"We know of no edition of the 'soveran poet' from which an English reader can derive on the whole so complete an impression of the immortal Epos." — Daily News.
THE

ILIAD OF HOMER.
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ILIAD OF HOMER,

Translated into Blank Verse,

BY

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VOLUME I.

BOOKS I.—XII.

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1861.
TO

MAJOR LOYD LINDSAY,

WHOSE GALLANT DEEDS IN THE CRIMEA

ASSOCIATE HIS NAME WITH THE HEROES OF OLD,

This Version

OF THE ILIAD OF HOMER

IS DEDICATED

BY THE TRANSLATOR.
"As for Homer, it is my weekly feast to get better and better acquainted with him."—Doctor Arnold—Stanley's Life, Vol. I. p. 415.
PREFACE.

A translation of Homer—satisfactory alike to the scholar and to the English reader—being generally considered impossible, the present attempt will, it is feared, be deemed presumptuous.

It may be pleaded, however, that the one version which ranks highest in public estimation, is notoriously a paraphrase—splendid indeed and marvellous, but written in a style wholly opposite to that of the original. Pope's aspirations were beyond those of a translator: and in thus consulting his own fame as a poet, it may be said that he has supplanted rather than represented Homer.

Under the circumstances of Pope's pre-eminence and unbounded popularity, it is unnecessary, as it would be invidious, for the translator to offer any opinion on other versions. With all their several and peculiar merits, it would appear that no one has satisfied the
public, when, after the lapse of two centuries, new editions of old Chapman have recently made their appearance. And this, notwithstanding admission by his panegyrist, Charles Lamb, of Chapman’s "unconquerable quaintness," and of his work being "not so properly a translation, as the stories of Achilles and Ulysses re-written."* Hence it is, that the greatest of poets remains comparatively unknown to the mass of that nation which is perhaps most qualified by nature and education to enjoy him.

The field therefore, it is presumed, is open to the earnest labourer, who well knows that any translation of Homer, taken as a whole, must be greatly defective; but ventures on the arduous task, in the hope that he may occasionally furnish to the English reader some faint idea of the glorious old Bard—"che sovra gli altri come aquila vola."

To attempt a version in rhyme, or in any way to invade the peculiar province of Pope, in which he must ever reign supreme, would be the height of temerity; nor would it contribute towards the desired object of a bona fide representation of Homer. The principle was not to be infringed, that, in translation, adherence to the metrical form of an author is of the utmost im-

* Specimens of English Dramatic Poets. An elaborate article on Chapman and other translators may be found in the Retrospective Review, Vol. iii.
portance; and blank verse appears to present the nearest practicable approach to the metre of Homer. Even Longfellow confesses that the hexameter is "inexorable," and that "the motions of the English Muse in that measure are not unlike those of a prisoner dancing to the music of his chains."

To enter upon the controversy as to the individuality of Homer would involve details of too great length, and would moreover be superfluous after the labours of Grote, Mure, and Gladstone. It is sufficient to state, that the translator has no belief in many Homers, at least as far as regards the Iliad.

On the vexed question of Greek or Latin names for the Homeric divinities, such difference of opinion exists, that a translator can scarcely hope to escape the charge of pedantry on the one hand, or of barbarism on the other. In a work intended for the English reader rather than the scholar, the more popular terms have been considered on the whole most desirable. Even Dr. Maginn, who, in his Homeric Ballads, recommends the Greek names to all translators, makes the "impracticable Zeus" an exception. Occasional variations however are adopted, such as Athenè for Minerva, Artemis for Diana, and Aphrodîtè for Venus.

And in a poetical work, some licence, it is presumed, is admissible, for the sake of euphony, or from the exigencies of the metre; since Homer himself calls one of his
characters Paris and Alexander indiscriminately, and applies to the Greeks the triple title of Achaians, Argives, and Danaans.

Endeavour having been made to render available the improved readings and interpretations of modern commentators, the translator will occasionally labour under the disadvantage of appearing to misinterpret passages familiar to school recollections.* But to discuss these in critical notes would render the work less agreeable to the English reader.

Fully concurring in the opinion recently given by Mr. Gladstone in his "Homeric Studies," that Homer is not honoured as he deserves to be in this country, and that every exertion ought to be made to place him "on his lawful throne," the writer offers the labour of many years as his mite in furtherance of this object;—proposing to publish at short intervals the remaining books, which are in a state of considerable forwardness. And in order to impress upon others the value of Homer, not only as a poet, but as a teacher,

* To take a few instances from the first two books:—For the common reading ὄμωνα, as one of the epithets of the sea, B. i. 350, ἀπελπόνα is adopted by Bekker. So, with regard to the epithet of Thersites, B. ii. 217, Buttmann, Crusius, and Liddell and Scott concur in banishing the old rendering of "squint-eyed." On the other hand, although Mr. Gladstone's elaborate argument as to the meaning of ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν may be just, still, his "lord of men" scarcely conveying the idea he insists upon, the commonly received "king of men" is retained.
even in this enlightened age,—the translator prefixes to his work a few extracts on the subject from the writings of distinguished persons in the present century.

The unwarranted neglect of Homer referred to is not to be wondered at. Acquaintance with Homer in boyhood is often associated with disagreeable recollections; and it is under these circumstances that the elegant paraphrase which had previously delighted the child, and upon which his taste has been in great measure formed, is frequently reverted to in after-days as a substitute for the original. But it is not in childhood, or indeed in early life, that we are the best judges of true excellence, or capable of distinguishing the artificial from the natural. And hence, taking a review of youthful studies at Eton, and of the order in which the classics unfold themselves to the understanding, Dean Milman places Homer last in the list: "At length," he says, "as our minds approached their stature, we could comprehend the majestic simplicity of Homer."*

REMARKS ON HOMER,

FROM

DISTINGUISHED WRITERS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

SIR ARCHIBALD ALISON, BART.*

"There is something inexpressibly striking—it may be said, awful, in the fame of Homer. Three thousand years have elapsed since the Bard of Chios began to pour forth his strains: and their reputation, so far from declining, is on the increase. Successive nations are employed in celebrating his works; generation after generation are fascinated by his imagination. . . . Epic poets, in subsequent times, have done little more than imitate his machinery, copy his characters, adopt his similes, and, in a few instances, improve upon his descriptions. Painting and statuary for two thousand years have been employed in striving to pourtray, by the pencil or the chisel, his yet breathing conceptions; language and thought themselves have been moulded by the influence of his poetry. . . .

"Perhaps the greatest cause of the sustained interest of the Iliad, is the continued and vehement action which is maintained. . . . It is in the skill with which this is done, and a

* Readings in Homer.
state of anxious suspense, like the crisis of a great battle, kept up, that the great art of the poet consists. It is done by making the whole dramatic—by bringing the characters constantly forward to speak for themselves, making the events succeed each other with almost breathless rapidity, and balancing success alternately from one side to the other, without letting it ever incline decidedly to either.

"The pourtraying of character and events was the great and evident object of the Grecian bard; and there his powers may almost be pronounced unrivalled. He never tells you, unless it is sometimes to be inferred from an epithet, what the man's character that he introduces is. He trusts to the character to delineate itself. He lets us get acquainted with his heroes, as we do with persons around us, by hearing them speak and seeing them act."

COLONEL MURE.*

"Among the properties of his art, in which Homer stands superior to all competitors, a first place belongs to the general design and composition of his poems. ... The next peculiar excellence of Homer, is the combination of epic and dramatic management,—a faculty which he possesses in a degree far surpassing any other poet. ... The characters are never formally described, but made to develop themselves by their own language and conduct. It is this among his many great qualities which chiefly raises Homer above all other poets of

his own class; nor, with the single exception perhaps of the great British dramatist, has any poet ever produced so numerous and spirited a variety of original characters of different ages, ranks, and sexes.

"The third, and perhaps the most remarkable of Homer's distinctive peculiarities, consists in his uniting the delicacy of ideas and purity of expression, which form the usual characteristics of the more advanced stages of literature, frequently in its decline, with the native simplicity and vigour of a primitive age... Nor can there be a more striking proof of the innate delicacy of his own taste, and that of his age and country, than the fact that, while the entire Iliad and Odyssey offer scarcely a line calculated to call forth a blush on the most fastidiously modest cheek, there is hardly a tale or drama of our own Christian Chaucer or Shakespeare which a father of a family could venture to place, unpurified, in the hands of a youthful wife or daughter."

GEORGE GROTE, ESQ.*

"Nor were the Homeric poems originally addressed to minds of the rarer stamp... They are of all poems, the most absolutely and unreservedly popular. Had they been otherwise, they could not have lived so long in the mouths of the rhapsodes and the ear and memory of the people. The most unlettered reader of those times could readily seize, while the most instructed reader can still recognise, the

characteristic excellence of Homeric narrative—its straightforward, unconscious, unstudied simplicity.... He is essentially the poet of the broad highway and the market-place;* touching those feelings which all men have in common. ... No nation has ever yet had so perfect and touching an exposition of its early social mind, as the Iliad and Odyssey exhibit."

ARCHDEACON WILLIAMS.†

"Among the most precious legacies, few indeed in number but great in value, which the present race of men have received as an intellectual inheritance from the ages that have passed, leading minds of every enlightened age have, with one consent, placed the Homeric Poems. The able men who, during the lapse of ages, have devoted their time and labour to the interpretation of these memorials of an unknown era, might be supposed to have left little for the modern scholar to perform. Far different however is the truth; and it may be boldly affirmed, that Homeric literature presents a broader and richer field for critical research and new discoveries than any other department of merely human learning."

* "Poetry was always meant, and to the end of time must be adapted, for the crowd in the street, for the boards of a great theatre, and for the choir of a great cathedral; for an army marching tumultuous to battle, and for an assembled nation silent over the tomb of a Prince in Israel. It is intended for a great audience. So Homer sang to attentive listeners from court to court: so Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides wrote for the Athenian populace; so Pindar chaunted for the mob that buzzed round the Olympian racecourse."—Times Paper, Dec. 27th, 1856.
† Homerus, Part I.
REMARKS ON HOMER.

THE REV. JULIUS CHARLES HARE.*

"What a love of Nature there is in Homer! What a fresh morning air breathes through those twin first-births of Poetry! What a clear bright sky hangs above those two lofty peaks of Parnassus! . . . . Of all poems the Homeric have the most thoroughly out-of-door character. We stand on the Ionian coast, looking out upon the sea, and beholding it under every variety of hue, and form, and aspect. And there, too, he was wont to stand; there, as Coleridge so melodiously expresses it, he

Beheld the Iliad and the Odyssee
Rise to the swelling of the voiceful sea.

Every epithet he gives to a natural object, every image taken from one, has the liveliest truth; and truth is ever the best proof that any one can give of love. . . . . Assuredly no human work ever exercised so powerful and beneficial an influence on the literature and arts of the people out of whom it sprang, as the Homeric poems."

THE REV. HENRY NELSON COLERIDGE.

"The Old Testament and the Iliad reflect light mutually on each other; and he who has the longest studied, and most deeply imbibed the spirit of the Hebrew Scriptures, will best

understand, and most lastingly appreciate the tale of Troy divine. In Homer, head and heart speak, and are spoken to together. Morbid peculiarities of thought and feeling have no place in him. He is as wide and general as the air we breathe. He is as the mighty strength of his own deep-flowing ocean.”

THE RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE.

“When the world has been hearing and reading Homer, and talking and writing about him for nearly three thousand years, it may seem strange to imply that he is still an ‘inheritor of unfulfilled renown,’ and not yet in full possession of his lawful throne. . . . But in later times, and in most of the lands where he is a foreigner, I know not if he has ever yet enjoyed his full honour from the educated world. . . . We have been gradually coming to understand that these precious works, which may have formed the delight of our boyhood, have also been designed to instruct our maturer years. I do not here refer to their poetic power and splendour only. It is now time that we should recognise the truth, that they constitute a vast depository of knowledge upon subjects of deep interest, and of boundless variety; and that this is a knowledge, too, which can be had from them alone. . . .

“It may be enough for Homer’s fame, that the consent of mankind has irrevocably assigned to him a supremacy among

* Introduction to the Greek Classic Poets.
† Studies on Homer and the Homeric Age, vol i. p. 2, 13; iii. p. 555.
poets, without real competitors or partners, except Dante and Shakespeare; and that, perhaps, if we take into view his date, the unpreparedness of the world for works so extraordinary as his, the comparative paucity of the traditional resources and training he could have inherited, he then becomes the most extraordinary, as he is also the most ancient phenomenon in the whole history of purely human culture. . . .

"To one only among the countless millions of human beings has it been given to draw characters, by the strength of his own individual hand, in lines of such force and vigour, that they have become, from his day to our own, the common inheritance of civilised man,—that one is Homer. Ever since his time, besides finding his way into the usually impenetrable East, he has provided literary capital and available stock in trade for reciters and hearers, for authors and readers, of all times and of all places within the limits of the Western world."

THE LATE LORD DENMAN.*

"To descant on the genius of Homer is merely superfluous and impertinent. Pope's eloquent panegyric, and Horace's almost unbounded veneration, are but feeble echoes of the praise bestowed by the sympathy of the wise and good in

* Although the following remarks were written for the translator, to work up in any way he chose, he feels that no apology is necessary for offering them to the reader in their original state. They were intended merely as introductory to extracts, at a time when his lordship considered a translation of the entire poem impossible—an opinion he afterwards revoked.
every succeeding age. Hence the inspiration of the great tragedians of Greece. Hence the formation of character in all stages of society. Hence the transmission of heroic sentiment, which has preserved nobleness and dignity in the rulers of mankind, through all the turbid complication of public affairs.

"The merits of Homer are, heroic sentiments, dramatically expressed with transcendent eloquence; lively and energetic description of those events which must ever excite the warmest sympathy of mankind; varied and beautiful displays of character; just and picturesque descriptions of natural objects, vicissitudes in human affairs the most striking and affecting in their conduct: all this challenging the reader's affections and interest in a style of unexcelled force and perspicuity, and in measures which delight the ear and elevate the mind. Let us hope that the benefit they have produced for ages, in at once humanising and invigorating the minds of men in performing the duties of active life, may be secured to ages yet unborn, by a constant and earnest perseverance in the study of the noblest of classics.

"When we think of Homer, we call to mind not the words and actions of the gods of his mythology, not the inconsistencies into which he may have been betrayed by an exclusive patriotism; still less, the occasional coarseness on which some of the French critics have loved to dwell; but the fine display of character in the busy scene of his first books; the exquisite beauty of Helen surveying the camp of her own countrymen from the walls of Troy: not the strange evasion of Glaucus from the conflict with Diomed, but the beautiful
address to the Lycian captain by his gallant chief—\textit{the very principle of an aristocracy founded upon virtue}; not the clumsy device by which Hector is lured from the field of danger and of honour, but the exquisite tenderness of the husband and father, the lovely solicitude of the suffering wife, with all the little circumstances of domestic interest which render the sixth Iliad perhaps the most attractive and poetical passage that has ever delighted the world.

"Our grateful memory sinks the extravagant fury of Achilles, and brings before us his affectionate respect for his old tutor Phœnix, his passionate regret for his friend Patroclus, his indulgence to the father of his hated foe, when the old man has stricken the chord of his own filial affection. We forget the weakness of the Trojan hero in the glorious victory over the Greeks at their bulwark, and his wonderful boldness in defying even superstition, and finding the best augury of success in the great cause of his country, of which he is the dauntless champion."
THE ILIAD.

BOOK I.

The wrath of Peleus' son, O goddess, sing—
Achilles' baneful wrath—which to the Greeks
Brought woes unnumbered, and, to Hades' depths
Hurrying the souls of many valiant chiefs,
Their bodies left a prey to dogs and birds:—
Yet was Jove's will advancing to its end—
From the first hour when, after fierce debate,
Discord arose between the godlike prince
Achilles, and Atrides, king of men.

Which of the gods provoked the deadly feud?
Jove and Latona's son. He, with the king
Indignant, sent a plague that scattered death
Throughout the host, in vengeance for his priest,
The aged Chryses, whom Atrides scorned,
When to redeem his child he sought the ships
With boundless ransom, bearing in his hands
The sacred chaplet of the archer god,
Far-darting Phœbus, twined on golden staff.
Much he entreated all the Greeks, but most
The two Atridæ, leaders of the war.

"Ye sons of Atreus," he began, "and ye
Warriors in greaves accoutred, may the gods
Who in the mansions of Olympus dwell,
Grant you to overthrow king Priam's city,
And safely reach your homes, as ye restore
My much-loved daughter, and accept these gifts,
Revering Phœbus, Jove's far-darting son."

Then with a shout the Greeks all gave consent
The priest to honour, and accept the gifts.
But pleased not Agamemnon such resolve:
Stern he dismissed the suppliant with harsh speech:
"Let me not find thee near the ships, old man,
Or lingering now, or venturing here again;
Lest nought the staff and chaplet of thy god
Henceforth avail thee. I release her not,
Until old age o’ertake her in my halls
In Argos, far from her dear native land,
Plying the loom, and busied at my couch.
Begone; nor vex me, if thy life be dear."

This heard, the old man trembled and obeyed.
Silent he took his way along the shore
Lashed by the ceaseless loud-resounding waves:
Withdrawing then, he to Apollo prayed,
Son of Latona of the radiant hair.
"God of the silver bow, who dost protect
Chrysa, and holy Cilla, and with might
Rulest in Tenedos, O hear me now,
Smintheus; if e’er I decked thy beauteous fane,
Or burnt to thee fat thighs of bulls and goats,
Accomplish this my prayer.—Let thy dread shafts
Avenge my tears upon the Argive host."
Thus Chryses prayed: Apollo heard his prayer;
And from the Olympian heights descended swift;
Angry at heart. Upon his shoulder hung
Quiver and bow; and as he moved in wrath,
The arrows rattled. Dark he came, like night;
Then sat aloof, and winged a deadly shaft.
Forth as it flew amid the ships beneath,
With sound terrific twanged the silver bow.
Mules and swift dogs he first destroyed; then smote 60
The Greeks with pointed shaft; and pyres stood thick,
Blazing incessant with the frequent dead,

Nine days the arrows of the god shot death
Throughout the fleet. Achilles on the tenth
To an assembly the Achaians called,
Prompted by white-armed Juno, who with grief
Beheld her stricken people. When they all
Were gathered and assembled, Peleus' son
Uprising in the midst, harangued the host:
“O son of Atreus, would we death escape—
The twofold death of pestilence and war—
We must consent, I deem, to wander back
The way we came. But first ask priest or seer, 
Or dream expounder—since of Jove are dreams—
Why wrath so deep hath moved Apollo's breast;
Whether neglect of sacrifice or prayer
Provoke his ire: if haply savour sweet,
Ascending from unblemished goats and lambs,
May move his pitying soul to stay the plague."

Achilles ceased; when, first of augurs, rose
Calchas, the son of Thistor, whose clear eye
The past, the present, and the future saw;
And taught by prescient skill, Apollo's gift,
Guided to Ilium's port the Achaian fleet.
In words of kindness he the chiefs addressed:
"Thou bidd'st me, O Achilles, loved of Jove,
Declare the cause of king Apollo's wrath;
Therefore I speak. But first give thou a pledge;
And swear to shield me both by word and deed;
For my plain speech, I ween, will goad to ire
The prince who rules the Argives, and whose sway
The Achaians own.—Monarch with subject wroth
Ever prevails; and even though he quell.
His rage to-day, yet deep within his breast
It rankles until vengeance be fulfilled.
Consider then if thou my life wilt guard."

To him the swift Achilles answering spoke:
"Be of good courage, Calchas, and reveal
All that thou knowest of the will divine;
For by Apollo, loved of Jove, to whom
Thou prayest, and who gives thee to expound
Heaven's oracles, not one of all the host,
While I still live, and still behold the light,
Shall dare to lay a heavy hand on thee;
Not e'en should Agamemnon be the man,
Who vaunts himself the mightiest of the Greeks."

Thus reassured, the unerring prophet spoke:
"Not for neglect of sacrifice or prayer
The god is wroth, but for his injured priest,
Whom Atreus' son dishonoured, when he came
With ransom for his daughter; hence these woes:
Nor will far-darting Phoebus stay the plague,
Till he restore the maid of glancing eye,
Unbought, unransomed, to her loving sire,
With offering of a sacred hecatomb
To Chrysa led. Then haply may the god
Accept propitiation, and relent."

Thus saying, Calchas ceased; when, fired with rage,
Rose Agamemnon, the wide-ruling king,—
Black choler swelling in his heart—his eyes
Sparkling with living fire. To Calchas turned,
Harsh he replied, with stern foreboding look:
"Prophet of evil; never from thy lips
Fell sound of grateful augury to me:
Omens of ill are ever thy delight;
From thee came never word or deed of good.
Now, babbling thy predictions through the camp,
Me thou proclaimest source of all the woe
Hurled on our people by the archer-god,
Because I spurned the gifts by Chryses brought
In ransom for his daughter. She is mine;
For I prefer her to my wedded wife,
Since not to Clytemnestra doth she yield
In beauty's charm, in feature, or in form,
In mental grace, or varied works of skill:
Yet I resign her for my country's weal.
Let not my people perish, if their king
Have power to save. But make requital first,
Lest I alone be left without reward,
Robbed of my prize in face of all the host.”

Answered the swift Achilles, godlike chief:
‘O thou most glorious, yet most grasping man,
How shall the high-souled Greeks bestow on thee
Another prize? Treasures we know of none
Remaining still to be distributed.
The spoils of captured cities have been shared:
Again to gather them and share afresh
Were unbefitting. To the offended god
Yield thou the maid: requital shall be thine
Of threefold, fourfold worth, if ever Jove
Grant to our conquering arms the well-built Troy.”

To him Atrides, ruler of the host:
‘Think not, Achilles, O thou godlike man,
For all thy bravery, thus with specious words
To over-reach me. The attempt is vain:
Nor cunning nor persuasion will avail.
Wouldst thou thy prize retain, while I sit down,
Deprived of mine? Thou bidst me yield the maid?
First let the lofty-souled Achaians choose
Another prize well pleasing to my mind,
Of equal worth. Else will I seize on thine;
Or Ajax or Ulysses, reft of theirs,
Shall chafe with vain resentment. But of this
Hereafter. Launch we now a sable bark
With chosen crew, to bear the fair-cheeked maid,
And sacred hecatomb to Chrysa's shore
Under the guidance of some prudent chief—
Ajax, Ulysses, or Idomeneus,
Or of thyself, O most redoubtable!
So may we pacify the avenging god."

With angry look the swift Achilles spoke:
"O clothed with insolence, rapacious chief!
What Greek henceforth will prompt obedience yield—
March at thy word, or strenuous urge the fight?
I came not to avenge a private wrong;"
I have no quarrel with the Trojans;—they
Ne'er drove away or herds or steeds of mine;
Nor roamed injurious o'er my fruitful fields
In fertile Phthia; for between us lie
Far-shadowing mountains, and the roaring sea.

Thy cause espousing, and at thy behest
We came to Troy, O most unblushing chief!
Not on our own behalf; but to redress
Wrongs suffered by thy brother and by thee,
Thou dog in shamelessness! Yet all our deeds,
And painful services thou holdest light;—
Threatening e'en now to rob me of my prize,
Won by long toil, my guerdon from the Greeks.
When some well-peopled city is destroyed,
My share of booty never equals thine:
On me still falls the heavier weight of war;
But when division of the spoil is made,
Thine the far richer portion:—my reward,
Scanty, yet cherished, to my ships I bear,
When weary with the battle's ceaseless toil.
Now will I back to Phthia. Better far,
That I should turn my rounded galleys home:
I stay not here, dishonoured at thy hands,
To enhance thy wealth, and swell thy treasured stores."

Him answered Agamemnon, king of men:

"Fly, if thy mind so prompt thee, fly at once;
Stay not for me; I ask thee not to stay.
Others will honour me, and more than all,
Great Jove the counsellor. Of heaven-born kings
Thee I detest the most. Battle and blood
Are ever thy delight. If thou be strong,
Some god that strength bestowed. Fly with thy ships,
And lord it o'er thy Myrmidons at home:—
I heed thee not, and disregard thy wrath.
Yet hear this threat.—Since Phœbus claims from me
Chryses' fair daughter, ships and friends of mine
Shall lead the damsels back. But to thy tent
Hence will I speed myself, and tear away
Thy prize, Briseis of the beauteous cheeks.
So shalt thou learn by proof how far my power
Surpasseth thine; and all shall be deterred
From boasting an equality with me."
He spoke. Rage fired Achilles; and his heart
Struggled in doubt within his shaggy breast—
Whether to draw the falchion from his side,
Break through the chiefs, and strike Atrides dead,
Or curb his fierce resentment. While he stood
Pondering, in act of drawing from the sheath
His mighty sword, from heaven Minerva came,
By Juno sent, who watched o'er both the chiefs
With equal care. Standing behind, she seized
The son of Peleus by his auburn locks,
To him alone apparent. In amaze
Achilles turned, and instant recognised
Pallas Minerva;—so terrific shone
Her flashing eyes. "Daughter of Jove," he said,
"What brings thee from Olympus?—To behold
This monarch's insolence? Hear my resolve,
That will not long, I deem, be unfulfilled:
His life shall pay the forfeit of his pride."

Answered the bright-eyed goddess: "To restrain
Thy wrath I came; by white-armed Juno sent,
Who watches over both with equal love.
Draw not thy sword; but vent thy rage in words;
For I declare—nor shall my promise fail—
A day is coming, when for this affront
Gifts thrice the value shall repay thy loss:
Then calm thy ruffled spirit, and obey.”

To whom the swift Achillés: "Aught enjoined
By thee and Junó prompt obedience claims,
Though deep my wrath. He who reveres the gods,
To him they listen with approving ear.”

He spake; and placing on the silver hilt
His heavy hand, thrust back into its sheath
The mighty falchion, mindful of the word
Minerva spoke, who had e’en now returned
To the bright mansions of Olympian Jove.

Pelides’ wrath, not yet allayed, again
Burst on the king in mischief-stirring words:
“Drunkard, with eye of dog, but heart of deer,
When did thy craven soul dare join the chiefs
In open fight, or secret ambuscade?
Such risk were death to thee. Safer to roam
The spacious camp, and rob of their reward
All who may dare oppose thy despot will.
Rapacious tyrant,—slaves thou governest,
Or else this insult, king, had been thy last!
Yet hear me now;—a mighty oath I swear
By this my sceptre, which hath never borne
Or leaf or branch, since in the mountains first
It left its trunk; and ne'er will bud again,—
Stripped by the unsparing axe of leaves and bark;—
And such is held an emblem in the hands
Of judges who uphold the laws of Jove:—
Yea, by this sceptre—oath inviolate—
A day is coming, when the Greeks shall all
Long for Achilles, and thine arm prove weak
To save thy people, falling fast beneath
The slaughtering Hector. Then shall keen remorse
Dart through thy inmost soul a bitter pang
For honouring not the bravest of the Greeks.''

Uttering these words, Pelides dashed to earth
His golden-studded sceptre, and sat down.
Meanwhile Atrides, stung to fury, raged;
When Nestor, clear-toned orator of Pylos,
Quick rose to speak; from whose persuasive lips
A voice more sweet than liquid honey flowed.
Two generations born beneath his rule
In sacred Pylos now had passed away;
And e'en a third revered him as their king.
In words of kindness he the chiefs addressed:
"Surely hath dire disaster fallen on Greece!
Oh, how would Priam, how would Priam's sons
Exult! how all the Trojans would rejoice,
To know that ye who are the Danaans' pride—
The best in council, bravest in the field—
Are thus contending! Bend to the advice
Of one your elder. Mightier men than ye
Were my companions in the days of old;
Yet they despised me not—heroes, whose like
I never saw, never may hope to see,—
Pirithous, Dryas, leader of the host,
Cœneus, Exadius, godlike Polyphemus,
And Theseus, son of Ægeus, chief divine.
They, the renowned, the bravest of the brave,
Fought with the bravest—the rough mountain race
Of Centaurs,—and with slaughter terrible
Discomfited. Associates such were mine
In days of old, who from the Apian land,
And Pylos called me. Then was sternly tried
My utmost valour, combating among
Chiefs whom no living mortal dare confront:
Yet they my counsel followed;—so do ye
Receive my counsel, and my words obey:
Thou, Agamemnon, powerful as thou art,
Seize not the maid—his prize to whom the Greeks
Gave her at first; nor with the king do thou,
Achilles, strive; since never sceptred prince,
With glory honoured by the gift of Jove,
To such exalted dignity was raised.
If thou art brave, and of a goddess born,
Still, he is greater; wider is his rule.
Peace then, Atrides; calm thy ruffled soul;
Yea, I beseech thee, lay aside thy wrath
Against Achilles, who to all our host
Firm bulwark stands in battle's evil day."
Answered the king: "Thy words, O aged prince,
Become thee well: but this audacious chief
Would fain exalt himself above us all,
Rule over all, control all, govern all:
Such pride is not, I ween, for me to brook.
What, though the gods have made him great in war,
Do they accord him an unbridled tongue?"

Broke on the king Achilles in his wrath:
"Dastard and worthless might I well be deemed,
Should I in all things bow to thy command.
Give law to others; dictate not to me:
Think not that I thy mandate shall obey.
Yet hear my words, and weigh them in thy mind.—
My sword I lift not for the damsel's sake,
Since ye who gave her have withdrawn the gift.
But aught beside that my black ship contains
Touch at thy peril. Yet I bid thee come,
And dare the attempt, that others may be warned;
Instant shall thy dark blood gush round my spear."

The chieftains battling thus with angry words
Dissolved the council. To his tent returned Achilles and his friends. Atrides launched a ship with twenty rowers, and embarked. Rich hecatomb to pacify the god: Chryses' fair daughter to the ship he led; Ulysses, wise commander, entered last; And swift they glided o'er the liquid ways.

Lustral ablution by the king enjoined—
The host obeyed, and cast into the deep the refuse-water. Faultless hecatombs of bulls and goats they duly sacrificed along the shore of the unfruitful sea to golden Phoebus; and to heaven uprose a grateful savour, mingling with the smoke.

So were they busied in the camp. Meanwhile Atrides, on his wrathful purpose bent, thus to Talthybius and Eurybates, his zealous heralds and attendants, spoke: "Haste to Achilles' tent, and lead away fair-cheeked Briseis. Should he dare resist,
I with a numerous band will drag her thence:
And woe to him the day he braves my wrath."

Charged with the ruthless message of the king,
Unwillingly the heralds took their way
Along the margin of the barren sea,
Until they reached the Myrmidonian camp.
Achilles sitting by his tent they found
Near his dark ship; nor did his look bespeak
Joy at their coming. They with reverent awe
Both stood abashed, nor spoke, nor message gave.
But he their mission understood, and said:
"Hail, heralds, messengers of gods and men;
Approach; I blame not you; I blame the king,
Who sends you for Briseis. Haste, my friend,
Noble Patroclus;—lead the maiden forth;
And let the heralds bear her from my tent.
Be they my witnesses before the gods,
And mortal men, and the relentless king,
If ever need of me arise, to stay
Destruction from the host.—Insensate man!
He by his own pernicious folly driven,
Rushes on fate, unable to discern
The future in the past, and teach our bands
To fight in safety by their galleys' side."

Obedient to his loved companion's word,
Patroclus led Briseis from the tent,
And gave her to the heralds:—they returned
Slow towards their vessels, while the Beauteous maid
Reluctant followed. From his friends withdrawn, 390
Achilles sat beside the hoary sea,
Gazing in tears upon the boundless deep;
Then to his mother prayed with outstretched hands:
"O mother, since so brief my term on earth,
Surely the Olympian should at least have crowned
Thy son with glory: glory he denies;
And Agamemnon, the wide-ruling king,
Insults me, robs me, and my prize retains."

In the deep caves of ocean, where she sat
Beside her aged sire, the goddess heard 400
Her son's lament; and from the hoary sea
Instant emerging, like a mist, arose;
Then, sitting down before him as he wept,
Soothed with her hand, and fondly breathed his name:
"Why weep, my son? What sorrow wrings thy heart?
Speak; hide it not; and let me share thy grief."

Answered Achilles with a deep-drawn sigh:
"Thou knowest; why should I recount my woes?
Thebè we sacked, Eétion's sacred town,
Plundered of all, and hither brought the spoil.
This the Achaians, in proportion just
Dividing, chose for Agamemnon's share
Fair-cheeked Chryseis. To redeem his child
Came Chryses, Phoebus' venerable priest,
With boundless ransom to the Achaian ships.
The godlike sceptre in his hand he bore,
Wreathed with the sacred chaplet of the god
Who scatters far and wide his radiant shafts.
Much he entreated all the Greeks, but most
The two Atridæ, leaders of the war.
Then with a shout the Greeks all gave consent
The priest to honour, and accept the gifts.
But pleased not Agamemnon such resolve:
Stern he dismissed him with insulting speech.
Heavy at heart the aged man returned
Along the shore: Apollo heard the prayer
Of his loved priest, and hurled a baneful shaft.
Fast died the Argives; while on every side
Throughout the broad encampment of the Greeks
Thick fell the arrows of the avenging god.

At last a skilful seer interpreting
The oracles of Heaven, I counsel gave
To offer an atonement. Seized with wrath
Atrides rose, and spoke the threatening word
This day fulfilled. The Argives in swift bark
Bear the priest's daughter back to Chrysa's shore
With offerings to the god; and even now
Heralds have left my tent, leading away
Brises' fair child, my guerdon from the Greeks.
Oh! for thou canst, defend thy warrior son;
And mounting to Olympus, plead my cause
With Jove, if ever thou by word or deed
Didst please his heart: for I have heard thee oft
Boast in my father's halls, that when the gods,
By Juno, Neptune, and Minerva led,
Conspired to fetter cloud-encompassed Jove,
Thou, goddess, coming singly to his aid,
Didst save him from inglorious overthrow,
To high Olympus instant summoning
Him of the hundred hands, hight Briareus
In heaven, on earth Ægæon, for he passed
His sire in strength: at Jove's right hand he sat
In glory exulting.—Of his might afraid,
The blest Immortals their attempt forbore.
Of this remind him, and embrace his knees;
So may he favour Troy, and crush the Greeks
Close-pent between their vessels and the sea.
Then shall the Achaians in their king exult;
And Agamemnon his mad folly rue,
For honouring not the bravest of the host.”

Him Thetis answered, weeping as she spoke:
“Woe, woe the day I gave thee birth, my son!
Would thou wert resting by thy sable bark,
Without a tear, without a wrong;—so brief
The term of life allotted thee by fate:—
Alas! too brief;—an early death thy doom,
And misery beyond the lot of man.
In evil hour, alas, I gave thee birth!
Yet will I seek Olympus’ snow-capped height,
And to the Lightning-hurler plead for thee.

Meantime, breathe thou thy rage against the Greeks,
Resting beside thy swift-careering bark;
And from the war abstain. Immortal Jove
Went yester-morning to Oceanus,
To banquet with the blameless Æthiops,
Followed by all the ever-living gods.
The twelfth day to Olympus he returns:
Then to his brazen mansion will I speed,
And falling at his knees, will urge, I ween,
No idle suit.”

This said, she took her way,
And left him grieving for that lovely maid
Torn from his arms. Meanwhile Ulysses went
To Chrysa with the sacred hecatomb.
When they arrived within the deep-bayed port,
They furled the sails, and stowed them in the bark;
Then quickly by the forestays struck the mast,
And in its crutch secured; next rowed the ship
Into her moorings, cast the anchor out,
And bound her fast with cables to the beach.
Now forth they came upon the sea-beat shore
And brought to land the splendid hecatomb.
Forth came Chryseis from the swift-winged bark,
Led to the hallowed altar of the god
By wise Ulysses, who restored the maid
With gentle speech to her dear father's arms:
"O Chryses, me the king of men hath sent
To bring thy child, and on behalf of Greece
Make offering of a sacred hecatomb,
If, haply, we may so appease the god
Who now deals death throughout the sorrowing camp."

He spoke; and to the joyful father's hands
Gave his loved daughter. Speedily they placed
Around the well-built altar of the god
The precious sacrifice; then laved their hands,
And o'er the victims strewed the salted meal.
His arms uplifting, Chryses prayed aloud:
"God of the silver bow, who dost protect
Chrysa, and holy Cilla, and with might
Rulest in Tenedos, if thou erewhile
Didst listen to my prayer, and honouring me,
With grievous chastisement afflict the Greeks;
So to my prayer now lend a gracious ear,
And stay the plague that scatters death around.”

Thus Chryses spoke; and Phoebus heard his prayer.
When they had prayed and sprinkled barley-meal
Over the victims, back their necks they drew,
Slaughtered and flayed; then cutting out the thighs,
Enwraapt them in a double coil of fat,
And overlaid choice morsels of the flesh.
These on cleft wood the aged Chryses burnt,
And sprinkled with libation of dark wine,
While youths stood near with five-pronged forks in hand.
The thighs now burnt, and entrails duly proved,
The rest they sliced, and hung upon the spits,
Broiled with nice care, and then drew off again.
Their labour over, and the table spread,
They feasted, nor lacked aught of plenteous cheer.
Craving of thirst and hunger now allayed,
Boys crowned with wine rich goblets, and in cups
Bore it to all, while through the livelong day
Achaian youths propitiated with song
Far-darting Phoebus, chanting in his praise
A joyous Pæan; and the rapturous sound
Fell with delight upon his listening ear.

Soon as the sun had set, and night came on,
They slept beside the moorings of their ship.
But at the hour when rosy-fingered Morn
Early appeared, they seaward turned their prow
Back to the wide encampment of the Greeks.
Blest by Apollo with a favouring breeze,
They reared the mast, and spread the snow-white sail.
Full on the canvas blew the streaming wind;
And as the vessel bounded on her course,
Loud roared the purple wave around her keel:
Thus through the yielding foam she cut her way.

Arriving now before the Achaian fleet,
They drew the sable vessel to the shore,
High on the sand; then fixing props beneath, All to their several tents and ships dispersed.

Meanwhile beside his swift-careering bark Achilles sat, still brooding o'er his wrath; Nor ever to the ennobling council went, Nor sought the war, but pined his soul away, Still longing for the battle and the shout.

The twelfth refulgent morn appearing now, Back to Olympus sovereign Jove returned, Followed by all the ever-living gods. Then, not unmindful of her son's request, Thetis, emerging from the ocean-wave, To heaven's vast dome and high Olympus sped At early hour, and found far-seeing Jove High seated, from the other gods apart, On many-cragged Olympus' loftiest peak. In suppliant guise she knelt before his throne: Her left hand clasped his knees; and with her right Entreatingly she touched his chin, and spoke: "O mighty Sire, if I by word or deed
Have ever pleased thee in the court of heaven,
Accomplish this my prayer:—honour my son,
Of mortals most short-lived, yet by the king
Insulted, and defrauded of his prize.
Do thou, Olympian Jove, who canst fulfil
Thy counsel, honour him thyself; and grant
Success to Troy, till all the Achaian host
Shall raise to glory his now slighted name."

She spake. No answer gave cloud-gathering Jove,
But long in silence sat. She to the knees
She once had touched, importunate still clung;
And urged a second time her fond request:
"Plight me thy word, and to confirm thy troth,
Bow down thy head;—or, since thou canst not fear,
Deny my suit; so shall I fully know
That I of all the gods am least esteemed."

Then, deeply moved, out spoke cloud-gathering Jove:
"Alas! what grievous strife thy suit portends!
Must I again excite fierce Juno's wrath?
Again incur her rancour? Even now
She taunts me in the assemblies of the gods
With favouring Troy. Go, lest she see thee here:
My care shall be to compass thy desire;
And when I bow my head, accept the sign,
Greatest among the gods—inviolate,
 Immutable, irrevocable pledge."

He spoke; and bending low his sable brows,
Jove bowed assent.—Around the immortal head
Of heaven's high king flowed down the ambrosial locks;
And vast Olympus trembled.

This converse o'er, they parted. Thetis straight
Plunged from Olympus' radiant summit down
Into the deep profound. His own abode
The Thunderer sought. Together from their seats
Rose all the gods in presence of their Sire.
His dread approach not one dared wait; but all
Rose up to meet him. On his throne he sat;
Yet was he not of Juno unobserved,
When with the daughter of the old sea-god
He held close counsel. She impatient turned,
And tauntingly provoked the king of heaven.
"Which of the Immortals, O thou crafty one,
Hath lately shared thy counsels? It delights
Thee ever to devise clandestine plans,
And hide from me the secrets of thy heart."

To her replied the Sire of gods and men:
"Aspire not, Juno, all my thoughts to learn,
Hard e'en for thee, my consort, to divine.
Whatever it besitteth thee to hear,
Thou first of all in heaven and earth shalt know.
Then seek not to explore my deep designs
Concealed in wisdom from the gods themselves."

Answered Jove's consort of the full-orbed eye: 620
"Dread son of Saturn, what a speech from thee!
I am not wont to pry into thy thoughts,
And thou in quiet hast thy schemes pursued;
But now I tremble lest bright-sandalled Thetis,
The hoary sea-god's child, have thee cajoled.
This morning early she thy knees embraced:
To her methinks thou bowedst sure assent
To honour Peleus' son, and at the ships
Deal wide destruction through the Achaian host."

"Consort august," cloud-gathering Jove replied, "Suspicion ever in thy bosom lurks;
Nor e'er do I thy searching ken escape.
Yet shalt thou not prevail; and thy design
Will but estrange from thee my heart the more:
The worse for thee. Let thy surmise be true;
I still accomplish what my will approves.
Be thou submissive, lest when I approach,
And lift against thee my unconquered hand,
Vain be the aid of all the Olympian host."

Trembled imperial Juno at the sound
Of that sharp menace, and in silence sat,
Curbing her stubborn soul. Through those high courts
A murmur ran; when Vulcan, artist famed,
To his loved mother soothing counsel gave:
"Woe must befall, intolerable woe,
If thus ye two contend for mortals' sake,
And raise such tumult in the realm of heaven:
Nor will enjoyment crown the festive board,
While evil counsels over good prevail,
And might I, O my mother, thee persuade,
Though of thyself discreet,—resign thy will
To father Jove, lest he, again incensed,
Upbraid thee, and our tranquil feast disturb.
For should the Olympian hurl us from our seats,
Who shall withstand the terror of his arm?
Deign thou to soothe him with endearing words,
And we shall soon again his favour win.
Then placing in her hands a double cup,
"Be patient, O my mother," he exclaimed,
"Although afflicted, lest mine eyes behold
Thee stricken, thee so loved; and I bewail
My lack of power to help thee in thy woe;
So irresistible the king of heaven.
For to thy rescue when erewhile I sped,
He seized me by the foot, and hurled me down
From the celestial gates. All day I fell;
And with the setting sun in Lemnos dropped.
There, scarce alive, the men of Sintia raised
My sinking frame."
He spake. Fair Juno smiled,  
And smiling took the goblet from her son.  
Meanwhile he filled to each a brimming cup,  
Drawing sweet nectar from the golden bowl,  
And bore it round in order from the right;  
While inextinguishable laughter rose  
To see halt Vulcan puffing round the court.

All day they feasted till the sun went down:  
Nor lacked their souls abundant festal cheer,  
Nor sound of harp—the soul-inspiring harp,  
Struck by Apollo, to whose notes divine  
The Muses with sweet voice responsive sang.  
But when the glorious lamp of Day had sunk,  
The gods departed, each to seek repose  
In his own mansion, fashioned by the hand  
Of Vulcan, skilful architect renowned.  
To his own couch the Olympian Thunderer sped,  
Where he was wont to rest, when o'er his eyes  
Soft slumber stole; and near to him reposed  
Juno, his consort of the golden throne.
BOOK II.

