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VIRGIL'S ECLOGUES

IN ENGLISH VERSE

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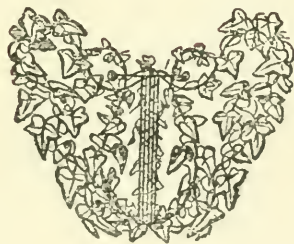
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THE
ECLOGUES
OF
VIRGIL
IN
ENGLISH VERSE



*Not rhyme, but rhythm, doth my Muse delight,
So do the rippling wavelets on the strand,
In cadence musical, that whispering break.*

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NOTA BENE.

These verses do not pretend to be an original translation of Virgil's poems. They are simply a versification of Mr. J. W. MACKAIL's excellent prose translation with which a few small liberties have been occasionally taken.

E. J. CARDEW.



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ECLOGUE I.

TITYRUS AND MELIBŒUS.

Tityrus mine, reclining in the shade
Of spreading beech, thou canst invoke the muse
Of the still forest, with thy slender reed.
But we forsake our dear, our native fields,
We fly our country, Tityrus, whilst thou
In easy shelter, dost inform the woods
Of Amaryllis' charms.

Tityrus. O Melibœus

It was a god that helped us to this ease
Always a god to me ; and from my fold
A tender lamb shall often, from this time
Be offered at his shrine ; 'tis by his will
That, as thou seest, my cattle wander free,
Whilst I can here indulge in rustic song.

Melibœus.

Indeed, I envy not, but wonder more
For in all parts the country is disturbed.
See, I myself, in weary mood, drive forth
My flock of goats—look ! scarcely can I drag
This one along—she, just now, hath borne twins.
I hope of my flock ! in thickest hazel copse.
But—having brought them forth—she left them then
On the bare rock, deserted. This our grief

I call to mind, erewhile was prophesied
To our slow sense, by lightning-scathed oaks
(As oft the crow from hollow ilex warns
Of black disaster.) Tityrus, now tell
Of this thy god, to us, who know him not.

Tityrus. The city they call Rome, O Melibœus,
I likened in my foolish mind to ours,
Where we are wont to drive our new-weaned lambs.
So one compares the little things with large
Kids with their mothers, puppies with their sires ;
But, as the cypress towers o'er hedgerow shrubs,
So lifts fair Rome her head o'er other towns.

Melibœus. And what great cause led to thy seeing Rome ?

Tityrus. The cause was Freedom ; she though late did yet
At length regard her tardy follower.
Such long delay—his beard was whitening fast !
Until she looked, and after long time came.
Since Amaryllis holds and Galatea yields !
For I confess, whilst Galatea reigned
No hope of freedom had I, nor of gain.
Though many victims from my folds were sent
To the unthankful town, and from my press
Good store of cheeses rich, but never yet
With my hand full of coin did I return.

Melibœus. Ah, Amaryllis, I had wondered much
Why thou so sadly didst adjure the gods ?
Why was the fruit left hanging on the trees ?
Tityrus wandered far. Yes, e'en the pines,
The springs, the orchards, called for Tityrus.

Tityrus. What could I do? Not be from service free,
 Nor find elsewhere the gods that give us aid.
 Here, Melibœus, that young man I saw
 To whom, year after year, our altars smoke
 For twice six days : at once unto my prayer
 He made reply : “ My children, feed your herds,
 And train your bulls, as ye have done of yore.”

Melibœus. How blest is thy old age ! thou hast the fields
 That meet thy wants, albeit the pastures all
 Are covered with bare stones, or marsh-grown reeds.
 Thy breeding ewes will eat accustomed food
 Nor from a neighbour’s flock take any ill.
 O fortunate old friend ! Near well-known streams
 And hallowed fountains canst thou woo cool shade
 Near boundary hedge, where bees from Hybla, take
 Their fill of honeyed willow-blossom, thou
 By their sweet murmurous hum wilt oft be lulled
 To softest slumber ! Here beneath high rocks
 The gatherers of leaves, with cheerful songs
 Fill the high winds. Meanwhile thy turtle doves
 And hoarse wood pigeons from the lofty elms
 Make endless moan.

Tityrus. And so shall never fade
 His visage from my heart : sooner than that
 May the wild stags be pastured on the air
 Or the sea waves cast fishes on the shore !
 Or exiled Parthians, breaking bounds, shall drink
 Of Arar’s stream—Germans, of Tigris old.

Melibœus. But as for us, we turn our weary steps

Some to parched Africa, to Scythia some
Or to Oaxes, the swift Cretan stream
Or distant Britain, cut off from the world.
Ah me ! shall I, long hence, my native land
Revisit, and with wonder gaze upon
My poor turf-covered hut, by scanty corn
Surrounded? Shall these oft-tilled fields be then
By lawless soldiery possessed? these crops
Of waving corn shall the barbarians own?
Lo! what great misery has discord wrought
Amongst us all! Ah to what end have we
Patiently sown our fields—for others' gain!?
Ha! Melibœus, wilt thou graft thy trees
Or set thy vines along in order *now*?—
Go hence, my she-goats, my once happy flock
Never again may I, from distant cave
Gaze on your frolics, hanging from the rock
Midst the thick bushes; no more songs I sing
Nor can I watch you, O my goats, whilst ye
Crop flowering cytissus, or willows harsh!

Titurus. Yet, for this night with me, thou mayst repose
On green leaves heaped; good store of fruit have we
Of mellow apples, chestnuts ripe, and milk
Fresh-curdled: thou canst see afar the smoke
Rise from farm-roofs, the lengthening shadows too
From the high hills are cast: the day is done.

ECLOGUE II.

ALEXIS.

