain ! I now am in disgrace : 740
 Nyctimène, the owl, enjoys my place.

On her incestuous life I need not dwell
 (In Lesbos still the horrid tale they tell),
 And of her dire amours you must have heard,
 For which she now does penance to a bird, 745
 That, conscious of her shame, avoids the light,
 And loves the gloomy cov'ring of the night;
 The birds, where'er she flutters, scare away
 The hooting wretch, and drive her from the day.

The raven, urg'd, at such impertinence 750
 Grew passionate, it seems, and took offence,
 And curs'd the harmless daw; the daw withdrew ;
 The raven to her injur'd patron flew,
 And found him out, and told the fatal truth
 Of false Coronis and the favour'd youth. 755

The god was wroth; the colour left his look,
 The wreath his head, the harp his hand forsook :
 His silver bow and feather'd shafts he took,
 And lodg'd an arrow in the tender breast,
 That had so often to his own been prest. 760
 Down fell the wounded nymph, and sadly groan'd,

And pull'd his arrow, reeking, from the wound;
 And welt'ring in her blood, thus faintly cry'd:
 Ah cruel god! though I have justly dy'd,
 What has, alas! my unborn infant done, 765
 That he should fall, and two expire in one?

This said, in agonies she fetch'd her breath;
 The god dissolves in pity at her death;
 He hates the bird that made her falsehood known,
 And hates himself for what himself had done; 770
 The feather'd shaft, that sent her to the fates,
 And own his hand, that sent the shaft, he hates.
 Fain would he heal the wound, and ease her pain,
 And tries the compass of his art in vain.
 Soon as he saw the lovely nymph expire, 775
 The pile made ready, and the kindling fire,
 With sighs and groans her obsequies he kept,
 And, if a god could weep, the god had wept.
 Her corse he kiss'd, and heav'nly incense brought,
 And solemniz'd the death himself had wrought. 780

But, lest his offspring should her fate partake,
 Spite of th' immortal mixture in his make,
 He ripp'd her womb, and set the child at large,
 And gave him to the Centaur Chiron's charge:
 Then in his fury black'd the raven o'er, 785
 And bid him prate in his white plumes no more.

Old Chiron took the babe with secret joy,
 Proud of the charge of the celestial boy.
 His daughter too, whom on the sandy shore
 The nymph Chariclè to the Centaur bore, 790
 With hair dishevell'd on her shoulders came
 To see the child, Ocyrrhœe was her name;
 She knew her father's arts, and could rehearse
 The depths of prophecy in sounding verse.
 Once as the sacred infant she survey'd, 795
 The god was kindled in the raving maid,
 And thus she utter'd her prophetic tale:—
 Hail, great physician of the world, all hail!
 Hail, mighty infant, who, in years to come,
 Shall heal the nations, and defraud the tomb! 800
 Swift be thy growth! thy triumphs unconfin'd!
 Make kingdoms thicker, and increase mankind.

Thy daring art shall animate the dead,
 And draw the thunder on thy guilty head:
 Then shalt thou die, but from the dark abode 805
 Rise up victorious, and be twice a god.
 And thou, my sire, not destin'd by thy birth
 To turn to dust, and mix with common earth,
 How will thou toss, and rave, and long to die,
 And quit thy claim to immortality; 810
 When thou shalt feel, enrag'd with inward pains,
 The Hydra's venom rankling in thy veins?
 The gods, in pity, shall contract thy date,
 And give thee over to the power of fate.
 Thus, ent'ring into destiny, the maid 815
 The secrets of offended Jove betray'd:
 More had she still to say; but now appears
 Opprest with sobs and sighs, and drown'd in tears.—
 My voice, says she, is gone, my language fails;
 Through ev'ry limb my kindred shape prevails; 820
 Why did the god this fatal gift impart,
 And with prophetic raptures swell my heart!
 What new desires are these? I long to pace
 O'er flow'ry meadows, and to feed on grass;
 I hasten to a brute, a maid no more; 825
 But why, alas! am I transform'd all o'er?
 My sire does half a human shape retain,
 And in his upper parts preserves the man.
 Her tongue no more distinct complaints affords,
 But in shrill accents, and mis-shapen words, 830
 Pours forth such hideous wailings, as declare
 The human form confounded in the mare:
 Till by degrees accomplish'd in the beast,
 She neigh'd outright, and all the steed express'd.
 Her stooping body on her hands is borne, 835
 Her hands are turn'd to hoofs, and shod in horn;
 Her yellow tresses ruffle in a mane,
 And, in a flowing tail, she frisks her train.
 The mare was finish'd in her voice and look,
 And a new name from the new figure took. 840

Sore wept the Centaur, and to Phœbus pray'd:
 But how could Phœbus give the Centaur aid?
 Degraded of his pow'r by angry Jove,

In Elis then a herd of beeves he drove;
 And wielded in his hand a staff of oak, 845
 And o'er his shoulders threw a shepherd's cloak;
 On sev'n compacted reeds he us'd to play,
 And on his rural pipe to waste the day.

As once, attentive to his pipe, he play'd,
 The crafty Hermès from the god convey'd 850
 A drove, that sep'rate from their fellows stray'd;
 The theft an old, insidious peasant view'd
 (They call him Battus in the neighbourhood),
 Hir'd by a wealthy Pylian prince to feed
 His fav'rite mares, and watch the gen'rous breed.
 The thievish god suspected him, and took 856
 The hind aside, and thus in whispers spoke:—
 Discover not the theft, who'er thou be,
 And take that milk-white heifer for the fee.—
 Go, stranger (cries the clown), securely on, 860
 That stone shall sooner tell; and shew'd a stone.

The god withdrew, but straight return'd again,
 In speech and habit like a country swain;
 And cries out, Neighbour hast thou seen a stray
 Of bullocks and of heifers pass this way? 865
 In the recov'ry of my cattle join,
 A bullock and a heifer shall be thine.—
 The peasant quick replies: You'll find 'em there
 In yon dark vale:—and in the vale they were.
 The double bribe had his false heart beguil'd: 870
 The god, successful in the trial, smil'd:—
 And dost thou thus betray myself to me?
 Me to myself dost thou betray? says he:—
 Then to a Touch-stone turns the faithless spy,
 And in his name records his infamy. 875

This done, the god flew up on high, and pass'd
 O'er lofty Athens, by Minerva grac'd,
 And wide Munichia, whilst his eyes survey
 All the vast region that beneath him lay.

'Twas now the feast, when each Athenian maid
 Her yearly homage to Minerva paid; 881
 In canisters, with garlands cover'd o'er,
 High on their heads their mystic gift they bore:
 And now, returning in a solemn train,
 The troop of shining virgins fill'd the plain. 885

The god, well-pleas'd, beheld the pompous show,
 And saw the bright procession pass below ;
 Then veer'd about, and took a wheeling flight,
 And hover'd o'er them : As the spreading kite,
 That smells the slaughter'd victim from on high, 890
 Flies at a distance, if the priests are nigh,
 And sails around, and keeps it in her eye ;
 So kept the god the virgin quire in view,
 And in slow winding circles round them flew.

As Lucifer excels the meanest star, 895
 Or, as the full-orb'd Phœbè Lucifer ;
 So much did Hersè all the rest outvie,
 And gave a grace to the solemnity.
 Hermès was fir'd, as in the clouds he hung :
 So the cold bullet, that, with fury slung 900
 From Balëaric engines, mounts on high,
 Glows in the whirl, and burns along the sky.
 At length he pitch'd upon the ground, and shew'd
 The form divine, the features of a god.

He knew their virtue o'er a female heart, 905
 And yet he strives to better them by art.
 He hangs his mantle loose, and sets to show
 The golden edging on the seam below ;
 Adjusts his flowing curls, and in his hand
 Waves, with an air, the sleep-procuring wand ; 910
 The glitt'ring sandals to his feet applies,
 And to each heel the well-trimm'd pinion ties.

His ornaments with nicest art display'd,
 He seeks th' apartment of the royal maid.
 The roof was all with polish'd iv'ry lin'd, 915
 That, richly mix'd, in clouds of tortoise shin'd.
 There rooms, contiguous, in a range were plac'd,
 The midmost by the beauteous Hersè grac'd ;
 Her virgin sisters lodg'd on either side.
 Aglauros first th' approaching god descry'd, 920
 And, as he cross'd her chamber, ask'd his name,
 And what his business was, and whence he came.

I come (reply'd the god), from heav'n to woo
 Your sister, and to make an aunt of you ;
 I am the son and messenger of Jove, 925
 My name is Mercury, my bus'ness love :
 Do you, kind damsel, take a lover's part,

And gain admittance to your sister's heart.

She star'd him in the face with looks amaz'd,
As when she on Minerva's secret gaz'd, 930

And asks a mighty treasure for her hire,
And, till he brings it, makes the god retire.
Minerva griev'd to see the nymph succeed;
And now rememb'ring the late impious deed,
When, disobedient to her strict command, 935

She touch'd the chest with an unhallow'd hand;
In big-swoln sighs her inward rage express'd,
That heav'd the rising Ægis on her breast;
Then sought out Envy in her dark abode,
Defil'd with ropy gore and clots of blood : 940

Shut from the winds and from the wholesome skies,
In a deep vale the gloomy dungeon lies,
Dismal and cold, where not a beam of light
Invades the winter, or disturbs the night.

Directly to the cave her course she steer'd ; 915

Against the gates her martial lance she rear'd ;
The gates flew open, and the fiend appear'd.
A pois'nous morsel in her teeth she chew'd,
And gorg'd the flesh of vipers for her food.
Minerva loathing, turn'd away her eye ; 950

The hideous monster, rising heavily,
Came stalking forward, with a sullen pace,
And left her mangled offals on the place.

Soon as she saw the goddess, gay and bright,
She fetch'd a groan at such a cheerful sight. 955

Livid and meagre were her looks ; her eye,
In foul, distorted glances, turn'd awry :
A hoard of gall her inward parts possess'd,
And spread a greenness o'er her canker'd breast ;
Her teeth were brown with rust, and, from her tongue,
In dangling drops, the stringy poisou hung. 961

She never smiles but when the wretched weep,
Nor lulls her malice with a moment's sleep.
Restless in spite ; while watchful to destroy,
She pines and sickens at another's joy ; 965

Foe to herself, distressing and distressed,
She bears her own tormentor in her breast.

The goddess gave (for she abhorr'd her sight)
A short command :—To Athens speed thy flight ;

On curst Aglauros try thy utmost art, 970
 And fix thy rankest venoms in her heart.

This said, her spear she push'd against the ground,
 And, mounting from it with an active bound,
 Flew off to heav'n : The hag, with eyes askew,
 Look'd up, and mutter'd curses as she flew ; 975
 For sore she fretted, and began to grieve
 At the success which she herself must give ;
 Then takes her staff, hung round with wreaths of thorn,
 And sails along, in a black whirlwind borne,
 O'er fields and flow'ry meadows : Where she steers
 Her baneful course, a mighty blast appears, 981
 Mildews and blight ; the meadows are defac'd,
 The fields, the flow'rs, and the whole year laid waste ;
 On mortals next, and peopled towns she falls,
 And breathes a burning plague among their walls. 985

When Athens she beheld, for arts renown'd,
 With peace made happy, and with plenty crown'd,
 Scarce could the hideous fiend from tears forbear,
 To find out nothing that deserv'd a tear.
 Th' apartment now she enter'd, where at rest 990
 Aglauros lay, with gentle sleep opprest.
 To execute Minerva's dire command,
 She strok'd the virgin with her canker'd hand ;
 Then prickly thorns into her breast convey'd,
 That stung to madness the devoted maid ; 995
 Her subtle venom still improves the smart,
 Frets in the blood, and festers in the heart.

To make the work more sure, a scene she drew,
 And plac'd before the dreaming virgin's view
 Her sister's marriage, and her glorious fate : 1000
 Th' imaginary bride appears in state ;
 The bridegroom with unwonted beauty glows ;
 For envy magnifies whate'er she shews.

Full of the dream, Aglauros pin'd away
 In tears all night, in darkness all the day ; 1005
 Consum'd like ice, that just begins to run,
 When feebly smitten by the distant sun ;
 Or, like unwholesome weeds that, set on fire,
 Are slowly wasted, and in smoke expire.
 Giv'n up to envy (for, in ev'ry thought, 1010
 The thorns, the venom, and the vision wrought),

Oft did she call on Death ; as oft decreed,
 Rather than see her sister's wish succeed,
 To tell her awful father what had past :
 At length before the door herself she cast ; 1015
 And, sitting on the ground, with sullen pride,
 A passage to the love-sick god deny'd.
 The god caress'd, and for admission pray'd,
 And sooth'd, in softest words, th' envenom'd maid.
 In vain he sooth'd : Begone ! (the maid replies), 1020
 Or here I keep my seat, and never rise.—
 Then keep thy seat, for ever ! (cries the god,)
 And touch'd the door, wide op'ning to his rod.—
 Fain would she rise, and stop him, but she found
 Her trunk too heavy to forsake the ground ; 1025
 Her joints are all benumb'd, her hands are pale,
 And marble now appears in ev'ry nail.
 As when a cancer in the body feeds,
 And gradual death, from limb to limb, proceeds ;
 So does the chillness to each vital part 1030
 Spread by degrees, and creeps into her heart ;
 Till, hard'ning ev'ry where, and speechless grown,
 She sits unmov'd, and freezes to a stone.
 But still her envious hue and sullen mein
 Are in the sedentary figure seen. 1035

When now the god his fury had allay'd,
 And taken vengeance of the stubborn maid,
 From where the bright Athenian turrets rise,
 He mounts aloft, and re-ascends the skies.
 Jove saw him enter the sublime abodes, 1040
 And, as he mix'd among the crowd of gods,
 Beckon'd him out, and drew him from the rest,
 And, in soft whispers, thus his will express'd :
 My trusty Hermès, by whose ready aid
 Thy sire's commands are through the world convey'd,
 Resume thy wings, exert thy utmost force, 1046
 And to the walls of Sidon speed thy course ;
 There find a herd of heifers wand'ring o'er
 The neighb'ring hill, and drive 'em to the shore.
 Thus spake the god, concealing his intent : 1050
 The trusty Hermès on his message went,
 And found the herd of heifers wand'ring o'er

A neighb'ring hill, and drove 'em to the shore ;
 Where the king's daughter, with a lovely train
 Of fellow-nymphs, was sporting on the plain. 1055

The dignity of empire laid aside
 (For love but ill agrees with kingly pride),
 The Ruler of the skies, the thund'ring god,
 Who shakes the world's foundations with a nod,
 Among a herd of lowing heifers ran, 1060
 Frisk'd in a bull, and bellow'd o'er the plain.

Large rolls of fat about his shoulders clung,
 And from his neck the double dewlap hung.
 His skin was whiter than the snow that lies
 Unsully'd by the breath of southern skies ; 1065

Small shining horns on his curl'd forehead stand,
 As turn'd and polish'd by the workman's hand ;
 His eye-balls roll'd, not formidably bright,
 But gaz'd and languish'd with a gentle light.
 His ev'ry look was peaceful, and express'd 1070
 The softness of the lover in the beast.

Agénor's royal daughter, as she play'd
 Among the fields, the milk-white bull survey'd,
 And view'd his spotless body with delight,
 And, at a distance, kept him in her sight. 1075

At length she pluck'd the rising flow'rs, and fed
 The gentle beast, and fondly strok'd his head.
 He stood well pleas'd to touch the charming fair,
 But hardly could confine his pleasure there.
 And now he wantons o'er the neighb'ring strand,
 Now rolls his body on the yellow sand ; 1081

And now, perceiving all her fears decay'd,
 Comes tossing forward to the royal maid ;
 Gives her his breast to stroke, and downward turns
 His grisly brow, and gently stoops his horns. 1085

In flow'ry wreaths the royal virgin dress'd
 His bending horns, and kindly clapt his breast.
 Till now grown wanton, and devoid of fear,
 Not knowing that she pressed the Thunderer,
 She plac'd herself upon his back, and rode 1090
 O'er fields and meadows, seated on the god.

He gently march'd along, and, by degrees,
 Left the dry meadow, and approach'd the seas ;
 Where now he dips his hoofs, and wets his thighs,

Now plunges in, and carries off the prize. 1095
 The frighted nymph looks backward on the shore,
 And hears the tumbling billows round her roar;
 But still she holds him fast: one hand is borne
 Upon his back; the other grasps a horn:
 Her train of rustling garments flies behind, 1100
 Swells in the air, and hovers in the wind.

Through storms and tempests he the virgin bore,
 And lands her safe on the Dictéan shore;
 Where now, in his divinest form array'd,
 In his true shape he captivates the maid; 1105
 Who gazes on him, and, with wond'ring eyes,
 Beholds the new, majestic figure, rise,
 His glowing features, and celestial light,
 And all the god discover'd to her sight.

BOOK III.

TRANSLATED BY MR. ADDISON.

The story of Cadmus. The transformation of Actæon into a stag.
 The birth of Bacchus. The transformation of Tiresias. The
 transformation of Echo. The story of Narcissus. The story of
 Pentheus: the mariners transformed into dolphins: the death
 of Pentheus.

WHEN now Agénor had his daughter lost,
 He sent his son to search on ev'ry coast;
 And sternly bade him to his arms restore
 The darling maid, or see his face no more,
 But live an exile in a foreign clime; 5
 Thus was the father pious to a crime.

The restless youth search'd all the world around;
 But how can Jove in his amours be found?
 When tir'd at length with unsuccessful toil,
 To shun his angry sire and native soil, 10
 He goes a suppliant to the Delphic dome;
 There asks the god what new-appointed home
 Should end his wand'rings, and his toils relieve?
 The Delphic oracles this answer give:

Behold among the fields a lonely cow, 15
 Unworn with yokes, unbroken to the plough;

Mark well the place where first she lays her down,
 There measure out thy walls, and build thy town,
 And from thy guide Bœotia call the land,
 In which the destin'd walls and town shall stand. 20

No sooner had he left the dark abode,
 Big with the promise of the Delphic god,
 When in the fields the fatal cow he view'd,
 Nor gall'd with yokes, nor worn with servitude :
 Her gently at a distance he pursu'd ; 25
 And, as he walk'd aloof, in silence pray'd
 To the great pow'r whose counsels he obey'd.
 Her way through flow'ry Panopè she took,
 And now, Cephisus, cross'd thy silver brook ;
 When to the heav'ns her spacious front she rais'd, 30
 And bellow'd thrice, then backward turning, gaz'd
 On those behind, till on the destin'd place
 She stoop'd, and couch'd, amid the rising grass.

Cadmus salutes the soil, and gladly hails
 The new-found mountains and the nameless vales, 35
 And thanks the gods, and turns about his eye
 To see his new dominions round him lie ;
 Then sends his servants to a neighb'ring grove
 For living streams, a sacrifice to Jove.

O'er the wide plain there rose a shady wood 40
 Of aged trees ; in its dark bosom stood
 A bushy thicket, pathless and unworn,
 O'errun with brambles, and perplex'd with thorn :
 Amidst the brake a hollow den was found,
 With rocks and shelving arches vaulted round. 45

Deep in the dreary den, conceal'd from day,
 Sacred to Mars, a mighty dragon lay,
 Bloated with poison to a monstrous size ;
 Fire broke in flashes when he glanc'd his eyes :
 His tow'ring crest was glorious to behold, 50
 His shoulders and his sides were scal'd with gold ;
 Three tongues he brandish'd when he charg'd his foes ;
 His teeth stood jaggy in three dreadful rows.

The Tyrians in the den for water sought,
 And with their urns explor'd the hollow vault : 55
 From side to side their empty urns rebound,
 And rouse the sleeping serpent with their sound.
 Straight he bestirs him, and is seen to rise ;

And now with dreadful hissings fills the skies,
 And darts his forky tongues, and rolls his glaring eyes.
 The Tyrians drop their vessels in the fright, 61
 All pale and trembling at the hideous sight.
 Spire above spire uprear'd in air he stood,
 And gazing round him, overlook'd the wood :
 Then floating on the ground in circles roll'd ; 65
 Then leap'd upon them in a mighty fold.
 Of such a bulk, and such a monstrous size,
 The serpent in the polar circle lies,
 That stretches over half the northern skies.
 In vain the Tyrians on their arms rely, 70
 In vain attempt to fight, in vain to fly :
 All their endeavours and their hopes are vain ;
 Some die entangled in the winding train ;
 Some are devour'd, or feel a loathsome death,
 Swoln up with blasts of pestilential breath. 75
 And now the scorching sun was mounted high,
 In all its lustre, to the noon-day sky ;
 When, anxious for his friends, and fill'd with cares,
 To search the woods th' impatient chief prepares.
 A lion's hide around his loins he wore, 80
 The well-pois'd jav'lin to the field he bore,
 Inur'd to blood ; the far-destroying dart ;
 And, the best weapon, an undaunted heart.
 Soon as the youth approach'd the fatal place,
 He saw his servants breathless on the grass ; 85
 The scaly foe amid their corse he view'd,
 Basking at ease, and feasting in their blood.
 Such friends (he cries) deserv'd a longer date ;
 But Cadmus will revenge or share their fate.
 Then heav'd a stone, and rising to the throw, 90
 He sent it in a whirlwind at the foe :
 A tow'r assaulted by so rude a stroke,
 With all its lofty battlements had shook ;
 But nothing here th' unwieldy rock avails,
 Rebounding harmless from the plated scales, 95
 That, firmly join'd, preserv'd him from a wound,
 With native armour crusted all around.
 With more success the dart unerring flew,
 Which at his back the raging warrior threw ;
 Amid the plated scales it took its course, 100

And in the spinal marrow spent its force.
 The monster hiss'd aloud, and rag'd in vain,
 And writh'd his body to and fro with pain ;
 He bit the dart, and wrench'd the wood away,
 The point still buried in the marrow lay. 105
 And now his rage, increasing with his pain,
 Reddens his eyes, and beats in every vein ;
 Churn'd in his teeth the foamy venom rose,
 Whilst from his mouth a blast of vapours flows,
 Such as th' infernal Stygian waters cast : 110
 The plants around him wither in the blast.
 Now in a maze of rings he lies enroll'd,
 Now all unravell'd, and without a fold :
 Now, like a torrent, with a mighty force
 Bears down the forest in his boist'rous course. 115
 Cadmus gave back, and on the lion's spoil
 Sustain'd the shock, then forc'd him to recoil ;
 The pointed jav'lin warded off his rage :
 Mad with his pains, and furious to engage,
 The serpent champs the steel, and bites the spear, 120
 Till blood and venom all the point besmear,
 But still the hurt he yet receiv'd was slight ;
 For, whilst the champion with redoubled might
 Strikes home the jav'lin, his retiring foe
 Shrinks from the wound, and disappoints the blow.
 The dauntless hero still pursues his stroke, 126
 And presses forward, till a knotty oak
 Retards his foe, and stops him in the rear ;
 Full in his throat he plung'd the fatal spear,
 That in th' extended neck a passage found, 130
 And pierc'd the solid timber through the wound.
 Fix'd to the reeling trunk, with many a stroke
 Of his huge tail, he lash'd the sturdy oak ;
 Till spent with toil, and lab'ring hard for breath,
 He now lay twisting in the pangs of death. 135
 Cadmus beheld him wallow in a flood
 Of swimming poison, intermix'd with blood ;
 When suddenly a speech was heard from high
 (The speech was heard, nor was the speaker nigh),
 Why dost thou thus with secret pleasure see, 140
 Insulting man ! what thou thyself shalt be ?
 Astonish'd at the voice, he stood amaz'd,

And all around with inward horror gaz'd ;
 When Pallas, swift descending from the skies,
 Pallas, the guardian of the bold and wise, 145
 Bids him plough up the field, and scatter round
 The dragon's teeth o'er all the furrow'd ground ;
 Then tells the youth how to his wond'ring eyes
 Embattled armies from the field should rise.

He sows the teeth at Pallas's command, 150
 And flings the future people from his hand.
 The clods grow warm, and crumble where he sows ;
 And now the pointed spears advance in rows ;
 Now nodding plumes appear, and shining crests,
 Now the broad shoulders and the rising breasts ; 155
 O'er all the field the breathing harvest swarms,
 A growing host, a crop of men and arms.
 So through the parting stage a figure rears
 Its body up, and limb by limb appears
 By just degress ; till all the man arise, 160
 And in his full proportion strikes the eyes.

Cadmus surpris'd, and startled at the sight
 Of his new foes, prepar'd himself for fight :
 When one cry'd out, Forbear, fond man, forbear,
 To mingle in a blind, promiscuous war. 165
 This said, he struck his brother to the ground,
 Himself expiring by another's wound ;
 Nor did the third his conquest long survive,
 Dying ere scarce he had begun to live.

The dire example ran through all the field, 170
 Till heaps of brothers were by brothers kill'd.
 The furrows swam in blood ; and only five
 Of all the vast increase were left alive ;
 Echion one, at Pallas's command,
 Let fall the guiltless weapon from his hand, 175
 And with the rest a peaceful treaty makes,
 Whom Cadmus as his friends and partners takes :
 So founds a city on the promis'd earth,
 And gives his new Bœotian empire birth. [guess'd

Here Cadmus reign'd, and now one would have
 The royal founder in his exile blest : 181
 Long did he live within his new abodes,
 Ally'd by marriage to the deathless gods ;
 And, in a fruitful wife's embraces old,

A long increase of children's children told : 185
 But no frail man, however great or high,
 Can be concluded blest before he die.

Actæon was the first of all his race,
 Who griev'd his grandsire in his borrow'd face;
 Condemn'd by stern Diana to bemoan 190
 The branching horns, and visage not his own;
 To shun his once-lov'd dogs, to bound away,
 And from their huntsman to become their prey.
 And yet consider why the change was wrought,
 You'll find it his misfortune, not his fault; 195
 Or, if a fault, it was the fault of chance :
 For how can guilt proceed from ignorance ?

In a fair chase a shady mountain stood, [blood.
 Well-stored with game, and mark'd with trails of
 Here did the huntsmen, till the heat of day, 200
 Pursue the stag, and load themselves with prey ;
 When thus Actæon, calling to the rest :
 My friends (says he), our sport is at the best :
 The sun is high advanc'd, and downward sheds
 His burning beams directly on our heads ; 205
 Then, by consent, abstain from farther spoils,
 Call off the dogs, and gather up the toils ;
 And ere to-morrow's sun begins his race,
 Take the cool morning to renew the chase.—
 They all consent, and in a cheerful train 210
 The jolly huntsmen, laden with the slain,
 Return in triumph from the sultry plain.

Down in a vale with pine and cypress clad,
 Refresh'd with gentle winds, and brown with shade
 (The chaste Diana's private haunt), there stood, 215
 Full in the centre of the darksome wood,
 A spacious grotto, all around o'er-grown
 With hoary moss, and arch'd with pumice stone.
 From out its rocky cleft the waters flow,
 And, trickling, swell into a lake below. 220
 Nature had ev'ry where so play'd her part,
 That ev'ry where she seem'd to vie with art.
 Here the bright goddess, toil'd and chaf'd with heat,
 Was wont to bathe her in the cool retreat.

Here did she now with all her train resort, 225
 Panting with heat, and breathless from the sport ;

Her armour-bearer laid her bow aside,
 Some loos'd her sandals, some her veil unty'd;
 Each busy nymph her proper part undress'd;
 While Cocalè, more handy than the rest, 230
 Gather'd her flowing hair, and in a noose
 Bound it together, whilst her own hung loose.
 Five of the more ignoble sort, by turns,
 Fetch up the water, and unlade the urns.

Now all undrest the shining goddess stood, 235
 When young Actæon, wilder'd in the wood,
 To the cool grot by his hard fate betray'd,
 The fountains fill'd with naked nymphs survey'd.
 The frighted virgins shriek'd at the surprise
 (The forest echo'd with their piercing cries), 240
 Then in a huddle round their goddess press'd:
 She, proudly eminent above the rest,
 With blushes glow'd; such blushes as adorn
 The ruddy welkin, or the purple morn:
 And, tho' the crowding nymphs her body hide, 245
 Half backward shrunk, and view'd him from
 aside.

Surpris'd, at first she would have snatch'd her bow,
 But sees the circling waters round her flow;
 These in the hollow of her hand she took,
 And dash'd 'em in his face while thus she spoke: 250
 Tell, if thou canst, the wondrous sight disclos'd,
 A goddess naked to thy view expos'd.

This said, the man began to disappear
 By slow degrees, and ended in a deer:
 A rising horn on either brow he wears, 255
 And stretches out his neck, and pricks his ears;
 Rough is his skin, with sudden hairs o'er-grown,
 His bosom pants with fears before unknown:
 Transform'd at length, he flies away in haste,
 And wonders why he flies away so fast. 260
 But as by chance, within a neighb'ring brook,
 He saw his branching horns, and alter'd look,
 Wretched Actæon! in a doleful tone
 He try'd to speak, but only gave a groan;
 And as he wept, within the wat'ry glass, 265
 He saw the big round drops, with silent pace,
 Run trickling down a savage, hairy face.
 What should he do? Or seek his old abodes,

Or herd among the deer, and skulk in woods?
 Here shame dissuades him, there his fear prevails, 270
 And each by turns his aching heart assails.

As he thus ponders, he behind him spies
 His op'ning hounds, and now he hears their cries:
 A gen'rous pack, or to maintain the chase,
 Or snuff the vapour from the scented grass. 275

He bounded off with fear, and swiftly ran
 O'er craggy mountains, and the flow'ry plain;
 Through brakes and thickets forc'd his way, and flew
 Through many a ring, where once he did pursue.
 In vain he oft endeavour'd to proclaim 280

His new misfortune, and to tell his name;
 Nor voice nor words the brutal tongue supplies;
 From shouting men, and horns, and dogs, he flies,
 Deafen'd and stunn'd with their promiscuous cries.
 When now the fleetest of the pack, that press'd 285

Close at his heels, and sprung before the rest,
 Had fasten'd on him, straight another pair,
 Hung on his wounded haunch, and held him there,
 Till all the pack came up, and every hound
 Tore the sad huntsman grovelling on the ground, 290
 Who now appear'd but one continued wound.

With dropping tears his bitter fate he moans,
 And fills the mountains with his dying groans.
 His servants, with a piteous look he spies,
 And turns about his supplicating eyes: 295

His servants, ignorant of what had chanc'd,
 With eager haste and joyful shouts advanc'd,
 And call'd their lord Actæon to the game:
 He shook his head in answer to the name;
 He heard, but wish'd he had indeed been gone, 300
 Or only to have stood a looker-on:

But, to his grief, he finds himself too near,
 And feels his rav'nous dogs with fury tear
 Their wretched master, panting, in a deer.

Actæon's suff'rings, and Diana's rage, 305
 Did all the thoughts of men and gods engage;
 Some call'd the evils, which Diana wrought,
 Too great and disproportion'd to the fault;
 Others again, esteem'd Actæon's woes

Fit for a virgin goddess to impose. 310
 The hearers into different parts divide,
 And reasons are produc'd on either side.

Juno alone, of all that heard the news,
 Nor would condemn the goddess, nor excuse :
 She heeded not the justice of the deed, 315
 But joy'd to see the race of Cadmus bleed;
 For still she kept Europa in her mind,
 And, for her sake, detested all her kind.
 Besides, to aggravate her hate, she heard
 How Sémelè to Jove's embrace preferr'd, 320
 Was now grown big with an immortal load,
 And carry'd in her womb a future god.
 Thus terribly incens'd, the goddess broke
 To sudden fury, and abruptly spoke :

Are my reproaches of so small a force? 325
 'Tis time then I pursue another course :
 It is decreed the guilty wretch shall die,
 If I'm indeed the mistress of the sky,
 If rightly styl'd among the pow'rs above,
 The wife and sister of the thund'ring Jove, 330
 (And none can sure a sister's right deny);
 It is decreed the guilty wretch shall die.
 She boasts an honour I can hardly claim,
 Pregnant she rises to a mother's name ;
 While proud and vain she triumphs in her Jove, 335
 And shews the glorious tokens of his love:
 But if I'm still the mistress of the skies,
 By her own lover the fond beauty dies.
 This said, descending in a yellow cloud,
 Before the gates of Sémelè she stood. 340

Old Beröe's decrepit shape she wears,
 Her wrinkled visage, and her hoary hairs ;
 Whilst in her trembling gait she totters on,
 And learns to tattle in the nurse's tone.
 The goddess, thus disguis'd in age, beguil'd, 345
 With pleasing stories, her false foster-child.
 Much did she talk of love, and when she came
 To mention to the nymph her lover's name,
 Fetching a sigh, and holding down her head,
 'Tis well (says she), if all be true that's said. 350
 But trust me, child, I'm much inclin'd to fear,

Some counterfeit in this your Jupiter.
 Many an honest, well-designing maid,
 Has been by these pretended gods betray'd :
 But if he be indeed the thund'ring Jove, 355
 Bid him, when next he courts the rites of love,
 Descend triumphant from th' ethereal sky,
 In all the pomp of his divinity,
 Encompass'd round by those celestial charms,
 With which he fills th' immortal Juno's arms. 360

Th' unwary nymph, ensnar'd with what she said,
 Desir'd of Jove, when next he sought her bed,
 To grant a certain gift which she would choose;—
 Fear not (reply'd the god) that I'll refuse
 Whate'er you ask : may Styx confirm my voice; 365
 Choose what you will, and you shall have your choice.
 Then (says the nymph), when next you seek my arms,
 May you descend in those celestial charms,
 With which your Juno's bosom you inflame,
 And fill with transport heav'n's immortal dame. 370
 The god, surpris'd, would fain have stopp'd her voice,
 But he had sworn, and she had made her choice.

To keep his promise he ascends, and shrouds
 His awful brow in whirlwinds and in clouds;
 Whilst all around, in terrible array, 375
 His thunders rattle, and his lightnings play.
 And yet the dazzling lustre to abate,
 He set not out in all his pomp and state,
 Clad in the mildest lightning of the skies,
 And arm'd with thunder of the smallest size; 380
 Not those huge bolts, by which the giants slain
 Lay overthrown on the Phlegréan plain:
 'Twas of a lesser mould, and lighter weight;
 They call it thunder of a second-rate;
 For, the rough Cyclops, who, by Jove's command, 385
 Temper'd the bolt, and turn'd it to his hand,
 Work'd up less flame and fury in its make,
 And quench'd it sooner in the standing lake.
 Thus dreadfully adorn'd, with horror bright,
 Th' illustrious god, descending from his height, 390
 Came rushing on her in a storm of light.

The mortal dame, too feeble to engage
 The lightning's flashes, and the thunder's rage,

Consum'd amidst the glories she desir'd,
And in the terrible embrace expir'd. 395

But, to preserve his offspring from the tomb,
Jove took him, smoking, from the blasted womb;
And, if on ancient tales we may rely,
Inclos'd th' abortive infant in his thigh.
Here when the babe had all his time fulfill'd, 400
Ino first took him for her foster-child;
Then the Niséans, in their dark abode,
Nurs'd secretly, with milk, the thriving god.

'Twas now, while these transactions pass'd on
earth,

And Bacchus thus procur'd a second birth, 405
When Jove, dispos'd to lay aside the weight
Of public empire, and the cares of state,
As to his queen in nectar bowls he quaff'd:
In troth, says he (and as he spoke, he laugh'd),
The sense of pleasure in the male is far 410
More dull and dead, than what you females share.

Juno, the truth of what was said, deny'd;
Tiresias, therefore, must the cause decide,
For he the pleasure of each sex had try'd.

It happen'd once, within a shady wood, 415
Two twisted snakes he in conjunction view'd,
When with his staff their slimy folds he broke,
And lost his manhood at the fatal stroke.

But, after sev'n revolving years, he view'd
The self-same serpents in the self-same wood; 420

And if (says he) such virtue in you lie,
That he who dares your slimy folds untie,
Must change his kind, a second stroke I'll try.
Again he struck the snakes, and stood again
New-sex'd, and straight recover'd into man. 425

Him, therefore, both the deities create
The sov'reign umpire in their grand debate:
And he declar'd for Jove: When Juno fir'd,
More than so trivial an affair requir'd,
Depriv'd him, in her fury, of his sight, 430
And left him groping round in sudden night.
But Jove (for so it is in heav'n decreed,
That no one god repeal another's deed)

Irradiates all his soul with inward light, 434
 And with the prophet's art relieves the want of sight.

Fam'd far and near for knowing things to come,
 From him th' inquiring nations sought their doom;
 The fair Liriopè his answers try'd,
 And first th' unerring prophet justify'd.
 This nymph the god Cephisus had abus'd, 440
 With all his winding waters circumfus'd,
 And on the Nereid got a lovely boy,
 Whom her soft maids ev'n then beheld with joy.

The tender dame, solicitous to know
 Whether her child should reach old age or no, 445
 Consults the sage Tiresias; who replies,
 If e'er he knows himself, he surely dies.

Long liv'd the dubious mother in suspense,
 Till time unriddled all the prophet's sense.
 Narcissus now his sixteenth year began, 450
 Just turn'd of boy, and on the verge of man;
 Many a friend the blooming youth caress'd:
 Many a love-sick maid her flame confess'd;
 Such was his pride, in vain the friend caress'd;
 The love-sick maid in vain her flame confess'd. 455

Once, in the woods, as he pursu'd the chase,
 The babbling Echo had descry'd his face;
 She, who in other's words her silence breaks,
 Nor speaks herself but when another speaks.
 Echo was then a maid, of speech bereft, 460
 Of wonted speech; for, though her voice was left,
 Juno a curse did on her tongue impose,
 To sport with ev'ry sentence in the close.
 Full often, when the goddess might have caught
 Jove, and her rivals, in the very fault, 465
 This nymph, with subtle stories, would delay
 Her coming, till the lovers slipp'd away.
 The goddess found out the deceit in time,
 And then she cry'd: That tongue for this thy crime,
 Which could so many subtle tales produce, 470
 Shall be hereafter but of little use.

Hence 'tis she prattles in a fainter tone,
 With mimic sounds, and accents not her own.

This love-sick virgin, overjoy'd to find

The boy alone, still follow'd him behind; 475
 When glowing warmly at her near approach,
 As sulphur blazes at the taper's touch,
 She long'd her hidden passion to reveal,
 And tell her pains, but had not words to tell:
 She can't begin, but waits for the rebound, 480
 To catch his voice, and to return the sound.
 The nymph, when nothing could Narcissus move,
 Still dash'd with blushes for her slighted love,
 Liv'd in the shady covert of the woods,
 In solitary caves, and dark abodes; 485
 Where, pining, wander'd the rejected fair,
 'Till harass'd out, and worn away with care,
 The sounding skeleton, of blood bereft,
 Besides her bones and voice, had nothing left.
 Her bones are petrify'd, her voice is found 490
 In vaults, where still it doubles every sound.

Thus did the nymphs in vain caress the boy,
 He still was lovely, but he still was coy;
 When one fair virgin of the slighted train
 Thus pray'd the gods, provok'd by his disdain: 495
 O, may he love like me, and love like me in vain!—
 Rhamnusia pity'd the neglected fair,
 And, with just vengeance, answer'd to her pray'r.

There stands a fountain in a darksome wood,
 Nor stain'd with falling leaves, nor rising mud; 500
 Untroubled by the breath of winds it rests,
 Unsully'd by the touch of men or beasts;
 High bow'rs of shady trees above it grow,
 And rising grass and cheerful greens below.
 Pleas'd with the form and coolness of the place, 505
 And over-heated by the morning chase,
 Narcissus on the grassy verdure lies:
 But whilst within the crystal fount he tries
 To quench his heat, he feels new heats arise.
 For, as his own bright image he survey'd, 510
 He fell in love with the fantastic shade;
 And o'er the fair resemblance hung unmov'd,
 Nor knew, fond youth! it was himself he lov'd.
 The well-turn'd neck and shoulders he descries,
 The spacious forehead and the sparkling eyes; 515

The hands that Bacchus might not scorn to shew,
 And hair that round Apollo's head might flow ;
 With all the purple youthfulness of face,
 That gently blushes in the wat'ry glass ;
 By his own flames consum'd, the lover lies, 520
 And gives himself the wound by which he dies.

To the cold water oft he joins his lips,
 Oft catching at the beauteous shade he dips
 His arms, as often from himself he slips.
 Nor knows he who it is his arms pursue 525
 With eager clasps, but loves he knows not who.

What could, fond youth, this helpless passion move ?
 What kindle in thee this unpity'd love ?
 Thy own warm blush within the water glows,
 With thee the colour'd shadow comes and goes, 530
 Its empty being on thyself relies ;
 Step thou aside, and the frail charmer dies.

Still o'er the fountain's wat'ry gleam he stood,
 Mindless of sleep, and negligent of food.
 Still view'd his face and languish'd as he view'd. 535
 At length he rais'd his head, and thus began
 To vent his griefs, and tell the woods his pain :
 You trees (says he), and thou surrounding grove,
 Who oft have been the kindly scenes of love,
 Tell me, if e'er within your shades did lie 540
 A youth so tortur'd, so perplex'd as I ?

I, who before me see the charming fair,
 Whilst there he stands, and yet he stands not there ;
 In such a maze of love my thoughts are lost :
 And yet no bulwark'd town, nor distant coast, 545
 Preserves the beauteous youth from being seen,
 No mountains rise, nor oceans flow between.

A shallow water hinders my embrace ;
 And yet the lovely mimic wears a face
 That kindly smiles, and when I bend to join 550
 My lips to his, he fondly bends to mine.

Hear, gentle youth, and pity my complaint,
 Come from thy well, thou fair inhabitant.
 My charms an easy conquest have obtain'd
 O'er other hearts, by thee alone disdain'd. 555
 But why should I despair ? I'm sure he burns
 With equal flames, and languishes by turns.

Whene'er I stoop, he offers at a kiss,
 And when my arms I stretch, he stretches his.
 His eye with pleasure on my face he keeps, 560
 He smiles my smiles, and when I weep he weeps;
 Whene'er I speak, his moving lips appear
 To utter something, which I cannot hear.

Ah, wretched me! I now begin too late
 To find out all the long, perplex'd deceit: 565
 It is myself I love, myself I see;
 The gay delusion is a part of me.
 I kindle up the fires by which I burn,
 And my own beauties from the well return.
 Whom should I court? how utter my complaint? 570
 Enjoyment but produces my restraint,
 And too much plenty makes me die for want.
 How gladly would I from myself remove!
 And at a distance set the thing I love.

My breast is warm'd with such unusual fire, 575
 I wish him absent whom I most desire.
 And now I faint with grief; my fate draws nigh;
 In all the pride of blooming youth I die.
 Death will the sorrows of my heart relieve:
 O, might the visionary youth survive, 580
 I should with joy my latest breath resign;
 But, oh! I see his fate involv'd in mine.

This said, the weeping youth again return'd
 To the clear fountain, where again he burn'd;
 His tears defac'd the surface of the well, 585
 With circle after circle, as they fell:
 And now the lovely face but half appears,
 O'errun with wrinkles, and deform'd with tears.

Ah, whither (cries Narcissus) dost thou fly?
 Let me still feed the flame by which I die; 590
 Let me still see, though I'm no farther blest:—
 Then rends his garment off, and beats his breast;
 His naked bosom redden'd with the blow,
 In such a blush as purple clusters shew,
 Ere yet the sun's autumnal heats refine 595
 Their sprightly juice, and mellow it to wine.
 The glowing beauties of his breast he spies,
 And with a new, redoubled passion dies.
 As wax dissolves, as ice begins to run,

And trickle into drops before the sun ; 600
 So melts the youth, and languishes away,
 His beauty withers, and his limbs decay ;
 And none of those attractive charms remain,
 To which the slighted Echo sued in vain.

She saw him in his present misery, 605
 Whom, spite of all her wrongs, she griev'd to see.

She answer'd sadly to the lover's moan,
 Sigh'd back his sighs, and groan'd to ev'ry groan :
 Ah, youth, belov'd in vain ! Narcissus cries ;
 ' Ah, youth, belov'd in vain !' the nymph replies. 610

Farewell! says he;—the parting sound scarce fell
 From his faint lips ; but she reply'd, ' Farewell !'
 Then on th' unwholesome earth he gasping lies,
 Till death shuts up those self-admiring eyes.
 To the cold shades his fitting ghost retires, 615
 And in the Stygian waves itself admires.

For him the Naiads and the Dryads mourn,
 Whom the sad Echo answers in her turn.
 And now the sister-nymphs prepare his urn ;
 When, looking for his corse, they only found 620
 A rising stalk, with yellow blossoms crown'd.

This sad event gave blind Tiresias fame,
 Through Greece establish'd in a prophet's name.

Th' unhallow'd Pentheus, only, durst deride
 The cheated people, and their eyeless guide: 625
 To whom the prophet, in his fury, said,
 Shaking the hoary honours of his head :

'Twere well, presumptuous man, 'twere well for thee,
 If thou wert eyeless too, and blind like me :

For the time comes,—nay, 'tis already here, 630
 When the young god's solemnities appear :

Which if thou dost not with just rites adorn,
 Thy impious carcase, into pieces torn,
 Shall strew the woods, and hang on ev'ry thorn.

Then, then, remember what I now foretel, 635
 And own the blind Tiresias saw too well.

Still Pentheus scorns him, and derides his skill ;
 But time did all the prophet's threats fulfil : [rode,
 For now through prostrate Greece young Bacchus
 Whilst howling matrons celebrate the god: 640

All ranks and sexes to his orgies ran,
 To mingle in the pomps, and fill the train ;
 When Pentheus thus his wicked rage express'd :
 What madness, Thebans, has your souls possess'd !
 Can hollow timbrels, can a drunken shout, 645
 And the lewd clamours of a beastly rout,
 Thus quell your courage? Can the weak alarm
 Of women's yells those stubborn souls disarm,
 Whom nor the sword nor trumpet e'er could fright,
 Nor the loud din and horror of a fight? 650
 And you, our sires, who left your old abodes,
 And fix'd in foreign earth your country gods:
 Will you, without a stroke, your city yield,
 And poorly quit an undisputed field?
 But you, whose youth and vigour should inspire 655
 Heroic warmth, and kindle marshal fire,
 Whom burnish'd arms and crested helmets grace,
 Not flow'ry garlands, and a painted face;
 Remember him to whom you stand ally'd:
 The serpent for his well of waters dy'd. 660
 He fought the strong; do you his courage shew,
 And gain a conquest o'er a feeble foe.
 If Thebes must fall, oh! might the Fates afford
 A noble doom from famine, fire, or sword!
 Then might the Thebans perish with renown: 665
 But now a beardless victor sacks the town;
 Whom nor the prancing steed, nor pond'rous shield,
 Nor the hack'd helmet, nor the dusty field,
 But the soft joys of luxury and ease,
 The purple vests, and flow'ry garlands please. 670
 Stand then aside, I'll make the counterfeit
 Renounce his godhead, and confess the cheat.
 Acrisius from the Grecian walls repell'd
 This boasted pow'r; why then should Pentheus yield?
 Go quickly, drag th' impostor boy to me; 675
 I'll try the force of his divinity.
 Thus did th' audacious wretch those rites profane;
 His friends dissuade th' audacious wretch in vain;
 In vain his grandsire urg'd him to give o'er
 His impious threats; the wretch but raves the more.
 So I have seen a river gently glide 681
 In a smooth course, and inoffensive tide;

But if with dams its current we restrain,
It bears down all, and foams along the plain.

But now his servants came, besmear'd with blood,
Sent by their haughty prince to seize the god; 636
The god they found not in the frantic throng,
But dragg'd a zealous votary along.

Him Pentheus view'd, with fury in his look, 639
And scarce withheld his hands, while thus he spoke :
Vile slave! whom speedy vengeance shall pursue,
And terrify thy base seditious crew ;
Thy country and thy parentage reveal,
And, why thou join'st in these mad orgies, tell.

The captive views him with undaunted eyes, 695
And, arm'd with inward innocence, replies :

From high Mæonia's rocky shores I came,
Of poor descent, Acœtes is my name :
My sire was meanly born ; no oxen plough'd
His fruitful fields, nor in his pasture low'd, 700
His whole estate within the waters lay :
With lines and hooks he caught the finny prey ;
His art was all his livelihood ; which he
Thus, with his dying lips, bequeath'd to me :

In streams, my boy, and rivers take thy chance ;
There swims (said he) thy whole inheritance, 706
Long did I live on this poor legacy ;
Till, tir'd with rocks, and my old native sky,
To arts of navigation I inclin'd ;
Observ'd the turns and changes of the wind ; 710
Learn'd the fit havens, and began to note
The stormy Hyädès, the rainy Goat,
The bright Taygetè, and the shining Bears,
With all the sailor's catalogue of stars.

Once as by chance for Delos I design'd, 715
My vessel driv'n by a strong gust of wind,
Moor'd in a Chian creek ; ashore I went,
And all the following night in Chios spent.
When morning rose, I sent my mates to bring
Supplies of water from a neighb'ring spring, 720
Whilst I the motion of the winds explor'd ;
Then summon'd in my crew, and went aboard.
Opheltès heard my summons, and with joy,

Brought to the shore a soft and lovely boy,
 With more than female sweetness in his look, 725
 Whom straggling in the neighb'ring fields he took.
 With fumes of wine the little captive glows,
 And nods with sleep, and staggers as he goes.

I view'd him nicely, and began to trace
 Each heav'nly feature, each immortal grace, 730
 And saw divinity in all his face.—

I know not who, said I, this god should be;
 But that he is a god, I plainly see:
 And thou, whoe'er thou art, excuse the force
 These men have us'd; and oh, befriend our course!

Pray not for us, the nimble Dictys cry'd; 736
 Dictys, that could the main-top-mast bestride,
 And down the ropes with active vigour slide.

To the same purpose old Epopeus spoke,
 Who over-look'd the oars, and tim'd the stroke; 740
 The same the pilot, and the same the rest;
 Such impious avarice their souls possess'd.

Nay, Heav'n forbid that I should bear away
 Within my vessel so divine a prey,
 Said I: and stood to hinder their intent: 745
 When Lycabas, a wretch for murder sent
 From Tuscany, to suffer banishment,
 With his clench'd fist had struck me overboard,
 Had not my hands in falling grasp'd a cord.

His base confederates the fact approve; 750
 When Bacchus (for 'twas he) began to move,
 Wak'd by the noise and clamours which they rais'd,
 And shook his drowsy limbs, and round him gaz'd:
 And shook his drowsy limbs, and round him gaz'd:
 What means this noise? (he cries;) am I betray'd?
 Ah! whither, whither must I be convey'd?— 755

Fear not (said Proteus), child, but tell us where
 You wish to land, and trust our friendly care.—
 To Naxos then direct your course (said he);
 Naxos a hospitable port shall be
 To each of you, a joyful home to me. 760

By ev'ry god, that rules the sea or sky,
 The perjurd villains promise to comply,
 And bid me hasten to unmoor the ship.
 With eager joy I launch into the deep;
 And heedless of the fraud, for Naxos stand. 765

They whisper oft, and beckon with the hand,
 And give me signs, all anxious for their prey,
 To tack about, and steer another way.
 Then let some other to my post succeed,
 Said I, I'm guiltless of so foul a deed, 770
 What! says Ethalion, must the ship's whole crew
 Follow your humour, and depend on you?
 And straight himself he seated at the prore,
 And tack'd about, and sought another shore.
 The beauteous youth now found himself betray'd, 775
 And from the deck the rising waves survey'd,
 And seem'd to weep, and, as he wept, he said:
 And do you thus my easy faith beguile?
 Thus do you bear me to my native isle?
 Will such a multitude of men employ 780
 Their strength against a weak, defenceless boy?
 In vain did I the godlike youth deplore,
 The more I begg'd, they thwarted me the more.
 And now by all the gods in heav'n that hear
 The solemn oath, by Bacchus' self I swear, 785
 The mighty miracle that did ensue,
 Although it seems beyond relief, is true.
 The vessel, fix'd and rooted in the flood,
 Unmov'd by all the heaving billows stood.
 In vain the mariners would plough the main, 790
 With sails unfurl'd, and strike their oars in vain;
 Around their oars a twining ivy cleaves,
 And climbs the mast, and hides the cords in leaves:
 The sails are cover'd with a cheerful green,
 And berries in the fruitful canvas seen, 795
 Amidst the waves a sudden forest rears
 Its verdant head, and a new spring appears.
 The god we now behold with open'd eyes;
 And herd of spotted panthers round him lies
 In glaring forms; the grapy clusters spread 800
 On his fair brows, and dangle on his head.
 And whilst he frowns, and brandishes his spear,
 My mates, surpris'd with madness or with fear,
 Leap'd overboard: First perjur'd Madon found 804
 Rough scales and fins his stiff'ning sides surround;—
 Ah, what (cries one) has thus transform'd thy look!
 Straight his own mouth grew wider as he spoke:

And now himself he views with like surprise.
 Still at his oar th' industrious Libys plies ;
 But, as he plies, each busy arm shrinks in, 810
 And, by degrees, is fashion'd to a fin.

Another, as he catches at a cord,
 Misses his arms, and, tumbling over-board,
 With his broad fins, and forky tail, he laves
 The rising surge, and flounces in the waves. 815

Thus all my crew transform'd around the ship,
 Or dive below, or on the surface leap,
 And spout the waves, and wanton in the deep.
 Full nineteen sailors did the ship convey,
 A shoal of nineteen dolphins round her play. 820

I only in my proper shape appear,
 Speechless with wonder, and half dead with fear,
 Till Bacchus kindly bade me fear no more.
 With him I landed on the Chian shore,
 And him shall ever gratefully adore. 825

This forging slave (says Pentheus) would prevail
 O'er our just fury by a far-fetch'd tale :
 Go, let him feel the whips, the swords, the fire,
 And in the tortures of the rack expire.

Th' officious servants hurry him away, 830
 And the poor captive in a dungeon lay.
 But, whilst the whips and tortures are prepar'd,
 The gates fly open, of themselves unbarr'd ;
 At liberty th' unfetter'd captive stands,
 And flings the loosen'd shackles from his hands. 835

But Pentheus, grown more furious than before,
 Resolv'd to send his messengers no more,
 But went himself to the distracted throng,
 Where high Cithæron echo'd with their song.
 And as the fiery war-horse paws the ground, 840
 And snorts and trembles at the trumpet's sound ;
 Transported thus he heard the frantic rout,
 And rav'd and madden'd at the distant shout.

A spacious circuit on the hill there stood,
 Level and wide, and skirted round with wood ; 845
 Here the rash Pentheus, with unhallow'd eyes,
 The howling dames and mystic orgies spies.
 His mother sternly view'd him where he stood,

And kindled into madness as she view'd:
 Her leafy jav'lin at her son she cast, 850
 And cries: The boar that lays our country waste!
 The boar, my sisters! aim the fatal dart,
 And strike the brindled monster to the heart!

Pentheus, astonish'd, heard the dismal sound,
 And sees the yelling matrons gath'ring round; 855
 He sees, and weeps at his approaching fate,
 And begs for mercy, and repents too late.—
 Help, help! my aunt Antonœ; he cry'd;
 Remember, how your own Actæon dy'd.

Deaf to his cries, the frantic matron crops 860
 One stretch'd-out arm, the other Ino lops.
 In vain does Pentheus to his mother sue,
 And the raw bleeding stumps presents to view:
 His mother howl'd; and, heedless of his pray'r,
 Her trembling hand she twisted in his hair; 865
 And this (she cry'd) shall be Agavè's share:
 When from his neck the struggling head she tore,
 And in her hands the ghastly visage bore.

With pleasure all the hideous trunk survey;
 Then pull'd and tore the mangled limbs away, 870
 As starting in the pangs of death it lay.
 Soon as the wood its leafy honours casts,
 Blown off and scatter'd by autumnal blasts,
 With such a sudden death lay Pentheus slain,
 And in a thousand pieces strew'd the plain. 875

By so distinguishing a judgment aw'd,
 The Thebans tremble, and confess the god.

BOOK IV.

TRANSLATED BY MR. EUSDEN, &c.

The story of Alcithœ and her sisters. The story of Pyramus and Thisbè. The story of Leucothœ and the sun. The transformation of Clytiè. The story of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus. Alcithœ and her sisters transformed to bats. The transformation of Ino and Melicerta to sea-gods. The transformation of the Theban matrons. Cadmus and his queen transformed to serpents. The story of Perseus. Atlas transformed to a mountain. Andromeda rescued from the sea-monster. The story of Medûsa's head.

YET still Alcithœ perverse remains,
 And Bacchus still, and all his rites disdains.
 Too rash and madly bold, she bids him prove
 Himself a god; nor owns the son of Jove.
 Her sisters, too, unanimous agree, 5
 Faithful associates in impiety.

Be this a solemn feast, the priest had said;
 Be, with each mistress, unemploy'd each maid:
 With skins of beasts your tender limbs inclose,
 And with an ivy crown adorn your brows; 10
 The leafy Thyrsus high in triumph bear,
 And give your locks to wanton in the air.

These rites profan'd, the holy seer foreshew'd
 A mourning people, and a vengeful god.

Matrons and pious wives obedience shew, 15
 Distaffs, and wool, half-spun, away they throw:
 Then incense burn, and, Bacchus, thee adore,
 Or lov'st thou Nyseus, or Lyæus more?

O! doubly got, O! doubly born, they sung,
 Thou mighty Bromius, hail, from lightning sprung! 20
 Hail, Thyon! Elelêus! each name is thine:
 Or listen, Parent of the genial Vine!
 Iacchus! Evan! loudly they repeat,
 And not one Grecian attribute forget, 25
 Which to thy praise, great deity, belong,
 Styl'd justly Liber in the Roman song.
 Eternity of youth is thine! enjoy
 Years roll'd on years, yet still a blooming boy.
 In heav'n thou shin'st with a superior grace;
 Conceal thy horns, and 'tis a virgin's face. 30

Thou taught'st the tawny Indian to obey,
 And Ganges, smoothly flowing, own'd thy sway.
 Lycurgus, Pentheus, equally profane,
 By thy just vengeance equally were slain.
 By thee the Tuscans, who conspir'd to keep 35
 Thee captive, plung'd, and cut with fins the deep;
 With painted reins, all-glittering from afar,
 The spotted lynxes proudly draw thy car;
 Around, the Bacchæ, and the Satyrs throng;
 Behind, Silenus, drunk, lags slow along; 40
 On his dull ass he nods from side to side,
 Forbears to fall, yet half forgets to ride.
 Still, at thy near approach, applauses loud
 Are heard, with yellings of the female crowd.
 Timbrels, and boxen pipes, with mingled cries, 45
 Swell up in sounds confus'd, and rend the skies.
 Come, Bacchus, come propitious, all implore,
 And act thy sacred orgies o'er and o'er!

But Mineus' daughters, while these rites were paid,
 At home, impertinently busy, staid; 50
 Their wicked tasks they ply with various art,
 And through the loom the sliding shuttle dart;
 Or at the fire to comb the wool they stand,
 Or twirl the spindle with a dext'rous hand.
 Guilty themselves, they force the guiltless in; 55
 Their maids, who share the labour, share the sin.
 At last one sister cries, who nimbly knew,
 To draw nice threads, and wind the finest clue:
 While others idly rove, and gods revere,
 Their fancy'd gods! they know not who, or where;
 Let us whom Pallas taught her better arts, 61
 Still working, cheer with mirthful chat our hearts,
 And to deceive the time, let me prevail
 With each by turns, to tell some antique tale.

She said; her sisters lik'd the humour well, 65
 And smiling, bade her the first story tell.
 But she awhile profoundly seem'd to muse,
 Perplex'd amid variety to choose:
 And knew not, whether she would first relate
 The poor Dircetis, and her wondrous fate; 70
 The Palestines believe it to a man,
 And shew the lake, in which her scales began:

Or if she rather should the daughter sing,
 Who in the hoary verge of life took wing;
 Who soar'd from earth, and dwelt in tow'rs on high,
 And now a dove she flits along the sky:— 76
 Or how lewd Nais, when her lust was cloy'd,
 To fishes turns the youths she had enjoy'd,
 By pow'rful verse, and herbs; effect most strange!
 At last the changer shar'd herself the change:— 80
 Or how the tree, which once white berries bore,
 Still crimson bears, since stain'd with crimson gore.
 The tree was new; she likes it, and begins
 To tell the tale, and as she tells, she spins.

In Babylon, where first her queen, for state, 85
 Rais'd walls of brick magnificently great,
 Liv'd Pyramus, and Thisbè, lovely pair:
 He found no eastern youth his equal there,
 And she beyond the fairest nymph was fair.
 A closer neighbourhood was never known, 90
 Though two the houses, yet the roof was one.
 Acquaintance grew: th' acquaintance they improve
 To friendship; friendship ripen'd into love:
 Love had been crown'd, but impotently mad,
 What parents could not hinder, they forbade: 95
 For with fierce flames young Pyramus still burn'd,
 And grateful Thisbè flames as fierce return'd.
 Aloud in words their thoughts they dare not break,
 But silent stand (and silent looks can speak);
 The fire of love, the more it is suppress, 100
 The more it glows and rages in the breast.

When the division-wall was built, a chink
 Was left, the cement unobserv'd to shrink.
 So slight the cranny, that it still had been
 For centuries unclos'd, because unsean. 105
 But, oh! what thing so small, so secret lies,
 Which 'scapes, if form'd for love, a lover's eyes?
 Ev'n in this narrow chink they quickly found
 A friendly passage for a trackless sound;
 Safely they told their sorrows and their joys, 110
 In whisper'd murmurs, and a dying noise:
 By turns to catch each other's breath they strove,
 And suck'd in all the balmy breeze of love.

Oft, as on diff'rent sides they stood, they cry'd:
Malicious wall, thus lovers to divide! 115

Suppose, thou should'st awhile to us give place,
To lock and fasten in a close embrace:

But if too much to grant so sweet a bliss,
Indulge, at least, the pleasure of a kiss.

We scorn ingratitude: To thee, we know, 120
This safe conveyance of our minds we owe.

Thus they their vain petition did renew
Till night, and then they softly sigh'd, adieu!
But first they strove to kiss, and that was all;
Their kisses dy'd untasted on the wall. 125

Soon as the morn had o'er the stars prevail'd,
And, warm'd by Phoebus, flow'rs their dew's exhal'd,
The lovers to their well-known place return,
Alike they suffer, and alike they mourn.

At last their parents they resolve to cheat 130
(If to deceive in love be call'd deceit),

To steal by night from home, and thence unknown
To seek the fields, and quit th' unfaithful town.

But, to prevent their wand'ring in the dark,
They both agree to fix upon a mark; 135

A mark that could not their designs expose:
The tomb of Ninus was the mark they chose;
There they might rest secure beneath the shade,
Which boughs, with snowy fruit incumber'd, made:
A wide-spread mulberry its rise had took 140
Just on the margin of a gurgling brook.

Impatient for the friendly dusk they stay;
And chide the slowness of departing day.
In western seas down sunk at last the light,
From western seas up-rose the shades of night. 145

The loving Thisbè ev'n prevents the hour;
With cautious silence she unlocks the door,

And veils her face, and, marching through the gloom,
Swiftly arrives at th' assignation tomb

(For still the fearful sex can fearless prove;— 150
Boldly they act, if spirited by love);

When, lo! a lioness rush'd o'er the plain,
Grimly besmear'd with blood of oxen slain:

And what to the dire sight new horrors brought, 154
To slake her thirst the neighb'ring spring she sought.

Which, by the moon, when trembling Thisbè spies,
 Wing'd with her fear, swift as the wind she flies;
 And in a cave recovers from her fright,
 But dropp'd her veil confounded in her flight.
 When sated with repeated draughts, again 160
 The queen of beasts scour'd back along the plain,
 She found the veil, and, mouthing it all o'er,
 With bloody jaws, the lifeless prey she tore.

The youth, who could not cheat his guards so soon,
 Late came, and noted, by the glimm'ring moon, 165
 Some savage feet new printed on the ground;
 His cheeks turn'd pale, his limbs no vigour found:
 But when, advancing on, the veil he spied,
 Distain'd with blood, and ghastly torn, he cried:
 One night shall death to two young lovers give, 170
 But she deserv'd unnumber'd years to live!
 'Tis I am guilty, I have thee betray'd,
 Who came not early as my charming maid.
 Whatever slew thee, I the cause remain;
 I nam'd, and fix'd the place, where thou wast slain.
 Ye lions, from your neighb'ring dens repair, 176
 Pity the wretch, this impious body tear!
 But cowards thus for death can idly cry;
 The brave still have it in their pow'r to die.

Then to th' appointed tree he hastes away, 180
 The veil first gather'd, though all rent it lay;
 The veil all rent, yet still itself endears;
 He kiss'd, and kissing, washed it with his tears.
 Though rich (he cry'd) with many a precious stain,
 Still from my blood a deeper tincture gain. 185
 Then in his breast his shining sword he drown'd,
 And fell supine, extended on the ground.
 As out again the blade he dying drew,
 Out spun the blood, and streaming upwards flew.

So if a conduit pipe e'er burst you saw, 190
 Swift spring the gushing waters through the flaw;
 Then spouting in a bow, they rise on high,
 And a new fountain plays amid the sky.
 The berries, stain'd with blood, began to shew
 A dark complexion, and forgot their snow; 195
 While fatten'd with the flowing gore, the root
 Was doom'd for ever to a purple fruit.

Meantime poor Thisbè fear'd, so long she staid,
 Her lover might suspect a perjur'd maid,
 Her fright scarce o'er, she strove the youth to find,
 With ardent eyes, which spoke an ardent mind. 201
 Already in his arms, she hears him sigh
 At her destruction, which was once so nigh.
 The tomb, the tree, but not the fruit, she knew;
 The fruit she doubted for its alter'd hue. 205
 Still as she doubts, her eyes a body found
 Quiv'ring in death, and gasping on the ground.
 She started back; the red her cheeks forsook,
 And ev'ry nerve with thrilling horrors shook.
 So trembles the smooth surface of the seas, 210
 If brush'd o'er gently with a rising breeze.
 But when her view her bleeding love confess'd,
 She shriek'd, she tore her hair, she beat her breast,
 She rais'd the body, and embrac'd it round,
 And bath'd with tears unfeign'd the gaping wound;
 Then her warm lips to the cold face apply'd, 216
 And is it thus, ah! thus we meet! she cry'd:
 My Pyramus! whence sprang thy cruel fate?
 My Pyramus;—ah! speak, ere 'tis too late:
 I, thy own Thisbè, but one word implore, 220
 One word thy Thisbè never ask'd before.

At Thisbè's name, awak'd, he open'd wide
 His dying eyes; with dying eyes he try'd
 On her to dwell, but clos'd them slow and died.

The fatal cause was now at last explor'd, 225
 Her veil she knew, and saw his sheathless sword:—
 From thy own hand thy ruin thou hast found,
 She said; but love first taught that hand to wound.
 Ev'n I for thee as bold a hand can shew,
 And love, which shall as true direct the blow. 230
 I will against the woman's weakness strive,
 And never thee, lamented youth, survive.
 The world may say, I caus'd, alas! thy death,
 But saw thee breathless, and resign'd my breath.
 Fate, though it conquers, shall no triumph gain, 235
 Fate, that divides us, still divides in vain.

Now, both our cruel parents, hear my pray'r;
 My pray'r to offer for us both I dare:

O! see our ashes in one urn confin'd,
 Whom love at first, and fate at last has join'd. 240
 The bliss you envy'd, is not our request;
 Lovers, when dead, may sure together rest.
 Thou, tree, where now one lifeless lump is laid,
 Ere long o'er two shall cast a friendly shade.
 Still let our loves from thee be understood; 245
 Still witness in thy purple fruit our blood.—
 She spoke, and in her bosom plung'd the sword,
 All warm and reeking from its slaughter'd lord.
 The pray'r, which dying Thisbè had preferr'd,
 Both gods and parents with compassion heard. 250
 The whiteness of the mulberry soon fled,
 And rip'ning, sadden'd in a dusky red:
 While both their parents their lost children mourn,
 And mix their ashes in one golden urn.
 Thus did the melancholy tale conclude, 255
 And a short, silent interval ensu'd.
 The next in birth unloos'd her artful tongue,
 And drew attentive all the sister throng.

The Sun, the source of light, by Beauty's pow'r
 Once am'rous grew; then hear the Sun's amour. 260
 Venus, and Mars, with his far-piercing eyes
 This god first spy'd; this god first all things spies.
 Stung at the sight, and swift on mischief bent,
 To haughty Juno's shapeless son he went:
 The goddess, and her god gallant betray'd, 265
 And told the cuckold where their pranks were play'd.
 Poor Vulcan soon desir'd to hear no more,
 He dropp'd his hammer, and he shook all o'er:
 Then courage takes, and full of vengeful ire,
 He heaves the bellows, and blows fierce the fire, 270
 From liquid brass, though sure, yet subtle snares
 He forms, and next a wondrous net prepares,
 Drawn with such curious art, so nicely sly,
 Unseen the meshes cheat the searching eye.
 Not half so thin their webs the spiders weave, 275
 Which the most wary, buzzing prey deceive.
 These chains, obedient to the touch, he spread
 In secret foldings o'er the conscious bed:
 The conscious bed again was quickly prest

By the fond pair, in lawless raptures blest. 280
 Mars wonder'd at his Cytheréa's charms
 More fast than ever lock'd within her arms;
 While Vulcan th' iv'ry doors unbarr'd with care,
 Then call'd the gods to view the sportive pair:
 The gods throng'd in, and saw in open day, 285
 Where Mars, and Beauty's queen, all naked lay.
 O shameful sight! if shameful that we name,
 Which gods with envy view'd, and could not blame,
 But for the pleasure wish'd to bear the shame.
 Each deity, with laughter tir'd, departs, 290
 Yet all still laugh'd at Vulcan in their hearts.
 Through heav'n the news of this surprisal run,
 But Venus did not thus forget the Sun.
 He, who stol'n transports idly had betray'd,
 By a betrayer was in kind repaid. 295
 What now avails, great god, thy piercing blaze,
 That youth, and beauty, and those golden rays?
 Thou, who canst warm this universe alone.
 Feel'st now a warmth more pow'rful than thy own:
 And those bright eyes, which all things should survey,
 Know not from fair Leucothœe to stray: 301
 The lamp of light, for human good design'd,
 Is to one virgin niggardly confin'd.
 Sometimes too early rise thy eastern beams,
 Sometimes too late they set in western streams: 305
 'Tis then her beauty thy swift course delays,
 And gives to winter skies long summer days.
 Now in thy face thy love-sick mind appears,
 And spreads through impious nations empty fears:
 For when thy beamless head is wrapt in night, 310
 Poor mortals tremble in despair of light.
 'Tis not the moon that o'er thee casts a veil,
 'Tis love alone which makes thy looks so pale.
 Leucothœe is grown thy only care,
 Not Phæton's fair mother now is fair: 315
 The youthful Rhodos moves no tender thought,
 And beauteous Porsa is at last forgot;
 Fond Clytiè scorn'd, yet lov'd, and sought thy bed,
 Ev'n then thy heart for other virgins bled;
 Leucothœe has all thy soul possest,
 And chas'd each rival passion from thy breast. 320

To this bright nymph, Eurynomè gave birth
 In the blest confines of the spicy earth;
 Excelling others, she herself beheld
 By her own blooming daughter far excell'd. 315
 The sire was Orchamus, whose vast command,
 The seventh from Belus, rul'd the Persian land.
 Deep in cool vales, beneath th' Hesperian sky,
 For the Sun's fiery steeds the pastures lie.
 Ambrosia there they eat, and thence they gain 330
 New vigour, and their daily toils sustain :
 While thus on heav'nly food the coursers fed,
 And night, around, her gloomy empire spread,
 The god assum'd the mother's shape, and air,
 And pass'd, unheeded, to his darling fair. 335
 Close by a lamp, with maids encompass'd round,
 The royal spinster, full employ'd, he found :
 Then cry'd, Awhile from work, my daughter, rest ;
 And, like a mother, scarce her lips he press'd.
 Servants, retire! nor secrets dare to hear, 340
 Intrusted only to a daughter's ear.
 They swift obey'd: Not one, suspicious, thought
 The secret, which their mistress would be taught.
 Then he: Since now no witnesses are near,
 Behold the god, who guides the various year! 345
 The world's vast eye, of light the source serene,
 Who all things sees, by whom are all things seen.
 Believe me, nymph! (for I the truth have shew'd,)
 Thy charms have pow'r to charm so great a god.
 Confus'd she heard him his soft passion tell; 350
 And on the floor, untwirl'd, the spindle fell :
 Still from the sweet confusion some new grace
 Blush'd out by stealth and languish'd in her face.
 The lover now inflam'd, himself put on,
 And out at once the god all radiant shone. 355
 The virgin startled at his alter'd form,
 Too weak to bear a god's impetuous storm :
 No more against the dazzling youth she strove,
 But silent yielded, and indulg'd his love.
 This, Clytiè knew, and knew she was undone, 360
 Whose soul was fix'd, and doated on the Sun.
 She rag'd to think on her neglected charms,
 And Phœbus, panting in another's arms,

With envious madness fir'd, she flies in haste,
 And tells the king his daughter was unchaste. 365
 The king, incens'd to hear his honour stain'd,
 No more the father, nor the man retain'd,
 In vain she stretch'd her arms, and turn'd her eyes
 To her lov'd god, th' enlightner of the skies.
 In vain she own'd it was a crime, yet still 370
 It was a crime not acted by her will.

The brutal sire stood deaf to ev'ry pray'r,
 And deep in earth entomb'd alive the fair.
 What Phœbus could do was by Phœbus done,
 Full on her grave with pointed beams he shone: 375
 To pointed beams the gaping earth gave way;
 Had the nymph eyes, her eyes had seen the day;
 But lifeless now, yet lovely still she lay.
 Not more the god wept, when the world was fir'd,
 And in the wreck his blooming boy expir'd. 380

The vital flame he strives to light again,
 And warm the frozen blood in ev'ry vein:
 But since resistless fates denied that pow'r,
 On the cold nymph he rain'd a nectar show'r.
 Ah! undeserving thus (he said) to die, 385
 Yet still in odours thou shalt reach the sky.

The body soon dissolv'd, and all around
 Perfum'd with heav'nly fragrances the ground.
 A sacrifice for gods up-rose from thence,
 A sweet delightful tree of frankincense. 390

Though guilty Clytiè thus the Sun betray'd,
 By too much passion she was guilty made:
 Excess of love begot excess of grief,
 Grief fondly bade her hence to hope relief.
 But angry Phœbus hears, unmov'd, her sighs, 395
 And scornful from her loath'd embraces flies.
 All day, all night, in trackless wilds, alone
 She pin'd, and taught the list'ning rocks her moan.
 On the bare earth she lies, her bosom bare,
 Loose her attire, dishevell'd is her hair. 400

Nine times the morn unbarr'd the gates of light,
 As oft were spread th' alternate shades of night;
 So long no sustenance the mourner knew,
 Unless she drank her tears, or suck'd the dew:

She turn'd about, but rose not from the ground, 405
 Turn'd to the Sun, still as he roll'd his round :
 On his bright face hung her desiring eyes,
 Till fix'd to earth, she strove in vain to rise.
 Her looks their paleness in a flow'r retain'd,
 But here and there some purple streaks they gain'd.
 Still the lov'd object the fond leaves pursue, 411
 Still move their root, the moving sun to view,
 And in the Heliotrope the nymph is true.

The sisters heard these wonders with surprise,
 But part receiv'd them as romantic lies ; 415
 And partly rally'd, that they could not see
 In pow'rs divine so vast an energy.
 Part own'd, true gods such miracles might do,
 But own'd not Bacchus one among the true.
 At last a common, just request they make, 420
 And beg Alcithoë her turn to take.

I will (she said) and please you, if I can,
 Then shot her shuttle swift, and thus began :

The fate of Daphnis is a fate too known,
 Whom an enamour'd nymph transform'd to stone,
 Because she fear'd another nymph might see 426
 The lovely youth, and love as much as she :
 So strange the madness is of jealousy !
 Nor shall I tell, what changes Scython made,
 And how he walk'd a man, or tripp'd a maid. 430
 You too would peevish frown, and patience want
 To hear how Celmis grew an adamant.
 He once was dear to Jove, and saw of old
 Jove, when a child, but what he saw he told.
 Crocus, and Smilax, may be turn'd to flow'rs, 435
 And the Curètès spring from bounteous show'rs ;
 I pass a hundred legends, stale as these,
 And with sweet novelty your taste will please.

How Salmacis, with weak enfeebling streams
 Softens the body, and unnerves the limbs, 440
 And what the secret cause, shall here be shewn ;
 The cause is secret, but th' effect is known.

The Naïds nurs'd an infant heretofore,
 That Cytheréa once to Hermès bore :
 From both th' illustrious authors of his race 445

The child was nam'd ; nor was it hard to trace
 Both the bright parents through the infant's face.
 When fifteen years, in Ida's cool retreat,
 The boy had told, he left his native seat,
 And sought fresh fountains in a foreign soil : 450
 The pleasure lessen'd the attending toil.
 With eager steps the Lycian fields he cross'd,
 And fields that border on the Lycian coast ;
 A river here he view'd so lovely bright,
 It shew'd the bottom in a fairer light, 455
 Nor kept a sand conceal'd from human sight.
 The stream produc'd nor slimy ooze, nor weeds,
 Nor miry rushes, nor the spiky reeds ;
 But dealt enriching moisture all around,
 The fruitful banks with cheerful verdure crown'd, 460
 And kept the spring eternal on the ground.
 A nymph presides, nor practis'd in the chase,
 Nor skilful at the bow, nor at the race ;
 Of all the blue-ey'd daughters of the main,
 The only stranger to Diana's train : 465
 Her sisters often, as 'tis said, would cry,
 Fy, Salmacis, what always idle ! fy ;
 Or taky the quiver, or thy arrows seize,
 And mix the toils of hunting with thy ease ;
 Nor quivers she nor arrows e'er would seize, 470
 Nor mix the toils of hunting with her ease ;
 But oft would bathe her in the crystal tide,
 Oft with a comb her dewy locks divide :
 Now in the limpid streams she views her face,
 And dress'd her image in the floating glass : 475
 On beds of leaves she now repos'd her limbs ;
 Now gather'd flow'rs that grew about her streams,
 And then by chance was gathering as she stood
 To view the boy, and long'd for what she view'd.

Fain would she meet the youth with hasty feet, 480
 She fain would-meet him, but refus'd to meet.
 Before her locks were set with nicest care,
 And well deserv'd to be reputed fair.
 Bright youth (she cries), whom all thy features prove
 A god, and, if a god, the god of Love ; 485
 But if a mortal, blest thy nurse's breast,
 Blest are thy parents, and thy sisters blest ;

But oh, how blest! how more than blest thy bride,
Ally'd in bliss, if any yet ally'd.

If so, let mine the stol'n enjoyments be: 490
If not, behold a willing bride in me.

The boy knew nought of love, and, touch'd with shame,
He strove and blush'd; but still the blush became:
In rising blushes still fresh beauties rose;
The sunny side of fruit such blushes shews; 495
And such the moon, when all her silver white
Turns, in eclipses, to a ruddy light.

The nymph still begs, if not a nobler bliss,
A cold salute at least, a sister's kiss;
And now prepares to take the lovely boy 500
Between her arms. He innocently coy,
Replies: Or leave me to myself alone,

You rude, uncivil nymph, or I'll begone,
Fair stranger, then (says she), it shall be so:
And, for she fear'd his threats, she feign'd to go; 505

But hid within a covert's neighb'ring green,
She kept him still in sight, herself unseen.
The boy now fancies all the danger o'er,
And innocently sports at the shore;

Playful and wanton, to the stream he trips, 510
And dips his foot, and shivers as he dips:

The coolness pleas'd him, and with eager haste,
His airy garments on the banks he cast;
His godlike features, and his heav'nly hue,
And all his beauties were expos'd to view. 515

His naked limbs the nymph with rapture spies,
While hotter passions in her bosom rise,
Flush in her cheeks, and sparkle in her eyes.
She longs, she burns to clasp him in her arms,
And looks, and sighs, and kindles at his charms. 520

Now all undrest upon the banks he stood,
And clapt his sides, and leapt into the flood:
His lovely limbs the silver waves divide,
His limbs appear more lovely through the tide;
As lilies shut within a crystal case, 525

Receive a glossy lustre from the glass.—
He's mine, he's all my own (the Naïd cries),
And flings off all, and after him she flies:—
And now she fastens on him as he swims,
And holds him close, and wraps about his limbs. 530

The more the boy resisted, and was coy,
 The more she clasp'd and kiss'd the struggling boy.
 So when the wriggling snake is snatch'd on high
 In eagle's claws, and hisses in the sky;
 Around the foe his twirling tail he flings, 535
 And twists her legs, and writhes about her wings.

The restless boy still obstinately strove
 To free himself, and still refused her love.
 Amidst his limbs she kept her limbs entwin'd:
 And why, coy youth (she cries), why thus unkind?
 O, may the gods thus keep us ever join'd! 541
 O may we never, never part again!

So pray'd the nymph, nor did she pray in vain:
 For now now she finds him, as his limbs she press'd,
 Grow nearer still, and nearer to her breast; 545
 Till, piercing each the other's flesh they run
 Together and incorporate in one:
 Last, in one face are both their faces join'd,
 As when the stock and grafted twig, combin'd,
 Shoot up the same, and wear a common rind: 550
 Both bodies in a single body mix,
 A single body with a double sex.

The boy, thus lost in woman, now survey'd
 The river's guilty stream, and thus he pray'd
 (He pray'd, but wonder'd at his softer tone, 555
 Surpris'd to hear a voice but half his own):—
 You parent-gods, whose heav'nly names I bear,
 Hear your Hermaprodite, and grant my pray'r;
 O grant, that whomsoe'er these streams contain,
 If man he enter'd, he may rise again 560
 Supple, unsinew'd, and but half a man!

The heav'nly parents answer'd, from on high,
 Their two-shap'd son, the double votary;
 Then gave a secret virtue to the flood,
 And ting'd its source to make his wishes good. 565

But Mineus' daughter still their tasks pursue,
 To wickedness most obstinately true:
 At Bacchus still they laugh;—when, all around,
 Unseen, the timbrels hoarse were heard to sound:
 Saffron, and myrrh, their fragrant odours shed, 570

And now the present deity they dread.
 Strange to relate! here ivy first was seen,
 Along the distaff crept the wondrous green:
 Then sudden-springing vines began to bloom,
 And the soft tendrils curl'd around the loom: 575
 While purple clusters, dangling from on high,
 Ting'd the wrought purple with a second die.
 Now from the skies was shot a doubtful light,
 The day declining to the bounds of night.
 The fabric's firm foundations shake all o'er, 580
 False tigers rage, and figur'd lions roar:
 Torches, aloft, seen blazing in the air,
 And angry flashes of red lightnings glare.
 To dark recesses, the dire sight to shun,
 Swift the pale sisters in confusion run: 585
 Their arms were lost in pinions, as they fled,
 And subtle films each slender limb o'erspread:
 Their alter'd forms their senses soon reveal'd;
 Their forms, how alter'd, darkness still conceal'd.
 Close to the roof each, wond'ring, upwards springs,
 Borne on unknown, transparent, plumeless wings. 591
 They strove for words; their little bodies found
 No words, but murmur'd in a fainting sound.
 In towns, not woods, the sooty bats delight,
 And never, till the dusk, begin their flight; 595
 Till Vesper rises with his ev'ning flame;
 From whom the Romans have deriv'd their name.

