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HOMER AND THE ILIAD

BY

JOHN STUART BLACKIE, F.R.S.E.

PROFESSOR OF GREEK IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

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THE ILIAD IN ENGLISH VERSE

BOOKS XIII-XXIV.

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BOOK XIII.

ARGUMENT.

Neptune, in pity to the Greeks, despises

The Thunderer's ban, and mingles in the fray ;

Strong by such aid the Cretan captain rises,

And wears the bloody honours of the day.

Ajax well-armed the fateful moment prizes,

And from the ships drives Trojan brands away.

But Hector stands ; far spreads the blazing battle ;

Swords gleam, spears flash, shields clash, and helmets rattle.



BOOK XIII.

Thus to the galleys of the Greeks Jove helped the foe ; but then
The tug and toil of weary war to Hector and his men
The Thunderer left, and from the fight his radiant eyne withdrew,
And the horse-rearing Thracians' land with far-sent glance he
knew,

And the close-fighting Mysians, and the Hippomolgian crew,
On mare's milk fed, and the Abian race, of all the tribes of men
Justest ; on these he looked, but far from Troy withheld his ken ;
For none of the Immortals (thus he deemed) to mortal man,
Trojan or Greek, would succour bring, spurning the Thunderer's ban.

But not the strong earth-shaking god like a blind watchman
stood;

10

He with far-sweeping look surveyed the battle and the blood,
High seated on the topmost peak of woody Samothrace ;
Thence lofty Ida filled his view, and all the famous place,
Where rose the Greek masts, and the towers of Priam's lordly race ;
There stood Poseidon, and beheld the sore-pressed Grecian clan,
With pitiful ruth ; his heart abhorred the Thunderer's partial plan.

Down from his craggy throne straightway the strong sea-regent came
Striding apace ; the forest shook ; the mountain's stable frame
Trembled beneath the immortal feet of the wave-upcurling god.
Three strides he made, and when again the strong Poseidon
strode,

20

His foot touched Ægæ ; there his famous palace-hall had he,
Golden and lincnt, deathless-piled in the pools of the azure sea.
Then to his car of brazen-footed steeds the force divine
He yoked, the steeds with golden manes who sweep the sparkling
brine,

And donned his golden-glittering mail, and in his hand the good
And golden lash he seized, and high upon his car he stood ;
Then skimmed the wave, while round him the huge-floating scaly
brood

Rose gambolling from the depths serene, for well their lord they
knew.

The glad sea parted where he passed ; the steeds so lightly flew,
That not the brazen axle with the dew of the briny spray
Was sprent. Him thus his coursers bore across the watery way.

30

In the deep-bosomed briny pool a cave both wide and high,
Half-way 'twixt Tenedos and Imbros' craggy isle doth lie ;
Here the strong sea-god loosed his steeds, and, kindly to restore
them,
From the long journey's toil, he spread ambrosial food before them ;

Then round their feet the careful god did cast a golden chain,
With gyves no hand might break or loose, that there they might
remain

Till his return ; then hied himself away to the Trojan plain.

Meanwhile the Trojans, fierce as flame, or the gusty-sweeping
storm,

Pour in dark swarms where Hector leads with warlike fury warm,
Far-shouting ; for full soon they hoped to fire the ships, and free ⁴⁰
Troy from her foes, and slay the Greeks beside the sounding sea.
But the strong god, whose might engirds the earth with billowy
bound,

Spurred on the Argives ; forth he leapt from his briny home profound,
In form like Calchas, and with Calchas' voice strong-throated stirred
The Ajax pair ; with willing ear they caught his wingèd word :
Stout hero pair ! the hope of Greece this day doth lie with you,
Be the red fight your soul's delight, bid chilly fear adieu !
Elsewhere o'er all the field I nothing fear the forceful hands
Of the Trojan men, who leapt our wall, with their stormy-driving
bands,

50

For well I know the Achæans strong to stem the swelling foe ;
Here only my fair hope is dimmed with clouds of coming woe,
Even here where Hector leads, and all his madded strength doth
gather,

Hector, who burns like fire, and boasts Almighty Jove his father.

But you, I pray some friendly god this day may make you strong,
To stand yourselves, and teach your men to face the Trojan
throng.

Thus shall ye cool this madman's rage, and save the ships from
harm,

Though Jove high-throned in Hector's help should lift his
thundering arm.

He spoke; and with his weighty mace the strong earth-shaking god
Smote both the heroes; both received quick virtue from his rod.⁶⁰
Their souls he filled with force divine, with lightsome strength
their limbs.

Then as a strong-winged hawk sublime in airy circles swims,
That from a steep black rock hath stooped, and now with easy
strain

Poises his wing, to chase the bird that flutters o'er the plain;
So from their sight the earth-embracing strong Poseidon flew.

Him first the nimble-footed Ajax, son of Oileus knew,

And to the Telamonian straight this wingèd word he threw:

Ajax, one of the mighty gods who in Olympus dwell,

Masked like the prophet hath been here; I know good Calchas
well;

This was not he; though with like voice our thrilling ear he
stirred,

70

The gait, the stature were not his, who notes the bodeful bird.

I marked him well, as hence he flew ; a faithful eye discerns
The gods through every mask, and now the breast within me
burns,

All eager for the fray ; I feel the finely-sharpened mettle,
My limbs leap up with suppleness, my arms strike out for battle.

To whom the Telamonian thus flung back the wingèd word :
Even so, the spear-shaft in my hand with fervid force is stirred,
And proves her point for fight ; my soul with ardour overbrims,
And all the suppleness of chase lives in my lightsome limbs.
No friend I ask to share the task ; but if that son of Priam
Against my might alone will fight, alone will I defy him. 80

Thus they with stout heroic words did whet each other's mettle,
So hot within their hearts the god had fired the lust of battle.
Meanwhile the strong Poseidon roused the Greeks, who in the
rear

Beside the ships had respite sought, their drooping hearts to cheer.
Their knitted strength was loosed ; with languid limbs they idly
stood,

Sharp sorrow pierced their dear hearts through, and woful was
their mood,

When they saw the foes who o'er the wall with insolent daring
leapt ;

On them they looked, and from their eyes the flooding stream they
wept,

Deeming death nigh. But the strong god who rules the wine-dark
main,

Riding from rank to rank, restored their drooping hearts again. 90

To Teucer first he spoke ; then roused the willing Leïtus,

Thoas, and noble Peneleus, and brave Deïporus,

Meriones, and Antilochus, strong counsellors of fear ;

To these he spoke the wingèd word, and raised their fallen cheer :

Shame on you, Argives ! Shall my hope be shorn of fair fruition,

My hope in you, that you should save our ships from sheer perdition?

But if ye slack, and turn your back, and shun grim war's annoy,

The sun that rose to-day shall set on Greece enslaved to Troy.

Truly a woful wonder now with bitter eyne I see,

Portentous, more than I believed on earth might hap to be. 100

Even at our ships the Trojans stand, the unwarlike multitude,

That fled in fear, like hunted deer far through the trackless wood,

Whom pards and jackals do devour, and wild wolves make their
prey,

A pithless race, who turn their face from threatful foe's display ;

Even thus the Trojans, whom I knew, from the Achaean band,

Faint-hearted fled ; like hinds before the hounds they might not
stand ;

But now they leave their walls, and force their passage to the
ships,

For why ? Your king lets passion burst the barrier of his lips,

And when he fumes the people fret, and turn their backs and flee,
And down are mowed in heaps beside the sleepless-sounding
sea.

110

But if much blame lies with his name whose sceptre's lordly might
Rules over Argos and the isles, for that he did despite
To Peleus' son, the swift of foot, not therefore we should slack
Our blows, but with more valorous charge should drive the foeman
back.

Mend we our manners ; with the wise a fault is lightly mended.
Of all the Greeks that tread the field in martial glory splendid
The best are ye ; a common loon, if he should bate his speed,
I would not chide ; but your defeat doth make me sad indeed.
O ye soft-hearted ! blot more foul shall stain the fair Greek fame,¹²⁰
When ye show slackness ; to your hearts take bitter-biting blame
Against yourselves ! 'tis now no time for weak resolves and tame :
The strong-voiced Hector at the ships leads on the raging war,
Leaps o'er the ditch, batters the gates, and breaks through bolt and
bar.

Thus the sea-regent with brave words roused the Greek men ;
and they,
Gathering around the Ajax pair, in steady firm array
Stood massed ; such well-compacted files not Mars himself might
blame,
Nor Jove's host-driving daughter. For the best of Grecian name

Against the godlike Hector now maintain the rallied field
With bristling lance on lance, and rounded shield o'erlapping
shield ;

130

Buckler on buckler dashed, and casque on casque, and man on man,
And shining knobs and streaming crests from swarming rear to
van,

Touch as they nod ; so closely packed stood all that firm array.
And long spear-shafts crossed eagerly, as they shook to the forward
sway

Of thronging hands ; and each brave heart stood panting for the
fray.

But now the Trojan masses poured, where Hector led them on,
Impetuous. Even as from a hill when rolls a huge round stone, ‘
Which from the craggy brow the torrent shook into the vale,
Splitting the mountain's jointed frame with the might of its watery
flail ;

Rolls the huge rock, and leaps and bounds, and bounds and leaps
again,

140

At every shock the wood resounds ; it springs and springs amain,
And smokes along, and hurries down, and thunders to the plain ;
There halts : thus Hector stormed along, and weened his course
was free

From Troy, o'er Danaan ditch and dyke, to the ships that plough
the sea.

But, when he reached the rallied ranks, his fury found a bar,
With all his strain he might not break their steady lines of war ;
With their keen blades and tway-mouthed spears they pricked the
hero so,
And pushed so hard that even Hector's might must backward
go.

He stood and lifted high his voice, and cried with mighty strain :
Trojans and Lyeians, and ye brave close-fighting Dardan men, ¹⁵⁰
Stand ! The Achæans I, even I, will push into the sea !
Though like a tower they rise with power, they 'll turn their backs
and flee.

This lance shall pierce them ; if indeed the god of mightiest sway,
Even Herè's lofty-pealing lord, hath stirred my soul to-day.

He spake ; and in the soul of each he roused the martial might ;
Forth then outstept Deïphobus, a stout high-hearted wight,
King Priam's son. He in his hand held a well-rounded shield,
And 'neath the shelter of its disk traversed the bloody field
With light and dexterous step. Him Merion marked, nor aiming
wide

With his good spear, he fixed it in his buckler's stiff ox-hide ; ¹⁶⁰
But vainly ; for the quivering shaft broke at the head in two.
Deïphobus started at the shock, and from his body threw
The cumbered shield ; for much he feared the warlike hero's spear.
Then back stept Merion to the ranks of his trusty comrades dear,

Sore-vexed in heart, both for the hope of golden victory flown,
And for the spear—a goodly shaft—that he had vainly thrown.
Back to the camp, and to the swift sea-furrowing ships he went,
To fetch a fresh strong-shafted spear from his own well-furnished
tent.

The rest fought on, and with the battle's din the air was rent.
First Telamonian Teucer brought stout Imbrius to the ground, 170
The son of Mentor, for his breed of horses far-renowned ;
He for his wife had Medecaste, Priam's bastard daughter,
And at Pedæus dwelt with her, before the Ægean water
Was ploughed by Argive keels. Now back to Troy the hero
came,

And fought against the Greeks, amid the first of Trojan name.
Him as his own sons Priam loved, and honoured him the same.
But Teucer slew him ; 'neath the ear he drave his lance so well
(Then drew it out), that reeling back he like an ash-tree fell,
Which on a mountain-top far seen did to the clouds aspire,
But the sharp axe came, and now its tender leafage drags the
mire. 180

He fell ; and in the dust was dashed his glittering gay attire.
Him to despoil did Telamon's son with hasty foot advance,
Whom Hector saw, and aimed at him his long far-shadowed lance ;
But Teucer nimbly turned aside, and marred his fatal aim,
And Cteatus' son received the dart, and gained a bitter fame,

By Hector slain, whose sturdy spear then proudly overbore him ;
With a hollow sound he smote the ground, and his armour rattled
o'er him.

Then Hector to the foremost line with eager hurry darted,
To take the helmet from the head of Cteatus' son high-hearted.
This Ajax marked, and flung his brazen-pointed spear at Hector, ¹⁹⁰
But might not pierce him, for the burnished brass was his
protector,

Casing him round with strength. The spear transfixed his orbèd
shield

Right through the boss ; and both the dead now Priam's son must
yield.

Then the Achæans drew their breathless comrades from the field.

Thy corpse, O son of Cteatus, divine Menestheus drew,
And Stichius both Athenian chiefs, back to the Grecian crew ;

The Ajax pair drew Imbrius, whom godlike Teucer slew.

As when two lions snatch a goat from dogs with cutting teeth,

And to their den they bear it, the thick bushes break beneath,

As in their savage jaws they lift the gory-gouted prey ;

200

Thus lifted high, the Ajax pair bore Imbrius away,

And spoiled his arms ; Oileus' son severed the Trojan's head,

(Such sorrow in his heart the death of Cteatus' son had bred,)

Then, like a ball, athwart the field he rolled it, till before

The godlike Hector's feet it fell, all soiled with dust and gore.

Now in Poseidon's heart, I ween, the bitter gall 'gan flow,
For that his grandson dear was slain by the spear of the Trojan
foe.

Then to the dark-hulled hollow ships the strong sea-regent fares,
And rouses the Achæans, but for Troy much grief prepares :
And there he met Idomeneus, the spear-famed Cretan knight, 210
Fresh from a comrade whom he left sore wounded in the fight ;
For in the ham of the leg a spear had maimed his vigour quite.
The wounded man his comrade bare, and to the surgeons wise
The Cretan king gives kindly hest about his friend ; then hies
To his own tent, athirst for fight. Him the sea-god addressed,
While voice and form of Thoas did his deity invest,
Thoas, who over Pleuron ruled, and steepy Calydon,
And like a god they honoured him, Andraemon's warlike son :
Idomeneus, the Greeks erewhile sent many a threat, I trow,
'Gainst the beleaguered Trojan men ; where be those vauntings
now ? 220

To whom the king of Cretan fame thus gave the prompt reply :
Thoas, for this there lies no blame with any man, so far
As I can see, or know ; full well we ken the craft of war.
No craven fear hath seized our hearts ; no Cretan soldier dreameth
To seek a cover from sore darts ; but truly thus it seemeth,
Almighty Jove, who rules the war, in his heart this plan doth cherish,
That all the Greeks, from Argos far, inglorious here shall perish.

But, Thoas, thou wert never wont on foes to turn thy back,
Thy spur was ever in their ribs when laggard loons were slack.
Go now, and rouse them ! at thy call their sinking hearts will rise.
To whom the strong earth-shaker thus with wingèd word re-
plies :

230

Idomeneus, may never more that man return from Troy,
Who spares to-day his sweat to spend, and shrinks from war's
annoy,
But dogs and ravening birds shall rend his rotted limbs with joy !
But come and don thine armour ; thou and I will bravely do
The work that waits us ; we can help, though we are only two.
A single force makes little way ; strength from close union grows,
Making the weakest strong ; we tway can face the stoutest foes.

Thus he ; and forth to rouse the host the strong sea-regent goes.
Then to his tent the Cretan went, and in his hand took he
Tway massy spears, and donned his mail, that blazed full brilliantly.
Forth went the chief, like lightning which the thunder-loving
Jove

240

Flings with fierce-flashing hand in wrath from the glowing halls
above,
A sign to mortals ; widely flames the light of his forky flame ;
So blazed the noble Cretan's mail, as from the tent he came.
Him near the tent's door Merion met, his faithful-hearted squire,
Coming to seek a pointed spear for use of battle dire.

Whom thus the stalwart Cretan king with wingèd words addressed :
Thou son of Molus, swift of foot, of all my friends the best,
What seek'st thou here ? why hast thou left the battle's dust and
din ? 250

Say, art thou wounded ? doth a barbèd arrow fret thy skin ?
Or dost thou summon me to fight ? in sooth I need no spur ;
No soft-spread seat is my delight, but with the first I stir.

To whom the prudent Merion replied with answer free :
To fetch a fresh spear for the fight, if in thy tent there be
A spear, I came ; the lance I owned was splintered on the shield
Of that stout wight Deiphobus ; for this I left the field.

To whom with wingèd word thus spoke the brave Idomeneus :
Thou crav'st a spear ; one, ay, and twenty lances for thy use 260
Stand in the opening of my tent, in burnished bright array,
Good shafts which from stout Trojans slain I took ; for none can
say

Idomeneus is wont to skulk and lag behind the fray ;
Wherefore great store of glancing spears, and bossy shields is
mine,

And crested casques, and mailed coats that on my walls do shine.

To whom the prudent Merion thus with wingèd word replied :
I too can boast my tent and dark-hulled ship right well supplied
With Trojan arms ; but for this need the distance were too far
To fetch them. None can say that I am slack in use of war.

Sweet to my ear is charge and cheer, swords' clash, and chariots'
rattle. 270

Some copper-coated Greek may be who hath not proved my mettle ;
But thou, Idomeneus, well know'st how Merion loves the battle.

To whom from brave Idomeneus the ready answer fell :
I know thy valiance, Merion ; needs not thy tongue to tell.
If from the men who man the fleet were chosen all the best
To lie in jeopardous ambuscade, stern valour's sternest test,
Where most true courage shines, and most the craven stands con-
fessed ;

For there the coward trembling sits, his valour comes and goes,
No will hath he to rule his limbs, no steady power he knows, 280
His shifting knees embrace the ground, his heart his ribs beneath
Beats loud, forecasting death, and thou mayst hear his chattering
teeth ;

But the brave man no change doth show, no hue of fear is there,
As he waits and watches for the foe in danger's patient lair,
But his heart's prayer is forth to fare, the open fight to reach :
Ev'n in such perilous ambuscade no man did yet impeach
Brave Molus' son. And, wert thou wounded, or by spear or
arrow,

Not from thy neck or in thy back would hang the barbèd sorrow,
But in thy breast or belly, there the bitter brass would stick, 290
As thou wert rushing forward where the fight is hot and thick.

But come! why stand we prating? While, like idle girls, we
prattle,

The moment flies, and we, not wise, are truants from the battle;
Go, take the brazen-headed spear that waits thee in my tent.

He spoke; and strong as very Mars the son of Molus went;
With hasty hand he snatched the spear that in the threshold
stood,

Then went to join Idomeneus in stout high-hearted mood.

As when the man-destroying Mars to battle moveth on,
And with him marches Terror grim, his well-belovèd son,
Whom when he sees, the stoutest wight must quail, and then the
pair,

300

Harnessed for fight, from Thrace upon the Ephyri down bear,
Or haughty Phlegians, then the field no doubtful issue sways,
But with this side doth shame abide, with that eternal praise:
So Merion and Idomeneus, that goodly Cretan pair,
March to the fray, their brazen arms far gleaming as they fare.

Then to his brave companion spake the valiant Merion so:
Tell me, Deucalion's godlike son, by which way shall we go?
Shall we bring help upon the right, or on the middle line,
Or on the left? for chiefly there, if rightly I divine,
Our ranks are weak, and there the Grecian host cries out for
aid.

310

To whom the godlike Cretan leader thus replied, and said:

Thou speakest well, our middle line the Ajax pair defend,
And Teucer, best of all the Greeks, through breezy air to send
The feathered shaft, nor in close-handed battle taught to bend.
These men will give a glut of fight to the godlike son of Priam ;
Strong though he be, he'll find them made of stuff will sorely try
him ;

Though o'er the gory field he drift with rude tempestuous rattle,
Not light the task to bind their hands, when reared in burly
battle,
Not light to touch the ships with fire, where they unflinching
stand,

Unless loud-thundering Jove in ire shall fling the blazing brand. ³²⁰
Not to a mortal man, I trow, of mortal woman born,
Will Ajax yield, or any wight that feeds on well-ground corn,
Whose flesh may by a spear be pierced, or by a rock be torn !
Even with the fierce rank-breaking son of Peleus Ajax vies
In stable fight, though o'er the turf his foot less fleetly flies.
Keep we to leftward of the fray ; there we shall quickly know
If we shall glory gain this day, or glorify the foe.

He spoke ; and like fierce-swooping Mars rushed Merion to the
fray,

Where on the left Idomeneus pointed the perilous way.

But when they saw the Cretan chief, like blazing fire in night, ³³⁰
Himself and his brave comrade, both in glittering armour dight,

In eager swarms around him Greek and Trojan warrior clustered,
And the doubtful fight did wildly rage where the leftmost ships
were mustered.

As when the shrilly winds do blow, and the blackening tempest
brays,

When the summer's dust lies thick and fine on the dry and sandy
ways,

And the rude buffets of the blast thick-whirling clouds upraise ;
So raged the battle ; one wild lust each fighting man possessed,
His copper-pointed spear to thrust into the foeman's breast.

Bristled the hero-slaughtering line, where high they held in air
The long flesh-gashing pikes ; their eyne were blinded with the
glare

340

Which from the brazen helmets shone, and from the gleaming mail,
New furbished, and from sun-bright shields, where man doth man
assail

In the close-clashing fight ; full harsh were he and stout of heart,
Who could look and smile on the red turmoil, and feel no ruthless
smart !

Meanwhile the sons of Kronos, gods most excellent in might,
With diverse minds much harm devised to Greek and Trojan
wight.

Jove to the Trojans and to Priam's godlike son designed
Blithe victory's goal ; not for that he in heart was all inclined

Sheer to destroy the Greeks, nor saw with sorrow when they
smarted,

But he to Thetis glory gave, and to her son stout-hearted. 350

Poseidon for the Argives fought ; and from the hoary brine

In stealthy guise uprose, and filled their breasts with strength
divine ;

For sore their loss him grieved, and much he loathed great Jove's
design.

Both gods of one great race were sprung, and from one soil they
grew,

But Jove was elder born, and more as elder brother knew.

Wherefore the sea-god might not lend to the Achæan clan

His open aid, but paced the camp in the mask of a friendly man.

Thus in the dubious strife of war the adverse gods delight ;

Now to this side and now to that the stiff-stretched cord of fight

Straining they drew, and loosed the knees of many a stalwart
wight. 360

Then, though his locks were sprent with grey, Idomeneus was
strong

To rouse the Greeks, and spread dismay among the Dardan throng,

And slew a man, Othryoneus hight, who from Cabeus came

Fresh to the fight, whom love made keen to win a warrior's name.

The fairest daughter of the king, Cassandra hight, he sought

To be his bride ; and promised free—for dower none he brought—

To drive from Troy the Achaean host across the briny water.

King Priam smiled, and blithely pledged to him his lovely daughter ;
And now the youth would win the bride through fields of purple
slaughter.

Him with his spear Idomeneus smote, as o'er the death-sown plain³⁷⁰
High-confident he strode ; his copper coat's defence was vain ;
But through the mail the spear-head drives, and in his stomach lies ;
He fell and smote the hollow ground ; and thus the victor cries :
Othryoneus, above all men thee I will surely prize,
If thou shalt win a princely wife through fields of purple slaughter,
As thou didst boast to Priam, when he pledged his lovely daughter.
But have a brave heart ; we can promise things as good, I ween :
Atrides has a daughter fair as ever maid was seen ;
We'll ferry her o'er the salt sea's roar to be thy wedded joy,
If thou wilt lend thy hand to bend the pride of broad-wayed
Troy.

380

Come, come ! we'll make a pact beside the ships that ride the water,
Thou'lt win a richly dowered bride in Agamemnon's daughter !

Thus spoke the chief ; and by the feet he dragged the gory dead.
Then, to avenge his fallen friend, the gallant Asius sped
On foot before his car ; his horses o'er his shoulders blow
Hot breath, held by the charioteer ; while his high heart doth glow
To smite Idomeneus : but he prevents the blow, and in
He drives the brazen spear-point right beneath the Trojan's chin,

Trenching his throat. He fell even as a sturdy oak doth fall
By axe new-sharpened, or a lofty poplar, or a tall 390
Pine-tree, whose top hath kissed the ground at the woodman's
sturdy call,

For timber to a masted ship that ploughs the watery way.
Even so before his car outstretched the gasping warrior lay,
And screamed a dying scream, and clutched the cold unkindly clay.
His startled charioteer, like one amerced of reason, stood
Vacant, nor thought to turn his steeds, and from the multitude
Of circling foes escape. Him did Antilochus assail,
And with his spear transfix'd him ; nor sufficed his brazen mail
To ward the stroke ; firm in his midmost bowels stuck the spear,
And from his well-wrought car down fell the groaning charioteer.
His steeds Antilochus, the high-souled Nestor's gallant boy 400
Drave to the ships—a joy to Greece, a grief to breezy Troy.

Then to the valiant Cretan chief Deïphobus came near,
Sore grieved for Asius' death, and hurled his brazen-pointed spear ;
But him Idomeneus foresaw with quick preventing glance,
And sheltered by his huge round shield eschewed the fatal lance,
The shield, with hides of oxen and strong copper plates ybound,
And with two handles fitted well to grasp its ample round.
Beneath this screen the hero crouched ; the spear-shaft flew
beyond,

Grazing the buckler's rim, which with a dry and crackling sound

Shook ; but not vainly flew thy dart, thou stout Deïphobus ; 410

It smote Hypsenor, people's shepherd, son of Hippasus,
In the liver 'neath the midriff, and unbraced his sinewy knees.

Then out the Trojan spoke, and flung those proud words on the
breeze :

Not unavenged lies Asius now ; though in the house he dwell
Of the strong god whose iron gates the uncounted dead compel,
He shall rejoice ; this escort brave shall go with him to hell.

Thus he ; the Argive men were grieved who heard his lofty boast,
And the warlike son of Nestor in his heart was grieved the
most.

But not by grief o'erwhelmed did he forget his comrade true,
But up he ran, and o'er the slain Hypsenor broadly threw 420
His buckler's fence. Meeisteus then, and stout Alastor drew
Their groaning comrade to the ships beside the sounding shore.

But not the less Idomeneus raged, and inly burned the more,
Either some noble Trojan slain to wrap in deathful night,
Or slain himself to save the fleet from the flame's devouring
might.

Then first Æsetes' dear-loved son he gave to bloody slaughter,
Godlike Alcathous who did wed Anchises' lovely daughter,
The eldest of his daughters she, Hippodamia hight,
Her father's pride, and in the hall her mother's prime delight, 430
Who all her young compeers outshone in grace of beauty bright,

And cunning works, and prudent thoughts ; wherefore in all broad

Troy

The foremost man this maid did win to be his wedded joy.

Him the sea-god by hand of strong Idomeneus did slay,

Glamoured his eyes, and from his limbs charmed all the nerve
away,

Powerless alike to turn and run, or stand and front the fray ;

That like a pillar, or a lofty tree with leafy crest,

Unmoved he stood, while right into the stounded hero's breast

The Cretan drove his pointed lance, that brake the brazen barrier,

Which till this hour from mortal chance had fenced the Trojan
warrior ;

440

And harshly rang the shattered mail, pierced by the pitiless dart.

He fell and smote the hollow ground ; the brass stuck in his heart,

His heart that with convulsive beat did make the strong shaft
quiver

Of the good spear ; thus mighty Mars did all his force deliver.

Eftsoons Idomeneus shouted through the fight with lusty glee :

Right bravely done ! Deïphobus, seems it not well to thee,

That for one Grecian slain, we quit the count with Trojans three ?

Loud were thy vauntings ; now approach ; the way is clear, and
prove

Thy pith in fight against my might, who draw my blood from
Jove.

Jove begot Minos, lord of Crete, the isle that rules the sea, 450
Minos begat Deucalion, a blameless man was he ;
Deucalion me begat, a king o'er many men to reign
In ample Crete ; thence with swift keels I crossed the billowy
main,

With freight of woe to thee, and all who tread the Trojan plain.

Thus he ; meanwhile Deïphobus with doubtful thought was swayed,
Whether to seek the Trojan camp, and find some friendly aid,
Or sole to stand with lance in hand and front the Achæan spear.
And as he pondered in his heart, this plan did best appear,
To seek Æneas ; him he found in the camp's utmost rear
Standing ; for evermore his heart was sore displeased with
Priam, 460

Who, valiant though he was, true valour's meed did still deny
him.

Him then Deïphobus found, and thus bespake him, standing near :
Æneas, counsellor in need, now make thy love appear,
If love thou hast, and with hot speed avenge our kinsman dear,
Aleathotis ; he, while thou wert young, reared thee in lotty hall ;
Now by Idomeneus slain he lies ; on thee his blood doth call.

He spake ; and in the hero's breast he fanned the willing fire.
Against Idomeneus he marched, burning for battle dire ;
But not the Cretan quailed, like dainty tenderling, but stood 470
In sturdy strength high confident, like a wild boar in the wood,

Which waits with firm-set foot the charge of the hunter's clattering
band,

Lord of the waste, while on his chine the bristles stiffly stand ;
His red eyes glare ; his tusks the chafed beast doth grind, and far
He keeps both hounds and hunters keen, and breathes fell breath
of war.

So stood the spear-famed Cretan king, nor bates one inch of ground
To the advancing prince ; high on the field with shrilling sound
His comrades' names he called ; Ascalaphus, and Merion,
Deïpyrus, and Aphareus, and godlike Nestor's son.

To these Idomeneus loudly called, and thus to speak began : 480

Help, comrades ! here I keep my ground alone ; there comes a man,
Æneas, swift of foot, renowned among the Trojan clan ;
Strong in the fight is he, and stands, where brave men fall, the
longest,

And blooms in lustilhood of years, when strong men are the strongest ;
If I his youth could match, as in my heart like force I carry,
Or he this day, or I should slay a doughty adversary.

Thus he ; and they with one accord for instant battle keen
Stood round their chief, and on their shoulders their broad bucklers
lean.

On the other side Æneas called his fellow-champions true :

Deïphobus and Paris, and divine Agenor knew

490

Their leader's voice ; then trooping came the common-valued crew.

Even as when sheep from pasture go, to drink the water clear,
Led by the ram; the shepherd sees and looks with blithesome
cheer,

So on the people looked the prince, and in his heart was glad
To see them trooping to his call, in weeds of war yelad.
Then round Alcathoüs Greek and Trojan joined close-handed fight
With spears long-shafted; on their breasts the burnished copper
bright,

Terribly sounded, as from van to van came whizzing on
The well-aimed spears. Above the rest two sturdy warriors shone,
Æneas and the Cretan, both with fell intent to pass

500

Into the adverse champion's breast the pitiless-piercing brass.
Æneas first with well-swung spear to strike Idomeneus tried,
But he quick saw the peril near, and deftly turned aside;
Strong was the shaft the Trojan threw, with hot desire to wound,
But vain the forceful weapon flew, and quivering in the ground
It stuck. The Gnossian hero then smote brave CEnomaus right
In midst the stomach, through the hollow of his hauberk bright;
Even to his bowels the whetted brass shore its remorseless way,
And sucked his lifeblood; down he fell, and dying clenched the
clay.

Then from the dead the Cretan knight took the good spear away;
His other arms, all burnished bright, defied the victor's power

510

To seize; for where he stood the foe rained thick the deadly shower.

And he, alas ! was light no more of limb, where need might be
To follow his own weapon, or with timely flight to flee ;
In the close fight no sturdier wight in all the host was found,
But his limbs were slow to chase the foe, or clear the yielded
ground.

At him Deïphobus aimed, as with slow pace the chief retired,
For still the Trojan's breast to him with sleepless hate was fired.
But him once more he missed ; the copper-headed lance was sent
Against Ascalaphus, son of Mars, and through his shoulders went
Mortal ; he fell, and with convulsive grasp he clutched the soil. ⁵²⁰
Nor did the strong harsh-throated Mars regard the hero's toil
When his own son lay breathless 'mid the battle's red turmoil ;
But he sat afar from the dusty war on Olympus' snowy crown,
With golden clouds high-canopied, and kept his humour down,
Barred from the fray, with all the gods who feared the Thunderer's
ban.

Then round Ascalaphus the close and cuffing fight began.
His shining casque Deïphobus seized ; but Merion's strength
awoke
Like the fierce-swooping Mars ; clean on his arm he fetched a
stroke
With weighty spear ; the hero's gripe relaxed, and on the ground
Down fell the hollow-visored helm from his hand, with tinkling
sound.

Up sprang brave Merion yet again, and like a vulture flew,
And from the arm of the Trojan back the massy spear he drew,
Then safely to the camp retired of the long-haired Grecian crew.
Polites to his brother ran, and round his wounded frame
Stretched both his arms, and bore him from the battle, till he
came

To where his swift-hoofed horses stood safe in the farthest rear,
Yoked to the well-wrought car, and reined by cunning charioteer.
Him in the car they placed, and to the broad-wayed Troy they
bore ;
And oft he groaned, while from his wound fresh welled the purple
gore.

The rest fought on ; and through the field far swelled the loud
uproar.

540

Then Aphareus, Caletor's son, knew thy impetuous might,
Æneas ; thou within his throat didst sheathe thy spear-head
bright.

Down sideward dropt his head ; his helm and buckler smote the
ground
With sharp rude clash ; and soul-dislodging death him darkly
bound.

Antilochus pierced Thoön, as he bounded o'er the plain
In fearful flight, and with his spear he ripped the mighty vein
That runs along the back with mounting pulses, till it gain

The neck and head ; this vein he shore across ; the hero fell
Down in the dust, and stretched his arms to the friends that loved
him well.

Forward Antilochus sprang, and from the dead man's shoulders
drew

550

The arms, and wary glances cast around him, to eschew
The thronging Trojans ; they in fervid swarms far-circling came,
And with their spears assayed to pierce his buckler's blazoned frame.
Vainly ; the god that rules the sea, and shakes the earth with power,
His life redeemed, and Nestor's son amid that arrowy shower
Stood with whole skin unscratched. Not he, I wis, eschewed the
foe,

But where the strife was fiercest, there he moved him to and fro ;
Nor slept his lance, but through the war his spear he brandished
high,

And marked a man, now near, now far, with quick and watchful
eye.

Him Adamas saw, as with deft foot he paced the perilous ground,⁵⁶⁰
And with his brazen-pointed spear transfix'd the middle round
Of his good shield ; but the dark-locked Poseidon, standing near,
Claimed his dear life, and with his hand lamed the swift-rushing
spear.

One half the shaft, like a fire-hardened stake, hung on the shield
Of Nestor's son ; the other half lay shattered on the field.

Back to his clan the Trojan went ; but, as he sought the rear,
Him Merion saw, and smote him with his stout long-shafted spear
In the groin beneath the navel, where the weapon of the foe
Cuts deadliest, and the sharpest pang comes with the deadly blow
To wretched men ; there Merion's spear a deadly depth did go. ⁵⁷⁰
As a strong ox doth puff and storm, which the shepherds of the hill
Bind with strong cords, and drive the infuriate beast against his
will ;

So he a moment struggled, and in agony writhed, until
The son of Molus, coming near, drew out the sharp spear-head ;
He fell, and round his eyes the veil of deathful night was spread.
Then Helenus smote Deïpyrus with a huge Thracian sword
In the temple, that the crested casque, being severed from its lord,
Falls rolling o'er the field ; and a Greek soldier quickly hies
From out the fighting ranks, and lightly bears away the prize ;
But murky Erebus its shade flings round the hero's eyes.

This Menelaus saw, and him the sight did sorely rue ; ⁵⁸⁰
Threatful his spear he brandished at the Trojan prince, who slew
The Achæan chief ; the Trojan saw, and with firm hand he drew
His ready bow ; now face to face the hostile chiefs advance,
Intent to wing the barbèd shaft, and hurl the pointed lance.
First from the Trojan flew the shaft, and came with whizzing
speed

To the king's breast ; his hollow mail turned off the fatal reed.

As on the floor of a wealthy man, when shrilly blows the breeze,
Leap lightly forth from the broad-faced van the dark-skinned
beans and pease,

Swung by the strength of the thrasher brave, who winnows them
with ease ;

590

So from the mail of Sparta's king, all-glorious in the fray,
The arrow strayed with baffled wing, and lightly glanced away.
Then the strong-voiced Atrides flung his spear against the foe,
And drove it right into his hand, where he held the polished bow ;
And through the hand into the bow the forceful brass did go.
Back to his folk went Helenus, to shun the deadly harm ;
Down hangs his hand ; the ashen spear doth sorely drag his arm.
This from his hand Agenor drew, and then the bleeding wound
With a well-twisted woollen band the high-souled hero bound,
Torn from a sling which for his need the brave attendant carried.⁶⁰⁰

Then 'gainst Atrides' might an evil fate Pisander hurried ;
Truly an ill fate spurred him on, and on a luckless day,
To tempt the Spartan monarch brave in risk of bloody fray.
Adverse they stood, and then advanced, and, when they came full
nigh,

Atrides hurled his spear, and missed ; the shaft flew idly by.

But Pisander's lance against the glorious Menelaus flew,
Right on his shield, but might not pierce the goodly buckler
through,

By its stiff plies repelled : the shaft of the arrested spear
Split at the head : the Trojan weened that victory was near.
But the Greek drew his silver-studded sword, and with a bound ⁶¹⁰
Sprang on the prince, who from beneath his buckler's goodly round
Took the well-coppered axe, whose haft was of hard olive-wood,
Long and well-polished ; and both chiefs the mortal fight renewed.
Pisander first right on the knob of the lofty horse-hair crest,
That topped the Atrides' shining casque, a weighty stroke im-
pressed :

But him Atrides cut in the brow, and in the stroke did go
To the root of the nose ; the crashing bone gave witness of the
blow,
And the slashed eyne dropped upon the ground, and soiled the
dust with blood.

Writhing he fell : upon his breast the king his heel doth plant,
And reaves his arms, and o'er his corpse thus flings the bitter
taunt :

Now from the galleys of the Greeks wing back your fearful way, ⁶²⁰
Ye over-vaulting Trojans, still insatiate of the fray !
Truly of insult and reproach ye have filled a goodly measure
Against my house, vile dogs ! nor, while ye wantoned in your
pleasure,

Recked of the lofty-thundering Jove to nurse the holy fear,
Even hospitable Jove, whose wrath shall now destroy you sheer !

Traitors ! who knew the friendly hearth, and shared the board with
me,

Then shamed the wife who crowned my life, and filched her o'er
the sea ;

And now ye press upon the fleet, and boast with fury dire,
That ye will slay the Greeks, and wrap the ships in folds of fire.
But we this day with sore affray will clip your froward wing. 630

O Jove, above all gods that be, whom praiseful bards besing
Supremely wise, from thee, even thee, these weeds of evil spring !
For thou upon this baneful brood dost look with favouring smile,
These overlusty knaves whose veins with hot offences boil,
Who hunger with insatiate maw for battle's red turmoil.
All pleasure palls ; enough of sleep and love that warmly gloweth,
Enough of lightsome dance may be, and song that sweetly
floweth ;

These things men seek, and glut their hearts with fine surcharge
of joy

Liefer than war ; but fight is still choice food for sateless Troy !

Thus he ; and of his arms he spoiled the breathless Trojan
man ; 640

Then back to the fray the hero went and fought in the dinsome
van.

Him first Harpalion met, son of the Paphlagonian king,
Pylæmenes ; he to the war beneath his father's wing

Had marched to Troy, but him no more his dear-loved country
knew.

Against Atrides' middle shield his well-aimed weapon flew,
Forceful, but not prevailed to rive his compact buckler through.
Back to his clan the baffled man retraced the perilous ground,
Now here, now there, with wary care, casting quick glances round.
Him Merion marked, and pierced him with a brazen-barbed
arrow 650

On the right hip ; its deadly way the violent brass cut thorough
Beneath the bone, and to the bladder brought the bitter sorrow.
Low on the grass he sank, and lay with prostrate-writhing form,
By his dear friends upheld, and, like a poor down-trampled worm,
Breathed out his soul, and on the ground welled forth the reeking
gore.

Him from the field the mighty-hearted Paphlagonians bore.
Into a car they lift him, and thence wend to sacred Troy
Their heavy way ; his father goes behind his dear-loved boy,
Weeping ; for stern-faced Nature knows no ransom for the dead.
This Paris saw, and sorrow through his princely heart was shed ; ⁶⁶⁰
To him Harpalion was bound by bond of friendliest ties ;
And for his death by sorrow winged the vengeful arrow flies.
There was a Greek, Euchenor, son of that soothsayer wise,
Polyides ; rich and good was he, and his Corinthian home
Had left, well weeting with what risk he crossed the salt-sea foam.

To him his sire his fate foretold, or in ancestral hall,
To pine by slow disease, or by the Trojan's spear to fall.
The praiseful youth eschewed the blame that brands inglorious
ease,

Chose the keen death, and nobly shunned the creeping slow dis-
ease ;

670

Him Paris pierced beneath the ear and jaw ; his spirit fled
Swift from his limbs, and o'er his eyne was hated darkness spread.

So like consuming fire the hungry rage of battle grew.
Meanwhile stout Hector, dear to Jove, of all this fighting knew
No whit, how leftward of the ships his brave men were mowèd
down

By the Achæans, and how soon might glorious issue crown
Their toil, whom the earth-shaking god who rules the billowy
brine,

Spurred to the fight, and to their might added his force divine.
But there he stood, where first he leapt the dyke with reckless
daring,

And broke, like storm, the well-massed ranks of the Argive men
shield-bearing.

680

There stood the ships of Ajax ; there his many-masted line
Protesilaus first had haled from out the hoary brine ;
There lowest rose the dyke, and there the hottest battle burned,
When man and horse against the dyke with plunging ruin turned.

There the Bœotians fought, and there the Ionian men long-stoled,
Locrians, Phthians, and Epean warriors lofty-souled ;
All these the rushing foe withstood, but all their might was
vain,

When Hector like a fiery flood devoured the smoking plain.
First the Athenians stood ; them led a man of noble name,
Menestheus, son of Peteus ; with him gallant Pheidias came, 650
Bias and Stichius ; Meges led the brave Epean band ;
With him stout Dracius and Amphion shared the proud command.
Podarces with unflinching foot, and Medon led the line
Of the Phthian men ; the bastard son of Oïleus, king divine,
Was Medon, Ajax' brother, but from his dear fatherland
He lived in Phylacè remote, for that with hasty hand
To Eriopis' brother he had fatal violence done
His stepmother, whom Oïleus loved. Podarces was the son
Of Iphiclus, whose sire was Phylacus. These heroes bold
Well-mailed led on the phalanx of the Phthians lofty-souled,
And, with the brave Bœotians, back the flooding battle rolled. 700
Meanwhile Oïleus' son, swift-footed Ajax, stood beside
The Telamonian tall, and there full closely did abide.
As two brown oxen o'er a field that fallow long hath lain
Stout-hearted draw the sturdy plough with equal tug and strain,
And from the roots of their curvèd horns the sweat flows down
again ;

Only the smooth yoke on their necks doth part the patient pair,
While lengthening furrows in the field their steady toil declare :
So in the fight this faithful pair of brothered warriors stood.
With the tall Telamonian many comrades stout and good
Followed, who when the hot turmoil and the toil of the sweatful
field

710

O'ercame his labouring limbs, might ease him of his ample shield.
But no brave comrades helped thy son, Oileus mighty-hearted,
For in close fight from Locrian men the warlike heart departed ;
No copper casques were theirs, with crest of horse-hair nodding
o'er them,

No ashen spears, no shelter of well-rounded shields before them ;
But only bows they knew, and of well-twisted wool the sling ;
In these they trust, with these they marched to Troy, and with
the wing

Of the far-flying shaft swift death to Trojan warriors bring.

Thus in the van the Telamonian with his comrades good,
Well cased in burnished mail, against the harnessed Hector
stood ;

720

But from behind the Locrians shot their shafts ; and from afar
The Trojans knew their force, and winced beneath the arrowy
war.

Then truly from the Grecian ships and tents in sorry plight
Back to the breezy Troy had all the Trojans spurred their flight,

Had not Polydamas spoken thus to Hector frank and free :

Hector, a cross-grained strength is thine ; good counsel pleads with
thee

In vain. Deem'st thou the power divine, that made thee top thy
brothers

In war, in wisdom gave thee strength to pluck the crown from others ?

Not so ; all gifts thou canst not claim ; the lofty-pealing Jove

Divides his grace, and scatters wide the tokens of his love.

Some ride the battle by his gift ; some rule in counsel wise, 730

Whose thought the drooping heart uplifts, whose word with healing
flies ;

And he who owns the grace not least its virtue knows to prize.

I'll speak my thoughts ; my speech thy soldier's fierceness shall
not mar.

Thou'rt hedged with danger, compassed round with the blazing
ring of war ;

Since o'er the dyke the mighty-hearted Trojans leapt with thee,

Some stand aloof, with arms displayed in vain ; the rest we see,

Some here, some there amid the ships, few by the many pressed.

Therefore step back and make firm stand, and summon all the
best. 740

That done, we will advise us well, and know without delay

Whether more fiercely mid the dark-hulled ships to stir the fray,

(If so some god give strength), or back to trace our wiser way,

While safe retreat lies open. Certes, much I fear to-morrow
May backward turn the swerving fight, and the Greeks repay with
sorrow

Our short success ; a warrior bold beside the galleys stands
Deedless, but long will not withhold his overwhelming hands.

He spoke ; well pleased was Hector with the counsel frank and
free,

Gave back the wingèd word, and thus with prompt reply spake he :⁷⁵⁰
Polydamas, keep thou here the best of those that near thee stand ;
Myself will go where most the war cries for my helping hand,
And quick return, when they from me have heard the wise command.

He spoke ; and, as a snow-clad peak flashes through sunny skies,
He through the lines of the Trojans dashed, and the ranks of their
brave allies.

The while around Polydamas, that mild man-loving wight,
The Trojans flocked who heard the voice of Hector in the fight.
But Hector for Deïphobus sought, and the might of Helenus,
Stout Adamas, and Asius, the son of Hyrtacus ;
These in the van bold Hector sought through all the gory ground ;⁷⁶⁰
And found them, but not all unscathed or free from death he found.
Some at the furthest ships, amid the hero-slaughtering strife,
By force of Argive hands on ground had poured their labouring life,
Some on the dyke had wounded been with sword, or spear, or arrow.
But one he found to leftward of the fight that worketh sorrow,

Even godlike Alexander, spouse of Helen lovely-haired,
As his men he stirred with rousing word, and fiercer strife prepared.
This man he found, and with these taunting words pursued him
there :

Ill-fated Paris, woman-mad, with form and face so fair,
Soft weaver of smooth cozening phrase ! this truly tell me, where
Hast left divine Deïphobus, and the might of Helenus, 770
Stout Adamas, and Asius, the son of Hyrtæus,
And brave Othryoneus ?—now the high-towered pride is toppling
o'er thee

Of wind-swept Troy ; now deep remeidless ruin yawns before thee.

To whom with ready word replied the godlike Alexander :
Hector, thou ratest bravely ; but from truth thy blame doth wander.
Times were when Paris might not stand with blushless cheek be-
fore thee ;

But now—for not unmanly quite my queenly mother bore me—
We from what time beside the ships sounded thy battle-cry,
Unwearied fight ; and for the friends thou namest lovingly,
The most are slain, and in their blood their breathless bodies lie. 780
Only Deïphobus, and the might of Helenus, saved from death,
Have left the battle, bearing in their hands unsightly seath
From the long-shafted lances ; their good lives great Jove did
spare.

Go now, and lead the way, and do what Hector's heart may dare ;

We where thou ledest follow, less in need of spur than rein :
What blood we have for thee and Troy we to the dregs will drain.
More than he can achieves no man, though much he puff and strain.

Thus Paris ; and his words into his brother's heart did pass.
Then forth they went to where the fiercest-raging battle was,
Where fought Cebriones, the blameless chief Polydamas, 790
Where Phalces, Polyphetes, and Orthæos, and the three
Sons of Hippotion, Palmys, Morus, and Ascanius be,
Who but on yester morn, from thy rich glebe, Ascania, came,
Fresh food for Mars. Now Jove more fiercely fans the battle's flame.
Onward they rush like sudden winds that sweep the ruffled plain,
When thunderer Jove his bolt prepares, and brews the flooding
rain,

With force divine they lash the brine, and o'er the sounding main
The huge-heaved billows rise and roll, and with a surly roar
Toss their white crests ridge after ridge, and smite the sounding
shore.

Even so the Trojans, rank on rank, massed the proud-swelling
war, 800

While o'er the plain their fretful spears were gleaming near and
far.

Them Hector led ; like hero-slaughtering Mars he swept the field,
And fore him threw the flaming round of his huge man-sheltering
shield,

Compact with plies of strong neat-hides, and with plates of brass
ybound,

While on his head his helmet shone, and nodded terror round.

Now right, now left, the hero pushed, if haply they might yield
Beneath the weight of Hector bold, as he pressed behind his shield.
But firm the Argives stood ; in vain to break their strength he tried ;
Ajax strode out into the plain, and stoutly him defied :

Come near, thou man of might ! deem'st thou to fray with brazen
rattle

810

The Argives ! We too boast some taste of war, some craft of battle ;
And if we fled, against the scourge of Jove what wight may stand ?
Doubtless your high conceit had weened to fling the burning brand
Into our ships ; but we for them can lift the sheltering hand.

Sooner, I trow, the long-haired Greeks with fire will sheer destroy
Your towers, and captive drag the sons of the strong fair-sited Troy.
The hour is near, with routed bands when thou across the plain
Shalt drift in flight, and lift thy hands to Father Jove in vain,
To lend thy beautiful-manèd steeds the falcon's wing to bear thee
Safe o'er the dusty field ; for this, thou mighty man, prepare thee ! ⁸²⁰

Thus he ; and down from heaven straightway on the right hand
there flew

A proud-winged eagle ; joyful shouts rose from the Grecian crew
At the glad omen ; Hector saw, and thus the hero spake :
Ajax, big braggart, hasty-tongued, from me this answer take :

Would I were son and very blood of agis-bearing Jove
And from his queenly spouse enjoyed a mother's tender love,
Would that with Pallas flashing-eyed like worship I might share,
And with Apollo, who shoots far his strong shafts through the air,
So surely as this day to thee and all thy folk I bear
Perdition ! thou shalt know what fate my truthful lips rehearse,
When through thy delicate skin my sharp-mouthed spear shall
rudely pierce, 830
And suck thy life out ! When thou liest upon the sun-bleached
shore,
Vultures shall batten on thy flesh, and dogs shall lap thy gore !
He spake, and led the van ; behind a billowy shout uprose
Far-pealing, where the Trojan line of bristling battle goes ;
Nor less from lusty lungs reply the Greeks to their haughty foes.
The choicest Trojan they defy their steady strength to prove ;
And the mingled cry of the hosts mounts high to the gleaming
halls of Jove.



BOOK XIV.



ARGUMENT.

*The wounded Agamemnon counsels flight ;
But Diomed stands firm. The queen of heaven
From Venus gains the zone of dear delight,
To which all power o'er gods and men is given.
Strong Love, and Sleep with overmastering might
Bind the great god who wields the flashing levin ;
Ajax 'gainst Hector with a stone advances,
And drives him wounded from the strife of lances.*



BOOK XIV.

MEANWHILE old Nestor in the tent sat with the leech divine ;
But not to the flooding din of war, as he quaffed the purple
 wine,
Was closed the old man's ear ; and thus the wingèd word he
 spake :

Machaon, much I fear what end this ugly strife may take ;
Fierce and more fierce the war-cry swells of our lusty soldiery.
But be thou still, and sip at ease the rich wine's purple spring,
Till Hecamede with lovely locks the pure warm water bring
To bathe thy wound, and tenderly wash off the clotted gore ;
The while I go without to learn what means this wild uproar.

He spoke ; and took the sun-bright shield of godlike Thrasy-
 mede,

His own steed-taming son, who used his father's for the need. ¹⁰
Then took his copper-pointed spear, strong-shafted, beamy-bright,
And stood without the tent, and soon he saw a sorry sight ;
He saw the Greek lines broken, and the Trojan troops pursuing
The scattered host, and leaping o'er the rampart's gaping ruin.

As on the sea's far-darkling face the wave's unbroken form
Gathers, and with uneasy swell forefeels the coming storm ;
Mutely the tumid water vast is rocked with dubious sway,
Till Jove down cast the keen-set blast which racing waves obey :
Even so the old man's mind this way and that was rudely tossed, ²⁰
Whether to wend him to the ranks of the fleet-horsed Grecian host,
Or seek the son of Atreus, lord of the wide-spread Argive clan.
And, as he pondered in his mind, it seemed the wiser plan
To go to the king. Meanwhile the troops, man marshalled against
man,
Tug stiffly at the fight ; the clashing glaive gleams through the
battle,
While on the hard sore-dinted mail the tway-mouthed lances rattle.
Then Nestor met the Jove-born kings, Laertes' godlike son,
Tydides, and Atrides—wounded was each kingly one—
As from the ships they came ; for high upon the sanded shore
Of the hoar sea the ships were drawn, far from the battle's roar. ³⁰
The foremost ships close to the plain came up ; and all along
Their lofty-curved poops was raised the well-built rampart strong.
For the whole stretch of the sweeping beach was narrow to contain
The masted fleet, nor could receive the folk with mickle strain.
Wherefore with line o'erlapping line in ordered fair display
They drew them up o'er all the strand between the headlands
tway.

Them thus old Nestor met ; for they came forth with wishful fears
To learn the event of battle, halt, and leaning on their spears.

Him when the Jove-born kings beheld, their hearts were strongly
stirred, 40

And thus the wide-realmed Argive king outspake the wingèd word :
Great glory of the Greeks, thou godlike son of Neleus, say,
What seek'st thou here, and why hast left the man-destroying
fray ?

Certes I fear lest Hector now in very act shall do
The deed which once he boasted loud amid the Dardan crew,
Not sooner from the fleet to turn his conquering foot till flame
Shall fold the fleet, and ruin sheer ride o'er the Argive name.
Thus Hector spoke ; and now his vaunt receives fulfilment dire.
Woe's me ! my foes are in my camp ! my own brave Greeks
conspire

Against me ! not alone the son of Peleus hugs his ire, 50
But all now fear stout Hector's spear, and shun to front the foe.

To whom the old Gerenian horseman, Nestor, answered so :
Truly all things to ruin rush ; nor vails to stem the tide
Ev'n Jove, the lofty-pealing lord, who rules the welkin wide.
The strong defence that we had raised to guard the ships, the
mound
That should have saved our lives, lies low and levelled with the
ground :

Our men are drifted here and there ; in random knots they fight
Unmarshalled ; though thou scan the plain, and strain thy eager sight,
Thou canst not tell the place in fight of Greek or Trojan wight ;
With such hot hubbub swells the fray and mingles foe with
friend. 69

But we must counsel take to-night how this blind work may end,
If counsel now avails ; ourselves to help the Argive clan
Are naught ; small is the strength that lives in the arm of a
wounded man.

Him then the king of men addressed, and thus to speak began :
Nestor, since now close to our poops wild Mars gives flaming rein
To Troy, and Argive pith and power, and dyke and ditch are vain,
Which we had hoped might firmly stand, and Hector's force restrain,
It seems that Jove in heaven, the puissant umpire of the war,
Hath willed it so that all the Greeks shall die from Argos far 70
Inglorious ; once he looked on Greece with kindly eye benign,
But now a glory more than men may claim his will divine
Hath given to Troy ; our heart he blights, our hands from deeds
he ties.

Hear then my words, and follow well the counsel I advise.
Those ships that by the sounding sea stand in the nearest line
Let us hale down close to the brim of the salt sea's flood divine,
And moor them to their mooring-stones till sacred night descend,
If even the mirksome night shall cause our hot-spurred foes to end

Their bloody chase ; then 'neath the dark our galleys great and
small

We will hale down. No shame to flee beneath night's pitchy
pall, 89

When who remain must dung the plain, or pine in Trojan
thrall.

To whom Ulysses thus replied, the prudent Ithacan warrior :
O king, what unblest word hath leapt thy teeth's unguarded
barrier !

Faint-hearted spearmen well might wish for a captain-king faint-
hearted

To lead them back from battle ; us, since first our young blood
started

Upon life's race, Jove taught to unwind the weary yarn of battle,
Till in the silent grave shall cease sword's clash and lance's rattle.
Is it then thus that thou wilt leave unscathed the broad-wayed
Troy,

Where we nine summers long have woven the web of war's annoy ?
Rein thou thy mouth, that no fool's ear amid the Argive clan 90
May drink such word,—what none should hear from the mouth of
a valiant man,

A sceptre-bearing king, who, when he parts his lips, should say
Words sorted to the time, whose words a thousand arms obey,
As o'er the Danaans, thou, O king, dost brook far-reaching sway.

Beseems it thee behind the din of the battle's surging roar
Down to the sea to hale the well-benched galleys, that the more
The Trojans may rejoice, and find the wished-for end of all
Their toils, while ruin sheer on us and ours shall surely fall ?
For not the Greeks, I trow, will stand and fight ; but, when they
see 100

The ships launched in the billowy brine, themselves will turn and
flee :

Such ruin on the Greeks, O king, thy witless word will bring.

To whom with wingèd phrase replied the far-commanding king :
Ulysses, truly in my heart thy word hath left a sting ;
But I, believe me, from the thought was in my purpose far,
To launch the fleet, if still the Greeks desire to spur the war.
Stand forth and speak, if any Greek there be, a prudent wight,
Young man or old ; to follow him shall be the king's delight.

To whom the strong-voiced Diomede with ready answer spake :
O king, the man is here to speak, if ye will deign to take 110
My counsel, nor, for that my years not number yours, despise
My words ; for truly Tydeus was a prudent man and wise,
Whose son am I, though now beneath the Theban clay he lies.
Three sons did godlike Portheus boast, right noble was each one,
Who in the bounds of Pleuron dwelt, and steepy Calydon.
Melas and Agrios, and the third, my father's sire was he,
(Eneus, a steed-controlling knight, the best of all the three.

Ceneus at home remained, but my good sire did wandering go
To Argos ; Jove and all the gods had willed it even so. 120

The daughter of Adrastus there he wedded, and a store
Of all good things she brought : his fields a wheaten increase bore
Immense ; full many trees and herbs his well-fenced garden held,
His stalls with kine were peopled well, and all Greeks he excelled
In cast of spear. I speak the truth, and none my words may blame.
My race is good, and ye may hear my counsel without shame,
Young though I be, if but my deeds approve my father's fame.
I counsel war : our wounded arms to fling or dart or arrow
Vail not, but we can stand and speak, and pray for Priam's
sorrow, 130

While they, who boast unclipt their wings, now in the venturous van
Catching the word from their wounded kings, may end what we
began.

Thus he : and they with pleasure hear, and with good-will obey,
And to the field of strife the mightful monarch leads the way.

But not the strong earth-shaking god a blinded watchman
stood ;

He to the army came, disguised in hoar similitude
Of an old man, and by the right hand took the king of men,
And spoke the wingèd word, and freely thus addressed him then :
O son of Atreus, truly now with fierce fell-hearted joy
Achilles' heart will beat to see the foe with sharp annoy 140

Harrow the Greeks, for he in truth is shorn of reason quite.
But give him rein ; may some god maim his over-vaulting might !
But thou, the blissful gods, believe me, have not sworn thy ruin ;
Thou yet shalt see the Trojans flee, with the Greek host pursuing
Far o'er the dusty plain, and thou shalt praise my truthful lips,
When they behind the walls shall skulk, who now would fire the
ships.

Thus spake the god ; and, shouting high, swept o'er the echoing
plain.

As when nine thousand men or ten with hot high-hearted strain
Shout through the fight, when Mars with might spurs his hot steeds
amain ;

So from his breast a cry of power the god that rules the wave ¹⁵⁰
Shrilled forth ; to all the Argive band his voice firm purpose
gave

Like men to stand with heart and hand in the fight that crowns
the brave.

Then Herè golden-throned her glance into the battle threw,
Where on a crag she stood of high Olympus ; and she knew
The god, her husband's brother, and her own, as through the fight
He bustled ; and her soul was stirred with the pulse of keen
delight.

Jove too she saw, where on the highest peak the Thunderer sate
Of many-fountained Ida ; and her heart did flow with hate.

Brooding the large-eyed Herè sat, and in her deep heart wove
A scheme, to cheat the watchful mind of ægis-bearing Jove. 161

And as she pondered in her heart, this plan did best appear,
To go to Ida richly dight with beauty's dainty gear.