The Shepherd Corydon felt truest love
For fair Alexis, but found no return
Of his fond friendship, for the youth had gained
His master's favour ; still the faithful swain
Would tell his sorrow to the hills and woods
Wand'ring beneath the beech trees' kindly shade.
"Cruel Alexis, dost not love my songs ?
No pity hast thou ? Must I now expire ?
Even the cattle seek the coolest shade
And spiny thickets hide the lizards green.
For the tired reapers, spent with ardent heat
Thestylis crushes garlic, fragrant herbs
And sweet wild thyme : but I, companionless,
Under the blazing sun, thy footsteps track,
Whilst with shrill crickets' chirp the grove resounds.
Were it not better to endure the scorn
Of Amaryllis, and her gloomy ire ?
Or dark Menalcas, dark as thou art fair ?
O charming boy, trust not too much thy looks.
See the white privet blossom quickly shed,
And the dark hyacinths, so gladly plucked.
Thou dost neglect me, nor dost even stoop

To ask who I may be, nor what my wealth
In white-fleeced flocks—or in abundant milk.
My thousand lambs wander on Sicily's hills:
Fresh milk I lack not all the rolling year.
The airs Amphion loved, I often sing,
Calling the herds together, and, indeed
My looks are pleasant: lately on the shore
In the still mirror of the sea I saw
My image, truly now I do not fear
The rivalry of Daphnis—be thou judge.
Oh that thou wouldst be pleased to dwell with me
In humble cot, to chase the graceful stags
Or drive the kids, where the green mallows grow.
Then in the woods thou mightest sing me songs
To rival Pan himself. He first taught men
With wax to join together several reeds.
Pan guards our sheep, and faithful Shepherds too.
Scorn not to put thy lips to pastoral pipes
Whose art Amqutas gained with toil and pain.
Damœtas, dying, gave to me his pipe
Formed of seven reeds, all of unequal length—
Saying, "Its second master now thou art."
Foolish Amqutas envies me the gift.
Besides these treasures, I possess two fawns.
In a steep-sided valley they were found
Already showing coats of dappled white—
Twice daily do they drain a she-goat's milk
These I could give thee—they were coveted
By Thestylis long since—and thou dost scorn

My gifts—so she shall have them for her own.
Come hither boy; look at the Nymph's rich gifts—
The baskets full of lilies, and the pale
Violets that water-nymphs for thee have plucked
With poppy-heads, and scented anise flowers,
Narcissus too; twining them with the blooms
Of Cassia, and fragrant herbs, as well—
Spangling the clustered hyacinths with gold
Of yellow Caltha. While for fruits, myself
Will pluck for thee the downy quince, and too,
The chestnuts which my Amaryllis loved.
These wax-like plums shall also honoured be.
To mingle all the sweets, I'll gather next
The scented laurels, and the myrtles rich.
Corydon, rustic boor, the gentle swain
Alexis scorns thy presents—not to say
That Iolas bears off the palm in gifts.
Alas! alas! what madness seizes me?
How I have wrecked the garden of my soul
And on my fountains clear, loosed savage swine?
From whom dost flee, thou madman, knowst thou not
Gods dwell in woods, and Trojan Paris too.
Pallas may hold the towers herself has built;
For us, the woods shall be our chief delight.
Wolves are pursued by lions, goats by wolves,
Whilst in their turn, the goats devour the thyme.
And so, Alexis, Corydon seeks thee—
To please his fancy. See the evening comes—
The oxen draw the ploughs, hung from the yoke,

Their labour o'er, and now the sinking sun
Lengthens the shadows—yet I still must love.
And who would bound the power of faithful love?
Still, I am foolish, wasting hours that should
Be spent in training vines to leafy elms,
Or weaving rushes soft and osiers strong
Into things useful for my daily work.
—Alexis scorns—I'll seek another friend.

ECLOGUE III.

PALÆMON.

MENALCAS. DAMÆTAS. PALÆMON.

Men. Damætas, I would know of thee ; to whom
Belongs this flock of sheep ?—to Melibœus ?

Dam. Not so ! 'tis Ægon's flock—lately he gave
His sheep unto my care.

Men. A luckless flock !
While with Neæra does their owner play,
Fearing lest she prefer my love to his,
This hireling robs his sheep, for hour by hour,
Twice does he milk the ewes, so cheats their lambs.

Dam. Nay, be not hasty to accuse thy kin ;
All know of thee, that thou lett'st Virtue slip
While easy-going Nymphs smiled pleasantly,
But all thy he-goats turned their heads aside.

Men. That was when I stood hacking Micon's grove
With envious hand-bill.

Dam. Yes, or it might be
When thou, amongst the beeches old, did'st break
The bows and shafts of Daphnis : thou didst grieve,
Envious Menalcas, when thou saw'st the gift

Daphnis received, and forthwith thou didst yearn
To do the boy some harm, or die of spite.

Men. We masters must outwit yon thieving knaves—
Ah! rascal! whom I saw catch Damon's goat
Loud tho' the sheep-dog barked! loud though I cried
To Tityrus to guard his flock, but thou didst hide
Among the sedges.

Dam. Nay, but I had won
That goat in rivalry of tuneful pipes—
You might not know it, but that goat was mine,
As Damon did confess, although indeed
He swore he could not give it up to me.

Men. Thou vanquished him in song? Not so, I ween;
When didst thou ever own a wax-joined pipe?
Didst thou not use, poor dunce, to squeak through straws
Murdering a wretched tune, on the cross-roads?

Dam. Well, shall we try, by turns, what each can do?
This heifer young my stake shall be, and lest
Thou should'st refuse, I'll tell thee of her worth.
I wice in the day the milking pail she fills,
Suckling two calves besides! Say now, what stake
Canst thou on thy side show when we contend?

Men. Ah! from our flock I dare not bring thee aught
Fearing the wrath of step-mother and sire;
Each day a careful reckoning they make
Of the whole flock, one of them counts the kids.
But if thou needst must fool, I'll lay a stake
Of greater value far, as thou wilt own,
Even the beechwood bowls, with carving rich

Of god-like Alcimedon : round the edge
Clusters a vine, formed by light graver's tool,
Clothing pale ivy with its scattered fruit.
Two figures in the midst—Conon is one,
The other—who was he who with his staff
Unto the nations of the globe marked out
The various seasons—for the reaper glad,
And bending ploughman. Not yet with my lips
Have I approached them, for I laid them by.