The gods in heaven, and warrior chiefs on earth
Slept through the night; but no sweet slumber soothed
The breast of Jove, deep-pondering in his mind
How to exalt to glory Peleus' son,
And spread destruction through the Achaian fleet.
Resolved at last, he to his presence called
A baneful dream, and spoke these winged words:
"Fly, baneful Dream, to the swift ships of Greece;
Fly to Atrides' tent; and my command—
E'en as I charge thee—faithfully declare:
Bid him embattle all the long-haired Greeks
In full array; for soon shall haply fall
The Trojan city with its ample streets,
Since strife divides no more the deathless gods
In the Olympian mansions; Juno's prayer
Hath sway'd all hearts; and woes o'er Troy impend."

The Dream departed at command of Jove,
And quickly to the Greeks' swift vessels came.
There in his tent the king of men reposed,
Wrapt in ambrosial sleep. Above his head
The vision stood, in form of Nestor, son
Of Neleus, by Atrides honoured most
Of all the elders. Thus disguised, it spoke:
"Son of steed-taming Atreus—sleepest thou?
Ill it becomes wise counsellor, on whom
Nations depend, one charged with cares so great,
To slumber through the night: now hear my word;
For I am come, a messenger of Jove,
Who from his lofty dwelling looks on thee
With tender pity and exceeding love.
He bids thee marshal all the long-haired Greeks
In full array; for soon shall haply fall
The Trojan city with its ample streets,
Since strife divides no more the deathless gods
In the Olympian mansions; Juno's prayer
Hath sway'd all hearts, and woes o'er Troy impend,
By Jove decreed. Let this my message sink
Deep in thy mind; nor let forgetfulness
Enthral thee, when sweet sleep hath passed away."

With this the vision fled, and left the king
Intent on schemes not doomed to be fulfilled,
Hoping to capture Troy that very day,—
Senseless,—unread in the designs of Jove,
Who still was planning miseries and woes
To both the hosts in many a hard-fought field.
From sleep he woke, while yet the voice divine
Hovered around. Upright the monarch sat,
Drew on a fleecy vest, soft, beautiful,
And newly woven—over it a cloak
Of ample size; and on his shining feet
Rich sandals braced. A silver-studded sword
He round him flung; and grasping in his hand
The undecaying sceptre of his sires,
Quick reached the galleys of the brass-clad Greeks.

Aurora, mounting now Olympus' height,
Announced to Jove and the immortal gods
Approach of dawn. The clear-voiced heralds called
The Greeks to an assembly—so the king
Commanded—and full quickly they obeyed.

But ere they met, to council he convoked
The lofty-minded elders, at the ship
Of Nestor, king of Pylos, and declared
This deep-laid purpose. "Hear me, O my friends.—
A heaven-sent vision to my couch descended
Amid the darkness of the ambrosial night,
In stature, form, and mien like aged Nestor,
And standing o'er my head, addressed me thus:
'Son of steed-taming Atreus—sleepest thou?
Ill it becomes wise counsellor, on whom
Nations depend, one charged with cares so great,
To slumber through the night: now hear my word;
For I am come, a messenger of Jove,
Who from his distant dwelling looks on thee
With tender pity and exceeding love.
He bids thee marshal all the long-haired Greeks
In full array, for soon shall haply fall
The Trojan city with its ample streets,
Since strife divides no more the deathless gods
In the Olympian mansions; Juno's prayer
Hath swayed all hearts, and woes o'er Troy impend,
By Jove decreed.' Thus saying, on the wing
Swiftly the Dream departed; and sweet sleep
My couch forsook. Now, haply if we may,
Arm we the Greeks. But first will I attempt
With winning words to urge their homeward flight:
Do ye, dispersing wide, their flight prevent."

Then Nestor, king of sandy Pylos, rose,
And thus in courteous words harangued the chiefs:
"Heroes and comrades, champions of the Greeks,
Had other warrior such a dream declared,
We had pronounced it false, and turned away
Incredulous; but this hath been beheld
By chieftain deemed the mightiest of the host:
Haste then, and urge renewal of the war."

Thus speaking, Nestor first the council left.
Anon the sceptre-bearing kings arose,
And to the shepherd's voice obedience paid.
From every quarter flocked the people round:
And as the bees, in closely-thronging swarms
Ever fresh-issuing from some hollow rock,
Fly forth in spring-time, clustering on the flowers,
Some here, some there; so to the assembly swarmed
From ship and tent along the wide-spread shore
The banded tribes of that unnumbered host;
While Rumour, busy messenger of Jove,
Among them blazed, exciting all with speed
To flock to the assembly. When they met,
Great was the din; and as the people sat,
Earth groaned beneath. The tumult to assuage,
And win a hearing for the heaven-born kings,
Nine heralds strove. At last the clamour ceased,
And all were seated. Then arose the king,
Holding the sceptre Vulcan gave to Jove;
Jove to his messenger, who Argus slew;
Hermes to Pelops, tamer of the steed;
Pelops to Atreus, shepherd of the tribes,
And Atreus to Thyestes, rich in flocks;
Who at his death bequeathed it to the hands
Of Agamemnon,—token of his rule
Over all Argos, and her many isles.

Leaning on this, the royal chieftain spoke:

"Friends, Danaan heroes, ministers of Mars,
Me in a grievous strait hath Jove involved,—
Harsh god, who promised me, and gave his pledge
I should return proud conqueror of Troy.
But now hath he devised a cruel scheme,
And bids me steer my galleys home to Argos,
Inglorious, with the loss of half my host.
Such seems the pleasure of all-powerful Jove,
Who often hath abased the pinnacles
Of haughty cities, and will more abase;
For he alone can boast omnipotence.
Ah! what disgrace for men in after days,
To hear so vast an army and so brave
Had waged a fruitless war (for no success
Hath yet been ours) with enemies so few,
That if—a solemn armistice proclaimed—
Trojans and Greeks should each their numbers count,
The Trojans counting only citizens,
And we, divided into decades, chose
One Trojan to pour wine for every ten,
Full many a decad would be unsupplied:
So greatly do the Achaian bands exceed
In number those within the walls of Troy.
Allies indeed she hath from many a town,
Skilled with the spear, who frustrate my designs,
And guard her towers from my destroying hand.
Nine years e'en now of mighty Jove have passed;
Worn are our cables, and our ships decayed:
Our wives and little children sit at home
Expecting our return; yet fruitless still
Is all the toil and labour of the war.
Haste then; obey my counsel; let us now
Fly with our ships to our dear native land,
Since vain the cherished hope of conquering Troy."

Atrides spoke; and stirred the hearts of all
In that vast throng who knew not his design;
And the assembled multitude was swayed,
Like the huge billows of the Icarian sea,
Lashed into fury by tempestuous winds—
Eurus and Notus bursting from the clouds
Of father Jove:—or as when Zephyrus
Furious descends on rich wide-waving corn,
And all the ears are bowed before the blast;
Such wild commotion through the assembly ran.
Some with loud clamour to the galleys flocked,
While from beneath their feet the dust-cloud rose,
And hung aloft. Others with mutual cheer
Urged their companions to draw forth the props,
Clear out the channels, and the vessels drag
Down to the sacred main. To heaven uprose
The shout of thousands longing for their homes.

Then, spite of fate, the Greeks had sailed from Troy,
Had Juno not invoked Minerva's aid:
"Unwearied child of Ægis-bearing Jove,
Strange sight is this! Home shall the Achaians fly
O'er the broad sea, leaving behind proud boast
To Priam and the Trojans—Argive Helen,
For whom so many Greeks have given their lives,
In Troy, far distant from their native land?
Oh! check their ardour: haste amid the ranks;
And with thine own mild words each man restrain;
Nor let them drag their well-poised ships to sea."
She spake: nor did Minerva disobey.
Down from Olympus' heights descending swift,
She reached the Grecian fleet, and speedily
Ulysses found, the Jove-like counsellor.
He stood beside his bark, but touched it not;
For sorrow overwhelmed his noble heart.
Approaching him, the bright-eyed goddess spoke:

"Son of Laertes; heaven-descended prince,
Great in resource, are ye indeed thus bent
On flying home to your dear native land,
Flocking tumultuous to your well-oared ships?
And will ye leave behind a glorious boast
To Priam and the Trojans—Argive Helen,
For whom so many Greeks have given their lives,
In Troy, far distant from their native land?
Haste then amid the ranks; each man persuade;
Nor let them drag their well-poised ships to sea."

The goddess spoke. Ulysses recognised
The voice divine, and instantly rushed forth,
Casting his cloak aside. (Eurybates,
Herald from Ithaca, quick caught it up,
And took in charge.) In presence of the king 
The hero stood, and from Atrides' hand 
Received the immortal sceptre of his sires. 
With this Ulysses to the ships repaired.

Whatever prince or chieftain he o'ertook, 
Him he restrained with words of blandishment: 210
"Fear ill becometh thee, my friend. Pause thou; 
And bid thy comrades pause. The king's design 
Not yet is known. He now our courage tries; 
But soon will smite the fainting sons of Greece. 
All have not heard what he in council said. 
Beware of his displeasure: he is great; 
And fearful is the anger of a king 
Beloved and honoured by all-knowing Jove."

Heard he some vile plebeian brawling loud, 
He struck him with his sceptre, and rebuked: 220
"Fellow, be still: regard what others say, 
And listen to thy betters. Base art thou,— 
Of no repute in council or in war. 
All are not born to rule. Ill fares the state
Where many rule. Let one alone be king, 
To whom Jove gives the sceptre and the laws, 
So to fulfil his delegated trust."

Thus with authority he awed the host; 
And to the assembly back they rushed amain, 
From ship and tent tumultuously poured; 230 
Like to the sea, when some loud-booming wave 
Bursts on the mighty beach; and ocean roars.

Then, sitting down, they ceased their clamorous cries, 
All, save Thersites: he alone still brawled, 
Well knowing how to vilify the kings, 
And raise a laugh by coarse opprobrious taunts. 
Ugliest was he of all who came to Troy; 
His legs were bandy, and one foot was lame; 
His shoulders round, and gathered tow'rd his breast; 
His head high-tapering to a peak, besprent 240 
With thin and woolly down. Him Peleus' son, 
And wise Ulysses execrated most, 
On whom he chiefly poured his vile abuse. 
Yet now great Agamemnon he assailed,
Shrill-screaming. His invectives roused the Greeks to furious indignation; but he still
Turned on the king the poison of his tongue,
With loud reproach:—"Atrides, why complain?
Dost covet more? thy ships are full of brass,
Thy tents of damsels chosen from the spoil
Of cities we have taken. Dost thou still
Long for the gold which some steed-taming chief
Shall bring from Troy in ransom for his son,
Captured by me or other valiant Greek?
Or wouldst hold dalliance with some youthful maid
Retained in secret for thine own disport?
Shame on a chief who so afflicts his host!
And ye who bear his rule, faint-hearted Greeks,
The scandal of your race,—women, not men—
Would ye stay longer here? Return; sail home—
Home with your ships, and leave a worthless king
To doat upon his treasures undisturbed:
So shall he learn the value of our aid,
Nor spurn a warrior braver than himself,
Whose prize he seized, and haughtily retains.
Surely resentment boils not in the breast
Of Peleus' son; and his a patient mind,
Or this thy insult, king, had been thy last.''

On Agamemnon, shepherd of the tribes,
Thus railed Thersites; but anon uprose
Godlike Ulysses, and with angry brow,
Eyeing the factious wrangler, stern rebuked:
"Hold, fool and babbler, hold thy deafening tongue,
Nor singly dare with princes to contend,—
Thou vilest of the vile who came to Troy.
'Tis not for thee thy betters to rebuke,
And prompt disgraceful flight. We know not yet
The issue of the war,—and whether Fate
Dooms us in joy or sorrow to return.
Dost thou presume to rail against the king
Because the Greeks adjudge him large reward?
Hear me;—nor shall my threatened vengeance fail:—
If e'er I catch thee playing thus the fool
Again, no longer let Ulysses' head
Rest on his shoulders; and may I no more
Be called the father of Telemachus,
If I forbear to pluck thy raiment off,
Cloak, tunic; and e'en all that hides thy shame,
And send thee back loud wailing to the fleet,
Whipped from the assembly with unseemly stripes."

This said, he with the sceptre struck his back: 291
Anon he writhed; and from his eyes gushed out
Hot tears, while from his shoulder rose a weal
Of blood, beneath the golden sceptre's stroke.
Cowering he sat, with bitter pain convulsed;
And, looking foolish, wiped away his tears.
Meanwhile, the warriors, though their hearts were sad,
Yielded to pleasant laughter at the sight:
And neighbour, looking to his neighbour, said:
"Countless good deeds Ulysses hath achieved— 300
Our guide in council, and our chief in war;—
But this his greatest exploit—to have stopped
This slanderer's mouth. Surely that noble tongue
Will shrink from vilifying kings again."

So spake the crowd. Forthwith Ulysses rose,
Spoiler of cities, bearing in his hands
The golden sceptre; while beside him stood
Bright-eyed Athenê, in a herald's form,
Enjoining silence, that all, far and near,
Might hear his speech, and understand his words:

"Atrides, surely are the Greeks resolved
To stamp thee most contemptible of men,
Breaking their promise, plighted when they sailed
Hither from Argos, nursing-land of steeds,
To bring thee back proud conqueror of Troy;
For now, like tender boys or widowed wives,
They pour their mutual griefs, pining for home.
Yet it is hardship for a man worn out
By toil and sorrow, baffled to return:
For even seaman, absent from his wife
A single month, frets in his well-benched ship
By wintry winds and boisterous waves detained;
But this is now the ninth revolving year
Fruitlessly spent before the walls of Troy.
Can we then marvel that the Greeks should fret
Beside their rounded vessels? Yet 'twere shame
To stay so long, and empty to return.
Bear up, my friends, and wait until ye judge
If Calchas' prophecies be true or false.
For this we well remember;—and ye all
Are witnesses, whom war long time hath spared,
And the dire plague that lately thinned the host;—
When the fleet lay in Aulis, fraught with woe
To Priam and the Trojans, we—beside
A fountain gathered—to the blessed gods
Were sacrificing faultless hecatombs
Upon the sacred altar, 'neath the shade
Of a fair plane-tree, whence pure water flowed;
Behold! a mighty prodigy appeared:—
A dreadful snake, blood-spotted on the back,
Sent by the Olympian Thunderer himself
Forth to the light, swift-gliding from beneath
The altar, to the plane-tree sudden crept;
High on whose top nestled among the leaves
Eight callow sparrows, and their dam; the ninth.
These he devoured for all their piteous cries,
While the sad mother fluttered round the tree,
Bewailing her dear young, until the snake,
Out-darting, seized her also by the wing.
The parent bird and young ones now devoured,—
The god who sent the serpent forth to light
Portentously transformed him into stone.  
Wondering we stood to see the hecatomb  
Invaded by this monster of the god.  
Calchas then spoke, interpreting the sign:  
'Warriors of Greece, why stand ye thus aghast?  
This portent Jove hath in his wisdom sent,  
Granted us late, and late to be fulfilled,  
Of fame undying. Even as the snake  
Slew the eight sparrows, and their dam, the ninth;  
So we, to nine long years of warfare doomed,  
Shall triumph in the tenth.' Thus Calchas spake;  
And his predictions soon will be fulfilled:  
Wait then in patience, wait, till we achieve  
Their consummation in the fall of Troy.'"  

He spoke. A shout so loud the warriors raised,  
Applauding the divine Ulysses' speech,  
That all the echoing ships gave back the sound.  
Then rose Gerenian Nestor, and began:  
"Ye talk like children, ignorant of war.  
Your counsels, plans, and treaties, ratified  
With unmixed wine, and right hands given in faith,
Where are they now? Let flames consume them all.
Vainly we strive with words; and though long time
We linger here, no new expedient find.
Do thou, Atrides, with unshaken heart
Lead, as before, the Argives to the fight:
Abandon to their fate the craven few
Bent on return to Argos, ere they know
If true or false the promises of Jove—
Of Jove all-powerful, who vouchsafed to Greece
Propitious signs that memorable day,
When,—his red lightning flaming on the right—
Mounted their barks the gallant armament
Pregnant with fate and misery to Troy.
Wherefore, let no one think of his return
Till he embrace some haughty Trojan’s wife,
And Helen’s groans and injuries avenge.
Woe be to him who, yearning for his home,
Drags down his well-benched vessel to the sea!
An early death shall be his certain doom.
And now, O king, this admonition weigh;
Nor spurn my counsel.—Into tribes and clans
Divide the host, that clan may succour clan
And tribe aid tribe. This done, and thy command
Obeyed—the bravery or cowardice
Of chieftain and of soldier thou wilt see,
Each on himself relying; and wilt know
Whether the gods thy purposes defeat,
Or lack of valour stay the fall of Troy.”

To him in answer Agamemnon spoke—
Great king of men: “In council, aged chief,
Shines now, as ever, thy pre-eminence.
O father Jove, Minerva, and Apollo,
Had I but ten such counsellors as thou;
Then, should the city of king Priam fall,
Conquered and crushed beneath the arms of Greece!
But Jove hath plunged me in continual strife
With Peleus’ son, and racks my heart with grief.
The quarrel I began,—a maid the cause:
Yet if we once again our counsels join,
Troy shall short respite from destruction know.
Now to repast; and then renew the fight.
Let each man sharpen well his spear; let each
Brace well his buckler, nourish well his steeds,
Look to his chariot, and prepare for war:
So shall we give ourselves the live-long day
To savage Mars. Not for a moment's space
Shall ease or respite spare the combatants,
Till night arrive, and part the hostile bands.

Buckler shall reek on every brawny breast,
Ache every hand that wields the ponderous spear,
And smoke each steed that whirls a warrior's car.
The wretch who shrinks from battle, and remains
Beside the ships, shall meet the doom he shuns;
And dogs and birds shall feed upon his corse."

He spoke; when shouted loud the Argive host,
Loud as some billow by the western blast
Driven on the jutting rock of lofty shore
That knows no shelter from the dashing wave,
Blow from what quarter may the winds of heaven.
Anon they rise and share their evening meal;
While from each tent the curling smoke ascends;
And every man his tutelary god
Implores to bear him scathless through the fight.
To mighty Jove, Atrides, king of men,
Offered a fatted bullock five years old;  
And summoned all the elders—Nestor first,  
Idomeneus and the Ajaces, next  
Tydides, and the wise Ulysses sixth.  
Brave Menelaus uninvited came,  
Longing to share his brother’s hallowed toil.  
Around the ox they stood, and strewed the meal,  
While Agamemnon thus his prayer preferred:  
"O thou who hast thy dwelling in the sky,  
Most glorious, most supreme, veiled in dark clouds,  
Let not the sun descend, and night come on,  
Ere Priam’s palace I have wrapt in flame,  
Burnt his high gates with hostile fire, and torn  
The tunic that defends proud Hector’s breast;  
While fast around him his companions fall  
Headlong to earth, and bite the dusty plain."

He spoke; but Jove accepted not his prayer—  
Received his offering, and increased his toil.  
When they had prayed and sprinkled barley cake  
Over the victims, back they drew their necks,  
Slaughtered and flayed: then cutting out the thighs,
Enwrept them in a double coil of fat,
And overlaid choice morsels of the flesh.
These upon leafless billets they consumed,
And held the spitted entrails o'er the flame.
The thighs now burnt, and entrails duly proved,
They sliced the rest, and hung upon the spits,
Broiled with nice care, and then drew off again.
Their labour ended, and the board prepared,
They feasted, nor lacked aught of plenteous cheer.
Craving of thirst and hunger now allayed,
Gerenian Nestor thus addressed the host:
"Most glorious Agamemnon, king of men,—
Consume we time no longer, nor make void
The promise of a god. Now let the heralds
Summon the people to the ships; while we
Roam through the camp, and wake the fiery Mars."

He ceased. Atrides instantly despatched
The clear-voiced heralds. At their summons flocked
The Greeks to arms. Meanwhile the Jove-born kings
Marshalled the combatants. Amid the host
Stood bright-eyed Pallas, bearing on her arm
The honoured Ἀegis, aye exempt from age,
And everlasting. Round about it waved
A hundred tassels, exquisitely wrought,
Of golden thread, each worth a hundred beeves.
With this she ranged the camp, fierce gazing round;
And, urging all to speed, in every breast
Infused such strength to combat through the day,
That sweeter soon became the battle-roar
Than thoughts that whisper of a distant home.

As when a baleful fire on mountain-ridge
Burns some vast forest—the ascending glare
Is seen afar;—so from the advancing host,
Bright in effulgent mail, uprose to heaven
The glittering splendour of their brazen arms.

As in the Asian meadows, near the stream
Of fair Caẏster; birds of many a tribe—
Geese, cranes, and swans with long-extended necks—
Fly here and there, and on the wing exult,
Or settle screaming, while the meadow rings;
So o'er Scamander's plain from ship and tent
Poured many a nation; and beneath the feet
Of men and horses shook the sounding earth.
There in Scamander's blooming mead they stood,
Innumerous as the leaves and flowers of spring.

And e'en as flies, that in the vernal prime
Flit round the shepherd's fold in ceaseless swarms,
What-time the pails with milk are overflowing;
So stood the Achaians countless in the plain,
Impatient all to break their foemen's ranks.

Or as the goat-herd easily divides
Large flocks, that in the plain promiscuous feed;
E'en so the leaders marshalled each their bands,
While high among them Agamemnon stood,
His head and eyes like Jove the Thunderer,
With breast of Neptune, and with belt of Mars.

And as a bull above the bullock herd
Majestic stands; so, favoured of high Jove,
Atrides towered amid a host of chiefs.
Say now, ye Nine, who in Olympus dwell—
For ye—heaven-born—are present everywhere;
And see with clearest ken all things revealed;
But we know nothing save from rumour's voice;— 520
Say, O ye daughters of Olympian Jove,
Who were the chiefs and leaders of the Greeks;
For unassisted vainly should I strive
To tell the warriors who to Ilium came,
Although ten tongues, although ten mouths were mine,
A voice unwearied, and a heart of brass;
But ye, O Muses, aiding me, I sing
What ships, what leaders graced the roll of fame.

Bœotia's people followed to the field
Penelios, Leítus, Arcesilaus,
Clonius and Prothoënор: this the race
That dwelt in Hyria, and the rocky Aulis,
In Schoenos, Scholos, hilly Eteon,
Thespeia, Graia, spacious Mycalessus,
Harma, Ilesium, and Eleon,
Erythrae, Hylè, Peteon, Ocalea,
The well-built Medeon, Copæ and Eutresis,
Thisbè, the land of doves, and Coronæa,
The grassy Haliartus and Platæa,
Glissa and Hypothebæ, strong-built town,
Sacred Onchestus, Neptune’s fair domain,
Midea, vine-clad Arne, holy Nissa,
And the remote Anthedon:—these to Troy
Were borne in fifty vessels; and in each
Twice sixty of Bœotia’s youths embarked.

Aspledon’s troops, and those who had their dwelling
In Minyeian Orchomenus,
Were led to battle by two sons of Mars,
Ascalaphus and brave Ialmenus,
Whom in the house of Actor, Azeus’ son,
Aastyochè, a youthful maiden bore
To sturdy Mars, the fiery god of war,
Ascending to an upper chamber. These
In thirty vessels sailed to Ilium’s shores.

Led the Phocæans next Epistrophus
And Schedius, son of great Iphitus, son
Of Naubolus; their followers those who came
From Cyparissus, and the rocky Python,
And sacred Crissa, Daulis, Panopeus,
Anemoria, and Hyampolis:
And those who near divine Cephisus dwelt,
And in Lilaea, at Cephisus' source:
These came in forty ships; and these their chiefs
Ranged on the left, beside Boeotia's troops.

The Locrians by Oileus' son were led,
Ajax the swift; far less of stature he
Than Telamonian Ajax: he was clad
In linen corslet; and though slight of frame,
None so expert as he to hurl the spear,
Of all the Hellenic and Achaian race.

From Cynos, Opus, Calliarus came
His bands, from Bessa, Scarpha, fair Augeia,
Tarphè, and Thronium, on Boagrius' banks:—
These from beyond Euboea's sacred isle
Forty dark ships conveyed.

Euboea's sons,
The Abantes, breathing valour,—they who held
Chalcis, Eretria, vine-clad Histiae,
Cerinthus on the coast, Dios' high fort,
Styra, Carystus:—these Elphenor led,
Son of Calchodon, of the race of Mars,
Chief of the Abantes, men of lofty soul,
With streaming hair, and swift of foot, intent
To pierce with ashen spears their foemen's breasts.
Forty dark vessels these to Ilium brought.

Those who in Athens, well-built city, dwelt,
Land of high-souled Erectheus, whom of yore—
Progeny of the all-sustaining earth—
Minerva nurtured, child of mighty Jove,
And placed at Athens in her own rich fane,
Where the Athenian youths with bulls and rams
Appease the goddess each revolving year:
These brave Menestheus, son of Peteus, led,—
Skilful above all chieftains upon earth
To marshal chariots and shield-bearing men,
Save Nestor, whom a long experience taught:
Him fifty vessels followed to the war.
Ajax from Salamis twelve galleys led,  
And placed his followers near the Athenian bands.

The men of Argos, and of well-walled Tiryns,  
Hermionè, and Asinè, that lie  
Within an ample bay, Eïonae,  
Troezen, and vine-clad Epidaurus—those  
Who in Ægina, and in Mases dwelt—  
Achaian youths—were led by Diomed  
The good at need, and Sthenelus, loved son  
Of far-famed Capaneus; with whom a third  
Associate came, god-like Euryalus,  
Sprung from Macisteus, Talaion's son:  
All these led Diomed in eighty ships.  

Those who possessed Mycenæ and Cleonæ,  
Cities well-fortified, and wealthy Corinth,  
Orniaé, and the lovely Aræthyrea;  
And Sicyon, where Adrastus first held sway,  
And Hyperesia, and steep Gonoessa,  
Pellene, those who round Ægium dwelt,  
And all Ægialus, and the broad tract  
Of Helice—these, in a hundred ships,
King Agamemnon, son of Atreus, led,
Resplendent with his glittering brazen mail,
And glorying in his high pre-eminence—
The mightiest leader of the mightiest host.

Those who in channelled Lacedaemon lived,
Land by wild beasts frequented, and in Pharis,
In Sparta, and in Messa, famed for doves,
Bryseia, and Augeia, and Amyclae,
In sea-washed Helos, Ætylus, and Laas,—
These Menelaus, brother to the king,
And good at need, in sixty vessels led,
Arrayed apart. Among them went he forth
Relying on his zeal, and to the war
Arousing all; but chiefly was his mind
Bent on avenging Helen's wrongs and woes.

Those who in Pylos dwelt, and in the abode
Of fair Arene, Thrium, on the ford
Of the Alpheus, and the well-built Æpy,
In Cyparissa, and Amphigeneia,
In Pteleon, Helos, Dorium, where of old
The Muses met Threïcian Thamyris,
And closed his tuneful lips, what-time he left 640
Œchalia and Œchalian Eurytus:
For boast was his he should a victory win,
E’en though the Muses, daughters of high Jove,
Vied in the song. Indignant at the vaunt,
They struck him blind, and from his soul erased
All memory of his once loved vocal art.
These Nestor, the Gerenian horseman, led;
And ninety ships were subject to his sway.

Arcadia’s warriors—those who dwelt beneath
Cyllene’s towering peak, beside the tomb 650
Of Æpytus, where men fight hand to hand;
And those of Pheneus, and Orchomenus,
Wealthy in flocks; those who in Rhipè dwelt,
In Stratia, and Enispe’s breezy fields—
In Tegea, and Mantinea, pleasant land,
Stymphælus, and Parrhasia; these, embarked
In sixty ships, king Agapenor led,
Anœus’ son; and in their number came
Many Arcadian heroes skilled in war.
The ships that bore them o'er the dark blue sea,
Were given by Agamemnon, king of men;
For they in naval arts were little versed.

Those who inhabited Buprasium,
And sacred Elis, by Herminē bounded,
By Myrsinus the frontier of the land,
And by Alisium and the Olenian rock,
Four chieftains led to war: ten winged ships
With brave Epeans filled, attended each.
Amphimachus and Thalpius led a part,
The sons of Cteatus, and Eurytus,
From Actor sprung; brave Amarynceus' son,
Diores, followed next; and Polyxenus,
The godlike offspring of Agasthenes,
Augeias' son, the fourth division led.

Those from Dulichium, and the sacred isles,
The Echinades, across the sea, off Elis,
Meges commanded, hero like to Mars,
Offspring of gallant Phyleus, loved of Jove,
Who, with his sire enraged, Dulichium sought;
And with him forty sable vessels came.
Ulysses led the Cephalenians, men
Of noble soul, who dwelt in Ithaca,
And woody Neritus, rough Ægilips,
And Crocyleia, Samos, and Zacinthus,
And in the main land, on the opposite coast;
All these Ulysses, wise as Jove, arrayed:
With him twelve vermeil-tinted vessels sailed.

Thoas, Andræmon’s son, the Ætolians led,
Who in Pylenè and in Pleuron dwelt,
In Olenus, and Chalcis by the sea,
And rocky Calydon; for Οeneus’ sons
Were now no more; and Οeneus, noble prince,
And fair-haired Meleager, both were dead.
To Thoas was the Ætolian sceptre given,
Whose bands twice twenty sable ships conveyed.

Spear-famed Idomeneus the Cretans rul’d,
Who Cnossus and well-walled Gortyna held,
Lyctus, Miletus, and Lycastus, built
On dazzling cliff, and Phæstus, Rhytium, all
Well-peopled cities; and the hosts who dwelt
In Crete, for hundred cities famed:—o’er these
In eighty ships spear-famed Idomeneus
Held sway, and fierce Meriones, in war
Like e’en to man-destroying Mars himself.

Tlepolemus, the strong and valiant son
Of Hercules, brought nine dark ships from Rhodes
Of haughty Rhodians, in three bands arrayed,—
The men of Lindus, and Ialyssus,
And white Cameirus,—these Tlepolemus
To battle led, famed wielder of the spear,
Whom to Alcides Astyocheia bore,
A prize he carried off from Ephyre
Beside Selleis’ stream, when he had sacked
Full many a town of vigorous princely chiefs.
Nurtured and trained within the palace walls,
Tlepolemus his father’s uncle slew,
The old Licymnius, of the line of Mars;
And built a fleet, and gathering ample aids,
Fled o’er the sea, threatened by all the sons
And grandsons of the might of Hercules.
He, suffering many woes, and wandering long,
Came, with his train, to Rhodes. There in three tribes
They dwelt; and Jove, the king of gods and men,
Loved them, and blessed with countless store of wealth.

Nireus from Syma led three well-poised ships,
Nireus, the son of Charops and Aglaia,
Nireus, most beautiful of all the Greeks
Who came to Troy, save Peleus' blameless son:
But he was weak and delicate of frame;
Nor many were the followers that he brought.

The men of Crapathus, Nisyrus, Casus,
And Cos, the city of Eurypylus,
And the Calydnian isles—o'er these bore sway
Antiphus and Phidippus, the two sons
Of Thessalus, the son of Hercules;
And in their train sailed thirty hollow ships.

Pelasgian Argos next her warriors sent—
The men of Alus, Alopè, and Trachis,
Phthia, and Hellas, land for beauty famed;
(Hellenes, Myrmidons, Achaians called)
Led by Achilles in their fifty barks,
But they harsh-sounding battle heard no more,
Since leader they had none; for in his ships
Godlike Achilles lay, the swift of foot,
Indignant at the loss of fair Briseis,
Whom as the guerdon of his toils he chose
When Thebè and Lyrnessus he had sacked,
And slain brave Mynes and Epistrophus,
Sons of Evenus, from Selepius sprung.
Grieving for her, the prince inactive lay,
But destined soon in arms again to rise.

Next, those of Phylacè and Pyrasus,
That flowery land to Ceres consecrate,
And Iton's pastures, Antron by the sea,
And grassy Pteleon;—these while life remained,
Protesilaus, warlike chief, commanded;
But then earth wrapt him in her cold embrace.
His grieving spouse at Phylacè was left,
His halls unfinished. Him, as from the ships
First of the Greeks he leapt, a Dardan slew.
But though they mourned their loss, yet they were not
Without a leader; for Podarces, branch
Of Mars, arrayed their bands, Iphiclus' son,
From Phylacus descended, rich in flocks,
Own brother of high-souled Protesilaus,
But younger, and in bravery not his peer.
Thus grieved they for their former leader lost,
A valorous chief: Podarces led them now,
With whom twice twenty ebon vessels sailed.

And those of Pherœ, near Bæbæis' lake,
Of Bæbæ, Glaphyræ, and Iæolchus,
Fair seated town; these in eleven ships
Eumeles led, Admetus' well-loved son,
Whom to his sire, divine Alcestis bore,
The loveliest daughter of old Pelias' house.

Those who Methonè and Thaumasia held,
And Melibœa, and Olizon's crags,
These Philoctetes, skilled in archery,
Led in seven ships; and fifty rowers came
In each, all warriors practised with the bow.

But he in Lemnos, beauteous island, lay,
Where the Achaians left him in dire pain,
Bit by a deadly serpent: and the Greeks
Beside their ships were destined soon to rue
The princely Philoctetes:—not that they
Were left without a chief, Oileus' son,
Medon, the fruit of an illicit love,
Whom Rhena to her warlike father bore.

Those who in Tricca dwelt, and in the knolls
Of steep Ithomè, and Æchalia, town
Of the Æchalian Eurytus—all these
Good Podaleirius and Machaon led,
Two skilful leeches, Æsculapius' sons:
And thirty ships beneath their guidance came.

Next followed those who by Ormenium dwelt,
And Hypereia's fount, and those who held
Asterium, and the chalky summits white
Of Titanus—Eurypylus brought these,
Evæmon's noble son, in forty ships.

The dwellers in Argissa and Gyrtona,
Elonè, Ortha, and white Oloosson,
These war-enduring Polypætes led,
Pirithous' son, whom deathless Jove begot:
Him to his sire Hippodamia bore,
Illustrious damsel, on the day he took
Vengeance upon the shaggy Centaur band,
And drove from Pelion onward, till they reached
The far Æthicians: nor was he alone
Their chieftain, for with him Leonteus came,
High-souled Coronus' son, of Ceneus born;
And forty sable vessels owned their sway.

Twenty and two the barks that Gyneus brought
From Cyphus; he the Enienes led,
And stout Peræbi, who by bleak Dodona
Their dwellings built; and those who tilled their fields
Beside the Titaresius, pleasant stream,
That into Peneus pours its lovely tide,
Yet is not mingled with that silvery flood,
But on the surface ever floats like oil,
Branch of the Styx, inviolable flood,
By whose dread name the blest Immortals swear.
From Peneus' stream, and Pelion's waving woods, Led the Magnesians brave Tenthredon's son, Protheus the swift, in forty sable ships. These were the chiefs and captains of the Greeks.

Of men and steeds that followed Atreus' sons Declare, O Muse, the bravest and the best. The choicest steeds were by Eumelus driven, The son of Pheres, swift as birds, alike In colour, age, and measure by the line, Bred by Apollo of the silver bow, Both females from Pieria,—through the ranks Bearing dismay. Of heroes bravest far Was Ajax Telamon, while at the ships Achilles raged; for with great Peleus' son Might none compare, or any steeds with his. But he beside his sea-careering barks Lay, nursing his fierce wrath against the king; Meanwhile his people on the sounding shore At quoits disported, or with lance and bow: And near his chariot stood each hero's steeds, On marsh-nursed parsley and sweet lotus fed. The chariots of the princes in the tents
Lay closely-covered, while they roved about,  
Mourning their chief, nor mingled in the war.

Wherever moved, wherever trod the host,  
Earth seemed on fire, and groaned beneath their feet;  
As when in wrath the god of thunder smites  
The earth in Arimè, where fame reports  
Typhœus' burning bed:—so groaned the earth  
Beneath their feet, as quick they scoured the plain.

Now swift-foot Iris to the Trojans came,  
A messenger from Ægis-bearing Jove,  
With grievous tidings. At king Priam's gates  
The people were assembled, young and old,  
When standing near, the nimble Iris spoke,  
Feigning the voice of Priam's son Polites,  
Who in his speed confiding, sat as scout  
For Troy on aged Esyetes' tomb,  
Watching when in their ships the Greeks should sail.  
In such disguise king Priam she addressed:  
"Pleasing to thee, as erst in time of peace,  
Are undecided words, my aged sire;"
Now rages round inevitable war.
Battles full many have I seen, but ne'er
Witnessed so gallant and so great a host;
For countless as the leaves, or as the sand,
They sweep the plain, impatient to assault
The city. Hector, be advised by me;
And since in Troy are many auxiliar bands,
That speak in divers tongues, of divers race,
Let every chief direct the troops he leads,
And each his proper citizens array."

The goddess spoke; and Hector recognised
The voice divine. The assembly he dismissed.
To arms they ran. Open the gates were flung:
Out rushed both horse and foot, a mighty throng;
And deafening was the tumult that arose.

In front of Ilium is a lofty mount,
Far in the plain, with ample drive around,
By men called Batiæa,—by the gods
The tomb of swift Myrinna: here were ranged
In separate ranks the Trojans and allies.
Plume-waving Hector swayed the Trojan host, 
Priam's great son: beneath his banner marched 
The best and bravest, ardent with their spears.

Next were the Dardans by Æneas led, 
Whom to Anchises Aphrodite bore 
In Ida's glens—a goddess to a man 
United—and with him Antenor's sons, 
Antilochus and Acamas, were joined, 
Chieftains expert in every work of war.

The Trojans of Zeleia, at the foot 
Of Ida, men of substance, who the stream 
Of dark Æsepus drank, were trained to war 
By Pandarus, Lycaon's valiant son, 
Whose bow was of Apollo's self the gift.

The men of Adrastæa, and Apæsus, 
Of Pityæa, and the steep Tereia,— 
Adrastus these and stout Amphius led, 
Adorned with linen corslet, the two sons 
Of Merops the Percosian, who excelled
All in prophetic art, and warned the youths
Not to go forth to man-destroying war:
But, disobedient to their sire’s command,
The hapless pair their destiny fulfilled.

Percote, Practium, Sestos and Abydos,
And beautiful Arisba—their brave troops
Asius Hyrtacides to battle led,
Asius Hyrtacides—a prince of men,
Whom erst his large and glossy-coated steeds
Brought from Arisba, and Selleis’ stream.

The bands of the Pelasgians, in the spear
Well practised, who inhabited the plain
Of rich Larissa—these Hippothous led,
And brave Pylæus, of the line of Mars,
Both sons of Lethus, sprung from Teutamus.

The Thracians, whom swift Hellespont includes,
By Acamas and Peiroos were arrayed.

Euphemus the Ciconian warriors ruled,
Child of Jove-nurtured Troæzen, Ceas’ son.
Pyræchmes the Pæonian bowmen led
From distant Amydon, and Axius' stream,
That waters earth with fairest widest tide.

Pylæmenes, the sturdy-hearted, led
The Paphlagonians from the Enetian land,
Famous for savage mules—those who possessed
Cytorus, Sesamus, the fair abodes
Around Parthenius' stream, Ægialus,
And Cromna, and the Erythinian hills.

From Alybe's far-distant silver mines
Epistrophus and Hodius led to war
The Halizonian bands.

The Mysians came
Arrayed by Chromis, and by Ennomus
The augur; yet, for all his skill in birds,
Escaped he not dark fate himself, laid low
By swift Achilles in that eddying stream
Where hosts of Trojans found a watery grave.

Next Phorcys and Ascanius, godlike chief,
From far Ascania brought the Phrygian bands, panting for battle.

Mesthles, Antiphus, sons of Pylæmenes, beside the lake Gygæa born, headed Mæonia’s bands from Tmolus’ foot.

Of language barbarous came next the Carians under Nastes’ sway—those who possessed Miletus, and the hills of woody Pthira and Meander’s stream, and lofty Micalè—their hardy bands Nomion’s famous sons, Amphimacus, and Nastes led, who to the war went forth bedecked with golden trinkets, like a girl. Infatuate chieftain! yet they nought availed to save his life: him swift Æacides whelmed in the stream, and plundered of his gold.

From eddying Xanthus came the Lycian bands, by blameless Glaucus and Sarpedon led.
BOOK III.

Both armies now beneath their chiefs arrayed—
Onward the Trojans came with noise and clang,
Like unto birds; e'en with the clang of cranes
High poised in air, when, to avoid the cold
Of winter, and immeasurable storm,
Towards Ocean's streams with noise and clang they fly,
Bearing destruction to the Pygmy race,
And heralding at dawn the coming strife.
But silent, breathing valour, marched the Greeks,
Each sworn to aid his comrade in the fight.

And as the South-wind o'er some mountain top
Pours down a darksome mist, by shepherd feared,
But to the thief more welcome than the night—
All things beyond a stone's throw lost to view;—
So from beneath the approaching warriors' feet,
The dust-cloud rose; and swift they scoured the plain.

Nearer and nearer now the armies drew—
Host facing host in dread expectancy—
When Paris, beauteous as a god, was seen
Leading the van. Across his shoulder hung
A panther's skin, a sword, and bended bow;
While, lifting high two brazen-pointed spears,
He challenged all the bravest of the Greeks
To meet him face to face in single fight.
When Menelaus, the beloved of Mars,
Beheld him coming on before the ranks
With lordly strides, his joy was as the joy
Of lion, who, by hunger pinched, alights
On carcase huge—wild goat or horned stag—
And rends it greedily, though eager dogs
And lusty swains upon his haunches press;
So, when fair Paris stood before his eyes,
Exulted Menelaus, strong in hope
Of wreaking vengeance on the traitor's head,
And from his chariot leapt in all his arms.
When Paris, fair as an immortal, saw
Who was the champion that in front advanced,
His conscience-stricken heart within him sank;
And back on his companions swift he drew,
Avoiding fate. As from a serpent spied
In mountain glade, the traveller quick recoils,
Trembling and pale; thus, fearing Atreus' son,
Back towards the haughty ranks of Troy withdrew
The godlike Paris. Hector marked his flight,
And cried reproachfully: "Ill-omened Paris,
Noble indeed in form, but woman's slave,
Seducer,—would thou never hadst been born,
Or died unwedded! Better far to die,
Than live contemptible, a nation's scorn.
Well may the Greeks deride thee: they believed
Thy matchless form bespoke a valiant soul;
But in thy breast nor strength nor courage dwell.
Art thou the man, so craven now and faint,
Who erst explored in swift-careering bark
The briny deep with band of chosen friends;
And visiting strange nations, bore away
A peerless beauty from the Apian land
To warrior men allied, thy country's bane—
Bane of thy sire, thy city, and thy race;
Shame to thyself, and triumph to thy foes?
Darest thou not in single combat meet
The warlike Menelaus? Thou wouldst learn
How brave the chief whose wife thou hast seduced.
Nought will thy lyre avail thee, nought avail
The gifts of Aphrodite—thy fair locks,
And thy surpassing beauty—when the dust
Shall those fair locks, that beauteous form defile.
The Trojans are forsooth a dastard race;
Else, in requital for thy crimes, long since
Hadst thou been shrouded in a coat of stone."

Him Paris answered: "Hector, thy reproach
Is just:—I boast not valour like to thine.
Keen is thy courage ever, as an axe
That cleaves stout beam in cunning shipwright's hands,
Adding fresh vigour to the workman's strength;
Spirit so dauntless animates thy soul.
Upbraid me not for golden Venus' gifts:—
The gifts of heaven are not for us to scorn,
For us to choose. Yet wilt thou I provoke
The fight again? Bid either host sit down,
While I and Menelaus in the midst
Combat alone for Helen and her wealth;—
The conqueror free to bear her to his home:
So—Greek and Trojan bound in faithful league—
Secure may ye in fertile Ilium dwell,—
While they return to Argos, nurse of steeds,
And to Achaia, beauty's favoured clime."