The pow'r of Bacchus now o'er Thebes had flown,
 With awful rev'rence soon the god they own.
 Proud Ino, all around, the wonder tells, 600
 And on her nephew deity still dwells.
 Of num'rous sisters, she alone yet knew
 No grief, but grief which she from sisters drew.
 Imperial Juno saw her, with disdain,
 Vain in her offspring; in her consort vain, 605
 Who rul'd the trembling Thebans with a nod;
 But saw her vainest in her foster god.—
 Could, then (she cry'd), a bastard boy have pow'r
 To make a mother her own son devour?
 Could he the Tuscan crew to fishes change, 610
 And now three sisters damn to forms so strange?

Yet, shall the wife of Jove find no relief?
 Shall she, still unreveng'd, disclose her grief?
 Have I the mighty freedom to complain?
 Is that my pow'r? is that to ease my pain? 615
 A foe has taught me vengeance; and who ought
 To scorn that vengeance, which a foe has taught?
 What sure destruction frantic rage can throw,
 The gaping wounds of slaughter'd Pentheus shew.
 Why should not Ino, fir'd with madness stray? 620
 Like her mad sisters, her own kindred slay?
 Why she not follow where they lead the way?

Down a steep yawning cave, where yews display'd
 In arches meet, and lend a baleful shade,
 Through silent labyrinths a passage lies 625
 To mournful regions and infernal skies:
 Here Styx exhales its noisome clouds: and here,
 The fun'ral rites once paid, all souls appear.
 Stiff cold, and horror with a ghastly face
 And staring eyes, infest the dreary place. 630
 Ghosts, new arriv'd, and strangers to these plains,
 Know not the palace where grim Pluto reigns.
 They journey doubtful, nor the road can tell,
 Which leads to the metropolis of hell.
 A thousand avenues those tow'rs command, 635
 A thousand gates for ever open stand.
 As all the rivers, disembogu'd, find room
 For all their waters in old Ocean's womb:
 So this vast city worlds of shades receives,
 And space for millions still of worlds she leaves. 640
 Th' unbody'd spectres freely rove, and shew,
 Whate'er they lov'd on earth, they love below.
 The lawyers, still, or right, or wrong, support,
 The courtiers smoothly glide to Pluto's court.
 Still airy heroes thoughts of glory fire; 645
 Still the dead poet strings his deathless lyre;
 And lovers still, with fancy'd darts, expire.
 The queen of heav'n, to gratify her hate,
 And soothe immortal wrath, forgets her state.
 Down from the realms of day, to realms of night, 650
 The goddess swift precipitates her flight.
 At hell arriv'd, the noise hell's porter heard,

Th' enormous dog his triple head uprear'd :
 Thrice from three grisly throats he howl'd profound,
 Then suppliant couch'd, and stretch'd along the
 ground. 655

The trembling threshold which Saturnia press'd,
 The weight of such divinity confess'd.

Before a lofty, adamantine gate,
 Which clos'd a tow'r of brass, the Furies sat;
 Mis-shapen forms, tremendous to the sight, 660
 Th' implacable, foul daughters of the Night.
 A sounding whip each bloody sister shakes,
 Or from her tresses combs the curling snakes.
 But now, great Juno's majesty was known,
 Thro' the thick gloom, all-heav'nly bright, she shone :
 The hideous monsters their obedience shew'd, 666
 And, rising from their seats, submissive bow'd.

This is the place of woe; here groan the dead;
 Huge Tityus o'er nine acres here is spread :
 Fruitful for pain, th' immortal liver bleeds, 670
 Still grows, and still th' insatiate vulture feeds.
 Poor Tantalus to taste the water tries,
 But from his lips the faithless water flies:
 Then thinks the bending tree he can command,
 The tree starts backwards, and eludes his hand. 675
 The labour too of Sisyphus is vain ;
 Up the steep mount he heaves the stone with pain,
 Down from the summit rolls the stone again.
 The Belidès their leaky vessels still
 Are ever filling, and yet never fill : 680
 Doom'd to this punishment for blood they shed,
 For bridegrooms slaughter'd in the bridal bed.
 Stretched on the rolling wheel Ixion lies ;
 Himself he follows, and himself he flies.
 Ixion, tortur'd, Juno sternly ey'd, 685
 Then turn'd, and toiling Sisyphus espy'd :—
 And why (she said) so wretched is the fate
 Of him, whose brother proudly reigns in state?
 Yet still my altars unador'd have been
 By Athamas, and his presumptuous queen. 690

What caus'd her hate, the goddess thus confess'd,
 What caus'd her journey, now was more than guess'd.
 That hate, relentless, its revenge did want,

And that revenge the Furies soon could grant :
 They could the glory of proud Thebes efface, 695
 And hide, in ruin, the Cadmèan race.

For this she largely promises, intreats,
 And to intreaties adds imperial threats.
 Then fell Tisiphonè with rage was stung,
 And from her mouth th' untwisted serpents flung. 700

To gain this trifling boon, there is no need
 (She cry'd) in formal speeches to proceed.
 Whatever thou command'st to do, is done ;
 Believe it finish'd, though not yet begun.
 But from these melancholy seats repair 705
 To happier mansions, and to purer air.

She spoke: The goddess, darting upwards, flies,
 And joyous re-ascends her native skies :
 Nor enter'd there, till 'round her Iris threw
 Ambrosial sweets, and pour'd celestial dew. 710

The faithful fury, guiltless of delays,
 With cruel haste the dire command obeys.

Girt in a bloody gown, a torch she shakes,
 And 'round her neck twines speckled wreaths of snakes;
 Fear, and dismay, and agonizing pain, 715
 With frantic rage, complete the loveless train.

To Thebes her flight she sped, and hell forsook :
 At her approach the Theban turrets shook ;
 The sun shrunk back, thick clouds the day o'ercast,
 And springing greens were wither'd, as she pass'd. 720

Now, dismal yellings heard, strange spectres seen,
 Confound as much the monarch as the queen.

In vain to quit the palace they prepar'd ;
 Tisiphonè was there, and kept the ward.
 She wide-extended her unfriendly arms, 725
 And all the fury lavish'd all her harms.

Part of her tresses loudly hiss, and part
 Spread poison, as their forky tongues they dart.
 Then from her middle locks two snakes she drew,
 Whose merit from superior mischief grew : 730

Th' envenom'd ruin, thrown with spiteful care,
 Clung to the bosoms of the hapless pair:
 The hapless pair soon with wild thoughts were fir'd,
 And madness, by a thousand ways inspir'd.

'Tis true, th' unwounded body still was sound, 735

But 'twas the soul which felt the deadly wound.
 Nor did th' unsated monster here give o'er,
 But dealt of plagues a fresh, unnumber'd store:
 Each baneful juice too well she understood:
 Foam, churn'd by Cerberus, and Hydra's blood. 740
 Hot hemlock, and cold aconite she chose,
 Delighted in variety of woes.

Whatever can untune th' harmonious soul,
 And its mild, reas'ning faculties control;
 Give false ideas, raise desires profane, 745
 And whirl in eddies the tumultuous brain;
 Mix'd with curs'd art, she direfully around
 Through all their nerves diffus'd the sad compound:
 Then toss'd her torch in circles still the same,
 Improv'd their rage, and added flame to flame. 750
 The grinning Fury her own conquest spy'd,
 And to her rueful shades return'd with pride,
 And threw th' exhausted, useless snakes aside.

Now Athamas cried out (his reason fled),
 Here, fellow-hunters, let the toils be spread. 755
 I saw a lioness, in quest of food,
 With her two young, run roaring in this wood.

Again the fancy'd savages were seen,
 As through his palace still he chas'd his queen;
 Then tore Learchus from her breast: The child 760
 Stretch'd little arms, and on its father smil'd:
 A father now no more, who now begun
 Around his head to whirl his giddy son,
 And, quite insensible to nature's call,
 The helpless infant flung against the wall. 765

The same mad poison in the mother wrought,
 Young Melicerta in her arms she caught,
 And with disorder'd tresses, howling, flies,
 O! Bacchus, Evôë, Bacchus! loud she cries.
 The name of Bacchus, Juno laugh'd to hear, 770
 And said, Thy foster-god has cost thee dear.

A rock there stood, whose side the beating waves
 Had long consum'd, and hollow'd into caves:
 The head shot forwards in a bending steep,
 And cast a dreadful covert o'er the deep. 775
 The wretched Ino on destruction bent,
 Climb'd up the cliff; such strength her fury lent:

Thence with her guiltless boy, who wept in vain,
At one bold spring she plung'd into the main.

Her niece's fate touch'd Cytheréa's breast, 780
And in soft sounds she Neptune thus address'd :
Great god of waters, whose extended sway
Is next to his, whom heav'n and earth obey :
Let not the suit of Venus thee displease,
Pity the floaters on th' Ìonian seas. 785

Increase thy subject gods, nor yet disdain
To add my kindred to that glorious train.
If from the sea I may such honours claim,
If 'tis désert, that from the sea I came,
As Grecian poets artfully have sung, 790
And in the name confest, from whence I sprung.

Pleas'd Neptune nodded his assent; and free
Both soon became from frail mortality.
He gave them form, and majesty divine,
And bade them glide along the foamy brine. 795
For Melicerta, is Palæmon known ;
And Ino once, Leucothöe is grown.

The Theban matrons their lov'd queen pursu'd,
And, tracing to the rock, her footsteps view'd.
Too certain of her fate, they rënd the skies 800
With piteous shrieks, and lamentable cries.
All beat their breasts, and Juno all upbraid,
Who still remember'd a deluded maid :
Who, still revengeful for one stol'n embrace,
Thus wreak'd her hate on the Cadméan race. 805
This Juno heard ;—And shall such elfs (she cry'd)
Dispute my justice, or my pow'r deride ?
You too shall feel my wrath, not idly spent ;
A goddess never for insults was meant. 809

She, who lov'd most, and who most lov'd had been,
Said, Not the waves shall part me from my queen.
She strove to plunge into the roaring flood ;
Fix'd to the stone, a stone herself she stood.
This, on her breast would fain her blows repeat ;
Her stiffen'd hands refus'd her breast to beat: 815
That, stretch'd her arms unto the seas ; in vain
Her arms she labour'd to unstretch again.
To tear her comely locks another try'd ;

Both comely locks and fingers petrify'd.
 Part thus: but Juno, with a softer mind, 820
 Part doom'd to mix among the feather'd kind.
 Transform'd, the name of Theban birds they keep,
 And skim the surface of that fatal deep.

Meantime, the wretched Cadmus mourns, nor knows
 That they who mortal fell, immortal rose. 825
 With a long series of new ills opprest,
 He droops, and all the man forsakes his breast.
 Strange prodigies confound his frighted eyes;
 From the fair city, which he rais'd, he flies:
 As if misfortune not pursu'd his race, 830
 But only hung o'er that devoted place.
 Resolv'd by sea to seek some distant land,
 At last he safely gain'd th' Illyrian strand.
 Cheerless himself, his consort still he cheers,
 Hoary, and loaded both with woes and years. 835
 Then to recount past sorrows they begin,
 And trace them to the gloomy origin.

That serpent sure was hallow'd (Cadmus cry'd)
 Which once my spear transfix'd with foolish pride;
 When the big teeth, a seed before unknown, 840
 By me along the wond'ring glebe were sown,
 And sprouting armies by themselves o'erthrown.
 If thence the wrath of Heav'n on me is bent,
 May Heav'n conclude it with one sad event;
 To an extended serpent change the man;— 845
 And, while he spoke, the wish'd-for change began.
 His skin with sea-green spots was vary'd round,
 And on his belly prone he press'd the ground:
 He glitter'd soon with many a golden scale,
 And his shrunk legs clos'd in a spiry tail; 850
 Arms yet remain'd, remaining arms he spread
 To his lov'd wife, and human tears yet shed.

Come, my Harmonia, come, thy face recline
 Down to my face; still touch, what still is mine.
 O, let these hands, while hands, be gently prest, 855
 While yet the serpent has not all possess!
 More he had spoke, but strove to speak, in vain,
 The forky tongue refus'd to tell his pain,
 And learn'd in hissings only to complain. 859

Then shriek'd Harmonia, Stay, my Cadmus, stay !
 Glide not in such a monstrous shape away !
 Destruction, like impetuous waves, rolls on ;
 Where are thy feet, thy legs, thy shoulders gone ?
 Chang'd is thy visage, chang'd is all thy frame ;
 Cadmus is only Cadmus now in name. 865
 Ye gods, my Cadmus to himself restore,
 Or me like him transform ; I ask no more.

The husband serpent shew'd he still had thought ;
 With wonted fondness an embrace he sought ;
 Play'd round her neck, in many a harmless twist,
 And lick'd that bosom, which, a man, he kiss'd. 871
 The lookers on (for lookers on there were),
 Shock'd at the sight, half-dy'd away with fear.
 The transformation was again renew'd,
 And, like the husband, chang'd the wife they view'd.

Both, serpents now, with fold involv'd in fold, 876
 To the next covert amicably roll'd :
 There curl'd they lie, or wave along the green ;
 Fearless see men, by men are fearless seen, 879
 Still mild, and conscious what they once have been.

Yet though this harsh, inglorious fate they found,
 Each in the deathless grandson liv'd renown'd :
 Through conquer'd India, Bacchus nobly rode,
 And Greece with temples hail'd the conqu'ring god.
 In Argos only, proud Acrisius reign'd, 885
 Who all the consecrated rites profan'd.
 Audacious wretch ! thus Bacchus to deny,
 And the great Thunderer's great son defy !
 Nor him alone, thy daughter vainly strove,
 Brave Perseus of celestial stem to prove, 890
 And herself pregnant by a golden Jove.
 Yet this was true, and truth in time prevails ;
 Acrisius now his unbelief bewails.
 His former thought, an impious thought he found,
 And both the hero and the god were own'd. 895
 He saw, already one in heav'n was plac'd,
 And one with more than mortal triumphs grac'd.
 The victor Perseus, with the Gorgon head,
 O'er Libyan sands his airy journey sped.
 The gory drops distill'd, as swift he flew, 900

And from each drop envenom'd serpents grew.
 The mischiefs brooded on the barren plains,
 And still th' unhappy fruitfulness remains.

Thence Perseus, like a cloud, by storms was driv'n,
 Thro' all th' expanse beneath the cope of heav'n. 905
 The jarring winds unable to control,
 He saw the southern and the northern pole :
 And eastward thrice, and westward thrice was
 whirl'd,

And from the skies survey'd the nether world.
 But when gray ev'ning shew'd the verge of night,
 He fear'd in darkness to pursue his flight. 911
 He pois'd his pinions, and forgot to soar,
 And sinking, clos'd them on th' Hesperian shore :
 Then begg'd to rest, till Lucifer begun
 To wake the morn, the morn to wake the sun. 915

Here Atlas reign'd of more than human size,
 And in his kingdom the world's limit lies.
 Here Titan bids his wearied coursers sleep,
 And cools the burning axle in the deep.
 The mighty monarch, uncontroll'd, alone, 920
 His sceptre sways ; no neigh'ring states are known.
 A thousand flocks on shady mountains fed,
 A thousand herds o'er grassy plains were spread.
 Here wondrous trees their shining stores unfold,
 Their shining stores too wondrous to be told; 925
 Their leaves, their branches, and their apples, gold.

Then Persens the gigantic prince address'd,
 Humbly implor'd a hospitable rest :—
 If bold exploits thy admiration fire
 (He said), I fancy, mine thou wilt admire : 930
 Or if the glory of a race can move,
 Not mean my glory, for I spring from Jove.

At this confession Atlas ghastly star'd,
 Mindful of what an oracle declar'd,
 That the dark womb of time conceal'd a day, 935
 Which should, disclos'd, the gloomy gold betray :
 All should at once be ravish'd from his eyes,
 And Jove's own progeny enjoy the prize.

For this, the fruit he loftily immur'd,
 And a fierce dragon the strait pass secur'd; 940

For this, all strangers he forbade to land,
And drove them from th' inhospitable strand.

To Perseus then : Fly quickly, fly this coast,
Nor falsely dare thy acts and race to boast.

In vain the hero for one night entreats ; 945
Threat'ning he storms, and next adds force to threats.

By strength not Perseus could himself defend,
For who in strength with Atlas could contend ?—
But since short rest to me thou wilt not give,
A gift of endless rest from me receive.— 950

He said, and backward turn'd, no more conceal'd
The present, and Medûsa's head reveal'd.

Soon the high Atlas a high mountain stood :
His locks, and beard, became a leafy wood :
His hands and shoulders into ridges went, 955
The summit-head still crown'd the steep ascent :
His bones a solid, rocky hardness gain'd :
He thus immensely grown (as fate ordain'd),
The stars, the heav'ns, and all the gods sustain'd.

Now Æolus had with strong chains confin'd 960
And deep imprison'd every blust'ring wind ;
The rising Phosphor, with a purple light,
Did sluggish mortals to new toils invite ;
His feet again the valiant Perseus plumes,
And his keen sabre in his hand resumes ; 965
Then nobly spurns the ground, and upwards springs,
And cuts the liquid air with sounding wings.
O'er various seas, and various lands he pass'd,
Till Æthiopia's shore appear'd at last.

Andromeda was there, doom'd to atone, 970
By her own ruin, follies not her own :
And if injustice in a god can be,
Such was the Libyan god's unjust decree.
Chain'd to a rock she stood ; young Perseus stay'd
His rapid flight, to view the beauteous maid. 975
So sweet her fame, so exquisitely fine,
She seem'd a statue by a hand divine,
Had not the wind her waving tresses shew'd,
And down her cheeks the melting sorrows flow'd.

Her faultless form the hero's bosom fires ; 980
The more he looks, the more he still admires.

Th' admirer almost had forgot to fly,
 And swift descended, flutt'ring from on high.—
 O virgin, worthy no such chains to prove,
 But pleasing chains in the soft folds of love; 985
 Thy country, and thy name (he said) disclose,
 And give a true rehearsal of thy woes.

A quick reply her bashfulness refus'd,
 To the free-converse of a man unus'd:
 Her rising blushes had concealment found 990
 From her spread hands, but that her hands, were
 She acted to her full extent of pow'r, [bound.
 And bath'd her face with a fresh, silent show'r.
 But by degrees in innocence grown bold,
 Her name, her country, and her birth she told: 995
 And how she suffer'd for her mother's pride,
 Who with the Nereids once in beauty vy'd.

Part yet untold, the seas began to roar,
 And mounting billows tumbled to the shore:
 Above the waves a monster rais'd his head, 1000
 His body o'er the deep was widely spread:
 Onward he flounc'd; aloud the virgin cries;
 Each parent to her shrieks in shrieks replies;
 But she had deepest cause to rend the skies.
 Weeping, to her they cling; no sign appears 1005
 Of help, they only lend their helpless tears.

Too long you vent your sorrows (Perseus said);
 Short is the hour, and swift the time of aid.
 In me, the son of thund'ring Jove behold,
 Got in a kindly shower of fruitful gold. 1010
 Medûsa's snaky head is now my prey,
 And through the clouds I boldly wing my way.
 If such desert be worthy of esteem,
 And, if your daughter I from death redeem,
 Shall she be mine? shall it not then be thought, 1015
 A bride, so lovely, was too cheaply bought?
 For her, my arms I willingly employ,
 If I may beauties, which I save, enjoy.

The parents eagerly the terms embrace,
 (For who would slight such terms in such a case?)
 Nor her alone they promise, but beside, 1021
 The dowry of a kingdom with the bride.

As well-rigg'd galleys, which slaves, sweating, row,

With their sharp beaks the whiten'd ocean plow :
 So when the monster mov'd, still at his back 1025
 The furrow'd waters left a foamy track.
 Now to the rock he was advanc'd so nigh,
 Whirl'd from a sling a stone the space would fly.
 Then bounding, upwards the brave Perseus sprung,
 And in mid air on hov'ring pinions hung. 1030
 His shadow quickly floated on the main,
 The monster could not his wild rage restrain,
 But at the floating shadow leap'd in vain.
 As when Jove's bird, a speckled serpent spies,
 Which in the shine of Phœbus basking lies, 1035
 Unseen, he souses down, and bears away,
 Truss'd from behind, the vainly hissing prey.
 To writhe his neck the labour nought avails,
 Too deep th' imperial talons pierce his scales.
 Thus the wing'd hero now descends, now soars, 1040
 And at his pleasure, the vast monster goes.
 Full in his back, swift stooping from above,
 The crooked sabre to its hilt he drove.
 The monster rag'd impatient of the pain,
 First bounded high, and then sunk low again. 1045
 Now, like a savage boar, when chaf'd with wounds,
 And bay'd with op'ning mouths of hungry hounds,
 He on the foe turns with collected might,
 Who still eludes him with an airy flight ;
 And wheeling round, the scaly armour tries 1050
 Of his thick sides: his thinner tail now plies :
 Till, from repeated strokes, out gush'd a flood,
 And the waves redden'd with the streaming blood.
 At last, the dropping wings, befoam'd all o'er,
 With flaggy heaviness their master bore : 1055
 A rock he spy'd, whose humble head was low,
 Bare at an ebb, but cover'd at a flow.
 A ridgy hold, he, thither flying, gain'd,
 And, with one hand, his bending weight sustain'd ;
 With th' other, vig'rous blows he dealt around, 1060
 And the home-thrusts th' expiring monster own'd.
 In deaf'ning shouts the glad applauses rise,
 And peal on peal runs rattling through the skies,
 The saviour youth the royal pair confess, [bless. 1065
 And, with heav'd hands, their daughter's bridegroom

The beauteous bride moves on, now loos'd from chains,
 The cause, and sweet reward of all the hero's pains,
 Meantime, on shore triumphant Perseus stood,
 And purg'd his hands, smear'd with the monster's
 blood :

Then in the windings of a sandy bed 1070
 Compos'd Medûsa's execrable head.

But, to prevent the roughness, leaves he threw,
 And young, green twigs, which soft in waters grew :
 There soft, and full of sap ; but here, when laid,
 Touch'd by the head, that softness soon decay'd. 1075

The wonted flexibility quite gone,
 The tender scions harden'd into stone.

Fresh, juicy twigs, surpris'd, the Nereids brought,
 Fresh, juicy twigs the same contagion caught.
 The nymphs the petrifying seeds still keep, 1080
 And propagate the wonder through the deep.

The pliant sprays of coral yet declare
 Their stiff'ning nature, when expos'd to air.
 Those sprays, which did, like bending osiers, move,
 Snatch'd from their element, obdurate prove, 1085
 And shrubs beneath the waves, grow stones above.

The great Immortals grateful Perseus prais'd,
 And to three pow'rs three turfy altars rais'd.

To Hermès this, and that he did assign
 To Pallas ; the mid honours, Jove, were thine. 1090

He hastes for Pallas a white cow to cull,
 A calf for Hermès, but for Jove a bull.

Then seiz'd the prize of his victorious fight,
 Andromeda, and claim'd the nuptial rite :

Andromeda alone he greatly sought, 1095
 The dowry kingdom was not worth his thought.

Pleas'd Hymen now his golden torch displays ;
 With rich oblations fragrant altars blaze.

Sweet wreaths of choicest flow'rs are hung on high,
 And cloudless pleasure smiles in ev'ry eye. 1100

The melting music melting thoughts inspires,
 And warbling songsters aid the warbling lyres.

The palace opens wide in pompous state,
 And, by his peers surrounded, Cepheus sate.

A feast was serv'd, fit for a king to give, 1105
 And fit for godlike heroes to receive.

The banquet ended, the gay, cheerful bowl
 Mov'd round, and brighten'd, and enlarg'd each soul.
 Then Perseus ask'd, what customs there obtain'd,
 And by what laws the people were restrain'd. 1110
 Which told; the teller a like freedom takes,
 And to the warrior his petition makes,
 To know, what arts had won Medûsa's snakes.

The hero with his just request complies;
 Shews, how a vale beneath cold Atlas lies, 1115
 Where, with aspiring mountains, fenc'd around,
 He the two daughters of old Phorcus found.
 Fate had one common eye to both assign'd,
 Each saw by turns, and each by turns was blind.
 But while one strove to lend her sister sight, 1120
 He stretch'd his hand, and stole their mutual light,
 And left both eyeless, both involv'd in night.

Through devious wilds and trackless woods he pass'd,
 And at the Gorgon seats arriv'd at last:
 But as he journey'd, pensive he survey'd 1125
 What wasteful havoc dire Medûsa made.

Here, stood still breathing statues, men before;
 There, rampant lions seem'd in stone to roar.
 Nor did he yet, affrighted, quit the field,
 But in the mirror of his polish'd shield 1130
 Reflected saw Medûsa slumbers take,
 And not one serpent by good chance awake.

Then backward an unerring blow he sped,
 And from her body lopp'd at once her head.
 The gore prolific prov'd; with sudden force 1135
 Sprung Pegasus, and wing'd his airy course.

The heav'n-born warrior faithfully went on,
 And told the num'rous dangers which he run.
 What subject seas, what lands he had in view,
 And nigh what stars th' advent'rous hero flew. 1140
 At last he silent sat; the list'ning throng
 Sigh'd at the pause of his delightful tongue.
 Some begg'd to know, why this alone should wear,
 Of all the sisters, such destructive hair.

Great Perseus then: With me you shall prevail,
 Worth the relation, to relate a tale. 1146
 Medûsa once had charms: to gain her love
 A rival crowd of envious lovers strove.

They, who have seen her, own they ne'er did trace
 More moving features in a sweeter face: 1150
 Yet above all, her length of hair, they own,
 In golden ringlets wav'd, and graceful shone.
 Her, Neptune saw, and with such beauties fir'd,
 Resolv'd to compass what his soul desir'd.
 In chaste Minerva's fane, he, lustful, staid, 1155
 And seiz'd, and rifled the young, blushing maid,
 The bashful goddess turn'd her eyes away,
 Nor durst such bold impurity survey;
 But on the ravish'd virgin vengeance takes,
 Her shining hair is chang'd to hissing snakes. 1160
 These in her Ægis, Pallas joys to bear,
 The hissing snakes her foes more sure ensnare,
 Than they did lovers once, when shining hair.

BOOK V.

TRANSLATED BY A. MAYNWARING, ESQ.

The story of Perseus, continued. Minerva's Interview with the Muses. The fate of Pyrenéus. The story of the Piëridès. The song of the Piëridès. The song of the Muses. The rape of Proserpine. Cyanè dissolves to a fountain. A boy transformed to an Eft. The transformation of Ascalaphus into an owl. The daughters of Achelöus transformed to Sirens. The story of Arethûsa. The transformation of Lyncus. The Piëridès transformed to magpies.

WHILE Perseus entertain'd, with this report,
 His father Cepheus, and the list'ning court;
 Within the palace walls was heard aloud
 The roaring noise of some unruly crowd;
 Not like the songs which cheerful friends prepare 5
 For nuptial days, but sounds that threaten'd war;
 And all the pleasures of this happy feast,
 To tumult turn'd, in wild disorder ceas'd:
 So, when the sea is calm, we often find
 A storm rais'd sudden by some furious wind. 10
 Chief in the riot Phineus first appear'd,
 The rash ringleader of this boist'rous herd;
 And, brandishing his brazen-pointed lance,
 Behold (he said), an injur'd man advance,
 Stung with resentment for his ravish'd wife, 15

Nor shall thy wings, O Perseus, save thy life;
 Nor Jove himself; though we've been often told,
 Who got thee in the form of tempting gold.

His lance was aim'd, when Cepheus ran, and said:
 Hold, brother, hold; what brutal rage has made 20
 Your frantic mind so black a crime conceive?

Are these the thanks that you to Perseus give?
 This the reward that to his worth you pay,
 Whose timely valour sav'd Andromeda?

Nor was it he, if you would reason right, 25
 That forc'd her from you, but the jealous spite
 Of envious Nereïds, and Jove's high decree;

And that devouring monster of the sea,
 That ready with his jaws wide gaping stood
 To eat my child, the fairest of my blood. 30

You lost her then, when she seem'd past relief,
 And wish'd, perhaps, her death, to ease your grief
 With my afflictions: not content to view

Andromeda in chains, unhelp'd by you,
 Her spouse and uncle; will you grieve that he 35
 Expos'd his life, the dying maid to free?

And shall you claim his merit? Had you thought
 Her charms so great, you should have bravely sought
 That blessing on the rocks, where fix'd she lay:

But now let Perseus bear his prize away, 40
 By service gain'd, by promis'd faith possess'd;
 To him I owe it, that my age is bless'd

Still with a child: nor think that I prefer
 Perseus to thee, but to the loss of her.

Phineus on him and Perseus roll'd about 45
 His eyes in silent rage, and seem'd to doubt
 Which to destroy; till, resolute at length,

He threw his spear with the redoubled strength
 His fury gave him, and at Perseus struck;
 But missing Perseus, in his seat it stuck; 50

Who, springing nimbly up, return'd the dart,
 And almost plung'd it in his rival's heart;
 But he, for safety, to the altar ran,

Unfit protection for so vile a man;
 Yet was the stroke not vain, as Rhætus found, 55
 Who, in his brow, receiv'd a mortal wound;

Headlong he tumbled, when his skull was broke,

From which his friends the fatal weapon took,
 While he lay trembling, and his gushing blood,
 In crimson streams, around the table flow'd. 60

But this provok'd th' unruly rabble worse,
 They flung their darts, and some in loud discourse,
 To death young Persens, and the monarch, doom :
 But Cepheus left before the guilty room,
 With grief appealing to the gods above, 65
 Who laws of hospitality approve,
 Who faith protect, and succour injur'd right,
 That he was guiltless of this barb'rous fight.

Pallas, her brother Perseus close attends,
 And, with her ample shield, from harm defends, 70
 Raising a sprightly courage in his heart :
 But Indian Athis took the weaker part,
 Born in the crystal grottoes of the sea,
 Limnatè's son, a fenny nymph, and she
 Daughter of Ganges: graceful was his mien, 75
 His person lovely, and his age sixteen.
 His habit made his native beauty more ;
 A purple mantle, fring'd with gold, he wore ;
 His neck, well turn'd, with golden chains was grac'd ;
 His hair, with myrrh perfum'd, was nicely dress'd. 80
 Though with just aim he could the jav'lin throw,
 Yet with more skill he drew the bending bow ;
 And now was drawing it with artful hand,
 When Perseus snatching up a flaming brand,
 Whirl'd sudden at his face the burning wood, 85
 Crush'd his eyes in, and quench'd the fire with blood ;
 Through the soft skin the splinter'd bones appear,
 And spoil'd the face that lately was so fair.

When Lycabas his Athis thus beheld,
 How was his heart with friendly horror fill'd ! 90
 A youth so noble, to his soul so dear,
 To see his shapeless looks, his dying groans to hear :
 He snatch'd the bow the boy was us'd to bend,
 And cry'd : With me, false traitor, dare contend :
 Boast not a conquest o'er a child, but try 95
 Thy strength with me, who all thy pow'rs defy ;
 Nor think so mean an act a victory.

While yet he spoke, he flung the whizzing dart,
 Which pierc'd the plaited robe, but miss'd his heart

Perseus, defy'd, upon him fiercely press'd, 100
 With sword unsheath'd, and plung'd it in his breast;
 His eyes o'erwhelm'd with night, he stumbling falls,
 And with his latest breath on Athis calls;
 Pleas'd that so near the lovely youth he lies,
 He sinks his head upon his friend, and dies. 105

Next, eager Phorbas, old Methion's son,
 Came rushing forward with Amphimedon;
 When the smooth pavement, slippery made with gore,
 Tripp'd up their feet, and flung them on the floor;
 The sword of Perseus, who by chance was nigh, 110
 Prevents their rise, and where they fall, they lie:
 Full in his ribs Amphimedon he smote,
 And then stuck fiery Phorbas in the throat.

Eurythus lifting up his axe, the blow
 Was thus prevented by his nimble foe; 115
 A golden cup he seizes, high embost,
 And at his head the massy goblet toss'd:
 It hits, and from his forehead bruis'd rebounds,
 And blood and brains he vomits from his wounds;
 With his slain fellows on the floor he lies, 120
 And death for ever shuts his swimming eyes.

Then Polydæmon fell, a goddess born;
 Phlegias, and Elycén, with locks unshorn,
 Next follow'd; next, the stroke of death he gave
 To Clytus, Abanis, and Lycetus brave; 125
 While o'er unnumber'd heaps of ghastly dead,
 The Argive hero's feet triumphant tread.

But Phineus stands aloof, and dreads to feel
 His rival's force, and flies his pointed steel;
 Yet threw a dart from far: by chance it lights 130
 On Idas, who for neither party fights;
 But wounded, sternly thus to Phineus said:
 Since of a neuter thou a foe hast made,
 This I return thee: drawing from his side
 The dart; which, as he strove to fling, he dy'd. 135

Oditès fell by Clymenus's sword,
 The Cephèñ court had not a greater lord.
 Hypseus his blade does in Protenor sheath,
 But brave Lyncidès soon reveng'd his death.
 Here too was old Emathion, one that fear'd 140
 The gods, and in the cause of heav'n appear'd;

Who only wishing the success of right,
 And, by his age, exempted from the fight,
 Both sides alike condemns; This impious war,
 Cease, cease (he cries), these bloody broils forbear. 145

This, scarce the sage, with high concern, had said,
 When Chromis, at a blow, struck off his head;
 Which dropping, on the royal altar roll'd,
 Still staring on the crowd with aspect bold;
 And still it seem'd their horrid strife to blame, 150
 In life and death, his pious zeal the same;
 While, clinging to the horns, the trunk expires,
 The sever'd head consumes amidst the fires.

Then Phineus, who from far his jav'lin threw,
 Broteas and Ammon, twins and brothers, slew; 155
 For knotted gauntlets matchless in the field;
 But gauntlets must to swords and jav'lins yield.
 Ampycus next, with hallow'd fillets bound,
 As Cerès' priest, and with a mitre crown'd,
 His spear transfix'd, and struck him to the ground.

O, Iäpetidès, with pain I tell 161
 How you, sweet lyrist, in the riot fell:
 What worse than brutal rage his breast could fill,
 Who did thy blood, O bard celestial spill?
 Kindly you press'd amid the princely throng, 165
 To crown the feast, and give the nuptial song;
 Discord abhorr'd the music of thy lyre,
 Whose notes did gentle peace so well inspire;
 Thee, when fierce Pettalus far off espy'd,
 Defenceless with thy harp, he scoffing cry'd: 170
 Go; to the ghosts thy soothing lessons play;
 We loathe thy lyre, and scorn thy peaceful lay:
 And, as again he fiercely bade him go,
 He pierc'd his temples with a mortal blow.
 His harp he held, though sinking on the ground, 175
 Whose strings in death his trembling fingers found
 By chance, and tun'd by chance a dying sound.

With grief Lycormas saw him fall from far,
 And, wresting from the door a massy bar,
 Full in his poll lays on a load of knocks, 180
 Which stun him, and he falls like a devoted ox.
 Another bar Pelatès would have snatch'd,

But Corythus his motions slyly watch'd;
 He darts his weapon from a private stand,
 And rivets to the post his veiny hand : 185
 When straight a missive spear transfix'd his side,
 By Abas thrown, and as he hung he dy'd.

Melaneas on the prince's side was slain;
 And Dorylas, who own'd a fertile plain,
 Of Nasamonia's fields the wealthy lord, 190
 Whose crouded barns could scarce contain their hoard.
 A whizzing spear obliquely gave a blow,
 Stuck in his groin, and pierc'd the nerves below :
 His foe beheld his eyes convulsive roll,
 His ebbing veins, and his departing soul; 195
 Then taunting said; Of all thy spacious plains,
 This spot thy only property remains.

He left him thus; but had no sooner left,
 Than Perseus in revenge his nostrils cleft; 199
 From his friend's breast the murd'ring dart he drew,
 And the same weapon at the murd'rer threw;
 His head in halves the darted javelin cut,
 And on each side the brain came issuing out.

Fortune his friend, his deaths around he deals,
 And this his lance, and that his faulchion feels: 205
 Now Clytius dies; and by a diff'rent wound,
 The twin his brother Clanis bites the ground;
 In his rent jaw the bearded weapon sticks,
 And the steel'd dart does Clytius' thigh transfix :
 With these Mendesian Celadon he slew; 210
 And Astreus next, whose mother was a Jew.
 His sire uncertain: Then by Perseus fell
 Æthion, who could things to come foretel;
 But now he knows not whence the javelin flies
 That wounds his breast, nor by whose arm he dies.

The squire to Phineus next his valour try'd, 216
 And fierce Agyrtès stain'd with parricide.

As these are slain, fresh numbers still appear,
 And wage with Perseus an unequal war;
 To rob him of his right, the maid he won, 220
 By honour, promise, and desert his own.
 With him the father of the beauteous bride,
 The mother and the frighted virgin, side :
 With shrieks and doleful cries they rend the air;

Their shrieks confounded with the din of war, 225
 With clashing arms, and groanings of the slain,
 They grieve unpitied, and unheard complain.
 The floor with ruddy streams Bellona stains,
 And Phineus a new war with double rage maintains.

Perseus begirt, from all around they pour, 230
 Their lances on him, a tempestuous show'r,
 Aim'd all at him: a cloud of darts and spears,
 Or blind his eyes, or whistle round his ears.
 Their numbers to resist, against the wall
 He guards his back secure, and dares them all.

Here from the left Molpeus renews the fight,
 And bold Ethémon presses on the right:
 As when a hungry tiger near him hears
 Two lowing herds, awhile he both forbears;
 Nor can his hopes of this or that renounce, 240
 So strong he lusts to prey on both at once:
 Thus Perseus now with that or this, is loath
 To war distinct, but fain would fall on both.

And first Chaönian Molpeus felt his blow,
 And fled, and never after fac'd his foe; 245
 Then fierce Ethémon, as he turn'd his back,
 Hurried with fury, aiming at his neck;
 His brandish'd sword against the marble struck,
 With all his might; the brittle weapon broke,
 And in his throat the point rebounding, stuck. 250

Too slight the wound for life to issue thence,
 And yet too great for battle or defence;
 His arms extended in this piteous state,
 For mercy he would sue, but sues too late;
 Perseus has in his bosom plung'd the sword, 255
 And, ere he speaks, the wound prevents the word.

The crowds increasing and his friends distrest,
 Himself by warring multitudes opprest;
 Since thus unequally you fight, 'tis time
 (He cry'd) to punish your presumptuous crime; 260
 Beware, my friends:—His friends were soon prepar'd,
 Their sight averting, high the head he rear'd,
 And Gorgon on his foes severely star'd.

Vain shift! says Thescelus, with aspect bold,
 Thee, and thy bugbear monster I behold 265
 With scorn:—He lifts his arm, but ere he threw

The dart, the hero to a statue grew.

In the same posture still the marble stands,
And holds the warrior's weapons in its hands.

Aphyx, whom yet this wonder can't alarm, 270

Heaves at Lyncidès' breast his impious arm :

But, while thus daringly he presses on,

His weapon and his arm are turn'd to stone.

Next Nileus ; he who vainly said he ow'd
His origin to Nile's prolific flood ; 275

Who on his shield seven silver rivers bore,

His birth to witness by the arms he wore ;

Full of his seven-fold father, thus express'd

His boast to Perseus, and his pride confess'd :

See whence we sprung ; Let this thy comfort be 280

In thy sure death, that thou didst die by me.—

While yet he spoke, the dying accents hung

In sounds imperfect on his marble tongue ;

Though chang'd to stone, his lips he seem'd to stretch,

And thro' th' insensate rock would force a speech. 285

This, Eryx saw ; but seeing, would not own ;—

The mischief by yourselves (he cries) is done ;

'Tis your cold courage turns your hearts to stone ;

Come, follow me ; fall on the stripling boy,

Kill him, and you his magic arms destroy. 290

Then rushing on, his arm to strike he rear'd,

And marbled o'er his varied frame appear'd.

These for affronting Pallas were chastis'd,

And justly met the death they had despis'd :

But brave Aconteus, Perseus' friend, by chance 295

Look'd back, and met the Gorgon's fatal glance :

A statue now become, he ghastly stares,

And still the foe to mortal combat dares.

Astyagès the living likeness knew,

On the dead stone with vengeful fury flew ; 300

But impotent his rage, the jarring blade

No print upon the solid marble made :

Again, as with redoubled might he struck,

Himself astonish'd in the quarry stuck.

The vulgar deaths 'twere tedious to rehearse, 305

And fates below the dignity of verse ;

Their safety in their flight two hundred found,

Two hundred by Medûsa's head were ston'd.

Fierce Phineus now repents the wrongful fight,
 And views his varied friends, a dreadful sight; 310
 He knows their faces; for their help he sues,
 And thinks, not hearing him, that they refuse:
 By name he begs their succour, one by one,
 Then doubts their life, and feels the friendly stone.
 Struck with remorse, and conscious of his pride, 315
 Convict of sin, he turn'd his eyes aside;
 With suppliant mien to Perseus thus he prays:
 Hence with the head, as far as winds and seas
 Can bear thee: Hence; O quit the Cephên shore,
 And never curse us with Medûsa more; 320
 That horrid head, which stiffens into stone
 Those impious men who, daring death, look on.
 I warr'd not with thee out of hate or strife,
 My honest cause was to defend my wife,
 First pledg'd to me: what crime could I suppose, 325
 To arm my friends, and vindicate my spouse?
 But vain, too late, I see was our design;
 Mine was the title, but the merit thine.
 Contending made me guilty, I confess,
 But penitence should make that guilt the less: 330
 'Twas thine to conquer by Minerva's pow'r;
 Favour'd of Heav'n, thy mercy I implore;
 For life I sue; the rest to thee I yield:
 In pity, from my sight remove the shield.
 He suing said; nor durst revert his eyes 335
 On the grim head: And Perseus thus replies:
 Coward, what is in me to grant I will,
 Nor blood, unworthy of my valour spill:
 Fear not to perish by my vengeful sword,
 For that secure; 'tis all the fates afford. 340
 Where I now see thee, thou shalt still be seen,
 A lasting monument to please our queen;
 There still shall thy betroth'd behold her spouse,
 And find his image in her father's house.
 This said; where Phineus turn'd to shun the shield,
 Full in his face the staring head he held; 346
 As here and there he strove to turn aside,
 The wonder wrought, the man was petrify'd:
 All marble was his frame, his humid eyes
 Dropp'd tears which hung upon the stone like ice:

In suppliant posture, with uplifted hands,
And fearful look, the guilty statue stands. 351

Hence Perseus to his native city hies,
Victorious, and rewarded with his prize.
Conquest, o'er Prætus the usurper, won, 355
He reinstates his grandsire in the throne.

Prætus, his brother, dispossess'd by might,
His realm enjoy'd, and still detain'd his right:
But Perseus pull'd the haughty tyrant down,
And to the rightful king restor'd the throne. 360

Weak was th' usurper, as his cause was wrong;
Where Gorgon's head appears, what arms are strong?
When Perseus to his host the monster held,
They soon were statues, and their king expell'd.

Thence to Seriphus with the head he sails, 365
Whose prince his story treats as idle tales:
Lord of a little isle, he scorns to seem
Too credulous, but laughs at that, and him.
Yet did he not so much suspect the truth,
As out of pride or envy hate the youth. 370

The Argive prince, at his contempt enrag'd,
To force his faith by fatal proof engag'd:
Friends, shut your eyes (he cries);—his shield he
And to the king expos'd Medûsa's snakes. [takes,
The monarch felt the pow'r he would not own, 375
And stood convict of folly in the stone.

Thus far Minerva was content to rove
With Perseus, offspring of her father Jove:
Now hid in clouds, Seriphus she forsook;
And to the Theban tow'rs her journey took. 380

Cythos and Gyaros lying to the right,
She pass'd unheeded in her eager flight;
And choosing first on Helicon to rest,
The virgin muses in these words address'd:

Me, the strange tidings of a new-found spring, 385
Ye learned Sisters, to this mountain bring,
If all be true that fame's wide rumours tell,
'Twas Pegasus discover'd first your well;
Whose piercing hoof gave the soft earth a blow,
Which broke the surface, where the waters flow. 390
I saw that horse by miracle obtain

Life, from the blood of dire Medûsa slain,
 And now, this equal prodigy to view,
 From distant isles to fam'd Bœotia flew.

The muse Urania said; Whatever cause 395
 So great a goddess to this mansion draws;
 Our shades are happy with so bright a guest;
 You, queen, are welcome, and we Muses blest.
 What fame has publish'd of our spring, is true;
 Thanks for our spring to Pegasus are due. 400

Then with becoming courtesy, she led
 The curious stranger to their fountain's head:
 Who long survey'd, with wonder and delight,
 Their sacred water, charming to the sight;
 Their ancient groves, dark grotto, shady bow'rs, 405
 And smiling plains adorn'd with various flow'rs.

O happy Muses! she with rapture cry'd,
 Who, safe from cares, on this fair hill reside;
 Blest in your seat, and free yourselves to please
 With joys of study, and with glorious ease! 410

Then one replies: O goddess, fit to guide
 Our humble works, and in our choir preside;
 Who sure would wisely to these fields repair,
 To taste our pleasures, and our labours share,
 Were not your virtue, and superior mind 415
 To higher arts, and nobler deeds inclin'd:
 Justly you praise our works, and pleasing seat,
 Which all might envy in this soft retreat,
 Were we secur'd from dangers and from harms;
 But maids are frighten'd with the least alarms, 420
 And none are safe in this licentious time;
 Still fierce Pyrenéus, and his daring crime
 With lashing horror strikes my feeble sight,
 Nor is my mind recover'd from the fright.

With Thracian arms this bold usurper gain'd 425
 Daulis, and Phocis, where he proudly reign'd:
 It happen'd once, as through his lands we went,
 For the bright temple of Parnassus bent,
 He met us there, and in his artful mind
 Hiding the faithless action he design'd, 430
 Conferr'd on us (whom, oh! too well he knew)
 All honours that to goddesses are due.

Stop, stop, ye Muses, 'tis your friend who calls
 (The tyrant said); behold the rain that falls
 On ev'ry side, and that ill-boding sky, 435
 Whose low'ring face portends more storms are nigh.
 Pray make my house your own, and void of fear,
 While this bad weather lasts, take shelter here:
 Gods have made meaner places their resort,
 And, for a cottage, left their shining court. 440

Oblig'd to stop, by the united force
 Of pouring rains, and complaisant discourse,
 His courteous invitation we obey,
 And in his hall resolve awhile to stay.

Soon it clear'd up; the clouds began to fly, 445
 The driving north refin'd the show'ry sky;
 Then to pursue our journey we began;
 But the false traitor to his portal ran,
 Stopp'd our escape, the door securely barr'd,
 And to our honour violence prepar'd. 450
 But we, transform'd to birds, avoid his snare,
 On pinions rising in the yielding air.

But he, by lust and indignation fir'd,
 Up to his highest tow'r with speed retir'd,
 And cries, In vain you from my arms withdrew; 455
 The way you go, your lover will pursue.
 Then in a flying posture wildly plac'd,
 And daring from that height himself to cast,
 The wretch fell headlong, and the ground bestrew'd
 With broken bones, and stains of guilty blood. 460

The Muse yet spoke; when they began to hear
 A noise of wings that flutter'd in the air;
 And straight a voice, from some high spreading bough,
 Seem'd to salute the company below.
 The goddess wonder'd, and inquired whence 465
 That tongue was heard, that spoke so plainly sense
 (It seem'd to her a human voice to be,
 But prov'd a bird's; for in a shady tree
 Nine magpies perch'd, lament their alter'd state,
 And what they hear are skilful to repeat). 470

The sister to the wond'ring goddess said:
 These, foil'd by us, by us were thus repaid.

These did Evippè of Pæonia bring
 With nine hard labour-pangs to Pella's king.
 The foolish virgins, of their number proud, 475
 And puff'd with praises of the senseless crowd,
 Through all Achaia, and th' Æmonian plains,
 Defy'd us thus, to match their artless strains:
 No more, ye Thespian girls, your notes repeat,
 Nor with false harmony the vulgar cheat: 480
 In voice or skill, if you with us will vie,
 As many we, in voice or skill will try.
 Surrender you to us, if we excel,
 Fam'd Aganippè, and Medûsa's well.
 The conquest yours, your prize from us shall be 485
 Th' Æmathian plains to snowy Pæonè;
 The Nymphs our judges.—To dispute the field,
 We thought a shame; but greater shame to yield.
 On seats of living stone the sisters sit,
 And by the rivers swear to judge aright. 490

Then rises one of the presumptuous throng,
 Steps rudely forth, and first begins the song:
 With vain address describes the giants' wars,
 And to the gods their fabled acts prefers.
 She sings, from earth's dark womb how Typhon rose,
 And struck with mortal fear his heav'nly foes. 496
 How the gods fled to Egypt's slimy soil,
 And hid their heads beneath the banks of Nile;
 How Typhon, from the conquer'd skies, pursu'd
 Their routed godheads to the sev'n-mouth'd flood: 500
 Forc'd ev'ry god, his fury to escape,
 Some beastly form to take, or earthly shape.
 Jove (so she sung) was chang'd into a ram,
 From whence the horns of Libyan Ammon came.
 Bacchus a goat, Apollo was a crow; 505
 Phœbè a cat; the wife of Jove a cow,
 Whose hue was whiter than the falling snow.
 Mercury to a nasty Ibis turn'd.
 The change obscene, afraid of Typhon, mourn'd;
 While Venus from a fish protection craves, 510
 And once more plunges in her native waves.
 She sang, and to her harp her voice apply'd;
 Then us again to match her they defy'd:

But our poor song, perhaps for you to hear,
 Nor leisure serves, nor is it worth your ear. 515
 That causeless doubt remove, O Muse, rehearse
 (The goddess cry'd) your ever-grateful verse.
 Beneath a chequer'd shade she takes her seat,
 And bids the sister her whole song repeat.

The sister thus; Calliopè we chose 520
 For the performance.—The sweet virgin rose
 With ivy crown'd, she tunes her golden strings,
 And to her harp this composition sings.

First Cerès taught the lab'ring hind to plow
 The pregnant earth, and quick'ning seed to sow. 525
 She first for man did wholesome food provide,
 And with just laws the wicked world supply'd:
 All good from her deriv'd, to her belong
 The grateful tributes of the Muse's song.
 Her more than worthy of our verse we deem, 530
 Oh! were our verse more worthy of the theme.

Jove on the giant, fair Trinacria hurl'd,
 And with one bolt reveng'd his starry world.
 Beneath her burning hills Tiphæus lies,
 And, struggling always, strives in vain to rise. 535
 Down does Pelorus his right hand suppress
 Tow'rd Latium, on the left Pachynè weighs;
 His legs are under Lilybæum spread,
 And Ætna presses hard his horrid head.
 On his broad back he there extended lies, 540
 And vomits clouds of ashes to the skies.
 Oft lab'ring with his load, at last he tires,
 And spews out in revenge a flood of fires.
 Mountains he struggles to o'erwhelm and towns;
 Earth's inmost bowels quake, and Nature groans. 545
 His terrors reach the direful king of hell;
 He fears his throes will to the day reveal
 The realms of night, and fright his trembling ghosts.

This to prevent, he quits the Stygian coasts,
 In his black car, by sooty horses drawn, 550
 Fair Sicily he seeks, and dreads the dawn.
 Around her plains he cast his eager eyes,
 And ev'ry mountain to the bottom tries:
 But when, in all the careful search he saw

No cause of fear, no ill-suspected flaw ; 555
 Secure from harm, and wand'ring on at will,
 Venus beheld him from her flow'ry hill :
 When straight the dame her little Cupid press'd
 With secret rapture to her snowy breast,
 And in these words the flutt'ring boy address'd : 560
 O thou, my arms, my glory, and my pow'r,
 My son, whom men, and deathless gods adore ;
 Bend thy sure bow, whose arrows never miss'd,
 No longer let hell's king thy sway resist :
 Take him, while straggling from his dark abodes ; 565
 He coasts the kingdom of superior gods.
 If sov'reign Jove, if gods who rule the waves,
 And Neptune who rules them have been thy slaves ;
 Shall hell be free ? The tyrant strike, my son,
 Enlarge thy mother's empire, and thy own. 570
 Let not our heav'n be made the mock of hell,
 But Pluto to confess thy pow'r compel,
 Our rule is slighted in our native skies,
 See Pallas, see Diana too defies
 Thy darts, which Cerès' daughter would despise. 575
 She too our empire treats with awkward scorn ;
 Such insolence no longer's to be borne.
 Revenge our slighted reign, and with thy dart
 Transfix the virgin's to the uncle's heart.
 She said : and from his quiver straight he drew 580
 A dart that surely would the business do.
 She guides his hand, she makes her touch the tes ,
 And of a thousand arrows chose the best :
 No feather better pois'd, a sharper head
 None had, and sooner none, and surer sped. 585
 He bends his bow, he draws it to his ear,
 Through Pluto's heart it drives, and fixes there.

Near Enna's walls a spacious lake is spread,
 Fam'd for the sweetly-singing swans it bred ;
 Pergûsa is its name: And never more 590
 Were heard, or sweeter on Cäyster's shore.
 Woods crown the lake ; and Phœbus ne'er invades
 The tufted fences, or offends the shades :
 Fresh fragrant breezes fan the verdant bow'rs,
 And the moist ground smiles with enamell'd flow'rs.

The cheerful birds their airy carols sing, 596
And the whole year is one eternal spring.

Here while young Proserpine, among the maids,
Diverts herself in these delicious shades ;
While like a child with busy speed and care 600
She gathers lilies here, and violets there ;
While first to fill her little lap she strives,
Hell's grizzly monarch at the shade arrives ;
Sees her thus sporting on the flow'ry green,
And loves the blooming maid, as soon as seen. 605
His urgent flame impatient of delay,
Swift as his thought he seiz'd the beauteous prey,
And bore her in his sooty car away.
The frightened goddess to her mother cries :
But all in vain, for now far off she flies ; 610
Far she behind her leaves her virgin train ;
To them too cries, and cries to them in vain.
And, while with passion she repeats her call,
The violets from her lap, and lilies fall :
She misses 'em, poor heart ! and makes new moan :
Her lilies, ah ! are lost, her violets gone. 616

O'er hills the ravisher, and valleys speeds,
By name encouraging his foamy steeds ;
He rattles o'er their necks the rusty reins,
And ruffles with the stroke their shaggy manes. 620
O'er lakes he whirls his flying wheels, and comes
To the Palici breathing sulph'rous fumes.
And thence to where the Bacchiads of renown
Between unequal havens built their town ;
Where Arethûsa, round th' imprison'd sea, 625
Extends her crooked coast to Cyanè ;
The nymph who gave the neighb'ring lake a name,
Of all Sicilian nymphs the first in fame.
She from the waves advanc'd her beauteous head,
The goddess knew, and thus to Pluto said : 630
Farther thou shalt not with the virgin run ;
Cerès unwilling, canst thou be her son ?
The maid should be by sweet persuasion won :
Force suits not with the softness of the fair ;
For, if great things with small I may compare, 635
Me Anapis once lov'd ; a milder course

He took, and won me by his words, not force.

Then, stretching out her arms, she stopp'd his way :
 But he, impatient of the shortest stay,
 Throws to his dreadful steeds the slacken'd rein, 640
 And strikes his iron sceptre through the main ;
 The depths profound thro' yielding waves he cleaves,
 And to hell's centre a free passage leaves ;
 Down sinks his chariot, and his realms of night
 The god soon reaches with a rapid flight. 645

But still does Cyanè the rape bemoan,
 And with the goddess' wrongs laments her own ;
 For the stol'n maid, and for her injur'd spring,
 Time to her trouble no relief can bring.
 In her sad heart a heavy load she bears, 650
 Till the dumb sorrow turns her all to tears.
 Her mingling waters with that fountain pass,
 Of which she late immortal goddess was.
 Her varied members to a fluid melt,
 A pliant softness in her bones is felt. 655
 Her wavy locks first drop away in dew,
 And liquid, next, her slender fingers grew.
 The body's change soon seizes to extreme,
 Her legs dissolve, and feet flow off in stream.
 Her arms, her back, her shoulders, and her side, 660
 Her swelling breasts in little currents glide.
 A silver liquor only now remains
 Within the channel of her purple veins ;
 Nothing to fill love's grasp : her husband chaste
 Bathes in that bosom he before embrac'd. 665

Thus, while through all the earth, and all the main,
 Her daughter mournful Cerès sought in vain ;
 Aurora when with dewy looks she rose,
 Nor burnish'd vesper found her in repose.
 At Ætna's flaming mouth two pitchy pines 670
 To light her in her search at length she tines.
 Restless, with these, through frosty night she goes,
 Nor fears the cutting winds, nor heeds the snows ;
 And, when the morning star the day renews,
 From east to west her absent child pursues. 675

Thirsty at last by long fatigue she grows,
 But meets no spring, no riv'let near her flows.

Then looking round, a lowly cottage spies,
 Smoking among the trees, and thither hies.
 The goddess knocking at the little door, 680
 'Twas open'd by a woman old and poor,
 Who, when she begg'd for water, gave her ale,
 Brew'd long, but well preserv'd from being stale.
 The goddess drank; a chuffy lad was by,
 Who saw the liquor with a grudging eye, 685
 And grinning cries, She's greedy more than dry.
 Cerès offended at his foul grimace,
 Flung, what she had not drunk, into his face.
 The sprinklings speckle where they hit the skin,
 And a long tail does from his body spin; 690
 His arms are turn'd to legs, and, lest his size
 Should make him mischievous, and he might rise
 Against mankind, diminutive's his frame,
 Less than a lizard, but in shape the same.
 Amaz'd the dame the wondrous sight beheld, 695
 And weeps, and fain would touch her quondam child.
 Yet her approach th' affrighted vermin shuns,
 And fast into the greatest crevice runs.
 A name they gave him, which the spots express'd,
 That rose like *stars, and varied all his breast. 700
 What lands, what seas the goddess wander'd o'er,
 Were long to tell, for there remain'd no more.
 Searching all round, her fruitless toil she mourns,
 And, with regret, to Sicily returns.
 At length, where Cyanè now flows, she came, 705
 Who could have told her, were she still the same
 As when she saw her daughter sink to hell;
 But what she knows, she wants a tongue to tell,
 Yet this plain signal manifestly gave,
 The virgin's girdle floating on a wave, 710
 As late she dropp'd it from her slender waist,
 When with her uncle through the deep she pass'd.
 Cerès the token by her grief confess'd,
 And tore her golden hair, and beat her breast.
 She knows not on what land her curse should fall,
 But, as ingrate, alike upbraids them all, 716
 Unworthy of her gifts; Trinacria most,
 Where the last steps she found of what she lost.

* Stellio.

The plough for this the vengeful goddess broke,
 And with one death the ox and owner struck. 720
 In vain the fallow fields the peasant tills;
 The seed, corrupted ere 'tis sown, she kills.
 The fruitful soil, that once such harvest bore,
 Now mocks the farmer's care, and teems no more;
 And the rich grain which fills the furrow'd glade,
 Rots in the seed, or shrivels in the blade; 726
 Or too much sun burns up, or too much rain
 Drowns, or black blights destroy the blasted plain;
 Or greedy birds the new-sown corn devour,
 Or darnel, thistles, and a crop impure 730
 Of knotted grass, along the acres stand,
 And spread their thriving roots through all the land.
 Then from the waves soft Arethûsa rears
 Her head, and back she flings her dropping hairs.
 O mother of the maid, whom thou so far 735
 Hast sought, of whom thou canst no tidings hear:
 O thou (she cry'd) who art to life a friend,
 Cease here thy search, and let thy labour end.
 Thy faithful Sicily's a guiltless clime,
 And should not suffer for another's crime; 740
 She neither knew, nor could prevent the deed:—
 Nor think that for my country thus I plead;
 My country's Pisa, I'm an alien here,
 Yet these abodes to Elis I prefer,
 No clime to me so sweet, no place so dear. 745
 These springs I, Arethûsa, now possess,
 And this my seat, O gracious goddess, bless.
 This island why I love, and why I cross'd
 Such spacious seas to reach Ortygia's coast,
 To you I shall impart, when, void of care, 750
 Your heart's at ease and you more fit to hear;
 When on your brow no pressing sorrow sits;
 For gay content alone such tales admits.
 When through earth's caverns I awhile have roll'd
 My waves, I rise, and here again behold 755
 The long-lost stars; and as I late did glide
 Near Styx, Proserpina there I espy'd.
 Fear still with grief might in her face be seen;
 She still her rape laments; yet, made a queen,
 Beneath those gloomy shades her sceptre sways, 760

And e'en the infernal king her will obeys.

This heard, the goddess like a statue stood,
Stupid with grief: and in that musing mood
Continu'd long; new cares awhile suppress'd
The reigning powers of her immortal breast. 765

At last to Jove, her daughter's sire, she flies,
And with her chariot cuts the crystal skies;
She comes in clouds, and with dishevell'd hair,
Standing before his throne, prefers her pray'r:

King of the gods, defend my blood and thine, 770
And use it not the worse for being mine.

If I no more am gracious in thy sight,
Be just, O Jove, and do thy daughter right.
In vain I sought her the wide world around,
And, when I most despair'd to find her, found. 775

But how can I the fatal finding boast,
By which I know she is for ever lost?

Without her father's aid, what other pow'r
Can to my arms the ravish'd maid restore?
Let him restore her; I'll the crime forgive; 780

My child, though ravish'd, I'd with joy receive.
Pity, *your* daughter with a thief should wed,
Though *mine*, you think, deserves no better bed.

Jove thus replies: It equally belongs
To both, to guard our common pledge from wrongs:
But if to things we proper names apply, 786
This hardly can be call'd an injury.

The theft is love; nor need we blush to own
The thief, if I can judge, to be our son.
Had you of his desert no other proof, 790

To be Jove's brother is, methinks, enough.
Nor was my throne by worth superior got,
Heav'n fell to me, as hell to him, by lot.

If you are still resolv'd her loss to mourn,
And nothing less will serve than her return; 795
Upon these terms she may again be yours

(Th' irrevocable terms of fate, not ours);
Of Stygian food if she did never taste,
Hell's bounds may then, and only then, be pass'd.

The goddess now, resolving to succeed, 800
Down to the gloomy shades descends with speed.

But adverse fate had otherwise decreed :
 For, long before, her giddy, thoughtless child
 Had broke her fast, and all her projects spoil'd.
 As in the garden's shady walk she stray'd, 805
 A fair pomegranate charm'd the simple maid ;
 Hung in her way, and tempting her to taste,
 She pluck'd the fruit, and took a short repast.
 Seven times, a seed at once, she eat the food ;
 The fact Ascalaphus had only view'd ; 810
 Whom Acheron begot, in Stygian shades,
 On Orphnè, fam'd among Avernall maids ;
 He saw what pass'd, and, by discov'ring all,
 Detain'd the ravish'd nymph in cruel thrall.
 But now a queen, she with resentment heard, 815
 And chang'd the vile informer to a bird.
 In Phlegeton's black stream her hand she dips,
 Sprinkles his head, and wets his babbling lips.
 Soon on his face, bedropt with magic dew,
 A change appear'd, and gaudy feathers grew. 820
 A crooked beak the place of nose supplies,
 Rounder his head, and larger are his eyes.
 His arms and body waste, but are supply'd
 With yellow pinions flagging on each side.
 His nails grew crooked, and are turn'd to claws, 825
 And lazily along his heavy wings he draws.
 Ill-omen'd in his form, th' unlucky fowl,
 Abhorr'd by men, and call'd a screeching owl.

Justly this punishment was due to him ;
 And less had been too little for his crime : 830
 But, O ye nymphs that from the flood descend,
 What fault of yours the gods could so offend,
 With wings and claws your beauteous forms to spoil,
 Yet save your maiden face, and winning smile ?
 Were you not with her in Pergûsa's bow'rs, 835
 When Proserpine went forth to gather flow'rs ?
 Since Pluto in his car the goddess caught,
 Have you not for her in each climate sought ?
 And when on land you long had search'd in vain,
 You wish'd for wings to cross the pathless main ; 840
 'That earth and sea might witness to your care :
 The gods were easy, and return'd your pray'r ;

With golden wings o'er foamy waves you fled,
 And to the sun your plummy glories spread.
 But, lest the soft enchantment of your songs, 845
 And the sweet music of your flatt'ring tongues
 Should quite be lost (as courteous fates ordain),
 Your voice and virgin beauty still remain.

Jove some amends for Cerès' loss to make,
 Yet willing Pluto should the joy partake, 850
 Gives 'em of Proserpine an equal share,
 Who, claim'd by both, with both divides the year,
 The goddess now in either empire sways,
 Six moons in hell, and six with Cerès stays.
 Her peevish temper's chang'd; that sullen mind, 855
 Which made ev'n hell uneasy, now is kind.
 Her voice refines, her mien more sweet appears,
 Her forehead free from frowns, her eyes from tears.
 As when with golden light, the conqu'ring day
 Through dusky exhalations clears away. 860
 Cerès her daughter's rape no longer mourn'd,
 But back to Arethûsa's spring return'd;
 And sitting on the margin, bade her tell
 From whence she came, and why a sacred well?

Still were the purling waters; and the maid 865
 From the smooth surface rais'd her beauteous head,
 Wipes off the drops that from her tresses ran,
 And thus to tell Alpheus' loves began :

In Elis first I breath'd the living air,
 The chase was all my pleasure, all my care. 870
 None lov'd like me the forest to explore,
 To pitch the toils, and drive the bristled boar.
 Of *fair*, though masculine, I had the name,
 But gladly would to that have quitted claim :
 It less my pride than indignation rais'd, 875
 To hear the beauty I neglected, prais'd :
 Such compliments I loath'd, such charms as these
 I scorn'd, and thought it infamy to please.

Once, I remember, in the summer's heat,
 Tir'd with the chase, I sought a cool retreat; 880
 And, walking on, a silent current found,
 Which gently glided o'er the grav'ly ground ;
 The crystal water was so smooth, so clear,

My eye distinguish'd ev'ry pebble there.
 So soft its motion, that I scarce perceiv'd 885
 The running stream, or what I saw, believ'd.
 The hoary willow, and the poplar, made
 Along the shelving bank a grateful shade.
 In the cool rivulet my feet I dipp'd,
 Then waded to the knee, and then I stripp'd; 890
 My robe I careless on an osier threw,
 That near the place commodiously grew;
 Nor long upon the border naked stood,
 But plung'd with speed into the silver flood.
 My arms a thousand ways I mov'd, and try'd 895
 To quicken, if I could, the lazy tide;
 Where, while I play'd my swimming gambols o'er,
 I heard a murm'ring voice, and frighted sprang to shore.
 O! whither, Arethûsa, dost thou fly?
 From the brook's bottom did Alpheus cry, 900
 Again I heard him, in a hollow tone,
 O! whither Arethûsa; dost thou run?
 Naked I flew, nor could I stay to hide
 My limbs; my robe was on the other side;
 Alpheus follow'd fast, th' inflaming sight 905
 Quicken'd his speed, and made his labour light;
 He sees me ready for his eager arms,
 And, with a greedy glance, devours my charms.
 As trembling doves from pressing danger fly, 909
 When the fierce hawk comes sousing from the sky;
 And, as fierce hawks the trembling doves pursue,
 From him I fled, and after me he flew.
 First by Orchomenus I took my flight,
 And soon had Psophis and Cyllenè in sight;
 Behind me then high Mænalus I lost, 915
 And craggy Erimanthus scal'd with frost;
 Elis was next; thus far the ground I trod
 With nimble feet, before the distanc'd god.
 But here I lagg'd unable to sustain
 The labour longer, and my flight maintain; 920
 While he more strong, more patient of the toil,
 And fir'd with hopes of beauty's speedy spoil,
 Gain'd my lost ground, and by redoubled pace,
 Now left between us but a narrow space.
 Unwearied I, till now, o'er hills and plains, 925

O'er rocks, and rivers ran, and felt no pains
 The sun behind me, and the god I kept;
 But, when I fastest should have run, I stept.
 Before my feet his shadow now appear'd;
 As what I saw, or rather what I fear'd. 930
 Yet there I could not be deceiv'd by fear,
 Who felt his breath pant on my braided hair,
 And heard his sounding tread, and knew him to be
 near.

Tir'd and despairing, O celestial maid,
 I'm caught (I cry'd), without thy heav'nly aid. 935
 Help me, Diana, help a nymph forlorn,
 Devoted to the woods, who long has worn
 Thy livery, and long thy quiver borne.

The goddess heard; my pious pray'r prevail'd;
 In muffling clouds my virgin head was veil'd. 940
 The am'rous god, deluded of his hopes,
 Searches the gloom, and through the darkness gropes;
 Twice, where Diana did her servant hide,
 He came, and twice, O Arethûsa! cry'd.
 How shaken was my soul, how sunk my heart! 945
 The terror seiz'd on ev'ry trembling part.
 Thus when the wolf about the mountain prowls
 For prey, the lambkin hears his horrid howls;
 The tim'rous hare, the pack approaching nigh,
 Thus hearkens to the hounds, and trembles at the cry;
 Nor dares she stir, for fear her scented breath 951
 Direct the dogs, and guide the threaten'd death.

Alpheus in the cloud no traces found
 To mark my way, yet stays to guard the ground.
 The god so near, a chilly sweat possess'd 955
 My fainting limbs at ev'ry pore exprest;
 My strength distill'd in drops, my hair in dew,
 My form was chang'd, and all my substance new.
 Each motion was a stream, and my whole frame
 Turn'd to a fount, which still preserves my name 960
 Resolv'd I should not his embrace escape,
 Again the god resumes his fluid shape;
 To mix his streams with mine he fondly tries,
 But still Diana his attempt denies;
 She cleaves the ground; through caverns dark I run
 A diff'rent current, while he keeps his own. 966

To dear Ortygia she conducts my way,
And here I first review the welcome day.

Here Arethûsa stopp'd; then Cerès takes
Her golden car, and yokes her fiery snakes; 970
With a just rein, along mid-heav'n she flies
O'er earth, and seas, and cuts the yielding skies.
She halts at Athens, dropping like a star,
And to Triptolemus resigns her car.
Parent of seed, she gave him fruitful grain, 975
And bade him teach, to till and plough the plain;
The seed to sow, as well in fallow fields,
As where the soil manur'd, a richer harvest yields.

The youth o'er Europe, and o'er Asia drives,
Till at the court of Lyncus he arrives. 980
The tyrant, Scythia's barb'rous empire sway'd;
And, when he saw Triptolemus, he said:
How cam'st thou, stranger, to our court, and why?
Thy country, and thy name? the youth did thus
reply:—

Triptolemus my name; my country's known 985
O'er all the world, Minerva's fav'rite town;
Athens, the first of cities in renown.
By land I neither walk'd, nor sail'd by sea,
But hither through the æther made my way.
By me, the goddess who the fields befriends, 990
These gifts, the greatest of all blessings, sends.
The grain she gives, if in your soil you sow,
Thence wholesome food in golden crops shall grow.

Soon as the secret to the king was known,
He grudg'd the glory of the service done, 995
And wickedly resolv'd to make it all his own.
To hide his purpose, he invites his guest,
The friend of Cerès, to a royal feast:
And when sweet sleep his heavy eyes had seiz'd,
The tyrant with his steel attempts his breast. 1000
Him straight a lynx's shape the goddess gives,
And home the youth her sacred dragons drives.

The chosen Muse here ends her sacred lays:
The nymphs unanimous decree the bays,
And give the Heliconian goddesses the praise. 1005

Then, far from vain that we should thus prevail,
 But much provok'd to hear the vanquish'd rail,
 Calliopè resumes: Too long we've borne
 Your daring taunts, and your affronting scorn;
 Your challenge justly merited a curse, 1010
 And this unmanner'd railing makes it worse.
 Since you refuse us calmly to enjoy
 Our patience, next our passions we'll employ:
 The dictates of a mind enrag'd pursue,
 And, what our just resentment bids us, do. 1015
 The railers laugh, our threats and wrath despise,
 And clap their hands, and make a scolding noise:
 But in the fact they're seiz'd; beneath their nails
 Feathers they feel, and on their faces scales;
 Their horny beaks at once each other scare, 1020
 Their arms are plum'd, and on their backs they bear
 Pied wings, and flutter in the fleeting air.
 Chatt'ring, the scandal of the woods they fly,
 And there continue still their clam'rous cry:
 The same their eloquence, as maids, or birds, 1025
 Now only noise, and nothing *then* but words.

BOOK VI.

TRANSLATED BY MR. CROXALL.

The transformation of Arachnè into a spider. The story of Niobè. The transformation of Niobè. The peasants of Lycia transformed to frogs. The fate of Marsyas. The story of Pelops. The story of Tereus, Procnè, and Philomela. Boreas in love.

PALLAS, attending to the Muses' song,
 Approv'd the just resentment of their wrong;
 And thus reflects: While tamely I commend
 Those who their injur'd deities defend,
 My own divinity affronted stands, 5
 And calls aloud for justice at my hands:
 Then takes the hint, asham'd to lag behind,
 And on Arachnè bends her vengeful mind;
 One at the loom so excellently skill'd,
 That to the goddess she refus'd to yield. 10

Low was her birth, and small her native town ;
 She from her art alone obtain'd renown.
 Idmon, her father, made it his employ,
 To give the spongy fleece a purple dye.
 Of vulgar strain her mother, lately dead, 15
 With her own rank had been content to wed ;
 Yet she their daughter, though her time was spent
 In a small hamlet, and of mean descent,
 Through the great towns of Lydia gain'd a name,
 And fill'd the neighb'ring countries with her fame.

Oft, to admire the niceness of her skill, 21
 The nymphs would quit their fountain, shade, or hill ;
 Thither, from green Tymolus, they repair,
 And leave the vineyards, their peculiar care ;
 Thither, from fam'd Pactolus' golden stream, 25
 Drawn by her art, the curious Naiads came.
 Nor would the work, when finish'd, please so much,
 As, while she wrought, to view each graceful touch ;
 Whether the shapeless wool in balls she wound,
 Or with quick motion turn'd the spindle round, 30
 Or with her pencil drew the neat design,
 Pallas her mistress shone in every line.
 This, the proud maid with scornful air denies,
 And e'en the goddess at her work defies ;
 Disowns her heav'nly mistress ev'ry hour, 35
 Nor asks her aid, nor deprecates her pow'r :—
 Let us (she cries) but to a trial come,
 And, if she conquers, let her fix my doom.

The goddess then a beldame's form put on,
 With silver hairs her hoary temples shone ; 40
 Propp'd by a staff, she hobbles in her walk,
 And tott'ring, thus begins her old wife's talk :

Young maid, attend, nor stubbornly despise
 The admonitions of the old and wise ;
 For age, though scorn'd, a ripe experience bears, 45
 That golden fruit, unknown to blooming years :
 Still may remotest fame your labours crown,
 And mortals your superior genius own ;
 But to the goddess yield, and humbly meek
 A pardon for your bold presumption seek ; 50
 The goddess will forgive.—At this the maid,
 With passion fir'd, her gliding shuttle stay'd ;

And, darting vengeance with an angry look,
To Pallas in disguise, thus fiercely spoke :

Thou doating thing, whose idle babbling tongue 55
But too well shews the plague of living long ;
Hence, and reprove, with this your sage advice,
Your giddy daughter, or your awkward niece :
Know, I despise your counsel, and am still
A woman, ever wedded to my will ; 60
And, if your skilful goddess better knows,
Let her accept the trial I propose.

She does (impatient Pallas straight replies) ;
And, cloth'd with heav'nly light, sprang from her odd
The nymphs and virgins of the plain adore [disguise.
The awful goddess, and confess her pow'r ; 66
The maid alone stood unappall'd ; yet shew'd
A transient blush, that for a moment glow'd,
Then disappear'd ; as purple streaks adorn
The op'ning beauties of the rosy morn ; 70
Till Phœbus rising prevalently bright,
Allays the tincture with his silver light,
Yet she persists, and, obstinately great,
In hopes of conquest, hurries on her fate.

The goddess now the challenge waves no more, 75
Nor, kindly good, advises as before.

Straight to their posts appointed both repair,
And fix their threaded looms with equal care :
Around the solid beam the web is tied,
While hollow canes the parting warp divide ; 80
Through which, with nimble flight the shuttles play,
And for the woof prepare a ready way ;
The woof and warp unite, prest by the toothy slay.

Thus both, their mantles button'd to their breast,
Their skilful fingers ply with willing haste, 85
And work with pleasure ; while they cheer the eye
With glowing purple of the Tyrian die ;
Or, justly intermixing shades with light,
Their colourings insensibly unite.
As when a show'r transpierc'd with sunny rays, 90
Its mighty arch along the heav'n displays ;
From whence a thousand diff'rent colours rise,
Whose fine transition cheats the clearest eyes ;

So like the intermingled shading seems,
 And only differs in the last extremes. 95
 Then threads of gold both artfully dispose,
 And, as each part in just proportion rose,
 Some antique fable in their work disclose.

Pallas in figures wrought the heav'nly pow'rs,
 And Mars's hill among th' Athenian tow'rs. 100
 On lofty thrones twice six celestials sate,
 Jove in the midst, and held their warm debate;
 The subject weighty, and well-known to fame,
From whom the city should receive its name.

Each god by proper features was exprest, 105
 Jove with majestic mien excell'd the rest.
 His three-fork'd mace the dewy sea-god shook,
 And, looking sternly, smote the ragged rock ;
 When from the stone leapt forth a sprightly steed,
 And Neptune claims the city for the deed. 110

Herself she blazons with a glitt'ring spear,
 And crested helm that veiled her braided hair,
 With shield, and scaly breast-plate, implements of war.
 Struck with her pointed lance, the teeming earth
 Seem'd to produce a new surprising birth ; 115
 When, from the glebe, the pledge of conquest sprung,
 A tree pale-green with fairest olives hung.

And then, to let her giddy rival learn
 What just rewards such boldness was to earn,
 Four trials at each corner had their part, 120
 Design'd in miniature, and touch'd with art.
 Hæmus in one, and Rhodopè of Thrace,
 Transform'd to mountains, fill'd the foremost place ;
 Who claim'd the titles of the gods above,
 And vainly us'd the epithets of Jove 125

Another shew'd, where the Pigmæan dame,
 Profaning Juno's venerable name,
 Turn'd to an airy crane, descends from far,
 And with her pigmy subjects wages war.
 In a third part, the rage of heaven's great queen, 130
 Display'd on proud Antigonè, was seen :
 Who with presumptuous boldness dared to vie,
 For beauty, with the empress of the sky.
 Ah! what avails her ancient princely race,
 Her sire a king, and Troy her native place! 135

Now, to a noisy stork transform'd, she flies,
 And with her whiten'd pinions cleaves the skies.
 And in the last remaining part was drawn
 Poor Cinyras, that seem'd to weep in stone;
 Claspings the temple steps, he sadly mourn'd 140
 His lovely daughters now to marble turn'd.
 With her own tree the finish'd piece is crown'd,
 And wreaths of peaceful olive all the work surround.

Arachnè drew the fam'd intrigues of Jove,
 Chang'd to a bull to gratify his love; 145
 How through the briny tide all foaming hoar,
 Lovely Europa on his back he bore.
 The sea seem'd waving, and the trembling maid
 Shrank up her tender feet, as if afraid;
 And, looking back on the forsaken strand, 150
 To her companions wafts her distand hand.

Next she design'd Asteria's fabled rape,
 When Jove assum'd a soaring eagle's shape:
 And shew'd how Leda lay supinely press'd, 154
 Whilst the soft snowy swan sate hov'ring o'er her
 How in a satyr's form the god beguil'd, [breast.
 When fair Antiopè with twins he fill'd.
 Then, like Amphitryon, but a real Jove,
 In fair Alcmena's arms he cool'd his love.
 In fluid gold to Danaë's heart he came, 160
 Ægina felt him in a lambent flame.
 He took Mnemosynè in shepherd's make,
 And for Dëois was a speckled snake.

She made thee, Neptune, like a wanton steer,
 Pacing the meads for love of Arnè dear: 165
 Next like a stream, thy burning flame to slake,
 And like a ram, for fair Bisaltis' sake.
 Then Cerès in a steed your vigour tried,
 Nor could the mare the yellow goddess hide.
 Next, to a fowl transform'd, you won by force 170
 The snake-hair'd mother of the winged horse;
 And, in a dolphin's fishy form, subdu'd
 Melantho sweet beneath the oozy flood.

All these the maid with lively features drew,
 And open'd proper landscapes to the view. 175
 There Phœbus roving like a country swain,
 Attunes his jolly pipe along the plain;

For lovely Issè's sake in shepherd's weeds,
 O'er pastures green his bleating flock he feeds.
 There Bacchus, imag'd like the clust'ring grape, 180
 Melting bedrops Erigonè's fair lap;
 And there old Saturn, stung with youthful heat,
 Form'd like a stallion, rushes to the feat.
 Fresh flow'rs, which twists of ivy intertwine,
 Mingling a running foliage, close the neat design. 185

This the bright goddess, passionately mov'd,
 With envy saw, yet inwardly approv'd.
 The scene of heav'nly guilt with haste she tore,
 Nor longer the affront with patience bore;
 A boxen shuttle in her hand she took, 190
 And more than once Arachnè's forehead struck.
 Th' unhappy maid, impatient of the wrong,
 Down from a beam her injur'd person hung;
 When Pallas, pitying her wretched state,
 At once prevented, and pronounc'd her fate:— 195
 Live; but depend, vile wretch (the goddess cry'd),
 Doom'd in suspense for ever to be tied;
 That all your race, to utmost date of time,
 May feel the vengeance, and detest the crime.

Then, going off, she sprinkled her with juice, 200
 Which leaves of baleful aconite produce.
 Touch'd with the pois'nous drug, her flowing hair
 Fell to the ground, and left her temples bare;
 Her usual features vanish'd from their place,
 Her body lessen'd all, but most her face. 205
 Her slender fingers, hanging on each side
 With many joints, the use of legs supply'd:
 A spider's bag, the rest from which she gives
 A thread, and still by constant weaving lives. 209

Swift through the Phrygian towns the rumour flies,
 And the strange news each female tongue employs:
 Niobè, who, before she married, knew
 The famous nymph, now found the story true;
 Yet, unreclaim'd by poor Arachnè's fate,
 Vainly above the gods assum'd a state. 215
 Her husband's fame, their family's descent,
 Their pow'r, a rich dominion's wide extent,
 Might well have justified a decent pride;

But not on these alone the dame relied.
 Her lovely progeny, that far excell'd, 220
 The mother's heart with vain ambition swell'd :
 The happiest mother not unjustly styl'd,
 Had no conceited thoughts her tow'ring fancy fill'd.