Dam. Yes, for us also Alcimedon carved
Two goblets with the soft acanthus wreathed
Around their handles—Orpheus in the midst
In his own woods, and I have kept them safe
Untouched by any lip. This heifer—see,
Thy cups in worth will not compare with her.

Men. Think not thou canst escape me so, this day,
When thou shalt challenge, then will I appear.
Let but one hear us—ah, Palæmon comes!
No challenge shall be thine, in future days.

Dam. No longer then delay—sing what thou canst
No hearers do I fear, but, neighbour mine,
Palæmon, give thy utmost mind to this,
For 'tis no trifling matter. Now begin.

Pal. Sing on ; whilst on the soft grass we may rest.
Now is the fairest time of all the year,
For now the fields and trees bring forth their buds
And leafy are the woods. Damcetas first—
Menalcas follow—in alternate verse,
For so the Muses love.

Dam. From Jove the Muse begins ;
All things are full of him : he guards the earth,
He listens to my songs.

Men. Phœbus loves me,
My gifts he welcomes—bays and hyacinths red.

Dam. Gay Galatea with an apple pelts,
Then flies to hide 'mongst willows, all the while
Desiring to be seen.

Men. Ah, but hear !
Amyntas, of his own accord, to me
Offers his friendship—so our household dogs
Know him as well as Delia.

Dam. For my love
Are plenteous gifts provided ; I have marked
The spot where the doves build their lofty nest.

Men. And I have done my utmost ; from the tree
Ten golden apples gathered for my boy
And on the morrow, more I mean to send.

Dam. How often did my Galatea whisper words
To my quick ear ? Ye winds, I pray you waft
Some portion of them to the listening gods.

Men. Amyntas, though thou do not me despise
What boots it if I needs must guard the nets
Whilst thou canst gaily chase the rushing boar ?

Dam. Send Phyllis to me, Iolas—it is
My birthday—come yourself and see
When the young heifer for the crops I slay.

Men. Phyllis I love above all women—she

Wept at my leaving, crying, " Now farewell,
A long farewell to thee, thou charming one ! "

Dam. The wolf is fatal in the fold, and so
Are hailstones to ripe corn, wind blasts to trees—
Or—Amaryllis' anger to us all.

Men. How sweet is gentle rain ! and to the kids
From mother weaned, the arbutus is good,
So pliant willows to the pregnant kine—
But to my mind, Amyntas reigns alone.

Dam. Our Muse is rustic, yet by Pollio loved
Pierian maid, a heifer feed for him.

Men. Pollio himself makes freshest songs, so feed
For him a bull that can already gore
And spurn the sand beneath his furious feet.

Dam. Where thou dost love to be, O Pollio, there
Let him who loves thee come, and for his joy
Let honey flow amain, let brambles balsam yield.

Men. Who hates not Bavius' songs, he may love thine,
O, Mævius ; may yoke foxes, he-goats milk !

Dam. Ye children, picking flowers and low-grown fruit,
Flee hence, for in the grass lurks a cold snake !

Men. My sheep, go carefully—it is not safe
To trust the bank—the ram himself was forced
To dry his fleece.

Dam. Now, Tityrus, keep back
The grazing kids from river-bed, and I
In due time, in the pool will wash them all.

Men. Come, boys, we'll fold the sheep, if the fierce heat

Should, as of late, dry up the flow of milk,
Then vainly would our hands their udders press.

Dam. Alas, how lean of flesh, amidst the tares
My bull has grown! well, love has wrought the same
Ruin, alike to herd and herdsmen both.

Men. Nay, but love certainly is not the cause
With these—why, to their bones they scarcely cling,
What evil eye is cast on my young lambs?

Dam. If thou canst tell me in what lands the sky
Seems but three ells in width, thou shalt to me
Be as the great Apollo oracle.

Men. Rather tell me where I can find the lands
In which flowers bloom, printed with names of kings,
Then Phyllis shalt thou claim, as all thine own.

Palæmon. Such rivalry as yours, I cannot judge
The heifer both of you deserve, and so,
Whoever fears sweet love, or tasted has
Love's bitterness, that one is worthy too.
Lads! it is time to turn the streams aside
The thirsty meadows now have drunk their fill.

ECLOGUE IV.

POLLIO.

Muses of Sicily! on nobler themes
I now will sing. Not all of us admire
Dense woods and groves; if sylvan joys we sing
Let them be fit for a great Consul's ear.
Now dawns the last age of Cumæan song!
Once more the circling centuries beg in—
The Virgin reappears and Saturn reigns:
From heav'n descends a novel progeny;
Now to this child in whom the iron race
Throughout the world shall cease and turn to gold,
Extend thy aid, Lucina, chaste and kind,
For thy Apollo reigns. This glorious age,
Pollio, will dignify thy consulate;
Then shall great months their wondrous course commence
Under thy rule what trace may yet remain
With us of guilt, shall vanish from the earth
Leaving it free for ever from alarm.
He will accept his life as of the gods
With whom the heroes mingle; seen by them.
The whole world will he rule, now set at peace
By his great father's power: to him shall bring

Uncultured earth her first small offerings,
Creeping wild ivy, arums, foxgloves too,
Smiling acanthus with bright polished leaf.
The teeming she-goats without call come home,
The flocks by lions shall be scared no more,
No more by serpents and by poison plants ;
O'er all the land sweet spicy balsams grow.
When thou shalt learn thy father's glorious deeds,
The pride of heroes and what Virtue means.
Golden the plains will slowly turn with soft
And bearded ears of corn ; the blushing grapes
Shall hang from wild-briar boughs ; hard oaks shall drip
With sweetest honey. There will linger yet
Some trace of evil ; tempted men will be
To cross the sea in ships, gird towns with walls,
And delve deep furrows in the fertile earth.
Tiphys must come again ; Argo once more
Shall bear the chosen heroes ; wars will rise
And great Achilles go anew to Troy.
When from Time's course thy manhood thou hast gained,
No more shall men in tall ships cross the seas,
Nor merchandise be carried in the same :
All countries then all good things shall produce ;
No harrow need the soil, no hook the vine ;
The hind shall loose his oxen from the yoke.
No more our wool need dyeing with false hues,
For rams in meadows make their fleeces glow
With lovely purple melting into gold ;
The grazing lambs with crimson shall be decked.