He spoke; and Hector, hearing his resolve,
Greatly rejoiced. Advancing to the midst,
Aloft he held his equal-balanced spear,
And motioned back the phalanxes of Troy.
They all obeyed their chieftain, and drew back.
Bending their bows meanwhile, the long-haired Greeks
Showered down on Hector storm of darts and stones.
But at the sight, Atrides, king of men,
Cried in commanding voice: "Hold, Argives, hold;
For Hector of the waving plume would speak."

Instant the clamour ceased, and all was still;
When Hector, standing in the midst, began:

"Trojans, and chiefs of Greece, hear the resolve of Paris, cause of this disastrous war.

He bids you both lay down your beauteous arms
On earth's all-nurturing lap, while in the midst
With Menelaus the beloved of Mars
Singly he strives for Helen and her wealth;—
The conqueror free to bear her to his home
With all her wealth, while Greek and Trojan plight
Their hands in sign of amity and peace."

He ceased. Deep silence through the host prevailed,
When Menelaus, battle-loving prince,

Replied: "Hear also me, upon whose heart
Grief heaviest falls. Fain would I end the war;
For greatly have ye suffered for my sake—
Paris the guilty cause. In single fight
Let us contend, and one or other die,
As fate decrees: so shall this warfare cease.
Do ye, O men of Troy, two lambs prepare,
One spotless white, an offering to the Sun,
Another to the Earth, of sable fleece;
And we will dedicate to Jove a third.  
Let Priam too, supreme in power, attend  
To ratify the treaty, lest his sons,  
Faithless and proud, transgress the sacred pact.  
The minds of younger men are ever rash;  
But age, appealed to, casts a look at once  
On past and future, and considering each  
With thoughtful mind, gives counsel for the best."

He spoke, and filled with gladness every heart,—  
Trojan and Greek rejoicing to have heard  
Of speedy respite from the ills of war.  
Their steeds reined back, they from the rapid cars  
Dismounting, laid their armour on the plain—  
Small space remaining 'twixt the adverse hosts.  
Two heralds to the city Hector sent  
To bring the votive lambs for sacrifice,  
And summon Priam.  Agamemnon bade  
Talthybius hasten to the hollow ships,  
And lead the victim dedicate to Jove.

Iris meanwhile, a messenger from heaven,
Came down to Helen of the snow-white arms,  
In likeness of Laodicè, the wife  
Of Helicaon, sage Antenor’s son,  
Fairest of Priam’s daughters. Her she found  
Within her palace-halls weaving a robe  
Of double texture, large, of purple dye,  
Wherein she traced the many grievous toils  
Which Trojans, tamers of the warlike steed,  
And mail-clad Greeks had suffered for her sake  
Beneath the hand of Mars. Near Helen stood  
The swift-winged Iris, and her message gave:  
“Haste, lady dear, and see the wondrous change  
In either army wrought.—Nations that late  
Were bent on mutual slaughter in the plain—  
Thirsting for battle—now all silent lie,  
Reclining on their shields, for war hath ceased;  
And in the ground stand fixed their lofty spears.  
Paris, and Menelaus, dear to Mars;  
In mortal combat shall decide the war,—  
Thou the rich prize of him who wins the day.”

In Helen’s breast the thrilling words divine
Woke a sweet longing for her former spouse,
Her home and parents. Wrapt in silvery veil,
She from her chamber sped with tearful eye,
Yet not alone: two maidens of her train
Followed her steps, Æthrrè, the beauteous child
Of Pittheus, and the full-eyed Clymenè.
Reaching the spot where stood the Scaen gates,
There Priam sat with many hoary chiefs—
Sage Pantheus, Lampus, Clytius at his side,
Thymetes, Hycetaon, sprung from Mars,
Ucalegon, Antenor, prudent both.
Though age their warlike energies had tamed,
Yet were they skilled and fluent in debate,
Like to cicadae, that in leafy grove
Sit on the boughs and chirp with slender voice.
When these, Troy's aged counsellors, beheld
Helen approach the tower, they interchanged
These winged words: "No wonder well-armed Greeks,
And men of Troy long time encounter woes
For sake of one so marvellously fair!"
Who can behold, nor deem her heavenly born?
Yet let her homeward sail for all her charms,
Nor here remain, to bring, in days to come,
Destruction on our country and our race."

Such their discourse. Then Priam spoke to Helen:
"Come, sit by me, dear daughter, and behold
Thy former spouse, thy kindred, and thy friends.
I blame not thee; I blame the gods, to whom
I owe this mournful war. But who yon chief
So vast and stately? Others may surpass
In height, but mortal never have I seen
So nobly grand: his looks bespeak him king."

Answered the peerless Helen: "Sire beloved,
With reverent awe I in thy presence stand.
Would that a wretched death had been my choice,
When I accompanied thy son to Troy,
Leaving my marriage bed, my new-born child,
My kinsfolk and the playmates of my youth.
Another doom was mine; and hence I waste
My days in sorrow. Yonder glorious prince
Is Agamemnon, Atreus' royal son,
Excelling both as warrior and as king;
My brother once, if I, degraded now,
May boast such noble brother e'er was mine."

Fixing his eyes upon that princely form,
The aged monarch, wonder-struck, exclaimed:
"O happy prince, Atrides, at whose birth
Propitious Jove, propitious Fortune smiled;
What numerous hosts are subject to thy sway!
In vine-clad Phrygia whilom have I seen
Unnumbered warriors—men well skilled to turn
The rapid steed—obedient to the rule
Of Otreus, and of Mygdon, godlike chief—
By Sangar's stream encamped, what-time I joined
My troops to theirs, that memorable day
The man-defying Amazons assailed
The Phrygian land; yet all these countless hosts
Had been outnumbered by the dark-eyed Greeks."

"Tell me," the aged king again inquired,
"Tell me, my child, the name of yonder chief,
Broader across the shoulder and the chest,
But less in height than Atreus' royal son,
His arms are lying on the fertile plain,
While he between the ranks of heroes stalks,
Like stately ram among the snow-white sheep."

Answered the beauteous Helen, sprung from Jove:
"That is Laertes' son, the wise Ulysses,
Nurtured in Ithaca's wild rugged land,
Expert in counsels and in stratagems."

Then spoke the sage Antenor: "I avouch
Thy words, O lady; for on thy behalf
Divine Ulysses came erewhile to Troy
With warlike Menelaus. In my halls
I entertained them both as guests, and learnt
The bias and the genius of their minds.
When, mingled with the senators of Troy,
They stood erect, then Menelaus, broad
Of shoulder, towered the loftiest; when they sat,
Ulysses greater majesty displayed.
When in debate their counsels they declared,
Rapid and brief was Menelaus' speech,
Concisely uttered in a clear sweet tone;
For he was not a man of many words,
Nor wandered from the point, though young in years.
But when Ulysses, deep of counsel, rose,—
With downcast eyes he stood—his sceptre still,
And motionless,—as though unused to speak;
And one who closely his deportment marked,
Had deemed him sullen, or bereft of sense.
Yet from his breast when flowed that mighty voice, 250
And words came forth like flakes of wintry snow,
No mortal with Ulysses might compare;
No more in wonder on his form we gazed."

Casting his eyes on Ajax' stately frame,
A third time asked the venerable king:
"Say, who yon Grecian chief, stalwart and brave,
That towers a head and shoulders o'er the rest?"

Answered the peerless Helen, as she stood
With flowing robe: "Yon chief of giant size
Is mighty Ajax, bulwark of the Greeks:
And at his side, among the Cretans, stands,
Like to a god, the brave Idomeneus."
Him in our halls the warlike Menelaus
Oft entertained, a visitor from Crete.
And now I see full many a dark-eyed Greek,
Whose name, well known of old, I could declare:
But two in vain I look for—Castor, skilled
In horsemanship, and Pollux, wrestler famed,
Twin brothers mine. Surely they never sailed
From lovely Lacedæmon; or perchance
Came hither in their swift-careering barks,
Yet shrink from mingling in the camp, afraid
To hear the story of their sister's shame."
Vain thought! To earth consigned, the heroes slept
In Lacedæmon, their dear native land.

Now came the heralds, bearing back from Troy
The pledges of the gods—two lambs, and wine,
The joyous fruit of earth, in goat-skin stored.
A splendid goblet too Idæus brought,
And golden cups; then standing near the king,
"Son of Laomedon, arise," he said,
"Troy's noble chieftains, tamers of the steed,
And Grecia's warriors,cased in brazen mail,
Invite thee to descend into the plain,
To ratify a solemn covenant.
Paris and Menelaus, loved of Mars,
Prepare in single combat to contend—
Fair Helen and her wealth the conqueror’s prize:
So—Greek and Trojan bound in faithful league—
Securely we in fertile Troy may dwell;
The Greeks return to Argos, nurse of steeds,
And to Achaia, beauty’s favoured clime.”

Shuddered the aged king, and gave command
To yoke his steeds; then mounting, drew the reins,
And with Antenor seated at his side,
Drove the swift coursers through the Scæan gates.
When now between the adverse hosts they came,
The noble pair descended from the car,
And to the middle space advanced on foot.
Uprose anon the king of men; uprose
Ulysses, wise of soul; while sceptred heralds
Prepared the sacred pledges of the gods.
Wine in a bowl they mixed, and water poured
Over their royal hands. Then, drawing forth
The knife which hung beside his sword's huge sheath,  
The king cut off the forelocks of the lambs.  
These to the chieftains both of Greece and Troy  
The heralds gave. Then stretching forth his hands,  
Atrides prayed: "O father Jove, enthroned  
On Ida, great and glorious, and thou, Sun,  
Who seest all things, and who hearest all;  
Ye Rivers, and thou Earth, and ye below,  
Who punish perjured souls, be witnesses  
Of this our league, and guard our plighted faith.  
Should Paris slay his rival, let him take  
Helen, and all her wealth; and let the Greeks  
Sail homeward in their sea-careering barks.  
Should Menelaus of the golden hair  
Slay Paris, let the Trojans straight restore  
Helen with all her wealth, and forfeit pay,  
Such as is just, and shall to future times  
Record the deed. If Priam and his sons  
Refuse to ratify the covenant,  
I stay and combat for the forfeit here,  
Till all I sought in warfare be achieved."
He spoke; then slew the lambs with ruthless blade,
And laid the victims quivering on the ground.
Wine from rich goblet into cups they poured,
While either nation to the Immortals prayed:
"Most glorious Jove, and ye undying gods,
Who ever first shall violate the oath,—
Trojan or Greek,—dashed be his brains to earth,
His and his children's, even as this wine
Is sprinkled on the ground; and let their wives
Be given to strangers."

Thus the nations prayed;
But to their vows great Jove no sanction gave.
Then Priam, son of Dardanus, began:
"Hear me, ye Greeks and Trojans.—To the walls
Of storm-beat Ilium must I now return;
For never may these eyes endure the sight
Of fierce encounter 'twixt a son so dear,
And Menelaus, the beloved of Mars.
Which of the chiefs is doomed to meet his fate,
Jove only knows, and the immortal gods."
Placing the sacred victims in the car,
The godlike hero, mounting, drew the reins;
Antenor too ascending, took his seat
Within the beauteous chariot; and the twain
Drove back to Ilium. Hector, Priam's son,
And wise Ulysses measured out the ground,
Next in a brazen helmet shook the lots,
So to decide who first should hurl the spear.
Then to the gods the people raised their hands,
Trojan and Greek thus offering up their vows:
"O father Jove, most glorious, most supreme,
Who from thy throne in Ida bearest rule,—
Whichever champion on the nations brought
This dire contention, let him quick descend
To Pluto's mansion; but to us vouchsafe
Peace, and fulfilment of our plighted oaths."

This said, illustrious Hector shook the lots,
With eyes averted. Instantly sprang forth
The lot of Paris. Straight they all sat down,
Each near his pawing steeds and glittering arms.
Now godlike Paris, fair-haired Helen's spouse,
His shoulders in refulgent armour girt.
His legs he first encased in well-wrought greaves,
Fastened with silver clasps; then on his breast
Buckled Lycaon’s corslet (for the suit
Became him well), and o’er his shoulder slung
Huge shield, and silver-studded sword of brass,
Grasped a stout spear, and crowned his noble head
With brazen helm, whose sable horse-hair plume
Waved dreadful from above. In like array
Stood Menelaus forth, equipped for war.

When now the combatants on either side
Had donned their arms, into the middle space
Between the adverse hosts they each advanced
With eyes fierce glaring. At the sight, amaze
Seized Greek and Trojan. In the measured ground,
Near to each other, the two warriors stood—
By rage possessed—high-brandishing their spears.
Paris first hurled his lance, which as it flew,
Long shadow cast, and smote the broad round shield
Of Atreus’ son, but failed to pierce the brass,
For on the massy plate the point broke short.
Next Menelaus, uttering prayer to Jove, Rushed with his spear: "Grant, Jove, a just revenge; And let the aggressor fall beneath my hand, That men to the remotest day may dread To abuse the friendship of a generous host."

He ceased; and hurling forth his spear, that cast A length of shade, smote Paris' rounded shield. Through the bright shield the sturdy javelin sped, And through the corslet, curiously wrought, Swift gliding through the tunic by his side. But Paris, flinching from the blow, escaped Impending death. Next Menelaus drew His silver-studded sword, and lifting high, Struck his foe's crested helmet. From his hand, In many a fragment fell the shivered blade. His eyes then turning to the spacious heaven, Atrides cried aloud: "O father Jove, Of all the gods malignant most art thou! Vengeance, I deemed, was mine, and surely thought To punish the aggressor; but my sword Broke in my hands—my spear is hurled in vain."
Then seizing Paris by the horse-hair plume,
He dragged him towards the well-accoutred Greeks,
His delicate throat choked by the broidered strap
That tied the casque. And now had Menelaus
Drawn him away, and won immortal fame,
Had Venus not perceived her favourite's plight,
And snapt the leathern thong:—in his broad hand
Was left an empty helm: this whirling round,
He to his comrades tossed, and rushed again,
Eager to slay the foe with brazen spear.
But Venus easily deliverance brought,—
Such power a goddess wields,—and in thick mist
Concealing, laid him in his fragrant chamber
Odorous with richest perfumes. She herself
Went forth in quest of Helen. Her she found
Standing amid the matron dames of Troy
On lofty tower; then seizing with the hand
Her scented mantle, shook it as she spoke,
The form assuming of an aged crone,
Who erst for her in Lacedæmon dressed
White wool, and loved her with exceeding love.
In this disguise the lovely goddess spoke:
“Haste, Paris calls thee. In his perfumed chamber, Radiant with beauty, on his couch he lies
In bright attire; nor wouldst thou say he came
From battle-field, but rested from the dance,
Or to the dance was issuing forth again.”

She spoke, and kindled all the woman’s soul
In Helen’s breast, who, soon as she perceived
The goddess, by her wondrous charms revealed—
That love-inspiring neck, those glowing eyes,
And that enchanting bosom—stood, amazed;
Then spoke to her: “O marvellously fair!
Why practise upon me thy treacherous arts?
Wouldst lure me on to some well-peopled town
In Phrygia, or Mæonia’s pleasant land,
Where dwelleth favoured mortal of thy choice?
Or dost thou now beset me with thy wiles,
Since Menelaus, victor in the fight,
Would fain lead home me his detested spouse?
Go, sit beside thy Paris; and for him
Renounce the paths frequented by the gods;
Nor to Olympus bend thy steps again.
Go, watch beside him, and partake his grief,
Till he adopt thee as his wife or slave.
I go not;—I should ill endure the shame,
To tend his couch. The Trojan women all
Hereafter would deride me; and my heart
E’en now is burdened with unceasing woes.”

“Vex me not,” answered the indignant goddess,
“Lady, lest I desert thee in my wrath,
And boundless hate succeed to boundless love,—
Lest I inspire deep hatred in the breast
Of Greek and Trojan, and an evil death
Be thine.”

Dismayed the Jove-born Helen stood;
And, wrapt in dazzling veil of white, passed forth
Silent, unseen of all the Trojan dames,
By Venus led.

Reaching the halls of Paris,
Her handmaids to their several tasks repaired;
But she, of women loveliest, sought alone
Her high-roofed chamber. There, in front of Paris, 470
For her the smiling goddess placed a seat.
On this the child of Aegis-bearing Jove,
Fair Helen, sat, turning her eyes away,
And thus reproached her lord: "Hast left the field?
Would thou hadst perished, slain by valiant chief,
My husband once, whom thou in olden time
Didst vaunt thou couldst surpass in warlike feats
Of sword and javelin! Go;—defy again
The gallant Menelaus. Yet forbear;
Nor with the hero of the golden locks
Provoke rash combat, lest thou quickly fall
Beneath his spear."

"Cease, Helen, cease thy taunts," 480
Paris replied, "since now by Pallas' aid
My rival wins the day: hereafter I
Shall conquer; for gods also favour me.
Now to the couch, and there indulge in love;
For never was my soul so passion-wrapt,
So thrilled with ravishment of soft desire;—
No, not when first I carried thee away
From lovely Lacedæmon in my bark,
And Cranae's isle was witness to our joys."
Thus speaking, to the couch he led the way,
Followed by Helen, his consenting spouse.

Meanwhile, throughout the crowd, like savage beast,
In quest of Paris Menelaus roamed
Now here, now there: but vain the search: not one
Of all the Trojans or their famed allies
Could tell where he was hid:—yet no regard
Prompted concealment of the faithless prince,
Whom all detested as dark death itself.

Then spoke Atrides, sovereign king of men.
"Hear me, ye Trojans, Dardans and allies:—
With Menelaus sides the victory:
Therefore let Argive Helen be restored,
With all her treasures, and such forfeit paid,
As shall to future times record the deed."
He spoke; and shouts proclaimed the Greeks' assent.
BOOK IV.

With Jove in council sat the assembled gods
On golden pavement, while fair Hebe bore
Sweet nectar round; and they in cups of gold
Pledged each the other, as they bent their eyes
On Troy's beleaguered city stretched beneath.
Then with sharp words and taunting speech oblique
Saturnian Jove aroused proud Juno's wrath.

"Two of the goddesses who grace our court
Take part with Menelaus—Argive Juno,
And Pallas the protectress: yet these two,
Content to sit and watch him from afar,
Gaze with delight; while laughter-loving Venus
Is ever present with her favourite Paris,
Averting fate, and from impending death
E'en now hath saved him. Victory hath fallen
To Menelaus the beloved of Mars:
With us depends the great arbitrement—
Whether to wake again the din of war,
Or bind the nations in a league of peace.
If haply peaceful counsels shall prevail,
Let Priam's city be a city still,
And Menelaus lead his Helen home."

A murmur followed at the words of Jove
From Juno and Minerva, who enraged
Sat side by side devising ills for Troy.
Minerva silence held, nor spake a word,
Though with her sire indignant, and possessed
By fiercest wrath. But Juno could not curb
The rage that fired her bosom, and thus spoke:
"What words from thee, dread monarch? Wouldst thou mar,
And frustrate all my labour, all my toil,
When fainted e'en the steeds that bore me round
Collecting that vast host pregnant with woe
To Priam and his race? Have then thy will;
But deem not that we all thy will approve."
Answered in wrath the cloud-compelling Jove:
"Implacable! have Priam and his sons
So greatly wronged thee, that to overthrow
Fair-seated Troy is ever in thy heart?
Couldst thou surmount her gates and lofty walls,
Devour the flesh, and revel in the blood
Of Priam and his sons, then might thy rage
Be sated.—Have thy will, lest this dispute
Prove source of bitter strife in days to come.
But let this warning sink into thy mind.—
When I too some fair city would destroy,
Inhabited by mortals dear to thee,
Oppose me not, nor strive to turn my rage,
Since I, although reluctant, yield to thee.
For of the cities of terrestrial men
Beneath the sun and star-bespangled heaven,
Most honoured in my heart is sacred Troy,
Priam, and battle-loving Priam's race:
For there my altar never lacked rich steam
Of fat or wine—due portion of the gods."

Answered the goddess of the full bright eye:
"Three cities also are to me most dear—
Argos, Mycenæ, Sparta. Overthrow
These utterly, when hateful to thy soul.
These I grudge not; these I forbear to shield:
For should I strive to turn away thy wrath,
Vain were the attempt; so far more powerful thou.
Yet are my labours not to be destroyed:
I also am, like thee, of heavenly birth,
Sprung from the self-same lineage with thyself,
The eldest born of deep-devising Saturn,
And doubly honoured—honoured by my birth,
And by my lofty title, spouse of Jove—
Thy spouse, who rulest all the gods of heaven.
Let each now yield, and mutually submit;
So shall the rest of the Immortals own
Our high supremacy. Go thou, and send
Minerva to the battle-field, and lure
The Trojans to assail the haughty Greeks,
In violation of their plighted oaths."

Nor did the Sire of gods and men refuse,
But spoke to Pallas in these winged words:
"Haste, Pallas, to the battle-field, and lure
The Trojans to assail the haughty Greeks
In violation of their plighted oaths."

Ardent before, Minerva at his words
Was fired to greater zeal. Precipitate
Down from Olympus' lofty peaks she shot,
Like some bright meteor, which the wily son
Of Saturn hath sent forth,—portentous sign
To mariners, or mighty martial host—
All-radiant, and emitting numerous sparks;
So swift, so bright, Minerva sped from heaven,
And midway stood between the warrior bands.
In deep amazement Greek and Trojan gazed;
And clansman, answering clansman's look, thus spoke:
"Contention now, and strife shall be renewed;
Or Jove, great arbiter of peace and war,
Will join the nations in a friendly league."

While thus they marvelled, Pallas in the guise
Of brave Laodocus, Antenor's son,
Entered the camp in quest of Pandarus,
Lycaon's son, the blameless and renowned. Him she discovered standing in the midst Of shielded warriors from Æsepus' stream, 100 And, drawing near him, spoke these winged words: "Son of Lycaon, could your venturous spirit Dare aim a shaft at Menelaus' breast, Each man of Troy would hail the valorous feat With praise and honour,—princely Paris most: For could he feast his eyes upon the sight Of Atreus' son mounting the mournful pile, A victim to thy dart, he, chief of all, Would crown the exploit with surpassing gifts. Come, try thy skill; and to the archer god, 110 Lycian Apollo, vow rich hecatomb Of firstling lambs, whene'er, returning home, Thou see Zeleia's sacred walls again."

Minerva spoke, and swayed his foolish mind. Quick from the case he drew his polished bow, Wrought of the horns of a wild bounding goat, Which, as it issued from a hollow rock, He, watching stealthily in ambush, struck
Full on the breast, and stretched upon a crag.

Its antlers, that grew sixteen palms in length,

A bowyer-workman polished skilfully,

Joined at the end, and tipped with golden ring.

This to the ground inclining, Pandarus

Now deftly strung, while over him his friends

Their bucklers held, lest ere the shaft be sped,

And princely Menelaus struck to earth,

The Greeks should rise and intercept its aim.

Opening his quiver, forth a virgin shaft

He drew, full plumed, dire source of grievous pangs,

Fitted the bitter arrow to the string,

And vowed rich hecatomb of firstling lambs

To Lycian Phoebus, should he reach his home,

And see Zeleia’s sacred walls again.

Seizing the notch together with the string,

Close to his breast the ox-hide cord he drew,

And to the bow brought near the iron barb.

In circle bent, harsh twanged the bow; loud whizzed

The string; and the keen shaft, athirst for blood

Bounded impatient forth amid the crowd.
Nor thee did the immortal gods forget, 140
O Menelaus. Pallas, child of Jove,
Standing before thee, turned the dart aside,
As far as from her boy, when locked in sleep,
Fond mother drives away the troublous fly;
Then guided it with nice-directing hand
Just where the girdle’s golden buckles met,
And double corslet. Nor the embroidered work
Of girdle or of corslet stayed its force,
Nor e’en the baldrick that he wore, to guard
His breast from arrows: even this it pierced,
And grazed the surface of the hero’s skin.
Gushed instant from the wound the purple blood.

And as when Carian or Mæonian maid
Dyes the white ivory with purple tint,
To torm rich cheek-piece for some noble steed,
And in her chamber stores it, coveted
Long time by many a youthful charioteer;
But she reserves it for the king alone,
The glory of the driver and his horse;
So, Menelaus, did the sanguine stain
Thy comely thighs, thy legs and ankles dye.

Shuddered in fear Atrides, king of men,
When he beheld the dark blood flowing forth;
Shuddered e'en Menelaus, loved of Mars;
But when he saw the string and barbs outside,
The spirit gathered in his breast again.
Deep groaned the king, holding his brother's hand,
And spoke, while round him his companions mourned:
"Ah, dearest brother; ill-starred league I struck,
Exposing thee alone to fight for Greece
With enemies who trample upon oaths!
But fruitless shall not be the blood of lambs,
Libations pure, and right hands pledged in trust.
For though the Olympian hath not yet enforced
Fulfilment, yet will he exact the pledge
Hereafter; and the Trojans shall have paid
Heavy atonement for their perfidy,
E'en with their own, their wives, and children's blood.
For in my heart and soul I surely know,
A day draws near when sacred Troy shall fall,
Priam, and battle-loving Priam's race;
When Saturn's son, in ether high enthroned,
Shall shake his sable Ægis over all,
Loathing this treachery; nor shall the curse
Be unaccomplished. Yet what anguish mine,
O brother, if thou die, and now fulfil
Life's destined term! Loaded with infamy,
To Argos' thirsty soil I shall return;
For instant each Achaian breast will thrill
With fond remembrance of his native land;
And we shall leave behind the Argive Helen,
A boast to Priam and the Trojan race,
While mouldering here in Ilium lie thy bones,
In scorn of mighty project unfulfilled:
And thus some haughty Trojan will exclaim,
Leaping on glorious Menelaus' tomb:
"O that Atrides may such vengeance wreak
On all his foes,—leading a fruitless host
To Troy, and flying home with empty ships,—
The valiant Menelaus left behind!"
Thus some one will exclaim in after days.
Then may earth open wide her jaws for me!
"Cheer thee, my brother," Menelaus cried;
"Discourage not our bands. The shaft hath struck
No vital part: such stout resistance gave
The embroidered belt, the girdle underneath,
And brazen mail, by skilful armourer wrought."

Answered the monarch: "Be thy hopes fulfilled:
Meanwhile, loved brother, let the wound be probed
By dextrous leech, and remedies applied,
To soothe dark pangs."

Then turning to the herald;
"Haste, good Talthybius, and with utmost speed
Summon Machaon, Æsculapius' son,
Physician famed; and bid him succour bring
To Menelaus, whom some skilful archer,
Trojan or Lycian, with a shaft hath struck,—
Proud feat for him; for us dire source of woe."

He spoke; nor did the herald disobey.
Swift through the camp he flew, looking around
For brave Machaon. Him at last he spied
Standing, begirt by many a valiant band
Of shielded warriors from the land of Tricca, Nurse of proud steeds. Approaching him he spoke: "Haste, good Machaon, at Atrides' call, To aid his brother, whom some skilful archer, Trojan or Lycian, with a dart hath struck,— Proud feat for him; for us dire source of woe."

He spoke; and deeply stirred Machaon's soul. Through the broad camp amid the crowd they sped; But when they came where lay the wounded chief— Brave Menelaus of the auburn locks, Amid a circle of the noblest Greeks— Godlike Machaon, standing in the midst, From the close-fitting girdle plucked the dart; But as he drew it back, the barbs broke short. The variegated girdle straight he loosed, The band beneath, and belt, by artist wrought Famous in works of brass. When now he saw The wound exposed, where fell the bitter dart, He sucked the dark blood out, and skilfully Applied the soothing balms which Chiron erst Gave to his father as a friendly gift.
While these were busied round the wounded chief,
The ranks of Troy advanced with lifted shields.
The Greeks too buckled on their arms again,
Mindful of war.

Not slumbering at his post
Had godlike Agamemnon then been seen,
Nor crouching down, nor shrinking from the fray,
But all impatient for the glorious fight.
To his attendant, brave Eurymedon,
The son of Ptolemaus, he consigned
The snorting steeds, and decorated car,
Bidding him follow near, to aid his lord,
When tired in marshalling so vast a host.
On foot he visited the warlike bands,
Cheering the brave to greater confidence:
"Argives, relax not your impetuous zeal;
The mighty Jove will surely not befriend
Perfidious men. They who first broke the truce,
And violated faith—their tender limbs
Vultures shall rend; their city shall be sacked;
Their wives and babes borne captives into Greece."
Those he observed relaxing in the fight
He chid with vehemence. "Unmanly Argives!
Afraid of arrows,—are ye dead to shame?
Why stand ye gazing in astonishment,
Like fawns, that, over spacious plain pursued,
Pause, faint and weak? Wait ye, thus stupified,
Aloof from battle, till the Trojan foe
Hath reached your ships high drawn upon the beach, 270
That ye may learn if Jove in your defence
Will lift his arm?"

Thus through the ranks he strode
With lordly mien. The Cretans first he reached,
Commanded by the brave Idomeneus,
Strong as wild boar. Valiant Meriones
Brought up the rear. Delighted at their zeal,
Thus to Idomeneus the king exclaimed:
"Of all our chieftains, thee, Idomeneus,
I honour most in council and in war,
And at the feast, when wine the goblet crowns: 280
For others quaff by measure; but thy cup,
Like mine, is ever brimming full, and stands
Ready to quaff when inclination prompts.
Now to the war; and let thy noble deeds
Match thine achievements in the days of old."

Answered the Cretan chief Idomeneus:
"Atrides, count me as thy sure ally,
Even according to my plighted troth.
Spur others on, and bid fierce war revive
In all its fury.—Misery and death
Are the sure meed of violated faith."

Joyous at heart, Atrides, passing on,
Came where the two Ajaces stood in arms,
Backed by a heavy cloud of infantry.
And as a goatherd on some lofty rock
Perceives a cloud come rolling o'er the sea
Before the western blast: beheld afar,
Black e'en as pitch it seems, and with it brings
A devastating tempest:—he in fear
Drives in his flock beneath some sheltering cave;
So, close-wedged columns of impetuous youths
Bristling with shield and lance, a darkening mass,
Followed the two Ajaces. At the sight
King Agamemnon in his heart rejoiced,
And straight bespoke them in these winged words:
"Brave leaders of the mail-clad Argive host,
You I exhort not,—you I need not urge,
Eager yourselves to animate your troops.
O Jove, Apollo, Pallas:—would such spirit
Fired every breast; full soon should Ilium fall,
Captured and crushed beneath our conquering arms!"

Passing to other chiefs, Atrides found
Nestor, the clear-toned orator of Pylos,
Ranging his bands and urging them to war—
Alastor, Chromius, Pelagon the huge,
King Hæmon, Bias, shepherd of the host.
The horse and chariots in the front he placed,
With many a gallant band of foot behind—
War's firmest stay—the cowards in the midst,
Compelled to fight, albeit against their will.
First he enjoined the horsemen: "Curb your steeds,
Lest they be mixt confusedly with the crowd.
Let no one, confident in skill and strength,
Advance alone to combat in the front,
Nor yet draw back and weaken the array;
And whoso, dashing with his own car, reach
Another's chariot, forward let him stretch
With ready spear; assured this rule is best;
Since thus our fathers laid proud cities low,
Bearing this practice ever in their minds.”

Such was the veteran's counsel. At the sight
The king rejoicing, spoke: "O aged chief,
Would that thy limbs were vigorous as thy mind!
But age, the common leveller, weighs thee down.
Oh that some other prince thy years might take,
And thou be clothed again in bloom of youth!"

To him in answer spoke the Pylian chief:
"Atrides, would such strength indeed were mine
As braced my limbs when I in battle slew
The noble Ereuthalion; but the gods
Bestow not all their precious gifts at once.
Then was I young; old age now weighs me down:
Still to the charioteers will I impart
Wise words; for such the privilege of years.
Let younger men, confiding in their strength,
Rush to the war, and hurl the pointed spear."

This said, the king with joyful heart passed on,
And found Menestheus, charioteer renowned,
The son of Peteus, standing in the midst
Of the Athenian war-delighting bands.

Near stood Ulysses, deep-devising chief,
The Cephallenians too, whose valiant troops
Not yet had heard the newly-bursting shout
From Greek and Trojan marshalling their hosts,
But waited till some other Argive band
Should lead the onset, and begin the war.

Reproachfully Atrides then exclaimed:
"O son of Peteus, heaven-descended king,
And thou, all-wily, crafty-minded chief,
Why hold ye back till others lead the way,
Shuddering like cowards—ye, who should have led
The firm assault, and met the glowing fight?
Prompt ye obey my summons when the Greeks
Regale the elders. Gladly then ye feast
On roasted flesh, and to your hearts' content
Quaff honied wine; now calmly would ye gaze,
Even should ten Achaian squadrons join
In dread turmoil of war before your eyes."

Stern on the king Ulysses frowned and spoke:
"Atrides, what reproach hath passed thy lips!
Remiss in war! When next the combat glows,
Then, if brave feats delight thee, thou shalt see
The father of Telemachus advance,
Leading the van against the sons of Troy;
Yea, rashly spoken are thy words, O king."

His wrath perceiving, Agamemnon smiled,
And turned the edge of his reproachful speech;
"Heaven-born Ulysses, deep-devising prince,
Deem not of me as lavish in rebuke,
Or in command imperious: well I know
Thy friendly nature, and thy kind intent.
Go then; and if severe have been my words,
May the gods scatter them in empty air."
These left behind, Atrides took his way
Towards other chiefs, and found brave Diomed
Standing beside his car with Stenelus,
The son of Capaneus. Reproachful look
On him the monarch cast, as he exclaimed :
"Ah me, thou son of Tydeus the renowned,
The tamer of the steed! why crouch and peer
Wistfully through the opening files of war?
Not so thy noble father Tydeus shrank;
Wont aye to combat foremost in the van,
If true their story who beheld his toils
In battle-field. Him never did I see;
But his compeers report his bravery
Unrivalled. To Mycenæ once he came,
Escorted not by martial retinue,
With godlike Polynices, gathering troops
In aid of those beleaguering sacred Thebes:
Nor were we loth to grant their urgent suit;
But Jove prevented us by adverse signs.
They to Asopus' rushy stream advanced,
When Tydeus on an embassy to Thebes
The Achaians sent. Many Cadmeans there
Feasting in mighty Eteocles' halls
He found; but though a stranger, and alone
Amid those haughty youths, he knew not fear;
And challenging them oft to try their skill,
In every contest easy victory won:
So mighty an assistant Pallas proved.
Fired with resentment they on his return
Placed fifty chosen youths in ambuscade,
Led by two chieftains, Hæmon's valiant son,—
Mæon, a warrior equal to the gods,—
And Polyphontes, patient in the fight,
Son of Autophonius. Yet even these
Tydeus consigned to an ignoble death,
All, except Mæon, whom alone he spared,
Obedient to the portents of the gods.

E'en such was Tydeus, who begat a son
Haply more eloquent, but not so brave.''

He spoke. Stout Diomed no answer gave,
And bore with reverent awe the king's reproof;
But Capaneus' famed son made quick retort:
"Lie not, Atrides, when thou know'st the truth:
Prowess we boast far greater than our sires."

BOOK IV.

THE ILIAD.

127
Seven-gated Thebes, with scantier force we stormed,
Trusting to Jove and heavenly portents;—they
Perished, the victims of their own rash folly:
Compare not then our fathers' deeds with ours.”

Him with stern look brave Diomede bespoke:
“My friend, be silent, and obey my words.—
I censure not the ruler of the host
For zealously encouraging the Greeks:
His the chief glory, his the chief disgrace
Of Ilium captured, or of Greece subdued:
Come; bend we also all our thoughts to war.”

He spoke; and from his chariot leapt in arms;
While on his breast so loud the metal rang,
The sound had startled e'en the bravest heart.

As, gathering strength before the western blast,
Rolls towards the sounding shore some giant wave;
Gradual at first it rears its crest afar,
Then bellows, as it bursts upon the land;
Its hollow summit mounting o'er the rocks,
And scattering far and wide the hoary foam;
So, gathering strength, rolled onward to the fight
The Argive bands, each headed by its chief.
He only spoke: the rest in silence marched,
As though in all that mighty moving host
Voice had not been:—awe for their leaders wrought
Silence so deep; while from their varied arms
A glittering radiance shot throughout the field.
Not so the Trojans.—As at milking hour
Stand in a rich man's fold large flocks of ewes,
That often as they hear their lambs' complaint,
Raise constant bleatings; so the Trojan shout
Unceasing rose throughout that broad array.
Nor was their cry, nor were their voices one,
But many-tongued, from men of different climes.
These Mars incited, and Minerva those,
And Fear and Flight, and ever-restless Strife,
Sister and friend of hero-slaughtering Mars.
Small at the first, she soon uprears her crest,
Stalks upon earth, and lifts her head to heaven.
She now threw down contention in the midst,
Baneful to both; and through the ranks swift passed,
Redoubling all the miseries of war.
When now, approaching near, the armies met,— 470
Followed the clash of shield and spear, the shock
Of mail-clad warriors stirring all their might
To fierce encounter. Bossy bucklers joined;
And fearful was the din. Together rose
The shouts of Victory, and the groans of Death.
Earth ran with blood. And e’en as wintry streams,
Rushing down mountains from vast reservoirs,
Through deep ravine, mingle in hollow chasm
Their mighty waters; and the roar is heard
By listening shepherd on the distant hills;— 480
So, from the shock of clashing warriors rose
The shout of Triumph, and the cry of Fear.

Antilochus first slew a chief of Troy,
Brave Echepolus, fighting in the van,
Thalysius’ son:—him on his crested helm
He struck, and pierced his forehead: the swift spear
Passed through the bone; and darkness closed his eyes.
Like lofty tower he fell. Him by the feet
Elphenor seized, Chalcodon’s son, who bore
Sway o’er the lofty-souled Abantian race. 490
And dragged him from the storm of darts, in haste
To seize the armour. But the essay was short:
For watching, while he drew away the corse,
High-souled Agenor smote him in the flank,
Which, as he stooped, the buckler failed to guard.
Over his corpse a bloody conflict rose.
Fierce on each other Greek and Trojan rushed,
Like ravening wolves; and warrior warrior slew.

Then, by the hand of Ajax Telamon
Anthemion's son, young Simoësius, fell;
Whom by fair Simois' stream his mother bore,
As with her parents she from Ida came
To tend the flocks:—hence Simoësius named.
Nor did the youth requite his parent's care,—
Reft of sweet early life by Ajax' spear,
That struck him on the chest as he advanced,
And pierced his shoulder. In the dust he fell,
Like some fair poplar, that in humid mead
Grows with smooth bark, and waves its branching top,
But falls beneath the woodman's gleaming axe
To shape the fellies of bright chariot wheel,
And withering lies beside the river's bank;
So Simoïsius lay, Anthemion's child,
By godlike Ajax slain. Then Priam's son,
Antiphus, warrior of the varied mail,
Levelled his spear against the haughty Greek;
And missing him, struck Leucus in the groin,
Ulysses' faithful comrade, as he drew
The corse aside. O'er it he fell to earth;
And from his hand the lifeless body dropt.

Wrath seized Ulysses for his comrade slain.
Armed in bright mail, he strode along the front;
Then took his stand, and hurled his glittering spear,
Glaring around. Dismay the Trojans seized,
As flew the dart. Democoon it struck,
A spurious son of Priam, whose fleet mares
He tended at Abydos. Sore enraged
For his companion fall'n, Ulysses smote
Democoon on the crest: the brazen point
His temple pierced, and darkness closed his eyes:
With crash he fell; and o'er him clanged his arms.

Back drew the Trojans; even Hector quailed:
Shouted the Argives, drew the dead away,
And forward rushed. From lofty Pergamus
Looked down Apollo, and in wrath exclaimed,
Shouting: "On, Trojans, tamers of the steed;
Nor yield to Greece the glory of the day;
For not of stone or iron is their flesh,
That it should turn the piercing javelin's force:
Nor doth Achilles, fair-haired Thetis' son,
Maintain the war, but at the fleet apart
Is brooding o'er his soul-corroding wrath."

Thus dread Apollo spoke from Pergamus,
While glorious Pallas, moving through the ranks,
Aroused the Greeks where'er she saw them quail.

Fell next Diores, Amarynceus' son,
On the right ankle violently struck
With block of rugged stone, by Pirous hurled,
Chief of the Thracians, son of Imbrasus,
Who came from Ænus. The relentless mass
Crushed bone and tendons. Down he fell supine;
And to his comrades stretching forth his hands,
In anguish gasped, till he who dealt the blow
Ran in, and pierced his navel. On the ground
His entrails dropped; and darkness closed his eyes.
Short was the victor's triumph; for the lance
Of Thoas, the Ætolian, struck his breast;
And in his lungs was fixed the brazen point.
Forth from the wound then Thoas drew his spear,
Unsheathed his sword, and smote him in the midst. 560
Yet stript he not the corse; for Pirous' friends,
The Thracians of the tufted locks, closed round,
And with sharp spears repelled him from their ranks,
Brave as he was, gigantic and renowned.
Thus, stretched beside each other in the dust,
The Thracian and Epean champion lay,
With many a valiant chief around them slain.

"No ill-fought field, no paltry work of war!"
Might well have been exclaimed by one who viewed
That dreadful carnage, led in safety through 570
The storm of darts by Pallas' guiding hand:
Trojans and Greeks so numerous on the plain,
Stretched in the dust, beside each other lay.
BOOK V.

To crown with glory Tydeus' noble son,
And lift him high above the chiefs of Greece,
Was now Minerva's care. Valour and might
She gave; and kindled from his helm and shield
A ceaseless flame, like blaze of autumn star,
That brightest shines, fresh dipt in ocean's wave.
Kindling such fire around the hero's head,
She bade him seek the thickest of the fight:

There was in Troy a rich and blameless man,
Named Dares, Vulcan's priest.—Two sons had he,
Brave Phegeus and Idæus, both well versed
In arts of warfare. These beyond the ranks
Advancing now, rushed fierce on Diomed—
They fighting from their chariot, he on foot.
When now the rival combatants drew near, 
Phegeus first hurled his lance, which as it flew 
Long shadow cast. Fruitless the weapon sped 
O'er Diomed's left shoulder. Lifting high 
His javelin, rushed Tydides on the foe; 
Nor aimed in vain: on Phegeus' breast it fell; 
And from the chariot hurled him to the ground. 
Down leapt Idæus, quitting his bright car, 
Nor ventured to defend his brother's corse. 
He too had perished, but for Vulcan's aid; 
Who wrapt him in a night of sable cloud, 
Lest altogether sad and desolate 
His aged sire be left. His beauteous steeds 
The son of high-souled Tydeus drove away, 
And bade his comrades lead them to the fleet.

Fear seized the Trojans, seeing Dares' sons, 
One slain, the other flying.—At the sight, 
Bright-eyed Minerva grasped the hand of Mars, 
And thus addressed the impetuous god of war: 
"Mars, murderous, blood-stained, wall-destroying Mars, 
Were it not better that we left the field;
So, Greek and Trojan battling it alone,
Jove, as he lists, shall victory accord,
And we retiring, shun our Father's wrath?"

Thus speaking, she led furious Mars away,
And placed him on Scamander's grassy bank.

Now were the Greeks triumphant; and each chief
A warrior slew. Atrides, king of men,
First hurled gigantic Hodius from his car,
The Halizonian monarch, as he turned
In act of flight, and drove the brazen spear
Between the shoulder blades, right through his breast.
Ponderous he fell, and o'er him clanged his arms.