If Jove, belike, glamour'd by love, might long in dalliance dear
With her to lie, then she on him should cast soul-soothing sleep,
And hold his lids and bind his soul with bonds of slumber deep.
Then to a room she went, which Vulcan, her dear son, had made,
With doors well fitted to the posts, and strong locks which obeyed
A secret key which only she could turn ; here Herè came,

And as she enter'd, closed behind the door's bright-polished frame.
Then with ambrosia she washed her stately body fair ; 170

And when her skin was pure from stain, with precious unguent
rare

She did anoint her, whose ambrosial virtue filled the air
With potent balm, which, when the queen the brazen pavement
treads

Of Jove's Olympian hall, from heaven to earth far-floating spreads.
And with her hands she combed her hair, and her bright locks
braided well,

Ambrosian, fair, that from her deathless head rich-streaming fell.
Then the ambrosian stole she donned, which for the spouse of
Jove

Athenè worked, and with her hands the pictured tissue wove ;

Then clasped it fine with golden studs to her breast, and bound the
zone 189

Around her waist, which with a hundred glittering tassels shone ;
While in her ears the polished ear-rings found a seemly place,
Three-beaded, lucent, pendent from her ears with tremulous grace.
And to her head she bound the coif, of finest texture fair,
Of sunny whiteness, without spot, new-woven tissue rare.
Then to her fair white feet she bound the beauteous sandals light.
And when with garniture complete her limbs were richly dight,
She from her chamber forth did sail, and private from the rest
Sought Aphroditè, whom with wingèd word she thus addressed :
Dear daughter, wilt thou hear my prayer, and grant me one
request ? 190

Or wilt thou thrust my hope aside, and my beseechment mar,
For that I aid the Argives, thou the Trojans in the war ?

To whom with ready word replied Jove's daughter Aphroditè :
Herè, thou spouse of Father Jove, of Kronos old and mighty
Daughter revered, unfold thy wish ; unless thou wander wide
Beyond the scope of what I can, thou mayst not be denied.

To whom the large-eyed Herè thus with guileful words replied :
Give me sweet grace and strong desire, and in the charms array
me,
Wherewith thou makest deathless gods, and dying men obey
thee ;

For I go hence, even to the ends of nurturing earth, to see 200
Ocean, and mother Tethys, whence their primal pedigree
All gods derive, into whose arms my infant life was given
By Rhea, then when mighty Jove cast Kronos old from heaven,
Far down beneath the roots of earth, and the waste unfertile sea.
To them I go, their hearts from strife and ancient grudge to free.
For they these many summers dwell with sundered souls apart,
Divorced from every kindly use that warms the wedded heart.
If I by charm of soothing word might move the Ocean sire
To take his partner to his arms, and quench his moody ire,
His grateful love for evermore my friendly care shall buy. 210

To whom the smile-diffusing queen of beauty made reply :
Even so ; 'tis reason that to thee no rude denay be given,
Who sleepest in the arms of Jove, the greatest god in heaven.
She spoke ; and from her waist the curious-figured zone unbound,
Where all her subtle charms do dwell that deal the pleasing
wound ;

There love and longing dwell, the gentle word, the winning way,
That oft have stole the wit from men, the wisest in their day.
This in her hand she gave, and thus the white-armed queen
addressed :

Take now this zone, and bind it well beneath thy faithful vest ;
Here dwells my virtue ; give its spell a free unhindered sway, 220
And all thy wishes shall compel a wide and open way.

Thus she ; and large-eyed Herè smiled to find such charm her
own,

And smiling, in her bosom placed the curious-figured zone ;
Then to her shining chamber Jove's fair-smiling daughter fled.
But, from Olympus swooping, down the white-armed Herè sped,
And o'er Pieria flew, and o'er Emathia's lovely plain,
And where the horse-carreering Thracians 'neath the snowy chain
Of mountains dwell, whose topmost peaks she touched not with
her feet.

Then down from Athos to the billowy sea, with passage fleet
She came to Lemnos, where the godlike Thoas hath his seat. 230
And then she sought the home of Sleep, the brother of Death, and
took

His hand in hers, and thus her lips the wingèd words forsook :
O Sleep, thou lord of gods and men, if ever thou didst grant
Request of mine erewhile, hear now, and make to cease my want
This day ; and in my heart thy grace shall live for evermore.
When in my arms the king divine lies clasped, then do thou
pour

The fulness on his shining eyne of all thy sleepy store,
And for thy fee a chair expect right beautiful to see,
Golden, immortal, which Hephæstus' skill shall make for thee.
And when thou sittest on this chair, feasting on food divine, 240
He'll make, thy soft feet to upbear, a golden footstool fine.

To whom from soul-subduing Sleep the gentle answer came :
Daughter of Kronos, spouse of Jove, revered Olympian dame,
What one thou pleasest of the gods that live at ease for ever
My charm can lull, yea even the stream of that immortal River,
Ocean, from whom all gods that be their generation draw :
But Jove I fear ; him to invade with slumber's might strong
awe

Deters me ; only when he calls I with swift wings obey.
Well I remember when thy word did o'er my prudence sway,
What time that lusty Jovian boy, whom thou didst call thy foe, ²⁵⁰
High-hearted from the sack of Troy to Greece did homeward go,
At thy command I laid with guile the mighty Jove asleep,
Soft-stealing o'er his soul ; the whiles thou in thy heart didst
keep

Hatred against his son, and, raging o'er the gurly deep,
Didst rouse such blore of winds that he, reft of his friends, was
driven

On the well-peopled Cos. Meanwhile from rest the lord of heaven
Uprose, and cast the gods about, and sought, for vengeance, me
Above the rest, and would have plunged me in the deep dark
sea

Had not old Night redeemed me—Night, who sways both gods
and men :

To her I fled ; and awful Jove 'minished his anger then,

Fearing to grieve dread Night who flits fleet on far-shadowed wing.²⁶⁰
Thus then I fared ; and should I tempt again heaven's thundering
king ?

To whom the large-eyed gracious Herè, answering mildly, spake :
O Sleep, from thy too faithful soul these dismal memories
shake !

Deem'st thou far-seeing Kronos' son will burn with zeal for Troy,
As for his dear son he was wroth, Alcmènè's lusty boy ?
Come, do my hest ; one of the Graces for thy wedded joy
I give ; the fair Pasithea thy proper wife shall be ;
The youngest and the fairest Grace I freely give to thee.

She spoke ; the heart of Sleep was glad ; and this reply he
gave :

270

Swear me an oath, a mighty oath, by Styx' inviolate wave ;
Touch with one hand the glebe of many-nurturing Earth divine,
And with the other the salt flood of the broad far-shimmering
brine,

That all the awful gods, who dwell where Kronos dwells below,
Hearing the sacred binding word, our solemn pact may know ;
The youngest of the Graces thou shalt surely give to me,
Pasithea, for all my days my wedded wife to be.

Thus spake the god ; nor did the white-armed Herè disobey,
But swore, and all the gods she named that hold their awful
sway

In lowest Tartarus, Titans clept, powers of the primal time.
And when the oath was duly sworn, they winged their flight
sublime 280

O'er earth and sea ; Lemnos and Imbros now they leave behind,
Mantled with airy mist, and swift as the march of the sweeping wind,
To Ida, nurse of savage beasts, whence many fountains leap,
They came ; and there at Lectum first they left the sounding deep
And trod the land ; beneath their tread the topmost forest shook.
There Sleep remained, and, to deceive the Thunderer's searching
look,

Upon a pine alights, which rose from Ida's summit high,
And spread its horrid arms sublime and mingled with the sky ;
There mid the branchy coverture, and leaves that screen the light,
Like to a bird clear-throated sat the son of sacred Night, 290
A bird by gods named Chalcis, but by men Cymindis hight.
Then on the topmost Gargarus lightly stept the queenly dame ;
And cloud-compelling Jove beheld her beauty as she came,
And, as he looked, he felt strong love through all his senses shed,
Strong as when first in lusty youth they lay on genial bed,
And mingled in embrace, remote from their dear parents' ken ;
Thus Jove before her stood, and thus accosted Herè then :
Herè, what business moves thee now, and whither dost thou fare,
Without or horse or chariot swift, to bear thee through the air ?
To whom with graceful guile replied his large-eyed consort fair :³⁰⁰

I travel far, even to the ends of the nurturing earth, to see
Ocean and mother Tethys, whence their primal pedigree
All gods derive ; they in their halls did nurse my infant life ;
To them I go, to free their lives from old connubial strife ;
For they these many summers dwell with sundered souls apart,
From every kindly use divorced that warms the wedded heart.
And for my steeds, upon the extremest spur they wait for me
Of many-fountained Ida, o'er the boundless billowy sea
And the dry land to bear me. Now I come to show to thee
My purpose, lest thine anger swell, if I without thy knowing 310
Alone should roam to the distant home of Ocean's stream deep-
flowing.

To whom the cloud-compeller thus with ready answer spake :
Herè, that Ocean journey thy true-footed speed shall make
Some other day ; meanwhile love's kindly joyaunee let us take.
For never fairest goddess, or fair mortal maid, I trow,
With such control did sway my soul as thou dost sway me
now.

Not then, when erst Ixion's spouse I held in love's embrace,
Who bore Peirithoüs, in wit like to the heavenly race,
Nor when I loved the beautiful-ankled maid, Acrisius' daughter,
Mother of Perseus, far-renowned by dire Medusa's slaughter ; 320
Nor when I owned the might of famous Phoenix' daughter fair,
Mother of Minos and of Rhadamanthus, justest pair ;

Nor when Amphitryon's wife in Thebes I knew with genial joy,
From whom the might of Hercules sprang, that strong stout-hearted
boy ;

Nor when the fairest Semelè constrained me by her charms,
And the god of winy joy was born from the grasp of my flaming
arms ;

Nor when I loved Demeter with the golden-flowing hair,
Nor the renowned Latona, nor thyself so virgin fair ;
Such potent love from thee doth now my senses overbear.

To whom thus by the large-eyed queen the guileful words were
spoken :

O son of Kronos, what rash word thy fence of teeth hath broken ; ³³⁰
That thou in dalliance dear shouldst seek to lay thee down with me
On topmost Ida's shining peak, where every eye may see !
What if some god, while there we lay in soft embrace entwined,
Seeing our open loves, should bruit to all the Olympian kind
The grateful tale ! How should I then from bed of Jove uprise,
To walk in queenly state and grace before celestial eyes ?
Not so : but if thy fervent will must forthwith be obeyed,
There is a chamber, which my well-belovèd son hath made,
Hephæstus ; strong the door, and strong the door-posts ; there
with me,

If 'tis thy pleasure, love shall spread the couch that waits for
thee.

To whom the cloud-compelling Jove this ready answer made :
Herè, fear not lest man or god should with rude glance invade
Our loves, for I around our couch will spread a golden cloud,
So dense, that not even Helios' eye shall pierce its friendly
shroud,

Helios, whose ray can travel far and search each hidden place.

The Father spoke ; and seized his large-eyed spouse with strong
embrace ;

And where they lay the grass upsprang with fresh green-bladed
power ;

Lotus and crocus, and the purple hyacinthine flower

In dewy tufts their pillow made in that Olympian bower.

Even so they lay, and their soft couch with clouds was curtained
round,

350

Beautiful, golden, whence bright dews dropt on the teeming ground.

Thus high on topmost Gargarus great Jove serenely slept,

By love and sleep subdued, and in his arms his partner kept.

Meanwhile soft-soothing Sleep the airy pathway lightly trod

Down to the ships with tidings to the strong earth-shaking god :

And, standing near him, clearly thus outspake the wingèd word :

Rouse thee, Poseidon, now for Greece let all thy might be stirred !

And aid, while aid thou canst, for Jove hath sunk his mighty
head

In sleep ; myself into his soul the drowsy virtue shed,

And Herè holds his sense subdued by love's soft-mastering
might. 360

He spake ; and to the tribes of men winged his air-winnowing
flight.

But strong Poseidon burned the more to help the Argive clan,
And to the foremost lines he rushed, and thus to speak began :
O Argive men ! shall we again let Hector from our hands
Snatch victory ? and shall our fleet be food for Trojan brands ?
The vauntful Trojan feels his heart to mighty deeds aspire,
For that Achilles sits apart and hugs his fretful ire ;
But for Achilles we shall waste few tears, if all the rest
In race of war with generous haste shall nobly strain their best.
Hear ye my word ; rouse ye, and take each man from rear to van 370
The buckler bound with many hides, the largest that he can,
To screen him well ; then let his head shine with the sun-bright glance
Of the copper casque, and let his hand grasp the long-shafted lance.
Then boldly charge ; myself will lead the van ; and we shall see
Hector retreat with hasty feet, stout spearman though he be !

He spake ; him to obey forthwith each eager hero vies.
Ulysses and Tydides and the king of men despise
Their wounds, and seize the arms that best might bear the stiffest
fight, 380

Leaving the worse (a wise exchange) to suit each weaker wight
And when the bodies of the kings with shining brass were dight,

They join the fray, led by old ocean's strong earth-shaking lord,
Who wielded in his weighty hand a sharp strong-bladed sword
That flashed like lightning. When that blade the sea-god brandished, then

No mortal wight to stand assayed; fear bound the hearts of
men.

But marshalling the Trojan troops stood Priam's son divine,
Hector, who with the dark-haired god who rules the billowy
brine,

390

Now strained the strife, and to the fight led up the Trojan line.
Beside the ships and tents of the Greeks upon the sounding shore
The billows brake; the adverse hosts met with tumultuous roar;
But not the bellowing billow beats so fierce the echoing strand,
When the Borean blast the spray hath cast on the rocks that gird
the land,

Nor with such fierceness roars the fire when the flame's red wreaths
are rolled

From tree to tree, with crackling glee, of the forest dry and old;
Nor with such loudness brays the storm whose gusty scourge hath
laid

Flat on the ground with crashing sound the old oak's branchy shade;
As from the Greeks and Trojans rose the hostile ring and rattle,⁴⁰⁰
When raged the strife for death or life in the mustered ranks of
battle.

Then first by glorious Hector was a well-aimed weapon thrown
At Ajax, who before him stood, the son of Telamon.

Two thongs upon his breast were crossed ; these saved the hero's
life,

One for his shield, the other for his silver-studded knife.

Sore vexed was Hector to behold the spear hurled from his hand

Fruitless ; then back a space he moved toward the Trojan band.

Him Ajax marked ; then in his hand a mighty stone took he ;

Such stones lay many all around, beside the sounding sea, 410

Wherewith they shored the ships ; with one of these the hero
smote

Stout Hector on the breast above the shield's rim, near the
throat ;

Light as a quoit with airy whirl the huge round stone flung he.

As when beneath the bolt of Jove an old high-armed oak-tree

Falls flat ; and strong the sulphurous fume from the lightning's
blackening trace

Upsmokes, and the wayfaring man with blank-confounded face

Beholds ; for terrible is the bolt with which Jove splits the sky.

Thus Hector fell, and in the dust his helpless length doth lie ;

Starts from his hand the spear, his shield and helm come rattling
o'er him.

Loud rings his mail ; with such fell force the huge stone overbore
him. 420

With lusty shouts the Greeks rushed in, pouring a heavy rain
Of lances, in the hope to bear his body from the plain ;
But in vain they strove to reach him with the long keen-pointed
spear ;

For to defend him where he lay right valiant friends were near,
Polydamas and Æneas, and Agenor's godlike name,
Sarpedon, Lycian leader brave, and Glaucus without blame.
Trooping they came, whoever cared for Ilium, or were true
To Priam ; and around the prince their sheltering bucklers threw,
And bore him swiftly to the rear, where his fleet coursers far
From brandished blade and flying spear, behind the bristling war ⁴³⁰
Were standing, with the charioteer, and the shining well-wrought
car.

Him then to Troy they led, while many a heavy groan he gave.
But when they reached the ford of the stream with the broad-
flowing wave,

Scamander, born of Jove, who reigns immortal in the skies,
Him from the car they take, and sprinkle, where supine he lies,
Fresh fountains on his face. He breathed, and looked up with his
eyes,

And rose upon his knee, and spat from his mouth the purple gore ;
Then back fell on the ground ; and darkness as of death came
o'er

His swimming sight ; for still the stroke did grieve his spirit sore.

But when the Argives saw the godlike Hector led away, 440
They with more warlike fervour burn, and urge the prosperous fray.
And first of all Oileus' son, the nimble-footed wight,
With his keen-piercing spear transfix'd stout Satnios in the fight,
The son of Enops, whom a water-nymph to Enops bare,
On banks of Satnios, as his kine the hero pastured there.
Him Ajax marked, and hurled his whizzing missile through the
air,

And pierc'd him in the groin ; down like a humpish clod he fell,
And fiercely round his body rag'd the battle's hot pell-mell.
Then rose to wreak his comrade's death the brave Polydamas,
And pierc'd Arilycus' son, Prothenor, with the brandish'd brass 450
In the right shoulder—there infix'd the point remorseless lay.
He fell, and falling, with his fist convulsive clenched the clay.
Then thus outspoke Polydamas, and o'er the battle shouted :
Thou hast it now ! the skill of Panthus' son was never doubted
To make a spear-head find its mark ; and now some Greek may
tell

Of the rare virtue of my shaft ; that man, I know it well,
Will find my spear a trusty crutch to limp his way to hell.

He spoke ; and all the Argives heard his cruel word with grief,
But with keen ire was stirred the heart of the Telamonian chief ;
For where the hero fell, there stood the Telamonian near ; 460
And when the victor backward went, he flung his shining spear.

Deftly Polydamas turned aside, and from the instant death
Was saved ; but to Antenor's son, Archelochus, came the scath,
Avoidless ; for the gods had willed to stop his lively breath.
Him Ajax pierced where to the neck the head fits on, right under
The neatmost joint of the neck, and both the tendons shore in
sunder,

That mouth and nostrils with the stroke did kiss the dust, before
The trunk with legs and sturdy knees fell floundering in their gore.

Then Ajax to Polydamas loud o'er the battle cries :

Now tell me, brave Polydamas, and tell me true, here lies 470
A man who for Prothenor's life with his own body bleeding
May quit the score, a valiant man, and of right noble breeding.
He to Antenor, horse-subduing prince, is son or brother ;
For by his looks the man may claim true kinship with none other.

He spoke ; and all the Trojan men were stung with bitter grief.
Then Acamas pierced Promachus, the brave Bœotian chief,
And from the strong grasp of the Greek redeemed his brother
slain,

Even as he dragged him by the legs across the gory plain ;
Then o'er the din of the pelting fight cried with a mighty shout :
Unwarlike Greeks, who fling your big and vauntful words about ;
Not we alone in the crimson fray shall smart with bitter sorrow ;⁴⁸⁰
Through you shall pass the pitiless brass, and pierce your inmost
marrow.

Behold Boeotian Promachus, bound in heavy sleep, lies low
By my victorious spear, that not my brother's blood might flow
All unavenged ! this comfort hath a warrior when he falls,
His wrong shall wreak some kinsman in his own ancestral halls.

He spoke ; and sharp pain seized the Greeks to hear his boastful
word ;

But chiefly Peneleus felt his breast with wrathful sorrow stirred,
And rushed on Acamas ; but he found wise escape by flight.
Then Peneleus with well-poised lance did young Ilioneus smite,
The son of Phorbas, rich in flocks with fleeces thick and white, ⁴⁹⁰
Whom Hermes loved, and gave his sheep the yearly increase
rare ;

To him this only son his well-belovèd mother bare.
Into his eye beneath the roots the hero drove the brass,
And thrust the eyeball out ; right through the eye the spear did
pass,

Even to the nape of the neck ; he sat, and with both hands implored
The hopeless help ; the victor drew his sharp strong-bladed sword
And cut him through the neck, that head and helmet shining clear
Came ringing down, while still the point of his strong-shafted spear
Stuck in his eye ; then in his hand the gory head he took,

Like a lopt poppy, and aloud with vauntful breath he spoke : ⁵⁰⁰

Go now, ye Trojans, tell the tale to his sire and mother dear,
And let them lift the woful wail, and pour the bitter tear.

Not less I trow the wife of Promachus shall weep and wail,
When from the blood-smeared plain of Troy we spread the home
ward sail,

Nor bring her dear-loved husband back to his green Bœotian vale.

He spoke ; and mighty fear possessed each trembling Trojan knee,
And wildly looked each warrior round where hope of flight might be.

And now, ye Muses, maids that won in halls Olympian, say,
Who first of the Achæans bore the bloody spoils away,
What time the strong earth-shaking god restored the wavering
fray ?

510

First Telamonian Ajax tall the son of Gyrtias slew,
Even Hyrtius, leader of the strong stout-hearted Mysian crew ;
Antilochus then spoiled Mermerus, and laid strong Phaleis low ;
To Morys and Hippotion Merion dealt the deadly blow ;
And Teucer did stout Prothöon and Periphetes slay ;
And Agamemnon smote proud Hyperenor in the fray
Beneath the midriff ; through the bowels the cold brass ploughed
its way,
And sucked his life ; out through the gaping wound his spirit fled
With fluttering haste ; and round his eyne were rings of darkness
spread.

But the Orlean Ajax gleaned rich harvest of the dead ;
For none like power of limb with him in deadly chase could wield,
When Jove did fray the hearts of men far drifting o'er the field.

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BOOK XV.



ARGUMENT.

*From sleep awaked, Heaven's lofty-thundering rector
Draves from the fight the god that rules the brine,
And bids the Trojans' silver-bowed protector
Inspire their leader with new strength divine.
With brand in hand, led on by famous Hector,
The people rush ; the Greeks withdraw their line
Within the ships. But where the foeman rushes,
Ajax stands firm, and whom he meets he crushes.*

BOOK XV.

BUT when beyond the palisade the Trojans spurred their flight,
And o'er the ditch fled back dismayed before the Danaan might,
Beside the cars they halted, and pale fear possessed their hearts.
Meanwhile on Ida's shining crown high-thundering Jove upstarts
From where with Herè golden-throned he lay in slumber bound,
And flings his far-commanding glance o'er all the tented ground,
And sees the fleeing Trojans, and the Greeks in eager chase,
And mid the hot pursuit the Power who wields the trident mace,
And Hector stretched upon the plain ; round him his comrades
stood ;

Senseless he lay, and heavily breathed, and spat the purple blood ; ¹⁰
For truly he who smote the chief was a warrior stout and good.
Him when he saw, soft pity moved the king of gods and men,
And, with a dark disavouring look, he spake to Herè then :

Thou cross-grained dame, thy wiles were working here ! The
plot by thee

Was hatched, that maimed stout Hector's nerve, and made the
people flee.

Have thou a care, lest thou be snared in the mesh thy guile did
weave,

Not for thyself; and, when I scourge thee, thou shalt sorely grieve.
Hast thou forgot when round thy feet two heavy weights I hung,
And bound thy hands with golden chains that none might break,
then slung

Thee down from heaven, and in mid air thy hapless body swung? ²⁰
The gods to see thy plight were grieved; but none of all their
band

Might loose thee from the scapeless gripe of my unmastered hand.
Who disobeyed I seized, and from the threshold of the sky
Hurled down to earth each rebel god that dared my will defy,
Disarmed and deedless. But much more stout Hector moveth me
Than even Alcmæon's son, from toil to toil pursued by thee,
Stout Hercules, who by the force of all the windy host
With Boreas leagued, was o'er the wide unpastured billow tossed,
So plained by thee, vile queen! and on the tyrannous-driving wing
Of the black storm to peopled Cœtes the hero thou didst bring.
But him I loved, and brought him safe redeemed from Heracles
guile,

Back to horse-rearing Argos, there to rest from monstrous toil. ³⁰
This I recount, that thou mayst cease to weave the mazy wile,
Nor hope, mid entertainment sweet of limb-dissolving love,
Apart from all the gods, to cheat the sovran wit of Jove.

He spake. Through large-eyed Herè's veins a fearful chillness
ran ;

Then to her lord the queen replied, and thus to speak began :

Witness my faith broad-breasted earth, and the starry welkin wide,
And the stream which flows through the realm of woes, by whose
inviolatè tide

No blissful god who sware in heaven his awful word belied :

Witness thy head, and the dear bed which knew our early love,
That bed which Herè never named with lips untrue to Jove ;⁴⁰
Not moved by me the god who shakes the land with billowy might
Maimed godlike Hector's strength, and makes the Trojans flee from
fight ;

But his own spirit spurred him ; potent pity pricked his breast
To see them flee beside the sea by furious Hector pressed.

Yet even he, if I may bring advice to his ear divine,
Shall own thy will, dark-clouded king, nor thwart thy high design.

She spake ; and heard her with a smile the king of gods and
men,

And spake the wingèd word, and answering thus bespake her then :

Thou large-eyed Herè, gracious dame, if mid the heavenly clan
Thy will to mine were wisely tuned, nor forged a separate plan,⁵⁰
Full surely then the mighty god, that rules the billowy brine,
With drooping mace would own my nod, and bend his thought to
mine.

If then thou speakest sooth, and if thy words from guile are free,
Hence hie thee to the tribe of gods, bid Iris come to me,
And let the silver bowed Apollo hear my hest from thee !
She to the long-haired Argive band shall speed on breezy wing,
And bear this word of strict command to the earth-embracing king,
That to his home he go, and cease against my ban to bring
Help to the Greeks. Apollo then shall fan the smouldering flame
Of Hector's life, and soothe the pangs that rend his fainting frame.⁶⁰
And when they see stout Hector wield the lance with strength
renewed,

With hasty heels they'll scour the field, by his fell force pursued,
And seek for shelter near the galleys of Pelides, who
Shall rouse Patroclus, from the ships to drive the Trojan crew.
But him shall Hector kill ; yet not till many valiant men,
And mine own son, Sarpedon, he to Pluto's lightless den
Hath posted. Godlike Peleus' son shall rise in choler then.
This done, I'll help the powers of Greece to drive the Trojans
back ;

And they from fighting shall not cease, nor I to aid be slack,⁷⁰
Till Ilium fall, by wisdom lent from Pallas. Till that hour
My wrath shall burn, and every god submit shall own my power.
What to Achilles Fate provides shall be performed ; and they
In vain with bungling skill shall thwart my guidance in the fray.
My sacred word I pledged to sea-born Thetis, on what day

She clasped my knees, and I did swear with awful-sanctioning nod,
That her dear son should honour wear from heaven's high-thunder-
ing god.

He spoke ; and no delay the white-armed gracious Herè knew,
But straight from Ida to Olympus' ample hall she flew.

Swift as a thought that through the soul of a far-travelling man ⁸⁰
Shoots, when he seeks remote abodes of the scattered human clan,
And thinks, while his thought rides far and free, would I were
there, or there ;

So swift and free was Herè's flight through depths of ambient air
To high Olympus. There she found the gods assembled all
At banquet, round the ambrosial board in Jove's cerulean hall ;
Who, when they saw her, rose with cup in hand. The rest she
passed,

But on fair Themis, lovely-checked, her kindly glance she cast,
And took the offered cup ; for she to meet the goddess ran
The first, and spake the wingèd word, and thus her quest began :

Whence com'st thou, Herè ? surely Jove, the strong dark-clouded
king, 90

Hath frayed thee ; thou dost wear the look of a scared and startled
thing !

To whom from white-armed Herè's lips the ready answer fell :

Themis divine, refrain the quest ; thyself dost know full well
His haughty humour, and how harsh a heart in Jove doth dwell.

But thou the banquet rule in heaven, and temper well the cheer.
Forthwith amid the assembly of the Immortals thou shalt hear
The evil works which Jove hath planned ; and much, in sooth, I fear,
Not all the gods that drain the bowl at heaven's high festal board
Will hear with glee the stern decree of my dark-clouded lord.
Thus spake the queen, and sat her down ; and all the gods in
course 100

Muttered displeasure. Ill at ease, the spouse of Jove did force
Her lips into a smile ; but on her brow a sombre cloud
Sat cheerless ; then she speaketh thus to all the heavenly crowd :
O fools to fret at Jove's decree, soft brains, and baby wits !
Whether with suasive word we try, or dare with force, he sits
On his own throne from us apart, and walks on his own ways,
Reckless of us and our desires ; for every god, he says,
Must yield to him, when with his overmastering might he sways.
Take then, the lease that he hath lent, who deals to each his
sorrow,

To Mars already he hath sent a pang will pierce his marrow. 110
One of his sons hath died in fight, a dear-loved warrior good,
Ascalaphus, the best who boasts such lofty fatherhood.

She spoke ; and lusty-hearted Mars smote his strong sinewy thigh
With violent palm, and thus the god lamenting made reply :

Blame me not now, ye gods, that dwell in high Olympian halls,
If to avenge my son I go, whose blood upon me calls ;

If Jove for me by harsh decree hath a fiery bolt in store,
I with the dead will lay my head 'mid the battle's dust and
gore!

He spoke; and swiftly gave command to Terror and grim Fear,
To yoke his steeds; then on his limbs he drew the battle-gear ¹²⁰
Sun-bright; and now had deadly strife been raised in blissful
heaven,

When wrath should spring from the mighty king who wields the
fiery levin,

Had not Athenè left her seat to lay the growling storm,
And on the threshold of the hall planted her stately form.

Then from his head the helm, and of his shield the round enorm
She from his shoulders took, and from his heavy hand the spear,
And thus the furious-hearted god she lashed with word severe:
Madman, has passion robbed thy wits! and hast thou ears to
hear

In vain? is all discretion flown? hast thou no touch of shame?
Didst thou not hear the warning words of the white-armed gracious
dame, 130

That even now with clouded brow from the Olympian came?
Wilt thou sow harm on earth, and, when the baleful harvest grows,
Come back to heaven that all the gods may share thy cup of
woes?

Truly not thou alone shalt weep, when Jove's wrath overflows.

Trojans and Greeks may suffer loss ; from earth he'll turn his
face,

And with tempestuous turmoil toss the whole Olympian race ;
Guilty and guiltless he will whelm in sweeping dire disgrace.
Wherefore I pray thee rein thy wrath, and wisely understand
Thy son was a right valiant knight, strong both in heart and hand,
But better men have died in fight, and better yet shall die ;
'Twere hard to save each mortal wight, when the stroke of death is
nigh. 140

She spoke ; and forced fierce-hearted Mars her prudent will to
follow.

Then Herè called within the hall the silver-bowed Apollo,
And Iris who through liquid air the swift-sped message beareth
Of deathless gods ; and thus to them Jove's lofty mind declareth :
Ye twain, to Ida speed your way, as swift as swift may be ;
And when ye reach the mount divine, and when Jove's face ye
see,

Then wait and hear, and with good cheer his high commandment
do.

Thus spake the large-eyed gracious dame, and backward then
withdrew,

And sat down on a throne. They through the air full fleetly
sped, 150

To many-fountained Ida, where wild mountain-cubs are bred ;

And there on topmost Gargarus far-seeing Jove they found
High-seated, and with odorous clouds his throne was volumed
round.

Hither they came, and stood before the cloud-compelling sire.
Nor he the radiant gods beheld with darkly-frowning ire,
But smiled to see how swift their feet had owned his high desire ;
Then first to Iris turned, and thus the wingèd word spake he :
Come, nimble-footed Iris, to the god who rules the sea
This message bring on breezy wing, and tell the truth from me.
That he no more the field of fight shall ride, but instant join
The tribes of the gods, or keep his home in the depths of the sea
divine.

160

But if he nurse the rebel's dream, and if he fling away
All reverence for my will supreme, let him ponder well his way ;
And know that, though he shake the land with the scourge of the
sounding sea,

Against my might he may not stand, who stronger am than he,
And elder-born ; so far I deem his dear heart will not stray
As to contend with me, whom all the trembling gods obey.

He spake ; and no delay the swift wind-footed Iris knew,
But down from Ida's shining peak to sacred Troy she flew.

As when the cold and sleety storm, or the hasty-rattling hail, 170
When sky-born Boreas flaps his vans, drifts o'er the shivering
vale,

So swift Jove's faithful messenger pursued her airy road,
Till, standing near, she thus addressed the strong earth-shaking
god :

Earth-girdling god with dark-blue locks, behold, to thee I bring
This solemn hest from mighty Jove, the ægis-bearing king ;
That thou no more the field of fight shalt ride, but instant join
The tribes of the gods, or keep thy home in the depths of the sea
divine.

But if his high behest thou scorn, and make my mission vain,
From his own hand thy pride shall learn, and thou shalt wisdom
gain

From his o'ermastering force ; this warning wise he gives thee
now,

180

To shun his fell and forceful hands ; for stronger far than thou
Is he, and elder born ; so far thy dear heart should not stray,
As to contend with him, whom all the trembling gods obey.

To whom the strong earth-shaking god with angry word replied :
O strange ! though Jove be great, he spoke a word of wanton pride,
If me, an equal god, he boasts with force to override ;
Three brothers we, to Kronos born from Rhea's sacred womb,
Great Jove and I, and he who rules the realm of lightless gloom
Three lots we cast, each brother gained his just and equal share,
Myself above the briny pool the three-pronged sceptre bear,
Pluto the nether world doth rule, and the Shades dim-flitting there.

Jove in the lofty welkin builds his cloud-encompassed hall,
Olympus and Earth's vasty fields our common home we call.
Wherefore not I will meekly smart beneath his lawless bent.
Of power he hath his rightful part ; therewith be Jove content !
His weighty hands I know ; but their fell force were fitter spent
On his own sons and daughters ! they must own his natural
right,

When he with bitter ban forbids, or lifts his arm to smite.

To whom the swift wind-footed Iris wisely thus replied : 200
Earth-circling god, with dark-blue locks, who sway'st the hoary
brine,

Such answer shall I bring to Jove, and shall I call it thine ?
Or wilt thou yield ? to yield betimes wise hearts will scarcely
scorn ;

And Furies, well thou knowest, guard the rights of the elder
born.

To whom the strong earth-shaking god more mildly thus
replies :

Wind-footed Iris, from thy lips there fell a warning wise ;
'Tis well when he that bears a hest can add a likely word.
But I was grievèd in my breast, and my wrath was deeply stirred,
That I, to whom an equal share of rightful power was fated,
From him the harsh command should bear, and with bitter words
be rated ! 210

Nathless I yield ; and for this tide his word shall be obeyed.
But this I say, and be this threat to haughty Jove conveyed ;
If he apart from me and Pallas, booty-bearing maid,
Herè, and Hermes, and the god who beats the glowing iron,
Shall spare the steepy towers of Troy, which Argive hosts environ,
And if the Achæans fail to reap great glory, let him know
That in my breast strong rancour's flood for evermore shall flow.

He spake, and left the host, and plunged into the briny wave ;
And sad were the hearts when they found him gone of the Grecian
heroes brave.

Then spake the cloud-compelling Jove to the god of the silver
bow :

220

Dear Phœbus, to the copper-harnessed Hector quickly go,
For now the strong earth-shaking god that rules the billowy path
Hath plunged him in the sea divine, nor dares defy our wrath.
'Tis well ; else had a strife been raised, whose sound to nether
hell

Had travelled, where old Kronos and his blasted Titans dwell.
Better for him the peaceful part ; for me too better far
That he hath tamed his chafing heart, and from the fateful war
Retired ; no sweatless fight with me the sea-king would have
found.

But thou, take in thy hand the ægis fringed with tassels round,
And shake it well, and scare the Grecian heroes from the ground. ²³⁰

The glorious Hector I bestow in charge to thee ; inspire
His breast with battle's fervent glow, till all the Greeks retire
To the broad-streaming Hellespont. Then I to thee will bare
My purpose how the war-worn Greeks their lost strength may
repair.

He spake ; and no delay the silver-bowed Apollo knew,
But down from Ida's heights as swift as sousing hawk he flew,
The pigeon-pouncing bird, most fleet of all the wingèd crew ;
And found the godlike son of Priam sitting on the ground,
Not senseless now, and stunned, but on his dear friends looking
round.

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No more the painful breath he breathed, no more the cold sweat
flowed ;

Such power to wake new springs of life all-gracious Jove bestowed.

Him standing near accosted thus the bright god silver-bowed :

Hector, thou son of Priam, why from all the host apart

Sittest thou here so faint ? What sorrow pricks thy noble heart ?

To whom with feeble voice the prince did thus his thought
impart :

Who art thou, best of the blissful gods, that speakest thus to me ?

Didst thou not know by yonder ships that fringe the sounding sea,

Where most I slew the Argive crew, that strong-limbed weighty
wight,

Ajax did stun me with a stone, and marred the prosperous fight ? ²⁵⁰

Truly me deemed that I should see the shadowy home that day
Of dingy Dis, when I had breathed my dear soul's life away.

To whom this answer gave the god whose arrows work from far :
Be of good cheer ; no common help to nerve thine arm in war
The son of Kronos sends. I come at his almighty nod,
Phœbus Apollo, lord of light, the golden-sworded god,
From Ida's shining peak, even I, who ever loved thee well,
And still to save thy life was nigh, and Troy's dear citadel.
But come, and rouse thy horsemen ! let them mount the seated car,
And bid them drive to the hollow ships the steeds that snort for war.
Myself will march before thee to make smooth the path of battle, ²⁶⁰
That the Greeks may quail beneath their mail, when they hear
thy chariot's rattle.

He spake ; and to the prince with strength he fired both heart
and brain.

Even as a horse in stall confined, and fed with barley grain,
Snaps his harsh bond, and, neighing, beats with sounding hoof the
plain ;

Oft hath he gone to lave his flanks in the deep smooth river's bed,
And now the well-known stream he seeks, and high he rears his
head ;

Adown his shoulders floats his mane ; proud of his strength is he ;
Then flings his limbs light o'er the turf, where the haunts of horses
be :

Thus Hector lightly moved his limbs to the call of the bright
Apollo,

And scoured the field with stormy feet, and bade his brave men
follow. 270

As when a rout of long-breathed hounds and rustic huntsmen keen,
Close in the track of an antlered stag, or a mountain goat are seen ;
Beneath a steep black-beetling crag the panting quarry lies,
And now in the shade of the tangled wood secure from chase he lies ;
With baffled gaze the huntsmen stand, when, lo ! from the prickly
wood

A bearded lion peers, who frays the keen-set multitude,
And scatters them like drift : even so the brave Achaean warriors
Pushed on with tway-mouthed spear and glaive, and overbore all
barriers ;

But when they saw the prince storm down through all the hot
pell-mell,

Stounded they stood, and from top wing plumb down their courage
fell. 280

Then outspake Thoas 'mid the host, Andræmon's valiant son,
Best of Ætolian men ; like him to fling the dart was none,
None in close-grappling fight ; and few the wisely-counselling word
Could pour like him, when in debate the people's heart was stirred.
Then with a friendly mien uprose and spake that hero bold :
O strange ! a mighty marvel I with mine own eyes behold !

Stout Hector lives, back from the gates of gloomy Hades flown,
When all believed him dead, pierced in the breast by the sharp
stone

Which large-limbed Ajax flung, the son of godlike Telamon.
Truly some god the prince restored to the grieving Trojan clan,
Whose strength unknit the sinewy knees of many an Argive man.
Not without Jove he stands revived, and rides the prosperous fray.
But hear my word ; and as I speak let each brave man obey.
Back to the ships the general host shall pace its wary way ;
But we the choicest of the chiefs, with our selectest band
Shall face the foe with a fence of spears, and with a firm front
stand

Against this new attack ; even he, though like a fire he burn,
Will halt, and from our bristling van with swerving foot will turn.
Thus he ; nor they with sluggish ears his prudent counsel spurn. ³⁰⁰
Eftsoons Idomeneus, and Ajax, son of Telamon,
Meges, a match for Mars, brave Teucer, and bold Merion,
Buckle for fight, and choose the best of all the Greeks, to meet
The godlike Hector ; all the rest with wary steps retreat.

On in thick shoals the Trojans rolled ; with mighty paces
strode

Their valiant chief ; before them marched Apollo silver-bowed,
His shoulders wrapt in cloud, while in his hand the shield he
showed

Tasseled with tempest blazing far, which with most cunning ken
Hephæstus forged for Jove, to fling strange fear in hearts of men ;³¹⁰
This in his hand he held, and led the host. The Argives then
In close-wedged masses stood ; uprose the air-splitting wild halloo
From friend and foe ; from twanging bows the whizzing arrows flew,
And spear on spear in thickening showers from high heroic hands
Came hurtling down ; and some did find the flesh of eager bands
Of stalwart youths, but many failed their scope, and baffled stood
Fixed in the ground, athirst in vain for taste of mortal blood.
So long Apollo moveless stood, nor shook Jove's fearful shield,
Now here now there the people fell, and doubtful hung the field ;
But when the god infixed his glance on the long-haired Argive
race,

320

And shouted o'er the host, and shook the ægis in their face,
His looks stole courage from their hearts, and they forgot to fight.
As when two wild beasts from a wood in the hushed hour of the
night

Spring on a herd of hornèd kine, or a flock of fleecy sheep,
Sudden, when help is far, and all the toil-worn shepherds sleep :
So startled then were the Argive men ; for the glorious god, Apollo,
Frayed them, and, where fierce Hector flamed, bade strength and
victory follow.

Then man slew man through all the hurly-burly of the field :
First Hector Stichius and the brave Arceusilaus killed,

The leader this of the brave Bœotian warriors copper-coated, 330
Of high-souled Mnestheus that the friend, for steady faith well
noted.

Medon and Iasus to Æneas paid the mortal due,
The bastard Medon, brother of Ajax, who from Oïleus drew
His blood, but far in Phylacè had spent his days, nor knew
His fatherland, for that with mortal hand he smote the brother
Of Eriopis, Oïleus wife, and to himself stepmother.

A leader of the Athenian men was warlike Iasus,
The son of Sphelus, who was son of noble Bucolus
Polydamas killed Mecistes ; Echius felt the fatal knife
From thee, Polites ; to Agenor Clonius yields his life. 340

And Paris 'neath the shoulder pierced Deïphobus in the back,
And to the breast the weapon forced its passage, nothing slack.
And now the conquering Trojan shoals dismasted the harnessed
dead,

While back to the stakes the Argives ran, and to the ditch they
fled,

And leapt the dyke man after man, in wild confusion routed.
Then Hector to the Trojans called, and through the battle shouted :
Touch not the spoils, but onward press to the ships that plough
the brine !

Whatever Trojan man shall lag this day behind the line,
Him with this hand I'll backward drag, and death shall be his fine !

No friendly fire his corpse shall share, but, where the traitor
falls, 350

The fowls of the air and the dogs shall tear his flesh beneath the
walls !

Thus he : and lashes the good steeds, and to his men he calls
From rank to rank. They follow where their godlike captain leads,
And urge along with high halloo the chariot-drawing steeds.
Before their path with flaming wrath the heavenly archer flew,
And with an easy kick knocked down the bank of the ditch, and
threw

A bridge across the sea of strife, and paved a path as far
As a strong man may fling a spear, when he proves his pith in war.
Then tower on tower the Trojans stormed ; Apollo marched
before, 360

And shook his priceless ægis, and with swift foot overbore
The rampart lightly : ev'n as a child that plays upon the shore,
And heaps the sand in a mounded pile, and then with childish
glee

Down throws the harvest of his toil, and claps his hands to see ;
So thou, Apollo, with thy touch didst the long toil confound
Of the Argive troops ; and level lay their rampart with the ground.
But they beside the ships made halt, and in distracted bands
Called to their friends, and to the gods outstretched their suppliant
hands.

But chiefly Nestor, guardian of the Greeks, was grieved, and hove³⁷⁰
Skyward his arms, and prayed this burning prayer to mighty Jove :
O Father Jove, if e'er in Argos' wheat-producing soil
On the fat thighs of sheep and oxen thou with gracious smile
Didst look, and to our vows didst grant from war's forwasting toil
The wished return, remember now our prayers, and ward the day
Of pitiless ruin to the Greeks, when Troy shall rule the fray.

Thus Nestor prayed ; and counsellor Jove pealed loudly through
the air,

In sign that he with favour heard the old man's faithful prayer.
But not the less the Trojans heard the peal of thundering Jove³⁸⁰
Joyful ; still on and on they shoaled, and stouter still they strove.
As when some billow broad and big of the salt sea widely-flowing
Breaks o'er the side of a dark-hulled ship, when the breeze is stiffly
blowing,

And wave on wave to the snorting blast their hissing crests are
showing :

So 'gainst the wall with a shout divine the Trojan warriors good
Their horses drave, and at the poops of the galleys fighting stood
With double-pointed spear, and steeds that ramped beneath the ear.
But the brave Greeks aye from the ships plied the unyielding war
With ponderous boat-hooks, which for need lay on the well-built
ships,

Compact and strong, and stoutly clad with copper on the tips.

Meantime Patroclus, while the Greek and Trojan men of might ³⁹⁰
Outside the ships beyond the wall renewed the wavering fight,
Remained within Eurypylus' tent, that kind man-loving wight,
And soothed his soul with kind discourse; and on the fretful
wound

Sprinkled the softly-soothing drug to make him whole and sound.
But when the Greeks by the Trojan turns were o'er the rampart
driven,

And the din and the shout, and the hurrying rout, and the death-
cry rose to heaven,

Oh, then he groaned, and with his weighty palm he smote his thigh,
And spake, and mingled with his words the deep-drawn heavy
sigh :

Eurypylus, no more with thee, though much my heart desire,
Can I remain; for o'er the plain blazes the battailous fire. ⁴⁰⁰

On thee thy faithful squires shall wait; forthwith myself will go,
That I may rouse Pelides, back to drive the whelming foe.

If but a kindly god shall aid, my word may him compel
Persuasive; ofttime with a friend persuasion loves to dwell.

Thus spake the chief, and went. Meanwhile the waves of battle
swell.

Firm stood the Greeks; but all their front of steady force was
vain

To drive the fewer-numbered foe from the ships beside the main;

Nor more could Troy with all her strain break through the brist-
ling band,

That saved the black well-timbered ships from the touch of the
Trojan brand.

Even as a plummet to the point of equal poise is brought, 410

Held in a cunning shipwright's hand, whose wit is richly fraught
With all the wisdom of the craft, which wise Athenè taught :

Such poise of force in the tug of war Trojan and Greek displayed,
Now here now there beside the ships the balanced battle swayed.

Then Hector in the fight the son of Telamon assailed,

And for a single ship they fought; but neither chief prevailed,

Nor Hector to make Ajax slack his guard against the flame,

Nor Ajax to push Hector back ; for with a god he came.

Kaletor, son of Clytius, then the glorious Ajax slew,

In act to east a brand, and in the breast he pierced him
through. 420

He fell ; the brand fell from his grasp ; and his armour rattled o'er
him.

Then Hector, when his eyne beheld his kinsman dear before him

In the black mould now lifeless rolled beside the dark-hulled
ships,

To Trojans and to Lycians thus he cried with burning lips :

Trojans and Lycians, Dardan men, that in close fight excel,

Now in the strait of fight stand firm, and force with force repel !

Hale me this man, dear Clytius' son, who on the gory plain
Lies breathless, lest the Trojans spoil with insolent hand the slain.

He spoke; and at the large-limbed chief his ponderous lance he
threw,

But missed him; on to Lycophron the deathful weapon flew, ⁴³⁰
Who from divine Cytherè came, where he a man had killed,
And dwelt with Ajax, and with him marched to the tented field.
Him Hector smote upon the head; the strong lance, pointed well,
Pierced through his skull above the ear; he backward-reeling fell
From the high poop upon the sand; and his knees were loosed in
death.

Ajax with shuddering heart beheld, and spake with angry breath:
Good Teucer, Mastor's son, our well-belovèd friend, is dead,
Who from divine Cytherè to our halls blood-guilty fled,
And, with our kin the nearest, ate our hospitable bread.
Him mighty Hector now hath slain; let thy keen arrow follow, ⁴⁴⁰
Winged with swift fate! bring forth thy bow, the gift of bright
Apollo!

He spake; his brother heard, and with right willing speed he
went,

And took his well-stored quiver: then his curvèd bow he bent,
And with sure art the barbèd dart on deadly mission sent.
To Clitus first, Pisenor's son, the vengeful arrow flew,
Of glorious Polydamas the dear-loved comrade true,

And struck him as he held the reins, and tried his steeds to guide,
To where the fray was thickest, and the shock most hard to bide.
But now was come the hour that choked that high-souled hero's
breath,

And none of all that loved him well could save his soul from
death ;

450

For in his neck the arrow stuck, and with sharp pain overbore
him ;

Down from his shining seat he fell, and the startled horses o'er him
Ran riderless with the rattling ear. Him with quick eye beheld
Polydamas, and seized the reins, and the horses' fury quelled,
And gave them to Astynöös, Protiaon's son, and told him
To watch them well with wary eye, and with sure hand to hold
them.

Then in the van to fight he ran with hot high-hearted haste.
But Teucer now his second shaft 'gainst Hector copper-cased
Let fly ; and soon beside the ships the Greeks had ceased from
sorrow,

If Teucer in that gallant breast had lodged the barbèd arrow.

460

But not the deep-discerning Jove so purposed in his heart,
Who watched o'er Hector's life with love, and foiled the bowman's
art.

He on his bow that knew no blame, snapt the well-twisted string
Even as he drew it ; slant the arrow sped on wandering wing,

Far from the mark, and from his hand was jerked the goodly bow.
Back stept the startled hero, and bespake his brother so :
Truly some god cuts through my plans, and me with hate doth
follow,

Who snapt my string, and on the ground flung thy good bow,
Apollo !

New and well-twisted was the string, which I this very morrow
Bound to my bow, full strong to wing a thousand shafts with
sorrow !

470

To whom the large-limbed Telamonian captain thus replied :
Good brother, quit thine arrows, cast thy famous bow aside ;
A hostile god thy craft confounds, and sends thine arrows wide ;
But take thy lance in hand, and round thy shoulders fling the
shield,

And rouse our men, and chase the foe o'er all the dinsome field ;
Through their own sweat the knaves shall wade, before a hand
they lay

Upon the ships. Come, rouse with me the soul that fires the fray !

Thus he ; and Teucer in his tent the bow and quiver laid,
Then round his shoulders flung his four-ply'd shield, and on his
head

He placed the dog-skin helm, by hand of cunning workman made. ⁴⁸⁰
Then in his hand he took the weighty copper-pointed spear,
And swift to Ajax ran, and stood beside his brother dear.

But Hector, when he saw brave Teucer's arrow wander wide,
To Trojans and to Lycians, high above the fight he cried :
Trojans and Lycians, Dardans brave, that in close fight excel,
Quit ye like men ! put forth the strength that in your breasts doth
 dwell,

And make the ships your prize. Even now I saw with these good
 eyne,

The arrow of a noble Greek shoot wide by Jove's design.

Full plainly is the hand of Jove revealed to labouring mortals, ⁴⁹⁰
Or when his favouring arm he shows from bright cerulean portals,
Or when he smites with dwindling blights, and all their virtue
 ceases,

As dwindled Greece now feebly fights, and the strength of Troy
 increases.

Here mass your ranks, and if by spear, or sword, or barbèd arrow
Wounded, some Trojan brother dear shall find the deadly sorrow,
Even let him die ! not he untimely dies who pours his life
For fatherland ! Behind him live his children and his wife ;
And house and hearth, and old ancestral roods unscathed shall be,
When the long-haired Greek his home shall seek o'er the vast and
 voiceful sea !

Thus he ; and to the fight upstirred each warlike Trojan
 breast ;

590

But not the less with rousing word Ajax the Greeks addressed :

Shame on you, Argives ! choose we now to perish, or to live,
To lose our fleet, or from the ships the raging flame to drive !
Deem ye, if once the tall crest-flickering Hector fix his brand
In Argive hulls, that ye shall find your way to Greece by land ?
See ye not how from band to band the godlike hero hurries,
And breathes hot war, and in his hand the flaming sorrow carries ?
Truly he calls not to a dance, but to the strife of lances ;
No choice remains but stiff to stand, and strike where he advances. ⁵¹⁰
Better to die at once, or live a life from cumber free,
Than thus to strain, both day and night, by the ships that plough
the sea,

Draining our blood by drops in fight, with worsers men than we !

Thus he ; and in their hearts he stirred the love of deadly strife.
First Hector stole from Perimedes' son the dear-loved life,
Stout Schedios, Phocian leader ; then huge Ajax stretched a corpse
The brave Laodamas, the leader of the footed force :
Polydamas a stout Cyllenian, friend of Meges, slew,
Otus, a captain of the lofty-souled Epean crew.

Him Meges then assailed ; but quickly from his aim aside ⁵²⁰
Polydamas turned ; Apollo to the spearman's might denied
The life of Panthus' son, and saved him from the threatful blow.
But Cresmus felt his force ; the spear right through his breast did
go ;

With hollow sound he smote the ground ; the victor spoiled the foe.

Him Dolops then attacked, like whom to fling the spear was none,
The son of Lampus, best of men, son of Laomedon,
Trained by his sire in all the craft that rules the fateful field.
This Dolops pierced the son of Phyleus through the middle shield,
With a sharp-pointed spear; but this his well-compacted coat
With bulging brass repelled, the coat which the good Phyleus
brought

530

From Ephyrè, where flows the swirling flood of Sellè's river;
Of this stout mail his host, the king Euphetes, was the giver,
To fend his life in perilous strife with hostile minded men;
Even this good coat from deadly harm redeemed his dear son then.
Then Meges against Lampus' son did with stout pace advance,
And struck his helmet's topmost peak with his weighty-pointed
lance,

And brake the horse-hair crest, which with fresh tint of crimson
shone,

But low in the dust it now was crushed, and all its pride was gone.
So bravely Meges fought, and deemed the victory all his own,
When martial Menelaus came, and standing out of view,
Flung his strong spear to help his friend, and pierced the shoulder
through

540

Of Dolops; to the breast the cold brass shore its greedy way,
And reached the heart: he fell: and with his blood the sod he soils.
Then from his shoulders they unbind the brass, and bear the spoils.

But Hector to his kinsmen all outspake with bitter grief,
But chiefly to the son of Icetaon, stalwart chief,
Hight Melanippus, who, before the Greeks had camped at Troy,
To tend slow-footed kine in lone Percotè had his joy,
But when the ships with balanced oars came to the Ilian strand,
A warrior brave he shone, far known through all the Trojan
land, 550

And Priam loved him like his sons, beneath his kindly roof.
Him Hector thus bespake, and chid with words of sharp reproof :
Is this an hour for slackness ? shall thy heart be free from care,
When Dolops lies, thy kinsman, stretched on grim and gory lair.
Dost thou not see how round the arms of Dolops dead they swarm !
Come, follow me ; no time is now, at safe remove from harm,
To wage a wary war ; this hour their ships we must destroy,
Or, toppling from its topmost tower shall fall the broad-wayed
Troy.

Thus he, and led the way ; the godlike hero owned his call.
Then to the Argives spoke the Telamonian Ajax tall : 560
Dear friends, be men, let noble shame usurp your hearts to-day,
Blush when ye hear your comrades' blame, and ye shall rule the
fray ;
Of men that stand with sword in hand, the fewest fall ; but ever
Shall death pursue the craven loon, and his name be sounded
never !

Thus he ; they heard with open ear, and to their leader's lips
Their hearts replied ; a brazen hedge around the hollow ships
They draw. But Kronos' son yet more the Trojan warriors stirred.
Then Sparta's king to Nestor's son thus flung the wingèd word :
Antilochus, in all our camp there is no youth more ready,
None fleetier in the chase than thou, nor in the fight more
steady ; 570

Would that some Trojan wight might feel the weight of thy sturdy
spear !

He spoke, and backward stept ; the youth upheavt with forward ear
His word, and sprang before the rest, and looked if all were clear,
Then whirled his shining lance. The Trojans with wise fear with-
drew

From his fell aim ; but not in vain the well-poised weapon flew.
The might of Melanippus stooped beneath its forceful sway ;
Into his breast beside the pap the cold brass ploughed its way ;
With hollow sound he smote the ground, and darkness veiled
him round.

As when a hound a stag pursues, which with a deathful wound 580
A hunter pierced, what time it rose from its dew-sprent morning
lair ;

Even so on Melanippus sprang Antilochus to bear
His arms away. But not thus he escaped keen Hector's view,
Who instant ran to mar his plan in the front of the fighting crew.

Nor now Antilochus before that godlike hero stood,
But swiftly fled, even as some shaggy prowler of the wood,
Which having killed a watch-dog, or a herdsman stout and good,
Flees, ere the swains in mass shall march to urge the vengeful
chase :

Thus fled Antilochus ; his foes ride up with thundering pace,
And the thick darts fly, and the welkin high is rent with the wild
war-whoop ; 590

But the fleet youth turned round and stood, when he reached the
Grecian troop.

Then like flesh-rending lions wild the Trojans on the strand
Rushed on the curvèd ships, and worked almighty Jove's command,
Who pushed them on with mighty arm into the fervid fray,
While from the Greeks with glamouring charm he stole the strength
away.

For he in his high counsel sware to crown great Hector's name
With glory, and to bring the strength of strong-consuming flame
Against the ships, that thus the goddess of the billowy brine,
Might see her harmful prayer fulfilled by counsellor Jove's design,
When the fateful blaze should shoot its rays to the god's calm-
waiting eyne ; 600

Which done, he from the sweeping beach that bounds the salt sea
hoary,

Would drive the Trojans back, and grant to Greece immortal glory.

With such high scope Jove near the hollow ships did strongly stir
Stout Hector's heart, though truly he did little lack the spur ;
For like spear-shaking Mars he came, where the battle rages
sorest,

Or like the sweep of the crackling flame in the depths of the dry
old forest.

Foam dashed his lips, and from his gleaming eyes the flashing light
Shot 'neath his darkly-frowning brows ; and his beamy helmet
bright

Terribly on his temples rang through the din of the rattling fight :
For Jove was with him ; in the sky he had a strong protector, ⁶¹⁰
Who matched him single 'gainst a host, and glory gave to Hector.
A short-lived glory ! soon his corpse shall heap the swelling
slaughter,

By fierce Achilles' hands, and strength from Jove's spear-shaking
daughter.

Now here, now there, he strove to break the serried phalanx through,
And chiefly there assayed where thickest swarmed the struggling
crew.

But vainly ; more their durance waxed, as his rage more reiless
grew.

For they compact and tower-like stood, as a rock both black and
steep,

Stands strong against the flailing flood of the hoary-billowed deep,

Nor reck's fierce buffets of shrill blasts that sweep the briny
path, 620

Nor strokes of sulky-swollen waves that belch their foamy wrath :
Thus stood the Greeks before the foe, with stiff front, stable-
hearted.

But he with heart ablaze through all the smoking battle darted,
And burst upon them like a wave on a vessel swiftly sailing,

A strong big-bosomed billow, roused by mighty winds prevailing :

The white foam sweeps the deck ; in the full-bellied canvas rave

The whistling blasts ; the hearts of men who ride the watery wave

Tremble ; for truly they are near a deep black-yawning death.

So every Argive quailed with fear, and drew a bated breath.

As when a lion from the woods with savage-minded greed, 630

Comes on a herd of beeves that graze on a stretch of marshy
mead,

Whom only one dull herdsman keeps, a single swain unskilled

To save his hornèd charge, when a strong lion ramps the field ;

From rear to front of the herd he flies with busy pains, but lo !

Down on the middle of the troop pounces his tawny foe,

And hath devoured an ox ! the rest run drifting : even so

Hector and Father Jove did fray the valiant Argive crew.

Then Hector Periphetes, dear-loved son of Copreus, slew,

Who from Mycenæ came, and oft the message speeded on

From King Eurystheus to Alemena's strong hard-wrestling son ; 640

Of him a noble seed was born, much worthier than his father,
The first in fleet pursuit, the first where steady masses gather
In tug of fight, in council first of rich Mycenæ's men ;
This noble Argive brought the son of Priam glory then.
For, turning round, he tripped against his buckler's oval rim,
That reached his feet, to ward the shower of deathful darts from
him.

'Gainst this he stumbling fell supine, and his helmet burnished well
Terribly rattled round his brow, as the harnessed hero fell.
Him Hector saw, and with swift foot upran, and standing near
Beside the troop of his dear-loved friends, transfixed him with a
spear 650

In the breast ; but not his friends prevailed to ward the deathful
blow,

So much before his might they quailed who laid their comrade low.

