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# The Women of Sparta

J. G. Deupree

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**The Women of Sparta.**

Messrs. Editors: Looking over the miscellaneous books, magazines &c. that fill the shelves and tables of the "SOLDIERS' LIBRARY AND READING ROOM" on Conception street, I met with the following lines. Do they not breathe the very spirit of the Southern mother, wife, sister? Have they not proved themselves worthy of the synonym of Sparta? Who can doubt from experience of the past, that Southern women are prepared to exhibit the like sacrifice, for their "loved homes in the South," and testify to the world that when these homes are "trampled from the earth," Southern "women can die and be free?" I annex the historical extracts which forms the basis of the lines—please give them an insertion in your paper. M.

"Pyrrhus next advanced against the city. He was resolved to send the women into Crete, but they remonstrated against it; and the Queen Archidamia, being appointed to speak for the rest, went into the Council-hall with a sword in her hand, and said they did their wives great wrong if they thought them so faint-hearted as to live after Sparta was destroyed."

The chiefs were met in the Council-hall,  
Their words were sad and few;  
They were ready to fight and ready to fall,  
As the sons of heroes do;  
And moored in the harbor of Gythium lay  
The last of the Spartan fleet,  
That should bear the Spartan women away  
To the sunny shores of Crete.

Their hearts went back to the days of old;  
They thought of the world wide shock,  
When the Persian host like an ocean rolled  
To the foot of the Grecian rock;  
And they turned their faces, eager and pale,  
To the rising roar in the street,  
As if the clank of the Spartan mail  
Were the tramp of the conqueror's feet.

Thus Archidamia, Spartan Queen,  
Brave as her father's steel;  
She stood, like the silence that comes between  
The dash and the thunder peal;  
She looked in the eyes of the startled crowd;  
Calfly she gazed around;  
Her voice was neither low, nor loud,  
But strong like the sword on the ground.

"Spartans," she said—and her woman's face  
Flashed out both pride and shame—  
"I ask by the memory of your race,  
Are ye worthy of the name?  
Ye have bidden us seek new hearths and graves  
Beyond the reach of the foe,  
And now by the dash of the blue sea waves  
We swear we will not go.

"Is the name of Pyrrhus to blanch your cheeks?  
Shall he burn and kill and destroy?  
Are ye not sons of the deathless Greeks  
Who fired the gates of Troy?  
What though his feet have scathless stood  
In the rush of the Punic scam?  
Though his sword be red to its hilt with the blood  
That beat at the heart of Rome?

"Brothers and Sons! we have reared you men;  
Our walls are the ocean swell;  
Our winds blow keen down the rocky glen  
Where the staunch Three Hundred fell.  
Our hearts are drenched in the wild sea flow,  
In the light of the hills and the sky;  
And the Spartan women, if need be so,  
Will teach the men to die.

"We are brave men's mothers, and brave men's wives;  
We are ready to do and dare;  
We are ready to man your walls with our lives,  
And string your bows with our hair.  
Let the young and brave lie down to night,  
And dream of the brave old dead,  
Their broad shields bright for to-morrow's fight,  
Their swords beneath their head.

"Our breasts are better than bolts and bars;  
We neither wail nor weep;  
We will light our torches at the stars,  
And work while our warriors sleep.  
We held not the iron in our blood  
Viler than stranger's gold;  
The memory of our motherhood  
Is not to be bought and sold.

"Shame to the traitor heart that springs  
To the faint soil arms of peace,  
If the Roman eagle shook his wings  
At the very gates of Greece.  
Ask not the mothers who gave you birth  
To bid you turn and flee;  
When Sparta is trampled from the earth  
Her women can die, and be free."

Handwritten numbers and scribbles on the right side of the page, including:

- 278,3690
- 141,0992
- 13,22108
- 1,410
- 13,22108
- 30/1,88874
- 13,22108
- 12,2099988
- 90
- 349,998

Handwritten numbers and scribbles at the bottom left of the page, including:

- 30/1,88874
- 7x24