Idomeneus next Phaëstus overthrew,
Son of Mæonian Borus, who to Troy
From fertile Tarnè came. Him with long spear
The war-renowned Idomeneus transfixèd
In the right shoulder, as he climbed the car:
He fell; and hateful darkness veiled his eyes:
Idomeneus' attendants stripped the corse.
With pointed spear brave Menelaus slew
Scamandrius, famous hunter, Strophius' son,
Taught by the skill of Artemis herself
To strike all beasts that crop the mountain shrub.
But even she—the shaft-delighting maid—
Availed not then; nor all the bowman's craft
That graced his youthful arm in days of old:
For as he fled before fierce Atreus' son,
The war-famed Menelaus smote his back,
And drove the spear between his shoulder blades:
He fell; and over him his armour rang.

Meriones Phereclus next assailed,
Son of Harmonides, artist well-skilled
To fashion with his hands all cunning work,
Since Pallas loved him with exceeding love:
And he for Paris built the well-poised ships,
Pregnant with woe to all the sons of Troy,
And to himself, unskilled to read aright
Heaven's oracles. Meriones o'ertook
The flying chief, piercing his dexter hip;
And through his bladder passed the brazen point
Beneath the bone. Uttering a bitter cry, 
As on his knees he fell, Death wrapped him round.

Meges next slew Antenor's spurious son, 
Pedæus, whom the beautiful Theano, 
To please her lord, had nurtured as her own. 80
Renowned Phylides smote him in the neck, 
And drove beneath his tongue the pointed dart 
Right through his jaw. Prone in the dust he fell, 
Biting the chilly weapon with his teeth.

Eurypylus, Evæmon's son, next slew 
Hypsenor, high-souled Dolopion's child, 
Priest of Scamander, by the people held 
In reverence as a god:—him as he fled, 
Eurypylus, Evæmon's noble son, 
O'ertook; and springing with his sword behind, 90 
The shoulder struck, and lopped his heavy arm. 
The severed limb fell bleeding to the ground: 
Stern Fate and purple Death his eyelids closed.

Thus toiled the warriors in the strenuous fight.
But Diomed—'t were difficult to tell
Whether to Greek or Trojan he belonged;
For through the plain he rushed, like river swoll'n
By wintry stream, whose rapid tide hath burst
Opposing dykes; for fenced dykes, nor walls
Of blooming vineyards can resist its force,
When, by the storm of mighty Jove impelled,
Sudden it rushes down, and in its rage
Brings desolation on the labourers' toils.
Thus quailed before Tydides' single arm
The whole united phalanxes of Troy.

When Pandarus, Lycaon's far-famed son,
Saw Diomed thus dashing o'er the plain,
And bursting through the phalanxes in front,
He drew his bended bow, and aimed a shaft,
That falling in the hollow of his mail,
Pierced the right shoulder, and swift passing on,
Distained the corslet with his purple gore.
Loud cheered his troops Lycaon's valiant son:
"Courage, bold Trojans, tamers of the steed;
My dart hath reached the bravest of the Greeks;
Nor long, I deem, will he survive the blow,
If truly by Apollo's auspices
I came from Lycia."

Boastingly he spoke;
For that swift dart tamed not great Diomed:
Backward he drew, and as he dauntless stood
Before his coursers, Stenelus addressed:
"Haste, quit thy car, loved son of Capaneus,
And from my shoulder pluck this bitter shaft."

Thus Diomed.—Him Stenelus obeyed,—
Leaped from the car to earth, and standing near,
From out his shoulder plucked the piercing dart.
Quick through the twisted tunic gushed the blood.
Then brave Tydides raised his voice to heaven:
"O daughter of the Ægis-bearing Jove,
Invincible;—if ever thou didst stand
My father's friend or mine in battle-shock,
Befriend me now, Minerva, with thy aid,
And bring within my javelin's reach the man
Who stealthily hath struck me, and declares
That never shall mine eyes again behold
The sun's bright beam."

Such was the hero's prayer.

Athenè heard, and rendering all his limbs
Buoyant—his feet below and hands above—
Spoke in her favourite's ear these winged words:
"Courage, good Diomed, and brave the war;
For in thy breast have I inspired the might
Of Tydeus, thy indomitable sire,
Who in his chariot fought with lifted shield.
The mist that dimmed thy sight I have removed,
So shalt thou now distinguish forms divine
From those of mortal men. If then a god
Descend to prove thee, put not forth thy strength
In fruitless contest; but if Aphroditè,
Daughter of Jove, provoke thy hardihood,
Fear not to wound her with thy brazen lance."

This said, bright-eyed Minerva left the field:
Tydides mingled with the foremost ranks;
And though before impatient to engage,
With threefold ardour now his courage glowed;
Like lion, whom the shepherd of a flock
Hath wounded as he leapt into the fold,
And stirred to greater rage. The shepherd flies
Home in despair; and the deserted sheep,
One on the other huddled, quail in fear.
From out the fold triumphantly bounds back
The impetuous beast; so fiercely Diomed
Rushed on the Trojans.

First with brazen spear
He smote renowned Hypeinor in the breast;
And with his mighty falchion cut away
The collar bone of brave Astynous,
Rending his shoulder from the neck and back.
Abas and Polyides then he chased,
Sons of Eurydamas, an aged seer,
Who to his children setting forth for Troy
No warning counsel and prediction gave:—
Tydides the unhappy brothers slew.

Xanthus and Thöon next he overtook,
Loved sons of Phænops, born when past his prime;
And he, a victim to infirm old age,
Had reared no other son to be his heir.
Tydides slew them both, and bitter woes
Left to their sire, not destined to receive
His sons alive, returning from the war;
And strangers the inheritance enjoyed.

Two sons of Dardan Priam next he slew,
Borne in one chariot, Chromius and Echemmon:
And as a lion springing on a herd
That graze in woody thicket, breaks the neck
Of ox or heifer; so did Tydeus' son
Hurl both the chiefs reluctant from their car,
And of their arms despoil. The beauteous steeds
His faithful comrades to the galleys led.

Him mowing down the ranks Æneas saw,
And hastened through the crash of spears, in search
Of godlike Pandarus, Lycaon's son.
The brave and blameless hero soon he found;
And, standing in his front, bespoke him thus:
"Where, Pandaros, thy bow and feathered shafts?
Where that renown pre-eminently thine
Here and in Lycia, where no bowman proud
Thy skill would challenge? Raise thy voice to Jove,
And pierce yon haughty warrior who hath wrought
Such ills to Troy, and slain our mightiest chiefs;
If he indeed be man, and not a god
Incensed for the neglect of sacrifice:
For fearful is the wrath of deity."

To him in answer famed Lycaon's son:
"O thou, Æneas, counsellor of Troy—
Yon warrior's shield, his helmet and his steeds—
All these proclaim him, as I mark them well,
The son of warlike Tydeus, if indeed
He be of earthly, not of heavenly mould;
But if a mortal, and brave Tydeus' son,
Not without aid divine his fury glows;
And one of the Immortals, wrapped in cloud,
Hath turned away my powerful shaft, that late
Pierced his right shoulder through his coat of mail.
I deemed that I had hurled him down below
To Hades; but I failed to quell his might:
Surely some angry god his semblance wears.
Chariot nor horse I have, equipped for war;
Yet in Lycaon's halls I left eleven
Gorgeously finished cars, new-built, and wrapt
In splendid coverings. At the side of each
Stand coursers, yoked in pairs, feeding on rye,
And pure white barley. When erewhile I left
Aged Lycaon in his sumptuous halls,
Oft he indeed enjoined me mount my car,
And lead the Trojans to the battle-shock.
But I obeyed him not (would that I had),
Fearing my coursers, used to plenteous fare,
Should pine in crowded town for want of food.
My steeds thus left, I came on foot to Troy,
Confiding in my bow, destined, alas!
To play me false; for even now I struck
Two of the bravest chieftains with my shafts—
King Agamemnon, and bold Tydeus' son—
And drew true blood from each; but wounds excite
Their rage the more. Ill-omened was the day
I took my bow and arrows from the wall,
And, all for Hector, led my Trojan bands
To lovely Ilium. If returning hence,
'Tis granted to these eyes once more to see
My wife, my country, and proud palace-halls,
Let my head fall beneath a stranger's sword,
If I consign not to the flames this bow;
So faithless a companion hath it proved."

Answered Æneas: "Speak not so, my friend;
Ere that befal, let us his valour prove,
And rushing with our coursers to the charge,
Confront the chief in arms. Mount thou my car,
And learn how excellent the steeds of Tros—
Swift to pursue, or scour the plain in flight.
Safe to the city they will bear us back,
Should Jove befriend Tydides. Take the lash,
And shining reins, while I direct the spear;
Or stand the onset thou—I drive the car."

Replied famed Pandarus: "Guide thou thy steeds
Thyself, Æneas; for should Tydeus' son
Force us to fly, their master's practised hand
Would guide them best, lest missing thy known voice,
Restive they swerve, and terrified, refuse
To bear us homeward from the battle-field;
So brave Tydides, rushing fiercely on,
Shall slay us both, and make the steeds his own. 260
Do thou thy coursers and thy chariot drive;—
I, with my spear his onset will await."

Mounting their glittering car, the ardent chiefs
Against Tydides turned the rapid steeds;
But Stenelus, famed son of Capaneus,
Saw them advance, and spoke these winged words:
"O Diomed, in whom my soul delights!
I see two warriors measureless in strength
Advancing to assail thee—Pandarus
The one, expert in archery, who boasts
Lycaon's blood—the other great Æneas,
Who from Anchises bears descent, and claims
Venus his mother. Haste, and with the steeds
Quit we the field, nor risk thy precious life,
Heedlessly rushing through the foremost ranks."
Him with stern look bold Diomed rebuked:
"Speak not of flight; such counsel I disdain.
It is not in my father's son to quail,
Or crouch in danger's hour. Unshaken still
My strength remains. I scorn to mount the car,
And even thus on foot will meet the foe;
Pallas Athenè bids me fear despise.
Nor shall these chiefs, if one indeed escape,
Both drive their coursers back to Ilium's walls.
But in thy memory this injunction store:—
Should Pallas in her wisdom grant to me
A victory over both;—do thou detain
Our coursers here, and to the chariot's rim
Fasten the rein; then mindful of my words,
Rush with all haste to seize Æneas' steeds,
And drive thy booty to the camp of Greece.
For they are of the progeny which erst
Jove gave to Tros, in ransom for his son,
Fair Ganymede,—fleetest of steeds on earth
Beneath the star of morning and the sun.
This breed Anchises, king of men, obtained
Stealthily, introducing mares, unknown
To king Laomedon; and of that race
Six in his palace-stalls were foaled;—the four
He kept himself, and nursed with care;—the two
He gave Æneas, terror-breathing steeds:
Seize these; immense the glory of the prize.”

Such their discourse. Meanwhile the Trojan chiefs
Drew quickly near, urging their rapid cars,
When foremost spoke the noble Pandarus:
“O Diomed, valiant of soul, thou son
Of noble Tydeus,—since my swift-winged shaft
Hath failed to quell thee, I my spear will try.”

He spoke; and brandishing his spear, that cast
A length of shade, struck Diomed’s round shield.
Through this the weapon flew, until it reached
His breastplate, when Lycaon’s gallant son
Exulting cried: “Ha! I have pierced thy breast:
Survive thou canst not:—thou hast left to me
Imperishable glory.”

Undismayed
Answered Tydides: "Thou hast missed thy aim; Nor will ye rest till one at least, I deem, Sate with his blood the sturdy warrior Mars."
Swift flew his spear; and by Minerva's hand Guided, it pierced the nose, beside the eye,— Passed his white teeth, and cutting through the tongue, Forced its way out at last beneath the chin. Prone from the car he fell, and round him clanged His radiant armour. The affrighted steeds Drew back; and from his limbs the spirit fled.

Quick rushed Æneas, shield and spear in hand, To guard the body, and around it stalked, Like lion glorying in his strength. In front Bearing his spear and shield, he shouted loud, And menaced death to all who dare approach. Then in his hands Tydides grasped a stone— A giant block, so weighty, no two men In these our days could lift it;—he with ease Upheaved the mighty mass. Ponderous it fell, And crushed Æneas' hip where turns the thigh, Breaking the socket, rudely tore the skin,
And both the tendons burst. Upon his knees
The hero dropt, resting on his broad hand;
And o'er his eyes dark Night her mantle spread.
And there had died Æneas, king of men,
But for his mother Aphrodite's care,—
Who bore him to Anchises, as he watched
His herds afield:—her snow-white arms she cast
Round her beloved son, and spread a fold
Of her bright mantle as a shield in front,
To guard him from the darts that hurtled round:
Thus secretly she snatched him from the fight.

Nor did the son of Capaneus forget
Brave Diomed's injunctions. From the crash
His own fleet coursers he withdrew apart,
Binding the rein fast to the chariot's rim;
Then rushing on Æneas' fair-maned steeds,
He drove them quickly from the host of Troy,
And gave them to Deïpylus—most prized
Of all his comrades, for their minds were tuned
To one accord:—he drove them to the ships.
Then Stenelus, remounting his own car,
Caught up the shining reins, and urged anon
The strong-hoofed steeds in quest of Diomed
With ardent zeal; but Diomed meanwhile
Was chasing with his spear the Cyprian queen,
Well knowing her a goddess void of strength,
Nor one of those who sway the wars of men—
Minerva, or Bellona—strong to raze
Proud cities' walls. When high-souled Tydeus' son
At last o'ertook her, after long pursuit,
He springing fiercely, with his javelin grazed
Her delicate wrist; and pierced the ambrosial veil
Wrought by the Graces with their own fair hands.
Forth from the wound came trickling blood divine—
Ichor—such stream as flows in heavenly veins.
For since the blessed gods partake not food,
Nor quaff dark wine, all-bloodless are their forms,
And they are called immortal. Stung by pain,
Loud shrieked the goddess, and let fall her son.
But Phoebus round him threw a sable cloud,
To darts impervious, lest the swift-horsed Greeks
Should strike him dead. "Retire, thou child of Jove,
And quit the field," with voice exulting cried
Tydides. "Is it not enough for thee
Weak women to cajole? If thou go forth
To war and feats of arms, truly I deem
Thou soon wilt shudder at war's very name."

Grievously suffering, and with pain convulsed,
Fair Venus left the crash, from out the field
By swift-foot Iris led—her delicate skin
Stained with dark hues. Now leftward of the field
She found fierce Mars reclining—his huge spear
And rapid steeds encircled by a cloud.
Down at his feet the wounded goddess fell,
And supplicating spoke: "O brother dear,
Lend me, I pray, your golden-fronted steeds,
To bear me to Olympus, where the gods
Their seats possess. Wound, by a mortal man
Inflicted, grieves me sore. With Jove himself
Tydides would contend."

At her behest
Mars lent his golden-fronted steeds; and she
Mounted the chariot, sorrowful at heart.
Iris, ascending with her, took the reins,
And lashed the steeds. 'They not unwilling flew  
To high Olympus, mansion of the gods.
There swift-foot Iris stayed her coursers' flight,
Loosed from the car, and gave ambrosial food.
Venus meanwhile fell at her mother's knees;
And in her arms Dionè took her child,
Soothed with her hand, and tenderly addressed:
"Which of the blest inhabitants of heaven
Hath wantonly thus injured thee, my child,
As though deserving of such chastisement?"

To her the laughter-loving Aphrodite:
"The wound was dealt me by proud Tydeus' son,
Because I bore from out the battle-field
My son Æneas, dearest far to me
Of all mankind. No longer is the war
A war between the Trojans and the Greeks:
The Danai now fight with the gods themselves."

Answered Dionè, goddess most divine:
"Bear up, my child, and patiently endure,
Although afflicted; for e'en we who dwell
In the Olympian mansions, oftentimes
Suffer from men, and mutual wrongs inflict.
So suffered Mars, what time Aloëus' sons,
Otus and Ephialtes, chained him fast
In dungeon-keep of brass full thirteen moons.
And then had died the insatiate god of war,
Unless his step-mother, the beautiful
Eëribœa, had revealed his plight
To Mercury, who stole him from his thrall,
Worn out already by the obdurate chain.
Juno too suffered, when Amphytrion's son
Struck her right bosom with a triple barb,
And thrilled her with intolerable pain.
Huge Pluto also a swift shaft received,
When this same hero, son of mighty Jove,
At Pylus flinging him 'mid heaps of dead,
Dire pain inflicted. Refuge thence he sought,
Grieving at heart, in Jove's imperial halls
And vast Olympus, tortured by the shaft
That pierced his shoulder, and weighed down his soul.
There Pæon healed his wound with soothing balms,
For death was powerless o'er immortal frame.
Rash, wicked, impious chief, to bend his bow
Against the gods, and even against thee,
By Pallas urged! Senseless! ill hath he learnt
That short his life who with the gods contends.
Nor ever shall he hear the name of father
Lisped by fond children clinging to his knees,
When from the raging battle he returns.
Brave though he be, let Diomed beware
Lest warrior more redoubted than himself
Enter the contest; and his prudent wife,
Adrastus' daughter, fair Ægiale,
Arouse from sleep her household with loud cries,
Wailing the loss of her dear wedded spouse—
Renowned Tydides, bravest of the Greeks.”

She spoke, and wiped the ichor from her wrist:
Instant the hand was healed,—her pain assuaged.
Juno and Pallas, looking on meanwhile,
With taunting words sarcastic turned to Jove;
And first Minerva, bright-eyed goddess, spoke:
“Would it arouse thine ire, O father Jove,
If I should tell of Aphrodité’s woes,—
How she, inveigling some Achaian maid
To doat on Trojan youth she loves herself,
Caressing her, hath grazed her delicate hand
With golden buckle?"

At Minerva’s words
Smiled the almighty Sire of gods and men;
And thus to golden Aphrodité spoke:
"To thee, my child, are other cares assigned
Than those of war. To Pallas and to Mars
Leave these; and be connubial joys thy care."

Such was the converse of the gods. Meanwhile
Tydides on Æneas rushed amain,
Though conscious that Apollo’s sheltering hand
Was raised above him,—longing, heart and soul,
To strip the Trojan of his glorious arms,
And nothing daunted by so great a god.
Thrice he rushed on with murderous aim; and thrice
Apollo dashed aside his glittering shield.
But when a fourth time, demon-like, he rushed,
With dread rebuke far-darting Phoebus cried:
"Reflect, thou son of Tydeus, and retreat;
Nor with a deity presume to vie;
Since likeness there is none between the gods
And feeble men who creep upon the ground."

Drew back Tydides at his threatening words,
Shunning Apollo's anger, who withdrew
Æneas from the throng, and placed him safe
In hallowed Pergamus, wherein was built
His ample fane. There in the holy shrine
Artemis and Latona healed his wounds,
And all his pristine strength and bloom restored.
Meanwhile Apollo of the silver bow
A phantom, like Æneas, raised, the same
In mien, in arms. Around this shadowy form
Trojans and Greeks in fierce encounter strove,
Clashing their bucklers light and ox-hide shields.
Then to infuriate Mars Apollo spoke:
"Mars, murderous, blood-stained, wall-destroying Mars,
Wilt thou not chase this madman from the field,
Who would do battle with great Jove himself?"
Venus he first sore wounded in the wrist,
Then rushed on me, impetuous as a god."

He spoke, and on the height of Pergamus
Sat down. Meanwhile in guise of Acamas,
Brave leader of the Thracians, fiery Mars
Stirred to fresh daring Priam's noble sons:
"O sons of Priam, heaven-defended king,
How long will ye permit the Achaian host
To slay your people?—even till they push
Their conquering squadrons to your very gates?
Fall'n is the chief we honoured equally
With godlike Hector. Haste, your comrade save;
Haste, save Æneas, great Anchises' son."

Fresh zeal in every breast his words awoke.
In tone severe Sarpedon then rebuked
The noble Hector:—"Whither now is fled
Thy wonted courage? Boast erewhile was thine
That thou without the Trojans or allies
Couldst hold the city, aided by thy kin
And brothers only. Vainly do mine eyes
Now look for one; all, all are crouching down
Like dogs around a lion. Your allies
Maintain the war. I to your aid am come
From distant land; for Lycia lies far hence,
Near eddying Xanthus, where my cherished wife
I left, my infant child, and fair estates,
Which he who lacks them covets in his soul.
Yet thus bereaved, I still my Lycians cheer,
And still with ardour face the war myself,
Though nought possessing here that might allure
Marauding foe. Idle meanwhile art thou,—
Not even urging others to stand firm,
And combat bravely in their wives' defence.
Beware, lest caught in wide-enclosing net,
Enemies mock you, and fair-seated Troy
Be laid in dust. Behoves thee night and day,
Revolve these weighty matters in thy breast,
And urge the leaders of your famed allies
Boldly to press the war, and from reproach
Rescue the fame of now beleaguered Troy."

Thus spake Sarpedon; and his bitter taunt
Stung Hector's soul. Anon he leapt in arms
Down from his car to earth; and brandishing
Sharp-pointed javelins, roamed throughout the host,
Urging his men, and woke a grievous strife.
Instant they turned, and rallied to the war,
Their foes confronting; but the Greeks stood firm,
Meeting the furious onset undismayed.
And as, where swains are winnowing, the light chaff
Flies o'er the sacred floors before the wind,
When golden Ceres parts the husk and grain,
And all the threshing ground is whitened o'er;
So, when the chariots turned, and hosts again
Commingling met,—rose to the brazen heaven
Dense clouds of dust from many a courser's hoof;
And one white cloak of sand enwrapt the Greeks.
Strong hands advanced. Now o'er the battle-field
Impetuous Mars a night of darkness spread,
To aid the Trojans, zealous as he flew
From host to host, fulfilling the behest
Of Phoebus, bearer of the golden sword,
Who bade him rouse the Trojans, when he saw
Pallas, defender of the Greeks, depart.
Meanwhile Apollo from the well-stored shrine
Brought forth Æneas, and renewed his heart
With manly vigour. Now again he stood
Among his comrades, who with joy beheld
Their chief alive, and to his former strength
Restored; but questions asked they none—employed
In other toil—toil by Apollo raised,
By slaughtering Mars, and ever-restless Strife.

Now either Ajax, and brave Diomed,
Together with Ulysses, cheered the Greeks.
They, reassured, nor shout nor onslaught feared—
Immovable, like clouds that in a calm
Jove hath suspended on some mountain brow
Motionless, while the might of Boreas sleeps,
And all the winds, whose shrill-toned blasts disperse
The shadowy vapours. Firm and undismayed
So stood the Danai; while throughout the host
Atrides passed, thus cheering on his troops:
"Courage, my friends; acquit yourselves like men,
Who, fighting in each other's sight, enhance
The love of glory by the dread of shame:"
So, few will perish; many will survive:
But cowards neither fame nor safety win."

He spoke; and hurling his swift javelin, struck
The comrade of magnanimous Æneas,
Deicoön, the son of Pergasis,
A valorous chieftain, equal in repute
With Priam's sons, and ever in the front
Of battle found. Swift passing through his shield,
Atrides' weapon tore the hero's belt,
And pierced him in the chest. Ponderous he fell;
And over him his brazen armour rang.
Æneas next two Danaan chiefs subdued—
Great warriors—Crethon and Orsilochus,
Sons of the wealthy Diocles, who dwelt
In well-built Phera, and his lineage drew
From the broad stream Alphæus, that divides
The Pylian land. Orsilochus his son
Was prince o'er many nations, and begot
The high-souled Diocles, to whom were born
Twin sons, Orsilochus and Crethon, skilled
In war.—Manhood attained, they with the Greeks,
To avenge the Atridæ, sailed to Ilium's shores;
And there the hapless brothers met their doom:
E'en as two lions, by their mother reared
Amid the thickets of some lofty mount,

Seize sheep and oxen, and lay waste the folds,
Till banded rustics slay them with the spear;
So, by Æneas pierced, these warrior-youths
Lay like two lofty pines along the plain.

Pitying their fall, quick to the front advanced
Brave Menelaus, armed in gleaming brass,
Shaking two pointed spears, inspired of Mars,
Who sought to slay him by Æneas' hand.
His danger saw Antilochus, the son
Of high-souled Nestor. To the van he rushed,
In terror for the leader of the host,
Lest vain be all the labour of the war.
With hostile spears they stood, eager to fight,
When to the aid of Menelaus flew
Antilochus. Nor did Æneas dare
Maintain his ground—although expert in war—
Beholding the two champions side by side,
Who, drawing back the corpses of the slain,
To their attendants gave the hapless youths,
Then mingled in the foremost ranks again.

Now fell Pylæmenes, hero like Mars,
Chief of the noble Paphlagonian band.
Him Menelaus, famous with the spear,
Smote on the collar-bone. Atymnius' son,
Mydon, his brave attendant, shared his fate,
Struck on the elbow by Antilochus
With ponderous stone, while wheeling round his steeds.
Dropt from his hands the ivory-studded reins;
And Nestor's son swift-rushing, sword in hand,
Shattered his temple. From the well-built car
Precipitate he fell, gasping for breath,
And in deep sand alighting, there long stood
On head and shoulders, till his wildered steeds
Struck a chance blow, and rolled him in the dust.

These to the camp Antilochus now drove,
Not unobserved of Hector, who pursued,
Shouting aloud with all his squadrons, led
By Mars and fierce Bellona;—she exciting
Tumultuous rout;—Mars shaking in his hand
A giant lance, and now in Hector's front
Raging incensed, now thundering in his rear.

At sight so fearful, Diomed himself
Shuddered. As devious traveller who has crossed
A wide extent of plain, and reaching now
Some rapid-flowing stream that seaward runs,
Views with dismay the furious breakers' foam,
And starts in terror back; so quick recoiled
Stout Diomed, and to his comrades cried:
"Friends, what a marvel is the noble Hector,
Valiant in fight, and skilful with the spear!
Some deity is ever at his side,
Who wards off death; and near him now stands Mars
In mortal garb arrayed. Then towards the foe
Your faces turn; but step by step retreat;
Nor with the gods unequal combat wage."

As thus Tydides spoke, near him approached
The Trojan bands. Then Hector slew two chiefs
Borne in one chariot, practised with the spear,  
Menesthes and Anchialus. Their fall  
With pity Telamonian Ajax saw,

Instant drew near, and hurling his bright lance,  
Struck down Amphius, son of Lelagus,  
Who dwelt in Pæsus, rich in flocks and corn,  
By unpropitious destiny impelled  
To succour Troy. The Telamonian spear,  
Piercing the belt, within his bowels sank:  
Thundering he fell. To spoil him of his arms  
The victor rushed; but javelins bright and sharp  
Rained on his shield. Nathless upon the corpse  
He pressed his heel, and drew his weapon forth;  
But vainly from his shoulders sought to strip  
The beauteous armour,—by that storm of darts  
Discomfited, and fearful lest the foe  
Should hem him round; for Trojans many and brave  
Rushed on with pointed spears; and he, close pressed,  
Was driven by force of numbers to retreat,  
Although so strong, so valiant, so renowned.

Thus toiled the combatants in strenuous fight.—
Then powerful Fate impelled Tlepolemus,  
The strong and valorous son of Hercules,  
Against divine Sarpedon. And now met  
The son and grandson of cloud-gathering Jove;  
When first Tlepolemus addressed his foe:  
"Sarpedon, Lycian counsellor, what need  
Here to come skulking, ignorant of war?  
Falsely they speak who call thee son of Jove;  
So far inferior thou to those brave chiefs  
From Jove descended in the days of yore.  
Ah! how unlike to thee was Hercules,  
My toil-enduring, lion-hearted sire!  
He erewhile coming hither to demand  
The promised steeds from king Laomedon,  
With but six gallies, and a scanty train,  
Laid Ilium low, and widowed her fair streets.  
Dastard thy spirit; dwindling is thy host;  
Nor wilt thou prove, I deem, a help to Troy,  
Although a Lycian, and renowned in war,  
But pass to Hades' gates, by me subdued."

To him the Lycian chief: "Tlepolemus,
Truly thy vaunted father overthrew
The walls of sacred Troy, in just revenge
For the mad folly of Laomedon,
Who ill requited benefits received;
And, loading him with harsh reproach, denied
The steeds he came for from such distant land.
But vain thy boast: my spear shall send thy soul
To steed-famed Pluto; and the deed achieved,
To me in endless glory shall redound."

Sarpedon spoke: anon Tlepolemus
Lifted his ashen lance; and from their hands
At the same moment flew the mighty spears.
Sarpedon struck his foeman on the neck;
And through it passed the pain-inflicting point:
Over his eyes dark Night her shade o'erspread.
Tlepolemus the victor chieftain struck
On the left thigh, and grazed the very bone;
But Jove, his sire, averted death.

His friends
Now bore divine Sarpedon from the field,
Convulsed with pain; but in their busy haste
To lift the hero to the car, not one
Had noticed, or had thought of drawing out
The ashen spear, that in the wound infixed,
Trailed on the ground, and hindered his ascent.
The Greeks too bore Tlepolemus away.
At the sad sight, Ulysses' patient mind
Was greatly moved; and in his heart and soul
He pondered, doubtful whether to pursue
The son of Jove, or havoc deal afresh
Among the Lycian crew. But Fate forbade
Jove's valiant son should perish by his lance;
And Pallas turned his vengeance on the crowd.
Alastor, Chromius, Coeranus he slew,
Alcander, with Noëmon, Prytanis,
And Halius. Numbers more he still had slain,
But Hector marked his course, and through the front
Advancing, in resplendent brass arrayed,
Brought terror to the Greeks. At his approach
The son of Jove revived, and mournful spoke:
"Brave son of Priam, leave me not a prey
To Argive foes; and let me breathe my last
Within your walls; so shall I die content,
Since Fate forbids me to behold again
My native land, and gladden my loved wife,
And infant child."

No answer Hector gave,
But through the ranks full rapidly flew past,
On slaughter bent. Under the beech-tree’s shade—
That fairest beech of Ægis-bearing Jove—
Divine Sarpedon by his friends was laid;
And from his thigh illustrious Pelagon—
The one of all his comrades most beloved—
Drew forth the dart. Fainted the wounded chief;
And o’er his eyes a darksome mist was spread:
But soon his breath returned; and the keen breeze
Of Boreas gently fanning him around,
Fresh life imparted to his gasping soul.

Meanwhile the Argives, sore-assailed by Mars,
And brass-mailed Hector, neither stood to fight,
Nor to their vessels fled, but yielded ground,
Hearing that Mars was in the field for Troy.
Declare, O Muse, who first, who last were slain
By brazen Mars and Priam's valiant son:—
The godlike Teuthras, and famed charioteer
Orestes, Trechus from Ætolia's land,
Œ nomaus, and Helenus, the son
Of Œnops, and Oresbius, graced with belt
Of varied colours, who in Hylè lived,
Nursing his wealth beside Cephissus' lake,
Where other rich Bœotians tilled their lands.

When Juno saw the slaughter of her Greeks,
To Pallas she addressed these winged words:
"Alas! unconquerable child of Jove!
Vain promise we to Menelaus made
Of safe return, proud Ilium's walls o'erthrown,
If Mars we check not in his mad career.
Haste; let us also mingle in the war."

She spoke; nor did Minerva disobey.
Then Juno, daughter of the mighty Jove,
Dread, venerable goddess, with all haste
Prepared her golden-fronted steeds for fight,
While Hebe to the iron axle fixed
The eight-spoked wheels of brass, whose fellies shone
With undecaying gold. The tires were brass,
A wondrous work: silver the naves: on thongs
Of silver and of gold the chariot hung:
Two circling rims in front; silver the pole:
To this she bound the splendid golden yoke,
And through it passed the straps of burnished gold.
Juno herself the swift-winged coursers led,
Impatient for the battle and the shout.

Minerva, child of Ægis-bearing Jove,
Showered down on her celestial father's floor
The variegated robe her hands had wrought,
And buckling on the corslet of her sire,
Made preparation for the mournful war.
She decked her shoulders with the dreaded Ægis,
With fringes girt, and garlanded with Fear:
In it were pictured Discord, Force, and Rout;
In it the Gorgon monster's dreadful head,
Portent of Ægis-bearing Jove. Her brow
She crowned with golden helm, mounted with studs,
And four-fold crest,—in which might be contained The marshalled armies of a hundred towns.
Her flaming car she mounted, seized her spear, Huge, ponderous, strong, with which she overthrows The ranks of heroes, doomed to feel her wrath— Child of a mighty father. With the lash Juno the coursers urged. At her approach Spontaneous opened wide the gates of heaven, Kept by the Hours, to whom is given in charge, The vast Olympus, or to block the approach With heavy cloud, or roll it darkling back. Passing through these, they found imperial Jove High-seated, from the other gods apart, On many-cragged Olympus’ loftiest peak. There white-armed Juno stayed her rapid steeds, And thus ‘bespoke the ruler of the skies: “O father Jove, shall Mars his thousands slay, And thou unmoved behold these ruthless deeds, That wring my heart, while quietly look on Venus, and Phœbus of the silver bow Delighted, and spur on the insensate god, Unknowing of restraint? O father Jove,
Wilt thou be angry if with grievous stripes
I scourge fierce Mars, and drive him from the field?"

To her replied the cloud-compelling Jove:
"Against the cruel god do thou incite
Warlike Minerva. She hath learnt the art—
Practised full well—to vex him with sharp pains."

He spoke: nor did Minerva disobey.
Lashing her steeds, they, not unwilling, flew
Midway 'twixt earth, and heaven's star-spangled vault.
As far as one high seated on a rock,
And looking o'er the dark expanse of ocean,
Can compass at a glance;—through such a space
Sprang the loud-neighing coursers at a bound.
When now they came to Troy, and to the spot
Where Simois and Scamander's streams unite,
There white-armed Juno stayed her rapid steeds,
Loosed from the car, and spread thick mist around,
While Simois' stream gave forth ambrosial food.
Like timid doves the goddess pair advanced,
Eager to aid the Greeks. Arriving now
Where round the might of valiant Diomed
Warriors the bravest and most numerous stood,
Compact, like raw-fed lions, or like boars,
Of sturdy strength, not easily subdued,
There Juno stayed her course, shouting, in guise
Of high-souled Stentor of the brazen voice,
That reached as far as shout of fifty men:
"Shame, Argives, who in form alone excel!
Mock heroes! While divine Achilles fought,
The Trojans dare not pass beyond the gates,
So great their dread of his resistless spear:
Now, to our very ships, far from the town,
They push the war."

She spoke; and roused fresh zeal
In every breast. To valiant Diomed
Minerva came. Him near his steeds she found,
Cooling the wound that Pandarus had dealt.
Chafed was his arm with pressure of the strap
That held his buckler, and his hand fatigued.
Lifting the belt, he wiped away the gore,
When, touching with her palm the chariot's yoke,
The goddess spake: "Oh, how unlike his sire
Is Tydeus' son! Tydeus, though slight of frame,
Was great in fight. What-time he left the camp
Of Greece, and came ambassador to Thebes,
Amid a host of the Cadmean youths,
I bade him not provoke them to engage
In feats of arms, or give his ardour rein,
But share the banquet in their peaceful halls.
Yet he retaining all his own high spirit,
Challenged them oft, and victory ever won
Easily; so effectual was my aid.
As at thy father's side erewhile I stood,
So stand I now by thee, and bid thy soul
Rise with the rising war.—Depressing toil
Deadens thy limbs, or spirit-crushing fear
Unmans thee. Be no longer deemed the son
Of valiant Tydeus, sprung from Æneus' race."
Then answered Diomed: "I know thee well,
Thou daughter of the Ægis-bearing Jove;
Freely I therefore speak:—Nor heartless fear,
Nor sloth enthrals me; but I bear in mind
Thee, and thy strict injunctions—to refrain
From all encounter with the blessed gods, 
Unless Jove's daughter, Venus, should descend 
To battle: her I wounded with my spear. 
Thus at thy bidding, I myself retreat, 
And gather round me here the warrior band, 
Since Mars, I see, is in the field for Troy."

To him the goddess of the flashing eye:
"Tydides Diomed, my soul's delight! 
Quail not beneath this Mars, or other god,—
Secure in my protection. Whirl thy steeds 
Against him first, and strike him hand to hand; 
Nor have respect for this infuriate Mars, 
This mad, destructive, fickle partisan, 
Who late to me and Juno gave his plight 
Of succour to the Greeks, yet now forsooth 
Forgets his word, and sides with perjured Troy."

Thus saying, with strong hand she seized the son 
Of Capaneus, and dragged him from the car, 
Mounted herself, and by Tydides sat, 
While groaned the axle underneath the load—
Goddess so dread, and hero so renowned.
She seized the reins, and to elude the sight
Of Mars, concealed her head in Pluto's helm;
Then lashed her steeds against the god, elate
With slaughter of gigantic Periphas,
Ætolia's pride, Ochesius' famous son.

Seeing illustrious Diomed, dread Mars
Left Periphas extended on the plain,
And rushed amain against fierce Tydeus' son.
When now the combatants approached, Mars first
Over the yoke and reins stretched forth his arm,
Grasping a brazen spear, on slaughter bent;
But bright-eyed Pallas seized it with her hand,
And from the chariot turned its fruitless aim.
Brave Diomed next hurled his brazen spear:
This Pallas guided on, piercing the belt
That girt fell Mars, and tore his tender skin:
Then, as she drew the dart from out the wound,
Stung with sharp pain, loud bellowed brazen Mars,—
Loud as the shout ten thousand warriors raise,
Closing in dread encounter. Trembling seized
Trojan and Greek;—so roared insatiate Mars.
Like the dim haze that in the sky appears,
When hot and sultry blows a noxious wind;
So brazen Mars to Diomed appeared,
As, mingled with the clouds, he heavenward rose. 940
Reaching Olympus, mansion of the gods,
Grieving he sat beside Saturnian Jove,
Showed the immortal blood that from the wound
Profusely gushed, and spoke these winged words
With lamentable voice: "O father Jove,
Canst thou unmoved these ruthless deeds behold?
Dire are the ills we gods oft-times endure
One from the other, through our love to man.
Thee we all blame,—sire of a frenzied child,
Destructive, ever bent on lawless acts.
All other gods are subject to thy sway,
And yield to thee obedience:—she alone
Enjoys full licence to indulge her will,
Checked not by thee in action or in speech,
Because thy daughter. She alone hath urged
Imperious Diomed to vent his rage
Against the Immortals. Venus first he struck,
In close encounter, on her delicate wrist,
Then, like a demon, furious rushed on me:
And had my speedy feet not borne me off,
There had I long been doomed to suffer woe,
'Mid heaps of slain; and, since I might not die,
Been bruised and beat by storm of pitiless blows."

Him, frowning, answered cloud-collecting Jove:
"Bring not to me, vile waverer, thy complaints.
Of all the Olympian deities art thou
The most detested—thou whose chief delight
Is blood and battle. In thy bosom dwells
Thy mother Juno's fierce unbending spirit,—
Spirit e'en I have scarcely power to check.
From plots of her invention flow, I ween,
Thy grievous pangs. Yet mayst thou not endure
Affliction long:—thou art my son:—to me
Thy mother bore thee; else hadst thou been plunged
Long since below the sons of Uranus."

He spake; and summoned Pæon's dexterous aid,
Whose pain-assuaging balms soon healed the wound;
For fashioned not was he of mortal mould.
And e'en as juice of figs soon curdles milk,  
When by the mixer quickly stirred; so soon  
Did skilful Pæon heal impetuous Mars.  
Then laved by Hebe, and his limbs arrayed  
In bright apparel, near Saturnian Jove  
He sat, exulting on his glorious throne.

Thus having forced proud Mars to quit the field,  
Back to the mansions of immortal Jove  
Minerva and the Argive Juno sped.
BOOK VI.

The gods no longer mingling in the war,
This way and that the tide of battle rolled,
As Greek and Trojan hurled the brazen spear
'Twixt Simois' and Xanthus' flowing streams.

Now Ajax Telamon, bulwark of Greece,
First broke a Trojan phalanx, and a light
Brought to his comrades, wounding Acamas,
The noblest chieftain of the Thracian band,
Eysorus' son, the beautiful and brave.
Him on the crested helm huge Ajax struck;
Deep in his forehead sank the brazen lance,
Piercing the bone; and darkness veiled his eyes.
Next warlike Diomed slew Teutras' son,
Axylus, who in fair Arisba lived,
Of large possessions, and of generous heart;
For by the road he dwelt, and kindly gave
Welcome to all; but of his many guests
Not one brought timely aid, and snatched from death
Their generous host. He and his charioteer
Calesius, both were hurried to the shades.

Opheltius now and Dresus met their fate,
Slain by Euryalus, who next o'ertook
Æsepus, and his brother Pedasus.
These Aarbarea, naiad nymph, brought forth
To good Bucolion—a clandestine birth—
The eldest son of famed Laomedon;
For while Bucolion as a shepherd watched
The flocks, he held soft dalliance with the maid;
And she, conceiving, bore twin progeny.
Their gallant spirit, and their noble limbs,
The sons of brave Macisteus now unnerved,
And stript their shoulders of the glittering brass.
Stout-hearted Polypætes with his spear
Transfixed Astyalus; Ulysses' lance
Struck down Pidytes, the Percosian chief;
Teucer the godlike Aretaon pierced;
Antilochnus, a son of Nestor, smote
Ablerus with his spear; the king of men,
Atrides, wounded Elatus, who dwelt
In lofty Pedasus, by Satnoei's banks,
Fair-flowing stream. The hero Leitus
 Caught Phylax as he fled; Eurypylus
 Melanthus spoiled; and Menelaus, loud
 In battle-cry, Adrastus took alive,
 Whose frightened steeds wild-rushing o'er the plain,
 Against a tamarisk tree the chariot dashed,
 Shattering the pole—then fled precipitate
 With other wildered coursers towards the walls,
 Where prone in dust beside the wheel he fell.
In act to strike him, Menelaus stood
 With spear uplifted; while Adrastus clasped
 His knees, and suppliant craved his forfeit life:
"Take me alive, Atrides, and receive
 Gifts from my father. In his ample halls
 Are many precious stores—brass, steel, and gold;
And when he hears that I am still alive,
Thy prisoner at the ships, he will provide
Rich ransom."

Menelaus, pity-struck,
Had sent the suppliant instant to the fleet;
But Agamemnon, hastening, interposed
With stern rebuke: "Loved brother, do thy foes
Deserve such pity? Surely they have wrought
Much service to thy house. Let none escape,
Not e'en the babe within its mother's womb;
Yea, perish all; let the whole race of Troy
Be swept away, unburied and unknown."

Atrides spoke; and in his brother's mind
Such change of purpose wrought, he with a blow
The captive spurned. Atrides in his loins
Infixed a lance. Backward the warrior fell;
When with heel planted on his breast, the king
Drew forth the ashen spear.

Nestor meanwhile
Loud shouted to the Argives: "Heroes, friends,
Followers of Mars, let no one, through desire
To carry off rich booty to the ships,
Linger behind: be slaughter all our care:
To-morrow at your leisure strip the dead.”

This said, he kindled zeal in every breast.
And now the Trojans had again been driven
Within the walls, by cowardice unmanned,
Had not the son of Priam, Helenus,
Wisest of augurs, near his brother stood,
And Hector and Æneas thus addressed:
“Ye gallant princes, upon whom devolves
The chief command, chief labour of the war,
Wisest in council, bravest in the field,—
Stand at the gates, and check the flying bands,
Lest they rush in, and hurrying to their wives,
Become a jest and triumph to the foe.
Be yours to cheer the phalanxes, while we,
Remaining here, hold the proud Greeks in check,
Though sorely harassed in this pressing need.
Do thou, O Hector, to the city haste,
And bid the royal Hecuba invite
Troy's noble matrons to Minerva's fane
In Pergamus. There, opening with a key
The sacred portals, let her spread the robe
She prizes most, the richest, and the best,
On fair-haired Pallas' knees, and vow besides
Twelve yearling beeves that never bore the yoke,
If looking down with pity upon Troy,
Our wives and tender infants, she vouchsafe
To chase from sacred Ilium Tydeus' son,
The savage warrior, terror of our hosts.
Him bravest of the Achaians I pronounce;
For never did Achilles, prince of men,
Though of a goddess born, so daunt our hearts
As this fierce chief, unrivalled in his might."