Now they fell back within the foremost line of the equal-oared
Black ships ; in shoals upon their track the noble Trojans poured.
And here the brave Greeks took their stand, so pushed ; but not an
inch

Beyond the forceful press of fight their high-souled shame would
flinch.

From man to man the heartening cry through all the battle ran.
Then Nestor, guardian of the Greeks, to clasp their knees began,
And in their parents' name he thus besought each Argive man : 660

Dear friends, be men ! and cherish in your minds a blushful fear
Of censure in your brother's breasts ; your wives and children dear
Remember now ; your hearth and home remember, and be true
With your heart's blood to the noble dead, who living, bled for you !
For them, the absent, I implore, and clasp your youthful knees,
And bid you stand ; on Trojan shore his corpse shall rot who flees !

Thus he, and roused strong manhood's power in every trembling
limb ;

And Jove's spear-shaking daughter from their eyes removed the
dim

Confounding mist ; and lo ! before them in full light revealed
Stood all the fight beside the ships, and o'er the gory field ! 670

The strong-voiced Hector then they see, with sharpened vision fine,
With all his men, both in the rear who guard the farthest line,
And whoso fought beside the ships that plough the billowy brine.

But not the Telamonian stout was well content to go
And stand where Nestor turned the host to face the Trojan foe ;
On the high decks of the dark-hulled ships he moved him to and
fro

With mighty strides ; and held in his hand a boarding-pike, made
strong

With many clamps, a pike full two-and-twenty cubits long.
As when a man well skilled to ride with cunning-footed speed
Hath from the coursers chosen four, the best of all the breed ; 680

And now along the road sweeps he, and to the town he flies,
And men and women crowd to see, and strain their eager eyes ;
But he, unflustered in his soul, skirrs on with breezy force,
And keeps his eye upon the goal, and leaps from horse to horse :
So Ajax runs ; from deck to deck of the swift ships he goes
With mighty strides ; and to the sky his wrathful war-cry rose.
Now here now there his terrible shout o'er all the field resounded,
Bidding them stand to fence the ships. But Hector, unconfounded,
Stood not afar in distant war with his mailèd men surrounded ;
But as an eagle fiery-souled from the arch of the welkin wide ⁶⁹⁰
Down souses on a plummy troop, the sedgy stream beside,
Or geese, or cranes, or long-necked swans that oar the rippling
tide :

Thus Hector 'gainst the dark-prowed ships rushed with his Trojan
band,
And Father Jove impelled the troop with the stroke of his weighty
hand !

Oh, then a bitter strife, I ween, beside the ships began ;
New to the fight thou wouldst have thought a fresh unwearied clan
Now fleshed their swords, with such hot might rushed harnessed
man on man.

And while they fought their thought was this : the long-haired
Greeks this day
Caught in the mesh of scapeless harm shall perish in the fray. ⁷⁰⁰

But to the Trojans one bright thought filled every swelling breast,
That they should fire the fleet, and by their might the Greeks
oppressed

Would bite the dust; such thought each adverse fighting man
possessed.

Then Hector seized the poop of a ship with strong rude-grappling
hand,

A ship had wafted brave Protesilaus to the strand,

But ne'er with him sailed back again to his dear fatherland ;

About this goodly ship the Greeks and the stout-souled Trojan men
Joined desperate strife close-handed ; no light sport of darts was
then,

No nimble javelins skirr the air, no shafts from distant bow,

But with one will, man linked to man, they face the unflinching
foe !

710

With hatchet and with battle-axe they ply the deadly strife,

Huge swords and double-headed spears mow down the fated life ;

And many a beautiful iron-bound, and quaintly-hafted knife

Fell from the hands of the fighting men, and swords were dashed
on ground

From their broad shoulders ; with red gore the soil was reeking
round.

But Hector, when he seized the ship, not once relaxed his hold,

But grasped the flourish of the poop, and spake to the Trojans bold :

Bring brands, bring brands ! let fire destroy ! pour down in shoals !
at last

Great Jove doth grant to patient Troy a day worth all the past !
Now shall the ships be ours, which in the gods' despite did force⁷²⁰
Their path to Troy, while doting seniors made the evil worse ;
Who, when my sword was keen to hack beside the high-pooped fleet,
Did pluck me back from valour's track, and froze the people's heat ;
But if Jove then their wits did lame, that I sought battle vainly,
Himself now sets our souls aflame, and spurs our onset plainly.

Thus he ; they pour upon the Greeks their hot swarms more and
more,

That even Ajax winced ; for he by darts was galled full sore.
Back then he stept a space to shun the close-enwrapping fate,
And left the lofty deck, and on a seven-foot bench he sate.
There he remained with eye intent ; and with his massy spear⁷³⁰
Back drave who of the Trojans with red-blazing brand came near ;
And through the hurtling fight his cry thrilled every Argive ear :
Be men, dear friends, true sons of Mars, who rules the wavering fight !
Be men, dear friends, and in your breasts upstir the martial might !
No sure ally is waiting near, if here we flinch to-day,
No high-piled rampart in our rear, to fence black death away !
No fortress stands for routed bands, no city strong with towers,
Where we might wait, and with fresh hands repair our wasted
powers !

But here we sweat in room confined, and look in death's black throat,
With the foe before, and the sea behind, and our fatherland remote !
Our hands, our hands our safety hold ; our heels are helpless here !

Thus he ; and wielded with his hand the strong sharp-pointed
spear ;

And when a noble Trojan, spurred by godlike Hector's call,
With flaming brand in his threatful hand upon the ships would fall,
Him Ajax crossed, and with long lance him proudly overbore,
Till twelve stout Trojan youths lay stretched all grimly on the shore.

BOOK XVI.



ARGUMENT.

*Achilles clothes Patroclus in his mail,
Which seen fills every Trojan heart with fear.
Stout Hector turns ; the valiant Greeks prevail,
And brave Sarpedon dies by Danaan spear.
Around the corpse fierce Mars with bloody flail
Rages, till Jove transports his offspring dear
To Lycian land. Apollo, Troy's protector,
Achieves Patroclus' death by lance of Hector.*

BOOK XVI.

Thus they about the well-benched ship the pitiless fight pursued ;
But brave Patroclus near the godlike son of Peleus stood,
While hot tears flowed adown his cheeks, like some dark-watered
fountain,
That pours its flood from cliff to cliff of the steep black-frowning
mountain.

Him sorrowing thus Achilles saw ; and deep his sorrow stirred
The hero's heart ; and to his friend he spoke the wingèd word :
Why dost thou weep, Patroclus ; why thus pour the streaming tear ?
Even as a little maid that runs and cries to mother dear
To take her up ; and grasps her skirt, though she would fain be
gone,

And weeps and looks till mother halts, and lifts her little one :
Even so, Patroclus, like a girl thou weepest bitterly ; 10
Hast thou some word for my brave men, or wouldst thou speak
with me ?

Or doth ill news from Phthian land becloud thy sunny spright ?
Thy father lives ; brave Actor's son, Menætiüs, looks on light ;

And Peleus still, my sire, of noble Myrmidons is chief,
Whose death to hear would prick our souls with goad of bitter
grief.

Or for the Greeks art weeping, who beside the billowy brine
Perish, and of their proper fault now pay the rightful fine?
Speak boldly; all thy thought declare, that both the truth may
know.

To whom Patroclus spake, and inly groaned with weighty woe: ²⁹
O son of Peleus, thou of all the Achæan captains best,
Blame not thy friend. By heavy harm the Greeks are sorely
pressed.

Our chiefest champions, aye the first the Trojan to defy,
Now pierced with arrowy barb, or with the sharp blade wounded, lie
Beside the ships; Ulysses and the strong Tydides know
Unwilling rest from blows; the mightful monarch lieth low,
And in his thigh Eurypylus bears sharp sorrow from the foe.
Round these the drugful leeches stand, their vexing wounds to tend;
Thou seest; but with obdurate force thy will disowns to bend.
Far far from me such choler be as holds thy heart, my friend! ³⁰
Harsh-virtuous hero! small thy virtue's praise shall after be,
If by thy pride the Greeks beside the waste unfertile sea
Shall die. Sure Peleus, gentle knight, no father was to thee,
Nor Thetis was thy dam! but thee the cold green-glancing brine
Bare, and the rocks begat thee! such a stern harsh heart is thine.

Or if some bodeful prophecy keeps thee inglorious here,
Which, taught by Jove, thy mother's love hath whispered in thine
ear,

Then send me forth, and send with me thy Myrmidons, that I
May bring light to the Greeks, and make the mirksome sorrow fly.
Lend me thine armour ; on my shoulders bind thy terrible mail ;⁴⁰
And when thy semblance fills the field, belike the heart will fail
To Troy ; and from the stout-armed strife the Greeks will breathe
again ;

Short is the warrior's pause from fight, who night and day must
strain.

Thy men are fresh ; and if they make one hot and whole attack,
'Tis like that from the tents we drive the war-worn Trojans back !

Thus he, unweeting what he prayed ; for with his proper breath
He sought black ruin to himself, and life-dislodging death.

To whom this angry answer cast the keen swift-footed warrior :
My godlike friend, what word hath passed thy teeth's unguarded
barrier ?

No bodeful prophecy detains Achilles deedless here, 50

Nor me a word from Jove constrains, told by my mother dear ;
But one sharp sorrow grides my heart, even this, that me, his
peer,

An insolent man should override, and rob me of my right,
And seize my prize ; for why ? because his arm is strong in might.

Here sits the sting that galls me ! She—that maid so passing fair,
Whom, when I razed the captured fort, the Greeks for my just
share

Gave me—even her the king hath seized, and holds her for his
own,

As I were some vile outcast churl, unrated and unknown !

But let that pass. My spleen was just ; but yet I never meant ⁶⁰
To rage without all bound ; and this, I said, was my intent,
That from my grudge I should not slack, till Mars with brazen
bray

Even to the strand where I command had forced his fiery way.

Now, if thou wilt, with my strong mail thy goodly body dight,

And lead my valiant Myrmidons to fan the fainting fight.

For truly, like a dark storm-cloud, that lowereth heavily,

The Trojan host o'erhangs the fleet ; the Greeks close to the sea

Are pressed, and with much labour hold a scantied strip of ground,

While with high-hearted valiance bold the Trojans pour around ⁷⁰

Their hostile hordes ; for not my helm now lightens in their face

Its wonted terror ; seeing which, they'd fly with swift disgrace,

And feed the foss with dead ; but now this haughty-hearted king

Flouts my just right ; and rampant Troy flaps her unfearing wing.

Our mighty men lie low ; the spear in strong Tydides' hand

Rages no more, to drive the foe from the ships and the tented
strand.

No more the echoing host obeys Atrides' hated call,
But hero-slaughtering Hector sways, and with harsh-throated
bawl

Breaks o'er the field. His men stream on with swelling war-halloo
O'er all the plain, and to the ships our drifted host pursue.
Thou, therefore, as thou wilt, my friend, obey the strong desire ⁸⁰
That spurs thee to the charge, lest soon the swiftly-spreading fire
Usurp our ships, and we in vain across the sounding sea
Seek refuge. Go ; but in thy heart this caution take with thee ;
So shall thy blazoned might from Greece great honour bring to
me,

When they my rightful prize restore, that maid so wondrous fair,
And make atonement for their wrong by gifts both rich and rare :
Thou, when they leave the ships, return ; when glory once is thine
From lofty-pealing Jove, the spouse of Herè, queen divine,
Then curb the reins of thy assault, nor push the victory far,
To bring dishonour on thy friend, and my just vengeance mar ! ⁹⁰
Let not the wantonness of fight thy feet impatient carry
To Ilium's walls, while by the ships thy slighted friend must tarry,
Lest through the fight some god shall bend his jealous eye to follow
Thy headstrong charge ; they have a friend in silver-bowed Apollo.
When thou hast brought light to the ships, straight from the dusty
rout

Return, and let themselves again fight their own battle out.

Thus to his faithful friend the chief his wingèd word addressed. ¹⁶⁰
Meanwhile stout Ajax by the Trojan darts was sorely pressed ;
Him the strong will of Jove and force of foes doth overwhelm ;
Their rain of lances frets the air, and rattles on his helm,
Whose strong cheek-pieces with hard strokes was dinted o'er and
o'er.

The ponderous mass of his broad bright shield, which in his hand
he bore,

Weighed his left shoulder down : but all that deadly-driving
storm

Of darts was vain to shake the strength of his firm-planted form.

With panting heart he laboured, that the streaming sweat came
warm

Reeking adown his limbs ; he scarce might draw his labouring
breath ; 110

Hedged round by horrid harm he stood, and bayed the bristling
death.

But now, ye Muses, who in halls Olympian dwell, inspire
My song to tell how first the fleet took taint of Trojan fire.

Stout Hector struck the ashen spear of Ajax standing near,

With his huge sword, and severed sheer the spear-head from the
spear,

So clean the stroke. Erect the Telamonian Ajax stood,

And in his hand aloft he shook the silly pointless wood ;

The brazen point glanced off, and, ringing, smote the hollow
ground.

With shuddering heart the huge-limbed Telamonian looked around,
For well he knew that lofty-pealing Jove had cut away ¹²⁰

All counsel from the Greeks, and bade the Trojans rule the fray.

Back from the range of darts he stept: and now the foes, made
bold,

Fling fire into the ship; and lo! the flame's unfettered fold
Wraps all her stern. Achilles rose; and with his hand his thigh
Smote; and to dear Patroclus thus the winged word doth fly:
Rouse thee, Jove-born Patroclus, lord of the swift-carreering car!
The fire hath caught the ships; behold, the flame spreads fierce and
far!

If now they seize the fleet, no hand may mend what they shall
mar!

Go thou and don my arms, and I will bid my people follow.

Thus he; eftsoons Patroclus donned the shining armour hollow. ¹³⁰
And first upon his nimble shins he fitted featly round
The burnished greaves, with silver ankle-pieces nicely bound;
Then round his breast he drew, and with strong clasps he buckled
tight

The rich-engrailed and starry mail of that fleet-footed wight.
Then o'er his shoulders broad he slung his silver-studded brand
Brazen, and took his huge and massy buckler in his hand,

Then on his head he placed the horse-hair-crested helmet good,
And Terror nodded from his plume where brave Patroclus stood.
Then in his hand tway spears he took ; but not the lance, I
ween,

Of Peleus' son within Patroclus' grasp might then be seen, 140
That lance, huge, weighty, massive, which alone against the foe
Achilles' arm might hurl ; no lesser Greek its weight might
throw ;

The lance of Pelian ash, which Chiron to his father gave,
Hewn from high Pelion's leafy crown, to bring death to the
brave.

Then the swift steeds at his command to the well-compacted car
Automedon yoked, whom next to Peleus' son he honoured, far
Above all Greeks most faithful found in the tug of deadly war ;
Even he did yoke the swift-hoofed steeds, born of no mortal
kind,

Xanthus and Balius, who flew fleet as the wingèd wind ;
Them to strong Zephyr that keen Harpy, clept Podargè, bare
By ocean's stream, as there she fed on a lush green meadow fair. 150
And in the traces sideways the fleet Pedasus he bound,
Steed which Achilles gained when Thebes he levelled with the
ground ;

This mortal horse was yoked with steeds of heavenly brood
renowned.

Meanwhile o'er all his range of tents was swift Pelides seen
Mustering his Myrmidons ; they, like savage wolves with hunger
 keen,

A ravenous flesh-rending brood, of harsh unpitying power,
Who, having found an antlered stag deep in the woods, devour
His life with greedy jowl, that all their jaw doth stream with gore ;
Then in a troop they rush, from some cool fount of darkling water,¹⁶⁰
With long thin tongues to lap the flood, belching the clotted
 slaughter

Into the gurgling well ; with fearless hearts, I wis, and fell,
They stand and drink ; while with the gorge their labouring bellies
 swell :

Fierce even as these the Myrmidons, all quick with warlike mettle,
Around Menœtius' godlike son came trooping to the battle ;
In midst of whom up stood the godlike swift Achilles then,
Stirring the steeds, and all the crew of stout shield-bearing men.

Five times ten ships Achilles owned that swiftly ploughed the
 brine,

And fifty men in each good ship obeyed the chief divine. 170
Five captains over all he placed, who each with due control
Led on their several bands ; himself was lord to sway the whole.
One band Menestheus led, whose mail with various shimmer glows,
Son of Spercheius, whose strong flood from rainy Jove down
 flows ;

Him Pelens' daughter to the Stream, even Polydora fair,
Mingling in dalliance with the god, a lusty hero bare ;
Though Borus, Perieres' son, must wear the father's name,
Who wooed her openly, and won with costly gifts the dame.
The second band Eudorus led ; a warlike youth was he,
Born of a virgin, Polymela, beautiful to see, 180
Daughter of Phylas ; her strong Hermes saw, and seeing loved,
As with her fair compeers amid the tuneful dance she moved
Of Dian, golden-shafted queen, who loves the whooping chase.
He to a secret loft upclomb, and there in love's embrace
Unharmful Hermes held the maid ; and she bare him a son,
Eudorus, good to fight with spear, or with swift foot to run.
But when the goddess, whose high grace gives birth to mortal
 wight,
The throeiful Eilithyia, brought this seed to blissful light,
Then the strong might of Echecles, with costly presents rare,
Wooed Phylas' daughter, and for wife he won that maiden fair. 190
But the old man did keep the boy, and in his house did rear,
And loved him as a father loves the son he holds most dear.
Pisander, war-delighting wight, heads the third company,
The son of Mæmalus ; of all the Myrmidons was he,
The best to cast a spear next to Menœtius' warlike son.
The fourth battalion Phœnix old to battle keen leads on ;
The fifth, Laërtes' blameless son, the stout Alcimedon.

From troop to troop Achilles runs with rapid-mastering eye,
And from his mouth through all the clan the wingèd word doth
fly :

Brave Myrmidons, my trusty men, now prove your threatenings
true, 200

Which, when beside the ship-ploughed tide, with bitter taunts ye
threw

Against your chief, and many words of sharp reproach I knew ;
Harsh son of Peleus ! sure with bile thy mother nursed her child,
That we draw out the deedless hours, to serve thy humour wild ;
Better to dash the fretful spray o'er ocean's billowy path,
Than here to rot in dull delay, while he may hug his wrath !
These taunts ye cast against me then, and worked me much annoy.
But now the hour is come ; your hands are free ; go, pluck your
joy,

Where each stout wight may prove his might against the best in
Troy !

Thus he into their hearts did cast the war-provoking sting, 210
And they their ranks more closely massed, stirred by the godlike
king.

As when a cunning builder well-hewn stones hath nicely joined,
Tier above tier, in a palace wall, to bar the whistling wind,
So helm to helm was closely pressed, and bossy shield to shield,
And man to man was tightly packed o'er all the bristling field ;

The horse-hair crests high-shimmering nod, brass gleams on gleam-
ing brass

From every head ; so densely stood the firm-embattled mass.

But in the front of all the troops two heroes led them on,

Patroclus and Automedon, in high-souled purpose one,

To save the ships from Trojan fire. But godlike Peleus' son 220

Went to his tent, and of his coffer beautiful, curious wrought,

He oped the lid ; this chest his mother gave, and careful brought

Into the ship, well filled with various vestments rich and rare,

Coats and breeze-sheltering cloaks, and soft-napped carpets fine
and fair.

Within this chest deep-stowed there lay a beaker quaintly chased,

From which no lips but only his the glowing draught might taste,

And whence no god but Jove supreme, of all the powers divine,

Received libation ; this he took, and with the virtue fine

Of sulphur and of streaming lymph, cleansed it for holy rite,

Then washed his hands, and drew a draught of the winy fountain
bright ; 230

And in the middle court he stood, and the pure libation poured,

And looked aloft not unperceived by heaven's high thundering lord.

Jove, sovran king, Pelasgic god, who in Dodona far,

Dealest wise counsel from rough seat where wintry tempests war,

And where the Selli, sleeping on the sod, a lowly lair,

Seers with unwashen feet, to men thy sacred will declare ;

Truly before, when I forth-heaved my heart's deep groans to thee,
The Greeks thy harmful frown received, and honour came to me.
Hear me yet once ; nor fall in vain the prayer that parts my lips !
Myself unmoved do still remain beside the dark-hulled ships ;
But my best friend and men of might I send ; O may they prove ²⁴⁰
Success from thee in the cruel fight, thou far-surveying Jove !
Fire thou his heart and nerve his hand, that Hector's might may
know

That my best friend alone can stand, and singly front the foe,
Nor needs to filch his fire from me, nor with o'er-mastering hands
Then only rages, when my strength leads on the clattering bands.
But when his hands have done their work, bring thou him swiftly
then

Back to my arms unscathed, with all his stout close-fighting men !
He prayed ; nor missed his prayer the ear of Jove the counsellor god,
Who granted half, but to a half denied his sanctioning nod. ²⁵⁰
To save the fleet, and from the ships the wasting fire to drive,
This boon he gave, but might not bring the warrior back alive.

Thus to the Father with libation due the hero prayed ;
And to his tent went back, and in the chest the beaker laid.
Then forth he came again, with eye far-ranging, to survey
The Achæan and the Trojan men mingled in dinsome fray.
Then his brave men, led on by dear Patroclus mighty-hearted,
To work the Trojans mickle grief with burning breasts departed.

Swarming they went ; like wasps that build their nests beside the
road,

Whom wanton boys, with wicked wont, to vicious fury goad, 260

Unthinking, for to many men their sport much harm prepareth :

For now some peaceful-plodding man that by the wayside fareth,

Brushes their fretted wings, and they forthwith in bitter mood

Bounce on his face with fervid stings, to fend their buzzing brood.

Fierce even as these the Myrmidons, a dauntless multitude,

Flood from the ships ; and loud the shout of battle rends the sky.

Then to his comrades thus Patroclus speaks with lusty cry :

Brave Myrmidons, of brave Achilles friends and comrades dear !

Quit ye like men, and let your breasts glow with stout-hearted
cheer, 270

That we may honour our great chief, than whom no nobler man

With his close-fighting spearmen leads the ships of the Argive
clan,

And rich Mycenæ's king may weep his proud infatuate bent,

When he the best of all the Greeks with lawless rapine shent.

He spake ; and in their breasts he stirred the lust of fight ; and
they,

Troop pressing troop, across the plain pursued their dusty way,

And round the ships the din of fight 'gan terribly to bray.

But when the Trojans saw Menœtius' stalwart son advancing

With his stout Myrmidons, their armour in the bright sun glancing,

Down sank their hearts ; in hurried-rolling masses they retire ; ²⁸⁰
For sure Achilles now, they deem, casts off his cherished ire,
And turns his hate to love ; eftsoons aghast with yellow fear
They stand and cast their looks about, where safety might be near.

Then first Patroclus stirred the fray, and hurled his shining
spear ;

Close by Protesilaus' ship the blameless hero stood,
And, where the foe was thickest, flung the copper-pointed wood,
And smote Pyrechmes, who had brought a brave equestrian band
From Amydon, where Axios sweeps the fair Pæonian land.

He groaning fell, and dying lay supine on gory ground,
Through the right shoulder pierced. His death pale terror scat-
tered round 290

On all his men ; for brave Patroclus thrilled the stoutest heart,
When the best man of all their clan he slew with deadly dart.
Back from the ships he drove them, and the marching fire was
stayed ;

Half-burnt the smoking hull remained, and they, full sorely frayed,
Tumultuous fled. And now the Greeks their scattered strength
repair

Beside the hollow ships ; and loud the war-cry rends the air.
As when the lofty-lightening Jove, from some peaked mountain
high,

Rolls off the dense dark-brooding cloud that long had veiled the sky,

Forthwith the hills, the crags, the glades, the fields lie fair to view,
And through the widening rift outpeers the boundless-roofing
blue :

300

Even so the Greeks, when from the fleet they drove the Trojan
crew,

Breathed for a space ; but yet no pause to deadly strife was given ;
Not yet the Trojans o'er the plain in dismal rout were driven
Before the Achæans, dear to Mars, but with unwilling feet
Shrank from the men, whose arm from fire redeemed the smoking
fleet.

Then man slew man, as o'er the field the raging battle spread ;
And first Menœtius' warlike son gave to the sunless dead
Areilycus, and smote him in the thigh, an easy prey,
Even as he turned to flee : right through the copper forced its way,
And broke the bone ; he on his face fell flat, and kissed the clay.³¹⁰
Then strong-voiced Menelaus caused stout Thoas' soul to flit
Through the lanced breast, and loosed the bonds by which his
limbs were knit.

Phyleides then Amphiclus caught with keen-preventing glance,
And stayed him in his mid attack, and drave the forceful lance
Into his leg where thick the muscle swells ; his sinews' might
The baleful weapon rives ; and deathful darkness veils his sight.
Then Nestor's sons their prowess proved ; Antilochus the brave
In the soft flank above the groin the pitiless copper drave

To doomed Atymnius ; down he fell ; the life had left him sheer.
Instant the angered Maris sprang, and with his threatful spear ³²⁰
Bestrode his brother's corpse ; but him, before his weapon flew,
The godlike Thrasymede with keen-forecasting valour slew ;
And 'gainst his shoulder drave the brass, which forced its way right
through,
And shattered all the bone, and rove the muscles clean away ;
With a hollow sound he smote the ground, and looked no more on
day.

Thus by tway brothers of the Greeks tway Lycian brothers fell,
And went to Erebus ; them Sarpedon loved exceeding well,
Whose sire was Amisodarus, who nursed the dreadful dire
Chimera, bane of Lycian men, breathing pestiferous fire.
Then the Oilean Ajax his enthralling hand did lay ³³⁰
On Cleobulus, where he chanced to stumble in the fray ;
Nor spared his life, but cut the bonds that knit his life in
tway,
And clave with hilted sword the neck of that misfortuned wight.
Hot reeked the blood from the bright blade ; but o'er his swimming
sight
Dark death was spread ; and him the Fate seized with fell-handed
might.

Then Peneleus and Lycon met with hostile strokes ; for they
Had missed each man his mark, and flung the silly shafts away ;

And now their swords they drew. First Lycon his huge force
displayed,

And smote the knob of his foe's high-crested helmet ; but the blade
Snapt at the hilt ; then Peneleus a weighty stroke upon
His ear brought down, and shore the neck, that the skin was left
alone. 340

Loose hung the head ; and from the trunk the spouting life was
gone.

Then with swift feet brave Merion overtook stout Acamas,
And, as his ear he mounted, made the pointed spear to pass
Through the right shoulder ; back he reeled, and lay among the
dead.

Idomeneus then slew Erymas, and through his mouth he sped
The unsparing shaft ; even to the brain the cold brass tore its course,
And pierced right through, that the white bones were shivered
with the force,

And his firm teeth wrenched from the gums ; his eyes were filled
with blood,

And through his mouth and nostrils with red rush the bubbling flood
Choked the poor gaper ; and dark death his eyes did overcloud. 350

Thus every stout Achæan chief his martial might displayed.
As when a rout of ravening wolves a sudden rush have made
On lambs and kids, which from the fold in the lone hills have
strayed

By careless shepherd's fault ; them now the greedy spoilers seize,
Shorn of defence, and rend the powerless bleating prey with ease :
So on the Trojans rushed the Greeks, and drove the foe pell-mell ;
Mars left their limbs, and in their ears rang fear with dismal
yell.

And still the Telamonian tall on Hector copper-mailed
Hurled shaft on shaft ; and still the Trojan's craft of fight prevailed.
His bull's-hide orb'd shield around his shoulders broad he threw, ³⁶⁰
And warily marked where hurtling darts and hissing arrows flew.
Full well the adverse Jove he knew ; but in the slippery strife
Stood to his dear companions true, and saved their lusty life.
As when athwart the spotless blue a darkly-lowering cloud
Rolls heavy, when great Jove doth brew black storms that bluster
loud,

So from the ships in dire eclipse the fearful Trojan crowd
Drives on ; confusion rolls their ranks ; nor longer Hector's might
Unshaken stands, but from his car he spurs the driving flight,
And in the ditch unwilling leaves his men in woful plight.
Full many steeds their proud manes toss, and plunging snap the
pole, 370

And leave the car, while in the foss the helpless riders roll.
The hot pursuit Patroclus spurs, and where his chariot goes
Brings sorrow to the Trojans. Far and wide the broken foes
Choke with their rout the roads ; aloft the volumed dust uprose,

Blinding the day ; in long black lines, with eager-panting haste
Back from the ships and the tented shore the hoofed steeds are
chased ;

And where the tangled masses roll, there doth Patroclus sway
Shouting, and cheering to the charge, lord of the deathful fray,
Where reeling men and crashing cars are tumbled in deray.
Clean with one bound his horses cleared the foss ; and in his
eye

380

He held the fleeing Hector ; and his heart longed mightily
To smite him ; but the Trojan fled still as the Greek came nigh.
As when above the groaning earth a black-browed storm doth brood,
In autumn when the violent Jove lets down the gushing flood,
Launching against ungodly men the bolts of his angered mood,
Unrighteous kings who from their hearts have cast the sacred awe,
And from the judgment-seat to men deal forth the crooked law ;
Down from the rills with furious force far drives the arrowy
current,

And many a mound is washed to ground by the huge-involving
torrent ;

380

With headlong rush and surly roll the tumid waters pour
Their strength down to the seething sea, and sweep the farmer's
store :

So headlong then the Trojan turns poured o'er the deadly track.

But when divine Patroclus saw the first line beaten back,

Rearward he swept behind their ranks far-reaching, nor allowed
Their eager feet to reach the town, but hedged their huddled crowd
Between the river and the dyke and the ships that line the shore ;
And there he slew the helpless crew, and wroke his vengeance sore.
There Pronoüs first he struck, and with bright lance that ruled
the strife,

Pierced his bared breast beside the shield, and shore his woof of
life. 400

Rattling the rider reeled to ground. Then Thestor, Enops' son,
His charioteer, in the well-polished car now left alone,
He pressed ; him, shrunk into himself, and smitten with strange
fear,

The loose reins stolen from his grasp, he struck with pointed spear
In the right jaw, that through the teeth the pitiless copper ran ;
Then dragged him o'er his chariot's rim, even as a fishing man,
Who, perched upon a jutting rock, a sacred fish hath caught,
And to the land with line in hand, and shining hook hath brought.
So with the lance that stuck in his teeth he dragged him o'er the
rim,

And dashed him gaping on the ground, and left no life in him. 410

Then Erylaus, rushing to the combat, with a stone
He smote upon the head, and through the helmet crushed the bone,
And clave the skull in tway ; he fell, and, reft of lively breath,
Lay prone ; around him closed the night of soul-disrending death.

Then Erymas and Epaltes fell, and brave Amphoterus,
Pyres, and Echius, and Damastor's son, Tlepolemus ;
With them stout Polymelus, Ipheus, and Euippus, found
Black death, whose corpses thickly strewed the many-nurturing
ground.

But when divine Sarpedon saw his trusty men, who wore
No plate beneath their doublet, by Patroclus galled full sore, ⁴²⁰
High o'er the fight he chiding spake to his Lycian men of mettle :
Fie on ye, Lycians ! will ye flee ? myself will head the battle
And prove this man ! for truly he hath worked us mickle seath,
And from the limbs of many stout-souled men let free the breath.

Thus he ; and from his chariot with his harness leapt to ground :
Patroclus saw, and from his seat sprang with an eager bound.
As when tway vultures, with strong crookèd claw and hookèd
bill

Are matched in fight, and harshly scream from some far-looking
hill :

So from these whetted warriors rose the war-cry sharp and shrill. ⁴³⁰
Which when the son of Kronos saw, his breast strong pity stirred,
And thus to Herè, sister-spouse, he flung the wingèd word :
O wretched me, if so must be that with mine eyes I see
Dearest of men, Sarpedon, slain, Menœtius' son, by thee !
This way and that way, sore distraught, I feel my purpose sway,
Whether to rescue him alive from the grim and gashful fray,

And bear him on the light-winged wind to his Lycian home so dear,
Or leave him here sharp death to find from strong Patroclus' spear.

To whom with adverse word replied the large-eyed gracious
dame :

Much-dreaded Jove, what words are these, that from thy lips
forth came ! 440

A mortal man from death, his mortal meed, wilt thou deliver ?
Do so ; but thus to cheat the Fates the tribe of gods will never
Abet thee : hear me plainly speak, and weigh and understand :
If thou shalt send this Lycian wight alive to Lycian land,
Some other god, bethink thee well, with thee hath equal right
To save his son, when death shall dwell beside him in the fight.
Full many sons of gods now stand in siege of sacred Troy,
Whose sires will grudge thy partial hand to save thy Lycian boy.
But sith thou lov'st the godlike youth, and canst not choose but
grieve, 450

Even let him die, and let that death Patroclus' spear achieve ;
But when sweet life hath left him, then thy messengers prepare,
Even Death and soothing Sleep, to waft him through the breezy
air,

And bear his body to his home in the fruitful Lycian plains,
That there his friends may deck his corpse, and pile with pious
pains

Green mound and pillar ; such the grace that to the dead pertains.

She spake; and her the god obeyed who rules with sovran
power

Both gods and men; and on the ground forthwith a drizzling
shower

Of blood he sent, in honour of his dear-loved Lycian boy, 460
Doomed now to die from Lycia far on the loamy glebe of Troy.

But when they twain together came, and when they stood full
near,

Then first Patroclus Thrasymelus slew, the comrade dear
Of the divine Sarpedon; him with fatal stroke beneath
The stomach low he smote, and from his limbs dismissed the
breath.

Then on Patroclus rushed Sarpedon with fierce-hearted speed,
But missed him with his lance, and smote swift Pedasus his steed
On the right shoulder. Reeled the horse, and, shrieking, bit the
clay,

Rolled on the slippery ground, and harshly moaned his soul away.
But the immortal pair, when low their mortal fellow lay, 470
Started asunder with a bound; the yoke did creak and jar,
And wild entanglement perplexed the reins that guide the car.
But of this harm a sure reneid the wise Automedon knew;
He from his brawny thigh with speed the sword long-bladed
drew,

And slashed the traces from the side, and free the chariot flew.

Xanthus and Balus own his hand, and with willing feet obey,
And again the hostile heroes join the life-devouring fray.
And first Sarpedon flung his lance, but the weapon went astray :
O'er the left shoulder of his foe the copper glancing clear
Shot nigh, but missed the man ; the godlike Greek then hurled
his spear,
Nor on a fruitless errand from his hand was sped the dart, 480
But smote him where the midriff walls the tough and muscular
heart.
As when a stout and massy oak, or horrid pine-tree tall,
Or poplar white, in lonesome glade of woody mount doth fall
Beneath the woodman's sharpened axe to build huge ships withal :
So fell the chief. Outstretched before his shining car he lay,
And groaned aloud ; and with his hand he grasped the slippery clay.
As when a lion leaps the fold, and gorily doth slay
A fiery-souled stout-hearted bull mid the heavy-gaited kine,
Which groaning bellows forth his life beneath the force divine
Of the strong spoiler's jaws ; so fell that noble Lycian then, 490
And dying spake with eager breath to the dearest of his men :
Dear Glaucus mine, if thou hast soldier's mettle in thy blood,
Now show it ! now the hour demands a spearman stout and good ;
Now seek delight in grim-faced fight, and brook no other mood !
Stir up my captains ! rouse my men, my Lycian spearmen brave,
Sarpedon's corpse, their fallen chief, from foul despite to save !

And fight thyself the first ; for truly shame and sore disgrace
To them and thee shall ever be, if the Danaan host deface
My frame, and spoil my arms, here prostrate laid before the ships.
Then stand thou fast, and rouse my men with war-inspiring lips ! ⁵⁰⁰

He spake ; forthwith the dark of death shrouded that hero good.
But stout Patroclus with his heel upon Sarpedon stood,
And pulled the spear, and with the shaft the midriff came to view ;
Forth with the spear-head to the light his flitting soul he drew.
His snorting steeds the Myrmidons with vigorous grasp detain,
Eager to run, when now no more they felt their master's rein.

But Glaucus' heart sharp sorrow seized, when he heard his
dying friend
Cry through the battle ; for his strength was feeble to defend,
And with his hand he pressed his arm ; for sore he felt the smart ⁵¹⁰
Of the rankling wound which Teucer gave, when he with well-
aimed dart

Strove from the steep-faced dyke to drive the Trojan foe away.
Then thus to the far-darting god, Apollo, he did pray :
Hear me, who in the Lycian land dost dwell with kindly sway
Or in the broad-wayed Troy ! for thou hast open ears to all,
Or near, or far, who on thy name, distraught with sorrow, call.
The dart of Teucer frets my hand—still bleeds the open wound ;
My shoulder drags ; no strength within my pithless arm is found
To fling the spear, or closely gripe the foe on gory ground, ⁵²⁰

Sarpedon, best of Lycians, by Patroclus' spear hath perished,
And Jove hath left his son to die, untended and uncherished.
But, O Apollo, ruler of the loamy Lycian land,
I pray thee lull this agony that diggeth through my hand !
And make me strong again, that I may rouse the Lycian crew,
And o'er the body of my friend the tugging strife renew.
Thus prayed the hero ; nor the god his pious suit denied,
But soothed to sleep the shooting smart, and the red fountain dried
That welled from his wound, and to his heart the warlike strength
supplied.

And Glaucus felt the touch divine ; and his heart was thrilled
with joy 530
That his prayer was heard by the mighty god who shields the
sacred Troy.

Then all the camp he mustered, and upstirred each Lycian wight
For brave Sarpedon's corpse to ply the hero-slaughtering fight.
Through all the Trojan lines he went, and with stout pace did pass
To the godlike prince Agenor, and the brave Polydamas.
Then to Æneas and to Hector, cased in copper vest,
He hied ; and with these wingèd words he Hector thus addressed :
O Hector, of thy brave allies all care hath left thy breast ;
Thy brave allies, who from their home, and kin, and clanship far,
Pour out their lives for thee ; but thou dost slack the reins of
war. 540

Dead on the field Sarpedon lies, that strong shield-bearing wight,
Who swayed broad-fielded Lycia's land, by right and kingly
might ;

Even him by stout Patroclus' spear hath brazen Mars subdued.
Then stand ye firm, brave comrades ! keenly whet the vengeful
mood,

Lest they despoil the hero, and with savage insult rude
Mar his fair frame ; for now in truth the Achæan host advances,
Grief-goaded for their dear-loved friends who fell by Trojan
lances !

He spoke ; and bitter sorrow seized the Trojans great and small,
Unbearable ; for he had been a strong stay to them all,
Though stranger born ; a mighty host he led to aid the battle, ⁵⁵⁰
And still was first where helmets ring, swords clash, and chariots
rattle.

Right on the Grecian line they charged, and Hector led the van,
Stung by sharp grief for slain Sarpedon. But the Grecian clan
Patroclus' shaggy-hearted might with keen words did upstir ;
And thus the Ajax pair he roused, who needed not his spur :
Stout Ajax pair, prove now your might in front of the bristling
fray,

As ye have bravely proved before, or bravelier, if ye may !
Breathless Sarpedon lies, who first o'erleapt the Achæan mound ;
Now ours the task to hale him from the red and reeking ground,

With many a gash defaced ; now ours to strip the dead, and
send 560

Down to deep hell all eager friends that will his corpse defend.

He spake ; and to his rousing word their willing feet attend.
Then firmly massed the Trojans came, and Lyeia's valiant sons,
Against the brave Achæans, and the stout-souled Myrmidons.
And now about the hero's corpse fierce raged the burning battle,
With cry and shout, and mighty rout, and fearful ring and rattle.
For a misty veil of darkness Jove around Sarpedon spread,
That they might moil with bloody toil about the dear-loved dead.

Then first the noble Trojans pressed Achæa's quick-eyed sons,
And one was struck, nor meanest he, of the martial Myrmidons, ⁵⁷⁰
Godlike Epegeus, son of Agacles the mighty-souled,
Who in Budeum's pleasant town a strong ancestral hold
Possessed erewhile ; but having slain his kinsman in a brawl,
To silver-footed Thetis fled, and Peleus' friendly hall,
Who, with their dear rank-breaking boy, and all the Phthian might,
Sent him to steed-abounding Troy, with Priam's folk to fight.
Him, as he seized the dead, the glorious Hector with a stone
Smote on the head, and through the massy helmet clave the bone
Of the skull in two ; he forward fell, and, reft of lively breath,
Lay prone ; and round him closed the night of soul-disrending
death. 580

But sorrow seized Patroclus for his slaughtered fellow's scath :

Right through the foremost fight he rushed, like to a hawk which
swoops

Down on the starlings and the daws, and frays their cawing troops ;
So swiftly sprang Patroclus 'gainst the firm-massed Trojan band,
Galled in his heart for him who fell by glorious Hector's hand.
Then Sthenelaus with a stone he smote, and cut right through
The tendons of his neck, that from his frame the spirit flew.
The Trojans quailed ; and Hector back with his foremost men
withdrew.

Far as the cast of light-winged dart which in athletic game
A strong man throws with practised art, to win gymnastic fame, ⁵⁹⁰
Or in the tug of battle to bear down a foe ; so far
Back went the Trojans ; but the Greeks pushed on the swelling
war.

And first the chief of the shield-bearing Lycians, Glaucus bold,
Turned round and slew stout Bathycles, a hero lofty-souled,
Loved son of Chalcon, who in Hellas dwelt, and reaped the praise
Of wealth amid the Myrmidons, and walked in prosperous ways.
On him brave Glaucus turned, as in the hot pursuit he pressed,
And with his pointed pike received his forward-plunging breast.
With rattling mail he fell ; sharp sorrow seized the Greeks ; but
joy,

When died that valiant foeman, thrilled the rallying troops of
Troy.

Round Glaucus now they mass their ranks ; but not their native
might

The Greeks forgot, but onward rolled their bristling bands in fight.

Then Merion slew a Trojan, in bright brazen mail ydlight,

Laogonos, Onetor's son, whose sire was priest of Jove

In Ida ; him even as a god the folk revere and love.

His son between the jaw and ear bold Merion smote ; his breath

Fled from his limbs, and round him closed the dark-involving
death.

Aeneas then at Merion hurls his copper-pointed lance,

As with quick step the Cretan doth behind his shield advance. ⁶¹⁰

But Merion marked the weapon, and eschewed the danger well ;

Forward with dexterous bend he sprang ; the spear behind him
fell,

Its point in earth ; its weighty shaft with sounding tremor shook,

And all the force of deadly Mars the silly lance forsook.

Then to the Cretan turned the prince, and taunting spoke to him :

Merion, I praise thy knightly grace ; thou art a dancer trim,

But thou hadst tript thy latest pace, had I but pierced thy limb !

To whom thus Merion spear-renowned, replied : O Trojan prince,

I know thy prowess ; stout art thou, untaught in war to wince, ⁶²⁰

But not thy might can quench the light of all men ; thou art
made

Thyself of mortal stuff ; if now the gods my wish shall aid,

I'll prick thee here with my good spear, and thou shalt quickly go
To him who rides on sable steeds, and lays all vaunters low !

He spake ; but him thus gently chid Menœtius' godlike son :
Beseems not thee to bandy words, my valiant Merion !
Till the black earth shall him embrace the foe will nothing slack ;
Not taunting words, believe me ; force alone may drive him back.
In council mouths are mighty, but in battle blows are master ; ⁶³⁰
Then rein thy words, my trusty friend, that strokes may travel
faster.

Thus he, and urged the fight ; nor Merion loitered to begin.
As, when a band of woodmen through the forest goes, to thin
The thick-set trees, stroke follows stroke with quick-resounding
din ;

So rose the roar of battle from the frequent-trodden ground,
Where bucklers broad of stout bull's-hide, with brazen rim ybound,
From clashing brass and rattling darts gave back the ringing sound.
A sharp-eyed man had failed to ken Sarpedon on that day,
Where grimly bruised and battered, and enswathed in gory clay,
And pierced from head to foot with many a ruthless point he
lay. 640

Round him in freshly-pouring troops doth the red strife prevail.
As when thick flies on buzzing wing the creamy froth assail,
Beside the cow-stalls in the spring, when fresh milk floods the
pail ;

So round the noble dead they swarmed. But mighty Jove on high
Turned not away from the sturdy fray his bright far-viewing eye,
But with sleepless lid surveyed the field, forecasting in his mind
If now the brave Patroclus in the sweatful fight shall find
Fate from the noble Hector's hands, and for Sarpedon's death,
His dear-loved son, give quittance with his own dear body's breath,
Or if the godlike son of Priam for a space should toil, 650
Till stout Patroclus with more death might glut the bitter broil.
And as he pondered in his soul, him seemed the better plan,
That the comrade of Achilles still should lead the Phthian clan,
Till back to broad-wayed Troy he drove stout Hector copper mailed,
And o'er the lives of many foes with cruel force prevailed.
Then Jove smote Hector's heart with fear; the princely Trojan
 quailed,
And mounted on his car and fled, and called on all his crew
To flee with him; for well the sacred scales of Jove he knew.
Nor now the valiant Lycians stood, but wheeled their masses round
Fearful, when they beheld their king stretched breathless on the
 ground 660
Amid thick heaps of dead; for many o'er him piled that day
Found dusty death, while Kronos' son drew out the sturdy fray.
Then from the shoulders of the king of the Lycian warriors brave
They spoiled the sun-bright armour, which straightway Patroclus
 gave

To his stout Myrmidons to bear to the black sea-faring ships.

Then to Apollo fell these words from Jove's high-thundering lips :
Dear son, Apollo, silver-bowed, haste now, and wipe the gore
Black-clotted from Sarpedon's corpse, with wounds disfigured sore ;
Then bear him from the host apart, and with pure water bathe
him ;

Anoint him with ambrosia, and in weeds immortal swathe him. 670
Then Sleep and Death, twin-born, my faithful messengers, prepare,
To waft him with the breezes swift on the liquid paths of air,
And bear his body to his home in Lycia's fruitful plains,
That there his friends may deck his corpse, and pile with pious
pains

Green mound and pillar ; such the grace that to the dead pertains.

He spake ; nor did the archer god the Father disobey,
But down from Ida's brow he flew to the weary-wasteful fray,
And took Sarpedon's corpse, and bore him through the breezy
way,

And in the water flowing pure his gore-gashed body bathed,
Anointed with ambrosia, and with weeds immortal swathed. 680
Then Sleep and Death, the twins divine, Jove's messengers, did
bring

Him to his fruitful Lycian home on swift air-cleaving wing.

Then brave Patroclus urged his steeds and charioteer to go
In swift pursuit of the Trojan men, and work them nickle woe ;

Witless ! who, had his heart but kept what wise Achilles said,
Not then had closed his lightsome eyes in death's involving shade.
But always Jove's far-reaching thought o'ersways the wit of men,
Jove, who with fury's fateful spur did prick that hero then. 690

Now say, Menœtius' son, whom first, whom last of lively breath
Thou didst bereave, when all the gods had called thee to thy
death?

Adrastus and Epistor, Melanippus, Echeclus,
Antoniüs, and Megades he slew, and Perimus ;
Then Eläsus and Muliüs and Pylartes felt his might,
But all the rest bethought them of the life-preserving flight.

Then truly the high-gated Troy to ground had fallen sheer
Beneath Patroclus' hands, so fiercely raged his maddened spear,
Had not Apollo, perched aloft on the town's well-built tower, 700
Brought bane to Greece, and shielded Troy with hand of mighty
power.

Thrice the high walls the hero mounts, and grasps the jutting crown,
Thrice came the son of Jove and dashed the bold assaulter down,
Back pushing with immortal hands the shield of the mortal man.
But when the fourth time he advanced, and like a god up ran,
Then with these wing'd words the god him thus to chide began :
Back ! Jove-born mortal, back ! not thou the grace of Troy shalt
mar

(So Fate hath willed), nor Peleus' son, in fight thy better far.

He spake ; and wise Patroclus his hot bent forbore to follow, ⁷¹⁰
Fearing the wrath of the far-darting son of Jove, Apollo.
But Hector stood at the Scæan gate, and reined his horses there,
And pondered whether in the plain the open fight to dare,
Or with the high wall at his back the fierce assault to bear.
And, as he pondered, at his side the son of Jove appears
Like to a man in bright-hued bloom and lustihood of years,
Asius, the son of Dymas, and the true full-blooded brother
Of queenly Heecuba, the horse-subduing Hector's mother,
Who dwelt where strong Sangarius rolls through Phrygian valleys
hollow ;

In guise like him to Hector spake the son of Jove, Apollo : ⁷²⁰
O Hector, dost thou lag the last, whom all were wont to follow ?
If I were strong above thy strength, as I am weaker far,
I'd make you feel how grief is near to him who shrinks from war.
But rouse thee ; ride the strong-hoofed steeds ; and if our high
protector,

Apollo aids, this day 'tis like Patroclus dies by Hector.

He spoke, and went ; and left a sting that roused the hero's
might.

Then Hector bade his charioteer lash to the dinsome fight
The strong-hoofed steeds ; but now the silver-bowed far-darting
god

Swept through the thickest fray, and where his feet immortal trod

Came harm to Greece ; but glory to the godlike Hector grew, 730
Who passed the other Greeks, nor any wight unvalued slew,
Only Patroclus with his eye the impetuous Trojan knew.
Him to oppose Patroclus leapt from his car with eager bound ;
His left hand held his spear ; but in his right he from the ground
Lifted a huge sharp stone, and with firm hand he grasped it round,
Then poised his planted force, and flung ; the fated mark was near
To the sure stone ; it smote crest-flickering Hector's charioteer,
Cebriones, of Priam far-renowned the bastard son.

Him, as he held the reins, he struck with the cruel-pointed stone ;
Through both the eyebrows went the flint, nor might the bone
repel 740

Its smashing force ; into the dust his eyeballs sightless fell
Before his feet ; he, like a diver who hath headlong darted
Into the deep, down reeled ; and from its hull the soul departed.

Then thus to Hector's charioteer the chief spoke tauntingly :
Ye gods ! a nimble man is here, who tumbles trippingly !
Oh, were he but a diver in the deep fish-teeming sea,
He'd bring a feast of oysters for a thousand men together,
Albeit he pitched him from the boat in stormy-rocking weather !
'Tis a rare sight to see with what an easy grace he reels ;
Truly these Trojan captains caper lightly with their heels ! 750

He spoke ; and on Cebriones then rushed that hero bold,
Even as a lion rushes, when it leaps into the fold

And plies the fleecy slaughter, till an arrow in the breast
Shall pierce him ; on Cebriones even so Patroclus pressed.
Then from his chariot to the ground stout Hector did alight ;
And they about Cebriones like tway grim lions fight,
Which on a woody hill strive for a new slain stag, when both
Keen hunger stings, and whetted rage frets the fierce blood of both ;
So Hector and Patroclus fought about the charioteer, 760
Longing to lance each other with the sharp unsparing spear.
Stout Hector seized him by the head, nor slacked his brawny hold,
Godlike Patroclus by the feet ; the other Trojans bold
Closed with the Greeks ; and wildly the red tide of battle rolled.
As when the east wind and the south in savage-cuffing mood
Sweep through the gusty glens, and stir the depths of the leafy wood ;
Ash, oak, and slender cornel 'neath the straining tempest swing,
Their stout stems creak, with stroke on stroke their mighty arms
they fling
In clashing strife, that with the roar the rocky mountains ring ;
Thus Greek and Trojan wildly spurred the fray with vengeful spear 770
For mutual slaughter ; far from them was thought of yellow fear.
Full many darts the charioteer now pierced where he lay dead,
Full many fatal-feathered shafts from twanging bows were sped,
Full many sharp stones dented shields of men who fought that day
Around his corpse ; but he, while dusty eddies round him play,
Oblivious of his horseman's craft, large-limbed and lengthful lay.

So raged the strife ; and till the sun had clomb the middle sky,
Equal the vantage stands, and with no gain the people die.
But when the sun sank to the hour which frees the sturdy steers⁷⁸⁰
From sweatful yoke, the Greeks waxed strong in the battle of the
spears.

From the hot strife of darts the gashed Cebriones they hale,
And from the shoulders of the slain they strip the shining mail.
And now Patroclus in the fight more dire and deadly grew.
Thrice on the Trojan ranks he rushed with terrible war-halloo,
Like to swift-sweeping Mars ; and thrice nine Trojan men he slew.
But when the fourth time he advanced, strong as a god, O then,
The hour was come that cut him off from ways and works of men !
For him Apollo crossed with might in the hero-slaughtering field
Awful ; but not to mortal sight the immortal stood revealed ;
For thickly veiled with misty night the archer fought concealed,⁷⁹⁰
And from behind with weighty hand he smote the mortal wight
On the back between the shoulders ; giddy whirls involved his
sight,

And from his head the helmet fell, pushed by immortal might,
And rattling on the ground, beneath the horses' feet was trod ;
The dainty crest with gore was soiled, and o'er the dusty sod
Unsightly trailed ; such foul despite might not be done before
To this bright horse-hair-crested helm, to stain its pride with gore ;
For it had fenced a godlike man, e'en Peleus' son, who wore

Its beauty on his front ; but Jove had willed that Hector now
Should wear it—for how short a space !—to grace his fated brow.⁸⁰⁰
Stunned with the stroke, Patroclus' hands the broken lance did
yield,

Huge, massy, weighty, brazen-pointed ; and his oval shield,
Dashed from his shoulders, with the belt fell rattling on the field.
The son of Jove, Apollo, then his corslet loosed ; his wit
Strange terror dazed ; and in his limbs the bonds were all unknit.
Aghast he stood ; then from behind a sharp spear pricked his frame
Between the shoulders ; from a Dardan man the sorrow came,
Euphorbus, Panthoüs' son, like whom of all the youth was none
To fling the spear, or curb the steed, or with swift foot to run.
Fresh come was he, and in his first assay of tearful war 810
Full twenty men his hand had sent reeling from battle-car.
He first into Patroclus' flesh enforced the pitiless brass,
Then drew it forth, and backward ran and mingled with the mass.
For not his life he reached, nor dared, when he had struck, to
stay

And face him, though of armour bared, in the hero-slaughtering
fray.

Nathless, vexed by the Trojan's spear, and by Apollo's power,
Backward Patroclus shrank in fear to shun the deathful hour.
But Hector, when the mighty-souled Patroclus he beheld,
Galled by the pitiless-tearing brass, to slow retreat compelled,

Forward he came full near, and made his pointed lance to pass ⁸²⁰
Through the soft flesh above the groin ; full deeply stuck the brass.
With heavy fall he fell ; and grief seized each Achæan wight.
As when a lion overbears a stout wild-boar in fight,
When high among the mountains they contend with whetted spite
About a shallow well, and both with thirst are goaded sore,
Till the strong lion hath subdued the fiercely-gasping boar :
So Hector felled Patroclus in the soul-dislodging strife,
Whose spear full many Trojan limbs had reft of lusty life,
Then o'er the prostrate hero thus outspoke with taunting phrase :
Patroclus, once thy vaunt was loud that thy strong arm should

raze

830

My city's walls, and with harsh loss transport the Dardan daughters,
Enthralled to thee, in ships across the broad Ægean waters ;
Foolish ! no Greek or Trojan maid shall know the enslaving hand
While Hector's horses scour the plain, and Hector's self doth stand,
Mid war-delighting Trojans first to ward the perilous hour
From sacred Troy ; but thee the kites shall on this plain devour.
Luckless ! Achilles was thy friend, but played no friendly part,
Who stayed behind, and with brave words spurred on thy silly
heart :

Patroclus mine, I rede thee well, come not from sanguine fray,
Back to the ships till thy keen dart hath forced its gory way ⁸⁴⁰
Through Hector's mail to Hector's heart ; thus he, I wis, did say.

His word thy foolish heart did trust, and thou hast found thy death.

To whom Patroclus thus, with failing force and fainting breath :
Hector, an easy boast is thine ; thy ready victory came
From Jove, the son of Kronos, and Apollo, who did shame
Lightly my mortal might, and took the bright mail from my frame.
But if mere mortal men with me had matched their mortal might,
Even twenty Hectors like to thee had closed their eyes in night.
But me the Fate, and Leto's seed, and Panthoüs' valiant son
Subdned ; thy hand but clenched the deed, when more than half
was done. 850

But this I say, and in thy heart do thou my warning ponder ;
Not long on earth with living wights alive shall Hector wander,
But death and mastering fate are near ; that fate thou mayst not
shun,

Which soon shall quell thee by the spear of Peleus' godlike son !

He spake ; and death around his eyne thick veil of darkness
spread ;

And down to Hades' sunless clime his tristful spirit fled,
Wailing that in life's lusty prime he joined the pithless dead.
To whom, though reft of lively breath, spoke Hector, standing
nigh :

Pour not, Patroclus, in mine ear black-boding prophecy.
Who knows but Thetis' godlike seed by my good lance may fall,⁸⁶⁰
And fare the first with happy speed to Pluto's gloomy hall.

He spoke ; and on the corpse he pressed his heel, and from the
wound

Drew forth the brass, and pushed him back, face upward, on the
ground.

Then rushed with eager spear in hand against Automedon,
The faithful charioteer, the squire of Peleus' godlike son ;
But him the nimble-footed steeds, whom gods to Peleus gave,
Immortal, bounding o'er the plain, from hand of Hector save.

BOOK XVII.



ARGUMENT.

Hot swells the battle round Patroclus slain ;

Stout Hector in Achilles' armour dight

Flics like a tempest o'er the dinsome plain ;

But Menelaus rules the Argive fight.

Achilles' steeds weep for their master's pain ;

But o'er the field still sways the Trojan might.

And Pelus' son now learns the tearful story,

How his dear comrade lies all gashed and gory.

BOOK XVII.

NOR Menelaus, dear to Mars, of the sad chance, I ween,
Remained unweeting, when Patroclus bit the gory green.
Into the van he strode, all mailed with armour's glittering sheen,
And o'er the dead sore-grieving stood, as o'er her calf a cow,
That ne'er had calf before, draws out a long and querulous low.
So Menelaus yellow-haired bestrode Patroclus now,
And high his glancing spear he bore, and his buckler broad he
spread
Before his friend, if any dare to seize the sacred dead.
But not the son of Panthoüs, strong in the ashen-shafted spear,
Mencetius' prostrate son forgot, but came and stood full near,¹⁰
And with a wrathful challenge thus to Sparta's king he spake :
Jove-bred Atrides, dear to Mars, brave people's leader, take
Thy foot away, nor o'er the dead thy pointed weapon shake.
The spoil is mine. I of the Trojans, and their brave allies,
First maimed him in the sturdy fight ; to me the gory prize
Belongs ; my rightful glory filch not from me, nor my prey,
Lest in the strife thine own dear life thy folly's fine shall pay.

To whom the yellow-haired Atrides wrathful thus replied :
O Father Jove, not wise are men who lift their crested pride
In vauntful phrase ! Not panther grim, nor lion in the wood, ²⁰
Nor the wild-boar, that of all beasts frets with the fiercest mood,
When in its breast by foes oppressed the foaming rancour swells,
Towers with such prideful force as in these sons of Panthoüs dwells.
Full surely Hyperenor's pride, that horse-subduing wight,
When he cast shame on me, relied upon the nervy might
Of youth in vain, when I by him was rated dastard knight
Among the Greeks ; truly not then his legs did bear him far,
His wife to cheer and parents dear, returning from the war.
Even so thy knees will I unstring, if thou shalt madly mar
My bent. I give thee prudent rede ; within the cincture keep ³⁰
Of thine own people. With wise speed into thy safety creep,
Ere harm befall thee ! When it hath fallen a very babe may know.

He spake ; nor moved him ; for the son of Panthoüs answered so :
O Menelaus, dear to Mars, full surely shalt thou rue
With thine own life my brother's death, whom thy harsh weapon
slew,
And in the inner chamber left his widow newly wed,
And forced his parents to bewEEP their daughter's mateless bed.
Truly their hearts, with sorrow pricked, a soothing balm shall know,
When to the godlike Phrontis and to Panthoüs I shall show
Thy gore-grinned head, and of his mail despoil their hated foe. ⁴⁰

But cease we prating. What our pith can do in fearful battle
Let the deed show ; the sturdy blow approves the warrior's mettle !