The Fates harmonious to their spindles sing—
“ Run on, ye happy ages in your course ”—
Dear offspring of the Gods—the time is come,
Start on thy road thou mighty fruit of Jove !
Behold the world that sways her orbéd mass,
Lands, ocean wide, and the deep heaven above
All things are gladdened by the coming age ;
May my last span of life—this failing breath,
Be yet sufficient to recount thy deeds.
Not Thracian Orpheus, though his mother aid,
Not Linus, whom the fair Apollo helps,
Can conquer me in song ; if mighty Pan
With me contend, though Arcady be judge ;
Arcady judging, he shall own defeat.
Begin, O ! child, to greet her with thy smiles,
Whose ten months' burden caused her weary pain :
Begin, young boy ; no nurture has been thine
From parents, nor from gods, nor goddess' love.

ECLOGUE V.

DAPHNIS.

- Menalcas.* Come, Mopsus, now so happily we meet
And seem so good a pair, why not remain
Resting in shade of elms and hazel copse?
Thou canst breathe music from thy reed, and I
Can harmonize some verses to thy tune.
- Mopsus.* Nay, thou canst claim, Menalcas, by thine age
The rule o'er me ; choose thou (I will obey)
Whether we rest 'neath changeful shadow here
Or in deep shelter stay, in yonder cave—
See how 'tis garnished by the wild vine's sprays!
- Menalcas.* I know but one whose fame can vie with thine.
- Mopsus.* Will that one seek to rival Phœbus next?
- Menalcas.* Well, Mopsus, for thy song! first shall it tell
Of thy warm love for Phyllis—or the praise
Of Alcon, or the scolding Codrus flout?
Begin—while Tityrus doth tend the grazing kids.
- Mopsus.* Nay, let me try the songs I lately wrote
On a green beech bark, with the notes between.
Next, thou canst call Amyntas to the strife.
- Menalcas.* Ah, well! we all do judge thee to excel,
Amyntas, as the olive stronger stands
Than bending osier, or as low-grown reeds
Do yield in beauty to the crimson rose.
- Mopsus.* Enough, my friend, for we have reached the cave.

SONG.

“ Sore wept the Nymphs at sight of Daphnis slain.
O hazel brakes and running rivers, ye
Witnessed their sorrow! there whilst she embraced
Her son's poor corpse, his mother called to gods
And to the stars that pitied not her woe.
In those sad days, Daphnis, men did neglect
To drive their cattle, as was once their wont
To the cool streams—so the four-footed tribe
Pined, but in vain, for pasture and for drink.
Daphnis, the hills and woods tell wondrous tales
How Punic lions mourned at thy decease.
Ofttimes, at Daphnis' bidding, men did bind
Tigresses of Armenia to his car
And worshippers of Bacchus proudly stepped
Their tall wands twisted round with foliage soft.
The glory of the vine makes fair the elm
As do her grapes the vine. Bulls are the pride
Of the mild lowing herds : the golden corn
Adorns the smiling fields. So thou alone
Didst glorify thy race—but—thou art gone!
By cruel fate. Since then the land is left
By Pales and Apollo, desolate.
In the warm furrows, where our barley grew
Now spring the barren darnel, and wild oats.
Violets have let sharp thistles take their place
And thorny shrubs banished Narcissus bright.
Oh shepherds! Daphnis bids you strew green leaves

As carpet o'er the ground, and shade the springs
In his remembrance, then to raise a mound
And at its summit, just this epitaph—
“Lo, here is Daphnis! known in leafy groves
As well as in the skies--my flocks were fair
But I myself was fairer far than they!”

Menalcas. Oh, divine poet! unto us thy song
Is like sweet sleep that to the weary steals
'Mid the cool herbage—as refreshing streams
To men whose throats are parched with summer heat;
In voice and music, thou dost equal now
Even thy master—happy youth—indeed
Thou may'st be ranked with him. Yet, in my turn
If thou wilt listen to a song of mine
As best I may, thy Daphnis I'll exalt
And raise him to the skies—he loved us too.

Mopsus. No higher gift than that, could ye desire;
The glorious boy was worthy of the songs;
While of your verse, praise have I long since heard.

Menalcas (sings) The white-robed Daphnis, now at Heaven's gate
Marvels as he beholds—he sees the stars
And all Earth's clouds far far beneath his feet.
Now reigns gay pleasure in the woods and meads
Pan and his shepherds dance with Dryads young.
The gentle Daphnis loved both peace and rest.
So shall the wolf cease to assault the flock,
So shall no toils be set to ensnare the deer,
The untilled mountains cry aloud for joy,
The rocks, the groves resounding to the cry,

He is a God, Menalcas, yes, a God !
Then show thy fav'ring grace to all thine own,
Daphnis ! Two altars to thy honour stand
As two to Phœbus—yearly shalt thou find
Two bowls of frothing milk, two of rich oil,
And to make glad the feast, new Chios wine,
Shall be poured out—in winter by the fire ;
Or, if at harvest time, beneath the shade,
Ægon shall sing me songs—Damœtas too.
Alphesibœus, mimic frisking Fauns,
This place is thine alway. When to the Nymphs
We pay our vows, and when we mark our fields.
While the fierce boar shall haunt the mountain tops
While fishes love the floods, and bees suck thyme,
Or grasshoppers sip dew, still shall endure
Thy honour, Daphnis, and thy glorious name.
As do the swains yearly their vows perform
To Bacchus and to Ceres, so to thee
Shall they be paid ; and thou shalt bind them too.

Mopsus. And what reward can I bestow on thee
For such a song ? Neither the whisp'ring wind
That gathers in the South, nor breaking wave,
Nor rushing waterfalls, can so delight
My heart, Menalcas !

Menalcas. Take this gift from me,
This hemlock-pipe that taught us many tunes.