Hector, obedient to his brother's words,
Down from his chariot leapt; and brandishing
Two pointed spears, strode dreadful through the host,
Exhorting all, and roused a fearful strife.
Again the Trojans, rallying, stood their ground;
Again the Argives quailed before the foe,
Deeming some god had left the starry heaven.
To succour Troy. His troops encouraging,
Loud shouted Hector: "Ye of mighty soul,
Trojans, and ye allies of world-wide fame,
Be of good courage; quit yourselves like men;
While I, ascending lofty Pergamus,
Exhort our wives, and aged counsellors
To appease the gods with sacrifice and prayer."

This said, the chief departed, throwing back
His ample shield, whose broad circumference
Now touched his neck, now rattled at his heels.

Between both armies, eager for the fight,
Met Diomed, the noble Tydeus' son,
And Glaucus, son of famed Hippolochus.
When near each other drew the combatants,
Brave Diomed his foeman first addressed:
"Whence, and what art thou of the sons of men,
Undaunted chief? for never have mine eyes
Beheld thee in the glorious fight before,
Thine is a confidence beyond compare"
Thus to await my lance. Children are they
Of luckless parents who my strength confront.
But if from heaven thou come, and boast thyself
Of birth divine, I strive not with a god.
Not long lived stout Lycurgus, Dryas' son,
Who fought against the Immortals. O'er the height 140
Of sacred Nyssa he the nurses drove
Of frantic Bacchus. They, with ox-goad struck
By fierce Lycurgus, to the ground all cast
Their thyrsi; and the god himself affrighted
Plunged into ocean. In her bosom there
Thetis received him, trembling at the threat
Of mortal man. Act so profane displeased
The peaceful-living gods; and Saturn's son
Reft him of sight, nor did he long survive,
Abhorred by all the denizens of heaven: 150
Therefore I shrink from battle with the gods.
But if thou feedest on terrestrial food,
Draw near, and speed thee to the goal of death."

He spoke; and Glaucus answered: "Noble chief,
Of Tydeus sprung, why ask me of my birth?
The race of man is like the race of leaves;—
The summer-leaves are scattered by the wind;
But spring returns, and the reviving wood
Buds forth again: so generations change;
One springs to life, another dies away.

But wouldst thou hear the story of my birth,
A story known to many:—In a nook
Of Argos, courser-famed, stands Ephyrê,
Birthplace of SisyphusÆolides,
Subtlest of men. To him was Glaucus born;
To Glaucus the renowned Bellerophon,
On whom the gods bestowed a twofold gift—
Beauty, and manly virtue. But the king,
Prætus, to whose despotic sway had Jove
Bowed down the Argives, hated the young prince,
And drove him from the city; for the queen,
Anteia, was enamoured of the youth;
And since she could not shake his virtuous mind,
With words of falsehood she the king addressed:
'Perish thyself, or slay Bellerophon,
Who strove to lure me from my love to thee.'
Checked by religious awe, the wrathful king
Forbore to slay him, but to Lycia sent
The princely youth, with folded tablets sealed
Of fatal import, to Anteia's sire.
Guided by Heaven, to Xanthus' stream he came.
There Lycia's king received him in his halls,
And nine successive days a bullock slew.
When the tenth rosy-fingered morn appeared,
The tablets he demanded of his guest;
And from the deadly writing having learnt
The will of Praetus, bade Bellerophon
Slay the Chimæra, superhuman beast,
With lion's front, goat's body, dragon's tail;
Forth from whose throat came spouting flames of fire,
Dread to behold: yet he the monster slew,
Obedient to the portents of the gods;
Next overcame the glorious Solymi—
Task the most arduous that he e'er achieved,—
And thirdly slew the manly Amazons.
On his return, a new device the king
Prepared, and choosing out the bravest chiefs
Of Lycia, laid an ambush; but not one
E'er reached his home, for brave Bellerophon
Vanquished them all. The king, discerning now 200
His birth divine by these his glorious deeds,
Retained the hero in his palace-halls,
Gave him his daughter, and an equal share
Of all his royal dignities.—A plot
Of choicest land the Lycians also gave,
Well suited or for vineyard or for corn.
Three children blest his love, Hippolochus,
Isandrus, and the fair Laodamia,
Who bore to Jove Sarpedon, godlike chief.
But when the gods forsook Bellerophon,
Lonely he wandered through the Aleian plain,
Pining his soul away, avoiding man.
His son Isandrus met his death in war
Against the glorious Solymi. His daughter
Fell victim to the wrath of Artemis,
The golden-reined. I from Hippolochus
Derive my birth, and claim him as my sire.
He sent me forth to Troy, and many a charge
At parting gave,—'ever to lead the way,
And be the first among my brave compeers,
Nor shame my ancestors, the most renowned
In Ephyre and Lycia's broad domain:
Such blood and noble parentage I boast."

Bounded with joy Tydides' noble heart
At Glaucus' words. Planting in fertile earth
His shining spear, thus courteous he replied:
"Surely thou art my father's ancient guest;
For godlike Æneus in his halls of old
Received and feasted good Bellerophon
For twenty days; and they rich gifts exchanged. 230
The pledge of Æneus was a purple belt;
Bellerophon's, a double cup of gold,
Left in my mansion when I came to Troy.
(Tydeus I cannot call to memory:
I was a child what time he went to Thebes,
Where the Achaian armament was lost.)
Therefore in Argos I thy host will be,
Thou mine, whene'er I visit Lycia's land.
Avoid we combat, even in the crowd;
For many Trojans and their famed allies 240
The gods will grant to my victorious arm.
Thou, too, in combat with the Greeks, wilt prove
Thy dauntless valour. Now exchange we arms, That all may know it is our boast to claim The friendship of our sires."

This converse o'er,
The chiefs, dismounting from their chariots, clasped Each other's hands, and plighted mutual faith. But surely Jove robbed Glaucus of his wits, When golden arms for brazen he exchanged— Arms worth a hundred beeves for arms worth nine. 250

Hector arriving at the Scæan gates, Where stood the beech-tree—round about him flocked Matrons and daughters, longing each to learn How fared it with their brothers, husbands, sons, Kinsmen and friends. Answer the hero gave, Exhorting all to supplicate the gods, For many a woe impended over Troy.

Thence to king Priam's splendid courts he went Adorned with shining porticoes, wherein Were fifty chambers built of polished stone, All side by side. There with their consorts slept
The sons of Priam. Facing these arose
Twelve chambers side by side, of polished stone,
Near to each other. There the sons-in-law
Of Priam slept beside their blameless wives.
Him there his gentle-minded mother met,
Leading Laodicé, her youngest child,
Fairest of Priam’s daughters. To his hand
Hecuba clung, and thus in anguish spoke:
“Why leave the glowing battle, O my son? My fears are true. The walls are compassed round;
And thou, sore-harassed by the accursed Greeks,
Art prompted by the impulse of thy mind
To lift thy hands to Jove in Pergamus.
But stay, till I before thee set sweet wine,
That thou mayst drink, when thou hast first poured forth
Libation to the gods. Grateful is wine
To weary warrior, who like thee, my son,
Has laboured long to guard his native land.”

Answered the hero of the waving plume:
“Forbear, my honoured mother; nor upraise
The sweet delicious goblet to my lips,
Lest thou unnerve my soul, and I forget
My manhood. See these blood-polluted hands.
Oh! ask me not to lift them up in prayer,
Or pour libations forth to mighty Jove!
Becomes thee rather, bearing sacred incense,
To lead the matrons to Minerva's fane:
There spread upon the fair-haired goddess' knees
Thy richest, amplest, and most valued robe;
And vow to offer in her hallowed shrine
Twelve yearling beeves, that never bore the yoke,—
If looking down with pity upon Troy,
Our wives, and infant children, she vouchsafe
To chase from sacred Ilium Tydeus' son,
The savage Diomed, whose very look
Scatters dismay. Do thou the temple seek:
I speed in quest of Paris, if perchance
He listen to my words. Would Earth might yawn
For his destruction, whom the Olympian king
Hath nurtured in his father's halls, the curse
Of Priam and of high-souled Priam's race.
Oh! could mine eyes behold him sunk to Hades,
Then might my heart forget its joyless woe."
Then Hecuba her maidens summoning,
Bade them convene the matron dames of Troy;
Herself she hastened to her fragrant chamber,
Stored with full many a variegated robe
The work of those Sidonian maids whom erst
Paris from Sidon brought, what-time he bore
Over wide seas Helen the nobly born.
From these she chose the richest, largest robe,
A gift for Pallas, with embroidery decked,
That lowest lay, bright glittering as a star,
And took her way with all the matron train.

When now they reached Minerva's sacred shrine
In Pergamus, the beautiful Theano
Opened the gates—she whom the voice of Troy
Had chosen as Minerva's hallowed priestess,
Daughter of Cisseus, and Antenor's spouse.
To Pallas all, loud wailing, raised their hands;
Then, lifting up the robe, fair-cheeked Theano
Laid it upon the bright-haired goddess' knees,
Imploring thus the child of mighty Jove:
"Adored Athenè, goddess most divine,
Guardian of Troy, break thou Tydides' spear,
And lay him low before the Scæan gates.
So will we offer at thy sacred fane
Twelve yearling beeves that never bore the yoke,
If, pitying Troy, thou wilt in mercy spare
Her helpless babes, and sorrow-stricken wives."
Such was her vow, but Pallas heard it not.

Hector meanwhile had reached the fair abode
Reared by his brother Paris with the skill
Of Troy's best workmen—chamber, hall, and court,
Near to his own and royal Priam's dome,
In the Acropolis. There, loved of Jove,
Entered the godlike Hector. In his hand
He held a spear, eleven cubits long,
Whose brazen point, made fast with golden ring,
Shot forth a light in front. Paris he found
Within his chamber furbishing his arms,
His shield and corslet, and examining
His well-curved bow. Among her maidens sat
The Argive Helen, who assigned to each
Her task of rich embroidery. At the sight,
Hector reproached him in opprobrious words:

"Infatuate brother! Sullenness but ill
Becomes thee now. Before the lofty wall,
The people perish; and because of thee
War blazes round the city. Thou wouldst blame
Such slackness in another. Haste; to arms;
Haste, lest our city burn with hostile fire."

Him Paris answered: "Hector, thy reproach
Is just; yet hear me.—Neither sullenness,
Nor grudge against the Trojans for their taunts
Detains me here, but fond desire of grief.
My wife e'en now with soft persuasive words
Was urging me to battle; and I deem
Her counsel best; for Victory attends
Warriors by turns. Wait thou till I shall arm;
Or go; not long shall I remain behind."

Thus he: but Hector of the waving plume
Answered him not. Then Helen mildly spoke:
"O brother of a baneful, shameless woman,
Would that the day my mother gave me birth
Tempest had seized and carried me away
To desert rock, or ocean in its waves
Had whelmed me, ere such fatal deeds were wrought!
But since the gods these miseries foredoomed,
Would that a braver man had been my spouse,
Alive to feeling and reproach, unlike
This fickle prince, whose heart was never firm,
And never will be,—destined soon to reap
The bitter fruit of his inconstancy.
Yet, brother, on this seat repose awhile,
Since falls on thee the burden of my shame,
On thee the guilt of Paris. Ah, the toil,
The sorrow we have caused—by Jove ordained
Theme of opprobrious song in days to come!"

"No; gracious lady," Hector made reply;
"In vain wouldst thou invite me to repose:
I long to obey the impulse of my heart,
And succour friends in yonder battle-field,
Who there the absence of their chief regret.
Urge thou this loiterer on, and let him speed
To overtake me ere I reach the gates.
Meantime I hasten home, longing to see
My wife, my household, and my infant child:
For whether fate ordains me to return,
I know not, or if unpropitious gods
Doom me to perish here by Argive hands."

This said, the hero of the waving plume
Departed, and soon reached his princely halls,
But found not there white-armed Andromache;
For she had left her home, and with her child
And well-robed nurse was standing on the tower,
Weeping in all the bitterness of woe.
Not finding in the halls his blameless spouse,
He turned away, and on the threshold stood,
Inquiring: "Say, ye maidens, and speak truth:
Whither is gone white-armed Andromache?
Or on a visit to her well-robed sisters,
Or to the fane of Pallas, whither flock
Troy's matrons, to appease the awful power?"

Answered the faithful stewardess: "In sooth,
My honoured mistress went not from the halls,
Or on a visit to her well-robed sisters,
Or to the fane of Pallas, whither flock
Troy's matrons to appease the awful goddess;
But hence she sped to Ilion's lofty tower,
Soon as the news had reached her of the Greeks
Victorious, and of Troy discomfited:
Then to the battlements in haste she flew,
Like one distracted. At her side the nurse
Close followed with the infant in her arms."

She spoke: and Hector hastened from his home
The way he came along the well-built streets.
Through the vast city passing, now he reached
The Scæan gates, that open on the plain.
Thither to meet him ran his well-dowered wife;
Andromache, high-souled Eetion's daughter—
Eetion, who in Hypoplacian Thebes
'Neath woody Placus dwelt, Cilician king.
She, his fair daughter, now her consort met;
And with her came the nurse, upon whose breast,
Bright as a star, the infant Hector lay.
Him Hector called Scamandrius, but the men
Of Troy, Astyanax; for Hector's arm
Was Ilium's sole defence. Then on his boy
Gazing in silence, the fond father smiled,
While near him stood Andromache in tears,—
Clung to his hand, and to her husband spoke:
"O wondrous chief! alas, thine own great heart
Will be thy ruin! Pity thou hast none
Or for thy child, or me thy hapless wife,
Soon to be left thy widow—all thy foes
Assailing thee at once. Better to die,
Forlorn of thee; for other comforter
Will none remain when thou shalt meet thy doom,—
Grief my sole portion. Father I have none,
Nor honoured mother; for divine Achilles
My father slew, and sacked Cilician Thebes,
Fair-peopled city of the lofty gates.
Yet stript he not Eetion of his arms,
Through the restraint of a religious awe,
But burning him in all his panoply,
Heaped high his tomb; and the Orestiad nymphs,
Daughters of Jove, around it planted elms.
My seven brothers, whom I left at home,
Descended all to Hades in one day,
Slain by divine Achilles, as they watched
Their snow-white sheep and lazy-footed kine.
My mother, once the queen of woody Placus,
He bore away to Troy with other spoil,
But for an ample ransom freed again.
Her, Artemis, the arrow-loving maid,
Smote in her father's halls. All, all are gone!
But father, mother, brother, live in thee,
My noble, loving husband. Oh, have pity!

460 Stay with me here; stay with me on the tower;
Nor make thy son an orphan, and thy wife
A widow. Take my counsel:—post thy troops
At the wild fig-tree, where the city-walls
Are most exposed, and easiest of access,—
Thrice there assaulted by the bravest chiefs—
The two Ajaces, famed Idomeneus,
Atreus' bold sons, and warlike Diomed;
Instructed either by some heaven-taught seer,
Or by their own undaunted valour led.”

470 Answered the hero of the waving plume:
"All these thy anxious cares are also mine,
Partner beloved; but how could I endure
The scorn of Trojans and their long-robed wives,
Should they behold their Hector shrink from war,
And act the coward's part? Nor doth my soul
Prompt the base thought. Ever have I been trained
To fight amid the foremost, and to guard
My father's deathless glory, and my own.
For well doth my presaging mind foresee
A coming day, when sacred Troy shall fall,
Priam, and battle-loving Priam's race.
Yet all these threatened evils—all that Troy
Shall suffer, and e'en Hecuba herself,
And Priam, and my kinsmen many and brave,
Destined to fall beneath their foemen's steel,
Rack not my heart so deeply as the thought
Of thee a captive—thee amid thy tears
Carried to Argos by some mail-clad Greek,
And there in labour of the loom employed,
Or bearing water at a stranger's beck
From Hypereia, or Messeis' fount,—
Yielding reluctant to imperious fate.
And some one who beholds thy tears, shall say:
'This was the wife of Hector, most renowned
Of all the Trojans, tamers of the steed,
What-time the battle raged round Ilium's walls.'
Thus some one will exclaim; and fresh will flow
Thy grief for such a husband, whose strong arm
Had shielded thee from slavery's evil day.
But o'er my mouldering corse may earth be piled,
Ere thy lament and captive cry I hear.'

This said, illustrious Hector stretched his arms
To clasp the child; but with a cry of fear
Back drew the infant to the nurse's breast,
Scared at the brazen mail and horse-hair plume
That waved terrific o'er the crested helm.
Out laughed the father, and the noble mother.
Instant the hero from his brow removed
The glittering helm, and placed it on the ground,—
Kissed his loved child, and fondling in his arms,
Offered a prayer to all the immortal gods:
"O Jove, and all ye gods! let this my son
Shine, as his father shone, pre-eminent
Among the Trojans, and with vigorous arm
Rule over Ilium: so in days to come,
Some one beholding him return from war,
Bearing the bloody spoils—his foeman slain—
Shall say, 'How doth the son surpass the sire!'
And in her heart his mother shall rejoice.''

The warrior spoke: and to Andromache
Restored the babe: she, smiling through her tears,
Gently received him in her fragrant breast.
Hector beheld, and pitied her deep woe,
Caressed her in his arm, and gently spoke:
"Grieve not too deeply, my beloved;—the hand
Of mortal cannot hurl me to the shades
Before my time. When destiny draws near,
Nor brave nor coward may avert his fate.
Now home; there ply thy proper arts—the loom
And distaff: task thy maidens there. Be war
The care of men, my care above the rest."

This said, he on his brow replaced the helm.
Homeward his loved Andromache returned,
Oft looking back, and shedding many a tear.
Ere long she reached the stately-structured dome
Of gallant Hector. Gathered there she found
Her many handmaids; and in every one
Awoke the grief that burst from her sad heart.
Hector still living, they in Hector’s halls
Deplored as dead; for scarce a hope was theirs
Ever to see their honoured lord return
Safe from the war, unscathed by Argive hands.

Nor loitered Paris in his lofty courts.
Swift through the streets he flew, arrayed in arms
Glorious and bright. As courser fed in stall
On plenteous fare, and wont to bathe his sides
In flowing stream—if chance he break his cord,
Bounds o’er the plain elate, now stamps the ground,
Bearing his head aloft—and o’er his neck
Tossing his mane; anon in pride of beauty
Flies to the grassy pastures of the mares;
So from the lofty height of Pergamus
Paris, in arms all-radiant as the sun,
Exulting sped. Swiftly his nimble feet
Bore him along until he reached the spot
Where, after mournful parting with his wife,
The noble Hector stood. First Paris spoke:
"My honoured brother, I detain thee here,
And check thy ardent zeal by my delay,
Obeying not thy words that bade me speed."

To him the hero of the waving plume:
"No judge of war, good brother, will dispute
Thy prowess in the field, for thou art brave,
Though oft remiss; and sore it grieves my heart
To hear impeachment of thy fair renown
By those whose toils and sufferings spring from thee.
Haste now, and leave debate to future day,
If Jove shall haply from our shores repel
The haughty foe, and grant us to upraise,
With hands triumphant, to the eternal gods
The cup of freedom in our native halls."
BOOK VII.

He spoke; and from the Scæan gates forth rushed Illustrious Hector, and his brother Paris, Both eager in their souls to join the fight. And as to weary wistful mariner, Long toiling through the deep with polished oar, Most grateful comes at last propitious gale, Sent by some god; so to Troy's wistful hosts The brothers came.

Paris Menestheus slew, Who dwelt at Arnè, Areithous' son, Club-bearing king:—his mother the bright-eyed Philomedusa. Hector, with sharp spear Transfixed the neck of stout Eioneus Beneath his brazen helm, and quelled his might.
Glaucus, bold leader of the Lycian host—
Son of Hippolochus—struck Dexias' son,
Iphinous, on the shoulder, as he sprang
To mount his rapid chariot. On the ground
Headlong he fell; and death unnerved his limbs.

When bright-eyed Pallas saw the brother-chiefs
Slaughtering her Argives in the strenuous fight,
Swift she descended from Olympus' peak
To sacred Ilium. Her descent beheld
Apollo, looking down from Pergamus,
And rushed to meet her,—all his soul intent
On favouring Troy. Beneath the oak they met;
And first, Apollo, son of Jove, began:
"Daughter of Jove, why quit again the skies
Thus eager?—What doth thy great spirit essay?
Is victory to the Greeks thy soul's desire,
Since pity thou hast none for Ilium's woes?
Follow my counsel: Stay the war to-day;
Hereafter let fierce battle rage again,
Till consummated be the doom of Troy,
Since on its fall ye goddesses are bent."
Answered Minerva of the radiant eye:
"Glorious Far-darter! be thy will obeyed,
For with the like design I came myself
From high Olympus to the battle-field.
But say—how wouldst thou check the strife of heroes?"

Answered the king Apollo, son of Jove:
"In Hector's breast, proud tamer of the steed,
Rouse we a spirit that shall challenge forth
Some champion to contend in mortal fight;
So shall the Greeks indignant send a chief
To cope with godlike Hector."

Thus he spoke;
Nor did Minerva her consent withhold.
But Helenus, a son to Priam dear,
Was conscious of the purpose of the gods,
And thus to Hector: "If a brother's words
May move thee, O thou Jove-like counsellor,
Bid Greek and Trojan from the war desist;
Then challenge forth the bravest of the Greeks
To meet thee hand to hand in single fight;"
For I have heard the voice of heaven, and know
Thou art not doomed as yet to meet thy fate.”

He spoke; and Hector, in his heart rejoicing,
Advanced in front, holding his balanced spear,
And motioned back the phalanxes of Troy.
They all obeyed, and rested on the plain.
The Achaians too at Agamemnon’s word
Obeyed their king, and sat in silence down.
Pallas the while, and silver-bowed Apollo
Watched, like two vultures, in the lofty oak
Of father Jove, beholding with delight
The dense battalions of the rival hosts
Bristling with helmets, shields, and brazen spears.
And as when Zephyrus springs freshly forth,
A sparkling ripple over ocean spreads,
While dark appears the watery bed beneath;
So showed the adverse squadrons on the plain.
Then in the midst, the godlike Hector spoke:
“Hear me, ye Trojans, and ye well-armed Greeks,
While I declare my counsel:—High-throned Jove
Rejects the compact, and confounds the oaths,
Devising woe to both, till ye o'erthrow
Troy's stately towers, or your own doom fulfil—
Vanquished beside your swift-careering ships.
Now that Achaia's bravest sons are here,
Stand forth that chief whose soul within him burns
To fight with Hector; and be witness Jove.—
80
If he be conqueror, let him to the ships
My armour bear, but send my body home,
There to receive the hallowed rite of fire
From Troy's brave chieftains and their sorrowing wives.
Should I, by Phœbus' aid, the victory win,
Your champion's armour, from his shoulders stript,
To sacred Ilium I myself will bear,
And with the trophy deck Apollo's fane.
His body to the ships I will restore,
That Greece may fitting obsequies perform,
90
And raise his tomb beside broad Hellespont.
Then, ages hence, some later-born of men,
Ploughing the purple deep, may haply say:
'In yonder mound departed hero sleeps,
Whom, as he fought conspicuous in the van,
Illustrious Hector slew.' This shall be said; And never shall my glory pass away."

He ceased. The chieftains silent all remained— Afraid to accept the challenge—to refuse Ashamed. At last great Menelaus rose, Indignant, and reproachfully exclaimed:
"Vain braggarts, women now, no longer men! To what abyss of infamy are sunk The sons of Greece, if not one chief be found To cope with Hector! May you all, who sit Inglorious here and heartless, be to earth And water turned! Myself will meet the foe; But victory rests with the immortal gods."

This said, he buckled on his radiant arms. And now, O Menelaus, had thy life Been closed untimely—so superior far Hector to thee—had not the Achaian chiefs, Up-starting, checked thee, and the king himself, Grasping thy right hand, cried: "O heaven-born prince, Restrain thy rashness and infatuate zeal;
Nor, stung to rivalry, provoke a chief
So far above thee—Hector, Priam's son,
Whom all men dread, and e'en Achilles' self
Shudders to meet in war's ennobling strife.
Draw back. Let Greece some other champion send: 120
Yet he, though all-insatiable of war,
Gladly, I deem, will rest his weary knees,
If from the dread encounter he escape.''

This well-timed counsel in his brother's mind
Persuasion wrought. Glad his attendants stript
The armour from his shoulders. Then uprose
The aged Nestor: "Gods, what dire mischance
Hath fall'n on Greece? How heavily would groan
Peleus, the Myrmidonian counsellor,
Proud tamer of the steed, now bowed with age,
Who with delight, as in his halls he sat,
Was wont in olden times to question me
Of every Argive's ancestry and birth!
Ah! should he hear that men, erewhile his pride,
Are now all crouching down at Hector's name,
How would he lift his hands in prayer to Heaven,
That, freed from mortal bonds, his soul might pass
To Pluto's realm! O Jove, Minerva, Phoebus,
Would I were young, as when near Celadon,
Swift-flowing stream, and round Idaean,
By Phthia's walls, the assembled Pylian race
Fought with the Arcadians, under the command
Of Ereuthalion. He, a godlike chief,
Stood foremost in the van among them all—
His shoulders clad in the resplendent mail
Of Areithous, club-bearer hight
By men and bright-zoned women; for he fought
With bow nor spear, but with an iron mace
Broke through the dense battalions of the foe.
Him not by force, but guile, Lycurgus slew
In narrow pass, where nought his club availed:
For, springing on his victim unawares,
Lycurgus pierced and thrust him to the ground,
Stript of his arms—the splendid gift of Mars—
And thenceforth bore them to the war himself.
But when Lycurgus in his halls grew old,
On Ereuthalion he bestowed the mail—
His loved attendant. He, in this arrayed,
Challenged the bravest of our chiefs to fight;  
But, to a man, they all shrank back in fear.  

Then I with dauntless heart at last stood forth, 
Although the youngest, braved the perilous strife, 
And fought and conquered by Minerva's aid. 
That hugest, mightiest one, singly I slew, 
And stretched his bulky carcase on the plain. 
Would the same youthful blood now warmed my veins, 
Not long should Hector wait to find his match, 
Since ye, of Pan-Achaia's chiefs the prime, 
Shrink from encounter with his dreaded spear!"

Stung at the aged warrior's sharp rebuke, 
Nine chiefs upsprang—king Agamemnon first, 
Then Diomed, and either Ajax next, 
Clothed in impetuous valour. Following these, 
Idomeneus, and his attendant rose— 
Meriones, in prowess like to Mars, 
Eurypylus, Evæmon's far-famed son, 
Thoas, Andraemon's son, and the divine 
Ulysses—all impatient to contend 
With godlike Hector. In the midst again
Gerenian Nestor spoke: "Now let the lots Award the championship. He who escapes Unharmed the fierce encounter of to-day Will nobly serve his country, and achieve For his own soul a never-fading joy."

He spoke. Anon each hero marked his lot, And cast it into Agamemnon's helm; Then, looking to the boundless heaven above, With hands uplifted thus the people prayed:
"Grant, Jove, to Ajax, or to Tydeus' son, Or to Atrides, rich Mycenæs' king, The honoured choice."

Nestor now shook the lots, When from the helm leapt out the one they longed for, The lot of Ajax. This a herald bore To all the chiefs, beginning from the left: But each disclaimed it. Passing on, he reached Illustrious Ajax. He his hands stretched forth, Beheld the lot, and recognised his mark With joy unspeakable; then to the ground
Flung it before his feet, as he exclaimed:
“Comrades, the lot is mine; and I exult;
For victory dawns already on my sight.
Now while I don my arms, pray ye to Jove;
But, lest the Trojans hear, in silence pray;
No, pray aloud; we know not what is fear.
No one by force shall quell me, or prevail
Through my default. Not all in vain, I deem,
Nurtured and born in Salamis was I.”

Thus Ajax spoke. All offered prayer to Jove,
Their eyes upturning to the boundless heaven.
“O Jove, our Sire, most great, most glorious king,
Who from thy throne on Ida bearest rule,
Grant Ajax victory; or if equal love
Thou bear to Hector, honour both alike.”

They spoke. Anon in glittering brass arrayed,
Sallied forth Ajax, like to mighty Mars
Moving to war among embattled hosts
Whom Jove hath stirred to soul-consuming strife;
So moved huge Ajax—bulwark of the Greeks,
Glaring ferocious, as he strode immense,
High brandishing his shadow-casting spear.

Joy filled the Achaians at the sight; while fear Benumbed the Trojans: even Hector's heart
Knocked in his breast: but no retreat was left
For him who gave the challenge; nor could he
Shrink from his foeman. Ajax now approached,
Bearing his tower-like, brazen, seven-fold shield,
The work of Tychius, artist most renowned,
Who dwelt at Hylè, and this buckler wrought
For Ajax with the hides of seven fat bulls,
And overlaid an eighth strong plate of brass.

Bearing this ample shield before his breast,
Near Hector stood the Telamonian chief,
And thus in threatening words imperious spoke:
"Now, Hector, matched with me alone—alone—
Learn what unequalled warriors we possess
Beside Achilles of the lion heart.
He, cherishing fierce anger in his soul
Against Atrides, shepherd of the flock,
Lies in his sea-careering bark aloof:
But we can boast full many a gallant heart
Prepared to encounter thee. Come on; begin."
To him the hero of the waving plume:
"O Telamonian Ajax, Jove-born prince!
Think not to prove thy hardihood with me,
As with some feeble boy, or tender girl
All inexperienced in the deeds of war.
Well skilled am I in battle's murderous strife;
Well skilled am I to shift my ox-hide shield
To right or left, and fight the live-long day;
Well know I how to rush in battle-shock
With rapid car, or tread the field of Mars
With ordered step. I would not strike thee down
By stealth, but pierce thy breast in open war."

He spoke; and poised the shadow-casting spear,
And smote the seven-fold shield that Ajax bore,
Piercing the eighth and outer coat of brass.
Through six strong folds the unwearied javelin flew,
But in the last dry bull's-hide spent its force.
In turn great Ajax hurled his mighty spear,
And struck the full round shield of Priam's son.
Through his bright shield the impetuous weapon passed,
And through the corslet wrought with rare device,
And through the tunic, passing by his flank; 270
But he, quick-stooping, shunned the coming death.
Then, plucking out their weapons, each amain
Rushed on the other, fierce as raw-fed lions,
Or savage and indomitable boars.
Full on the midst of his opponent's shield
Fell Hector's javelin; but the blunted point
Pierced not the brass. Next Ajax, rushing on,
Struck Hector's shield, driving the javelin through,
And checked with sudden shock his onset fierce,
Grazing his neck, and drew forth purple blood.
Yet not for this did Hector quit the field,
But, falling back, grasped in his hands a stone
That lay upon the plain,—black, monstrous, rough.
This on the boss of Ajax' seven-fold shield
The hero hurled; and loud the metal rang.
But Ajax heaved a far more ponderous stone,
And whirling round, hurled with tremendous force
Full on his foeman's shield this mill-stone rock,
And crushed his limbs. Staggering he fell to earth,
And, flung against his buckler, lay supine.
But Phœbus raised him up. And now had wounds.
Been dealt in close encounter with their swords,
Had not the heralds, messengers of gods
And mortal men—one chosen from the Greeks,
One from the Trojans—both of prudent mind,
Talthybius and Idaeus, now approaching,
Between them, each, his sceptre interposed:
And first Idaeus, wise of counsel, spoke:
“No longer, my loved children, urge the fight:
Cloud-gathering Jove regards you both with love;
And each, we know, hath high distinction won.
Night is at hand; ’tis good to yield to night.”

Ajax replied: “Idæus, Hector gave
The challenge. Bid him answer first. If he
Yield to thy summons, I will also yield.”

To him the crested Hector: “Since some god,
Ajax, to thee hath strength and prudence given,
And thou art most pre-eminent in war,
Cease we to-day from battle. We will fight
Hereafter till a god decide the strife,
And victory adjudge to thee or me.”
'Tis night already; therefore gladden thou
Thy friends and loved companions at the ships;
While I throughout king Priam's city cheer
The Trojans and the long-robed wives of Troy,
Who pray for me within the sacred fane.
But, ere we part, exchange we noble gifts,
That Greek and Trojan may hereafter say:
'Bravely they fought in soul-consuming strife,
But parted, in firm ties of friendship bound.'"

This saying, Hector to his foeman gave
A silver-studded falchion, with its sheath
And deftly-fashioned belt. Ajax returned
A girdle bright with purple. The two chiefs,
Thus parted by the heralds, sought their friends.
Greatly rejoiced the Trojans, to behold
Their champion scathless from the deadly grasp
Of foe so fierce, and led him home, though yet
They scarce believed him safe. The Greeks too brought
Their champion to the camp, with victory flushed.

When now the guests had reached Atrides' tent,
A bullock five years old the king of men
Offered in sacrifice to mighty Jove.
This, flayed and dressed, they parted into joints;
And skilfully dividing these again
In smaller portions, placed them on the spits,
Broiled with nice care, and then drew off the whole. 330
Their labour over, and the board prepared,
They shared the feast, nor lacked abundant cheer.
A chine's whole length to Ajax was assigned—
A special honour—by Atrides' hands.
When now their thirst and hunger were allayed,
Nestor, whose counsel all the chiefs revered,
Thus courteously harangued the assembled host:
"Atrides, and ye leaders of the Greeks,
Since now so many of our brave compeers
Have perished by Scamander's flowing stream—
Their dark blood spilt by raging Mars—their souls
To Hades swept—thee it becomes at dawn
To stay the fight; while we with steers and mules
Collect the dead, and piling them aloft,
At distance from the ships, burn them with fire;
So, when we sail to our dear native land,
Each to the children of the slain shall bear
His father's bones. Then raise we in the plain
Around the pyre one undistinguished mound,
And straightway build beside it lofty towers
To guard the ships, and in them fix strong gates,
Leaving free passage to the cars. Without,
Environing the rampart, shall be dug
Deep trench to check approach of horse and man,
Lest the proud sons of Troy should storm the camp."

His counsel all the kings approved. Meanwhile
Near Priam's gate, in the Acropolis,
Stirring and loud debate the Trojans held;
And first Antenor, wise of soul, began:
"Hear me, ye Trojans, Dardans, and allies,
While I declare the promptings of my mind.—
The Argive Helen and the wealth she brought,
I would to the Atridæ we restored,
To bear away; for now we wage the war
In violation of our sacred oaths;
Nor aught but evil can, I deem, ensue."
Antenor ceased; when 'mid the assembly rose
The godlike Paris, fair-haired Helen's spouse,
And uttered wingèd words: "This speech of thine,
Antenor, shows thee friend to me no more:"
The counsel which thou knowest is the best,
That hath thy mind withholden. But if thou
Hast spoken in sincerity of heart,
Surely the gods have robbed thee of thy wits.
Openly I declare my fixt resolve
Before the Trojans, tamers of the steed:—
My bride I yield not; but the wealth I brought
From Argos will I render back, and add
More treasures of mine own."

Thus Paris spoke.

Then Priam, son of Dardanus, arose,
Wise as a god, and courteously began:
"Hear me, ye Trojans, Dardans, and allies,
While I declare the counsel that my soul
Prompts me to utter.—Now let each prepare
His customed meal, then to the watch attend;
And in the morning let Idaeus seek
The hollow ships, and to the Atridæ bear
The words of Paris, author of the war;
And let him ask a truce, if they will stay
Harsh-sounding battle, while we burn the dead:
Hereafter we again will fight, till Jove
Decide the strife, and victory adjudge."

He spoke; all heard attentive, and obeyed.
By companies the squadrons took their meal
Throughout the city;—and at early dawn
Idæus to the hollow ships repaired.
There, near the stern of Agamemnon's bark,
He found the Danaan chiefs in council met.
Entering anon, the shrill-voiced herald spoke:
"Ye sons of Atreus, and brave kings of Greece—
So ye be pleased to listen to my charge—
I bear from Priam and Troy's noble chiefs
The words of Paris, author of the war.
All the possessions that he brought to Troy,—
Would he had perished first!—these he restores,
And adds besides rich treasure of his own;
But noble Menelaus' wedded wife,
Her he declares he never will resign,
Not though the Trojans claim her at his hands.
With this commission also am I charged—
To ask a truce, if haply ye will stay
Harsh-sounding battle, while we burn the dead:
Hereafter we again will fight, till Jove
Decide the strife, and victory adjudge.”

He spoke; mute silence through the host prevailed,
Till thus the valiant Diomed began:
“Accept we not the gifts of Priam’s son,
Nor Helen’s self. An infant may discern
That ruin hangs o’er Troy’s devoted walls.”

He ceased: loud plaudits rang from all the host,
In admiration of brave Diomed.

Then spoke the king: “Idæus, thou hast heard
The answer of the Greeks; and I confirm
This their resolve. The bodies of the slain,
Let them be burnt. I grudge not to the dead
Due rite of fire and soothing obsequies:
Then let high Jove be witness of the truce.”
Atrides spoke; and to the gods above
His sceptre raised. Meanwhile to sacred Troy
Sped back Idaeus, where in conclave sat
Trojans and Dardans waiting his return.
Entered the herald, on his message bent,
And in the midst of the assembly spoke.
The truce proclaimed—they speedily began,
These to collect the dead, and these to seek
Fuel for fire. The Argives also brought
The corpses in, or reared the funeral pile.

Now rose the Sun, and with his early beam
Smote the broad fields—ascending from the calm
Deep-flowing ocean. In the battle-plain
The foemen met, and scarce could recognise
The bodies of the dead. Shedding warm tears,
They washed away the purple gore, and raised
The corpses on the wains. Tumultuous grief
Priam forbade. Silent they therefore placed
The dead upon the pile, and sad at heart,
Burnt them with fire. This done, they took their way
To sacred Troy. The Greeks too, mournfully
Heaped on the pile the bodies of the slain,
Burnt them with fire, and to their ships returned.  450

Morn had not risen, and twilight still prevailed,
When round the pyre a chosen band of Greeks
Raised from the plain one undistinguished mound,
And built a wall beside it, with high towers
To guard the ships, and in them fixed strong gates,
Leaving a passage for the cars.—Outside,
Environing the rampart, they scooped out
A broad, deep trench, with sharpened stakes secured.

Thus toiled the Greeks; while sat the assembled gods
Near Jove the thunderer, and marvelled much  460
To see the mighty work of Greece achieved.
Neptune, the great earth-shaker, then began:
"Say, Jove, what mortal through the boundless world
Henceforth will guidance from the gods implore?
Dost thou not see, the Greeks have raised a wall
Before their ships, and round it drawn a trench,—
No hecatomb allotted to the gods?
And wide as spreads the expanding light of heaven,
So far shall spread this grand achievement's fame,
Blotting all memory of the wall, by me
And Phœbus built for king Laomedon.''

Indignant, answered cloud-compelling Jove:
"What hast thou uttered, thou that shakest earth,
Mighty in strength? Haply some feebler god
At such design might tremble; but thy fame
Shall spread unbounded as the light of heaven.
When to their homes the long-haired Greeks return,
Lift up thy waves and overthrow the wall;
Then, with smooth sand covering the wide-spread shore,
Efface all vestige of the hateful work."

So spake the gods. Now with the setting sun
The work of Greece was finished. At their tents
Oxen they slew, and took their evening meal.
Freighted with wine from Lemnos, many a ship
Rode in the harbour, by Euneus sent,
The son of Jason and Hypsipyle.
Choice wine he gave to Atreus' noble sons,
A thousand measures. Wine the Achaians bought,
Some paying brass, and others lustrous iron;
Some paying hides, some oxen, others slaves;
And ample was the banquet they prepared.
All night the Argives feasted in their tents;
All night the Trojans feasted in their walls;
All night Jove plotted ills to either host,
Dreadfully thundering. Fear the revellers seized,
And from their cups they dashed the wine to earth;
Nor dared a man the luscious goblet taste,
Till he had poured libation forth to Jove,
Saturn's all-powerful son. Then either host,
Trojan and Greek, partook the gift of sleep.
BOOK VIII.

Now Morn in saffron robe her light diffused
O'er all the world, when thunder-loving Jove
Convened the gods to council on the brow
Of many-cragged Olympus. All the gods
Assembled there, and listened as he spoke:
"Hear me, ye gods, and every goddess hear,
While I declare the purpose of my soul;
Nor let or god or goddess dare attempt
To frustrate my design, but all promote
Its swift accomplishment. If one I see
Quitting the heavenly mansions to assist
Trojan or Greek, he stricken shall return
In shameful plight; or I will seize and hurl
The recreant down to gloomy Tartarus—
Far hence—that lowest depth beneath the earth,
Whose gates are iron, and whose floor is brass,—
Sunk beneath Hades far as earth from heaven;
So shall he know how greatly I excel
All other deities. Then come, ye gods—
Make proof. From heaven suspend a golden chain, 20
And grasp it, all ye gods and goddesses;
Yet will ye not drag down from heaven to earth
Great Jove the counsellor. But should I choose
To lift the chain—upward both earth and sea
Would instant rise; and I would bind it fast
Around the Olympian crag, and in mid-air
All things suspend; so far do I excel
Both gods and men."

All, as he spake, were mute,
Astonished at the vehemence of his words.
At last Minerva, bright-eyed goddess, spoke:
"O thou our father, son of Saturn, king
Of kings, full well we know thy matchless might;
Yet we behold with pity the brave Greeks
Accomplishing their miserable fate.
Still at thy bidding, we from war abstain,
Content to offer counsel for their weal,
Lest in thine anger perish all the race."

Smiled at her words cloud-gathering Jove, and said:
"Take heart, loved child, Tritonia; for toward thee
No wrath I bear, and would be gentle ever." 40

This said, he yoked his brazen-footed steeds,
Swift, golden-maned—arrayed himself in gold,
Mounted his chariot, seized a golden whip,
And lashed the steeds; they, not unwilling, flew
Midway 'twixt earth and heaven's star-spangled vault.
But when he came to many-fountained Ida,
Nurse of wild beasts—to Gargarus, where stood
His sacred plot and fragrant altar, there
The Sire of gods and men his coursers stayed,
Loosed from the car, and spread thick mist around. 50
Enthroned on Ida's lofty peak he sat,
Exulting in his might—as he beheld
The Achaian ships, and Troy far stretched beneath.

Meanwhile the long-haired Greeks took hasty meal
Throughout their tents, then buckled on their arms.
So too the Trojans for the fight prepared—
Fewer in number, but still eagerly
Longing, by hard necessity compelled,
To combat for their children and their wives.
The gates thrown open—out the people rushed,
Both horse and foot;—and tumult wild prevailed.

When now approaching near, the armies met,—
Followed the clash of shield and spear, the shock
Of mail-clad warriors, mingling all their might
In fierce encounter. Bossy bucklers joined,
And fearful was the din. Together rose
The shout of Triumph, and the groan of Death.
Earth ran with blood.

While it was morning still,
And sacred day advanced, weapons flew fast
On either side, and multitudes were slain.
But when the sun had circled the mid heaven,
Jove, mighty Sire, stretched out the golden scales,
And in them placed a twofold destiny,
Laden with death to Trojan and to Greek.
The scales upheld—down sank the fate of Greece
To earth's all-teeming lap, while that of Troy
To heaven's broad vault uprose. From Ida, Jove
Thundered aloud, and hurled among the Greeks
A flash of vivid splendour. At the sight
They stood amazed; and pallid fear benumbed
The hearts of all.