He spake ; and into Menelaus' shield his spear he sent,
But pierced not through the copper plate ; the point was back-
ward bent

From the stout buckler. Then the brave Atrides yellow-haired,
Prayed to high Jove with lance in hand, and a deadly stroke
prepared,

And all his weight and all his force into the weapon threw,
And pierced him in the root of the throat, as back his step he
drew.

Right through his neck the spear-head ran, and sharply overbore
him ;

With hollow sound he smote the ground, and his armour rattled
o'er him.

50

Then blood besmeared his locks, that like the Graces were, so
fair,

And ringlets' glossy twine, yclasped with gold and silver rare.

As, when a man hath trained a green and sapful olive-tree

In a lone glade where wealth of purling waters runneth free,

Beautiful, leafy, lightly tossed in the delicate changeful play

Of zephyrs, and unfolding rich its white blooms to the day ;

Sudden a blast leaps from the hills, and with a roaring sound

Uptears it from the trench, and flings it flat on the gleby ground.

Even so o'er Panthoüs' son did Menelaus' spear prevail,
As victor now he laid his hands on the Trojan's glittering mail. 60
As when a lion mountain-bred who nurseth in his breast
Unbroken strength, o'erleaps a fence, and some fat ox, the best,
Hath seized, and first his neck he breaks with fangs both sharp
and strong,

And laps the blood, and tears the quivering flesh, and riots long
Upon the gory food ; anon with dogs the swains appear,
And shake the woods with hoot and yell and wild halloo ; but near
They venture not ; for all their heart is held by pallid fear.
So fell the hearts of Trojan men, nor dared they to assail
Stout Menelaus, when his hand would reave the glittering mail.
And soon Atrides to his tent had borne that vauntful prize 70
Lightly, had not Apollo seen, with dark disavouring eyes,
And stirred up Hector, fierce as Mars, and from the common ken
Came masked in guise of Mentès, leader of Ciconian men ;
Thus masked, to Hector's princely might the wingèd words spake
he :

O Hector, bootless is thy quest ! Pelides' steeds for thee
Were never meant ; to him alone of men, and to none other,
They yield proud necks, to him, the son of an immortal mother.
Meanwhile Atrides yellow-haired gives his wild humour rein,
Bestrides Patroclus, and the best of Trojan men hath slain, 80
The son of Panthoüs, now laid stark on the ensanguined plain.

Thus he ; and back into the ranks the god doth swiftly dart ;
But sorrow with strong gripe constrained stout Hector's darkling
heart.

Wistful he looked about ; and soon with rapid glance he found
Atrides spoiling Panthoüs' son, who on the gory ground
Lay flat, while reeking welled the blood from his big-gaping wound.
Hotly he ran through all the van yelad in glowing brass,
And shouted, fierce as fire, which from Hephaestus' forge may pass
Unquenchable ; him Menelaus heard the battle thorough,
And to his own proud heart thus spake, and voiced the mighty
sorrow : 90

Woe worth the day ! if now I pause, and quit the glittering prize,
And eke Patroclus, for my cause who dead and breathless lies !
Then me some Greek might justly chide, a monarch craven-souled.
But if stout Hector I abide with venture overbold
Alone, then he with his stout men will overflow me sheer ;
For even there he comes, and all his storming troop is near.
But oh, fond heart, what dreamest thou ? Why stand I wavering
here ?

Truly the man in gods' despite who lifts the hostile lance
Against a man whom Jove doth love, upon himself mischance
In flood shall bring. Then let no Greek rate me a craven king, ¹⁰⁰
If I from Hector turn, o'er whom Jove spreads his sheltering
wing.

But if my voice the son of Telamon might reach ; and he
With all his might would fan the fight, and front the foe with me,
O then, even in a god's despite from Hector's mastering arms
I'll snatch the dead, and choose the least of two avoidless harms !

Thus with his own high heart the son of Atreus held discourse,
While Hector nearer pressed, and led the embattled Trojan force.
Then back Atrides paced, while from his hand the body fell,
And oft he looked behind ; as when a lion, bearded well,
Whom dogs and men with hoot and yell and frequent-showering
dart

110

Drive from the fold ; he with unwilling step and surly heart
Shrinks grimly from the counted prey, and harmless leaves the pen :
So from Patroclus back withdrew the galled Atrides then,
And to his people came ; then stood, and cast his eyes around,
Wistful, if nigh upon the field stout Telamon's son were found.
Him on the outmost left he spied of the dinsome-driving battle,
Cheering his men, and rousing in their hearts the valorous mettle.
For truly in their quaking breasts pale fear Apollo stirred ;
To him Atrides ran, and thus forth flung the wingèd word :
Ajax, one deed with worthy speed may now be bravely done !
If we Patroclus' corpse bring forth to Peleus' godlike son,
All naked as he lies. His mail stout Hector's might hath won.

120

He spoke ; and through stout Ajax' veins the warlike fury fared,
And to the van he instant ran with Atrides yellow-haired.

Here Hector, having spoiled Patroclus' arms, with hot endeavour
Now dragged his corpse, that from his shoulders his sharp blade
might sever

The head, and to the Trojan dogs his hated trunk deliver.

Now Ajax came, and planted firm his huge shield like a tower.

And Hector to his people paced, shunning the deadly hour,

And sprang into his car; and gave his men the arms to bear 130

To lofty Pergamus, and hang a famous trophy there.

Then round Patroclus Ajax threw his buckler broad, and stood

Even as a lion stands before his shaggy-breasted brood,

A long-maned lion with his whelps, whom in a lonely wood

The hunters cross; he stands, and then with surly strength
defies,

And draws his weight of eyebrows down upon his glaring eyes :

So Ajax stands and fends his friend, and all approach denies.

On the other side the yellow-haired Atrides stood, while sorrow

Sat on his heart, and bitter smart shot through his kingly
marrow.

Then Glaucus, valorous chief, who led the Lycian company, 140

With darkling eye stout Hector scanned, and sharply thus spake he :

Hector, a goodly man to see art thou ; a soldier none

Will call thee now, whose newest skill is how to turn and run.

But tell me this, and ponder well, if with thy single arm,

And none but Trojan hands to aid, Troy may escape from harm ?

For surely none of Lycians lofty-souled will toil for Troy
Against the Greeks. Why should we drain our sap in harsh
employ,
Fighting with others' foes, for chary thanks and scanty joy ?
Unpitiful prince, how shouldst thou save a lesser-valued man
When even Sarpedon, guest and friend, crown of our Lycian clan,¹⁵⁰
Thou stricken saw'st, and from the spoiling Greeks stout Hector
ran ?

Sarpedon, who alive from thee and from thy Dardan brood
Much harm repelled ; but being dead, the dogs may lap his blood !
For the which cause, if Lycian men will hear my word, this day
We'll go ; and o'er proud Ilium's towers let reinless ruin sway !
For, if such dauntless venture now possessed the Trojan band
As fires the hearts of men who fight for hearth and fatherland,
And fling their lives into the hurly of grim war with joy,
Oh, then, full soon Patroclus' corpse were haled to breezy Troy !
Could we but once within the walls of Priam's citadel¹⁶⁰
His body bring, by valour snatched from the battle's hot pell-mell,
Then would the Argives give us back Sarpedon's mail with joy,
And we that king should bravely bring into the broad-wayed Troy.
For truly this Menœtius' son was friend and fellow dear
To the most bravest of the Greeks who fight with sword and spear ;
But thou from haughty Ajax' stride didst shrink back even now,
Nor durst his soldier-look abide ; much braver he than thou !

To whom with dark regard thus spoke the tall crest-flickering warrior :

Glaucus, what witless word hath crossed thy teeth's unguarded barrier ? 170

A prudent man wert thou - so oft my partial tongue would say -
Above all men who gather grain from Lycia's loamy clay ;
But now thy tongue hath rashly flung a foolish word, that Hector
Did make retreat with craven feet, and left huge Ajax victor !
Not me the din of battle, or the tramp of horses frays ;
But o'er the fight the sovran might of Jove the counsellor
 sways,

Who oft the boldest warrior scares, and from before his eyne
Snatches the vantage, when his will doth to the foe incline.
But come, good comrade, stand beside, and give good heed to me,
If I this tide, as thou dost chide, shall quickly turn and flee, 180
Or if some eager Argive, smit in the heart with yellow fear,
Shall quit Patroclus' gory corpse, and shun my fateful spear.

He spoke ; and to the Trojans called aloud, that all might hear :
Trojans and Lycians, Dardans brave, that love close-handed battle,
Be men, and in your burning breasts let flame the martial mettle !
Whiles I of that swift-footed wight the beautiful harness don,
Which from Patroclus' godlike might in sturdy fight I won.

Thus Hector spoke ; and from the gory field of wasteful war
Departed ; swift he ran with wingèd foot ; nor distant far

His comrades brave he overtook, who from the battle bore 190
To sacred Troy the arms renowned, which fierce Pelides wore.
And, standing from the tearful strife apart, his harness there
He doffed, and gave it to his war-delighting men to bear
To sacred Troy ; the whilst himself with mickle joy and pride
Donned the immortal mail, which gods, who hold the welkin wide,
Erst gave to Peleus, Peleus old to his son of wondrous might ;
But not the son grew old, I ween, in his father's armour dight.
And when the cloud-compelling Jove from lofty Ida's peak
Beheld him bracing to his limbs the mail of the godlike Greek,
He shook his brows, and to his soul these weighty words spake
he : 200

Full-wretched man, the thought, I wis, of death is far from thee,
Which yet is near, while thou dost proudly don the immortal mail
Of that best captain of the Greeks, who makes the bravest quail.
And his best friend, the gentle and the strong, thou didst assail
With deadly lance ; and from him thou didst take, not meant for
thee,

These sun-bright arms. Nathless enjoy thine hour of strength
from me,

Short solace for this grief that never more thy dear-loved wife,
Andromachè, shall see thy face returned from gory strife.

He spake ; and with his eyebrow dark Jove nodded from afar.
But close to Hector's limbs now clung the adopted weeds of war ;²¹⁰

Mars rushed into his soul, fierce, terrible, and filled his frame
With lust of fight. Then to the troops of brave allies he came
High-shouting o'er the field; and to all eyes the semblance
bore

Of that great-souled Pelides whose far-blazing arms he wore,
And to each captain as he passed the rousing word he threw.

His call Thersilochus and Medon, Glaucus, Mesthles knew,

Phorcys and Chromius, and bird-diviner, Ennomus,

Asteropæus, brave Deisenor, and Hippothoüs ;

To these stout Hector's wingèd word with blazing fervour flies :

Hear me, ye countless neighbouring tribes of trusty brave allies!²²⁹

Full well ye know that, not with more to increase the Trojan
glory,

I called you from your homes in glade and glen to battle gory ;

But that your forward valiance from the war-delighting spear

Of Greece might shield our hearths, our wives, and infant children
dear.

And even for this I on my folk with strict severe command

Lay heavy dues, that you may reap the best fruits of the land

Your valour saves. Then fling into the chance of war your
lives,

To sink or swim ; by glorious risk the trade of battle thrives.

Whoso from out the sweatful field Patroclus' corpse shall hale

Into the Trojan ranks, and make the huge-limbed Ajax quail, ²³⁰

To him one half of the bright arms I gift ; myself retain
The other ; he with me in all shall equal glory gain.

Thus he ; and they with serried lines advanced, and weighty strain
Against the Argives. High their spears they reared ; and high
their hope

Beat to redeem the dead, and cheat stout Ajax' lofty scope.
Fools ! o'er that corpse full many yet their lusty lives shall fling !

Then thus the Telamonian spoke to the strong-voiced Spartan
king :

Dear Menelaus, Jove-bred king, full much I fear nor thou
Nor I may long this cloud withstand of war grim-gathering now.
Not so fear pricks me for the corpse of dear Patroclus dead, 240
On whom the Trojan dogs and fowls shall soon be bravely fed,
As for mine own dear life, O king, and thy most kingly head,
I tremble ; since this cloud of war stout Hector rolleth o'er us
Dread-darkling ; and perdition yawns with shunless gape before us.
But come and call our bravest ; if belike they list to hear !

He spoke ; his words the yellow-haired Atrides with quick ear
Drank in, and o'er the roaring fight he shouted sharp and clear :
Dear fellow-kings and counsellors, by whose wit the folk is led,
Who sit beside the Atridae twain, and eat the public bread, 250
And o'er the land with high command send lordly words which
move

The people, holding grace and strength from all-controlling Jove.

Hard task for me to reach each king with voice that wisely
praises

Or wisely warns; so wildly now the hot contention blazes!

His own heart let each chief obey, and deem the fault his own,

If to the Trojan dogs this day Patroclus' corpse be thrown!

He spake; and, answering to his call, Oileus' son up ran,

Swift-footed Ajax, first to hear, and foremost in the van;

Next came Idomeneus, and his squire Meriones, in might

Like to the raging god of war, who rules the slaughterous fight;

But all their names what mortal may with mortal memory
tell, 269

Who at Atrides' call that day rushed to the hot pell-mell.

Likewise the Trojans swarming rolled their ranks; them Hector
led.

As at the mouth of a mighty stream by Jove's high fountains
fed,

The big wave roars against the flood, while rocks on either side

High-fronted replicate the bray of the briny-beleching tide;

So came the Trojans shouting: but the brave Achæan band

With one firm will before the corpse of dear Patroclus stand

With fence of brazen bucklers; while the son of Kronos threw

Thick-veiling mist around their shining helmets, and from view

Shielded their troop; for truly Jove with no unkind regard 270

Looked on Achilles' friend, ere death his faithful service marred;

And now the Trojan dogs he grudged upon such dainty feast
To flesh their fangs, and for his corpse the keen defence increased.

The Trojans first drave back the Greeks with quick and glancing
eyne,
And made them drop the corpse, and quail through all their wavering line.

And on they pressed, but none they slew, though all athirst to slay ;
Only the corpse they dragged a space. But not the Greeks might
stay

Long in repulse ; for Ajax rolled them back to front the fray,
Ajax, the stoutest soldier, and of all the Argive crew,
Next to the blameless Peleus' son, the goodliest man to view. 280
Into the front rank of the fight, like a wild-boar he flew,
Which in a mountain glade confronts hot hounds and lusty yeomen,

And with wild plunge sweeps lightly back the bands of bristling
foemen :

Even so the son of Telamon, the glorious Ajax, cast
Into wide-drifting rout the foe round dead Patroclus massed,
And drave them from their savage will to drag the body gory
Within their walls, and to themselves achieve undying glory.
For now Pelasgic Lethus' son, Hippothoüs, with might
Seized dead Patroclus by the foot amid the sturdy fight ;

And with a leathern thong the hero's lifeless ankle bound, 290

And haled the trunk, for Hector's praise, out o'er the slippery
ground.

But soon harm crossed his path, and needful help nowhere was
found ;

For Ajax in close-handed fight amid the armèd crew

Thrust at his helmet copper-cheeked with steady aim and true,

And the spear-shaft by his stout hand and brawny arm down
pressed,

Fixed the sharp point right through the casque, with its lofty
horse-hair crest ;

The brain beside the hollow cone from the cleft skull up sprung,

Bloody ; his bond of life was snapt ; and from his hands he flung

The mighty-souled Patroclus' foot on the gore-beslubbered clay.

Himself, beside the corpse, a corpse all prone and powerless lay, 300

Far from fat-glebed Larissa ; nor the pious son might pay

Now to his dam the nursing-fee ; his little race of life

Was run, by spear of Ajax quelled in the grim and gashful strife.

Then Hector at the mighty-hearted Telamonian cast

His spear ; but he the weapon saw, and turned his body vast

Deftly aside ; but not the son of Iphitus it passed,

Schedius, best of Phocians, who in Panopeus held sway.

Him 'neath the collar-bone he smote ; the keen point sped its
way

Right through beneath the shoulder, and with sharp pain overbore
him ; 310

With hollow sound he smote the ground, and his armour rattled
o'er him.

Then, while stout Phoreys to bestride Hippothoüs doth advance,
Ajax confronts his path, and through his navel drave the lance ;
Even to his bowels the unsparing brass enforced its deadly way,
And sucked his life-blood ; down he fell, and dying clenched the
clay.

Back shrink the Trojans ; even the godlike Hector's might doth fail ;
Loud shout the Greeks ; and to their ranks the captured dead they
hale,

Hippothoüs and Phoreys, and their lifeless limbs dismail.

And now the Trojans by their own unwarlike heart subdued,
Had fled to Troy before the rush of the Argive warriors good, 320
Who then had triumphed, maugre Fate and Jove's controlling law,
By their own strength ; but that the danger bright Apollo saw,
And sought Æneas, in the shape of Periphas, who grew
Old in his aged master's house, to good Anchises true,
A herald full of counsel mild. Like him Apollo came,
And with these taunting words upstirred the godlike hero's shame :
Æneas, even in gods' despite, a valiant man might save
The steep-faced Troy ; as I have known good men and soldiers
brave,

Who on themselves reliant, and their scanty people, went
To grasp a hopeless hope with hand of noble hardiment. 330

But now Jove loveth not the Greeks, but rather in the battle
Backs Troy ; yet ye do shrink from fight, and run like driven cattle.

Thus he. Æneas knew the god through all the strange disguise,
And loudly thus to the crest-flickering son of Priam cries :
Hector, and all ye captains brave of Troy, and Troy's allies,
Great shame were this in sooth, if we before the Achaean warriors
Should flee, and fight, like craven loons, behind the well-built
barriers.

Even now a god beside me stood, and thus he clearly spake,
That Jove the counsellor supreme his part doth surely take
With Troy. Then march we on ; nor suffer shame like this to
grow, 340

That they Patroclus' body bring to the broad sea's briny flow !

He spake ; and with a bound before the foremost leapt : they
knew

The hero's voice, and rallying wheeled, and fanned the fight anew.
Then did Æneas pierce Leiocritus with pointed spear,
Son of Arisbas, Lycomedes' trusty comrade dear ;
Whom falling, Lycomedes followed with the friendly tear,
And forward stopt, and flung his shining dart, and to the ground
Brought Apisaon, son of Hippasus, with mortal wound
In the liver 'neath the midriff, and the sturdy strength unbound

Of his firm knees. From far Pæonia came that chief, whose
might 350

Asteropæus only matched in all the fence of fight.

Him as he fell Asteropæus saw with pitying eye,

And eager rushed against the front of the Danaan company.

But vain the attempt ; shield lapping shield, and pointed lance on
lance

Close bristling round Patroclus' corpse, repel his hot advance.

For so stout Ajax gave command, and so enjoined on all,

Neither with flinching foot behind the dear-loved dead to fall,

Nor yet with wild unmeasured force beyond the line to go,

But firmly massed around the corpse a sure defence to throw.

Thus huge-limbed Ajax spake ; the ground with blood did
largely flow 360

Purple ; and stretched the good knights lie, breathless, row after row,

Heaping the clay, both Trojans with their lofty-souled allies

And Greek men too ; for in the fight they win no bloodless
prize ;

But with less loss they bought their gain ; for firmly ringed
together

They stood, each man to save himself, nor less to shield his brother.

Thus they, like blazing fire, fought on ; nor might quick vision
spy,

Or the refulgent Sun, or Moon's mild radiance in the sky ;

Such thick-enveiling mist the favouring grace of Jove had spread
Around the gallant Argives, who enring Patroclus dead ;
But round them only ; for the rest pursued the sturdy fight 370
Lightly, 'neath sky serene ; the sun's ray, beaming keenly bright,
Shot down ; and not a trail of cloud on grassy plain was seen,
Or craggy mount ; at ease they fought with many a pause between,
And from safe distance flung the thick and sorrow-freighted store
Of well-aimed darts. But they who stood in the middle battle bore
Full many a woe ; for mist, and cloud, and high-strained struggle
wore

Their manful temper down ; and these the best of all the crew.
But brave Antilochus and Thrasymedes nothing knew
Of dead Patroclus, for they weened that in the foremost van
He fought, the living terror of the high-souled Trojan clan. 380
These fought apart, and only from afar the death and flight
Of their dear comrades saw ; for so their sire, the Pylian knight,
Commanded them, when from the ships he bade them join the
fight.

Thus they. But round Achilles' friend raged the hot strife of
blows

Unceasing ; from long tug and toil the sweaty river flows ;
And knees and shins, and feet and hands, and eyes find no repose
With the brave men who from the corpse back drive the plunging
foes.

As when a tanner a bull's hide hath taken, and doth tell
His men to stretch it, with smooth-flowing fat now moistened
well ; 390

They seize the ends, and, standing round, with constant tug compel
The hide to yield ; the shining fat sinks with soft virtue in
Through every pore, till supple lies the smooth and well-drawn
skin :

Thus in full scanty space they pulled the dead man to and fro ;
For Greeks and Trojans felt their hearts with one fell purpose
glow,

These to steep Troy to hale the corpse, those to the sandy shore.
Fierce and more fierce now swelled afar the battle's wild uproar,
That not ev'n Mars, when o'er the field he drives his ranks
untamed,

Nor awful Pallas flashing-eyed that fytte of fight had blamed.

Such evil toil and bloody toil the son of Kronos threw 400
That day on men and horses. But not yet Achilles knew
Patroclus' death, for whom so toughly fought that sturdy crew.
For from the swift sea-faring ships remote the Achæans fought
Hard by the town ; and Peleus' son had never dreamed the thought,
That there the friend he loved should die, but from the combat fell
Looked for his safe return. One thing the hero knew full well,
That not without his aid, or with it, might Patroclus lay
Proud Ilium low. For this his mother, born of ocean-spray,

Told him, what time the mind of Jove almighty she revealed ;
Much she declared, but this, the chiefest grief of all, concealed, ⁴¹⁰
That that dear friend to fate should bend, on Troy's blood-streaming
field.

Meanwhile with their sharp-pointed spears the unwearied warriors
hedge

The dear-loved dead ; and when one falls, another like a wedge
Fills up the gap. Then thus a Greek outspoke with burning
lips :

Dear friends, a sore disgrace were this, if now we seek the ships !
Sooner the black earth swallow all, or dismal death's eclipse
Wrap great and small, than that the haughty Trojans should enjoy
This boast, that they Achilles' friend had dragged to sacred Troy !

Even so a Trojan lofty-souled to his neighbour bravely said : ⁴²⁰
Dear friends, if so our fate must be, beside this dead all dead
In heaps to lie, so be it, but let none from fight retire !
He spoke ; and in his comrades' breast upstirred the warlike
fire.

Thus burned the battle, but the harsh and iron din rose high
Through ether's waste unfertile fields to the brazen-vaulted sky.

But fierce Pelides' steeds, who stood apart from the hottest fight,
Wept when they knew that from the car was east that blameless
wight,
And tramped in gory dust by Hector's hero-slaughtering might.

Full oft Diores' stalwart son, the brave Automedon 430
With the sharp scourge their flanks did urge his eager will to own,
Now speaking mild with gentle voice, and now with threatful tone ;
But they nor to the briny tide and Helle's flood broad-flowing,
Nor to the marshalled host would ride, where hot the fight was
glowing ;

But, as a pillar moveless stands on the green and grassy sod,
Marking where mortal man or maid lies low beneath the clod ;
So still they stood, yoked to the beauteous chariot, and kept
Their heads fixed earthwards ; and with bitter burning tears they wept,
And in black dust was soiled their rich-haired manes' full-flowing
pride,

Which from the strong ring of the yoke rolled ruffled on each side. 440
Them as they wept the son of Kronos saw, and shook his head,
Moved with much ruth, and to his own high heart the Thunderer said:
Ah, wretched steeds ! why then to Peleus, mortal king, did we
Gift you, being born of brood divine, from age and death set free ?
Was it that ye with men might taste of man's worst misery ?
For truly man beneath the sky in sorrows doth abound,
Above all things that creep or fly, or walk on gleby ground.
But not beneath his well-wrought car shall Hector, son of Priam,
Yoke your immortal necks ; this boast Jove and the Fates deny him.
Is 't not enough that he is clad in swift Achilles' mail ? 450
I to your knees such strength will add, that ye may now prevail

To bear Antomedon to the strand in the well-compacted car.
For thus my high decree must stand, that glory in the war
The Trojans reap, till to the ships their conquering feet are led
When the sun shall sink, and o'er the earth the sacred Dark is
spread.

He said ; and the noble horses' hearts with mettlesome fire he
fed.

They, shaking from their manes the dust, forth flew with fervid
rattle

And clattering hoof into the moil of the hot and hurtling battle.
Full bravely fought Antomedon, though sorely grieved in mind
For his lost friend ; and as a vulture on the cackling kind ⁴⁶⁰
Comes sousing down, so he upon the Trojans pounced with
force,

Or backward wheeled, where need might be, with sudden-veering
course,

But none he slew, and left them free to run with hasty feet ;
For how could he alone upon that sacred chariot's sell,
Both fling the well-poised spear, and guide the hoofed coursers
well ?

Him saw at length a warrior-friend, with keen discerning eyne,
Alcimedon, Laërce's son, of Æmon's lordly line ;

Beside the car he stood, and thus with friendly word spake he :
Antomedon, which of the gods hath stole thy wits from thee ?

And planted in thy bosom thoughts, from which no vantage
flows ? 470

So mad art thou to fight in the van amid the thickest foes
Alone? thy godlike comrade slain, while in the armour dight
Of fierce Pelides, Priam's son rides thundering through the fight !

To whom Automedon replied, and thus to speak began :
Alcimedon, what other man of all the Achæan clan,
But he, Patroclus, like to gods in counsel, could maintain
Rule o'er these steeds of heavenly brood with wise-controlling
rein ?

He lived, but him now Death and Fate hold in their dark domain.
Wherefore, dear friend, mount thou, and sway with cunning rein
the car,

While I leap down, and from the reins discombered urge the
war. 480

He spoke ; and to the rattling car the stout Alcimedon
Upsprang, and lash and rein straightway their new director own.
Down leapt Automedon. All this the godlike Hector spies,
And to Æneas standing near, loudly the hero cries :
Æneas, prudent counsellor of Trojans copper-coated,
Achilles' steeds of heavenly brood even now mine eyes have noted,
Reined through the battle by weak hands, which lack the needful
skill.

These we may lightly capture, if to my sharp-whetted will

Thou add thine own. For truly with our brace of well-proved
spears

We'll shake the reins with little pains from these crude charioteers.
He spake ; Anchises' praiseful son with quick attention hears ; ⁴⁹⁰
Forth marched the pair, with bucklers of the tough dry neat's-hide,
round

Their shoulders thrown ; the hides with plates of brass were bravely
bound.

Godlike Aretus and brave Chromios, where they led the way,
Followed ; high in their breasts up-flamed the prideful hope to
slay

The charioteers, and drive to Troy the high-necked steeds that day.
Witless ! not bloodless they to sacred Troy shall backward fare,
From brave Automedon ; for he to Father Jove his prayer
Lifted, who through his darkling heart shot warlike vigour new.
Forthwith thus to Alcimedon he spake, his comrade true : ⁵⁰⁰

Alcimedon, hold a cunning rein, and keep thy horses nigh,
And let me feel their fervid breath upon my back ; for I
Deem not that Hector, Priam's princely son, will be restrained
This day, till he shall seize Achilles' coursers glossy-maned,
Slaying us twain, and spreading fear through all the Argive clan,
Unless himself fall first down-trampled in the foremost van.
He spoke ; and on the Ajax pair he called, and Menelaus :
Leaders of Greece, and sceptred kings who with wise counsel sway us,

Around the dead let the choice youth of all our host display
Broad shields and bristling spears, and keep the haughty foe at
bay; 510

But we who live, O save us first, brave kings, while save ye may !
For Hector and Æneas, of stout Trojan chiefs the first,
Thorough the tear-abounding fray with weighty fury burst
I fling the dart, but how it fares when flung, lies on the knees
Of gods in heaven ; great Jove prepares the end, as he shall please.

He spake ; and through the air the strong long-shadowed shaft
he threw,

Which to Aretus' broad well-rounded buckler fatal flew.
Vainly the shield the stroke repels, for straight the forceful brass
Drives on, and through his baldrick good doth to his belly pass.
As when a brawny man who wields a heavy axe and keen 520
Smiteth a stout field-ox behind the head, the horns between,
Cutting the sinew, that the brute flings forward on the green
His gasping bulk ; so with a spring he falls supine, while quivers
The strong lance in his flesh, and from his limbs the soul delivers.
Then Hector at Automedon his shining javelin threw.

But he foresaw, and timely from the swooping stroke withdrew ;
Forward he bent his head ; its course behind the weapon took,
And stood with head fixed in the ground ; the sounding spear-shaft
shook,

And soon the quivering wood all force of sturdy Mars forsook.

And now close-handed fight had been with clashing glaive to
glaive, 530

Had not the Ajax pair with eager-whetted heart, to save
Rushed in, where loudly through the host their comrade brave
besought them.

Whom when they saw the Trojan chiefs of prudent ways bethought
them ;

Hector, Æneas, and the godlike Chromios in fear
Shrank back, and left Aretus, where the strong Achaean spear
Had pierced him ; then like furious Mars upon the prostrate foe
Automedon pounced, and spoiled his mail, and spake full proudly
so :

Take now this drop of balm, vexed heart, for loved Patroclus
dead,

A life so vile not quits my smart, but a Trojan's blood is shed !
Thus he ; and put the shining mail into the car, then reared 540
Himself into the seat, his hands and feet with blood besmeared,
As when a lion rends a bull, and shows his gory beard.

Then round Patroclus' corpse afresh the battle's bickering flame
Burst, terrible, tearful ; down from heaven spear-shaking Pallas
came

To stir yet more the strife ; her from his throne in the starry pole,
Wide-pealing Jove had sent ; for now to Greece was turned his
soul.

As when the cloud-compelling king the fair purpleal bow
Athwart the sky hath stretched, a sign of war and wasteful woe,
Or of the black and wintry blast, that with unfriendly sweep,
To works of rustic men brings pause, and sorrow to the sheep ; 550
Thus in a purple cloud ydight, Athenè to the clan
Of the Achæans swooping came, and roused each fighting man.
And first to Menelaus she the stirring word applied,
Stout Sparta's king—for chanced that he stood nearest by her
side—

To him in masque of Phœnix old Jove's awful daughter came :
Thou, Menelaus, thou shalt bear the dire reproach and shame
For ever, if the Trojan dogs, for that the king was tame,
On great Achilles' trusty friend shall glut their greedy maws.
But hold thou fast ; add blow to blow, nor give the battle pause.

To whom the strong voiced Menelaus promptly thus re-
plied :

560

Good father Phœnix, old, revered, if Pallas flashing-eyed
Would lend to me the shielding arm, and turn the darts aside,
Then I Patroclus' dear-loved limbs would from the Trojan foe
Forth hale ; for surely never death of hero probed me so
With searching sorrow ; but this son of Priam, like a fire,
Rages, and mighty Jove in heaven doth with his wish conspire.

He spoke ; and gladly heard his words Athenè flashing-eyed,
For that he chiefly her revered, and on her aid relied ;

His arms and knees she knit with strength, and in his breast she
planted

Such boldness as a fly doth boast, buzzing with wing undaunted ⁵⁷⁰
About a man ; full many a cuff he bears, but, frontless still,
Holds on to bite, till with sweet blood of man his mouth he fill.
Such boldness then his darkling heart from Jove's strong daughter
drew.

Eftsoons Patroclus he bestrode, and his shining lance he threw.
A man there was, hight Podes, great among the Trojan crew,
Eëtion's son, a blameless man and rich, to Hector dear
Above all others, in his hours of mirth and festive cheer ;
Him through the baldrick Menelaus struck, even as he gave
His back to flee, and through his loins the unsparing copper drave.
He fell and smote the hollow ground, and with quick-grasping
hand 580

Him Menelaus seized, and haled to the Greeks' encircling band.
Then near to Hector the far-darting god Apollo came,
Most like to Phænops, Asius' son, both in look and goodly frame,
Who in Abydos wounded, and was of all his guests most dear,
Clad with his semblance Phœbus came, and spoke with accents
clear :

Hector, what man of all the Greeks will shrink with yellow fear
At thy approach, whose might no more against the pith prevails
Of Menelaus, feeble erst, but now alone he hales

Over the field the body of thy trusty comrade true,
Even stout Eëtion's son, whom in the foremost front he slew ? 590
He spoke ; o'er Hector's soul a cloud of sorrow passed, like night,
And stoutly to the van he strode, with burnished brass ydlight.
Then Kronos' son his ægis seized, with fringe of tassels bound,
Far-flaming, and high Ida's peak with clouds he swathed around,
And bright he flashed, and loud he pealed, and shook his thunderous
shield,
Gave strength to Troy, and frayed the Greeks o'er all the startled
field.

Then first Boeotian Peneleus began the woful flight,
Pierced in the shoulder, while he boldly faced the murtherous
fight.
'Gainst him thy spear, Polydamas, with dexterous aim was thrown,
And shore the surface flesh, and grazed the tip of the shoulder
bone. 600

Then Hector pierced brave Leïtus near the hand, right through the
wrist ;
Eftsoons high-souled Alectryon's son in sturdy fight was missed ;
Wildered with fear he looked around ; no hope was now to stand,
Against the Trojans, while that shaft was dangling from his hand.
Him Hector chased, but, as he spurred the chase, the Cretan
king
Idomeneus 'gainst the Trojan's breast his well-poised spear did fling ;

But the shaft snapped in twain, and from the Trojan crew uprose
Loud shouts. His lance then Hector at the godlike Cretan throws,
Where on his car he stood ; aside the glancing weapon goes,
But pierced the squire and charioteer of Merion, whose name 610
Was Coeranos, and with him from well-built Lyctus came.
For brave Dencalion's son had left the ships, and the sounding
strand

On foot, and now wellnigh had found black fate from Trojan hand,
Had not stout Merion's squire, with aid of nimble coursers, darted
Into the midst, and from the prince the doomful day averted.
But not himself might Coeranos from Hector's murtherous spear
Redeem ; for him the unsparing brass pierced 'neath the jaw and ear,
Ploughed up his teeth, and through his tongue a forceful passage
found.

Down from the car he tumbled ; the loose reins flowed on the
ground.

Then Merion, stooping from the car, with outstretched arm up-
took 620

The shining reins ; and thus to stout Idomeneus he spoke :
Ply now the lash ! nor brook delay, till thou hast reached the
shore !

Thou seest that for the Greeks to-day remains no battle more.

Thus he. Idomeneus bravely lashed the coursers beautiful-maned .
Right to the hollow ships ; for fear his manly heart constrained.

And now Atrides yellow-haired, and Ajax lofty-souled,
Well knew that for the Trojans Jove the swerving fight controlled.
Then thus to speak began that Telamonian hero bold ;
Woe worth the day ! a little child, a very babe might know
That Father Jove now hates the Greek, and loves the Trojan foe. ⁶³⁰
For all their arrows to the mark fly straight, whatever wight
Worthy, or worthless, wings them ; truly Jove directs their flight ;
While ours by the best warriors shot, fall slant with harmless bite.
But come ! bethink us well ! together let us counsel weave,
How we may hale Patroclus' corpse, and for ourselves achieve
A safe return, and to our friends clear up the clouded brow ;
For surely they sore-grieved our plight behold, nor deem that
now

Anght can restrain the maddened might of Hector red with slaughter ;
But he will stand with torch in hand beside the briny water
And fire the ships ! With nimble foot let some brave fellow go ⁶⁴⁰
To Peleus' son ; for he full sure our deepest depth of woe
Knows not, nor how his comrade true fell by unfriendly blow.
But how shall I a courier find to bear this word to him,
Since horse and man all round the corpse are swathed in vapour
dim ?

O Father Jove, from blinding mist the tangled fight redeem !
And from the fair and fleckless sky pour down light's radiant stream,
That, if we die, at least our eye may greet the blissful beam !

He spake. The Father wept to see the hero's trickling tear,
Scattered the mirksome mist, and bade the thick clouds disappear.
Outshone the sun, and brightness flashed on that wild-fighting
chaos ; 650

Then thus the Telamonian spake to the strong-voiced Menelaus ;
Jove-born Atrides, cast thine eye, I pray thee, round the host,
And see if high-souled Nestor's son, Antilochus, we boast
Alive, and bid him to divine Achilles speed his way,
And tell him that his best-loved friend lies weltering on the clay.

He spake ; nor did the strong-voiced Menelaus disobey ;
But went, as when a lion goes slow from the well-fenced pen,
Wearied with vain assay to foil the patient dogs and men,
Who from the fat flesh of the kine to keep the tawny foe,
Watch through the long-drawn night ; but he—sharp hunger goads
him so— 660

Plunges now here, now there—in vain ; for still before him stands
A troop of sturdy swains, who fling thick darts from hostile hands,
With glare of torch, which in his eyes a dazzling terror throws,
Till with the dawn back to his den sullen and sour he goes.
Thus from Patroclus Menelaus yellow-haired withdrew
Reluctant, slow ; for much he feared lest the Achæan crew,
Smitten with dread, might leave the dead to the Trojan's spoiling
hand.

Then thus to Merion and the Ajax pair he gives command :

Brave Merion, and stout Ajax pair, by whom the Greeks are
led,

Achilles' friend demands your care, the good Patroclus dead. . . 670

Full mild was he, I wis, and kind to all, while yet his eyes
Looked on sweet light ; now wrapt in blind and rayless night he
lies.

Thus he, and onward sped, and cast a wistful glance around ;
Even as an eagle darts his glance, than whom no bird is found
More powerful-sighted of all fowls that beat the breezy air ;
He from his lofty path hath spied a poor fleet-footed hare,
Crouching beneath the leafy bush ; then souses down ; and lo !
The life shrinks in the cowering brute from the glance of its swoop-
ing foe.

So thou, O Jove-bred king, didst cast thy glance around thee
then,

Keen, swift, broad-sweeping, far through all the host of fighting
men, . . . 680

If Nestor's noble son might fall within thy circling ken.

Him thou didst spy full soon upon the battle's leftward wing,
Where he doth cheer his men, and all his burning soul doth fling
Into the fray. Him with these words bespake the strong-voiced
king :

Come hither, Jove-bred Antilochus, that I may pierce thy marrow
With grief. Would I had never lived to voice such tearful sorrow !

If not already, as I deem, thou with thy proper eyne
Hast seen how wave on wave of woe, full tide of wrath divine
Bursts on the Greeks ! Spear-stricken lies that bravest of our clan,
Patroclus ; and with streaming eyes we wail the godlike man. 690
But thou, haste to the ships, and tell Pelides that his brave
Comrade is slain, and let him run with wingèd feet to save
His naked corpse ; for his bright arms crest-flickering Hector
wears.

He spake ; but through Antiochus' frame a shuddering horror
fares.

Moveless he stood ; the briny tear gushed from his swelling eyes ;
No word he spake ; his tongue the gripe of the strong sorrow ties ;
But not the less to do the Jove-bred king's command he lies ;
And for more speed he to a friend his warlike weeds commended,
Laodocus, who by his side with the hoofèd steeds attended.

Him sorrowing thus his swift feet bore, from Sparta's godlike
king 700

To Peleus' son on the sounding shore, the baleful news to bring.
But not the Jove-bred yellow-haired Atrides did incline
To the brave Pylians then in fight his kingly strength to join.
War-worn were they, and much they missed old Nestor's son
divine ;

But for their captain now he gave the godlike Thrasymede,
And to Patroclus hied him back with eager-footed speed.

Then to the Ajax pair he came, and through the battle cried :
Him I have sent to the hollow ships that plough the purple tide
With word to Peleus' son ; but scarce that man of mickle pride,
Though much he chafe at Hector's might, unto the fight will
fare

Against that strong steed-taming wight, of needful armour bare. ⁷¹⁰
But we—together let us now a prudent counsel weave,
To hale the dead, nor to the foe his dear-loved body leave,
And for ourselves from death and doom to work the swift reprieve.
He spoke ; to whom replied the Telamonian Ajax tall :
Far-famous monarch, from thy lips the wise words timely fall,
Do therefore thou and Merion from the battle's hot turmoil
Rescue Patroclus. I myself and Oileus' son the while
Will shield your rear, and with stout cheer pursue the sweaty
toil,

Give blow for blow to quit the foe, and with unflinching mettle, ⁷²⁰
All firmly stand, a one-souled band, to stem the flooding battle.

He said ; and they with firm embrace the body from the clay
Uplifted ; loud the Trojans shout, close-massed behind, when
they

Beheld the stout Achæans bear Menœtius' son away ;
And on they press, like hounds which run the hunting troops
before,

All fierce and fell with bay and yell on a wounded mountain-boar.

At first sheer on they run, and ween to crush the quarry quite ;
But when he turns and plunges wild, and gathers all his might,
Then back they go from the shaggy foe, dissolved in dusty flight :
Even so the Trojan warriors brave pressed on the Achaean rear, ⁷³⁰
With frequent prick from glancing glaive, and strong tway-headed
spear ;

But when the Ajax pair turned round, oh ! then pale-blooded fear
Sucked all the manhood from their cheeks, nor dared one Trojan
wight

To vex the bearers of the dead, as they left the stout-armed fight.

Thus to redeem the dear-loved corpse each high-souled Argive toils
With bloody toil ; behind them still the impetuous battle boils.
Fierce as the flaring fire which on some city's peopled piles,
With sudden rush hath seized ; far spreads the flame swift to
devour,

Thick fall the crashing roofs, loud roars the blast with mighty
power :

So on the labouring Greeks the rush of fight came roaring then, ⁷⁴⁰
Ceaseless, with tramp of steeds, and whoop of stout spear-bearing
men.

But the Achaeans, like stout mules, which on a mountain road,
Slippery and sharp, with patient strain bring down the woody load,
Ribs for a ship, or rafters for a house, and tug and sweat
Stoutly beneath the weight, which sore their reeking flanks doth fret ;

Even so they bear the dead ; but still the Ajax pair withstand
The Trojans pressing on the rear. As when a jut of land
Well crowned with wood flings forth its rocky arm into the plain ;
Down flow with sweeping strength the floods, but all their strength
in vain

Beats on the bank, which drives their fretful-foaming rush aside⁷⁵⁰
Into the plain ; far sounding whirls the brown and baffled tide :
Even so these heroes in the rear with patient stand abide
The Trojans pressing on, and on, and two before the rest,
Anchises' son and Hector, shaking high his glittering crest.
As when a cloud of birds, the chattering starling or the daw,
Have spied a wheeling hawk, who with small fowl regales his
maw,

Sudden they shake the air with shrieks and multitudinous caw :
So from Æneas and the tall crest-flickering Hector's might,
With shrilly screams the Greeks recede, and slack the fervent fight,
And, where they flee, with shining mail, spear, shield, and shattered
car,

760

The foss is heaped, nor ebbs behind the surge of bloody war.

BOOK XVIII.



ARGUMENT.

*Thetis consoles Achilles plunged in woe
For dead Patroclus ; he with terrible cries
Stands on the dyke, and scares away the foe ;
And from the field, where bathed in blood it lies,
Hales his friend's corpse, and to his tent doth go.
Thetis to Vulcan's heavenly palace hies,
Who forges arms, in which her son victorious
Shall ride the fray by death of Hector glorious.*

BOOK XVIII.

Thus they, like blazing fire, with hot and smoking fury fought.
Meantime to Peleus' son the son of Nestor tidings brought ;
Him on the shore beside the lofty-curved ships he found,
Brooding with bodeful soul, and plunged in mirksome grief profound ;

And thus to his own mighty heart the hero did complain :
Woe's me, woe's me ! again the foe advances ! and again
Back to the ships the stricken Greeks are drifted o'er the plain !
O may the gods the harm fend, and may I never see
What once my mother, ocean-born, with sad words spake to me,
That the best man of all my clan should quit the blissful light, ¹⁰
By Trojan spear, and leave me here a lone and friendless wight !
Full much I fear that comrade dear hath found death in the fight,
Foolhardy ! though I warned him, when the fleet he saved from
fire,

Back to return, nor dare to front Hector in battle dire.

Thus with dark thoughts Achilles fed his wintry-woful mood,
When, lo ! beside him the swift-footed son of Nestor stood

With sorrowful hest, and spake, and speaking poured the burning
tear :

O son of Peleus, thou from me art fated now to hear
Drear words and dearnful tidings ! would they ne'er had reached
thine ear !

Slain lies Patroclus ; round his naked corpse the Trojan victor 20
Rages ; his sun-bright mail is worn by tall crest-flickering Hector.

He spoke ; and sorrow's murky pall was o'er the hero spread ;
Then with both hands he took the ashy dust, and o'er his head
Down shook the grimy shower, and spoiled the beauty of his
face,

And of his vest so nectarous-fair he marred the glossy grace.
Then on the ground outstretched with all his length of limb he
lay,

And with his own dear hands he tore his flowing locks' display.
And all the maidens, whom in war he with Patroclus won,
From grief-pricked hearts send shrilly screams, and to the door
they run

Around Achilles, and their breasts with wailing hands they
smite, 30

And the bond of strength that knit their dainty limbs was loosèd
quite.

On the other side Antilochus wept hot tears, and stooping, held
Achilles' hands ; for tyrannous grief the hero's heart compelled,

And much he feared lest with sharp steel his dear throat he might
sever,

So fiercely sad he moaned. Him heard his mother, gracious ever,
Where by her hoary sire she sat in the depths of the ocean
river,

And bitterly wailed. The Nereids in the briny depths profound
Answered her sorrow, and in friendly troops came sistering round.

There Glaucè was, and there Thalia and Cymodocè,

Nisæa, Speio, Thoè, and the full-eyed Haliè, 40

Cymothoë, Actæa, Limmorea, and Iara,

Amphithoë and Agavè, and Melitè, and Mæra,

Pherousa, and Dynamenè, Dexamène, and Proto,

Amphinomè and Panopè, Nemertes, Doris, Doto,

Kallianassa, Kallianeira, and the far-famed Galatea,

Iancira, Ianassa, and the rich-haired Amatheia,

Apsudes, Clymenè, and Orithyia, maids divine,

Whoso were Nereids numbered in the depths of the billowy brine.

With these the sparry cave was filled, and each did smite her
breast, 50

With passioned hands. Them Thetis thus with sorrowful words
addressed :

Hear me, ye daughters of the brine, my sisters dear, and know
That sorrows without match are mine, sharp stings of sleepless
woe !

Sure never dam that bore good son was sorrowed like to me !
A blameless youth and strong, elect of Phthian chiefs was he,
And in his comely youth upshot like the shoot of a goodly tree.
Him, as a gardener the green herb, even so with tender care
I nursed, till in the rounded ships to Troy he forth must fare,
To fight for Greece ; and now I know that I shall sigh in
vain,
To bring him o'er the briny flow to his dear-loved sire again. 60
He, whiles he lives and looks upon the bright sun's genial ray,
Doth feed his heart with griefs, nor I may chase those griefs away.
And now I go, from my dear son to learn what grievous jar
Grates on his heart, the while he shuns the hero-slaughtering
war.

Thus Thetis spoke, and left the cave, and they with tearful
eyne
Followed ; and round them brake the wave of the waste unfertile
brine.
Upon the beach they landed then, and ranged them line on line,
Beside the Phthian ships, which owned Achilles' high command.
There sat the hero moaning, and his mother on the strand
Beside him came, and wailing, took his dear head in her hand ;
And wept, and with the frequent sob these wingèd words spake
she :

Why weepest thou, my son ? what heavy grief hath come to thee ?

Hide not thy heart from me ; thou hast from Jove who rules the
sky

Thy 'complished prayer ; that prayer which thou, with hands up-
lifted high,

Didst pray, that back to the hollow ships, dismanned for lack of
thee,

The Greeks before down-bearing Troy in wretched rout should flee.

To whom with deep-drawn sigh replied her nimble-footed son :
Dear mother mine, this thing the Olympian sire supreme hath
done ;

But of all this what joy to me, when from my side removed 89
Patroclus lies, whom more than all my best-loved friends I loved,
Even as my own dear life ? But now he's gone, and Hector
bold

Hath spoiled him of that massy mail, a wonder to behold,
Beautiful, which from gods in heaven my sire received with thee,
What time to mortal man was given a goddess of the sea
For wedded wife. Oh, hadst thou still beneath the billowy tide
Unwooded remained, and Peleus lived yoked to a mortal bride !
But now thy grief is greater ; thou hast born a son in sorrow
Whom thou shalt never greet returned from the war in ships that
furrow

The wine-dark sea ! nor more wish I to look on lightsome day, 90
Nor converse hold with men, if but my shafted spear shall lay

Stout Hector low ! for with his life he yet must pay the fine,
Who did dishonour to thy corpse, Menœtius' son divine !

To whom with eyes of weeping thus his sea-born mother
spake :

Even as thou sayst, my son, thee quickly Fate shall overtake,
And thou shalt follow soon—how soon !—in godlike Hector's wake.

To whom Achilles, swift of foot, from sore-vexed heart replied :
Now should I die—even now ;—why live, who, when my comrade
died,

Lifted no hand to help ? him on a stranger soil the foe
Struck down, calling on me in vain to ward the cruel blow. 100

Even now, since no return may be to my Phthian fatherland
Nor loved Patroclus knew, nor other friend my aidful hand,
Whom Hector slew, now breathless laid on Troy's blood-streaming
strand !

Even as a dull and lumpish clod I lie beside the ships,
I, to whom none of all the Greeks in war may bring eclipse,
Though in the assembly with glib speech the tongue more nimbly
trips

Of many. Would that strife from gods and mortal man might
perish,

And Wrath, that teaches wisest heads the foolish grudge to cherish !
Wrath, that like honey sweetly slides at first into the soul,
But after grows, and thick as smoke its choking vapours roll. 110

With such fell wrath the king of men did make my bosom swell.
But let that go ; with the past hour the past regret may dwell.
The rancorous humour I within my heart will stoutly quell.
And now I go to find the man, who robbed my dear-loved friend
Of life ; which done, myself will greet black death, when Jove shall
send

The finishing hour. For not even Hercules, though to his sire
More dear than all his sons, might 'scape the doomed destruction dire ;
But Fate subdued him, and Jove's spouse with keen persistent ire.
So may I perish, and, like strong Alcides, end my story. 120

But, ere I die, one deed remains to crown my mortal glory.
Once more let me behold the fair deep-bosomed Dardan maids
Tear with white hands their delicate cheeks, when, to the murky
Shades,

Husband descends, or brother, whom my vengeful spear invades,
And they shall feel me once again lord of the tearful fray !
Urge me not, mother. Words are vain. From fight I may not stay.

To whom thus spake the silver-footed goddess of the wave :
Well hast thou spoken, son ; no joy is greater to the brave
Than weary war-worn comrades from disastrous fate to save.
But thy good armour, well thou know'st, the high-souled Trojan
victor 120

Took from thy friend ; that fulgent mail the tall crest-flickering
Hector

Wears on his shoulders vauntful, though not long such vaunt, I trow,
Will last ; for soul-dislodging death is lurking near him now.
But thou for strife and battle bold restrain thine eager yearning,
Till with thine eyes thou shalt behold thy mother back returning :
For in the morning, when the sun flings his fresh rays abroad,
I'll come again with armour made by the fire-subduing god.

Thus Thetis spake, and from her son she quickly turned away,
And to her sea-born sisters thus with gentle speech did say :
Seek now your homes in the sparry cells beneath the briny spray, ¹⁴⁰
And to your hoary sire who dwells in the broad deep-bosomed tide
Tell what hath chanced ; myself will soar to the halls of the welkin
wide,

To find Hephæstus, if belike with him my prayer prevail,
To forge for my swift-footed son the glorious-glistening mail !

She spake : eftsoons her sisters sank beneath the billowy tide,
While to Olympus' court the silver-footed Thetis hied,
In hope to fetch the armour made by Vulcan's cunning hands.

And so the goddess went. Meanwhile the long-haired Argive
bands

From hero-slaughtering Hector fled with din and wild uproar,
Back driven to the dark-hulled ships, and Hellè's sounding shore. ¹⁵⁰
And scarcely now the well-greaved Greeks with all their might
prevailed

To save Patroclus' corpse, by showers of hostile darts assailed,

For round him swarmed the Trojans, man and horse in struggle
dire,

And Hector, son of Priam, strong as all-devouring fire.

Thrice by the foot the glorious Hector seized the corpse, and drew
Patroclus back, and shouted loud to all the Trojan crew ;

Thrice the stout Ajax pair, clad with impetuous strength pushed
back

His fell hand from the dead ; but he, in courage nothing slack,
Now plunged into the hot turmoil, now stood with steady face,
And shouted to his men, nor backward cared to budge a pace. ¹⁶⁰

As when a fierce-souled lion grips a vagrant from the fold,
Vainly the shepherds strive to make him slack his hungry hold :
So vainly strove the harnessed might of the doughty Ajax pair,
That princely son of Priam from the gory corpse to scare.

And doubtless he had now prevailed, and deathless glory won,
Had not wind-footed Iris stooped from heaven to Peleus' son,
By all the gods unseen, with hest from Herè, large-eyed queen,
That he should buckle for the fray and march to battle keen.

Near him swift Iris stood, and thus bespake the hero then :
Rouse thee, Pelides, stern of heart above all mortal men ! ¹⁷⁰

Thy friend demands a friendly part, around whose naked corpse
The chiefest champions hotly fight of Greek and Trojan force,
Those to the rescue, these to hale his limbs to breezy Troy.
But chiefly round thy friend doth rage Priam's stout-hearted boy,

Who to his heart hath vowed when his strong hand shall drag the
dead,

To chop his dainty neck, and on a stake impale the head.

But rouse thee ! lag no more ! feel in thy heart the manly shame,
If Trojan dogs with grim delight shall banquet on the frame
Of thy dear friend, whose foul despite blots thee with ugly
blame. 180

To whom Atrides, strong of foot, replied : O goddess fair,
Which of the gods with hest to me hath sent thee through the
air ?

To whom the swift wind-footed Iris spake the answering word :
Herè, the stately queen of Jove me to this mission stirred ;
Nor Jove himself, the lofty-seated son of Kronos, knows,
Nor any god of all who hold Olympus crowned with snows.

To whom Achilles swift of foot gave ready answer thus :
How should I mingle in the moil, when they, who harry us,
Now wear my arms, and me from fight my ocean-mother banned,
Till from Hephaëstus' hall returned before my tent she stand, 190
Bearing me sun-bright armour, made by the god's all-cunning hand ?
In sooth, no warrior's arms I know which I might fitly don,
Save the well-rounded shield of Ajax, son of Telamon.
And he, I ween, is foremost seen, and rears his towering head
Mid the tug and the tear, and the spear-thrust keen, around
Patroclus dead.

To whom wind-footed Iris thus her answering thought declares :
Full well we know the weighty loss that the foe thine armour wears ;
But, as thou art, go to the foss, and from the rampart show
Thy form, which seen, belike to flight may turn the startled foe,
And toil-worn Greeks may breathe a space from cruel war's em-
ploy ;

200

Full short, I trow, is the breathing hour that fighting men enjoy.

Thus the swift-footed Iris spake, and from lowly ground up flew.
Eftsoons Pelides rose ; and round his shoulders Pallas threw
Her broad man-shielding ægis, with dark tasselled fringe ybound,
And with a golden cloud his head the mightiest goddess crowned,
A cloud whence the far-shooting flame in radiant shafts was
shed.

As when the smoke of a leaguered town in soaring scrolls is spread,
High from a sea-girt isle, round which embattled armies fight,
Who all the day prolong the fray, and with the sloping light, 210
Long lines of flaring flame are seen, that through the sombre sky
Shoot ruddy tongues, which men in neighbour coasts may well
descry,

And when they see, with friendly speed send well-oared ships to
aid :

So from Achilles' head that day the flashing terror rayed.

He from the rampire showed his kingly form, nor further pressed
Into the battle, minded well of his sea-born mother's hest.

There planted high he shouted, and apart Athenè raised
The shout with him, and with swift fear the Trojan hosts amazed.
As when a shrill-tongued trumpet fore a leaguered town doth
blare,

When rings of circling foes the life-disrending rush prepare, 220
So shrilly rose the piercing cry from Æacus' seed divine.
And when they heard the brazen voice of Æacus' seed divine,
Dire panic shook each Dardan heart, and each full-manèd steed
Snuffed in his soul the coming harm, and with fierce rattling speed
Back flew. The charioteers by the unwearied strength were frayed
Of fire, which from Achilles' head with awful brightness rayed ;
That heavenly fire a goddess flashed, the maid with the flashing eyes.
Thrice from the rampart with shrill shout divine Pelides cries,
Thrice backward reel the Trojan crew, with their far-come brave
allies.

Then perished in the tumbling flight twice five brave men and
two 230

Mid clashing spears and rattling cars. And now his comrades
true

Back from beneath the rain of spears the dead Patroclus drew,
And placed him on a bier. Round him his trusty comrades stood
Weeping ; and with them the divine Pelides poured a flood
Of burning tears, when he beheld his faithful comrade dear
Stretched on a bloody bed, and pierced with the bitter-biting spear :

Him to the fight he had sent forth, with steeds and chariot's
rattle,

But never hailed his friend alive returned from tearful battle.

Then the unwearied sun the gracious spouse of Jove large-eyed
Sent with unwilling pace to dip 'neath ocean's streaming tide. ²⁴⁰

Down sank his orb ; and the divine Achæans ceased from all
The din and jar of sturdy war, which levels great and small.
But the Trojan men went backward from the field of deathful
war,

And each his one-hoofed charger now unyoked from battle-car ;

And to the assembly straightway hied before he tasted food.

None sought a seat, but all erect the noble Trojans stood ;

For fear did hold them when they thought of fierce Pelides'
wrath,

Absent so long, but now returned to tread war's tearful path.

Then rose Polydamas, Panthoüs' son, a prudent man was he,

Who knew the past, and could forecast the fortune soon to be ; ²⁵⁰

The friend of Hector ; in one night both greeted mortal light ;

But he in moving words was best, Hector in sturdy fight.

Them thus with friendly phrase addressed that prudent-thoughted
wight :

Hear me, brave Trojans, when I speak, and with your thought
incline ;

Leave we the plain straightway, nor wait the morning's beam divine

Beside the ships! we from our line of safe defence are far.
While Thetis' son with Agamemnon strove in spleenful jar,
Full lightly then the Trojans beat the Achæans in the war:
To camp beneath the starry cope to valiant hearts was sweet,
Fed with the dear enheartening hope that we should fire the fleet. ²⁶⁰
But now more wary counsels we must weave, in fight to meet
That perilous proud Pelides; he, full sure, will scorn to wield
Delayful arms, where Greeks and Trojans in the wavering field
Sway between loss and gain, but desperate strife will fiercely waken
For tower and town and captive maid, where the battered wall is
shaken.

Retreat we to the town; my warning word be timely taken.
Him now the ambrosian night prevents, and holds from battle keen
His hot-spurred soul; but if we wait till morning's rosy sheen,
He cased in terrible mail will come; and all with dread will see
His coming; gladly back to Troy that man will turn and flee, ²⁷⁰
Who lives to flee; but dogs the most and vultures will devour;
Would that mine ears were deaf to hear the knell of that dismal
hour!

But if my prudent words ye hear, we'll nip the growth of sorrow,
And in the night we'll keep our might, for well-planned war to-
morrow;

Our firm-built towers, and lofty gates tway-folded will display
Bars, beams, and planks compacted well, to keep the foe at bay.

And, when bright morning each true knight to mailèd service calls,
We'll man the towers ; O then to him not light the venture falls
To fight with Trojan men well sconced behind the god-built
walls !

Back to the masted fleet he'll go, when he with fruitless pains, ²⁸⁰
Around the town hath idly driven the steeds with flowing manes.
Within the walls he'll never plant a foot, nor lash a steed ;
Sooner the nimble-footed dogs upon his flesh shall feed !

To whom crest-flickering Hector thus with darkling glance re-
plies :

Polydamas, I may not love thy speech ; thou art not wise,
Who sayst that we behind stone walls should shun the Danaan
power.

Enough, I trow, have we been cooped by gate, and wall, and tower !
Time was when in the mouths of men my father's praise was
sounded,

Priam, whose chests in yellow gold and copper bright abounded.