For once a prophetess with zeal inspir'd,
 Their slow neglect to warm devotion fir'd; 225
 Through ev'ry street of Thebes who ran possess'd,
 And thus in accents wild her charge express'd:—
 Haste, haste, ye Theban matrons, and adore,
 With hallow'd rites, Latona's mighty pow'r;
 And, to the heav'nly twins that from her spring, 230
 With laurel crown'd, your smoking incense bring.

Straight the great summons ev'ry dame obey'd,
 And due submission to the goddess paid ;
 Graceful, with laurel chaplets dress'd they came,
 And offer'd incense in the sacred flame. 235

Meanwhile, surrounded with a courtly guard,
 The royal Niobè in state appear'd ;
 Attir'd in robes embroider'd o'er with gold,
 And mad with rage, yet lovely to behold :
 Her comely tresses, trembling as she stood, 240
 Down her fine neck with easy motion flow'd ;
 Then, darting round a proud disdainful look,
 In haughty tone her hasty passion broke,
 And thus began : What madness this, to court
 A goddess founded merely on report ? 245
 Dare ye a poor pretended pow'r invoke,
 While yet no altars to my godhead smoke ?
 Mine, whose immediate lineage stands confest
 From Tantalus, the only mortal guest
 That e'er the gods admitted to their feast. 250

A sister of the Pleiads gave me birth ;
 And Atlas, mightiest mountain upon earth,
 Who bears the globe of all the stars above,
 My grandsire was, and Atlas sprang from Jove.
 The Theban towns my majesty adore, 255
 And neighb'ring Phrygia trembles at my pow'r :
 Rais'd by my husband's lute, with turrets crown'd,
 Our lofty city stands secur'd around.
 Within my court, where'er I turn my eyes,
 Unbounded treasures to my prospect rise ; 260

With these my face I modestly may name,
 As not unworthy of so high a claim :
 Seven are my daughters, of a form divine,
 With seven fair sons, an indefective line.
 Go, fools ! consider this ; and ask the cause 265
 From which my pride its strong presumption draws.
 Consider this ; and then prefer to me
 Cæus the Titan's vagrant progeny ;
 To whom, in travail, the whole spacious earth
 No room afforded for her spurious birth. 270
 Not the least part in earth, in heav'n, or seas,
 Would grant your outlaw'd goddess any ease :
 Till pitying her's, from his own wand'ring case,
 Delos, the floating island, gave a place.
 There she a mother was, of two at most ; 275
 Only the seventh part of what I boast,
 My joys all are beyond suspicion fixt :
 With no pollutions of misfortune mixt :
 Safe on the basis of my pow'r I stand,
 Above the reach of fortune's fickle hand. 280
 Lessen she may my inexhausted store,
 And much destroy, yet still must leave me more.
 Suppose it possible that some may die
 Of this my num'rous lovely progeny ;
 Still with Latona I might safely vie, 285
 Who, by her scanty breed, scarce fit to name,
 But just escapes the childless woman's shame.
 Go then, with speed your laurel'd heads uncrown,
 And leave the silly farce you have begun.
 The tim'rous throng their sacred rites forbore, 290
 And from their heads the verdant laurel tore ;
 Their haughty queen they with regret obey'd,
 And still in gentle murmurs softly pray'd.
 High, on the top of Cynthus' shady mount,
 With grief the goddess saw the base affront : 295
 And, the abuse revolving in her breast,
 The mother her twin-offspring thus address'd :
 Lo I, my children, who with comfort knew
 Your god-like birth, and thence my glory drew ;
 And thence have claim'd precedency of place 300
 From all but Juno, of the heav'nly race,
 Must now despair, and languish in disgrace.

My godhead question'd, and all rites divine,
Unless you succour, banish'd from my shrine.

Nay more, the imp of Tantalus has flung 305

Reflections with her vile paternal tongue ;

Has dar'd prefer her mortal breed to mine, [repine !

And call'd me childless ; which, just Fate, may she

When to urge more the goddess was prepar'd,
Phœbus in haste replies, Too much we've heard, 310

And ev'ry moment's lost, while vengeance is deferr'd.--

Diana spoke the same. Then both enshroud

Their heav'nly bodies in a sable cloud ;

And to the Theban tow'rs descending light,

Through the soft yielding air direct their flight. 315

Without the wall their lies a champaign ground

With even surface, far extending round,

Beaten and levell'd, while it daily feels

The trampling horse, and chariot's grinding wheels.

Part of proud Niobè's young rival breed, 320

Practising there to ride the manag'd steed,

Their bridles boss'd with gold, were mounted high

On stately furniture of Tyrian die.

Of these, Ismenos, who by birth had been

The first fair issue of the fruitful queen, 325

Just as he drew the rein to guide his horse

Around the compass of the circling course,

Sigh'd deeply, and the pangs of smart express'd,

While the shaft stuck, engor'd, within his breast:

And the reins dropping from his dying hand, 330

He sunk quite down, and tumbled on the sand.

Sipylus next the rattling quiver heard,

And with full speed for his escape prepar'd ;

As when the pilot from the black'ning skies

A gath'ring storm of wintry rain descries, 335

His sails unfurl'd, and crowded all with wind,

He strives to leave the threat'ning cloud behind:

So fled the youth : but an unerring dart

O'ertook him, quick discharg'd, and sped with art ;

Fix'd in his neck behind, it trembling stood, 340

And at his throat display'd the point besmear'd with

Prone as his posture was, he tumbled o'er, [blood,

And bath'd his courser's name with streaming gore,

Next at young Phædimus they took their aim ;

And Tantalus, who bore his grandsire's name: 345
 These, when their other exercise was done,
 To try the wrestler's oily sport begun;
 And, straining ev'ry nerve, their skill express'd
 In closest grapple, joining breast to breast:
 When from the bending bow an arrow sent, 350
 Join'd as they were, through both their bodies went:
 Both groan'd, and writhing both their limbs with pain,
 They fell together, bleeding on the plain:
 Then both their languid eye-balls faintly roll,
 And thus together breathe away their soul. 355

With grief Alphenor saw their doleful plight,
 And smote his breast, and sicken'd at the sight;
 Then to their succour ran with eager haste,
 And, fondly griev'd; their stiff'ning limbs embrac'd:
 But in the action falls; a thrilling dart, 360
 By Phœbus guided, pierc'd him to the heart.
 This, as they drew it forth, his midriff tore,
 Its barbed point the fleshy fragments bore,
 And let the soul gush out in streams of purple gore.
 But Damascithon, by a double wound, 365
 Beardless and youug, lay gasping on the ground,
 Fix'd in his sinewy ham, the steely point
 Stuck through his knee, and pierc'd the nervous joint:
 And, as he stoop'd to tug the painful dart,
 Another struck him in a vital part; 370
 Shot through his wezon, by the wing it hung,
 The life-blood forc'd it out, and darting upward sprung.

Ilioneus, the last, with terror stands;
 Lifting in pray'r his unavailing hands;
 And, ignorant from whom his griefs arise, 375
 Spare me, O all ye heav'nly pow'rs (he cries):
 Phœbus was touch'd too late, the sounding bow
 Had sent the shaft, and struck the fatal blow;
 Which yet but gently gor'd his tender side,
 So by a slight and easy wound he died. 380

Swift to the mother's ears the rumour came,
 And doleful sighs the heavy news proclaim;
 With anger and surprise, inflam'd by turns,
 In furious rage her haughty stomach burns:
 First she disputes th' effects of heav'nly pow'r, 385
 Then at their daring boldness wonders more;

For poor Amphion with sore grief distress,
 Hoping to soothe his cares by endless rest,
 Had sheath'd a dagger in his wretched breast.
 And she who toss'd her high disdainful head, 390
 When through the streets in solemn pomp, she led
 The throng that from Latona's altar fled,
 Assuming state beyond the proudest queen,
 Was now the miserablest object seen.

Prostrate among the clay-cold dead she fell, 395
 And kiss'd an undistinguish'd last farewell.
 Then her pale arms advancing to the skies,
 Cruel Latona! triumph now (she cries);
 My grieving soul in bitter anguish drench,
 And with my woes your thirsty passion quench; 400
 Feast your black malice at a price thus dear,
 While the sore pangs of sev'n such deaths I bear.
 Triumph, too cruel rival, and display
 Your conquer'd standard; for you've won the day.
 Yet I'll excel; for yet, though sev'n are slain, 405
 Superior still in number I remain.

Scarce had she spoke; the bowstring's twanging
 Was heard, and dealt fresh terrors all around; [sound
 Which all, but Niobè alone, confound.
 Stunn'd and obdurate by her load of grief, 410
 Insensible she sits, nor hopes relief.

Before the fun'ral biers, all weeping sad,
 Her daughters stood, in vests of sable clad;
 When one, surpris'd, and stung with sudden smart,
 In vain attempts to draw the sticking dart, 415
 But to grim death her blooming youth resigns,
 And o'er her brother's corse her dying head reclines.

This, to assuage her mother's anguish tries,
 And, silenc'd in the pious action dies;
 Shot by a secret arrow, wing'd with death, 420
 Her fault'ring lips but only gasp'd for breath.

One on her dying sister breathes her last;
 Vainly in flight another's hopes are plac'd:
 This hiding from her fate a shelter seeks;
 That trembling stands, and fills the air with shrieks:
 And all in vain; for now all six had found 426
 Their way to death, each by a diff'rent wound.
 The last, with eager care the mother veil'd,

Behind her spreading mantle close conceal'd,
 And with her body guarded as a shield 430
 Only for this, this youngest I implore,
 Grant me this one request, I ask no more;
 O, grant me this! she passionately cries:—
 But while she speaks, the destin'd virgin dies.

Widow'd, and childless (lamentable state!) 435
 A doleful sight among the dead she sate;
 Harden'd with woes, a statue of despair,
 To ev'ry breath of wind unmov'd her hair;
 Her cheek still redd'ning, but its colour dead;
 Faded her eyes, and set within her head. 440
 No more her pliant tongue its motion keeps,
 But stands congeal'd within her frozen lips.
 Stagnate and dull, within her purple veins,
 Its current stopp'd, the lifeless blood remains.
 Her feet their usual offices refuse, 445
 Her arms and neck their graceful gestures lose:
 Action, and life from ev'ry part are gone;
 And e'en her entrails turn to solid stone:
 Yet still she weeps; and, whirl'd by stormy winds,
 Borne through the air, her native country finds; 450
 There fix'd, she stands upon a bleaky hill,
 There yet her marble cheeks eternal tears distil.

Then all, reclaim'd by this example shew'd
 A due regard for each peculiar god:
 Both men and women their devoirs express'd, 455
 And great Latona's awful pow'r confess'd.
 Then, tracing instances of older time,
 To suit the nature of the present crime,
 Thus one begins his tale:—Where Lycia yields
 A golden harvest from its fertile fields, 460
 Some churlish peasants, in the days of yore,
 Provok'd the goddess to exert her pow'r.
 The thing, indeed, the meanness of the place
 Has made obscure, surprising as it was;
 But I myself once happen'd to behold 465
 This famous lake of which the story's told.
 My father then, worn out by length of days,
 Nor able to sustain the tedious ways,

Me, with a guide, had sent the plains to roam,
 And drive his well-fed, straggling heifers home. 470
 Here, as we saunter'd through the verdant meads,
 We spy'd a lake o'ergrown with trembling reeds,
 Whose wavy tops an op'ning scene disclose,
 From which an antique smoky altar rose.

I, as my superstition's guide had done, 475
 Stopp'd short, and bless'd myself, and then went on;
 Yet I inquir'd to whom the altar stood,
 Faunus, the Naïds, or some native god?

No sylvan deity, my friend replies,
 Enshrin'd within this hallow'd altar lies : 480

For this, O youth, to that fam'd goddess stands,
 Whom, at th' imperial Juno's rough commands,
 Of ev'ry quarter of the earth bereav'd,
 Delos, the floating isle, at length receiv'd.

Who there, in spite of enemies, brought forth, 485
 Beneath an olive's shade, her great twin-birth.

Hence too she fled the furious step-dame's pow'r,
 And in her arms a double godhead bore;
 And now the borders of fair Lycia gain'd,
 Just when the summer solstice parch'd the land. 490

With thirst the goddess languishing, no more
 Her empty'd breast would yield its milky store;
 When, from below, the smiling valley shew'd
 A silver lake that in its bottom flow'd:

A sort of clowns were reaping, near the bank, 495
 The bending osier, and the bulrush dank;
 The cress, and water-lily, fragrant weed,
 Whose juicy stalk the liquid fountains feed.

The goddess came, and, kneeling on the brink,
 Stoop'd at the fresh repast, prepar'd to drink. 500
 Then thus, being hinder'd by the rabble race,
 In accents mild expostulates the case:

Water I only ask, and sure 'tis hard
 From nature's common rights to be debarr'd :
 This, as the genial sun, and vital air, 505
 Should flow alike to ev'ry creature's share,
 Yet still I ask, and as a favour crave,
 That, which a public bounty, nature gave.
 Nor do I seek my weary limbs to drench;
 Only, with one cool draught, my thirst I'd quench.

Now from my throat the usual moisture dries, 511
 And ev'n my voice in broken accent dies:
 One draught as dear as life I should esteem,
 And water, now I thirst, would nectar seem.
 Oh! let my little babes your pity move, 515
 And melt your hearts to charitable love;
 They (as by chance they did) extend to you
 Their little hands, and my request pursue!

Whom would these soft persuasions not subdue,
 Though the most rustic, and unmanner'd crew? 520
 Yet they the goddess's request refuse,
 And, with rude words, reproachfully abuse:
 Nay more, with spiteful feet the villains trod
 O'er the soft bottom of the marshy flood, 524
 And blacken'd all the lake with clouds of rising mud.

Her thirst by indignation was suppress'd;
 Bent on revenge, the goddess stood confess'd.
 Her suppliant hands uplifting to the skies,
 For a redress, to heav'n she now applies,
 And, may you live, she passionately cried, 530
 Doom'd in that pool for-ever to abide!

The goddess has her wish: for now they choose
 To plunge and dive among the wat'ry ooze;
 Sometimes they shew their head above the brim,
 And on the glassy surface spread to swim; 535
 Often upon the bank their station take,
 Then spring, and leap into the coolly lake.
 Still, void of shame, they lead a clam'rous life,
 And, croaking, still scold on in endless strife;
 Compell'd to live beneath the liquid stream, 540
 Where still they quarrel, and attempt to scream.
 Now, from their bloated throat, their voice puts on
 Imperfect murmurs in a hoarser tone;
 Their noisy jaws, with bawling now grown wide,
 (An ugly sight)! extend on either side: 545
 Their motley back, streak'd with a list of green,
 Join'd to their head, without a neck is seen;
 And, with a belly broad and white, they look
 Mere frogs, and still frequent the muddy brook.

Scarce had the man this famous story told, 550
 Of vengeance on the Lycians shewn of old,

When straight another pictures to their view
 The satyr's fate, whom angry Phœbus slew;
 Who, rais'd with high conceit, and puff'd with pride,
 At his own pipe the skilful god defy'd. 555

Why do you tear me from myself, he cries?
 Ah, cruel! must my skin be made the prize?
 This for a silly pipe?—he roaring said;
 Meanwhile the skin from off his limbs was flay'd:
 All bare and raw, one large continu'd wound, 560
 With streams of blood his body bath'd the ground.
 The bluish veins their trembling pulse disclos'd;
 The stringy nerves lay naked, and expos'd;
 His guts appear'd, distinctly each express'd,
 With ev'ry shining fibre of his breast. 565

The fauns, and sylvans, with the nymphs that rove
 Among the satyrs in the shady grove;
 Olympus, known of old, and ev'ry swain
 That fed, or flock, or herd upon the plain,
 Bewail'd the loss; and with their tears that flow'd,
 A kindly moisture on the earth bestow'd; 571
 That soon conjoin'd, and in a body rang'd,
 Sprung from the ground, to limpid water chang'd;
 Which, down thro' Phrygia's rocks, a mighty stream,
 Comes tumbling to the sea; and Marsya is its name.

From these relations, straight the people turn 576
 To present truth, and lost Amphion mourn:
 The mother most was blam'd; yet some relate
 That Pelops pity'd, and bewail'd her fate,
 And stripp'd his clothes, and laid his shoulder bare,
 And made the iv'ry miracle appear. 581
 This shoulder, from the first, was form'd of flesh,
 As lively as the other, and as fresh;
 But, when the youth was by his father slain,
 The gods restor'd his mangled limbs again; 585
 Only that place which joins the neck and arm,
 The rest untouch'd, was found to suffer harm:
 The loss of which an iv'ry piece sustain'd;
 And thus the youth his limbs and life regain'd.

To Thebes the neighb'ring princes all repair, 590
 And with condolence the misfortune share.

Each bord'ring state in solemn form address'd,
 And each betimes a friendly grief express'd.
 Argos, with Sparta's, and Mycenæ's towns,
 And Calydon, yet free from fierce Diana's frowns.
 Corinth for finest brass well fam'd of old, 596
 Orthomenos for men of courage bold :
 Cléonæ lying in the lowly dale,
 And rich Messænè with its fertile vale :
 Pylos, for Nestor's city after fam'd, 609
 And Trœzen, not as yet from Pittheus nam'd ;
 And those fair cities, which are hemm'd around
 By double seas within the Isthmian ground ;
 And those, which farther from the sea-coast stand,
 Lodg'd in the bosom of the spacious land. 605
 Who can believe it ? Athens was the last :
 Though for politeness fam'd for ages past.
 For a strait siege, which then their walls inclos'd,
 Such acts of kind humanity oppos'd :
 And thick with ships, from foreign nations bound, 610
 Sea-ward their city lay invested round,
 These, with auxiliar forces led from far,
 Tereus of Thrace, brave, and inur'd to war,
 Had quite defeated, and obtain'd a name,
 The warrior's due, among the sons of fame. 615
 This, with his wealth, and pow'r, and ancient
 line,
 From Mars deriv'd, Pandion's thoughts incline
 His daughter Procnè with the prince to join.
 Nor Hymen, nor the Graces here preside,
 Nor Juno to befriend the blooming bride ; 620
 But fiends with fun'ral brands the process led,
 And furies waited at the genial bed :
 And all night long the screeching owl aloof,
 With baleful notes sat brooding o'er the roof.
 With such ill omens was the match begun, 625
 That made them parents of a hopeful son.
 Now Thrace congratulates their seeming joy,
 And they, in thankful rites, their minds employ.
 If the fair queen's espousals pleas'd before,
 Itys, the new-born prince, now pleases more ; 630
 And each bright day, the birth, and bridal feast,
 Were kept with hallow'd pomp above the rest.

So far true happiness may lie conceal'd,
When, by false lights, we fancy 'tis reveal'd!

Now, since their nuptials, had the golden sun 635
Five courses round his ample zodiac run ;
When gentle Procnè thus her lord address'd,
And spoke the secret wishes of her breast:—
If I (she said) have ever favour found,
Let my petition with success be crown'd : 640
Let me at Athens my dear sister see,
Or let her come to Thrace, and visit me :
And, lest my father should her absence mourn,
Promise that she shall make a quick return.
With thanks I'd own the obligation due 645
Only, O Tereus, to the gods and you.

Now, ply'd with oar, and sail at his command,
The nimble galleys reach'd th' Athenian land,
And anchor'd in the fam'd Piræan bay,
While Tereus to the palace takes his way ; 650
The king salutes, and ceremonies past,
Begins the fatal embassy at last :
The occasion of his voyage he declares,
And with his own, his wife's request prefers ;
Asks leave that, only for a little space, 655
Their lovely sister might embark for Thrace.

Thus, while he spoke, appear'd the royal maid,
Bright Philomela, splendidly array'd ;
But most attractive in her charming face,
And comely person, turn'd with ev'ry grace : 660
Like those fair nymphs, that are describ'd to rove
Across the glades, and op'nings of the grove ;
Only that these are dress'd for Sylvan sports,
And less become the finery of courts.
Tereus beheld the virgin, and admir'd, 665
And with the coals of burning lust was fir'd :
Like crackling stubble, or the summer hay,
When forked lightnings o'er the meadows play.
Such charms in any breast might kindle love,
But him the heats of inbred lewdness move ; 670
To which though Thrace is naturally prone,
Yet his is still superior, and his own.
Straight her attendants he designs to buy,

And with large bribes her governors would try :
 Herself with ample gifts resolves to bend, 675
 And his whole kingdom in th' attempt expend ;
 Or, snatch'd away by force of arms to bear,
 And justify the rape with open war.

The boundless passion boils within his breast,
 And his projecting soul admits no rest. 680

And now, impatient of the least delay,
 By pleading Procnè's cause, he speeds his way :
 The eloquence of love his tongue inspires,
 And in his wife's, he speaks his own desires ;
 Hence all his importunities arise, 685
 And tears unmanly trickle from his eyes.

Ye gods! what thick involving darkness blinds
 The stupid faculties of mortal minds!
 Tereus the credit of good-nature gains
 From these his crimes; so well the villain feigns. 690

And, unsuspecting of his base designs,
 In the request fair Philomela joins ;
 Her snowy arms her aged sire embrace,
 And clasp his neck with an endearing grace ;
 Only to see her sister she entreats, 695

A seeming blessing which a curse completes.
 Tereus surveys her with a luscious eye,
 And in his mind forestals the blissful joy :
 Her circling arms a scene of lust inspire,
 And ev'ry kiss forments the raging fire. 700

Fondly he wishes for the father's place,
 To feel, and to return the warm embrace:
 Since not the nearest ties of filial blood
 Would damp his flame, and force him to be good.
 At length, for both their sakes, the king agrees; 705
 And Philomela, on her bended knees,
 Thanks him for what her fancy calls success,
 When cruel fate intends her nothing less.

Now Phœbus, hast'ning to ambrosial rest,
 His fiery steeds drove sloping down the west: 710
 The sculptur'd gold with sparkling wines was fill'd,
 And, with rich meats, each cheerful table smil'd.
 Plenty and mirth the royal banquet close,
 Then all retire to sleep, and sweet repose,
 But the lewd monarch, though withdrawn apart, 715

Still feels love's poison rankling in his heart:
 Her face divine is stamp'd within his breast,
 Fancy imagines, and improves the rest:
 And thus, kept waking by intense desire,
 He nourishes his own prevailing fire. 720

Next day the good old king for Tereus sends,
 And to his charge the virgin recommends;
 His hand with tears th' indulgent father press'd;
 Then spoke, and thus, with tenderness, address'd:

Since the kind instances of pious love 725

Do all pretence of obstacle remove;
 Since Procnè's, and her own, with your request,
 O'er-rule the fears of a paternal breast;
 With you, dear son, my daughter I entrust,
 And by the gods adjure you to be just; 730

By truth, and ev'ry consanguineal tie,
 To watch and guard her with a father's eye.
 And, since the least delay will tedious prove,
 In keeping from my sight the child I love,
 With speed return her, kindly to assuage 735.

The tedious troubles of my ling'ring age.
 And you, my Philomel, let it suffice,
 To know your sister's banish'd from my eyes;
 If any sense of duty sways your mind,
 Let me from you the shortest absence find. 740

He wept; then kiss'd his child; and while he speaks,
 The tears fall gently down his aged cheeks.

Next, as a pledge of fealty, he demands,
 And with a solemn charge, conjoins their hands:
 Then, to his daughter, and his grandson sends, 745
 And by their mouth a blessing recommends;
 While, in a voice with dire forebodings broke,
 Sobbing, and faint, the last farewell was spoke.

Now, Philomela, scarce receiv'd on board,
 And in the royal gilded bark secur'd, 750
 Beheld the dashes of the bending oar,
 The ruffled sea, and the receding shore;
 When straight (his joy impatient of disguise),
 We've gain'd our point,—the rough barbarian cries;
 Now I possess the dear, the blissful hour, 755
 And ev'ry wish subjected to my pow'r.

Transports of lust his vicious thoughts employ,

And he forbears, with pain, th' expected joy.
 His gloating eyes incessantly survey'd
 The virgin beauties of the lovely maid: 760
 As when the bold rapacious bird of Jove,
 With crooked talons stooping from above,
 Has snatch'd and carry'd to his lofty nest
 A captive hare, with cruel gripe oppress'd;
 Secure, with fix'd, and unrelenting eyes, 765
 He sits and views the helpless, trembling prize.

Their vessels now had made th' intended land,
 And all with joy descend upon the strand;
 When the false tyrant seiz'd the princely maid,
 And to a lodge in distant woods convey'd: 770
 Pale, sinking, and distress'd with jealous fears,
 And asking for her sister all in tears,
 The letcher, for enjoyment fully bent,
 No longer now conceal'd his base intent:
 But with rude haste the bloomy girl deflour'd, 775
 Tender, defenceless, and with ease o'erpower'd.
 Her piercing accents to her sire complain,
 And to her absent sister, but in vain:
 In vain she importunes, with doleful cries,
 Each unattentive godhead of the skies. 780
 She pants, and trembles, like the bleating prey,
 From some close-hunted wolf just snatch'd away:
 That still, with fearful horror, looks around,
 And on its flank regards the bleeding wound.
 Or, as the tim'rous dove, the danger o'er, 785
 Beholds her shining plumes besmear'd with gore,
 And, though deliver'd from the falcon's claw
 Yet shivers, and retains a secret awe.

But when her mind a calm reflection shar'd,
 And all her scatter'd spirits were repair'd: 790
 Torn, and disorder'd while her tresses hung,
 Her livid hands, like one that mourn'd, she wrung;
 Then thus, with grief o'erwhelm'd her languid eyes,
 Savage, inhuman, cruel wretch! (she cries;) 794
 Whom nor a parent's strict commands could move,
 Though charg'd, and utter'd with the tears of love;
 Nor virgin innocence, nor all that's due
 To the strong contract of the nuptial vow:
 Virtue, by this, in wild confusion's laid,

And I compell'd to wrong my sister's bed ; 800
 Whilst you, regardless of your marriage oath,
 With stains of incest have defil'd us both.
 Though I deserv'd some punishment to find,
 This was, ye gods, too cruel and unkind.
 Yet, villain, to complete your horrid guilt, 805
 Stab here, and let my tainted blood be spilt.
 O happy ! had it come, before I knew
 The curs'd embrace of vile perfidious you ;
 Then my pale ghost, pure from incestuous love,
 Had wander'd spotless through th' Elysian grove. 810
 But, if the gods above have pow'r to know,
 And judge those actions that are done below ;
 Unless the dreadful thunders of the sky,
 Like me, subdu'd and violated lie ;
 Still my revenge shall take its proper time, 815
 And suit the baseness of your hellish crime.
 Myself, abandon'd, and devoid of shame,
 Through the wide world your actions will proclaim ;
 Or though I'm prison'd in this lonely den,
 Obscur'd and buried from the sight of men, 820
 My mournful voice the pitying rocks shall move,
 And my complainings echo through the grove.
 Hear me, O Heav'n ! and if a god be there,
 Let him regard me, and accept my pray'r.
 Struck with these words, the tyrant's guilty breast
 With fear and anger was, by turns, possess'd ; 826
 Now, with remorse, his conscience deeply stung,
 He drew the falchion that beside him hung,
 And first her tender arms behind her bound,
 Then dragg'd her by the hair along the ground. 830
 The princess willingly her throat reclin'd,
 And view'd the steel with a contented mind ;
 But soon her tongue the girding pincers strain,
 With anguish, soon she feels the piercing pain :
 ' O father ! father ! ' she would fain have spoke, 835
 But the sharp torture her intention broke ;
 In vain she tries, for now the blade has cut
 Her tongue sheer off, close to the trembling root.
 The mangled part still quiver'd on the ground, -
 Murmuring with a faint, imperfect sound : 840
 And, as a serpent writhes his wounded train,

Uneasy, panting, and possess'd with pain;
 The piece, while life remain'd, still trembled fast,
 And to its mistress pointed to the last.

Yet, after this so damn'd and black a deed, 845
 Fame (which I scarce can credit) has agreed,
 That on her rifled charms, still void of shame,
 He frequently indulg'd his lustful flame.

At last he ventures to his Procnè's sight,
 Loaded with guilt, and cloy'd with long delight; 850
 There, with feign'd grief, and false, dissembled sighs,
 Begins a formal narrative of lies;

Her sister's death he artfully declares,
 Then weeps, and raises credit from his tears.

Her vest, with flow'rs of gold embroider'd o'er, 855
 With grief distress'd, the mournful matron tore,
 And a beseeching suit of gloomy sable wore.

With cost, an honorary tomb she rais'd,
 And thus th' imaginary ghost appear'd.
 Deluded queen! the fate of her you love, 860
 Nor grief, nor pity, but revenge should move.

Though the twelve signs had pass'd the circling sun,
 And round the compass of the zodiac run :

What must unhappy Philomela do,
 For ever subject to her keeper's view? 865

Huge walls of massy stone the lodge surround,
 From her own mouth no way of speaking's found.

But all our wants by wit may be supply'd,
 And arts makes up what fortune has denied.

With skill exact a Phrygian web she strung, 870
 Fix'd to a loom that in her chamber hung,

Where in-wrought letters, upon white display'd.
 In purple notes, her wretched case betray'd:

The piece, when finish'd, secretly gave
 Into the charge of one poor menial slave; 875

And then, with gestures made him understand,
 It must be safe convey'd to Procnè's hand.

The slave with speed the queen's apartment sought,
 And render'd up his charge, unknowing what he

brought.

But when the ciphers, figur'd in each fold, 880
 Her sister's melancholy story told,

(Strange that she could!) with silence she survey'd

The tragic piece, and without weeping read:
 In such tumultuous haste her passions sprung.
 They chok'd her voice, and quite disarm'd her tongue.
 No room for female tears; the furies rise, 886
 Darting vindictive glances from her eyes;
 And, stung with rage, she bounds from place to place,
 While stern revenge sits low'ring in her face.

Now the triennial celebration came, 890
 Observ'd to Bacchus by each Thracian dame;
 When, in the privacies of night retir'd,
 They act his rites, with sacred rapture fir'd:
 By night, the tinkling cymbals ring around,
 While the shrill notes from Rhodopè resound; 895
 By night, the queen, disguis'd, forsakes the court,
 To mingle in the festival resort.

Leaves of the curling vine her temples shade,
 And, with a circling wreath, adorn her head:
 Adown her back the stag's rough spoils appear, 900
 Light on her shoulder leans a cornel spear.

Thus, in the fury of the god conceal'd,
 Procne her own mad headstrong passion veil'd;
 Now, with her gang, to the thick wood she flies,
 And with religious yellings fills the skies; 905
 The fatal lodge, as 'twere by chance, she seeks,
 And, through the bolted doors, an entrance breaks;
 From thence, her sister snatching by the hand,
 Mask'd like the ranting Bacchanalian band,
 Within the limits of the court she drew, 910
 Shading, with ivy green, her outward hue.
 But Philomela, conscious of the place,
 Felt new reviving pangs of her disgrace;
 A shiv'ring cold prevail'd in ev'ry part,
 And the chill'd blood ran trembling to her heart. 915

Soon as the queen a fit retirement found,
 Stript of the garlands that her temples crown'd,
 She straight unveil'd her blushing sister's face,
 And fondly clasp'd her with a close embrace:
 But, in confusion lost, th' unhappy maid, 920
 With shame dejected, hung her drooping head,
 As guilty of a crime that stain'd her sister's bed.
 That speech, that should her injur'd virtue clear

And make her spotless innocence appear,
 Is now no more; only her hands, and eyes 925
 Appeal, in signals, to the conscious skies.
 In Procné's breast the rising passions boil,
 And burst in anger with a mad recoil;
 Her sister's ill-tim'd grief, with scorn, she blames,
 Then, in these furious words her rage proclaims: 930
 Tears, unavailing, but defer our time,
 The stabbing sword must expiate the crime;
 Or worse, if wit, on bloody vengeance bent,
 A weapon more tormenting can invent.
 O sister! I've prepar'd my stubborn heart, 935
 To act some hellish, and unheard-of part;
 Either the palace to surround with fire,
 And see the villain in the flames expire;
 Or, with a knife, dig out his cursed eyes,
 Or, his false tongue with racking engines seize; 940
 Or, cut away the part that injur'd you,
 And, through a thousand wounds, his guilty soul pursue.
 Tortures enough my passion has design'd,
 But the variety distracts my mind.
 Awhile, thus wav'ring, stood the furious dame, 945
 When Itys fondling to his mother came;
 From him the cruel fatal hint she took,
 She view'd him with a stern remorseless look;
 Ah' but too like thy wicked sire (she said),
 Forming the direful purpose in her head. 950
 At this a sullen grief her voice suppress'd,
 While silent passions struggle in her breast.
 Now, at her lap arriv'd, the flatt'ring boy
 Salutes his parent with a smiling joy;
 About her neck his little arms are thrown, 955
 And he accosts her in a prattling tone.
 Then her tempestuous anger was allay'd,
 And in its full career her vengeance stay'd;
 While tender thoughts, in spite of passion, rise,
 And melting tears disarm her threat'ning eyes. 960
 But when she found the mother's easy heart,
 Too fondly swerving from th' intended part;
 Her injur'd sister's face again she view'd:
 And, as by turns surveying both she stood,
 While this fond boy (she said) can thus express 965

The moving accents of his fond address ;
 Why stands my sister of her tongue bereft,
 Forlorn, and sad, in speechless silence left ?
 O Procnè, see the fortune of your house ! 969
 Such is your fate, when match'd to such a spouse !
 Conjugal duty, if observ'd to him,
 Would change from virtue, and become a crime :
 For all respect to Tereus must debase
 The noble blood of great Pandion's race. 974

Straight at these words, with big resentment fill'd,
 Furious her look, she flew, and seiz'd her child ;
 Like a fell tigress of the savage kind,
 That drags the tender suckling of the hind
 Through India's gloomy groves, where Ganges laves
 The shady scene, and rolls his streamy waves. 980

Now to a close apartment they were come,
 Far off retir'd within the spacious dome ;
 When Procnè, on revengeful mischief bent,
 Home to his heart a piercing poniard sent.
 Itys, with rueful cries, but all too late, 985

Holds out his hands, and deprecates his fate ;
 Still at his mother's neck he fondly aims,
 And strives to melt her with endearing names ;
 Yet still the cruel mother perseveres,
 Nor with concern his bitter anguish hears. 990

This might suffice ; but Philomela too
 Across his throat a shining cutlass drew.
 Then both, with knives, dissect each quiv'ring part,
 And carve the butcher'd limbs with cruel art ;
 Which whelm'd in boiling caldrons o'er the fire, 995
 Or turn'd on spits, in steamy smoke aspire :
 While the long entries, with their slipp'ry floor,
 Run down in purple streams of clotted gore.

Ask'd by his wife to his inhuman feast,
 Tereus, unknowingly, is made a guest : 1000

Whilst she, her plot the better to disguise,
 Styles it some unknown mystic sacrifice ;
 And such the nature of the hallow'd rite,
 The wife her husband only could invite, 1004
 The slaves must all withdraw, and be debarr'd the
 Tereus, upon a throne of antique state, [sight.
 Loftily rais'd, before the banquet sate ;

And, glutton-like, luxuriously pleas'd,
 With his own flesh his hungry maw appeas'd.
 Nay, such a blindness o'er his senses falls, 1010
 That he for Itys to the table calls.
 When Procnè, now impatient to disclose
 The joy that from her full revenge arose,
 Cries out, in transports of a cruel mind,
 ' Within yourself your Itys you may find.' 1015
 Still at this puzzling answer with surprise,
 Around the room he winds his curious eyes;
 And, as he still inquir'd, and call'd aloud,
 Fierce Philomela, all besmear'd with blood, 1019
 Her hands with murder stain'd, her spreading hair
 Hanging dishevell'd, with a ghastly air,
 Stepp'd forth, and flung full in the tyrant's face
 The head of Itys, gory as it was :
 Nor ever long'd so much to use her tongue, 1024
 And, with a just reproach, to vindicate her wrong.
 The Thracian monarch from the table flings,
 While with his cries the vaulted parlour rings;
 His imprecations echo down to hell,
 And rouse the snaky furies from their Stygian cell.
 One while, he labours to disgorge his breast, 1030
 And free his stomach from the cursed feast;
 Then, weeping o'er his lamentable doom,
 He styles himself his son's sepulchral tomb.
 Now, with drawn sabre, and impetuous speed,
 In close pursuit he drives Pandion's breed ; 1035
 Whose nimble feet spring with so swift a force
 Across the fields, they seem to wing their course :
 And now, on real wings themselves they raise,
 And steer their airy flight by diff'rent ways :
 One to the woodlands shady covert hies, 1040
 Around the smoky roof the other flies ;
 Whose feathers yet the marks of murder stain,
 Where, stamp'd upon her breast, the crimson spots
 Tereus, through grief, and haste to be reveng'd, [remain.
 Shares the like fate, and to a bird is chang'd : 1045
 Fix'd on his head, the crested plumes appear,
 Long is his beak, and sharpen'd like a spear ;
 Thus arm'd, his looks his inward mind display,
 And, to a lapwing turn'd, he fans his way.

Exceeding trouble, for his children's fate, 1050
 Shorten'd Pandion's days, and chang'd his date,
 Down to the shades below, with sorrow spent,
 An early, unexpected ghost he went.

Erectheus next th' Athenian sceptre sway'd,
 Whose rule the state with joint consent obey'd; 1035
 So mix'd his justice with his valour flow'd,
 His reign one scene of princely goodness shew'd.
 Four hopeful youths, as many females bright,
 Sprang from his loins, and sooth'd him with delight.

Two of these sisters, of a lovely air, 1060
 Excell'd the rest, though all the rest were fair.
 Procris, to Cephalus in wedlock tied,
 Bless'd the young Sylvan with a blooming bride:
 For Orithyia Boreas suffered pain,
 For the coy maid sued long, but sued in vain; 1065
 Tereus his neighbour, and his Thracian blood,
 Against the match a main objection stood;
 Which made his vows, and all his suppliant love,
 Empty as air, and ineffectual prove.

But when he found his soothing flatt'ries fail, 1070
 Nor saw his soft addresses could avail;
 Blust'ring with ire, he quickly has recourse
 To rougher arts, and his own native force.

'Tis well (he said): such usage is my due,
 When thus disguis'd by foreign ways I sue; 1075
 When my stern airs, and fierceness I disclaim,
 And sigh for love ridiculously tame;
 When soft addresses foolishly I try,
 Nor my own stronger remedies apply.

By force and violence I chiefly live, 1080
 By them the low'ring stormy tempests drive;
 In foaming billows raise the hoary deep,
 Writhe knotted oaks, and sandy deserts sweep,
 Congeal the falling flakes of fleecy snow,
 And bruise, with rattling hail, the plains below. 1085
 I, and my brother-winds, when join'd above,
 Through the waste champaign of the skies we rove,
 With such a boist'rous full career engage,
 That heav'n's whole concave thunders at our rage.
 While struck from nitrous clouds, fierce lightnings play,

Dart through the storm, and gild the gloomy day.
 Or when, in subterraneous caverns pent,
 My breath against the hollow earth is bent,
 The quaking world above, and ghosts below,
 My mighty pow'r, by dear experience, know, 1095
 Tremble with fear, and dread the fatal blow.

This is the only cure to be applied,
 Thus to Erectheus I should be allied;
 And thus the scornful virgin should be woo'd,
 Not by intreaty, but by force subdu'd. 1100

Boreas, in passion, spoke these huffing things,
 And, as he spoke, he shook his dreadful wings;
 At which, afar, the shiv'ring sea was fann'd,
 And the wide surface of the distant land:

His dusty mantle o'er the hills he drew, 1105
 And swept the lowly valleys, as he flew;
 Then, with his yellow wings, embrac'd the maid,
 And, wrapt in dusky clouds, far off convey'd.

The sparkling blaze of love's prevailing fire 1110
 Shone brighter as he flew, and flam'd the higher.

And now the god, possest of his delight,
 To northern Thrace pursu'd his airy flight,
 Where the young ravish'd nymph became his bride,
 And soon the luscious sweets of wedlock try'd.

Two lovely twins, th' effect of this embrace, 1115
 Crown their soft labours, and their nuptials grace;
 Who, like their mother, beautiful and fair,
 Their father's strength, and feather'd pinions share:

Yet these, at first, were wanting, as 'tis said,
 And after, as they grew, their shoulders spread. 1120
 Zethès and Calais, the pretty twins,

Remain'd unfledg'd, while smooth their beardless chins;
 But when, in time, the budding silver down
 Shaded their face, and on their cheeks was grown,
 Two sprouting wings upon their shoulders sprung,
 Like those in birds that veil the callow young. 1125

Then as their age advanc'd, and they began
 From greener youth to ripen into man,
 With Jason's Argonauts they cross'd the seas,
 Embark'd in quest of the fam'd golden fleece; 1130
 There, with the rest, the first frail vessel try'd,
 And boldly ventur'd on the swelling tide.

BOOK VII.

TRANSLATED BY MR. TATE, AND MR. STONESTREET.

The story of Medea and Jason. The dragon's teeth transformed to men. Old Æson restored to youth. The death of Pelias. The story of Ægeus. The story of ants changed to men. The story of Cephalus and Procris.

THE Argonauts now stemm'd the foaming tide,
 And to Arcadia's shore their course apply'd:
 Where sightless Phineus spent his age in grief,
 But Boreas' sons engage in his relief;
 And those unwelcome guests, the odious race 5
 Of Harpies, from the monarch's table chase.
 With Jason then they greater toils sustain,
 And Phasis' slimy banks at last they gain.
 Here boldly they demand the golden prize
 Of Scythia's king, who sternly thus replies, 10
 That mighty labours they must first o'ercome,
 Or sail their Argo thence unfreighted home.
 Meanwhile Medea, seiz'd with fierce desire,
 By reason strives to quench the raging fire;
 But strives in vain!—Some god (she said) withstands,
 And reason's baffled counsel countermands. 16
 What unseen pow'r does this disorder move?
 'Tis love, at least 'tis like what men call love,
 Else wherefore should the king's commands appear
 To me too hard?—But so indeed they are. 20
 Why should I for a stranger fear, lest he
 Should perish, whom I did but lately see?
 His death or safety, what are they to me?
 Wretch, from thy virgin breast this flame expel,
 And soon—O, could I, all would then be well; 25
 But love, resistless love, my soul invades;
 Discretion this, affection that persuades.
 I see the right, and I approve it too;
 Condemn the wrong, and yet the wrong pursue.
 Why, royal maid, shouldst thou desire to wed 30
 A wanderer, and court a foreign bed?
 Thy native land, though barb'rous, can present
 A bridegroom worth a royal bride's consent;

And whether this advent'rer lives or dies,
 In fate, and fortune's fickle pleasure lies. 35
 Yet may he live! for to the pow'rs above,
 A virgin led by no impulse of love,
 So just a suit may, for the guiltless, move.
 Whom would not Jason's valour, youth, and blood
 Invite? or could these merits be withstood, 40
 At least his charming person must incline
 The hardest heart—I'm sure 'tis so with mine!
 Yet, if I help him not, the flaming breath
 Of bulls, and earth-born foes, must be his death;
 Or, should he through these dangers force his way,
 At last he must be made the dragon's prey. 46
 If no remorse for such distress I feel,
 I am a tigress, and my breast is steel.
 Why do I scruple then to see him slain,
 And with the tragic scene my eyes profane? 50
 By magic's art employ, not to assuage
 The savages, but to inflame their rage?
 His earth-born foes to fiercer fury move,
 And accessory to his murder prove?
 The gods forbid!—But pray'rs are idle breath, 55
 When action only can prevent his death.
 Shall I betray my father, and the state,
 To intercept a rambling hero's fate;
 Who may sail off next hour, and sav'd from harms,
 By my assistance, bless another's arms? 60
 Whilst I, not only of my hopes bereft,
 But to unpity'd punishment am left.
 If he is false, let the ungrateful bleed!
 But no such symptom in his looks I read.
 Nature would ne'er have lavish'd so much grace 65
 Upon his person, if his soul were base.
 Besides, he first shall plight his faith, and swear
 By all the gods; what, therefore, canst thou fear?
 Medea, haste, from danger set him free,
 Jason shall thy eternal debtor be; 70
 And thou, his queen, with sov'reign state install'd,
 By Grecian dames the kind preserver call'd.
 Hence, idle dreams, by love-sick fancy bred!
 Wilt thou, Medea, by vain wishes led,
 To sister, brother, father bid adieu? 75

Forsake thy country's gods, and country too?
 My father's harsh, my brother but a child,
 My sister rivals me, my country's wild;
 And for its gods, the greatest of them all
 Inspires my breast, and I obey his call. 80
 That great endearments I forsake, is true;
 But greater far the hopes that I pursue:
 The pride of having sav'd the youths of Greece
 (Each life more precious than our golden fleece),
 A nobler soil by me shall be possess'd, 85
 I shall see towns with arts and manners blest;
 And, what I prize above the world beside,
 Enjoy my Jason;—and, when once his bride,
 Be more than mortal, and to gods allied.
 They talk of hazards I must first sustain; 90
 Of floating islands justling in the main;
 Our tender bark expos'd to dreadful shocks
 Of fierce Charybdis' gulf, and Scylla's rocks,
 Where breaking waves in whirling eddies roll,
 And rav'nous dogs, that in deep caverns howl: 95
 Amidst these terrors, while I lie possess'd
 Of him I love, and lean on Jason's breast,
 In tempests unconcern'd I will appear,
 Or, only for my husband's safety fear.—
 Didst thou say husband? Canst thou so deceive 100
 Thyself, fond maid, and thy own cheat believe?
 In vain thou striv'st to varnish o'er thy shame,
 And grace thy guilt with wedlock's sacred name.
 Pull off the cozz'ning mask; and oh! in time
 Discover, and avoid the fatal crime. 105
 She ceas'd;—the Graces now, with kind surprise,
 And virtue's lovely train, before her eyes
 Present themselves, and vanquish'd Cupid flies.
 She then retires to Hecate's shrine, that stood
 Far in the covert of a shady wood: 110
 She finds the fury of her flames assuag'd,
 But, seeing Jason there, again they rag'd.
 Blushes and paleness did by turns invade
 Her tender cheeks, and secret grief betray'd.
 As fire, that sleeping under ashes lies, 115
 Fresh blown, and rous'd, does up in blazes rise,
 So flam'd the virgin's breast,———

New kindled by her lover's sparkling eyes.
 For chance, that day had, with uncommon grace,
 Adorn'd the lovely youth, and through his face 120
 Display'd an air so pleasing, as might charm
 A goddess, and a vestal's bosom warm.
 Her ravish'd eyes survey him o'er and o'er,
 As some gay wonder never seen before ;
 Transported to the skies she seems to be, 125
 And thinks she gazes on a deity.
 But, when he spoke, and press'd her trembling hand,
 And did with tender words her aid demand,
 With vows, and oaths to make her soon his bride,
 She wept a flood of tears, and thus reply'd : 130
 I see my error, yet to ruin move,
 Nor owe my fate to ignorance, but love:
 Your life I'll guard, and only crave of you
 To swear once more,—and to your oath be true.
 He swears by Hecate, he would all fulfil, 135
 And by her grandfather's prophetic skill,
 By ev'ry thing that doubting love could press,
 His present danger, and desir'd success.
 She credits him, and kindly does produce
 Enchanted herbs, and teaches him their use; 140
 Their mystic names, and virtues he admires,
 And, with his booty joyfully retires.

Impatient for the wonders of the day,
 Aurora drives the loit'ring stars away.
 Now Mars's Mount the pressing people fill, 145
 The crowd below, the nobles crown the hill;
 The king himself high thron'd above the rest,
 With iv'ry sceptre, and in purple drest.

Forthwith the brass-hoof'd bulls are set at large,
 Whose furious nostrils sulph'rous flame discharge;
 The blasted herbage by their breath expires; 151
 As forges rumble with excessive fires,
 And furnaces with fiercer fury glow,
 When water on the panting mass ye throw;
 With such a noise from their convulsive breast, 155
 Thro' bellowing throats the struggling vapour press'd.

Yet Jason marches up, without concern,
 While on th' advent'rous youth the monsters turn.

Their glaring eyes, and eager to engage 159
 Brandish their steel-tipt horns in threat'ning rage:
 With brazen hoofs they beat the ground, and choke
 The ambient air, with clouds of dust and smoke:
 Each gazing Grecian for his champion shakes,
 While bold advances he securely makes
 Through singing blasts; such wonders magic art 165
 Can work, when love conspires, and plays his part.
 The passive savages like statues stand,
 While he their dewlaps strokes with soothing hand;
 To unknown yokes their brawny necks they yield,
 And, like tame oxen, plough the wond'ring field. 170
 The Colchians stare; the Grecians shout, and raise
 Their champion's courage with inspiring praise.
 Embolden'd now, on fresh attempts he goes,
 With serpent's teeth the fertile furrows sows;
 The glebe, fermenting with enchanted juice, 175
 Makes the snake's teeth a human crop produce.
 For as an infant, pris'ner to the womb,
 Contented sleeps, till to perfection come,
 Then does the cell's obscure confinement scorn,
 He tosses, throbs, and presses to be born; 180
 So, from the lab'ring earth no single birth,
 But a whole troop of lusty youths rush forth;
 And, what's more strange, with martial fury warm'd,
 And for encounter all completely arm'd;
 In rank and file, as they were sow'd, they stand, 185
 Impatient for the signal of command.
 No foe but the Æmonian youth appears;
 At him they level their steel-pointed spears;
 His frightened friends, who triumph'd just before,
 With peals of sighs his desp'rate case deplore: 190
 And, where such hardy warriors are afraid,
 What must the tender and enamour'd maid?
 Her spirits sink, the blood her cheek forsook,
 She fears, who for his safety undertook:
 She knew the virtue of the spoils she gave, 195
 She knew their force, and knew her lover brave;
 But what's a single champion to a host?
 Yet scorning thus to see him tamely lost.
 Her strong reserve of secret arts she brings,
 And last, her never-failing song she sings. 200

Wonders ensue; among his gazing foes
 The massy fragment of a rock he throws;
 This charm in civil war engag'd 'em all;
 By mutual wounds those earth-born brothers fall.
 The Greeks, transported with the strange success,
 Leap from their seats, the conqu'ror to caress; 206
 Commend and kiss, and clasp him in their arms:
 So would the kind contriver of the charms;
 But her, who felt the tenderest concern,
 Honour condemns in secret flames to burn; 210
 Committed to a double guard of fame,
 Aw'd by a virgin's, and a princess' name.
 But thoughts are free, and fancy unconfin'd,
 She kisses, courts, and hugs him in her mind;
 To fav'ring pow'rs her silent thanks she gives, 215
 By whose indulgence her lov'd hero lives.

One labour more remains, and, though the last,
 In danger far surmounting all the past;
 That enterprize by fates in store was kept,
 To make the dragon sleep, that never slept, 220
 Whose crest shoots dreadful lustre; from his jaws
 A triple tire of forked stings he draws,
 With fangs, and wings of a prodigious size:
 Such was the guardian of the golden prize.
 Yet him, besprinkled with Lethéan dew, 225
 The fair enchantress into slumber threw;
 And then to fix him, thrice she did repeat
 The rhyme that makes the raging winds retreat;
 In stormy seas can halcyon seasons make,
 Turn rapid streams into a standing lake; 230
 While the soft guest his drowsy eye-lids seals,
 Th' unguarded golden fleece the stranger steals;
 Proud to possess the purchase of his toil,
 Proud of his royal bride, the richer spoil;
 To sea both prize and patroness he bore, 235
 And lands triumphant on his native shore.

Æmonian matrons, who their absence mourn'd,
 Rejoice to see their prosp'rous sons return'd:
 Rich curling fumes of incense feast the skies,
 An hecatomb of voted victims dies, 240
 With gilded horns, and garlands on their head,

And all the pomp of death, to th' altar led.
 Congratulating bowls go briskly round,
 Triumphant shouts in louder music drown'd.
 Amidst these revels, why that cloud of care 245
 On Jason's brow? (to whom the largest share
 Of mirth was due:)—His father was not there.
 Æson was absent, once the young, and brave,
 Now crush'd with years, and bending to the grave.
 At last withdrawn, and by the crowd unseen, 250
 (Pressing her hand, with starting sighs between),
 He supplicates his kind and skilful queen :
 O patroness! preserver of my life!
 (Dear when my mistress, and much dearer wife,)
 Your favours to so vast a sum amount, 255
 'Tis past the pow'rs of numbers to recount;
 Or could they be to computation brought,
 The history would a romance be thought:
 And yet, unless you add one favour more,
 Greater than all that you conferr'd before, 260
 But not too hard for love and magic skill,
 Your past are thrown away, and Jason's wretched still.
 The morning of my life is just begun ;
 But my declining father's race is run :
 From my large stock retrench the long arrears, 265
 And add them to expiring Æson's years.

Thus spake the gen'rous youth, and wept the rest :
 Mov'd with the piety of his request,
 To his ag'd sire such filial duty shewn,
 So diff'rent from her treatment of her own, 270
 But still endeav'ring her remorse to hide,
 She check'd her rising sighs, and thus reply'd :

How could the thought of such inhuman wrong
 Escape (said she) from pious Jason's tongue ?
 Does the whole world another Jason bear, 275
 Whose life Medea can to yours prefer?
 Or could I with so dire a change dispense,
 Hecate will never join in that offence :
 Unjust is the request you make, and I,
 In kindness, your petition shall deny : 280
 Yet she that grants not what you do implore,
 Shall yet essay to give her Jason more ;

Find means t' increase the stock of Æson's years,
 Without retrenchment of your life's arrears;
 Provided that the triple goddess join 285
 A strong confed'rate in my bold design.

Thus was her enterprise resolv'd: but still
 Three tedious nights are wanting to fulfil
 The circling crescents of th' increasing moon;
 Then, in the height of her nocturnal noon, 290
 Medea steals from court; her ancles bare,
 Her garments closely girt, but loose her hair;
 Thus sally'd, like a solitary sprite,
 She traverses the terrors of the night.

Men, beasts, and birds in soft repose lay charm'd, 295
 No boist'rous wind the mountain-woods alarm'd;
 Nor did those walks of love, the myrtle trees,
 Of am'rous Zephyr hear the whisp'ring breeze;
 All elements chain'd in unactive rest,
 No sense but what the twinkling stars express'd; 300
 To them (that only wak'd) she rears her arms,
 And thus commences her mysterious charms.

She turn'd her thrice about, as oft she threw
 On her pale tresses the nocturnal dew;
 Then, yelling thrice a most enormous sound, 305
 Her bare knee bended on the flinty ground,
 O night (said she), thou confident and guide
 Of secrets, such as darkness ought to hide;
 Ye stars and moon, that when the sun retires,
 Support his empire with succeeding fires; 310
 And thou, great Hecate, friend to my design;
 Songs, mutt'ring spells, your magic forces join;
 And thou, O earth, the magazine that yields
 The midnight sorceror drugs; skies, mountains, fields;
 Ye wat'ry pow'rs of fountain, stream, and lake; 315
 Ye sylvan gods, and gods of night, awake,
 And gen'rously your parts in my adventure take!
 Oft, by your aid, swift currents I have led
 Thro' wand'ring banks, back to their fountain head;
 Transform'd the prospect of the briny deep, 320
 Made sleeping billows rave, and raving billows sleep;
 Made clouds, or sunshine; tempests rise, or fall;
 And stubborn lawless winds obey my call:

With mutter'd words disarm'd the viper's jaw,
 Up by the roots vast oaks and rocks could draw; 325
 Made forests dance, and trembling mountains come,
 Like malefactors to receive their doom;
 Earth groan, and frighted ghosts forsake their tomb.
 Thee, Cynthia, my resistless rhymes drew down,
 When tinkling cymbals strove my voice to drown;
 Nor stronger Titan could their force sustain, 331
 In full career compell'd to stop his wain:
 Nor could Aurora's virgin blush avail,
 With pois'nous herbs I turn'd her roses pale;
 The fury of the fiery bulls I broke, 335
 Their stubborn necks submitting to my yoke;
 And when the sons of earth with fury burn'd,
 Their hostile rage upon themselves I turn'd;
 The brothers made with mutual wounds to bleed,
 And by their fatal strife, my lover freed; 340
 And, while the dragon slept, to distant Greece,
 Through cheated guards convey'd the golden fleece:
 But now to bolder action I proceed,
 Of such prevailing juices now have need,
 That wither'd years back to their bloom can bring,
 And in dead winter raise a second spring. 346
 And you'll perform 't;—
 You will: for lo! the stars with sparkling fires,
 Presage as bright success to my desires:
 And now another happy omen see! 350
 A chariot drawn by dragons, waits for me.

With these last words, she leaps into the wain,
 Strokes the snakes' necks, and shakes the golden rein.
 That signal giv'n, they mount her to the skies,
 And now beneath her fruitful Tempè lies, 355
 Whose stores she ransacks, then to Crete she flies;
 There Ossa, Pelion, Othrys, Pindus, all
 To the fair ravisher a booty fall;
 The tribute of their verdure she collects,
 Nor proud Olympus' height his plants protects. 360
 Some by the roots she plucks; the tender tops
 Of others with her culling sickle crops.
 Nor could the plunder of the hills suffice,
 Down to the humble vales and meads she flies;

Apidamus, Amphrysus, the next rape 365
 Sustain, nor could Enipeus' banks escape;
 Through Beebè's marsh, and through the border rang'd,
 Whose pasture Glaucus to a Triton chang'd.
 Now the ninth day, and ninth successive night,
 Had wonder'd at the restless rover's flight; 370
 Meanwhile her dragons fed with no repast,
 But her exhaling simples' od'rous blast,
 Their tarnish'd scales, and wrinkled skins had cast.
 At last return'd before her palace gate,
 Quitting her chariot, on the ground she sate, 375
 The sky her only canopy of state.
 All conversation with her sex she fled,
 Shunn'd the caresses of the nuptial bed:
 Two altars next of grassy turf she rears, 379
 This Hecate's name, that Youth's inscription bears:
 With forest-boughs, and vervain these she crown'd;
 Then delves a double trench in lower ground,
 And sticks a black-fleec'd ram, that ready stood,
 And drench'd the ditches with devoted blood: 384
 New wine she pours, and milk from th' udder
 warm,
 With mystic murmurs to complete the charm,
 And subterranean deities alarm.
 To the stern king of ghosts she next apply'd,
 And gentle Proserpine, his ravish'd bride,
 That for old Æson with the laws of fate 390
 They would dispense, and lengthen his short date:
 Thus with repeated pray'rs she long assails
 Th' infernal tyrant, and at last prevails;
 Then calls to have decrepit Æson brought,
 And stupifies him with a sleeping draught; 395
 On earth his body like a corse extends,
 Then charges Jason and his waiting friends
 To quit the place, that no unhallow'd eye
 Into her arts forbidden secrets pry.
 This done, th' enchantress, with her locks unbound,
 About her altars trips a frantic round; 401
 Piece-meal the consecrated wood she splits,
 And dips the splinters in the bloody pits,
 Then hurls 'em on the piles; the sleeping sire
 She lustrates thrice, with sulphur, water, fire. 405

In a large caldron now the med'cine boils,
 Compounded of her late collected spoils,
 Blending into the mash the various pow'rs
 Of wonder-working juices, roots, and flow'rs;
 With gems i' th' eastern ocean's cell refin'd, 410
 And such as ebbing tides had left behind;
 To them the midnight's pearly dew she flings
 A screech-owl's carcase, and ill boding wings;
 Nor could the wizard wolf's warm entrails 'scape
 (That wolf who counterfeits a human shape). 415
 Then, from the bottom of her conj'ring bag,
 Snakes' skins, and liver of a long-liv'd stag;
 Last a crow's head to such an age arriv'd,
 That he had now nine centuries surviv'd;
 These, and with these a thousand more that grew 420
 In sundry soils, into her pot she threw;
 Then with a wither'd olive-bough she rakes
 The bubbling broth; the bough, fresh verdure takes;
 Green leaves at first the perish'd plant surround,
 Which the next minute with ripe fruit were crown'd.
 The foaming juices now the brink o'er-swell; 426
 The barren heath, where'er the liquor fell,
 Sprang out with vernal grass, and all the pride
 Of blooming May.—When this, Medea spy'd,
 She cuts her patient's throat; th' exhausted blood
 Recruiting with her new enchanted flood; 431
 While at his mouth, and through his op'ning wound,
 A double inlet her infusion found;
 His feeble frame resumes a youthful air,
 A glossy brown his hoary beard and hair, 435
 The meagre paleness from his aspect fled,
 And in its room sprang up a florid red;
 Through all his limbs a youthful vigour flies,
 His emptied art'ries swell with fresh supplies:
 Gazing spectators scarce believe their eyes. 440
 But Æson is the most surpris'd to find
 A happy change in body and in mind;
 In sense and constitution the same man,
 As when his fortieth active year began.
 Bacchus, who from the clouds this wonder view'd,
 Medea's method instantly pursu'd, 446
 And his indulgent nurse's youth renew'd.

Thus far obliging love employ'd her art,
 But now revenge must act a tragic part.
 Medea feigns a mortal quarrel bred 450
 Betwixt her and the partner of her bed ;
 On this pretence, to Pelias' court she flies,
 Who languishing with age and sickness lies :
 His guiltless daughters, with inveigling wiles,
 And well-dissembled friendship she beguiles : 455
 The strange achievements of her art she tells,
 With Æson's cure, and long on that she dwells,
 Till them to firm persuasion she has won,
 The same for their old father may be done :
 For him they court her to employ her skill, 460
 And put upon the cure what price she will.
 At first she's mute, and with a grave pretence
 Of difficulty, holds them in suspense ;
 Then promises, and bids them from the fold
 Choose out a ram, the most infirm and old ; 465
 That so by fact their doubts may be remov'd,
 And first, on him, the operation prov'd.

A wreath-horn'd ram is brought, so far o'ergrown
 With years, his age was to that age unknown ; 470
 Of sense too dull the piercing point to feel,
 And scarce sufficient blood to stain the steel.
 His carcase she into a caldron threw,
 With drugs whose vital qualities she knew ;
 His limbs grew less, he casts his horns and years,
 And tender bleating strike their wond'ring ears. 475
 Then instantly leaps forth a frisking lamb,
 That seeks (too young to graze) a suckling dam.
 The sisters, thus confirm'd with the success,
 Her promise with renew'd entreaty press ;
 To countenance the cheat, three nights and days 480
 Before experiment th' enchantress stays ;
 Then into limpid water, from the springs,
 Weeds, and ingredients of no force she flings ;
 With antique ceremonies for pretence,
 And rambling rhymes without a word of sense. 485

Meanwhile the king with all his guards lay bound
 In magic sleep, scarce that of death so sound ;
 The daughters now are by the sorceress led
 Into his chamber, and surround his bed.

Your father's health's concern'd, and can ye stay? 490
 Unnat'ral nymphs, why this unkind delay?
 Unsheathe your swords, dismiss his lifeless blood,
 And I'll recruit it with a vital flood:

Your father's life and health are in your hand,
 And can ye thus, like idle gazers stand? 495

Unless you are of common sense bereft,
 If yet one spark of piety is left,
 Dispatch a father's cure, and disengage
 The monarch from his toilsome load of age:
 Come, drench your weapons in his putrid gore; 500
 'Tis charity to wound, when wounding will restore.

Thus urg'd, the poor deluded maids proceed,
 Betray'd by zeal to an inhuman deed,
 And, in compassion, make a father bleed.
 Yes, she who had the kindest, tend'rest heart, 505
 Is foremost to perform the bloody part.

Yet, though to act the butchery betray'd,
 They could not bear to see the wounds they made;
 With looks averted, backward they advance,
 Then strike, and stab, and leave the blows to chance.

Waking in consternation, he essays 511
 (Welt'ring in blood) his feeble arms to raise:
 Environ'd with so many swords— From whence
 This barb'rous usage? What is my offence?

What fatal fury, what infernal charm, 515
 'Gainst a kind father does his daughters arm?

Hearing his voice, as thunder-struck, they stopp'd
 Their resolution, and their weapons dropp'd:
 Medea then the mortal blow bestows,
 And, that perform'd, the tragic scene to close, 520
 His corse into the boiling caldron throws.

Then, dreading the revenge that must ensue,
 High mounted on her dragon-coach she flew;
 And in her stately progress through the skies,
 Beneath her shady Pelion first she spies, 525
 With Othrys, that above the clouds did rise;
 With skilful Chiron's cave, and neighb'ring ground,
 For old Cerambus' strange escape renown'd,
 By nymphs deliver'd, when the world was drown'd;
 Who him with unexpected wings supply'd, 530
 When delug'd hills a safe retreat deny'd.

Æolian Pitane on her left hand
 She saw, and there the statued dragon stand;
 With Ida's grove, where Bacchus, to disguise
 His son's bold theft, and to secure the prize, 535
 Made the stol'n steer a stag to represent
 Cocytus' father's sandy monument;
 And fields that held the murder'd sire's remains,
 Where howling Mæra frights the startled plains.
 Euryphilus' high town, with tow'rs defac'd 540
 By Herculès, and matrons more disgrac'd
 With sprouting horns, in signal punishment,
 From Juno, or resenting Venus sent.
 Then Rhodes, which Phœbus did so dearly prize,
 And Jove no less severely did chastise; 545
 For he the wizard native's pois'ning sight,
 That us'd the farmer's hopeful crops to blight,
 In rage o'erwhelm'd with everlasting night.
 Cartheïa's ancient walls come next in view,
 Where once the sire almost a stature grew 550
 With wonder, which a strange event did move,
 His daughter turn'd into a turtle-dove.
 Then Hyrie's lake, and Tempè's field o'er-ran,
 Fam'd for the boy who there became a swan;
 For there enamour'd Phyllius, like a slave, 555
 Perform'd what tasks his paramour would crave.
 For presents he had mountain-vultures caught,
 And from the desert a tame lion brought;
 Then a wild bull commanded to subdue,
 The conquer'd savage by the horns he drew; 560
 But, mock'd so oft, the treatment he disdains,
 And from the craving boy this prize detains.
 Then thus in choler the resenting lad:
 Won't you deliver him? you'll wish you had:
 Nor sooner said, but, in a peevish mood, 565
 Leapt from the precipice on which he stood:
 The standers-by were struck with fresh surprise,
 Instead of falling, to behold him rise
 A snowy swan, and soaring to the skies.
 But dearly the rash prank his mother cost, 570
 Who ignorantly gave her son for lost;
 For his misfortune wept, till she became
 A lake, and still renown'd with Hyrie's name.

Thence to Latona's isle, where once was seen,
 Transform'd to birds, a monarch, and his queen. 575
 Far off she saw how old Cephisus mourn'd
 His son, into a seal by Phoebus turn'd;
 And where, astonish'd at a stranger sight,
 Eumelus gaz'd on his wing'd daughter's flight.

Ætolian Pleuron she did next survey, 580
 Where sons a mother's murder did essay,
 But sudden plumes the matron bore away.
 On her right hand, Cyllenè, a fair soil,
 Fair, till Menephron there the beauteous hill
 Attempted with foul incest to defile. 585

Her harness'd dragons now direct she drives
 For Corinth, and at Corinth she arrives;
 Where, if what old tradition tells be true,
 In former ages men from mushrooms grew.

But here Medea finds her bed supplied, 590
 During her absence, by another bride;
 And hopeless to recover her lost game,
 She sets both bride and palace in a flame.
 Nor could a rival's death her wrath assuage,
 Nor stopp'd at Creon's family her rage; 595
 She murders her own infants, in despite
 To faithless Jason, and in Jason's sight;
 Yet ere his sword could reach her, up she springs,
 Securely mounted on her dragon's wings.

From hence to Athens she directs her flight, 600
 Where Phineus, so renown'd for doing right;
 Where Periphas, and Polyphemon's niece,
 Soaring with sudden plumes, amaz'd the towns of

Here Ægeus so engaging she address'd, [Greece.
 That first he treats her like a royal guest: 605
 Then takes the sorceress for his wedded wife;
 The only blemish of his prudent life.

Meanwhile his son, from actions of renown,
 Arrives at court, but to his sire unknown.
 Medea, to dispatch a dang'rous heir 610
 (She knew him), did a pois'nous draught prepare;
 Drawn from a drug, was long reserv'd in store
 For desp'rate uses, from the Scythian shore;
 That from the Echydnean monster's jaws
 Deriv'd its origin, and this the cause. 615

Through a dark cave a craggy passage lies,
 To ours, ascending from the nether skies;
 Through which, by strength of hand, Alcides drew
 Chain'd Cerberus, who lagg'd, and restive grew,
 With his blear'd eyes our brighter day to view. 620
 Thrice he repeated his enormous yell,
 With which he scares the ghosts, and startles hell;
 At last outrageous (though compell'd to yield)
 He sheds his foam in fury on the field;
 Which, with its own, and rankness of the ground, 625
 Produc'd a weed, by sorcerers renown'd,
 The strongest constitution to confound;
 Call'd Aconite, because it can unlock
 All bars, and force its passage through a rock.

The pious father, by her wheedles won, 630
 Presents this deadly potion to his son;
 Who, with the same assurance, takes the cup,
 And to the monarch's health had drank it up,
 But in the very instant he apply'd
 The goblet to his lips, old Ægeus spy'd 635
 The iv'ry hilted sword that grac'd his side.
 The certain signal of his son he knew,
 And snatch'd the bowl away; the sword he drew,
 Resolv'd, for such a son's endanger'd life,
 To sacrifice the most perfidious wife. 640

Revenge is swift, but her more active charms
 A whirlwind rais'd, that snatch'd her from his arms.
 While conjur'd clouds their baffled sense surprise,
 She vanishes from their deluded eyes,
 And through the hurricane triumphant flies. 645

The gen'rous king, although o'erjoy'd to find
 His son was safe, yet bearing still in mind
 The mischief by his treach'rous queen design'd;
 The horror of the deed, and then how near
 The danger drew, he stands congeal'd with fear. 650
 But soon that fear into devotion turns,
 With grateful incense ev'ry altar burns;
 Proud victims! and unconscious of their fate,
 Stalk to the temple, there to die in state.
 In Athens never had a day been found 655
 For mirth, like that grand festival, renown'd.
 Promiscuously the peers and people dine,

Promiscuously their thankful voices join,
 In songs of wit, sublim'd by sprightly wine.
 To list'ning spheres their joint applause they raise, 660
 And thus resound their matchless Theseus' praise:
 'Great Theseus! thee the Marathonian plain
 Admires, and wears with pride their noble stain
 Of the dire monster's blood, by valiant Theseus slain;
 That now Cromyon's swains in safety sow, 665
 And reap their fertile field, to thee they owe,
 By thee th' infested Epidaurian coast
 Was clear'd, and now can a free commerce boast.
 The traveller his journey can pursue,
 With pleasure the late dreaded valley view, 670
 And cry, Here Theseus the grand robber slew.
 Cephysus' flood cries to his rescu'd shore,
 The merciless Procrustes is no more.
 In peace, Eleusis, Cerès' rites renew,
 Since Theseus' sword the fierce Cercyon slew. 675
 By him the tort'rer Sinis was destroy'd,
 Of strength (but strength to barb'rous use employ'd)
 That tops of tallest pines to earth could bend,
 And thus, in pieces, wretched captives rend.
 Inhuman Scyron now has breath'd his last, 680
 And now Alcatho's road's securely past,
 By Theseus slain, and thrown into the deep:
 But earth nor sea his scatter'd bones would keep,
 Which, after floating long, a rock became,
 Still infamous with Scyron's hated name. 685
 When fame to count thy acts and years proceeds,
 Thy years appear but ciphers to thy deeds.
 For thee, brave youth, as for our common wealth,
 We pray; and drink, in yours, the public health.
 Your praise the senate, and plebeians sing; 690
 With your lov'd name the court and cottage ring.
 You make our shepherds and our sailors glad,
 And not a house in this vast city's sad.'

But mortal bliss will never come sincere,
 Pleasure may lead, but grief brings up the rear; 695
 While for his son's arrival, rev'ling joy
 Ægeus, and all his subjects, does employ;
 While they for only costly feasts prepare,
 His neighb'ring monarch, Minos, threatens war:

Weak in land forces, nor by sea more strong, 700
 But pow'rful in a deep-resented wrong
 For a son's murder, arm'd with pious rage;
 Yet prudently, before he would engage,
 To raise auxiliaries resolv'd to sail,
 And wish the pow'rful princes to prevail. 705

First Anaphè, then proud Astypalæa gains,
 By presents that, and this by threats obtains.
 Low Myconè, Cymolus, chalky soil,
 Tall Cythnos, Scyros, flat Seriphos' isle;
 Paros, with marble cliffs afar display'd; 710
 Impregnable Sithonia; yet betray'd
 To a weak foe, by a gold-admiring maid,
 Who, chang'd into a daw of sable hue,
 Still hoards up gold, and hides it from the view.

But as these islands cheerfully combine, 715
 Others refuse t' embark in his design.
 Now leftward with an easy sail he bore,
 And prosp'rous passage to Cænopia's shore;
 Cænopia once, but now Ægina call'd,
 And with his royal mother's name install'd 720
 By Æacus, under whose reign did spring
 The Myrmidons, and now their reigning king.

Down to the port, amidst the rabble, run
 The princes of the blood; with Telamon,
 Peleus the next, and Phocus, the third son: 725
 Then Æacus, although opprest with years,
 To ask the cause of their approach appears.

That question does the Gnoasian's grief renew,
 And sighs from his afflicted bosom drew;
 Yet after a short, solemn respite made, 730
 The ruler of the hundred cities said:

Assist our arms, rais'd for a murder'd son,
 In this religious war no risk you'll run:
 Revenge the dead:—for, who refuse to give
 Rest to their urns, unworthy are to live, 735

What you request (thus Æacus replies),
 Not I, but truth and common faith denies:
 Athens and we have long been sworn allies;
 Our leagues are fix'd, confed'rate are our pow'rs,
 And who declare themselves their foes, are ours. 740

Minos rejoins, Your league shall dearly cost;

Yet (mindful how much safer 'twas to boast,
 Than there to waste his forces and his fame,
 Before in field with his grand foe he came),
 Parts without blows;—nor long had left the shore,
 Ere into port another navy bore, 746
 With Cephalus, and all his jolly crew :
 Th' Æacidès their old acquaintance knew ;
 The princes bid him welcome, and, in state,
 Conduct the hero to their palace gate ; 750
 Who, ent'ring, seem'd the charming mien to wear,
 As when in youth he paid his visit there.
 In his right hand an olive-branch he holds,
 And, salutation past, the chief unfolds
 His embassy from the Athenian state, 755
 Their mutual friendship, leagues of ancient date ;
 Their common danger, ev'ry thing could wake
 Concern, and his address successful make :
 Strength'ning his plea with all the charms of sense,
 And those with all the charms of eloquence. 760
 Then thus the king : Like suitors do you stand
 For that assistance which you may command ?
 Athenians, all our listed forces use
 (They're such as no bold service will refuse) ;
 And when y' have drawn them off, the gods be prais'd,
 Fresh legions can within our isle be rais'd : 766
 So stock'd with people, that we can prepare
 Both for domestic and for distant war,
 Ours, or our friends' insulters to chastise.
 Long may ye flourish thus, the prince replies. 770
 Strange transport seiz'd me as I pass'd along,
 To meet so many troops, and all so young,
 As if your army did of twins consist ;
 Yet amongst them my late acquaintance miss'd :
 E'en all that to your palace did resort, 775
 When first you entertain'd me at your court ;
 And cannot guess the cause from whence could spring
 So vast a change.—Then thus the sighing king :
 Illustrious guest, to my strange tale attend,
 Of sad beginning, but a joyful end ; 780
 The whole to a vast history would swell,
 I shall but half, and that confus'dly, tell.
 That race whom so ~~er~~erv'dly you admir'd,

Are all into their silent tombs retir'd :
 They fell; and falling, how they shook my state, 785
 Thought may conceive, but words can ne'er relate.

A dreadful plague from angry Juno came,
 To scourge the land, that bore her rival's name ;
 Before her fatal anger was reveal'd,
 And teeming malice lay as yet conceal'd. 790

All remedies we try, all med'cines use,
 Which nature could supply, or art produce :
 Th' unconquer'd foe derides the vain design,
 And art, and nature foil'd, declare the cause divine.
 At first we only felt th' oppressive weight 795
 Of gloomy clouds, then teeming with our fate,
 And lab'ring to discharge inactive heat :

But ere four moons alternate changes knew,
 With deadly blasts the fatal south-wind blew,
 Infected all the air, and poison'd as it flew. 800

Our fountains, too, a dire infection yield,
 For crowds of vipers creep along the field,
 And, with polluted gore, and baneful steams,
 Taint all the lakes, and venom all the streams.

The young disease with milder force began, 805
 And rag'd on birds, and beasts, excusing man.

The lab'ring oxen fall before the plough,
 Th' unhappy ploughmen stare and wonder how :
 The tabid sheep, with sickly bleatings, pines ;
 Its wool decreasing, as its strength declines : 810

The warlike steed, by inward foes compell'd,
 Neglects his honours, and deserts the field ;
 Unnerv'd and languid, seeks a base retreat,
 And at the manger groans, but wish'd a nobler fate :
 The stags forget their speed, the boars their rage, 815
 Nor can the bears the stronger herds engage :

A gen'ral faintness does invade 'em all,
 And in the woods and fields promiscuously they fall.
 The air receives the stench, and (strange to say)
 The rav'nous birds and beasts avoid the prey : 820
 Th' offensive bodies rot upon the ground,
 And spread the dire contagion all around.

But now the plague, grown to a larger size,
 Riots on man, and scorns a meaner prize.

Intestine heats begin the civil war, 825
 And flushings first the latent flame declare,
 And breath inspir'd, which seem'd like fiery air.
 Their black dry tongues are swell'd, and scare can
 move,

And short thick sighs from panting lungs are drove.
 They gape for air, with flatt'ring hopes t' abate 830
 Their raging flames, but that augments their heat.
 No bed, no cov'ring can the wretches bear,
 But on the ground expos'd to open air,
 They lie, and hope to find a pleasing coolness there.
 The suff'ring earth, with that oppression curst, 835
 Returns the heat which they imparted first.

In vain physicians would bestow their aid,
 Vain all their art, and useless all their trade;
 And they, e'en they, who fleeting life recall,
 Feel the same pow'rs, and, undistinguish'd, fall. 840
 If any proves so daring to attend
 His sick companion, or his darling friend,
 Th' officious wretch sucks in contagious breath,
 And, with his friend, does sympathize in death.

And now the care and hopes of life are past, 845
 They please their fancies, and indulge their taste;
 At brooks and streams, regardless of their shame,
 Each sex, promiscuous, strives to quench their flame;
 Nor do they strive in vain to quench it there,
 For thirst and life, at once, extinguish'd are. 850
 Thus in the brooks the dying bodies sink,
 But, heedless, still the rash survivors drink.

So much uneasy down the wretches hate,
 They fly their beds to struggle with their fate;
 But if decaying strength begins to rise, 855
 The victim crawls and rolls, till on the ground he lies.
 Each shuns his bed, as each would shun his tomb,
 And thinks th' infection only lodg'd at home.

Here one, with fainting steps, does slowly creep
 O'er heaps of dead, and straight augments a heap; 860
 Another, while his strength and tongue prevail'd,
 Bewails his friend, and falls himself bewail'd:
 This, with imploring looks, surveys the skies,
 The last dear office of his closing eyes;
 But finds the heav'ns implacable, and dies. 865

What now, ah! what employ'd my troubled mind?
 But only hopes my subjects' fate to find.
 What place soe'er my weeping eyes survey,
 There, in lamented heaps, the vulgar lay;
 As acorns scatter when the winds prevail, 870
 Or mellow fruit from shaken branches fall.

You see that dome which rears its front so high:
 'Tis sacred to the monarch of the sky:
 How many there, with unregarded tears,
 And fruitless vows, sent up successful pray'rs! 875
 There fathers for expiring sons implor'd,
 And there the wife bewail'd her gasping lord;
 With pious off'rings, they'd appease the skies,
 But they, ere yet th' atoning vapours rise,
 Before the altars fall, themselves a sacrifice; 880
 They fall, while yet their hands the gums contain,
 The gums surviving, but their off'ers slain.

The destin'd ox, with holy garlands crown'd,
 Prevents the blow, and feels th' expected wound:
 When I myself invok'd the pow'rs divine, 885
 To drive the fatal pest from me and mine;
 When now the priest with hands uplifted stood,
 Prepar'd to strike, and shed the sacred blood,
 The gods themselves the mortal stroke bestow,
 The victim falls, but they impart the blow: 890
 Scarce was the knife with the pale purple stain'd,
 And no presages could be then obtain'd,
 From putrid entrails, where th' infection reign'd.

Death stalk'd around with such resistless sway,
 The temples of the gods his force obey, 895
 And suppliants feel his stroke, while yet they pray.
 Go now (said he), your deities implore
 For fruitless aid, for I defy their pow'r.
 Then, with a curst, malicious joy, survey'd
 The very altars, stain'd with trophies of the dead. 900

The rest grown mad, and frantic with despair,
 Urge their own fate, and so prevent the fear.
 Strange madness that, when death pursu'd so fast,
 T' anticipate the blow, with impious haste!

No decent honours to their urns are paid, 905
 Nor could the graves receive the num'rous dead;
 For, as they lay unbury'd on the ground,

Or unadorn'd a needy fun'ral found:
 All rev'rence past, the fainting wretches fight
 For fun'ral piles which were another's right. 910

Unmourn'd they fall; for who surviv'd to mourn?
 And sires, and mothers, unlamented burn:
 Parents and sons sustain an equal fate,
 And wand'ring ghosts their kindred shadows meet.
 The dead a larger space of ground require, 915
 Nor are the trees sufficient for the fire.

Despairing under grief's oppressive weight,
 And sunk by these tempestuous blasts of fate,
 O Jove (said I), if common fame says true,
 If e'er Ægina gave those joys to you, 920
 If e'er you lay enclos'd in her embrace,
 Fond of her charms, and eager to possess;
 O father, if you do not yet disclaim
 Paternal care, nor yet disown the name;
 Grant my petitions, and with speed restore 925
 My subjects num'rous as they were before,
 Or make me partner of the fate they bore.

I spoke; and glorious lightning shone around,
 And rattling thunder gave a prosp'rous sound:
 So let it be, and may these omens prove 930
 A pledge (said I) of your returning love.

By chance a rev'rend oak was near the place,
 Sacred to Jove, and of Dodona's race;
 Where frugal ants laid up their winter meat,
 Whose little bodies bear a mighty weight: 935
 We saw them march along, and hide their store,
 And much admir'd their number, and their pow'r;
 Admir'd at first, but after envy'd more.