Not e'en Idomeneus,
Nor Agamemnon, dare maintain their ground,
Nor the Ajaces, ministers of Mars.
Nestor alone, mainstay of Greece, stood firm,
And he unwilling; for an arrow, shot
By godlike Paris, fair-haired Helen's spouse,
Had pierced his courser on the head, where grows
The forelock—spot most vital. Stung with pain,
He bounded high in air. The arrow sank
Deep in his brain; and as he writhed around
The fatal shaft, confused his fellow-steeds.
But while the veteran hastened with his sword
To cut the trace which held the outer horse,
On through the rout the steeds of Hector rushed,
Bearing amain a valiant charioteer—Hector himself. And now the aged chief Had met his fate, had not brave Diomed Perceived his plight, and with a dreadful shout Aroused Ulysses: "Jove-descended prince, Son of Laertes—whither dost thou fly, Turning thy back, like coward, in the throng? Beware lest javelin pierce thy shoulder-blade, Whilst flying: turn, and save the Pylian king From foe so savage."

Deaf to his appeal,
Ulysses—noble, patient-minded chief, Passed swiftly onward to the hollow ships, While to the van rushed Diomed alone; And standing in the front of Nestor's car, Spoke in these wingèd words: "O aged chief! Young warriors bear thee down; thy strength is gone; Dreary old age is thy companion now; Infirm thy charioteer, thy horses slow: Come, mount my car;—see how the steeds of Tros— Late from Æneas won, breathing dismay—
Swift scour the plain, or in pursuit or flight.  
Thine own meanwhile to the attendants leave;  
And we against the courser-taming foe  
Directing these, will make proud Hector learn  
If my hand too can bid the javelin rage."

Nor did Gerenian Nestor not comply,  
But to his brave attendants—Stenelus  
And great Eurymedon—consigned his steeds,  
Mounted Tydides' car, and seized the reins.  
Lashed by his hand, the gallant coursers flew  
To encounter Hector. Reaching him anon,  
Tydides hurled the spear, but missed his aim,  
And struck the charioteer Eniopeus,  
Son of high-souled Thebæus, as he held  
The shining reins, and pierced him through the breast.  
Down from his car he fell: the rapid steeds  
Swerved in affright; and life ebbed fast away.  
Deep sorrow for his well-loved charioteer  
Clouded great Hector's soul: yet was he fain  
To leave him there, and seek another chief  
To guide his chariot: nor remained he long
In quest of aid. Soon he espied the son
Of Iphitus, brave Archeptolemus,
And bidding him ascend the swift-winged car,
Resigned the glittering reins.

Then had been rife
Slaughter, and deeds remediless been wrought,
And in their walls the Trojans had been pent
Like lambs, unless the sire of gods and men,
Conscious, had thundered dreadfully, and hurled
Down to the ground a glowing thunderbolt
Before Tydides' coursers. Terrible
A flame of sulphur rose, and 'neath the car
Shrank back the affrighted steeds. From Nestor's hands
Dropped the bright reins; and thus in fear he spoke:
"Turn, son of Tydeus, turn thy coursers back;
Dost thou not see great Jove befriends us not?"
The glory he to Hector gives to-day,
If such his will, to-morrow may be ours;
For man, how strong soe'er, in vain resists
The stronger will of Jove omnipotent."
To him the brave Tydides: "True thy words,
O aged warrior! but my heart and soul
Are racked with grief; for on some future day
Among his countrymen will Hector boast;—
'Through terror of my arm Tydides fled.'
Thus will he vaunt: then earth gape wide for me!" 160

Answered Gerenian Nestor: "Oh, what words
From thee, Tydides! Hector brand thee coward?
Who will believe him? Surely not the wives
Of those high-hearted Trojans whom thy spear
Hath laid in dust untimely."

Thus he spoke,
And turned to flight his solid-footed steeds
Amid the crash, while Hector and his host,
Following with superhuman cries, poured forth
Death-dealing weapons; and exulting shout
Was heard from Hector of the waving plume:
"Thee, Diomed, of old the swift-horsed Greeks
Seated in place of honour, and bestowed
On thee the choicest meat, the largest cup:
Now will they cry thee shame, and call thee woman.
Go, timid girl, nor think, through my default,
To mount our towers, and bear our wives away:—
Ere that befal, this hand shall strike thee dead."

He spoke. Doubt struggled in Tydides' soul,
Whether to turn his steeds, and meet the foe
In shock of battle;—thrice he held debate
Within his mind; and from the Idaean peaks
Thrice thundered Jove the counsellor, in sign
Of certain victory adjudged to Troy.
Then shouted Hector: "Trojans and allies,
Lycians and Dardans, quit yourselves like men;
And bear in mind your valorous deeds of old.
Full well I know that favouring Jove ordains
Victory to me—destruction to the Greeks.
Fools! to have built yon despicable wall,
And deemed it proof against my matchless might: 190
With ease my coursers shall o'erleap the trench.
Once at the ships, forgotten shall not be
The flaming brand; for I will burn the fleet,
And slay the Greeks, bewildered in the smoke."
Thus Hector spoke, and cheered his noble steeds:
"Xanthus, and thou Podargus, and thou brave Lampus and Æthon, now repay to me The abundant care which upon you bestowed Andromache, high-souled Eetion's daughter, Who fed you with refreshing corn, and mixt 200 Sweet wine for you to drink when thirst impelled, Ere she prepared the pleasant draught for me, Her vigorous spouse. Then haste, and follow on; So shall we capture the Nestorian shield, Whose fame hath reached to heaven,—wrought all of gold, E'en to the handles. This could we secure, And from the shoulders of great Diomed Pluck the bright armour wrought by Vulcan's skill, Then might I hope the baffled Greeks this night Would mount their swift-winged barks."

That haughty boast 210
The stately Juno heard, and on her throne Indignant moved, and shook the vast Olympus: Then to great Neptune: "Thou who shakest earth,
Resistless, doth not pity stir thy heart
To see the Danai perishing, who heap
Thy temple's shrine with many a grateful gift
At Helice and Ægæ? Oh, vouchsafe
To grant them victory; for if all we,
Who side with Greece, were resolutely bent
To arrest the Trojans, and to thwart the will
Of thunder-loving Jove,—then might he sit
And pine in solitude on Ida's height."

To her, indignant, spoke the earth-shaking king:
"Juno, what words of arrogance! Deem not
That I would willingly embroil the gods
In an unequal war with Saturn's son,
Since mightier far is he."

They each in turn
Such converse held. Meanwhile the space enclosed
Between the ships and trench that flanked the wall,
Was filled with chariots, steeds, and armed men,
Pent closely there by Priam's mighty son,
Who stood a match for Mars, to glory raised
By favouring Jove. And now he would have burnt
The ships with fire, had not imperial Juno
Moved Agamemnon—harbouring in his mind
The same design—to rouse the Achaian host.
To ship and tent anon the monarch sped,
Bearing on his strong arm a purple robe
Of ample size. High on Ulysses’ bark,
That, black and whale-like, in the midst was moored, 240
He stood, so that his shout might reach the tent
Of Peleus’ son or Ajax Telamon,
Who, strong in daring, had their galleys drawn
At the fleet’s furthest bounds on either side.
Thence through the ships sonorous rang his voice:
"Shame, men of Argos, the reproach of Greece,
Specious in aspect! Where are now the vaunts
We made in Lemnos of surpassing valour,
When feasting to the full on long-horned beeves,
And quaffing wine from over-flowing cups,
Vain-glorious rose the boast that ye would each
Meet face to face a hundred men of Troy,
Aye, twice a hundred. Now are we no match
For but one Hector, who will soon enwrap
The fleet in hostile fire. O father Jove!
On which of the exalted kings of earth
Didst thou e'er bring such dire disgrace, and mar
His fair renown? Yet truly, when I steered
My well-benched ships to Troy in evil hour,—
Altar of thine I slighted not, but burned
On each fat thighs of oxen, strong in hope
To humble the proud battlements of Troy.
And now, O Jove, accomplish this my prayer—
Grant us at least to escape impending death;
Nor let the Achaians by their foes be crushed."

He spoke. Heaven's sire with pity saw his tears,
And sure deliverance promised for the host.
An eagle straight he sent, noblest of birds,
That in its talons grasped a tender fawn,
Offspring of nimble deer, and threw it down
Beside the beauteous altar where the Greeks
Make sacrifice to Panomphæan Jove.
They, conscious that the omen came from heaven,
With fiercer rage against the Trojans sprang:
Nor could a Greek of all that countless throng
Boast he had driven his car across the trench,  
And closed in fight before brave Diomed.  
He, far the first of all the Achaians, slew  
A Trojan warrior—Agelaus, son  
Of Phradmon, as he turned his steeds to flight.  
Him in the back, between the shoulder blades,  
Tydides struck, and pierced him through the breast:  
To earth he fell; and loud his armour rang.  
Then came the Atridæ, either Ajax next,  
Clothed in impetuous valour. Followed these  
Idomeneus, and he who bore his arms,  
Meriones, in war a match for Mars;  
Eurypylus, Evæmon's famous son;  
Teucer, the ninth, drawing his supple bow  
Beneath the shield of Ajax Telamon,  
Who moved it ever and anon aside,  
While Teucer, looking round, shot forth his darts  
Amid the crowd, and slew each chief he struck.  
Then, like a child that to its mother runs,  
Again to Ajax quickly he returned,  
Who over him his shining buckler threw.  
What Trojans first did blameless Teucer slay?
Orsilochus and Ormenus, then struck
Dætor and Ophilestes, Chromius, next
The godlike Lycophontes, Menalippus,
And Hamopaon, Polyæmon’s son:
All these in quick succession Teucer stretched
On earth’s prolific lap. Great was the joy
Of Agamemnon, sovereign king of men,
To see him thinning with his sturdy bow
The phalanxes of Troy. He, drawing near,
Then spoke: "Loved Teucer, son of Telamon,
Strike thus; so shalt thou prove a light to Greece,
And to thy sire, who nursed thee in his halls
When yet a child, albeit of spurious birth.
Be now his care repaid; and though he dwell
In lands remote, to glory lift his name.
Hear now my words;—nor shall my promise fail:
If Pallas and the Ægis-bearing Jove
Grant me to overthrow Troy’s well-built towers,
Thou next myself shalt honoured gifts receive—
A tripod, or a chariot with two steeds;
Or damsel, worthy to ascend thy couch."
Answered illustrious Teucer: "Glorious king,
Why urge me on, impatient as I am?
My utmost might I cease not to exert;
And from the moment that we first repelled
The foe towards Ilium, have I singled out
The bravest of the Trojans for my mark.
Eight pointed arrows have I thus winged forth;
And each hath pierced the flesh of vigorous chief:
But vain my skill against this raging dog."

He spoke; and, bent on slaying Hector, shot
Another dart, but missed his aim, and struck
Gorgythion on the breast, Priam's brave son,
Whom Castianeira to the monarch bore,
Fair as a goddess, from Æsymna brought:
And as a poppy in a garden bends
Its head aside, with seed and dews of spring
Heavily laden; so the wounded chief
Drooped low his head, o'erburdened with the casque.

Intent on striking Hector to the heart,
Another arrow Teucer now let fly,
But missed again, for Phoebus turned the shaft,
Which, erring, fell on Archeptolemus,
Brave Hector's charioteer, as to the fight
Ardent he rushed, and struck him in the breast.
Down from the car he dropped: his nimble steeds
Swerved in affright; and life ebbed fast away.
Deep sorrow for his much-loved charioteer
Clouded great Hector's soul; yet was he fain
To leave him there, and bade Cebriones,
His brother, take the reins; while he himself
Leapt from the shining car with dreadful shout;
And, seizing in his hand a massive stone,
Rushed upon Teucer, murderously bent.
He, from his quiver drawing forth a shaft,
Quick placed it on the bow; but as he pulled
The string, down came from crested Hector's hand
The rugged stone, and struck his shoulder, where
The bone parts neck and breast—most fatal spot—
Numbed his strong arm, and snapped the well-strung cord:
Upon his knees he fell, and dropped the bow.
But Ajax, mindful of his brother's fall,
Ran to his aid, and o'er him threw the shield;
Then raising him aloft, his two loved friends,  
Alastor and Mecistheus, Echius’ son—  
Bore him deep groaning to the hollow ships.  
Meanwhile the Olympian with fresh might inspired  
The host of Troy. Back to the trench they drove  
The routed Greeks. Brave Hector led the van,  
Exulting in his strength. And as a hound,  
Relying on his speed, seizes the haunch  
Of lion or wild boar, watching him turn;  
So Hector, ever hanging on the rear,  
Slaughtered the hindmost. When the flying bands  
Had passed the stakes and trench, where many fell,  
Beside their ships at last they stood at bay,  
Cheering each other, and to all the gods  
Lifting their hands in prayer. Hector meanwhile,  
With flashing eye of Gorgon or of Mars,  
Hither and thither drove his fair-maned steeds.

With pity white-armed Juno saw their plight,  
And to Minerva spoke these wingèd words:  
"O daughter of the Ægis-bearing Jove,  
Shall we unmoved behold the routed Greeks
Fulfil their wretched doom beneath the might
Of one man's arm—Priam's redoubted son—
That scourge of Greece, that fatal source of woe,
Now maddened to intolerable rage?"

To her the goddess of the radiant eye:
"He of a truth ere now had met his doom,
Slain by the Argives in his native land,
But for my father Jove's insensate will;
Who, aye impracticable and perverse,
Thwarts my designs, nor in remembrance bears
How oft I rescued Hercules his son,
When by Eurystheus' burdens overtasked.
To heaven he wept, till Jove gave me command
To bear him aid. Yet, had my prescient mind
Foreseen these ills, what time he sent me down
To Pluto's realm to drag from Erebus
The jailor's dog,—never had Hercules
'Scaped the deep waters of the Stygian flood.
But now he hates me, and accomplishes
The will of Thetis, who embraced his knees,
And touched his beard, imploring for her son—
Spoiler of cities—a distinguished name.
Yet shall a day arrive when he again
Shall call me his loved Pallas. But do thou
Harness for us anon thy firm-hoofed steeds,
While I to Ægis-bearing Jove ascend,
And in his palace gird me for the fight.
So shall I learn if Hector will exult
To see us entering the rough paths of war;
Or whether some proud Trojan at the ships,
Laid low in death, shall furnish forth a feast
To dogs and birds."

Such counsel Pallas gave.
Nor did the white-armed Juno not comply,
But harnessed swift the golden-bridled steeds.
Meanwhile Minerva, child of sceptred Jove,
Let fall on her celestial father's floor
The variegated robe her hands had wrought,
And, buckling on the corslet of her sire,
Made preparation for the mournful war.
Her flaming car she mounted, seized her spear,
Huge, ponderous, strong, with which she overthrows
The ranks of heroes, doomed to feel her wrath,
Child of a mighty father. With the lash
Juno the coursers urged. At her approach
Spontaneous opened wide the gates of heaven,
Kept by the Hours, to whom is given in charge
The vast Olympus,—or to block the approach
With heavy cloud, or roll it darkling back.
Through these they urged their goad-excited
steeds.

From Ida Jove the goddesses beheld;
And, stirred to fearful wrath, on message sent
Iris, resplendent with her wings of gold.
"Haste, turn them back, swift Iris, lest we meet
In dread encounter and unseemly shock:
For I declare my will—nor shall it fail
Of due completion—I will lame their steeds,
Hurl them to earth, and break their chariot wheels;
Nor shall the wounds my thunderbolt inflicts
Be healed again for ten revolving years:
So shall Minerva of the radiant eye
Know at what cost she dare confront her sire.
Juno less moves mine anger: she is wont
Ever to thwart the purpose of my soul."

He spoke; and Iris, bearing Jove's command,
Swift as the storm, shot down from Ida's peaks
To vast Olympus. At the foremost gate
Of many-valed Olympus, Iris met
The goddess pair—and stayed their rapid steeds,
Speaking her message: "Whither are ye bent?
What madness fires you? Saturn's son forbids
Aid to the Greeks. His menace is gone forth,
That he will maim your nimble-footed steeds,
Hurl you to earth, and break your chariot wheels:
Nor shall the wounds his thunderbolt inflicts
Be healed again for ten revolving years:
So thou, Minerva of the radiant eye,
Shalt dread to combat with thy father Jove.
Juno less moves his anger;—she is wont
Ever to thwart the purpose of his soul.
But thou art shameless and most reprobate,
If thou indeed dare lift thy mighty spear
Against thy sire."
Thus speaking, fled away
Swift Iris. Then to Pallas Juno spoke:
"Ah! daughter of the Ægis-bearing Jove,
No more with my consent shall we engage
In warfare with thy sire for mortals' sake.
Let them each live or die, as fate ordains,
And Jove, as seems him best, and is his right,
Victory accord to Trojan or to Greek."

Thus saying, back she turned her firm-hoofed steeds.
Those fair-maned coursers now the Hours unyoked,
And strongly to the ambrosial manger bound,
Then reared the car against the shining wall;
While, mingling with the gods, the baffled pair
Sat on their golden thrones, chagrined at heart.

Jove, mighty sire, his rolling chariot urged
From Ida to Olympus—seat of gods.
There Neptune, shaker of the earth, unloosed
The steeds, then on its frame replaced the car,
And threw fair covering round it. Jove himself,
The Thunderer, on his golden throne sat down;
And vast Olympus shook beneath his feet.
Apart from Jove, in silence and alone,
Pallas and Juno sat, nor question asked;
But he, their thoughts discerning, thus exclaimed:
"Wherefore, ye goddesses, so vexed at heart?
Surely ye faint not with war's glorious toils,
Slaughtering the Trojans, towards whom a wrath
So fierce ye nurture. Know, that my firm heart,
And my indomitable hands availing,
Not all the gods who in Olympus dwell
Shall drive me back:—but ye—your beauteous limbs
Were seized with terror ere ye saw the fray,
And war's destructive deeds; for I declare—
Nor vain the threat,—struck with my lightning-shaft,
Never in your own chariot had ye reached
Olympus, mansion of the deathless gods."

A murmur followed at the words of Jove
From Juno and Minerva, who, enraged,
Sat side by side, devising ills for Troy.
Minerva silence held, nor spake a word,
Though with her sire indignant, and possessed
By fiercest wrath; but Juno could not curb
Her rising passion, and impetuous spoke:
"Dread son of Saturn, what a speech from thee!
Full well we know, resistless is thy power;
Still, though we see with pity the brave Greeks
Fulfilling thus their miserable fate,
Thee we obey, and from the war abstain,
Content to give them counsel in their need,
Lest in thine anger perish all the race."

In answer spoke the cloud-compelling Jove:
"At dawn, imperial Juno, if thou wilt,
Saturn's all-powerful son shalt thou behold
Spreading wide slaughter through the Achaian host.
For mighty Hector shall not cease from war
Till he arouse to arms swift Peleus' son,
That day when at the galleys they shall fight
In narrow space around Patroclus' corse;
So Fate decrees. Thy rancour I contemn,
E'en shouldst thou hie thee to the utmost bounds
Of earth and sea, where old Iâpetus
And Kronos sit,—enjoying not the sun
That beams on high, nor the refreshing wind,—  
But shut within the depths of Tartarus:  
Roam even thither—I despise thy wrath,  
So matchless thy effrontery.”

He spoke:  
But white-armed Juno answered not. Now sank  
In ocean’s wave the sun’s resplendent orb,  
Drawing dark shadows o’er the genial earth.  
With grief the Trojans saw those parting beams,  
But to the Greeks thrice welcome night approached.

At Hector’s summons, in assembly met  
The Trojans, by Scamander’s eddying stream,  
Without the naval camp, in open space  
Not cumbered by the dead. Dismounting here,  
To Hector’s speech they listened. In his hand  
He held a spear, eleven cubits long,  
Whose brazen point, inclosed in ring of gold,  
Glittered in front. Leaning on this, he spoke:  
“Hear me, ye Trojans, Dardans, and allies:  
To wind-beat Troy I thought to have returned—
The Achaian host and all their fleet destroyed,—
But night, forestalling my design, hath saved
Both men and ships by ocean's utmost verge.
Then yield we to dark night:—your evening meal
Prepare; and loosing your bright-coated steeds,
With food refresh them. From the city bring
Fat sheep and oxen, bread, sweet wine, and wood 550
Abundant, so that through the live-long night,
Till morn arise, may many a watch-fire glow,
Whose blaze shall reach to heaven, lest in the gloom
Achaia's long-haired sons attempt to fly
Across the broad-backed main. Let them at least
Not leisurely return, from hindrance free,
But so, that each, as to his bark he springs,
Receive some wound from dart or pointed spear,
To nurse at home for many a day to come;
That men may shudder in all future time 560
To wage fierce warfare with the sons of Troy.
And let the heralds, dear to Jove, command
That growing youths and hoary-headed men
Watch all night long upon the heaven-built towers;
And let the women in their houses each
Kindle bright fires, and set a trusty guard,
Lest in the absence of our armed bands
The city be surprised by ambuscade.
Suffice, high-hearted Trojans, this command;
For it is good: at dawn I will again
Declare my will, proud tamers of the steed.
Then, offering prayer to Jove and all the gods,
I hope to chase away these hellish hounds,
Whom evil fate brought in their sable ships.
To-night keep watch; and with the early dawn,
In arms accoutred, stir we battle fierce
Beside the fleet. Then shall I know by proof,
If Tydeus' son, redoubted Diomed,
Will drive back me to Troy, or I pierce him,
And bear in triumph home the bloody spoils.
To-morrow, if my onset he await,
His valour shall he prove; but in the van
Pierced will he lie, I trow, with many a chief
Around him slain, what time the sun mounts high.
Would immortality were surely mine,
Exemption from old age through all my days,
And honour such as is to Phoebus paid,
And to Minerva, as mischance is doomed
To-morrow of a certainty to Greece."

He spoke: the Trojans shouted forth applause.
Loosing their steeds, they bound them to the cars,
Brought from the city oxen and fat sheep,
With corn, and pleasant wine, and store of wood.
Then hecatombs they offered to the gods;
And from the plain fresh breezes bore to heaven
Sweet savour; but not grateful to the gods
That savour rose,—such hate they bore to Troy,
To Priam and to valiant Priam's race.
All night upon the field the Trojans sat,
Proudly elate—their watch-fires blazing near.
As when in heaven around the silver moon
Bright shine the stars, and every wind is hushed—
When pointed rock, high crag and distant wood
Stand out revealed, and, opening from beneath,
The immeasurable ether bursts to view,
And all the stars are seen; and gladness fills
The shepherd’s heart;—so, lit by Trojan hands,
In front of Ilium glowed full many a fire
Between the stream of Xanthus and the ships,
There on the plain a thousand watch-fires blazed; 610
And in the light of every burning pile
Sat fifty men; while near the chariots stood
Their coursers, champing barley and white oats,
Till rose the orient Morn on golden throne.
Thus kept the Trojans watch;—while heaven-sent Flight, 
Comrade of chilling Fear, possessed the Greeks; 
And smote with overwhelming dread the hearts 
Of all their bravest. As with sudden gust 
Two winds that blow from Thrace—the north and south—
Stir up the fishy deep; while the dark waves 
Together lift their crests, and on the shore 
Thick sea-weed fling; so doubts conflicting racked 
Each Argive breast. Deep-wounded in his heart 
With anguish, Agamemnon paced the camp, 
And bade the shrill-voiced heralds call each chief 
By name to council, but in under tone—
Most sedulous himself of all who toiled. 
In deep dejection the assembly met, 
When rose Atrides, shedding bitter tears; 
Like some dark fountain, that from lofty rock
Pours forth black water. Groaning, thus he spoke:

"Friends, chieftains, leaders of the Achaian host,
Me in a grievous strait hath Jove involved,—
Harsh god, who promised me, and gave his pledge
I should return proud conqueror of Troy:
But now hath he devised a cruel scheme,
And bids me steer my galleys home to Argos,
Inglorious, with the loss of half my host.
Such seems the pleasure of all-powerful Jove,
Who hath abased the haughty pinnacles
Of many a city, and will more abase;
For he alone may claim omnipotence.
Then listen to my counsel and obey:—
Fly with your ships to your dear native land,
Since vain the hope of conquering heaven-built Troy."

He spoke. All stood in mute amaze; and long
Silent remained the care-worn sons of Greece.
At last rose Diomed, the good at need.
"Be not incensed, Atrides, if I raise
My voice against thy ill-considered speech,
As is my right, in presence of the Greeks.
Thou first, O king, my valour didst impugn
Before the Danai, and denounce me weak,
Unskilled in war: all heard, both young and old.  
Yet Jove hath made thee but by halves a king—
Pre-eminent indeed with sceptred sway;
But valour—that far nobler heritage—
He gave thee not. Dost thou the Achaians deem
Weak and unwarlike? If thy own faint heart
Bid thee return, go;—open is the way;
And by the sea are moored the many ships
That brought thee from Mycenæ. Other Greeks
Will bide the war till we have conquered Troy.
Or if they too are longing for their homes,
Let them sail back to their dear native land.
We twain—myself and Stenelus—will fight,
Until the doom of Ilium we achieve;
For with the sanction of the gods we came.”

He spoke. Loud plaudits rang from all the host
In admiration of brave Diomed.
Steed-taming Nestor then, uprising, spoke:
"Tydides, thou excellest all in war,
And art in council eminent above
All thy compeers; nor will a single chief
Condemn or gainsay what thou hast declared:
But thou hast left thy reasonings incomplete.
Youthful indeed thou art, and mightest well
Be deemed my youngest son; yet hast thou shown
A prudent mind before the assembled kings.
I now, who am thy elder, will set forth
Thy argument so plainly, that no chief—
Not e'en Atrides—shall my words disdain.
All social ties—all privilege of tribe,
Country and home—that man hath forfeited,
Who takes delight in chill domestic strife.
Now, in obedience to the call of night,
Take your repast; and let a chosen watch
Be posted by the trench without the wall.
This to our youth be trusted. But do thou,
Atrides, exercise thy sovereign sway,
And feast the elders, as becomes the king.
Thy tents are full of wine, which o'er the sea
Achaian vessels daily bring from Thrace.
Supplies of every kind are thine; and thine
Attendants many. When the chiefs have met, 
Follow his counsel who submits the best:
For need we have of sagest counsellors, 
When hostile fires are blazing near the fleet. 
What heart, such sight beholding, can rejoice? 
This night will save us, or this night destroy."

He spoke: the warriors listened and obeyed. 
Forth rushed the guards in arms, following their chiefs——
First Thrasymedes, shepherd of the host, 
Ascalaphus, Iälménus, both sons 90 
Of Mars, Meriones, and Aphereus, 
Deípyreus, and godlike Lycomedes, 
The son of Creon, seven brave chiefs in all. 
Each led to war a hundred gallant youths, 
Bearing long spears. Between the wall and trench 
They in the midst sat down, and kindling fires, 
Prepared repast.

Atrides to his tent 
Led the distinguished elders, and there spread
Refreshing food. Over the ready feast
They stretched their hands. Hunger and thirst allayed—
The aged Nestor, who before was deemed
Wisest of counsellors, began the first
To weave devices: he now prudent spoke:
"Most glorious Agamemnon, king of men,
With thee my words begin, with thee must end,
Since over many nations thou art king,
And Jove to thee the sceptre and the laws
Hath given, to exercise the sovereign sway.
Thee it becomes to listen, thee to speak,
Thee to accomplish what another's mind
Prompts him to utter for the public weal,
Since the decision rests with thee, O king.
What seems expedient now will I declare;
For sager counsel no one may suggest
Than I have offered, even from the hour
When in defiance of my words, and led
By fatal passion, thou, O nobly born,
Didst tear Briseis from Achilles' tent,—
Dishonouring, and despoiling of his prize
Thy bravest chieftain, whom the gods themselves
Delight to honour; yet consult we now
How to appease his wrath and move his soul
By gifts and soothing words."

Replied the king:

"Just is thy condemnation, aged chief:
Much have I erred; and I deny it not.
Worth a whole host is he, whom Jove so loves,
That to exalt his name he hath subdued
Achaia's might. But since I greatly erred,
Yielding to impulse of a headstrong mind,
A full atonement now I fain would make,
And purchase peace by gifts of boundless worth.
These I recount in presence of you all:—
Seven tripods never sullied by the fire,
Ten golden talents, twenty burnished cauldrons,
Twelve high-bred coursers, victors in the race;—
Nor destitute of precious gold were he
Who owned the prizes by their fleetness won;—
Seven damsels too, in handiwork excelling,
And passing beautiful above their sex,
My choice, when Lesbos, well-built city, fell
Beneath his arms,—among them Briseus' daughter,
Whom then I carried off; and mighty oath
I swear, that I have never known her charms.
All these I give at once; and if the gods
Yield Priam's city to our conquering host,
Let him with gold and brass a vessel fill,
Whene'er we share the spoil; and let him choose
Twenty young maids, who next to Argive Helen
Excel in beauty: and if e'er we reach
The fruitful pastures of Achaian Argos,
Let him my chosen son-in-law become;
And he in equal honour shall be held
E'en with Orestes, mine own youngest son,
In all abundance delicately reared.
Three daughters in my stately-structured palace
Remain,—Chrysothemis, Laodicè,
Iphianassa. Let him take his choice,
And lead to Peleus' halls the one he loves,—
No bridal gifts demanded. I myself
Full many will bestow, and richer dower
Than to his daughter ever father gave:
Seven well-built cities too,—Cardamylè,
Hira, for pastures famed, and Enopè,
Phera divine, Anthea rich in meads,
Æpea fair, and vine-clad Pedasus,
Bordering on sandy Pylos, near the sea.
Men rich in flocks and herds are dwellers there;
And they will pay him honour as a god
With tributary gifts, such as become
A sceptred king:—all these will I bestow
If he abate his wrath. Hades indeed
Is ever ruthless and implacable,
And therefore most abhorred of all the gods.
I am the elder-born: my regal sway
Loftier than his; then let him yield to me.”

To him Gerenian Nestor: “Glorious king,
Truly not despicable are the gifts
Offered by thee to Peleus' royal son.
Haste then, and to Achilles' tent despatch
Select ambassadors. Be mine the choice;
And let the chiefs I name obedience pay:—
First, Phoenix, loved of Jove, great Ajax next,
And wise Ulysses. Of the herald train
Let Hodius and Eurybates attend.
Bring water now to purify our hands;
And let no inauspicious words be heard,
While Saturn's son we supplicate with prayer,
If haply his compassion we may move."

He spoke; and all applauded his design.
Water upon their hands the heralds first
Poured forth; then youths with wine the goblets
crowned,
And after duly offering to the gods,
Bore it around to all. Libation made—
Each drank, and satisfied his soul's desire,
Then from the tent of Agamemnon sped—
Gerenian Nestor turning upon each
An earnest look, but on Ulysses most,
Exhorting all that they should leave untried
No argument to move Achilles' soul.

Along the margin of the sounding sea
They took their way, and uttered many a prayer
To the earth-shaking, earth-encircling god,
That he would lend persuasion to their tongues.
When now they reached the Myrmidonian ships,
Achilles there beside his tent they found,
Soothing his spirit with the lyre's sweet tone—
That beauteous lyre, most exquisitely wrought,
With silver neck, selected from the spoils,
When to his arms Eëtion's city fell:
With this Achilles soothed his mighty soul,
And sang the praises of illustrious men.
In front of him Patroclus sat alone,
In silence, listening till the song was closed.
Onward they drew—divine Ulysses first—
And stood before him. At the sight amazed,
Sprang from his seat Achilles—in his hand
Holding the lyre. Patroclus too uprose
In like amazement. Greeting then his guests,
Achilles spoke: "Hail, friendly visitors,
For such ye are, though dire must be the need
That brings you to my tent, while I am still
By wrath possessed—you whom I love the most
Of all the Achaians."
Saying this, he led
The delegates within, and seated them
On chairs and purple carpets. To his friend
Patroclus, who stood near him, then he spoke:
"Son of Menætius, bring a larger bowl;
Mix stronger wine, and give a cup to each,—
For dearest friends are now beneath my roof."

He spoke: nor did Patroclus disobey.

In the bright light cast by the blazing fire
Achilles placed upon a mighty block
Loin of a sheep and well-fed goat, and chine
Of hog, with fat o’erlaid. Automedon
Held up the joints, while Peleus’ godlike son
Divided first, then pierced them through with spits.
Meanwhile Menætius’ son heaped up the fire;
And when the flame its ardour had relaxed,
Spread out the embers, stretched the spits above,
Threw sacred salt, and raised them from the racks.

The meat now roasted, and on dressers thrown,
Patroclus placed upon the table bread
In costly baskets. Peleus’ son himself
Distributed the meat, then near the wall,
Facing Ulysses sat, and bade his friend
Make offering to the Immortals. At the word
Patroclus cast first fruits into the fire:
Then o'er the ready feast they stretched their hands.
Hunger and thirst abated—Ajax made
A sign to Phoenix. This Ulysses marked,
And filled with wine a brimming cup, and spoke:
"Health to Achilles! Banquet lack we not
In Agamemnon's tent or thine;—so rich
The viands here outspread; but other cares
Than those of feasting now our thoughts engage,
Since dire disaster, Jove-born prince, we dread,
When, looking round, we see the imperilled fleet,
Unless thou, noble chief, gird on thy might.
At little distance from the fleet and wall
The haughty Trojans and far-famed allies
Have pitched their camp, and kindled many a fire,
Deeming that we no longer can resist
Their fierce assault, and must in terror plunge
Amid the ships.—Propitious now to Troy
Jove flashes forth his lightnings on the right,
While Hector, fiercely glorying in his strength,
Rages infuriate, confident in Jove,
And, unrestrained by fear of gods or men.
He prays for sacred Morning's earliest beam,
That he may break our vessels' crested beaks,
Consume the ships with hostile fire, and slay
The Greeks beside them, wildered in the smoke.
Oh! how I tremble, lest his prayer be heard,
And we be doomed to perish here in Troy,
Afar from Argos, nurse of generous steeds.
Rise even yet, and ere too late, defend
Achaia's harassed sons from Troy's assault:
Refuse; and sorrow to thyself must flow;
For nought can e'er undo an evil done.
Avert then, while thou mayst, impending ills
From all the host. Bethink thee of the charge
Thy father Peleus gave, the day he sent thee
To Agamemnon from the land of Phthia:—
'Juno and Pallas, if they please, my son,
Will give thee strength; but it is thine to tame
A haughty temper. Then be merciful—
Abstain from strife,—that baneful source of ill,
And win new praises both from young and old.'
Such were the precepts of thine aged sire:—
These thou forgettest. Yet e'en now desist;
For worthy treasures will great Atreus' son
Give thee, if thou relent. Then list to me,
While all his promised offerings I recount:—
Seven tripods never sullied by the fire,
Ten golden talents, twenty burnished cauldrons,
Twelve high-bred coursers, victors in the race;—
Nor destitute of precious gold were he
Who owned the prizes by their fleetness won;—
Seven damsels too, in handiwork excelling,
And passing beautiful above their sex,
His choice, when Lesbos, well-built city, fell
Beneath thine arms,—among them Briseus' daughter,
Whom then he carried off; and mighty oath
He swears, that he has never known her charms.
All these he gives at once; and if the gods
Yield Priam's city to our conquering host,
Fill thou thy bark with store of gold and brass,
Whene'er we share the spoil; and choose besides
Twenty young maids, who next to Argive Helen
Excel in beauty; and if e'er we reach
The fruitful pastures of Achaian Argos,
His chosen son-in-law shalt thou become;
And thee in equal honour will he hold
E'en with Orestes, his own youngest son,
In all abundance delicately reared.
Three daughters in his stately-structured palace
Remain,—Chrysothemis, Laodice, Iphianassa. Be it thine to choose,
And lead to Peleus' halls the one thou lov'st,
No bridal gifts demanded.—He himself
Full many will bestow, with richer dower
Than to his daughter father ever gave:
Seven well-built cities too,—Cardamylê, Hira, for pastures famed, and Enopê, Phera divine, Anthea rich in meads, Æpea fair, and vine-clad Pedasus, Bordering on sandy Pylos, near the sea.
Men rich in flocks and herds are dwellers there;
And they will pay thee honour as a god,
With tributary gifts, such as become
A sceptred king. All these he promises,
If thou relent. But if great Atreus' son—
He, and his gifts—are hateful to thy soul,
Have pity at least upon the toil-worn Greeks;
And they will pay thee honour as a god:
For now mayst thou achieve exceeding glory,—
The glory of slaying Hector, who, inflamed
With fury in his frenzied soul, draws near,
And boasts that of the Greeks who came to Troy,
Not one to match his prowess can be found.”

Answered the swift Achilles: “Noble prince,
Son of Laertes, fertile in resource,
Freely I speak my mind without reserve,
E'en as I think, and as shall come to pass,
Lest ye, remaining here, distract my soul,
Pouring forth, one by one, your querulous notes:
For hateful as the gates of hell is he
Who thinketh one thing, yet another speaks:
But what I speak shall surely be fulfilled;
Nor shall Atrides bend my soul, I deem—
Nor other chief; since thankless is the task
To wage unceasing strife with hostile men.
Like recompense is his who lags behind,
And his who strenuous battles with the foe:
Coward and hero equal glory share:
Alike dies he who nothing hath achieved,
And he who many a glorious deed hath done.
Nor doth it profit me above the rest,
To have endured affliction—risking life
In battle evermore. And as a bird
Brings to her callow young, food found at last,
Untasted, though in wretched plight herself;
So I, in the defence of others' wives,
Have many a night of watchfulness endured,
And many a day in bloody warfare spent.
Twelve cities, sailing in my ships, I sacked,
Eleven on foot, in fertile Troy, and won
From each abundant treasures. All this spoil
Day after day I carried to the king.
He, resting at the ships, received the whole,
And to the chiefs dispensing scanty share,
Kept the far larger portion for himself.
Their prizes all the other Greeks retain,
Inviolate; but mine hath he revoked—
Mine only, and possesses my loved spouse.
Let him enjoy her. Wherefore do the Greeks
War with the Trojans? Why did Atreus' son
Raise host so mighty? Was it not for sake
Of Helen, beauteous with her golden locks?
Do the Atridæ only love their wives? And doth not every good and virtuous man
Cherish his own? Thus from my heart I loved
Mine, though a captive, won by feats of war.
Though now by force and fraud he hath prevailed,
Let him not think to inveigle me again.
I know him well; his dupe am I no more.
With thee, Ulysses, and the other kings
Let him devise expedients how to save
The ships from fire. E'en now, without my aid
Full many a mighty work hath he achieved—
Built lofty rampart, and around it drawn
A wide and ample trench, with stakes secured:
Yet not for all his toil can he restrain
The murderous Hector. While I kept the field,
He durst not venture from his sheltering walls
Beyond the oak-tree and the Scæan gates.
There once indeed he waited my assault;
But scarce with life escaped. Now that my soul
No longer burns to fight with noble Hector,
To-morrow—sacrifice performed to Jove,
And all the gods—I launch my freighted ships.
Then, if thou wilt, and carest for the sight,
Thou shalt behold them with the early dawn
Bounding along, by vigorous arms impelled,
Over the waters of broad Hellespont.
And if the Earth-shaker grant a favouring gale,
Three days shall bear me in my vessel back
To fertile Phthia. Treasures there I left
Many and rich, what-time I hither came
In evil hour. Now will I carry hence,
To add to these—the gold and ruddy brass,
Grey-tinted iron, and the fair-zoned maids,
By lot apportioned: but the one loved prize
Atrides gave me, hath he torn away
Insultingly. Go, take my answer back—
Aye, tell him openly; so shall the Greeks
All know him, and resent a like affront,
If, clad in insolence, he hopeth still
To dupe another. Dog-like though he be,
Let him not dare confront me. Enterprise
Nor counsel will I share with him. Enough
That he has wronged me, over-reached me once:
Soft specious words will not avail again.
Leave him to take the downward way to ruin,
By Jove demented. I detest his gifts;
And prize him at the value of a straw.
No.—Would he give me twenty times the worth
Of all his present, all his future stores—
All he hath ever won, or hopes to win—
All that superb Orchomenos contains—
All that is hoarded in Egyptian Thebes—
City that boasteth of her hundred gates,
Through each of which two hundred warriors pass,
Together with their chariots and their steeds—
Gifts, countless as the sand or dust of earth;
Not so shall Agamemnon move my soul,
Till all his insults I have paid him back.
Daughter of Agamemnon wed I none,
Albeit in charm of beauty she contend
With golden Aphrodite, and in works
Of skill with bright-eyed Pallas; even so I wed her not. Let him select some chief
Of wider sway: for if through favouring heaven I reach my home, Peleus himself shall find
A bride for me. In Hellas and in Phthia Are many damsels, daughters of the kings Who guard their own proud fortresses. From these The maiden of my choice will I espouse:
For, many a time, my noble soul hath longed To enjoy with a befitting wedded wife
The fair possessions of my aged sire;
Since not, I deem, with life to be compared Are all the treasures, which, as fame reports, Well-peopled Ilium formerly possessed, In days of peace, ere came the Greeks to Troy;
Nor all, that in his stony threshold stored, Phœbus Apollo, the far-darter, boasts
In rocky Pytho. Oxen and fat sheep By plunder may be won; tripods, and fair-maned steeds By purchase gained; but force nor gold may bring Back to its tenement the breath of man That once hath passed the barrier of the lips.
My mother, Thetis of the silver foot,
Hath warned me that a twofold destiny
Conducts me to my end. If here I stay,
Beleaguering Troy, I forfeit my return,
But win an immortality of fame;
If e'er I reach again my native land,
I forfeit glory, but win length of days,
And long exemption from the stroke of death.

Yea, and I counsel all that they should steer
Their vessels home, for Ilium’s day of doom
Is distant still, since thunder-loving Jove
Hath over her his mighty arm outstretched,
And in his aid her people rest secure.
Take back my message now; and as becomes
Elders, declare it to the Achaian chiefs,—
That they some wiser counsel may devise
To save their people and the hollow ships,
Since vain their present schemes, while I am wroth.