But now our halls are emptied of their rich ancestral store, ²⁹⁰

Our wealth on Phrygia's hills, or on the fair Mæonian shore

Is marketed for Mars, since when great Jove with wrathful eye

Looked on our house. But now that he who rules the thunderous
sky

Hath given me grace, and to the ships hurled back the Argive foe,

Rule thou thy thought, nor from thy lips let wordy folly flow !

No craven counsels shall prevail, while Hector's voice shall sway.
But hear me now, and what I speak each Trojan man obey !
With drink and food each spearman good his wasted strength
repair,

And set a watch, and of surprise that loves the dark beware !
And if there be who of his gold doth make a fretful care, 300
Ev'n let him gift it free, to feed the public maw with food ;
Much better thus than that the Greeks should freight it o'er the
flood.

But in the morning to our limbs our armour we will gird,
And near the ships unresting shall the bitter fight be stirred.
And if indeed Pelides' shout the jaded battle spurred,
It may fall worse for him. Not Hector's foot with hasty pace
Will flee from dismal war, but I will meet him face to face,
Whether from me he gather fame, or I reap bloody bays
From him. Mars loves a shifting game, and oft the slayer slays.
Thus Hector spake ; and to his word the assenting echoes roll. 310
Fond fools ! for from the Trojans all their wits Athenè stole ;
The bold-mouthed Hector counselling harm with open ears they
heard,

But from Polydamas back-spurned the wisely-warning word.
Then they repaired their strength with food. But the Achaean
men
For dead Patroclus with sad moans the wail uplifted then ;

And first Pelides led the choir of the woful-wailing crew,
While on his dear friend's breast his hero-slaughtering arms he
threw,

Moaning with piteous moan ; even as a bearded lioness,
Whose whelps a bold stag-hunter in the shaggy wilderness
Hath rudely seized ; she back returns, and howls with sore dis-
tress, 320

And woful roams from glade to glade upon the spoiler's track,
If she may find him ; her wild heart the bitter tortures rack ;
Thus deeply groaning, he bespoke his Phthian comrades true :
Woe 's me ! a barren word that day from my vain lips outflow,
When in his hall Menœtius old from me sweet solace drew ;
For back to Opus I declared his gallant-hearted boy
Should come, with wreaths of victory crowned, and spoils of cap-
tured Troy.

But Jove not ripens every thought that sprouts in human brain.
We both shall with our Danaan blood make red the Trojan plain.
So Fate hath willed ; nor me returned to Phthian halls again, 330
Shall horse-subduing Peleus hail from the broad Ægean billow,
Nor mother Thetis ; the cold Trojan clay shall be my pillow.
But now, Patroclus, sith my doom is after thee to go
Beneath the ground, I 'll spare the dead's just rights, till I can show
Stout Hector's head and mail, who made thy dear heart's blood to
flow.

Twelve noble Trojan youths their life shall heap upon thy pyre,
Whom I will slay with ruthless knife, to glut my righteous ire ;
Meanwhile beside the ships thy limbs, marred and disfigured, lie.
Now let Troy's maidens weep, and Dardan damsels mourn and
sigh,

Wailing thy plight both day and night with tearful-streaming
eye,

340

Even they whom with strong sword and shafted spear we captured,
when

Full many a well-stored town we sacked of stout word-moulding
men.

Thus to his comrades spake the godlike Phthian chief ; and then
A mighty caldron on the fire he bade them place, that they
From dear Patroclus' form might wash the clotted gore away.
They a three-footed caldron placed upon the glowing fire,
And poured the flood, and heaped the old dry logs at his desire.
The flame climbs round the bellied brass, and genial tremor grows
Through all the flood. But, when to air the frequent bubble rose,
Then with warm streams they wash the limbs of that dear hero
brave,

350

And with rich unguent, nine years old, his gaping wounds they
lave ;

Then lay him on a couch, and with fine linen cloth from head
To foot they swathe him, and above a fair white pall they spread.

Thus all night long the Myrmidons round their swift-footed chief,

Watching and wailing by the dead, draw out the bitter grief.

Meanwhile in heaven from Jove these taunting words to Herè came :

Well hast thou played thy partial part, my large-eyed gracious dame !

From thee Achilles took the start ; a very child might see

The Greeks live in a mother's heart, who boast descent from thee !

To whom this sharp reply returned the large-eyed gracious dame :

360

O terrible son of Kronos, small the cause with thee for blame !

A man, I wot, may freely plot against a brother man,

Though mortal brain oft sweats in vain to forge a cunning plan.

How then should I for this be blamed, who brook immortal life,

And by all powers in heaven am named thy sister and thy wife,

Even thine of deathless gods the king, and all-controlling sire—

Should I not dare to point a sting, when Trojans whet my ire ?

Thus spoke the lofty-pealing lord, and his large-eyed gracious dame.

Meanwhile to Vulcan's hall the silver-footed Thetis came,

That hall immortal, brassy, strong, which for his starry home

370

The lame god piled—no other god could boast such wondrous dome.

Him sweatful, puffing wind into the bellows vast she found,
Where twenty tripods from his hands fresh-forged were standing
round,

Tripods which soon the walls of his Olympian hall should grace.
Gold-glittering wheels the god had fixed beneath each tripod's base,
That with self-moving force they to the council might be rolled,
And to his house wheel back again, a wonder to behold.

These he had made, but not complete ; and now he urged the blast
To forge the bonds that made the curious moulded handles fast.
And, while he swinks and sweats, and snips the brass with cunning
hands, 380

Lo ! at his side the silver-footed wave-born goddess stands ;
Whom when fair Charis of the shining snood saw coming near—
The lovely wedded wife was she to lame Hephæstus dear —
She grasped her hand, and then bespoke her thus in accents clear :
Thou long-stoled Thetis, say what brings thee from thy briny
home,

High-honoured, well-beloved ; 'tis long since thou wert wont to
roam !

But come ; a kindly welcome first, thou much-loved guest, be thine.

She spake, and led into the hall the goddess of the brine,
Then bade her sit upon a high and silver-studded seat,
Beautiful, quaintly-wrought, and placed a footstool at her feet ; 390
Then to her cunning-handed lord she spake with words discreet :

Come forth, good Vulcan, sea-born Thetis claims thy friendly aid.

To whom the wise lame-footed god this ready answer made :
Truly a goddess much revered doth seek my friendly hall,
Who once did save me when from heaven I fell with headlong fall,
Disowned by her who bore me for my lame and halting gait ;
Full hopeless then, I ween, had been the lame Hephæstus' fate,
Had not Eurynome, tideful Ocean's kindly-thoughtful daughter,
And Thetis, hid me in the depths of the billowy-bosomed water.
For nine years there I worked for them, and forged them dainty
things, 400

Buckles, and twisted bracelets, hair-pins, necklaces, and rings,
All in a hollow cave, round which the stream of ocean blue
Rippled with murmurous foam immense ; and of my hiding knew
None of the Olympians lofty-throned, nor of food-eating men,
But only Thetis and her sister fair, who saved me then.
Even she now at my threshold knocks ; and well beseemeth me
To Thetis with the lovely locks to pay the grateful fee
Of my saved life. But thou prepare meet entertainment, while
My blastful bellows I lay by, and the tools of my sooty toil.

He spake ; and from the anvil he with halting pace arose, 410
And on his long and slender shanks with clumsy sway he goes,
Then his stout bellows, and his tools, the sooty workman's pride,
Into a silver chest with decent care he puts aside.

Then with a sponge he wiped his face, and both his hands, I ween,
His sinewy neck and shaggy breast, till they from smutch were clean.
Then donned his smock, and took his sturdy staff, and forth he
wended,

Halting; and on their skilful lord the shapes of maids attended,
Golden, of subtle frame, like living maids in beauty splendid;
And in their frames there breathes a soul which feels, and thinks,
and knows

Right cunning things, and from their lips discourse of reason
flows. 420

They to their master ministered; with them he did advance
To where the goddess sat upon a throne of brightest glance,
And clasped her hands; and with these words his welcome did
enhance:

Thou long-stoled Thetis, say what brings thee from thy watery
home,

High-honoured, well-beloved; 'tis long since thou wert wont to
roam!

Speak all thy wish, and well believe the firmest will is mine
What may be done to do for thee, dear goddess of the brine.

To whom thus she, while from her eyne the tearful torrent fell:
Hephaestus, which of all the race of goddesses who dwell
In high Olympus hath endured such dearful dole as I 430
Now bear, and yet shall bear, from Jove who rules the starry sky?

For he of all my sisters me unwilling forced to wed
The seed of Ææcus, and I endured a mortal's bed,
A mortal who with hoary eld down-bent now hirpling goes
About the house; and yet for me Jove ripens worsen woes.
A noble son from Peleus born the Olympian gave to me,
Elect of heroes, who grew up like the shoot of a goodly tree;
Him, as a gardener the green herb, even so with tender care
I reared, till in the curvèd ships to Troy he forth must fare
To fight for Greece; and now I know that I shall sigh in vain ⁴⁴⁰
For his return to Phthia, safe across the sounding main.
He, while he lives, and looks upon the bright sun's blissful ray,
Eats his own heart with grief, nor may I ward his woes away;
And the fair maid whom in just raid he took, his portioned
right,
Wide-ruling Agamemnon seized with rude licentious might;
Whereat he, chafing in his heart, no causeless rancour nursed,
The while the Achæans from the haughty Trojans fled, nor durst
Advance beyond the ships. And then with many a pleading prayer
The Argive elders came, and offered gifts both rich and rare;
But he their bribe disdained, nor recked the man-ennobling fight, ⁴⁵⁰
And bade Patroclus on his limbs his own bright armour dight,
Then sent him to the field, with all his Myrmidons, and they
From morn to night by the Sææan gates drew out the murderous
fray;

And now the fated hour was nigh when Ilium might be won,
Had not Apollo slain Menœtius' strong death-dealing son,
And Hector by that heavenly help with glory graced his brow.
Wherefore I at thy knees, wise god, a suppliant sit, if thou
For my fleet-footed son bright helm and buckler's ample round,
Corslet, and burnished greaves, with ankle-pieces nicely bound,
Wilt please prepare ; for his own arms subdued by foeman's
force

460

Patroclus to the Trojans lost, and lies a breathless corpse.
To whom the wise lame-footed god the kindly answer made :
Keep thou good cheer, nor let vain fear thy mother's heart invade ;
Would that from dismal-sounding death thy son I so might
save,
When the hour shall come that cuts his breath, and lays him in
the grave,

As to thy prayer the arms are sure, which I will gladly render
Beautiful, dazzling eyes of men with wonder-working splendour.

He said, and left her there, and to the blasting work did go,
And turned his bellows to the flame, and stontly 'gan to blow.
Through twice ten muzzles to the smelting-pots the blast was
sent,

470

And here and there the enforced air rushed through the glowing
vent,

Now strong, now slack, as it might suit the cunning god's desire,
Adjusting to each moment's need the nicely-tempered fire.
Into the furnace then he threw fine tin, and copper ore,
Silver and precious gold ; and, whiles the fiery billows roar,
Fixes an anvil in the stock ; to his right hand belongs
A weighty hammer ; in his left he holds the griping tongs.
Then first of all he made a strong and well-compacted shield,
With subtle mastery, and round its huge orbicular field
A radiant rim threefold ; the brace was made of silver fair ;
Five plies made strong the round, and with much cunning-thoughted
care
Rich shapes of various-fashioned things were quaintly blazoned
there.

And first the earth, and sea, and sky, with nice-discerning
mind,
The unwearied sun and full clear moon the artful god designed,
And all the stars that diadem the welkin's brow with light,
Pleiads and twinkling Hyads, and Orion's radiant might :
The Bear that studs the lucid pole, by some yclept the Wain,
Which wheeling still, still at Orion looks with steady strain,
And of all stars alone is free from the baths of the briny main.

Then in the shield two towns of speechful men Hephaestus
made,
Fair cities, in which marriage feasts and banquets were displayed.

There the bold bridegroom leads the bride, while the attendant
throng

Swing torches through the streets; high swells the hymeneal
song,

And young men wheel in the merry dance, and flute and lyre are
loud,

And women standing in the doors admire the festive crowd.

A market-place was pictured then, where rose an angry strife, ⁴

About a slaughtered clausman, and the fine for his stolen life.

Two men confronted stood before the folk; that he had paid

The one declared, the other with denial stout gainsayed;

Both by sworn witnesses were pledged to make their pleading
good,

500

The while their friends in eager rings with rival clamour stood.

The heralds drew the people back, and aged men sedate

On polished stones to speak the doom in sacred circle sate;

And in their hands the shrill air-piercing heralds' staves they hold,

And one by one uprising, to the folk their minds unfold;

And in the midst two talents lay of gleaming gold, which he

Should gain who in that cause declared the doom most evenly.

The other city by two hosts of glistening spearmen stood

Emringed, who gave this only choice to the leaguered multitude, ⁵¹⁰

Or in tway equal halves their hoarded treasure to divide,

Or see in blazing ruins fall their dear-loved city's pride.

But they refused, and 'gainst the foe an ambush they prepare.
With their dear wives and children, and old men with hoary hair,
They line the walls ; themselves forth to the jeopardous venture fare.
Before them marched impetuous Mars, and Jove's spear-shaking
daughter,

Golden, and pranked in golden weeds to the field of ruddy slaughter,
Beautiful, and with armour bright, tall, and of goodly frame,
As gods beseems ; smaller to view the mortal people came.
But when they reached where they were pleased to plant their
ambuscade

520

Beside the river, where their drinking-place the cattle made,
Then they crouched down, and waited all in glowing brass arrayed,
And a short space ahead they set two scouts, good watch to keep,
And sign the coming of the hornèd kine and fleecy sheep.
These soon appear, and in the rear two herdsmen come with them,
Piping their way, nor seeing aught of guileful stratagem.
They from the ambush sudden spring, and with quick force compel
The herds of hornèd cattle, and the flocks with fleecy fell,
Then with keen brand in sturdy hand they slay the herdmen
twain ;

But when the stout besiegers heard the din, across the plain, 530
Where in the public place they sat, their proud high-prancing
steeds

Instant they mount, and to the stream each eager rider speeds,

Now to the steep banks they advance, and the burning battle
rages,

Loud rings the brass where lance meets lance, and man with man
engages.

Fierce Strife was there, and hot Turmoil, and dire Destruction,
who

One wounded man, and one unwounded through the battle drew,
And by the feet she dragged a third dead through the dauby gore,
And gouted with the blood of men a vermeil vest she wore.

Like living men these figured shapes fought on the field of death,
And across the plain they haled the slain bereft of lively breath. ⁵⁴⁰

Then in the shield he graved a field that long had fallow lain,
Fat, broad, thrice-ploughed, and many ploughmen ploughed that
goodly plain,

Turning their yokèd oxen round, with sweat and sturdy strain.
And as each lusty labourer reached the end of the upheaved line,
There stood a man, with in his hand a cup of mellow wine,
And poured it to the ploughmen. They turn round and instant
bend

Over their work with patient force, to reach the other end.
Behind the plough the furrow rose, dark like the fresh-turned clod,
Though framed of very gold ; such wondrous skill was in the god.

Thereby a harvest-field he carved, and in the field were bands ⁵⁵⁰
Of reapers, brawny churls, with sharpened sickles in their hands.

A long-drawn line of thick eared swathes each busy reaper leaves,
Which carefully the binders bind with wisps in yellow sheaves.
For three stout binders followed aye the swathes, and with them
ever

A troop of boys, who gathered up the corn with deft endeavour,
And gave it to the binders ; near them stood with silent joy
A king with staff in hand, and calmly watched their brave employ.
Apart the heralds 'neath an oak set forth a banquet rare,
Slaughtering a mighty ox ; then for the serfs the matrons fair
Strew the white barley, and with cakes right jolly cheer pre-
pare.

560

A vineyard then the crafty god with cunning hand did shape,
Beautiful, golden, laden with the rich dark-clustered grape.
On poles the vines did grow, all made of gleaming silver fine :
A foss of mineral blue went round, and in the extremest line
A fence of tin ; through all the ground there led one only road,
On which the bearers went, who bore the rich and winy load ;
For lusty-visaged youths, and dainty-thoughted maids were there,
In nicely-woven baskets the fine juicy fruit to bear.
In midst the group upstood a boy, and sweetly 'gan to play
Upon the lyre ; and, whiles he played, a pleasing plaintive lay
With clear shrill voice he sang ; well pleased they drink the grate-
ful sound,
With full refrain fling back the strain, and beat the gleby ground.

A herd of kine with high-reared horns the broad disk then displayed,

And some were chased from ruddy gold, and some of tin were made.

They in deep-lowing troops from close and steaming stalls were going

To pasture by the running stream where the slender reeds were growing.

The herdsmen followed in a row, four golden figures fine,

And with the herd the nimble-footed dogs were numbered nine.

But in the cattle's foremost rank two tawny lions strong

Seized a huge bull ; he, bellowing loud and sharp, was dragged along,

580

While hooting swains came up behind, and dogs, a yelping throng.

But the tway lions held the bull, and tore his tough black hide,

And lapped his blood, and feasted on his flesh, the while aside

The herdsmen stood, and shouted to the dogs, who fain would bite,

But wary stood beside the path, and barked with all their might.

Then a fair field upon the shield that limping smith renowned

Chased, with a flock of fleecy sheep cropping the grassy ground ;

And stalls were there, and pens, and tents with goodly roofs displayed.

A dancing plot for tinkling feet the god then nicely made,

590

Like that which in broad-fielded Crete erst Dædalus prepared,

For famous Ariadne, queenly maiden, lovely-haired.

There lusty youths and maidens, worth full many stately kine,
Join hand in hand, and through the dance the mazy figures twine ;
Around the maidens' wavy forms the airy vesture floats,
While bright as oil the striplings shake their glossy-woven
coats ;

A crown the maidens' foreheads bound ; the lusty youths displayed

A dagger each, hung by a belt of shining silver made.

And now with dexterous foot they trip, and round and round they
reel

Lightly, as when a potter sits, and proves the whirling wheel ; ⁶⁰⁰

And now, the mazy links dissolved, they form an ordered band,

And face to face with steady gaze in marshalled lines they stand ;

And eager gazing crowds surround the delicate-shifting twine

Delighted ; and amid the crowd there stands a bard divine,

And sings to his lyre ; and while he pours the sweetly-stirring
song,

Two tumblers tumble wondrous quaint before the applauding
throng.

Then in the buckler's outmost rim the mighty ocean river,

Hephaestus carved, whose current flows with strength that sleepeth
never.

And when the god had finished thus the shield of massy frame,

He made a mailèd coat that shone brighter than spiring flame ; ⁶¹⁰

Likewise a weighty helmet for the head of the hero bold,
Beautiful, nicely wrought, and crowned with a crest of glittering
gold ;

Then greaves of finest tin the god with subtle craft did mould,

And when his art these warlike weeds had finished fair and
fine,

He laid the beauteous gift before the goddess of the brine.

And like a hawk forthwith she flew from Olympus' snow-crowned
hill,

Bearing the glittering armour made by lame Hephæstus' skill.

BOOK XIX.



ARGUMENT.

*The god-forged arms the goddess of the brine
To godlike Peleus' rueful son presents.
He sees with joy their dadal beauty shine,
And of his wrath against the king repents.
To her just lord the fair-checked maid divine
Returns, and Peace unites the Argive tents.
Achilles rides against the Trojan forces,
And hears dark warnings from his speechful horses.*

BOOK XIX.

AND now bright Morning, saffron-throned, from ocean's tideful
stream

Rose, and on gods and men outpoured her light-diffusing beam.
Then Thetis came to the hollow ships, the gift of Vulcan bringing,
And found her godlike son to dear Patroclus' body clinging,
And weeping bitter tears ; and round the mournful hero stood
His wailing friends ; beside them rose the goddess of the flood,
And took his hand in hers, and thus with kindly tone spake she :
Dear son, quit we the dead ! though grieved with mighty grief
we be ;

The gods have willed his death, and we must own their high decree.
But thou with these fair god-forged arms thy manly body dight ; ¹⁰
So beauteous ne'er yet decked the limbs of war-rejoicing wight !

She spake ; and placed the dædal brass all glittering on the
ground

Before Achilles ; and the mail rang with clear-ringing sound.
But trembling seized the Myrmidons ; upon the arms sun-bright
None dared to look ; but Pelus' son fixed his unflinching sight
Upon the gift, and ever as he gazed sharp anger's might

Mastered his soul, and fiercely flashed keen lightnings from his
eyne.

Yet was he glad, when in his hand he held the gift divine,
And when his eye was sated with the wonder-stirring view,
Thus to his mother from his lips the wingèd answer flew : 20

Dear mother mine, the arms are fair, the witnessed work are
they

Of gods ; no mortal might prepare mail of such rich display.
Myself will deck my limbs anon ; but now full sore I fear
Lest to the body of my friend the spoiling flies come near,
And creep into the gory gaps made by the copper spear,
And worms shall grow his flesh below, and—for no life remains—
All foul putrescence mar his flesh, and the blood rot in his veins !

To whom then spake the silver-footed goddess of the sea :

Dear son, from this heart-harrowing care my tendance keep thee
free ;

Myself with force divine will drive the frontless tribes away 30
Of flies that feed on flesh of men, whom Mars hath made his
prey ;

And I will pour such juices rare, that for a year and more
Will keep his skin from taint, as fair, or fairer than before.
But summon thou the chiefs ; and in the great assembly fling
To the four winds the rancorous grudge thou bear'st against the
king ;

Then deck thee with the mailèd vest, and gird thee for the battle.
Thus she; and filled his manly breast with hot and valorous
mettle.

Then on Patroclus' head she poured ambrosia, and the red
Nectar, till freshening virtue fine o'er all his limbs was shed.

Then to the shore of the sounding sea went Thetis' son divine,⁴⁰
And cried aloud, and called the chiefs through all the masted line.
All heard his call. Then even they who never came before,
Who held the rudder, and controlled the men who ply the oar,
And all the stewards, to the fleet who dealt the foodful store;
All these came flocking to his call, and cheered their eyes to
view

Achilles now returned to join the long-deserted crew.

Then two brave ministers of Mars, stout warrior kings, appear,
With limping pace, and leaning each upon a shafted spear,
Tydides and Ulysses—for their wounds still sorely galled them—
And in the first rank sat them down, when the godlike hero called
them.

50

Then Agamemnon, wide-realmed king, the people's shepherd,
came;

He too was wounded; for a Trojan man of warlike fame,
Antenor's son, with bitter lance had trenched his kingly frame.
And, when the people and the chiefs were seated in a ring,
Uprose Achilles, swift of foot, and thus bespake the king:

Atrides, wiser had we been, if, when the strife began,
When thou and I strove for a girl before the Achæan clan,
We had agreed, as now, the heart-devouring grudge to ban.
Would she had perished in the ships by dart of Dian killed,
What day I forced Lyrnessus' towers to my proud strength to
yield ! 60

Not then so many gallant Greeks had with their strong teeth bit
The measureless earth, while I did nurse my sour and spleeny fit.
Of this was Hector glad and Troy ; but all the Achæan men
Through many a year will tell their sons the strife that severed
then

Me from thy camp. But let this pass. Though in our bosoms
dwell

Crude memories, let us crush our pride, and our sharp rancour
quell.

Myself my choler now forswear ; besseems it not for aye
A stiff unstooping front to wear. And now, without delay,
Let all the long-haired Greeks gird on the shining mail, and go
To the fight with me, that I may prove the haughty-hearted
foe, 70

If here he wish to lodge o' nights ; but this I rather deem,
With supple knee he'll turn and flee from the war's forwasting
stream

Full fairly, when across the plain my eager spear shall gleam.

Thus he ; and all the Greeks with burnished greaves rejoiced to
see

The noble heart of Pelens' son from bitter rancour free.

And in the assembly rising, great Atrides, king of men,

Not in the midst, but standing near his seat, bespoke them then :

Dear friends, and ministers of Mars, Greek captains brave, give
ear !

Who stands to speak may silence claim, and ye are bound to
hear ;

But when a throng obstreperous shouts, amid such wild uproar ⁸⁰

The speaker speaks in vain, though loud from lusty lungs he pour

The rolling phrase. I to Achilles will declare my thought,

And what I say let every Greek who hears me wisely note !

Ofttimes with words of bitter blame to me the Argives came

In this affair ; but free from guilt is Agamemnon's name.

Jove and the Fate, and the night-roaming Fury, own the blame,

Who on that day me overbore with blind infatuation,

When I did seize his prize before the assembled Argive nation.

What should I do ? A power divine makes mortal sorrows flow, ⁹⁰

Jove's awful daughter, Atè, opes the cursed sluice of woe.

Light are her feet ; on lowly ground no steps her march declare,

Above the heads of men she floats, and sows with harm the air.

Even Jove, the best of all the gods, did once severely prove

Her evil-working virtue ; yea, the lofty-pealing Jove

Was by a woman once deceived, even Herè's cunning sleight,
What time Alcmènè knew her throes, and soon should bring to light
Stout Hercules, in Thebes, whose walls are fenced about with
 might.

Even then the father vauntful spake to the tribe that holds the
 sky : 100

Lend me your ears, all mighty gods and goddesses, that I
May voice the thought that in my breast doth move me mightily.
This day the pang-producing Eileithyia aids the birth
Of one, whose mighty sway shall hold all neighbouring kings in
 girth,

A man who to the race belongs that from my loins came forth.

To whom the large-eyed Herè thus with crafty thought replied :
Nay, but thou liest ! by the event shall thy big vaunt be tried.
Or—an thou wilt—a mighty oath to me, Olympian, swear,
That o'er the neighbouring men that man a sovran sway shall
 bear,

Whoso this day between a woman's feet shall fall to earth, 110
Of men who draw from Jove the source of their high-rated birth.

She spake. But not her crafty scope the heavenly sire perceived.
A mighty oath he swore ; and by his oath was sore deceived.
Down from Olympus' brow the white-armed gracious Herè flew,
And to Achaean Argos came, where well the wife she knew
Of Sthenelus, who his spring of life from Jove-born Perseus drew.

She in her womb then held a son—seven moons had nursed the
germ ;

But Herè brought the babe to light before ripe Nature's term,

And from Alcménè drave the aidful Eileithyia ; then

With well-pleased mouth this word she spake to the king of gods
and men :

129

Lord of the flaming bolt, receive this witnessed word from me ;

This day a goodly man is born, and o'er the Argives he

Is king, from Persens' stock divine who draws his high degree,

Thy blood, Eurystheus hight ; this man shall o'er the Argives reign.

She said. The heart of Jove was pricked with points of piercing
pain.

Forthwith he seized fell Atè's head, and griped her glossy hair,

And with keen-kindled anger thus a mighty oath he swore :

No more shall foot of Atè tread Olympus' starry courts,

Who on the food of harm is fed, and with destruction sports.

He said ; and from the starry bound he hurled that maiden fell, ¹³⁰

Even as one whirls a quoit ; since when with men the fiend doth
dwell.

And oft he cursed her, when from far his dear son he beheld,

To irksome toils by the harsh son of Sthenelus compelled.

Thus I, when that crest-flickering wight, stout Hector, ruled the fray,

And my brave Greeks with grim delight beside the ships did slay,

Groaned o'er fell Atè's baleful might, and cursed her hated sway.

But, sith I strayed from right, and Jove amerced me in my wits,
I, to atone my fault, will pay such fine as well befits.

Now be the war thy care, and stir the folk, and fan the fight ;
And all the precious gifts are thine—thereto thou hast my
plight—

140

Which yesterday within thy tent divine Ulysses pledged,
Or—an thou wilt—remain, though with thy warlike bent sharp-
edged,

And from the ships my faithful men shall bring the gifts anon,
That thou mayst see how we would heap with honour Peleus' son.

To whom Achilles, swift of foot, with ready word replied :
Glorious Atrides, king of men, and monarch ruling wide,
The promised gifts give or withhold, as it may seem thee right.
Thine act be free ; but now, O king, mine only thought is fight.
No time is this with wordy pains to balance yea and nay ;
A mighty work undone remains, which brooketh no delay.

150

As ye shall see the son of Peleus in the foremost van
Fighting, while with his brazen spear he gores the Trojan clan,
Even so do all, and at my call let man contend with man !

To whom the subtle-scheming chief Ulysses thus replies :
Godlike Achilles, thou art brave ; but 'twere more brave than
wise

To drive the good sons of the Greeks unfoddered to the fray
Against the foe ; no scant time will serve the need to-day,

When Greek and Trojan front to front assay their warlike mettle,
And in their breasts a god shall breathe the flaming breath of
battle.

Bid them sit down, and pour good wine, and spread the nurturing
food, 169

Whence vigour springs and strength divine to spearmen true and
good.

The man, who foodless fights all day to the setting of the sun,
Will find his heart desert his hand, ere half the work be done.
For though with hot desire for fight his spirit may prevail
At first, full soon shall weariness his sturdy limbs assail,
Hunger will pinch, and thirst, and from his knees all firmness
fail.

But when good wine and food doth sate the soul of galliard wight,
Who in close tug of war shall sweat from dawn to dusky night,
With lusty pulses beats his heart, his knees him stoutly bear,
And where the last foe quits the field, he deals the last blow
there. 170

Then bid the people spread themselves, and with deft hands
prepare

The nurturing meal ; then Agamemnon, king of men, the rare
And golden gifts will bring into the midst, that thou mayst see
With gladdened eye and glowing heart, how Greece doth honour
thee.

Then let him stand amid the host, and his high honour plight,
That with the maid he never knew dear dalliance and delight,
As man with maid may know by nature's law and human right.
And with his plighted word be thy heroic heart content.

Then let the king of men entreat thee kindly in his tent
With savoury feast, that every due may on thy right attend. 180
And thou, O king, with hasty word wilt not again offend.

No shame it brings to thy great name to appease a kingly man
With gentle word and deed, when with thyself the grudge began.

To whom this answer made the wide-realmed king of the Argive
clan ;

Son of Laertes, thou hast spoken, like a wise man truly.

With willing heart I heard : all things thy thought hath ordered
duly ;

And I thy voice will follow, nor my mouth will dare in vain
To attest the truthful gods. Here let the high-souled chief remain
A space, though much his swift foot yearn to scour the dusty plain.

And wait ye also, noble kings, till from the tent the rare 190
Gifts shall be brought, and we this day a solemn oath shall swear.

But thou, Ulysses, hear my word, and my command obey ;

Choose choicest youths from all the host, and let them go straight
way

And from my dark-hulled galley bring the costly gifts and rare,
Which yesterday I promised ; nor forget the women fair.

And let Talthybius sans delay a boar for sacrifice
To Helios prepare, and Jove, who wons in the lucid skies.

To whom with ready word replied Achilles swift of foot :
Glorious Atrides, king of men, another day will suit
These matters better, when some ease from warlike toil may be, ²⁰⁰
And the hot rage shall cool that now for battle burns in me,
Now, when my dear friends round me lie defaced by gashes gory
From Hector's spear, to whom the high Olympian king gave glory.
Our hunger with untimely spur ye prick ; for I much rather,
Spurring the common war, the crop of sweet revenge would gather,
And fight with lighter stomach, till this shame I wipe away
From Greece, and then take food at ease with the sun's far-wester
ing ray.

Down my own throat no drop shall pass, nor nurturing food be
sent,

While unavenged Patroclus lies, dead in Achilles' tent, ²¹⁰
Whom most I loved, his body gashed by Hector's ruthless spear,
His feet toward the door, and round him stand his comrades dear
Weeping ; this makes me loathe my food ; one only thought is
mine—

Battle and blood and death and tears through all the Trojan
line !

Then thus Ulysses, subtle-scheming chief, to speak began :
Achilles, son of Peleus, best of all the Achaean clan,

Better in war, and in the craft to hurl the mortal spear
Art thou ; but I, in counsel wise, and in discernment clear,
May top thy measure, elder-born, and knowing more than thou ;
'Tis well that thy stout heart submit to my advisal now. 220

Soon comes a glut of war, where Mars his gory harvest reaps ;
Like worthless straw is all the crop, where he who gathers weeps ;
Full scanty grain the acres yield where force o'er force prevails,
And Jove, lord of the bloody field, inclines his fateful scales.
Who on his stomach puts a force, when he the slain bewails.
Must aye be fasting ; row on row the gallant Argives fall ;
Our lids were never dry, if we long time should weep for all.
The dead once buried, we must turn a flinty face on woe ;
One day's enough for grief, one day let lawful sorrow flow.
Then who the gory strife survive, let them with nurturing food 230
Make firm their flesh, and with the glowing wine make rich their
blood

For use of Mars, that they with hostile men may stiffly fight,
Clad with the dint-enduring mail. But let no harnessed wight
Wait for a second call to rouse his backward bravery.
Ill luck bechance the laggard loon by the ships beside the sea
Who skulks this day ; a forward front let our dense masses
show,

And stir the bitter Mars against the horse-careering foe !

He spake ; and bade with him the sons of noble Nestor go,

Thoas, and Merion likewise, and Meges, Phyleus' seed ;
Stout Melanippus, and of Creon's stock brave Lycomedes. 240
Eftsoons they to the tent departed of the king of men,
And, as the word was said, clean so the work was finished then.
Seven tripods from the tent, and twenty caldrons forth they
bring,
All burnished bright, and horses twelve, as plighted by the king.
Eke seven fair women, skilled in cunning works of women's
hands ;
With them a fairer, beautiful-cheeked Briseïs, seemly stands.
Laertes' son ten talents weighed of yellow golden ore,
And led the pomp ; behind him ranked, the young Achæans bore
The gifts, and placed them in the midst Then to the multitude
Uprose the king ; beside him like a god for utterance stood 250
Talthybius ; and a brawny boar his guiding hand obeyed.
Then from his belt Atrides drew a knife with shining blade,
The knife which alway hung beside the sheath of his good sword,
And cut the top-hairs from the boar, then to the thundering lord
Of heaven upreared his hands and prayed. The Greeks were seated
round,
And heard the monarch, as he spake, with silent awe profound :
Then to the welkin wide he looked, and thus to pray began :
Be Jove my witness, king supreme, best of the heavenly
clan !

Earth, and the Sun, and Furies, who in realms of nether night
Mark each bold sinner, and chastise the falsely-swearing wight ; ²⁶⁹
Not on the beautiful-cheeked Briseïs hand of mine was laid,
Nor I with thought of love came near the couch of that fair
 maid,

But in my tent unharmed, unstained, the blameless virgin stayed.
And, if my tongue untruthful sins, may the gods who reign on
 high

Pay me the wage that falsehood wins, where the perjured people
 lie.

He said ; and through the victim's throat the unsparing blade
 he drew ;

Eftsoons the boar into the gulfy brine Talthybius threw

To bait the fishes. Then Achilles rose, and thus began

To frame his speech, amid the war-delighting Argive clan :

O Jove, men's hearts thou dost possess with dire infatuation ! ²⁷⁰

Not else, I ween, had Atreus' son with ireful indignation

So lanced my soul ! nor ta'en the blooming maid that was my
 prize,

Reckless of right, perforce ! But thou, the ruler of the skies,

To Hector's spear hadst surely doomed full many Greeks a prey.

Now go ye hence, and taste sweet food, and stir the sturdy fray !

He spake ; and with his word dismissed the folk right suddenly :

Eftsoons they wend them every man to his tent beside the sea.

Then came the high-souled Myrmidons, and in their hands they
bring

To the ship of Peleus' son divine, the gifts of the mighty king, ²⁸⁰
And placed them in his tent ; there too a place the women found ;
The steeds his stout attendants drove to the horses' pasturing-
ground.

But when Briseïs, fair as golden Aphrodite, saw
Patroclus stretched on bloody bier, by battle's ruthless law,
She o'er his body fell diffused, and hove the shrill-voiced wail,
And with her hands her breasts she tore, her delicate neck and
pale

Fair cheeks, then spake the maid divine, and poured the streaming
tear.

Patroclus, dear to wretched me wert thou, and very dear ;
Alive I left thee here, alive, and full of lusty breath,
But now returning find thy bier, and stretched in lowly death
The mighty captain ! so to me one sorrow breeds another. ²⁹⁰
The husband whom my father chose, and my gracious-hearted
mother,

Him I beheld in the city's gate, when the sharp spear drank his
gore ;

And my three brothers' dearest blood, whom one dear mother
bore,

One deadly day sent all the three to Hades' gloomy shore !

But thou didst then forbid my tears, when Achilles slew my lord,
And Mynes' high-towered town lay low before his conquering
sword.

And thou didst say that of divine Pelides I should be
The bride, and thou to Phthian land shouldst bring me o'er the
sea,

Where the brave Myrmidons should keep my marriage-feast with
glee :

Therefore I weep thee gone, so honey-kind wert thou to me.

Thus she ; and o'er Patroclus dead with her the women show ³⁰⁰
A sister grief ; but in her heart each weeps her private woe.
Then all the elders of the Greeks with warm entreaty plied
The chief to eat ; but groaning low their suit he still denied.
Dear comrades, if ye love me well, and fain would please your
friend,

Speak not of food or drink to-day, nor seek my heart to bend
To what it loathes ; a heavy woe lies on my soul, and I
Will wait, and bear till westering low the red sun quits the sky.

He said ; and all the other kings depart ; only the twain
Atridae, Nestor, and divine Laertes' son remain,

Idomeneus, and Phcenix old, soothing the hero's pain 310
With friendly presence ; but his heart from soothing ways was
far,

Burning to plunge into the throat of grim and gory war :

And stung by bitter thoughts, he poured these words from labour-
ing breast :

Ill-fated friend, of all I ever loved on earth the best !

Ofttimes didst thou within my tent the banquet set with care,

And gentle ministry, when the Greeks did eagerly prepare

'Gainst horse-subduing Trojan men war's tearful tide to roll ;

And now thou liest, gashed and gored, and for thy cause my
soul

Fasts from sweet food, and loathes to drink, and from the well
spread board

320

Recoils ; no worsèr woe to me could time or chance afford.

Not my dear father's death might work within my heart more
sorrow,

Who now in Phthia with salt tears his aged cheek doth furrow,

Lacking his son, even me, who in this Trojan country far,

For hated Helen's sake unwind the toilsome clue of war.

Not my dear son, if he were dead, would deeper stir the wells

Of grief in me ; my dear-loved son, who now in Scyros dwells.

Alack the day ! oft with the thought I soothed my troubled
mind,

That me from Phthian land remote, me only death should find

On Trojan ground, whiles in a ship that ploughs the briny foam ³³⁶

Thy faithful hands should bear my son to his dear horse-rearing
home

From Seyros' wave-lashed isle, and show him all my lands, and all
My fair possessions, and my slaves, and my spacious high-roofed
hall ;

For Peleus old, my father—if indeed he still remains
Alive—drags on a feeble life with thin blood in his veins,
By fretful eld forworn, and sadly waits from day to day
The message of my death, when I shall bite the Trojan clay.

He weeping spake ; and with him wept all the old men ; for all
Felt the same memories prick their hearts of the loved paternal hall.
Them weeping Kronos' son beheld, and his heart with ruth was
stirred, 349

And to his daughter flashing-eyed he passed the wingèd word :
Dear child, a noble heart doth burn with flood of bitter woes,
Even Peleus' son ; but for his plight thy heart no pity shows.
Apart he sits beside the dark-hulled ships with high-horned bows,
And weeps his dear-loved friend ; the rest with strengthening food
repair

Their wasted force ; but he doth fast and feeds on carking care.
Go then, drop nectar on his breast, and sweet ambrosian dew
Distil ; that from lean hunger's gripe thou save this hero true

He spoke ; she, prompt before, obeyed the hest of the heavenly
king,

And, like a shrill-voiced falcon swift with wide-disspredden
wing, 350

Darted from high and clave the sky, the while the forward Greeks
Arm, and for instant battle busk. She the sad hero seeks,
And nectar and ambrosia dropt into his breast, that he,
Maugre sharp hunger, in the fight might stand with steady knee.
Then to her father's well-compacted dome the goddess flew,
And from the ships in masses flocked the harnessed Argive crew.
As when the thickly-whirling flakes of the cold white-mantling

snows

Fall winged from Jove, when sharp and shrill the sky-born Boreas
blows ;

So thickly now the glittering casques, and bossy bucklers bright,
And ashen spears, and hollow mail of each copper-harnessed
wight,

369

Swell on the view ; far skyward gleams the brass, and all around
The field laughs radiance ; loud the tramp of warriors beats the
ground ;

In midst of whom Achilles to his limbs the armour bound.

First to his nimble shins his hands with dexterous force compel

The beautiful greaves, with silver ankle-pieces fitted well ;

370

Then on his breast the hollow plates of his copper coat he drew,

And round his shoulders broad the silver-studded falchion threw,

Brazen ; then grasped his massy shield orbicular, whence light

Rayed forth, like to the full-faced moon, when she looks through
sacred night.

As when sea-faring men from far a sudden gleam descry
Of blazing fire, that burns on some grey mountain kindled high
By a lone shepherd—them upon the broad fish-teeming main,
Far from their friends, the buffets of the blackening storm detain ;
So through the air a gleaming ray Achilles' buckler shed,
Beautiful, daedal ; then the three-knobbed casque upon his head ³⁸⁹
Weighty the hero placed, and like a star the helm did shine
With glistening crest, whose golden hairs in many a wavy line
Shook various, by the cunning craft of Vulcan's art divine.

Eftsoons the godlike Peleus' son his god-forged arms assayed,
If they were aptly made, and well his supple limbs obeyed ;
Like wings they bore him, to each warlike motion nicely true.
Then from the spear-case, where it lay, his father's spear he drew,
Huge, massy, weighty ; none of all the Greeks had strength to
fling

Such ponderous shaft, but only he could lend the weapon wing.
Of Pelian ash 'twas made, which to his father Chiron gave, ³⁹⁰
Hewn from high Pelion's crown, to sway the battle of the brave.
Automedon then, and Alcimus, the willing horses fit
To the yoke, the leathern traces bind, and in their jaws the bit
Adroitly thrust ; then backward throw the pliant reins, and on
The well-wrought chariot lay them. Then the deft Automedon
Seized in his hand the shining lash, and roused the waiting steeds ;
And fleet Achilles mounts behind, clad in his warlike weeds

All radiant, like Hyperion, when he rides the clear blue sky.
Then with loud voice to his father's steeds thus doth the hero cry :
Xanthus and Balius, of Podarges' godlike breed renowned, 400
Bear me, your well-known rider, nimbly o'er the gory ground
Back to the brave Achæans, where the foe hath freely bled,
Nor leave your master now, as then ye left Patroclus dead.

To whom the flickering-footed steed replied, and drooped his
head,

While all his flowing mane down from the curvèd yoke was shed
Sheer to the ground ; for white armed Herè to the dumb brute gave
Articulate speech ; and Xanthus thus bespoke his rider brave :
Our feet are thine ; have thou no fear, and we thy life will save
This once ; but thy dark hour is near, and death on thee doth wait,
Not by our fault ; a mighty god, and the all-mastering Fate 410
So wills it. Not for we were slow, or to thy wish untrue,
From thy slain friend the Trojan foe the sun-bright armour drew ;
But the bright god, whom lovely-locked Latona gave to light,
Fought in the van, and glory gave to the godlike Hector's might.
We with strong Zephyr's blastful sweep, who wings his airy flight,
Fleetest of winds, would bear thee safe ; but what the Fates decree,
Death from a man's hand and a god's, we cannot ward from
thee.

Thus far the steed ; from further speech his tongue the Furies tied,
And wrathful thus to him Achilles swift of foot replied :

Xanthus, why bursts thy tongue its bonds with dismal prophecy ?
Myself know well that I am doomed on Ilium's plain to die,
From father dear and mother far. But I the fight will ply
Stoutly, till every Trojan man shall cry, Enough of war !
He said ; and shouting in the van, he drave his rattling car.

BOOK XX.



ARGUMENT.

*Jove gives permission to the gods above
To aid the fight, and give their humour sway.
Achilles and Æneas stoutly prove
Their pith ; but Neptune steals the prince away.
His brother slain doth Hector keenly move
To meet Achilles in the deadly fray ;
But Phœbus saves the prince, and wildly sweeping
Pelides rides, death's crimson harvest reaping.*



BOOK XX.

THUS near the rounded ships the well-greaved Danaan people
stood

Round Peleus' son, who longed for war as hungry men for food,
While on the gently rising ground the Trojans wait the fight.
Then from Olympus mighty Jove sent Themis to invite
The gods to council ; she, obedient to the father's call,
Went east and west, and to the great Olympian's azure hall
Summoned the gods. The Rivers came, save only Ocean's flood,
And every nymph, whose sacred haunt is in the leafy wood,
And in the river-feeding spring, and on the grassy mead.
These trooping to the Thunderer's call came now with loyal speed,¹⁰
And sat them down in sun-bright corridors, which Vulcan's hand
With wondrous artifice had framed at sovran Jove's command.
Thus the Immortals came ; with them the strong earth-shaking god
Deep from the brine uprose, and owned the cloud-compeller's nod,
And stood i' the midst, and thus bespake the lord of the starry
sky :

Dread wielder of the flaming bolt, this solemn session why

Hast thou convoked? art thou concerned the dubious war to guide,
Which flames anew by Xanthus' flood and Simoïs' swirling tide?

To whom the cloud-compeller thus gave back the prompt reply :
Earth-shaking king, into mine inmost thought thy searching eye²⁰
Hath pierced; my heart is vexed to see the dwindling people die.
I on Olympus' shining brow will keep my cloudless station
Apart, and view the contest; thou and all the deathless nation
May seek the field of strife, where hot the breath of battle reeks,
And as your liking leadeth, fight for Trojans or for Greeks.
For truly, if Achilles wields his fierce tempestuous might,
The Trojan men will flee, as oft they fled from that swift wight,
Fear-stricken; now that sorrow goads his heart with maddened
power,

I fear his wrath may take the town before the fated hour. 30

Thus spake the Thunderer; and the battle grew beneath his nod ;
And to his separate field of strife parted each partial god :
The queenly Herè to the ships, and with the flashing eyes
Pallas Athenè, and with them earth-girdling Neptune hies,
And helpful Hermes, more than all in subtle wisdom wise ;
With them came Vulcan, and his heart was hot to swell the ranks,
Sturdy, but halting on one foot, and slender were his shanks.
But with the Trojans Mars and the unshorn Apollo stood,
Leto, and dart rejoicing Dian, and Xanthus' swirling flood,
And Aphroditè, with soft smiles who quells the stoutest mood. 40

At first, while yet the gods remained apart from the bloody fray,
So long the brave Achaëans reaped the glory of the day,
While he whose wrath had slept now gave his warlike virtue sway.
Terror binds every heart, and fear holds every Trojan knee,
When on the reeking plain swift-footed Peleus' son they see,
His arms a-blaze ; and like to Mars, that sports with death, is he.
But when the Olympians in the fight had joined the mortal crowd,
Hot rose the people-driving strife ; the voice of Pallas loud
Swelled through the battle, terrible now the circling foss beside,
And now her cry from near the sea outroared the billowy tide ; ⁵⁰
While black as storm with rage enorm brayed Mars on the Trojan
side,
And now from topmost Troy he called Troy's battle-breathing sons,
Now from Fairhill and Simois' flood his rousing summons runs.
Thus on each side the rival gods upstir the swelling battle,
Man against man, and in their breasts they whet the valorous mettle.
And terribly from the throne sublime the frequent thunder's rattle
Jove launches, and strong Neptune's mace the boundless earth doth
shake
In its deep roots ; and the high-frowning steep-walled ridges quake.
The many-fountained Ida shook from base to loftiest peaks ;
Shook Ilium's towers, and all the masted navy of the Greeks ; ⁶⁰
And in his darksome realm the king of shades, infernal Jove,
From his high throne leapt down, and yelled in fear, lest from above

Poseidon, strong earth-shaker, with his three-pronged mighty mace
Rending the earth, to gods and men his dismal hiding-place
Might open throw,—hated of gods, a dim delightless den ;
With such a hurdling shock the gods in battle mingled then.
Poseidon, lord of the briny flood, did set his foot to mar
The archer-god with the silver bow, who shoots his shafts from far ;
Athenè with the flashing eyne met the fierce god of war :
The queenly Herè did confront the sister of Apollo, 70
Chaste, golden-shafted, through the wood whom whooping hunters
follow.

'Gainst Leto helpful Hermes stood, sure prop of sinking wight.
And Vulcan chose the river-foe, whose waters roll with might
Through Ilium's plain, Xanthus by gods, by men Scamander
hight.

Thus god with god was matched in fight ; but Peleus' godlike
son

Of all the Trojans burned to fight with one, and only one,
Hector, the son of Priam ; and with his most princely blood
To glut the fierce stout-hearted Mars, who feeds on gory food ;
But to confront the Phthian chief the archer Phœbus fired 80
The brave Æneas, and his soul with warlike might inspired ;
Lycaon's shape the god put on, and with his voice he spoke,
And through the dinsome battle thus with rousing banter broke :
Æneas, counsellor of Troy, where now those vaunts of thine,

So bravely made to the Trojan kings, when freely flowed the wine,
That thou wouldst plant thy might in fight 'gainst Peleus' son
divine !

To whom Æneas made reply, and thus to speak began :

O son of Priam, why shouldst thou spur me, a weaker man,
To fight with the unmastered might of the best of the Argive clan ?
Him well I know ; on Ida erst my soul felt bitter fear,
When that swift footed wight came down with his tempestuous
spear,

90

To reave my kine ; Lyrnessus then and Pedasus he took ;
And I by suppleness of limb, and grace of Jove forsook
The hopeless fray. No mortal wight that hero may withstand,
Whom Pallas aids, and who with strong spear shaken in his hand,
Both Trojan men and Leleges will sweep from Trojan land.
I know him well ; and from such man do wisely stand aloof,
Whom some one of the heavenly clan hath cased all battle-proof.
From him the arrow flies right on, nor ceases till it slake
Its thirst in Trojan blood. Grant but some friendly god to
make

100

The venture equal, oh ! not then Achilles lightly o'er me
Shall triumph, though in brazen mail compact he stood before me !

To whom thus answer made Jove's son, the lord of the sounding
quiver :

Brave Trojan hero, lift thy voice to the gods that live for ever,

Prayerful ! for thou, they say, wert born of golden Aphroditè,
But him a mother claims among the heavenly dames less mighty ;
His grandsire is the old sea-god ; thy mother's sire is Jove.
Seize then the fell and forceful brass, and well thy prowess prove,
Nor let his bitter-taunting words thy steady valiance move.

He spake ; and breathed into the heart of that full princely
wight 119

New strength ; who cased in burnished brass now sought the fore-
most fight.

But not from white-armed Herè's glance escaped the Trojan man,
When in Pelides' quest he stoutly sought the bristling van ;
She all the gods together called, and thus to speak began :
Take counsel now,—I speak to thee, Poseidon, and to thee,
Pallas,—what evil things anon the host of gods may see ;
Æneas marcheth to the fray, in burnished armour dight,
Confronting Peleus' son, and Phœbus fires his soul with might.
Come we and drive the Trojan back ! or, if it please you so,
Let not the son of Peleus lack our aid to smite the foe. 120

Him stand we near, and gird with mighty strength both soul and
limb,

And let him feel that all the strongest gods are leagued with him,
While light as whirling chaff are they, and work their own undoing,
Who strive to save the Trojan men from sheer down-bearing
ruin !

We in Olympus' starry height our shining seats forsook,
Even for this cause that in the fight no scath the chief might brook
To-day ; hereafter sans reprieve mischance may lord it o'er him,
Even as the Fate his thread did weave in the hour his mother bore
him !

Let not Achilles be unwarned by voice divine ; else he
In sore dismay amid the fray a hostile god may see. 130
'Tis hard for mortal men to look immortals in the face !

To whom thus answer made the god who wields the three-
pronged mace :

Herè, fret thee not overmuch ! it is a bootless pain ;
I rather deem that from the fray the gods awhile abstain.
Let us retire, and sit apart, and from our place of view,
Leave the war's lurly-burly free to the mortal-moiling crew.
But if stout Ares fiery-souled, or Apollo's archer might
Shall join the fray, or back withhold Achilles from the fight,
Then thou and I, and all that love the Greeks, the wild turmoil 140
Will swell, and they, I wis, not long will bear the bloody toil,
But to the synod will retreat of the other gods in heaven,
When the fell force of our hands they know, and from the field are
driven.

Thus he ; and then the dark-haired king of the billowy-bound-
ing brine

Led them apart to the lofty mound of Hercules divine ;

The mound which Pallas and the men of Troy with sweatful hand
Piled, that the monster of the deep the hero might withstand,
When it rolled hideous to the plain from the broad surf-beaten
strand.

There sat Poseidon, and with him sat the celestial crew,
And round their forms a vesture of unrifted cloud they drew. 150
The adverse gods on slope of Fairhill gathered at thy call,
Apollo, and at thine, fierce Mars, whose might shakes strongest
wall.

There they their diverse counsel hold, but from the strife forbear,
The cruel strife that stretches man upon a joyless lair.
Jove sat apart, and with his lofty purpose swayed supreme.
Meanwhile the tumult swelled, and all the field blazed with the
gleam

Of mailed men and steeds ; the earth jarred 'neath the frequent
tramp

Of hotly-hurrying feet. Two men, the best of either camp,
Into the middle space advance to head the stern dispute,
Anchises' son, Æneas, and Pelides swift of foot. 160

First threatful strode the Trojan prince, and high the shimmering
crest

Of his strong helmet nodded ; while he held before his breast
The impetuous shield, and shook his lance, as forward still he
pressed.

Then on the adverse side the godlike son of Peleus rose
Like as a lion, whom to slay a banded host of foes
Streams from the villages ; he at first disdains to own them near ;
But when some fierce Mars-goaded youth hath pricked him with a
spear,

O then he coils his tawny length and opes his jaw, his teeth
Flowing with foam, while his strong heart beats lustily beneath
His savage breast ; and with his tail lashes his shaggy flanks, ¹⁷⁰
And burns with hot desire to rush right on the bristling ranks ;
Then, with fierce blue eye flaring fear, he plunges on, to kill
Who dares oppose, or on the ground his own heart's blood to
spill.

Even so Achilles swift of foot into the battle darted,
When him to stern dispute defied Æneas mighty-hearted.
But when they nearer came, and stood confronted in the van,
Him first the godlike Greek addressed, and thus to speak began :
Æneas, why so great a space against my worthier might
Hast thou marched through the battle ? Dost thou challenge me
to fight,

Weening amid the horse-subduing sons of Troy that thou ¹⁸⁰
Shalt rule in Priam's place ? but not, even if thou slay me now,
Shall Priam's starry diadem embrace thy haughty brow.
Priam hath many sons, and he hath sober wits and sound.
Say, have the Trojans marked indeed for thee a lot of ground,

A goodly croft to plant, or sow with seed, if thou shalt smite
The son of Peleus ? Deem not thou thy labour shall be light.
Full well thy worth I proved erewhile ; or hath it 'scaped thee
how

My spear thee proudly overbore on Ida's grassy brow,
And chased thee from the kine ; and thou, swift as a sweeping
wind,

Didst fling thee down the steep, nor stay to cast one look be-
hind ?

120

Thence to Lyrnessus thou didst flee ; but I came down pell-mell,
And sacked the town ; for Father Jove and Pallas helped me well.
And many Trojan maidens then were captive led, and wept
Their forfeit freedom ; thee great Jove from deadly venture kept.
Thus then ; but not again thy heart with the fair hope deceive,
That Jove thy knees will underprop ; this warning word receive :
Back to the host with wise alarm retreat, and shun the blow
Before it fall ; once done the harm a very child may know !

To whom the shepherd of the folk with wingèd word replied :
O son of Peleus, cease with words to fray me, and to chide
As a mere child ; myself right well can match thee in the skill
To rail and flout, and cast about the bantering word at will.
Our race we know ; among the sons of mortal men our line
Is bruited well ; with joy they own our mothers both divine,
Though never thou hast mine beheld, nor I shall look on thine.

200

Thy sire was Peleus, blameless knight ; and thee a goddess bare,
Thetis, sea-floating Nereid nymph, with lovely-flowing hair.

For me, Anchises is my sire ; my dame a goddess mighty
Among the powers divine I boast, the golden Aphroditè.

These be our parents ; and of these or yours or mine, this day, ²¹⁰

I wis, shall weep ; for not with words a light and childish play
List we to make, nor without blood will end the toilsome fray.

No base-born foeman thou hast found ; and if thou seek to know
The race that rules on Trojan ground, my tongue shall freely show.

First cloud-compelling Jove begat king Dardanus ; and he
Founded Dardania ; for not yet the wanderer's eye might see,

Low in the plain, the sacred Troy, a town of speechful men,
But high they held the slope of many-fountained Ida then.

From Dardanus the kingly Erichthonius drew his birth,
Than whom no wealthier monarch swayed the tribes of peopled
earth. 220

Three thousand mares he counted, famed for beauty and for speed,
Each with its foal rejoicing in the large and lushy mead ;
Them Boreas saw, and smit with love, in guise of dark-maned horse,
He with them lay upon the grass, and used his procreant force ;
And being pregnant from the god, ten foals and two they bare,
So swift that o'er the corn-clad field they bounded light as air,
And where they came nor ear was crushed, nor stalk was broken
there ;

So light that o'er the broad sea's back they sprang with nimble
motion,

Skimming the hoary-crested track of the briny-swelling ocean.

From Erichthonius, Tros, a king of Trojan men, had birth, ²³⁰

From whom three sons of blameless worth to mortal life came forth,

Assaracus and Ilus, and young Ganymede divine,

Who overtopped all mortal men in beauty's golden shine ;

Him to their deathless homes above the gods received, to be

Cup-bearer to the blissful Jove, so wondrous fair was he.

Ilus begat Laomedon, from whom Tithonus grew,

And Hiketaon, Lampus, Clytius, and Priam too.

Priam the godlike Hector gat ; Assaracus was father

To Capys ; to Anchises he ; from whom my life I gather. ²⁴⁰

Thou hast it now ; I've told to thee my race and generation ;

'Tis Jove that makes our strength increase, or bids our mortal nation

Dwindle and pine, as he shall please, who rules from lofty station

All human fates. But cease we here with idle words to prattle,

Like very children mid the heat and hurly of the battle.

'Tis light to cast reproachful taunts, and heap up wordy stores,

A bulky freight, enough to load a ship with an hundred oars.

A light-turned weapon is the tongue ; the harvest is full cheap

Of wingèd words, which any fool, or old or young, may reap ;

What breath you spend, back to your ear as much is deftly sent. ²⁵⁰

But why stand we confronted here, with brawling bickering,

Battling like women, from whose hearts the wrathful fountains flow,
When, spurred by soul-consuming strife, into the street they go,
Venting true taunts and false ; their eager choler goads them so ?
Words shall not make my purpose bend from fight. With manly
cheer

Come now, and let us slake with blood the thirst of the brazen spear.

Thus he ; and straight his weighty lance with mighty sway he
flings

Against Achilles' shield, which with the stroke full sharply
rings. 260

This when Pelides felt, his brawny arm he did advance,

Holding the buckler far ; for truly that long-shadowed lance

He feared might reach his flesh, and Troy's high-hearted prince
enhance ;

Witless ! nor weeted that the shield by skill immortal made

To no long-shafted lance might yield by mortal muscle swayed.

Nor now the lance its force maintains, but idly quivering stands

In the firm round, whose golden plate was made by Vulcan's hands.

Thorough two metal plates it pierced, but might no further drive ;

Three yet remained ; Hephaestus' skill had braced it well with
five ; 270

Tway were of copper, tway of tin, and one between of gold ;

There stuck the brazen spear, nor more its baffled way might hold.