Full of amazement, thus to Jove I pray'd:
 O grant, since thus my subjects are decay'd, 940
 As many subjects to supply the dead!

I pray'd, and strange convulsions mov'd the oak,
 Which murmur'd, though by ambient winds unshook:
 My trembling hands, and stiff erected hair,
 Express'd all tokens of uncommon fear; 945
 Yet both the earth and sacred oak I kiss'd,
 And scarce could hope, yet still I hop'd the best:
 For wretches, whatso'er the fates divine,
 Expound all omens to their own design.

But now 'twas night, when e'en distraction wears
A pleasing look, and dreams beguile our cares. 951

Lo! the same oak appears before mine eyes,
Nor alter'd in its shape, nor former size;
As many ants the num'rous branches bear,
The same their labour and their frugal care; 955
The branches too, a like commotion found,
And shook th' industrious creatures on the ground,
Who, by degress (what's scarce to be believ'd),
A nobler form and larger bulk receiv'd,
And on the earth walk an unusual pace, 960
With manly strides and an erected face;
Their num'rous legs, and former colour lost,
The insects could a human figure boast.

I wake, and, waking, find my cares again,
And to the unperforming gods complain, 965
And call their promise and pretences vain.
Yet in my court I heard the murm'ring voice
Of strangers, and a mixt uncommon noise:
But I suspected all was still a dream,
Till Telamon to my apartment came, 970
Op'ning the door with an impetuous haste;
O come (said he), and see your faith and hopes sur-
past:

I follow, and, confus'd with wonder, view
Those shapes which my presaging slumbers drew:
I saw, and own'd, and call'd them subjects; they 975
Confess'd my pow'r, submissive to my sway.
To Jove, restorer of my race decay'd,
My vows were first with due oblations paid;
I then divide, with an impartial hand,
My empty city, and my ruin'd land, 980
To give the new-born youth an equal share,
And call'd them Myrmidons from what they were.
You saw their persons, and they still retain
The thrift of ants, though now transform'd to men.
A frugal people, and inur'd to sweat, 985
Lab'ring to gain, and keeping what they get.
These, equal both in strength and years, shall join
Their willing aid, and follow your design,
With the first southern gale that shall present
To fill your sails, and favour your intent. 990

With such discourse they entertain the day;
 The ev'ning pass'd in banquets, sport, and play:
 Then having crown'd the night with sweet repose,
 Aurora (with the wind at east) arose.

Now Pallas' sons to Cephalus resort, 995
 And Cephalus with Pallas' sons to court,
 To the king's levee; him sleep's silken chain,
 And pleasing dreams, beyond his hour detain;
 But then the princes of the blood, in state,
 Expect, and meet 'em, at the palace gate. 1000

To th' inmost courts the Grecian youths were led,
 And plac'd by Phocus on a Tyrian bed;
 Who, soon observing Cephalus to hold
 A dart of unknown wood, but arm'd with gold;
 None better loves (said he) the huntsman's sport, 1005
 Or does more often to the woods resort;
 Yet I that jav'lin's stem with wonder view,
 Too brown for box, too smooth a grain for yew.

I cannot guess the tree; but never art,
 Did form, or eyes behold, so fair a dart! 1010

The guest then interrupts him—'Twould produce
 Still greater wonder, if you knew its use.
 It never fails to strike the game, and then
 Comes bloody back into your hand again.

Then Phocus each particular desires, 1015
 And th' author of the wondrous gift inquires.
 To which the owner thus, with weeping eyes,
 And sorrow for his wife's sad fate, replies:

This weapon here, (O prince!) can you believe
 This dart the cause for which so much I grieve; 1020
 And shall continue to grieve on, till fate
 Afford such wretched life no longer date?

Would, I this fatal gift had ne'er enjoy'd,
 This fatal gift my tender wife destroy'd!

Procris her name, allied in charms and blood 1025
 To fair Orythia courted by a god.

Her father seal'd my hopes with rites divine,
 But firmer love before had made her mine.

Men call'd me blest, and blest I was indeed,
 The second month our nuptials did succeed; 1030

When (as upon Hymettus' dewy head,

For mountain stags, my net betimes I spread)
 Aurora spy'd, and ravish'd me away;
 With rev'rence to the goddess I must say,
 Against my will, for Procris had my heart, 1035
 Nor would her image from my thoughts depart.
 At last, in rage she cry'd : Ungrateful boy,
 Go to your Procris, take your fatal joy :
 And so dismiss'd me. Musing as I went,
 What those expressions of the goddess meant, 1040
 A thousand jealous fears possess me now,
 Lest Procris had profan'd her nuptial vow :
 Her youth and charms did to my fancy paint
 A lewd adultress, but her life a saint.
 Yet I was absent long; the goddess too 1045
 Taught me how far a woman could be true.
 Aurora's treatment much suspicion bred;
 Besides, who truly love, e'en shadows dread.
 I straight impatient for the trial grew, 1049
 What courtship, back'd with richest gifts, could do.
 Aurora's envy aided my design,
 And lent me features far unlike to mine.
 In this disguise to my own house I came;
 But all was chaste, no conscious sign of blame :
 With thousand arts I scarce admittance found, 1055
 And then beheld her weeping on the ground
 For her lost husband; hardly I retain'd
 My purpose, scarce the wish'd embrace refrain'd.
 How charming was her grief ! Then, Phocus, guess
 What killing beauties waited on her dress. 1060
 Her constant answer, when my suit-I press'd,
 ' Forbear ; my lord's dear image guards this breast ;
 Where'er he is, whatever cause detains,
 Whoe'er has his, my heart unmov'd remains.' 1064
 What greater proofs of truth than these could be ?
 Yet I persist, and urge my destiny.
 At length she found, when my own form return'd,
 Her jealous lover there, whose loss she mourn'd.
 Enrag'd with my suspicion, swift as wind,
 She fled at once from me and all mankind ; 1070
 And so became, her purpose to retain,
 A nymph, and huntress in Diana's train.
 Forsaken thus, I found my flames increase,

I own'd my folly, and I sued for peace.
 It was a fault, but not of guilt to move 1075
 Such punishment, a fault of too much love,
 Thus I retriev'd her to my longing arms,
 And many happy days possess'd her charms,
 But with herself she kindly did confer
 What gifts the goddess had bestow'd on her; 1080
 The fleetest greyhound, with this lovely dart:
 And I of both have wonders to impart.

Near Thebes, a savage beast, of race unknown,
 Laid waste the field, and bore the vineyards down :
 The swains fled from him, and with one consent 1085
 Our Grecian youth to chase the monster went ;
 More swift than lightning he the toils surpass'd,
 And in his course, spears, men, and trees o'er cast.
 We slipt our dogs, and last my Lelaps too,
 When none of all the mortal race would do : 1090
 He long before was struggling from my hands,
 And ere we could unloose him, broke his bands.
 That minute, where he was, we could not find,
 And only saw the dust he left behind.
 I clim'd a neighb'ring hill to view the chase, 1095
 While in the plain they held an equal race ;
 The savage now seems caught, and now by force
 To quit himself, nor holds the same straight course ;
 But running counter, from the foe withdraws,
 And with short turning cheats his gaping jaws, 1100
 Which he retrieves, and still so closely press'd,
 You'd fear at ev'ry stretch he were possess'd ;
 Yet for the gripe his fangs in vain prepare,
 The game shoots from him, and he chops the air.
 To cast my jav'lin then I took my stand ; 1105
 But as the thongs were fitting to my hand,
 While to the valley I o'erlook'd the wood,
 Before my eyes two marble statues stood ;
 That, as pursu'd, appearing at full stretch ;
 This barking after, and at point to catch : 1110
 Some god their course did with this wonder grace,
 That, neither might be conquer'd in the chase.
 A sudden silence here his tongue suppress'd,
 He here stops short, and fain would waive the rest.
 The eager prince then urg'd him to impart, 1115

The fortune that attended on the dart.

First then (said he), past joys let me relate;

For bliss was the foundation of my fate.

No language can those happy hours express,

Did from our nuptials me, and Procris bless: 1120

The kindest pair! what more could Heav'n confer?

For she was all to me, and I to her.

Had Jove made love, great Jove had been despis'd;

And I my Procris more than Venus priz'd:

Thus while no other joy we did aspire, 1125

We grew at last one soul, and one desire.

Forth to the woods I went at break of day

(The constant practice of my youth) for prey:

Nor yet for servant, horse, or dog did call;

I found the single dart to serve for all. 1130

With slaughter tir'd, I sought the cooler shade,

And winds that from the mountains pierc'd the glade;

Come, gentle air (so was I wont to say),

Come, gentle air, sweet Aura, come away.

This always was the burden of my song, 1135

Come, 'suage my flames, sweet Aura, come along.

Thou always art most welcome to my breast;

I faint; approach, thou dearest kindest guest!

(These blandishments, and more than these, I said,

By fate to unsuspected ruin led,) 1140

Thou art my joy, for thy dear sake I love

Each desert hill, and solitary grove;

When (faint with labour) I refreshment need,

For cordials on thy fragrant breath I feed.

At last a wand'ring swain in hearing came, 1145

And, cheated with the sound of Aura's name,

He thought I had some assignation made;

And to my Procris' ear the news convey'd.

Great love is soonest with suspicion fir'd:

She swoon'd, and with the tale almost expir'd. 1150

Ah! wretched heart (she cry'd), ah! faithless man!

And then to curse th' imagin'd nymph began:

Yet oft she doubts, oft hopes she is deceiv'd,

And chides herself, that ever she believ'd,

Her lord to such injustice could proceed, 1155

Till she herself were witness of the deed.

Next morn I to the woods again repair,

And, weary with the chase invoke the air;
 Approach, dear Aura, and my bosom cheer:—
 At which a mournful sound did strike my ear; 1160
 Yet I proceeded, till the thicket by,
 With rustling noise and motion, drew my eye;
 I thought some beast of prey was shelter'd there,
 And to the covert threw my certain spear;
 From whence a tender sigh my soul did wound; 1165
 ' Ah me!' it cry'd, and did like Procris sound.
 Procris was there; too well the voice I knew,
 And to the place with headlong horror flew;
 Where I beheld her gasping on the ground,
 In vain attempting from the deadly wound 1170
 To draw the dart, her love's dear fatal gift!
 My guilty arms had scarce the strength to lift
 The beauteous load; my silks, and hair I tore
 (If possible) to stanch the pressing gore;
 For pity begg'd her keep her flitting breath, 1175
 And not to leave me guilty of her death.
 While I entreat, she fainted fast away,
 And these few words had only strength to say:
 ' By all the sacred bonds of plighted love,
 By all your rev'ence to the pow'rs above, 1180
 By all that made me charming once appear,
 By all the truth for which you held me dear,
 And last by love, the cause through which I bleed,
 Let Aura never to my bed succeed!'
 I then perceiv'd the error of our fate, 1185
 And told it her, but found and told too late!
 I felt her lower to my bosom fall,
 And while her eyes had any sight at all,
 On mine she fix'd them, in her pangs still press'd
 My hand, and sigh'd her soul into my breast! 1190
 Yet, being undeceiv'd, resign'd her breath,
 Methought, more cheerfully, and smil'd in death.
 With such concern the weeping hero told
 This tale, that none who heard him could withhold
 From melting into sympathizing tears, 1195
 Till Æacus with his two sons appears;
 Whom he commits, with their new-levy'd bands,
 To fortune's, and so brave a gen'ral's hands.

BOOK VIII.

TRANSLATED BY MR. DRYDEN, &c.

The story of Nisus and Scylla. The Labyrinth. The story of Dædalus and Icarus. The story of Meleager and Atalanta. The transformation of the Naiads. Perimelè turned into an island. The story of Baucis and Philemon. The changes of Proteus. The story of Erisichthon. The description of famine. The transformation of Erisichthon's daughter.

Now shone the morning star in bright array,
 To vanquish night, and usher in the day;
 The wind veers southward, and moist clouds arise,
 That blot with shades the blue meridian skies.
 Cephalus feels with joy the kindly gales, 5
 His new allies unfurl the swelling sails;
 Steady their course, they cleave the yielding main,
 And, with a wish, th' intended harbour gain.

Meanwhile king Minos, on the Attic strand,
 Displays his martial skill, and wastes the land. 10
 His army is encamp'd upon the plains,
 Before Alcathoë's walls, where Nisus reigns;
 On whose gray head a lock of purple hue,
 The strength and fortune of his kingdom, grew.

Six moons were gone, and past, when still from far
 Victoria hover'd o'er the doubtful war. 16
 So long, to both inclin'd, th' impartial maid
 Between 'em both her equal wings display'd.

High on the walls, by Phœbus vocal made,
 A turret of the palace rais'd its head; 20
 And where the god his tuneful harp resign'd,
 The sound within the stones still lay enshrin'd:
 Hither the daughter of the purple king
 Ascended oft, to hear its music ring;
 And, striking with a pebble, would release 25
 Th' enchanted notes in times of happy peace.

But now, from thence, the curious maid beheld
 Rough feats of arms, and combats of the field:
 And, since the siege was long, had learnt the name
 Of ev'ry chief, his character, and fame; 30
 Their arms, their horse, and quiver she descry'd,
 Nor could the dress of war the warrior hide.

Europa's son she knew above the rest,
 And more, than well became a virgin breast :
 In vain the crested morion veils his face, 35
 She thinks it adds a more peculiar grace :
 His ample shield, emboss'd with burnish'd gold,
 Still makes the bearer lovelier to behold :
 When the tough jav'lin, with a whirl he sends,
 His strength, and skill, the sighing maid commends :
 Or, when he strains to draw the circling bow, 41
 And his fine limbs a manly posture shew,
 Compar'd with Phœbus, he performs so well,
 Let her be judge, and Minos shall excel.

But when the helm, put off, display'd to sight, 45
 And set his features in an open light ;
 When, vaulting to his seat, his steed he press'd,
 Caparison'd in gold, and richly drest ;
 Himself in scarlet sumptuously array'd,
 New passions rise, and fire the frantic maid. 50
 O happy spear! (she cries) that feels his touch ;
 Nay, e'en the reins he holds are blest too much.
 O! were it lawful she could wing her way
 Through the stern hostile troops without dismay ;
 Or throw her body to the distant ground, 55
 And in the Cretans' happy camp be found.
 Would Minos but desire it! she'd expose
 Her native country to her country's foes ;
 Unbar the gates, the town with flames infest,
 Or any thing that Minos should request. 60

And, as she sat, and pleas'd her longing sight,
 Viewing the king's pavilion veil'd with white,
 Should joy, or grief (she said), possess my breast,
 To see my country by a war oppress ?
 I'm in suspense! for, though 'tis grief to know, 65
 I love a man that is declar'd my foe ;
 Yet in my own despite, I must approve
 That lucky war, which brought the man I love.
 Yet, were I tender'd as a pledge of peace,
 The cruelties of war might quickly cease. 70
 O! with what joy I'd wear the chains he gave !
 A patient hostage, and a willing slave,
 Thou lovely object! if the nymph that bare
 Thy charming person, were but half so fair ;

Well might a god her virgin bloom desire, 75
 And with a rape indulge his amorous fire.
 O! had I wings to glide along the air,
 To his dear tent I'd fly, and settle there;
 There tell my quality, confess my flame,
 And grant him any dowry that he'd name. 80
 All, all I'd give; only my native land,
 My dearest country, should excepted stand.
 For, perish love and all expected joys,
 Ere with so base a thought, my soul complies.
 Yet, oft the vanquish'd some advantage find, 85
 When conquer'd by a noble, gen'rous mind.
 Brave Minos justly as the war begun,
 Fir'd with resentment for his murder'd son:
 The righteous gods a righteous cause regard,
 And will, with victory, his arms reward: 90
 We must be conquer'd; and the captive's fate
 Will surely seize us, though it seize us late.
 Why then should love be idle, and neglect
 What Mars, by arms and perils, will effect?
 O prince, I die, with anxious fear oppress, 95
 Lest some rash hand should wound my charmer's breast:
 For, if they saw no barb'rous mind could dare
 Against that lovely form to raise a spear.
 But I'm resolv'd, and fixt in this decree,
 My father's country shall my dowry be. 100
 Thus I prevent the loss of life and blood,
 And, in effect, the action must be good.
 Vain resolution! for, at ev'ry gate
 The trusty centinels successive wait:
 The keys my father keeps; ah! there's my grief; 105
 'Tis he obstructs all hopes of my relief.
 Gods! that this hated light I'd never seen!
 Or, all my life without a father been!
 But gods we all may be: for those that dare,
 Are gods, and fortune's chiefest favours share. 110
 The ruling pow'rs a lazy pray'r detest,
 The bold adventurer succeeds the best.
 What other maid, inspir'd with such a flame,
 But would take courage, and abandon shame?
 But would, though ruin should ensue, remove 115
 Whate'er oppos'd, and clear the way to love?

This, shall another's feeble passion dare,
 While I sit tame, and languish in despair?
 No; for though fire and sword before me lay,
 Impatient love through both should force its way; 120
 Yet I have no such enemies to fear,
 My sole obstruction is my father's hair;
 His purple lock my sanguine hope destroys,
 And clouds the prospect of my rising joys.

Whilst thus she spoke, amid the thick'ning air 125
 Night supervenes the greatest nurse of care;
 And, as the goddess spreads her sable wings,
 The virgin's fears decay, and courage springs.

The hour was come, when man's o'er-labour'd breast
 Surceas'd its care, by downy sleep possess'd: 130

All things now hush'd, Scylla with silent tread
 Urg'd her approach to Nisus' royal bed:
 There of the fatal lock (accursed theft!)
 She her unwitting father's head bereft.

In safe possession of her impious prey, 135
 Out at a postern gate she takes her way.

Embolden'd, by the merit of the deed,
 She traverses the adverse camp with speed,
 Till Minos' tent she reach'd: The righteous king
 She thus bespoke, who shiver'd at the thing: 140

Behold th' effect of love's resistless sway!
 I, Nisus' royal seed to thee betray
 My country, and my gods. For this strange task,
 Minos, no other boon but thee I ask.

This purple lock, a pledge of love receive; 145
 No worthless present, since in it I give

My father's head.—Mov'd at a crime so new,
 And with abhorrence fill'd, back Minos drew.
 Nor touch'd th' unhallow'd gift; but thus exclaim'd,
 (With mien indignant, and with eyes inflam'd): 150

Perdition seize thee, thou, thy kind's disgrace;
 May thy devoted carcase find no place
 In earth, or air, or sea, by all outcast!
 Shall Minos, with so foul a monster, blast
 His Cretan world, where cradled Jove was nurst? 155
 Forbid it Heav'n! Away, thou most accurst!

And now Alcathœe, its lord exchang'd.
 Was under Minos' domination rang'd.

While the most equal king his care applies
 To curb the conquer'd, and new laws devise, 160
 The fleet, by his command, with hoisted sails,
 And ready oars, invites the murm'ring gales,
 At length the Cretan hero anchor weigh'd,
 Repaying, with neglect, the abandon'd maid.
 Deaf to her cries, he furrows up the main; 165
 In vain she prays, solicits him in vain.

And now she furious grows; in wild despair
 She wrings her hands, and throws aloft her hair.
 Where runn'st thou (thus she vents her deep distress)
 Why shunn'st thou her that crown'd thee with success?
 Her, whose fond love to thee could sacrifice 171
 Her country, and her parent, sacred ties!
 Can nor my love, nor proffer'd presents find
 A passage to thy heart, and make thee kind?
 Can nothing move thy pity? O ingrate, 175
 Canst thou behold my lost, forlorn estate,
 And not be soften'd? Canst thou throw off one
 Who has no refuge left but thee alone?
 Where shall I seek for comfort? whither fly?
 My native country does in ashes lie: 180
 Or were't not so, my treason bars me there,
 And bids me wander. Shall I next repair
 To a wrong'd father, by my guilt undone?—
 Me, all mankind deservedly will shun.
 I, out of all the world, myself have thrown, 185
 To purchase an access to Crete alone;
 Which since refus'd, ungen'rous man, give o'er
 To boast thy race; Europa never bore
 A thing so savage. Thee some tigress bred,
 On the bleak Syrt's inhospitable bed; 190
 Or where Charybdis pours its rapid tide
 Tempestuous. Thou art not to love allied;
 Nor did the king of gods thy mother meet
 Beneath a bull's forg'd shape, and bear to Crete.
 That fable of thy glorious birth is feign'd; 195
 Some wild outrageous bull thy dam sustain'd.
 O father Nisus, now my death behold;
 Exult, O city, by my baseness sold!
 Minos, obdurate, has aveng'd ye all;
 But 'twere more just by those I wrong'd to fall: 200

For why should'st thou, who only didst subdue
 By my offending, my offence pursue?
 Well art thou match'd to one whose am'rous flame
 Too fiercely rag'd, for human kind to tame;
 One who, within a wooden heifer thrust, 295
 Courted a low'ring bull's mistaken lust;
 And, from whose monster-teeming womb, the earth
 Receiv'd what much it mourn'd, a bi-form birth.
 But what avail my plaints? the whistling wind,
 Which bears him far away, leaves them behind. 210
 Well weigh'd Pasiphaë, when she preferr'd
 A bull to thee, more brutish than the herd.
 But, ah! time presses, and the labour'd oars
 To distance drive the fleet, and lose the less'ning shores.
 Think not, ungrateful man, the liquid way 215
 And threat'ning billows shall enforce my stay.
 I'll follow thee in spite: my arms I'll throw
 Around thy oars, or grasp thy crooked prow,
 And drag through drenching seas.—Her eager tongue
 Had hardly clos'd the speech, when forth she sprung,
 And prov'd the deep. Cupid with added force 221
 Recruits each nerve, and aids her wat'ry course.
 Soon she the ship attains, unwelcome guest;
 And, as with close embrace its sides she press'd,
 A hawk from upper air came pouring down 225
 ('Twas Nisus cleft the sky with wings new grown):
 At Scylla's head his horny bill he aims;
 She, fearful of the blow, the ship disclaims,
 Quitting her hold: and yet she fell not far,
 But wond'ring, finds herself sustain'd in air. 230
 Chang'd to a lark, she mottled pinions shook,
 And, from the ravish'd lock, the name of Ciris took.

Now Minos, landed on the Cretan shore,
 Performs his vows to Jove's protecting pow'r,
 A hundred bullocks of the largest breed, 235
 With flow'rets crown'd, before his altar bleed:
 While trophies of the vanquish'd, brought from far,
 Adorn the palace with the spoils of war.

Meanwhile the monster of a human beast,
 His family's reproach, and stain, increas'd. 240
 His double kind the rumour swiftly spread,

And evidenc'd the mother's beastly deed.
 When Minos, willing to conceal the shame
 That sprang from the reports of tattling fame,
 Resolves a dark inclosure to provide, 245
 And, far from sight, the two-form'd creature hide.

Great Dædalus of Athens was the man
 That made the draught, and form'd the wondrous
 plan;

Where rooms within themselves encircled lie,
 With various windings, to deceive the eye. 250

As soft Mæänder's wanton current plays,
 When through the Phrygian fields it loosely strays;
 Backward and forward rolls the dimpled tide,
 Seeming, at once, two diff'rent ways to glide :
 While circling streams their former banks survey,
 And waters past, succeeding waters see; 256
 Now floating to the sea with downward course,
 Now pointing upward to its ancient source.

Such was the work, so intricate the place,
 That scarce the workman all its turns could trace ;
 And Dædalus was puzzled how to find 261
 The secret ways of what himself design'd.

These private walls the Minotaure include,
 Who twice was glutted with Athenian blood :
 But the third tribute more successful prov'd, 265
 Slew the foul monster, and the plague remov'd.

When Theseus, aided by the virgin's art,
 Had trac'd the guiding thread through ev'ry part,
 He took the gentle maid, that set him free,
 And, bound for Dias, cut the briny sea. 270

There quickly cloy'd, ungrateful, and unkind,
 Left his fair consort in the isle behind :
 Whom Bacchus saw, and straining in his arms

Her rifled bloom, and violated charms,
 Resolves, for this, the dear engaging dame 275
 Should shine for ever in the rolls of fame ;

And bids her crown among the stars be plac'd,
 With an eternal constellation grac'd.

The golden circlet mounts ; and, as it flies,
 Its diamonds twinkle in the distant skies ; 280

There, in their pristine form, the gemmy rays
 Between Alcides, and the dragon blaze.

In tedious exile now too long detain'd,
 Dædalus languish'd for his native land :
 The sea foreclos'd his flight; yet thus he said; 285
 Though earth and water in subjection laid,
 O cruel Minos, thy dominion be,
 We'll go through air; for sure the air is free.
 Then to new arts his cunning thought applies,
 And to improve the work of nature tries. 290
 A row of quills in gradual order plac'd,
 Rise by degrees in length from first to last;
 As on a cliff th' ascending thicket grows,
 Or, different reeds the rural pipe compose.
 Along the middle runs a twine of flax, 295
 The bottom stems are join'd by pliant wax.
 Thus, well compact, a hollow bending brings
 The fine composure into real wings.

His boy, young Icarus, that near him stood,
 Unthinking of his fate, with smiles pursu'd 300
 The floating feathers, which the moving air [there,
 Bore loosely from the ground, and wafted here and
 Or with the wax impertinently play'd,
 And with his childish tricks the great design delay'd.

The final master-stroke at last impos'd, 305
 And now, the neat machine completely clos'd;
 Fitting his pinions, on a flight he tries,
 And hung self-balanc'd in the beaten skies.
 Then thus instructs his child: My boy, take care
 To wing your course along the middle air; 310
 If low, the surges wet your flagging plumes,
 If high, the sun the melting wax consumes:
 Steer between both: nor to the northern skies,
 Nor south Orion turn your giddy eyes;
 But follow me: Let me before you lay 315
 Rules for the flight, and mark the pathless way.
 Then teaching, with a fond concern, his son,
 He took the untried wings, and fix'd 'em on,
 But fix'd with trembling hands; and, as he speaks,
 The tears roll gently down his aged cheeks. 320
 Then kiss'd, and in his arms embrac'd him fast,
 But knew not this embrace must be the last;
 And mounting upward, as he wings his flight,
 Back on his charge he turns his aching sight,

As parent birds, when first their callow care 325
 Leave the high nest to tempt the liquid air ;
 Then cheers him on, and oft, with fatal art,
 Reminds the stripling to perform his part.

These, as the angler at the silent brook,
 Or mountain-shepherd leaning on his crook, 330
 Or gaping ploughman from the vale descries,
 They stare, and view 'em with religious eyes,
 And straight conclude 'em gods ; since none but they
 Through their own azure skies could find a way.

Now Delos, Paros, on the left are seen, 335
 And Samos, favour'd by Jove's haughty queen ;
 Upon the right, the isle Lebynthos nam'd,
 And fair Calymnè for its honey fam'd.

When now the boy, whose childish thoughts aspire
 To loftier aims, and make him ramble high'r, 340
 Grown wild, and wanton, more embolden'd flies
 Far from his guide, and soars among the skies.

The soft'ning wax, that felt a nearer sun,
 Dissolv'd apace, and soon began to run ;
 The youth in vain his melting pinions shakes, 345
 His feathers gone, no longer air he takes ;
 O ! father, father ! as he strove to cry,
 Down to the sea he tumbled from on high,
 And found his fate ; yet still subsists by fame,
 Among those waters that retain his name. 350

The father, now no more a father, cries,
 Ho, Icarus ! where are you ? as he flies ;
 Where shall I seek my boy ? he cries again,
 And saw his feathers scatter'd on the main :
 Then curs'd his art ; and fun'ral rites conferr'd, 355
 Naming the country from the youth interr'd.

A partridge, from a neighb'ring stump, beheld
 The sire his monumental marble build ;
 Who, with peculiar call, and flutt'ring wing,
 Chirp'd joyful, and malicious seem'd to sing : 360
 The only bird of all its kind, and late
 Transform'd in pity to a feather'd state :
 From whence, O Dædalus, thy guilt we date.

His sister's son, when now twelve years were past,
 Was, with his uncle, as a scholar plac'd ; 365

- The unsuspecting mother saw his parts,
 And genius fitted for the finest arts.
 This soon appear'd ; for when the spiny bone
 In fishes' backs was by the stripling known,
 A rare invention thence he learnt to draw, 370
 Fil'd teeth in ir'n, and made the grating saw.
 He was the first; that from a knob of brass
 Made two straight arms with widening stretch to
 pass ;
 That, while one stood upon the centre's place,
 The other round it drew a circling space. 375
 Dædalus envy'd this, and from the top
 Of fair Minerva's temple let him drop ;
 Feigning that; as he lean'd upon the tow'r,
 Careless he stoop'd too much, and tumbled o'er.
 The goddess, who th' ingenious still befriends, 380
 On this occasion her assistance lends ;
 His arms with feathers, as he fell, she veils,
 And in the air a new made bird he sails.
 The quickness of his genius, once so fleet,
 Still in his wings remains, and in his feet: 385
 Still, though transform'd, his ancient name he
 keeps,
 And with low flight the new-shorn stubble sweeps ;
 Declines the lofty trees, and thinks it best
 To brood in hedge-rows o'er its humble nest ;
 And, in remembrance of the former ill, 390
 Avoid the heights, and precipices still.
 At length, fatigu'd with long laborious flights,
 On fair Sicilia's plains the artist lights ;
 Where Cocalus the king, that gave him aid,
 Was, for his kindness, with esteem repaid. 395
 Athens no more her doleful tribute sent,
 That hardship gallant Theseus did prevent ;
 Their temples hung with garlands, they adore
 Each friendly god, but most Minerva's pow'r ;
 To her, to Jove, to all, their altars smoke, 400
 They each with victims and perfumes invoke.
 Now talking Fame, through ev'ry Grecian town,
 Had spread, immortal Theseus, thy renown.
 From him, the neighb'ring nations in distress,
 In suppliant terms implore a kind redress. 405

From him, the Calidonians sought relief;
 Though valiant Meleagrus was their chief.
 The cause, a boar, who ravag'd far and near :
 Of Cynthia's wrath, th' avenging minister.
 For Ceneus with autumnal plenty bless'd, 410
 By gifts to heav'n his gratitude express'd :
 Cull'd sheaves, to Cerès ; to Lyæus, wine ;
 To Pan, and Palès, offer'd sheep and kine ;
 And fat of olives, to Minerva's shrine.
 Beginning from the rural gods, his hand 415
 Was lib'ral to the pow'rs of high command :
 Each deity in ev'ry kind was bless'd,
 Till at Diana's fane th' invidious honour ceas'd.

Wrath touches e'en the gods ; the queen of night,
 Fir'd with disdain, and jealous of her right, 420
 Unhonour'd though I am, at least (said she),
 Not unreveng'd that impious act shall be.
 Swift as the word, she sped the boar away,
 With charge on those devoted fields to prey.
 No larger bulls th' Ægyptian pastures feed, 425
 And none so large Sicilian meadows breed :
 His eye-balls glare with fire suffus'd with blood ;
 His neck shoots up a thick-set thorny wood ;
 His bristled back a trench impal'd appears,
 And stands erected, like a field of spears ; 430
 Froth fills his chaps, he sends a grunting sound,
 And part he churns, and part befoams the ground.
 For tusks with Indian elephants he strove,
 And Jove's own thunder from his mouth he drove.
 He burns the leaves ; the scorching blast invades 435
 The tender corn, and shrivels up the blades :
 Or suff'ring not their yellow beards to rear,
 He tramples down the spikes, and intercepts the
 year.

In vain the barns expect their promis'd load ;
 Nor barns at home, nor ricks are heap'd abroad : 440
 In vain the hinds the threshing-floor prepare,
 And exercise their flails in empty air.
 With olives ever-green the ground is strow'd,
 And grapes ungather'd shed their gen'rous blood.
 Amid the fold he rages, nor the sheep 445
 Their shepherds, nor the grooms their bulls can keep.

From fields to walls the frightened rabble run,
 Nor think themselves secure within the town :
 Till Meleagrus, and his chosen crew,
 Contemn the danger, and the praise pursue. 450
 Fair Leda's twins (in time to stars decreed)
 One fought on foot, one curb'd the fiery steed ;
 Then issu'd forth fam'd Jason after these,
 Who mann'd the foremost ship that sail'd the seas ;
 Then Theseus join'd with bold Perithous came, 455
 A single concord in a double name ;
 The Thestian sons, Idas who swiftly ran,
 And Ceneus, once a woman, now a man ;
 Lynceus, with eagle's eyes, and lion's heart ;
 Leucippus, with his never-erring dart : 460
 Acastus, Phileus, Phoenix, Telamon,
 Echion, Lelix, and Eurytion,
 Achilles' father, and great Phocus' son ;
 Dryas the fierce, and Hippasus the strong ;
 With twice old Iólas, and Nestor then but young ; 465
 Laërtes active, and Ancæus bold ;
 Mopsus the sage, who future things foretold ;
 And t'other seer,* yet by his wife unsold.
 A thousand others of immortal fame :
 Amongst the rest, fair Atalanta came, 470
 Grace of the woods ; a diamond buckle bound
 Her vest behind, that else had flow'd upon the ground,
 And shew'd her buskin'd legs ; her head was bare,
 But for her native ornament of hair ;
 Which in a simple knot was tied above, 475
 Sweet negligence ! unheeded bait of love !
 Her sounding quiver, on her shoulder tied,
 One hand a dart, and one a bow supply'd.
 Such was her face, as in a nymph display'd
 A fair fierce boy, or in a boy betray'd 480
 The blushing beauties of a modest maid.
 The Calidonian chief at once the dame
 Beheld, at once his heart receiv'd the flame,
 With heav'ns averse. O happy youth (he cry'd),
 For whom the fates reserve so fair a bride ! 485
 He sigh'd, and had no leisure more to say ;

* Amphiaraus.

His honour call'd his eyes another way,
And forced him to pursue the now neglected prey.

There stood a forest on a mountain's brow,
Which overlook'd the shaded plains below; 490
No sounding axe presum'd those trees to bite;
Coëval with the world, a venerable sight.
The heroes there arriv'd; some spread around
The toils; some search the footsteps on the ground:
Some from the chains the faithful dogs unbound. 495
Of action eager, and intent in thought,
The chiefs their honourable danger sought:
A valley stood below; the common drain
Of waters from above, and falling rain:
The bottom was a moist and marshy ground, 500
Whose edges were with bending osiers crown'd:
The knotty bulrush next in order stood,
And all within of reeds a trembling wood.

From hence the boar was rous'd, and sprang amain,
Like lightning sudden, on the warrior train; 505
Beats down the trees before him, shakes the ground,
The forest echoes to the crackling sound;
Shout the fierce youth, and clamours ring around.
All stood with their protended spears prepar'd,
With broad steel heads the brandish'd weapons glar'd.
The beast impetuous with his tusks aside 511
Deals glancing wounds; the fearful dogs divide:
All spend their mouths aloof, but none abide.
Echion threw the first, but miss'd his mark,
And stuck his boar-spear on a maple's bark. 515
Then Jason; and his jav'lin seem'd to take,
But fail'd with over-force, and whizz'd above his back.
Mopsus was next: but, ere he threw, address'd
To Phœbus, thus: O patron, help thy priest:
If I adore, and ever have ador'd 520
Thy pow'r divine, thy present aid afford;
That I may reach the beast. The god allow'd
His pray'r, and smiling, gave him what he could:
He reach'd the savage, but no blood he drew,
Dian unarm'd the jav'lin as it flew. 525

This chaf'd the boar, his nostrils flames expire,
And his red eye-balls roll with living fire.
Whirl'd from a sling, or from an engine thrown,

Amid the foes, so flies a mighty stone,
 As flew the beast: the left wing put to flight, 530
 The chiefs o'erborne, he rushes on the right.
 Eupalamos and Pelagon he laid
 In dust, and next to death, but for their fellows' aid.
 Onesimus far'd worse; prepar'd to fly,
 The fatal fang drove deep within his thigh, 535
 And cut the nerves: the nerves no more sustain
 The bulk; the bulk unpropp'd, falls headlong on the
 Nestor had fail'd the fall of Troy to see, [plain.
 But, leaning on his lance, he vaulted on a tree;
 Then gath'ring up his feet, look'd down with fear,
 And thought his monstrous foe was still too near. 541
 Against a stump his tusk the monster grinds,
 And in the sharpen'd edge new vigour finds.
 Then, trusting to his arms, young Othrys found,
 And ranch'd his hips with one continu'd wound. 545
 Now Leda's twins, the future stars, appear;
 White were their habits, white their horses were:
 Conspicuous both, and both in act to throw
 Their trembling lances, brandish'd, at the foe:
 Nor had they miss'd; but he to thickets fled, 550
 Conceal'd from aiming spears, not pervious to the steed.
 But Telamon rush'd in, and happ'd to meet
 A rising root, that held his fasten'd feet;
 So down he fell, whom, sprawling on the ground,
 His brother from the wooden gyves unbound. 555
 Meantime the virgin huntress was not slow
 T' expel the shaft from her contracted bow;
 Beneath his ear the fasten'd arrow stood,
 And from the wound appear'd the trickling blood.
 She blush'd for joy: but Meleagrus rais'd 560
 His voice with loud applause, and the fair archer
 He was the first to see, and first to shew [prais'd.
 His friends the marks of the successful blow.
 Nor shall thy valour want the praises due,
 He said. A virtuous envy seiz'd the crew: 565
 They shout; the shouting animates their hearts,
 And all at once employ their thronging darts:
 But out of order thrown, in air they join,
 And multitude makes frustrate the design.
 With both his hands the proud Ancæus takes, 570

And flourishes his double-biting axe;
 Then, forward to his fate, he took a stride
 Before the rest, and to his fellows cry'd:
 Give place, and mark the difference if you can,
 Between a woman warrior, and a man: 575
 The boar is doom'd; nor though Diana lend
 Her aid, Diana can her beast defend.

Thus boasted he; then stretch'd, on tiptoe stood,
 Secure to make his empty promise good.
 But the more wary beast prevents the blow, 580
 And upward rips the groin of his audacious foe.
 Ancæus falls; his bowels from the wound
 Rush out, and clotted blood distains the ground.

Perithoüs, no small portion of the war,
 Press'd on, and shook his lance: to whom from far,
 Thus Theseus cry'd: O stay, my better part, 586
 My more than mistress; of my heart, the heart.
 The strong may fight aloof; Ancæus try'd
 His force too near, and by presuming died.
 He said, and while he spake, his jav'lin threw; 590
 Hissing in air the unerring weapon flew;
 But on an arm of oak, that stood betwixt
 The marksman and the mark, his lance he fix'd.

Once more bold Jason threw, but fail'd to wound
 The boar, and slew an undeserving hound, 595
 And through the dog the dart was nail'd to ground.

Two spears from Meleager's hand were sent,
 With equal force, but various in th' event:
 The first was fix'd in earth, the second stood
 On the boar's bristled back, and deeply drank his blood.

Now while the tortur'd savage turns around, 601
 And flings about his foam, impatient of the wound,
 That wound's great author close at hand provokes
 His rage, and plies him with redoubled strokes;
 Wheels as he wheels; and, with his pointed dart, 605
 Explores the nearest passage to his heart.

Quick and more quick he spins, in giddy gires,
 Then falls, and in much foam his soul expires.
 This act with shouts heav'n-high the friendly band
 Applaud, and strain in theirs the victor's hand. 610
 Then all approach'd the slain, with vast surprise,
 Admire on what a breadth of earth he lies,

And scarce secure, reach out their spears afar,
And blood their points, to prove their partnership of war.

But he, the conqu'ring chief, his foot impress'd 615
On the strong neck of that destructive beast;

And gazing on the nymph with ardent eyes,

Accept (said he), fair Nonacrine, my prize,

And, though inferior, suffer me to join

My labours, and my part of praise, with thine: 620

At this, presents her with the tusky head

And chine, with rising bristles roughly spread.

Glad, she receiv'd the gift; and seem'd to take

With double pleasure, for the giver's sake.

The rest were seiz'd with sullen discontent, 625

And a deaf murmur through the squadron went:

All envy'd; but the Thestyan brethren shew'd

The least respect, and thus they vent their spleen aloud:

Lay down those honour'd spoils, nor think to share,

Weak woman as thou art, the prize of war: 630

Ours is the title, thine a foreign claim,

Since Meleagrus from our lineage came.

Trust not thy beauty; but restore the prize,

Which he, besotted on that face and eyes,

Would rend from us.—At this, inflam'd with spite,

From her they snatch the gift, from him the giver's

right. 636

But soon th' impatient prince his falchion drew,

And cry'd, Ye robbers of another's due,

Now learn the diff'rence, at your proper cost,

Betwixt true valour and an empty boast.— 640

At this advanc'd, and sudden as the word,

In proud Plexippus' bosom plung'd the sword:

Toxeus amaz'd, and with amazement slow,

Or to revenge, or ward the coming blow, 644

Stood doubting; and while doubting thus he stood,

Receiv'd the steel bath'd in his brother's blood.

Pleas'd with the first, unknown the second news,

Althæa to the temples pays their dues

For her son's conquest; when at length appear

Her grisly brethren stretch'd upon the bier: 650

Pale at the sudden sight, she chang'd her cheer,

And with her cheer, her robes; but hearing tell

The cause, the manner, and by whom they fell,

'Twas grief no more, or grief and rage were one
 Within her soul; at last, 'twas rage alone; 655
 Which, burning upwards in succession, dries
 The tears, that stood consid'ring in her eyes.

There lay a log unlighted on the hearth,
 When she was lab'ring in the throes of birth,
 For th' unborn chief: the fatal sisters came, 660
 And rais'd it up, and toss'd it on the flame;
 Then on the rock a scanty measure place
 Of vital flax, and turn'd the wheel apace;
 And turning sung: To this red brand and thee,
 O new-born babe, we give an equal destiny:— 665
 So vanish'd out of view. The frighted dame
 Sprang hasty from her bed, and quench'd the flame;
 The log, in secret lock'd, she kept with care;
 And that, while thus preserv'd, preserv'd her heir.

This brand she now produc'd; and first she strews
 The hearth with heaps of chips, and after blows: 671
 Thrice heav'd her hand, and heav'd, she thrice re-
 The sister, and the mother long contest, [press'd;
 Two doubtful titles, in one tender breast:
 And now her eyes and cheeks with fury glow, 675
 Now pale her cheeks, her eyes with pity flow:
 Now low'ring looks presage approaching storms,
 And now prevailing love her face reforms;
 Resolv'd, she doubts again; the tears she dry'd
 With burning rage, are by new tears supplied; 680
 And as a ship, which wind and waves assail,
 Now with the current drives, now with the gale,
 Both opposite, and neither long prevail;
 She feels a double force, by turns obeys
 Th' imperious tempest, and th' impetuous seas: 685
 So fares Althæa's mind; she first relents
 With pity; of that pity then repents.
Sister, and mother, long the scales divide;
 But the beam nodded on the *sister's* side:
 Sometimes she softly sigh'd, then roar'd aloud; 690
 But sighs were stifled in the cries of blood.

The pious, impious wretch at length decreed,
 To please her brothers' ghosts, her son should bleed:
 And when the fun'ral flames began to rise,

Receive (she said) a sister's sacrifice; 695
 A mother's bowels burn: high in her hand,
 Thus while she spoke, she held the fatal brand;
 Then thrice before the kindled pile she bow'd,
 And the three Furies thus invok'd aloud:
 Come, come, revenging sisters, come, and view 700
 A sister paying her dead brother's due:
 A crime I punish, and a crime commit,
 But blood for blood, and death for death is fit:
 Great crimes must be with greater crimes repaid,
 And second fun'ral on the former laid. 705
 Let the whole household in one ruin fall,
 And may Diana's curse o'ertake us all!
 Shall fate to happy CENEUS still allow
 One son, while Thestius stands depriv'd of two?
 Better three lost, than one unpunish'd go. 710
 Take, then, dear ghosts (while yet admitted new
 In hell, you wait my duty), take your due:
 A costly off'ring on your tomb is laid,
 When with my blood the price of yours is paid.—
 Ah! whither am I hurry'd? Ah forgive, 715
 Ye shades, and let your sister's issue live:
 A mother cannot give him death; though he
 Deserves it, he deserves it not from me:—
 Then shall th' unpunish'd wretch insult the slain,
 Triumphant live; nor only live, but reign? 720
 While you, thin shades, the sport of winds, are tost
 O'er dreary plains, or tread the burning coast.
 I cannot, cannot bear; 'tis past, 'tis done;
 Perish this impious, this detested son;
 Perish his sire, and perish I withal; 725
 And let the house's heir, and the hop'd kingdom fall!
 Where is the mother fled, her pious love,
 And where the pains with which ten months I strove!
 Ah! hadst thou died, my son, in infant years,
 Thy little hearse had been bedew'd with tears.— 730
 Thou liv'st by me; to me thy breath resign;
 Mine is the merit, the demerit thine.
 Thy life by double title I require;
 Once giv'n at birth, and once preserv'd by fire;
 One murder pay, or add one murder more, 735
 And me to them who fell by thee restore.—

I would, but cannot: my son's image stands
 Before my sight; and now their angry hands
 My brothers hold, and vengeance *these* exact,
This pleads compassion, and repents the fact.— 740
 He pleads in vain, and I pronounce his doom:
 My brothers, though unjustly, shall o'ercome:
 But having paid their injur'd ghosts their due,
 My son requires my death, and mine shall his pursue.

At this, for the last time, she lifts her hand, 745
 Averts her eyes, and, half unwilling, drops the brand.
 The brand, amid the flaming fuel thrown,
 Or drew, or seem'd to draw, a dying groan:
 The fires themselves but faintly lick'd their prey,
 Then loath'd their impious food, and would have
 shrunk away. 750

Just then the hero cast a doleful cry,
 And in those absent flames began to fry:
 The blind contagion rag'd within his veins;
 But he with manly patience bore his pains:
 He fear'd not fate, but only griev'd to die 755
 Without an honest wound, and by a death so dry.

Happy Ancaeus (thrice aloud he cry'd),
 With what becoming fate in arms he dy'd!
 Then call'd his brothers, sisters, sire around,
 And her to whom his nuptial vows were bound; 760
 Perhaps his mother; a long sigh he drew,
 And, his voice failing, took his last adieu:
 For, as the flames augment, and as they stay
 At their full height, then languish to decay,
 They rise and sink by fits; at last they soar 765
 In one bright blaze, and then descend no more:
 Just so his inward heats, at height impair,
 Till the last burning breath shoots out the soul in air.

Now lofty Calidon in ruins lies; 769
 All ages, all degrees unsluice their eyes; [and cries.
 And heav'n and earth resound with murmurs, groans,
 Matrons and maidens beat their breasts, and tear
 Their habits, and root up their scatter'd hair:
 The wretched father (father now no more),
 With sorrow sunk, lies prostrate on the floor, 775
 Deforms his hoary locks with dust obscene,
 And curses age, and loaths a life prolong'd with pain.

By steel her stubborn soul his mother freed,
 And punish'd on herself her impious deed.
 Had I a hundred tongues, a wit so large 780
 As could their hundred offices discharge;
 Had Phœbus all his Helicon bestow'd
 In all the streams, inspiring all the god; [vain
 Those tongues, that wit, those streams, that god in
 Would offer to describe his sisters' pain : 785
 They beat their breasts with many a bruising blow,
 Till they turn livid, and corrupt the snow.

The corse they cherish, while the corse remains,
 And exercise, and rub, with fruitless pains;
 And when to fun'ral flames 'tis borne away, 790
 They kiss the bed on which the body lay :
 And when those fun'ral flames no longer burn
 (The dust compos'd within a pious urn),
 E'en in that urn their brother they confess, 794
 And hug it in their arms, and to their bosoms press.

His tomb is rais'd; then, stretch'd along the ground,
 Those living monuments his tomb surround.
 E'en to his name, inscrib'd, their tears they pay,
 Till tears, and kisses wear his name away.

But Cynthia now had all her fury spent, 800
 Not with less ruin than a race content:
 Excepting Gorgè, perish'd all the seed,
 And * her whom heav'n for Hercules decreed.
 Sate at last, no longer she pursu'd
 The weeping sisters; but with wings endu'd, 805
 And horny beaks, and sent to flit in air;
 Who yearly round the tomb in feather'd flocks repair.

Theseus meanwhile acquitting well his share
 In the bold chase confed'rate like a war,
 To Athens' lofty tow'rs his march ordain'd, 810
 By Pallas lov'd, and where Erectheus reign'd.
 But Achelous stopp'd him on the way,
 By rains a deluge, and constrain'd his stay.

O fam'd for glorious deeds, and great by blood,
 Rest here (says he), nor trust the rapid flood; 815
 Its solid oaks has from its margin tore,
 And rocky fragments down its current bore,

* Deïanira.

The murmur hoarse, and terrible the roar.
 Oft have I seen herds with their shelt'ring fold
 Forc'd from the banks, and in the torrent roll'd; 820
 Nor strength the bulky steer from ruin freed,
 Nor matchless swiftness sav'd the racing steed.
 In cataracts, when the dissolving snow
 Falls from the hills, and floods the plains below;
 Toss'd by the eddies, with a giddy round, 825
 Strong youths are in the sucking whirlpools drown'd.
 'Tis best with me in safety to abide,
 Till usual bounds restrain the ebbing tide,
 And the low waters in their channel glide.

Theseus persuaded, in compliance bow'd; 820
 So kind an offer, and advice so good,
 O Achelöus, cannot be refus'd;
 I'll use them both, said he;—and both he us'd.

The grot he enter'd, pumice built the hall,
 And tophi made the rustic of the wall; 835
 The floor, soft moss, an humid carpet spread,
 And various shells, the chequer'd roof inlaid.
 'Twas now the hour when the declining sun
 Two thirds had of his daily journey run;
 At the spread table Theseus took his place, 840
 Next his companions in the daring chase:
 Perithoüs here, there elder Lelex lay,
 His locks betraying age, with sprinkled gray.
 Acharnia's river-god dispos'd the rest,
 Grac'd with the equal honour of the feast, 845
 Elate with joy, and proud of such a guest.
 The nymphs were waiters, and, with naked feet,
 In order serv'd the courses of the meat.
 The banquet done, delicious wine they brought;
 Of one transparent gem the cup was wrought. 850

Then the great hero of this gallant train,
 Surveying far the prospect of the main;
 What is that land (says he), the waves embrace?
 (And with his finger pointed at the place;)
 Is it one parted isle which stands alone? 855
 How nam'd? and yet methinks it seems not one.

To whom the wat'ry god made this reply:
 'Tis not one isle, but five; distinct they lie;
 'Tis distance which deceives the cheated eye.

But, that Diana's act may seem less strange, 860
 These once proud Naiads were, before their change.
 'Twas on a day more solemn than the rest,
 Ten bullocks slain, a sacrificial feast,
 The rural gods of all the region near
 They bid to dance, and taste the hallow'd cheer. 865
 Me they forgot; affronted with the slight,
 My rage, and stream swell'd to the greatest height;
 And with the torrent of my flooding store,
 Large woods from woods, and fields from fields I tore.
 The guilty nymphs, oh! then, rememb'ring me, 870
 I, with their country, wash'd into the sea;
 And joining waters with the social main,
 Rent the gross land, and split the firm champaign.
 Since the Echinadès, remote from shore
 Are view'd as many isles, as nymphs before. 875

But yonder far, lo, yonder does appear
 An isle, a part to me for ever dear,
 From that (it sailors Perimelè name)
 I doating, forc'd by rape a virgin's fame.
 Hippodamas's passion grew so strong, 880
 Gall'd with th' abuse, and fretted at the wrong,
 He threw his pregnant daughter from a rock;
 I spread my waves beneath, and broke the shock;
 And as her swimming weight my stream convey'd,
 I su'd for help divine, and thus I pray'd: 885
 O pow'rful Thou, whose trident does command
 The realm of waters, which surround the land;
 We sacred rivers, wheresoe'er begun,
 End in thy lot, and to thy empire run,
 With favour hear, and help with present aid; 890
 Her whom I bear, 'twas guilty I betray'd.
 Yet if her father had been just, or mild,
 He would have been less impious to his child;
 In her, have pity'd force in the abuse;
 In me, admitted love for my excuse. 895
 O, let, relief for her hard case be found,
 Her whom paternal rage expell'd from ground,
 Her whom paternal rage relentless drown'd.
 Grant her some place, or change her to a place,
 Which I may ever clasp with my embrace. 900

His nodding head the sea's great Ruler bent,
 And all his waters shook with his assent.
 The nymph still swam, though with the fright distress:
 I felt her heart leap, trembling in her breast:
 But hard'ning soon, whilst I her pulse explore, 905
 A crusting earth cas'd her stiff body o'er;
 And, as accretions of new cleaving soil
 Enlarg'd the mass, the nymph became an isle.

Thus Achelous ends: his audience hear
 With admiration, and admiring, fear 910
 The pow'rs of heav'n; except Ixion's son,
 Who laugh'd at all the gods, believ'd in none;
 He shook his impious head, and thus replies:
 These legends are no more than pious lies;
 You attribute too much to heav'nly sway, 915
 To think they give us forms, and take away.

The rest, of better minds, their sense declar'd
 Against this doctrine, and with horror heard.
 Then Lelex rose, an old, experienc'd man,
 And thus with sober gravity began: 920

Heav'n's pow'r is infinite; earth, air, and sea,
 The manufactur'd mass, the making pow'r obey;
 By proof to clear your doubt; In Phrygian ground
 Two neighb'ring trees, with walls encompass'd round,
 Stand on a mod'rate rise, with wonder shewn, 925
 One a hard oak, a softer linden one:
 I saw the place, and them, by Pittheus sent
 To Phrygian realms, my grandsire's government.
 Not far from thence is seen a lake, the haunt
 Of coots, and of the fishing cormorant: 930
 Here Jove with Hermès came; but in disguise
 Of mortal men conceal'd their deities;
 One laid aside his thunder, one his rod;
 And many toilsome steps together trod:
 For harbour at a thousand doors they knock'd; 935
 Not one of all the thousand but was lock'd.
 At last an hospitable house they found;
 A homely shed; the roof, not far from ground,
 Was thatch'd with reeds and straw together bound.

There Baucis and Philemon liv'd, and there 940
 Had liv'd long married, and a happy pair:

Now old in love, though little was their store,
 Inur'd to want, their poverty they bore,
 Nor aim'd at wealth, professing to be poor.
 For master, or for servant, here to call, 945
 Was all alike, where only two were all;
 Command was none, where equal love was paid;
 Or rather both commanded, both obey'd.

From lofty roofs the gods repuls'd before,
 Now stooping, enter'd through the little door: 950
 The man (their hearty welcome first express'd)
 A common settle drew for either guest,
 Inviting each his weary limbs to rest:
 But ere they sate, officious Baucis lays
 Two cushions stuff'd with straw, the seat to raise; 955
 Coarse, but the best she had; then rakes the load
 Of ashes from the hearth, and spreads abroad
 The living coals: and, lest they should expire,
 With leaves and bark she feeds her infant fire:
 It smokes; and then, with trembling breath she blows,
 Till in a cheerful blaze the flames arose; 961
 With brush-wood and with chips she strengthens these,
 And adds at last the boughs of rotten trees.
 The fire thus form'd, she sets the kettle on
 (Like burnish'd gold the little seether shone); 965
 Next took the coleworts which her husband got
 From his own ground (a small well water'd spot);
 She stripp'd the stalks of all their leaves; the best
 She cull'd, and them with handy care she dress'd.
 High o'er the hearth a chine of bacon hung; 970
 Good old Philemon seiz'd it with a prong,
 And from the sooty rafter drew it down;
 Then cut a slice, but scarce enough for one;
 Yet a large portion of a little store,
 Which, for their sakes alone, he wish'd were more.
 This in the pot he plung'd without delay, 976
 To tame the flesh, and drain the salt away.
 The time between, before the fire they sat,
 And shorten'd the delay by pleasing chat.

A beam there was, on which a beechen pail 980
 Hung by the handle, on a driv'n nail:
 This fill'd with water, gently warm'd, they set
 Before their guests: in this they bath'd their feet,

And after with clean towels dried their sweat.
 This done, the host produc'd the genial bed; 985
 Sallow the feet, the borders, and the stead;
 Which with no costly coverlet they spread,
 But coarse old garments: yet such robes as these
 They laid alone, at feasts, or holidays.
 The good old housewife, tucking up her gown, 990
 The table sets: th' invited gods lie down.
 The trivet-table of a foot was lame,
 A blot which prudent Baucis overcame,
 Who thrusts beneath the limping leg a sberd,
 So was the mended board exactly rear'd: 995
 Then rubb'd it o'er with newly gather'd mint,
 A wholesome herb that breath'd a grateful scent.
 Pallas began the feast, where first was seen
 The parti-colour'd olive, black, and green:
 Autumnal cornels next in order serv'd, 1000
 In lees of wine, well pickled and preserv'd.
 A garden salad was the third supply,
 Of endive, radishes, and succory:
 Then curds and cream, the flow'r of country fare,
 And new-laid eggs, which Baucis' busy care 1005
 Turn'd by a gentle fire, and roasted rare.
 All these in earthen-ware were serv'd to board;
 And next in place, an earthen pitcher, stor'd
 With liquor of the best the cottage could afford.
 This was the table's ornament, and pride, 1010
 With figures wrought: like pages at his side
 Stood beechen bowls; and these were shining clean,
 Varnish'd with wax without, and lin'd within.
 By this the boiling kettle had prepar'd,
 And to the table sent the smoking lard; 1015
 On which with eager appetite they dine,
 A sav'ry bit, that serv'd to relish wine:
 The wine itself was suiting to the rest,
 Still working in the must, and lately press'd.
 The second course succeeds like that before, 1020
 Plums, apples, nuts, and of their wintry store
 Dry figs, and grapes, and wrinkled dates were set,
 In canisters, t' enlarge the little treat:
 All these a milk-white honey-comb surround,
 Which in the midst the country banquet crown'd:

But the kind hosts their entertainment grace 1026
 With hearty welcome, and an open face:
 In all they did, you might discern with ease,
 A willing mind, and a desire to please.

Meantime the beechen bowls went round,
 and still, 1030

Though often emptied, were observ'd to fill:
 Fill'd without hands, and of their own accord
 Ran without feet, and danc'd about the board.
 Devotion seiz'd the pair, to see the feast
 With wine, and of no common grape increas'd; 1035
 And up they held their hands, and fell to pray'r,
 Excusing, as they could, their country fare.

One goose they had ('twas all they could allow);
 A wakeful sentry, and on duty now;
 Whom to the gods for sacrifice they vow: 1040

Her with malicious zeal the couple view'd;
 She ran for life, and limping they pursu'd:
 Full well the fowl perceiv'd the bad intent,
 And would not make her master's compliment;
 But persecuted, to the Pow'rs she flies, 1045

And close between the legs of Jove she lies;
 He, with a gracious ear, the suppliant heard,
 And sav'd her life; then what he was declar'd,
 And own'd the god. The neighbourhood (said he)
 Shall justly perish for impiety: 1050

Ye stand alone exempted: but obey
 With speed, and follow where we lead the way:
 Leave these accurst; and to the mountain's height
 Ascend; nor once look backward in your flight.

They haste, and, what their tardy feet deny'd, 1055
 The trusty staff (their better leg) supply'd.

An arrow's flight they wanted to the top,
 And there secure, but spent with travel, stop;
 Then turn their now no more forbidden eyes;—
 Lost in a lake the floated level lies: 1060

A wat'ry desert covers all the plains;
 Their cot alone, as in an isle, remains.

Wond'ring with weeping eyes, while they deplore
 Their neighbours' fate, and country now no more,
 Their little shed, scarce large enough for two, 1065

Seems, from the ground increas'd, in height and bulk
A stately temple shoots within the skies, [to grow.

The crotchets of their cot in columns rise :

The pavement polish'd marble they behold, [of gold.

The gates with sculpture grac'd, the spires and tiles

Then thus the sire of gods, with looks serene: 1071

Speak thy desire, thou only just of men;

And thou, O woman, only worthy found

To be with such a man in marriage bound.

Awhile they whisper; then to Jove address'd, 1075

Philemon thus prefers their joint request :

We crave to serve before your sacred shrine,

And offer at your altars rites divine :

And since not any action of our life

Has been polluted with domestic strife; 1080

We beg one hour of death, that neither she,

With widow's tears, may live to bury me,

Nor weeping I, with wither'd arms, may bear

My breathless Baucis to the sepulchre.

The godheads sign their suit. They run their race

In the same tenour all th' appointed space: 1086

Then, when their hour was come, while they relate

These past adventures at the temple-gate,

Old Baucis is by old Philemon seen

Sprouting with sudden leaves of sprightly green :

Old Baucis look'd where old Philemon stood, 1091

And saw his lengthened arms a sprouting wood ;

New roots their fasten'd feet begin to bind,

Their bodies stiffen in a rising rind :

Then, ere the bark above their shoulders grew, 1095

They give, and take at once their last adieu.

At once, Farewell, O faithful spouse ! they said :

At once th' incroaching rinds their closing lips invade.

E'en yet, an ancient Tyanæan shews

A spreading oak, that near a linden grows; 1100

The neighbourhood confirm the prodigy,

Grave men, not vain of tongue, or like to lie.

I saw myself the garlands on their boughs,

And tablets hung for gifts of granted vows;

And, off'ring fresher up, with pious pray'r, 1105

The good (said I) are God's peculiar care, [share,

And such as honour Heav'n, shall heav'nly honour

He ceas'd in his relation to proceed;
 Whilst all admir'd the author and the deed;
 But Theseus, most inquisitive to know 1110
 From gods what wondrous alterations grow.
 Whom thus the Calidonian stream address'd,
 Rais'd high to speak, the couch his elbow press'd:
 Some, when transform'd, fix in the lasting change;
 Some with more right, through various figures range.
 Proteus, thus large thy privilege was found, 1116
 Thou inmate of the seas, which earth surround,
 Sometimes a blooming youth you graced the shore;
 Oft a fierce lion, or a furious boar;
 With glist'ring spires now seem'd an hissing snake,
 The bold would tremble in his hands to take; 1121
 With horns assum'd a bull; sometimes you prov'd
 A tree by roots, a stone by weight unmov'd;
 Sometimes two wav'ring contraries became,
 Flow'd down in water, or aspir'd in flame. 1125

In various shapes thus to deceive the eyes,
 Without a settled stint of her disguise,
 Rash Erisichthon's daughter had the pow'r,
 And brought it to Autolicus in dow'r.
 Her atheist sire the slighted gods defy'd, 1130
 And ritual honours to their shrines deny'd.
 As fame reports, his hand an axe sustain'd,
 Which Cerès' consecrated grove profan'd;
 Which durst the venerable gloom invade,
 And violate, with light, the awful shade. 1135
 An ancient oak in the dark centre stood,
 The covert's glory, and itself a wood:
 Garlands embrac'd its shaft, and from the boughs
 Hung tablets, monuments of prosp'rous vows.
 In the cool dusk its unpierc'd verdure spread 1140
 The Dryads oft their hallow'd dances led;
 And oft when round their gaging arms they cast;
 Full fifteen ells it measur'd in the waist:
 Its height all under standards did surpass,
 As they aspir'd above the humbler grass. 1145

These motives which would gentler minds restrain,
 Could not make Triopè's bold son abstain;
 He sternly charg'd his slaves with strict decree,

To fell with gnashing steel the sacred tree.
 But whilst they ling'ring, his commands delay'd, 1150
 He snatch'd an axe, and thus blaspheming said:
 Was this no oak, nor Cerès' fav'rite care,
 But Cerès' self, this arm, unaw'd should dare
 Its leafy honours in the dust to spread,
 And level with the earth its airy head. 1155

He spoke, and as he pois'd a slanting stroke,
 Sighs heav'd, and tremblings shook the frighted oak;
 Its leaves look'd sickly, pale its acorns grew,
 And its long branches sweat a chilly dew.
 But when his impious hand a wound bestow'd, 1160
 Blood from the mangled bark in currents flow'd.
 When a devoted bull of mighty size,
 A sinning nation's grand atonement, dies,
 With such a plenty from the spouting veins,
 A crimson stream the turfy altar stains. 1165

The wonder all amaz'd: yet one more bold,
 The fact dissuading, strove his axe to hold;
 But the Thessalian, obstinately bent,
 Too proud to change, too harden'd to repent,
 On his kind monitor, his eyes, which burn'd 1170
 With rage, and with his eyes his weapon turn'd;
 Take the reward (says he) of pious dread;—
 Then with a blow lopp'd off his parted head.
 No longer check'd, the wretch his crime pursu'd,
 Doubled his strokes, and sacrilege renew'd; 1175
 When from the groaning trunk a voice was
 heard,—

' A Dryad I, by Cerès' love preferr'd,
 Within the circle of this clasping rind
 Coëval grew, and now in ruin join'd;
 But instant vengeance shall thy sin pursue, 1180
 And death is cheer'd with this prophetic view.'
 At last the oak with cords enforc'd to bow,
 Strain'd from the top, and sapp'd with wounds below,
 The humbler wood, partaker of its fate, 1184
 Crush'd with its fall, and shiver'd with its weight.

The grove destroy'd, the sister Dryads moan,
 Griev'd at its loss, and frighted at their own.
 Straight suppliants for revenge, to Cerès go,
 In sable weeds, expressive of their woe.

The beauteous goddess, with a graceful air, 1190
 Bow'd in consent, and nodded to their pray'r.
 The awful motion shook the fruitful ground,
 And wav'd the fields with golden harvests crown'd.
 Soon she contriv'd in her projecting mind
 A plague severe, and piteous in its kind 1195
 (If plagues for crimes of such presumptuous height
 Could pity in the softest breast create);
 With pinching want, and hunger's keenest smart,
 To tear his vitals, and corrode his heart.
 But since her near approach, by fate's denied 1200
 To famine, and broad climes their pow'rs divide,
 A nymph, the mountain's ranger, she address'd,
 And thus resolv'd, her high commands express'd :

Where frozen Scythia's utmost bound is plac'd,
 A desert lies, a melancholy waste ; 1205
 In yellow crops there Nature never smil'd,
 No fruitful tree to shade the barren wild:
 There sluggish Cold its icy station makes,
 There Paleness frights, and aguish Trembling shakes.
 Of pining Famine this the fated seat, 1210
 To whom my orders in these words repeat:
 Bid her this miscreant, with her sharpest pains,
 Chastise, and sheath herself into his veins ;
 Be unsubdu'd by Plenty's baffled store,
 Reject my empire, and defeat my pow'r. 1215
 And, lest the distance, and the tedious way,
 Should with the toil, and long fatigue dismay,
 Ascend my chariot, and convey'd on high,
 Guide the rein'd dragons through the parting sky.

The nymph, accepting of the granted car, 1220
 Sprang to the seat, and posted through the air ;
 Nor stopp'd till she to a bleak mountain came,
 Of wondrous height, and Caucasus its name.
 There in a stony field, the fiend she found,
 Herbs gnawing, and roots scratching from the ground.
 Her elflock hair in matted tresses grew ; 1226
 Sunk were her eyes, and pale her ghastly hue ;
 Wan were her lips, and foul with clammy glue.
 Her throat was furr'd, her guts appear'd within
 With snaky crawlings thro' her parchment skin. 1230

Her jutting hips seem'd starting from their place,
And for a belly was a belly's space.

Her dugs hung dangling from her craggy spine,
Loose to her breast, and fasten'd to her chine;
Her joints protuberant by leanness grown, 1235
Consumption sunk the flesh, and rais'd the bone.
Her knees' large orbits bunch'd to monstrous size,
And ancles to undue proportion rise.

This plague the nymph, not daring to draw near,
At distance hail'd, and greeted from afar. 1240

And though she told her charge without delay,
Though her arrival late, and short her stay,
She felt keen famine, or she seem'd to feel,
Invade her blood, and on her vitals steal.

She turn'd from the infection to remove, 1245
And back to Thessaly the serpents drove.

The fiend obey'd the goddess's command
(Though their effects in opposition stand);
She cut her way, supported by the wind, 1249
And reach'd the mansion by the nymph assign'd.

'Twas night, when ent'ring Erisichthon's room,
Dissolv'd in sleep, and thoughtless of his doom,
She clasp'd his limbs, by impious labour tir'd,
With battish wings, but her whole self inspir'd;
Breath'd on his throat and chest a tainting blast,
And in his veins infus'd an endless fast. 1256

The task dispatch'd, away the fury flies
From plenteous regions, and from rip'ning skies;
To her old barren north she wings her speed,
And cottages distress'd with pinching need. 1260

Still slumbers Erisichthon's senses drown,
And soothe his fancy with their softest down.
He dreams of viands delicate to eat,
And revels on imaginary meat; 1264
Chews with his working mouth, but chews in vain,
And tires his grinding teeth with fruitless pain;
Deludes his throat with visionary fare,
Feasts on the wind, and banquets on the air.

The morning came, the night, and slumbers past,
But still the furious pangs of hunger last; 1270
The cank'rous rage still gnaws with griping pains,

Stings in his throat, and in his bowels reigns.

Straight he requires, impatient in demand,
 Provisions from the air, the seas, the land :
 But, though the land, air, seas, provisions grant, 1275
 Starves at full tables, and complains of want.
 What to a people might in dole be paid,
 Or victual cities for a long blockade,
 Could not one wolfish appetite assuage ;
 For, glutting nourishment increas'd its rage. 1280
 As rivers pour'd from ev'ry distant shore,
 The sea insatiate drinks, and thirsts for more :
 Or as the fire, which all materials burns,
 And wasted forests into ashes turns,
 Grows more voracious, as the more it preys, 1285
 Recruits dilate the flame, and spread the blaze :
 So impious Erisichthon's hunger raves,
 Receives refreshments, and refreshments craves.
 Food raises a desire for food, and meat
 Is but a new provocative to eat. 1290
 He grows more empty, as the more supplied,
 And endless cramming but extends the void.

Now riches hoarded by paternal care
 Were sunk, the glutton swallowing up the heir.
 Yet the devouring flame no stores abate, 1295
 Nor less his hunger grew with his estate.
 One daughter left, as left his keen desire,
 A daughter worthy of a better sire :
 Her too he sold, spent nature to sustain ;
 She scorn'd a lord with generous disdain, 1300
 And flying, spread her hands upon the main.
 Then pray'd: Grant thou, I bondage may escape,
 And with my liberty reward thy rape ;
 Repay my virgin treasure with thy aid 1304
 ('Twas Neptune who deflower'd the beauteous maid).

The god was mov'd at what the fair had su'd ;
 When she, so lately by her master view'd
 In her known figure, on a sudden took
 A fisher's habit, and a manly look.
 To whom her owner hasted to inquire ; 1310
 O thou (said he), whose baits hide treach'rous wire ;
 Whose art can manage, with experienc'd skill
 The taper angle, and the bobbing quill,

So may the sea be ruffled with no storm,
 But smooth with calms, as you the truth inform;
 So your deceit may no shy fishes feel, 1316
 Till struck, and fasten'd on the bearded steel.
 Did not you, standing, view upon the strand
 A wand'ring maid? I'm sure I saw her stand;
 Her hair disorder'd, and her homely dress 1320
 Betray'd her want, and witness'd her distress.
 Me, heedless (she reply'd), whoe'er you are,
 Excuse, attentive to another care.
 I settled on the deep my steady eye,
 Fix'd on my float, and bent on my employ. 1325
 And that you may not doubt what I impart,
 So may the ocean's god assist my art,
 If on the beach since I my sport pursu'd,
 Or man, or woman but myself I view'd.
 Back o'er the sands, deluded, he withdrew, 1330
 Whilst she for her old form put off her new.
 Her sire, her shifting pow'r to change perceiv'd,
 And various chapmen by her sale deceiv'd.
 A fowl, with spangled plumes, a brinded steer,
 Sometimes a crested mare, or antler'd deer: 1335
 Sold for a price she parted, to maintain
 Her starving parent with dishonest gain.
 At last all means, as all provisions, fail'd;
 For the disease by remedies prevail'd;
 His muscles, with a furious bite, he tore, 1340
 Gorg'd his own tatter'd flesh, and gulp'd his gore.
 Wounds were his feast, his life to life a prey,
 Supporting nature by its own decay.
 But foreign stories why should I relate?
 I, too, myself can to new forms translate, 1345
 Though the variety 's not unconfin'd,
 But fixt in number, and restrain'd in kind:
 For often I this present shape retain,
 Oft curl a snake the volumes of my train.
 Sometimes my strength into my horns transferr'd,
 A bull I march, the captain of the herd. 1351
 But whilst I once those goring weapons wore,
 Vast wrestling force one from my forehead tore.
 Lo, my maim'd brows the injury still own.
 He ceas'd; his words concluding with a groan. 1355

BOOK IX.

TRANSLATED BY MR. DRYDEN AND OTHERS.

The story of Acheloüs and Herculès. The death of Nessus the Centaur. The death of Herculès. The transformation of Lycias into a rock. The apotheosis of Herculès. The transformation of Galanthis. The fable of Dryopè. Iöläüs restored to youth. The prophecy of Themis. The debate of the Gods. The passion of Byblis. The fable of Iphis and Iänthè.

THESEUS requests the god to tell his woes, [arose?
Whence his maim'd brow, and whence his groans
When thus the Calidonian stream reply'd,
With twining reeds his careless tresses tied :

Ungrateful is the tale; for who can bear, 5
When conquer'd, to rehearse the shameful war?
Yet I'll the melancholy story trace;
So great a conqu'ror softens the disgrace :
Nor was it still so mean the prize to yield,
As great and glorious to dispute the field. 10

Perhaps you've heard of Deïanira's name,
For all the country spoke her beauty's fame.
Long was the nymph by num'rous suitors woo'd,
Each with address his envied hopes pursu'd :
I join'd the loving band; to gain the fair, 15
Reveal'd my passion to her father's ear.

Their vain pretensions all the rest resign,
Alcidès only strove to equal mine;
He boasts his birth from Jove, recounts his spoils,
His stepdame's hate subdu'd, and finish'd toils. 20

Can mortal then (said I) with gods compare?
Behold a god; mine is the wat'ry care :
Through your wild realms I take my mazy way,
Branch into streams, and o'er the region stray :
No foreign guest your daughter's charms adores, 25
But one who rises in your native shores.

Let not his punishment your pity move;
Is Juno's hate an argument for love?
Though you your life from fair Alcmena drew,
Jove's a feigu'd father, or by fraud a true. 30
Choose, then; confess thy mother's honour lost,
Or thy descent from Jove no longer boast.

While thus I spoke, he look'd with stern disdain,
 Nor could the sallies of his wrath restrain,
 Which thus break forth: This arm decides our right:
 Vanquish in words, be mine the prize in fight. 36

Bold he rush'd on. My honour to maintain,
 I fling my verdant garments on the plain,
 My arms stretch forth, my pliant limbs prepare,
 And, with bent hands, expect the furious war. 40

O'er my sleek skin now gather'd dust he throws,
 And yellow sand his mighty muscles strews,
 Oft he my neck and nimble legs assails,
 He seems to grasp me, but as often fails.

Each part he now invades with eager hand; 45
 Safe in my bulk immoveable I stand.

So when loud storms break high, and foam and roar
 Against some mole, that stretches from the shore;
 The firm foundation lasting tempests braves,
 Defies the warring winds and driving waves. 50

Awhile we breathe, then forward rush amain,
 Renew the combat, and our ground maintain;
 Foot strove with foot, I prone extend my breast,
 Hands war with hands, and forehead forehead press'd.

Thus have I seen two furious bulls engage, 55
 Inflam'd with equal love, and equal rage:
 Each claims the fairest heifer of the grove,
 And conquest only can decide their love:

The trembling herds survey the fight from far,
 Till victory decides the important war. 60

Three times, in vain, he strove my joints to wrest,
 To force my hold, and throw me from his breast;
 The fourth he broke my gripe that clasp'd him round,
 Then, with new force he stretch'd me on the ground;

Close to my back the mighty burthen clung, 65
 As if a mountain o'er my limbs were flung.

Believe my tale; nor do I, boastful, aim
 By feign'd narration to extol my fame.
 No sooner from his grasp I freedom get,
 Unlock my arms that flow'd with trickling sweat, 70

But quick he seiz'd me, and renew'd the strife,
 As my exhausted bosom pants for life:

My neck he gipes, my knee to earth he strains;
 I fall, and bite the sand with shame, and pains.

O'ermatch'd in strength, to wiles and arts I take,
 And slip his hold, in form of speckled snake; 76
 Who, when I wreath'd in spires my body round,
 Or shew'd my forky tongue, with hissing sound,
 Smiles at my threats;—such foes my cradle knew,
 He cries, dire snakes my infant hand o'erthrew; 80
 A dragon's form might other conquests gain;
 To war with me, you take that shape in vain.

Art thou proportion'd to the hydra's length,
 Who, by his wounds, receiv'd augmented strength?
 He rais'd a hundred hissing heads in air, 85
 When one I lopt, up sprang a dreadful pair.
 By his wounds fertile, and with slaughter strong,
 Singly I quell'd him, and stretch'd dead along.
 What canst thou do, a form precarious, prone,
 To rouse my rage with terrors not thy own? 90
 He said; and round my neck his hands he cast,
 And, with his straining fingers, wrung me fast;
 My throat he tortur'd, close as pincers clasp,
 In vain I strove to loose the forceful grasp.

Thus vanquish'd too, a third form still remains, 95
 Chang'd to a bull, my lowing fills the plains.
 Straight on the left his nervous arms were thrown
 Upon my brindled neck, and tugg'd it down;
 Then deep he struck my horn into the sand,
 And fell'd my bulk among the dusty land. 100
 Nor yet his fury cool'd; 'twixt rage and scorn,
 From my maim'd front he tore the stubborn horn:
 This, heap'd with flow'rs and fruits, the Naiads bear,
 Sacred to plenty, and the bounteous year.

He spoke; when lo, a beauteous nymph appears,
 Girt like Diana's train, with flowing hairs; 106
 The horn she brings, in which all autumn stor'd,
 And ruddy apples for the second board.

Now morn begins to dawn, the sun's bright fire
 Gilds the high mountains, and the youths retire; 110
 Nor stay'd they, till the troubled stream subsides,
 And in its bounds with peaceful current glides.
 But Achelous in his oozy bed
 Deep hides his brow deform'd, and rustic head:
 No real wound the victor's triumphs shew'd, 115
 But his lost honours griev'd the wat'ry god;

Yet e'en that loss the willow's leaves o'erspread;
And verdant reeds, in garlands, bind his head.

This virgin, too, thy love, O Nessus, found;
To her alone you owe the fatal wound. 120
As the strong son of Jove his bride conveys,
Where his paternal lands their bulwarks raise;
Where from her slopy urn Evenus pours
Her rapid current, swell'd by win'try show'rs,
He came. The frequent eddies whirl'd the tide, 125
And the deep-rolling waves all pass deny'd.
As for himself, he stood unmov'd by fears,
For now his bridal charge employ'd his cares.
The strong-limb'd Nessus thus officious cry'd
(For he the shallows of the stream had try'd), 130
Swim thou, Alcidès, all thy strength prepare,
On yonder bank I'll lodge thy nuptial care.
Th' Aonian chief to Nessus trusts his wife,
All pale, and trembling for her hero's life:
Cloth'd as he stood in the fierce lion's hide, 135
The laden quiver o'er his shoulder tied
(For cross the stream his bow and club were cast),
Swift he plung'd in; these billows shall be past,
He said; nor sought, where smoother waters glide,
But stemm'd the rapid dangers of the tide. 140
The bank he reach'd; again the bow he bears;
When, hark! his bride's known voice alarms his ears.
Nessus, to thee I call (aloud he cries),
Vain is thy trust in flight, be timely wise:
Thou monster double-shap'd, my right set free; 145
If thou no rev'rence owe my fame and me,
Yet kindred should thy lawless lust deny;
Think not, perfidious wretch, from me to fly,
Though wing'd with horse's speed; wounds shall
pursue:
Swift as his words, the fatal arrow flew: 150
The Centaur's back admits the feather'd wood,
And through his breast the barbed weapon stood;
Which, when in anguish, through the flesh he tore,
From both the wounds gush'd forth the spumy gore,
Mix'd with Lernæan venom; this he took, 155
Nor dire revenge his dying breast forsook.

His garment, in the reeking purple dy'd,
To rouse love's passion, he presents the bride.