Here in my tent let Phœnix rest to-night,
That he may sail to-morrow, if he choose,
Back in my ships to his dear native land:
I bid him not return against his will."
He ceased. In silence all the chieftains sat,
Marvelling at the vehemence of his words.
At last the aged Phoenix spoke, while tears
Streamed from his eyes, in terror for the fleet:
"If thou indeed art bent on thy return,
Illustrious prince; and brooding o'er thy wrath,
Wilt not defend the ships from hostile fire,
How shall I stay alone, deprived of thee,
Loved child? for aged Peleus to my care
Entrusted thee, the day he sent thee forth
To Agamemnon from the land of Phthia,
As yet a stripling, ignorant of war,
That levels all, nor practised in debate,
Where men win glory. Me he therefore sent,
So to instruct thee, that thou might'st become
Prudent in speech, and resolute in deed.
I would not then be severed from thy side,
Loved child, though one of the immortal gods
Should promise to remove all trace of age,
And make me such as when I quitted Hellas—
Land of fair women, flying my father's wrath,
Amyntor, son of Ormenus, what time,
Enamoured of a fair-haired treacherous maid,
He wronged my mother, his own wedded wife;
And I, complying with her frequent prayers,
Forestalled my sire, and won the damsel's love.
My father, then enraged, with many a curse
Invoked the dread Erinnys that no son
Of mine should ever sit upon his knees;—
Curses too truly by the gods fulfilled—
Infernal Jove, and dread Persephone.
To sojourn in the palace and endure
A father's wrath, my heart and soul forbade:
I thought to kill him, but some god restrained
My anger, and aroused me to a sense
Of everlasting shame among mankind,
Should I incur the brand of parricide.
My friends indeed, and kinsmen by their prayers
Detained me in the halls. Many fat sheep
And lazy-footed kine with crooked horns,
And swine with fat exuberant they slew,
Roasting them over Vulcan's scorching flame,
While beakers of the old man's wine were quaffed.
Nine nights they slept beside me, keeping watch
In turns; nor ever were the blazing fires
Extinguished—one within the court-yard porch,
One in the hall, before my chamber door.
But when the tenth night came, exceeding dark,
I burst the well-wrought fastenings—sallied forth,
And leapt the fence, unseen of all the guards
And female servants. Through the spacious realm
Of Hellas thence I fled until I came
To fertile Phthia, land in flocks abounding:
King Peleus there a kindly greeting gave,
And loved me even as a father loves
His only son, late-born in his old age
To rich inheritance. Wealth he bestowed
And subjects many. In Phthia's utmost bounds
I dwelt, and governed the Dolopian race.
Such as thou art, I made thee, godlike man,
So loving thee, that food thou wouldst refuse
Till I had taken thee upon my knees,
And offered it, by mine own hands prepared—
Thy lips oft spluttering back the pleasant wine
In merriment or childish frowardness.
Much have I suffered, laboured much for thee;
And since the gods vouchsafed me not a son,
Thee, noble chief, I thought to make my heir,
Strong to defend me in the evil day.
Tame then thy soul, Achilles, nor indulge
An unrelenting mind. The gods themselves,
Pre-eminent in majesty and might,
Are not implacable. Offending man
Propitiates them, by sacrifice and prayer,
Sweet-smelling savour, and rich frankincense.—
Prayers are the daughters of almighty Jove,
Halt, wrinkled, and with downcast eyes askance,
Following solicitous in Ațe's steps.
But Ațe is stout of limb, vigorous of foot;
Wherefore she far outstrips them all in speed—
Foremost in every land to injure man:
They, following slow, a remedy provide.
Whoso reveres these daughters of high Jove,
When they approach, great blessings they bestow,
And listen to him when he makes his vows.
But whoso rudely entreats and drives them back—
They go and supplicate great Saturn's son
That Ațe may attend him, and exact
Due penalty. Yield thou too, mighty prince,
That reverence to these daughters of the god
Which bends the minds of other noble chiefs.
Had not Atrides offered thee rich gifts,
And promised more, nor quelled his vehement rage,
I would not urge thee to abandon thine,
And aid the Greeks, however great their need:
But since he offers much, and pledges more,
And sends as intercessors, chosen friends,
Dearest to thee of all the Argive host,
Spurn not their suit, though blameless was thy wrath
Before we came. So have we heard erewhile
Praises of men who passion's tide had quelled—
Appeased by presents and persuasive words.
Such instance, I remember; long ago,
And will relate, since ye are all my friends.—
Around the walls of lovely Calydon
Fought the ΑΕtolians and Curetes—these
To save the city—to destroy it those:
Such strife had golden Artemis aroused—
In wrath that Οeneus, through forgetfulness,
Or through neglect, had impiously withheld
From her, the daughter of all-powerful Jove,
First fruits of corn, while all the other gods
Feasted on hecatombs. For this enraged,
The shaft-delighting goddess, heavenly-born,
Sent against Œneus a fierce white-tusked boar,
Which desolated oft his fertile lands,
And to the ground cast many a goodly tree,
Together with their roots and blooming flowers.
Him Meleager, son of Œneus, slew,
Assembling dogs and huntsmen to the chase
From neighbouring cities, since no slighter force
Could tame such monstrous beast, who in his might
Had often heaped with dead the funeral pile.
For his rich spoils—his head and shaggy hide—
Loud tumult and fierce strife Diana stirred
Between the Ætolian and Curetian race.

While Meleager, loved of Jove, still fought,
Ill the Curetes fared, nor dared to quit
The city, though more numerous. But when wrath,
That swells the bosom even of the wise,
Seized Meleager, he, incensed against
His mother-queen Althæa, passed his days
With Cleopatra, his fair wedded spouse,
Whose parents were the beautiful Marpessa,
(Evenus' child), and Idas, bravest chief
Of all then living, who e'en drew his bow
Against Apollo in his wife's defence.
Her in their halls the sire and queenly mother
Surnamed Alcyone, since she, partaking
The sad Alcyone's most wretched fate,
Wept, when Apollo snatched away her spouse.
With her secluded, Meleager nursed
His fierce resentment, and inactive lay,
Indignant at his mother's curse, who, grieved
For her slain brethren, had with many a tear
Entreated vengeance,—often with her hands
Striking the fruitful earth, and on her knees
Invoking Hades and dread Proserpine
To kill her son. Her prayer from Erebus
Heard the Erinnys who in darkness walk,
Implacable of heart. Around the gates
Sounded anon the clatter and the din
Of battered towers. To Meleager now
The Ætolian elders, sending chosen priests,
Besought his aid to save the threatened town.

Promising ample gifts, they bade him choose, Where'er the lovely plain of Calydon

Was richest, fifty acres, well-enclosed—

One half luxuriant with the blooming vine—

The other, free from wood, suited for tillage.

And oft steed-taming Æneus, aged chief,

Mounting the threshold of the high-roofed chamber,

Shook the well-fastened door, and on his knees

Implored admittance. Oft his sisters too,

And venerable mother urged their suit;

Oft too his dearest and most valued friends;—

Yet changed they not the purpose of his soul,

Till at his chamber frequent batterings rang,

And the Curetes, mounting the high towers,

Were firing the great city. Then at last

Did Meleager's fair-zoned wife with tears

Entreat him, and recount what woes befal

A captured town—men slaughtered, houses fired,

Children and deep-zoned women dragged away.

At the recital of that tale of woe,

His heart was stirred. To sudden impulse yielding,
He rose; and buckling on his shining arms,
Rescued the Ætolians from the evil day.
Thus was the city by his valour saved,
Although he forfeited the rich rewards.
Indulge not thou such rancour, O my friend;
And let no god incite thee. Little worth
Would be thy aid—the ships once wrapt in flame.
Accept the offered presents; and to thee
The Greeks will yield the honour of a god;
Refuse;—no victories hereafter won
Will purchase thee an equal meed of fame.”

Answered Achilles: “Phœnix, sire beloved,
Nurtured of Jove;—such honour need I not:
Honour, I deem, is mine, by Jove decreed,
Which never shall desert me at the ships,
While life remains and animates my limbs.
But let the counsel I shall give thee now
Sink deep into thy heart:—vex not my soul
With tears and lamentations on behalf
Of Atreus’ son; nor cherish love for him,
Lest my warm love for thee be turned to hate:
Sworn foe to me should ne’er be friend of thine:
Share thou my kingdom and my honours share.
Let these, the delegates, my message take
Back to Atrides; but do thou remain,
And rest on downy couch. When morning breaks,
Decide we then to sail, or tarry here.”

Achilles ceased, and to Patroclus gave
Mute signal—nodding with his brow—to strew
A couch for aged Phœnix, that the chiefs
More speedily might think of their return.
Then spoke great Ajax, Telamonian prince:
“Son of Laertes, warrior wise and great,
Depart we now; for ill success, I deem,
Attends our embassy; and we must bear
Back to the Greeks who wait for our return,
The unwelcome message.—In Achilles’ breast
Is nursed a harsh, relentless, haughty spirit;
Nor doth he ought regard his comrades’ love,
Pre-eminently lavished upon him
Above all other chieftains at the ships.
Hard-hearted! For a son or brother slain
Has ransom oft been given; and with his kin
The murderer dwells—large expiation paid;
While the receiver of the fine restrains
His vengeful spirit. But the gods have planted
In thee a ruthless, unforgiving mind;
And this, for sake of one fair maid alone,
For whom we offer seven, excelling her,
And many a gift. Calm then thy mind: respect
Thine own abode. Beneath thy roof we come,
Chosen from all the Danai, and would fain
Still in thy memory hold the dearest place.”

To him the swift Achilles answering spoke:
"Most noble Ajax, son of Telamon,
All that thou sayest seemeth to be just;
But indignation boils within my breast,
Remembering how before the host he scorned me,
Like some vile outcast, branded with disgrace.
Return with this my message.—Thou art of war
Shall never win admission to my soul
Till Hector reach the Myrmidonian tents,
Slaughtering the Greeks, and wrap the ships in flame:
But at my tent, at my dark ship arrived—
There shall he stay, I deem, his murderous course."

He spoke. Each hero raising in his hand
A double goblet, due libation made;
Then home they took their way along the ships,
Ulysses first. Patroclus gave the word;
And quickly the attendants strewed a couch
With rugs of sheep-skin, and fine down of flax
For aged Phœnix. There the old man lay,
Awaiting the return of heavenly Morn.
In a recess within the well-built tent
Achilles and his Lesbian spouse reposed,
The fair-cheeked Diomedè, Phorbas' child.
Patroclus on the other side reclined;
And with him Iphis, his fair partner, lay,
Gift of divine Achilles, when he sacked
Seyron, Enyeus' lofty citadel.

Soon as the chieftains reached Atrides' tent,
Achaia's sons uprose, and one by one
With golden goblets salutation made.
To each, and questions asked: but Atreus' son,
The king of men, Ulysses first addressed:
"Tell me, thou wondrous, much-enduring man,
Thou glory of the Achaians—will he save
The ships from hostile fire, or doth he still
Refuse, and nourish wrath in his proud soul?"

To him Ulysses, patient-minded chief:
"Glorious Atrides,—he to quench his wrath
Refuses still; and haughtiness the more
Inflames his breast. Thee and thy gifts he scorns;
And bids thee with thy friends and counsellors
Forecast to save thy people and the fleet,
Threatening to-morrow, with the early dawn,
To launch his well-poised vessels on the main.
His counsel is to all, that they should steer
Their galleys home, for Ilium's day of doom
Is distant still, since thunder-loving Jove
Hath over her his mighty arm outstretched;
And in his aid her people rest secure.
Such his discourse; as these can testify—
Brave Ajax, and the heralds, prudent both.
But there to-night the aged Phœnix rests—
For so Achilles bade—that if he choose,
To-morrow he to his loved home may sail:
He bids him not return against his will."

He spoke: all stood in mute amaze; and long
Silent remained the care-worn sons of Greece,
Confounded with Achilles' stern reply.
At last spoke Diomed, the good at need:
"Most glorious Agamemnon, king of men,
Atrides, would thou never hadst essayed
By boundless gifts to move Achilles' soul.
Haughty before, now is his mind inflamed
To greater pride. Then let him, as he lists,
Or sail or stay. Hereafter he will join
The war again, when inclination prompts,
Or Jove incites him. Would ye follow now
My counsel,—gladden ye your weary hearts
With food and generous wine, for thence is born
Courage and strength—and snatch a short repose:
But when the rosy-fingered morn appears,
Array both horse and foot before the ships;
And thou thyself do battle in the van."

He spoke. Loud plaudits rang from all the kings
In admiration of brave Diomed.
Libation made—each to his tent repaired,
And on his couch partook the gift of sleep.
BOOK X.

Now at the ships lay slumbering through the night
Achaia's chiefs, by pleasant sleep subdued;
But to Atrides, shepherd of the host,
Came not sweet sleep; such cares disturbed his mind.
Quick as the lightning—flash to flash succeeds,
What-time the fair-haired Juno's spouse prepares
Abundant deluge or of rain or sleet,
When driving snow has whitened all the fields;
Or when he opens the wide throat of war;
So frequent from Atrides' inmost soul
Burst forth deep groans; and his o'erburdened heart
Trembled within him. Looking now towards Troy,
He wondered at the many fires that blazed
In front of Ilium—heard the sound of flutes,
And pipes, the din and tumult of the foe.
But when he turned his gaze upon the fleet,
And saw the Achaian tents beneath him stretched,
Up by the roots desperate he tore his hair
In mute appeal to Jove who dwells above,
And deeply sighed within his noble heart.

Long time he pondered, and resolved at last
To seek Nelëian Nestor, and with him
Some scheme devise to stem the tide of woe.

Then springing up—around his breast he cast
A tunic, bound beneath his shining feet
The beauteous sandals, o'er his shoulders flung
The blood-red skin of tawny lion huge
That reached the ground, and grasped a glittering spear.

Nor had sweet slumber visited the eyes
Of Menelaus, trembling with dismay,
Lest woe befal the Greeks, who for his sake
Had crossed wide seas to wage fierce war with Troy.
Over his shoulders broad he drew the skin
Of spotted panther; next, uplifting high
A brazen helmet, placed it on his head;
Then grasping in his sturdy hand a spear,
Swift sallied forth to rouse his brother king—
Chief in command of all the Achaian host,
And by the people honoured as a god.
Him near the prow of his dark ship he found
Already buckling on his radiant mail.
Welcome he came, and thus bespoke the king:
"Why, honoured brother, early thus in arms?
Wouldst send some scout to explore the Trojan camp?
Lives not the man, I deem, who would essay
Such dread emprise, and in the ambrosial night
Venture to tread the hostile camp alone;
Bold heart were his who dared the desperate deed."

To him in answer spoke the king of men:
"O Menelaus, Jove-descended prince,
Wise counsel need we—yea both thou and I—
To save the ships, since Jove's design is changed,
And Hector's offerings all his favour win.
For never have I seen, or heard report
Of one man in a day such deeds achieving,
As Hector, loved of Jove, though not the son
Of god or goddess—deeds the Greeks will rue
For many a year to come. Now list my words:
Haste to the ships, and summon with all speed
Idomeneus and Ajax. I myself
Will visit godlike Nestor. He perchance
Will to the chosen band of guards repair,
And counsel offer. Him they will obey,
Since his own son, and brave Meriones,
Chieftains in whom we trust, are captains there."

Him answered Menelaus, good at need:
"Speak then; make known thy will. Wouldst have
me stay
There with the watchers, and thy coming wait,
Or hasten back to thee, my task fulfilled?"

To him in answer spoke the king of men:
"Wait, lest we fail to meet, since many paths
Run through the camp. But as thou passest on,
Lift up thy voice, and strictest watch enjoin.
Accost each warrior by his father's name,—
Calling to memory glorious deeds of old—
In words of praise, but in no haughty spirit."
We too must toil,—such heavy weight of woe
Hath Jove laid on us even from our birth."

Thus to his brother full instruction given—
Atrides bade him haste, and sped himself
In quest of Nestor, shepherd of the host.
Him near his tent and sable bark he found
On downy couch. His variegated arms
Lay near—a shield, two spears, a shining helm,
And glittering belt, which round his waist he drew
Oft as he sallied forth to deadly war,
Since yielded not to age that valorous heart.
His head he raised, and leaning on his arm,
To Agamemnon spoke: "Say who art thou,
Wending thy way alone throughout the camp,
In the dark night when other mortals sleep?
Whom dost thou seek—comrade, or guard? Speak out:
Approach me not in silence, but declare,
What brings thee hither."

Answered Atreus' son:
"O, Nestor, son of Neleus, pride of Greece
Before thee stands Atrides, doomed by Jove
To endless woes, beyond the lot of man,
While life remains and animates his frame.
Racked with my people's sorrows, and the care
Of all the war, I wander here alone,—
Mine eyes unvisited by sleep—my heart
Infirm of purpose—leaping from my breast,
While all my limbs tremble with fear. Come then,
If strength in thee remaineth, since sweet sleep
Hath left thee too, descend we to the guards,
Lest they, by toil and slumber overcome,
Forget the nightly watch. Hard by encamped
Are hostile bands; and the o'erweening foe
May haply dare assault the ships by night."

Him answered Nestor, tamer of the steed:
"Most glorious king, never will Jove fulfil
All Hector's high designs and cherished hopes;
But he, I deem, will greater ills endure,
If c'er Achilles lay his wrath aside.
Still will I follow thee, and wake our friends—
Ulysses, and the spear-famed Diomed,
Ajax the swift, and Phyleus' valiant son.
Yet would some other comrade might arouse
The godlike Ajax and Idomeneus,
For at a distance are their vessels moored. 120
But Menelaus, though revered and loved,
At risk of thy displeasure, will I chide;
Since he is slumbering, when in this our need
Behoved him all his energies to task,
And every chief with earnest suit implore."

Him answered Agamemnon, king of men:
"O aged prince, at other times indeed
Would I myself pronounce such censure just;
For oft he is remiss, and labour shuns:
Not that he yields to carelessness or sloth,
But ever looks to me for sign to act.
This morn, however, early he arose,
And coming to my tent, beside me stood.
Him have I sent to awake the chiefs thou nam'st.
Haste; we shall overtake them at the gates,
Among the guards, for there I bade them meet."
To him Gerenian Nestor: "His commands
None will dispute, or dare to disobey."

This said, he cast his tunic round his breast
And drew the shining sandals on his feet;
A scarlet cloak, with downy fleece o'erlaid,
Ample and thick, he with a clasp secured,
Seized a strong javelin, sharp with pointed brass,
And sought the ships. From sleep he first awoke
Ulysses, godlike counsellor. The voice
Entering his soul—Ulysses from his tent
Came forth and spoke: "Why wander ye alone
Thus through the camp amid the ambrosial night?
What dire necessity hath brought you here?"

"Son of Laertes, noble and discreet,"
Replied Gerenian Nestor, "blame us not;
Danger so imminent assails the Greeks:
But follow thou, and other chiefs arouse,
With whom united counsels we may hold,
Whether to fly or still maintain the war."
He spoke; and wise Ulysses at the word
His tent re-entering, round his shoulders threw
A rich-embroidered shield, and with them sped
In quest of brave Tydides. Him they found
Lying all-armed without his tent, while slept
His comrades round him. Underneath their heads
Their bucklers lay: upright their spears were fixed;
And to a distance shone the brazen points,
Bright as the lightning-flash of father Jove.
Slumbered the hero; and his head reposed
On gorgeous cushion: under him was stretched
A wild bull's hide. Approaching him anon,
Gerenian Nestor stirred him with his foot,
Woke from his sleep, and openly rebuked:
"Rise, son of Tydeus. Why in deep repose
Sleep'st thou oblivious through the live-long night?
Hast heard not how on yonder sloping bank
The Trojans lie encamped beside the ships,
While little space divides the hostile hosts?"

Instant Tydides roused himself from sleep,
And thus to Nestor spoke in winged words:
"Unwearied chiet, ne'er satisfied with toil!
Hath Greece no younger sons to go the round,
And wake the kings? Too ardent spirit thine!"

Answered Gerenian Nestor: "All thy words, my friend, with just discretion have been spoken;
And many illustrious sons and subjects mine
The camp might traverse and arouse the kings;
But dire misfortune now assails the Greeks,
And on a razor's edge stands life and death,
Equally poised to all. Go then thyself,
And wake the chiefs—Ajax and Phyleus' son,
Since thou art younger—if thou pitiest me."

He spoke. Tydides o'er his shoulders threw
The dark red skin of tawny lion huge,
That reached his feet, then seized a glittering spear,
And rousing the two warriors, led them forth.

Now at the assemblage of the guards arrived,
Not slumbering at their post they found the chiefs,
But wakeful all, each sitting in his arms:
And as when dogs keep anxious watch by night
Round folded sheep, if savage beast is heard
Adown some woody mountain's side approaching—
From dogs and men follows such wild uproar,
That sleep is banished; so was pleasant sleep
Chased from their eyelids, watching wearily
The evil night; while ever and anon—
If haply sound of footstep came from Troy—
Straight towards the plain each eye, each ear was turned.
Beholding them alert, Nestor rejoiced,
And thus with cheering words: "So watch, my sons;
Nor let your eyes by slumber be subdued,
Lest we become a triumph to the foe."

This said, he crossed the trench; and all the kings
Followed, who to the conclave had been called:
Came too Meriones and Nestor's son,
Whose counsel they especially had sought.
The trench now crossed—they chose an open space
Uncumbered by the bodies of the slain,
Where night had checked fierce Hector's murderous arm.
Here, sitting down, the chieftains held debate;
And first Gerenian Nestor spoke his mind:
"Is there a man among you, O my friends,
Who confident in his own daring spirit,
Would venture to the Trojan camp, and learn  
From straggler or report the foes' designs,—
Whether beside the galleys to remain,
Or, victors in the war, re-enter Troy?
This could he learn, and bring the tidings back
Unscathed, a world-wide glory should he win,
And rich reward. Of all the noblest chiefs
Who at the Achaian vessels bear command,
Each shall on him a sable ewe bestow,
With suckling lamb—gift not to be surpassed;
And ever at our banquets shall he be  
An honoured guest."

All mute the warriors sat,
Till rose brave Diomed, and thus began:
"Nestor, the daring spirit in my breast
Bids me go forth to explore yon hostile camp;
But if some chief should bear me company,
Then would a greater confidence be mine:"
When two unite, the one or other spies
Advantages; but whoso plans alone,
Slow his perception, and his judgment weak."

He spoke. To join Tydides many strove:—
Strove the Ajaces, ministers of Mars;
Strove brave Meriones, and Nestor's son;
Strove Menelaus, spearman known to fame;
Strove too Ulysses, eager to explore
The Trojan camp, endurant chief, whose mind
On arduous enterprise was ever bent.
Foremost among them spoke the king of men:
"O Diomed, in whom my soul delights,
Since many aspire to bear thee company,
Choose thou the bravest, after thine own heart;
Nor over-awed, pass by a better man,
And through respect to birth select a worse,
Although of kinglier sway."

He spoke, afraid
For Menelaus of the yellow hair.
Then Diomed again, the good at need:
"If at your bidding I a comrade choose—
Godlike Ulysses how can I forget,
Whose noble spirit and undaunted mind
Springs willingly to share in every toil?
Him Pallas loves. Such valiant comrade mine,
Safe e'en from flames of fire should we return;
So marvellous a wisdom guides his steps."

To him the godlike much-enduring man:
"Be not too lavish or of praise or blame,
For thou haranguest those who know me well.
But let us on, since night already wanes;
Morning is nigh; the stars have far advanced;
And but one third of sable night is left."

This said, they buckled on their dreadful arms.
To Diomed stout Thrasymedes gave
A two-edged sword—his own was at the ships—
And goodly buckler. On his brows he placed
A helmet, wrought of bull’s-hide, without crest
Or cone, and commonly cataitux called,
Such as defends the head of blooming youths.
A quiver, bow, and sword, Meriones
Gave to Ulysses, and a leathern helm,
By many a strap full strongly bound within:
Without, on either side, a boar's white teeth
Were studded thick—a work of wondrous skill,
And rare device: soft felt the centre lined.
This had Autolycus from Eleon brought,
Amyntor's city, son of Ormenus,—
Breaking into his closely-guarded halls—
And at Scandea gave Amphidamas,
Chief of Cythera; he to Molus gave it,
A hospitable pledge; he to his son
Meriones, to carry to the war;
And now it screened the wise Ulysses' head.

Clothed thus in dreadful arms, the hero pair
Swift hastened on, leaving the chiefs behind.
Close to their path Minerva on the right
A heron sent, which, through the murky gloom,
They saw not with their eyes, but heard its clang.
Ulysses hailed the omen, and thus prayed:
"Hear me, thou child of Ægis-bearing Jove,
Who standest at my side in all my toils,
And art about me wheresoe’er I move,
Befriend me now with thy especial care.
Grant us a safe return, with glory crowned,—
Some deed achieved that Troy shall ever rue.”

Next prayed brave Diomed, the good at need:
“Daughter of Jove, invincible, hear now
This my petition:—As thou didst befriend
Tydeus, my noble father, when he left
His comrades at the Asopus, and to Thebes
Went, on behalf of Greece, ambassador;
And to the chiefs of the Cadmeans bearing
Message of peace, on his return achieved
Marvellous deeds, in thy protection strong;
So, noble goddess, at my side now stand,
And grant thine aid to me. I in return
Will sacrifice to thee a yearling heifer,
Of forehead broad, untamed, which never yet
Hath bowed beneath the yoke; and I will gild
Its horns with gold.”
Pallas Minerva heard
The heroes’ prayers; and they—their homage paid
To the dread daughter of almighty Jove—
Went forth, like lions, in the gloomy night,
Mid carnage, weapons, blood, and heaps of slain.

Nor were the gallant Trojans by their chief
Allowed to rest, for Hector, summoning
All the brave leaders, opened thus his speech:
“Who, for a sure and ample recompense
Will, at my bidding, a great work essay?
A chariot, and two steeds with lofty necks,
Famed at the ships for speed, will I bestow
On him who, enamoured of a glorious name,
Will venture to approach the swift-winged barks,
And learn if still the Achaians guard the fleet,
Or whether, meditating sudden flight,
No longer they maintain the nightly watch,
Worn by hard toil, and vanquished in the war.”

He spoke; but all throughout the host were mute.
A man there was among the Trojan bands
Hight Dolon, rich in store of gold and brass,
Son of Eumedes, herald of the gods,
Ungainly in his form, but swift of foot,—
Among his sisters five an only son.
He now to Hector and the Trojans spoke:

"Hector, my daring spirit and brave heart
Bid me go forth, and at the swift-winged ships
Learn what the Achaians in their need design.
But raise thy sceptre first, and swear an oath,
That mine shall be the chariot, mine the steeds
That bear the great Achilles to the war.
Swear this;—I will not prove a faithless scout,
Or mock thy hopes; for I will make my way
Right through the hostile camp, until I reach
King Agamemnon's galley, where the chiefs
Haply deliberate now, to fight or fly."

His sceptre then upraising, Hector spoke

"Let thunder-loving Jove my words attest—
No Trojan save thyself those steeds shall guide;
Thou, only thou, shalt in their pride exult."
He spoke; but though a fruitless oath he swore,  
The words of Hector spurred the adventurer on.  
Across his shoulders quick he flung his bow  
And grey wolf's-hide; his head in weasel skin  
He then encased, and seizing a sharp spear,  
Forth from the camp proceeded towards the ships;  
But to return, and bring to Hector back  
The wished report was not decreed by fate.  
Leaving behind the throng of men and steeds,  
Eager he took his way, when his approach  
Divine Ulysses suddenly perceived,  
And said to Diomed: "I hear the steps  
Of some one coming to explore the fleet,  
Or strip the dead. Let him at first pass by  
Some little space; then follow swift behind,  
And overtake him. But should he in speed  
Outstrip us, let the menace of our spear  
Constantly drive him towards the ships, and bar  
Return, lest to the city he escape."

Thus saying, they crouched down among the dead,  
Out of the pathway; and the witless spy
Ran past. But when they were apart such space
As is the boundary to mules assigned—
So far superior they to lazy kine
In dragging through deep soil the heavy plough—
The chieftains quick pursued. Hearing a sound,—
He halted, deeming they were friends, who came,
By Hector sent, to call him back to Troy.
But when he was within a javelin's throw,
He knew them for his foes, and straight prepared
His nimble knees for flight. Swift in pursuit
Hastened the twain: and as two strong-toothed dogs,
Trained to the chase, press ceaseless on the track
Of fawn or hare through some deep sylvan glade,
While the scared victim shrieking flies before;
So, fierce Tydides and Ulysses, still
Following his steps, cut off the spy's return.
But when he approached the ships, and fondly thought
To mingle with the guards and slip away,
Minerva in Tydides' heart inspired
Fresh might, lest other Greek the prize forestall.
Raising his arm, he rushed amain, and cried:
"Stand! or I overtake thee with my spear; 
Nor wilt thou long, I deem, with life escape."

This said, he hurled the spear, feigning to strike: 400
O'er his right shoulder swift the weapon passed,
And quivered in the ground. With trembling limbs
And pallid look stood Dolon, while his teeth
Chattered. They, panting, seized their victim's hands;
And, as his tears flowed fast, stammering, he spoke:
"Take me alive; for I have iron, gold,
And brass in store; and when my father hears
I am alive, he to the ships will bring
Ransom of boundless worth."

Answered him quick
The deep-devising prince. "Be of good cheer; 410
Nor let sad thoughts of death disturb thy mind.
Tell me—and tell me truly—why alone
Thou wendest hither in the gloom of night,
When other mortals sleep;—to strip the dead,
Or to explore the fleet, by Hector sent,
Or prompted by thine own adventurous spirit?"
His limbs all trembling—Dolon made reply:

"Hector, enticing me when off my guard,
Hath brought this evil on me.—Promising
That mine should be the chariot, mine the steeds 420
That bear the great Achilles to the war,
He bade me venture forth among our foes,
Amid the gloom of swift-descending night,
And learn if sentinels still guard the ships,
Or whether ye are bent on your return—
Worn by hard toil, and vanquished in the war."

Him answered sage Ulysses with a smile:

"To mighty gifts forsooth thy soul aspired—
The horses of war-famed Æacides,
Which he alone of mortal men can tame, 430
Born of a deathless mother. But come, speak;
And tell me truly: "When thou camest hither,
Where rested Hector, shepherd of the host?
Where are his arms, and where his martial steeds?
Where lie the other chiefs, and where the guards?
What their designs—to stay beside the ships,
Or, victors in the war, re-enter Troy?"
"Faithfully will I speak," the spy returned:—
"Hector and all the elders council hold
Without the camp, at godlike Ilus' tomb;
And sentinels to guard the camp are none
Specially chosen. Where the Trojans light
Their hearth-fires, there they are constrained to watch,
And urge each other to maintain strict watch;
But the allies, who come from many lands,
Lie slumbering, and to Troy the guard commit—
No wives and children near to claim their care."

Again the crafty prince: "Where sleep the allies—
Among the warlike Trojans, or apart?
Tell me; and let thy answer be distinct."

To him then Dolon spoke, Eumedes' son:
"This also will I faithfully declare:
Near to the sea repose the Carian troops,
And the Paeonians with their bended bows,
The Leleges, Cauconians, and divine
Pelasgians. Near to Thrymbra pitch their tents
The Lycians, and the haughty Mysian race,
The Phrygians, tamers of the warlike steed,  
And the Mæonians with their horse-hair crests.  
But why this scrutiny? If ye desire  
The camp to enter—yonder lie apart  
The Thracians, who came latest, and with them  
Rhesus their king, son of Eioneus,  
Whose steeds surpass in beauty and in size  
All I have ever seen—swift as the wind,  
And whiter than the snow. His car is decked  
With gold and silver; golden are his arms,  
Of size enormous, wondrous to behold,—  
Meet only for the deathless gods to wear,  
And not for mortals subject to decay.  
Bear me now prisoner to the swift-winged ships,  
Or leave me here with rigid fetters bound;  
So shall ye find, when ye retrace your steps,  
If true or false the tidings I declare.”

Him with stern look brave Diomed addressed:  
"Hope not to escape, once fall’n into our hands,  
Though welcome news thou bring. Should we release  
Or ransom thee, thou mightest come again"
To join the war, or spy the Achaian ships; 480
But once bereft of life by my strong arm—
Harm to the Danai wilt thou plot no more."

He spoke. With outstretched palm the suppliant now
Essayed to touch his chin; but with his sword
Tydides rose, and smote him on the neck,
And severed both the tendons. In the dust
His head, still muttering, fell. His weasel helm,
His wolf-skin, spear, and bended bow they stripped;
Then to Minerva, who in spoil delights,
Lifting on high the prize, Ulysses prayed:
"Goddess, rejoice in these; thee first we invoke. 490
Of all the powers in heaven. Be thou our guide,
And lead us to the Thracian steeds and tents."

Then, raising up the spoils, he hung them high
Upon a tamarisk tree, and plucking reeds
By handfuls, and large branches, marked the spot,
Lest they should miss it, and their booty lose,
Returning in the dark and rapid night.
Through heaps of slaughter now the heroes sped,
And soon arrived where slept the Thracian bands,
Oppressed with toil. Beside them on the ground,
Piled in three rows, their splendid arms were laid
In orderly array; and near to each
Their coursers stood in pairs. Amid them slept
Rhesus, whose swift-careering steeds were bound
With straps of leather to the chariot's rim.
Ulysses recognised the Thracian first,
And pointed out to Diomed: "Behold
The monarch and the steeds by Dolon praised.
Stir up thy strength; nor in thine armour stand
Inactive: let the horses be thy care;
Or slay the warriors thou—I loose the steeds."

He spoke. Bright-eyed Minerva in his breast
Fresh valour breathed. On every side he turned
His ruthless sword, till groans of anguish rose
From dying chiefs, while earth ran red with blood.
And as a lion suddenly invades
An unprotected flock of sheep or goats
With fell intent; so on the Thracian host
Tydides sprang, nor stayed his murderous arm
Till twelve had fall'n. Each that Tydides slew,
Ulysses by the ankles dragged away,
Designing thus to leave an open road,
Lest the fair steeds, to carnage not inured,
Might start among the bodies of the slain.
The monarch now, a thirteenth victim, fell,
Reft of sweet life by fierce Tydides' sword,—
Gasping already; for an evil dream,
Sent by Minerva in the fearful night,
Stood over him in form of Æneus' son.

Meanwhile Ulysses loosed the firm-hoofed steeds,
Bound them together with the glittering reins,
Struck with his bow, and drove from out the throng—
For he bethought him not to lay his hands
On the bright lash in Rhesus' well-wrought car—
Then whistled, as a sign to Diomed.
But he, on some more daring deed intent,
Stood, pondering in his mind whether to seize
The car wherein the embroidered armour lay,
And drag it by the pole, or with main force
Bear it away uplifted in his hands;
Or slay more Thracians with his reeking blade.
While thus he stood debating in his mind, Minerva whispered: "Think of thy return, Son of great Tydeus, to the hollow ships, Lest by some hostile god the foe be roused, And thou be forced in terror to retreat."

Tydides recognized the voice divine, And leaped into the car. Ulysses smote The coursers with his bow, and straight they flew Back to the swift-winged galleys of the Greeks.

Nor did Apollo of the silver bow Keep idle watch. Minerva he had seen Befriending Diomed; and to the camp Wrathful descending, roused Hippocoön, Cousin of Rhesus, counsellor of Thrace. Starting from sleep, vacant he saw the spot Where late the nimble steeds of Rhesus stood, Saw too the chiefs all gasping in their gore. Anon he wailed aloud, and called by name His loved companion.—Clamorous rose a host Of Trojans flocking round in wild dismay,
And wondering at such deeds by foemen wrought
Now far away beside the hollow ships.

Reaching the spot where Hector's spy they slew,
Ulysses, loved of Jove, reined in the steeds;
Then, leaping to the ground, Tydides placed
The bloody spoils within his comrade's hands,
Mounted the car, and towards the hollow ships
The coursers lashed. They not unwilling flew
Whither their hearts desired. The sound of hoofs
Nestor was first to hear, and thus exclaimed:
"Friends, comrades, leaders of the Argive host,
Am I deceived, or is my augury true?
Yet my mind bids me speak. The tramp of steeds
Strikes on mine ear. Would that brave Diomed
And wise Ulysses might be driving back
Some firm-hoofed coursers! Yet I greatly dread
Lest these, the noblest of the Achaian host,
Suffer mischance, entangled 'mid their foes."

Scarce had he spoken, when the warrior-pair,
Alighting quickly on the earth, received
Greeting of friends, with right hands warmly pressed,  
And kind salute. Then first the charioteer  
Nestor began: "O thou for prudence famed,  
Ulysses, glory of the Achaian host,  
Whence these fair coursers? Did ye in the throng  
Of Trojans seize them, or are they the gift  
Of some Immortal who came down to meet you?  
Wondrously are they like the sun's bright beams!  
Old as I am, I never shrink from war,  
Or linger at the ships, yet ne'er have seen  
Such gallant steeds. Some god, I deem, bestowed  
The precious gift; for dear ye are to Jove,  
And to Minerva, Jove's all-glorious child."

"O Nestor, son of Neleus, pride of Greece,"
Answered the wise Ulysses: "Nobler steeds  
Easily might a god bestow—such power  
Immortals wield; but these are newly brought  
From Thrace. Tydides slew the king, their lord,  
With twelve companions, all redoubted chiefs:  
A thirteenth, sent by Hector as a spy  
To explore our camp, we captured near the ships."
This said, exultingly Ulysses drove
The horses o'er the trench; and with a cheer
Followed the Achaians, glad at his return.
Reaching the firm-built tent of Tydeus' son,
They bound the noble steeds with well-cut thongs
Fast to the stall, where, champing pleasant corn,
Stood Diomed's own coursers. In the stern
Of his dark vessel wise Ulysses placed
The bloody spoils of Dolon, dedicate
To Pallas. Now into the sea descending,
The chieftains cleansed their limbs weary with toil,
And thus refreshed, entered the polished bath.
With fragrant oil anointing then their skin,
They to the feast repaired, and from full bowl
Forth to Minerva poured mellifluous wine.
BOOK XI.

From famed Tithonus' couch now Morn arose,
Fair harbinger of light to gods and men,
When to the swift-winged vessels of the Greeks
Jove sent fell Discord, bearing in her hands
The sign of War. High on Ulysses' bark,
That, black and whale-like, in the midst was moored,
She stood; so that her shout might reach the tent
Of Peleus' son, or Ajax Telamon,
Who, strong in daring and in native might,
Had drawn their vessels high upon the shore,
At the fleet's farthest bounds on either side.
Thence cried the goddess with terrific shout,
And fired with courage every Argive heart
To wage fierce combat through the livelong day,
Till sweeter far became the battle-roar
Than thoughts that whisper of a distant home.
Now, loudly shouting, Agamemnon bade
The Achaians arm, and girded on his mail.
First on his legs the beauteous greaves he bound,
Fastened with silver clasps. A corslet next
He drew around him—hospitable pledge
Bestowed by Cinyras in days of old,
What time to Cyprus ran the winged news
Of Greece preparing armament for Troy:
Wherefore to please the king this gift he sent.
Ten of its bars were wrought of dusky steel,
Twenty of tin, and twelve of shining gold.
Three azure serpents, pointing towards the throat,
On either side the burnished corslet rose,
Like twofold rainbows, set upon a cloud
By Jove, a token to speech-gifted men.
Around his shoulders he a falchion cast,
That brightly shone, with golden studs adorned,
In sheath of silver hung with golden belt.
His buckler next he seized, that broad and strong,
And, decked with rare device, his body screened.
Around it ran ten circles wrought of brass;
Twenty tin bosses in the centre rose,
All white, and in the midst one dark, of steel,  
Twined with a hideous Gorgon, fierce of look;  
And Flight and Terror were pourtrayed around.  
Silver the belt, on which a livid snake  
Was coiled; and from one neck sprang forth three heads,  
All intertwined. Next on his brow he placed  
A helm with double cone and fourfold crest;  
And dreadful waved the horse-hair plume aloft.  
Two spears, strong, sharp, and tipped with brass he seized,  
Which far towards heaven a sparkling radiance cast,  
While Juno and Minerva thundered loud  
In honour of Mycenæ’s wealthy king.  

Each warrior now his charioteer enjoined  
To rein in order the swift coursers back,  
Beside the trench, while they, in armour clad,  
Rushed forth on foot; and ere the dawn of day  
An unextinguishable clamour rose.  
Marshalled beside the trench, they stood in front,  
Their chariots following closely in the rear.  
Dire tumult now Saturnian Jove aroused,  
And from aloft showered drops all red with blood—
Sign he would hurl full many a gallant chief
That day to Pluto.

Opposite the Greeks,
High on a hill that from the plain uprose,
Were ranged the Trojans. These great Hector led,
Polydamas the blameless, and Æneas,
Whom all the people honoured as a god,
Antenor's sons, Agenor, Polybus,
And youthful Acamas, of form divine.
Hector in front stood, bearing his round shield:
And as from out a cloud the baleful star
Emerges, now all bright, and now again
Obscured to view—re-entering the cloud;
So Hector marshalling the war was seen,
Now blazing in the van, now lost to sight
Far in the rear, while shone his brazen arms,
Like the swift flash of Ægis-bearing Jove.
And e'en as reapers in some rich man's field,
From either end advancing cut the swaths
Of wheat or barley; and thick handfuls fall;
So Greek and Trojan each the other charged,
Strangers alike to soul-benumbing fear.

Like wolves, they rushed amain, and held their heads
Both equal in the combat. With delight
Looked down fell Discord, revelling in groans;
For she alone of all the immortal gods
Was present at the fray:—peaceful the rest
Sat in the fair abode assigned to each
Along the summit of the Olympian steep.
All blamed dark-clouded Jove for favouring Troy:
But he the while, apart from all the gods,
Regardless sat, exulting in his might—
Contemplating the city and the fleet,
The flash of arms, the slaying and the slain.

While Morn still rose, and sacred Day advanced,
Thick flew the darts, and Greek and Trojan fell.
But at the hour when weary wood-cutter
Longs for sweet food, and in the mountain glade
Prepares his meal, then through the phalanxes
Burst the brave bands of Greece with cheering shout
From rank to rank. Atrides first sprang forth,
And slew Bianor, chief of high renown,
Oileus next, his friend and charioteer,
Who, from his car leapt down with hostile aim.
Him in the forehead, furious as he rushed,
Atrides smote; nor did the brazen casque
Resist the spear: through helm and bone it flew;
And all the brain within was stained with blood.
His valour quelled—king Agamemnon stripped
The bodies of the dead, and left them there,
Their naked breasts all gleaming in the sun.
Isus and Antiphus he next assailed,
Two sons of Priam. Seated in one car,
Isus, the base-born, drove; while Antiphus,
The nobler, fought. These once on Ida's height,
Pasturing their flocks, Achilles caught, and bound
With oziers, and for ransom large set free.
Now Agamemnon, the wide-ruling king,
Struck Isus with his spear upon the breast,
And with his falchion smiting Antiphus
Beside the cheek-bone, hurled him from his car.
Stripping their arms, he recognised the youths
Whom swift Achilles had erewhile brought down,
From Ida to the ships. And as a lion
Entering the covert of some nimble roe,
Easily crushes with his forceful teeth
The tender fawns, and robs them of sweet life:
She, though so near, is powerless to save,
And through the wood and tangled forest flies,
Trembling and panting; while in every pore
Reeking, she dreads that furious beast's assault:
Thus, cowed at heart, their comrades all hung back, 130
Nor dared approach to save them from their doom.

Next fell Pisander and Hippolochus,
Sons of Antimachus, who, by the gold
Of Paris bribed, refused to give back Helen
To fair-haired Menelaus. In one car
The brothers sat, when Agamemnon came,
Swift-rushing, like a lion. From their hands,
All stupefied, they dropped the shining arms,
And from the chariot cried with suppliant voice:
"Take us alive, Atrides, and receive 140
Rich ransom from Antimachus our sire.
Boundless his treasures—iron, gold and brass;
Nor will he spare them when he knows his sons
Are still alive, your captives at the fleet."

In soothing words the brothers weeping spoke,
But from the king no soothing answer heard;
"If ye be sons of that Antimachus,
Who in the assembly of the Trojans erst
Bade them slay Menelaus, when he came
On embassy with the divine Ulysses,
Now shall ye expiate your father's crime."

He spoke; and hurled Pisander from the car,
Who instant fell to earth supine—his breast
Pierced with the javelin. From the chariot leapt
Hippolochus; but Agamemnon's sword
Lopped off his hands, asunder cleft his neck,
And sent the trunk bounding amid the crowd,
Like to a pillar. These upon the ground
Atrides left; and where the phalanxes
Were quailing most, thither he rushed amain,
By all his bands attended. Foot slew foot,
Constrained to fly; and horsemen horsemen slew,
While clouds of dust from clattering hoofs arose.
King Agamemnon, cheering on the Greeks,
Ceaseless pursued his desolating course;
And as destructive fire on some dense wood
Alighting, runs before the whirling wind,
While, yielding to the flame's impetuous might,
Uprooted fall the trees; so fell the heads
Of Trojans as they fled, lopped by the sword
Of Atreus' son; and many proud-necked steeds
Rattled their empty chariots through the lines,
Missing their gallant lords, who lay on earth
Dearer to vultures far than to their wives.

