

C O R S I C A.*

————— *A manly race*

Of unsubmitting spirit, wise and brave;

Who still thro' bleeding ages struggled hard

To hold a generous undiminish'd state;

Too much in vain!

THOMSON.

HAIL generous CORSICA! unconquer'd isle!
The fort of freedom; that amidst the waves
Stands like a rock of adamant, and dares
The wildest fury of the beating storm.

And

* Written in the year 1769.

And are there yet, in this late sickly age
(Unkindly to the tow'ring growths of virtue)
Such bold exalted spirits? Men whose deeds,
To the bright annals of old GREECE oppos'd,
Would throw in shades her yet unrival'd name,
And dim the lustre of her fairest page!
And glows the flame of LIBERTY so strong
In this lone speck of earth! this spot obscure,
Shaggy with woods, and crufted o'er with rock,
By slaves surrounded, and by slaves oppress'd!
What then should BRITONS feel? should they not catch
The warm contagion of heroic ardour,
And kindle at a fire so like their own?

Such were the working thoughts which swell'd the breast
Of generous BOSWEL; when with nobler aim
And views beyond the narrow beaten track
By trivial fancy trod, he turn'd his course

From

From polish'd Gallia's soft delicious vales,
From the grey reliques of imperial Rome,
From her long galleries of laurel'd stone,
Her chisel'd heroes, and her marble gods,
(Whose dumb majestic pomp yet awes the world,)
To animated forms of patriot zeal;
Warm in the living majesty of virtue;
Elate with fearless spirit; firm; resolv'd;
By fortune unsubdu'd; unaw'd by power.

How raptur'd fancy burns, while warm in thought
I trace the pictur'd landscape; while I kiss
With pilgrim lips devout, the sacred soil
Stain'd with the blood of heroes. CYRNUS, hail!
Hail to thy rocky, deep indented shores,
And pointed cliffs, which hear the chafing deep
Incessant foaming round their shaggy sides.
Hail to thy winding bays, thy shelt'ring ports

And

And ample harbours, which inviting stretch
Their hospitable arms to every sail :
Thy numerous streams, that bursting from the cliffs
Down the steep channel'd rock impetuous pour
With grateful murmur : on the fearful edge
Of the rude precipice, thy hamlets brown
And straw-roof'd cots, which from the level vale
Scarce seen, amongst the craggy hanging cliffs
Seem like an eagle's nest aerial built.
Thy swelling mountains, brown with solemn shade
Of various trees, that wave their giant arms
O'er the rough sons of freedom ; lofty pines,
And hardy fir, and ilex ever green,
And spreading chesnut, with each humbler plant,
And shrub of fragrant leaf, that cloathes their sides
With living verdure ; whence the clust'ring bee
Extracts her golden dews : the shining box,
And sweet-leav'd myrtle, aromatic thyme,

The prickly juniper, and the green leaf
Which feeds the spinning worm ; while glowing bright
Beneath the various foliage, wildly spreads
The arbutus, and rears his scarlet fruit
Luxuriant, mantling o'er the craggy steeps ;
And thy own native laurel crowns the scene.
Hail to thy savage forests, awful, deep :
Thy tangled thickets, and thy crowded woods,
The haunt of herds untam'd ; which fullen bound
From rock to rock with fierce unfocial air,
And wilder gaze, as conscious of the power
That loves to reign amid the lonely scenes
Of unbroke nature : precipices huge,
And tumbling torrents ; trackless desarts, plains
Fenc'd in with guardian rocks, whose quarries teem
With shining steel, that to the cultur'd fields
And sunny hills which wave with bearded grain
Defends their homely produce. LIBERTY,

The

The mountain Goddess, loves to range at large
Amid such scenes, and on the iron foil
Prints her majestic step. For these she scorns
The green enamel'd vales, the velvet lap
Of smooth savannahs, where the pillow'd head
Of luxury repofes ; balmy gales,
And bowers that breathe of blifs. For these, when first
This isle emerging like a beauteous gem
From the dark bosom of the Tyrrhene main
Rear'd its fair front, she mark'd it for her own,
And with her spirit warm'd. Her genuine sons,
A broken remnant, from the generous stock
Of ancient Greece, from Sparta's sad remains,
True to their high descent, preserv'd unquench'd
The sacred fire thro' many a barbarous age :
Whom, nor the iron rod of cruel Carthage,
Nor the dread sceptre of imperial Rome,
Nor bloody Goth, nor grisly Saracen,