Mopsus. And thou, this crook, adorned with studs of brass
Antigenes begged often—but in vain—
Though he deserved my love, but not as thou, Menalcas.

ECLOGUE VI.

SILENUS.

My Muse at first did condescend to sing
In Syracusan verse, nor did she blush
To dwell in simple woodland. As for me,
As I was praising battles fierce, and kings,
Apollo twitched my ear, with this advice :
“ A shepherd, Tityrus, may tend fat sheep,
But it becomes him to subdue his song.”
Now will I hold my slender reed awhile
And meditate upon the Muse of fields ;
For there be many, Varus, who will long
To tell thy praises, and describe grim wars.
Nor do I sing a quite unbidden strain :
But if there should be one to read my verse,
Induced by love—oh, Varus, every grove
And all our shrubs shall surely sing of thee.
There is no page that pleases Phœbus more
Than does that one that Varus' name doth bear.
Muses, continue. In a cave, two boys
Chromis, and Mnasylos, Silenus found
Lying asleep, all swollen with the wine
Of yesterday, as always he is seen.

His garlands lay beyond, fall'n from his head ;
His heavy wine-jar from worn handle hung :
They seize him (for he oft had promised fair
To sing them songs) and bind, with his own wreaths ;
Now comes the fairest of the Naiads near,
Ægle, encouraging the coward boys,
And, as he opes his eyes, she with the juice
Of mulberries, stains his brows and temples red.
He, laughing at the trick, saith, " Loose me, lads,
Why tie these bonds ? Enough that I am seen.
" Now hear the songs ye wish for—songs for you—
" For her some other payment "—then began
And as he sang you well could think you saw
Fauns and wild creatures frisking in the dance ;
Then the stiff oaks waving their topmost boughs,
The cliff Parnassian, less in Phœbus joyed,
Less did the Thracian hills Orpheus admire,
For now he sang how through the vasty void
Were gathered once the seeds of all those things
In earth and air and sea and liquid fire
That grew together—till the young orb'd world
Itself was shaped—then how the solid earth
Separate became, and all the waters wide
Were prison'd by degrees in the sea's cup.
Then sang he how the lands were all amazed
To see the new-born Sun rise and shine forth
And from the clouds on high the rain showers fall.
When the thick forests first began to rise
And a few creatures ranged the unknown hills,

Now told he of the stones by Pyrrha cast,
Of Saturn's realm, of birds of Caucasus
And of Prometheus' theft—yet more he sang
How the fair youth of Argos, left behind
Beside the fountain, was in vain invoked
By sailors calling Hylas, Hylas ! till
The shore was made to echo with the name.
He tries to comfort the ill-fated Pasiphæ,
Whose mind was turned to fancies base and wild.
Ah, hapless maid, of reason sweet bereft !
And sent to wander on the mountain drear,
Thy only friends the scattered herds of kine —
Ah, hapless maid ! trod down by evil tongues !
The snow-white steer rests on the soft blue bloom
Of hyacinths, and chews the freshest grass,
Or follows one amongst the numerous herd.
Ye Nymphs of Crete, now close the forest paths,
Perchance his vagrant foot-prints we may see ;
Or haply, they may lure him with green food,
Or he may follow heifers to their stalls.
—Now sings the bard of Atalanta ; charmed
With golden apples of Hesperides —
Next tells how Phaëton's sisters were transformed
To poplars—clothed with moss and bitter bark ;
Then of the straying Gallus, by the streams
Sacred to Muses ; how one led his steps
To the Aonian hills, and there rose up
The whole of Phœbus' choir, to honour him
And Linus, shepherd of grand song, his locks

All twined with bitter parsley and with flowers,
Spoke thus to him : " Behold, the Muses give
" These pipes to thee : receive them as the same,
" That formerly they gave old Hesiod, he
" Who laid low by his songs stubborn ash-trees
" Upon the hills. On these pipes thou shalt sing
" The first beginning of the Grynean grove
" Than which not one is more Apollo's pride."
Why should I tell, how Scylla, Nisus' maid,
Her snowy sides circled with noisy beasts,
Harassed Ulysses' ships, and her sea-hounds
In the deep whirlpool, tore their frightened crews?
He also sang of Tereus' transformed limbs
Of Philomela's banquets, and the gifts
Prepared by her ; then how she fled in grief
To desert places, also of the wings
On which she hovered high, before her home.
All that of you happy Eurotas heard
From musing Phœbus, and bid laurels learn.
All this he sang, and to the stars resound
The echoing valleys : at his word at last
The sheep are gathered to their fold, and soon
Are numbered ; then the Evening Star shines forth
In the reluctant heavens—Vesper glows.

ECLOGUE VII.

MELIBŒUS

MELIBŒUS. CORYDON. THYRSIS.

Melibæus. By chance, my Daphnis sat to rest awhile
Under a rustling holm-oak, and his friends
Thyrsis and Corydon their mingled flocks
Had thither brought, Thyrsis his sheep—there too
The she-goats, full of milk, of Corydon.
Both swains were in the first flower of their youth,
Both of Arcadian sort, equal in song
And skilled in giving answer, verse by verse.
Hither (whilst I, with careful zeal, did seek
My tender myrtles from the cold to shield)
The he-goat, father of my flock, had strayed.
Soon I, and Daphnis, both each other spied,
And he cried, “Melibæus, come with haste!
Thy goat and kids are safe, so, if thou canst
Cease from thy labour, rest here in the shade.
O'er the fair meadows may'st thou see thy kine
Come of their own free will, to slake their thirst,
Green with soft rushes, here are Mincio's banks,
Whilst swarming bees hum round the sacred oak.”
—What could I do? I owned no careful folk
At home, to shut up all my weanling lambs,

But, as this great match was by Corydon
And Thyrsis planned, I must prefer their joy
To my affairs. So both began the fray
In verse alternate. Muses, lend your aid
To 'mind me of the answering of their verse.
These Corydon did say, and Thyrsis those.