Then at Anchises' godlike son the son of Peleus bold

Hurled his long lance, and drove its point into his buckler's round.
Beneath the marge, where with the thinnest copper plate 'twas
bound,

And thinnest was the stout neat's hide, there pierced the Pelian
spear

Right through, and terrible rang the targe on Æneas' startled ear.
Back shrank the hero, and his shield far from his body held
Fearful ; the while across his shoulder the swift lance impelled
Stuck in the ground ; both plate and hide of the huge round it
tore

289

With violent force ; he scathless stood, nor feared its fury more.
But dim confusion from the shock o'erspread the hero's eyne,
As the shaft quivered near him. Then that Phthian chief divine
Sprang, and from brawny thigh forth drew his stout sharp-bladed
brand,

Shouting immense. But now thy son, Anchises, in his hand
Seized a sharp stone,—a stone which not two men with mickle
pain,

As men now are, might lift ; but he hove it with easy strain.
Then truly had the Trojan with that weighty-crushing stone
Smitten his foe on shield or casque, as he rushed impetuous on,
And fierce Achilles' sword had made the deadly sharp reply, 290
Had not Poseidon with keen glance seen all the peril nigh,
And thus with burning words addressed the Immortal company :

Oh, woe is me for the noble prince, the chief of the Trojan men,
Whom fell Pelides now shall hurl to Hades' darksome den,
For that he chose the baneful rede of Leto's son to follow,
And now no aid upstays his need from the son of Jove, Apollo !
But why should him, so just and true, such foul mischance betide,
Who never yet or sacred due or pious rite denied
To any of the deathless crew, who won in the welkin wide ?
Then come we now, and bear him from the sheer-impending
death,

300

Lest the dread Thunderer swell with ire, if this prince suffer seath,
At fell Pelides' hand. 'Tis fate that he from harm be kept,
Lest from earth's face without a seed the kingly race be swept
Of Dardanus, the dearest imp to thunder-launching Jove
Of all that from his loins came forth, through mortal woman's love.
Enough from Jove hath Priam known of sorrow and of bane ;
But now the good Æneas o'er his remnant seed shall reign ;
His children's children in the land shall with sweet peace remain.

To whom the large-eyed queenly spouse of Jove made answer
so :

Earth-shaking god, thou for thyself in thine own heart mayst
know,

310

If thou the valiant Trojan prince wilt save, or let him go ;
But we amid the deathless gods—myself and Pallas both—
Against the Trojan folk have sworn a stern and changeless oath,

That Troy from us no help shall claim to ward the fateful hour,
What time the pitiless strong-jawed Flame its beauty shall devour,
When the Argive bands with vengeful hands shall fling the burn-
ing power.

These words the strong Poseidon heard with wise-discerning ears,
And went to the hurly-burly wild, and the dance of the deadly
spears,

And came to where Æneas stood, and Peleus' son divine, 320
And threw himself between, and cast a mist before the eyne
Of Pelens' son ; then the sharp lance, with copper pointed bright,
Drew from its hold in the buckler round of the high-souled Trojan
wight,

And tossed it on the ground before Achilles' feet, and bore
Anchises' son from earth aloft, far from the battle's roar.
Full many ranks of men he crossed, and many turns of horse,
While with strong hand the god through air impelled his breezy
course,

And bore him to the farthest lines, from stour of battle far,
Where the Canconian brave allies had pitched their tents for
war.

There standing near him, the strong god who wields the three-
pronged mace, 330

With wing'd words did thus bespeak the prince of the Dardan
race :

Which of the gods, O Trojan prince, to the dire and deadly strife
Hath goaded thee, that thou in fight dost jeopardize thy life
With Peleus' son, than whom no knight that walks in battle's
stour

Is dearer to the gods? Tempt not his overmatch of power,
Lest thou with Pluto find thy lot before the fated hour.
But when that fierce swift-footed wight himself goes down to death,
Then show thee in the foremost fight, nor bate thy warlike breath ;
'Gainst thee no other Greek will dare to shake the deadly spear.

He spake, and left Æneas there from scath and danger clear ; ³⁴⁰
Then went and drew aside the mist which veiled Achilles' eyes,
Wondrous ; the chief before him looked, and gazed with broad sur-
prise,

Then in his mighty heart he chafed, and wrathful thus spake he :
O strange ! a mighty marvel with my mortal cyne I see !
Here lies the spear upon the ground ; but whom I sought to slay,
Of him no trace remains in all the clear unclouded fray.
Truly this Trojan prince was dear to all the heavenly kind,
And false my thought, when I believed his boast was empty wind.
E'en let him go ! a second time he'll scarcely dare to try
My strength—too happy for the nonce that he hath 'scaped to
die.

350

I'll on and fight, and rouse each wight of our Achæan warriors,
Then stoutly go against the foe, and break their bristling barriers !

He spake, and leapt into the ranks, and roused each Argive man.
Lag not behind, Achæans ! up and seek Troy's perjured clan,
And cross the foeman front to front in the battle's burning van.
'Tis hard for me, stout though I be, nor lack the martial mettle,
'Gainst all the clan a single man to do unfriended battle !
Not Mars the deathless, nor the maid divine with flashing eye,
Such sharp-mouthed front of bristling war alone would dare defy.
As far as hands and feet may go, and strength to hew and hack, ³⁶⁰
I'll do my work ; ye shall not find the son of Peleus slack.
I'll drive right through the adverse crew, and, when I near advance,
No Trojan man in all their clan shall joy to see my lance !

Thus spake Achilles ; but the glorious Hector heard him then,
And standing nigh with stirring cry thus spoke to the Trojan men :
High-hearted Trojans, shrink ye not from Peleus' godlike son !
Even with the gods themselves a strife of words I would not shun ;
Not so of spears, for gods are strong, and soon would work me woe.
Not all Achilles' prideful thoughts to ripened fruit shall grow ;
A few may prosper, but the most—a god shall lop them low. ³⁷⁰
I'll face the wight in open fight, and were his hands like flame,
Like flame his hands, and his strength like the strength of steel in
his iron frame !

He spoke ; and to the stirring word each valorous Trojan raises
His lance ; might clashes against might ; and wild the battle
blazes.

Then near to Hector Phœbus came, and thus to speak begun :
Hector, plant not thy single might 'gainst Peleus' godlike son,
But with the many take thy part in the battle's stour and strife,
Lest he with deadly sword or dart should rob thy dearest life !

He spake ; and godlike Hector back into the ranks withdrew,
Fearful, for well the warning voice of the friendly god he knew. ³⁸⁹
In plunged Achilles to the fray, clad with immortal might,
Shouting immense, and brought to ground Iphition, praiseful
wight,

Otruntes' son, who led full many folk to swell the fight,
Whom to Otruntes, town-destroying wight, a Naiad bare
'Neath snowy Tmolus, in the vale of Hydè fat and fair ;
Him with his spear Achilles pierced, and stretched upon the clay,
Lifeless ; for with the weighty stroke he clove his skull in tway.
With hollow sound he smote the ground ; then thus Achilles
cried :

There lie, thou mighty man, Otruntes' son ! and veil thy pride,
Where Death hath found thee ! thou wert born far inland by the
tide

390

Of the Gygean lake, lord there of many a goodly rood,
By Hyllus' fish-abounding stream, and Hermus' swirling flood.

He spoke ; and o'er the Phrygian's eyne the deathful darkness
steals,

And o'er his corpse with ruthless force the iron-girded wheels

Of Grecian chariots rattle. Then the swooping hero seeks
Demoleon, Antenor's son, that oft defied the Greeks,
And pricks him in the temple through his casque with copper
cheeks :

But not the copper might detain the lance ; the bone was shattered,
And folly with the wearer's brain the burnished helm was
spattered. 100

Hippodamus then, as from his car he leapt, and fled in fear,
The wind-swift hero in the back pierced with his ruthless spear.
He fell ; and cast his spirit out harsh bellowing. As a bull
Whom youths to Neptune's altar lead, who sways the briny pool,
And o'er the Heliconian strand with mighty mace doth rule,
And the god hears the bellowing beast, and smiles on the favoured
shore ;

So bellowed he, and his spirit fled from the body bathed in gore.
Then with his spear the chief advanced to the godlike Polydore,
The son of Priam ; him his sire from the fearful fight withheld,
For that he was his youngest son, the darling of his eld,
Light-limbed and supple, and in speed all Dardan youth excelled ; ⁴¹⁰
He full of youthful light conceit his limber legs displayed
Full deftly then in the foremost van, where death him lowly laid.
Him the divine fleet-footed chief, as nimbly o'er the ground
He sped, pierced in the back, close where the golden clasps were
bound

Of his good belt beneath the joinings of his plated mail ;
From chine to navel the strong brass did bitterly prevail.
Flat on his knees he fell, and groaned ; a dark cloud round him
spread ;

With eager clutch he grasped his bowels, and filled a bloody bed.
But Hector, when he saw his dear-loved brother, Polydore,
Holding his bowels in his hand, and rolling in his gore, 429
A tearful mist bedimmed his eyne, nor might he longer brook
To fight amid the ranks, but forth he brake like flame, and shook
His pointed spear in face of Peleus' son. Him momentarily
Achilles saw, and leapt to front, and with burning breath spake
he :

Here comes the man of all the clan, who stabbed me with most
woe,

Who slew my friend ; now time is none for running to and fro,
Foining and shifting ; I will plough a straight way to my foe !

He spoke ; and darkly scowling, thus to Priam's son spoke he :
Approach, and find the fateful term, that waiteth long for thee !

To whom undaunted thus the tall crest-flickering prince replied : 430
O son of Peleus, cease with words to fray me and to chide
As a mere child ; myself right well can match thee in the skill
To rail and flout, and cast about the vauntful word at will !
Not I with thee in fence may vie, for I am worser far,
But on the knees of the gods doth lie the event of doubtful war.

Worse though I be, by grace of gods, my trusty spear, I ween,
May rob thy life ; its shaft is stout, its point is passing keen.

He spoke, and swung his javelin, but Athenè marked it well,
And with a gently-puffing breeze the brass did back repel 440
From swift Achilles, that before the feet to ground it fell
Of baffled Hector. Terrible then did Peleus' godlike son,
Athirst to slay, with weighty sway come darkly-storming on,
High shouting ; but Apollo stood, the Trojan's near protector,
And swathed in mist, he lightly stole away the godlike Hector.
Thrice on the prince Achilles sprang, and drove the bitter brass,
But thrice in vain with silly strain he felt the weapon pass
Through empty air. Again he sprang, and forth his fury brake,
Fierce as a god, and wrathfully these wingèd words he spake :
Dog ! thou hast 'scaped once more ; the fate was passing near thy
skin ;

Full bravely for his Trojan boy the fight did Phœbus win, 450
To whom thou prayest, ere thou tempt the battle's deathful din !
So let it be ! I'll meet with thee some other day, believe me,
When near my hand a god shall stand, and none from death re-
prieve thee ;

Now other game my spear shall claim, as Jove may guide the chance.

He spake ; and in the neck he pierced stout Dryops with his lance,
Who forward rolled before his feet. Him he left gasping there,
And sought Demuchus, brave and tall, Philetor's son and heir,

Whom piercing in the knee he stayed, then with his ponderous
blade

Slashed him, and for his parting soul a wide-mouthed passage
made.

Then Dardan and Laogonos, sons of Bias brave he found, 460
And with one push he from the car cast both upon the ground ;
This from his spear, that from his sword the deathful sorrow bore.
Then Tros, Alastor's son he slew, who flung himself before
The victor's feet, and clasped his knees, in hope that gracious ruth
Might stir the hero's heart to spare his green and buxom youth ;
Witless ! who weened to move, mid savage conflict of the spears,
No dainty-humoured man, nor lightly stirred to rueful tears,
But sharp and eager ; to his knees with desperate firm endeavour,
The suppliant clung ; but stern Achilles smote him 'neath the
liver.

Out slides the liver from its seat, and the dark-streaming blood 470
Drowns all his breast, and dismal death's thick-gathering mists
o'er-cloud

His drooping sight. Then he assailed stout Mulius with his spear,
And in the car empierced him ; right through to the adverse ear
Travelled the violent brass ; then he with hilted sword amain
Smote Echeclus, Agenor's son, and clave his skull in twain,
That all the blade with hot blood reeked, and his eclipsèd sight
The dark-involving death possessed, and fate's o'ermastering might.

Deucalion then he smote, where all the sinews of the arm
Are gathered 'neath the elbow ; to his hand the bitter harm
Remorseless pierced ; with dragging arm he stood, and in his
view 480

Took death ; eftsoons the Greek his neck with swooping blade cut
through,

That head and helm rolled o'er the ground ; the marrow forced its
way

Out from the spine ; and there in lifeless length Deucalion lay.

Then to the blameless Pireus' son he gave the deadly chase,
Rigmos, who to the war had come from loamy-fielded Thrace ;
Him in the front he struck ; the brass was in his belly pight ;
And from the car he fell ; then to his squire, as he to flight
Addressed him, sharp the hero turned, and drave the lance-head right
Into his middle spine ; headlong the stricken Thracian reeled ;
His startled horses with the car neigh wildly o'er the field.

As when the strength of Fire divine hath seized a dry old
wood, 490

Deep in a heathy glen, and now the wind in lusty mood
Rolls raving through the crackling trees the folds of the flaming
flood ;

So raged Achilles with his spear, and like a god the slain
Upon the slain he heaped ; with blood swims all the reeking plain.
As, when a brace of stout broad-fronted steers some rustic swain

Hath yoked, to tread white barley on the floor of a wealthy wight,
The strong-hoofed bellowing brutes tramp out the grain with
labour light ;

So, as the fierce Achilles drives, his clattering coursers tread
On corpses, casques, and shining shields ; the axletree is red
With gouted blood, and all the rim of the rounded ear with gore
From the high-splashing hoofs of the swift steeds is spattered o'er.
And from the fellied wheels. Thus he the subject field commands
With death, and with the reeking gore smears his unmastered
hands.



BOOK XXI.



ARGUMENT.

*Achilles chokes Scamander's tide with dead ;
The river rolls his flood against the chief ;
Against the stream Hephestus' flames are spread,
And from the Water Fire brings quick relief.
The immortal gods, by diverse passions led,
Join the hot fray, and swell the gory grief.
Agenor fights ; but Pelcus' son must follow
In mortal mask the silver-bowed Apollo.*



BOOK XXI.

BUT when the drifting Trojans came to the ford of the swirling
river,

Fair-flowing Xanthus, born of Jove who lives immortal ever,
There in two ways the sweeping force of Peleus' son did sever
Their parted bands ; some o'er the plain what way the Achæans fled,
That day when Troy's far-wasting ranks the maddèd Hector led,
Poured in loose troops, and where they fled the large-eyed Herè
spread

A blinding mist about them ; the other band the hero drave
Pell-mell into the rolling depth of the silver-swirling wave.
In with a sounding plash they fell ; the billow roars, and loud
The steep banks replicate the yell of the helpless-struggling crowd,¹⁰
As to and fro they sway in the flow of the foamy-troubled flood.
As, when a fire is lit to scare the locusts herb-devouring,
Full wildly sways the sudden blaze, where Vulcan's might is
roaring,

And blindly they from the flame and the smoke in headlong troops
are pouring,

So, while swift-footed Peleus' son spurs the hot racing slaughter,
With flouncing steed and gasping men is choked the bubbling
water.

Then on the banks the Jove-descended hero left his spear
Against a tamarisk-tree, and like a god came sweeping sheer,
With brand in hand, and in his heart a thought without a tear ;
Now right, now left, down swept his blade, and to each stroke
replied 20

A heavy groan ; and red with blood far flowed the labouring tide.
As when from dolphin huge the troop of lesser fishes flees
To the far bend of a windless bay, where good ships ride at ease,
Trembling ; for without ruth his tooth devours whom he shall
seize ;

Even so the fearful Trojans pushed themselves into the water,
'Neath the scooped banks. But he, his hero hands forworn with
slaughter,

Twelve goodly youths alive did seize from the river's crimsoned bed,
Whom he might offer to appease his loved Patroclus dead.
Them all astound with fear, like fauns, he from the stream upled,
Their yielding hands their backs behind with well-cut thongs he
bound, 20

Which in their ringèd mail entwined, well pleased the hero found ;
And bade his comrades bear them to the ships that plough the sea ;
Then with fresh might to spur the fight full hot and high came he,

And on Lycaon, Priam's son, as from the stream he fled,
Sousing he came; him erst with his own hand he seized, and led
From his father's field, what time into the Trojan land he made
A midnight raid, and found the prince with his sharp-mouthèd
blade

Cutting young shoots of the wild fig-tree to make a chariot-rim;
Even then the godlike Peleus' son unlooked-for came on him, ⁴⁰
And sent him captive in a ship across the salt-sea wave
To Lemnos; and for him much gold the son of Jason gave.
Him thence his father's friend redeemed, an Imbrian hero brave,
Eëtion hight, and to divine Arisbè safely sent,
Whence soon he fled, and to his father's hall light-footed went.
Ten days and one with his dear friends in joyance and delight
He spent; but when the twelfth morn rayed the gladsome-stream
ing light,

A god him gave into thy hand, thou king of Phthian men,
That he might join the ghostly band in Hades' darksome den.
Him when the godlike Peleus' son beheld with eager glance,
Unarmed,—nor helm had he, nor shield, nor in his hand the
lance, 50

For he upon the ground had cast them, when in labouring flight
He from the river fled, and toil subdued his sinewy might;
Then wrathful to his own great heart outspake Pelides bold:
O strange! a wondrous sight this day I with mine eyes behold.

Truly the Trojans, whom my spear in fight did overwhelm,
Mailed in new flesh their fronts will rear from Hades' gloomy
 realm,

If this Lycaon, for whose life I earned the golden fine,
And sold to Lemnos' sacred isle, the barrier of the brine
O'erleaps, which many holds, I ween, where least their wills incline.
But come, the point of my good spear I'll make him taste, that I ⁶⁰
May see and know if this quick foe beneath the clod will lie
In peace, or he again will rise and burst the turfy mould
Of life-sustaining earth, which lies on many a hero bold.
Thus spake the godlike hero ; but Lycaon numb with fear
Sprang for to clasp the hero's knees, for he saw black fate was
 near.

Then high the son of Peleus reared his stout long-shafted lance,
Eager to smite him ; but with sudden crouch he did advance,
And seized his knees ; behind his back the spear came down, and
 stood .

Fixed in the ground, all hungry-hot to feed on gory food. 70
But still the Trojan with one hand embraced Achilles' knee,
And in the other with stark gripe his pointed spear held he,
And thus to Peleus' godlike son he poured the piteous plea :
I clasp thy knees, Achilles ; then, let godlike pity o'er thee
Sway, while, as suppliant falls, I fall in prostrate woe before
 thee !

Truly, ere this I tasted boon Demeter's gift with thee,
What time within the well-made threshing-floor thou captured me,
And from my friends and father far to Lemnos' isle divine
Shipped me, and sold me for the worth of a hundred hornèd kine.
Now, for three times that fine redeemed, and from the harsh annoy⁸⁰
Of hated thrall, ten days and two I breathe free air in Troy.
And to thy hands a second time, O Jove-bred king, I'm given
By the destroying Fate; sure Father Jove who rules in heaven
Hates me and mine; a short-lived son in me my mother bare,
Laöthoë, of Altes aged knight the daughter fair;
Altes, who o'er the Leleges war-loving swayed supreme,
And held the steepy Pedasus, by Satnios' swirling stream.
His daughter Priam married—her and many other wives—
Of whom two sons were born, both doomed to yield to thee their
lives :

My brother Polydore to ground thy fatal weapon brought,
When in the van the foremost man with thee he stoutly fought.⁹⁰
And now to me like fate shall be; for scarce the god, I trow,
Who brought thee nigh will hear my cry, when I beseech thee now.
But this I say, and thou within thy bosom cast it; not
I from one womb with Hector came, from whom the deathful lot
Thy gentle gallant comrade drew; for this some mercy show!

His supplication thus the prince poured forth with piteous flow
To Peleus' son; but he with heart unsoftened answered so :

Fond boy, prate not of mercy now, nor yellow gold, to buy
Thy life ! While yet Patroclus lived beneath the lightsome sky,¹⁰⁰
Nor knew black death, so long might I unblamed from death
redeem

Full many souls, and market them across the billowy stream
For gold ; but now not one shall 'scape, whom a god shall plainly
give

Into my hands ; and least of all shall seed of Priam live !
Therefore die thou ! nor vainly whine ! by the same lot of war
Patroclus fell, dear brother mine, who was thy better far.
And look on me ! of stature tall, and fair to view, before thee
I stand ; full noble was my sire, a goddess-mother bore me.
Yet me likewise shall puissant Fate and death usurp full soon,¹¹⁰
Some rosy morn or dusky eve, or bright broad-beaming noon,
When in the fight by fateful chance some stalwart Trojan foe
Shall smite me with the well-poised lance, or with shaft from the
twanging bow !

Thus he. The heart of the Trojan sinks ; his knee its use
denies ;

Down drops the spear from his hand ; and with both arms out-
stretched he lies.

Then swift Achilles from his thigh drew the sharp-edgèd glaive,
And smote him in the key-bone underneath the neck, and
drove

The brass deep in his throat ; he fell prone on the dusty ground,
And dewed the soil with the crimson well that flowed from the
bubbling wound.

Then by the foot he dragged the dead, and flung him in the
river, 129

And standing grim on the water's brim, these words did thus
deliver :

There make thy bed, O prince ! and let the careless feasters there,
The fishes, lick thy blood ! for thee no mother dear prepare,
With shrill-voiced wail, the decent bier ! but thou shalt blindly
wander

Down to the dark broad-bosomed sea in the swirl of the strong
Scamander !

There some strong fish from the depths of the brine to the dark
wave's wrinkling face

Shall leap, and daintily there shall dine on a prince of the Trojan
race !

So perish thou, and all thy crew, till the day when the heavenly
powers

Give sacred Troy into our hands, and I shall raze its towers !

O vainly then the river strong with his silver-swirling pools 130

Ye shall invoke, vainly have slain full many blameless bulls,
And cast full many hoofed steeds alive into his flood !

So perish all, both great and small, and with your dearest blood

Pay for Patroclus' gory pall, and for your works of slaughter,
Done when I lay behind the wall, and looked on the waste sea-
water !

Thus he ; but at his word the stream with crisping wrath did
swell,

And in his heart bethought him how he might prevail to quell
Divine Achilles, and from Troy the whelming woe repel ;
The while Pelides, brandishing his strong long-shadowy lance,
Winged with black death, against Asteropæus did advance, 140
The son of Pelegon, whom Peribcea, eldest daughter
Of Akessamenos, bare to Axius of broad-flowing water,
Who loved the maid, and in his arms with lusty transport caught
her.

On him Achilles sprang ; but he on the river's bank upstood,
Grasping two spears : for him the River with new strength endued,
Sore vexed to see his sacred stream with dying and with dead
Defiled, by the fell-hearted chief, heaped in his choking bed.
And when they stood full near, and each the other fronted well,
First from the lips of Peleus' son the wingèd challenge fell :
What man art thou, and whence ? what proud conceit hath lifted
thee ? 150

Ill-fated mothers send their sons to tempt the fight with me !
To whom the son of Pelegon with short phrase answered so :
High-souled Pelides, my descent what vails thee now to know ?

I from Pæonia come, a loamy land, and distant far,
Leading my long-speared men to aid the Trojans in the war.
Ten moons have dawned and now the eleventh her gladsome ray
hath spread,

Since I for Priam's cause to fight the Dardan meadows tread.
And, for my race, from Axius I derive my lofty birth,
Broad-flowing Axius, fairest flood that rolls its wave on earth ;
He begat Pelegon, spear-renowned, from whom my blood I draw.
Enough ; come prove we now our worth by battle's equal law !
Thus spake he, threatful. But the swift divine Achilles rears ¹⁶⁹
His Pelian ash. At him Asteropæus both his spears
Deftly discharged ; with either arm the lance he lightly swayed.
With the one spear he struck his shield, but its full force was
stayed

By the strong plate of gold, which lame Hephæstus' skill had
made.

The other spear the chief's right arm grazed sharply, that the blood
Flowed purple-welling ; past his arm the weapon flew, and stood
Fixed in the ground, all hungry-hot to feed on gory food.
Then swift Achilles hurled the shaft with straight unswerving
flight

Against the son of Pelegon, burning to fell him quite, ¹⁷⁰
But missed him ; with unharmful force the fiercely-driving wood
Rove up the high bank of the stream, and deep-embedded stood.

Then fierce Pelides from his thigh forth drew the eager brand,
And sprang upon him; he the while tugged with his brawny
hand

At the stout shaft, which in the steep clay bank did stiffly stand.
Thrice from its bed he strove to wrench the wood, which thrice in
vain

Baffled his gripe, and now he made the fourth and desperate strain
To bend and break the ashen spear of Peleus' godlike seed.

But him Achilles' blade prevents, and with impetuous speed
Slashes right through the belly in the navel; on the ground ¹⁸⁰
His bowels gush out; and darkness spreads his swimming sight
around,

As gasping low he lies. Upon his breast Achilles springs,
Spoils his bright mail, and o'er the dead these words high-vaunt
ing flings:

There lie! thou hast thy due! for thou in fight mayst vanquish
never

The son of mighty Jove, though got by a strong deep-flooded
River!

Thy father fathered by a stream thy vaunt not vainly showed,
But from great Jove, the lord supreme, my blood's high fountain
flowed.

My father o'er the Myrmidons, the godlike Peleus, reigns,
The son of Æacus, who blood of Jove held in his veins.

As Jove is strong above all streams whose murmurs swell the
brine, 190

So sons of Rivers may not cope with brood of Jove divine.
Thou hast a River near thee now, a mighty stream ; but all
Who strive with Jove, or high or low, in hopeless struggle fall.
Even Acheloüs, when he rolls his flood with rude commotion,
And the strong might that belts the earth of the boundless-billowy
Ocean,

Whence every river springs, and every mere engirt with mountains,
And every sea, and every well, with fair fresh-bubbling fountains,
He against Jove that rules on high will tempt the bootless battle,
When from the sky his lightnings fly, and his fearful thunders
rattle !

He spake ; and from the turfy bank updrew the ashen wood, ²⁰⁰
And left him, when his breathless corpse had spouted all its
blood,

Stretched on the sand, where lapped it lay by the deep dark-
watered flood.

Him there the eels and glancing fish with little labour found,
And picked with eager bite the fat, that wrapt his kidneys round.
But fierce Pelides gave hot chase with force unvanquished ever,
To the Pæonian horse-careering men along the river,
Who fearful fled, when they their best and bravest knight beheld
By that unmastered captain's hands and swinging sabre quelled.

Then Mydon, Mnesus, Ænius, and Astypylus he slew,
Thersilochus and Thrasius, Ophelestes with his crew, 210
And many more Pæonians down had hurled to Pluto's cave,
Had not the chafed River from his deep dark-swirling wave,
Faced like a man, his head upreared, and spoke to the hero
brave :

O son of Peleus, strong art thou, and gruesome in thy deeds
Above all men ; for with the arm of gods thy battle speeds.
If Jove thee give from Trojan soil to sweep the Trojan brood,
Vex all the plain with deadly toil, but spare my pleasant flood,
Which now is choked with dead, and stained with purple-bubbling
blood.

My liquid store I may not pour into the salt sea water,
Groaning with corpses heaped by thee, who know'st no bounds in
slaughter ; 220

O spare my stream, thou awful man, and ease my labouring tide !
To whom Achilles swift of foot with willing word replied :
Divine Seamander, as thy words have willed it, so I do ;
But, for the Trojans, I to death will scourge their haughty crew,
Till to the town they flee, and I shall prove stout Hector's mettle,
If he in fight subdue me quite, or I slay him in battle !

He spake ; and like a god swooped down on the fear-confounded
foe,

The while the swirling River spoke to the god of the silver bow :

Fie on thee, son of Jove ! thy heart hath backward been to follow
The best which the loud-thundering sire enjoined, that thou,
Apollo, 230

With thy strong hand shouldst aid the band of Trojans, till the
shadow

Of the late-slanting eve shall fall on field and fertile meadow !

He spoke ; and from the river's bank into its middle course
Sprang Peleus' son ; the wrathful stream with furious-swelling force
Rolled down his troubled tide, and drave before his flood the dead,
With whom the hot spear-famous chief had choked his groaning
bed ;

These on the plain he cast, and like a bellowing bull outroared
Awful, but round each living wight his swathing flood he poured,
Within his deep dark whirls from death the Trojan men to save.
Terrible round stout Peleus' son upstood the troubled wave, 240
And lashed his buckler's broad round disk, that on his feet to
stand

He found no strength. An elm-tree then he seized with violent
hand,

Well-grown and stately ; from its root upwrenched the timber fell,
And with it drew the bank, and dammed the water's surging swell
With its thick-branching arms, and bridged the foamy-mantled
bed

Of the savage flood. Then from the swirl the hero rose and fled

With rapid foot full strain, and o'er the field his course he held
Fear-stricken. But not the puissant god the less with anger
swelled,

And with high-darkling curl rolled on, that he might work salvation
From Peleus' hero-slaughtering son to his dear-loved Trojan
nation. 259

Aside Achilles ran, as far as one a javelin flings,
Even as a dark-plumed eagle swoops, of fowls that fly with wings
Strongest and fleetest, on its prey when sousing down it springs ;
Even so he sprang ; and on his breast the sun-bright mail he wore
Terribly rattled, as he fled the enchain'd god before,

Who rolled close on his path behind with heart-subduing roar.
As when a man from the fresh dark-watered fountain freely feeds
His thirsty fields, and through well-garden'd plots the current
leads,

And from the channel with a spade outcasts whate'er impedes
Its easy flow ; the pebbles roll before the swelling sway 260
Of the strong brook, which swift and swifter brattles down the
brae,

Nor waits his call, whose tool first oped its headlong-hurrying way :
So o'er thy track, O Peleus' son, the sounding billow then
Ramped rudely ; for the gods are strong above all strength of men.
And, oft as fierce Pelides 'gainst the flood assayed to stand,
With foot sure planted, for to know if all the glorious band

Of gods were leagued against him, who possess bright thrones for
ever,

Each time upstood the mighty wave of the Jove-descended River,
And drowned his shoulders. He with hasty-footed spring upleapt
Sore fretted; but beneath his knees the wildering current
swept, 270

And where he stood the soil was gone, and raged the swirling
stream;

Then groaning deep the hero poured this prayer to Jove supreme :
O Jove ! will none of all the gods from floods that wildly burst
Redeem me ? save me but from this, and I will bear the worst !
None of the other gods I blame, who hold the starry skies,
But she whom mother dear I name, with fair smooth-sounding
lies

Deceived me ! saying that the god who wears the golden quiver
With twanging bow would lay me low on Ilium's plain for ever.
Oh, would that Hector, of this land the best, had slain me here,
I worthy then from worthy hand had known the deadly spear ! 280
But now a sorry death I die, by surging billow's wrath
Fenced grimly round ; such death a boy, a little swineherd hath,
Swamped in the beck that big with rain foams o'er the stony
path.

Thus he ; and swiftly from the sky broad-breasted Neptune then,
And Pallas came, and near him stood in guise of mortal men,

And took him by the hand, and strong heart-cheering words they
spake.

Then thus began the god whose mace the firm-set earth doth shake :

Fear not, O son of Peleus ! from our words sure comfort take ;

The strongest gods befriend thee ; mighty Jove approves the cause ;

Myself and Pallas both combine to give thy foeman pause. 290

Thou shalt not die, so Fate hath ruled, by flood of Xanthus ; he

Right soon shall sink to his 'customed brink, as thine own eyes
shall see.

But hear our voice, and in all things our high command obey.

Cease not from levelling work of death with hands that lord the
fray,

Till thou behind their god-built walls shalt drive, like drifted spray,

The Trojan foe. Thyself of life shalt reave the glorious Hector,

And to the ships return. The will of gods doth make thee victor.

Thus he ; and to their starry homes the twin immortals soar.

But Peleus' son—for in his breast their high command he bore—

Scoured all the plain, which far and wide with waves was flooded
o'er, 300

And many burnished arms were borne along by the watery sweep,

And many dead. But the strong-footed wight with sinewy leap

Baffled the billows ; him not now the flooding river daunted,

Such strength immortal in his breast had Jove's dread daughter
planted.

Nor did Scamander bate his wrath ; but with full-swelling tide
More fiercely rushed, and crested high the billows of his pride
Immense, and to his brother-stream, to Simoïs, thus he cried :
Dear brother, join thy strength to mine, that we may both restrain
This terrible man ; for soon his arm will level with the plain
Great Priam's town, and all the force of Troy be spent in vain. ³¹⁰
But haste thee, haste thee to my aid ! stir all thy bubbling foun-
tains,

And every beck that brings to thee clear tribute from the mountains ;
Make big thy billow, and roll down, with rudely-roaring swell,
In foamy whirl, stone, tree, and sod, that our joint force may quell
This savage man, who like a god the ranks of battle moweth.
But this I say, the goodly frame, which now with pride he showeth,
Shall vail him nought, nor his bright arms, when my strong current
floweth

With rude embracement round them. I in choking floods will
bathe them,

And in a well-rolled sheet of sand, and slime and slush enswathe
them !

And him so deep in mud I'll keep, that who would find his
bones, 321

Shall seek in vain beneath a heap of mud-embedded stones.
I in my bed will o'er his head rear the sepulchral barrow,
Nor spade from men be needed then to heap the mound of sorrow !

Thus he ; and right on Peleus' son his troubled tide he rolls,
Moaning along with blood and foam, and bodies reft of souls.
Darkly around him swelled the flood of the Jove-descended river,
As it would overwhelm him, head and helm, beneath its waves for
ever !

But Herè shrieked ; her heart, I wis, for the chief was sorely
troubled,

Lest he be drowned in the pool profound, where the fierce flood
foamed and bubbled.

Then swiftly Vulcan her dear son she called, and thus spake
she :

330

Dear son, now help me with thy might ; for sure in only thee
The swirling Xanthus finds his match, when all his waves conspire.
Rise ! sans delay his madness stay, and quash his flood with
fire.

I from the briny sea will bring strong Zephyr's blastful might,
And the South that rides on dewless wing, when the air is hot and
white ;

These with dry blasts shall scorch their arms, and every Trojan
head

Blister with burning plague. But thou beside the river's bed
Fling fire from bank to bank, and flame the trees ; nor lend thine
ear

To words of honeyed blandishment or railing curse severe.

Nor cease thy flood-subduing pains till thou hear me proclaim ³⁴⁰
Enough ! then mayst thou draw the reins of the unwearied flame :

She spake ; and to her will the god his work full deftly sped.
O'er all the plain the raging sway of god-lit fire he spread,
And burned the dead that countless lay from fierce Achilles'
slaughter,
And cast a rein through all the plain on the swell of the prideful
water.

As when in yellow Autumn months blows the dry Borean breeze
O'er a new-watered field, and with glad heart the tiller sees,
So by the god the plain was dried, and all the dead were burned ;
Then to the stream with flaming power his force divine he
turned,

And fired the willows on the flood, and elm, and tamarisk tree, ³⁵⁰
Clover and rush and galingal, with wild and crackling glee,
All trees and herbs, which fringed the stream, with growth full fair,
and free ;

And every eel and troutling in deep pool and bickering current,
Did wildly leap sore vexed beneath the scathful fiery torrent,
Launched by the god who wields the strength of flame unwearied
ever.

Then thus by fiery might subdued, outspoke the swirling River :
O Vulcan, none of all the gods a conquering arm upraises
Against thy might ; much less may I, when thy red fury blazes.

Cease from this strife, and let the fell Achilles sweep the plain
With death. From helping men in fight what good may Xanthus
gain ? 369

Thus spake the Stream ; while all his tide bubbled and boiled
again.

As when a caldron simmering steams by the strength of fire divine,
Wherein the swineherd's wife doth melt smooth lard of fattest
swine,

Quick burst the bubbles, while the old dry logs are heaped be-
neath ;

So now the Jove-born Xanthus boils, and all his waters seethe.
Backward he drew his scanted flood : so sore him pressed the blast
Of the strong god who all the gods in cunning craft surpassed.
Then thus in white-armed Herè's ear these wingèd words he
cast :

Herè, why doth thy son so lash my flood with scorching flame,
Me more than others, me much less than other gods to blame, 370
Who in the battle mar the Greeks, and aid the Trojan crew ?
But I from strife will cease, and as thou listest, so will do,
If he too ceases. Thus I swear, and thou believe me well,
Never shall I from broad-wayed Troy the harmful day repel,
Not e'en when Danaan men destroy with the strong-devouring
flame

The god-built walls, and blot from earth all trace of Priam's name.

Thus spake the River. But his prayer when white-armed Herè
heard,

She to her dear son hastily out-threw the wingèd word :

Vulcan, withhold thy fiery rod ! beseems thee not to smite

With clean discomfiture a god for the sake of a mortal wight. 380

She spake. Hephaestus reined the pride of the ramping fire ; and
back

Flowed the fair waves of Xanthus' tide into their customèd
track.

So god with god no longer strove ; for Herè, large-eyed dame,

Herself the strife appeased, when she beheld the victor Flame.

But now amid the other gods a grievous combat rose,

And in disparted ranks full hot the hostile rancour glows.

Dread was the clash of their arms as they pass ; with the din
broad earth resounds,

As with a trumpet's blare were split the welkin's vasty bounds.

Jove heard the din, and he laughed in his heart, as he sat on his
throne afar,

To see the host of gods take part in the toil of the tearful war. 390

And now the desperate tug began, when the god who gloats on
slaughter,

Shield-riving Ares, wildly rushed on Jove's spear-shaking daughter

With brazen lance ; and thus with taunting word the maid defied :

Foolhardy maid, and blushless ! dog and fly in one ! what tide

Of high conceit buoys thee again to tempt the battailous chance
With me ? Hast thou forgot how thou didst Tydeus' son enhance,
And in the face of heaven, didst guide his long far-gleaming
lance,

Teaching a mortal's pointed brass to taste my blood divine ?
Now make that insolent venture good, and pay the rightful fine.

He spake ; and flung his lance against that terrible-tasselled
shield,

400

The shield which not the bolt may pierce that thundering Jove
doth wield.

This Mars did strike ; but vainly was the vauntful weapon thrown.
Sideward she stept a space, and in her strong hands seized a stone,
Black, sharp, and huge, which near her lay upon the turfy ground,
There placed by ancient men to mark each owner's rightful bound.
With this she smote the god in the neck, that not his limbs might
bear

His body up. Seven roods he lay ; in dust was dragged his hair ;
His armour o'er him rang. Then laughed great Jove's spear-shak
ing daughter,

And spake these words, exulting o'er the god that gloats on
slaughter :

410

There lie, soft-witted boy, and learn, if thou hast wit to know,
How vain thy strength to match with mine, where blow is paid
with blow !

There for thy sin atone, and feel thy mother's Furies, then
Cast on thy head, when in the strife of Greek and Trojan men
Fighting for Troy, thou didst bring low the pride of the Argive
name.

She spake, and turned her eyes away. But Aphroditè came,
Daughter of Jove, and by the hand she took his pithless frame.
Full many a sigh and sob he drew ; scant signs of life showed he.
But when the white-armed Herè saw the god by slow degree
Fanned into life, to Pallas thus the wingèd word spake she :
Daughter of ægis-bearing Jove, unvanquished Pallas, lo !
That fine quintessence of a blushless dog and fly doth go, 420
And heals the wounds of murtherous Mars. Be thine to check her
daring.

She spake ; and joyful at her word went Pallas booty-bearing,
And on the breast of the goddess launched her hand with weighty
sway.

She fell : the band of her knees was loosed ; and her dear heart
sank away.

Now god and goddess on the nurturing earth disabled lie,
And thus from Pallas' conquering lips the wingèd accents fly :
So kiss the rod, both man and god, who, since the strife began,
With force pursue the Danaan crew, and prop the Trojan clan !
Would they might all show face in fight, as now this golden dame 430
Brought help to Mars, and drew my might upon her dainty frame ;

Then long ago both gods and men had ceased from war's annoy,
When our joint powers had razed the towers of the strong well-
builted Troy.

She spoke. The white-armed Herè smiled. But while they
gloried so,

The strong earth-shaker thus bespake the god of the silver bow :
Phœbus, why stay we from the fight ? the others are not slow.
'Twere shame indeed if we to Jove's high copper-pavèd hall
Without a blow return, when strife embrangles great and small !
Strike thou the first ; for thou art young ; in blows thy virtue dwells :
But greater age in greater weight of gathered wit excels. 440
Truly a silly god art thou, and hast a thoughtless heart,
Forgetful sheer of what we bore from the foul treacherous art
Of proud Laomedon, we tway from all the gods apart,
What time from Jove we came, and on sure pact and fixed condition
Toiled twelve long months, being gods, to serve a mortal man's
ambition.

I for his city's sure defence a goodly wall did make
Both broad and high, that none its well-compacted joints might shake.
And thou his heavy-gaited hornèd kine with faithful skill
Didst tend within the wooded glades of Ida's folded hill.
But when the jocund-tripping Hours brought term to our employ, ⁴⁵⁰
Then threats for thanks he gave ; and for our toil and harsh annoy
He sent us wageless from our work, this faithless king of Troy.

To thee he threatened gyve and bond, and for a branded slave
Would sell thee, so he said, beyond the bound of the briny wave,
And swore that with a knife he'd crop our ears. Right bitter-
hearted,

Shorn of our dues, we from the hall of that false king departed.
And now, instead of scourge and stripe, his people find thy grace ;
Nor thou with us dost league, to wipe Troy from earth's gladsome
face,

With wives and children dear, and all their proud and perjured
race. 460

To whom far-darting Phœbus thus with ready word replies :
Truly a witless god were I, nor thou wouldst deem me wise,
Thee in the grim fight to defy, for man who lives and dies
Like forest leaves ; to-day he blazes up with wanton blood,
And feeds upon the fruits of earth in nature's lustilhood,
To-morrow flickers into smoke. Why should we waste our power ?
Let mortals deal sharp stroke for stroke, and fret their fleeting hour !

So saying, Phœbus turned and went ; for in his heart he feared
To tempt the fight with the dreaded might of his uncle's name
revered.

But him his sister, queen of each free-roaming beast and bird, 470
The field-rejoicing Dian, saw, and spoke the taunting word :
O shame, Apollo ! shall Poseidon boastful stand before thee ?
And wilt thou freely let him reap a bloodless victory o'er thee ?

Thou pithless boy, why dost thou bear thy bow with vain display ?
Once in thy father's halls of light I heard thee vaunting say,
That thou against Poseidon's might in battailous array
Wouldst firmly stand ; but now the deed is slow the speech to
follow.

She spake ; but not a word replied the son of Jove, Apollo.
Eftsoons Jove's consort high-revered, with mighty anger stirred,
To dart-rejoicing Dian spake, and flung the taunting word : ⁴⁸⁰
O blushless ! dog and fly in one ! what madness goads thee now
Against my might in tug of fight to rear thy virgin brow ?
Here thou shalt bear thy bow in vain, though Jove thy place
assigned,
A lioness with savage sway to kill of womankind
Whom thou shalt please. Much wiser 'twere in mountain glade to
chase
Wild boar and deer, than tempt mad war with those who hold the
place

Of foremost powers in heaven. But if thou wilt to battle go,
Take this, that thou mayst know betimes the measure of thy foe.

She spake ; and with her left hand both the hands of Dian seized,
And with her right of quiver and bow her shoulders lightly eased ; ⁴⁹⁰
Then smiled, and with the quiver buffed her on the ears, that
round

The goddess turned, and all the shafts fell tinkling on the ground.

Fearful fleet Dian flees ; as flies into some rocky hollow
A fluttering dovelet, whom a hawk with eager swoop doth follow,
Not fated then to die, but saves its life in rocky nook ;
So tearful Dian fled, and bow and quiver both forsook.
Then to Latona Hermes speaks, and through the battle cries,
Latona, I'll not dare the strife with thee. Not he is wise
Who bandies blows with any wife of Jove who rules the skies.
The boast I give thee from this hour, tell all the gods in heaven,⁵⁰⁰
That by thy power from bloody stour was fearful Hermes driven.

Thus he ; Latona took the curvèd bow, and from the ground
Gathered the shafts that in the wreathèd dust were scattered round ;
Then followed where her daughter led, who to the brazen-floored
Palace of Jove immortal came, and seized his knees, and poured
The streaming tear, and with meek eyes his strengthening aid im-
plored.

Round her the fine ambrosial vesture trembled ; but the sire
Her gently took, and with a kindly smile did thus inquire :
Dear daughter, which of all the gods who won in the welkin wide
Hath used thee so, as one whose crime for open vengeance
cried ?

510

To whom the queen of the whooping chase, bright-diademed,
replied :

The white-armed Herè smote me, sire, even she, thy wedded wife,
Who sows in heaven contention dire, and breeds unholy strife.

Thus they together wove discourse. But from the gory plain
Apollo, son of Jove, returned to sacred Troy again.
For much he wished with mighty power to ward that well-built
town,

That not before the fated hour the Greeks might cast it down.
But all the other gods from earth to high Olympus rose,
Some sullen with defeat, some flushed from fall of prostrate foes,
And sat beside dark-clouded Jove. Meanwhile Achilles speeds ⁵²⁰
The bloody work, and heaps the plain with lifeless men and steeds.
As when the dark dense-rolling smoke mounts to the welkin
wide,

From a burning town, which doth the wrath of hostile gods abide,
And terrible toil and sad turmoil o'erwhelms the people ; so
Toil and turmoil Achilles then poured on the Trojan foe.

But hoary Priam, king revered, stood in a sacred tower,
And saw large-limbed Achilles ride, beneath whose sweeping
power

In tumbled troops the Trojans fled, nor any virtue found
To stand ; he groaning from the tower came quickly to the ground,
And to the warders of the gate thus voiced his kingly will : ⁵³⁰

Fling wide the gates with sundered valves, and let them gape,
until

Our folk find refuge in the town ; for surely like a storm
The fierce Pelides sweeps the plain, and we must look for harm.

But when they breathe behind the walls, nor fear the hot-spurred
fate,

With bolt and bar then firmly close each well-compacted gate ;

For much I fear this baleful man may breach the wall to-day.

He spoke. They fling the valves full wide, and draw the bolts
away,

And light shone on the routed host. Then forth Apollo flew

To front the foe, and ward the woe from his dear-loved Dardan crew.

But they right up to the lofty wall with every nerve a-strain, ⁵⁴⁰

With thirst agape, and choked with dust, shoal o'er the sounding
plain

Breathless. Pelides after pressed, and strong rage fired his soul,

When with boiling blood in hope he stood, at flaming victory's goal.

And now the sons of the Greeks had ta'en the lofty-ported Troy,

Had not Apollo, son of Jove, to the battle's grim employ

Stirred up Antenor's son, divine Agenor, stout and good.

Into his heart he cast the lust of fight, and near him stood,

Leaning upon an oak, to watch when deathful harm came nigh,

And in thick wreaths of mist concealed from ken of mortal eye.

But when Agenor that fierce town-dismantling Greek beheld, ⁵⁵⁰

He stood ; and in his breast the heart with darkling tumult
swelled ;

And to his stout heroic soul with fretful breath spake he :

O woe is me ! if from the strong Achilles I shall flee,

Where all the rest so hotly pressed in dusty flight are poured,
Even then he'll grip me fast, and in my neck embathe his sword.
Or I may stand, and let them pass when swift Achilles' goad
Drives them, and then with nimble turn seek by another road,
To save my life, across the plain, until I reach the glades
Of Ida, where the copse shall wrap me round with sheltering
shades ;

Then with the evening in the stream wash weary sweat away, ⁵⁶⁰
And steal me back to breezy Troy 'neath the vail of the gloamin
grey.

But why stand here, and parley hold with thoughts that shun the
fight ?

'Tis vain. His eye will hunt me out ; and in my middle flight
I'll stumble and gasp in the deadly grasp of that strong-footed
wight ;

Then death shall come and I shall join the pale and shadowy clan,
For never yet was lodged such might in the hull of a mortal man.
'Tis best stand ev'n where I am, nor shrink with cowering fear ;
He too, I wis, doth wear a skin must yield to a pointed spear ;
His single life a knife may rob ; of mortal brood is he.

He spoke ; and gathered up his might, and stood full manfully ; ⁵⁷⁰
And his heart leaped up for the fray, as the heart of a valiant
warrior should.

And as a panther from its lair in the thick and copsy wood

Springs in the face of the hunter bold with a clean unswerving
bound,

And shows no fear, though he shake his spear with his ban-dogs
barking round ;

But whether a lance may level him low, or the sword him smite,
or a dart,

He stands all braced to rend his foe, or fall with a dauntless heart :

Thus did divine Agenor stand ; no sign of fear gave he,

Nor thought to flee, though sorely pressed, fierce Phthian chief, by
thee. 580

But with firm grasp Antenor's son forth held his shield well-rounded,
And poised his lance, and through the fight his shrill-voiced
challenge sounded ;

Noble Achilles, thy proud heart this day did swell with joy,

For that thou weened to sack the town of the high-souled sons of
Troy ;

Foolish ! thou yet shalt bravely sweat, before thou wipe thy spear.

For we are many in this town, who from the cup of fear

Ne'er tasted drop, but for our wives, parents, and children dear

Fought, and will fight ; but thee, I deem, so stout thou art in fray,

The Fate will foil, and in her toil enmesh thy strength to-day.

He spoke ; and from his heavy hand the well-poised dart
flung he, 590

Nor missed, but smote him in the shin, right underneath the knee ;

Sharp rang the tin of the new forged greave at the stroke of the
forceful lance,

But from the work of the smith divine the baffled brass did glance.

Then swift Pelides like a storm against Agenor swept,

But him from touch of deadly harm the watchful Phœbus kept,

Who with preventing hand prepared a mist that wrapt him round,

And bore him gently through the air, far from the gory ground.

Then the far darting god Agenor's shape and guise put on,

And from the field with guile enticed the godlike Peleus' son, ⁶⁰⁰

Glamouring his eyes; right nimbly then did swift Achilles run,

Chasing the god far o'er the plain that beareth wheaten food,

And by the banks of strong Scamander's deeply swirling flood,

In vain; for still the god before the mortal ran a space,

And still the glamour'd hero hoped to win the hopeless chase.

Meanwhile the other Trojans fled; nor breath nor halt they
knew;

And through the gates with trembling joy in rushed the huddled
crew.

Little they recked to wait and watch without the strong wall's
bound,

To see who fell in the hot pell-mell, and who salvation found;

But swift as feet and knees might bear, full fain to quit the fray,

Into the town they drifted loose in streaming disarray.

BOOK XXII.



ARGUMENT.

*His parents' urgent cry in vain recalls
Stout Hector from his post without the gate ;
Three times Achilles hunts him round the walls,
The gods his death decree in stern debate ;
Then with fierce Pelcus' son he fights, and falls
Where guileful Pallas hath prepared his fate.
His corpse is dragged by the harsh-minded victor ;
And all the city sounds with wail for Hector.*



BOOK XXII.

THUS fled the Trojans, even as hinds that scour the grassy
glade,
And cooled their sweat, and with fresh draught their parching
thirst allayed,
Sure-fenced behind the rampires. But the Argive onset swelled
Close to the walls, and all the Greeks above their shoulders
held
Close-overlapping shields. But Hector the destroying Fate
Bound to the spot, and kept his foot without the Scaean gate.
Then to the strong Pelides spake the son of Jove, Apollo :
O son of Peleus, why dost thou with chase untiring follow
My steps ? A mortal man art thou, and with insensate strain
Thou chasest me, a deathless god, across the dusty plain. 10
Idly thou fimest ; use thine eyes, and see the Trojans safe
Behind the bulwarks, whiles thou huntest me with windy chafe :
Witless ! Apollo may not die, to feed a mortal's pride !
To whom the nimble-footed chief with wrathful word replied :
Fellest of gods, far-darter ! thou didst turn my feet aside

Guileful from Troy's wide-gaping gate, else had my arm mowed
down

Full many a stumbling churl, before he reached the strong-walled
town !

But thou hast stolen my glory ; thou, a god, with labour light,
Hast saved thy friend, for that to thee no harm from mortal wight
May come. I'd harm thee with good-will, but Fate doth plant a
bar.

20

So said, full wrathful back to Troy he turned the rolling war,
Swift as a listed steel that draws the keen-contending car
Light o'er the course with rattling force, and gains full many a prize :
So limber-knee'd and light of foot the swift Achilles flies.
Him first the godlike Priam old beheld with fearful cyne,
As o'er the plain he skirred, and like the blazing star did shine,
Lord of the sweltering summer who, with radiance red and bright,
Outshines the host of the starry signs in the still of the drowsy
night,

Orion's hound yclept, a star well known to rustic wight ;
Fierce flares his ray ; in the hot sky he hangs a baleful sign, 30
And 'neath his sway the languid boors with sallow fever pine :
So baleful-bright across the field flashed Peleus' son divine.
All mailed in brass old Priam groaned ; with his hands his head
he smote,

And with a shrill and wailing cry his dear son he besought,

Who stood before the gate, and with Pelides longed to fight ;
To him the old man stretched his arms, and cried in piteous
 plight :

O Hector, dearest Hector, wilt thou madly dare to stand
Alone against this man, the bravest of the Danaan band,
Fierce Peleus' son ? O Hector, thus thou to thy fate art driven. ⁴⁰
Fell chief ! Would he were dear to all the gods that hold high
 heaven

As he is dear to me ! then dogs and vultures on his marrow
Should feed ; and from my heart would fall a heavy weight of
 sorrow !

He, even he, unhilded me of many sons and brave,
Some slain, some sold to isles remote across the salt-sea wave.
Where now is Polydorus ? where Lycaon ? stalwart pair,
Whom to my love Laöthoë, that queenliest woman, bare ?
When all the host fled to the town, I could not see them there,
For whose dear life I'd freely give of copper and of gold
A goodly ransom ; in my house no scanty store I hold, ⁵⁰
Which for his daughter's dower I got from praiseful Altes old.
But are they dead, and are they gone whence no power may restore
 them,

Then woe is me, and sorrow to the queenly dame who bore them,
And to my folk, though less their grief, so long the gory strife
Spares thee, nor fierce Achilles reaves our only hope, thy life !

Come then, dear Hector, come within the wall, nor rashly fling
Thy life away, to crown the bloody fame of that fierce king,
Who brought such harm to Trojan land, and worsèr woe shall
bring!

Me too, while yet I breathe live breath, ill-fated lord of Troy,
Me on the threshold of old age, whom Jove will sheer destroy, ⁶⁰
Me pity, O my son! who soon shall see the bourn of joy,
Shall see my sons all butchered, all my daughters dragged and
bound,

Their chambers sacked, and all their little babes upon the ground
Dashed merciless, while far and near the strife is raging red,
And by rude hands the wives of all my sons are captive led.
Me too, when all are slain, the dogs that sit before my gate
Shall rudely rend, when I from piercing dart have found black Fate,
Or goring pike; the very dogs, whom in my halls I bred
To watch my doors, and with the crumbs from mine own table
fed,

Even these, lapping my blood, when madness through their veins
hath sped, ⁷⁰
Gorged at my gates shall lie. When a young man of blooming
cheer,

Stricken of Mars, all breathless lies, empierced by copper spear,
Even in grim death, mown freshly down, he hath a comely show;
But when the hoary head and hoary-bearded chin lies low,

And dogs the shrunk and withered limbs with foul dishonour tear,
O then, no worser woe than this may wretched mortals bear !

Thus he ; and from his head the hoary locks with violent hands
He tore ; but Hector still before the gate unheeding stands.

Then rose his mother, from whose eyne the bitter sorrow flowed,
And bared her bosom with one hand, and with the other showed ⁸⁰
Her mother's breast, and weeping sore the wingèd word spake she :
See here, my child ; thy mother's breast behold, and pity me,

Thy mother, me who in the hour of baby-fret to thee

The soothing nipple held. Oh, this remember, and retire

Behind the walls, nor stand to front that ruthless man, and dire !

O hard of heart ! if that fell chief shall slay thee, then no tear

From me, dear blossom of my womb, shall drench thy comely bier,

Nor from thy wife rich-dowered ; but far from us, beside the ships,

The dogs shall rend thy flesh, and gnaw thy bones with bloody
lips !

Thus they their dear-loved son bespake, and poured the stream-
ing tear, 99

With shrill entreaty ; but the stout-souled Hector would not hear,
And full in fell Pelides' view with foot unmoved he stood.

As when a snake in mountain den, which feeds on venomous food,
Watches to spring upon a man, and his eyes with fierceness glare,

As with tumid breast he rears his coils in the throat of his slimy
lair,

So Hector stood with soul untamed, unquenched, and uncon-
founded,

Before a jutting tower, and leant on his buckler hugely-rounded ;

Then to his mighty heart the sore-pressed hero speaketh so :

Oh, woe is me ! if I shall flee, and behind the ramparts go,

Full surely then Polydamas the keen reproach will fling, 100

Who counselled me within the wall the Trojan host to bring

On that black night, when fierce Achilles roused his smothered
might,

And I refused, who to obey had been a wiser wight.

But now through fault of me the Trojan folk have found a snare,

And much I fear the townsmen and the long-trained damsels
fair,

Lest some unvalued loon may rise, and say with spiteful joy,

Stout Hector, vauntful of his strength, hath ruined sacred Troy !

So will they speak ; 'twere better far, dealing a riskful blow,

To slay Achilles, or to win death from such noble foe. 110

What if my bossy buckler I should lay upon the green,

And eke my helmet and my lance against the rampart lean,

And to the blameless chief advance with soft-submissive foot,

And pledge me to give Helen back, whence sprang the dire dis-
pute,

Nor her alone, but all the dower which godlike Alexander

With her in evil birded hour brought home to deep Scamander,

And eke from Troy's old treasure deal to Greece a goodly share,
And make the Trojans, great and small, with solemn oath declare
That they will nought conceal, but all their hidden wealth make
bare ?

120

But why should I hold vain discourse with thoughts remote from
truth ?

Why go to him who wild remorse knows not, nor gentle ruth,
Who, when he sees me leave the strife in helpless suppliant guise,
Will kill me clean with trenchant knife, as a helpless woman dies.
Certes, not he with willing ear from me will gladly hear
Talk about oaks and rocks, as dainty youth with damsel dear
May weave sweet talk in leafy bower, with none to listen near.
Better to tempt the chanceful fight, that both may quickly know
To which great Jove, supreme in might, will grace and favour
show !

130

Thus he, and stood. But now the godlike Phthian chief came nigh,
Like the fierce war-god, when his rushing plume the steadiest eye
Blasts with pale fear, even so the chief, instinct with terror sways
His Pelian shaft, while, like red fire with broadly-streaming blaze,
Or the rising sun, his brazen arms shoot the far-travelling rays.
Him when he saw, stout Hector quailed, and with light-heeled
retreat,

Fled from the gate, nor dared that wrathful-rushing man to meet.
On dashed Pelides, tempest-swift, in the might of his stormy feet,

Like to a hawk, the swiftest bird that cleaves the realm of Jove,
When from high hill it swoops upon a timorous-trembling dove ¹⁴⁰
Drifting aslant beneath, while he with shrill unpitying cry
Comes sousing down, and sharply holds the victim in his eye.

Thus down on Hector swooped the Greek ; the Trojan quailed be-
fore him,

And from the deathful danger near his limbs full fleetly bore him.
They past the Mount of view, and past the breezy fig-tree strain
Their panting course, and reach the road where rolls each well-
wheeled wain,

Till to the tway far-bubbling wells they came, whence brightly
rose

Two springs of Xanthus, whose broad flood in swirling eddies
flows ;

The one with mild warm water runs, and from its tepid stream
Like wreaths of smoke from glowing fire rises the misty steam ; ¹⁵⁰

The other, through the summer, cold as driving hail doth flow,
Or ice that binds the water, or the pure and crispèd snow.

Beside these wells were washing-troughs full beautiful and broad,
Cut from the living rock, through which the limpid fountain
flowed,

Where Trojan dames to cleanse their dainty weeds, with their fair
daughters

Wont to convene, before the Greeks had crossed the Ægean waters,

When yet was peace ; past these they swept, with flickering-footed
speed.