Now a long interval of time succeeds,
When the great son of Jove's immortal deeds, 160
And stepdame's hate had fill'd earth's utmost round;
He from Œchalia, with new laurels crown'd,
In triumph was return'd. He rites prepares,
And to the king of gods directs his pray'rs;
When Fame (who falsehood clothes in truth's disguise,
And swells her little bulk with growing lies) 166
Thy tender ear, O Deïanira, mov'd,
That Herкулès the fair Iolè lov'd.
Her love believes the tale; the truth she fears
Of his new passion, and gives way to tears. 170
The flowing tears diffus'd her wretched grief.
Why seek I thus, from streaming eyes, relief?
She cries; indulge not thus these fruitless cares,
The harlot will but triumph in thy tears:
Let something be resolv'd, while yet there's time;
My bed not conscious of a rival's crime. 176
In silence shall I mourn, or loud complain?
Shall I seek Calidon, or here remain?
What though, allied to Meleager's fame,
I boast the honours of a sister's name? 180
My wrongs, perhaps, now urge me to pursue
Some desp'rate deed, by which the world shall view
How far revenge, and woman's rage can rise,
When, welt'ring in her blood, the harlot dies.
Thus various passions rul'd by turns her breast, 185
She now resolves to send the fatal vest,
Died with Lernæan gore, whose pow'r might move
His soul anew, and rouse declining love.
Nor knew she what her sudden rage bestows,
When she to Lychas trusts her future woes; 190
With soft endearments she the boy commands,
To bear the garment to her husband's hands.
Th' unwitting hero takes the gift in haste,
And o'er his shoulders Lerna's poison cast,
As first the fire with frankincense he strews, 195
And utters to the gods his holy vows;
And on the marble altar's polish'd frame

Pours forth the grapy stream; the rising flame
 Sudden dissolves the subtle pois'nous juice,
 Which taints his blood, and all his nerves bedews.
 With wonted fortitude he bore the smart, 201
 And not a groan confess'd his burning heart.
 At length his patience was subdu'd by pain,
 He rends the sacred altar from the plain;
 Cète's wide forests echo with his cries: 205
 Now to rip off the deathful robe he tries.
 Where'er he plucks the vest, the skin he tears,
 The mangled muscles, and huge bones he bears,
 (A ghastly sight!) or raging with his pain,
 To rend the sticking plague he tugs in vain. 210
 As the red iron hisses in the flood,
 So boils the venom in his curdling blood.
 Now with the greedy flame his entrails glow,
 And livid sweats down all his body flow;
 The cracking nerves, burnt up, are burst in twain, 215
 The lurking venom melts his swimming brain.
 Then, lifting both his hands aloft, he cries:
 Glut thy revenge, dread empress of the skies;
 Sate with my death the rancour of thy heart,
 Look down with pleasure, and enjoy my smart. 220
 Or, if e'er pity mov'd a hostile breast
 (For here I stand thy enemy profest),
 Take hence this hateful life, with tortures torn,
 Inur'd to trouble, and to labours born.
 Death is the gift most welcome to my woe, 225
 And such a gift a stepdame may bestow.
 Was it for this Busiris was subdu'd, [blood ?
 Whose barb'rous temples reek'd with stranger's
 Press'd in these arms, his fate Antæus found,
 Nor gain'd recruited vigour from the ground. 230
 Did I not triple-form'd Geryon fell?
 Or did I fear the triple dog of hell?
 Did not these hands the bull's arm'd forehead hold?
 Are not our mighty toils in Elis told?
 Do not Stymphalian lakes proclaim thy fame? 235
 And fair Parthenian woods resound thy name?
 Who seiz'd the golden belt of Thermodon?
 And who the dragon-guarded apples won? [stand ?
 Could the fierce Centaur's strength my force with-

Or the fell boar that spoil'd th' Arcadian land? 240
 Did not these arms the hydra's rage subdue,
 Who from his wounds to double fury grew?
 What if the Thracian horses, fat with gore,
 Who human bodies in their mangers tore,
 I saw, and, with their barb'rous lord, o'erthrew? 245
 What if these hands Nemæa's lion slew?
 Did not this neck the heav'nly globe sustain?
 The female partner of the Thund'rer's reign
 Fatigu'd, at length suspends her harsh commands,
 Yet no fatigue hath slack'd these valiant hands. 250
 But now new plagues pursue me, neither force,
 Nor arms, nor darts can stop their raging course.
 Devouring flame through my rack'd entrails strays,
 And on my lungs and shrivell'd muscles preys.
 Yet still Eurystheus breathes the vital air. 255
 What mortal now shall seek the gods with pray'r?
 The hero said; and with the torture stung,
 Furious o'er Cêtè's lofty hills he sprung.
 Stuck with the shaft, thus scours the tiger round,
 And seeks the flying author of his wound. 260
 Now might you see him trembling, now he vents
 His anguish'd soul in groans, and loud laments;
 He strives to tear the clinging vest in vain,
 And with up-rooted forests strews the plain:
 Now kindling into rage his hands he rears, 265
 And to his kindred gods directs his pray'rs;
 When Lychas, lo, he spies; who trembling flew,
 And in a hollow rock conceal'd from view,
 Had shunn'd his wrath. Now grief renew'd his pain,
 His madness chaf'd, and thus he raves again: 270
 Lychas, to thee alone my fate I owe,
 Who bore the gift, the cause of all my woe.
 The youth all pale, with shiv'ring fear was stung,
 And vain excuses falter'd on his tongue.
 Alcidès snatch'd him, as with suppliant face 275
 He strove to clasp his knees, and beg for grace:
 He toss'd him o'er his head with airy course,
 And hurl'd with more than with an engine's force.
 Far o'er th' Eubœan main aloof he flies,
 And hardens, by degrees, amid the skies. 280
 So show'ry drops, when chilly tempests blow,

Thicken at first, then whiten into snow ;
 In balls congeal'd the rolling fleeces bound,
 In solid hail result upon the ground. 284
 Thus whirl'd with nervous force through distant air,
 The purple tide forsook his veins, with fear ;
 All moisture left his limbs. Transform'd to stone,
 In ancient days the craggy flint was known ;
 Still in th' Eubœan waves his front he rears,
 Still the small rock in human form appears, 290
 And still the name of hapless Lychas bears.

But now the hero of immortal birth
 Fells Cêtè's forests on the groaning earth ;
 A pile he builds ; to Philoctetès' care
 He leaves his deathful instruments of war : 295
 To him commits those arrows, which again
 Shall see the bulwarks of the Trojan reign.
 The son of Pæan lights the lofty pyre,
 High round the structure climbs the greedy fire ;
 Plac'd on the top, thy nervous shoulders spread 300
 With the Nemæan spoils, thy careless head
 Rais'd on the knotty club, with look divine,
 Here thou, dread hero, of celestial line,
 Wert stretch'd at ease ; as when a cheerful guest,
 Wine crown'd thy bowls, and flow'rs thy temples
 dress'd. 305

Now on all sides the potent flames aspire,
 And crackle round those limbs that mock the fire :
 A sudden terror seiz'd th' immortal host,
 Who thought the world's profest defender lost. 309
 This when the Thund'rer saw, with smiles he cries :
 'Tis from your fears, ye gods, my pleasures rise ;
 Joy swells my breast, that my all-ruling hand
 O'er such a grateful people boasts command,
 That you my suff'ring progeny would aid ;
 Though to his deeds this just respect be paid, 315
 Me you've oblig'd. Be all your fears forborne,
 Th' Cêtean fires do thou, great hero, scorn.
 Who vanquish'd all things, shall subdue the flame.
 That part alone of gross maternal frame
 Fire shall devour ; while what from me he drew 320
 Shall live immortal, and its force subdue ;

That, when he's dead, I'll raise to realms above ;
 May all the pow'rs the righteous act approve.
 If any god dissent, and judge too great
 The sacred honours of the heav'nly seat, 325
 E'en he shall own his deeds deserve the sky,
 E'en he reluctant, shall at length comply.
 The assembled pow'rs assent. No frown till now
 Had mark'd with passion vengeful Juno's brow.
 Meanwhile, whate'er was in the pow'r of flame 330
 Was all consum'd ; his body's nervous frame
 No more was known ; of human form bereft,
 Th' eternal part of Jove alone was left.
 As an old serpent casts his scaly vest,
 Wreathes in the sun, in youthful glory drest ; 335
 So when Alcidès mortal mould resign'd,
 His better part enlarg'd, and grew refin'd ;
 August his visage shone ; almighty Jove
 In his swift car his honour'd offspring drove ;
 High o'er the hollow clouds the coursers fly, 340
 And lodge the hero in the starry sky.

Atlas perceiv'd the load of heav'n's new guest,
 Revenge still rancour'd in Eurystheus' breast
 Against Alcidès' race. Alcmena goes
 To Iôlè, to vent maternal woes ; 345
 Here she pours forth her grief, recounts the spoils
 Her son had bravely reap'd in glorious toils.
 This Iôlè, by Herculès commands,
 Hyllus had lov'd, and join'd in nuptial bands.
 Her swelling womb the teeming birth confess'd, 350
 To whom Alcmena thus her speech address'd :

O, may the gods protect thee in that hour,
 When 'midst thy throes, thou call'st th' Ilithyan
 May no delays prolong thy racking pain, [pow'r !
 As when I su'd for Juno's aid in vain. 355

When now Alcidès' mighty birth drew nigh,
 And the tenth sign roll'd forward on the sky,
 My womb extends with such a mighty load,
 As Jove, the parent of the burthen, shew'd.
 I could no more th' increasing smart sustain, 360
 My horror kindles to recount the pain ;
 Cold chills my limbs while I the tale pursue,

And now methinks I feel my pangs anew.
 Sev'n days and nights, amidst incessant throes,
 Fatigu'd with ills I lay, nor knew repose ; 365
 When lifting high my hands, in shrieks I pray'd,
 Implor'd the gods, and call'd Lucina's aid.
 She came, but prejudic'd, to give my fate
 A sacrifice to vengeful Juno's hate.
 She hears the groaning anguish of my fits, 370
 And on the altar at my door she sits.
 O'er her left knee her crossing leg she cast,
 Then knits her fingers close, and wrings them fast:
 This stay'd the birth ; in mutt'ring verse she pray'd,
 The mutt'ring verse th' unfinish'd birth delay'd. 375
 Now with fierce struggles, raging with my pain,
 At Jove's ingratitude I rave in vain.
 How did I wish for death! such groans I sent,
 As might have made the flinty heart relent.
 Now the Cadmeian matrons round me press, 380
 Offer their vows, and seek to bring redress ;
 Among the Theban dames Galanthis stands,
 Strong-limb'd, red-hair'd, and just to my commands :
 She first perceiv'd that all these racking woes
 From the persisting hate of Juno rose. 385
 As here and there she pass'd, by chance she sees
 The seated goddess ; on her close-prest knees
 Her fast-knit hands she leans ; with cheerful voice
 Galanthis cries, Whoe'er thou art, rejoice ;
 Congratulate the dame, she lies at rest, 390
 At length the gods Alcmena's womb have blest.
 Swift from her seat the startled goddess springs,
 No more conceal'd, her hands abroad she flings ;
 The charm unloos'd, the birth my pangs reliev'd ;
 Galanthis' laughter vex'd the pow'r deceiv'd. 395
 Fame says, the goddess dragg'd the laughing maid
 Fast by the hair ; in vain her force essay'd
 Her grov'ling body from the ground to rear ;
 Chang'd to fore-feet her shrinking arms appear :
 Her hairy back her former hue retains, 400
 The form alone is lost, her strength remains ;
 Who, since the lie did from her mouth proceed,
 Shall from her pregnant mouth bring forth her
 breed ;

Nor shall she quit her long-frequented home,
But haunt those houses where she loved to roam. 405

She said, and for her lost Galanthis sighs ;
When the fair consort of her son replies :
Since you a servant's ravish'd form bemoan,
And kindly sigh for sorrows not your own,
Let me (if tears and grief permit) relate 410
A nearer woe, a sister's stranger fate.

No nymph of all Æchalia could compare
For beauteous form with Dryopè the fair ;
Her tender mother's only hope and pride
(Myself the offspring of a second bride), 415
This nymph, compress'd by him who rules the day,
Whom Delphi, and the Delian isle obey,
Andræmon lov'd; and, blest in all those charms
That pleas'd a god, succeeded to her arms.

A lake there was, with shelving banks around, 420
Whose verdant summit fragrant myrtles crown'd.
Those shades, unknowing of the fates, she sought,
And to the Naiads flow'ry garlands brought;
Her smiling babe (a pleasing charge) she press'd
Between her arms, and nourish'd at her breast. 425
Not distant far a wat'ry lotos grows;
The spring was new, and all the verdant boughs,
Adorn'd with blossoms, promis'd fruits that vie
In glowing colours with the Tyrian die.
Of these she cropt, to please her infant son, 430
And I myself the same rash act had done,
But, lo! I saw (as near her side I stood)
The violated blossoms drop with blood;
Upon the tree I cast a frightful look,
The trembling tree with sudden horror shook. 435
Lotis, the nymph (if rural tales be true),
As from Priapus' lawless lust she flew,
Forsook her form; and, fixing here, became
A flow'ry plant, which still preserves her name.

This change unknown, astonish'd at the sight, 440
My trembling sister strove to urge her flight;
Yet first the pardon of the nymphs implor'd,
And those offended silvan pow'rs ador'd:
But when she backward would have fled, she found

Her stiff'ning feet were rooted to the ground : 445
 In vain to free her fasten'd feet she strove,
 And as she struggles, only moves above ;
 She feels th' encroaching bark around her grow,
 By slow degrees, and cover all below :
 Surpris'd at this, her trembling hand she heaves 450
 To rend her hair ; her hand is fill'd with leaves ;
 Where late was hair, the shooting leaves are seen
 To rise, and shade her with a sudden green.
 The child Amphisus, to her bosom prest,
 Perceiv'd a colder and a harder breast, 455
 And found the springs, that ne'er till then deny'd
 Their milky moisture, on a sudden dried.
 I saw, unhappy, what I now relate,
 And stood the helpless witness of thy fate ;
 Embrac'd thy boughs, the rising bark delay'd, 460
 There wish'd to grow, and mingle shade with shade.
 Behold Andræmon, and th' unhappy sire
 Appear, and for their Dryopè inquire ;
 A springing tree for Dryopè they find,
 And print warm kisses on the panting rind ; 465
 Prostrate, with tears their kindred plant bedew,
 And close embrac'd, as to the roots they grew.
 The face was all that now remain'd of thee ;
 No more a woman, not yet quite a tree :
 Thy branches hung with humid pearls appear, 470
 From ev'ry leaf distils a trickling tear ;
 And straight a voice, while yet a voice remains,
 Thus thro' the trembling boughs in sighs complains :
 If to the wretched any faith be giv'n,
 I swear by all th' unpitying pow'rs of heav'n, 475
 No wilful crime this heavy vengeance bred,
 In mutual innocence our lives we led.
 If this be false, let these new greens decay,
 Let sounding axes lop my limbs away,
 And crackling flames on all my honours prey. 480
 Now from my branching arms this infant bear,
 Let some kind nurse supply a mother's care ;
 Yet to his mother let him oft be led,
 Sport in her shades, and in her shades be fed ;
 Teach him, when first his infant voice shall frame 485
 Imperfect words, and lisp his mother's name,

To hail this tree, and say, with weeping eyes,
 Within this plant my hapless parent lies;
 And when in youth he seeks the shady woods,
 Oh, let him fly the crystal lakes and floods, 490
 Nor touch the fatal flow'rs; but, warn'd by me,
 Believe a goddess shrin'd in ev'ry tree.
 My sire, my sister, and my spouse farewell!
 If in your breasts or love, or pity dwell,
 Protect your plant, nor let my branches feel 495
 The browsing cattle, or the piercing steel.
 Farewell! and, since I cannot bend to join
 My lips to yours, advance at least to mine.
 My son, thy mother's parting kiss receive,
 While yet thy mother has a kiss to give. 500
 I can no more; the creeping rind invades
 My closing lips, and hides my head in shades:
 Remove your hands; the bark shall soon suffice,
 Without their aid, to seal these dying eyes.
 She ceas'd at once to speak, and ceas'd to be: 505
 And all the nymph was lost within the tree:
 Yet latent life through her new branches reign'd,
 And long the plant a human heat retain'd.

While Iôlè the fatal change declares,
 Alcmena's pitying hand oft wip'd her tears. 510
 Grief, too, stream'd down her cheeks; soon sorrow flies,
 And rising joy the trickling moisture dries,
 Lo, Iôlaüs stands before their eyes.
 A youth he stood; and the soft down began
 O'er his smooth chin to spread, and promise man.
 Hebè submitted to her husband's pray'rs, 516
 Instill'd new vigour, and restor'd his years.

Now from her lips a solemn oath had past,
 That Iôlaüs this gift alone should taste,
 Had not just Themis thus maturely said 520
 (Which check'd her vow, and aw'd the blooming
 Thebes is embroil'd in war. Capaneus stands [maid]:
 Invincible, but by the Thund'rer's hands.
 Ambition shall the guilty* brothers fire,
 Both rush to mutual wounds, and both expire; 525

* Eteoclès and Poliniccès.

The reeling earth shall ope her gloomy womb,
 Where the yet breathing* bard shall find his tomb.
 The son† shall bathe his hands in parent's blood,
 And in one act be both unjust and good.
 Of home, and sense depriv'd, where'er he flies, 530
 The furies, and his mother's ghost he spies.
 His wife the fatal bracelet shall implore,
 And Phegeus stain his sword in kindred gore.
 Callirhœ shall then, with suppliant pray'r,
 Prevail on Jupiter's relenting ear. 535
 Jove shall with youth her infant sons inspire,
 And bid their bosoms glow with manly fire.

When Themis thus, with prescient voice, had spoke,
 Among the gods a various murmur broke;
 Dissention rose in each immortal breast, 540
 That one should grant, what was denied the rest.
 Aurora from her aged spouse complains,
 And Cerès grieves for Jason's freezing veins;
 Vulcan would Erichthonius' years renew,
 Her future race the care of Venus drew, 545
 She would Anchises' blooming age restore;
 A different care employ'd each heav'nly pow'r:
 Thus various int'rests did their jars increase,
 Till Jove arose; he spoke, their tumults cease.

Is any rev'rence to our presence giv'n, 550
 Then why this discord 'mong the pow'rs of heav'n?
 Who can the settled will of fate subdue?
 'Twas by the fates that Iölaüs knew
 A second youth. The fates' determin'd doom
 Shall give Callirhœ's race a youthful bloom. 555
 Arms, nor ambition can this pow'r obtain;
 Quell your desires; e'en me the fates restrain.
 Could I their will control, no rolling years
 Had Æacus bent down with silver hairs;
 Then Rhadamanthus still had youth possest, 560
 And Minos with eternal bloom been blest.

Jove's words the synod mov'd; the pow'rs give o'er,
 And urge in vain unjust complaint no more.
 Since Rhadamanthus' veins now slowly flow'd,
 And Æacus, and Minos bore the load; 565

* Amphiaraus

† Alcmaeon.

Minos, who in the flow'r of youth, and fame,
 Made mighty nations tremble at his name,
 Infirm with age, the proud Miletus fears
 Vain of his birth, and in the strength of years;
 And now regarding all his realms as lost, 570
 He durst not force him from his native coast.
 But you by choice, Miletus, fled his reign,
 And thy swift vessel plow'd th' Ægéan main;
 On Asiatic shores a town you frame,
 Which still is honour'd with the founder's name. 575
 Here you, Cyänè, knew the beauteous maid,
 As on her * father's winding banks she stray'd:
 Caunus and Byblis hence their lineage trace,
 The double offspring of your warm embrace.

Let the sad fate of wretched Byblis prove 580
 A dismal warning to unlawful love:
 One birth gave being to the hapless pair,
 But more was Caunus than a sister's care;
 Unknown she lov'd, for yet the gentle fire
 Rose not in flames, nor kindled to desire; 585
 'Twas thought no sin to wonder at his charms,
 Hang on his neck, and languish in his arms:
 Thus, wing'd with joy, fled the soft hours away,
 And all the fatal guilt on harmless nature lay.

But love (too soon from piety declin'd) 590
 Insensibly depriv'd her yielding mind.
 Dress'd she appears, with nicest art adorn'd,
 And ev'ry youth, but her lov'd brother, scorn'd;
 For him alone she labour'd to be fair,
 And curs'd all charms that might with her's compare.
 'Twas she, and only she, must Caunus please, 596
 Sick at her heart, yet knew not her disease:
 She call'd him *lord*,—for *brother* was a name
 Too cold, and dull for her aspiring flame;
 And when he spoke, if *sister* he replied, 600
 For *Byblis* change that frozen word (she cry'd).
 Yet waking, still he watch'd her struggling breast,
 And love's approaches were in vain addrest,
 Till gentle sleep an easy conquest made,
 And in her soft embrace the conqu'ror was laid. 605

* Mæander.

But, oh! too soon the pleasing vision fled,
 And left her blushing on the conscious bed;
 Ah me! (she cry'd,) how monstrous do I seem!
 Why these wild thoughts, and this incestuous dream?
 Envy herself ('tis true) must own his charms, 610
 But what is beauty in a sister's arms?

Oh! were I not that despicable she,
 How bless'd, how pleas'd, how happy should I be!
 But unregarded now must bear my pain,
 And, but in dreams, my wishes can obtain. 615

O sea-born goddess! with thy wanton boy!
 Was ever such a charming scene of joy?
 Such perfect bliss! such ravishing delight!
 Ne'er hid before in the kind shades of night.
 How pleas'd my heart! in what sweet raptures tost!
 E'en life itself in the soft combat lost, 621
 While breathless he on my heav'd bosom lay,
 And snatch'd the treasures of my soul away.

If the bare fancy so affects my mind,
 How should I rave if to the substance join'd? 625
 O gentle Caunus! quit thy hated line,
 Or let thy parents be no longer mine!
 Oh, that in common all things were enjoy'd,
 But those alone who have our hopes destroy'd.
 Were I a princess, thou an humble swain, 630
 The proudest kings should rival thee in vain.

It cannot be, alas! the dreadful ill
 Is fix'd by fate, and he's my brother still.
 Hear me, ye gods! I must have friends in heav'n,
 For Jove himself was to a sister giv'n: 635

But what are their prerogatives above,
 To the short liberties of human love?
 Fantastic thoughts! down, down, forbidden fires,
 Or instant death extinguish my desires!
 Strict virtue, then, with thy malicious leave, 640
 Without a crime I may a kiss receive:

But say, should I, in spite of laws, comply,
 Yet cruel Caunus might himself deny,
 No pity take of an afflicted maid 644

(For love's sweet game must be by couples play'd)?
 Yet why should youth, and charms like mine despair?
 Such fears ne'er startled th' Æolian pair;

No ties of blood could their full hopes destroy,
 They broke through all for the prevailing joy;
 And who can tell but Caunus too may be 650
 Rack'd and tormented in his breast for me?
 Like me to the extremest anguish drove,
 Like me just waking from a dream of love?
 But stay! oh, whither would my fury run!
 What arguments I urge to be undone! 655
 Away, fond Byblis, quench these guilty flames;
 Caunus thy love but as a brother claims;
 Yet had he first been touch'd with love of me,
 The charming youth could I despairing see?
 Oppress'd with grief, and dying by disdain? 660
 Ah no! too sure I should have eas'd his pain!
 Since then, if Caunus ask'd me, it were done;
 Asking myself, what dangers can I run?
 But canst thou ask? and see that right betray'd,
 From Pyrrha down to thy whole sex convey'd? 665
 That self-denying gift we all enjoy,
 Of wishing to be won, yet seeming to be coy.
 Well then, for once, let a fond mistress woo,
 The force of love no custom can subdue;
 This frantic passion he by words shall know, 670
 Soft as the melting heart from whence they flow.
 The pencil then in her fair hand she held,
 By fear discourag'd, but by love compell'd;
 She writes, then blots, writes on, and blots again,
 Likes it as fit, then razes it as vain: 675
 Shame, and assurance, in her face appear,
 And a faint hope just yielding to despair;
Sister was wrote, and blotted as a word
 Which she, and Caunus too (she hop'd), abhorr'd;
 But now resolv'd to be no more controll'd 680
 By scrup'lous virtue, thus her grief she told:
 Thy lover (gentle Caunus) wishes thee
 That health, which thou alone canst give to me.
 O charming youth, the gift I ask, bestow,
 Ere thou the name of the fond writer know; 685
 To thee without a name I would be known,
 Since knowing that, my frailty I must own.
 Yet why should I my wretched name conceal,
 When thousand instances my flames reveal? 689
 Wan looks, and weeping eyes have spoke my pain;

And sighs discharg'd from my heav'd heart in vain ;
 Had I not wish'd my passion might be seen,
 What could such fondness and embraces mean ?
 Such kisses too ! (O heedless, lovely boy,)

Without a crime no sister could enjoy : 695
 Yet (though extremest rage has rack'd my soul,
 And raging fires in my parch'd bosom roll)
 Be witness, gods ! how piously I strove,
 To rid my thoughts of this enchanting love.
 But who could 'scape so fierce, and sure a dart, 700
 Aim'd at a tender and defenceless heart ?
 Alas ! what maid could suffer, I have borne,
 Ere the dire secret from my breast was torn ;
 To thee a helpless, vanquish'd wretch I come,
 'Tis you alone can save, or give my doom ; 705
 My life, or death, this moment you may choose,
 Yet think, oh think, no hated stranger sues,
 No foe ; but one, alas ! too near allied,
 And wishing still much nearer to be tied.
 The forms of decency let age debate, 710
 And virtue's rules by their cold morals state ;
 Their ebbing joys give leisure to inquire,
 And blame those noble flights our youth inspire :
 Where nature kindly summons let us go,
 Our sprightly years no bounds in love should 715
 know,
 Should feel no check of guilt, and fear no ill ;
 Lovers, and gods, act all things at their will :
 We gain one blessing from our hated kin,
 Since our paternal freedom hides the sin ;
 Uncensur'd in each other's arms we lie, 720
 Think then how easy to complete our joy.
 Oh, pardon, and oblige a blushing maid,
 Whose rage the pride of her vain sex betray'd ;
 Nor let my tomb thus mournfully complain,
 ' Here Byblis lies, by her lov'd Caunus slain.' 725

Forc'd here to end, she, with a falling tear,
 Temper'd the pliant wax, which did the signet bear ;
 The curious cipher was impress'd by art,
 But love had stamp'd one deeper in her heart.
 Her page, a youth of confidence and skill 730
 (Secret as night), stood waiting on her will ;
 Sighing (she cry'd), Bear this, thou faithful boy,

To my sweet partner in eternal joy :
 Here a long pause her secret guilt confess'd,
 And when at length she would have spoke the rest,
 Half the dear name lay buried in her breast. 736

Thus as he listen'd to her vain command,
 Down fell the letter from her trembling hand.
 The omen shock'd her soul: yet, Go, she cry'd;
 Can a request from Byblis be denied? 740

To the Mæandrian youth this message borne,
 The half-read lines by his fierce rage were torn;
 Hence, hence (he cry'd), thou pander to her lust;
 Bear hence the triumph of thy impious trust!
 Thy instant death will but divulge her shame, 745
 Or thy life's blood should quench thy guilty flame.

Frighted, from threat'ning Caunus he withdrew,
 And with the dreadful news to his lost mistress flew.
 The sad repulse so struck the wounded fair,
 Her sense was buried in her wild despair; 750

Pale was her visage, as the ghastly dead;
 And her scar'd soul from the sweet mansion fled;
 Yet with her life renew'd, her love returns,
 And faintly thus her cruel fate she mourns:

'Tis just, ye gods! was my false reason blind, 755
 To write a secret of this tender kind?

With female craft I should at first have strove,
 By dubious hints to sound his distant love;
 And try'd those useful, though dissembled arts,
 Which women practise on disdainful hearts 760

I should have watch'd whence the black storm might
 Ere I had trusted the unfaithful skies. [rise,
 Now on the rolling billows I am tost,
 And, with extended sails, on the blind shelves am lost .

Did not indulgent Heav'n my doom foretel, 765
 When from my hand the fatal letter fell?

What madness seiz'd my soul, and urg'd me on
 To take the only course to be undone?

I could myself have told the moving tale
 With such alluring grace as must prevail; 770

Then had his eyes beheld my blushing fears,
 My rising sighs, and my descending tears;
 Round his dear neck these arms I then had spread,

And, if rejected, at his feet been dead :
 If singly these had not his thoughts inclin'd, 775
 Yet all united would have shock'd his mind.
 Perhaps my careless page might be in fault,
 And in a luckless hour the fatal message brought ;
 Business, and worldly thoughts might fill his breast,
 Sometimes e'en love itself may be an irksome guest :
 He could not else have treated me with scorn, 781
 For Caunus was not of a tigress born :
 Nor steel, nor adamant has fenc'd his heart ;
 Like mine, 'tis naked to the burning dart.

Away, false fears ! he must, he shall be mine, 785
 In death alone I will my claim resign !
 'Tis vain to wish my written crime unknown,
 And for my guilt much vainer to atone.

Repuls'd and baffled, fiercer still she burns,
 And Caunus with disdain her impious love returns.
 He saw no end of her injurious flame, 791
 And fled his country to avoid the shame.
 Forsaken Byblis, who had hopes no more,
 Burst out in rage, and her loose robes she tore ;
 With her fair hands she smote her tender breast, 795
 And to the wond'ring world her love confess'd ;
 O'er hills and dales, o'er rocks and streams she flew,
 But still in vain did her wild lust pursue :
 Wearied at length, on the cold earth she fell,
 And now in tears alone could her sad story tell. 800
 Relenting gods in pity fix'd her there,
 And to a fountain turn'd the weeping fair.

The fame of this, perhaps, thro' Crete had flown :
 But Crete had newer wonders of her own,
 In Iphis chang'd : For near the Gnoasian bounds 805
 (As loud report the miracle resounds)
 At Phœstus dwelt a man of honest blood,
 But meanly born, and not so rich as good ;
 Esteem'd and lov'd by all the neighbourhood,
 Who to his wife, before the time assign'd 810
 For child-birth came, thus bluntly spoke his mind :
 If Heav'n (said Lygdus) will vouchsafe to hear,
 I have but two petitions to prefer ;
 Short pains for thee, for me a son and heir.

Girls cost as many throes in bringing forth; 815
 Besides, when born, the tits are little worth;
 Weak puling things, unable to sustain
 Their share of labour, and their bread to gain.

If, therefore, thou a creature shalt produce,
 Of so great charges, and so little use 820
 (Bear witness, Heav'n, with what reluctancy),
 Her hapless innocence I doom to die.

He said, and tears the common grief display,
 Of him who bade, and her who must obey.

Yet Telethûsa still persists, to find 825
 Fit arguments to move a father's mind;
 T' extend his wishes to a larger scope,
 And in one vessel not confine his hope.

Lygdus continues hard: Her time drew near,
 And she her heavy load could scarcely bear; 830
 When slumb'ring, in the latter shades of night,
 Before th' approaches of returning light,

She saw, or thought she saw, before her bed,
 A glorious train, and Isis at their head:
 Her moony horns were on her forehead plac'd, 835
 And yellow shelves her shining temples grac'd:

A mitre for a crown, she wore on high,
 The dog and dapple bull were waiting by;
 Osyris, sought along the banks of Nile;
 The silent god; the sacred crocodile; 840

And last, a long procession moving on,
 With timbrels, that assist the lab'ring moon.
 Her slumbers seem'd dispell'd, and, broad awake,
 She heard a voice, that thus distinctly spake:

' My votary, thy babe from death defend, 845
 Nor fear to save whate'er the gods will send:
 Delude with art thy husband's dire decree;
 When danger calls, repose thy trust on me:

And know, thou hast not serv'd a thankless deity.'
 This promise made, with night the goddess fled; 850
 With joy the woman wakes, and leaves her bed;
 Devoutly lifts her spotless hands on high,
 And prays the pow'rs their gift to ratify.

Now grinding pains proceed to bearing throes,
 Till its own weight the burthen did disclose: 855
 'Twas of the beauteous kind, and brought to light

With secrecy, to shun the father's sight.
 Th' indulgent mother did her care employ,
 And pass'd it on her husband for a boy.
 The nurse was conscious of the fact alone; 860
 The father paid his vows as for a son;
 And call'd him Iphis, by a common name,
 Which either sex with equal right may claim.
 Iphis his grandsire was; the wife was pleas'd,
 Of half the fraud by fortune's favour eas'd, 865
 The doubtful name was us'd without deceit,
 And truth was cover'd with a pious cheat.
 The habit shew'd a boy, the beauteous face
 With manly fierceness mingled female grace.
 Now thirteen years of age were swiftly run, 870
 When the fond father thought the time drew on
 Of settling in the world his only son.
 Ianthè was his choice; so wondrous fair,
 Her form alone with Iphis could compare;
 A neighbour's daughter of his own degree, 875
 And not more bless'd with fortune's goods than he.
 They soon espous'd; for they with ease were join'd,
 Who were before contracted in the mind.
 Their age the same, their inclinations too;
 And bred together, in one school they grew. 880
 Thus fatally dispos'd to mutual fires,
 They felt, before they knew, the same desires.
 Equal their flame, unequal was their care;
 One lov'd with hope, one languish'd in despair.
 The maid accus'd the ling'ring day alone: 885
 For whom she thought a man, she thought her own.
 But Iphis bends beneath a greater grief;
 As fiercely burns; but hopes for no relief.
 E'en her despair adds fuel to her fire:
 A maid with madness does a maid desire. 890
 And, scarce refraining tears, Alas! (said she,)
 What issue of my love remains for me!
 How wild a passion works within my breast,
 With what prodigious flames am I possess!
 Could I the care of providence deserve, 895
 Heav'n must destroy me, if it would preserve.
 And that's my fate, or sure it would have sent
 Some usual evil for my punishment:

Not this unkindly curse; to rage and burn,
 Where nature shews no prospect of return. 900
 Nor cows for cows consume with fruitless fire;
 Nor mares, when hot, their fellow-mares desire:
 The father of the fold supplies his ewes;
 The stag through secret woods his hind pursues;
 And birds for mates the males of their own species
 choose. 905

Her females nature guards from female flame,
 And joins two sexes to preserve the game:
 Would I were nothing, or not what I am!
 Crete fam'd for monsters, wanted of her store,
 Till my new love produc'd one monster more. 910

The daughter of the sun a bull desir'd,
 And yet e'en then a male a female fired:
 Her passion was extravagantly new,
 But mine is much the madder of the two.
 To things impossible she was not bent, 915
 But found the means to compass her intent.

To cheat his eyes she took a different shape;
 Yet still she gain'd a lover, and a leap.
 Should all the wit of all the world conspire,
 Should Dædalus assist my wild desire, 920
 What art can make me able to enjoy,
 Or what can change Iânthè to a boy?

Extinguish then thy passion, hopeless maid,
 And recollect thy reason for thy aid.
 Know what thou art, and love as maidens ought, 925
 And drive these golden wishes from thy thought.
 Thou canst not hope thy fond desires to gain;
 Where hope is wanting, wishes are in vain.

And yet no guards against our joys conspire;
 No jealous husband hinders our desire: 930
 My parents are propitious to my wish,
 And she herself consenting to the bliss.
 All things concur to prosper our design:
 All things to prosper any love but mine.

And yet I never can enjoy the fair; 935
 'Tis past the pow'r of Heav'n to grant my pray'r.
 Heav'n has been kind, as far as Heav'n can be;
 Our parents with our own desires agree;
 But nature, stronger than the gods above,

Refuses her assistance to my love ; 940
 She sets the bar that causes all my pain ;
 One gift refus'd makes all their bounty vain.
 And now the happy day is just at hand,
 To bind our hearts in Hymen's holy band ;
 Our hearts, but not our bodies : thus accurst, 945
 In midst of water I complain of thirst.
 Why com'st thou, Juno, to these barren rites,
 To bless a bed defrauded of delights ?
 But why should Hymen lift his torch on high,
 To see two brides in cold embraces lie ? 950
 Thus love-sick Iphis her vain passion mourns ;
 With equal ardour fair Iänthè burns,
 Invoking Hymen's name, and Juno's pow'r,
 To speed the work, and haste the happy hour.
 She hopes, while Telethûsa fears the day, 955
 And strives to interpose some new delay ;
 Now feigns a sickness, now is in a fright
 For this bad omen, or that boding sight.
 But having done whate'er she could devise,
 And emptied all her magazine of lies, 960
 The time approach'd : the next ensuing day
 The fatal secret must to light betray.
 Then Telethûsa had recourse to pray'r,
 She, and her daughter with dishevell'd hair ;
 Trembling with fear, great Isis they ador'd, 965
 Embrac'd her altar, and her aid implor'd :
 Fair queen, who dost on fruitful Egypt smile,
 Who sway'st the sceptre of the Pharian isle,
 And sev'n-fold falls of disemboguing Nile,
 Relieve, in this our last distress (she said), 970
 A suppliant mother, and a mournful maid.
 Thou, goddess, thou wert present to my sight ;
 Reveal'd I saw thee by thy own fair light :
 I saw thee in my dream, as now I see,
 With all thy marks of awful majesty : 975
 The glorious train that compass thee around ;
 And heard the hollow timbrels' holy sound.
 Thy words I noted, which I still retain ;
 Let not thy sacred oracles be vain.
 That Iphis lives, that I myself am free 980
 From shame and punishment, I owe to thee.

On thy protection all our hopes depend:
Thy counsel sav'd us, let thy pow'r defend.

Her tears pursu'd her words; and while she spoke,
The goddess nodded, and her altar shook: 985
The temple doors, as with a blast of wind,
Were heard to clap; the lunar horns that bind
The brows of Isis, cast a blaze around;
The trembling timbrel made a murm'ring sound.

Some hopes these happy omens did impart; 990
Forth went the mother with a beating heart:
Not much in fear, nor fully satisfied;
But Iphis follow'd, with a larger stride;
The whiteness of her skin forsook her face;
Her looks embolden'd with an awful grace; 995
Her features, and her strength together grew,
And her long hair to curling locks withdrew.
Her sparkling eyes with manly vigour shone,
Big was her voice, audacious was her tone.

The latent parts, at length reveal'd, began 1000
To shoot and spread, and burnish into man.
The maid becomes a youth:—No more delay
Your vows, but look, and confidently pay.
Their gifts the parents to the temple bear;
The votive tables this inscription wear: 1005
' Iphis the man, has to the goddess paid
The vows, that Iphis offer'd when a maid.'

Now when the star of day had shewn his face,
Venus, and Juno, with their presence grace
The nuptial rites, and Hymen from above 1010
Descending to complete their happy love:
The gods of marriage lend their mutual aid;
And the warm youth enjoys the lovely maid.

BOOK X.

TRANSLATED BY MR. DRYDEN, MR. CONGREVE,
AND OTHERS.

The story of Orpheus and Eurydicè. The fable of Cyparissus. Hyacinthus transformed into a Flower. The transformation of the Cerastæ and Propætides. The story of Pygmalion and the Statue. The story of Cinyras and Myrrha. The story of Venus and Adonis.

THENCE, in his saffron robe, for distant Thrace,
Hymen departs, through air's unmeasur'd space:
By Orpheus call'd, the nuptial pow'r attends,
But with ill-omen'd augury descends;
Nor cheerful look'd the god, nor prosp'rous spoke, 5
Nor blaz'd his torch, but wept in hissing smoke;
In vain they whirl it round, in vain they shake,
No rapid motion can its flames awake.

With dread these inauspicious signs were view'd,
And soon a more disastrous end ensu'd; 10
For as the bride, amid the Naiad train
Ran joyful, sporting o'er the flow'ry plain,
A venom'd viper bit her as she pass'd;
Instant she fell, and sudden breath'd her last.

When long his loss the Thracian had deplor'd, 15
Not by superior pow'rs to be restor'd;
Inflam'd by love, and urg'd by deep despair,
He leaves the realms of light, and upper air;
Daring to tread the dark Tenarian road,
And tempt the shades in their obscure abode: 20
Through gliding spectres of th' interr'd to go,
And phantom people of the world below:
Persephonè he seeks, and him who reigns
O'er ghosts, and hell's uncomfortable plains.
Arriv'd, he, tuning to his voice his strings, 25
Thus to the king and queen of shadows sings:

'Ye pow'rs, who under earth your realms extend,
To whom all mortals must one day descend:
If here 'tis granted sacred truth to tell,
I come not curious to explore your hell; 30
Nor come to boast (by vain ambition fir'd)
How Cerberus at my approach retir'd:
My wife alone I seek; for her lov'd sake,

These terrors I support, this journey take.
 She, luckless wand'ring, or by fate misled, 35
 Chanc'd on a lurking viper's crest to tread ;
 The vengeful beast, inflam'd with fury, starts,
 And through her heel his deathful venom darts.
 Thus was she snatch'd untimely to her tomb ;
 Her growing years cut short, and springing bloom.
 Long I my loss endeavour'd to sustain, 41
 And strongly strove, but strove, alas ! in vain :
 At length I yielded, won by mighty love ;
 Well known is that omnipotence above !
 But here, I doubt, his unfehl influence fails ; 45
 And yet a hope within my heart prevails,
 That here, e'en here, he has been known of old ;
 At least, if truth be by tradition told ;
 If fame of former rapes belief may find,
 You both by love, and love alone, were join'd. 50
 Now, by the horrors which these realms surround,
 By the vast chaos of these depths profound ;
 By the sad silence which eternal reigns
 O'er all the waste of these wide-stretching plains ;
 Let me again Eurydicè receive, 55
 Let fate her quick-spun thread of life re-weave.
 All our possessions are but loans from you,
 And soon, or late, you must be paid your due ;
 Hither we haste to human-kind's last seat,
 Your endless empire, and our sure retreat. 60
 She too, when ripen'd years she shall attain,
 Must, of avoidless right, be yours again ;
 I but the transient use of that require,
 Which soon, too soon, I must resign entire.
 But if the destinies refuse my vow, 65
 And no remission of her doom allow ;
 Know, I'm determin'd to return no more ;
 So both retain, or both to life restore.'

Thus while the bard melodiously complains,
 And to his lyre accords his vocal strains, 70
 The very bloodless shades attention keep,
 And silent, seem compassionate to weep ;
 E'en Tantalus his flood unthirsty views,
 Nor flies the stream, nor he the stream pursues ;
 Ixion's wond'ring wheel its whirl suspends, 75
 And the voracious vulture, charm'd, attends :

No more the Belidès their toil bemoan,
 And Sisyphus reclin'd, sits list'ning on his stone:
 Then first ('tis said) by sacred verse subdu'd,
 The Furies felt their cheeks with tears bedew'd : 80
 Nor could the rigid king, or queen of hell,
 Th' impulse of pity in their hearts repel.
 Now, from a troop of shades that last arriv'd,
 Eurydicè was call'd, and stood reviv'd.
 Slow she advanc'd, and, halting, seem'd to feel 85
 The fatal wound, yet painful, in her heel.
 Thus he obtains the suit so much desir'd,
 On strict observance of the terms requir'd :
 For if, before he reach the realms of air,
 He backward cast his eyes to view the fair, 90
 The forfeit grant, that instant, void is made,
 And she for ever left a lifeless shade. [bend,
 Now through the noiseless throng their way they
 And both with pain the rugged road ascend ;
 Dark was the path, and difficult, and steep, 95
 And thick with vapours from the smoky deep.
 They well-nigh now had pass'd the bounds of night,
 And just approach'd the margin of the light,
 When he, mistrusting, lest her steps might stray,
 And gladsome of the glimpse of dawning day, 100
 His longing eyes, impatient, backward cast
 To catch a lover's look,—but look'd his last ;
 For, instant dying, she again descends,
 While he to empty air his arms extends.
 Again she died, nor yet her lord reprov'd : 105
 What could she say, but that too well he lov'd ?
 One last farewell she spoke, which scarce he heard ;
 So soon she dropp'd, so sudden disappear'd.
 All stunn'd he stood, when thus his wife he view'd,
 By second fate, and double death subdu'd : 110
 Not more amazement by that wretch was shewn,
 Whom Cerberus beholding, turn'd to stone ;
 Nor Olenus could more astonish'd look,
 When on himself Lethæa's fault he took,
 His beauteous wife, who, too secure, had dar'd 115
 Her face to vie with goddesses compar'd :
 Once join'd by love, they stand united still,
 Turn'd to contiguous rocks on Ida's hill.
 Now to re-pass the Styx in vain he tries,

Charon averse, his pressing suit denies. 120
 Sev'n days entire, along th' infernal shores,
 Disconsolate, the bard Eurydicé deplores ;
 Defil'd with filth his robe, with tears his cheeks,
 No sustenance but grief, and cares he seeks :
 Of rigid fate incessant he complains, 125
 And hell's inexorable gods arraigns.
 This ended, to high Rhodopè he hastes,
 And Hæmus' mountain, bleak with northern blasts.
 And now his yearly race the circling sun
 Had thrice complete through wat'ry Pisces run, 130
 Since Orpheus fled the face of womankind,
 And all soft union with the sex declin'd.
 Whether his ill success this change had bred,
 Or binding vows made to his former bed ;
 Whate'er the cause, in vain the nymphs contest, 135
 With rival-eyes to warm his frozen breast :
 For ev'ry nymph with love his lays inspir'd,
 But ev'ry nymph repuls'd, with grief retir'd.
 A hill there was, and on that hill a mead,
 With verdure thick, but destitute of shade. 140
 Where, now, the Muses' son no sooner sings,
 No sooner strikes his sweet-resounding strings,
 But distant groves the flying sounds receive,
 And list'ning trees their rooted stations leave ;
 Themselves transplanting, all around they grow, 145
 And various shades their various kinds bestow.
 Here, tall Chaönian oaks their branches spread,
 While weeping poplars there erect their head.
 The foodful esculus here shoots his leaves ;
 That turf, soft lime tree, this, fat beech receives ; 150
 Here, brittle hazels, laurels here advance,
 And there tough ash to form the hero's lance ;
 Here silver firs with knotless trunks ascend,
 There, scarlet oaks beneath their acorns bend.
 That spot admits the hospitable plain, 155
 On this, the maple grows with clouded grain :
 Here wat'ry willows are with lotus seen,
 There, tamarisk, and box for ever green :
 With double hue here myrtles grace the ground,
 And laurustines, with purple berries crown'd : 160
 With pliant feet, now, ivies this way wind,

Vines yonder rise, and elms with vines entwin'd :
 Wild ornus now, the pitch-tree next takes root,
 And arbutus adorn'd with blushing fruit:
 Then easy-bending palms, the victor's prize, 165
 And pines erect with bristly tops arise.
 To Rhea grateful still the pine remains,
 For Atys still some favour she retains ;
 He once in human shape her breast had warm'd,
 And now is cherish'd to a tree transform'd. 170

Amid the throng of this promiscuous wood,
 With pointed top, the taper cypress stood ;
 A tree, which once a youth, and heav'nly fair,
 Was of that deity the darling care,
 Whose hand adapts, with equal skill, the strings 175
 To bows with which he kills, and harps to which he
 For, heretofore, a mighty stag was bred, [sings.
 Which on the fertile fields of Cæa fed ;
 In shape and size he all his kind excell'd,
 And to Carthæan nymphs was sacred held. 180
 His beamy head, with branches high display'd,
 Afforded to itself an ample shade ;

His horns were gilt, and his smooth neck was grac'd
 With silver collars thick with gems enchas'd :
 A silver boss upon his forehead hung, 185
 And brazen pendants in his ear-rings rung.
 Frequenting houses, he familiar grew,
 And learnt by custom, nature to subdue ;
 Till by degrees, of fear, and wildness, broke, 180
 E'en stranger hands his proffer'd neck might stroke.

Much was the beast by Cæa's youth caress'd,
 But thou, sweet Cyparissus, lov'dst him best :
 By thee, to pastures fresh, he oft was led,
 By thee oft water'd at the fountain's head :
 His horns with garlands, now, by thee were tied, 195
 And, now, thou on his back would'st wanton ride ;
 Now here now there, would'st bound along the plains,
 Ruling his tender mouth with purple reins.

'Twas when the summer sun at noon of day,
 Through glowing Cancer shot his burning ray ; 200
 'Twas then, the fav'rite stag in cool retreat
 Had sought a shelter from the scorching heat ;
 Along the grass his weary limbs he laid,

Inhaling freshness from the breezy shade :
 When Cyparissus with his pointed dart, 205
 Unknowing, pierc'd him to the panting heart.
 But when the youth, surpris'd, his error found,
 And saw him dying of the cruel wound,
 Himself he would have slain through desp'rate grief :
 What said not Phœbus, that might yield relief! 210
 To cease his mourning, he the boy desir'd,
 Or mourn no more than such a loss requir'd.
 But he, incessant griev'd : at length address'd
 To the superior pow'rs a last request ;
 Praying, in expiation of his crime, 215
 Thenceforth to mourn to all succeeding time.

And now of blood exhausted he appears,
 Drain'd by a torrent of continual tears ;
 The fleshy colour in his body fades,
 And a green tincture all his limbs invades ; 220
 From his fair head, where curling locks late hung,
 A horrid bush with bristled branches sprung,
 Which stiff'ning by degrees, its stem extends,
 Till to the starry skies the spire ascends.

Apollo sad look'd on, and sighing, cry'd, 225
 Then, be for ever, what thy pray'r imply'd ;
 Bemoan'd by me, in others grief excite ;
 And still preside at ev'ry fun'ral rite.

Thus the sweet artist in a wondrous shade
 Of verdant trees, which harmony had made, 230
 Encircled sat, with his own triumphs crown'd,
 Of list'ning birds, and savages around.
 Again the trembling strings he dext'rous tries,
 Again from discord makes soft music rise ;
 Then tunes his voice : O muse, from whom I sprung,
 Jove be my theme, and thou inspire my song. 235
 To Jove my grateful voice I oft have rais'd,
 Oft his almighty pow'r with pleasure prais'd.
 I sang the giants in a solemn strain,
 Blasted, and thunder-struck on Phlegra's plain. 240
 Now be my lyre in softer accents mov'd,
 To sing of blooming boys by gods belov'd ;
 And to relate what virgins, void of shame,
 Have suffer'd vengeance for a lawless flame.

The king of gods once felt the burning joy, 245
 And sigh'd for lovely Ganymede of Troy:
 Long was he puzzled to assume a shape
 Most fit, and expeditious for the rape ;
 A bird's was proper, yet he scorns to wear
 Any but that which might his thunder bear. 250
 Down with his masquerading wings he flies,
 And bears the little Trojan to the skies ;
 Where now, in robes of heav'nly purple drest,
 He serves the nectar at th' Almighty's feast,
 To slighted Juno an unwelcome guest. 255

Phœbus for thee too, Hyacinth, design'd
 A place among the gods, had fate been kind :
 Yet this he gave ; as oft as wintry rains
 Are past, and vernal breezes soothe the plains,
 From the green turf a purple flow'r you rise, 260
 And with your fragrant breath perfume the skies.

You when alive were Phœbus' darling boy ;
 In you he plac'd his heav'n, and fix'd his joy ;
 Their god the Delphic priests consult in vain ;
 Eurotas now he loves, and Sparta's plain : 265
 His hands, the use of bow and harp forget,
 And hold the dogs, or bear the corded net ;
 O'er hanging cliffs swift he pursues the game ;
 Each hour his pleasure, each augments his flame.

The mid-day sun now shone with equal light 270
 Between the past, and the succeeding night ;
 They strip, then, smooth'd with suppling oil, essay
 To pitch the rounded quoit, their wonted play :
 A well-pois'd disk first hasty Phœbus threw,
 It cleft the air, and whistled as it flew ; 275
 It reach'd the mark, a most surprising length,
 Which spoke an equal share of art and strength.
 Scarce was it fall'n, when with too eager hand
 Young Hyacinth ran to snatch it from the sand ;
 But the curst orb, which met a stony soil, 280
 Flew in his face with violent recoil.

Both faint, both pale, and breathless now appear,
 The boy with pain, the am'rous god with fear.
 He ran, and rais'd him bleeding from the ground,
 Chafes his cold limbs, and wipes the fatal wound : 285

Then herbs of noblest juice in vain applies ;
The wound is mortal, and his skill defies.

As in a water'd garden's blooming walk,
When some rude hand has bruis'd its tender stalk,
A fading lily droops its languid head, 290
And bends to earth, its life and beauty fled ;
So Hyacinth, with head reclin'd, decays,
And, sick'ning, now no more his charms displays.

Oh, thou art gone, my boy (Apollo cry'd),
Defrauded of thy youth in all its pride ! 295
Thou, once my joy, art all my sorrow now ;
And to my guilty hand my grief I owe :
Yet from myself I might the fault remove,
Unless to sport, and play, a fault should prove,
Unless it too were call'd a fault to love. 300

Oh, could I for thee, or but with thee die !
But cruel fates to me that pow'r deny :
Yet on my tongue thou shalt for ever dwell ;
Thy name my lyre shall sound, my verse shall tell ;
And to a flow'r transform'd, unheard of yet, 305
Stamp'd on thy leaves my cries thou shalt repeat.
The time shall come, prophetic I foreknow,
When join'd to thee, a mighty* chief shall grow,
And with my plaints his name thy leaf shall shew.

While Phœbus thus the laws of fate reveal'd, 310
Behold, the blood which stain'd the verdant field,
Is blood no longer ; but a flow'r full blown,
Far brighter than the Tyrian scarlet shone.

A lily's form it took ; its purple hue
Was all that made a diff'rence to the view. 315

Nor stopp'd he here ; the god upon its leaves
The sad expression of his sorrow weaves ;
And to this hour the mournful purple wears
Ai, Ai, inscrib'd in funeral characters.

Nor are the Spartans, who so much are fam'd 320
For virtue, of their Hyacinth asham'd ;
But still with pompous woe, and solemn state,
The Hyacinthian feasts they yearly celebrate.

Inquire of Amathus, whose wealthy ground
With veins of every metal does abound, 325

* Ajax.

If she to her Propætidès would shew,
 The honour Sparta does to him allow?
 No more, she'd say, such wretches would we grace,
 Than those whose crooked horns deform'd their face,
 From thence Cerastæ call'd; an impious race: 330
 Before whose gates a rev'rend altar stood,
 To Jove inscrib'd, the hospitable god:
 This had some stranger seen with gore besmear'd,
 The blood of lambs and bulls it had appear'd:
 Their slaughter'd guests it was; not flock nor herd.

Venus these barb'rous sacrifices view'd 336
 With just abhorrence, and with wrath pursu'd:
 At first, to punish such nefarious crimes,
 Their towns she meant to leave, her once-lov'd climes.
 But why (said she), for their offence, should I 340
 My dear delightful plains, and cities fly?
 No, let the impious people, who have sinn'd,
 A punishment in death, or exile find:
 If death, or exile, too severe be thought,
 Let them in some vile shape bemoan their fault. 345

While next her mind a proper form employs,
 Admonish'd by their horns, she fix'd her choice.
 Their former crest remains upon their heads,
 And their strong limbs an ox's shape invades.

The blasphemous Propætidès deny'd 350
 Worship of Venus, and her pow'r defy'd:
 But soon that pow'r they felt, the first that sold
 Their lewd embraces to the world for gold.
 Unknowing how to blush, and shameless grown,
 A small transition changes them to stone. 355

Pygmalion, loathing their lascivious life,
 Abhor'd all womankind, but most a wife:
 So single chose to live, and shunn'd to wed,
 Well pleas'd to want a consort of his bed.
 Yet fearing idleness, the nurse of ill, 360
 In sculpture exercis'd his happy skill;
 And carv'd in iv'ry such a maid, so fair,
 As nature could not with his art compare,
 Were she to work; but in her own defence,
 Must take her pattern here, and copy hence. 365
 Pleas'd with his idol, he commends, admires,
 Adores; and last, the thing ador'd, desires.

A very virgin in her face was seen,
 And had she mov'd, a living maid had been : 369
 One would have thought she could have stirr'd, but
 With modesty, and was asham'd to move. [strove
 Art hid with art, so well perform'd the cheat,
 It caught the carver with his own deceit :
 He knows, 'tis madness, yet he must adore,
 And still the more he knows it, loves the more : 375
 The flesh, or what so seems, he touches oft,
 Which feels so smooth that he believes it soft.
 Fir'd with this thought, at once he strain'd the breast,
 And on the lips a burning kiss impress'd.
 'Tis true, the harden'd breast resists the gripe, 380
 And the cold lips return a kiss unripe ;
 But when, retiring back, he look'd again,
 To think it iv'ry, was a thought too mean :
 So would believe she kiss'd, and courting more,
 Again embrac'd her naked body o'er ; 385
 And straining hard the statue, was afraid,
 His hands had made a dint, and hurt his maid :
 Explor'd her limb by limb, and fear'd to find
 So rude a gripe had left a livid mark behind :
 With flatt'ry now he seeks her mind to move,; 390
 And now with gifts (the pow'rful bribes of love):
 He furnishes her closet first, and fills
 The crowded shelves with rarities of shells ;
 Adds orient pearls, which from the conchs he drew,
 And all the sparkling stones of various hue : 395
 And parrots, imitating human tongue,
 And singing-birds in silver cages hung ;
 And ev'ry fragrant flow'r, and od'rous green
 Were sorted well, with lumps of amber laid between :
 Rich fashionable robes her person deck, 400
 Pendants her ears, and pearls adorn her neck :
 Her taper'd fingers too with rings are grac'd,
 And an embroider'd zone surrounds her slender waist.
 Thus like a queen array'd, so richly dress'd, 404
 Beauteous she shew'd, but naked shew'd the best :
 Then, from the floor, he rais'd a royal bed,
 With cov'rings of Sidonian purple spread :
 The solemn rites perform'd, he calls her bride,
 With blandishments invites her to his side :

And as she were with vital sense possest, 410
Her head did on a plummy pillow rest.

The feast of Venus came, a solemn day,
To which the Cypriots due devotion pay;
With gilded horns the milk-white heifers led,
Slaughter'd before the sacred altars, bled. 415

Pygmalion off'ring first, approach'd the shrine,
And then with pray'rs implor'd the pow'rs divine:
Almighty gods, if all we mortals want,
If all we can require be yours to grant;
Make this fair statue mine (he would have said,) 420
But chang'd his words for shame; and only pray'd,
Give me the likeness of my iv'ry maid.

The golden goddess, present at the pray'r,
Well knew he meant th' inanimated fair,
And gave the sign of granting his desire; 425
For thrice in cheerful flames ascends the fire.

The youth, returning to his mistress, hies,
And impudent in hope, with ardent eyes,
And beating breast, by the dear statue lies.
He kisses her white lips, renews the bliss, 430

And looks, and thinks they redden at the kiss:
He thought them warm before: nor longer stays,
But next his hand on her hard bosom lays,
Hard as it was, beginning to relent,
It seem'd the breast beneath his fingers bent; 435

He felt again, his fingers made a print,
'Twas flesh, but flesh so firm, it rose against the dint:
The pleasing task he fails not to renew;

Soft, and more soft at ev'ry touch it grew;
Like pliant wax, when chafing hands reduce, 440
The former mass to form, and frame for use.

He would believe, but yet is still in pain,
And tries his argument of sense again,
Presses the pulse, and feels the leaping vein.

Convinc'd, o'erjoy'd, his studied thanks and praise,
To her who made the miracle, he pays: 446

Then lips to lips he join'd; now freed from fear,
He found the savour of the kiss sincere:

At this, the waken'd image op'd her eyes,
And view'd at once the light and lover with surprise.
The goddess present at the match she made, 451

So bless'd the bed, such fruitfulness convey'd,
 That ere ten months had sharpen'd either horn,
 To crown their bliss, a lovely boy was born;
 Paphos his name, who, grown to manhood, wall'd
 The city, Paphos, from the founder call'd. 456

Nor him alone produc'd the fruitful queen;
 But Cinyras, who, like his sire, had been
 A happy prince, had he not been a sire.
 Daughters and fathers, from my song retire; 460
 I sing of horror; and, could I prevail,
 You should not hear, or not believe my tale.
 Yet if the pleasure of my song be such,
 That you will hear, and credit me too much,
 Attentive listen to the last event, 465
 And with the sin believe the punishment:
 Since nature could behold so dire a crime,
 I gratulate at least my native clime,
 That such a land, which such a monster bore,
 So far is distant from our Thracian shore. 470
 Let Araby extol her happy coast,
 Her cinamon and sweet amomum boast,
 Her fragrant flow'rs, her trees with precious tears,
 Her second harvests, and her double years; [bears?
 How can the land be call'd so bless'd that Myrrha
 Nor all her od'rous tears can cleanse her crime, 476
 Her plant alone deforms the happy clime:
 Cupid denies to have inflam'd thy heart,
 Disowns thy love, and vindicates his dart:
 Some fury gave thee those infernal pains, 480
 And shot her venom'd vipers in thy veins.
 To hate thy sire had merited a curse;
 But such an impious love deserv'd a worse.
 The neighb'ring monarchs, by thy beauty led,
 Contend in crowds, ambitious of thy bed: 485
 The world is at thy choice; except but one,
 Except but him, thou canst not choose, alone.
 She knew it too, the miserable maid,
 Ere impious love her better thoughts betray'd,
 And thus within her secret soul she said: 490
 Ah, Myrrha! whither would thy wishes tend?
 Ye gods, ye sacred laws, my soul defend

From such a crime as all mankind detest,
 And never lodg'd before in human breast !
 But is it sin ? or makes my mind alone 495
 Th' imagin'd sin ? for nature makes it none.
 What tyrant then these envious laws began,
 Made not for any other beast, but man !
 The father-bull his daughter may bestride,
 The horse may make his mother mare a bride ; 500
 What piety forbids the lusty ram,
 Or more salacious goat, to rut their dam ?
 The hen is free to wed the chick she bore,
 And make a husband, whom she hatch'd before ;
 All creatures else are of a happier kind, 505
 Whom nor ill-natur'd laws from pleasure bind,
 Nor thoughts of sin disturb their peace of mind.
 But man, a slave of his own making lives :
 The fool denies himself what nature gives :
 Too busy senates, with an over-care 510
 To make us better than our kind can bear,
 Have dash'd a spice of envy in the laws,
 And, straining up too high, have spoil'd the cause.
 Yet some wise nations break their cruel chains,
 And own no laws, but those which love ordains ; 515
 Where happy daughters with their sires are join'd,
 And piety is doubly paid in kind.
 O, that I had been born in such a clime,
 Not here, where 'tis the country makes the crime !
 But whither would my impious fancy stray ? 520
 Hence, hopes, and ye forbidden thoughts away !
 His worth deserves to kindle my desires,
 But with the love that daughters bear to sires.
 Then had not Cinyras my father been,
 What hinder'd Myrrha's hopes to be his queen ! 525
 But the perverseness of my fate is such,
 That he's not mine, because he's mine too much :
 Our kindred blood debars a better tie ;
 He might be nearer, were he not so nigh.
 Eyes and their objects never must unite, 530
 Some distance is requir'd to help the sight :
 Fain would I travel to some foreign shore,
 Never to see my native country more,
 So might I to myself myself restore ;

So might my mind these impious thoughts remove,
 And ceasing to behold, might cease to love. 536
 But stay I must, to feed my famish'd sight,
 To talk, to kiss, and more if more I might :
 More, impious maid ! what more canst thou design,
 To make a monstrous mixture in thy line, 540
 And break all statutes, human and divine ?
 Canst thou be call'd (to save thy wretched life)
 Thy mother's rival and thy father's wife ?
 Confound so many sacred names in one,
 Thy brother's mother ! sister to thy son ! 545
 And fear'st thou not to see th' infernal bands,
 Their heads with snakes, with torches arm'd their
 Full at thy face th' avenging brands to bear, [hands,
 And shake the serpents from their hissing hair ?
 But thou in time th' increasing ill control, 550
 Nor first debauch the body by the soul ;
 Secure the sacred quiet of thy mind,
 And keep the sanctions nature has design'd.
 Suppose I should attempt, th' attempt were vain,
 No thoughts like mine his sinless soul profane ; 555
 Observant of the right ; and O, that he
 Could cure my madness, or be mad like me !
 Thus she : But Cinyras, who daily sees
 A crowd of noble suitors at his knees,
 Among so many, knew not whom to choose, 560
 Irresolute to grant, or to refuse.
 But having told their names, inquir'd of her
 Who pleas'd her best, and whom she would prefer.
 The blushing maid stood silent with surprise,
 And on her father fix'd her ardent eyes, 565
 And looking, sigh'd, and as she sigh'd, began
 Round tears to shed, that scalded as they ran.
 The tender sire, who saw her blush and cry,
 Ascrib'd it all to maiden modesty,
 And dry'd the falling drops, and yet more kind, 570
 He strok'd her cheeks, and holy kisses join'd.
 She felt a secret venom fire her blood,
 And found more pleasure than a daughter should ;
 And, ask'd again what lover of the crew
 She lik'd the best, she answer'd, One like you. 575
 Mistaking what she meant, her pious will

He prais'd, and bade her so continue still:
 The word of *pious* heard, she blush'd with shame
 Of secret guilt, and could not bear the name.

'Twas now the mid of night, when slumbers close
 Our eyes, and soothe our cares with soft repose; 581
 But no repose could wretched Myrrha find,
 Her body rolling, as she roll'd her mind:
 Mad with desire, she ruminates her sin,
 And wishes all her wishes o'er again: 585
 Now she despairs, and now resolves to try;
 Would not, and would again, she knows not why;
 Stops, and returns, makes and retracts the vow;
 Fain would begin, but understands not how.
 As when a pine is hew'd upon the plains, 590
 And the last mortal stroke alone remains,
 Lab'ring in pangs of death, and threat'ning all,
 This way and that she nods, consid'ring where to fall:
 So Myrrha's mind, impell'd on either side,
 Takes ev'ry bent, but cannot long abide; 595
 Irresolute on which she should rely,
 At last, unfix'd in all, is only fix'd to die.
 On that sad thought she rests; resolv'd on death,
 She rises, and prepares to choke her breath:
 Then while about the beam her zone she ties, 600
 Dear Cinyras, farewell (she softly cries);
 For thee I die, and only wish to be
 Not hated, when thou know'st I die for thee:
 Pardon the crime, in pity to the cause:
 This said, about her neck the noose she draws. 605
 The nurse, who lay without, her faithful guard,
 Though not the words, the murmurs over-heard,
 And sighs and hollow sounds: Surpris'd with fright
 She starts, and leaves her bed, and springs a light;
 Unlocks the door, and ent'ring out of breath, 610
 The dying saw, and instruments of death;
 She shrieks, she cuts the zone with trembling haste,
 And in her arms her fainting charge embrac'd;
 Next (for she now had leisure for her tears)
 She weeping ask'd, in these her blooming years, 615
 What unforeseen misfortune caus'd her care,
 To loath her life, and languish in despair?

The maid, with downcast eyes, and mute with grief,
 For death unfinish'd, and ill-tim'd relief,
 Stood sullen to her suit: The beldame press'd 620
 The more to know, and bar'd her wither'd breast,
 Adjur'd her by the kindly food she drew
 From those dry founts, her secret ill to shew.
 Sad Myrrha sigh'd, and turn'd her eyes aside :
 The nurse still urg'd, and would not be denied: 625
 Nor only promis'd secrecy, but pray'd
 She might have leave to give her offer'd aid.
 Good-will (she said) my want of strength supplies,
 And diligence shall give what age denies :
 If strong desires thy mind to fury move, 630
 With charms and med'cines I can cure thy love :
 If envious eyes their hurtful rays have cast,
 More pow'rful verse shall free thee from the blast :
 If Heav'n, offended, sends thee this disease,
 Offended Heav'n, with pray'rs, we can appease. 635
 What then remains, that can these cares procure ?
 Thy house is flourishing, thy fortune sure :
 Thy careful mother yet in health survives,
 And, to thy comfort, thy kind father lives.—
 The virgin started at her father's name, 640
 And sigh'd profoundly, conscious of the shame :
 Nor yet the nurse her impious love divin'd,
 But yet surmis'd that love disturb'd her mind :
 Thus thinking, she pursu'd her point, and laid,
 And lull'd within her lap the mourning maid ; 645
 Then softly sooth'd her thus: I guess your grief ;
 You love, my child ; your love shall find relief.
 My long-experienc'd age shall be your guide ;
 Rely on that, and lay distrust aside :
 No breath of air shall on the secret blow, 650
 Nor shall (what most you fear) your father know.
 Struck once again, as with a thunder-clap,
 The guilty virgin bounded from her lap.
 And threw her body prostrate on the bed,
 And, to conceal her blushes, hid her head ; 655
 There silent lay, and warn'd her with her hand
 To go ; but she receiv'd not the command ;
 Remaining still, importunate to know :
 Then Myrrha thus : Or ask no more, or go ;

And Cerès' power with secret rites ador'd :
 The royal couch, now vacant for a time,
 The crafty crone, officious in her crime,
 The first occasion took : the king she found
 Easy with wine, and deep in pleasures drown'd, 705
 Prepar'd for love : The beldame blew the flame,
 Confess'd the passion, but conceal'd the name.
 Her form she prais'd ; the monarch ask'd her years ;
 And she reply'd, The same thy Myrrha bears.
 Wine, and commended beauty, fir'd his thought ; 710
 Impatient, he commands her to be brought.
 Pleas'd with her charge perform'd, she hies her home,
 And gratulates the nymph, the task was overcome.
 Myrrha was joy'd the welcome news to hear ;
 But clogg'd with guilt, the joy was unsincere : 715
 So various, so discordant is the mind,
 That in our will a diff'rent will we find.
 Ill she presag'd, and yet pursued her lust ;
 For guilty pleasures give a double gust.
 'Twas depth of night: Arctophylax had driv'n 720
 His lazy wain half round the northern heav'n,
 When Myrrha hasten'd to the crime desir'd :
 The moon beheld her first, and first retir'd ;
 The stars amaz'd ran backward from the sight,
 And, shrunk within their sockets, lost their light. 725
 Icarus first withdraws his holy flame :
 The virgin sign, in heav'n the second name,
 Slides down the belt, and from her station flies,
 And night with sable clouds involves the skies.
 Bold Myrrha still pursues her black intent ; 730
 She stumbled thrice (an omen of th' event) ;
 Thrice shriek'd the fun'ral owl, yet on she went,
 Secure of shame, because secure of sight ;
 E'en bashful sins are impudent by night.
 Link'd hand in hand, th' accomplice and the dame,
 Their way exploring to the chamber came : 736
 The door was ope ; they blindly grope their way,
 Where dark in bed th' expecting monarch lay.
 Thus far her courage held, but here forsakes ;
 Her faint knees knock at ev'ry step she makes. 740
 The nearer to her crime, the more within
 She feels remorse, and horror of her sin ;

Repents too late her criminal desire,
 And wishes that, unknown, she could retire.
 Her ling'ring thus, the nurse (who fear'd delay 745
 The fatal secret might at length betray)
 Pull'd forward, to complete the work begun,
 And said to Cinyras, 'Receive thy own.'
 Thus saying, she deliver'd kind to kind,
 Accurs'd, and their devoted bodies join'd. 750
 The sire unknowing of the crime, admits
 His bowels, and profanes the hallow'd sheets;
 He found she trembled, but believ'd she strove
 With maiden modesty against her love, [move.
 And sought with flatt'ring words vain fancies to re-
 Perhaps, he said, *my daughter*, cease thy fears 756
 (Because the title suited with her years);
 And *father*, she might whisper him again,
 That names might not be wanting to the sin.

Full of her sire, she left th' incestuous bed, 760
 And carried in her womb the crime she bred.
 Another, and another night she came;
 For frequent sin had left no sense of shame:
 Till Cinyras desir'd to see her face,
 Whose body he had held in close embrace, 765
 And brought a taper; the revealer, light,
 Expos'd both crime and criminal to sight.
 Grief, rage, amazement, could no speech afford,
 But from the sheath he drew th' avenging sword:
 The guilty fled; the benefit of night, 770
 That favour'd first the sin, secur'd the flight.
 Long wand'ring through the spacious fields she bent
 Her voyage to th' Arabian continent;
 Then pass'd the region which Panchæa join'd,
 And flying left the palmy plains behind. 775
 Nine times the moon had mew'd her horns; at length
 With travel weary, unsupplied with strength,
 And with the burthen of her womb oppress'd:
 Sabæan fields afford her needful rest:
 There, loathing life, and yet of death afraid, 780
 In anguish of her spirit, thus she pray'd:
 Ye pow'rs, if any so propitious are
 T' accept my penitence, and hear my pray'r;

Your judgments, I confess, are justly sent;
 Great sins deserve as great a punishment: 785
 Yet, since my life the living will profane,
 And since my death the happy dead will stain,
 A middle state your mercy may bestow,
 Betwixt the realms above and those below;
 Some other form to wretched Myrrha give, 790
 Nor let her wholly die, nor wholly live.

The prayers of penitents are never vain;
 At least she did her last request obtain:
 For while she spoke, the ground began to rise,
 And gather'd round her feet, her legs, and thighs; 795
 Her toes in roots descend, and, spreading wide,
 A firm foundation for her trunk provide:
 Her solid bones convert to solid wood,
 To pith her marrow, and to sap her blood:
 Her arms are boughs, her fingers change their kind,
 Her tender skin is harden'd into rind. 801
 And now the rising tree her womb invests,
 Now shooting upwards still, invades her breasts,
 And shades the neck; when weary with delay,
 She sunk her head within, and met it half the way,
 And tho' with outward shape she lost her sense, 806
 With bitter tears she wept her last offence;
 And still she weeps, nor sheds her tears in vain;
 For still the precious drops her name retain.

Meantime, the mis-begotten infant grows, 810
 And, ripe for birth, distends with deadly throes
 The swelling rind, with unavailing strife,
 To leave the wooden womb, and pushes into life.
 The mother tree, as if oppress'd with pain, 814
 Writhes here, and there, to break the bark in vain;
 And like a labouring woman would have pray'd,
 But wants a voice to call Lucina's aid:
 The bending bole sends out a hollow sound,
 And trickling tears fall thicker on the ground.
 The mild Lucina came uncall'd, and stood 820
 Beside the struggling boughs, and heard the groaning
 wood;

Then reach'd her midwife-hand to speed the throes,
 And spoke the pow'rful spells, that babes to birth dis-
 The bark divides, the living load to free, [close-

And safe delivers the convulsive tree. 825
 The ready nymphs receive the crying child,
 And wash him in the tears the parent plant distill'd.
 They swath'd him with their scarfs; beneath him
 spread
 The ground with herbs; with roses rais'd his head.
 The lovely babe was born with ev'ry grace, 830
 E'en envy must have prais'd so fair a face:
 Such was his form as painters, when they shew
 Their utmost art, on naked loves bestow:
 And that their arms no diff'rence might betray,
 Give him a bow, or his from Cupid take away. 835
 Time glides along with undiscover'd haste,
 The future but a length behind the past;
 So swift are years. The babe, whom just before
 His grandsire got, and whom his sister bore;
 The drop, the thing, which late the tree inclos'd, 840
 And late the yawning bark to life expos'd;
 A babe, a boy, a beauteous youth appears,
 And lovelier than himself at riper years.
 Now to the queen of love he gave desires,
 And, with her pains, reveng'd his mother's fires. 845
 For Cytheréa's lips, while Cupid press'd,
 He, with a heedless arrow, raz'd her breast.
 The goddess felt it, and with fury stung,
 The wanton mischief from her bosom flung:
 Yet thought at first the danger slight, but found 850
 The dart too faithful, and too deep the wound.
 Fir'd with a mortal beauty, she disdains
 To haunt th' Idalian mount, or Phrygian plains.
 She seeks not Cnidos, nor her Paphian shrines,
 Nor Amathus, that teems with brazen mines: 855
 E'en heaven itself, with all its sweets unsought,
 Adonis far a sweeter heav'n is thought.
 On him she hangs, and fonds with ev'ry art,
 And never, never knows from him to part.
 She, whose soft limbs had only been display'd 860
 On rosy beds beneath the myrtle shade,
 Whose pleasing care was to improve each grace,
 And add more charms to an unrivall'd face,
 Now buskin'd, like the virgin huntress, goes
 Thro' woods, and pathless wilds, and mountain snows

With her own tuneful voice she joys to cheer 866
 The panting hounds, that chase the flying deer.
 She runs the labyrinth of fearful hares,
 But fearless beasts and dang'rous prey forbears;
 Hunts not the grinning wolf, or foamy boar, 870
 And trembles at the lion's hungry roar.
 Thee too, Adonis, with a lover's care,
 She warns, if warn'd thou wouldst avoid the snare:—
 To furious animals advance not nigh,
 Fly those that follow, follow those that fly; 875
 'Tis chance alone must the survivors save,
 Whene'er brave spirits will attempt the brave.
 O lovely youth! in harmless sports delight;
 Provoke not beasts which arm'd by nature fight.
 For me, if not thyself, vouchsafe to fear: 880
 Let not thy thirst of glory cost me dear.
 Boars know not how to spare a blooming age;
 No sparkling eyes can soothe the lion's rage.
 Not all thy charms a savage beast can move,
 Which have so deeply touch'd the queen of love. 885
 When bristled boars from heathen thickets spring,
 In grinded tusks a thunderbolt they bring.
 The daring hunters lions rous'd devour,
 Vast is their fury, and as vast their pow'r;
 Curst be their tawny race! If thou would'st hear
 What kindled thus my hate; then lend an ear:
 The wondrous tale I will to thee unfold,
 How the fell monsters rose from crimes of old.
 But by long toils I faint: See! wide display'd,
 A grateful poplar courts us with a shade. 895
 The grassy turf beneath so verdant shews,
 We may secure delightfully repose.
 With her Adonis here be Venus bless'd;
 And swift at once the grass and him she press'd.
 Then sweetly smiling, with a raptur'd mind, 900
 On his lov'd bosom she her head reclin'd,
 And thus began: but, mindful still of bliss,
 Seal'd the soft accents with a softer kiss.

Perhaps thou may'st have heard a virgin's name,
 Who still in swiftness swiftest youths o'ercame. 905
 Wondrous! that female weakness should outdo
 A manly strength; the wonder yet is true.

'Twas doubtful, if her triumphs in the field
 Did to her form's triumphant glories yield;
 Whether her face could with more ease decoy 910
 A crowd of lovers, or her feet destroy.
 For once Apollo she implor'd to shew
 If courteous fates a consort would allow:
 A consort brings thy ruin (he reply'd);
 O, learn to want the pleasures of a bride! 915
 Nor shalt thou want them to thy wretched cost,
 And Atalanta living shall be lost.
 With such a rueful fate th' affrighted maid
 Sought green recesses in the woodland glade.
 Not sighing suitors her resolves could move, 920
 She bade them shew their speed, to shew their love.
 He only, who could conquer in the race,
 Might hope the conquer'd virgin to embrace;
 While he, whose tardy feet had lagg'd behind,
 Was doom'd the sad reward of death to find. 925
 Though great the prize, yet rigid the decree:
 But, blind with beauty, who can rigour see?
 E'en on these laws the fair they rashly sought,
 And danger in excess of love forgot.

There sat Hippoménès, prepar'd to blame 930
 In lovers such extravagance of flame.
 And must (he said) the blessing of a wife
 Be dearly purchas'd by a risk of life?
 But when he saw the wonders of her face,
 And her limbs naked, springing to the race, 935
 Her limbs, as exquisitely turn'd as mine,
 Or, if a woman thou, might vie with thine,
 With lifted hands, he cry'd, Forgive the tongue
 Which durst, ye youths, your well-tim'd courage wrong.
 I knew not, that the nymph for whom you strove, 940
 Deserv'd th' unbounded transports of your love.
 He saw, admir'd, and thus her spotless frame
 He prais'd, and praising, kindled his own flame.
 A rival now to all the youths who run,
 Envious, he fears, they should not be undone. 945
 But why (reflects he) idly thus is shewn
 The fate of others, yet untried my own?
 The coward must not on love's aid depend;
 The god was ever to the bold a friend.

Meantime, the virgin flies, or seems to fly, 950
 Swift as a Scythian arrow cleaves the sky:
 Still more and more the youth her charms admires,
 The race itself t' exalt her charms conspires.
 The golden pinions, which her feet adorn,
 In wanton flutt'rings by the winds are borne. 955
 Down from her head, the long fair tresses flow,
 And sport with lovely negligence below.
 The waving ribands, which her buskins tie,
 Her snowy skin with waving purple die;
 As crimson veils, in palaces display'd, 960
 To the white marble lend a blushing shade.
 Nor long he gaz'd; yet, while he gaz'd, she gain'd
 The goal, and the victorious wreath obtain'd.
 The vanquish'd sigh, and as the law decreed,
 Pay the dire forfeit, and prepare to bleed. 965

Then rose Hippoménès, not yet afraid,
 And fix'd his eyes full on the beauteous maid.
 Where is (he cry'd) the mighty conquest won,
 To distance those, who want the nerves to run?
 Here prove superior strength, nor shall it be 970
 Thy loss of glory, if excell'd by me.
 High my descent, near Neptune I aspire,
 For Neptune was grand-parent to my sire.
 From that great god, the fourth myself I trace,
 Nor sink my virtues yet beneath my race. 975
 Thou from Hippoménès, o'ercome, may'st claim
 An envied triumph, and a deathless fame.
 While thus the youth the virgin's pow'r defies,
 Silent she views him still with softer eyes;
 Thoughts in her breast a doubtful strife begin, 980
 If 'tis not happier now to lose than win.
 What god, a foe to beauty, would destroy
 The promised ripeness of this blooming boy?
 With his life's danger does he seek my bed?
 Scarce am I half so greatly worth, she said. 985
 Nor has his beauty mov'd my breast to love,
 And yet I own, such beauty well might move:
 'Tis not his charms, 'tis pity would engage
 My soul to spare the greenness of his age.
 What, that heroic courage fires his breast, 990

And shines through brave disdain of fate confest?
 What, that his patronage by close degrees,
 Springs from th' imperial ruler of the seas?
 Then add the love which bids him undertake
 The race, and dare to perish for my sake. 995
 Of bloody nuptials, heedless youth, beware!
 Fly, timely fly, from a too barb'rous fair.
 At pleasure choose; thy love will be repaid,
 By a less foolish, and more beauteous maid.
 But why this tenderness, before unknown? 1000
 Why beats and pants my breast for him alone?
 His eyes have seen his num'rous rivals yield,
 Let him, too, share the rigour of the field,
 Since, by their fates untaught, his own he courts,
 And thus with ruin insolently sports. 1005
 Yet for what crime shall he his death receive?
 Is it a crime with me to wish to live?
 Shall this kind passion his destruction prove?
 Is this the fatal recompense of love?
 So fair a youth, destroy'd, would conquest shame,
 And nymphs eternally detest my fame. 1011
 Still why should nymphs my guiltless fame upbraid?
 Did I the fond adventurer persuade?
 Alas! I wish thou would'st the course decline,
 Or that my swiftuess was excell'd by thine. 1015
 See! what a virgin's bloom adorns the boy!
 Why wilt thou run, and why thyself destroy?
 Hippoménès! O that I ne'er had been
 By those bright eyes unfortunately seen!
 Ah! tempt not thus, a swift, untimely fate; 1020
 Thy life is worthy of the longest date.
 Were I less wretched, did the galling chain
 Of rigid gods not my free choice restrain,
 By thee alone I could with joy be led
 To taste the raptures of a nuptial bed. 1025
 Thus she disclos'd the woman's secret heart,
 Young, innocent, and new to Cupid's dart.
 Her thoughts, her words, her actions, wildly rove;
 With love she burns, yet knows not that 'tis love.
 Her royal sire now with the murm'ring crowd
 Demands the race impatiently aloud. 1031
 Hippoménès then with true fervour pray'd,

My bold attempt let Venus kindly aid.
 By her sweet pow'r, I felt this am'rous fire,
 Still may she succour, whom she did inspire. 1035
 A soft, unenvious wind, with speedy care,
 Wafted to heav'n the lover's tender pray'r.
 Pity, I own, soon gain'd the wish'd consent,
 And all the assistance he implor'd, I lent.
 The Cyprian lands, though rich in richness, yield
 To that, surnam'd the Tamasenian field. 1041
 That field of old was added to my shrine,
 And its choice products consecrated mine.
 A tree there stands, full glorious to behold,
 Gold are the leaves, the crackling branches gold.
 It chanc'd, three apples in my hand I bore, 1046
 Which newly from the tree I sportive tore;
 Seen by the youth, alone, to him I brought
 The fruit, and when, and how to use it, taught.
 The signal sounding by the king's command, 1050
 Both start at once, and sweep th' unprinted sand.
 So swiftly move their feet, they might with ease,
 Scarce moisten'd, skim along the glassy seas;
 Or, with a wondrous levity, be borne
 O'er yellow harvests of unbending corn. 1055
 Now fav'ring peals resound from ev'ry part,
 Spirit the youth, and fire his fainting heart.
 Hippoménès! (they cry'd) thy life preserve,
 Intensely labour, and stretch ev'ry nerve.
 Base fear alone can baffle thy design, 1060
 Shoot boldly onward, and the goal is thine.
 'Tis doubtful, whether shouts like these, convey'd
 More pleasures to the youth or to the maid.
 When a long distance oft she could have gain'd,
 She check'd her swiftness, and her feet restrain'd:
 She sigh'd and dwelt, and languish'd on his face,
 Then, with unwilling speed, pursu'd the race. 1067
 O'er-spent with heat, his breath he faintly drew;
 Parch'd was his mouth, nor yet the goal in view,
 And the first apple on the plain he threw. 1070
 The nymph stopp'd sudden at th' unusual sight,
 Struck with the fruit so beautifully bright.
 Aside she starts, the wonder to behold,
 And eager, stoops to catch the rolling gold.