Corydon. Nymphs of Libethins, I your worshipper
Now crave from you this boon, either to grant
To me the gift of song, as once ye gave
To Codrus, who strings verses that may rank
Nearest to Phœbus' own—or, as indeed
Not all of us may win, then will I hang
My tuneful pipe upon your sacred pine.

Thyrsis. Arcadian shepherds, deck with ivy wreaths
Your rising poet, that with envy torn
Codrus may burst, or, should he praise too much
Then bind my brow with foxglove, that his tongue
May work no evil to the future bard.

Corydon. O Delia, at thy feet now lay I down
An offering—this head of bristled boar ;
And the young Micon prays thee to accept
The branching antlers of the long-lived stag.
Had it been fitting, thou shouldst stand erect
In polished marble shown, with buskins red.

Thyrsis. A bowl of milk, Priapus, and these cakes,
Thou, year by year, mayest look for, and no more.
Of a poor garden, thou the keeper art.
For the time being, marble is thy form,
But, should the flock increase, 'twill be of gold.

- Corydon.* Thou sea-nymph Galatea, who to me
 Sweeter than Hybla's thyme, and whiter far
 Than swans, and fairer art than ivory pale!
 Soon as the pastured bulls shall seek their stalls
 Come to thy Corydon, if thou care for him!
- Thyrsis.* Now may I seem to thee bitter indeed,
 Worse than Sardinian herbs, rougher than broom
 And viler than the sea-weed cast ashore,
 If this one day does not appear to me
 Longer than twelve long months. Go home, my steers,
 For very shame go home, my grazing herd.
- Corydon.* Ye mossy founts, 'midst herbage slumb'rous soft
 And the light shade of green arbutus boughs
 Shelter my flock from the midsummer heat!
 Now come the scorching days, now swell the buds
 In the luxuriant branches of the vine.
- Thyrsis.* Here glows a ruddy hearth, with pitch pine logs
 Ever alight—and doorposts, black with smoke.
 We heed no more the northern cold, than does
 The wolf the flock, or flooded streams their banks.
- Corydon.* Chestnuts and junipers in thick groves stand,
 And fallen apples lie beneath the trees;
 All things smile on us, but, Alexis fair,
 Should he desert these hills, why, e'en the streams
 Would dry up in their beds, for lack of him!
- Thyrsis.* Now are the green fields parched; the withered grass
 Thirsts in the poisoned air, and Bacchus e'en
 Grudges our hills the shadow of his vines.
 But when our Phyllis comes, then every grove

In richest verdure shall be clad, and Jove
Shall on our land descend, in gladd'ning showers.

Corydon. The poplar is the tree for Hercules ;
The vine belongs to Bacchus, and the fair
Goddess of Beauty, claims her myrtle green ;
While Phœbus in the shining bay delights.
But Phyllis loves the hazel, so whilst she
Shall love, no myrtle, nor e'en Phœbus' bay
Will e'er excel the humble hazel bush.

Thyrsis. The glory of the ash is in the woods,
The pine in gardens, poplar by the stream ;
On the high mountains stands the lonely fir
But if, fair Lycidas, I can obtain
Oftener thy company, nor slender ash
Nor stately pine, for me will equal thee.

Melibœus. These are the songs I call to mind, and how
In vain for victory, vanquish'd Thyrsis strove
And how from that time, Corydon is ours.

ECLOGUE VIII.

THE SORCERESS.

Now let me tell of the two shepherds' muse,
Damon the first—Alphesibœus next :
The gazing heifers wondered at their strife
Unmindful of rich pasture, while their song
Hushed the fierce lynx ; the rivers stayed their course.
Of these two shepherds I will sing the lay.
Will that day ever dawn, Oh, Pollio, when
I may aspire to tell of thy great deeds ?
Of broad Timavus dost thou climb the rocks
Or sailest by the shores of the Illyrian sea ?
Ah ! when may I to the whole world make known
Thy verse, which can with Sophocles compare ?
Thou didst inspire me first—with thee I end.
Accept the songs begun at thy command,
And let the ivy round thy brow be twined
Amidst the laurels of thy victories.
Hardly had night's cold shadow left the sky
When the dew-laden grass tempts most the flocks,
Damon began—leaning on olive staff.
“ Now, Lucifer, arise ! Before the dawn !
“ Be herald to the all-restoring day !

“ While I, deceived by Nisa’s treach’rous love,
“ Must still lament, and in my dying hour
“ To all the gods appeal, altho’ no gain,
“ As yet, has from their witness, come to me.

“ O flute, with me sing songs of Arcady !
“ The pine-grown mount, Arcadian Mœnalus
“ Listens to shepherds’ loves, echoes their lays
“ And Pan’s, who first piped on the vocal reeds.
“ Nisa is given to Mopsus, what may we
“ Hope for, as lovers? Noble steeds may now
“ Be yoked with griffins fierce ; in times to come
“ The timid does with dogs will learn to drink.
“ Mopsus, make torches for thy coming wife,
“ Scatter the nuts, oh bridegroom, for thy sake
“ The evening star is rising from the hill—

“ O flute, with me sing songs of Arcady !
“ O thou, who wedded to a worthy mate
“ Despising all the rest, dost scorn my pipe
“ And all my flock of she-goats, and dost hate
“ My shaggy beard and eyebrows, nor dost own
“ That the gods care, for hopes of mortal men.

“ O flute, with me sing songs of Arcady !
“ When, thou, a child, didst in our orchard stray
“ And with thy mother, gather’dst dewy fruit
“ I was your guide, and hardly had began
“ The twelfth year of my age, but could just bend
“ The slender boughs to earth, then saw I thee
“ Then was I lost, by fatal error borne !

“ O flute, with me sing songs of Arcady !

“ Alas ! now know I what is Love ! a boy
“ Not of our race or blood, but born on rocks
“ Of Rhodopé, or Ismarus, or the race
“ Of distant Garamantes—such is he.

“ O flute, with me sing songs of Arcady !
“ Fierce love has made a mother stain her hands
“ With her own children’s blood—fierce mother too
“ Was she more cruel, or the boy more vile ?
“ A cruel mother, and an impious boy.