Good was the first, but he who chased in every knightly deed
Better by far ; not for a bull, I ween, the racer's meed,
Or a bull's hide, that on the green oft crowns a nimble victor, ¹⁶⁰
But for the dear-prized life they ran of horse-subduing Hector.
As when the car-yoked steeds with flying wheels have shaved the
goal,

Where the high-posted prize inspires the fervid rider's soul,
Bright tripod, or fair woman, at some rich man's funeral feast ;
So they round Priam's city thrice their panting speed increased
With wingèd feet ; and all the gods beheld them straining then,
And thus to the high assembly spake the sire of gods and men :

Woe's me ! around the walls of Troy I with these eyne must see
Grinly pursued a valiant prince, a man full dear to me,
Hector, who to my altar brought the thighs of countless kine, ¹⁷⁰
On many-folded Ida's slope, and where my sacred shrine
Crowns Ilium's citadel ; but him the man that knows no pity
Now with tempestuous fury hunts round Priam's leaguered city.
Come then, ye gods, take counsel ; say if we indeed shall save
This man, or let the fierce Achilles hound him to his grave !
To whom the maid with flashing eyne, Athenè, thus replies :
Lord of the flaring bolt, dark-clouded king, can this be wise ?
A mortal man who by the law of mortal nature dies,

Breaking the fates, wilt thou from touch of doleful death deliver? ¹⁸⁰

Do as thou wilt ; but in this thing the gods will praise thee never.

To whom the dread dark-clouded Sire thus mildly made reply :

Be of good cheer, thou Triton-born, dear child ! not harshly I

Would cross thy will ; thy loyal love my yielding heart constrains.

Go, do thy pleasure ; fear no check, and give thy purpose reins.

Thus spake the sire. With willing heart his word she took ; and then

Down from Olympus' summit swooped, and came to the haunts of
men.

But still the unwearied fleet Achilles gave stout Hector chase.

As when a hound doth start a fawn from a lone and leafy place,

And through long glen and ample lawn pursues the shifting race ; ¹⁹⁰

A while the brute with jaded pains may hide in bushy bower,

But soon the hound the scent regains, and springs with freshened
power ;

So to avoid his tracking foe did Hector shift and cower ;

Now to the gates he springs, and to his friends he loudly calls,

If they belike might fling light darts, and from the high-towered
walls

Give aid ; but still Achilles cuts his flight from off the town,

And still the gates stout Hector seeks, and doubles up and down.

As in a painful dream oft-times the panting dreamer flees,

And who is chased still fails to scape, and who gives chase to
seize,

So neither could Achilles seize, nor Hector shun his foe.
And certes then the Trojan grisly death had learned to know,
Had not Apollo helped him in his last and latest need,
And in the hero's failing knees repaired the fainting speed.
Then fleet Achilles with a nod forbade the Argive crew
To fling their darts, that he alone stout Hector might pursue,
Nor any spear forestall the death that was his rightful due.
But when the fourth time to the walls his fleeing foe was driven,
Then with his hand the Sire outhung two golden scales from heaven;
And in the scales two fates he placed of stark-outstretching
death,

210

This for Achilles, that with power to steal stout Hector's breath;
Then seized the balance; and forthwith the scale of Hector falls
Down to the dead; nor Phœbus more may hear, when Hector
calls.

Then Pallas with the flashing eyne approached fleet Pelous' son,
And standing near that chief divine, her speech she thus begun:
Godlike Achilles, dear to Jove, great glory on this day
Shall now be ours, when in the levelling fight our hand shall slay
Crest-flickering Hector, Priam's son, insatiate of the fray.
The lot is cast; from our sure grasp the quarry may not spring,
Not even though Phœbus crook his knees and his down-bowed
body fling

220

With suppliant face to sue the grace of the ægis-bearing king.

Stand, then, and breathe a moment ; I the while to him will go,
And move his heart to stand and fight, and find the fateful blow.

So spoke Athenè. In his heart the hero felt good cheer,
And stood and rested, leaning on his brazen-barbèd spear.
She left him there ; and straightway to the godlike hero hies,
And of Deïphobus takes the lusty voice and very guise ;
And standing near, that he might hear the wingèd word, she
speaks :

Good brother mine, that godlike chief, the fleetest of the Greeks,
Presses thee sorely ; with tempestuous force the chase he plies, ²³⁰
But stand we with unflinching feet, and with unwinking eyes !

To whom the tall crest-flickering Hector gladly thus replies :
Deïphobus, dearest brother thou hast ever been before
To me, of all that Hecuba to godlike Priam bore ;
But certes, now within my heart and soul I love thee more,
Who dared alone, when every Trojan man from field hath fled,
To come without the walls, and help thy brother sore bestead.

To whom Athenè flashing-eyed, strong-fathered virgin, said :
Dear brother mine, my father, and my mother dear that bore me,
And all my friends did clasp my knees, and with many a tear
implore me 240

To stay within ; such fear in every Trojan heart doth reign.
But me strong love for thee constrained ; and all their prayers were
vain.

Now be the lust of battle lord, and let there be no stint
Of spears, and let us know whose sword can give the deeper
dint;

That, or Achilles, slaying us, bear to the dark-hulled ships
Our armour, or from thy good spear his life win dark eclipse.
Thus speaking, him Athenè led to death with guileful lips.
But when the heroes were full near, and stood full close in view,
The tall crest-flickering Hector first these wingèd words outthrew :
O son of Pelens, now no more shall I be frayed by thee, 250
Nor from thy wingèd fury thrice round Priam's fortress flee,
Shrinking to front thy presence ; all my soul is braced again
For the great throw to slay my foe, or by my foe be slain !
Come, let the gods be witness ; they are ever nigh to hear
Gracious agreements, when men risk the cast of the deadly spear.
Not I would on thy body use dishonour, if to me
Great Jove shall grant the well-aimed stroke that reaves the life
from thee ;

But when I spoil thy glorious arms, a mild-prevailing victor,
I'll give thy body to thy clan ; do thou the like by Hector.

To whom with dark regard the godlike fleet Achilles spake : 260
Hector, I hate thee not by halves ; no pact with thee I make.
'Twixt men and lions, when they strive, there may no pledges be,
Nor can meek lambs with wolves, I wis, in one consent agree,
But 'twixt their hearts a god hath set unconquered enmity ;

So 'twixt thy soul and mine no oath of love can break the barrier,
But only Mars can dash it down, that stout strong-shielded warrior !
One game remains : call up the soul of battle in thy breast ;
Beseems that thou shouldst fall in all thy best of valiance drest ;
Pallas Athenè fights for me ; my lance but works her will ; ²⁷⁰
She reaves thy life ; my vengeance now shall flow, and have its fill,
For all my comrades sore-bewept, whom thy harsh hand did kill !

He spake ; and through the air his strong long-shadowed lance
he threw ;

But Hector spied the whizzing shaft, and did the stroke eschew ;
Deftly he stooped, and o'er his head the pointed copper flew,
And tore the ground ; but Pallas came, and seized it cunningly,
And to Achilles gave it back, when Hector might not see.
Then rose the prince, and thus he spake, fleet Peleus' son, to thee :
Ha ! thou hast missed it ! thy swift thought, I wot, was keen to run
Beyond Jove's counsel, when it saw the death of Priam's son ! ²⁸⁰
Truly a glib-tongued wight art thou, with dexterous sleight to find
Words that make me my strength forego, for that it suits thy mind !
Not I from thee will turn and flee, nor in my back shalt thou
Infix thy brass ; but through my breast thy force shall drive it now,
If now a god so wills it ; but much rather thou beware
My copper spear that seeks thy flesh ! would it were buried there !
Light were the burden of the war that weighs on sacred Troy,
Wert thou but gone, the very front and crest of our annoy.

He spoke ; and, brandishing, he flung his lance with whizzing
might,

Nor missed, but struck the middle of his bossy buckler bright : ²⁹⁰

Nathless the point glanced off aside ; and with sore-vexèd heart
Stout Hector stood, that bootless all had flown the deathful dart.

Blankly he looked ; no second lance had he ; and o'er the field

He to Deïphobus loudly called, the prince with the silver shield,

And asked a lance from him ; but lo ! his brother stood not there.

Then Hector knew his doom, and with these words he rent the air :

Woe worth the hour ! the gods for me planted a deadly snare !

I deemed Deïphobus was nigh in danger to retrieve me ;

But now he's gone ; there came from heaven a goddess to deceive
me.

An evil death before me stands, escape is barred from me, ³⁰⁰

Even so 'twas purposed in the sky by ancient sure decree

Of Jove and his far-darting son, though they oft-times around me

Spread their strong sheltering shield ; but now fell-handed Fate
bath found me.

But I a manful death will die, that none my prowess blame,

And sons and grandsons may applaud, when they hear stout Hector's
name.

Thus spoke the godlike prince ; and forth he drew with rapid hand

The sword which hung down from his side, a ponderous-bladed
brand,

And rushed impetuous, like the bird of Jove careering high,
What time he souses on the plain from the sullen-clouded sky,
To seize a tender lambkin, or a cowering leveret shy ; 310
So Hector rushed, and waved the huge and weighty blade ; but him
With mightier swoop Achilles crossed, while all his breast did
brim

With savage rage ; before him his big buckler's round he spread,
Beautiful, dædal, quaintly wrought, while nodded from his head
The shining casque four-knobbed, whose crest the golden hair displayed
Branching and broad, which with wise hands the lame Hephæstus
made.

As is the star which doth outshine all stars in the dusky night,
The evening star, which through the sky rays forth the loveliest
light,
So shone thy bright well-pointed lance, Achilles, which with might
Thy right hand shook, while thou didst scan the godlike Hector's
form, 320

Searching a breach into his flesh, to work the deathful harm.
All other parts were fenced well by the good mail he wore,
The mail which from Patroclus slain the forceful victor bore ;
Only the neck was bare, above the collar-bone, where life
Goes out the soonest, 'neath the stroke of the ruthless-slitting
knife ;

There fierce Pelides drave the brass, which with unfainting speed
Right through the delicate neck did pass of Priam's godlike seed,
But not so shore the throat, but that some strength remained to
 speak.

Down in the dust he rolled. Then thus outspake the godlike
 Greek : 330

Hector, vain was thy boast, when thou Patroclus' fighting-gear
Didst spoil, and deem thee safe, for that Achilles was not near ;
Witless ! who shouldst have smelt afar the sure-impending danger
From me behind the hollow ships his friend and strong avenger !
But now I've snapt thy sinewy knees ; the dogs thy flesh shall
 tear ;

His funeral rites the long-haired Greeks shall tend with pious
 care.

To whom with feeble breath the Trojan poured the piteous prayer :
Oh, by thy soul, and by thy knees, and by the womb that bare
 thee,

Oh, cast me not beside the ships for Argive dogs to tear me !

But take thou gifts to soothe thine ire, both gold and copper ore, ³⁴⁰

Of which my mother and my sire command a goodly store.

Take ransom for my body, that both Trojan men and dames

May drop a tear upon my bier, and yield me to the flames !

To whom with darkling frown the godlike fleet Achilles spoke :

Unhand my knees, vile dog, nor my dear parents' name invoke !

Would that my teeth might eat thee raw, for the strong hate I bear
thee,

Much less will I with good-will try to gag the dogs who tear thee !
Not if they weigh me ten times down the ransom named by thee,
Ten times and twenty times as much ; the weight weighs not with
me !

350

Not even if hoary Priam with much gold, my wrath to smother,
Shall come, and clasp my knees ; not even then thy queenly
mother

Weeping shall stretch thee on thy bier, and for the flames prepare
thee,

But dogs and vultures limb by limb on the sanded beach shall tear
thee !

Thus he ; but him crest-flickering Hector dying thus addressed :
I knew thee well ; I should have known that pity was no guest
Harboured by thee ; an iron heart hath lodgment in thy breast ;
But this bethink, for such despiteous deed what wrath may follow
From gods on high, when Paris and the son of Jove, Apollo,
Even at the Scæan gate shall o'er thy haughty strength prevail ! ³⁶⁰

Thus Hector ; and the end of death did darkly him enveil.
Then from his limbs went forth the soul, and fled to Hades' gloom,
Wailing that he so young had lost life's lustihood and bloom.
Then o'er his breathless body thus the fleet Achilles spake :
There lie thou dead ! and, for myself, my doom I'll cheerly take,

When Jove, and all the deathless gods exact my mortal due.

He spoke ; and from the bleeding neck the copper lance forth-
drew,

And threw 't aside : then from stout Hector's shoulders he unbound
The bright mail gore-besprent ; and all the Greeks came crowding
round,

And on his goodly limbs and shapely corpse each comer cast 370

A wondering eye ; and each one dealt a new stab as he passed ;

And looking on the dead, one Greek thus to his neighbour spoke :

Soothly this Hector touch of Argive spear doth mildlier brook

By much, than when above the ships the blazing brand he shook.

Thus some one spoke and dealt a stab ; but fleet Achilles stood,

Full in the midst, and thus bespake the Danaan multitude :

Dear friends, and leaders of the Greeks, and counsellors true and
good,

Sith the kind gods beneath our hand have quelled this mighty man,

Who did more harm with his strong arm than all Troy's banded
clan, 380

Come, let us try their purpose now, and fully probe their plan,

Circling their city, if they mean to stand, bereft of Hector,

Or quit their bulwarks, vainly kept without that strong protector.

But why now speak of Troy ? why pass such wandering words my
lips,

Whose friend Patroclus breathless lies beside the dark-hulled ships,

Unwept, unburied, he who still my choicest love shall claim
While lively breath I breathe, and these dear knees uprear my
frame ;

Yes, even in Hades, doleful, drear, where blank oblivion rules,
I'll think of him, and nurse his love, beside Lethæan pools. 390

Meanwhile the hour demands blithe cheer ; ye sons of the Achæans,
Bear we the dead to the hollow ships, and fill the air with pæans !
A mighty glory we have reaped ; our conquering foot hath trod
On Hector, whom the Trojans all revered even as a god.

He spake ; and on the corpse he did a sorry deed, I ween ;
For with unpitying hand he pierced both feet right through, between
The heel and ankle, strung them then with neat's-hide thongs, and
bound

The feet to the car, and left the head to drag upon the ground.
Then on the seat he leapt, and hove the mail ; the coursers knew
His lash, and o'er the plain with no unwilling feet they flew. 400
Uprolled the white dust from the corpse, and, all his hair disspread
Trailed dark upon the ground ; his head, that late so lovely head,
Now shaved the soil ; for Jove allowed Achilles' hate to sway,
Marring the body of the prince dragged o'er his native clay.

Thus was his head dishonoured ; and his mother saw, and tare
Her grey locks, and her delicate veil cast from her, and made
bare

Her sorrow-furrowed face, and with shrill wailing rent the air.

And his dear father wept and wailed, and with a piteous moaning
The people wept, and all the town was full of grief and groaning ;
Like to the wail which then might rise, when rock-perched Troy
was taken, 410

When swathes of smoke the breath did choke, and the lofty towers
were shaken.

Scarce might the crowds the king restrain, when pricked with
bitter smart

He longed to rush without the gate, and ease his burdened heart.
Much he entreated ; on the ground he flung him down, and low
Rolled in the dust ; then to each man by name he speaketh so :
Hold back, good friends ! leave me alone ! though in your hearts
ye bear

Much grief, yet will I leave the town, and to the Greek camp fare,
And there entreat this violent man, this doer of mighty deeds,
If he belike unbar his ears, when with tears a father pleads,
And pity my grey hairs ; even such a father old hath he, 420
Peleus, who got him in his hall, and reared his strength to be
A bane to Troy, a heavy crown of bitter woes to me !

Full many of my blooming boys he slew, this savage chief,
For whom I grieve : but most for one my heart is racked with
grief,

Hector, for whose dear sake full soon the pithless-floating bands
Of Shades I'll join—my dear-loved boy, who in his father's hands

Had fitlier died ! then with his dear-loved mother dismal-fated
I o'er the bier had streamed the tear, till our hungry grief were
sated !

So spake the king, and wept ; and all the people wept with him.
Then Hecuba 'mid the women speaks ; and her eyes with sorrow
brim : 430

Dear son, why should I walk the earth, where sorrow sows the
way,

When thou art dead who wert to me a boast both night and day,
And to the town a tower, who in the hearts of men didst sway,
Even as a god ; our glory and our mighty gain wert thou
Alive ; now Death thee binds, and the strong Fate constrains thee
now !

Thus Hecuba weeping ; but his rich-dowered wife had nothing
known

Of Hector's death ; nor to her ear had any tidings flown
How he without the gates remained to front the Greeks alone ;
But in the innermost room she sat of the high-roofed house, and
there 440

A tway-ply'd purple web she wove, with flowers fine and fair,
Full quaintly varied. She her maids with lovely-flowing hair
Bade set a caldron on the fire to warm the cleansing water
For her dear Hector, when he came from the sweaty field of
slaughter ;

Witless ! nor knew that far from baths her dear lord lifeless lies,
Slain by Achilles and the maid of the fearful-flashing eyes !
Sudden she heard shrill wails and moans that rose from all the town ;
Her knees beneath her shook ; she starts, and flings the shuttle
down ;

Then eager thus bespoke her maids with the lovely-flowing hair :
Come follow me, ye two ; let's go and see what cry was there ! ⁴⁵⁰
Methought I heard dear Hecuba's voice ; and in my breast my
heart

Leaps to my mouth ; my knees are numbed. Sure in red battle's
mart

Some harm is cheapened for our house. Oh, from mine ears be far
Such news ! but much I fear lest harsh Achilles in the war
Cut off stout Hector from the town and bound him o'er the plain,
And fine him for his hardiment, and make his venture vain.
For not the common risk he shared, but forwards all alone
He spurred, and where most danger frowned, his dauntless front
was shown.

She spake ; and from the chamber rushed, like one distraught
with madness ; 460

Her heart against her ribs did knock, and her maids in fearful
sadness

Went with her. To the town she came, and to the fighting men,
And wildly o'er the rampart cast her greedy eyes ; and then

She saw him trailed before the town, where, with dispiteous slight,
Unfuneraled the light-heeled steeds dragged that right noble wight.
Instant around her eyes was spread the swimming dark eclipse ;
Backward she swooned upon the ground, and gasped with quivering
lips.

Far from her hand the fair head-gear she threw upon the floor,
Frontal and net and snood, and shining riband which she wore,
Gifts of the golden queen of love, to swell her marriage store, 470
What time crest flickering Hector gained Eëtion's lovely daughter
With priceless marriage gifts, and to the halls of Priam brought
her.

And all her husband's brothers' wives and sisters crowded round
To fan her flickering life, and raise her kindly from the ground.
Then, when her soul came back, into a sharp shrill wail she brake,
And looking woful round amid the Trojan women spake :
O Hector ! O unhappy me ! one fate divorced from joy
Knew thee and me, when thou within the halls of sacred Troy
Wert born, and I in Thebes beneath the woody Placus, where
To my ill-fated sire ill-fated me my mother bare 480
And nursed me in my baby years. Would I had ne'er been
born !

Now to the halls of Hades thou from me art rudely torn
And housed beneath the Earth, while I am left, outcast from joy,
A widow in thy halls, with one poor child, thy helpless boy,

Born to woe-freighted parents ! sith, nor thou, I wis, canst be,
Being dead, a help to him, nor he alive can profit thee !
For should he live, and not see death from the tear-abounding war,
Still to thy boy shall sorrow and teen be near, and joy be far ;
Strangers his land shall rudely seize, and all his fortunes mar !
For an orphan boy still lives alone among his young compeers ; ⁴⁹⁰
Drooping he goes, and no man wipes his secret-dropping tears.
He to his father's friend him wends, a cousin or a brother,
Needy, and pulls one by the cloak, and by the coat another ;
And he who greatest pity shows, doth put him coldly by
With a cup that scantily wets the lips, and leaves the palate dry.
Then comes some child whose parents live, a prideful pampered
boy,
Cuffs him, and drives him off, and rates him with harsh taunt
severe ;
Go, brat, and beg at others' doors, thy father eats not here !
So buffeted, with in his eyes the bitter-streaming tear,
Will my poor boy now come to me, who on his father's knees ⁵⁰⁰
Erst fed on marrow, and on fat of sheep in fondled ease ;
And he would play till tired with sport the gracious sleep came
o'er him,
And in soft bed the nurse him laid, and in fond arms she bore him,
While pleasant fancies round him swayed, and rocked his baby heart.
But now his father lives no more, and many a bitter smart

Astyanax shall know—for still the Trojans call him so—

Sith, Hector, thou alone didst chase from gates and walls the foe.

Now by the ships, far from thy kin, thou'lt lie, a banquet rare

To creeping worms, and thy fair flesh the Danaan dogs shall tear,

All naked stretched; though in my halls for thee full many a
weed

510

Fine, and well spun by women's hands, is stored to serve thy need.

These will I burn, and cast them in the swift-disrending flame,

Bootless to thee; for never shall they swathe thy dear-loved
frame,

But in thine honour let them burn, since more they not avail.

Thus spake she weeping; and with her the women weep and wail.

BOOK XXIII.

ARGUMENT.

*Patroclus' Shade his tristful honour claims ;
From smoking pyre the flame funereal rises.
The sad Pelides publishes the games,
Invites the Champions, and sets forth the prizes.
No Grecian chief his well-known prowess shames ;
Each with more skill the gazing host surprises.
What kings were first in every game the poet
Tells in this fytte to all who care to know it.*



BOOK XXIII.

Thus they in Troy did weep and wail, and Hector dead deplore.
Meanwhile in bands along the beach where Helle's waters roar,
The Greeks were spread, and each man came to his ship on the
sounding shore.

But not the Myrmidons might leave their conquering leader then,
For thus divine Achilles spake to his war-delighting men :
Fleet-steeded Myrmidons, my faithful comrades in the war,
Not yet the single-hoofed steeds may we from battle-ear
Unyoke ; but here in martial mail, to our dear comrade true,
For him that's gone we'll weep and wail, and give the dead his
due ;

And when our eyes can weep no more, and our hearts with grief
are sated,

10

Unyoke we then, and taste sweet food, till hunger be abated.

He spake ; and all the brave troop wailed, and hailed their
captain brave,

And then the steeds with glossy hair around the dead they drove ;
And still they wailed, and Thetis still more lust for wailing gave.

The streaming tear fell on the sand ; upon their mail the tear
Fell rolling ; with such love they loved that counsellor of fear.
The stout Pelides with shrill wail led on their sorrowing bands,
While on the breast of his friend he laid his hero-slaughtering
hands ;

Hear me, Patroclus, hear me down in Hades' gloomy hall,
What gifts I vowed to pay thee, now these hands shall pay them
all !

20

Even as I said that Hector's corpse I to the dogs should throw,
And round thy pyre with vengeance dire that the life-blood should
flow

From twelve young men, the pride of Troy, to soothe my mighty
woe

For thee, my brother ! Thus he spake, and Hector's corpse he
laid

Beside Patroclus' bier stretched prone, in pitiless parade
Amid the dust. His Myrmidons then doffed their warlike weeds,
Brazen, bright burnished, and unyoked the proud high-snorting
steeds ;

Then down in countless rows they sat beside Achilles' ship,
And he the funeral feast prepared for many a hungry lip.

Full many a knife then stole the life of sleek fat beeves, that lay ³⁰
Prone-gasping on the sand, and goats and sheep with piteous baa ;
And many white-tusked swine well swathed in fat upon that day

Were spitted well, and roasted at the fire which briskly roared,
While round the dead in torrents red the sacred blood was poured.

Then to the tent of Atreus' son, great Jove-descended king,
The other kings with princely care did swift Achilles bring,
And in his heart with kindly words 'gan soothe grief's bitter sting ;
And when they brought the tristful chief to the tent of the king
of men,

Atrides to the herald gave the quick commandment then,
To place a caldron on the fire, three-footed, huge, if they 40
Might move the hero blood-besprent to wash the gore away
From his toil-wearied limbs ; but he refused and stoutly sware ;
No ! not by Jove the best of gods, who wields in upper air
Supremest sway ; not on my head be cleansing water shed,
Till I upon the pyre have placed the well-belovèd dead,
And piled his tomb, and shorn my hair ; for sure a worser woe,
While here with living men I live, my heart may never know.
But let us now, since need so wills, the sorrowful meal prepare,
And with the dawn, O king of men, bid thy stout people bear
Wood from the forest, and provide what furnishing beseems 50
The dead that flit from broad-eyed day to the realm of lightless
dreams,

And let the strong unwearied fire, with all-devouring might,
Consume him from our eyes ; then let the people wage the fight !

He spake ; eftsoons they all obeyed the nimble-footed wight,

And each man went with willing foot to his evening meal, and
shared

The portioned food for every man with seemly grace prepared.

And when desire of food and drink was bravely sated, they

Each in his tent brooked kindly sleep, and closed the weary
day.

But Peleus' son upon the shore of the surgy-murmuring sea,

Sat heavily groaning in the midst of his valiant company, 69

In an open place, washed by the briny billows' ceaseless roll.

Him there the soft-winged slumber seized, and soothed his fretted
soul ;

For truly much the limbs were strained of that fleet-footed
wight,

When by the breezy Troy he chased stout Hector in the fight.

And, as he slept, uprose Patroclus' shade in stature tall,

Even as he lived, in voice, and mildly-beaming eyne, and all

Even to the weeds he wont to wear ; and bending o'er the head

Of his dear sleep-bound comrade, thus outspake that tristful
shade :

Liest thou, Achilles, slumber-bound, while I am clean forgot ?

Alive I knew thy care, but now, being dead, thou know'st me
not. 70

Rise ! do my burial rites, that I may reach the dead man's home ;

For all the Shades disown me, and the souls that dimly roam

Through Pluto's kingdom drive me back from the bank of the fate-
ful river,

That I without the strong vast-gated realm must wander ever
Unhoused! O let me grasp thy hand once, but this once! for
never

May I to thee return, when I have shared the funeral flame.
Oh, never then with mortal men shall I sweet counsel frame,
Far, far from thee, and whom I love! for now the murky power
Holds me, the death that was my doom from life's first dawning
hour,

Even as thou too shalt find thy fate, though strength of gods be
thine. 89

Thee too the well-born Trojans in the doomful death shall fine.
But grant me this, true friend, nor be my latest word gainsayed;
Not far from thine, O chief divine, my brothered bones be laid,
But near thee, even as I within thy house was trained and
bred,

When from my dear Opuntian home my godlike father led
My stripling steps to thee, because of blood mischanceful shed
What time I with Amphidamas' son waxed wroth in silly strife
About the dice, and, free from felonous will, him reft of life;
Then Peleus in his friendly hall received me, and I grew
Well nurtured there with kindly care, thy friend and comrade
true. 90

So may our brothered bones be blent in one chaste vase together,
Golden, tway-handled, which on thee bestowed thy gracious mother.
To whom Achilles, swift of foot, with kindly answer said :

Oh why hast thou from Hades dim the dreary journey made,
Dear comrade ? why upon me heap these hests ? trust me, my
will

Without such spur my hand will stir thy bidding to fulfil.
But come thou near, and let me feel, though the embrace be brief,
Once more thy brother's arm, and let us sate our souls with grief !

He spake ; and stretched his hand to seize the hand of his com-
rade true ;

In vain : he might not grasp the shade ; away like smoke it flew,¹⁰⁰
And gibbered 'neath the ground. Upstert the chief in wonderment,
And clapped his hands, and from his mouth the bitter wailing went.
Oh, woe is me ! the shade that roams in Pluto's gloomy hall
Hath shape and size, but in its form nor pith nor power at all !
All night Patroclus' shade—how like to him in stature tall
And mildly beaming eye—beside me, as I slept, did stand,
And with his well-known voice gave me full many a dear com-
mand !

Thus he ; and in the chiefs awoke anew the fount of sorrow.
And, as they wept and wailed, uprose the rosy-fingered Morrow,
And shone upon the corpse. Eftsoons the king of men appears,¹¹⁰
And from their tents he deftly stirs both mule and muleteers,

To bring wood from the forest ; and to Merion gave command,
Squire of Idomeneus, men-loving king from Cretan land,
To speed the work. They, each with sharp wood-cleaving axe in
hand,

And ropes well-twisted left the camp. The stout mules led the
way ;

Now steep, now sheer, now right, now left, with many a bend went
they.

But when they came to Ida's hill with gushing springs abounding,
Then felt the high-leaved oak the axe, and rock to rock was
sounding

With the sharp strokes. Down fell the trees and smote the hollow
ground

With weighty crash ; the deft Achæans lopped them well, and
bound

120

Them on the mules ; then travel down the slope, and sorely
strain

Through bush and brake and snaggy copse, and pant to reach the
plain.

And each stout woodman dragged a stem ; so Merion gave com-
mand,

Squire of Idomeneus, men-loving king from Cretan land ;
And cast them at Achilles' feet, where the great captain meant
To his dear friend, and to himself to pile high monument.

And when the work was done, and heaped on ground lay all the
wood,

They sat them down in troops. Meanwhile the swift Achilles
stood

Amid his Myrmidons that love the man-ennobling war,

And bade them don their mail, and yoke their good steeds to the
car. 130

Their heart was stirred, and at his word each wight full-mailed
appears ;

The champions leap into the cars, and eke the charioteers.

First came the knights ; a cloud of foot rolled in the dusty rear

Countless ; and in the midst they bore their breathless comrade dear ;

And from their heads the hair they shore, and cast it on the bier

Weeping ; Achilles came behind, and held the hero's head,

Sad ; for his blameless friend he sent to the home of the sunless
dead.

But when they reached the spot by mouth of swift Achilles named,
Laying the body down, a pile of sturdy logs they framed.

Then the strong-footed in his heart this thing with pious care 140

Devised ; behind the pyre he stood, and shore the yellow hair

Which sacred to Spercheius' stream he nourished full and fair ;

Then with sore vexèd heart he spoke, and looked on the dark blue
sea :

Spercheius, not this vow my father Peleus vowed to thee,

But that to my dear native land, across the salt-sea foam
Returned, I'd reap my locks for thee, and slay an hecatomb,
And fifty rams should sacrifice to thee with holy hands,
Even at thy fountains, where thy shrine and odorous altar stands.
But now since thou hast crossed his wish, and marred his vow, and
here

Dark fate shall find me, never more to see my country dear, 150
I fling the honour of my head on loved Patroclus' bier.

He spake ; and in his dear loved comrade's hand he placed the
hair,

And stirred the lust of grief in all, that wailings filled the air.
And they had wept, till the sun had dimmed his ray in the dusky
West,

Had not Achilles with wise word the king of men addressed :
Atrides—for thy voice to all the people speaks prevailing,
Whate'er thou sayst—enough this day hath been of woe and wailing.
Therefore do thou command the folk to scatter, and prepare
Their morning meal ; this sorrowful work shall be our instant care,
To whom the dead belong ; but let the chiefs our labour share. 160
These words when Agamemnon heard from swift Pelides' lips,
He with quick nest the folk dispersed to the black sea-faring ships ;
The rest remained, and raised a mighty pyre, both high and wide,
Of sturdy logs, four square, a hundred feet on every side,
And hove the dead aloft, while in their hearts deep grief they hide,

And many hornèd heavy-gaited oxen then they flayed,
And many sheep beside the pyre ; eftsoons the hero laid
From all the beasts fat on the corpse from head to foot, and piled
The well-flayed bodies round ; and then that mighty-hearted
Childe

Placed jars of oil and honey on the bier, with mouth inclined, ¹⁷⁰
And on the pyre four horses, lofty-maned, with eager mind
He flung, and as he flung them, loud he moaned with moaning
dire.

Nine table-dogs Patroclus kept to wait on his desire ;
The throat of two Achilles slit, and laid them on the pyre.
Twelve blooming Trojan youths, likewise, of pith and prowess rare
He slew with brass ; to them, I ween, no kindly thoughts he bare.
Then through the pyre, to burn the whole, the iron might of flame
He sent, and groaned, and from sad soul invoked his friend by
name :

Hail, O Patroclus, dear to me, in Hades' gloomy hall,
The vows that erst I vowed to thee, lo ! now I quit them all ! ¹⁸⁰
Twelve Trojan youths upon the pyre, of pith and prowess rare
Shall burn with thee ; but Priam's son no grace of fire shall share ;
These hands shall cast stout Hector forth, his flesh the dogs shall
tear !

He spake ; but not the dogs devoured that Trojan hero brave ;
Them from his flesh Jove's daughter, golden Aphroditè drave

Both night and day, anointing him with rosy unguent fine,
That fierce Achilles might not tear the skin of the prince divine,
Dragged from his car. Apollo cast a glooming cloud around
The hero's corpse, and curtained all the place with night profound,
That not the might of the strong far-beaming sun with scorching
flame

190

Might parch the hero's flesh, and filch the freshness from his frame.

Meanwhile the fire with dull slow flame crept through the
smoking wood,

When a new thought came to Achilles' careful heart ; he stood

Apart some space, and to the pair of strongest Winds he cries,

Boreas and Zephyr, and to them a costly sacrifice

He vows. Then from a golden cup he pours the wine, and prays

That they would come and burn the dead, and stir a lively blaze

Through all the crackling logs. His prayer a ready hearing finds

From Iris, who swift-footed bears his wishes to the Winds.

They in the strong shrill-whistling Zephyr's hall then sat, sur-

rounding

200

The festal board ; to them the goddess came, and, lightly bounding,

Stood on the marble threshold. They beheld her with their

eyne,

And all upstood, and asked her to partake the food divine ;

But she the proffered grace denayed, and then bespake them so :

No festal seat for me ; I to the streams of Ocean go,

To the land of Æthiopian men, who hecatombs prepare
To the blest gods, and in their gifts I claim my rightful share.
But Peleus' son to Boreas and sharp-whistling Zephyr cries,
And vows that he to them will bring a costly sacrifice,
If they will come on breezy wing, and stir the sullen flame 210
Upon Patroclus' pyre, whom all the Greeks with weeping name.

She spoke; and winged her westward way. The winds with
potent bore
Rose, and in hurtling tumult drave the dark-piled clouds before;
Then o'er the deep with gusty sweep they ride, and billows
vast

Swelled 'neath their whistling vans; then Troy they smote with
sturdy blast,

And seized the pyre, and on the fire their gathered fury cast.
Uprose the crackling flame high-wreathed; and they with bois-
terous might

Unpausing blew; the while Achilles, through the sacred night,
Holding a beaker double-cupped from golden bowl forth drew
The purple wine, and poured it forth, and did the earth bedew; 220
Then cried with piteous cry on the soul of his dear-loved comrade
true.

Like as a father for his son wails, when he burns his bones,
Who died a bridegroom, and hath filled his parents' house with
moans;

Even so Achilles moaned, when o'er his friend the fire prevailed,
And with slow tread around the dead he walked, and wept, and
wailed.

But when the morning star shone bright and heralded the day,
And o'er the sea the Dawn, the saffron-stoled, her shimmering
ray

Shot slant, then was the pyre consumed, and the bright flame
paled away ;

And the winds went back on their homeward track across the
Thracian brine,

And the big sea rolled with breakers bold 'neath the brush of
their wings divine. 230

Then turned Achilles from the pyre, and sought soul-soothing rest,
And laid him down ; and soothing sleep his grief-worn soul
possessed.

But when the Greeks thick-gathering came to Mycenæ's king
renowned,

Their din and bustle broke the swift Pelides' slumber sound.

Upright he rose, and looked about, and firmly thus he speaks :

Atrides, and ye other chiefs, the best of all the Greeks,

First pour the vine-juice glowing bright o'er all the smoking pyre,
That ye may quite subdue the might of the strong-consuming fire.

Then from the rest the bones outcull of Menætiüs' son divine,

Discerning well ; for well may they be known by certain sign. 240

His bones the centre hold ; but heaped in the outer corners far,
Unmingled lies the cindered wreck of men and steeds of war.
His bones place in a golden urn, and wrap them nicely round
With double fold of fat, till I this dead beneath the ground
Shall follow. For the tomb no lofty pile I bid provide,
But modest for the need ; the Greeks may build it high and wide,
Who here behind remain, when I no more shall look on day.

He spake ; and all the Greeks swift-footed Peleus' son obey.
First with the ruddy-glowing wine the fire's enfeebled might ²⁵⁰
O'er all the pyre they quenched, where heaped lay ashes grey and
white ;

Then weeping, the white bones they culled of that most gentle
wight

Into a golden urn with twice-coiled fat ; and then they bore them
Into the tent, and spread a pall of fine white linen o'er them ;
Then drew a circle round the pyre, and firmly fixed on ground
The strong foundations, and upheaped black earth to pile the
mound.

This done, they back returned. But Peleus' godlike son straight-
way

Called all the folk, and bade them sit in orderly array ;
Then prizes from the ships he brought, and set in bright display,
Broad-fronted oxen, horses, mules, caldrons, and tripods rare, ²⁶⁰
And bars of iron glancing-grey, and well-zoned women fair.

First for the horsemen he exposed a glorious prize to view,
A woman fair whose fingers all the work of women knew,
And eke a tripod that could twenty measures hold and two,
Tway-eared : the next in course of race should claim a beautiful
mare,

Six-year'd, unyoked, and in her womb a foal, a mule, she bare ;
A caldron to the third he gave that smutched had never been
With flame ; four measures full it held, and shone with virgin
sheen.

Two talents of pure gold fell to the fourth ; a double urn,
Stainless from smirching smoke or flame the fifth shall bravely
earn.

270

Upright Achilles stands, and thus to the brave Achæans speaks :
Atrides, and ye other copper-mailed well-greav'd Greeks,
Thou seest the prizes wait the race in ordered fair array.
In other case, thou knowest well, I'd bear the prize away
Myself ; no steeds there be on earth that top my own in speed ;
Immortal they, for Neptune gave them of celestial breed
To Peleus, he in gift to me to serve my warlike need.
But they with me remain to-day, alone, with dismal cheer ;
For truly never shall they know a gentle charioteer
Like him, who, when from slaughterous fields they came and dusty
plains,

280

Bathed them in lucid floods, and poured soft oil adown their manes.

Him they lamenting stand, while low their drooping manes
descend,

Sweeping the ground ; with down-dropt heads they mourn their
absent friend.

But let the other Greeks stand forth—each man whose virtue lies
In steeds and well-compacted cars—and claim the published
prize !

Thus spake the chief : eftsoons each knight with instant act
replies.

First rose Eumelus, king of men, Admetus' darling son,
Than whom more skilled to manage steeds the Grecian host had
none ;

Next to his call Tydides rose, the strong-voiced Diomedè,290
And 'neath the yoke he harnessed well the steeds of wondrous
speed,

Of which he spoiled Æneas, when that hero's uttermost need
Apollo helped. Then Menelaus came with yellow hair,
Jove-born, and with him Æthè, Agamemnon's famous mare,
And his own horse, Podargos ; these he yoked to battle-car.
That mare to Agamemnon Echepolus gave, who far
From breezy Ilium wished to dwell, nor sweat in dusty war,
But brook an easy life at home ; for he had mickle gains
From Jove, and lorded many roods in Sicyon's loamy plains.
This mare he yoked ; with eager heart she owns the rattling reins.300

Fourth came Antilochus, Nestor's son, the wise old chief, who
drew

His race from Neleus ; to the car he yoked his coursers two
With glossy-waving manes, which came from Pylus' distant strand ;
Uprose the sire, and to the son spoke words of wise command :
Antilochus, though green thy growth of years, high-thundering Jove
And strong Poseidon loved thee with a fondly favouring love,
And taught thee manage of all steeds. Needs not that I should
show

What well thou knowest, to wheel the car ; but heavy-paced and
slow

Thy horses run ; and this I fear, brave boy, will work thee woe. ³¹⁰
Their steeds are swift, and limber legs are like to win the race ;
Nathless in skilful driver's art thou hold'st the foremost place.
Use then thy skill ; in every slippery turn be wary-wise ;
Else not for thee, I surely see, shines the bright glittering prize.
By skill and not by witless might the woodman fells the tree,
By skill the pilot helms aright his good ship through the sea,
When hugely swell the briny tides, and wind with wind doth war ;
By skill the rider foremost rides, and car doth vanquish car.
Who puts his trust in horses' heels, and hath scant skill to ride,
Planless he drives the rattling wheels, now here, now there, and
wide

320

Drifts from the mark ; the courser feels he hath a silly guide.

But whoso knows the craft to drive, though lord of worser
steeds,

He with nice eye shaves closely by the goal, and ever heeds
When to give less of floating rein, and when to urge with more,
Keeps a firm hand, and sharply eyes the man that rides before.
Now mark ; the goal thou canst not miss, clear to the runner's
eye

A stout old stem fixed in the ground, which stands full six feet
high,

Of oak or pine, not rotted by the rain, but sound and dry ;
Against the stem lean two white stones, one upon either side,
Where meet two roads, and close by runs the race-course sweeping
wide,

330

Whether these stones were raised to mark where some old chief-
tain died,

Or served for goal in olden times on this same racing ground ;
Here hath Achilles fixed the goal, the circling course to bound.
Close to this stem drive thou thy car, and full-maned coursers
fleet,

And lean thy body to the left from the well-plaited seat,
With supple bend ; but give the lash and full rein flowing free
To the offside horse, and let him hear a cheering cry from thee.
But thy left steed close to the goal drive thou so nicely near,
That of the well-compacted wheel the nave in hot career

May seem to strike it ; but avoid to touch, or thou shalt mar 340
The race, and wound thy noble steeds, and break the burnished
car,

And bring great triumph to the rest, and to thyself disgrace.

Wherefore, dear boy, be wary, and let wisdom rule the race !

If once thou clear the goal, and first thy fervid chariot flies,

No rider then, the best of men, may keep from thee the prize,

Not even if he into his car had yoked the wingèd speed

Of famed Arion, born of gods, Adrastus' wondrous steed,

Or thy swift steed, Laomedon, of noblest Trojan breed !

Thus spoke the son of Neleus old, and sat down in his place,

When he had wisely shown his son the skill that rules the race. 350

Then Merion with his full-maned steeds stood forth the fifth and
last ;

And on their seats all mounted, and straightway the lots were cast.

Achilles shook them, and thy lot, Antilochus, outflew

The first ; then thine, Admetus' son, Eumelus, leapt to view ;

The third to Menelaus fell, for cast of spear well famed ;

The fourth place in the riders' roll the gallant Merion claimed,

And last and best of all the band was stout Tydides named.

Now all in row they stand. Achilles stood, with eye and hand

Marking the goal in the far field, and gave a strict command

To Phoenix, Peleus' faithful friend, to note the prowess well 360

Of each stout rider in the race, and all the truth to tell.

And now each rider o'er his steed the lash uplifted high,
And smote him with the neat's-hide thong, and with loud-echoing
 ery

Stirred up his mettle ; at one bound the willing coursers fly
Off from the ships ; beneath their breasts the enwreathèd dust
 uprose,

And from their necks before the breeze the waving beauty flows
Of their long manes. And now the cars brush low the nurturing
 ground,

And now high into air upspring with sudden rattling bound.
Firm planted each brave driver stands, while pants his heart to
 gain 370

The glittering prize, and to his steeds each cries with eager
 strain,

While, dust-enwrap't, like storm from Jove, they scour the sounding
 plain.

But when the goal they reached, and now back to the hoary brine
Turned the swift steeds, Oh then, each rider's skill did clearly
 shine !

With long quick pace the horses grasped the ground ; and, hotly
 pressed,

Thy panting steeds, Admetus' son, outflow before the rest.

Next them, the steeds of Tros came up in fast and full career,

With Diomede, not far behind, but near and very near ;

Seemed they would leap upon the car, so passing close they rode ;
Their glowing breath Eumelus felt upon his shoulders broad ; 380
And, as they flew, upon his back their long-stretched necks they
showed,

And had been surely first, or halved the race with equal speed,
Had not the wrathful archer-god achieved a harmful deed,
Who made the lash drop from the hand of doughty Diomede ;
And from the hero's eyne down rolled the bitter-biting tear,
Now when he saw Eumelus' steeds outpace in full career,
While his must flag, and sorely lag, and feel no spur to follow.
But well had Pallas marked, when thy o'er-reaching hand, Apollo,
Crippled his race ; forthwith she leapt into the middle course,
And gave him back the lash, and fired his steeds with double
force, 390

Then wrathful turned against Eumelus' son in race renowned,
And broke his horses' yoke ; they start ; and with a wayward
bound
Swerve from the course ; the headlong pole against the nurturing
ground
Was dashed ; himself from out the car with violent pitch was
borne,

And from his arm and mouth and nose the flesh was rudely torn.
Above the eye his forehead smote the ground ; stunned by the blow
No word he spoke, but down his cheeks the rolling tear 'gan flow.

Then starting 'fore the rest, the godlike son of Tydeus drave
His glorious steeds ; for to their limbs Pallas Athenè gave
New spring, and she with honours new would crown that hero
brave. 400

Then Menelaus yellow-haired came second ; but the son
Of Nestor to his coursers cried, and urged them hotly on :
Now stretch your paces, lusty steeds, as fast as ye may strain !
Not with Tydides I contend ; him now to pass is vain,
New strength to nerve his steeds Jove's daughter with the flashing
eyne

Inspires, and she with honours new will crown that king divine.
But Menelaus ye must pass, or surely mickle blame
Is yours ; if Agamemnon's mare outrun my stallions, shame
Shall cover you and foul reproach ; why lags the male behind ?
But this I say, and this my word shall certain issue find ; 410
To you no more the shepherd of the folk, my godlike father,
Will tendance give, but with sharp brass his hand will slay you
rather,

If by your fault a worsèr prize the judge award to me ;
Then stretch your paces well, and run as fleet as fleet may be !
The speed be yours, mine be the skill, even at the narrowest place,
To dash right on, and guide you safe through all the slippery
race !

He said ; they feared their rider's eager call, and for a space

Doubled their speed. Eftsoons Antilochus with watchful eye,
In the large sweep of the winding course a narrow place did
spy, 420

Even at the mouth of a hollow gorge, where the wild winter torrent
Broke o'er the way, and hollowed all the fields with foaming cur-
rent ;

Here Menelaus wary rides, lest wheel on wheel should clash ;
But Nestor's son no moment slacks, and with a venturous dash
Outside the way sweeps fearless on, and side by side he flies.
Then Menelaus feared, and thus to Nestor's son he cries :
Antilochus, beware ! rein thy wild steeds ! thou art not wise !
A broader place we soon shall find, then try to pass, or thou
And I, be sure, shall scath endure for thy hot folly now !

He spake ; but Nestor's eager son, without or halt or fear,
Dashed on, and spurred with fervid goad, as one that did not
hear. 430

Far as a youth from his shoulders broad the whirling discus flings,
When all the strength of his lusty brawn to the well-poised cast
he brings,

So far he sprang before ; not so Atrides' horses strain
Their topmost speed ; the king himself draws back the sober rein,
Lest, when with reckless spur they run, the glittering prize to gain,
The hoofed steeds, entangled in the clattering race should dash
Riders and well-compacted cars in the dust with fatal crash :

Him then with keen reproach bespoke Atrides, yellow-haired :

Antiloehus, thou balefullest fool, that ever madly dared !

Truly the Greeks much blame did bear, when once they called thee
wise ; 440

But thou shalt take my oath and swear, before thou claim the
prize !

He spake, and to his horses loud with spiring cry doth call ;

Now boldly pace, my chafed steeds, nor let your mettle fall !

Their feet will flag, their knees will fail before yours in the race,

For they are old ; and age with youth not holds an equal pace.

He spake ; their rider's voice the coursers hear, and seize amain

The hollow ground with vigorous bound, and on the leaders gain.

Meanwhile from where they sat with keen regard the Dardans view

The race, as through the whirling dust the smoking horses flew.

But first Idomeneus, Cretan chief, the winning car desiered ; 450

For from a height beside the course his view was free and wide.

The rider's shout from far he heard, as he rode with rattling speed,

And by its marks he knew full well the foremost-sweeping steed.

The steed was roan whose sounding hoof ran with the swiftest
bound,

With in his front a snow-white spot like the clear full moon so
round.

Upstood Idomeneus, and thus the Danaan men bespeaks :

Brave comrades, captains dear to me, and counsellors of the Greeks,

Say do your eyne conspire with mine, and do I truly see ?

Now other steeds, as I divine, lead the hot race ; and he

Who once was first is first no more ; an evil chance did mar 460

His course, and from the shining prize his steeds have wandered
far.

Doubtless close by the distant goal I saw them whirling round

The first, but see them now no more ; o'er all the measured ground

I cast my eyes ; the steeds that late were first no more are found.

Belike the reins slipt from his hand, nor he with dexterous skill

Could turn the goal, and hold his steeds, and guide their wayward
will ;

Then with a crash, I ween, he fell, and brake his car, and they

Lordless across the field pell-mell tore their unhindered way.

But stand ye up and scan the field with nicer view ; for I

But dimly see, and, as I may, with likely guess, descry 470

First an Ætolian rider, an Argive chief of high degree,

The horse-subduing Tydeus' son, stout Diomedes is he.

To whom Oïleus' son thus spake right sharp and scornfully :

Idomeneus, thy hasty word outspeeds thy wit ; not thou

Canst tell who first who last, where far the cars are whirling
now.

Not thou among the Greeks of might in summers art the youngest,

Nor from thy head looks forth the light with piercing power the
strongest.

Mighty art thou in breath and lung; though many here, thy
betters,

Both see and hear, thou wear'st a tongue that doth allow no fetters.
The self-same steeds that foremost ran still run the first; I know ⁴⁸⁰
The rider well, Admetus' son, his waving reins I know.

To whom the stalwart Cretan king the wrathful answer gave :
O Ajax, evil-thoughted chief, in bitter brawling brave,
But in all manly virtue weak, a windy railer rude ;
I'll stake a tripod on my word, or else a caldron good,
And let Atrides Agamemnon daysman be, and say
Which steed is first, that for thy headlong prate thy purse may
pay !

He spake ; and swiftly to reply the nimble Ajax turns,
While in his heart with fretful smart the bitter rancour burns ;
And now more loud the brawl had swelled, and keener strife been
stirred, 490

Had not Achilles them compelled to peace with warning word :
Cease from these harsh reproachful gibes, this taunting temper
tame,

Ye Argive chiefs ! with noisy brawls soil not your knightly fame,
Unseemly ! sure in other chiefs yourselves such strife would blame.
Here sit you down, and scan the course from your appointed place ;
The steeds themselves, whose sounding hoof now plies the panting
race,

Will soon be here ; then all who choose may see with their own
eyes,

Whose horses lag behind, and whose have won the golden prize.

He spake ; but now with clattering speed ahead Tydides
flies,

Down from the shoulders of his steeds he swings the sounding
lash, 500

And, rapid-sweeping to the goal with airy hoof they dash.

The dust and gravel drifts aloft and smites the rider bold,

While rattling flies the ear well-wrought with various tin and gold,

Behind the swift-hoofed steeds ; not deep, I wis, in dusty ground

The felloes sink, so light the coursers fly with airy bound.

Now in the midst Tydides stood ; outburst the sweaty beads

From neck and breast, and full-maned crest of the hot and smoking
steeds.

Then from the sun-bright chariot's seat the stout Tydides leapt,

And leant his lash against the yoke ; and forward Sthenelus
stept, 510

His stalwart squire, and in his hand the appointed prize took he ;

Then gave his men to lead to the ships the women fair to see,

And eke the tripod, while himself the reeking steeds set free.

Now comes the son of Nestor ; he the second place maintained,

By craft and not by speed from godlike Menelaus gained,

Who came the third, and by the smallest space behind remained.

What space a horse is distant from the wheel, when on the course
He pulls his master's rattling car, and strains his topmost force ;
His flying tail with hair tips fine doth o'er the felloes fall, 520
'Twixt flying tail and whirling wheel the space is wondrous small ;
So small 'twixt Menelaus and Antilochus, I ween,
Was now the space, which first as wide as cast of quoit had
been,

But soon was 'minished ; such fine force did Agamemnon's mare,
Aithè, put forth, and with such speed her rider's loss repair ;
And had the race been longer, certes, then from Nestor's son,
The yellow-haired Atrides the high-valued prize had won.
Fourth Merion comes, thy trusty squire, Idomeneus, not near
To Menelaus, but behind by the cast of a weighty spear. 530
His race the slowness of his steeds did sadly maim and mar ;
Nor mickle skill had he to rule the fervid-wheeling car.
Last came Admetus' son, and dragged his chariot, and drave
His steeds before ; in sorrier plight came never rider brave.
Whom when Achilles strong of foot beheld, with pity stirred
He spake ; and thus amid the Greeks outflow his wingèd word :
O strange ! who rode the best comes last ; nathless it seemeth well
That he the second prize receive whom dire mischance befell ;
The first to Tydeus' son belongs, the strong-voiced Diomede.

Thus he ; and all the Greeks with loud-consenting voice agreed.
And now the six-yearèd mare with foal had been Eumelus' meed,

Had not Antilochus, the son of Nestor mighty-souled,
From swift Pelides claimed the right, and spoke both free and bold :
O son of Peleus, if thou do this thing, my heart denies
The right ; no justice rules the word that takes from me the prize.
Mischance, thou sayst, his car befell ; but his steeds were wisely
driven,

And he himself showed bravely. Well, if to the gods in heaven,
His pious prayer had risen, belike his race had better thriven.
But if thou love this rider bold, and wouldst his loss repair,
Send to thy tent—thou hast of gold and copper plenty there,
And sheep, and swift strong-hoofèd steeds, and bright-cheeked
maidens fair ;

550

Thence bring a prize, and gift thy friend to-morrow ! or, if thou
Art whetted for the act, give now, and all will praise thee now ;
But, for the mare that I have won, the prize is mine, and I
Will keep it with my hands ; who dares to take it, let him try !

He spake : Achilles smiled to see the sudden choler swell
Of Nestor's son, for certes in his heart he loved him well ;
And from the hero's lips straightway the willing answer fell :
Antilochus, if 'tis thy will that to Admetus' son
My tent another prize provide, 'tis well ; it shall be done.
The hauberk which the brave Asteropæus owned, to him
Be gifted now, with copper disk, and bound about the rim
With gleaming tin ; no mean priced gift my heart designs for him.

560

He spake ; and bade Automedon in haste bring from the tent
The glorious gift ; with willing foot his faithful comrade went.
Eumelus took it from his hand, and smiled with blithe content.
But Menelaus yellow-haired upstands, while fiercely glows
Wrath in his heart 'gainst Nestor's son. Eftsoons a herald rose
And placed the sceptre in his hands, and bade the Argive clan
Keep silence ; then amid the folk outspake the godlike man :
O son of Nestor, once so wise, what hast thou done ? disgrace ⁵⁷⁰
On my fair fame thy craft hath brought, my steeds thou didst dis-
place
Unduly, though more swift than thine, and strong to win the race.
But now, brave captains of the Greeks, and counsellors wise, judge
ye
'Twixt him and me this day, and keep your doom from favour
free,
That of the brave Greeks copper-mailed no man may rate me
thus :
Lo ! Menelaus hath prevailed o'er brave Antilochus
By fraud and force ; for, though his steeds are slow and heavy
gaited,
He is a king, and even his faults are for a virtue rated.
Or, if you choose, myself will speak the doom ; no Greek will dare
To speak an adverse word, when I my honest right declare. ⁵⁸⁰
Jove-born Antilochus, stand forth—for so 'tis right and fair—

Stand forth in front of steeds and shining car, and in thy hand
Take the lithe lash, which made the steeds to own thy keen com-
mand,

And touch the steeds, and truly swear in strong Poseidon's face,
Thou didst not break by purposed wile the laws that rule the
race !

To whom the prudent-minded son of Nestor made reply :

Enough ! enough ! beseems not me, so green in years, to vie

With thee, O king, an older man, and wiser far than I.

Thou know'st a young man's soul, how there rich fount of folly
springs ;

Hasty his wit, and his conceit floats light on flimsy wings. 590

Therefore do thou my fault forgive ; to thee I yield the mare

Prize of the race ; and, if thou ask a gift more rich and rare,

I'll bring it from my tent for thee, O king, and nothing spare,

Sooner than fall from thy dear love, thou Jove-born king, and win

The wrath of righteous gods above for guerdon of my sin.

Thus spake, and came with the mare in hand old Nestor's noble
boy,

And gave it to the king, whose heart was warmed with sudden joy,

As a soft dew with genial power falls on the swelling ears

Of growing corn, when all the field is bristling with its spears ;

Even so Atrides' kingly breast with kindly ruth was stirred, 606

And thus to godlike Nestor's son he spake the wingèd word :

Antilochus, though much my heart was chafed, yet I this day
Will yield to thee ; thou wert not wont with wayward wit to stray,
And slippery purpose ; youth this once hath held thy sense in
fettors,

A second time beware by craft to overreach thy betters.

Scarcely another Greek with such cheap words had soothed my
wrath ;

But thou hast toiled through much, and trod no dainty-footed path,
Thou and thy brother and thy sire, for simple love of me.

Wherefore I yield thy prayer ; and lo ! I freely give to thee,
Though mine by right, the goodly mare, that all may understand ⁶¹⁰
That I with grace and gentle thews do wear my high command.

He spake ; and to Antilochus' friend, Noëmon, gave the mare ;
Then to himself the caldron took of burnished beauty rare.

Then Merion, who stood the fourth, the golden talents gained ;
And now unclaimed by any wight the double urn remained.

This swift Pelides took, and 'mid the assembly of the Greeks
Gave it to Nestor old, and thus the godlike hero speaks :

Take this, old man, and let it be with thee and thine for ever
In memory of Patroclus ; him amid the Argives never

Shalt thou behold again. This prize I give thee of free love ; ⁶²⁰
For never more shall thong-bound fist or cast of javelin prove

Thy prowess ; thee nor wrestler's grip nor racer's course shall crown
With glory in the games, for irksome eld doth weigh thee down.

He spake, and gave the gift. The old man's heart with joy was stirred,

With blithe face he received it, and thus spake the wingèd word :
Certes, my son, in all these words thy tongue hath spoken rightly ;
Nor more my knees are firm, nor swift my feet to run, nor lightly
My arms spring out to right and left, as when my strength was
young.

Oh, if my years were now as fresh, and my limbs were lithe and strong,

As when king Amarynceus at Buprasium died, and there 630

His sons appointed funeral games with prizes rich and rare ;
Oh, then no man could match me, none of all the Pylians bold,
Nor the Epeans, nor the stout Ætolians mighty-souled !

Then with my fist I brought the brawny Clytomede to ground,
And from my gripe a weighty fall the stout Anceus found.

Iphiclus in the race I left behind, the nimble-footed ;

Pyleus and Polydore with me the javelin cast disputed

In vain ; only in chariot race the sons of Actor gained

The prize from me, when with united skill they hotly strained. 640

For they were twins, and, while the one did sway the reins, the other

Sounded the lash, and with keen stroke gave echo to his brother.

Such was I then. Now let young men their lustihood display

In feats of strength ; for I am old, and bend beneath the sway

Of many years ; when young I shone bright with the chiefest names.

But this is past. Be thine, Achilles, now to end the games.

And, for this gift, it warms my heart to see it, and my hand

Leaps to embrace it ; thus thy kindly thoughts I understand ;

Thus by the side of hoary old doth seemly honour go ;

May the gods love thee for thy love, and grace for grace bestow ! ⁶⁵⁰

He spoke : well pleased Achilles heard ; and, when his talk was done,

Into the midst of all the host strode Peleus' godlike son.

There with loud voice a boxing-bout the hero did proclaim,

And tethered in the ring a mule, prize of the bloody game,

Six-year'd, unyoked, a sturdy beast, and passing hard to tame.

Then for the vanquished, to console his fall, a goodly prize,

A double cup, he gives, and thus amid the Achæans cries :

Atrides, and ye other well-greaved Danaans, I invite

The stoutest two of all your crew in the strong-fisted fight

To deal the weighty-levelled blow ; and by Apollo's grace ⁶⁶⁰

Who sturdiest stands, and with strong hands strikes likeliest, in the face

Of all the Greeks, his skill a stout and toilsome mule shall claim :

This double cup be meed for him who loses in the game.

He spake ; and straight uprose a brawny man both tall and stout, Epeius, son of Panopeus, who oft in boxing-bout

Had proved his skill ; he laid his hand upon the mule, and spake :
Approach who will, and for his prize the double beaker take,
Mine be the mule ! for 'mongst the men who launch the bloody
blow

With weighty fist, no match for me the Achaean host can show.
How much I fail with sword and mail I know it ; but in one ⁶⁷⁰
Sort I excel ; to bear the bell in all is given to none.

I warn him well the luckless wight who tries with me my game,
I'll bruise his brawn, and dark his light, and smash his bony
frame ;

His friends be near with pall and bier to bear him hence, whom I
Smite with strong hand ; on Trojan sand there let him gasping lie !