Th' observant youth pass'd by, and scour'd along, 1075
 While peals of joy rung from th' applauding throng;
 Unkindly she corrects the short delay,
 And, to redeem the time, fleets swift away,
 Swift as the lightning, or the northern wind,
 And far she leaves the panting youth behind. 1080
 Again he strives the flying nymph to hold
 With the temptation of the second gold:
 The bright temptation fruitlessly was toss'd,
 So soon, alas! she won the distance lost.
 Now but a little interval of space 1085
 Remain'd for the decision of the race.
 Fair author of the precious gift (he said),
 Be thou, O goddess, author of my aid!
 Then of the shining fruit the last he drew,
 And with his full-collected vigour threw: 1090
 The virgin still the longer to detain,
 Threw not directly, but across the plain.
 She seem'd awhile perplex'd in dubious thought,
 If the far distant apple should be sought:
 I lur'd her backward mind to seize the bait, 1095
 And to the massy gold gave double weight.
 My favour to my votary was shew'd,
 Her speed I lessen'd, and increas'd her load.
 But lest, though long, the rapid race be run,
 Before my longer tedious tale is done, 1100
 The youth the goal, and so the virgin won.
 Might I, Adonis, now not hope to see
 His grateful thanks pour'd out for victory?
 His pious incense on my altars laid?
 But he nor grateful thanks nor incense paid. 1105
 Enrag'd I vow'd, that with the youth the fair,
 For his contempt should my keen vengeance share;
 That future lovers m'ght my pow'r revere,
 And from their sad examples learn to fear,
 The silent fanes, the sanctified abodes 1110
 Of Cybélè, great mother of the gods,
 Rais'd by Echion in a lonely wood,
 And full of brown, religious horror stood.
 By a long painful journey, faint, they chose
 Their weary limbs here secret to repose. 1115
 But soon my pow'r inflam'd the lustful boy,

Careless of rest, he sought untimely joy.
 A hallow'd, gloomy cave, with moss o'ergrown,
 The temple join'd of native pumice-stone,
 Where antique images by priests were kept, 1120
 And wooden deities securely slept.
 Thither the rash Hippoménès retires,
 And gives a loose to all his wild desires,
 And the chaste cell pollutes with wanton fires.
 The sacred statues trembled with surprise, 1125
 The tow'ry goddess, blushing, veil'd her eyes;
 And the lewd pair to Stygian sounds had sent,
 But unrevengeful seem'd that punishment.
 A heavier doom such black profaneness draws,
 Their taper fingers turn to crooked paws. 1130
 No more their necks the smoothness can retain,
 Now cover'd sudden with a yellow mane.
 Arms change to legs: each finds the hard'ning breast
 Of rage unknown, and wondrous strength possest.
 Their alter'd looks with fury grim appear, 1135
 And on the ground their brushing tails they bear;
 They haunt the woods: their voices, which before
 Were musically sweet, now hoarsely roar.
 Hence lions, dreadful to the lab'ring swains,
 Are tam'd by Cybèle, and curb'd with reins, 1140
 And humbly draw her car along the plains.
 But thou, Adonis, my delightful care,
 Of these, and beasts, as fierce as these, beware!
 The savage, which not shuns thee, timely shun,
 For by rash prowess should'st thou be undone, 1145
 A double ruin is contain'd in one,
 Thus cautious Venus school'd her fav'rite boy,
 But youthful heat all cautions will destroy.
 His sprightly soul beyond grave counsels flies,
 While with yok'd swans the goddess cuts the skies.
 His faithful hounds, led by the tainted wind, 1151
 Lodg'd in thick coverts chanc'd a boar to find.
 The callow hero shew'd a manly heart,
 And pierc'd the savage with a side-long dart.
 The flying savage, wounded, turn'd again, 1155
 Wrench'd out the gory dart, and foam'd with pain.
 The trembling boy by flight his safety sought,
 And now recall'd the lore, which Venus taught

But now too late to fly the boar he strove,
 Who in the groin his tusks impetuous drove, 1160
 On the discolour'd grass Adonis lay,
 The monster trampling o'er his beauteous prey.

Fair Cytheréa, Cyprus scarce in view,
 Heard from afar his groans, and own'd them true,
 And turn'd her snowy swans, and backward flew.
 But as she saw him gasp his latest breath, 1166
 And quiv'ring agonize in pangs of death,
 Down with swift flight she plung'd, nor rage forbore,
 At once her garments and her hair she tore.
 With cruel blows she beat her guiltless breast, 1170
 The fates upbraided, and her love confess'd.
 Nor shall they yet (she cry'd) the whole devour
 With uncontroll'd inexorable pow'r:
 For thee, lost youth, my tears and restless pain
 Shall in immortal monuments remain. 1175
 With solemn pomp in annual rites return'd,
 Be thou for ever, my Adonis, mourn'd.
 Could Pluto's queen with jealous fury stórm,
 And Menthè to a fragrant herb transform?
 Yet dares not Venus with a change surprise, 1180
 And in a flow'r bid her fall'n hero rise?
 Then on the blood sweet nectar she bestows,
 The scented blood in little bubbles rose:
 Little as rainy drops, which flutt'ring fly,
 Borne by the winds, along a low'ring sky. 1185
 Short time ensu'd till where the blood was shed,
 A flower began to rear its purple head:
 Such, as on punic apples is reveal'd,
 Or in the filmy rind but half conceal'd.
 Still here the fate of lovely forms we see, 1190
 So sudden fades the sweet anemonie.
 The feeble stems, to stormy blasts a prey,
 Their sickly beauties droop and pine away.
 The winds forbid the flow'rs to flourish long, 1194
 Which owe to winds their names in Grecian song.

BOOK XI.

TRANSLATED BY MR. DRYDEN AND OTHERS.

The death of Orpheus. The Thracian women transformed to trees. The fable of Midas. The building of Troy. The story of Thetis and Peleus. The transformation of Dædalion. A wolf turned into marble. The story of Ceyx and Alcyonè. The house of sleep. Æsacus turned into a cormorant.

HERE while the Thracian bard's enchanting strain
 Soothes beasts, and woods, and all the list'ning plain,
 The female Bacchanals devoutly mad,
 In shaggy skins, like savage creatures clad,
 Warbling in air perceiv'd his lovely lay, 5
 And from a rising ground beheld him play :
 When one, the wildest, with dishevell'd hair,
 That loosely stream'd, and ruffled in the air;
 Soon as her frantic eye the lyrist spy'd,
 See, see! the hater of our sex (she cry'd); 10
 Then at his face her missive jav'lin sent,
 Which whizz'd along, and brush'd him as it went;
 But the soft wreaths of ivy twisted round,
 Prevent a deep impression of the wound.
 Another, for a weapon, hurls a stone, 15
 Which, by the sound subdu'd as soon as thrown,
 Falls at his feet, and with a seeming sense
 Implores his pardon for its late offence.
 But now their frantic rage unbounded grows,
 Turns all to madness, and no measure knows: 20
 Yet this the charms of music might subdue,
 But that, with all its charms, is conquer'd too;
 In louder strains their hideous yellings rise,
 And squeaking horn-pipes echo through the skies,
 Which, in hoarse concert with the drum, confound 25
 The moving lyre, and ev'ry gentle sound :
 Then 'twas the deafen'd stones flew on with speed,
 And saw, unsooth'd, their tuneful poet bleed.
 The birds, the beasts, and all the savage crew
 Which the sweet lyrist to attention drew, 30
 Now, by the female mob's more furious rage,
 Are driv'n, and forc'd to quit the shady stage.
 Next their fierce hands the bard himself assail,
 Nor can his song against their wrath prevail :

They flock, like birds; when, in a clust'ring flight, 35
 By day they chase the boding fowl of night.
 So, crowded amphitheatres survey
 The stag to greedy dogs a future prey.
 Their steely jav'lins which soft curls entwine
 Of budding tendrils from the leafy vine, 40
 For sacred rites of mild religion made,
 Are flung promiscuous at the poet's head.
 Those clods of earth, or flints discharge, and these
 Hurl prickly branches sliver'd from the trees.
 And, lest their passion should be unsupplied, 45
 The rabble crew, by chance, at distance spy'd
 Where oxen straining at the heavy yoke,
 The fallow'd field with slow advances broke;
 Nigh which the brawny peasants dug the soil,
 Procuring food with long laborious toil. 50
 These, when they saw the ranting throng draw near,
 Quitted their tools, and fled possess'd with fear.
 Long spades and rakes of mighty size were found,
 Carelessly left upon the broken ground:
 With these the furious lunatics engage, 55
 And first the labouring oxen feel their rage;
 Then to the poet they return'd with speed
 Whose fate was, past prevention, now decreed:
 In vain he lifts his suppliant hands, in vain
 He tries, before, his never-failing strain. 60
 And, from those sacred lips, whose thrilling sound
 Fierce tigers and insensate rocks could wound,
 Ah gods! how moving was the mournful sight,
 To see the fleeting soul now take its flight.
 Thee the soft warblers of the feather'd kind 65
 Bewail'd; for thee thy savage audience pin'd:
 Those rocks and woods that oft thy strain had led,
 Mourn for their charmer, and lament him dead,
 And drooping trees their leafy glories shed.
 Naiads and Dryads with dishevell'd hair 70
 Promiscuous weep, and scarfs of sable wear;
 Nor could the river-gods conceal their moan,
 But with new floods of tears augment their own.
 His mangled limbs lay scatter'd all around,
 His head and harp a better fortune found; 75
 In Hebrus' streams they gently roll'd along,

And sooth'd the waters with a mournful song.
 Soft deadly notes the lifeless tongue inspire,
 A doleful tune sounds from the floating lyre ;
 The hollow banks in solemn concert mourn, 80
 And the sad strain in echoing groans return,
 Now with the current to the sea they glide,
 Borne by the billows of the briny tide ;
 And driv'n where waves round rocky Lesbos roar,
 They strand and lodge upon Methymna's shore. 85

But here, when landed on the foreign soil,
 A venom'd snake, the product of the isle,
 Attempts the head, and sacred locks embru'd
 With clotted gore, and still fresh-dropping blood.
 Phoebus, at last, his kind protection gives, 90
 And from the fact the greedy monster drives :
 Whose marbled jaws his impious crime atone,
 Still grinning ghastly, though transform'd to stone.

His ghost flies downward to the Stygian shore,
 And knows the places it had seen before : 95
 Among the shadows of the pious train
 He finds Eurydicè, and loves again ;
 With pleasure views the beauteous phantom's charms,
 And clasps her in his unsubstantial arms.
 There side by side they unmolested walk, 100
 Or pass their blissful hours in pleasing talk ;
 Aft or before the bard securely goes,
 And, without danger, can review his spouse.

Bacchus, resolving to revenge the wrong,
 Of Orpheus murder'd, on the madding throng, 105
 Decreed that each accomplice-dame should stand
 Fix'd by the roots along the conscious land.
 Their wicked feet that late so nimbly ran
 To wreak their malice on the guiltless man,
 Sudden with twisted ligatures were bound, 110
 Like trees, deep planted in the turfy ground.
 And as the fowler with his subtle gins,
 His feather'd captives by the feet entwines,
 That flutt'ring pant, and struggle to get loose,
 Yet only closer draw the fatal noose : 115
 So these were caught; and, as they strove in vain
 To quit the place, they but increas'd their pain.

They flounce and toil, yet find themselves controll'd,
 The root, though pliant, toughly keeps its hold.
 In vain their toes and feet they look to find, 120
 For e'en their shapely legs are cloth'd with rind.
 One smites her thighs with a lamenting stroke,
 And finds the flesh transform'd to solid oak;
 Another with surprise and grief distress,
 Lays on above, but beats a wooden breast. 125
 A rugged bark their softer neck invades,
 Their branching arms shoot up delightful shades;
 At once they seem, and are a real grove,
 With mossy trunks below, and verdant leaves above.

Nor this suffic'd; the god's disgust remains, 130
 And he resolves to quit their hated plains;
 The vineyards of Tymole engross his care,
 And, with a better choir, he fixes there;
 Where the smooth streams of clear Pactolus roll'd,
 Then undistinguish'd for its sands of gold. 135
 The satyrs with the nymphs, his usual throng,
 Come to salute their god, and jovial dance along.
 Silenus only miss'd: for while he reel'd,
 Feeble with age and wine, about the field,
 The hoary drunkard had forgot his way, 140
 And to the Phrygian clowns became a prey;
 Who to king Midas drag the captive-god,
 While on his totty pate the wreaths of ivy nod.

Midas from Orpheus had been taught his lore,
 And knew the rites of Bacchus long before: 145
 He, when he saw his venerable guest,
 In honour of the god ordain'd a feast.
 Ten days in course, with each continu'd night,
 Were spent in genial mirth, and brisk delight;
 Then on th' eleventh, when with brighter ray 150
 Phosphor had chas'd the fading stars away,
 The king through Lydia's fields young Bacchus sought,
 And to the god his foster-father brought.
 Pleas'd with the welcome sight, he bids him soon
 But name his wish, and swears to grant the boon. 155
 A glorious offer! yet but ill bestow'd
 On him whose choice so little judgment shew'd.

Give me, says he (nor thought he ask'd too much),
 That with my body wheresoe'er I touch,
 Chang'd from the nature which it held of old, 160
 May be converted into yellow gold.

He had his wish; but yet the god repin'd
 To think the fool no better wish could find.

But the brave king departed from the place,
 With smiles of gladness sparkling in his face; 165
 Nor could contain, but, as he took his way,
 Impatient longs to make the first essay.

Down from a lowly branch a twig he drew,
 The twig straight glitter'd with a golden hue:
 He takes a stone, the stone was turn'd to gold; 170

A clod he touches, and the crumbling mould
 Acknowledg'd soon the great transforming pow'r,
 In weight and substance like a mass of ore.

He pluck'd the corn, and straight his grasp appears
 Fill'd with a bending tuft of golden ears. 175

An apple next he takes, and seems to hold
 The bright Hesperian vegetable gold.

His hand he careless on a pillar lays,
 With shining gold the fluted pillars blaze:
 And while he wishes, as the servants pour, 180
 His touch converts the stream to Danaë's show'r.

To see these miracles so finely wrought,
 Fires with transporting joy his giddy thought:
 The ready slaves prepare a sumptuous board,
 Spread with rich dainties for their happy lord; 185

Whose pow'rful hands the bread no sooner hold,
 But its whole substance is transform'd to gold:
 Up to his mouth he lifts the sav'ry meat,
 Which turns to gold as he attempts to eat:

His patron's noble juice, of purple hue, 190
 Touch'd by his lips a gilded cordial grew;
 Unfit for drink, and, wondrous to behold,
 It trickles from his jaws a fluid gold.

The rich poor fool, confounded with surprise,
 Starving in all his various plenty lies: 195
 Sick of his wish, he now detests the pow'r
 For which he ask'd so earnestly before;
 Amidst his gold with pinching famine curst,
 And justly tortur'd with an equal thirst.

At last his shining arms to heav'n he rears, 200
 And, in distress, for refuge flies to pray'rs:
 O father Bacchus, I have sinn'd (he cry'd),
 And foolishly thy gracious gift apply'd;
 Thy pity now, repenting, I implore;
 Oh, may I feel the golden plague no more! 205
 The hungry wretch, his folly thus confess'd,
 Touch'd the kind deity's good-natur'd breast;
 The gentle god annull'd his first decree,
 And from the cruel compact set him free.
 But then, to cleanse him quite from farther harm, 210
 And to dilute the relics of the charm,
 He bids him seek the stream that cuts the land
 Nigh where the tow'rs of Lydian Sardis stand;
 Then trace the river to the fountain-head,
 And meet it rising from its rocky bed; 215
 There, as the bubbling tide pours forth amain,
 To plunge his body in, and wash away the stain.
 The king instructed, to the fount retires;
 But with the golden charm the stream inspires:
 For while this quality the man forsakes, 220
 An equal pow'r the limpid water takes;
 In forms with veins of gold the neighb'ring land,
 And glides along a bed of golden sand.
 Now loathing wealth, th' occasion of his woes,
 Far in the woods he sought a calm repose; 225
 In caves and grottoes, where the nymphs resort,
 And keep with mountain Pan their silvan court,
 Ah! had he left his stupid soul behind!
 But his condition alter'd not his mind.
 For where high Tmolus rears his shady brow, 230
 And from his cliffs surveys the seas below,
 In his descent, by Sardis bounded here,
 By the small confines of Hypæpa there,
 Pan to the nymphs his frolic ditties play'd,
 Tuning his reeds beneath the checker'd shade. 235
 The nymphs are pleas'd: the boasting silvan plays,
 And speaks with slight of great Apollo's lays.
 Tmolus was arbiter; the boaster still
 Accepts the trial with unequal skill.
 The venerable judge was seated high 240
 On his own hill, that seem'd to touch the sky.

Above the whisp'ring trees his head he rears,
 From their incumb'ring boughs to free his ears;
 A wreath of oak alone his temples bound,
 The pendent acorns loosely dangled round. 245
 In me your judge (says he), there's no delay:
 Then bids the goatherd god begin and play.

Pan tun'd the pipe, and with his rural song
 Pleas'd the low taste of all the vulgar throng;
 Such songs a vulgar judgment mostly please: 250
 Midas was there, and Midas judg'd with these.

The mountain sire, with grave deportment, now
 To Phœbus turns his venerable brow;
 And, as he turns, with him the list'ning wood
 In the same posture of attention stood. 255
 The god his own Parnassian laurel crown'd,
 And in a wreath his golden tresses bound,
 Graceful his purple mantle swept the ground.
 High on the left his iv'ry lute he rais'd;
 The lute, emboss'd with glitt'ring jewels, blaz'd. 260
 In his right hand he nicely held the quill;
 His easy posture spoke a master's skill.

The strings he touch'd with more than human art,
 Which pleas'd the judge's ear, and sooth'd his heart;
 Who soon judiciously the palm decreed, 265
 And to the lute postpon'd the squeaking reed.

All, with applause, the rightful sentence heard,
 Midas alone dissatisfied appear'd;
 To him unjustly giv'n the judgment seems,
 For Pan's barbaric notes he most esteems. 270
 The lyric god, who thought his untun'd ear
 Deserv'd but ill a human form to wear,
 Of that deprives him, and supplies the place
 With some more fit, and of an ampler space:
 Fix'd on his noddle an unseemly pair, 275
 Flagg'd, and large, and full of whitish hair;
 Without a total change of what he was,
 Still in the man preserve the simple ass.

He, to conceal the scandal of the deed,
 A purple turban folds about his head; 280
 Veils the reproach from public view, and fears
 The laughing world would spy his monstrous ears.
 One trusty barber-slave, that us'd to dress

His master's hair, when lengthen'd to excess,
 The mighty secret knew, but knew alone, 285
 And, though impatient, durst not make it known.
 Restless, at last a private place he found,
 Then dug a hole, and told it to the ground;
 In a low whisper he reveal'd the case, 289
 And cover'd in the earth, and silent left the place.

In time, of trembling reeds a plenteous crop
 From the confided furrow sprouted up:
 Which, high advancing with the rip'ning year,
 Made known the tiller, and his fruitless care:
 For then the rustling blades, and whisp'ring wind,
 To tell th' important secret both combin'd. 296

Phœbus, with full revenge, from Tmolus flies,
 Darts through the air, and cleaves the liquid skies;
 Near Hellespont he lights, and treads the plains
 Where great Laomedon sole monarch reigns; 300
 Where, built between the two projecting strands,
 To Panomphæan Jove an altar stands.
 Here first aspiring thoughts the king employ,
 To found the lofty tow'rs of future Troy.
 The work, from schemes magnificent begun, 305
 At vast expense was slowly carried on:
 Which Phœbus seeing with the trident god,
 Who rules the swelling surges with his nod,
 Assuming each a mortal shape, combine
 At a set price to finish his design. 310
 The work was built; the king their price denies,
 And his injustice backs with perjuries.
 This Neptune could not brook, but drove the main,
 A mighty deluge o'er the Phrygian plain:
 'Twas all a sea, the waters of the deep 315
 From ev'ry vale the copious harvest sweep;
 The briny billows overflow the soil,
 Ravage the fields, and mock the ploughman's toil.
 Nor this appeas'd the god's revengeful mind,
 For still a greater plague remains behind; 320
 A huge sea-monster lodges on the sands,
 And the king's daughter for his prey demands.
 To him that sav'd the damsel was decreed,
 A set of horses of the sun's fine breed;

But when Alcides from the rock untied 325
 The trembling fair, the ransom was deny'd,
 He, in revenge, the new-built walls attack'd,
 And the twice perjur'd city bravely sack'd.
 Telamon aided, and in justice shar'd
 Part of the plunder as his due reward; 330
 The princess, rescu'd late, with all her charms,
 Hesione was yielded to his arms;
 For Peleus, with a goddess-bride was more
 Proud of his spouse, than of his birth before;
 Grandsons to Jove there might be more than one, 335
 But he the goddess had enjoy'd alone.

For Proteus thus to virgin Thetis said:
 Fair goddess of the waves, consent to wed,
 And take some sprightly lover to your bed.
 A son you'll have, the terror of the field, 340
 To whom in fame, and pow'r his sire shall yield.

Jove, who ador'd the nymph with boundless love,
 Did from his breast the dang'rous flame remove.
 He knew the fates, nor car'd to raise up one,
 Whose fame and greatness should eclipse his own.
 On happy Peleus he bestow'd her charms, 346
 And bless'd his grandson in the goddess' arms:

A silent creek Thessalia's coast can shew;
 Two arms project, and shape it like a bow;
 'Twould make a bay, but the transparent tide 350
 Does scarce the yellow gravel bottom hide;
 For the quick eye may through the liquid wave
 A firm unweedy level beach perceive.

A grove of fragrant myrtle near it grows,
 Whose boughs, though thick, a beauteous grot disclose:
 The well-wrought fabric, to discerning eyes, 356
 Rather by art than nature seems to rise.

A bridled dolphin oft fair Thetis bore
 To this her lov'd retreat, her fav'rite shore;
 Here Peleus seiz'd her, slumb'ring where she lay,
 And urg'd his suit with all that love could say: 361
 But when he found her obstinately coy,
 Resolv'd to force her, and command the joy;
 The nymph, o'erpower'd, to art for succour flies,
 And various shapes the eager youth surprise: 365

A bird she seems, but plies her wings in vain,
 His hands the fleeting substance still detain :
 A branchy tree high in the air she grew ;
 About its bark his nimble arms he threw :
 A tiger next she glares with flaming eyes ; 370
 The frighten'd lover quits his hold, and flies:
 The sea-gods he with sacred rites adores,
 Then a libation on the ocean pours;
 While the fat entrails crackle in the fire,
 And sheets of smoke in sweet perfume aspire ; 375
 Till Proteus rising from his oozy bed,
 Thus to the poor desponding lover said:
 No more in anxious thoughts your mind employ,
 For yet you shall possess the dear expected joy.
 You must once more th' unwary nymph surprise, 380
 As in her coolly grot she slumb'ring lies ;
 Then bind her fast with unrelenting hands,
 And strain her tender limbs with knotted bands ;
 Still hold her under ev'ry different shape,
 Till tir'd she tries no longer to escape. 385
 Thus he ; then sunk beneath the glassy flood,
 And broken accents flutter'd, where he stood.

Bright Sol had almost now his journey done,
 And down the steepy western convex run ;
 When the fair Nereïd left the briny wave, 390
 And, as she us'd, retreated to her cave.
 He scarce had bound her fast, when she arose,
 And into various shapes her body throws :
 She went to move her arms, and found 'em ty'd ;
 Then with a sigh, Some god assists, she cry'd, 395
 And in her proper shape stood blushing by his side.
 About her waist his longing arms he flung,
 From which embrace the great Achillès sprung.

Peleus unmix'd felicity enjoy'd
 (Blest in a valiant son, and virtuous bride), 400
 Till fortune did in blood his hands imbrue,
 And his own brother by curs'd chance he slew :
 Then driv'n from Thessaly, his native clime,
 Trachinia first gave shelter to his crime ;
 Where peaceful Ceyx mildly fill'd the throne, 405
 And like his sire, the morning planet shone ;

But now unlike himself bedew'd with tears,
 Mourning a brother lost, his brow appears.
 First to the town with travel spent, and care,
 Peleus, and his small company repair: 410
 His herds, and flocks, the while at leisure feed,
 On the rich pasture of a neighb'ring mead.
 The prince before the royal presence brought,
 Shew'd by the suppliant olive what he sought:
 Then tells his name, and race, and country right, 415
 But hides th' unhappy reason of his flight.
 He begs the king some little town to give,
 Where they may safe, his faithful vassals live.
 Ceyx replied: To all, my bounty flows;
 A hospitable realm your suit has chose: 420
 Your glorious race, and far-resounding fame,
 And grandsire Jove, peculiar favours claim.
 All you can wish, I grant; entreaties spare;
 My kingdom (would 'twere worth the sharing) share.

Tears stopp'd his speech: astonish'd Peleus pleads
 To know the cause from whence his grief proceeds.
 The prince replied: There's none of ye but deems
 This hawk was ever such as now it seems:
 Know, 'twas a hero once, Dædalion nam'd,
 For warlike deeds and haughty valour fam'd; 430
 Like me to that bright luminary born,
 Who wakes Aurora, and brings on the morn.
 His fierceness still remains, and love of blood,
 Now dread of birds, and tyrant of the wood.
 My make was softer, peace my greatest care; 435
 But this, my brother, wholly bent on war,
 Late nations fear'd, and routed armies fled
 That force, which now the tim'rous pigeons dread.
 A daughter he possess'd divinely fair,
 And scarcely yet had seen her fifteenth year, 440
 Young Chionè: a thousand rivals strove
 To win the maid, and teach her how to love.
 Phœbus, and Mercury, by chance one day
 From Delphi, and Cyllenè pass'd this way;
 Together they the virgin saw: desire 445
 At once warm'd both their breasts with am'rous fire.
 Phœbus resolv'd to wait till close of day:

But Mercury's hot love brook'd no delay :
 With his entrancing rod the maid he charms,
 And unresisted revels in her arms. 450
 'Twas night, and Phoebus in a beldame's dress,
 To the late rifled beauty got access.
 Her time complete nine circling moons had run :
 To either god she bore a lovely son :
 To Mercury, Autolycus she brought, 455
 Who turn'd to thefts and tricks his subtle thought ;
 Possess he was of all his father's slight,
 At will made white look black, and black look white.
 Philammon, born to Phœbus, like his sire
 The muses lov'd, and finely struck the lyre, 460
 And made his voice and touch in harmony conspire.
 In vain, fond maid, you boast this double birth,
 The love of gods, and royal father's worth,
 And Jove among your ancestors rehearse!
 Could blessings such as these e'er prove a curse? 465
 To her they did, who with audacious pride,
 Vain of her own, Diana's charms decry'd.
 Her taunts the goddess with resentment fill.
 My face you like not, you shall try my skill. 469
 She said ; and straight her vengeful bow she strung,
 And sent a shaft that pierc'd her guilty tongue :
 The bleeding tongue in vain its accents tries ;
 In the red stream her soul reluctant flies.
 With sorrow wild I ran to her relief,
 And tried to moderate my brother's grief; 475
 He, deaf as rocks by stormy surges beat,
 Loudly laments and hears me not intreat.
 When on the fun'ral pile he saw her laid,
 Thrice he to rush into the flames essay'd,
 Thrice with officious care by us was staid. 480
 Now, mad with grief, away he fled amain,
 Like a stung heifer that resents the pain,
 O'er the most rugged ways so fast he ran,
 He seem'd a bird already, not a man : 485
 He left us breathless all behind ; and now,
 In quest of death, had gain'd Parnassus' brow :
 But when from thence headlong himself he threw,
 He fell not, but with airy pinions flew.
 Phoebus in pity chang'd him to a fowl, 490

Whose crooked beak and claws the birds control,
 Little of bulk, but of a warlike soul.
 A hawk become, the feather'd race's foe,
 He tries to ease his own by other's woe.

While they, astonish'd, heard the king relate 495
 These wonders of his hapless brother's fate ;
 The prince's herdsman at the court arrives,
 And fresh surprise to all the audience gives:—
 O Peleus, Peleus, dreadful news I bear
 (He said); and trembled as he spoke, for fear. 500
 The worst, affrighted Peleus bid him tell,
 Whilst Ceyx, too, grew pale with friendly zeal.
 Thus he began: When Sol mid-heav'n had gain'd,
 And half his way was pass'd, and half remain'd,
 I to the level shore my cattle drove, 505
 And let them freely in the meadows rove ;
 Some stretch'd at length, admire the wat'ry plain;
 Some cropp'd the herb, some wanton swam the main.
 A temple stands of antique make, hard by,
 Where no gilt domes nor marble lure the eye; 510
 Unpolish'd rafters bear its lowly height,
 Hid by a grove, as ancient, from the sight.
 Here Nereus and the Nereïds they adore ;
 I learnt it from the man who thither bore
 His net, to dry it on the sunny shore. 515
 Adjoins a lake, inclos'd with willows round,
 Where swelling waves have overflow'd the mound,
 And, muddy, stagnate on the lower ground.
 From thence a rustling noise increasing flies, 519
 Strikes the still shore, and frights us with surprise.
 Straight a huge wolf rush'd from the marshy wood,
 His jaws besmear'd with mingled foam and blood.
 Though equally by hunger urg'd, and rage,
 His appetite he mind's not to assuage ;
 Nought that he meets, his rapid fury spares, 525
 But the whole herd with mad disorder tears.
 Some of our men, who strove to drive him thence,
 Torn by his teeth, have died in their defence.
 The echoing lakes, the sea, and fields, and shore,
 Impurpled blush with streams of reeking gore. 530
 Delay is loss, nor have we time for thought;

While yet some few remain alive, we ought
 To seize our arms, and, with confed'rate force,
 Try if we so can stop his bloody course.
 But Peleus car'd not for his ruin'd herd; 535
 His crime he call'd to mind, and thence inferr'd,
 That Psamathè's revenge this havoc made,
 In sacrifice to murder'd Phocus' shade.
 The king commands his servants to their arms,
 Resolv'd to go: but the loud noise alarms 540
 His lovely queen, who from her chamber flew,
 And her half-plaited hair behind her threw:
 About his neck she hung with loving fears,
 And now with words, and now with pleading tears,
 Intreated that he'd send his men alone, 545
 And stay himself to save two lives in one.
 Then Peleus: Your just fears, O queen, forget;
 Too much the offer leaves me in your debt.
 No arms against the monster I shall bear,
 But the sea-nymphs appease with humble pray'r. 550
 The citadel's high turrets pierce the sky,
 Which home-bound vessels, glad, from far descry;
 This they ascend, and thence with sorrow ken,
 The mangled heifers lie, and bleeding men;
 Th' inexorable ravager they view, 555
 With blood discolour'd, still the rest pursue:
 There Peleus pray'd submissive tow'rds the sea,
 And deprecates the ire of injur'd Psamathè.
 But deaf to all his pray'rs the nymph remain'd,
 Till Thetis for her spouse the boon obtain'd. 560
 Pleas'd with the luxury, the furious beast,
 Unstopp'd, continues still his bloody feast:
 While yet upon a sturdy bull he flew,
 Chang'd by the nymph, a marble block he grew.
 No longer dreadful now the wolf appears, 565
 Buried in stone, and vanish'd like their fears.
 Yet still the fates unhappy Peleus vex'd:
 To the Magnesian shore he wanders next.
 Acastus there, who rul'd the peaceful clime,
 Grants his request, and expiates his crime. 570

These prodigies affect the pious prince,
 But more perplex'd with those that happen'd since,

He purposes to seek the Clarian god,
 Avoiding Delphi, his more fam'd abode,
 Since Phlegian robbers made unsafe the road. 575
 Yet could he not from her he lov'd so well,
 The fatal voyage, he resolv'd, conceal;
 But when she saw her lord prepar'd to part,
 A deadly cold ran shiv'ring to her heart;
 Her faded cheeks are chang'd to boxen hue, 580
 And in her eyes the tears are ever new.
 She thrice essay'd to speak; her accents hung,
 And fault'ring died unfinish'd on her tongue,
 Or vanish'd into sighs: With long delay
 Her voice return'd, and found the wonted way. 585

Tell me, my lord (she said), what fault unknown
 Thy once-belov'd Alcyonè has done?
 Whither, ah whither, is thy kindness gone?
 Can Ceyx then sustain to leave his wife,
 And unconcern'd forsake the sweets of life? 590
 What can thy mind to this long journey move?
 Or need'st thou absence to renew thy love?
 Yet, if thou go'st by land, though grief possess
 My soul e'en then, my fears will be the less.
 But ah! be warn'd to shun the wat'ry way, 595
 The face is frightful of the stormy sea:
 For late I saw adrift disjointed planks,
 And empty tombs erected on the banks.
 Nor let false hopes to trust betray thy mind,
 Because my sire in caves constrains the wind, 600
 Can with a breath their clam'rous rage appease,
 They fear his whistle, and forsake the seas:
 Not so; for once indulg'd, they sweep the main;
 Deaf to the call, or, hearing, hear in vain;
 But bent on mischief, bear the waves before, 605
 And not content with seas, insult the shore,
 When ocean, air, and earth, at once engage,
 And rooted forests fly before their rage:
 At once the clashing clouds to battle move,
 And lightnings run across the fields above: 610
 I know them well, and mark'd their rude comport,
 While yet a child within my father's court:
 In times of tempest they command alone,

And he but sits precarious on the throne :
 The more I know, the more my fears augment ; 615
 And fears are oft prophetic of th' event.
 But, if not fears or reasons will prevail,
 If fate has fix'd thee obstinate to sail,
 Go not without thy wife, but let me bear
 My part of danger with an equal share, 620
 And present, what I suffer, only fear :
 Then o'er the bounding billows shall we fly,
 Secure to live together, or to die.

These reasons mov'd her warlike husband's heart,
 But still he held his purpose to depart : 625
 For as he lov'd her equal to his life,
 He would not to the seas expose his wife ;
 Nor could be wrought his voyage to refrain,
 But sought by arguments to soothe her pain :
 Nor these avail'd ; at length he lights on one, 630
 With which so difficult a cause he won :
 My love, so short an absence cease to fear,
 For by my father's holy flame I swear,
 Before two moons their orb with light adorn,
 If heav'n allow me life, I will return. 635

This promise of so short a stay prevails ;
 He soon equips the ship, supplies the sails,
 And gives the word to launch ; she trembling
 views

This pomp of death, and parting tears renews :
 Last with a kiss, she took a long farewell, 640
 Sigh'd with a sad presage, and, swooning, fell :
 While Ceyx seeks delays, the lusty crew,
 Rais'd on their banks, their oars in order drew
 To their broad breasts ; the ship with fury flew.
 The queen, recover'd, rears her humid eyes, 645
 And first her husband on the poop espies,
 Shaking his hand at distance on the main ;
 She took the sign, and shook her hand again.
 Still as the ground recedes, contracts her view
 With sharpen'd sight, till she no longer knew 650
 The much-lov'd face ; that comfort lost supplies
 With less, and with the galley feeds her eyes ;
 The galley borne from view by rising gales,
 She follow'd with her sight the flying sails :

When e'en the flying sails were seen no more, 655
 Forsaken of all sight she left the shore.

Then on her bridal bed her body throws,
 And sought in sleep her wearied eyes to close:
 Her husband's pillow, and the widow'd part
 Which once he press'd, renew'd the former smart. 660

And now a breeze from shore began to blow,
 The sailors ship their oars, and cease to row;
 Then hoist their yards a-trip, and all their sails
 Let fall, to court the wind, and catch the gales:
 By this the vessel half her course had run, 665
 And as much rested till the rising sun;
 Both shores were lost to sight, when, at the close
 Of day, a stiffer gale at east arose:
 The sea grew white, the rolling waves from far,
 Like heralds, first denounce the wat'ry war. 670

This seen, the master soon began to cry:
 Strike, strike the top-sail; let the main-sheet fly,
 And furl your sails. The winds repel the sound,
 And in the speaker's mouth the speech is drown'd.
 Yet of their own accord, as danger taught, 675
 Each in his way officiously they wrought;
 Some stow their oars, or stop the leaky sides;
 Another bolder yet, the yard bestrides,
 And folds the sails; a fourth with labour laves
 Th' intruding seas, and waves ejects on waves. 680

In this confusion while their work they ply,
 The winds augment the winter of the sky,
 And wage intestine wars; the suff'ring seas
 Are tost and mingled as their tyrants please.
 The master would command, but in despair 685
 Of safety, stands amaz'd with stupid care;
 Nor what to bid or what forbid he knows;
 Th' ungovern'd tempest to such fury grows;
 Vain is his force, and vainer is his skill;
 With such a concourse comes the flood of ill; 690
 The cries of men are mix'd with rattling shrouds;
 Seas dash on seas, and clouds encounter clouds:
 At once from east to west, from pole to pole,
 The forky lightnings flash, the roaring thunders roll.

Now waves on waves ascending scale the skies, 695
 And in the fires above the water fries;

When yellow sands are sifted from below,
 The glitt'ring billows give a golden show;
 And when the fouler bottom spews the black,
 The Stygian die the tainted waters take: 700
 Then frothy white appear the flatted seas,
 And change their colours, changing their disease.
 Like various fits the Trachin vessel finds,
 And now sublime she rides upon the winds;
 As from a lofty summit looks from high, 705
 And from the clouds beholds the nether sky;
 Now from the depth of hell they lift their sight:
 And at a distance see superior light:
 The lashing billows make a loud report,
 And beat her sides, as batt'ring-rams a fort: 710
 Or as a lion bounding in his way,
 With force augmented, bears against his prey
 Sidelong to seize; or, unappall'd with fear,
 Springs on the toils, and rushes on the spear:
 So seas impell'd by winds, with added pow'r 715
 Assault the sides and o'er the hatches tow'r.

The planks (their pitchy cov'ring wash'd away)
 Now yield; and now a yawning breach display:
 The roaring waters, with a hostile tide,
 Rush through the ruins of her gaping side; 720
 Meantime in sheets of rain the sky descends,
 And ocean swell'd with waters upwards tends;
 One rising, falling one, the heav'ns and sea
 Meet at their confines in the middle way:
 The sails are drunk with show'rs, and drop with rain,
 Sweet waters mingle with the briny main. 726
 No star appears to lend his friendly light;
 Darkness and tempest make a double night;
 But flashing fires disclose the deep by turns,
 And while the lightnings blaze, the water burns. 730

Now all the waves their scatter'd force unite,
 And as a soldier foremost in the fight,
 Makes way for others, and an host alone
 Still presses on, and, urging, gains the town;
 So while th' invading billows come a-breast, 735
 The hero tenth advanc'd before the rest,
 Sweeps all before him with impetuous sway,
 And from the walls descends upon the prey;

Part following enter, part remain without,
 With envy hear their fellows' conqu'ring shout, 740
 And mount on others' backs, in hopes to share
 The city, thus become the seat of war.

A universal crowd resounds aloud,
 The sailors run in heaps, a helpless crowd;
 Art fails, and courage falls, no succour near; 745
 As many waves, as many deaths appear.

One weeps, and yet despairs of late relief;
 One cannot weep, his fears congeal his grief,
 But stupid, with dry eyes expects his fate:
 One, with loud shrieks, laments his lost estate, 750
 And calls those happy whom their fun'erals wait.

This wretch with pray'rs and vows the gods implores,
 And e'en the skies, he cannot see, adores.

That other on his friends, his thoughts bestows,
 His careful father, and his faithful spouse. 755

The covetous worldling in his anxious mind,
 Thinks only on the wealth he left behind.

All Ceyx his Alcyonè employs,
 For her he grieves, yet in her absence joys,
 His wife he wishes, and would still be near, 760
 Nor her with him, but wishes him with her:

Now with last looks he seeks his native shore,
 Which fate has destin'd him to see no more;
 He sought, but in the dark, tempestuous night,
 He knew not whither to direct his sight. 765

So whirl the seas, such darkness blinds the sky,
 That the black night receives a deeper die.

The giddy ship ran round; the tempest tore
 Her mast, and overboard the rudder bore;
 One billow mounts, and, with a scornful brow. 770

Proud of her conquest gain'd, insults the waves below;
 Nor lighter falls, than if some giant tore

Pindus and Athos with the freight they bore,
 And toss'd on seas, prest with the pond'rous blow,
 Down sinks the ship within the abyss below. 775

Down with the vessel sink into the main;

The many, never more to rise again.

Some few, on scatter'd planks, with fruitless care
 Lay hold and swim; but while they swim, despair.

E'en he who late a sceptre did command, 780

Now grasps a floating fragment in his hand;
 And while he struggles on the stormy main,
 Invokes his father, and his wife's in vain.

But yet his consort is his greatest care;

Alcyonè he names amidst his pray'r; 785

Names as a charm against the waves and wind,
 Most in his mouth, and ever in his mind.

Tir'd with his toil, all hopes of safety past,
 From prayers to wishes he descends at last;

That his dead body, wafted to the sands, 790

Might have its burial from her friendly hands.

As oft as he can catch a gulp of air,

And peep above the seas, he names the fair;

And e'en when plung'd beneath, on her he raves,

Murm'ring Alcyonè beneath the waves: 795

At last a falling billow stops his breath,

Breaks o'er his head, and whelms him underneath.

Bright Lucifer, unlike himself, appears

That night, his heav'nly form obscur'd with tears:

And since he was forbid to leave the skies, 800

He muffled with a cloud his mournful eyes.

Meantime Alcyonè (his fate unknown)

Computes how many nights he had been gone;

Observes the waning moon with hourly view,

Numbers her age, and wishes for a new; 805

Against the promis'd time provides with care,

And hastens in the woof the robes he was to wear:

And for herself employs another loom,

New drest to meet her lord returning home,

Flatt'ring her heart with joys that never were to come:

She fum'd the temples with an od'rous flame, 811

And oft before the sacred altars came,

To pray for him who was an empty name.

All pow'rs implor'd, but far above the rest,

To Juno she her pious vows address'd, 815

Her much-lov'd lord from perils to protect,

And safe o'er seas his voyage to direct:

Then pray'd, that she might still possess his heart,

And no pretending rival share a part;

This last petition heard of all her pray'r, 820

The rest, dispers'd by winds, were lost in air.

But she, the goddess of the nuptial bed,

Tir'd with her vain devotions for the dead,
 Resolv'd the tainted hand should be repell'd,
 Which incense offer'd, and her altar held : 825
 Then Iris thus bespoke; Thou faithful maid,
 By whom thy queen's commands are well convey'd,
 Haste to the house of Sleep, and bid the god
 Who rules the night by visions with a nod,
 Prepare a dream, in figure and in form 839
 Resembling him, who perish'd in the storm;
 This form before Alcyonè present,
 To make her certain of the sad event.

Indu'd with robes of various hue she flies, 834
 And flying draws an arch (a segment of the skies):
 Then leaves her bending bow, and from the steep
 Descends to search the silent house of Sleep.

Near the Cymmerians, in his dark abode,
 Deep in a cavern, dwells the drowsy god;
 Whose gloomy mansion nor the rising sun, 840
 Nor setting, visits, nor the lightsome noon;
 But lazy vapours round the region fly,
 Perpetual twilight, and a doubtful sky:
 No crowing cock does there his wings display,
 Nor with his horny bill provoke the day; 845
 Nor watchful dogs, nor the more wakeful geese,
 Disturb, with nightly noise, the sacred peace;
 Nor beast of nature, nor the tame are nigh,
 Nor trees with tempests rock'd, nor human cry;
 But safe Repose, without an air of breath, 850
 Dwells here, and a dumb quiet next to death.

An arm of Lethè with a gentle flow,
 Arising upwards from the rock below,
 The palace moats, and o'er the pebbles creeps,
 And with soft murmurs calls the coming sleeps. 855
 Around its entry nodding poppies grow,
 And all cool simples that sweet rest bestow;
 Night from the plants their sleepy virtue drains,
 And passing, sheds it on the silent plains:
 No door there was th' unguarded house to keep, 860
 On creaking hinges turn'd, to break his sleep.

But in the gloomy court was rais'd a bed,
 Stuff'd with black plumes, and on an ebon stead;

Black was the cov'ring too where lay the god,
 And slept supine, his limbs display'd abroad: 865
 About his head fantastic visions fly,
 Which various images of things supply,
 And mock their forms; the leaves on trees not more,
 Nor bearded ears in fields, nor sands upon the shore.
 The virgin ent'ring bright, indulg'd the day 870
 To the brown cave, and brush'd the dreams away:
 The god disturb'd with this new glare of light
 Cast sudden on his face, unseal'd his sight,
 And rais'd his tardy head, which sunk again,
 And sinking, on his bosom knock'd his chin; 875
 At length shook off himself, and ask'd the dame
 (And asking yawn'd), for what intent she came.
 To whom the goddess thus: O sacred Rest,
 Sweet pleasing Sleep, of all the pow'rs the best!
 O peace of mind, repairer of decay, 880
 Whose balms renew the limbs to labours of the day,
 Care shuns thy soft approach, and sullen flies away!
 Adorn a dream, expressing human form,
 The shape of him who suffer'd in the storm,
 And send it flitting to the Trachin court, 885
 The wreck of wretched Ceyx to report:
 Before his queen bid the pale spectre stand,
 Who begs a vain relief at Juno's hand.
 She said, and scarce awake her eyes could keep,
 Unable to support the fumes of sleep; 890
 But fled, returning by the way she went,
 And swerv'd along her bow with swift ascent.
 The god, uneasy till he slept again,
 Resolv'd at once to rid himself of pain;
 And, though against his custom, call'd aloud, 895
 Exciting Morphéus from the sleepy crowd:
 Morpheus, of all his numerous train, express'd
 The shape of man, and imitated best:
 The walk, the words, the gesture could supply,
 The habit mimic, and the mien bely; 900
 Plays well, but all his action is confin'd,
 Extending not beyond our human kind.
 Another, birds, and beasts, and dragons apes,
 And dreadful images, and monster shapes:
 This demon, Icélos, in heav'n's high hall, 905

The gods have nam'd; but men Phobétor call.
 A third is Phantasus, whose actions roll
 On meaner thoughts, and things devoid of soul;
 Earth, fruits, and flow'rs, he represents in dreams,
 And solid rocks remov'd, and running streams. 910
 These three to kings and chiefs their scenes display,
 The rest before th' ignoble commons play.

Of these the chosen Morpheus is dispatch'd;
 Which done, the lazy monarch, overwatch'd,
 Down from his propping elbow drops his head, 915
 Dissolv'd in sleep, and shrinks within his bed.

Darkling the demon glides, for flight prepar'd,
 So soft, that scarce his fanning wings are heard.
 To Trachin, swift as thought, the flitting shade,
 Through air his momentary journey made; 920

Then lays aside the steerage of his wings,
 Forsakes his proper form, assumes the king's;
 And pale as death, despoil'd of his array,
 Into the queen's apartment takes his way,
 And stands before the bed at dawn of day; 925

Unmov'd his eyes and wet his beard appears;
 And shedding vain, but seeming real tears;
 The briny water dropping from his hairs.
 Then staring on her with a ghastly look,
 And hollow voice, he thus the queen bespoke: 930

Know'st thou not me? nor yet, unhappy wife?
 Or are my features perish'd with my life?
 Look once again, and for thy husband lost,
 Lo all that's left of him, thy husband's ghost!

Thy vows for my return were all in vain, 935
 The stormy south o'ertook us in the main,
 And never shalt thou see thy living lord again.
 Bear witness, heav'n, I call'd on thee in death,
 And while I call'd, a billow stopp'd my breath.

Think not, that flying fame reports my fate: 940
 I present, I appear, and my own wreck relate.
 Rise, wretched widow, rise; nor undeplor'd
 Permit my soul to pass the Stygian ford;
 But rise, prepar'd in black, to mourn thy perish'd lord.

Thus said the player-god; and adding art 945
 Of voice, of gesture, so perform'd his part,
 She thought (so like her love the shade appears),

That Ceyx spake the words, and Ceyx shed the tears
 She groan'd, her inward soul with grief opprest, 949
 She sigh'd, she wept, and, sleeping, beat her breast;
 Then stretch'd her arms t' embrace his body bare;
 Her clasping arms enclose but empty air:
 At this not yet awake, she cry'd, O, stay;
 One is our fate, and common is our way!

So dreadful was the dream, so loud she spoke, 955
 That starting sudden up, the slumber broke:
 Then cast her eyes around, in hope to view
 Her vanish'd lord, and find the vision true:
 For now the maids who waited her commands,
 Ran in with lighted tapers in their hands. 960
 Tir'd with the search, nor finding what she seeks,
 With cruel blows she pounds her blubber'd cheeks;
 Then from her beaten breast the linen tear,
 And cut the golden caul that bound her hair.
 Her nurse demands the cause; with louder cries 965
 She prosecutes her griefs, and thus replies:

No more Alcyonè; she suffer'd death
 With her lov'd lord, when Ceyx lost his breath:
 No flatt'ry, no false comfort, give me none,
 My shipwreck'd Ceyx is for ever gone: 970
 I saw, I saw him manifest in view,
 His voice, his figure, and his gestures knew:
 His lustre lost, and ev'ry living grace,
 Yet I retain'd the features of his face; 974
 Though with pale cheeks, wet beard, and dropping
 None but my Ceyx could appear so fair: [hair
 I would have strain'd him with a strict embrace,
 But through my arms he slipt, and vanish'd from the
 place:

There, e'en just there he stood;—and as she spoke,
 Where last the spectre was she cast her look: 980
 Fain would she hope, and gaz'd upon the ground,
 If any printed footsteps might be found.

Then sigh'd, and said: This I too well foreknew,
 And my prophetic fears presag'd too true:
 'Twas what I begg'd, when with a bleeding heart 985
 I took my leave, and suffer'd thee to part:
 Or I to go along, or thou to stay,
 Never, ah never to divide our way!

Happier for me, that all our hours assign'd 989
 Together we had liv'd; e'en not in death disjoin'd!
 So had my Ceyx still been living here,
 Or with my Ceyx I had perish'd there:
 Now I die absent in the vast profound;
 And me without myself the seas have drown'd:
 The storms are not so cruel; should I strive 995
 To lengthen life, and such a grief survive?
 But neither will I strive, nor wretched thee
 In death forsake, but keep thee company.
 If not one common sepulchre contains
 Our bodies, or one urn our last remains, 1000
 Yet Ceyx and Alcyonè shall join,
 Their names remember'd in one common line.

No farther voice her mighty grief affords,
 For sighs came rushing in between her words, 1004
 And stopp'd her tongue: but what her tongue deny'd,
 Soft tears and groans, and dumb complaints supply'd.

'Twas morning: to the port she takes her way,
 And stands upon the margin of the sea:
 That place, that very spot of ground she sought,
 Or thither by her destiny was brought, 1010
 Where last he stood: and while she sadly said,
 'Twas here he left me, ling'ring here delay'd
 His parting kiss, and there his anchors weigh'd.

Thus speaking, while her thoughts past actions trace,
 And call to mind, admonish'd by the place, 1015
 Sharp at her utmost ken she cast her eyes,
 And somewhat floating from afar descries:
 It seem'd a corse a-drift to distant sight,
 But at a distance who could judge aright?
 It wafted nearer yet, and then she knew, 1020
 That what before she but surmis'd, was true:
 A corse it was, but whose, it was unknown,
 Yet mov'd howe'er, she made the case her own:
 Took the bad omen of a shipwreck'd man,
 As for a stranger wept, and thus began: 1025

Poor wretch, on stormy seas to lose thy life,
 Unhappy thou, but more thy widow'd wife!—
 At this she paus'd; for now the flowing tide
 Had brought the body nearer to the side:
 The more she looks, the more her fears increase, 1030

At nearer sight; and she herself the less:
 Now driv'n ashore, and at her feet it lies,
 She knows too much in knowing whom she sees:
 Her husband's corse! at this she loudly shrieks,
 'Tis he, 'tis he! she cries, and tears her cheeks, 1035
 Her hair, and vest; and stooping to the sands,
 About his neck she cast her trembling hands.

And is it thus, O dearer than my life,
 Thus, thus return'st thou to thy longing wife?—
 She said, and to the neighb'ring mole she strode 1040
 (Rais'd there to break th' incursions of the flood).

Headlong from thence to plunge herself she springs,
 But shoots along, supported on her wings;
 A bird new-made, about the banks she plies,
 Not far from shore, and short excursions tries; 1045
 Nor seeks in air her humble flight to raise,
 Content to skim the surface of the seas:
 Her bill, though slender, sends a creaking noise,
 And imitates a lamentable voice.

Now lighting where the bloodless body lies, 1050
 She with a fun'ral note renews her cries:
 At all her stretch, her little wings she spread,
 And with her feather'd arms embrac'd the dead,
 Then flick'ring to his pallid lips she strove
 To print a kiss, the last essay of love. 1055

Whether the vital touch reviv'd the dead,
 Or that the moving waters rais'd his head
 To meet the kiss, the vulgar doubt alone;
 For sure a present miracle was shewn.
 The gods their shapes to winter-birds translate, 1060
 But both obnoxious to their former fate.

Their conjugal affection still is tied,
 And still the mournful race is multiplied:
 They bill, they tread; Alcyonè compress'd,
 Seven days sits brooding on her floating nest; 1065
 A wintry queen: her sire at length is kind,
 Calms ev'ry storm, and hushes ev'ry wind;
 Prepares his empire for his daughter's ease,
 And for his hatching nephews smooths the seas.

These some old man sees wanton in the air, 1070
 And praises the unhappy constant pair,
 Then to his friend the long-neck'd corm'rant shews,

The former tale reviving other's woes :
 That sable bird (he cries), which cuts the flood,
 With slender legs, was once of royal blood; 1075
 His ancestors from mighty Tros proceed,
 The brave Laomedon, and Ganymede
 (Whose beauty tempted Jove to steal the boy),
 And Priam, hapless prince ! who fell with Troy.
 Himself was Hector's brother, and (had fate 1080
 But given his hopeful youth a longer date)
 Perhaps had rivall'd warlike Hector's worth,
 Though on the mother's side of meaner birth.
 Fair Alyxothoë, a country maid,
 Bare Æsacus by stealth in Ida's shade. 1085
 He fled the noisy town, and pompous court,
 Lov'd the lone hills, and simple rural sport,
 And seldom to the city would resort.
 Yet he no rustic clownishness profess'd,
 Nor was soft love a stranger to his breast: 1090
 The youth had long the nymph Hesperie woo'd,
 Oft through the thicket, or the mead pursu'd :
 Her haply on her father's bank he spy'd
 While fearless she her silver tresses dry'd ;
 Away she fled: not stags, with half such speed, 1095
 Before the prowling wolf scud o'er the mead ;
 Not ducks, when they the safer flood forsake,
 Pursu'd by hawks, so swift regain the lake.
 As fast she follow'd in the hot career ;
 Desire the lover wing'd, the virgin fear. 1100
 A snake unseen now pierc'd her heedless foot :
 Quick through the veins the venom'd juices shoot :
 She fell, and 'scap'd by death his fierce pursuit ;
 Her lifeless body, frighted, he embrac'd,
 And cry'd, Not this I dreaded, but thy haste: 1105
 O, had my love been less, or less thy fear !
 The victory, thus bought, is far too dear.
 Accursed snake ! yet I more curs'd than he !
 He gave the wound, the cause was giv'n by me.
 Yet none shall say that unreveng'd you died. 1110
 He spoke ; then climb'd a cliff's e'erhanging side,
 And, resolute, leap'd on the foaming tide.
 Tethys receiv'd him gently on the wave :
 The death he sought deny'd, and feathers gave.

Debarr'd the surest remedy of grief, 1115
 And forc'd to live, he curs'd th' unask'd relief.
 Then on his airy pinions upwards flies,
 And at a second fall successful tries ;
 The downy plume a quick descent denies.
 Enrag'd, he often dives beneath the wave, 1120
 And there in vain expects to find a grave.
 His ceaseless sorrow for th' unhappy maid,
 Meager'd his look, and on his spirits prey'd,
 Still near the sounding deep he lives ; his name
 From frequent diving and emerging came. 1125

BOOK XII.

TRANSLATED BY MR. DRYDEN.

The Trojan war. The house of fame. The story of Cygnus.
 The story of Cæneus. The skirmish between the Centaurs and
 Lapithites. The story of Cyllarus and Hilonomè. Cæneus
 transformed to an eagle. The fate of Periclyménos. The
 death of Achilles.

PRIAM, to whom the story was unknown,
 As dead, deplor'd his metamorphos'd son :
 A cenotaph his name and title kept,
 And Hector round the tomb with all his brothers wept.
 This pious office Paris did not share, 5
 Absent alone, and author of the war,
 Which for the Spartan queen, the Grecians drew
 T' avenge the rape ; and Asia to subdue.
 A thousand ships were mann'd to sail the sea :
 Nor had their just resentments found delay, 10
 Had not the winds and waves oppos'd their way.
 At Aulis, with united pow'rs they meet,
 But there cross-winds or calms detain'd the fleet.
 Now while they raise an altar on the shore,
 And Jove with solemn sacrifice adore, 15
 A boding sign the priests and people see :
 A snake of size immense ascends a tree,
 And, in the leafy summit spy'd a nest,
 Which o'er her callow young, a sparrow press'd.
 Eight were the birds unfledg'd ; their mother flew, 20
 And hover'd round her care ; but still in view :

Till the fierce reptile first devour'd the brood;
 Then seiz'd the flutt'ring dam, and drank her blood.
 This dire ostent the fearful people view;
 Calchas alone, by Phoebus taught, foreknew 25
 What heav'n decreed; and with a smiling glance,
 Thus gratulates to Greece her happy chance:
 O Argives, we shall conquer: Troy is ours,
 But long delays shall first afflict our pow'rs:
 Nine years of labour, the nine birds portend; 30
 The tenth shall in the town's destruction end.

The serpent, who his maw obscene had fill'd,
 The branches in his curl'd embraces held:
 But, as in spires he stood, he turn'd to stone:
 The stony snake retain'd the figure still his own. 35
 Yet, not for this, the wind-bound navy weigh'd;
 Slack were their sails; and Neptune disobey'd.
 Some thought him loth the town should be destroy'd,
 Whose building had his hands divine employ'd;
 Not so the seer; who knew, and known foreshew'd,
 The virgin Phœbè, with a virgin's blood, 41
 Must first be reconcil'd: the common cause
 Prevail'd; and pity yielding to the laws,
 Fair Iphigenia, the devoted maid,
 Was by the weeping priests, in linen robes array'd;
 All mourn her fate: but no relief appear'd, 46
 The royal victim bound, the knife already rear'd:
 When that offended pow'r, who caus'd their woe,
 Relenting ceas'd her wrath, and stopp'd the coming
 A mist before the ministers she cast, [blow.
 And in the virgin's room a hind she plac'd. 51
 The oblation slain, and Phœbè reconcil'd,
 The storm was hush'd, and dimpled ocean smil'd:
 A favourable gale arose from shore,
 Which to the port desir'd, the Grecian galleys bore.

Full in the midst of this created space, 56
 Betwixt heav'n, earth, and skies, there stands a place,
 Confining on all three, with triple bound;
 Whence all things, though remote, are view'd around,
 And thither bring their undulating sound. 60
 The palace of loud Fame, her seat of pow'r,
 Plac'd on the summit of a lofty tow'r;

A thousand winding entries long and wide,
 Receive of fresh reports a flowing tide.
 A thousand crannies in the walls are made; 65
 Nor gate, nor bars, exclude the busy trade.
 'Tis built of brass, the better to diffuse
 The spreading sounds, and multiply the news;
 Where echoes in repeated echoes play:
 A mart for ever full, and open night and day. 70
 Nor silence is within, nor voice express,
 But a deaf noise of sounds that never cease.
 Confus'd, and chiding like the hollow roar
 Of tides, receding from th' insulted shore;
 Or like the broken thunder heard from far, 75
 When Jove at distance drives the rolling war.
 The courts are fill'd with a tumultuous din
 Of crowds or issuing forth, or ent'ring in:
 A thoroughfare of news: Where some devise
 Things never heard, some mingle truth with lies; 80
 The troubled air with empty sounds they beat,
 Intent to hear, and eager to repeat.
 Error sits brooding there, with added train
 Of vain credulity, and joys as vain;
 Suspicion, with sedition join'd, are near, 85
 And rumours rais'd; and murmurs mix'd, and panic
 Fame sits aloft, and sees the subject ground; [fear.
 And seas about, and skies above; inquiring all around.
 The goddess gives th' alarm; and soon is known
 The Grecian fleet, descending on the town. 90
 Fix'd on defence, the Trojans are not slow
 To guard their shore from an expected foe.
 They meet in fight: By Hèctor's fatal hand
 Protésilaüs falls, and bites the strand;
 Which with expense of blood the Grecians won: 95
 And prov'd the strength unknown of Priam's son;
 And to their cost the Trojan leaders felt
 The Grecian heroes; and what deaths they dealt.

From these first onsets, the Sigæan shore
 Was strew'd with carcases, and stain'd with gore:
 Neptunian Cygnus troops of Greeks had slain: 101
 Achillès, in his car, had scour'd the plain,
 And clear'd the Trojan ranks: Where'er he fought,

Cygnus, or Hector, through the fields he sought;
 Cygnus he found: On him his force essay'd: 105
 For Hector was to the tenth year delay'd.
 His white-man'd steeds, that bow'd beneath the yoke,
 He cheer'd to courage with a gentle stroke:
 Then urg'd his fiery chariot on the foe;
 And rising shook his lance; in act to throw. 110
 But first he cry'd, O youth, be proud to bear
 Thy death ennobled by Pelidès' spear.
 The lance pursu'd the voice, without delay,
 Nor did the whizzing weapon miss the way;
 But pierc'd his cuirass, with such fury sent, 115
 And sign'd his bosom with a purple dint.
 At this the seed of Neptune: Goddess-born,
 For ornament, not use, these arms are worn;
 This helm, and heavy buckler, I can spare;
 As only decorations of the war: 120
 So Mars is arm'd for glory, not for need.
 'Tis somewhat more from Neptune to proceed,
 Than from a daughter of the sea to spring:
 Thy sire is mortal; mine is ocean's king.
 Secure of death, I should contemn thy dart, 125
 Though naked; and impassible depart:
 He said, and threw; the trembling weapon pass'd
 Through nine bull-hides, each under other plac'd,
 On his broadshield; and stuck within the last.
 Achillès wrench'd it out; and sent again 130
 The hostile gift; the hostile gift was vain:
 He try'd a third, a tough, well-chosen spear;
 Th' inviolable body stood sincere,
 Though Cygnus then did no defence provide,
 But scornful offer'd his unshielded side. 135
 Not otherwise th' impatient hero far'd,
 Than as a bull encompass'd with a guard
 Amid the circus roars, provok'd from far
 By sight of scarlet, and a sanguine war:
 They quit their ground, his bending horns elude; 140
 In vain pursuing, and in vain pursu'd.
 Before to farther fight he would advance,
 He stood consid'ring, and survey'd his lance;
 Doubts if he wielded not a wooden spear
 Without a point: He look'd; the point was there.

This is my hand, and this my lance (he said) 146
 By which so many thousand foes are dead:
 O, whither is their usual virtue fled!
 I had it once; and the Lyrnessian wall,
 And Tenédos, confess'd it in their fall. 150
 Thy streams, Caïcus, roll'd a crimson flood;
 And Thebes ran red with her own natives' blood.
 Twice Téléphus employ'd this piercing steel,
 To wound him first, and afterwards to heal.
 The vigour of this arm was never vain: 155
 And that my wonted prowess I retain,
 Witness these heaps of slaughter on the plain.
 He said; and, doubtful of his former deeds,
 To some new trial of his force proceeds.
 He chose Menætès from among the rest; 160
 At him he launch'd his spear, and pierc'd his breast:
 On the hard earth the Lycian knock'd his head,
 And lay supine; and forth the spirit fled.

Then thus the hero: neither can I blame
 The hand or jav'lin; both are still the same. 165
 The same I will employ against this foe,
 And wish but with the same success to throw.
 So spoke the chief; and while he spoke, he threw:
 The weapon with unerring fury flew,
 At his left shoulder aim'd: nor entrance found; 170
 But back, as from a rock, with swift rebound
 Harmless return'd: A bloody mark appear'd,
 Which with false joy the flatter'd hero cheer'd.
 Wound there was none; the blood that was in view,
 The lance before from slain Menætès drew. 175

Headlong he leaps from off his lofty car,
 And in close fight on foot renews the war,
 Raging with high disdain, repeats his blows;
 Nor shield, nor armour can their force oppose;
 Huge cantlets of his buckler strew the ground, 180
 And no defence in his bor'd arms is found.
 But on his flesh no wound or blood is seen,
 The sword itself is blunted on the skin.

This vain attempt the chief no longer bears,
 But round his hollow temples and his ears 185
 His buckler beats: the son of Neptune, stunn'd

With these repeated buffets, quits his ground ;
 A sickly sweat succeeds, and shades of night ;
 Inverted nature swims before his sight :
 Th' insulting victor presses on the more, 190
 And treads the steps the vanquish'd trod before.
 Nor rest, nor respite gives. A stone there lay
 Behind his trembling foe, and stopp'd his way ;
 Achillès took th' advantage which he found,
 O'er-turn'd, and push'd him backward on the ground,
 His buckler held him under, while he press'd, 196
 With both his knees, above, his panting breast,
 Unlac'd his helm : About his chin the twist
 He ty'd ; and soon the strangled soul dismiss'd.

With eager haste he went to strip the dead ; 200
 The vanish'd body from his arms was fled.
 His sea-god sire, t' immortalize his fame,
 Had turn'd it to a bird that bears his name.
 A truce succeeds the labours of this day,
 And arms suspended with a long delay. 206
 While Trojan walls are kept with watch and ward ;
 The Greeks before their trenches mount the guard :
 The feast approach'd ; when to the blue-ey'd maid
 His vows for Cygnus slain the victor paid,
 And a white heifer on her altar laid. 210
 The reeking entrails on the fire they threw,
 And to the gods the grateful odour flew :
 Heav'n had its part in sacrifice ; the rest
 Was broil'd, and roasted for the future feast.
 The chief invited guests were set around, 215
 And hunger first assuag'd, the bowls were crown'd ;
 Which in deep draughts their cares and labours
 drown'd.

The mellow harp did not their ears employ,
 And mute was all the warlike symphony.
 Discourse, the food of souls, was their delight, 220
 And pleasing chat prolong'd the summer's night.
 The subject, deeds of arms ; and valour shewn
 Or on the Trojan side, or on their own.
 Of dangers undertaken, fame achiev'd,
 They talk by turns ; the talk by turns reliev'd. 225
 What things but these could fierce Achillès tell,

Or what could fierce Achillès hear so well ?
 The last great act perform'd, of Cygnus slain,
 Did most the martial audience entertain,
 Wond'ring to find a body free by fate 230
 From steel ; and which could e'en that steel rebate :
 Amaz'd, their admiration they renew ;
 And scarce Pelidès could believe it true.

Then Nestor thus: What once this age has known
 In fated Cygnus, and in him alone, 235
 These eyes have seen in Cæneus long before ;
 Whose body not a thousand swords could bore,
 Cæneus, in courage, and in strength excell'd ;
 And still his Othrys with his fame is fill'd :
 But what did most his martial deeds adorn, 240
 (Though since he chang'd his sex) a woman born.

A novelty so strange, and full of fate,
 His list'ning audience ask'd him to relate.
 Achillès thus commends their common suit :
 O father, first for prudence, in repute, 245
 Tell, with that eloquence, so much thy own,
 What thou hast heard, or what of Cæneus known ;
 What was he, whence his change of sex begun,
 What trophies, join'd in wars with thee, he won ?
 Who conquer'd him, and in what fatal strife 250
 The youth, without a wound, could lose his life ?

Neleïdès then ; Though tardy age, and time,
 Have shrunk my sinews and decay'd my prime ;
 Though much I have forgotten of my store ;
 Yet not exhausted, I remember more. 255
 Of all that arms achiev'd, or peace design'd,
 That action still is fresher in my mind
 Than aught beside. If rev'rend age can give
 To faith a sanction, in my third I live.

'Twas in my second cent'ry, I survey'd 260
 Young Cænis, then a fair Thessalian maid :
 Cænis the bright, was born to high command ;
 A princess, and a native of thy land,
 Divine Achillès ; ev'ry tongue proclaim'd
 Her beauty, and her eyes all hearts inflam'd. 265
 Peleus, thy sire, perhaps had sought her bed,
 Among the rest ; but he had either led

Thy mother then, or was by promise tied;
But she to him, and all, alike her love deny'd.

It was her fortune once to take her way 270
Along the sandy margin of the sea :

The power of ocean view'd her as she pass'd,
And, lov'd as soon as seen, by force embrac'd.
So fame reports. Her virgin-treasure seiz'd,
And his new joys the ravisher so pleased, 275

That thus transported, to the nymph he cry'd;
Ask what thou wilt, no pray'r shall be denied.
This also fame relates: The haughty fair,
Who not the rape e'en of a god could bear,
This answer, proud, return'd: To mighty wrongs 280
A mighty recompense, of right, belongs.

Give me no more to suffer such a shame;
But change the woman for a better name;
One gift for all. She said; and while she spoke,
A stern, majestic, manly tone she took. 285

A man she was; and as the godhead swore,
To Cæneus turn'd, who Cænis was before.

To this the lover adds, without request,
No force of steel should violate his breast.
Glad of the gift, the new-made warrior goes; 290
And arms among the Greeks, and longs for equal foes.

Now brave Perithœus, bold Ixion's son,
The love of fair Hippodamè had won.
The cloud-begotten race, half men, half beast,
Invited, came to grace the nuptial feast: 295

In a cool cave's recess the treat was made, [shade.
Whose entrance, trees, with spreading boughs, o'er-
They sat; and summon'd by the bridegroom, came,
To mix with those, the Lapythæan name:

Nor wanted I: The roofs with joy resound: 300
And Hymen, Iö Hymen, rung around.

Rais'd altars shone with holy fires; the bride,
Lovely herself (and lovely by her side
A bevy of bright nymphs, with sober grace),
Came glitt'ring like a star, and took her place. 305

Her heav'nly form beheld, all wish'd her joy; [ploy.
And little wanted, but in vain, their wishes all em-
For one, most brutal of the brutal brood,

Or whether wine or beauty fir'd his blood,
 Or both at once, beheld with lustful eyes 310
 The bride : at once resolv'd to make his prize.
 Down went the board ; and fast'ning on her hair,
 He seiz'd, with sudden force, the frightened fair.
 'Twas Eurytus began ; his bestial kind
 His crime pursu'd ; and each as pleas'd his mind, 315
 Or her, whom chance presented, took : The feast
 An image of a taken town express'd.

The cave resounds with female shrieks ; we rise,
 Mad with revenge, to make a swift reprise :
 And Theseus first : What phrensy has possess't, 320
 O Eurytus (he cry'd), thy brutal breast,
 To wrong Perithous, and not him alone,
 But while I live, two friends conjoin'd in one ?

To justify his threat, he thrusts aside
 The crowd of centaurs, and redeems the bride: 325
 The monster nought reply'd : For words were vain,
 And deeds could only deeds unjust maintain :
 But answers with his hand ; and forward press'd,
 With blows redoubled, on his face and breast.
 An ample goblet stood, of antic mould, 330
 And rough with figures of the rising gold ;
 The hero snatch'd it up, and toss'd in air
 Full at the front of the foul ravisher.
 He falls ; and, falling, vomits forth a flood 334
 Of wine, and foam, and brains, and mingled blood.
 Half roaring and half neighing through the hall,
 Arms, arms ! the double-form'd with fury call :
 To wreak their brother's death : A medley-flight
 Of bowls, and jars, at first supply the fight,
 Once instruments of feasts, but now of fate ; 340
 Wine animates their rage, and arms their hate.

Bold Amycus, from the robb'd vestry brings
 The chalices of heav'n ; and holy things
 Of precious weight : A sconce, that hung on high,
 With tapers fill'd, to light the sacristy, 345
 Torn from the cord, with his unhallow'd hand
 He threw amid the Lapythæan band.
 On Celadon the ruin fell ; and left
 His face of feature and of form bereft :
 So, when some brawny sacrificer knocks, 350

Then (what a team of horse could hardly rear)
 He heaves the threshold-stone ; but could not throw ;
 The weight itself forbade the threaten'd blow ;
 Which, dropping from his lifted arms, came down
 Full on Cometès' head ; and crush'd his crown. 396
 Nor Rhætus then retain'd his joy ; but said,
 So by their fellows may our foes be sped !
 Then with redoubled strokes he plies his head :
 The burning lever not deludes his pains : 400
 But drives the batter'd skull within the brains.
 Thus flush'd, the conqueror, with force renew'd ;
 Evagrus, Dryas, Corythus, pursu'd :
 First, Corythus, with downy cheeks, he slew ;
 Whose fall, when fierce Evagrus had in view, 405
 He cry'd, What palm is from a beardless prey ?
 Rhætus prevents what more he had to say,
 And drove within his mouth the fiery death ;
 Which enter'd hissing in, and chok'd his breath.
 At Dryas next he flew : But weary chance, 410
 No longer would the same success advance.
 For while he whirl'd in fiery circles round
 The brand, a sharpen'd stake strong Dryas found :
 And in the shoulder's joint inflicts the wound.
 The weapon stuck, which, roaring out with pain, 415
 He drew ; nor longer durst the fight maintain,
 But turn'd his back for fear, and fled amain.
 With him fled Orneus, with like dread possess ;
 Thaumás, and Medon wounded in the breast ;
 And Mermeros, in the late race renown'd, 420
 Now limping ran, and tardy with his wound.
 Pholus, and Melaneus from fight withdrew,
 And Abas, maim'd, who boars encount'ring slew :
 And augur Astylos, whose art in vain,
 From fight dissuaded the four-footed train ; 425
 Now beat the hoof with Nessus on the plain ;
 But to his fellow cry'd, Be safely slow,
 Thy death deferr'd is due to great Alcides' bow.

Meantime, strong Dryas urg'd his chance so well,
 That Lycidas, Arëos, Imbreus fell : 430
 All, one by one, and fighting face to face :
 Crenæus fled, to fall with more disgrace ;
 For, fearful, while he look'd behind, he bore

Betwixt his nose and front, the blow before.
 Amid the noise and tumult of the fray, 435
 Snoring, and drunk with wine, Aphidas lay.
 E'en then the bowl within his hand he kept,
 And on a bear's rough hide securely slept.
 Him Phorbas with his flying dart transfix'd ;—
 Take thy next draught, with Stygian waters mix'd,
 And sleep thy fill (th' insulting victor cry'd) : 441
 Surpris'd with death unfelt, the centaur dy'd:
 The ruddy vomit, as he breath'd his soul,
 Repass'd his throat, and fill'd his empty bowl.
 I saw Petraüs' arms employ'd around 445
 A well-grown oak, to root it from the ground.
 This way, and that, he wrench'd the fibrous bands ;
 The trunk was like a sapling in his hands,
 And still obey'd the bent ; while thus he stood,
 Perithöus' dart drove on, and nail'd him to the wood :
 Lycus, and Chromis fell, by him opprest : 451
 Helops, and Dictis added to the rest
 A nobler palm : Helops, through either ear
 Transfix'd, receiv'd the penetrating spear.
 This Dictis saw ; and, seiz'd with sudden fright, 455
 Leapt headlong from the hill of steepy height ;
 And crush'd an ash beneath, that could not bear his
 weight.
 The shatter'd tree receives his fall ; and strikes,
 Within his full-blown paunch, the sharpen'd spikes.
 Strong Aphareus had heav'd a mighty stone, 460
 The fragment of a rock ; and would have thrown,
 But Theseus, with a club of harden'd oak,
 The cubit bone of the bold centaur broke,
 And left him maim'd ; nor seconded the stroke.
 Then leap'd on tall Biänor's back (who bore 465
 No mortal burthen but his own, before) ;
 Press'd with his knees his sides ; the double man,
 His speed with spurs increas'd, unwilling ran.
 One hand the hero fasten'd on his locks ;
 His other ply'd him with repeated strokes. 470
 The club rung round his ears, and batter'd brows ;
 He falls ; and lashing up his heels, his rider throws.
 The same Herculean arms, Medymnus wound ;
 And lays by him Lycotas on the ground.

And Hyppasus, whose beard his breast invades; 475
 And Ripheus, haunter of the woodland shades:
 And Tereus, us'd with mountain-bears to strive;
 And from their dens to draw the indignant beasts
 Demoleon could not bear this hateful sight, [alive.
 Or the long fortune of th' Athenian knight: 480
 But pull'd with all his force, to disengage
 From earth a pine, the product of an age:
 The root stuck fast: the broken trunk he sent
 At Theseus: Theseus frustrates his intent,
 And leaps aside; by Pallas warn'd the blow 485
 To shun (for so he said; and we believ'd it so):
 Yet not in vain th' enormous weight was cast;
 Which Crantor's body sunder'd at the waist:
 Thy father's squire, Achillès, and his care;
 Whom conquer'd in the Dolopeïan war, 490
 Their king, his present ruin to prevent,
 A pledge of peace implor'd to Peleus sent.

Thy sire, with grieving eyes, beheld his fate;
 And cry'd, Not long, lov'd Crantor, shalt thou wait
 Thy vow'd revenge. At once he said, and threw 495
 His ashen spear; which quiver'd as it flew;
 With all his force, and all his soul apply'd;
 The sharp point enter'd in the centaur's side:
 Both hands to wrench it out the monster join'd;
 And wrench'd it out, but left the steel behind; 500
 Stuck in his lungs it stood; enrag'd he rears
 His hoofs, and down to ground thy father bears.
 Thus trampled under foot, his shield defends
 His head; his other hand the lance portends.
 E'en while he lay extended on the dust, 505
 He sped the centaur, with one single thrust.
 Two more his lance before transfix'd from far;
 And two, his sword had slain, in closer war.
 To these was added Dorylas, who spread
 A bull's two goring horns around his head. 510
 With these he push'd: In blood already dy'd,
 Him fearless I approach'd, and thus defy'd;
 Now, monster, now, by proof it shall appear,
 Whether thy horns are sharper, or my spear.
 At this, I threw; for want of other ward, 515

He lifted up his hand, his front to guard.
 His hand it pass'd, and fix'd it to his brow :
 Loud shouts of ours attend the lucky blow.
 Him Peleus finished, with a second wound, 519
 Which through the navel pierc'd ; he reel'd around ;
 And dragg'd his dangling bowels on the ground.
 Trod what he dragg'd ; and what he trod he crush'd :
 And to his mother-earth, with empty belly, rush'd.

Nor could thy form, O Cyllarus, foreshew
 Thy fate (if form to monsters men allow) : 525
 Just bloom'd thy beard ; thy beard of golden hue ;
 Thy locks, in golden waves about thy shoulders flew,
 Sprightly thy look : Thy shapes in ev'ry part
 So clean, as might instruct the sculptor's art ;
 As far as man extended : Where began 530
 The beast, the beast was equal to the man.
 Add but a horse's head and neck ; and he,
 O Castor, was a courser worthy thee.
 So was his back proportion'd for the seat ;
 So rose his brawny chest ; so swiftly mov'd his feet.
 Coal-black his colour, but like jet it shone ; 536
 His legs and flowing tail were white alone.
 Belov'd by many maidens of his kind,
 But fair Hylonomè possess'd his mind ;
 Hylonomè, for features, and for face, 540
 Excelling all the nymphs of double race :
 Nor less her blandishments, than beauty, move :
 At once both loving, and confessing love.
 For him she dress'd ; for him with female care,
 She combed, and set in curls, her auburn hair. 545
 Of roses, violets, and lilies mix'd,
 And sprigs of flowing rosemary betwixt,
 She form'd the chaplet, that adorn'd her front :
 In waters of the Pegasæan fount,
 And in the streams that from the fountain play, 550
 She wash'd her face ; and bath'd her twice a day.
 The scarf of furs, that hung below her side,
 Was ermine, or the panther's spotted pride ;
 Spoils of no common beasts. With equal flame
 They lov'd : their sylvan pleasures were the same :
 All day they hunted ; and when day expir'd, 556
 Together to some shady cave retir'd :

Invited to the nuptials both repair,
 And, side by side, they both engage in war.
 Uncertain from what hand, a flying dart 560
 At Cyllarus was sent; which pierc'd his heart.
 The jav'lin drawn from out the mortal wound,
 He faints with stagg'ring steps, and seeks the ground:
 The fair within her arms receiv'd his fall,
 And strove his wand'ring spirits to recal: 565
 And while her hand the streaming blood oppos'd,
 Join'd face to face, his lips with hers she clos'd.
 Stifled with kisses, a sweet death he dies;
 She fills the fields with undistinguish'd cries:
 At least her words were in her clamour drown'd; 570
 For my stunn'd ears receiv'd no vocal sound.
 In madness of her grief, she seiz'd the dart,
 New-drawn, and reeking from her lover's heart;
 To her bare bosom the sharp point apply'd;
 And wounded fell; and, falling by his side, 575
 Embrac'd him in her arms; and, thus embracing,
 died.

E'en still methinks I see Phæocomès;
 Strange was his habit, and as odd his dress:
 Six lions' hides, with thongs together fast,
 His upper part defended to his waist: 580
 And where man ended, the continu'd vest,
 Spread on his back, the house and trappings of a beast.
 A stump too heavy for a team to draw
 (It seems a fable, though the fact I saw),
 He threw at Pholon; the descending blow 585
 Divides the skull, and cleaves his head in two.
 The brains from nose, and mouth, and either ear,
 Came issuing out, as through a colander
 The curdled milk; or from the press the whey,
 Driv'n down by weights above, is drain'd away. 590
 But him, while stooping down to spoil the slain,
 Pierc'd through the paunch, I tumbled on the plain.
 Then Chthonyus, and Teléböas I slew:
 A fork the former arm'd; a dart his fellow threw:
 The jav'lin wounded me (behold the scar); 595
 Then was my time to seek the Trojan war;
 Then I was Hector's match in open field;
 But he was then unborn; at least a child:
 Now, I am nothing. I forbear to tell

By Periphantas how Pyrétus fell; 600
 The centaur by the knight: nor will I stay
 On Amphix, or what deaths he dealt that day:
 What honour, with a pointless lance he won,
 Stuck in the front of a four-footed man:
 What fame young Macareus obtain'd in fight: 605
 Or dwell on Nessus, now return'd from flight:
 How prophet Mopsus, not alone divin'd,
 Whose valour equall'd his foreseeing mind.

Already Cæneus with his conqu'ring hand
 Had slaughter'd five, the boldest of their band; 610
 Pyrachus, Helymus, Antimachus,
 Bromus the brave, and stronger Stiphelus.
 Their names I number'd, and remember well,
 No trace remaining, by what wounds they fell.