“ O flute, with me sing songs of Arcady !
“ Now let the wolf be coward of the sheep,
“ Let golden apples be the hard oak’s fruit,
“ With sweet Narcissus may the alder bloom,
“ May richest amber ooze from tamarisks,
“ Owls vie with swans, and Tityrus in the woods
“ Orpheus shall seem—Arion, dolphin led.
“ For me now all is at an end, as though
“ The deep sea covered me : farewell, ye woods,
“ Headlong from yonder mountain-top I leap
“ Into the waves : this dying gift receive,
“ Now, my flute cease to sing Arcadian strains ! ”

These songs were sung by Damon—Muses, tell
What answer made Alpheisibœus then ?
We are not all sufficient for all things.

Alpheisibœus. “ Bring water forth ; then round these altars twine
“ The sacrificial billet—burn thereon
“ Rich vervain and the strength of frankincense,
“ So I may seek by magic rites to turn
“ My love’s sound mind ; only the charm I lack.

“ Bring Daphnis, O my songs, bring Daphnis home.
“ For charms have power to draw the moon from Heav’n,
“ By charms, the enchantress changed Ulysses’ crew
“ And, as men say, cold-blooded snakes can be
“ Lured to their death, by songs, in the green meads.

“ Bring Daphnis, O my songs, bring Daphnis home !
“ First, I wind round thine image triple threads
“ Of three-fold hues, and three times lead it round
“ The altars. Gods unequal numbers love !
“ Now, Amaryllis, tie the three-hued knots
“ And say the while, ‘ I tie fair Venus’ bands.’

“ Bring Daphnis, O my songs, bring Daphnis home !
“ As one same fire makes hard the clay, and yet
“ Softens the wax, so love may Daphnis melt.
“ Sprinkle the meal ! quick ! burn the laurel twigs
“ With blazing tar. As Daphnis me consumes
“ So may he pine with love, and I not care.
“ May he go wand’ring thro’ the woods and groves
“ As do the unquiet heifers by the brooks,
“ Forgetting when night falls, to seek their home
“ That he may suffer so, is my desire.

“ Bring Daphnis, O my songs, bring Daphnis home !
“ Long since the false one left as pledge with me
“ His cast-off garments—dear—for they were his.
“ I to the earth commit them—by the gate,
“ These pledges should bring Daphnis to my side,

“ Bring Daphnis, O my songs, bring Daphnis home !
“ Mæris himself gave me these herbs, and these
“ Most poisonous plants, gather’d in Pontus, where

“ They grow in plenty –by their magic power
“ Oft have I seen Mœris become a wolf
“ Hiding in woods, and from deep graves call forth
“ The shrinking ghosts, then charm the growing crops
“ From the sown fields, to other grounds transferred.
 “ Bring Daphnis, O my songs, bring Daphnis home !
“ Bring ashes, Amaryllis, out of doors,
“ Throw o’er thy head into the running brook.
“ Look not behind thee ! I will now attach
“ Daphnis with these—he scorns both gods and charms !
 “ Bring Daphnis, O my songs, bring Daphnis home.
“ Look how the ashes of themselves have clothed
“ With flickering flames the altars whilst I wait !
“ A lucky omen—tho’ I know not what—
“ And in the doorway, hear how Hylas barks.
“ May we believe, or do all lovers dream ?
“ Now cease, my songs, for from the town at last,
 My Daphnis comes !

ECLOGUE IX.

MÆRIS.

Lycidas. Whither away, oh Mæris? To the town?

Mæris. Ah, Lycidas, that which we never feared
We yet have lived to see our grievous lot,
That alien owners of our whilom fields
Can say to us, " Begone, ye tresspassers,
" This land is ours."—Well, fortune turns her wheel!
So we are sending to our conqueror
These kids of ours—(may ill luck go with them !)

Lycidas. Nay, surely we had heard that, by his songs
Menalcas had redeemed that grassy slope
Left by the hills, beneath their steeper ridge,
Down to the water-side, and where atop
Decaying beech-trees stand.

Mæris. So was it said.
But, Lycidas, against the will of Mars
Our songs are powerless, as Chaonian doves
'Gainst swooping eagles. Yet was I fore-warned
From hollow ilex, by the raven's croak
To end the dire dispute, by any means.
Else would thy friend, thy Mæris, not be here,
Nor yet Menalcas.

Lycidas.

Ah, tis hard to bear !

When will the wicked cease? That we should risk
The loss of all our help and joy in thee !
Ah, who would then have chanted of the Nymphs
Who, with sweet flowering herbs, have strewn the ground
Or cast shade o'er the springs, or sung those lays
Which lately, from Menalcas, I have learned?
One ran—" Now, Tityrus, whilst I am gone,
But a short way—thou must the she-goats feed—
When satisfied, then drive them to their drink,
But take heed to avoid the he-goat's path,
For with his horn he strikes."

Maris.

Nay, rather this :

Which, tho' unfinished, he to Varus sang--
" Varus, thy name shall to the stars be raised.
" Let but our Mantua remain for us,
" Tho' near Cremona, the ill-fated town."

Lycidas.

Now may thy honied swarms avoid the yews
Of Corsica, and may thy cows, full-fed,
Pastured on cytissus, give richest milk,
And even I, a poet, have been made
By Pierus' daughters ; even I sing songs.
The Shepherds call me bard ; I heed them not.
As yet I am not worthy to be called
Of Varro, or of Cinna, follower.
'Tis but a cackle mine, midst singing swans.

Maris.

And 'tis the same with me—I even now,
Am much considering as to this song--
My memory tells me, tis no common one.

“ Come to us here, oh Galatea fair !
“ Why ling’rest thou, rejoicing in the wave ?
“ We name the glowing spring.—The sparkling streams,
“ Fill the warm earth with blossoms manifold—
“ The tall white poplar overhangs the cave,
“ And clinging vines weave for us bowers of shade.
“ Come hither ! leave the tossing floods to beat
“ Upon the shore.”

Lycidas.

What were those verses then,
Which once I heard thee sing, as thou didst roam
In the clear night ? Familiar seems the time,
Could I the words remember.

