

THE LIFE

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The strife is o'er ; the deed is done :  
 The Persian warrior's race is run ;  
 His sword is broken, and he lies  
 In death, still gazing on the skies ;  
 While o'er the dying and the dead,  
 In sullen mockery is spread,  
 The banner of the fierce Afghan,—  
 And thou art fallen, Ispahan !”

About the same time appeared the following :

### A VISION OF GREECE.

CALM twilight o'er the Grecian isles  
 Has thrown her veil of sombre gray ;  
 The dying sunset's farewell smiles  
 In golden pomp have passed away.

No sounds the solemn silence wake  
 Save ocean's deep and distant roar,  
 As his chafed billows dash and break  
 In sullen murmurs on the shore.

But as that dull and dream-like song  
 Subsides in momentary rest,  
 A strain of music creeps along,  
 As from the islands of the blest.

Whence flow the sounds ? It is a lyre—  
 And swept by none but Grecian hand ;  
 In mingled tones of vengeful ire  
 And sorrow for his native land.

As he pursues a theme so dear,  
 Hark ! how the ancient cliffs prolong,  
 With all their echoes far and near,  
 The burden of the minstrel's song.

“Is this the land,” he faintly sighs,  
 “Where glory reared his crest of old,  
 And freedom to the cloudless skies  
 Her crimsoned flag in wrath unrolled ?”

“Is this the land,” he fiercely asks,  
 As memory goads him with her sting,  
 “This land where bondsmen ply their tasks  
 And kneel before an alien king ?”

“Is this the land where Xerxes fled  
 Alone, unarmed and in dismay?  
 Is this the noble Spartan’s bed?  
 Can this be proud Thermopylæ?”

As the last echo dies away,  
 A hollow voice responds to his—  
 “Can this be proud Thermopylæ?”  
 The answer comes—“It is, It is!”

And see! above the hallowed tomb,  
 Where sleeps the Spartan and his men,  
 Their ghosts seem mustering in the gloom,  
 And rallying for the fight again.

Behold! behold! the grisly band  
 Have seized upon their ancient pass;  
 Before them stalks in stern command,  
 The spirit of Leonidas.

One shout—one shout of ancient days,  
 And all is silent as before;  
 While from the cliffs a sudden blaze  
 Its blood-red light begins to pour.

Enough, enough, they work their will;  
 No sooner is the signal given,  
 Than from the crest of every hill  
 An answering beacon flames to Heaven.

But what portentous sound is this,  
 Which rises with the rising dawn?  
 Half-stifled shouts from Salamis,  
 And cries of war from Marathon.

The spell is broken! Arm for fight!  
 Vengeance is sure, for God is just!  
 Greece has arisen in her might,  
 And spurned her fetters to the dust.

Again, again, from every height,  
 The war-cry sends its dread alarms;  
 Again the sun’s returning light,  
 Sees renovated Greece in arms.

She invokes no more the fabled powers,  
 Whom erst her magic minstrels sung;

But to the wind from all her towers,  
The banner of the Cross is flung.

No more the heathen anthem rings,  
To Mars from her embattled posts;  
Her sovereign is the King of kings,  
Her patron is the Lord of Hosts.

See land and ocean, tower and mast,  
Teeming with countless throngs of men!  
The dream of servitude is past,  
And Greece is now herself again.

The constellation of poets that about this time continued to fix the attention of the world and dazzle the eyes of the critics, could hardly fail to be an object of considerable attraction to the author of these verses. As canto after canto, book after book came out, they were eagerly read by Mr. Alexander, as well as by his two older brothers. None of the gifted writers whose productions swarmed during this period and filled so much of the labours of Mr. Jeffrey and his coadjutors in the Edinburgh Review, seems to have exerted a more decided impression on the style of Mr. Alexander than those of Lord Byron. The American student was richly qualified to appreciate intellectual excellence of this sort, and his quick soul must have kindled under the inspiration. The correspondence, therefore, can hardly be altogether accidental between the stirring numbers of "the Childe" and the nervous diction and peculiarly sonorous rhythm of every scrap of verse that fell from that young scholar. And yet the poetry of Addison Alexander is as original and *sui generis* as his prose. Some of the very themes\* on which Byron loved to write were also favourites of Mr. Alexander's. Much of this was doubtless due to a partial similarity of tastes, and perhaps

\* To say nothing of such familiar pieces as "The Isles of Greece," I need only point to the LXXIII. stanza of the second canto of Childe Harold, and the spirited translation of the Greek war song Δεύτε παῖδες τῶν Ἑλλήνων of Riga, "Sons of the Greeks, arise." Both of the last named contain like allusions to Leonidas and Thermopylæ. The stanzas given in the text will not suffer in comparison with this animated lyric.