Nor

Nor the long galling yoke of proud Liguria,
Could crush into subjection. Still unquell'd
They rose superior, bursting from their chains,
And claim'd man's dearest birthright, LIBERTY:
And long, thro' many a hard unequal strife
Maintain'd the glorious conflict; long withstood
With single arm, the whole collected force
Of haughty Genoa, and ambitious Gaul.
And shall withstand it, trust the faithful Muse!
It is not in the force of mortal arm,
Scarcely in fate, to bind the struggling soul
That gall'd by wanton power, indignant swells
Against oppression; breathing great revenge,
Careless of life, determin'd to be free.
And fav'ring heaven approves: for see the Man,
Born to exalt his own, and give mankind
A glimpse of higher natures: just, as great;
The soul of council, and the nerve of war;

Of

Of high unshaken spirit, temper'd sweet
With soft urbanity, and polish'd grace,
And attic wit, and gay unstudied smiles :
Whom heaven in some propitious hour endow'd
With every purer virtue : gave him all
That lifts the hero, or adorns the man.
Gave him the eye sublime ; the searching glance
Keen, scanning deep, that smites the guilty soul
As with a beam from heaven ; on his brow
Serene, and spacious front, set the broad seal
Of dignity and rule ; then smil'd benign
On this fair pattern of a God below,
High wrought, and breath'd into his swelling breast
The large ambitious wish to save his country.
Oh beauteous title to immortal fame !
The man devoted to the public, stands
In the bright records of superior worth
A step below the skies : if he succeed,

The first fair lot which earth affords, is his ;
And if he falls, he falls above a throne.
When such their leader, can the brave despair ?
Freedom the cause, and PAOLI the chief !
Success to your fair hopes ! a British Muse,
Tho' weak and powerless, lifts her fervent voice,
And breathes a prayer for your success. Oh could
She scatter blessings as the morn sheds dews,
To drop upon your heads ! but patient hope
Must wait th' appointed hour ; secure of this,
That never with the indolent and weak
Will freedom deign to dwell ; she must be seiz'd
By that bold arm that wrestles for the blessing :
'Tis heaven's best gift, and must be bought with blood.
When the storm thickens, when the combat burns,
And pain and death in every horrid shape
That can appall the feeble, prowl around,
Then virtue triumphs ; then her tow'ring form

Dilates

Dilates with kindling majesty ; her mien
Breaths a diviner spirit, and enlarg'd
Each spreading feature, with an ampler port
And bolder tone, exulting, rides the storm,
And joys amidst the tempest. Then she reaps
Her golden harvest ; fruits of nobler growth
And higher relish than meridian suns
Can ever ripen ; fair, heroic deeds,
And godlike action. 'Tis not meats, and drinks,
And balmy airs, and vernal suns, and showers
That feed and ripen minds ; 'tis toil and danger ;
And wrestling with the stubborn gripe of fate ;
And war, and sharp distress, and paths obscure
And dubious. The bold swimmer joys not so
To feel the proud waves under him, and beat
With strong repelling arm the billowy surge ;
The generous courser does not so exult
To toss his floating mane against the wind,

And

And neigh amidst the thunder of the war,
As virtue to oppose her swelling breast
Like a firm shield against the darts of fate.
And when her sons in that rough school have learn'd
To smile at danger, then the hand that rais'd
Shall hush the storm, and lead the shining train
Of peaceful years in bright procession on.
Then shall the shepherd's pipe, the muse's lyre,
On CYRNU'S shores be heard : her grateful sons
With loud acclaim and hymns of cordial praise
Shall hail their high deliverers ; every name
To virtue dear be from oblivion snatch'd,
And plac'd among the stars : but chiefly thine,
Thine, PAOLI, with sweetest sound shall dwell
On their applauding lips ; thy sacred name,
Endear'd to long posterity, some Muse,
More worthy of the theme, shall consecrate
To after-ages, and applauding worlds
Shall bless the godlike man who sav'd his country.

So vainly wish'd, so fondly hop'd the Muse :
Too fondly hop'd. The iron fates prevail,
And CYRNUS is no more. Her generous sons,
Less vanquish'd than o'erwhelm'd, by numbers crush'd,
Admir'd, unaided fell. So strives the moon
In dubious battle with the gathering clouds,
And strikes a splendour thro' them ; till at length
Storms roll'd on storms involve the face of heaven
And quench her struggling fires. Forgive the zeal
That, too presumptuous, whisper'd better things
And read the book of destiny amiss.
Not with the purple colouring of success
Is virtue best adorn'd : th' attempt is praise.
There yet remains a freedom, nobler far
Than kings or senates can destroy or give ;
Beyond the proud oppressor's cruel grasp
Seated secure ; uninjur'd ; undestroy'd ;
Worthy of Gods : The freedom of the mind.

The