He spake ; the Greeks all silent heard, nor dared his might defy ;
Only Euryalus upstood, besides him ventured none ;

Of Talaüs' kingly race was he, Mecisteus' godlike son,
Who came to Thebes, when OEdipus was slain, and conquered all
The stout Cadmeans, who there fought to grace his funeral. ⁶⁸⁰

This man spear-famed Tydides loved, and with the friendly word
Cheered him, and with the hope to win his mounting mettle
stirred.

First with the belt he braced him, then with dexterous plies he
bound

The well-cut thongs of stout neat's-hide his wiry fist around.
Then both, for combat busked, stept forth into the palèd ground,

And now, with arm uplifted, firm each sinewy champion stands,
And now pell-mell with purpose fell they mingle hands with
hands.

Upon their chaps the vollied blows fall crackling ; streaming flows
The sweat adown their limbs ; godlike Epeius then uprose,
And smote Euryalus in the cheek, as he cast about his eyes. 690
Not long he stood ; his firm knee shakes, and flat on ground he
lies.

As on a beach with tangled weeds, by force of the ruffling blast,
A huge fish flounders, whelmed anon by a second billow vast,
So flounced Euryalus on the sand all helpless ; but the good
Epeius raised him by the hand ; around his comrades stood,
And heavily with dragging feet him through the ring they led,
Spitting the clotted blood, and drooping to one side his head,
And laid him down, of sense bereft, nor weeting where he lay ;
Then to the lists returned, and bore the double cup away.

Eftsoons Achilles 'mid the Greeks let cry another game, 700
To those in wrestler's slippery craft who sought a glorious fame ;
A huge fire-mounting caldron bright the conqueror receives,
So he proclaims—a caldron worth a dozen sturdy beeves ;
Then for the conquered a fair maid the godlike chief puts forth,
A maid well skilled in women's works, four sturdy oxen worth.
Then forth he stands, and thus amid the listening people speaks :
Now rise who will and prove your skill, ye copper-coated Greeks !

He spake ; and first the large-limbed Telamonian Ajax rose,
To him Ulysses who all sleights of cunning practice knows ;
These nicely belted both come forth, and in the middle stand, 710
And seize each other's elbows with the firmly-grasping hand,
Firm as two beams, which carpenter with nice dovetailing binds,
High on a lofty roof, to hold against the blustering winds.
Beneath the gripe of their brawny hands, the hard-tugged muscle
 creaks

Upon their backs ; the beaded sweat the ground free-flowing seeks ;
Upon their sides and shoulders broad dark bruise and bloody
stain

Frequent appear; while both the chiefs each starting muscle strain,
All topful of desire the caldron's massy round to gain.

In vain Ulysses would supplant the Telamonian ; all
 Stout Ajax' strength was vain to make the firm Ulysses fall. 720
 Equal they stood long time, and vexed with hope the waiting
 Greeks,

When thus the Telamonian tall to wise Ulysses speaks :

Son of Laertes, Jove-born king, now lift thou me, or I
Will lift thee from the ground; the event with Jove in heaven
doth lie !

He spake, and tried to lift him ; but the chief with 'customed
sleight

Struck in the hollow of the knee with his heel that weighty wight,

And threw him on his back ; and stout Ulysses on his breast
Fell prone above ; and all who saw beheld with wondering zest.
Another bout ; and from the ground Laertes' son prevailed
A little space to move the chief, but clean to lift him failed, 730
For his own knee he crooked ; down both the heroes fell,
And on the ground they rolled, and in the dust besoiled them
well.

And now a third bout they had tried, with hands and hearts untamed,
Had not Achilles risen, and thus amid the Greeks proclaimed :
Spend not your strength in vain, brave chiefs, let not your limbs
be lamed !

Be victors both ; with equal right ye claim the prize ; now go
Both from the lists, that other Greeks like strength of limb may
show.

He spake ; they to the hero's voice with willing act respond,
And wiped the soiling dust away, and their tunics deftly donned.
Now the fleet race with nimble feet Achilles doth proclaim, 740
And gives a silver bowl to crown the victor in the game.
Six measures the broad bowl contained ; a second cup so fair
Earth held not, by Sidonian smiths well wrought with curious
care,

Then by Phœnician traffickers across the dim sea carried,
A gift to Thoas, while in Lemnos' friendly ports they tarried.

Here Jason's son, Evenus, as a ransom for the soul
Of Priam's son Lycaon, to Patroclus gave the bowl;
And now Achilles set it forth, a costly prize most meet
For who at dear Patroclus' games should run with speedful feet.
A huge fat ox his meed shall be who holds the second place, ⁷⁵⁹
And half a talent of fine gold the third in nimble race
Shall claim. Then thus the godlike chief amid the assembly
speaks :

Now show your suppleness of joint, ye copper-coated Greeks !
Then rose the Locrian chief, whose feet were wondrous swift to
run,

Ajax ; Ulysses next, and third the blameless Nestor's son,
Antilochus, the fleetest Greek of all the youthful band.
These three stood in a line ; Achilles marked with eye and hand
The goal ; first from the starting-point full swiftly Ajax ran ;
Behind him, passing near, outflew Ulysses, godlike man.
As when a well-zoned woman holds the shuttle near her breast ⁷⁶⁰
When through the warp she shoots the woof to weave a pictured
vest,

So near the Ithacan hero ran, and filled the other's trace
Close with his own, before the dust might the firm print efface.
Right on the Locrian's head his breath the rival runner blew,
And o'er his shoulders hung ; loud shouts from all the Danaan crew
Rose, as he ran in the eager race, and cheered him as he flew.

But when their feet approached the goal, the Ithacan king divine
Prayed to Athenè in his heart, maid with the flashing eyne :
Hear me, Athenè ! make my feet strong with thy heavenly aid ! ⁷⁷⁰
Thus spake the king ; and Pallas heard him as with power he prayed,
And shed new lightness through his frame, and lifted feet and
hands ;

And when the goal was near, and now the prize before them
stands,

Then Ajax slipped his foot—for watchful Pallas marred his way—
And fell where on the ground the filth of bellowing oxen lay,
Oxen, which at Patroclus' pyre the swift Achilles slew ;
There fell the chief, and in their filth did mouth and nose imbrue.
Ulysses then victorious seized the bowl so rich and rare,
And noble Ajax took the ox, huge-bodied, fat, and fair ;
Then on the horns of the goodly beast his hands the hero laid, ⁷⁸⁰
Spat from his mouth the filth, and thus amid the assembly said :
She, even she, the goddess marred my race, she and none other,
Who still doth aid Ulysses wise, and loves him as a mother !

He spake ; and all the well-greaved Greeks full bravely laughed
to see.

Third came Antilochus ; in his hand the shining gold took he,
And smiled, and spake amid the folk with lusty-brimming glee :
I need not tell, you know it well, the gods who live for ever
Smile on the older men, and help the young Achæans never !

'Twixt me and Oileus' son I count of years no mighty space,
But old, and of an older clan is he who won the race. 790

A green old man they clepe him well ; so great his racing skill is,
No Greek in speed may him excel, except thyself, Achilles !

Thus he ; and with full gallant art spoke swift Pelides' praise.
Achilles hears with kindly heart, and with friendly word repays
Brave Nestor's son. Not I for nought would thus thy praise enjoy ;
Thou hast the one half-talent ; take the other, noble boy !
Thus he, and gives it. Nestor's son receives the gift with joy.

Then swift Pelides took a helm, and an ample-orbèd shield,
And a long-shadowed spear, and placed them on the listed field ;
Arms of Sarpedon, which from him Patroclus' might did take ; 800
And in the midst upstood, and thus to all the Danaans spake :
Now I invite tway warriors, Greeks for prowess valued most,
To don their glittering arms, and stand before the assembled host
And prove their skill, where the flesh-riving lance with lance is
crossed.

Which of these two the first shall prick the adverse champion's
skin,

And through his mail to his crimson blood a cutting passage win,
To him I'll give this silver-studded sword of Thracian make,
Which from Asteropæus slain my spoiling hands did take. 810

Thus he. And to the hero's call uprose with rival speed
The Telamonian Ajax, and the stalwart Diomede.

Their arms they donned, and forward came, all eager for the fight ;
Fierce flashed their eyes ; the circling Greeks with awe beheld the
sight.

Onward they paced the measured ground, till passing near they
stood,

And thrice they sprang, and thrice they aimed, and hurled the
coppered wood.

First Ajax of Tydides pierced the buckler's ample round,
But might not reach his skin ; his harness kept the hero sound.

Then stout Tydides overshot the rim of his buckler good, 820

And wounded Ajax ; from his neck trickled the crimson flood.

Now, fearful of the risk, the chief bade both the kings forbear,

And of the appointed armour each cull forth his equal share ;

But to stout Diomede the sword the godlike hero brought,

With studded hilt, and shining sheath, and belt full finely wrought.

Then forth Achilles brought a ball, a big and weighty round,

Of pure cast-iron, which Eëtion hurled across the ground

While yet he lived ; but, when he fell transfixed by Grecian brass,

With other wealth Achilles gained this rounded iron mass.

Upstood the hero, and outspake to all the harnessed crew : 830

Now try this other bout, and prove what Argive brawn can do ;

Whoso is lord of roods remote, let him live free from cumber,

This sphere will serve his need, though five revolving years he
number ;

Not he for gleaming iron bar need trudge to town ; he'll find
Enough at home, I ween, for use of ploughman, smith, and hind !

He spoke ; and forthwith Polypcetes rose, firm-souled in fight,
Uprose Leonteus, like a god in brawny-breasted might,
Divine Epeius, and the large-limbed Telamonian wight.
In line they stood ; divine Epeius seized the mass, and threw
Its whirling round ; loud laughter rang from all the Argive
crew. 840

Next came Leonteus, shoot of Mars, and flung the sphery mass ;
Third Ajax came, and all the marks did with light labour pass.
But when stout Polypcetes flung the ball with strength divine,
Far as a herdsman flings his crook, twirling above the kine,
So far he overpitched their mark. His comrades split the air
With cheers, and to the hollow ships the ponderous prize they bear.

Then for the archers a rare prize the hero set to view, 850
Ten double axes, single ten, of iron gleaming-blue,
Then the tall mast of a dark-prowed ship he planted in the ground,
Far on the beach, and to the mast with a fine cord he bound
A fluttering pigeon by the foot, to be the archer's aim.

Then spake Achilles : whoso strikes the pigeon wins the game,
And he the double axes for his rightful prize may claim ;
Who hits the twisted cord, but from the bird high-fluttering
swerves,
To him the single axes fall ; less praise less prize deserves.

He said ; the might of Teucer rose to meet the hero's will,
And Merion rose in archer's craft to prove his Cretan skill. 860
Then in the helm of glittering brass they shook the chanceful lot,
And Teucer's lot leapt forth. Straightway the practised bowman
shot

His arrow from the string, but, vainly confident, forgot
To vow the firstlings of his ewes to the archer-god, Apollo.
The god was wroth, and from his skill gave scant success to
follow.

He hit the cord which bound the bird to the lofty-planted mast,
And the keen arrow loosed the knot that held the trembler fast.
Up flew the pigeon to the sky ; the cord loose-dangling hung
Earthward ; from all the host around the pealing plaudits rung.
Then Merion took the bow with hasty grasp, where standing nigh 870
He waited, with the well-trimmed shaft, and ready hand and eye,
And vowed forthwith to the archer-god, the son of Jove, Apollo,
The firstlings of the fleecy flock, if dear success should follow.
Aloft beneath the clouds he marked the timid fluttering thing,
As here it wheeled and there, and in the breast, beneath the wing,
He shot the bolt right through. Down fell the missile swift and
sheer,

Back to the bowman, till at Merion's feet it lay full near ;
But the poor pigeon lighted on the mast, and there did cling
With sinking neck, and drooping head, and feebly-flagging wing.

The lively breath flew from its frame ; upon the beach it fell ⁸⁸⁰
Some space remote ; the Greeks applaud his skill who shot so well.
The double axes, nobly earned, the Cretan captain bore,
The single Teucer, to the ships beside the sounding shore.

Then Peleus' son a javelin took, and a caldron round and sheen,
Worth a stout ox, all bossed with flowers, which fire had never
seen,

And placed it in the midst. Then rose whoso had skill to fling
The whizzing dart : and first uprose Mycenæ's wide-realmed king,
Uprose thy squire, Idomeneus, the stalwart Merion,
And thus amid the assembly spake Thetis' fleet-footed son :
Atrides, well we know thy worth ; what strength may do, or art, ⁸⁹⁰
Is thine confessed above the rest to hurl the sure-aimed dart ;
Then be this prize contestless thine, and take it frank and free ;
And let the strong long-shadowed spear be Merion's meed, if thee
This order pleases. Thus to me, O king, it seemeth best.

He spake. The king of men obeyed the godlike hero's hest,
And gave the spear to Merion, while, with loyal-hearted care,
Talthybius to the monarch's tent the beautiful caldron bare.



BOOK XXIV.



ARGUMENT.

*Jove bids Achilles cruel insult spare,
And to his sire restore the corpse of Hector ;
The hoary king with precious gifts and rare
Goes through dark night to sue the haughty victor.
Achilles hears the old man's piteous prayer,
Who safe returns with Hermes for protector.
O'er Hector's pyre young maids and matrons hoary
Weep ; and with weeping ends the Trojan story.*



BOOK XXIV.

THUS all the games were ended ; and the people now dispart
To the hollow ships ; then with the evening meal refresh their heart,
And taste sweet sleep's delight. But the divine Pelides wept,
When on Patroclus dead he thought, nor o'er his eyelids crept
Sleep all-subduing ; on his weary couch he turned and turned,
And for his lost friend's gentle thews and lusty youth he mourned,
And for the toils he toiled with him, the combat and the slaughter,
And many far-adventurous quests on the back of the briny water.
On these he thought, and from his eyes he shed the tearful
tide,

And tossed and turned ; now on his back he lay, now on his side, ¹⁰
Now prone upon his face. Anon with sudden spring he rose
Upright, and wandered on the shore, as a man distracted goes,
Now here, now there, till on the beach the saffron morning shined.
Then to his well-wrought car the nimble-footed steeds he joined,
And bound the corpse of Hector with a goodly thong behind,
And thrice he dragged the hero round the dead Patroclus' mound ;
Then in his tent lay down, but left the body on the ground

Prone in foul dust and gore. But now from heaven Apollo came,
Piteous, and from unsightly harm redeemed the hero's frame ;
Round him his golden shield he threw, to keep harsh injury off ²⁰
From his smooth skin, which fierce Achilles vowed with ruthless
scoff.

Thus Hector's corpse beside the ships in foul dishonour lay.
But when the gods beheld the sight, they felt soft pity's sway,
And urged the keen-eyed Argus-slaying god to steal away
The hero's corpse ; though not to this the god who rules the brine
Consented, nor the white-armed queen, nor the maid with the
flashing eyne.

For in their breasts celestial still they nursed the hatred strong
'Gainst Priam and his folk, since when with disregardful wrong
Them Alexander knew, what time to his shepherd's hut they came,
And praised her most, who in his heart first fired the lustful flame.³⁰
But when from godlike Hector's death the twelfth bright morning
broke,

Then in the Olympian council thus far-darting Phcebus spoke :
Harsh, stern, and pitiless are your hearts, ye gods ! this now
declare,

Did Hector, when he lived, for you or goats or oxen spare,
To heap your shrines ? but him now dead ye reek not, and deny
him

To his dear wife, his son, his mother dear, and father Priam,

And all the people, who would tend his corpse with tendance
true,

And burn him in the fire, and pay the dead man's sacred due ;
And with Achilles bent on harm, more harmful ye conspire,
Who nought of reason reeks, or kindly human thought, when ire ⁴⁰
Burns in his breast ; but like a lion wild, in hungry mood,
Who what his own imperious greed demands deems only good,
And knows no right, but makes the sheep of rustic men his food ;
Thus Peleus' son casts ruth aside ; nor awe nor shame knows he,
Shame, which much harms in much excess, but in a just degree
Saves from much seath. Just is the tear, when by the common
doom

A dear son dies, or brother dear, from one dear mother's womb ;
But not alway grief's fountain flows ; an end hath fretful care ;
The burden, which the Fates impose, they help our backs to bear :
But he the godlike Hector slew, and to his chariot bound, ⁵⁰
And three times furious round his dear companion's funeral mound
Dragged him ; full surely for this deed himself shall feel the rod,
Brave though he be ; nor may such pride be brooked by any god,
That o'er the breathless dead he ride, and kick the senseless clod.

To whom with wrath indignant spake the white-armed Herè
so :

Well hast thou spoken for thyself, god of the silver bow !
And well for all, if gods to Hector and Achilles owe

Honour alike. But mortal Hector sucked a mortal mother,
Achilles had a dam divine, a goddess, whom none other
But in these arms myself did nurse ; and she a wife was given ⁶⁰
To Peleus, dear above all men to gods who rule in heaven.
And at the marriage all the gods attended ; and thou too
Wert there with harp in hand, thou friend of bad men and untrue !
To whom with gentle speech thus spake the cloud-compelling
sire :

Nay, Herè ! frown not on the gods with sulky-fronted ire.
Not equal honour they shall share ; but we who quaff the nectar
No man of all the Trojan clan should more regard than Hector.
Certes, he at my shrine did stand with constant service true,
And evermore libation bland from him my altar knew,
And savoury steam ; for such from mortals is our rightful due. ⁷⁰
Thus moved the godlike Hector's corpse from fierce Achilles'
sway

We will redeem, but not without his knowledge ; for alway
His ocean-mother by his side keeps watch both night and day.
Forthwith let some one of the gods from me swift message bear
To Thetis, that to her dear son my counsel she declare,
That he take gifts from Priam old, and Hector's corpse restore.

He spake ; and wind-swift Iris rose, and from the fulgent floor
Of heaven shot down. 'Twixt Samos and the rocky Imbros she
Into the darkling billow plunged ; far heaved the bubbling sea.

Even as the lead drops sudden down into the billowy brine, 80
Which, to an ox-horn bound, destruction brings, on baited line,
To greedy fish ; so swiftly dropt that herald-maid divine
Into the deep ; and there within a hollow cave she found
Thetis, with all the ocean nymphs, her sisters, gathered round.
There sat the goddess weeping sore the doom of her dear-loved boy,
To die from fatherland remote, on the loamy plains of Troy.

To her the tempest-footed maid these wingèd words addressed :
Come rouse thee, Thetis, and receive high-counselling Jove's
behest.

To whom the silver-footed Nymph thus gently made reply : 90
What hest hath mighty Jove for me ? my heart is heavy ; I,
Blighted with sorrows, shun to show my joyless face in heaven.
Nathless I go ; for not in vain shall Jove's command be given.

She spake ; then round her limbs a vest the tearful goddess
drew

Of dark sea-blue ; was never seen a vest of darker hue.
Then went ; and o'er the wave swift-footed Iris was her guide ;
Around their path with gentle rush slant falls the billowy tide ;
Then on the shore they land, and mount to the starry welkin wide.
There the far-seeing Kronos' son they found, and with him all
The blissful ever-living gods who hold the Olympian hall.
Beside the Father Thetis sits, where Pallas yields the place, 100
And Herè gives into her hand a cup with kindly grace,

Beautiful, golden. Thetis drank the nectared draught, and then
Gave back the cup; and thus outspake the king of gods and
men :

Thetis, sea-goddess, to the Olympian halls with heaviest woe
Borne down thou comest; this myself and all the Immortals know.
Nathless I called thee hither; why, few words shall clearly show.
Nine days the blissful gods in heaven who quaff the immortal
nectar,

With an unseemly strife have striven about the corpse of Hector;
And some did urge that Hermes watchful-eyed should steal away
The hero's corpse; but I to thee this grace and reverence pay, ¹¹⁰
That in this thing thy godlike son shall let mild reason sway,
And yield the ransomed dead. Go thou; and let our will be told
That all the gods, and chiefly I, his violent ways behold
Ill-pleased, for like a madman he o'erleaps all seemly bound,
And with ungracious insult drags dead Hector o'er the ground.
But let him fear, and to my will his wilful humour bend,
And I to Priam's kingly hall will wingèd Iris send,
Bidding him go with ransom rare from Ilium's broad-wayed city,
That he may move by righteous prayer thy godlike son to pity.

He spake; nor Thetis disobeyed, but on the word flew down ¹²⁰
With tempest-footed speed to earth from high Olympus' crown,
And to her dear son's tent she came, and him the mother found
Weeping; his trusty Myrmidons stood wofully around,

And with hot toil the morning meal prepared, and with a
knife

Took from a weighty-fleeced sheep the warm and reeking life.

Then near her son the mother sat, and on his shoulder laid

Gently her hand ; and thus the silver-footed goddess said :

My child, how long wilt thou consume thy life in dole and
sorrow,

Eating thy heart, and caring nought with food to fat thy marrow,

Or mingle with a woman fair in love and dear delight ? 130

For not long time on earth, I fear, thine eyes shall look on light,

But Death to thee is standing near, and Fate's fell-handed might.

But lend thine ear ; for sent to thee Jove's messenger am I :

For all the gods, he saith, nor least himself who rules the
sky,

Look on thy violent ways ill pleased, who o'er the gory ground

Draggest the godlike Hector's corpse, beyond all seemly bound.

Bend now thy will, and for the dead the precious ransom take.

To whom Achilles swift of foot the prompt reply did make :

So be it. Let the old man bring the ransom, and his son

Goes free. What the Olympian lord commandeth shall be done. 140

Thus they beside the ships, the godlike son and goddess mother,
Wove sad discourse, and mingled words full lovingly together.

Then thus to Iris spake the god who rules the stormy sky :

Go, nimble Iris, from Olympus' shining summit hie

To sacred Troy, and let the lofty-hearted Priam know
Our will, that he do ransom Hector's corpse, and straightway go
To the Achæan ships, with gifts to soothe his angered foe.
And let him go alone ; no Trojan now the route may share.
Only one reverend sire may go, a herald with grey hair,
To guide the mules, and in the well-wheeled wain bring back to
Troy

150

The corpse of godlike Hector, slain by Peleus' vengeful boy.
Nor let him fret his heart with fear, for to Achilles' tent
With him the Argus-slaying god shall for a guide be sent;
Not then shall Peleus' godlike son the monarch lust to kill,
And, if his comrades dare to strive, he'll rein their savage will ;
No rash unpurposed wight is he, no blushless bold offender,
But will regard the suppliant's plea with gentle heart and tender.

He spake. Swift Iris flew, adown the lucid ether sailing,
And came to Priam's house ; and there she heard sharp cries and
wailing.

160

Within the court sat all his sons, for Hector's bitter fate
Soiling their vests with tears ; in the midst the aged monarch
sat
Close in his cloak enwrapt ; and on his hoary-stricken head,
And on his bended neck, were dust and mickle ashes shed,
Which, rolling on the ground, he with his own wild hands had
spread ;

And through the halls his daughters and his dear sons' widowed
wives

Lifted shrill wail, when in their soul they wept for the dear lives
Of heroes slain on gory plain, where Mars on murder thrives ;
Such wailing found Jove's messenger, and close to Priam came,
And spake with low-hushed voice, while trembling seized the old
man's frame : 170

Be of good cheer, thou Dardan king, and fear no harm from me !
The messenger of Jove I bring his kindly hest to thee,
Jove, who from high with pitying eye doth thy great sorrow see ;
He wills that thou shalt ransom now stout Hector's corpse, and
go

To the Achæan ships with gifts to soothe thy wrathful foe.
And thou must go alone ; no Trojan man thy route may share ;
Only one reverend sire may go, a herald with grey hair,
To guide the mules, and on the well-wheeled wain bring back to
Troy

The corpse of godlike Hector, slain by Peleus' vengeful boy. 180
Nor fret thy heart with barren fears, for to Achilles' tent
With thee the Argus-slaying god shall for a guide be sent.
There Peleus' godlike son thy aged head shall fear to harm ;
And, if his comrades dare to strike, he'll raise the shielding arm.
No rash unpurposed wight is he, no blushless bold offender,
But will regard the suppliant's plea with gentle heart and tender.

Then off the nimble Iris flew, while Priam old enjoined
His sons to yoke the mules to the smooth-rolling wain, and bind
The waggon-basket with a strong well-twisted rope behind. 190
Then went the monarch to his room, fragrant with cedarn wood,
High-roofed, where all his stores he kept of chattels rare and
good,
And precious gems. Then for his spouse he called, and thus spake
he :

Dear Hecuba, from Jove supreme high hest hath come to me,
That I shall ransom Hector's corpse, and all-unfearing go
To the Achæan camp, with gifts to soothe my angered foe ;
Wherefore with honest heart and true thy kindly counsel show ;
For in my breast, plain sooth to say, the strong will urges me
Even to the camp to press my way, and the ships that fringe the
sea.

He spake ; but his dear spouse replied with heavy sob and
moan : 200

O noble Priam, whither hath thy reason fled, well known
Of yore to loyal men at home and brave allies abroad ?
How wilt thou dare to the Greek ships to foot thy lonely road
Into the eye of the savage wight, whose keen unsparing dart
Worked death to all thy sons ? Full sure thou hast an iron heart
Beneath these ribs. If he, the ruthless and the truthless man,
Shall know that Priam stands within the camp of the Argive clan,

No gracious tears shall dew his cheeks, and for thy hoary head
No reverence touch his heart ! At home for godlike Hector dead
Stay we, and nurse our grief ; for so the Fate's controlling might
Span his short thread, when he from me first saw the gladsome
light,

210

That he from parents dear divorced should feed the dogs, beneath
That fierce man's sway, whose liver with these close-infixèd teeth
Would I might feast on ! this were quittance just and rightful due
For my son's death, whom not as coward-loons are slain he slew,
But for the Trojans, and for Troy's deep-bosomed maids, his spear
Shaking, and flinching not from foes, nor blenched with thought
of fear.

To whom the godlike Priam old thus spake the answering word :
Nay, but I will go, woman ! stay me not ! nor be a bird
Of evil omen in my house ! thou shalt not move me so.
Had I from man of mortal seed received command to go,
Seer, or soothsayer, priest, or prophet, or diviner, I
Had crossed his will with mine, and called his wayward word a
lie.

220

But now, since Jove's high messenger I saw with mortal eye,
I go at his command. And if 'tis fated that the knife
Of copper-mailed Achæans from my breast shall rob the life,
So be it ! let me die by hand of that harsh-minded chief,
When in my arms I hold my son, and vent my bitter grief !

Thus Priam ; and the polished lids of the strong chests opened
he,

And drew forth twelve fine-woven stoles, right beautiful to see,
Twelve mantles single-plied, as many quilts and carpets fair, ²³⁰
As many coats, and cloaks an equal tale, of beauty rare.
Then talents ten he nicely weighed, of purest golden ore,
And added burnished tripods tway, and shining caldrons four,
And then a bowl exceeding quaint, which had been given him,
when

On embassy to Thrace he went, and the brave Thracian men
Sent him thus bravely gifted back ; but he not spared it now
To buy his dear son's body ; much he loved the boy, I trow.
This done, the old man from his breast the flooding wrath did pour,
And with bitter words he drave the folk from the echoing
corridor :

Out on you, losels ! scoundrels vile ! have ye no cares at home,
That on your old king's grief to gaze with idle eyes ye roam ? ²⁴⁰
Is't not enough that Jove hath crowned me with this topping
woe

To lose my bravest son ?—how great that loss yourselves will
know

Full soon ! The Greeks will mow you down through all your
shattered line,

Now Hector's gone. But for myself, before with these dim eyne

I see the sack of sacred Troy, and its high towers crashing fall,
Low with the dead may I lay my head in Pluto's sunless hall !

He spake ; and with his staff drove off the people. Forth they
went

From the enchain'd king. Then on his sons he 'gan to vent
His wrath ; on Helenus and Paris, and Antiphonus,
On Pammon, and strong-voiced Polites, and Deiphobus, 250
Brave Dius, and Hippothoüs, and Agathon divine ;
Thus Priam poured the bitter wrath upon those brothers nine :
Up now, ye shameless sluggards, evil loons ! would ye had died
In valiant Hector's room, beside the sleepless-plashing tide !
Thrice-wretched Priam, sons were mine, the bravest in broad Troy,
But now, being old, not one remains to give their father joy !
The godlike Mestor, Tröilus the steed-delighting boy,
And Hector, among mortal men who walked a god—no trace
Of mortal fatherhood he showed, but of a heavenly race—
These Mars cut down ; the vile survive who durst not face the
battle ! 260

Liars, and loons who trip the dance with lewd and light-heeled
rattle,

And make their bread from honest men by lifting sheep and cattle.
Come, put hands to the work ! and bring the wain ! and be not
slow,

And yoke the mules ! and tie the basket on, that we may go !

He spake ; they shrank from their sire's rebuke, and his command obeyed ;

And forth they brought the well-wheeled wain, with strong planks newly made,

Beautiful ; then they bound the basket with the gifts behind,

And from a peg took down the yoke, made for the mulish kind,

Of box-wood, with a shining boss, and rings both firm and fine ;

And then a stout yoke-strap they brought which measured cubits nine ;

270

Then to the farthest end of the smooth-polished pole they bring

The yoke, and to the hook attach the nicely-fitting ring ;

Thrice 'neath the boss they bound the strap, and nicely then they tied

The point below ; and to the work their dexterous force applied.

Then from the palace-chamber forth the glorious gifts they bear,

For godlike Hector's precious corpse a ransom rich and rare,

And then the strong-hoofed mules, stout harness-bearing brutes, they bring,

A present which the Mysians gave to Troy's high-valued king ;

While, for the ear which Priam rode, beneath the yoke were led

Tway horses, by the king himself in his cleanly stable bred ;

280

These in the palace-yard the king yoked to the goodly wain,

He and his herald hoary-haired, with prudent minds the twain.

Then forth came Hecuba sad of cheer, and in her right hand
showed

A golden bowl, in which the wine, the sweet heart-soother, flowed,
That, ere the perilous road they tempt, they to the gods might
make

Libation due. Before the steeds she stood, and thus she spake :
Now, take the bowl, and pour the wine, and pray that Jove fulfil
My prayer to bring thee back from harm, since to thy danger
still

Thy temper draws thee, sore against my prudent-hearted will.
Then on the son of Kronos call, whom gods and men obey, 290
Jove, who from Ida's height doth all the Trojan land survey,
And ask that he may send a sign, the bird whose bodeful wing
Hath mightiest swoop, and is most dear to heaven's dark-vested
king ;

That, when thine eyes behold it on the right, thou then mayst go
With hopeful heart to the hollow ships of the horse-careering
foe ;

But if no favouring bird from Jove shall spread his vans to thee,
Then let a woman's word thee move—no harm may come from me—
And count the venture overbold that seeks the Danaan ships.

To whom the godlike Priam old thus spake with gentle lips :
O woman ! as thy word desires, I'll do it, even so ; 300
'Tis good to lift our hands to Jove, if pity he may show.

Thus he ; and then the aged king the stewardess commands
To lave his hands with water pure ; the maid beside him stands
Obedient to his word, with ewer and basin in her hands.
The monarch washed ; then from his spouse the bowl he took and
stood

In midst the palace-yard, and poured the bright and winy flood,
And looked aloft to heaven, and thus with word devout did pray :
O Jove, most glorious and great, who dost from Ida sway,
Grant that to fleet Achilles Grace and Pity guide my way !
Father supreme, O send a sign, the bird whose bodeful wing ³¹⁰
Hath mightiest swoop, and is most dear to thee, dark-vested king,
That, when mine eyes behold it on the right, I then may go
With hopeful heart to the hollow ships of the horse-careering foe.

Thus spake the king, and counsellor Jove assenting heard his
prayer,

And sent his eagle, chief of plumèd things that cleave the air,
Dark hunter, who on dusky wings Jove's high commands doth
bear,

Wide as the valves of a well-compacted door asunder fly,
In a rich man's house, where rooms are large, and the ceiling broad
and high ;

So wide apart the bird his vans dispread, when from the sky
Swooping he came, on the right hand, above the towers of Troy ; ³²⁰
Glad they beheld the sign, and all their hearts were thrilled with joy.

Then mounted quickly on his car the aged monarch gray,
And from the echoing corridor he deftly drove away.
First went the mules who dragged the four-wheeled wain, and
 owned thy sway,
Prudent Idæus ; then behind, the king with lash and rein
Urged the good steeds, and through the sounding streets he drove
 amain.
His friends came trooping on behind, their eyes with salt tears
 flowing,
For sure the good old man, they said, to scapeless death is going.
But when they came without the gates, and reached the open plain,
His sons and all the convoy back returned to Troy again, 330
Sorrowful ; but far-seeing Jove looked from Olympus down,
And pity moved him, when he saw the old king leave the town.
Eftsoons to Hermes spake the god who wields the thunder's
 might ;
Hermes, dear son—for this thy work and pleasant task hath been,
To guide the lone wayfaring man, whom wandering thou hast seen—
Go now and guide that ancient king to the ships that line the
 strand,
And lead him so that none may know of all the Grecian band,
Till he unshent within the tent of the fleet Achilles stand.
He spake ; nor disobeyed his sire that kindly guide renowned.
And straightway to his shining feet the beautiful shoon he bound, 340

Ambrosial, golden, which above the silver-rippling seas ·
Bore him, and o'er the boundless land, swift as the sweeping breeze ;
Then took the rod, which charms the eyes of mortal men to sleep,
Or, at his pleasure, shakes them free from the bond of slumber
 deep ;

This wondrous rod in willing hand took Maia's speedful boy,
And swiftly came to Helle's flood, and the loamy plain of Troy,
In guise like to a blooming youth of lordly high degree,
When sprouts the down from his blooming chin, and youth is fair
 to see.

But when the herald and the king had reached the river's brink,
Close by the mound of Ilus, there they halted to give drink 350
To mules and steeds ; and now the shades of evening 'gan to sink.
Then the old herald's wistful eye spied through the gloaming gray
Jove's messenger, and fearful thus he to the king did say :

Thou seed of Dardanus, beware ! here's work for wisest brains !
I spy a man ; and what he brings we'll know with heavy pains !
Say, shall we turn the reins and flee, or throw us on the ground,
And clasp his knees, if in his heart be grace and mercy found ?
He spoke ; the old man's heart was spilt like water ; shuddering
 dread

Bound his stiff limbs ; erect the hairs uprose upon his head.
Aghast he stood ; but Hermes, kindly-helping god, came near, 360
And took him by the hand, and spake with words that banished fear :

Whither, O father, dost thou drive the steeds and mulish kind,
Through the ambrosian night, while Sleep all other men doth bind ?
Should not the fear of the hostile Greeks, encamped so near, con-
found thee,

With spears athirst for Trojan blood, and breathing hate around
thee ?

If through the swift-revolving night one of these mailèd men
Should spy thee leading such a load, how would thy heart beat
then ?

Not young art thou ; nor much, I wis, would the right arm avail
thee

Of this gray herald, if a Greek should with rude force assail thee ;
But from my arm fear thou no harm, O king ! and deem me
rather

370

Thy stay and shield ; for truly thou art like mine own dear father.
To whom from godlike Priam old the gentle answer flowed :
Dear son, thou speakest well ; certes, I pace a perilous road ;
But some kind god an arm of power doth hold aloft to save me,
Who in the dangerous dusky hour such kind encounter gave me,
And sent me thee, so mild in words, so blooming fair to see,
So wise in heart ; sure blessèd was the dam who mothered thee.

To whom the message-speeding Argus-slayer answered so :
Truly, old man, from thy mild lips the words full wisely flow,
But tell me this, nor aught conceal, that I may truly know

380

If thou dost wander through the night to ship these precious stores,
That stronger men may keep them safe in far outlandish shores ?
Or are the Trojans all indeed now leaving sacred Troy
Fear-stricken, for that he is dead, thy son, the godlike boy,
Whose name was named with famous chiefs who rule the battle
bold ?

To whom with ready word replied the godlike Priam old :
Who art thou, then, O best of men, and of what parents born,
Who know'st my son, whose woful fate left weeping Troy forlorn ?

To whom the message-speeding Argus-slayer thus replied :
Nay, Sire ! but godlike Hector's fame was sounded far and wide.³⁹⁹
Him with these eyne I oft beheld in the fight that crowns the
brave,

When he the Argive spearmen quelled, and to their galleys drave
In huddled troops, and many a skull with copper lance he clave,
While we looked on ill-pleased, I ween ; for not Achilles then
Gave reins to war, but fed his spleen against the king of men.
I of his Myrmidons am one, and o'er the sea I came
In a good ship with him ; Polyetor is my father's name,
A wealthy man and old like thee, who boasts a goodly band
Of six brave sons at home ; myself the seventh before thee stand.
We seven drew lots ; and here in war to serve the lot was mine.⁴⁰⁰
But now the hollow ships I've left ; for with the morning shine
Close to the walls the quick-eyed Greeks the tearful fray will join,

For they are weary camping ; nor can all the puissant kings
Fetter the feet that long for fight, or clip their eager wings.

To whom from godlike Priam old the wingèd answer flew :

If thou in very truth art one of the Myrmidonian crew,

O tell me this, I pray thee now, dear youth, and tell me true,

Lies yet my son beside the ships, or hath Pelides grim

Thrown his dear body to the dogs, to tear him limb by limb ?

To whom the message speeding Argus-slayer answer gave : ⁴¹⁰

Old man, nor dogs nor vultures have devoured thy Hector
brave ;

Beside the ship within Achilles' tent the hero lies,

Even as he was. Though now the twelfth morn looketh from the
skies

On his wan corpse, nor taint infects his skin, nor worm devours

His flesh, as haps to mortal men whom fell Mars overpowers.

Him fleet Achilles round the mound of his dead comrade dear

Drags pitiless, when in the sky Morn's sacred rays appear,

Nor mars his beauty ; thou, O king, wouldst see with wondering
eyes

How dewy-fresh and fair, and free from gore the body lies.

And all his wounds have closed their mouths ; for many a spear,
they say,

420

Was thrust into his lifeless corpse, as on the plain he lay.

Such care the gods who rule in heaven for thy good son display,

Dear in his death as in his life ; for sure they loved him well.

He spake ; the king was glad ; and from his lips the answer
fell :

Dear son, 'tis well that mortal men should give to the Powers divine
All grateful gifts ; even as my son,—if e'er such son were mine !—
Ne'er in his halls forgot the gods who wide Olympus hold ;
Nor they him now forget, when laid stark on the senseless mould.
But come, I pray thee ! from my hand receive this beaker
rare,

439

And save thy servant, and redeem my life with convoy fair ;
Till in Achilles' tent I stand, be thou my faithful guide !

To whom the message-speeding god with wingèd word replied :
Nay, tempt me not, thou good old man ! no gift can I receive
From thee ; nor gold nor any gift, without Achilles' leave,
A Myrmidon may take ; should I from him do aught apart,
I'd challenge wrath from him, and reap much blame from mine
own heart.

I need no gifts ; unthanked, O king, I lend me for thy guide,
On foot, or in a ship to Greece across the salt-sea tide ;
Lives not the man whose mouth shall dare my guidance good to
chide.

He said ; and on the car his seat the kindly helper took,
Seized in his hands the lash, and free the flowing reins he
shook,

440

While with new fire from him the mules and horses beat the
ground.

But when they reached the ditch, and towers that fenced the navy
round,

The watchmen there, just when their evening meal was o'er, they
found.

Fast o'er their eyes a dewy sleep the kindly Hermes shed,

Then drew the bars ; and all the gates straightway were open
spread ;

Then Priam and his precious load into the camp he led.

And when to fleet Pelides' lofty tent they safely came,

The tent which for their chief the skilful Myrmidons did frame

Of pine, with lofty roof of woven rush and plaited reed 450

Limber and woolly-flowered, which they culled from the watery
mead ;

And round the tent they built a roomy court to serve his need,

With close-set stakes ; to bar the door a bole of fir they planted

So huge that, to make fast the bar, three sturdy men were
wanted,

Nor by the strain of less than three the door was open thrown,

Three common men ; but stout Achilles moved the tree alone :

Here when they came, the god brought Priam in, and all the
store

Of costly gifts, which to redeem his son the waggon bore ;

Then leapt upon the ground, and thus bespake that kingly wight :
Old man, a deathless god am I, help-bringing Hermes hight, ⁴⁶⁰
Sent by the Father from the sky, to guide thee through the night ;
And now to Heaven I back return, nor on Achilles' eyne
Will dare to look ; for this were sin against all law divine,
That in public view with the mortal crew a god should speak at
case.

But enter thou, all fearless, and enclasp the hero's knees,
And for his ocean-mother's sake, and son, and hoary sire,
Entreat him to be pitiful, and soothe his savage ire.

He spake ; and Hermes to the high Olympus with a bound
Uprose ; and Priam from the car leapt to the gleby ground,
But left Idaeus there, to tend the steeds and mules ; then went ⁴⁷⁰
With foot unlingering right within the fair well-built tent,
Where sat Achilles, dear to Jove. There with his comrades true,
Seated a space apart, he found the chief ; but only two,
Automedon, and Alcimus, a sturdy warrior good,
Waited upon his wants ; for he but then from strengthening food
And drink had ceased ; and near him still the seemly table stood.
Them unobserved the old king passed, and to the chief came near,
And clasped his knees, and kissed his hands, those slaughterous
hands severe,
Which heaped the land with death, and laid his sons on gory
bier.

As when a man whose hands are red from murder's recent stain,⁴⁸⁹
Flies guilt-possessed, till rest he find in a neighbour clan's
domain,

Swayed by a wealthy lord, and all look on his face with awe ;
Even so Achilles awe-struck sat, when Priam old he saw ;
And all his comrades marvelling stood, and each the other eyed.
Then hoary Priam oped his mouth, and thus his suit he plied :
Think on thy father, godlike seed of Æacus, how he
Even on the threshold stands of sorry eld this day, like me !
Upon his feebled shoulders now, I wis, much insolent wrong
They heap who round him dwell ; for help the old man waiteth
long.

Yet even he hath hope in thee, and is glad through all his mourn
ing,

490

When he thinks of the day that shall restore his son, from Troy
returning ;

But me, unhappy ! sons were mine the bravest in broad Troy,

But now not one survives to give their aged father joy !

Sons five times ten I counted, when the Greeks began the strife,

And nine and ten from one dear womb came forth to taste sweet
life,

The others from the wives I gat within my palace. These

I name no more ; strong Mars unloosed the bond that knit their
knees.

But who remained, my only prop, the bulwark of the land,
Him thou didst slay, when for dear Troy he fought with spear and
brand, 509

Even Hector, for whose sake I come, and thee entreat to spare
His breathless form, and to receive the precious ransom rare.
Fear thou the gods, Achilles, and to me mild pity show
For thine own father's sake ; to me, who from such depth of woe
Dared what no mortal dared before, to kiss the hands that shed
My dear son's blood, my Hector brave, and stretched him with the
dead !

He spake ; and in Achilles' eyne he stirred sharp sorrow's tide ;
The hero seized the old man's hand and pushed it soft aside.
And they both wept ; the king for hero-slaughtering Hector bold,
As on the floor he lay before that captain mighty-souled ; 510
Achilles for his father, and beloved Patroclus dead ;
And groans and sighs filled all the tent, while burning tears they
shed.

But when his heart had poured its wail, then Peleus' son divine
Rose from his seat, and raised the king by the hand, and with dim
eyne

Looked on the hoary head and hoary chin of the good old man,
And thus with wingèd word to speak the godlike chief began :
O sorrowful man, truly no common weight of woes thou bearest.
That to the Achaean ships alone the perilous path thou farest

And in my face dost sue for grace who of thy royal line 520
Slew all the best ; truly, O king, an iron heart is thine.
But come, and sit upon this seat, and bury sorrow deep ;
No fruit from fretful tears may grow ; let cureless evils sleep.
For so the gods have spun our fate, that mortal men shall know
Sorrows on sorrows, while themselves are free from taste of woe.
Two jars stand on the floor of Jove, whence fate to mortals flows,
The one with goodly gifts is filled, the other brims with woes.
To one man Jove doth from the jars deal out a mingled measure,
His portioned pain he finds to-day, to-morrow lights on pleasure. 530
Another from one jar receives pure sorrow without mirth ;
Him evil famine houseless drives o'er fields of the sacred earth,
No honour he from mortal men, no grace from gods may wear.
Thus Peleus shared a mingled fate ; with precious gifts and rare
He from his birth was heaped, and none might with my sire com-
pare,
Grown to such wealthy state ; o'er all the Myrmidonian clan
He reigned ; and for her lord a goddess owned the mortal man.
But with this bliss Jove mingled bane, and gave no sons to hold
His sceptre o'er the Phthian plain, and sway the warriors bold.
Only one son they gave him, me short-lived, and sent me far 540
Across the sea, that he might pine alone, and I might mar
Thee and thy house, O king divine, with the wasteful work of
war !

Thee too full-blown in bliss above all mortal men we knew.
Where Lesbos, seat of Macon, meets the longing sailor's view,
Where Phrygia's mountains stand, and rolls fair Hellè's boundless
tide,

There of thy wealth and proud command the fame was sounded
wide ;

But, since the high Celestials all have freighted thee with woe,
That thou must see thy dearest fall, and gory slaughter know,
Bear manfully, nor let the stream of fruitless sorrow flow !

Thou canst not make thy loss a gain by weeping for thy son ; .⁵⁵⁰
He will not rise to ease thy pain ; the thing that's done is
done.

To whom the godlike Priam thus with wingèd word replies :
Nay ! ask me not, O Jove-born king, to sit while Hector lies
Here in thy tent untended !—first, O let me feast mine eyes
On his dear body ! and receive the precious ransom rare,
Which here we bring thee. May the gods for thy good ships
prepare

A prosperous voyage, and may thou full soon return with joy
To thy dear fatherland, while I drag out my griefs in Troy !

To whom fleet-footed Pelens' son with dark look answered so :
Urge not this point, old man ! myself without thy beck will know.⁵⁶⁰
To yield thy son ; this hest from Jove my mother brought to me,
Thetis, immortal daughter born to the old man of the sea.

Nor thou, O king, without a god, I wis, hast shown such daring
Alone to wander through the night to the Danaan ships, sea-faring.
No man such deed would dare, though he were lusty-limbed and
young ;

Our sentries guard the camp ; the bolts that bar my tent are strong.
Swell not with more my flooding woes, nor spur my willing bent,
Lest, while the gall within me flows, I drive thee from the tent,
And sin against thy suppliant rights, and mighty Jove's com-
mands. 579

He spake ; the old man feared ; and with a mute obedience
stands.

Then like a lion to the door Achilles sprang ; nor he
Alone ; two comrades with him went, of worth and high degree,
Automedon and Alcimus, whom in his heart he held
Dearest since dear Patroclus died, by Hector's fury felled.
These with quick hand unyoke the mules and steeds, and bring
Within the tent Idæus, herald of the aged king,
And place him on a seat ; then from the polished wain they
bear

Price of the dear-loved Hector's head, the costly gifts and rare ;
Only two cloaks they left and coats well woven in the wain, 580
To bring with comely care enswathed the dead to Troy again.
Then swift Achilles told his maids with water decently
And oil to wash the corpse, apart, that Priam might not see,

Lest the old man, when he beheld his son, by grief possessed,
Might vent wild words, and rouse quick bile in fierce Pelides'
breast,

That he should smite the king, and sin against great Jove's behest.
But when the maids had washed the dead, and with smooth oil
anointed,

They wrapped him in the beautiful cloak and tunic well-appointed ;
Then on a bier the hero laid the prince, and with his twain
Deft comrades hove the body high on the well-compacted wain.
And then he groaned with heavy heart, and called on his friend by
name ;

Godlike Patroclus, frown thou not on me, nor sharply blame,
If thou, beneath the ground, shalt learn that I to Priam's prayer
His son restored ; for truly he hath paid a ransom rare,
Of which a seemly part to thee shall fall, thy rightful share.

He spake ; and from the doorway back divine Pelides went,
And sat on a quaintly-broidered couch, on the one side of his tent ;
Then to the hoary Priam old these wingèd words addressed :
Old man, thy son is ransomed, even as thou didst make request,
And lieth in the wain ; with day's first dawning, as is meet, 600
Thyself shalt lead him home ; meanwhile forget we not to eat.
For even Niobe beautiful-haired forgot not strengthening food,
What time her twelve fair children lay all weltering in their blood,
Six blooming daughters and six sons in brawny lustihood.

The sons Apollo slew, dread lord of the silver-sounding bow,
The daughters archer-Dian laid with deadly arrows low,
Wrathful at Niobe for that she, a mortal born, might dare
Insult Latona, dear to Jove, with the blooming cheeks and fair,
Boasting her mortal offspring twelve, while the goddess bare but
two ;

Wherefore the archer-maid uprose, and all her children slew.
Nine days unburied in their blood they lay ; nine days she
mourned, 610

And all the people into stones the son of Kronos turned.
But when the tenth day came, the gods their mighty ire abated,
And buried them ; and she tasted food, with wasting sorrow
sated.

And now amid the old gray rocks, and lonesome glades she
stands,

Of Sipylus, home of the Nymphs, whose lightly tripping bands
With dainty feet the pebbles beat, where Acheloüs flows ;
There, once a woman, now a stone, she feeds on deathless woes.
But come, bethink thee now, old man, to taste heart-strengthening
food ;

Then mayst thou wend thee back to Troy, and nurse thy grieving
mood

At home ; well hath he earned thy tears, for he was brave and
good. 620

He said ; and rising seized a white-fleeced sheep, and slew it there,

While his brave comrades flayed, and cut it up with skilful care,
Then cut the flesh in pieces small, and with prongs they pierced it through,

And to themselves the well-browned roast with dexterous fingers drew.

Then bread upon the table placed the brave Automedon
In beautiful baskets ; but the flesh was served by Peleus' son ;
Then to the viands duly served they spread their willing hands.
And when their hearts with food were filled, nor thirst had more demands,

Then Priam on Achilles looked, and wondering saw how fair
And stately-built he sat, like to a god in mien and air ; 630
And on the king Achilles looked, and saw his reverent face
With awe, and heard the words that left his lips with kingly grace.
But when their eyes with mutual gaze were sated, then began
First to the Phthian chief to speak the king of the Trojan clan :
O Jove-bred king, now let my couch be spread, nor more delay
That soothing sleep our souls may keep till rosy break of day ;
For truly rest hath never pressed these eyelids, since thy hand
Reft of his life my son, the best that fought for Trojan land.
And day by day I bow my head, and feed with grief my soul,
And in the court, where beasts are fed, in dust and straw I roll, 640

But now my soul hath tasted bread, and I have drunk the good
Soul-soothing wine ; till now I loathed the life-sustaining food.

He spake ; and to his maidens then Achilles gave command,
In the front hall a bed forthwith to spread with dexterous hand,
Beautiful purple rugs, and quilts to strew upon the ground,
And thick warm cloaks with soft fine shag to wrap the sleeper
round.

Forth went the maids, with in their hands a torch, and quickly
spread

Two couches, for Idaeus one, for Priam's hoary head

The other. Then mild-bantering thus the fleet Achilles speaks :

Lie thou without ! 'tis well, old man ; lest any of the Greeks, 650

Some counselling king, come to my tent, as is their custom'd right,

To weave with me grave parley of the plan that rules the fight ;

If such an one should Priam see through the dusk swift-swooping
night,

He to the shepherd of the folk, Atrides, might straightway

Report ; and then the ransom of the dead might find delay ;

But tell me this, and let me know the thing thou meanest truly,

How long may Hector's funeral last to solemnize it duly,

That I so long from fight abstain, and all my men withhold ?

To whom with wingèd word replied the godlike Priam old :

Achilles, if indeed thou wilt that we enact with leisure 660

These rites to Hector hear me how thou 'lt do my soul a pleasure ;

Thou know'st within the gates we're hedged, and we must fetch
our wood

Far from the forest ; and strong fear constrains the multitude.

Nine days through all our palace halls we hold the solemn wail,

And on the tenth day burn the dead, and all the folk regale

With public feast ; then on the eleventh heap high the lofty
barrow,

And on the twelfth, since war we must, renew the tearful sorrow.

To whom this wingèd word addressed the Phthian chief divine :

Old man, as thou dost make request, so doth my will incline ;

And I will give death's reapers rest till the twelfth morn shall shine.⁶⁷⁰

He spake ; and with his own right hand the old man's right he
pressed

Kindly upon the wrist, to take all terror from his breast.

And then the king and the herald laid them down upon their lair,

In the front hall, and soundly slept, a prudent-minded pair ;

While in the well-made tent's recess sweet rest the hero seeks,

And with him slept Briseïs with the lovely blooming cheeks.

Then all the gods, and every mortal horse-careering wight

In bonds of gentle slumber bound, slept through the sacred night.

But not the aidful Hermes felt sleep's softly-soothing sway,

But brooded in his soul how he might send the king away 680

Safe from the ships, nor rouse the watch ; and so his post he took

Beside the sleeping monarch, and these wingèd words he spoke :

Old man, an easy heart is thine, if thou canst thus prolong
Deep slumber in the Achæan camp amid a hostile throng ;
Thy dear son's body thou hast bought from the fell Achæan foe
At a great ransom ; but if now the king of men should know
Thee present here, thy sons, I wis, and all thy kin would pay
Three times as great a price to buy thy safe return to-day.

He spake ; the old man feared, and from deep sleep the herald woke.
Then Hermes joined the willing mules and steeds beneath the
yoke ;

690

And gently through the camp they drove, and no man marked their
going.

But when they came to Xanthus' well-known ford, the lovely-
flowing

Deep-swirling river, who his birth from Jove immortal drew,
Then Hermes left the foodful earth, and to Olympus flew.
And when the saffron-vested Morn shed radiance o'er the plain,
They to the town the horses drove with toil and tristful pain,
The while the mules the dead man bare ; and, as they nearer came,
No Trojan man their coming saw, nor dainty-zonèd dame,
Until Cassandra, as the golden Aphroditè fair,

Climbing high Pergamus, was of her sire's approach aware,

700

And saw him seated on his car, with the herald at his side ;
Hector too stretched upon the wain the woful maid desiered,
And wailed with long shrill wail, and thus to all the city cried :

Come now, ye Trojan men and women, who, when Hector came
A living man from out the fight, did greet him with acclaim,
Come now, and see his ransomed corpse ; in life he was your joy ;
In death let him have honour meet from every son of Troy !

She spake ; nor man nor woman then within the town remained ;
But all rushed forth ; so sore a grief the common heart constrained.
Forth at the gate they poured, to meet the wain which bore the
dead.

His dear wife and his mother dear the march of mourners led, ⁷¹⁰
And fell on the smooth well-rolling wain, and tore their lovely hair,
While all around from the wailing crowd sharp sorrow rent the air.

And now the livelong day, I wis, even to the sloping sun,
They had wept and wailed before the gate, nor, with their grief
been done,

Had not the king cried from the car, and thus to speak begun :
Make way, make way for my stout mules ! and, when our hands
shall lay

The dead in his own chamber, then give grief unhindered sway !

He spake ; they parted at his word, and for the mules made
way ;

And when into his stately house they brought the dead, they laid
Him on a carvèd couch ; the minstrels then they brought, and bade ⁷²⁰
Uplift the wail, and they in shrill and long-drawn wailings vied,
While all the women stood around, and swelled the tearful tide.

Their wail Andromache the white-armed wife of Hector led,
And thus she spoke, while in her hand she held his dearest head :
Dear husband ! thou from life art gone, and I left here alone,
A widow in thy house ; I with thine infant son alone,
Thy son and mine, ill fated pair ! and much I fear that he
Life's bloom may never know ; but sooner our vexed eyes shall see
Troy toppling from its seat ! for thou no more, our shield, art here,
Whose arm the Trojan mothers saved, and their infant children dear.⁷³⁰
Them widowed now the hollow ships across the salt sea flow
Shall bear, and me with them ! and thou, dear child, where I may go,
Shalt follow, there with me to drudge far in an unknown land,
At some taskmaster's will ! or thee some ruthless victor's hand
Shall seize, and fling thee from the tower, and dash against the
stones,

Some foe, who with thy life for brother, sire, or son atones
By Hector slain ; for surely in the dismal-sounding fight,
Full many an Argive bit the ground by Hector's arm of might.
Not light his blow fell on the foe, in the soul-disrending fray ;
And the people weep with wail and woe and grief that none may
stay.

740

And thy dear parents weep for thee, Hector, both night and day ;
But chiefly I must reap rich crop of sorrows sown for me ;
Not to my grasp, with life's last move, the hand was stretched by
thee,

Nor to my ears the dear word came which in sure memory keeping,
I still might cherish, when I spent long days and nights in
weeping.

Thus she ; and the Trojan women all with woeful wail replied.
Then uprose queenly Hecuba, and swelled the tearful tide :
Hector, of all my children to my heart the dearest, thou,
When thou didst draw live breath, wert dear to gods in heaven ; nor
now

Left they thy corpse untended, when cold death was on thy brow. ⁷⁵⁰
Mine other children Peleus' son, fleet-footed hero bold,
Captured, and them to many an isle in the barren brine he sold,
To Samos, Imbros, and to Lemnos' harsh unfriendly strand.
But thee, when thy dear bond of life he cut with cruel hand,
He dragged around Patroclus' mound by thy good valiance slain,
Though vain his savage wrath to raise his friend to life again.
And yet all dewy-fresh thou liest, and in thy death dost show
Like one slain by Apollo, lord of the silver-sounding bow,
Whom in a pangless death the god with gentle shaft laid low.

Thus spake she, weeping ; and in all the women's hearts she
stirred

760

Sorrow more sharp ; then o'er the dead thus Helen wailed the third :
Hector, of all my husband's brothers, thou my chiefest joy
Wert still, since Alexander brought my wayward steps to Troy ;
Ill-birded ! would I had died before I worked such dire annoy

To thee and thine ! for now, I ween, wheels round the twentieth
year

Since first I left my Spartan home, and found new kinship here ;
But never from thy mouth or taunt, or word unkindly came,
Or, if another in thy house might Helen sharply blame,
Brother, or brother's wife, or sister with a comely stole,
Or mother—for thy father still showed me a father's soul— 770
At thy mild word their sour grew sweet, and their chiding wrath
departed ;

For thou wert ever gentle-tongued to all, and kindly-hearted.
Wherefore I weep thee and I wail, and my heart is dorn and drear,
In all broad Troy no friend I claim like thee, so true, so dear,
So mellow-souled ; all others name my luckless name with fear !

Thus spake she weeping ; and from all the mournful people brake
Weeping and wail. Then rose the godlike Priam old and spake :
Go now, and from the forest bring the dry old wood ! let none
From Greece fear ambush or attack, for thus spake Peleus' son,
When from the ships he sent me, that his word would stay the fight 780
Till the twelfth morning came, and poured on earth the gladsome
light.

Thus he ; they to the waggons yoked the mules and oxen : and
Forthwith before the city's gate a willing train they stand.
Nine days they from the forest led the huge-piled wood ; but when
The tenth revolving morning poured fair light on mortal men,

Weeping they brought stout Hector forth, and on the well-built pyre
Aloft they placed the dead, then touched the dry old wood with fire.
And when the rosy-fingered Morn shed forth her radiant flood,
Around the noble Hector's pyre the gathered people stood ;
And first the glowing wine they poured upon the smoking pyre, ⁷⁹⁰
To quench the embers where the might of the unwearied fire
Had spread ; his white bones then were culled by his kin and
comrades dear,

While fast adown their manly cheeks trickled the briny tear.
Then in a beautiful golden urn they placed the mournful store,
And with a pall of finely woven purple wrapt it o'er,
Then placed it in a hollow pit, and cased it nicely round
With goodly blocks of well-hewn stone together closely bound.
Then high they raised a barrow o'er the hero lying low,
And set a wakeful guard to watch the well-greaved Argive foe. ⁸⁰⁰
And when the mound was finished, back they wend to sacred Troy,
And in well-marshalled companies the funeral feast enjoy
Within the palace of the king, the Jove-bred Priam old.
And thus the latest rites were paid to Hector, horseman bold.

END OF VOL. III.

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Homerus
Homer and the Iliad

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