Laitreus, the bulkiest of the double race, 615
 Whom the spoil'd arms of slain Halesus grace,
 In years retaining still his youthful might,
 Though his black hairs were interspers'd with white,
 Betwixt th' embattled ranks began to prance,
 Proud of his helm, and Macedonian lance: 620
 And rode the ring around; that either host
 Might hear him, while he made this empty boast:
 And from a strumpet shall we suffer shame,
 For Cænis still, not Cæneus is thy name?
 And still the native softness of thy kind 625
 Prevails; and leaves the woman in thy mind;
 Remember what thou wert; what price was paid
 To change thy sex; to make thee not a maid;
 And but a man in show: Go, card and spin;
 And leave the business of the war to men. 630

While thus the boaster exercis'd his pride,
 The fatal spear of Cæneus reach'd his side:
 Just in the mixture of the kinds it ran;
 Betwixt the nether beast and upper man:
 The monster mad with rage, and stung with smart,
 His lance directed at the hero's heart: 636
 It struck; but bounded from his harden'd breast,
 Like hail from tiles, which the safe house invest;
 Nor seem'd the stroke with more effect to come,
 Than a small pebble falling on a drum. 640

He next his falchion try'd, in closer fight;
 But the keen falchion had no pow'r to bite.
 He thrust: the blunted point return'd again.
 Since downright blows (he cried), and thrusts are vain,
 I'll prove his side. In strong embraces held, 645
 He prov'd his side; his side the sword repell'd;
 His hollow belly echo'd to the stroke,
 Untouch'd his body as a solid rock;
 Aim'd at his neck at last, the blade in shivers broke.

Th' impassive knight stood idle, to deride 650
 His rage, and offer'd oft his naked side;
 At length, Now, monster, in thy turn (he cried),
 Try thou the strength of Cæneus. At the word,
 He thrust; and in his shoulder plung'd the sword.
 Then writh'd his hand: and as he drove it down, 655
 Deep in his breast, made many wounds in one.

The centaurs saw, enrag'd, th' unhop'd success;
 And rushing on, in crowds together press.
 At him, and him alone, their darts they threw;
 Repuls'd, they from his fated body flew. 660
 Amaz'd they stood; till Monichus began:
 O shame! a nation conquer'd by a man!
 A woman-man! yet more a man is he
 Than all our race; and what he was, are we.
 Now, what avail our nerves? th' united force 665
 Of two the strongest creatures, man and horse;
 Nor goddess-born; nor of Ixion's seed
 We seem (a lover built for Juno's bed),
 Master'd by this half-man. Whole mountains throw
 With woods at once, and bury him below. 670
 This only way remains. Nor need we doubt
 To choke the soul within, though not to force it out:
 Heap weights instead of wounds.—He chanc'd to see
 Where southern storms had rooted up a tree;
 This, rais'd from earth, against the foe he threw; 675
 Th' example shewn, his fellow brutes pursue:
 With forest-loads the warrior they invade;
 Othrys and Pelion soon were void of shade;
 And spreading groves were naked mountains made.
 Prest with the burthen, Cæneus pants for breath; 680
 And on his shoulders bears the wooden death.
 To heave th' intolerable weight he tries;

At length it rose above his mouth and eyes;
 Yet still he heaves; and struggling with despair,
 Shakes all aside, and gains a gulp of air: 685
 A short relief, which but prolongs his pain:
 He faints by fits; and then respire again;
 At last, the burthen only nods above,
 As when an earthquake stirs th' Idæan grove.
 Doubtful his death: he suffocated seem'd, 690
 To most: but otherwise our Mopsus deem'd,
 Who said he saw a yellow bird arise
 From out the piles, and cleave the liquid skies:
 I saw it too, with golden feathers bright;
 Nor e'er before beheld so strange a sight. 695
 Whom Mopsus viewing, as it soar'd around
 Our troop, and heard the pinions' rattling sound,
 All hail (he cry'd), thy country's grace and love,
 Once first of men below, now first of birds above!
 Its author to the story gave belief; 700
 For us, our courage was increas'd by grief:
 Asham'd to see a single man, pursu'd
 With odds, to sink beneath a multitude,
 We push'd the foe, and, forc'd to shameful flight,
 Part fell, and part escap'd by favour of the night. 705
 This tale, by Nestor told, did much displease
 Tlepolémus, the seed of Herculès:
 For often he had heard his father say,
 That he himself was present at the fray;
 And more than shar'd the glories of the day. 710
 Old Chronicle (he said), among the rest,
 You might have nam'd Alcides at the least:
 Is he not worth your praise? The Pylian prince
 Sigh'd ere he spoke; then made this proud defence:
 My former woes in long oblivion drown'd, 715
 I would have lost; but you renew the wound;
 Better to pass him o'er, than to relate
 The cause I have your mighty sire to hate.
 His fame has fill'd the world, and reach'd the sky;
 (Which, oh, I wish, with truth, I could deny!) 720
 We praise not Hector; though his name we know
 Is great in arms; 'tis hard to praise a foe.
 He, your great father, levell'd to the ground
 Messenia's tow'rs: nor better fortune found

Elis, and Pylos; that a neighb'ring state, 725
 And this my own; both guiltless of their fate.

To pass the rest, twelve wanting one he slew;
 My brethren, who their birth from Neleus drew,
 All youths of early promise, had they liv'd;
 By him they perish'd: I alone surviv'd. 730

The rest were easy conquest; but the fate
 Of Periclyménos, is wondrous to relate;
 To him, our common grandsire of the main [again.
 Had giv'n to change his form, and chang'd, resume
 Varied at pleasure, ev'ry shape he try'd; 735

And in all beasts, Alcides still defy'd;
 Vanquish'd on earth, at length he soar'd above:
 Chang'd to a bird, that bears the bolt of Jove:
 The new-dissembled eagle, now endu'd
 With beak, and pounces, Herculès pursu'd, 740

And cuff'd his manly cheeks, and tore his face;
 Then, safe retir'd, and tow'r'd in empty space.
 Alcides bore not long his flying foe;
 But bending his inevitable bow,

Reach'd him in air, suspended as he stood; 745
 And in his pinion fix'd the feather'd wood.

Light was the wound; but in the sinew hung
 The point, and his disabled wing unstrung.
 He wheel'd in air, and stretch'd his vans in vain;
 His vans no longer could his flight sustain: 750

For while one gather'd wind, one unsupplied
 Hung drooping down, nor pois'd his other side.
 He fell: The shaft that slightly was imprest,
 Now from his heavy fall with weight increas'd,
 Drove through his neck, aslant; he spurns the ground,
 And the soul issues through the weazon's wound. 756

Now, brave commander of the Rhodian seas,
 What praise is due from me to Herculès?
 Silence is all the vengeance I decree
 For my slain brothers: but 'tis peace with thee. 760

Thus with a flowing tongue old Nestor spoke;
 Then, to full bowls each other they provoke:
 At length, with weariness and wine opprest,
 They rise from table, and withdraw to rest.

The sire of Cygnus, monarch of the main, 765
 Meantime, laments his son in battle slain,
 And vows the victor's death; nor vows in vain.
 For nine long years the smother'd pain he bore
 (Achillès was not ripe for fate before):

Then when he saw the promis'd hour was near, 770

He thus bespoke the god that guides the year:
 Immortal offspring of my brother Jove;
 My brightest nephew, and whom best I love;
 Whose hands were join'd with mine, to raise the wall
 Of tott'ring Troy, now nodding to her fall, 775

Dost thou not mourn our pow'r employ'd in vain,
 And the defenders of our city slain?

To pass the rest, could noble Hector lie
 Unpitied, dragg'd around his native Troy?
 And yet the murd'rer lives: himself by far 780

A greater plague, than all the wasteful war:

He lives; the proud Pelidès lives to boast

Our town destroy'd, our common labour lost.

O, could I meet him! But I wish too late:
 To prove my trident is not in his fate! 785

But let him try (for that's allow'd) thy dart,
 And pierce his only penetrable part.

Apollo bows to the superior throne:

And to his uncle's anger adds his own.

Then in a cloud involv'd he takes his flight, 790

Where Greeks and Trojans, mix'd in mortal fight;

And found out Paris, lurking where he stood,

And stain'd his arrows with plebeian blood:

Phœbus to him alone the god confess'd,
 Then to the recreant knight he thus address'd: 795

Dost not thou blush to spend thy shafts in vain,

On a degenerate, and ignoble train?

If fame, or better vengeance be thy care,

There aim: And, with one arrow, end the war.

He said; and shew'd from far the blazing shield
 And sword, which, but Achillès, none could wield; 801

And how he mov'd a god, and mow'd the standing

The deity himself directs aright [field.

Th' envenom'd shaft, and wings the fatal flight.

Thus fell the foremost of the Grecian name; 805

And he, the base adult'rer, boasts the fame.

A spectacle to glad the Trojan train;
 And please old Priam, after Hector slain.
 If by a female hand he had foreseen
 He was to die, his wish had rather been 810
 The lance, and double axe of the fair warrior queen.
 And now the terror of the Trojan field,
 The Grecian honour, ornament, and shield,
 High on a pile, th' unconquer'd chief is plac'd,
 The god that arm'd him first, consum'd at last. 815
 Of all the mighty man, the small remains,
 A little urn, and scarcely fill'd, contains.
 Yet great in Homer, still Achillès lives;
 And equal to himself, himself survives.
 His buckler owns its former lord; and brings 820
 New cause of strife, betwixt contending kings;
 Who worthiest after him, his sword to wield,
 Or wear his armour, or sustain his shield.
 E'en Diomede sat mute, with downcast eyes:
 Conscious of wanted worth to win the prize: 825
 Nor Menelaüs presum'd these arms to claim,
 Nor he the king of men, a greater name.
 Two rivals only rose: Laërtès' son,
 And the vast bulk of Ajax Telamon:
 The king, who cherish'd each, with equal love, 830
 And from himself all envy would remove,
 Left both to be determin'd by the laws;
 And to the Grecian chiefs transferr'd the cause.

BOOK XIII.

TRANSLATED BY MR. DRYDEN, AND OTHERS.

The speeches of Ajax and Ulysses. The death of Ajax. The story of Polyxena and Hecuba. The funeral of Memnon. The voyage of Æneas. The story of Acis, Polyphemus, and Galatéea. The story of Glaucus and Scylla.

THE chiefs were set; the soldiers crown'd the field:
 To these, the master of the sevenfold shield
 Upstarted fierce; and kindled with disdain,
 Eager to speak, unable to contain
 His boiling rage, he roll'd his eyes around 5
 The shore, and Grecian galleys haul'd aground.

Then stretching out his hands, O Jove, he cry'd,
 Must then our cause before the fleet be tried?
 And dares Ulysses for the prize contend,
 In sight of what he durst not once defend? 10
 But basely fled that memorable day, [prey.
 When I from Hector's hands redeem'd the flaming
 So much 'tis safer at the noisy bar
 With words to flourish, than engage in war.
 By diff'rent methods we maintain our right, 15
 Nor am I made to talk, nor he to fight.
 In bloody fields I labour to be great:
 His arms are a smooth tongue and soft deceit:
 Nor need I speak my deeds, for those you see,
 The sun and day are witnesses for me. 20
 Let him who fights unseen, relate his own,
 And vouch the silent stars, and conscious moon.
 Great is the prize demanded, I confess,
 But such an abject rival makes it less;
 That gift, those honours, he but hop'd to gain, 25
 Can leave no room for Ajax to be vain:
 Losing he wins, because his name will be
 Ennobled by defeat, who durst contend with me.
 Were my known valour question'd, yet my blood
 Without that plea would make my title good: 30
 My sire was Telamon, whose arms, employ'd
 With Herculès, these Trojan walls destroy'd;
 And who before with Jason, sent from Greece,
 In the first ship brought home the golden fleece.
 Great Telamon from Æacus derives 35
 His birth (th' inquisitor of guilty lives
 In shades below; where Sisyphus, whose son
 This thief is thought, rolls up the restless, heavy stone).
 Just Æacus, the king of gods above
 Begot: Thus Ajax is the third from Jove. 40
 Nor should I seek advantage from my line,
 Unless (Achillès) it were mix'd with thine:
 As next of kin, Achillès' arms I claim;
 This fellow would ingraft a foreign name
 Upon our stock, and the Sisyphian seed 45
 By fraud and theft asserts his father's breed:
 Then must I lose these arms, because I came
 To fight uncall'd a voluntary name,

Nor shunn'd the cause, but offer'd you my aid,
 While he, long lurking, was to war betray'd: 50
 Forc'd to the field he came, but in the rear;
 And feign'd distraction, to conceal his fear:
 Till one more cunning, caught him in the snare
 (Ill for himself); and dragg'd him into war.
 Now let a hero's arms a coward vest, 55
 And he who shunn'd all honours, gain the best:
 And let me stand excluded from my right,
 Robb'd of my kinsman's arms, who first appear'd in
 Better for us, at home had he remain'd, [fight.
 Had it been true the madness which he feign'd, 60
 Or so believ'd; the less had been our shame,
 The less his counsell'd crime, which brands the
 Grecian name;
 Nor Philoctetès had been left inclos'd
 In a bare isle, to wants and pains expos'd,
 Where to the rocks, with solitary groans, 65
 His suff'rings and our baseness he bemoans:
 And wishes (so may Heav'n his wish fulfil)
 The due reward to him who caus'd his ill.
 Now he with us to Troy's destruction sworn,
 Our brother of the war, by whom are borne 70
 Alcides' arrows, pent in narrow bounds,
 With cold and hunger pinch'd, and pain'd with wounds,
 To find him food and clothing, must employ
 Against the birds, the shafts due to the fate of Troy.
 Yet still he lives, and lives from treason free, 75
 Because he left Ulysses' company:
 Poor Palamede might wish, so void of aid,
 Rather to have been left, than so to death betray'd.
 The coward bore the man immortal spite,
 Who sham'd him out of madness into fight: 80
 Nor daring otherwise to vent his hate,
 Accus'd him first of treason to the state;
 And then, for proof, produc'd the golden store,
 Himself had hidden in his tent before:
 Thus of two champions he depriv'd our host, 85
 By exile one, and one by treason lost.
 Thus fights Ulysses, thus his fame extends,
 A formidable man, but to his friends:
 Great, for what greatness is in words and sound,

E'en faithful Nestor less in both is found : 90
 But that he might without a rival reign,
 He left his faithful Nestor on the plain ;
 Forsook his friend, e'en at his utmost need,
 Who, tir'd and tardy with his wounded steed,
 Cried out for aid, and call'd him by his name : 95
 But cowardice has neither ears nor shame :
 Thus fled the good old man, bereft of aid,
 And, for as much as lay in him, betray'd ;
 That this is not a fable forg'd by me,
 Like one of his, an Ulysséan lie, 100
 I vouch e'en Diomede, who, though his friend,
 Cannot that act excuse, much less defend ;
 He call'd him back aloud, and tax'd his fear ;
 And sure enough he heard, but durst not hear.
 The gods with equal eyes on mortals look, 105
 He justly was forsaken, who forsook :
 Wanted that succour he refus'd to lend,
 Found ev'ry fellow such another friend :
 No wonder if he roar'd that all might hear ;
 His elocution was increas'd by fear. 110
 I heard, I ran, I found him out of breath,
 Pale, trembling, and half dead with fear of death.
 Though he had judg'd himself by his own laws,
 And stood condemn'd, I help'd the common cause :
 With my broad buckler hid him from the foe 115
 (E'en the shield trembled as he lay below),
 And from impending fate the coward freed ;
 Good heaven forgive me for so bad a deed !
 If still he will persist, and urge the strife,
 First let him give me back his forfeit life : 120
 Let him return to that opprobrious field ;
 Again creep under my protecting shield :
 Let him lie wounded, let the foe be near,
 And let his quiv'ring heart confess his fear ;
 There put him in the very jaws of fate ; 125
 And let him plead his cause in that estate :
 And yet, when snatch'd from death, when from
 below
 My lifted shield I loos'd, and let him go ;
 Good heav'ns ! how light he rose, with what a bound
 He sprung from earth, forgetful of his wound ; 130

How fresh, how eager then his feet to ply;
 Who had not strength to stand, had speed to fly!
 Hector came on, and brought the gods along;
 Fear seiz'd alike the feeble and the strong:
 Each Greek was an Ulysses; such a dread 135
 Th' approach, and e'en the sound of Hector bred:
 Him, flush'd with slaughter, and with conquest crown'd,
 I met, and overturn'd him to the ground.
 When after, matchless, as he deem'd, in might,
 He challeng'd all our host to single fight; 140
 All eyes were fix'd on me: the lots were thrown;
 But for your champion I was wish'd alone:
 Your vows were heard; we fought, and neither yield;
 Yet I return'd unvanquish'd from the field.
 With Jove to friend, th' insulting Trojan came, 145
 And menac'd us with force, our fleet with flame.
 Was it the strength of this tongue-valiant lord,
 In that black hour, that sav'd you from the sword?
 Or was my breast expos'd alone to brave
 A thousand swords, a thousand ships to save? 150
 The hopes of your return! and can you yield,
 For a sav'd fleet, less than a single shield?
 Think it no boast, O Grecians, if I deem
 These arms want Ajax, more than Ajax them:
 Or, I with them an equal honour share; 155
 They honour'd to be worn, and I to wear.
 Will he compare my courage with his sleight?
 As well he may compare the day with night.
 Night is indeed the province of his reign:
 Yet all his dark exploits no more contain 160
 Than a spy taken, and a sleeper slain;
 A priest made pris'ner, Pallas made a prey:
 But none of all these actions done by day;
 Nor aught of these was done, and Diomede away.
 If on such petty merits you confer 165
 So vast a prize, let each his portion share;
 Make a just dividend; and if not all,
 The greater part to Diomede will fall.
 But why for Ithacus such arms as those,
 Who naked, and by night, invades his foes? 170
 The glitt'ring helm by moonlight will proclaim
 The latent robber, and prevent his game:

Nor could he hold his tott'ring head upright,
 Beneath that morion, or sustain the weight ;
 Nor that right arm could toss the beamy lance: 175
 Much less the left that ampler shield advance ;
 Pond'rous with precious weight, and rough with cost
 Of the round world in rising gold emboss'd.
 That orb would ill become his hand to wield,
 And look as for the gold he stole the shield; 180
 Which, should your error on the wretch bestow,
 It would not frighten, but allure the foe ;
 Why asks he, what avails him not in fight,
 And would but cumber and retard his flight,
 In which his holy excellence is plac'd? 185
 You give him death, that intercept his haste.
 Add, that his own is yet a maiden-shield,
 Nor the least dint has suffer'd in the field,
 Guiltless of fight: mine, batter'd, hew'd, and bor'd,
 Worn out of service, must forsake his lord. 190
 What farther need of words our right to scan?
 My arguments are deeds, let action speak the man.
 Since from a champion's arms the strife arose,
 So cast the glorious prize amid the foes ;
 Then send us to redeem both arms and shield, 195
 And let him wear, who wins 'em in the field.

He said: A murmur from a multitude,
 Or somewhat like a stifled shout ensu'd :
 Till from his seat arose Laërtès' son,
 Look'd down awhile, and paus'd ere he begun; 200
 Then to th' expecting audience rais'd his look,
 And not without prepar'd attention spoke:
 Soft was his tone, and sober was his face;
 Action his words, and words his action grace.

If Heav'n, my lords, had heard our common pray'r,
 These arms had caus'd no quarrel for an heir; 206
 Still great Achillès had his own possest,
 And we with great Achillès had been blest;
 But since hard fate, and Heav'n's severe decree,
 Have ravish'd him away from you and me 210
 (At this he sigh'd, and wip'd his eyes, and drew,
 Or seem'd to draw, some drops of kindly dew),
 Who better can succeed Achillès lost,
 Than he who gave Achillès to your host?

This only I request, that neither he 215
 May gain, by being what he seems to be,
 A stupid thing; nor I may lose the prize,
 By having sense, which Heav'n to him denies:
 Since, great or small, the talent I enjoy'd
 Was ever in the common cause employ'd. 220
 Nor let my wit, and wonted eloquence,
 Which often has been us'd in your defence,
 And in my own, this only time be brought
 To bear against myself, and deem'd a fault.
 Make not a crime, where nature made it none: 225
 For ev'ry man may freely use his own.
 The deeds of long descended ancestors
 Are but by grace of imputation ours,
 Theirs in effect: but since he draws his line
 From Jove, and seems to plead a right divine; 230
 From Jove, like him, I claim my pedigree,
 And am descended in the same degree;
 My sire Laërtès was Arcesius' heir,
 Arcesius was the son of Jupiter:
 No parricide, no banish'd man, is known 235
 In all my line: Let him excuse his own.
 Hermès ennobles too my mother's side,
 By both my parents to the gods allied:
 But not because that on the female part
 My blood is better dare I claim desert, 240
 Or that my sire from parricide is free;
 But judge by merit, betwixt him and me:
 The prize be to the best: provided yet
 That Ajax for awhile his kin forget,
 And his great sire, and greater uncle's name, 245
 To fortify by them his feeble claim:
 Be kindred and relation laid aside,
 And honour's cause by laws of honour tried:
 For if he plead proximity of blood,
 That empty title is with ease withstood. 250
 Peleus, the hero's sire, more nigh than he,
 And Pyrrhus, his undoubted progeny,
 Inherit first these trophies of the field;
 To Scyros, or to Pthia, send the shield:
 And Teucer has an uncle's right; yet he 255
 Waves his pretensions, nor contends with me.

Then since the cause on pure desert is plac'd,
 Whence shall I take my rise, what reckon last?
 I not presume on ev'ry act to dwell,
 But take these few, in order as they fell. 260

Thetis, who knew the fates, apply'd her care
 To keep Achillès in disguise from war;
 And till the threat'ning influence was past,
 A woman's habit on the hero cast:
 All eyes were cozen'd by the borrow'd vest, 265
 And Ajax (never wiser than the rest)
 Found no Pelidès there; at length I came
 With proffer'd wares to this pretended dame;
 She, not discover'd by her mien, or voice,
 Betray'd her manhood by her manly choice; 270
 And while on female toys her fellows look,
 Grasp'd in her warlike hand a jav'lin shook:
 Whom, by this act reveal'd, I thus bespoke:
 O goddess-born! resist not Heav'n's decree,
 The fall of Ilium is reserv'd for thee: 275
 Then seiz'd him, and produc'd in open light,
 Sent blushing to the field the fatal knight.
 Mine then are all his actions of the war;
 Great Telephus was conquer'd by my spear,
 And after cur'd: To me the Thebans owe, 280
 Lesbos, and Tenèdos, their overthrow;
 Scyros and Cylla: Not on all to dwell,
 By me Lyrnesus and strong Chrysa fell;
 And since I sent the man who Hector slew,
 To me the noble Hector's death is due: 285
 Those arms I put into his living hand,
 Those arms, Pelidès dead, I now demand.

When Greece was injur'd in the Spartan prince,
 And met at Aulis to avenge th' offence,
 'Twas a dead calm, or adverse blasts, that reign'd, 290
 And in the port the wind-bound fleet detain'd;
 Bad signs were seen, and oracles severe
 Were daily thunder'd in our gen'ral's ear;
 That by his daughter's blood we must appease
 Diana's kindled wrath, and free the seas. 295
 Affection, int'rest, fame, his heart assail'd:
 But soon the father o'er the king prevail'd:

Bold, on himself he took the pious crime,
 As angry with the gods, as they with him.
 No subject could sustain their sov'reign's look, 300
 Till this hard enterprize I undertook:
 I only durst th' imperial pow'r control,
 And undermin'd the parent in his soul;
 Forc'd him t' exert the king for common good,
 And pay our ransom with his daughter's blood. 305
 Never was cause more difficult to plead,
 Than where the judge against himself decreed:
 Yet this I won by dint of argument,
 The wrongs his injur'd brother underwent,
 And his own office sham'd him to consent. 310
 'Twas harder yet to move the mother's mind,
 And to this heavy task was I design'd:
 Reasons against her love I knew were vain;
 I circumvented, whom I could not gain:
 Had Ajax been employ'd, our slacken'd sails 315
 Had still at Aulis waited happy gales.
 Arriv'd at Troy, your choice was fix'd on me,
 A fearless envoy, fit for a bold embassy;
 Secure, I enter'd through the hostile court,
 Glitt'ring with steel, and crowded with resort: 320
 There, in the midst of arms, I plead our cause,
 Urge the foul rape, and violated laws;
 Accuse the foes as authors of the strife,
 Reproach the ravisher, demand the wife.
 Priam, Antenor, and the wiser few, 325
 I mov'd; but Paris, and his lawless crew,
 Scarce held their hands, and lifted swords; but stood
 In act to quench their impious thirst of blood:
 This, Menelaüs knows; expos'd to share
 With me the rough prelude of the war. 330

Endless it were to tell what I have done,
 In arms, or council, since the siege begun;
 The first encounter past, the foe repell'd,
 They skulk'd within the town, we kept the field.
 War seem'd asleep for nine long years; at length 335
 Both sides resolv'd to push, we try'd our strength.
 Now, what did Ajax, while our arms took breath,
 Vers'd only in the gross mechanic trade of death?

If you require my deeds; with ambush'd arms
 I trapp'd the foe, or tir'd with false alarms; 340
 Secur'd the ships, drew lines along the plain,
 The fainting cheer'd, chastis'd the rebel-train,
 Provided forage, our spent arms renew'd; [pursu'd.
 Employ'd at home, or sent abroad, the common cause
 The king, deluded in a dream by Jove, 345
 Despair'd to take the town, and order'd to remove.
 What subject durst arraign the pow'r supreme,
 Producing Jove to justify his dream?
 Ajax might wish the soldiers to retain
 From shameful flight, but wishes were in vain: 350
 As wanting of effect has been his words,
 Such as of course his thund'ring tongue affords.
 But did this boaster threaten, did he pray,
 Or by his own example urge their stay?
 None, none of these, but ran himself away. 355
 I saw him run, and was asham'd to see;
 Who ply'd his feet so fast to get aboard as he?
 Then speeding through the place, I made a stand,
 And loudly cry'd, O base, degen'rate band,
 To leave a town already in your hand! 360
 After so long expense of blood, for fame,
 To bring home nothing, but perpetual shame!
 These words, or what I have forgotten since
 (For grief inspir'd me then with eloquence),
 Reduc'd their minds; they leave the crowded port, 365
 And to their late-forsaken camp resort:
 Dismay'd, the council met, this man was there,
 But mute, and not recover'd of his fear:
 Thersitès tax'd the king, and loudly rail'd,
 But his wide op'ning mouth with blows I seal'd. 370
 Then, rising, I excite their souls to fame,
 And kindle sleeping virtue into flame.
 From thence, whatever he perform'd in fight
 Is justly mine, who drew him back from flight.
 Which of the Grecian chiefs consorts with thee? 375
 But Diomede desires my company,
 And still communicates his praise with me.
 As guided by a god, secure he goes,
 Arm'd with my fellowship amid the foes;
 And sure no little merit I may boast, 380

Whom such a man selects from such an host:
 Unforc'd by lots I went, without affright,
 To dare with him the dangers of the night:
 On the same errand sent, we met the spy
 Of Hector, double-tongu'd, and us'd to lie; 385
 Him I dispatch'd, but not till undermin'd
 I drew him first to tell, what treach'rous Troy de-
 My task perform'd, with praise I had retir'd, [sign'd:
 But not content with this, to greater praise aspir'd:
 Invaded Rhesus, and his Thracian crew, 390
 And him, and his, in their own strength I slew.
 Return'd a victor, all my vows complete,
 With the king's chariot, in his royal seat
 Refuse me now his arms, whose fiery steeds
 Were promis'd to the spy for his nocturnal deeds: 395
 Yet let dull Ajax bear away my right,
 When all his days out-balance this one night.

Nor fought I darkling still: the sun beheld
 With slaughter'd Lycians when I strew'd the field:
 You saw, and counted as I pass'd along 400
 Alastor, Chromius, Ceranos the strong,
 Alcander, Prytanis, and Halius,
 Nöemon, Charopès, and Ennomus;
 Cöon, Chersidamas; and five beside,
 Men of obscure descent, but courage tried; 405
 All these this hand laid breathless on the ground:
 Nor want I proofs of many a manly wound;
 All honest, all before: Believe not me;
 Words may deceive, but credit what you see.

At this he bar'd his breast, and shew'd his scars,
 As of a furrow'd field well plough'd with wars; 411
 Nor is this part unexercis'd, said he:
 That giant-bulk of his from wounds is free:
 Safe in his shield he fears no foe to try,
 And better manages his blood than I: 415
 But thus avails me not; our boaster strove
 Not with our foes alone, but partial Jove,
 To save the fleet: This, I confess, is true
 (Nor will I take from any man his due):
 But thus assuming all, he robs from you. 420
 Some part of honour to your share will fall;
 He did the best indeed, but did not all.

Patroclus in Achillès' arms, and thought
 The chief he seem'd, with equal ardour fought ;
 Preserv'd the fleet, repell'd the raging fire, 425
 And forc'd the fearful Trojans to retire.

But Ajax boasts that he was only thought
 A match for Hector, who the combat sought :
 Sure he forgets the king, the chiefs, and me ;
 All were as eager for the fight as he : 430
 He but the ninth, and not by public voice,
 Or ours preferr'd, was only fortune's choice :
 They fought ; nor can our hero boast th' event,
 For Hector from the field unwounded went.

Why am I forc'd to name that fatal day, 435
 That snatch'd the prop and pride of Greece away ?
 I saw Pelidès sink, with pious grief,
 And ran in vain, alas ! to his relief :
 For the brave soul was fled : Full of my friend
 I rush'd amidst the war, his relics to defend : 440
 Nor ceas'd my toil, till I redeem'd the prey,
 And loaded with Achillès march'd away :
 Those arms, which on these shoulders then I bore,
 'Tis just you to these shoulders should restore.
 You see I want not nerves, who could sustain 445
 The pond'rous ruins of so great a man :
 Or if in others equal force you find,
 None is endu'd with a more grateful mind.

Did Thetis then, ambitious in her care,
 These arms thus labour'd for her son prepare, 450
 That Ajax after him the heav'nly gift should wear !
 For that dull soul to stare, with stupid eyes,
 On the learn'd unintelligible prize !
 What are to him the sculptures of the shield,
 Heav'n's planets, earth, and ocean's wat'ry field ? 455
 The Pleiads, Hyads ; less and greater Bear,
 Undipp'd in seas : Orion's angry star ;
 Two diff'ring cities, grav'd on either hand ;
 Would he wear arms he cannot understand ?

Beside, what wise objections he prepares 460
 Against my late accession to the wars !
 Does not the fool perceive his argument
 Is with more force against Achillès bent ?
 For if dissembling be so great a crime,

The fault is common, and the same in him : 465
 And if he taxes both of long delay,
 My guilt is less, who sooner came away.

His pious mother, anxious for his life,
 Detain'd her son, and me, my pious wife.
 To them the blossoms of our youth were due, 470
 Our riper manhood we reserv'd for you.

But grant me guilty, 'tis not much my care,
 When with so great a man my guilt I share:
 My wit to war the matchless hero brought,
 But by this fool I never had been caught. 475

Nor need I wonder, that on me he threw
 Such foul aspersions, when he spares not you :
 If Palamede unjustly fell by me,
 Your honour suffer'd in th' unjust decree:
 I but accus'd, you doom'd : And yet he died, 480
 Convict of treason, and was fairly tried:
 You heard not he was false ; your eyes beheld
 The traitor manifest ; the bribe reveal'd.

That Philoctètès is on Lemnos left,
 Wounded, forlorn, of human aid bereft, 485
 Is not my crime, or not my crime alone ;
 Defend your justice, for the fact's your own :
 'Tis true, th' advice was mine ; that staying there
 He might his weary limbs with rest repair,
 From a long voyage free, and from a longer war. 490
 He took the counsel, and he lives at least ;
 Th' event declares I counsel'd for the best ;
 Though faith is all in ministers of state ;
 For who can promise to be fortunate ?

Now, since his arrows are the fate of Troy, 495
 Do not my wit, or weak address employ ;
 Send Ajax there, with his persuasive sense,
 To mollify the man, and draw him thence :
 But Xanthus shall run backward ; Ida stand
 A leafless mountain ; and the Grecian band 500
 Shall fight for Troy ; if, when my counsels fail,
 The wit of heavy Ajax can prevail.

Hard Philoctètès, exercise thy spleen
 Against thy fellows, and the king of men ;
 Curse my devoted head, above the rest, 505
 And wish in arms to meet me breast to breast ;

Yet I the dangerous task will undertake,
And either die myself, or bring thee back.

Nor doubt the same success, as when before
The Phrygian prophet to these tents I bore, 510
Surpris'd by night, and forc'd him to declare
In what was plac'd the fortune of the war,
Heav'n's dark decrees and answers to display,
And how to take the town, and where the secret lay:
Yet this I compass'd, and from Troy convey'd 515
The fatal image of their guardian-maid:
That work was mine, for Pallas, though our friend,
Yet while she was in Troy, did Troy defend.
Now what has Ajax done, or what design'd?
A noisy nothing, and an empty wind. 520
If he be what he promises in show,
Why was I sent, and why fear'd he to go?
Our boasting champion thought the task not light
To pass the guards, commit himself to night:
Not only through a hostile town to pass, 525
But scale, with steep ascent, the sacred place:
With wand'ring steps to search the citadel,
And from the priests their patroness to steal;
Then through surrounding foes to force my way,
And bear in triumph home the heav'nly prey; 530
Which had I not, Ajax in vain had held,
Before that monstrous bulk his sev'n-fold shield.
That night to conquer Troy I might be said,
When Troy was liable to conquest made.
Why point'st thou to my partner of the war? 535
Tydidès had indeed a worthy share
In all my toil, and praise; but when thy might
Our ships protected, didst thou singly fight?
All join'd, and thou of many wert but one;
I ask'd no friend, nor had, but him alone: 540
Who, had he not been well assur'd, that art,
And conduct, were of war the better part,
And more avail'd than strength, my valiant friend
Had urg'd a better right than Ajax can pretend;
As good at least Euripylus may claim, 545
And the more mod'rate Ajax of the name:
The Cretan king, and his brave charioteer,
And Menelaüs bold with sword and spear:

All these had been my rivals in the shield,
 And yet all these to my pretensions yield. 550
 Thy boist'rous hands are then of use, when I
 With this directing head, those hands apply.
 Brawn without brain is thine: My prudent care
 Foresees, provides, administers the war:
 Thy province is to fight; but when shall be 555
 The time to fight, the king consults with me:
 No dram of judgment with thy force is join'd;
 Thy body is of profit, and my mind.
 By how much more the ship her safety owes
 To him who steers, than him that only rows, 560
 By how much more the captain merits praise,
 Than he who fights, and fighting but obeys;
 By so much greater is my worth than thine,
 Who canst but execute, what I design.
 What gain'st thou, brutal man, if I confess 565
 Thy strength superior, when thy wit is less?
 Mind is the man; I claim my whole desert
 From the mind's vigour, and th' immortal part.
 But you, O Grecian chiefs, reward my care,
 Be grateful to your watchman of the war; 570
 For all my labours in so long a space
 Sure I may plead a title to your grace:
 Enter the town; I then unbarr'd the gates,
 When I remov'd their tutelary fates.
 By all our common hopes, if hopes they be, 575
 Which I have now reduc'd to certainty;
 By falling Troy, by yonder tott'ring tow'rs,
 And by their taken gods, which now are ours;
 Or if there yet a farther task remains,
 To be perform'd by prudence, or by pains; 580
 If yet some desp'rate action rests behind,
 That asks high conduct, and a dauntless mind;
 If aught be wanting to the Trojan doom,
 Which none but I can manage and o'ercome,
 Award, those arms I ask, by your decree: 585
 Or give to this, what you refuse to me.
 He ceas'd: And ceasing, with respect he bow'd,
 And with his hand at once the fatal statue shew'd.
 Heav'n, air, and ocean rung with loud applause,
 Led by the gen'ral vote, he gain'd his cause. 590

Thus conduct won the prize, when courage fail'd,
And eloquence o'er brutal force prevail'd.

He who could often, and alone withstand
The foe, the fire, and Jove's own partial hand,
Now cannot his unmaster'd grief sustain, 595
But yields to rage, to madness, and disdain ;
Then snatching out his falchion, Thou (said he)
Art mine ; Ulysses lays no claim to thee.

O often try'd, and ever-trusty sword,
Now do thy last kind office to thy lord ; 600
'Tis Ajax, who requests thy aid, to shew
None but himself himself could overthrow.
He said, and with so good a will to die,
Did to his breast the fatal point apply.

It found his heart, a way till then unknown 605
Where never weapon enter'd but his own.
No hands could force it thence, so fix'd it stood,
Till out it rush'd, expell'd by streams of spouting
blood.

The fruitful blood produc'd a flow'r, which grew
On a green stem, and of a purple hue : 610
Like his, whom, unaware, Apollo slew :
Inscrib'd in both, the letters are the same,
But those express the grief, and these the name.

The victor with full sails for Lemnos stood
(Once stain'd by matrons with their husband's blood),
Thence great Alcides' fatal shafts to bear, 616
Assign'd to Philoctetes' secret care.

These with their guardian to the Greeks convey'd,
Their ten years' toil with wish'd success repaid.
With Troy old Priam falls ; his queen survives ; 620
Till all her woes complete, transform'd she grieves
In borrow'd sounds, nor with a human face,
Barking tremendous o'er the plains of Thrace.
Still Ilium's flames their pointed columns raise,
And the red Hellespont reflects the blaze. 625

Shed on Jove's altar are the poor remains
Of blood, which trickled from old Priam's veins.
Cassandra lifts her hands to heav'n in vain,
Dragg'd by her sacred hair ; the trembling train
Of matrons to their burning temples fly : 630

There to their gods for kind protection cry ;
 And to their statues cling, till forc'd away,
 The victor Greeks bear off th' invidious prey.
 From those high tow'rs Astyanax is thrown,
 Whence he was wont with pleasure to look down,
 When oft his mother, with a fond delight, 636
 Pointed to view his father's rage in fight,
 To win renown, and guard his country's right.

The winds now call to sea ; brisk northern gales
 Sing in the shrouds, and court the spreading sails.
 Farewell, dear Troy ! the captive matrons cry ; 641
 Yes, we must leave our long-lov'd native sky.
 Then prostrate on the shore they kiss the sand,
 And quit the smoking ruins of the land.

Last, Hecuba, on board (sad sight!) appears ; 645
 Found weeping o'er her children's sepulchres :
 Dragg'd by Ulysses from her slaughter'd sons,
 Whilst yet she grasp'd their tombs, and kiss'd their
 mould'ring bones.

Yet Hector's ashes from his urn she bore,
 And in her bosom the sad relic wore : 650
 Then scatter'd on his tomb her hoary hairs,
 A poor oblation, mingled with her tears.

Oppos'd to Ilium lie the Thracian plains,
 Where Polymestor safe in plenty reigns.
 King Priam to his care commits his son, 655
 Young Polydore, the chance of war to shun.
 A wise precaution ! had not gold consign'd,
 For the child's use, debauch'd the tyrant's mind.
 When sinking Troy to its last period drew,
 With impious hands his royal charge he slew ; 660
 Then in the sea his lifeless corse is thrown ;
 As with the body he the guilt could drown.

The Greeks now riding on the Thracian shore,
 Till kinder gales invite, their vessels moor.
 Here the wide op'ning earth to sudden view 665
 Disclos'd Achillès, great as when he drew
 The vital air, but fierce with proud disdain,
 As when he sought Briseïs to regain ;
 When stern debate, and rash injurious strife
 Unsheathe'd his sword, to reach Atridès' life. 670

And will ye go? he said. Is then the name
 Of the once great Achillès lost to fame?
 Yet stay, ungrateful Greeks; nor let me sue
 In vain for honours to my manè's due.
 For this just end, Polyxena I doom 675
 With victim rites to grace my slighted tomb.

The phantom spoke; the ready Greeks obey'd,
 And to the tomb led the devoted maid,
 Snatch'd from her mother, who with pious care
 Cherish'd this last relief of her despair. 680

Superior to her sex, the fearless maid
 Approach'd the altar, and around survey'd
 The cruel rites, and consecrated knife,
 Which Pyrrhus pointed at her guiltless life;
 Then as with stern amaze intent he stood, 685

Now strike (she said), now spill my gen'rous blood;
 Deep in my breast, or throat, your dagger sheath,
 While thus I stand prepar'd to meet my death;
 For life on terms of slav'ry I despise:
 Yet sure no god approves this sacrifice. 690

O, could I but conceal this dire event,
 From my sad mother, I should die content!
 Yet should she not with tears my death deplore,
 Since her own wretched life demands them more.
 But let not the rude touch of man pollute 695

A virgin victim; 'tis a modest suit:
 It best will please whoe'er demands my blood,
 That I untainted reach the Stygian flood.
 Yet let one short, last, dying pray'r be heard;
 To Priam's daughter pay this last regard; 700

'Tis Priam's daughter, not a captive sues;
 Do not the rites of sepulture refuse.
 To my afflicted mother, I implore,
 Free without ransom my dead corse restore:
 Nor barter me for gain when I am cold; 705

But be her tears the price if I am sold:
 Time was she could have ransom'd me with gold.

Thus as she pray'd, one common show'r of tears
 Burst forth and stream'd from ev'ry eye but hers.
 E'en the priest wept, and with a rude remorse, 710
 Plung'd in her heart the steel's resistless force.

Her slacken'd limbs sunk gently to the ground,
 Dauntless her looks, unalter'd by the wound.
 And as she fell, she strove with decent pride
 To hide what suits a virgin's care to hide. 715
 The Trojan matrons the pale corse receive,
 And the whole slaughter'd race of Priam grieve.
 Sad they recount the long disastrous tale;
 Then with fresh tears, thee, royal maid, bewail:
 Thy widow'd mother too, who flourish'd late, 720
 The royal pride of Asia's happier state:
 A captive lot now to Ulysses borne;
 Whom yet the victor would reject with scorn,
 Were she not Hector's mother: Hector's fame
 Scarce can a master for his mother claim! 725
 With strict embrace the lifeless corse she view'd;
 And her fresh grief that flood of tears renew'd,
 With which she lately mourn'd so many dead;
 Tears for her country, sons, and husband shed. 729
 With the thick gushing stream she bath'd the wound;
 Kiss'd her pale lips; then welt'ring on the ground,
 With wonted rage her frantic bosom tore;
 Sweeping her hair amidst the clotted gore;
 Whilst her sad accents thus her loss deplore:
 Behold a mother's last dear pledge of woe! 735
 Yes, 'tis the last I have to suffer now.
 Thou, my Polyxena, my ills must crown:
 Already in thy fate I feel my own.
 'Tis thus, lest haply of my num'rous seed
 One should unslaughter'd fall, even thou must bleed.
 And yet I hop'd thy sex had been thy guard; 741
 But neither has thy tender sex been spar'd.
 The same Achillès, by whose deadly hate
 Thy brothers fell, urg'd thy untimely fate!
 The same Achillès, whose destructive rage 745
 Laid waste my realms, has robb'd my childless age!
 When Paris' shafts with Phoebus' certain aid
 At length had pierc'd this dreadful chief, I said,
 Secure of future ills, He can no more:—
 But see he still pursues me as before. 750
 With rage rekindled his dead ashes burn;
 And his yet murd'ring ghost my wretched house
 must mourn.

This tyrant's lust of slaughter I have fed
 With large supplies from my too fruitful bed.
 Troy's tow'rs lie waste ; and the wide ruin ends 755
 The public woe : but me fresh woe attends.
 Troy still survives to me ; to none but me ;
 And from its ills I never must be free.
 I, who so late had pow'r, and wealth, and ease,
 Bless'd with my husband, and a large increase, 760
 Must now in poverty and exile mourn ;
 E'en from the tombs of my dead offspring torn :
 Giv'n to Penélopè, who proud of spoil,
 Allots me to the loom's ungrateful toil ;
 Points to her dames, and cries with scorning mien,
 See Hector's mother, and great Priam's queen ! 766
 And thou, my child, sole hope of all that's lost,
 Thou now art slain to soothe this hostile ghost.
 Yes ; my child falls an off'ring to my foe !
 Then what am I who still survive this woe ? 770
 Say, cruel gods ! for what new scenes of death
 Must a poor aged wretch prolong this hated breath ?
 Troy fall'n, to whom could Priam happy seem ?
 Yet was he so ; and happy must I deem
 His death ; for O ! my child, he saw not thine, 775
 When he his life did with his Troy resign.
 Yet sure, due obsequies thy tomb might grace ;
 And thou shalt sleep amidst thy kingly race.
 Alas ! my child, such fortune does not wait
 Our suff'ring house in this abandon'd state ; 780
 A foreign grave, and thy poor mother's tears,
 Are all the honours that attend thy hearse.
 All now is lost !—Yet no ; one comfort more
 Of life remains, my much-lov'd Polydore,
 My youngest hope : Here on this coast he lives, 785
 Nurs'd by the guardian king he still survives.
 Then let me hasten to the cleansing flood,
 And wash away these stains of guiltless blood.
 Straight to the shore her feeble steps repair
 With limping pace, and torn dishevell'd hair 790
 Silver'd with age. ' Give me an urn (she cry'd),
 To bear back water from this swelling tide :—
 When on the banks her son, in ghastly hue,
 Transfixt with Thracian arrows, strikes her view.

The matron shriek'd; her big-swoln grief surpass'd
 The pow'r of utterance; she stood aghast; 796
 She had nor speech nor tears to give relief;
 Excess of woe suppress'd the rising grief.
 Lifeless as stone, on earth she fix'd her eyes,
 And then look'd up to heav'n with wild surprise. 800
 Now she contemplates o'er with sad delight
 Her son's pale visage; then her aching sight
 Dwells on his wounds: She varies thus by turns,
 Till with collected rage at length she burns,
 Wild as the mother lion, when among 805
 The haunts of prey she seeks her ravish'd young:
 Swift flies the ravisher; she marks his trace,
 And by the print directs her anxious chace.
 So Hecuba, with mingled grief and rage,
 Pursues the king, regardless of her age; 810
 She greets the murd'rer with dissembled joy,
 Of secret treasure hoarded for her boy.
 The specious tale th' unwary king betray'd,
 Fir'd with the hopes of prey: Give quick (he said,
 With soft enticing speech) the promis'd store: 815
 Whate'er you give, you give to Polydore.
 Your son, by the immortal gods I swear,
 Shall this with all your former bounty share.
 She stands attentive to his soothing lies,
 And darts avenging horror from her eyes. 820
 Then full resentment fires her boiling blood:
 She springs upon him 'midst the captive crowd
 (Her thirst of vengeance want of strength supplies);
 Fastens her forky fingers in his eyes;
 Tears out the rooted balls; her rage pursues, 825
 And in the hollow orbs her hand imbrues.
 The Thracians, fir'd at this inhuman scene,
 With darts and stones assail the frantic queen.
 She snarls and growls, nor in a human tone;
 Then bites impatient at the bounding stone; 830
 Extends her jaws, as she her voice would raise
 To keen invectives in her wonted phrase;
 But barks, and thence the yelping brute betrays.
 Still a sad monument the place remains, 834
 And from this monstrous change its name obtains:
 Where she in long remembrance of her ills,

With plaintive howlings the wide desert fills,
 Greeks, Trojans, friends and foes, and gods above,
 Her num'rous wrongs to just compassion move;
 E'en Juno's self forgets her ancient hate, 840
 And owns she had deserv'd a milder fate.

Yet bright Aurora, partial as she was
 To Troy and those that lov'd the Trojan cause,
 Nor Troy, nor Hecuba can now bemoan,
 But weeps a sad misfortune, more her own. 845
 Her offspring Memnon, by Achillès slain,
 She saw extended on the Phrygian plain :
 She saw, and straight the purple beams, that grace
 The rosy morning, vanish'd from her face :
 A deadly pale her wonted bloom invades, 850
 And veils the low'ring skies with mournful shades.
 But when his limbs upon the pile were laid,
 The last kind duty that by friends is paid,
 His mother to the skies directs her flight,
 Nor could sustain to view the doleful sight; 855
 But frantic, with her loose neglected hair,
 Hastens to Jove and falls a suppliant there.—
 O king of heav'n, O father of the skies
 (The weeping goddess passionately cries),
 Though I the meanest of immortals am, 860
 And fewest temples celebrate my fame;
 Yet still a goddess I presume to come,
 Within the verge of your ethereal dome ;
 Yet still may plead some merit, if my light
 With purple dawn controls the pow'rs of night ; 865
 If from a female hand that virtue springs,
 Which to the gods, and men such pleasure brings,
 Yet I nor honour seek, nor rites divine,
 Nor for more altars, or more fanes repine ;
 O! that such trifles were the only cause, 870
 From whence Aurora's mind its anguish draws!
 For Memnon lost, my dearest only child,
 With weightier grief my heavy heart is fill'd ;
 My warrior son! that liv'd but half his time,
 Nipp'd in the bud, and blasted in his prime ; 875
 Who for his uncle early took the field,
 And by Achillès' fatal spear was kill'd.

To whom but Jove should I for succour come?
For Jove alone could fix his cruel doom.

O sov'reign of the gods, accept my pray'r, 880
Grant my request, and soothe a mother's care:
On the deceas'd some solemn boon bestow,
To expiate the loss, and ease my woe.

Jove, with a nod, comply'd with her desire;
Around the body flam'd the fun'ral fire; 885

The pile decreas'd, that lately seem'd so high,
And sheets of smoke roll'd upwards to the sky:
As humid vapours from a marshy bog,
Rise by degrees, condensing into fog.
That intercept the sun's enliv'ning ray, 890
And with a cloud infect the cheerful day.

The sooty ashes wafted by the air,
Whirl round, and thicken in a body there;
Then take a form which their own heat and fire,
With active life and energy inspire. 895

Its lightness makes it seem to fly, and soon
It skims on real wings that are its own;
A real bird, it beats the breezy wind,
Mix'd with a thousand sisters of the kind,
That from the same formation newly sprung, 900
Up-borne aloft on plummy pinions hung.

Thrice round the pile advanc'd the circling throng,
Thrice, with their wings, a whizzing concert rung:
In their fourth flight their squadron they divide,
Rank'd in two diff'rent troops, on either side: 905
Then two, and two, inspir'd with martial rage,
From either troop in equal pairs engage.

Each combatant with beak and pounces press'd,
In wrathful ire, his adversary's breast;
Each falls a victim, to preserve the fame 910
Of that great hero, whence their being came.

From him their courage and their name they take,
And, as they liv'd, they die for Memnon's sake.
Punctual to time, with each revolving year,
In fresh array the champion birds appear; 915
Again, prepar'd with vengeful minds, they come
To bleed, in honour of the soldier's tomb.

Therefore, in others it appear'd not strange,
To grieve for Hecuba's unhappy change:

But poor Aurora had enough to do 920
 With her own loss, to mind another's woe ;
 Who still, in tears, her tender nature shews,
 Besprinkling all the world with pearly dew.

Troy thus destroy'd, 'twas still denied by fate,
 The hopes of Troy should perish with the state. 925

His sire, the son of Cytherèa bore,
 And household gods from burning Ilium's shore.
 The pious prince (a double duty paid)

Each sacred burthen through the flames convey'd.
 With young Ascanius and this only prize, 930

Of heaps of wealth, he from Antandros flies :
 But struck with horror, left the Thracian shore,
 Stain'd with the blood of murder'd Polydore.

The Delian isle receives the banish'd train,
 Driv'n by kind gales, and favour'd by the main. 935

Here pious Anius, priest and monarch reign'd,
 And either charge with equal care sustain'd,
 His subjects rul'd, to Phœbus homage paid,
 His god obeying, and by those obey'd.

The priest displays his hospitable gate, 940
 And shews the riches of his church and state ;

The sacred shrubs, which eas'd Latona's pain,
 The palm, the olive, and the votive fane.

Here grateful flames, with fuming incense fed,
 And mingled wine, ambrosial odours shed ; 945

Of slaughter'd steers the crackling entrails burn'd :
 And then the strangers to the court return'd.

On beds of tap'stry plac'd aloft, they dine
 With Cerès' gift, and flowing bowls of wine ;

When thus Anchisès spoke, amidst the feast, 950
 Say, mitred monarch, Phœbus' chosen priest

(Or ere from Troy by cruel fate expell'd),
 When first mine eyes these sacred walls beheld,
 A son, and twice two daughters crown'd thy bliss ?

Or errs my mem'ry, and I judge amiss ? 955

The royal prophet shook his hoary head,
 With snowy fillets bound, and sighing, said ;
 Thy mem'ry errs not, prince ; thou saw'st me then,
 The happy father of so large a train ;

Behold me now (such turns of chance befall 960

The race of man!) almost bereft of all.
 For, ah! what comfort can my son bestow,
 What help afford to mitigate my woe!
 While far from hence, in Andros' isle he reigns 964
 (From him so nam'd), and there my place sustains.
 Him Delius prescience gave: the twice-born god
 A boon more wondrous on the maids bestow'd.
 Whate'er they touch'd he gave them to transmute
 (A gift past credit, and above their suit),
 To Cerès', Bacchus', and Minerva's fruit. 970
 How great their value, and how rich their use,
 Whose only touch such treasures could produce!
 The dire destroyer of the Trojan reign,
 Fierce Agamemnon, such a prize to gain
 (A proof we also were design'd by fate 975
 To feel the tempest that o'erturn'd your state),
 With force superior, and a ruffian crew,
 From these weak arms the helpless virgins drew;
 And sternly bade them use the grant diviue,
 To keep the fleet in corn, and oil, and wine. 980
 Each, as they could, escap'd; two strove to gain
 Eubœa's isle, and two their brother's reign.
 The soldier follows, and demands the dames;
 If held by force, immediate war proclaims.
 Fear conquer'd nature in their brother's mind, 985
 And gave them up to punishment assign'd.
 Forgive the deed; nor Hector's arm was there,
 Nor thine, Æneas, to maintain the war;
 Whose only force upheld your Ilium's tow'rs,
 For ten long years, against the Grecian Pow'rs. 990
 Prepar'd to bind their captive arms in bands,
 To heav'n they rear'd their yet unfetter'd hands.
 Help, Bacchus, author of the gift, they pray'd;—
 The gift's great author gave immediate aid;
 If such destruction of their human frame 995
 By ways so wondrous, may deserve the name;
 Nor could I hear, nor can I now relate
 Exact, the manner of their alter'd state;
 But this in gen'ral of my loss I knew,
 Transform'd to doves, on milky plumes they
 flew, 1000
 Such as on Ida's mount thy consort's chariot drew.

With such discourse they entertain'd the feast ;
 Then rose from table, and withdrew to rest.
 The following morn, ere Sol was seen to shine,
 Th' inquiring Trojans sought the sacred shrine, 1005
 The mystic pow'r commands them to explore
 Their ancient mother, and a kindred shore.
 Attending to the sea, the gen'rous prince
 Dismiss'd his guests with rich munificence,
 In old Anchisès' hand a sceptre plac'd, 1010
 A vest, and quiver young Ascanius grac'd,
 His sire, a cup ; which from th' Aöonian coast,
 Ismenian Thersès sent his royal host.
 Alcon of Mylè made what Thersès sent,
 And carv'd thereon this ample argument. 1015
 A town with sev'n distinguish'd gates was shewn,
 Which spoke its name, and made the city known ;
 Before it, piles, and tombs, and rising flames,
 The rites of death, and quires of mourning dames,
 Who bar'd their breasts, and gave their hair to flow,
 The signs of grief, and marks of public woe. 1021
 Their fountains dried, the weeping Naiäds mourn'd ;
 The trees stood bare, with searing cankers burn'd.
 No herbage cloth'd the ground, a ragged flock
 Of goats half-famish'd, lick'd the naked rock. 1025
 Of manly courage, and with mind serene,
 Orion's daughters in the town were seen ;
 One heav'd her chest to meet the lifted knife,
 One plung'd the poniard through the seat of life,
 Their countries' victims ; mourns the rescu'd state,
 The bodies burns, and celebrates their fate. 1031
 To save the failure of th' illustrious line,
 From the pale ashes rose, of form divine,
 Two gen'rous youths ; these, fame 'Coronæ calls,
 Who join the pomp, and mourn their mothers' falls :
 These burnish'd figures form'd of antique mould
 Shone on the brass, with rising sculpture bold ;
 A wreath of gilt acanthus round the brim was roll'd.
 Nor less expense the Trojan gifts express'd ;
 A fuming censer for the royal priest, 1040
 A chalice, and a crown of princely cost,
 With ruddy gold, and sparkling gems embost.

Now hoisting sail, to Crete, the Trojans stood,
 Themselves rememb'ring sprung from Teucer's blood ;
 But Heav'n forbids, and pestilential Jove 1045
 From noxious skies the wand'ring navy drove.
 Her hundred cities left, from Crete they bore,
 And sought the destin'd land, Ausonia's shore ;
 But toss'd by storms at either Strophas lay,
 Till scar'd by harpies from the faithless bay ; 1050
 Then passing onward with a prosp'rous wind,
 Left sly Ulysses' spacious realms behind ;
 Ambracia's state, in former ages known
 The strife of gods, the judge transform'd to stone
 They saw ; for Actian Phœbus since renown'd, 1055
 Who Cæsar's arms with naval conquest crown'd ;
 Next pass'd Dodona, wont of old to boast
 Her vocal forest ; and Chæonia's coast,
 Where King Molossus' sons on wings aspir'd,
 And saw secure the harmless fuel fir'd. 1060

Now to Phæacia's happy isle they came,
 For fertile orchards known to early fame ;
 Epirus past, they next beheld with joy
 A second Ilium, and fictitious Troy ;
 Here Trojan Helénus the sceptre sway'd, 1065
 Who shew'd their fate, and mystic truths display'd.
 By him confirm'd, Sicilia's isle they reach'd,
 Whose sides to sea three promontories stretch'd ;
 Pachynos to the stormy south is plac'd,
 On Lilybæum blows the gentle west ; 1070
 Peloro's cliffs the northern bear survey,
 Who rolls above, and dreads to touch the sea.
 By this they steer, and, favour'd by the tide,
 Secure by night in Zancle's harbour ride.

Here cruel Scylla guards the rocky shore, 1075
 And there the waves of loud Charybdis roar :
 This sucks, and vomits ships, and bodies drown'd ;
 And rav'nous dogs the womb of that surround,
 In face a virgin ; and (if aught be true
 By bards recorded) once a virgin too. 1080

A train of youths in vain desir'd her bed ;
 By sea-nymphs lov'd, to nymphs of seas she fled ;
 The maid to these, with female pride, display'd
 Their baffled courtship, and their love betray'd.

When Galatée thus bespoke the fair 1085
 (But first she sigh'd), while Scylla comb'd her hair;
 You, lovely maid, a gen'rous race pursues,
 Whom safe you may (as now you do) refuse;
 To me, though pow'rful in a num'rous train
 Of sisters, sprung from gods, who rule the main,
 My native seas could scarce a refuge prove, 1091
 To shun the fury of the Cyclops' love.

Tears choak'd her utt'rance here; the pitying
 maid
 With marble fingers wip'd them off, and said:
 My dearest goddess, let thy Scylla know 1095
 (For I am faithful), whence these sorrows flow.
 The maid's entreaties o'er the nymph prevail,
 Who thus to Scylla tells the mournful tale :

Acis, the lovely youth whose loss I mourn,
 From Faunus and the nymph Symethis born, 1100
 Was both his parents' pleasure ; but to me
 Was all that love could make a lover be.
 The gods our minds in mutual bands did join:
 I was his only joy, and he was mine.
 Now sixteen summers the sweet youth had seen ;
 And doubtful down began to shade his chin : 1106
 When Polyphemus first disturb'd our joy,
 And lov'd me fiercely as I lov'd the boy.
 Ask not which passion in my soul was high'r,
 My last aversion, or my first desire : 1110
 Nor this the greater was, nor that the less ;
 Both were alike, for both were in excess.
 Thee, Venus, thee, both heav'n and earth obey;
 Immense thy pow'r, and boundless is thy sway.
 The Cyclops, who defy'd th' ethereal throne, 1115
 And thought no thunder louder than his own,
 The terror of the woods, and wilder far
 Than wolves in plains, or bears in forests are,
 Th' inhuman host, who made his bloody feasts
 On mangled members of his butcher'd guests, 1120
 Yet felt the force of love, and fierce desire,
 And burnt for me with unrelenting fire ;
 Forgot his caverns, and his woolly care,
 Assum'd the softness of a lover's air ; 1124
 And comb'd, with teeth of rakes, his rugged hair.

Now with a crooked scythe his beard he sleeks,
 And mows the stubborn stubble of his cheeks:
 Now in the crystal stream he looks to try
 His simagres, and rolls his glaring eye.
 His cruelty and thirst of blood are lost; 1130
 And ships securely sail along the coast.

The prophet *Telémus* (arriv'd by chance
 Where *Ætna's* summits to the seas advance,
 Who mark'd the tracts of ev'ry bird that flew,
 And sure presages from their flying drew) 1135
 Foretold the Cyclops, that *Ulysses' hand*
 In his broad eye should thrust a flaming brand.
 The giant, with a scornful grin, reply'd,
 Vain augur, thou hast falsely prophesy'd;
 Already love his flaming brand has tost; 1140
 Looking on two fair eyes, my sight I lost.

Thus warn'd in vain, with stalking pace he strode,
 And stamp'd the margin of the briny flood
 With heavy steps; and weary sought again
 The cool retirement of his gloomy den. 1145

A promontory, sharpen'd by degrees,
 Ends in a wedge, and overlooks the seas;
 On either side, below, the water flows;
 This airy walk the giant lover chose.
 Here, on the midst he sate; his flocks unled, 1150
 Their shepherd follow'd, and securely fed.

A pine so burly, and of length so vast,
 That sailing ships requir'd it for a mast,
 He wielded for a staff, his steps to guide:
 But laid it by his whistle while he try'd. 1155

A hundred reeds, of a prodigious growth,
 Scarce made a pipe proportion'd to his mouth:
 Which when he gave it wind, the rocks around,
 And wat'ry plains, the dreadful hiss resound.
 I heard the ruffian shepherd rudely blow, 1160
 While in a hollow cave I sate below;

On *Acis' bosom* I my head reclin'd:
 And still preserve the poem in my mind.

O, lovely *Galatéea*, whiter far
 Than falling snows, and rising lilies are; 1165
 More flow'ry than the meads, as crystal bright,
 Erect as alders, and of equal height:
 More wanton than a kid, more sleek thy skin,

Than orient shells that on the shores are seen;
 Than apples fairer, when the boughs they lade, 1170
 Pleasing, as winter suns, or summer shade:
 More grateful to the sight than goodly plains;
 And softer to the touch than down of swans;
 Or curds new turn'd; and sweeter to the taste
 Than swelling grapes that to the vintage haste; 1175
 More clear than ice, or running streams that stray
 Through garden plots, but ah! more swift than they.

Yet Galatéea, harder to be broke

Than bullocks, unreclaim'd, to bear the yoke,
 And far more stubborn than the knotted oak: 1180
 Like sliding streams impossible to hold;
 Like them, fallacious, like their fountains, cold.
 More warping than the willow to decline
 My warm embrace, more brittle than the vine;
 Immoveable and fix'd in thy disdain; 1185
 Rough as these rocks, and of a harder grain.
 More violent than is the rising flood;
 And the prais'd peacock is not half so proud.
 Fierce as the fire, and sharp as thistles are,
 And more outrageous than a mother-bear; 1190
 Deaf as the billows to the vows I make;
 And more revengeful than a trodden snake.
 In swiftness fleeter than the flying hind,
 Or driv'n tempests, or the driving wind.
 All other faults with patience I can bear; 1195
 But swiftness is the vice I only fear.

Yet if you knew me well, you would not shun
 My love, but to my wish'd embraces run:
 Would languish in your turn, and court my stay;
 And much repent of your unwise delay. 1200

My palace, in the living rock is made
 By nature's hand; a spacious pleasing shade;
 Which neither heat can pierce, nor cold invade.
 My garden fill'd with fruits, you may behold,
 And grapes in clusters, imitating gold; 1205
 Some blushing bunches of a purple hue:
 And these and those are all reserv'd for you.
 Red strawberries, in shades, expecting stand,
 Proud to be gather'd by so white a hand.
 Autumnal cornels, latter fruit provide; 1210

And plums, to tempt you, turn their glossy side;
 Not those of common kinds; but such alone,
 As in Phæacian orchards might have grown:
 Nor chesnuts shall be wanting to your food,
 Nor garden fruits, nor wildings of the wood; 1215
 The laden boughs for you alone shall bear;
 And yours shall be the product of the year.

The flocks you see are all my own, beside
 The rest that woods and winding valleys hide;
 And those that folded in the caves abide. 1220

Ask not the numbers of my growing store;
 Who knows how many, knows he has no more.
 Nor will I praise my cattle; trust not me,
 But judge yourself, and pass your own decree:
 Behold their swelling dugs; the sweepy weight 1225

Of ewes, that sink beneath the milky freight;
 In the warm folds their tender lambkins lie;
 Apart from kids, that call with human cry.
 New milk, in nut-brown bowls, is duly serv'd
 For daily drink; the rest for cheese reserv'd. 1230

Nor are these household dainties all my store:
 The fields and forests will afford us more;
 The deer, the hare, the goat, the savage boar.
 All sorts of ven'son, and of birds the best;
 A pair of turtles taken from the nest. 1235

I walk'd the mountains, and two cubs I found
 (Whose dam had left them on the naked ground),
 So like, that no distinction could be seen:
 So pretty, they were presents for a queen;
 And so they shall: I took them both away, 1240
 And keep, to be companions of your play.

Oh raise, fair nymph, your beauteous face above
 The waves; nor scorn my presents, and my love.
 Come, Galatæa, come, and view my face;
 I late beheld it in the wat'ry glass, 1245
 And found it lovelier than I fear'd it was.
 Survey my tow'ring stature, and my size:
 Not Jove, the Jove you dream that rules the skies,
 Bears such a bulk, or is so largely spread:
 My locks (the plenteous harvest of my head) 1250
 Hang o'er my manly face, and dangling down,

As with a shady grove, my shoulders crown.
 Nor think, because my limbs and body bear
 A thick-set underwood of bristling hair,
 My shape deform'd: What fouler sight can be, 1255
 Than the bald branches of a leafless tree?
 Foul is the steed without a flowing mane;
 And birds, without their feathers and their train.
 Wool decks the sheep; and man receives a grace
 From bushy limbs, and from a bearded face. 1260
 My forehead with a single eye is fill'd,
 Round as a ball, and ample as a shield.
 The glorious lamp of heav'n, the radiant sun,
 Is nature's eye, and she's content with one.
 Add, that my father sways your seas, and I, 1265
 Like you, am of the wat'ry family.
 I make you his, in making you my own:
 You I adore, and kneel to you alone.
 Jove with his fabled thunder, I despise,
 And only fear the lightning of your eyes. 1270
 Frown not, fair nymph: yet I could bear to be
 Disdain'd, if others were disdain'd with me.
 But to repulse the Cyclops, and prefer
 The love of Acis, (heav'ns!) I cannot bear.
 But let the stripling please himself; nay more, 1275
 Please you, though that's the thing I most abhor;
 The boy shall find, if ere he cope in fight,
 These giant limbs endu'd with giant might.
 His living bowels, from his belly torn,
 And scatter'd limbs shall on the flood be borne; 1280
 Thy flood, ungrateful nymph; and fate shall find
 That way for thee and Acis to be join'd.
 For, oh! I burn with love; and thy disdain
 Augments at once my passion and my pain.
 Translated Ætna flames within my heart, 1285
 And thou, inhuman, wilt not ease my smart.
 Lamenting thus in vain, he rose and strode
 With furious paces to the neighb'ring wood:
 Restless his feet, distracted was his walk;
 Mad were his motions, and confus'd his talk. 1290
 Mad as the vanquish'd bull, when forc'd to yield
 His lovely mistress and forsake the field.
 Thus far unseen I saw: When fatal chance,

His looks directing with a sudden glance,
 Acis, and I, were to his sight betray'd; 1295
 Where, nought suspecting, we securely play'd.
 From his wide mouth a bellowing cry he cast,
 I see, I see; but this shall be your last:
 A roar so loud made Ætna to rebound;
 And all the Cyclops labour'd in the sound. 1300
 Affrighted with his monstrous voice, I fled,
 And in the neighb'ring ocean plung'd my head.
 Poor Acis turn'd his back, and Help, he cry'd,
 Help, Galatée, help, my parent gods,
 And take me dying, to your deep abodes. 1305
 The Cyclops follow'd; but he sent before
 A rib which from the living rock he tore:
 Though but an angle reach'd him of the stone,
 The mighty fragment was enough alone,
 To crush all Acis; 'twas too late to save, 1310
 But what the fates allow'd to give, I gave:
 That Acis to his lineage should return,
 And roll, among the river gods, his urn.
 Straight issu'd from the stone a stream of blood,
 Which lost the purple, mingling with the flood. 1315
 Then, like a troubled torrent it appear'd;
 The torrent too, in little space was clear'd.
 The stone was cleft, and through the yawning chink
 New reeds arose, on the new river's brink.
 The rock from out its hollow womb disclos'd 1320
 A sound like water in its course oppos'd,
 When (wondrous to behold), full in the flood,
 Up starts a youth, and navel-high he stood.
 Horns from his temples rise; and either horn
 Thick wreaths of reeds (his native growth) adorn.
 Were not his stature taller than before, 1326
 His bulk augmented, and his beauty more,
 His colour blue; for Acis he might pass:
 And Acis chang'd into a stream he was,
 But mine no more; he rolls along the plains 1330
 With rapid motion, and his name retains.

Here ceas'd the nymph; the fair assembly broke,
 The sea-green Nereïds to the waves betook:
 While Scylla, fearful of the wide-spread main,

Swift to the safer shore returns again. 1335
 There o'er the sandy margin unarray'd,
 With printless footsteps flies the bounding maid;
 Or in some winding creek's secure retreat [heat.
 She bathes her weary limbs, and shuns the noonday's
 Her, Glaucus saw, as o'er the deep he rode, 1340
 New to the seas, and late receiv'd a god.
 He saw, and languish'd for the virgin's love,
 With many an artful blandishment he strove
 Her flight to hinder, and her fears remove. 1344
 The more he sues, the more she wings her flight,
 And nimbly gains a neighb'ring mountain's height.
 Steep shelving to the margin of the flood,
 A neighb'ring mountain bare and woodless stood;
 Here, by the place secur'd, her steps she stay'd,
 And, trembling still, her lover's form survey'd. 1350
 His shape, his hue, her troubled sense appall,
 And dropping locks that o'er his shoulders fall;
 She sees his face divine, and manly brow,
 End in a fish's wreathy tail below:
 She sees, and doubts within her anxious mind, 1355
 Whether he comes of god or monster kind.
 This, Glaucus soon perceiv'd; and, oh! forbear
 (His hand supporting on a rock lay near),
 Forbear (he cry'd), fond maid, this needless fear:
 Nor fish am I, nor monster of the main, 1360
 But equal with the wat'ry gods I reign;
 Nor Proteus, nor Palæmon me excel,
 Nor he whose breath inspires the sounding shell.
 My birth, 'tis true, I owe to mortal race,
 And I myself but late a mortal was: 1365
 E'en then in seas, and seas alone, I joy'd;
 The seas my hours and all my cares employ'd.
 In meshes now the twinkling prey I drew;
 Now skilfully the slender line I threw,
 And silent sat the moving float to view. 1370
 Not far from shore there lies a verdant mead,
 With herbage half, and half with water spread:
 There, nor the horned heifers browsing stray,
 Nor shaggy kids, nor wanton lambkins play;
 There, nor the sounding bees their nectar cull, 1375
 Nor rural swains their genial chaplets pull;

Nor flocks, nor herds, nor mowers haunt the place,
 To crop the flow'rs, or cut the bushy grass:
 Thither, sure first of living race came I,
 And sat by chance, my drooping nets to dry. 1380
 My scaly prize, in order all display'd,
 By number on the greensward there I laid.
 My captives, whom or in my nets I took,
 Or hung unwary on my wily hook,
 Strange to behold! yet what avails a lie? 1385
 I saw them bite the grass, as I sat by.
 Then sudden darting o'er the verdant plain,
 They spread their fins, as in their native main:
 I paus'd, with wonder struck, while all my prey
 Left their new master, and regain'd the sea. 1390
 Amaz'd, within my secret self I sought,
 What god, what herb, the miracle had wrought:
 But sure no herbs have pow'r like this (I cry'd),
 And straight I pluck'd some neighb'ring herbs, and
 try'd. 1394
 Scarce had I bit, and prov'd the wondrous taste,
 When strong convulsions shook my troubled breast;
 I felt my heart grow fond of something strange,
 And my whole nature lab'ring with a change.
 Restless I grew, and ev'ry place forsook,
 And still upon the seas I bent my look. 1400
 Farewell for ever! farewell, land (I said);
 And plung'd amidst the waves my sinking head.
 And gentle pow'rs who that low empire keep,
 Receiv'd me as a brother of the deep;
 To Tethys, and to Ocean old, they pray 1405
 To purge my mortal earthy parts away.
 The wat'ry parents to their suit agreed,
 And thrice nine times a secret charm they read;
 Then with lustrations purify my limbs,
 And bid me bathe beneath a hundred streams; 1410
 A hundred streams from various fountains run,
 And on my head at once come rushing down.
 Thus far each passage I remember well,
 And faithfully thus far the tale I tell;
 But then oblivion dark on all my senses fell. 1415
 Again at length my thought reviving came,
 When I no longer found myself the same;

Then first this sea-green beard I felt to grow,
 And these large honours on my spreading brow;
 My long, descending locks the billows sweep, 1420
 And my broad shoulders cleave the yielding deep;
 My fishy tail, my arms of azure hue,
 And ev'ry part divinely chang'd, I view.
 But what avail these useless honours now?
 What joys can immortality bestow? 1425
 What, though our Nereïds all, my form approve?
 What boots it, while fair Scylla scorns my love?
 Thus far the god; and more he would have said:
 When from his presence flew the ruthless maid.
 Stung with repulse, in such disdainful sort, 1430
 He seeks Titanian Circè's horrid court.

BOOK XIV.

TRANSLATED BY SIR SAMUEL GARTH, M. D.

The transformation of Scylla. The voyage of Æneas continued. The transformation of Cercopians into apes. Æneas descends to Hell. The story of the Sibyl. The adventures of Achæmenidès. The adventures of Macareus. The enchantments of Circè. The story of Picus and Canens. Æneas arrives in Italy. The adventures of Diomedès. The transformation of Appulus. The Trojan ships transformed to sea-nymphs. The deification of Æneas. The line of the Latian Kings. The story of Vertumnus and Pomona. The story of Iphis and Anaxaretè. The Latian Line continued. The assumption of Romulus. The assumption of Hersilia.

Now Glaucus, with a lover's haste bounds o'er
 The swelling waves, and seeks the Latian shore.
 Messena, Rhegium, and the barren coast
 Of flaming Ætna, to his sight are lost:
 At length he gains the Tyrrhene seas, and views 5
 The hills where baneful filters Circè brews;
 Monsters, in various forms, around her press,
 As thus the god salutes the sorceress:
 O Circè, be indulgent to my grief,
 And give a love-sick deity relief. 10
 Too well the mighty pow'r of plants I know,
 To those my figure and new fate I owe.
 Against Messena, on th' Ausonian coast,
 I Scylla view'd, and from that hour was lost.
 In tend'rest sounds I sued; but still the fair 15

Was deaf to vows, and pitiless to pray'r.
 If numbers can avail, exert their pow'r;
 Or energy of plants, if plants have more.
 I ask no cure; let but the virgins pine
 With dying pangs, or agonies like mine. 20

No longer Circè could her flame disguise,
 But to the suppliant god marine replies:
 When maids are coy, have manlier aims in view;
 Leave those that fly, but those that like pursue.
 If love can be by kind compliance won, 25
 See, at your feet, the daughter of the Sun.

Sooner (said Glaucus) shall the ash remove
 From mountains, and the swelling surges love;
 Or humble sea-weed to the hills repair,
 Ere I think any but my Scylla fair. 30

Straight Circè reddens with a guilty shame,
 And vows revenge for her rejected flame.
 Fierce liking oft a spite as fierce creates;
 For love refus'd, without aversion, hates.
 To hurt her hapless rival she proceeds; 35
 And, by the fall of Scylla, Glaucus bleeds.

Some fascinating bev'rage now she brews,
 Compos'd of deadly drugs and baneful juice.
 At Rhegium she arrives; the ocean braves,
 And treads, with unwet feet, the boiling waves. 40
 Upon the beach a winding bay there lies,
 Shelter'd from seas, and shaded from the skies:
 This station Scylla chose; a soft retreat
 From chilling winds, and raging Cancer's heat.
 The vengeful sorc'ress visits this recess; 45,
 Her charm infuses, and infects the place.
 Soon as the nymph wades in, her nether parts
 Turn into dogs; then at herself she starts.
 A ghastly horror in her eyes appears;
 But yet she knows not who it is she fears; 50
 In vain she offers from herself to run;
 And drags about her what she strives to shun.

Oppress'd with grief the pitying god appears,
 And swells the rising surges with his tears;
 From the detested sorc'ress he flies; 55
 Her art reviles, and her address denies;

Whilst hapless Scylla, chang'd to rocks, decrees
Destruction to those barks that beat the seas.

Here bulg'd the pride of fam'd Ulysses' fleet,
But good Æneas 'scap'd the fate he met. 60
As to the Latian shore the Trojans stood,
And cut, with well-tim'd oars, the foaming flood,
He weather'd fell Charybdis: But ere long,
The skies were darken'd, and the tempest strong.
Then to the Libyan coast he stretches o'er, 65
And makes at length the Carthaginian shore.
Here Dido, with an hospitable care,
Into her heart receives the wanderer.
From her kind arms th' ungrateful hero flies;
The injur'd queen looks on with dying eyes, 70
Then to her folly falls a sacrifice.

Æneas now sets sail, and plying, gains
Fair Eryx, where his friend Acestès reigns:
First to his sire does fun'ral rites decree,
Then gives the signal next, and stands to sea; 75
Out-runs the islands where volcanoes roar:
Gets clear of Syrens, and their faithless shore:
But loses Palinurus in the way;
Then makes Inarimè, and Prochyta.

The galleys now by Pythecûsa pass; 80
The name is from the natives of the place.
The father of the gods, detesting lies,
Oft, with abhorrence, heard their perjuries.
Th' abandon'd race, transform'd to beasts, began
To mimic the impertinence of man. 85
Flat-nos'd, and furrow'd, with grimace they grin;
And look, to what they were, too near akin;
Merry in make, and busy to no end:
This moment they divert, the next offend;
So much this species of their past retains; 90
Though lost the language, yet the noise remains.

Now, on his right, he leaves Parthenopè;
His left, Misenus jutting in the sea:
Arrives at Cumæ, and with awe survey'd
The grotto of the venerable maid: 95

Begs leave through black Avernus to retire;
 And view the much-lov'd manè's of his sire.
 Straight the divining virgin rais'd her eyes,
 And foaming with a holy rage, replies:

O thou, whose worth thy wondrous works proclaim;
 The flames, thy piety; the world, thy fame: 101
 Though great be thy request, yet shalt thou see
 Th' Elysian fields, th' infernal monarchy;
 Thy parent's shade: This arm thy steps shall guide;
 To suppliant virtue nothing is denied. 105

She spoke, and pointing to the golden bough,
 Which in th' Avernian grove refulgent grew:
 Seize that (she bids); he listens to the maid:
 Then views the mournful mansions of the dead:
 The shade of great Anchisès, and the place 110
 By fates determin'd to the Trojan race.

As back to upper light the hero came,
 He thus salutes the visionary dame:

O, whether some propitious deity,
 Or lov'd by those bright rulers of the sky! 115
 With grateful incense I shall style you one,
 And deem no godhead greater than your own.
 'Twas you restor'd me from the realms of night,
 And gave me to behold the fields of light:
 To feel the breezes of congenial air; 120
 And nature's blest benevolence to share.

I am no deity, reply'd the dame,
 But mortal, and religious rites disclaim,
 Yet had avoided death's tyrannic sway,
 Had I consented to the god of day. 125
 With promises he sought my love: and said,
 'Have all you wish, my fair Cumæan maid.'
 I paus'd; then pointing to a heap of sand,
 For ev'ry grain, to live a year, demand.
 But, ah! unmindful of th' effect of time, 130
 Forgot to covenant for youth and prime.
 The smiling bloom, I boasted once, is gone,
 And feeble age, with lagging limbs, creeps on.
 Sev'n cent'ries have I liv'd; three more fulfil
 The period of the years to finish still. 135

Who'll think, that Phœbus, drest in youth divine,
 Had once believ'd his lustre less than mine?
 This wither'd frame (so fates have will'd) shall waste
 To nothing, but prophetic words, at last.

The Sibyl mounting now from nether skies, 140
 And the fam'd Ilian prince, at Cumæ rise.

He sail'd, and near the place to anchor came,
 Since call'd Caieta from his nurse's name.
 Here did the luckless Macareus, a friend
 To wise Ulysses, his long labours end. 145

Here wand'ring Achæmenidès he meets,
 And sudden thus his late associate greets: [bound?
 Whence came you here, O friend, and whither
 All deem'd you lost on far Cyclopean ground;
 A Greek's at last aboard a Trojan found. 150

Thus Achæmenidès:—With thanks I name
 Æneas, and his piety proclaim.
 I 'scap'd the Cyclops through the hero's aid,
 Else in his maw my mangled limbs had laid.
 When first your navy under sail he found, 155
 He rav'd, till Ætna labour'd with the sound.
 Raging he stalk'd along the mountain's side,
 And vented clouds of breath at ev'ry stride,
 His staff a mountain ash; and in the clouds,
 Oft, as he walks, his grisly front he shrouds. 160
 Eyeless he grop'd about, with vengeful haste,
 And justled promontories, as he pass'd,
 Then heav'd a rock's high summit to the main,
 And bellow'd, like some bursting hurricane.

Oh! could I seize Ulysses in his flight, 165
 How unlamented were my loss of sight!
 These jaws should piece-meal tear each panting vein,
 Grind ev'ry cracking bone, and pound his brain.
 As thus he rav'd, my joints with horror shook;
 The tide of blood my chilling heart forsook; 170
 I saw him once disgorge huge morsels, raw,
 Of wretches undigested in his maw.
 From the pale breathless trunks, whole limbs he tore,
 His beard all clotted with o'erflowing gore.
 My anxious hours I pass'd in caves; my food 175

Was forest fruits, and wildings of the wood.
At length a sail I wafted, and aboard
My fortune found an hospitable lord.