Mæris.

“ Daphnis, tell
“ Why thou dost watch alway the old-time signs
“ Now that the star of Cæsar mounts aloft ?
“ Beneath his star, we know, the fields of corn
“ Were to rejoice, and on the sunny hills
“ The grapes would purple glow. Now, Daphnis, graft
“ Thy pear trees, that thy children’s children may
“ Eat of their fruit. How time wears all things out !
“ Even the memory. I can call to mind
“ Long days of summer, in my boyhood spent,
“ Singing the hours away—but now, alas !
“ I have forgotten many of my songs—
“ And Mæris too—his voice begins to fail
“ As old folks say—Wolves caught first sight of him ”
But for those songs—Menalcas willingly
Will sing them to thee.

Lycidas.

Make no more excuse

As that but strengthens our delayed desire
See too, the mere is calm and still, and now
The murmurs of the breeze have died away.
But still before us lies our journey's half,
For we have nearly reached Bianor's tomb.
Here may we sing, oh Mæris—here put down
Thy kids, for even so we'll reach the town :
Or if we fear lest night should gather rain
Let us go singing to beguile our way.
See, I will take thy burden on my back
That we may still with song enliven toil !

Mæris. Nay, cease to urge me—rather let us mind
That which concerns us now. When he shall come
We may the better sing Menalcas' songs.

ECLOGUE X.

GALLUS.

O Arethusa, help me once again
To string some verses for my Gallus' ear,
Fit for Lycoris fair herself to read.
To Gallus mine, who would refuse such songs?
 So may the bitter stream that Doris pours
Mingle not with thy wave as thou dost flow
Into the flood that loves fair Sicily!
 We may begin to tell of Gallus' loves,
Our flat-nosed she-goats nibbling hard the while
The tender plants. To deaf ears sing we not,
The forest echoes all our tuneful lays.
What glades did ye frequent, ye Naiads young
While Gallus pined in chains of cruel Love?
Ye lingered not upon Parnassus' slopes
Nor yet on Pindas did your steps delay
Whilst e'en the laurels wept, to see him lie
So sad, beneath the cliff, where the cold stones
Of stern Lycæus seemed to share his grief.
 His sheep surround him, staring at his woe.
 Divinest poet, do not scorn thy flock!

Remember that the fair Adonis fed
His sheep on the rich lawns by river's bank.
Now comes the shepherd, and the neat-herds slow,
Menalcas too, all wet with harvesting
Plentiful acorns, in the wintry woods.
All ask of Gallus, why he madly loves?
Apollo bids him know, Lycoris now
Follows a new love through the snowy waste.
Behold, Silvanus, with his rustic crown,
Waving a sceptre made of lilies tall
And giant fennel-blooms. Then comes great Pan,
The god of Arcady, whom we have seen
"Rosy with juice of elder-berries ripe.
"Where will this end?" he cries, "Love careth not
"For such as these, and cruel Love is not
"O'ercome by tears. The grasses cannot drink
"Too deeply of the softly-trickling rills,
"Nor will the bees quit cytusus in bloom,
"Nor browsing goats the green leaves of the Spring."
"Then sadly he replies—"Yet of all these
"Ye soon will sing, Arcadians skilled in song
"Unto your mountains when ye shall return.
"Ah, if one day your pipes should tell my loves,
"Softly my bones might rest beneath the sod.
"Would I had dwelt with you, to tend your flocks
"Or dress your vines! Yea, some fair maid might then
"Neath bending willows my repose have shared.
"Phyllis perchance, or whom my fancy chose.
"Even Amyntas, though of swarthy hue.

“ But what of that? are not sweet violets dark
“ And hyacinths deep blue? She would have sung
“ And Phyllis plucked sweet-scented Melilot.
“ Lycoris, see what fountains cool are here,
“ What downy meads, and woodlands that entice
“ Lovers to spend their swiftly-passing hours!
“ Now, far from me, alas, thou dost remain.
“ Lured by mad passion, 'midst the War-God's hosts
“ Surrounded by fierce foes, with weapons grim.
“ Scarce can I deem it true that thou hast gone
“ Far from thy country to the Alpine snows,
“ And dwell'st 'mid frosts as cruel as thyself!
“ Ah, may the rough ice spare thy tender feet—
“ May the keen frost not harm thee! But for me
“ I must depart, and learn to sing my verse
“ To the Sicilian's shepherd's pipe, and must
“ Sternly resolve to suffer, in the woods
“ Where roam the wild beasts; there my love I'll carve
“ On trees, that as they grow, increase its mark.
“ Sometimes I will pursue the savage boar,
“ Or, with a troop of nymphs, climb Mœnalus—
“ Parthenian glades I'll traverse, with my dogs
“ However bleak the winds! Already there
“ I seem to be! 'Mid rocks and echoing groves—
“ And pleased, in fancy send the Cretan shaft
“ From Parthian bow. Ah! if such joys could heal
“ Love's lasting madness, or if gods could learn
“ To pity all the bitter griefs of men!
“ Not Dryads even give me now delight

“ Nor can, as once, sweet songs my heart refresh,
“ Nor shady forests please. We cannot hope
“ To change Love by our toil—not though we drink
“ From icy Hebrus, or endure hard days
“ Thro’ drenching winters or Sithonian snows,
“ Nor yet, if when the scorching sun has dried
“ The bark on the tall elms, we drive our sheep
“ On Æthiopian plains—our toil is vain.
“ Love conquers all things—let us yield to love.”
Pierian goddesses, this shall suffice,
Your poet sate, and wove the while he sang
A basket of the slender mallow-shoots.
You will prize Gallus all the more for this—
Gallus, my love for whom grows day by day,
As the green sprouts of Alders in the spring !
Now let us rise ; for singers it is ill
To linger in the shade—to the young corn
The junipers’ deep shadow worketh harm ;
The evening star shines forth—now go, my goats,
Ye may return, full fed, towards your home.

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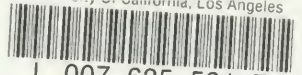
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