Now in return your own adventures tell,
And what, since first you put to sea, befell. 180

Then Macareus:—There reign'd a prince of fame
O'er Tuscan seas, and Æolus his name.
A largess to Ulysses he consign'd,
And in a steer's tough hide inclos'd a wind.
Nine days before the swelling gale we ran: 185
The tenth, to make the meeting land, began:
When now the merry mariners, to find
Imagin'd wealth within, the bag unbind.
Forthwith out rush'd a gust, which backwards bore
Our galleys to the Læstrigonian shore, 190
Whose crown Antiphatès the tyrant wore.
Some few commission'd were with speed to treat;
We to his court repair, his guards we meet.

Two, friendly flight preserv'd: the third was doom'd
To be by those curst cannibals consum'd. 195
Inhumanly our hapless friends they treat;
Our men they murder, and destroy our fleet.
In time the wise Ulysses bore away,
And dropp'd his anchor in yon faithless bay.
The thoughts of perils past we still retain, 200
And fear to land, till lots appoint the men.
Politès true, Elpénor giv'n to wine,
Eurylochus, myself, the lots assign.
Design'd for dangers, and resolv'd to dare,
To Circè's fatal palace we repair. 205

Before the spacious front, a herd we find
Of beasts, the fiercest of the savage kind.
Our trembling steps with blandishments they meet,
And fawn, unlike their species, at our feet.
Within, upon a sumptuous throne of state, 210
On golden columns rais'd, th' enchantress sat.
Rich was her robe, and amiable her mien,
Her aspect awful, and she look'd a queen.
Her maids nor mind the loom, nor household care,

Nor wage in needle-work a Scythian war; 215
 But cull, in canisters, disastrous flow'rs,
 And plants from haunted heaths and fairy bow'rs,
 With brazen sickles reap'd at planetary hours.
 Each dose the goddess weighs with watchful eye;
 So nice her art in impious pharmacy! 220

Ent'ring, she greets us with a gracious look
 And airs, that future amity bespoke.
 Her ready nymphs serve up a rich repast;
 The bowl she dashes first, then gives to taste.
 Quick to our own undoing, we comply; 225
 Her pow'r we prove, and shew the sorcery.

Soon, in a length of face, our head extends;
 Our chine stiff bristles bears, and forward bends:
 A breadth of brawn new burnishes our neck;
 Anon we grunt, as we begin to speak. 230

Alone Eurylochus refus'd to taste,
 Nor to a beast obscene the man debas'd.
 Hither Ulysses hastes (so fates command),
 And bears the pow'rful moly in his hand;
 Unsheaths his scimitar, assaults the dame, 235
 Preserves his species, and remains the same.
 The nuptial rite this outrage straight attends;
 The dow'r desir'd is his transfigur'd friends.
 The incantation backward she repeats,
 Inverts her rod, and what she did, defeats. 240

And now our skin grows smooth, our shape upright;
 Our arms stretch up, our cloven feet unite.
 With tears our weeping gen'ral we embrace;
 Hang on his neck, and melt upon his face.
 Twelve silver moons in Circè's court we stay, 245
 Whilst there we waste th' unwilling hours away.
 'Twas here I spy'd a youth in Parian stone;
 His head a pecker bore; the cause unknown
 To passengers. A nymph of Circè's train
 The myst'ry thus attempted to explain. 250

Picus, who once th' Ausonian sceptre held,
 Could rein the steed, and fit him for the field.
 So like he was to what you see, that still
 We doubt if real, or the sculptor's skill.
 The graces in the finish'd piece, you find, 255

Are but the copy of his fairer mind.
 Four lustres scarce the royal youth could name,
 Till ev'ry love-sick nymph confess'd a flame.
 Oft for his love the mountain Dryads su'd,
 And ev'ry silver sister of the flood: 260

Those of Numicus, Albula, and those
 Where Almo creeps, and hasty Nar o'erflows:
 Where sedgy Anio glides through smiling meads,
 Where shady Farfar rustles in the reeds;
 And those that love the lakes, and homage owe 265
 To the chaste goddess of the silver bow.

In vain each nymph her brightest charms put on,
 His heart no sov'reign would obey but one.
 She whom Venilia, on Mount Palatine,
 To Janus bore, the fairest of her line. 270

Nor did her face alone her charms confess,
 Her voice was ravishing, and pleas'd no less.
 Whene'er she sung, so melting were her strains,
 The flocks unfed seem'd list'ning on the plains;
 The rivers would stand still, the cedars bend; 275
 The birds neglect their pinions, to attend;
 The savage kind in forest-wilds grow tame;
 And Canens, from her heavenly voice, her name.

Hymen had now in some ill-fated hour
 Their hands united, as there hearts before. 280
 Whilst their soft moments in delights they waste,
 And each new day was dearer than the past;
 Picus would sometimes o'er the forests rove,
 And mingle sports with intervals of love.

It chanc'd, as once the foaming boar he chas'd, 285
 His jewels sparkling on his Tyrian vest,
 Lascivious Circè well the youth survey'd,
 As simpling on the flow'ry hills she stray'd.
 Her wishing eyes their silent message tell,
 And from her lap the verdant mischief fell. 290

As she attempts at words, his courser springs
 O'er hills, and lawns, and e'en a wish outwings.

Thou shalt not 'scape me so, pronounc'd the
 dame,

If plants have pow'r, and spells be not a name.
 She said;—and forthwith form'd a boar of air, 295
 That sought the covert with dissembled fear.

Swift to the thicket Picus wings his way
On foot to chase the visionary prey.

Now she invokes the daughters of the night,
Does noxious juices smear, and charms recite: 300
Such as can veil the moon's more feeble fire,
Or shade the golden lustre of her sire.

In filthy fogs she hides the cheerful noon ;
The guard at distance, and the youth alone.
By those fair eyes (she cries), and ev'ry grace 305
That finish all the wonders of your face,

O! I conjure thee, hear a queen complain,
Nor let the Sun's soft lineage sue in vain.

Whoe'er thou art (reply'd the king), forbear,
None can my passion with my Canens share. 310

She first my ev'ry tender wish possess'd,
And found the soft approaches to my breast.
In nuptials blest, each loose desire we shun,
Nor time can end, what innocence begun.

Think not (she cry'd) to saunter out a life 315

Of form, with that domestic drudge, a wife;
My just revenge, dull fool, ere long shall shew
What ills we women, if refus'd, can do;
Think me a woman, and a lover too.

From dear successful spite we hope for ease, 320
Nor fail to punish, where we fail to please.

Now twice to east she turns, as oft to west:
Thrice waves her wand, as oft her charms ex-
press'd.

On the lost youth her magic pow'r she tries;
Aloft he springs, and wonders how he flies. 325

On painted plumes the woods he seeks, and still
The monarch oak he pierces with his bill.
Thus chang'd, no more o'er Latian lands he reigns;
Of Picus nothing but the name remains.

The winds from drisling damps now purge
the air, 330

The mist subsides, the settling skies are fair:
The court their sov'reign seek with arms in hand,
They threaten Circè, and their lord demand.

Quick she invokes the spirits of the air,
And twilight elves, that on dun wings repair 335
To charnels, and th' unhallow'd sepulchre.

Now, strange to tell, the plants sweat drops of blood,
 The trees are toss'd from forests where they stood;
 Blue serpents, o'er the tainted herbage slide,
 Pale glaring spectres on the æther ride; 340
 Dogs howl, earth yawns, rent rocks forsake their beds,
 And from their quarries heave their stubborn heads.

The sad spectators, stiffen'd with their fears,
 She sees, and sudden ev'ry limb she smears;
 Then each of savage beasts the figure bears. 345

The Sun did now to western waves retire,
 In tides to temper his bright world of fire.
 Canens lament her royal husband's stay;
 Ill suits fond love with absence or delay.

Where she commands, her ready people run; 350
 She wills, retracts; bids, and forbids anon.

Restless in mind, and dying with despair,
 Her breasts she beats, and tears her flowing hair.
 Six days and nights she wanders on as chance
 Directs, without or sleep, or sustenance. 355

Tiber at last beholds the weeping fair;
 Her feeble limbs no more the mourner bear;
 Stretch'd on his banks, she to the flood complains,
 And faintly tunes her voice to dying strains.

The sick'ning swan thus hangs her silver wings, 360
 And, as she droops, her elegy she sings.

Ere long sad Canens wastes to air; whilst fame
 The place still honours with her hapless name.

Here did the tender tale of Picus cease,
 Above belief, the wonder I confess. 365

Again we sail, but more disasters meet,
 Foretold by Circè, to our suff'ring fleet.

Myself, unable further woes to bear,
 Declin'd the voyage, and am refug'd here.

Thus Macareus.—Now with a pious aim 370
 Had good Æneas rais'd a fun'ral flame,

In honour of his hoary nurse's name.
 Her epitaph he fix'd; and, setting sail,
 Caieta left, and catch'd at ev'ry gale.

He steer'd at distance from the faithless shore, 375
 Where the false goddess reigns with fatal pow'r;

And sought those grateful groves that shade the
 plain,
 Where Tiber rolls majestic to the main,
 And fattens, as he runs, the fair campaign.
 His kindred gods the hero's wishes crown 380
 With fair Lavinia, and Latinus' throne:
 But not without a war the prize he won.
 Drawn up in bright array the battle stands:
 Turnus with arms his promis'd wife demands.
 Hetrurians, Latians, equal fortune share; 385
 And doubtful long appears the face of war.
 Both pow'rs from neighb'ring princes seek
 supplies,
 And embassies appoint for new allies.
 Æneas, for relief, Evander moves;
 His quarrel he asserts, his cause approves. 390
 The bold Rutulians, with an equal speed,
 Sage Venulus dispatch to Diomede.
 The king, late griefs revolving in his mind,
 These reasons for neutrality assign'd:

Shall I, of one poor dotal town possest, 395
 My people thin, my wretched country waste;
 An exil'd prince, and on a shaking throne;
 Or risk my patron's subjects, or my own?
 You'll grieve the harshness of our hap to hear;
 Nor can I tell the tale without a tear. 400

After fam'd Ilium was by Argives won,
 And flames had finish'd, what the sword begun;
 Pallas, incens'd, pursu'd us to the main,
 In vengeance of her violated fane.
 Alone Oilëus forc'd the Trojan maid, 405
 Yet all were punish'd for the brutal deed.
 A storm begins, the raging waves run high,
 The clouds look heavy, and benight the sky;
 Red sheets of lightning o'er the seas are spread,
 Our tackling yields, and wrecks at last succeed. 410
 'Tis tedious our disastrous state to tell;
 E'en Priam would have pitied what befell.
 Yet Pallas sav'd me from the swallowing main;
 At home new wrongs to meet, as fates ordain.

Chas'd from my country, I once more repeat 415
 All suff'ring seas could give, or war complete.
 For Venus, mindful of her wound, decreed
 Still new calamities should past succeed.
 Agmon, impatient through successive ills,
 With fury, Love's bright goddess, thus reviles: 420
 These plagues in spite to Diomede are sent;
 The crime is his, but ours the punishment.
 Let each, my friends, her puny spleen despise,
 And dare that haughty harlot of the skies.

The rest of Agmon's insolence complain, 425
 And of irreverence the wretch arraign.
 About to answer, his blaspheming throat
 Contracts, and shrieks in some disdainful note.
 To his new skin a fleece of feather clings,
 Hides his late arms, and lengthens into wings, 430
 The lower features of his face extend,
 Warp into horn, and in a beak descend.
 Some more experience Agmon's destiny,
 And wheeling in the air, like swans they fly.
 These thin remains to Daunus' realms I bring, 435
 And here I reign, a poor precarious king.

Thus Diomedès.—Venulus withdraws;
 Unsped the service of the common cause.
 Putéoli he passes, and survey'd
 A cave long honour'd for its awful shade. 440
 Here trembling reeds exclude the piercing ray,
 Here streams, in gentle falls, through windings
 stray,
 And with a passing breath cool zephyrs play.
 The goatherd god frequents the silent place,
 As once the wood-nymphs of the sylvan race, 445
 Till Appulus, with a dishonest air,
 And gross behaviour, banish'd thence the fair.
 The bold buffoon, when'er they tread the green,
 Their motion mimics, but with jest obscene.
 Loose language oft he utters; but ere long 450
 A bark, in filmy net-work, binds his tongue.
 Thus chang'd, a base wild olive he remains;
 The shrub the coarseness of the clown retains.

Meanwhile the Latians all their pow'r prepare,
 'Gainst fortune, and the foe, to push the war. 455
 With Phrygian blood the floating fields they stain;
 But, short of succours, still contend in vain.
 Turnus remarks the Trojan fleet ill mann'd,
 Unguarded, and at anchor near the strand;
 He thought; and straight a lighted brand he bore, 460
 And fire invades, what 'scap'd the waves before.
 The billows from the kindling prow retire;
 Pitch, rosin, searwood on red wings aspire,
 And Vulcan on the seas exerts his attribute of fire.

This, when the mother of the gods beheld, 465
 Her tow'ry crown she shook, and stood reveal'd;
 Her brindled lions rein'd, unveil'd her head,
 And hov'ring o'er her favour'd fleet, she said:
 Cease, Turnus, and the heav'nly pow'rs respect,
 Nor dare to violate, what I protect. 470
 These galleys, once fair trees on Ida stood,
 And gave their shade to each descending god,
 Nor shall consume; irrevocable Fate
 Allots their being no determin'd date.

Straight peals of thunder heav'n's high arches
 rend, 475
 The hailstones leap, the show'rs in spouts descend.
 The winds with widen'd throats the signal give,
 The cables break, the smoking vessels drive.
 Now wondrous, as they beat the foaming flood,
 The timber softens into flesh and blood; 480
 The yards and oars new arms, and legs design;
 A trunk the hull; the slender keel, a spine;
 The prow, a female face; and by degrees
 The galleys rise green daughters of the seas.
 Sometimes on coral beds they sit in state, 485
 Or wanton on the waves they fear'd of late.
 The barks that beat the seas are still their care,
 Themselves rememb'ring what of late they were;
 To save a Trojan sail in throngs they press,
 But smile to see Alcinoüs in distress. 490
 Unable were those wonders to deter
 The Latians from their unsuccessful war.

Both sides for doubtful victory contend ;
 And on their courage, and their gods depend.
 Nor bright Lavinia, nor Latinus' crown, 495
 Warm their great soul to war, like fair renown.
 Venus at last beholds her godlike son
 Triumphant, and the field of battle won ;
 Brave Turnus slain, strong Ardea but a name,
 And buried in fierce deluges of flame. 500
 Her tow'rs, that boasted once a sov'reign sway,
 The fate of fancied grandeur now betray.
 A famish'd heron from the ashes springs,
 And beats the ruin with disastrous wings.
 Calamities of towns distress she feigns, 505
 And oft, with woeful shrieks, of war complains.

Now had Æneas, as ordain'd by fate,
 Surviv'd the period of Saturnia's hate ;
 And by a sure, irrevocable doom,
 Fix'd the immortal majesty of Rome. 510

Fit for the station of his kindred stars,
 His mother goddess thus her suit prefers :
 ' Almighty arbiter, whose pow'ful nod
 Shakes distant earth, and bows our own abode ;
 To thy great progeny indulgent be, 515
 And rank the goddess-born a deity.
 Already has he view'd, with mortal eyes,
 Thy brother's kingdoms of the nether skies.'

Forthwith a conclave of the godhead meets,
 Where Juno in the shining senate sits. 520
 Remorse for past revenge the goddess feels ;
 Then thund'ring Jove th' almighty mandate seals ;
 Allots the prince of his celestial line
 An apotheosis, and rites divine.

The crystal mansions echo with applause, 525
 And, with her graces, Love's bright queen with-
 draws ;

Shoots in a blaze of light along the skies,
 And, borne by turtles, to Laurentum flies ;
 Alights, where through the reeds Numicius strays,
 And to the seas his wat'ry tribute pays. 530
 The god she supplicates to wash away
 The parts more gross, and subject to decay,

And cleanse the goddess-born from seminal allay.
 The horned flood with glad attention stands,
 Then bids his streams obey their sire's commands.

His better parts by lustral waves refin'd, 536
 More pure, and nearer to ethereal mind ;
 With gums of fragrant scent the goddess strews,
 And on his features breathes ambrosial dews.
 Thus deified, new honours Rome decrees, 540
 Shrines, festivals; and styles him Indiges.

Ascanius now the Latian sceptre sways :
 The Alban nation, Sylvius, next obeys ;
 The young Latinus: next an Alba came,
 The grace and guardian of the Alban name. 545
 Then Epitus: then gentle Capys reign'd ;
 Then Capetus the regal pow'r sustain'd.
 Next he, who perish'd on the Tuscan flood,
 And honour'd with his name the river god.
 Now haughty Romulus begun his reign, 550
 Who fell by thunder he aspir'd to feign.
 Meek Acrota succeeded to the crown ;
 From peace endeav'ring, more than arms, renown,
 To Aventinus well resign'd his throne.
 The mount, on which he rul'd, preserves his
 name, 555
 And Procas wore the regal diadem.

A Hama-dryad flourish'd in these days,
 Her name Pomona, from her woodland race.
 In garden culture none could her excel,
 Or form the pliant souls of plants so well; 560
 Or to the fruit more gen'rous flavours lend,
 Or teach the trees with nobler loads to bend.

The nymph frequented not the flatt'ring stream,
 Nor meads, the subject of a virgin's dream ;
 But to such joys her nurs'ry did prefer, 565
 Alone to tend her vegetable care.
 A pruning hook she carried in her hand,
 And taught the stragglers to obey command ;
 Lest the licentious and unthrifty bough,
 The too indulgent parent should undo. 570
 She shews, how stocks invite to their embrace

A graft, and naturalize a foreign race
 To mend the salvage teint; and in its stead
 Adopt new nature and a nobler breed.

Now hourly she observes her growing care, 575
 And guards their nonage from the bleaker air;
 Then opes her streaming sluices, to supply
 With flowing draughts her thirsty family.

Long had she labour'd to continue free
 From chains of love, and nuptial tyranny; 580
 And in her orchard's small extent immur'd,
 Her vow'd virginity she still secur'd.

Oft would loose Pan, and all the lustful train
 Of satyrs, tempt her innocence in vain.
 Silénus, that old dotard, own'd a flame; 585

And he, that frights the thieves with stratagem
 Of sword, and something else too gross to name.

Vertumnus too pursued the maid no less;
 But, with his rivals, shar'd a like success.
 To gain access, a thousand ways he tries; 590

Oft in the hind, the lover would disguise,
 The heedless lout comes shambling on, and seems
 Just sweating from the labour of his teams.

Then, from the harvest, oft the mimic swain
 Seems bending with a load of bearded grain. 595

Sometimes a dresser of the vine he feigns,
 And lawless tendrils to their bounds restrains.
 Sometimes his sword a soldier shews; his rod
 An angler; still so various is the god.

Now, in a forehead-cloth, some crone he seems, 600
 A staff supplying the defect of limbs:

Admittance thus he gains; admires the store
 Of fairest fruit; the fair possessor more;
 Then greets her with a kiss: Th' unpractis'd dame
 Admir'd, a grandame kiss'd with such a flame. 605

Now seated by her, he beholds a vine,
 Around an elm in am'rous foldings twine.

If that fair elm (he cry'd) alone should stand,
 No grapes would glow with gold, and tempt the hand;
 Or if that vine without her elm should grow, 610

'Twould creep a poor neglected shrub below.
 Be then, fair nymph, by these examples led;
 Nor shun, for fancied fears, the nuptial bed.

Not she for whom the Lapithites took arms,
 Nor Sparta's queen could boast such heavenly charms;
 And if you would on woman's faith rely, 616
 None can your choice direct so well as I.
 Though old, so much Pomona I adore,
 Scarce does the bright Vertumnus love her more.
 'Tis your fair self alone his breast inspires 620
 With softest wishes, and unsoil'd desires.
 Then fly all vulgar followers, and prove
 The god of Seasons only worth your love.
 On my assurance well you may repose;
 Vertumnus scarce Vertumnus better knows. 625
 True to his choice, all looser flames he flies;
 Nor for new faces fashionably dies.
 The charms of youth, and ev'ry smiling grace
 Bloom in his features, and the god confess.
 Besides, he puts on every shape at ease; 630
 But those the most that best Pomona please.
 Still to oblige her, is her lover's aim;
 Their likings and aversions are the same.
 Nor the fair fruit your burthen'd branches bear;
 Nor all the youthful product of the year, 635
 Could bribe his choice; your self alone could prove
 A fit reward for so refin'd a love.
 Relent, fair nymph, and with a kind regret,
 Think 'tis Vertumnus weeping at your feet.
 A tale attend, through Cyprus known, to prove 640
 How Venus once reveng'd neglected love.

Iphis, of vulgar birth, by chance had view'd
 Fair Anaxaretè, of Teucer's blood.
 Not long had he beheld the royal dame,
 Ere the bright sparkle kindled into flame. 645
 Oft did he struggle with a just despair,
 Unfix'd to ask, unable to forbear.
 But love, who flatters still his own disease,
 Hopes all things will succeed, he knows will please.
 Where'er the fair one haunts, he hovers there: 650
 And seeks her confident with sighs and pray'r.
 Or letters he conveys, that seldom prove
 Successful messengers in suits of love.

Now shiv'ring at her gates the wretch appears,

And myrtle garlands on the columns rears, 655
 Wet with a deluge of unbidden tears.
 The nymph, more hard than rocks, more deaf than
 Derides his pray'rs, insults his agonies; [seas,
 Arraigns of insolence th' aspiring swain,
 And takes a cruel pleasure in his pain. 660
 Resolv'd at last to finish his despair,
 He thus upbraids th' inexorable fair:

O Anaxaretè, at last forget
 The licence of a passion indiscreet.
 Now triumph, since a welcome sacrifice 665
 Your slave prepares to offer to your eyes.
 My life, without reluctance, I resign;
 That present best can please a pride like thine.
 But, O, forbear to blast a flame so bright,
 Doom'd never to expire, but with the light. 670
 And you, great pow'rs, do justice to my name:
 The hours you take from life, restore to fame.

Then o'er the posts, once hung with wreaths, he
 throws

The ready cord, and fits the fatal noose;
 For death prepares; and, bounding from above, 675
 At once the wretch concludes his life and love.

Ere long the people gather, and the dead
 Is to his mourning mother's arms convey'd.
 First, like some ghastly statue, she appears;
 Then bathes the breathless corse in seas of tears, 680
 And gives it to the pile; now as the throng
 Proceed in sad solemnity along,

To view the passing pomp, the cruel fair
 Hastes, and beholds her breathless lover there.
 Struck with the sight, inanimate she seems; 685
 Set are her eyes, and motionless her limbs;
 Her features without fire, her colour gone,
 And, like her heart, she hardens into stone.
 In Salamis the statue still is seen,
 In the fam'd temple of the Cyprian queen. 690

Warn'd by this tale, no longer then disdain,
 O nymph belov'd, to ease a lover's pain.
 So may the frosts in spring your blossoms spare,
 And winds their rude autumnal rage forbear.

The story oft Vertumnus urg'd in vain,
 But then assum'd his heav'nly form again.
 Such looks and lustre the bright youth adorn,
 As when with rays glad Phœbus paints the morn.
 The sight so warms the fair admiring maid,
 Like snow she melts ; so soon can youth persuade. 700
 Consent on eager wings succeeds desire ;
 And both the lovers glow with mutual fire.

Now Procas yielding to the fates, his son
 Mild Numitor succeeded to the crown.
 But false Amulius, with a lawless pow'r, 705
 At length depos'd his brother Numitor.
 Then Ilia's valiant issue, with the sword,
 Her parent re-enthron'd the rightful lord.
 Next Romulus to people Rome contrives ;
 The joyous time of Palès' feast arrives ; 710
 He gives the word to seize the Sabine wives.
 The sires, enrag'd, take arms, by Tatius led,
 Bold to revenge their violated bed.
 A fort there was, not yet unknown to fame,
 Call'd the Tarpeïan, its commander's name. 715
 This by the false Tarpeïa was betray'd,
 But death well recompens'd the treach'rous maid.
 The foe on this new-bought success relies,
 And silent march the city to surprise.
 Saturnia's arts with Sabine arms combine, 720
 But Venus countermines the vain design ;
 Intreats the nymphs that o'er the springs preside,
 Which near the fane of hoary Janus glide,
 To send their succours ; ev'ry urn they drain,
 To stop the Sabines' progress, but in vain. 725

The Naiäds now more stratagems essay ;
 And kindling sulphur to each source convey.
 The floods ferment, hot exhalations rise,
 Till from the scalding ford the army flies.
 Soon Romulus appears in shining arms, 730
 And to the war the Roman legions warms.
 The battle rages, and the field is spread
 With nothing but the dying and the dead.
 Both sides consent to treat without delay,
 And their two chiefs at once the sceptre sway. 735

But Tatius by Lavinian fury slain ;
Great Romulus continued long to reign.

Now warrior Mars his burnish'd helm puts on,
And thus addresses heav'n's imperial throne :

Since the inferior world is now become 740
One vassal globe, and colony to Rome,
This grace, O Jove, for Romulus I claim,
Admit him to the skies, from whence he came.
Long hast thou promis'd an ethereal state
To Mars's lineage ; and thy word is fate. 745

The sire that rules the thunder, with a nod
Declar'd the fiat, and dismiss'd the god.

Soon as the pow'r armipotent survey'd
The flashing skies, the signal he obey'd ;
And leaning on his lance he mounts his car, 750
His fiery coursers lashing through the air.
Mount Palatine he gains, and finds his son
Good laws enacting on a peaceful throne ;
The scales of heav'nly justice holding high,
With steady hand, and a discerning eye. 755

Then vaults upon his car, and to the spheres,
Swift as a flying shaft, Rome's founder bears.
The parts more pure in rising are refin'd,
The gross and perishable lag behind.
His shrine in purple vestments stands in view ; 760
He looks a god, and is Quirinus now.

Ere long the goddess of the nuptial bed,
With pity mov'd, sends Iris in her stead
To sad Hersilia. Thus the meteor maid :

Chaste relict ! in bright truth to heav'n allied, 765
The Sabine's glory and the sex's pride ;
Honour'd on earth, and worthy of the love
Of such a spouse as now resides above,
Some respite to thy killing griefs afford ;
And if thou wouldst once more behold thy lord, 770
Retire to yon steep mount with groves o'erspread,
Which with an awful gloom his temples shade.

With fear the modest matron lifts her eyes.
And to the bright ambadress replies :

O goddess, yet to mortal eyes unknown, 775
But sure thy various charms confess thee one :

O, quick to Romulus thy votress bear,
 With looks of love he'll smile away my care:
 In whate'er orb he shines, my heav'n is there.

Then hastes with Iris to the holy grove, 780
 And up the mount Quirinal as they move,
 A lambent flame glides downward through the air,
 And brightens with a blaze Hersilia's hair.
 Together on the bounding ray they rise,
 And shoot a gleam of light along the skies. 785
 With op'ning arms Quirinus met his bride,
 Now Ora nam'd, and press'd her to his side.

BOOK XV.

TRANSLATED BY MR. DRYDEN AND OTHERS.

The Pythagorean philosophy. The story of Hippolytus. Egeria transformed to a fountain. The story of Cippus. The occasion of Æsculapius being brought to Rome. The deification of Julius Cæsar. The reign of Augustus, in which Ovid flourished. The Poet concludes.

A KING is sought to guide the growing state,
 One able to support the public weight,
 And fill the throne where Romulus had sate.
 Renown, which oft bespeaks the public voice,
 Had recommended Numa to their choice; 5
 A peaceful pious prince; who, not content
 To know the Sabine rites, his study bent
 To cultivate his mind; to learn the laws
 Of nature, and explore their hidden cause.
 Urg'd by this care, his country he forsook, 10
 And to Crotona thence his journey took.
 Arriv'd, he first inquir'd the founder's name
 Of this new colony, and whence he came.
 Then thus a senior of the place replies
 (Well read, and curious of antiquities): 15
 'Tis said, Alcides hither took his way
 From Spain, and drove along his conquer'd prey;
 Then, leaving in the fields his grazing cows,
 He sought himself some hospitable house:
 Good Croton entertain'd his godlike guest, 20
 While he repair'd his weary limbs with rest.

The hero, thence departing, bless'd the place;
 And here (he said), in time's revolving race,
 A rising town shall take its name from thee.
 Revolving time fulfill'd the prophecy: 25
 For Myscelos, the justest man on earth,
 Alémon's son, at Argos had his birth;
 Him Herculès, arm'd with his club of oak,
 O'ershadow'd in a dream, and thus bespoke:
 Go, leave thy native soil, and make abode, 30
 Where Æsaris rolls down his rapid flood.
 He said, and sleep forsook him and the god.
 Trembling he wak'd, and rose with anxious heart;
 His country laws forbade him to depart:
 What should he do? 'Twas death to go away, 35
 And the god menac'd, if he dared to stay.
 All day he doubted, and when night came on,
 Sleep, and the same forewarning dream, begun:
 Once more the god stood threat'ning o'er his head,
 With added curses if he disobey'd. 40
 Twice warn'd, he studied flight; but would convey
 At once his person, and his wealth away:
 Thus, while he linger'd, his design was heard;
 A speedy process form'd, and death declar'd.
 Witness there needed none of his offence; 45
 Against himself the wretch was evidence:
 Condemn'd, and destitute of human aid,
 To him, for whom he suffer'd, thus he pray'd:
 O pow'r, who hast deserv'd in heav'n a throne,
 Not giv'n, but by thy labours made thy own, 50
 Pity thy suppliant, and protect his cause,
 Whom thou hast made obnoxious to the laws.
 A custom was of old, and still remains,
 Which life or death by suffrages ordains:
 White stones and black within an urn are cast: 55
 The *first* absolve, but fate is in the *last*.
 The judges to the common urn bequeath
 Their votes, and drop the sable signs of death;
 The box receives all black, but, pour'd from thence, 60
 The stones came candid forth; the hue of innocence.
 Thus Alémonidès his safety won,
 Preserv'd from death by Alcumena's son:
 Then to his kinsman-god his vows he pays,

And cuts, with prosp'rous gales, the Iōnian seas :
 He leaves Tarentum, favour'd by the wind, 65
 And Thurine bays, and Temisès, behind ;
 Soft Sybaris, and all the capes that stand
 Along the shore, he makes in sight of land :
 Still doubling, and still coasting, till he found
 The mouth of Æsaris, and promis'd ground ; 70
 Then saw where on the margin of the flood,
 The tomb, that held the bones of Croton stood :
 Here, by the god's command, he built, and wall'd
 The place predicted ; and Crotona call'd.
 Thus fame from time to time delivers down 75
 The sure tradition of th' Italian town.
 Here dwelt the man divine, whom Samos bore,
 But now self-banish'd from his native shore,
 Because he hated tyrants, nor could bear
 The chains, which none but servile souls will wear : 80
 He, though from heaven remote, to heav'n could move,
 With strength of mind, and tread th' abyss above ;
 And penetrate, with his interior light,
 Those upper depths, which nature hid from sight :
 And what he had observ'd, and learn'd from thence,
 Lov'd in familiar language to dispense. 86

The crowd with silent admiration stand,
 And heard him as they heard their god's command ;
 While he discours'd of heav'n's mysterious laws,
 The world's original, and nature's cause ; 90
 And what was God, and why the fleecy snows
 In silence fell, and rattling winds arose :
 What shook the steadfast earth, and whence begun
 The dance of planets round the radiant sun ;
 If thunder was the voice of angry Jove, 95
 Or clouds, with nitre pregnant, burst above :
 Of these, and things beyond the common reach,
 He spoke, and charm'd his audience with his speech.

He first the taste of flesh from tables drove,
 And argu'd well, if arguments could move : 100
 ' O mortals, from your fellows' blood abstain,
 Nor taint your bodies with a food profane :
 While corn and pulse by nature are bestow'd,
 And planted orchards bend their willing load ;
 While labour'd gardens wholesome herbs produce, 105

And teeming vines afford their gen'rous juice;
 Nor tardier fruits of cruder kind are lost,
 But tam'd with fire, or mellow'd by the frost;
 While kine to pails distended udders bring,
 And bees their honey redolent of spring; 110
 While earth not only can your needs supply,
 But, lavish of her store, provides for luxury:
 A guiltless feast administers with ease,
 And without blood is prodigal to please.
 Wild beasts their maws with their slain brethren fill;
 And yet not all, for some refuse to kill: 116
 Sheep, goats, and oxen, and the nobler steed,
 On browse, and corn, and flow'ry meadows, feed.
 Bears, tigers, wolves, the lion's angry brood,
 Whom Heav'n endu'd with principles of blood, 120
 He wisely sunder'd from the rest, to yell
 In forests, and in lonely caves to dwell;
 Where stronger beasts oppress the weak by might,
 And all in prey, and purple feasts delight.
 ' O impious use: to nature's laws oppos'd, 125
 Where bowels are in other bowels clos'd;
 Where, fatten'd by their fellows' fat, they thrive;
 Maintain'd by murder, and by death they live.
 'Tis then for nought that mother Earth provides
 The stores of all she shews, and all she hides, 130
 If men with fleshy morsels must be fed,
 And chew, with bloody teeth, the breathing bread:
 What else is this, but to devour our guests,
 And barb'rously renew Cyclopéan feasts!
 We, by destroying life, our life sustain; 135
 And gorge th' ungodly maw with meats obscene.
 ' Not so th' Golden Age, who fed on fruit,
 Nor durst with bloody meals their mouths pollute.
 Then birds in airy space might safely move,
 And tim'rous hares on heaths securely rove: 140
 Nor needed fish the guileful hooks to fear,
 For all was peaceful; and that peace sincere.
 Whoever was the wretch, (and curs'd be he
 That envy'd first our food's simplicity!)
 Th' essay of bloody feasts on brutes began, 145
 And after forg'd the sword to murder man.
 Had he the sharpen'd steel alone employ'd

On beasts of prey, that other beasts destroy'd,
 Or man invaded with their fangs, and paws,
 This had been justified by nature's laws, 150
 And self-defence: But who did feasts begin
 Of flesh, he stretch'd necessity to sin.
 To kill man-killers, man has lawful pow'r,
 But not th' extended licence, to devour.
 ' Ill habits gather by unseen degrees, 155
 As brooks make rivers, rivers run to seas.
 The sow, with her broad snout, for rooting up
 Th' intrusted seed, was judg'd to spoil the crop,
 And intercept the sweating farmer's hope:
 The cov'tous churl, of unforgiving kind, 160
 Th' offender to the bloody priest resign'd:
 Her hunger was no plea: For that she died.
 The goat came next in order, to be tried;
 The goat had cropt the tendrils of the vine:
 In vengeance laity and clergy join, 165
 Where one had lost his profit, one his wine:
 Here was, at least, some shadow of offence:
 The sheep was sacrific'd on no pretence,
 But meek, and unresisting innocence:
 A patient, useful creature, born to bear 170
 The warm and woolly fleece, that cloth'd her mur-
 And daily to give down the milk she bred, [derer;
 A tribute for the grass on which she fed.
 Living, both food and raiment she supplies,
 And is of least advantage when she dies. 175
 ' How did the toiling ox his death deserve,
 A downright simple drudge, and born to serve?
 O tyrant! with what justice canst thou hope
 The promise of the year, a plenteous crop;
 When thou destroy'st thy lab'ring steer, who till'd 180
 And plough'd with pains, thy else ungrateful field?
 From his yet reeking neck to draw the yoke,
 That neck, with which the surly clods he broke;
 And to the hatchet yield thy husbandman,
 Who finish'd Autumn, and the Spring began! 185
 ' Nor this alone! but Heav'n itself to bribe,
 We to the gods our impious acts ascribe:
 First recompense with death their creatures' toil;
 Then call the bless'd above to share the spoil:

The fairest victim must the pow'rs appease, 190
 (So fatal 'tis sometimes too much to please !)
 A purple fillet his broad brows adorns,
 With flow'ry garlands crown'd, and gilded horns :
 He hears the murd'rous pray'r the priest prefers,
 But understands not 'tis his doom he hears: 195
 Beholds the meal betwixt his temples cast
 (The fruit and product of his labours past);
 And in the water views perhaps the knife
 Uplifted, to deprive him of his life;
 Then broken up alive, his entrails sees 200
 Torn out, for priests t' inspect the gods' decrees.
 ' From whence, O mortal men, this gust of blood
 Have you deriv'd, and interdicted food ?
 Be taught by me this dire delight to shun,
 Warn'd by my precepts, by my practice won : 205
 And when you eat the well-deserving beast,
 Think, on the lab'rer of your field you feast !
 ' Now since the god inspires me to proceed,
 Be that, whate'er th' inspiring pow'r, obey'd.
 For I will sing of mighty mysteries ; 210
 Of truths conceal'd, before, from human eyes ;
 Dark oracles unveil, and open all the skies.
 Pleas'd as I am to walk along the sphere
 Of shining stars, and travel with the year ;
 To leave the heavy earth, and scale the height 215
 Of Atlas, who supports the heav'nly weight ;
 To look from upper light, and thence survey
 Mistaken mortals wand'ring from the way,
 And wanting wisdom, fearful for the state
 Of future things, and trembling at their fate! 220
 ' Those I would teach, and by right reason bring
 To think of death, as but an idle thing.
 Why thus affrighted at an empty name,
 A dream of darkness, and fictitious flame ?
 Vain themes of wit, which but in poems pass, 225
 And fables of a world, which never was !
 What feels the body, when the soul expires,
 By time corrupted, or consum'd by fires ?
 Nor dies the spirit, but new life repeats
 In other forms, and only changes seats. 230
 E'en I, who these mysterious truths declare,

Was once Euphorbus in the Trojan war ;
 My name and lineage I remember well,
 And how in fight by Sparta's king I fell.
 In Argive Juno's fane, I late beheld 235
 My buckler hung on high, and own'd my former shield.

' Then Death, so call'd, is but old matter drest
 In some new figure, and a varied vest :
 Thus all things are but alter'd, nothing dies ;
 And here and there th' unbodied spirit flies, 240
 By time, or force, or sickness dispossesst,
 And lodges, where it lights, in man or beast ;
 Or hunts without, till ready limbs it find,
 And actuates those according to their kind ;
 From tenement to tenement is tost, 245
 The soul is still the same, the figure only lost :
 And as the soften'd wax new seals receives,
 This face assumes, and that impression leaves ;
 Now call'd by one, now by another name ;
 The form is only chang'd, the wax is still the same :
 So Death, so call'd, can but the form deface ; 251
 Th' immortal soul flies out in empty space,
 To seek her fortune in some other place.

' Then let not piety be put to flight,
 To please the taste of glutton appetite ; 255
 But suffer inmate souls secure to dwell,
 Lest from their seats your parents you expel ;
 With rapid hunger feed upon your kind,
 Or from a beast dislodge a brother's mind.

' And since, like Typhis parting from the shore, 260
 In ample seas I sail, and depths untried before,
 This let me further add, that Nature knows
 No steadfast station, but, or ebbs, or flows :
 Ever in motion ; she destroys her old,
 And casts new figures in another mould. 265
 E'en times are in perpetual flux, and run,
 Like rivers from their fountain, rolling on.
 For time, no more than streams, is at a stay ;
 The flying hour is ever on her way :
 And as the fountain still supplies her store, 270
 The wave behind impels the wave before ;
 Thus in successive course the minutes run,

And urge their predecessor minutes on,
 Still moving, ever new : For, former things
 Are set aside, like abdicated kings ; 275
 And ev'ry moment alters what is done,
 And innovates some act till then unknown.

' Darkness we see emerges into light,
 And shining suns descend to sable night ;
 E'en heav'n itself receives another dye, 280
 When wearied animals in slumbers lie
 Of midnight ease : Another, when the gray
 Of morn preludes the splendour of the day.
 The disc of Phœbus, when he climbs on high,
 Appears at first but as a blood-shot eye ; 285
 And when his chariot downward drives to bed,
 His ball is with the same suffusion red ;
 But, mounted high in his meridian race,
 All bright he shines, and with a better face :
 For there pure particles of ether flow, 290
 Far from th' infection of the world below.

' Nor equal light th' unequal moon adorns,
 Or in her waxing, or her waning horns.
 For ev'ry day she wanes, her face is less ;
 But gath'ring into globe, she fattens at increase. 295

' Perceiv'st thou not the process of the year,
 How the four seasons in four forms appear,
 Resembling human life in ev'ry shape they wear ?
 Spring first, like infancy, shoots out her head,
 With milky juice requiring to be fed : 300
 Helpless, though fresh, and wanting to be led.
 The green stem grows in stature, and in size,
 But only feeds with hope the farmer's eyes ;
 Then laughs the childish year with flowrets
 crown'd,

And lavishly perfumes the fields around, 305
 But no substantial nourishment receives ;
 Infirm the stalks, unsolid are the leaves.

' Proceeding onward whence the year began,
 The Summer grows adult, and ripens into man.
 This season, as in men, is most replete 310
 With kindly moisture, and prolific heat.

' Autumn succeeds ; a sober, tepid age,
 Not froze with fear, nor boiling into rage ;

More than mature, and tending to decay,
When our brown locks repine to mix with odious gray.

‘ Last, Winter creeps along with tardy pace, 316
Sour is his front, and furrow’d is his face ;

His scalp, if not dishonour’d quite of hair,
The ragged fleece is thin ; and thin is worse than bare.

‘ E’en our own bodies daily change receive, 320
Some part of what was theirs before they leave ;

Nor are to-day what yesterday they were ;
Nor the whole same to-morrow will appear.

‘ Time was when we were sow’d, and just began,
From some few fruitful drops, the promise of a man :
Then nature’s hand (fermented as it was) 326

Moulded to shape the soft, coagulated mass :
And when the little man was fully form’d,
The breathless embryo with a spirit warm’d ;
But when the mother’s throes begin to come, 330

The creature, pent within the narrow room,
Breaks his blind prison, pushing to repair
His stifled breath, and draw the living air ;
Cast on the margin of the world he lies
A helpless babe, but he by instinct cries. 335

He next essays to walk, but downward prest,
On four feet, imitates his brother beast :
By slow degrees, he gathers from the ground
His legs, and to the rolling chair is bound ;
Then walks alone ; a horseman now become, 340

He rides a stick, and travels round the room.
In time he vaunts among his youthful peers,
Strong-bon’d, and strung with nerves, in pride of years.
He runs with mettle his first merry stage,
Maintains the next, abated of his rage, 345

But manages his strength, and spares his age.
Heavy the third, and stiff he sinks apace, [race.
And, though ’tis down-hill all, but creeps along the
Now, sapless, on the verge of death he stands,
Contemplating his former feet and hands ; 350

And, Milo-like, his slacken’d sinews sees,
And wither’d arms, once fit to cope with Herculès,
Unable now to shake, much less to tear the trees.
‘ So Helen wept, when her too faithful glass
Reflected on her eyes the ruins of her face : 355

Wond'ring, what charms her ravishers could spy,
To force her twice, or e'en but once t' enjoy!

'Thy teeth, devouring Time, thine, envious Age,
On things below still exercise your rage:
With venom'd grinders you corrupt your meat, 360
And then, at ling'ring meals, the morsels eat.

'Nor those, which element we call, abide,
Nor to this figure, nor to that are tied:
For this eternal world is said of old,
But four prolific principles to hold, 365
Four diff'rent bodies; two to heav'n ascend,
And other two down to the centre tend:
Fire first, with wings expanded, mounts on high,
Pure, void of weight, and dwells in upper sky;
Then air, because unclogg'd in empty space, 370
Flies after fire, and claims the second place:
But weighty water, as her nature guides,
Lies on the lap of earth; and mother earth sub-
sides.

'All things are mix'd of these, which all contain,
And into these are all resolv'd again: 375
Earth rarifies to dew; expanded more,
The subtile dew in air begins to soar;
Spreads, as she flies, and weary of her name
Extenuates still, and changes into flame;
Thus having by degrees perfection won, 380
Restless, they soon untwist the web they spun,
And fire begins to lose her radiant hue,
Mix'd with gross air, and air descends to dew;
And dew condensing, does her form forego,
And sinks, a heavy lump of earth below. 385

'Thus are their figures never at a stand,
But chang'd by nature's innovating hand;
All things are alter'd, nothing is destroy'd,
The shifted scene for some new show employ'd.

'Then, to be born, is to begin to be 390
Some other thing we were not formerly:
And what we call to die, is not t' appear,
Nor be the thing that formerly we were.
Those very elements, which we partake
Alive, when dead some other bodies make;

Translated grow, have sense, or can discourse;
But death, on deathless substance has no force.

‘ That forms are chang’d, I grant; that nothing can
Continue in the figure it began:

The golden age, to silver was debas’d; 400
To copper that; our metal came at last.

‘ The face of places, and their forms, decay;
And that is solid earth, that once was sea:
Seas, in their turn, retreating from the shore,
Make solid land, what ocean was before; 405

And far from strands, are shells of fishes found,
And rusty anchors fix’d on mountain-ground:
And what were fields before, now wash’d and worn
By falling floods from high, to valleys turn,
And crumbling still descend to level lands; 410

And lakes and trembling bogs are barren sands;
And the parch’d desert floats in streams unknown;
Wond’ring to drink of waters not her own.

‘ Here nature living fountains opes; and there
Seals up the wombs where living fountains were; 415
Or earthquakes stop their ancient course, and bring
Diverted streams to feed a distant spring.

So Licus, swallow’d up, is seen no more,
But far from thence knocks out another door.
Thus Erasinus dives; and blind in earth 420

Runs on, and gropes his way to second birth,
Starts up in Argos’ meads, and shakes his locks
Around the fields, and fattens all the flocks.

So Mysus by another way is led,
And, grown a river, now disdains his head; 425
Forgets his humble birth, his name forsakes,

And the proud title of Caïcus takes.
Large Aménane, impure with yellow sands,
Runs rapid often, and as often stands,
And here he threats the drunken fields to drown; 430
And there his dugs deny to give their liquor down.

‘ Anigros once did wholesome draughts afford,
But now his deadly waters are abhorr’d:
Since, hurt by Herculès, as fame resounds,
The Centaurs in his current wash’d their wounds. 435
The streams of Hypanis are sweet no more,
But brackish lose the taste they had before.

Antissa, Pharos, Tyre, in seas were pent,
 Once isles, but now increase the continent;
 While the Leucadian coast, main land before, 440
 By rushing seas is sever'd from the shore.

So Zancle to th' Italian earth was tied,
 And men once walk'd where ships at anchor ride,
 Till Neptune overlook'd the narrow way,
 And in disdain pour'd in the conqu'ring sea. 445

' Two cities that adorn'd th' Achaïan ground,
 Buris and Helicè, no more are found,
 But whelm'd beneath a lake, are sunk and drown'd;
 And boatmen through the crystal water shew,
 To wond'ring passengers, the walls below. 450

' Near Trœzen stands a hill, expos'd in air
 To winter winds, of leafy shadows bare:
 This once was level ground: But (strange to tell)
 Th' included vapours, that in caverns dwell,
 Lab'ring with cholic pangs, and close confin'd, 455
 In vain sought issue for the rumbling wind:
 Yet still they heav'd for vent, and heaving still
 Enlarg'd the concave, and shot up the hill;
 As breath extends a bladder, or the skins
 Of goats are blown t' inclose the hoarded wines: 460
 The mountain yet retains a mountain's face,
 And gather'd rubbish heals the hollow space.

' Of many wonders, which I heard or knew,
 Retrenching most, I will relate but few:
 What, are not springs with qualities oppos'd, 465
 Endued at seasons, and at seasons lost?
 Thrice in a day thine, Ammon, change their form,
 Cold at high noon, at morn and evening warm:
 Thine, Athaman, will kindle wood, if thrown
 On the pil'd earth, and in the waning moon. 470

The Thracians have a stream, if any try
 The taste, his harden'd bowels petrify;
 Whate'er it touches, it converts to stones,
 And makes a marble pavement where it runs.

' Crathis, and Sybaris, her sister flood, 475
 That slide through our Calabrian neighbour wood,
 With gold and amber dye the shining hair;
 And thither youth resort: (for who would not be fair?)

' But stranger virtues yet in streams we find,

Some change not only bodies, but the mind: 480
 Who has not heard of Salmacis obscene,
 Whose waters into women soften men?
 Or Æthiopian lakes, which turn the brain
 To madness, or in heavy sleep constrain?
 Clytorian streams the love of wine expel 485
 (Such is the virtue of th' abstemious well),
 Whether the colder nymph that rules the flood
 Extinguishes, and balks the drunken god;
 Or that Melampus (so have some assur'd),
 When the mad Proetidès with charms he cur'd, 490
 And pow'rful herbs, both charms and simples cast
 Into the sober spring, where still their virtues last.
 ' Unlike effects Lyncestis will produce;
 Who drinks his waters, though with mod'rate use,
 Reels as with wine, and sees with double sight; 495
 His heels too heavy, and his head too light.
 Ladon, once Pheneos, an Arcadian stream
 (Ambiguous in th' effects, as in the name),
 By day is wholesome bev'rage; but is thought
 By night infected, and a deadly draught. 500
 ' Thus running rivers, and the standing lake
 Now of these virtues, now of those partake:
 Time was (and all things time and fate obey),
 When fast Ortygia floated on the sea;
 Such were Cyanéan isles, when Typhis steer'd 505
 Betwixt their streights, and their collision fear'd;
 They swam, where now they sit; and firmly join'd,
 Secure of rooting up, resist the wind.
 Nor Ætna vomiting sulphureous fire
 Will ever belch; for sulphur will expire 510
 (The veins exhausted of the liquid store). [more.
 Time was, she cast no flames; in time will cast no
 ' For whether earth's an animal, and air
 Imbibes, her lungs with coolness to repair,
 And what she sucks, remits; she still requires 515
 Inlets for air, and outlets for her fires;
 When tortur'd with convulsive fits she shakes,
 That motion chokes the vent, till other vent she makes;
 Or when the winds in hollow caves are clos'd,
 And subtile spirits find that way oppos'd, 520
 They toss up flints in air; the flints that hide

The seeds of fire, thus tost in air, collide,
 Kindling the sulphur, till, the fuel spent,
 The cave is cool'd, and the fierce winds relent.
 Or whether sulphur, catching fire, feeds on 525
 Its unctuous parts, till all the matter gone
 The flames no more ascend; for earth supplies
 The fat that feeds them; and when earth denies
 That food, by length of time consum'd, the fire,
 Famish'd for want of fuel, must expire. 530

' A race of men there are, as fame has told,
 Who, shiv'ring, suffer Hyperborean cold,
 Till nine times bathing in Minerva's lake,
 Soft feathers, to defend their naked sides they take.
 'Tis said, the Scythian wives (believe who will) 535
 Transform'd themselves to birds by magic skill;
 Smear'd over with an oil of wondrous might,
 That adds new pinions to their airy flight.

' But this by sure experiment we know,
 That living creatures from corruption grow: 540
 Hide in a hollow pit a slaughter'd steer,
 Bees from his putrid bowels will appear:
 Who, like their parents, haunt the fields, and bring
 Their honey harvest home, and hope another spring.
 The warlike steel is multiplied, we find, 545
 To wasps, and hornets of the warrior kind.
 Cut from a crab his crooked claws, and hide
 The rest in earth, a scorpion thence will glide
 And shoot his sting, his tail in circles tost,
 Refers the limbs his backward father lost: 550
 And worms that stretch on leaves their filmy loom,
 Crawl from their bags, and butterflies become,
 E'en slime begets the frogs' loquacious race:
 Short of their feet at first, in little space
 With arms and legs endued, long leaps they take, 555
 Rais'd on their hinder part, and swim the lake,
 And waves repel: For nature gives their kind,
 To that intent, a length of legs behind.

' The cubs of bears a living lump appear,
 When whelp'd, and no determin'd figure wear. 560
 Their mother licks 'em into shape, and gives
 As much of form as she herself receives.

' The grubs from their sexangular abode

Crawl out unfinish'd like the maggots' brood;
 Trunks without limbs; till time at leisure brings 565
 The thighs they wanted, and their tardy wings.
 ' The bird who draws the car of Juno, vain
 Of her crown'd head, and of her starry train;
 And he that bears th' artillery of Jove,
 The strong-pounc'd eagle, and the billing dove, 570
 And all the feather'd kind, who could suppose
 (But that from sight the surest sense he knows)
 They from th' included yolk, not ambient white arose?
 ' There are, who think the marrow of a man,
 Which in the spine, while he was living, ran, 575
 When dead, the pith corrupted will become
 A snake, and hiss within the hollow tomb.
 ' All these receive their birth from other things:
 But from himself the phoenix only springs;
 Self-born, begotten by the parent flame 580
 In which he burn'd, another, and the same;
 Who not by corn or herbs his life sustains,
 But the sweet essence of amomum drains:
 And watches the rich gums Arabia bears,
 While yet in tender dew they drop their tears. 585
 He (his five centuries of life fulfill'd)
 His nest on oaken boughs begins to build,
 Or trembling tops of palm; and first he draws
 The plan with his broad bill and crooked claws,
 Nature's artificers; on this the pile 590
 Is form'd, and rises round, then with the spoil
 Of cassia, cinnamon, and stems of nard
 (For softness strew'd beneath), his fun'ral bed is rear'd,
 Fun'ral and bridal both; and all around
 The borders with corruptless myrrh are crown'd, 595
 On this incumbent; till ethereal flame
 First catches, then consumes, the costly frame:
 Consumes him too, as on the pile he lies:
 He liv'd on odours, and in odours dies.
 ' An infant phoenix from the former springs, 600
 His father's heir, and from his tender wings
 Shakes off his parent dust, his method he pursues,
 And the same lease of life on the same terms renews.
 When grown to manhood, he begins his reign,
 And with stiff pinions can his flight sustain; 605

He lightens of its load the tree that bore
 His father's royal sepulchre before,
 And his own cradle: This (with pious care)
 Plac'd on his back, he cuts the buxom air,
 Seeks the sun's city, and his sacred church, 610
 And decently lays down his burthen in the porch.

' A wonder more amazing would we find?
 Th' hyæna shews it, of a double kind,
 Varying the sexes in alternate years,
 In one begets, and in another bears. 615
 The thin chameleon, fed with air, receives
 The colour of the thing to which he cleaves.

' India, when conquer'd, on the conqu'ring god
 For planted vines the sharp-ey'd lynx bestow'd,
 Whose urine, shed, before it touches earth, 620
 Congeals in air, and gives to gems their birth.
 So coral soft, and white in ocean's bed,
 Comes harden'd up in air, and glows in red.

' All changing species should my song recite;
 Before I ceas'd would change the day to night. 625
 Nations and empires flourish and decay,
 By turns command, and in their turns obey;
 Time softens hardy people: time again
 Hardens to war a soft, unwarlike train.
 Thus Troy for ten long years her foes withstood, 630
 And daily bleeding, bore th' expense of blood:
 Now for thick streets it shews an empty space,
 Or only fill'd with tombs of her own perish'd race,
 Herself becomes the sepulchre of what she was.

' Mycenè, Sparta, Thebes, of mighty fame, 635
 Are vanish'd out of substance into name.
 And Dardan Rome, that just begins to rise,
 On Tiber's banks, in time shall mate the skies:
 Wid'ning her bounds, and working on her way;
 E'en now she meditates imperial sway: 640
 Yet this is change, but she by changing thrives,
 Like moons new-born, and in her cradle strives
 To fill her infant horns; an hour shall come,
 When the round world shall be contain'd in Rome.

' For thus old saws foretel, and Helenus 645
 Anchisès' drooping son enliven'd thus;
 When Ilium now was in a sinking state,

And he was doubtful of his future fate:
 " O goddess-born, with thy hard fortune strive;
 Troy never can be lost, and thou alive. 650
 Thy passage thou shalt free through fire and sword,
 And Troy in foreign lands shall be restor'd.
 In happier fields a rising town I see,
 Greater than what e'er was, or is, or e'er shall be;
 And heav'n yet owes the world a race deriv'd from
 Sages, and chiefs, of other lineage born, [thee. 655
 The city shall extend, extended shall adorn:
 But from Iulus he must draw his breath,
 By whom thy Rome shall rule the conquer'd earth:
 Whom heav'n will lend mankind on earth to reign,
 And late require the precious pledge again." 661
 This Helenus to great Æneas told,
 Which I retain e'er since in other mould,
 My soul was cloth'd; and now rejoice to view
 My country walls rebuilt, and Troy reviv'd anew, 665
 Rais'd by the fall, decreed by loss to gain;
 Enslav'd but to be free, and conquer'd but to reign.
 'Tis time my hard-mouth'd coursers to control,
 Apt to run riot, and transgress the goal:
 And, therefore, I conclude, whatever lies, 670
 In earth, or flits in air, or fills the skies,
 All suffer change; and we, that are of soul
 And body mix'd, are members of the whole.
 Then when our sires, or grandsires, shall forsake
 The forms of men, and brutal figures take, 675
 Thus hous'd, securely let their spirits rest,
 Nor violate thy father in the beast,
 Thy friend, thy brother, any of thy kin,
 If none of these, yet there's a man within.
 O, spare to make a Thyestæan meal, 680
 T' inclose his body, and his soul expel.
 ' Ill customs by degrees to habits rise,
 Ill habits soon become exalted vice:
 What more advance can mortals make in sin
 So near perfection who with blood begin? 685
 Deaf to the calf, that lies beneath the knife,
 Looks up, and from her butcher begs her life:
 Deaf to the harmless kid, that ere he dies,
 All methods to procure thy mercy tries,

And imitates, in vain, thy children's cries. 690
 Where will he stop, who feeds with household bread,
 Then eats the poultry which before he fed?
 Let plow thy steers; that, when they lose their breath,
 To nature, not to thee, they may impute their death.
 Let goats for food their loaded udders lend, 695
 And sheep from winter-cold thy sides defend;
 But neither springes, nets, nor snares employ;
 And be no more ingenious to destroy.
 Free as in air let birds on earth remain,
 Nor let insidious glue their wings constrain: 700
 Nor op'ning hounds the trembling stag affright,
 Nor purple feathers intercept his flight:
 Nor hooks conceal'd in baits for fish prepare,
 Nor lines to heave 'em twinkling up in air.
 'Take not away the life you cannot give, 705
 For all things have an equal right to live.
 Kill noxious creatures, where 'tis sin to save;
 This only just prerogative we have:
 But nourish life with vegetable food,
 And shun the sacrilegious taste of blood.' 710

These precepts by the Samian sage were taught,
 Which god-like Numa to the Sabines brought,
 And thence transferred to Rome, by gift his own:
 A willing people, and an offer'd throne.
 O happy monarch, sent by heav'n to bless 715
 A salvage nation with soft arts of peace!
 To teach religion, rapine to restrain,
 Give laws to lust, and sacrifice ordain:
 Himself a saint, a goddess was his bride,
 And all the muses o'er his acts preside. 720

Advanc'd in years he died; one common date
 His reign concluded, and his mortal state.
 Then tears plebeians, and patricians shed,
 And pious matrons wept their monarch dead.
 His mournful wife her sorrows to bewail, 725
 Withdrew from Rome, and sought th' Arician vale:
 Hid in thick woods she made incessant moans,
 Disturbing Cynthia's sacred rites with groans.
 How oft the nymphs, who rul'd the wood and lake,

Reprov'd her tears, and words of comfort spake! 730
 How oft (in vain) the son of Theseus said,
 Thy stormy sorrows be with patience laid;
 Nor are thy fortunes to be wept alone,
 Weigh others' woes, and learn to bear thine own.
 Be mine an instance to assuage thy grief: 735
 Would mine were none!—yet mine may bring relief.
 You've heard perhaps, in conversation told,
 What once befel Hippolytus of old;
 To death by Theseus' easy faith betray'd,
 And caught in snares his wicked step-dame laid. 740
 The wondrous tale your credit scarce may claim,
 Yet (strange to say) in me behold the same,
 Whom lustful Phædra oft had press'd in vain,
 With impious joys my father's bed to stain;
 Till seiz'd with fear, or by revenge inspir'd, 745
 She charg'd on me the crimes herself desir'd.
 Expell'd by Theseus, from his home I fled
 With heaps of curses on my guiltless head.
 Forlorn I sought Pitthæan Trœzen's land,
 And drove my chariot o'er Corinthus' strand; 750
 When from the surface of the level main
 A billow rising, heav'd above the plain;
 Rolling, and gath'ring, till so high it swell'd,
 A mountain's height th' enormous mass excell'd:
 Then bellowing burst; when from the summit cleav'd
 A horned bull his ample chest upheav'd. 756
 His mouth and nostrils, storms of briny rain,
 Expiring, blew. Dread horror seiz'd my train;
 I stood unmov'd: my father's cruel doom
 Claim'd all my soul, nor fear could find a room. 760
 Amaz'd, awhile my trembling coursers stood
 With prick'd-up ears, contemplating the flood;
 Then starting sudden from the dreadful view,
 At once, like lightning, from the seas they flew,
 And o'er the craggy rocks the rattling chariot drew.
 In vain to stop the hot mouth'd steeds I try'd, 766
 And bending backwards all my strength apply'd;
 The frothy foam in driving flakes distains
 The bits and bridles, and bedews the reins.
 But though, as yet untam'd they ran, at length 770
 Their heady rage had tir'd beneath my strength,

When in the spokes, a stump entangling, tore
 The shatter'd wheel, and from its axle bore.
 The shock impetuous toss'd me from my seat,
 Caught in the reins beneath my horses' feet. 775

My reeking guts dragg'd out alive, around
 The jagged stump my trembling nerves were wound.
 Then stretch'd the well-knit limbs, in pieces hal'd,
 Part stuck behind, and part the chariot trail'd;
 Till, 'midst my cracking joints, and breaking bones,
 I breath'd away my wearied soul in groans. 781

No part distinguished from the rest was found,
 But all my parts a universal wound.

Now say, self-tortured nymph, can you compare
 Our griefs as equal, or in justice dare? 785

I saw, besides, the darksome realms of woe,
 And bath'd my wounds in smoking streams below.
 There I had stay'd, nor second life enjoy'd,
 But Pæan's son his wondrous art employ'd.
 To light restor'd, by medicinal skill, 790

In spite of fate, and rigid Pluto's will,
 Th' invidious object to preserve from view,
 A misty cloud around me Cynthia threw;
 And lest my sight should stir my foes to rage,
 She stamp'd my visage with the marks of age. 795
 My former hue was chang'd, and for it shewn
 A set of features, and a face unknown.

Awhile the goddess stood in doubt, or Crete,
 Or Delos' Isle, to choose for my retreat.

Delos and Crete refus'd, this wood she chose, 800

Bade me my former luckless name depose,
 Which kept alive the mem'ry of my woes;
 Then said, Immortal life be thine; and thou,
 Hippolytus once call'd, be Virbius now.

Here then a god, but of th' inferior race, 805
 I serve my goddess, and attend her chace.

But other's woes were useless to appease
 Egeria's grief, or set her mind at ease.

Beneath the hill, all comfortless she laid,
 The dropping tears her eyes incessant shed, 810

'Till pitying Phœbé eas'd her pious woe,
 Thaw'd to a spring, whose streams for ever flow.

The nymphs, and Virbius, like amazement fill'd,

As seiz'd the swains who Tyrrhene furrows till'd;
 When heaving up, a clod was seen to roll, 815
 Untouch'd, self-mov'd, and big with human soul.
 The spreading mass its former shape depos'd,
 Began to shoot, and arms and legs disclos'd,
 Till form'd a perfect man, the living mould
 Op'd its new mouth, and future truths foretold; 820
 And Tages nam'd by natives of the place,
 Taught arts prophetic to the Tuscan race.

Or such as once by Romulus was shewn,
 Who saw his lance with sprouting leaves o'er-grown,
 When fix'd on earth the point began to shoot, 825
 And, growing downward, turned a fibrous root;
 While spread aloft, the branching arms display'd,
 O'er wond'ring crowds, an unexpected shade.

Or as when Cippus in the current view'd
 The shooting horns that on his forehead stood, 830
 His temples first he feels, and with surprise
 His touch confirms th' assurance of his eyes.
 Straight to the skies his horned front he rears,
 And to the gods directs these pious pray'rs:
 If this portent be prosp'rous, O, decree 835
 To Rome th' event: if otherwise, to me.

An altar then of turf he hastes to raise,
 Rich gums in fragrant exhalations blaze;
 The panting entrails crackle as they fry,
 And boding fumes pronounce a mystery. 840
 Soon as the augur saw the holy fire,
 And victims with presaging signs expire,
 To Cippus then he turns his eyes with speed,
 And views the horny honours of his head:
 Then cry'd, Hail, conqueror! thy call obey; 845
 Those omens I behold, presage thy sway.
 Rome waits thy nod, unwilling to be free,
 And owns thy sov'reign pow'r as fate's decree.

He said;—and Cippus, starting at th' event,
 Spoke in these words his pious discontent: 850
 Far hence, ye gods, this execration send;
 And the great race of Romulus defend.
 Better that I in exile live abhorr'd,
 Than e'er the Capitol should style me lord.

This spoke, he hides with leaves his omen'd head,
Then prays; the senate next convenes, and said; 856

If augurs can foresee, a wretch is come,
Design'd by destiny the bane of Rome.

Two horns (most strange to tell) his temples crown:
If e'er he pass the walls, and gain the town, 860

Your laws are forfeit, that ill-fated hour;
And liberty must yield to lawless pow'r.

Your gates he might have enter'd; but this arm
Seiz'd the usurper, and withheld the harm.

Haste, find the monster out, and let him be 865
Condemn'd to all the senate can decree;

Or tied in chains, or into exile thrown;
Or by the tyrant's death prevent your own.

The crowd such murmurs utter as they stand,
As swelling surges breaking on the strand: 870

Or as when gath'ring gales sweep o'er the grove,
And their tall heads the bending cedars move.

Each with confusion gaz'd, and then began
To feel his fellow's brows; and find the man.

Cippus then shakes his garland off, and cries, 875
The wretch you want, I offer to your eyes.

The anxious throng look'd down, and sad in thought,
All wish'd they had not found the sign they sought;

In haste with laurel wreaths his head they bind;
Such honour to such virtue was assign'd. 880

Then thus the senate:—Hear, O Cippus, hear;
So godlike is thy tutelary care,

That since in Rome thyself forbids thy stay,
For thy abode those acres we convey

The ploughshare can surround, the labour of a day.
In deathless records thou shalt stand enroll'd, 886

And Rome's rich posts shall shine with horns of gold.

Melodious maids of Pindus, who inspire
The flowing strains, and tune the vocal lyre;

Tradition's secrets are unlock'd to you, 890
Old tales revive, and ages past renew;

You, who can hidden causes best expound,
Say, whence the isle which Tiber flows around,

Its altars with a heav'nly stranger grac'd,
And in our shrines the god of Physic plac'd. 895

A wasting plague infected Latium's skies;

Pale, bloodless looks were seen, with ghastly eyes;
 The dire disease's marks each visage wore,
 And the pure blood was chang'd to putrid gore:
 In vain were human remedies applied: 900
 In vain the pow'r of healing herbs was tried;
 Wearied with death, they seek celestial aid,
 And visit Phoebus in his Delphic shade;
 In the world's centre sacred Delphos stands,
 And gives its oracles to distant lands: 905
 Here they implore the god, with fervent vows,
 His salutary pow'r to interpose,
 And end a great afflicted city's woes.
 The holy temple sudden tremors prov'd:
 The laurel grove and all its quivers mov'd; 910
 In hollow sounds the priestess thus began;
 And through each bosom thrilling horrors ran:—
 'Th' assistance, Roman, which you here implore,
 Seek from another, and a nearer shore;
 Relief must be implor'd and succour won, 915
 Not from Apollo, but Apollo's son;
 My son, to Latium borne, shall bring redress:
 Go, with good omens, and expect success.'
 When these clear oracles the senate knew;
 The sacred tripod's counsels they pursue; 920
 Depute a pious and a chosen band,
 Who sail to Epidaurus' neighb'ring land:
 Before the Grecian elders when they stood,
 They pray 'em to bestow the healing god;
 'Ordain'd was he to save Ausonia's state: 925
 So promis'd Delphi, and unerring fate.'
 Opinions various their debates enlarge:
 Some plead to yield to Rome the sacred charge;
 Others, tenacious of their country's wealth,
 Refuse to grant the pow'r who guards its health. 930
 While dubious they remain'd, the wasting light
 Withdrew before the growing shades of night.
 Thick darkness now obscur'd the dusky skies:
 Now, Roman, clos'd in sleep were mortal eyes,
 When health's auspicious god appears to thee, 935
 And thy glad dreams his form celestial see:
 In his left hand, a rural staff preferr'd,
 His right is seen to stroke his decent beard.

'Dismiss (said he, with mildness all divine),
 Dismiss your fears; I come and leave my shrine; 940
 This serpent view, that with ambitious play
 My staff encircles, mark him ev'ry way:
 His form though larger, nobler, I'll assume,
 And chang'd as gods should be, bring aid to Rome.'
 Here fled the vision; and the vision's flight 945
 Was follow'd by the cheerful dawn of light.

Now was the morn with blushing streaks o'erspread,
 And all the starry fires of heav'n were fled;
 The chiefs perplex'd, and fill'd with doubtful care,
 To their protector's sumptuous roofs repair, 950
 By genuine signs implore him to express,
 What seats he deigns to choose, what land to bless;
 Scarce their ascending pray'rs had reach'd the sky;
 Lo, the serpentine god erected high!
 Forerunning hissings his approach confess'd; 955
 Bright shone his golden scales, and wav'd his lofty
 The trembling altar his appearance spoke: [crest.
 The marble floor, and glitt'ring ceiling shook;
 The doors were rock'd; the statue seem'd to nod;
 And all the fabric own'd the present god: 960
 His radiant chest he taught aloft to rise,
 And round the temple cast his flaming eyes:
 Struck with th' astonish'd crowd, the holy priest
 His temples with white bands of ribbon dress'd,
 With rev'rent awe the pow'r divine confess'd: 965
 'The god! the god! (he cries;) all tongues be still!
 Each conscious breast devoutest ardour fill!
 O beauteous! O divine! assist our cares,
 And be propitious to thy vot'ries' pray'rs!
 All with consenting hearts, and pious fear, 970
 The words repeat, the deity revere;
 The Romans in their holy worship join'd,
 With silent awe and purity of mind:
 Gracious to them, his crest is seen to nod,
 And, as an earnest of his care, the god, 975
 Thrice hissing, vibrates thrice his forked tongue.
 And now the smooth descent he glides along;
 Still on the ancient seats he bends his eyes,
 In which his statue breathes, his altars rise;
 His long-lov'd shrine with kind concern he leaves, 980

And to forsake th' accustom'd mansion grieves;
 At length, his sweeping bulk in state is borne
 Through the throng'd streets, which scatter'd flow'rs
 adorn.

Through many a fold he winds his mazy course,
 And gains the port, and moles, which break the
 ocean's force. 985

'Twas here he made a stand, and having view'd
 The pious train, who his last steps pursu'd,
 Seem'd to dismiss their zeal, with gracious eyes,
 While gleams of pleasure in his aspect rise.

And now the Latian vessel he ascends; 990

Beneath the weighty god the vessel bends:
 The Latins on the strand great Jove appease,
 Their cables loose, and plough the yielding seas;
 The high-rear'd serpent from the stern displays
 His gorgeous form, and the blue deep surveys; 995

The ship is wafted on with gentle gales,
 And o'er the calm Ìonian smoothly sails:
 On the sixth morn, th' Italian coast they gain,
 And touch Lacinia, grac'd with Juno's fane;
 Now fair Calabria to the sight is lost, 1000

And all the cities on her fruitful coast;
 They pass at length the rough Sicilian shore,
 The Brutian soil, rich with metallic ore,
 The famous isles where Æölus was king,
 And Pæstus blooming with eternal spring: 1005

Minerva's cape they leave, and Capreæ's isle,
 Campania, on whose hills the vineyards smile,
 The city which Alcidès' spoils adorn,
 Naples, for soft delight and pleasure born;
 Fair Stabiæ, with Cuméan Sibyls' seats, 1010

And Baïa's tepid baths, and green retreats:
 Linternum next they reach, where balmy gums
 Distil from mastic-trees, and spread perfumes:
 Caiëta, from the nurse so nam'd, for whom,
 With pious care, Æneas rais'd a tomb; 1015

Vulturne, whose whirlpools suck the num'rous sands,
 And Trachas, and Minturnæ's marshy lands,
 And Formiæ's coast is left, and Circè's plain,
 Which yet remembers her enchanting reign;
 To Antium, last, his course the pilot guides; 1020

Here, while the anchor'd vessel safely rides
 (For now the ruffled deep portends a storm),
 The spiry god unfolds his spheric form,
 Through large indentings draws his lubric train,
 And seeks the refuge of Apollo's fane. 1025

The fane is situate on the yellow shore,
 When the sea smil'd, and the winds rag'd no more,
 He leaves his father's hospitable lands,
 And furrows, with his rattling scales, the sands
 Along the coasts; at length the ship regains, 1030
 And sails to Tiber, and Lavinum's plains.
 Here mingling crowds to meet their patron came,
 E'en the chaste guardians of the Vestal flame;
 From ev'ry part tumultuous they repair,
 And joyful acclamations rend the air: 1035
 Along the flow'ry banks, on either side,
 Where the tall ship floats on the swelling tide,
 Dispos'd in decent order, altars rise;
 And crackling incense, as it mounts the skies,
 The air with sweets refreshes; while the knife, 1040
 Warm with the victim's blood, lets out the streaming
 life.

The world's great mistress, Rome, receives him now;
 On the mast's top reclin'd, he waves his brow,
 And from that height surveys the great abodes,
 And mansions, worthy of residing gods. 1045
 The land, a narrow neck, itself extends,
 Round which his course the stream divided bends;
 The stream's two arms, on either side, are seen,
 Stretch'd out in equal length; the land between.
 The isle, so call'd, from hence derives its name: 1050
 'Twas here the salutary serpent came;
 Nor sooner has he left the Latian pine,
 But he assumes again his form divine,
 And now no more the drooping city mourns,
 Joy is again restor'd, and health returns. 1055

But Æsculapius was a foreign power:
 In his own city, Cæsar we adore:
 Him arms and arts alike renown'd beheld,
 In peace conspicuous, dreadful in the field;
 His rapid conquests, and swift-finish'd wars, 1060

The hero justly fix'd among the stars ;
 Yet is his progeny his greatest fame :
 The son immortal makes the father's name.
 The sea-girt Britons, by his courage tam'd,
 For their high rocky cliffs, and fierceness fam'd ; 1065
 His dreadful navies, which victorious rode
 O'er Nile's affrighted waves and seven-sourc'd flood ;
 Numidia, and the spacious realms regain'd ;
 Where Cinyphis or flows, or Juba reign'd ;
 The pow'rs of titled Mithridatès broke, 1070
 And Pontus added to the Roman yoke ;
 Triumphal shows decreed, for conquests won,
 For conquests, which the triumphs still outshone ;
 These are great deeds ; yet less than to have giv'n
 The world a lord, in whom, propitious heav'n, 1075
 When you decreed the sov'reign rule to place,
 You bless'd with lavish bounty human race.

Now, lest so great a prince might seem to rise
 Of mortal stem, his sire must reach the skies ;
 The beauteous goddess that Æneas bore ; 1080
 Foresaw it, and, foreseeing, did deplore ;
 For well she knew her hero's fate was nigh,
 Devoted by conspiring arms to die.
 Trembling, and pale, to ev'ry god she cry'd,
 Behold, what deep and subtle arts are tried, 1085
 To end the last, the only branch that springs
 From my Ilius, and the Dardan kings !
 How bent they are ! how desp'rate to destroy
 All that is left me of unhappy Troy !
 Am I alone by Fate ordain'd to know 1090
 Uninterrupted care, and endless woe ?
 Now from Tydidès' spear I feel the wound :
 Now Ilium's tow'rs the hostile flames surround :
 Troy laid in dust, my exil'd son I mourn,
 Through angry seas, and raging billows borne ; 1095
 O'er the wide deep his wand'ring course he bends ;
 Now to the sullen shades of Styx descends.
 With Turnus driv'n at last fierce wars to wage,
 Or rather with un pitying Juno's rage.
 But why record I now my ancient woes ? 1100
 Sense of past ills in present fears I lose ;

On me their points the impious daggers throw;
 Forbid it, gods, repel the direful blow:
 If by curst weapons Numa's priest expires,
 No longer shall ye burn, ye vestal fires. 1105

While such complainings Cypria's grief disclose;
 In each celestial breast compassion rose:
 Nor gods can alter fate's resistless will;
 Yet they foretold, by signs, th' approaching ill.
 Dreadful were heard, among the clouds, alarms 1110
 Of echoing trumpets, and of clashing arms;
 The sun's pale image gave so faint a light,
 That the sad earth was almost veil'd in night;
 The Æther's face with fiery meteors glow'd;
 With storms of hail were mingled drops of blood!
 A dusky hue the morning star o'erspread, 1116
 And the moon's orb was stain'd with spots of red;
 In ev'ry place portentous shrieks were heard,
 The fatal warnings of th' infernal bird:
 In ev'ry place the marble melts to tears; 1120
 While in the groves, rever'd through length of years,
 Boding, and awful sounds, the ear invade;
 And solemn music warbles through the shade;
 No victim can atone the impious age,
 No sacrifice the wrathful gods assuage; 1125
 Dire wars and civil fury threat the state:
 And ev'ry omen points out Cæsar's fate:
 Around each hallow'd shrine and sacred dome,
 Night-howling dogs disturb the peaceful gloom;
 Their silent seats the wand'ring shades forsake, 1130
 And fearful tremblings the rock'd city shake.

Yet could not, by these prodigies, be broke
 The plotted charm, or staid the fatal stroke;
 Their swords th' assassins in the temple draw;
 Their murd'ring hands nor gods nor temples awe; 1135
 This sacred place their bloody weapons stain,
 And virtue falls before the altar slain.

'Twas now fair Cypria, with her woes opprest,
 In raging anguish smote her heav'nly breast;
 While with distracting tears the goddess try'd 1140
 Her hero in th' ethereal cloud to hide,
 The cloud which youthful Paris did conceal,
 When Menelæus urg'd the threat'ning steel!

The cloud, which once deceiv'd Tydidès sight,
And sav'd Æneas in th' unequal fight. 1145

When Jove:—' In vain, fair daughter, you essay
To o'er-rule destiny's unconquer'd sway:
Your doubts to banish, enter Fate's abode:
A privilege to heav'nly pow'rs allow'd;
There shall you see the records grav'd in length, 1150
On ir'n and solid brass, with mighty strength;
Which heav'n's and earth's concussions shall endure,
Maugre all shocks, eternal, and secure:
There, on perennial adamant design'd,
The various fortunes of your race you'll find: 1155
Well I have mark'd 'em, and will now relate
To thee the settled laws of future fate.

' He, goddess, for whose death the fates you blame,
Has finish'd his determin'd course with fame:
To thee 'tis giv'n, at length that he shall shine 1160
Among the gods, and grace the worshipp'd shrine:
His son to all his greatness shall be heir,
And worthily succeed to empire's care:
Our self will lead his wars, resolv'd to aid
The brave avenger of his father's shade: 1165
To him its freedom Mutina shall owe,
And Decius his auspicious conduct know:
His dreadful pow'rs shall shake Pharsalia's plain,
And drench in gore Philippi's fields again:
A mighty leader in Sicilia's flood, 1170
Great Pompey's warlike son shall be subdu'd.
Ægypt's soft queen, adorn'd with fatal charms,
Shall mourn her soldier's unsuccessful arms:
Too late shall find, her swelling hopes were vain,
And know, that Rome o'er Memphis still must reign:
Why name I Afric or Nile's hidden head? 1176
Far as both oceans roll, his pow'r shall spread:
All the known earth to him shall homage pay,
And the seas own his universal sway:
When cruel war no more disturbs mankind; 1180
To civil studies shall he bend his mind,
With equal justice guardian laws ordain,
And, by his great example, vice restrain:
Where will his bounty or his goodness end?

To times unborn his gen'rous views extend; 1185
 The virtues of his heir our praise engage,
 And promise blessings to the coming age :
 Late shall he in his kindred orbs be plac'd,
 With Pylia years, and croud'd honours grac'd.
 Meantime, your hero's fleeting spirit bear, 1190
 Fresh from his wounds, and change it to a star:
 So shall great Julius rites divine assume,
 And from the skies eternal smile on Rome.'

This spoke ; the goddess to the senate flew : 1194
 Where, her fair form conceal'd from mortal view,
 Her Cæsar's heav'nly part she made her care,
 Nor left the recent soul to waste to air,
 But bore it upwards to its native skies :
 Glowing with new-born fires she saw it rise ;
 Forth springing from her bosom up it flew, 1200
 And, kindling, as it soar'd, a comet grew ;
 Above the lunar sphere it took its flight,
 And shot behind it a long trail of light.

Thus rais'd, his glorious offspring Julius view'd,
 Beneficently great, and scatt'ring good, 1205
 Deeds, that his own surpass'd, with joy beheld,
 And his large heart dilates to be excell'd.
 What, though this prince refuses to receive
 The preference, which his juster subjects give ;
 Fame uncontroll'd, that no restraint obeys, 1210
 The homage, shunn'd by modest virtue, pays,
 And proves disloyal only in his praise.
 Though great his sire, him greater we proclaim :
 So Atreus yields to Agamemnon's fame ;
 Achillès so superior honours won, 1215
 And Peleus must submit to Peleus' son ;
 Examples yet more noble to disclose,
 So Saturn was eclips'd, when Jove to empire rose :
 Jove rules the heav'ns ; the earth Augustus sways ;
 Each claims a monarch's and a father's praise. 1220
 Celestials, who for Rome your cares employ ;
 Ye gods, who guarded the remains of Troy ;
 Ye native gods, here born and fix'd by fate ;
 Quirinus, founder of the Roman state ;
 O parent Mars, from whom Quirinus sprung ;

Chaste Vesta, Cæsar's household gods among 1225
 Most sacred held ; domestic Phœbus, thou,
 To whom with Vesta chaste alike we bow ;
 Great guardian of the high Tarpeïan rock ;
 And all ye pow'rs whom poets may invoke ;
 O, grant that day may claim our sorrows late,
 When lov'd Augustus shall submit to fate ; 1230
 Visit those seats where gods and heroes dwell ;
 And leave, in tears, the world he rul'd so well.

The work is finish'd, which nor dreads the rage
 Of tempests, fire, or war, or wasting age : 1236
 Come, soon or late, death's undetermin'd day,
 This mortal being only can decay ;
 My nobler part, my fame, shall reach the skies,
 And to late times, with blooming honours rise : 1240
 Whate'er th' unbounded Roman pow'r obeys,
 All climes, and nations, shall record my praise :
 If 'tis allow'd to poets to divine,
 One half of round eternity is mine.

THE END.