From out the darts, the carnage and the din,
The blood and dust, great Jove now Hector drew:
Followed Atrides cheering on the Greeks.
Through the mid-plain meantime the Trojans rushed
Past the wild fig-tree, near the tomb of Ilus,
Descendant of the ancient Dardanus,
All-eager to regain their city's walls.
Atrides, loudly shouting, followed still,
And stained with slaughter his unconquered hands.
Reaching the oak-tree and the Scæan gates,
The Trojans paused—some waiting for their friends,
While others through the plain their flight pursued,
Like oxen, which at dead of night, assailed
By famished lion, all in terror fly;
But one to inevitable death is doomed.
Him in strong teeth he seizes, breaks his neck, 190
Laps up the reeking entrails and the blood:
Thus Agamemnon, son of Atreus, still
Slaughtered the hindmost of the flying bands;
And many a chief beneath his raging spear
Fell from his chariot, hurled to earth supine.
When now the king in his victorious course
Approached the city and the lofty wall,
The sire of gods and men, from heaven descending,
Sat on a crag of many-fountained Ida,
And grasping in his hand the lightning shaft, 200
Aroused swift Iris of the golden wing:
"Away, swift Iris—and to Hector bear
This my command:—As long as he beholds
King Agamemnon raging in the van,
And dealing death among the ranks, so long
Let him, withdrawing, urge the rest to fight.
But when Atrides, struck by spear or dart,
Shall mount his chariot, then will I endow
Hector with strength to wake the war anew,
Until he reach the ships; and silent Night
Draw on dark shadows with the setting sun."

Jove spoke; nor did the goddess disobey.
Borne on the winds from Ida she sped down
To sacred Troy. There Priam's son she found,
The godlike Hector, standing in the midst
Of steeds and chariots, and approaching spoke:
"Great son of Priam, godlike counsellor,
To thee I come, a messenger from Jove:—
While Agamemnon rages in the van,
And deals destruction through the ranks, so long
Do thou, withdrawing, urge the rest to fight.
But when Atrides, struck by spear or dart,
Shall mount his chariot, then will Jove endow
Thee with fresh strength, to wake the war anew,
Until thou reach the ships, and silent Night
Draw on dark shadows with the setting sun."
Swift Iris sped obedient. Hector straight
Leapt to the ground in arms; and brandishing
Sharp glittering javelins, strode throughout the host,
Exciting all, and woke a fearful strife.

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The Trojans rallied, and withstood their foes:
Nor with less ardour did the Achaian chiefs
Strengthen their phalanxes. Now front to front
The armies stood, when rushed forth Atreus' son,
Eager to win the foremost place of all.

Ye who in mansions of Olympus dwell,
Tell me, ye Muses, who of all the host
Among the Trojans or their brave allies
Withstood Atrides first? Iphidamas,
Son of Antenor, chieftain brave and great,
Nurtured in fertile Thrace, parent of flocks.
Him, while a stripling, his maternal grandsire,
King Cisseus, father of the fair Theano,
Reared in his palace. After he had reached
The perfect measure of all-glorious youth,
The king detained him, and in marriage gave
His own loved daughter. From the bridal chamber,
Hearing the rumour of the war, he sailed
With twelve curved ships. These at Percotè left—
He came on foot to Troy. Such was the chief
Who sallied forth to meet great Atreus' son.
When, now advancing near, the warriors met,
Atrides' erring spear was turned aside,
And missed its mark; but stout Iphidamas
Beneath the corslet struck his foeman's belt,
And drove the weapon on with sturdy thrust.
Yet pierced he not the variegated zone;
For meeting with the silver in its course,
The yielding point was bent aside like lead.
Then Agamemnon, grasping in his hand
The javelin, plucked it back with lion-rage,
And on the neck of brave Iphidamas
Let fall his falchion, and unnerved his limbs.
Thus bravely fighting in his country's cause,
He, miserable, slept a brazen sleep,
Far from his wedded wife, her charms unknown,
Though many ample presents he had given—
A hundred oxen,—promising beside
A thousand goats and sheep that in the plain
Innumerous grazed. His arms Atrides seized, 270
And bore the splendid trophy through the host.

When Coön, eldest of Antenor's sons,
Chieftain renowned, beheld his brother fall,
Deep sorrow veiled his eyes. Sideways he stood,
Unseen of Agamemnon, with his spear,
And struck him in the middle of his arm,
Below the elbow; and the shining point
Pierced through the flesh. Shuddered the king of men;
Yet ceased he not from combat, holding high
His spear, wind-nurtured, and on Coön rushed, 280
Who eagerly was dragging by the foot
Iphidamas his brother, and invoking
Succour from every valiant chief around:
But as he dragged the body through the crowd,
Atrides smote him with his brazen spear
Beneath the buckler, and unnerved his limbs,
Then lopped his head over his brother's corse.
Fulfilling thus their miserable doom,
Antenor's sons to Pluto's mansion sank.
While the warm blood still trickled from his wound, 290
With spear, and sword, and stones of monstrous size
Roamed through the hostile ranks the victor chief.
But when the wound was dry, the blood congealed,
Sharp pains possessed the strength of Atreus' son—
Sharp, piercing, bitter—even as the throes
By Juno's daughters sent, the Ilithyæ,
Who grievous pangs inflicting, agonize
Women in travail. Tortured by such pangs,
Atrides sprang into his car, and urged
His charioteer to bear him to the fleet:
Then in a voice that sounded through the host:—
"Princes and chieftains, be it yours to save
The sea-careering galleys from mischance,
Since prescient Jove denieth me the power
To fight all day."

He spoke: the charioteer
Lashed towards the hollow ships his fair-maned steeds.
They not unwilling flew,—their breasts with foam
Besprent, their comely limbs with dust defiled,
As from the war they bore the wounded king.
His flight observing, Hector with loud shout Cheered both the Trojan and the Lycian bands:

"Ye Trojans, Lycians, Dardans, and allies,
Courage, my friends, acquit yourselves like men;
And bear in mind your valorous deeds of old.
The bravest of our foes hath left the field,
And glory immense is mine, by Jove decreed:
Then, rushing on the Danai, urge amain
Your firm-hoofed steeds, and win a loftier fame.

This said, he fired with ardour every heart:
And as a huntsman cheers his white-toothed dogs To attack some tawny lion or wild boar;
So Priam's son, a match for murderous Mars,
Urged on the high-souled Trojans to assault
The Achaian bands. Imperious he advanced
Among the foremost, dashing to the war,
Like hurricane that swooping from above,
Stirs up the depths of ocean's purple tide.

Who first, who last, was of his arms despoiled,
When Jove to glory exalted Priam's son?
Assæus first, Autonoïs, Opites, 330
Dolops, the son of Clytis, and Opheltius, 331
Hipponoïs, endurant of the fight, 332
Æsymnus, Agelaus, Orus, all. 333
Leaders: he then assailed the common herd. 334
As when the west-wind, with fierce gust descending, 335
Scatters the clouds brought by the rapid South, 336
And many a swollen wave is onward rolled; 337
While by the impulse of far-scattering winds 338
Is dashed the lifted spray; so fell to earth 339
Beneath great Hector many a foeman's head. 340

Then had dread deeds remediless been wrought, 341
And on their ships the routed Greeks been driven, 342
Had not Ulysses called on Diomed: 343
"Why, son of Tydeus, bear we not in mind 344
Our valorous feats of old? Come, stand by me; 345
For ignominy awaits the Achaian name, 346
If Troy's proud crested leader seize the ships."

Answered Tydides: "Surely will I stand 347
Firm by thy side; but what avail, since Jove, 348
The cloud-compeller, victory gives to Troy?" 350
He spoke; and striking with his spear the breast
Of king Thymbraeus, hurled him from his car.
Molion, godlike chief, his charioteer,
Beneath Ulysses' javelin met his fate.
Their ardour quenched, they left them on the ground,
Then dashed amid the crowd. And as two boars
Of lofty spirit turn upon the hounds,
So, rallying, mowed they down the Trojan bands;
And gladly the Achaians breathed again—
Winning short respite from great Hector's rage.

Two warriors in one chariot next they seized,
Bravest among the people—the two sons
Of Merops, the Percosian, who excelled
All men in augury, and warned the youths
Not to go forth to man-destroying war;
But disobedient to their sire's command,
The hapless pair their destiny fulfilled.
These Tydeus' son, the spear-famed Diomed,
Reft of their lives, and stripped their beauteous arms.
Hippodamus and stout Hypeirochus

Next met their doom, by famed Ulysses slain.
Then Saturn's son, from Ida looking down,
Extended equally the cord of war;
And foeman slaughtered foeman. On the hip
Tydides with his spear struck Pæon's son,
Agastrophus, whose coursers stood aloof,
While he, infatuate chieftain, fought on foot,
Till, rushing wildly through the van, he fell.
Hector aware, as through the ranks he looked,
Hastily towards the victor chiefs advanced,
Shouting with all his squadrons. At the sight
Shuddered the heart of valiant Diomed,
Who instant to Ulysses: "Towards us rolls
This terrible destruction—mighty Hector:
But come; abide his onset, and stand firm."

He spake; and hurled his shadow-casting spear
With an unerring aim against the ridge
Of Hector's helm; but brass encountering brass,
It glanced aside, and failed to reach his head,
Checked in its passage by Apollo's gift—
The triple vizored helm. Hastily back
Fierce Hector staggered, and was lost to sight
Among the crowd. There on his knees he sank,
Resting his weight upon his brawny hand;
And dusky night shrouded his swimming eyes.
But while Tydides through the foremost sprang,
Following the spear, where fixed in earth it stood,
Hector, reviving; leapt into his car,
And mingling in the throng, avoided death.
Swift rushing with his spear, Tydides cried:

"Dog, from impending fate thou hast escaped;
And thee a second time hath Phœbus saved,—
To whom, when venturing 'mid the clash of arms
Thou art wont to pray. In battle when we meet
Again, I surely bring thee to an end,
If but one friend I have among the gods;
Meanwhile my spear shall other foes o'ertake."

He spoke; and stripped the far-famed son of Pæon.
But Paris, fair-haired Helen's spouse, concealed
Behind a pillar, at the sculptured tomb
Of Dardan Ilus, aged counsellor,
Took aim at Diomed, while from the breast
Of brave Agastrophus he tore the mail,
The buckler from his shoulders, and the helm
Heavy with brass; nor idly flew the shaft,
But pierced the sole of Diomed's right foot,
And, passing through it, in the ground was fixed.
Sprang Paris from his hiding-place, and cried
Boastingly: "Ha! thou art wounded! Not in vain
My arrow flew. Would it had pierced thy flank,—
And struck thee dead! A respite then from woe
Had Troy obtained, whose warriors dread thee now
As bleating goats a lion."

Undismayed
Answered Tydides, gallant Diomed:
"Archer, reviler, valiant with thy bow,
Aye bent on woman;—meet me hand to hand;
Then shall thine arrows unavailing prove:
And for the boast that thou hast grazed my foot—
Such wound weak boy or woman might inflict.
Vain flies the shaft of feeble chief like thee;
Not so flies weapon from my forceful hand:
Sharp is its point; its slightest touch is death.
Whomso I strike—untimely furrows plough
His consort's cheek; his desolate children mourn
Their orphan state; the ground is stained with blood;
And birds, not women, tend his dying couch.''

Spear-famed Ulysses heard, and drawing near,
Stood in the front of Diomed, who sat
Behind, and from his foot the arrow plucked,
While through his frame a pang of anguish shot.
Mounting his car, he bade the charioteer
Drive to the ships—his limbs convulsed with pain.

Ulysses, now abandoned by the Greeks,
Was left alone, for fear quelled every heart;
And thus he communed with his own great soul,
Indignant: "Ah, what dire alternative!
Disgrace, if from the multitude I fly;
Worse still, if I be captured here alone;
For panic fear, by Saturn's son infused,
Hath seized on all. But why this questioning
With my fond heart? Dastards, I know full well,
Aye shrink from battle; but the brave of soul,
Striking or stricken, firmly bide the fray."
He thus debating in his inmost mind—
On came the squadrons of the shielded foe,
And hemmed him round, enclosing in the midst
Their own destruction. As when dogs and youths
Surround a boar,—he from some bosky dell,
Advances fierce, sharpening his ivory tusks
Within his crooked jaws, and gnashing loud
His teeth; yet firm they await the terrible beast;
So round Ulysses rushed the Trojan bands:
But he impetuous wounded with his spear
Above the shoulder-blade a faultless chief,
Deïopites, then slew Ennomus,
And Thoon; next beneath the buckler struck
Chersidamas, while leaping from his car.
He fell; and in the hollow of his hand
Grasped the dry dust. These leaving on the ground,
He wounded next the son of Hippasus,
Charops, own brother of the noble Socus,
Who, godlike hero, hasted to his aid,
And drawing near Ulysses, spoke: “Thou chief
Of rare devices, never satisfied
With guile and toil—this day shall be thy boast
That thou hast slain the two redoubted sons
Of Hippasus, and stript such mighty chiefs,
Or thou thyself shalt fall beneath my spear."

He spoke: and struck his foeman's rounded shield.
Through the bright orb swift passed the stubborn lance,
And piercing the rich corslet, tore his skin:
But Pallas guarded him from mortal wound.
Well knew Ulysses that the dart came not
Laden with death, and thus to Socus spoke:
"Ah miserable man! a wretched fate
Will overtake thee. Thou hast stayed indeed,
The vigour of my arm; but thou art doomed
To die this day. Beneath my javelin quelled,
Thy soul to steed-famed Pluto shall descend;
And all thy glory shall redound to me."  

He spoke; and instant Socus turned to fly;
But as he turned, Ulysses thrust his spear
Right in the back, between the shoulder blades,
And drove it through his bosom. With a crash
He fell; and loud arose the victor's boast:
"O Socus, son of warlike Hippasus,
Proud tamer of the steed;—with sudden stroke
Hath fate surprised thee. Miserable man!
Nor shall a father or fond mother close
Thine eyes in death; but ravening birds shall trail Thy flesh, and o'er thee flap their frequent wings.
Me, when I die, Achaia's godlike sons
Shall bear with all due honour to the tomb."

This said, from out his flesh and bossy shield
He drew the weapon. Spouted forth dark blood;
And through his frame shot anguish. At the sight
The high-souled Trojans on Ulysses rushed,
With mutual cheer; but he retiring slow,
Shouted to his companions. Thrice that shout—
The loudest mortal man hath power to raise—
Was heard by Menelaus, godlike prince,
Who instant turned to Ajax, and exclaimed:
"Most noble Ajax, son of Telamon,—
Cry of Ulysses, patient-minded chief,
Falls on mine ear, as though the Trojan bands
Had hemmed him in, and he all desolate
Was sorely pressed. Then haste we to his aid,  
Lest ill befall him, left to fight alone;  
And Greece bewail such mighty hero’s loss.”

Thus saying, Menelaus led the way,  
And with him Ajax, godlike chieftain, sped.  
Following that lamentable cry, they found  
Ulysses, loved of Jove. Around him pressed  
The foe, like blood-red jackals that enclose  
An antlered stag, by huntsman’s javelin pierced  
In mountain thicket. While the blood is warm,  
And supple are his knees, the nimble beast  
Escapes pursuit. But when the rapid dart  
Hath quelled his strength, the jackals seize their prey  
Amid the mountains in some shady grove.  
Chance brings a famished lion. At the sight  
Swift fly the jackals; and the lordly lion  
Devours the carcase; so around the wise  
Warlike Ulysses flocked the Trojan bands,  
Many and bold; but with his own good spear,  
Advancing, he repelled the pitiless day.  
Bearing his tower-like shield, came Ajax on,
And near Ulysses stood. Fled in dismay
The Trojans, when they saw the hero nigh,
While Menelaus, seizing by the arm
The hardy chieftain, drew him from the press,
Till his attendant drove the coursers near.
Ajax, now springing dauntless on the foe,
Doryclus slew, a spurious son of Priam,
Then wounded Pandocus and Pyrasus,
Lysander and Pylartes next assailed.
As when adown the mountains, flowing full,
A winter torrent, swoll'n by storm of Jove,
Rolls to the plain, hurrying full many a pine,
Dry oak, and mass of rubbish to the sea;
So valiant Ajax, slaying men and steeds,
Onward pursued his desolating course.

Hector meantime was battling on the left
Of all the field, beside Scamander's stream,
Where heads of heroes thickest fell, and din
Of horrid war around Idomeneus
And Nestor rose. There Hector fiercely strove—
Skilled or to hurl the spear or guide the car—
And broke whole phalanxes of noble youths.
Yet would the godlike Greeks have kept their ground,
Had not the husband of the fair-haired Helen
Wounded Machaon, as he led the van,
On the right shoulder with a triple barb.
Trembled the valour-breathing Greeks, lest he
Be captured, should the tide of battle turn.
To Nestor then spoke brave Idomeneus:
"O Nestor, son of Neleus, thou that art
The glory of the Achaians, mount thy car:
Beside thee take Machaon, and drive forth
The firm-hoofed coursers quickly to the ships:
For one so skilful is himself a host—
Practised to draw a dart, or heal a wound."

He spoke. Gerenian Nestor straight complied,
And mounting his own chariot, bade the son
Of Esculapius also mount the car.
The lash he plied, and willingly the steeds
Bore the swift chariot to the hollow ships.

Seeing confusion in the ranks of Troy,
Cebriones, by Hector seated, spoke:

"Hector, we two are battling with the Greeks. Here at the outskirt of the roaring fray,
While rout is spreading yonder through the host
Before the son of Telamon, whose shield
Massive and broad, I recognize full well.

Drive we our coursers thither, where contend
In fiercest struggle infantry and horse,
And loudest rolls the tumult of the war."

Thus saying, he the fair-mained coursers urged
With sounding lash. They, when they heard the stroke,
Through Greeks and Trojans whirled the rapid car,
Trampling on shields and corpses as they flew,
While all the axle and the chariot's rim
Were reeking fresh with frequent drops of blood
Flung from the horse's hoofs, and fervid wheels.
Longing to break the close-packed human mass,
Hector rushed on, and waking baneful flight,
Gave little respite to his murderous spear.
With falchion, lance, and massive stones he roamed
Through many a squadron, but encounter shunned
With mighty Ajax, son of Telamon.

Now in the heart of Ajax high-throned Jove
Breathed panic fear. His shield of seven bulls' hides
He flung behind, and in dismay gazed round,
Like a wild beast, as ever and anon,
His knees alternate changing, back he drew.
And as when dogs and rustics all night long
Watching the fold, repel a tawny lion,
And balk him of the goodliest of the herd,—
He, longing for the flesh, with frequent spring
Renews the assault, but spends his strength in vain, 610
Javelins so fast, and blazing torches flung
From daring hands, his gallant spirit arrest.
Morn sees him wandering homeward, grieved at heart;
So sorely vexed was Ajax Telamon,
Who, struck with terror for the endangered fleet,
Sadly and slowly from his post withdrew.
As when an ass hath made its way perforce
Into rich field, and browses on the crop,
Stubborn, in spite of boys, who with their sticks
Belabour him, and break them on his back, 620
Nor drive him out till satisfied with food;
So pressed on Ajax, son of Telamon,
The high-souled Trojans and far-famed allies,
And plied with ceaseless darts his bossy shield.
Now, wheeling round, his valour he recalled,
And checked awhile the phalanxes of Troy;
Now, turned again to fly; yet, as he stood
'Twixt Greeks and Trojans, raging in his might,
He barred all access to the swift-winged ships,
While spears, from daring hands against him thrown,
Stuck in his shield, though all athirst for blood, 631
Or reached the ground before they touched his skin.

When now Eurypylus, Evæmon's son,
Saw him beset with darts, he near him drew,
Hurled his bright spear, and in the liver smote,
Under the midriff, Apisaon, son
Of valiant Phausias, and unnerved his limbs.
On rushed Eurypylus to strip his arms;
But godlike Paris, marking his intent,
Quick bent his bow against the victor-chief, 640
And struck him with a shaft, which, breaking short,
On his right thigh inflicted grievous pain.
Back on the column of his friends he drew,
Avoiding fate, and cried with thundering voice:
"Princes and chieftains, leaders of the Greeks,
Stand, comrades, stand; nor let brave Ajax fall,
Your bulwark, who beset with darts, scarce hopes
To escape with life; yet to the rescue flock,
And firmly stand round Telamon's brave son."

So spoke the wounded chief; and they approached, 650
Lifting their spears, while on their shoulders hung
The bossy shields. To meet them Ajax came,
And when he reached his comrades, faced the foe.

Thus raged the combatants like living fire.
Now from the battle the Neleian mares
Machaon bore, a shepherd of the host.
Him the divine Achilles saw retreat,
As standing on the prow of his huge ship,
He viewed the tumult and the tearful rout,
And to Patroclus, his companion, cried.
He from his tent that fatal summons heard,
Dire source of woe, and thence came forth, like Mars.
And first Menoetius' son: "Why calls my friend?
What need impels?" Answered the swift Achilles:
"Son of Menoetius, dearest to my soul,
Soon will the Greeks, I deem, around me stand,
My knees embracing in their dire distress.
Go, and of Nestor ask, thou loved of Jove,
What wounded chief from out the field he bears.
Likest he seems to Æsculapius' son;
But I his face beheld not; flew so quick
The impatient steeds."

He spoke; and instantly,
Obedient to his loved companion's word,
Patroclus hastened past the Achaian ships.

Nelcian Nestor, when he reached his tent,
Alighted with Machaon from the car
On many-feeding earth. Eurymedon,
His charioteer, unyoked the rapid steeds,
While standing towards the breeze, beside the sea,
They dried their tunics, to the tent repaired,
And laid them down to rest. A pleasant cup
Prepared meantime the bright-tressed Hecamede—
Arsinous' noble daughter, whom the Greeks
For Nestor chose—their wisest counsellor,
What-time Achilles wasted Tenedos.
A polished table she before them set,
With ebon feet. On it she placed a leek
In brazen dish—a seasoning to the draught,
Fresh honey, and the fruit of sacred corn.
Near these a goblet stood, inlaid with gold,
Which from his home the aged man had brought.
Round each of its four handles were seen feeding
Two golden doves; and on two feet it rested.
When full, 'twere hard to raise it from the board,
But aged Nestor lifted it with ease.
In this the maiden, beautiful as goddess,
Mingled for them a draught of Pramnian wine,
And grated over it with brazen rasp
A goat's-milk cheese. Then sprinkling flour around,
She bade them drink; and they—their thirst allayed—700
With pleasant converse were the time beguiling,
When at the door Patroclus stood, in form
Like to a god. Sprang from his shining couch
The aged chief, and leading him within,
Conducted to a seat. Menætius' son
Then spoke: "No rest for me, O veteran prince;
So dread, so awful he who bade me ask
What wounded chief thou to thy tent hast brought.
But ask I need not; for I yonder see
Machaon, skilful shepherd of the host.

Back to Achilles therefore I return
With this my message; for thou knowest well,
Jove-nurtured prince, how wrathful is his soul,
How wont with causeless censure to rebuke."

To him Gerenian Nestor: "Doth Achilles
Pity the sons of Greece, or ought regard
How many have fallen? Little knoweth he
What deep affliction in the camp prevails—
The bravest wounded or by dart or spear
Beside the ships—redoubted Diomed,
Warlike Ulysses, and great Atreus' son.
Eurypylus is wounded in the thigh;
And by an arrow pierced is this good chief,  
Whom late I rescued from the battle-field.  
Brave as he is, Achilles pities not  
The woes of Greece. Waits he till hostile fire  
Devour the ships close to the water's edge,  
Spite of the Argives, and our diminished ranks  
Successive fall? Alas! no longer mine  
The strength I boasted in the days of old.  
Would I were young again and firm of limb,  
As when 'twixt us and the Eleians rose  
A strife for oxen plundered, and I slew  
Hypeirochus' brave son, Itymoneus,  
Who dwelt in Elis. I reprisal sought  
For booty seized;—he fighting for his herds,  
Among the foremost fell beneath my spear,  
While fled on every side his rustic bands.  
Rich was the booty gathered from the plain,—  
Of oxen fifty droves, as many flocks  
Of sheep, goats, swine; thrice fifty chesnut steeds,  
All mares, with colts beneath them. These by night  
Within Neleian Pylos' walls we drove;  
And aged Neleus in his heart rejoiced
That spoil so great had crowned my youthful arms.
When Morning dawned, shrill heralds summoned all
For whom the retribution had been made
In fertile Elis; and the Pylian chiefs,
Assembling, made division of the spoil;
Since debt was due to many for their herds
Plundered, what-time we Pylians had been left
Weak and impoverished; for the Herculean might
Had wrought us grievous ills in former years,
And slain our bravest chiefs. Of the twelve sons
Of famous Neleus I alone was left;
And in their pride the brazen-mailed Epeians
Insulted us, and wrongful acts devised.
A herd of oxen, and three hundred sheep,
Together with their shepherds, Neleus chose;
For large the debt in sacred Elis claimed.
His four famed steeds which oft had prizes won,
And for a tripod to contend then sought
The race again, bearing their chariots with them—
These had Augeas, king of men, detained,
And sent away their charioteer, aggrieved
For loss of those fair coursers. In his wrath
At such proud words and deeds, Neleus, my sire,
Selected ample booty for himself,
And to the host distributed the rest,
That none might lose his share. On the third day, 770
While to the gods we offered sacrifice
Throughout the city, they, equipped for war,
Came with their firm-hoofed horses in full force,—
The two Molions with them, sheathed in arms,
But striplings yet, nor versed in warlike deeds.
There is a city on a lofty hill,
Hight Thryoessa, far away, beside
Alpheus' stream, and last in sandy Pylos;
Round this the hostile army pitched their tents.
When o'er the plain they spread, Minerva came,
780
A messenger by night, bidding us arm;
Nor were the men of Pylos loth to obey,
But me the aged Neleus strove to keep
Back from the combat, and concealed my steeds,
Deeming me all-unskilled in feats of war.
Yet though on foot, I won renown among
The charioteers; such guidance Pallas gave.
There is a river, Minyëius named,
That near Arena runs into the sea,
Where with the Pylian horsemen we awaited
The lovely Morn, while swarms of foot poured in.
Accoutred fully, thence we sallied forth,
And reached at noon Alphæus' sacred stream.
There, offering victims to almighty Jove,
A bull to Alphæus, and a bull to Neptune,
A heifer to Minerva, we all took
Our evening meal in squadrons through the host,
And slept along the river's bank in arms.
Meanwhile, the Epeians, eager for the fray,
Compassed the town; but Mars for them prepared
A mighty work. Soon as the orient sun
Rose bright o'er earth, the battle we began,
To Jove and Pallas offering up our prayers.
When now the Pylians and Epeians met,
I first a foeman slew, the warrior Mulius,
And seized his coursers. Fair-haired Agamede,
Augeas' eldest daughter, was his spouse,
Skilled in the lore of all medicinal herbs
Which earth engenders in her ample lap;
Him, as against me he advanced, I slew;
And in the dust he fell. Mounting his car,  
Among the foremost combatants I stood.  
Seeing the leader of their horse o'erthrown,  
Bravest of all their chiefs—the lofty-souled  
Epeians fled in wild discomfiture.  
I, like a whirlwind, swept the battle-field,  
Seized fifty chariots; and from every one  
Two warriors bit the dust beneath my spear.  
The young Molions should I now have slain,  
Reputed sons of Actor, had not Neptune  
Their sire enwrapt them in a vapoury cloud,  
And borne in safety from the war. Then Jove  
A glorious victory to the Pylians gave;  
For through the extended plain we drove the foe,  
And numbers slew, gleaning rich prize of arms,  
Until we reached Buprasium's fertile glebe,  
The rock Olenia, and the city named  
Colonè, near Alesium. Pallas thence  
Dismissed our people. I the last man slew,  
And left him there. The Greeks from Pylos now  
Back to Buprasium urged their rapid steeds,  
Hymning the praise of Jove among the gods,
Of Nestor among men. Such was my fame
Among my peers. Achilles all alone
Will profit by his valour; yet, I deem,
Hereafter will he bitterly repent
Too late, when his companions all are slain.
Command to thee Mencætius gave, my friend,
The day he sent thee from the land of Phthia
To Agamemnon, when erewhile we came—
I and divine Ulysses—gathering troops.
In Peleus' halls received as guests, we found
Thee and Achilles, and distinctly heard
The counsel that to thee Mencætius gave,
What-time the aged Peleus in the court
Was burning to the thunder-loving god
A beeve's fat thighs, and poured from golden cup
Dark wine around the blazing sacrifice.
While we were standing in the vestibule,
And you were busied with the meat, upsprang
Achilles in amaze, and by the hand
Leading us in, conducted to a seat,
And placed before us hospitable fare,
With all the courtesy to strangers due.
When we were satisfied with wine and food,
I foremost spoke, and bade you join the war.
Ye willingly assented; and your sires
Bestowed on each of you much sage advice.—
The aged Peleus, parting with Achilles,
Enjoined him he should ever lead the way,
And shine pre-eminent among his peers.
Thee too Mencetius thus enjoined: 'In birth
Achilles far excels thee, and in strength—
But in experience far superior thou:
Be then to him a prudent counsellor,
And he thy words of wisdom will receive.'
Such admonition gave the aged chief;
But thou rememberest not. Yet still exhort
The heroic prince: some favouring god, perchance,
Aiding thy speech, may move Achilles' soul;
For wholesome is the counsel of a friend.
But if some evil prophecy he dreads,
Or Jove hath to his mother aught imparted,
Let him send thee; and let the Myrmidons
Follow; so shalt thou prove a light to Greece:
And would he clothe thee in his glorious arms,
Haply the Trojans, by the feint misled,
May cease from battle, and the toil-worn Greeks
Win a brief respite from the ills of war.
Ye, fresh and vigorous, easily will drive
Back to their walls men harassed with fatigue.”

Thus Nestor spoke, and stirred Patroclus’ soul.
Along the fleet instant the hero sped
To seek the tent of great Æacides:
But when he reached godlike Ulysses’ bark,
Where their assemblies and their courts were held,
And where the altars of the gods were built,
There, wounded with an arrow in the thigh,
Met him Eurypylus, Evæmon’s son,
Slow limping from the fight. Adown his head
And shoulders ran profusely drops of sweat;
And from his bitter wound the dark blood gushed:
Yet firm his spirit. Him with pity viewed
Menoetius’ gallant son; and spoke swift words:
“Ah, wretched chiefs and leaders of the Greeks,
Destined to glut the nimble dogs of Troy
With your white fat, far from your native land
And loving friends! But say, Eurypylus, Jove-nurtured chief, what hope remains to Greece? Will the Achaians Hector's might restrain, Or fall at once beneath his conquering spear?"

Answered Eurypylus: "Hope of escape, Thou godlike prince, is none. Beside their ships Must perish all, for every chief is slain By spear or dart who once was bravest deemed, While higher mounteth still the might of Troy. But lend thine aid, and bear me to my ship; And cutting out the arrow from my thigh, Wash the black blood away; and to the wound Apply the soothing drugs, whose power, 'tis said, Achilles taught thee, whom great Chiron's self Instructed—justest of the Centaur race: For the physicians—they are far away; Machaon lies disabled at the tent, In want of aid himself; and in the field Bold Podalirius takes a soldier's part."

To him Patroclus: "Brave Eurypylus,
What may we do? What can I for the best?
Message I bear myself to Peleus' son
From aged Nestor, guardian of the Greeks;
Yet may I not desert thee in thy need."

He spoke; and in his arms the hero bore
Back to the tent. Beholding his approach,
The attendant strewed beneath him soft bulls' hides.
On these Patroclus stretched the wounded chief,
Cut out the pointed arrow from his thigh,
With tepid water washed away the gore,
And bruising in his hand a bitter root
Of soothing power, applied it to the gash:
Instant the pain was lulled; the blood was stanched.
BOOK XII.

While in his tent Mencetius' gallant son
Tended the wounds of brave Eurypylus,
Trojans and Greeks in close battalions fought.
Nor longer destined to resist the foe
Was the deep trench, nor yet the rampart broad,
Built by the Achaians to defend the ships,
And guard the spoil. Against Heaven's will upreared—
Without due sacrifice of hecatombs,
And invocation to the immortal gods—
The rampart could not last. While Hector lived,
And fierce Achilles raged, and still unsheathed
King Priam's city stood, so long the wall
Remained secure. But when Troy's bravest chiefs
Were slain, and of the Achaians few were left,
And Troy, ten years beleaguered, fell at last,
And to their homes the Argives had returned—
Then Neptune and Apollo counsel took
To lay the rampart level with the ground,
Turning against it all the streams that flow
From Ida's mountains downward to the sea—
Rhesus, Caresus, and Heptaphorus,
Granicus, Rhodius, Simois, Æsepus,
And the divine Scamander, where in dust
Fell many an ox-hide shield and crested helm,
And a whole race of demigods. The mouths
Of all these rivers nine successive days
Apollo turned at once against the wall;
While Jove, to whelm it sooner in the sea,
Poured rain incessant. Foremost led the way
The great Earthshaker, bearing in his hands
His trident, and with wave resistless burst
The strong foundations which Achaia's sons
With beams and stones laboriously had built.
The rampart overthrown, he made all smooth
Along the margin of swift Hellespont,
Covered again with sand the wide-spread beach,
And turned the rivers back into the course
Where ran before their gently-flowing streams.
This the Earthshaker and Apollo wrought
In aftertime: now round the well-built wall
Blazed the fierce clamour and the yell of war,
While rang the timbers of the battered towers
With fearful din. Tamed by the scourge of Jove,
The Greeks were crowded close beside the ships,
Dismayed by Hector's terror-scattering arm,
Who fought with wonted fury, like a storm.
And as wild boar or lion, hard beset
By dogs and huntsmen, turns upon his foes,
Ferocious in his strength; they, like a tower,
With hostile front stand round him, marshalling
Their serried ranks, and hurl full many a spear;
Yet never daunted is his noble heart,
Till, victim to his own brave spirit, he falls—
Oft turning, and the hostile bands assaying,
Who, wheresoe'er his onset he directs,
There instant yield; so, passing through the host,
Hither and thither Hector furious turned,
And urged his comrades to o'erleap the trench
That yawned in front; but in dismay shrank back
The nimble steeds, and on the utmost verge
Stood snorting; for not easy was the task
To clear it with a chariot, or to force
Slow passage down; for banks precipitous,
On either side, throughout its length, hung over;
And stakes above were bristling many and strong,
Which as a barrier there the Greeks had fixed
To daunt assailing foe. No courser, braced
To well-wheeled chariot, there might passage win;
But those on foot with eagerness desired
To make the essay. Then spake Polydamas:

"Hector, and ye confederate chiefs of Troy,
Rash were the attempt to drive our rapid steeds
Across the trench; nor easy is the leap;
For in it stand sharp stakes, flanked by the wall,
So that no horsemen there may make descent,
Or cruel wounds escape, in pass so strait.
If Jove who from on high his thunder rolls,
Befriend the Trojans, and the Greeks detesting,
Is bent on their destruction, would they all
Might instant meet their fate, and perish here
Inglorious, far from Argos. But if now
They turn again, and drive us from the ships,
And we, hard-pressed, be thrust into the dike,  
I deem that not a single messenger,  
Escaping from that rally, will bear back Tidings to Troy. Then hearken to my words: —  
Let the attendants at the trench each hold  
Our steeds; and we on foot in dense array  
Will follow Hector, all equipped in arms:  
Nor will the Achaians our assault abide,  
If over them the cord of ruin hangs.”

Pleasing to Hector was his brother’s speech That counselled safety. Instant to the ground  
Down from his chariot in his arms he leapt.  
Nor did the Trojans in their cars remain,  
But seeing godlike Hector spring to earth,  
Dismounted, and enjoined their charioteers  
To hold the steeds in order near the trench,  
Then followed each their chiefs in five-fold band.  
Those most determined to surmount the wall,  
And push the battle to the hollow ships,  
Advanced with Hector and Polydamas.  
Cebriones, a third commander came:
For to a chieftain less renowned in war
Had Hector given his car and steeds in charge.
Paris, Alcathous and Agenor led
The second band, Priam's two sons the third—
Godlike Deiphobus and Helenus.
With these great Asius in command was joined—
Asius Hyrtacides, whom bright bay steeds
Bore from Arisba and Selleis' stream.
Anchises' son the fourth division led,
With brave Æneas, and Antilochus,
And Acamas—Antenor's sons—expert
In feats of war. Sarpedon led the allies
Of glorious fame, and for their leaders chose
Glaucus and famed Asteropæus—chiefs
Most valiant next himself; for he excelled
In prowess all his peers. Uniting now
Their ox-hide bucklers, the allies advanced
With ardent hearts direct against the Greeks,
Not deeming they their onset would resist,
But plunge in terror 'mid their sable ships.

The other Trojans and far-famed allies
Followed the counsel of Polydamas:
But Asius, son of Hyrtacus, deigned not
To quit his steeds, and urged them toward the fleet.
Fool! destined not to escape a wretched doom,
And, glorying in his car, retrace his steps
To wind-beat Ilium. Him disastrous Fate
O'ertook beneath spear-famed Idomeneus,
Deucalion's son: for leftward of the ships
He rushed along the road where all the Greeks
Back from the plain with steeds and chariots fled.
Reaching the gates, he found them not closed fast
With beam and bar, but men did hold them open,
If haply some companion they might save
Flying from battle. Thither straight he urged
His coursers, followed by the shouting bands,
Not deeming the Achaians would resist,
But plunge in terror 'mid their sable ships.
Fools! at the gates two gallant chiefs he found,
Sons of the warlike, high-souled Lapithæ—
Stout Polypætes, great Pirithous' child,
And brave Leonteus, fierce as murderous Mars.
Stood at the lofty gates this warrior pair,
Like towering oaks, that on some mountain's brow
Eternally abide the wind and rain—
Their branching roots fixed firmly in the ground;
So these two chiefs, relying on their strength
And fearless hearts, awaited the assault
Of mighty Asius. He with all his train—
Ialmenus, Orestes, Acamas,
Œnomaus and Thoon,—lifting high
Their hardened bucklers, towards the wall advanced
With dreadful shout. Within the gates till now
The heroic pair had stood, urging the Greeks
To strenuous combat in their ships' defence;
But when they saw the Trojans storm the wall,
And shouts of terror from the Achaians heard,
Out they both rushed, and fought before the gates,
Like savage boars, that in the hills awaiting
Assault of dogs and men, rush on aslant,
And darting through the forest smash the boughs,
Torn from the roots; while from beneath is heard
Gnashing of tusks, till some bold spearman deal
A deadly blow; so on those chieftains' breasts,
Stricken in front, rang out the glittering brass;
For gallantly they fought—all confident
In their own prowess, and the might of those
Above, who from the well-built towers flung down
Enormous stones, in struggle to defend
Their lives, their tents, and swift-careering ships.
And as fall flakes of snow upon the ground,
Which a brisk wind, driving the shadowy clouds,
Pours thick upon the many-feeding earth,
So from both Greek and Trojan hands streamed
darts;
And helms and bossy shields, by mill-stones struck,
Harshly resounded. Uttering a deep wail,
Asius Hyrtacides then smote his thigh,
And with a burst of indignation cried:
"O father Jove, thou hast utterly played me false:—
Full certainly I deemed no Argive chief
Would bide our onset and all-conquering hands;
But they, like wasps of flexible slender waists,
Or bees that build their nest in rugged path,
Nor quit their hollow mansion, but await
The coming of the invader—resolute
To combat for their offspring; so these chiefs
Though only two, before the gates stand firm, 190
Sworn to remain, or die in their defence."

He spoke; but moved not Jove, whose heart was bent
On honouring Priam's son. Others meantime
At other portals fought; but difficult
The task for me, as though I were a god,
All their exploits to tell; so fiercely raged
Around the wall unearthly fire of stones.
Thus strove the Argives in their ships' defence,
Constrained to fight, though sorrowful at heart;
And plunged in grief were all the gods, who lent 200
Their succour to the Danai in the strife.

Now entered on the war the Lapithæ.—
Pirithous' son, brave Polypætes, smote
The head of Damæsus, and drove his spear
Right through the cheek-plate of the brazen helm.
Piercing the bone, the weapon smashed his skull,
And all the brain within was stained with blood.
Thus having quelled the ardent Damæsus,
Pylon and Ormenus he next o'erthrew.
Leonteus, branch of Mars, struck with his spear
Antimachus' brave son, Hippomachus,
Full on the belt. Then drawing his sharp sword
From out the scabbard, through the crowd he rushed,
And in close combat to the ground struck down
The bold Antiphates. Ialmenus,
With Menon and Orestes, next he slew,
Dashed in succession to the fertile earth.

While of their arms the victors stripped the dead,
Those youths who high of spirit and brave of heart
Longed to break down the wall and fire the ships,
Behind Polydamas and Hector flocked.
But still they faltered, standing on the trench;
For while to cross it all-intent they strove,
Behold! an omen on the left appeared,
Parting the host—an eagle high in air,
That in its talons a huge serpent bore,
Spotted with blood, alive and panting still.
Nor was he yet forgetful of revenge;
For while the eagle grasped him in his claws,
He, curling round, struck in his neck the bird,
Who, racked with anguish, dropped his burden down
Amid the crowd, and with a scream swift fled,
Borne on the wind. Shuddered the host of Troy,
Seeing the writhing serpent in the midst—
A portent of the Ægis-bearing Jove.
Then to his brother spoke Polydamas:
"Hector, thou art ever wont to cast on me
Reproachful words before the assembled host,
Even when good the counsel I propound;
As though no citizen might raise his voice
In war or counsel save to enhance thy power.
Yet will I speak what seems me best.—Cease now
To combat with the Danai for their ships;
Since a disastrous issue I predict,
If when the Trojans strove to cross the trench,
This omen on the left appeared indeed,
Parting the host—an eagle high in air,
That in its talons a huge serpent bore,
Blood-spotted, still alive, but let it fall
Ere to his native eyrie he returned—
Failing to bear the booty to his young;—
So we, though gate and battlement we burst
By dint of strength, and force the Achaians back, 
Shall in no honourable plight return; 
For many a Trojan shall we leave behind, 
Slain by the Argives in their ships' defence. 
Thus would the omen be interpreted 
By a diviner skilled in auguries, 
In whom the people freely place their trust:"
Answered the hero of the waving plume
With aspect stern: "Thy speech, Polydamas, 
Shows thee my friend no more; and well thou know'st 
How to give better counsel. But if thou
Hast spoken in sincerity of heart,
The gods, I deem, have robbed thee of thy sense, 
Bidding me—heedless of the promises
Of Jove the thunderer, solemnly confirmed—
Place all my trust in wing-expanding birds, 
Which little I regard—whether they fly 
Or to the right, towards morning and the sun, 
Or to the left, and towards the realms of gloom. 
Be ours to obey the will of mighty Jove, 
Who rules both gods and men. Best omen this:—
To combat bravely for our native land.
Why shouldst thou tremble at the name of war? Should all beside thee perish at the ships, Thou still wert safe, possessing not the heart To venture forth and grapple with a foe. But if thou either shrink from war thyself, Or by persuasion check another's zeal, Instant my spear shall take thy recreant life."

This said, he led the way. With mighty shout The Trojans followed. From the heights of Ida Jove sent a blast of wind, which bore the dust Direct against the ships, damping the spirit In Argive hearts, but to the Trojans bearing Presage of victory. They confident In their own passing valour, and the signs Of favouring Jove, assailed the mighty wall. The breastworks of the towers they tore away; The battlements and massy buttresses Built in support, with levers they upheaved, And fain had won a passage to the ships. Yet fell not back the Greeks; but with their shields
The rampart screened, and from behind them smote
Their foes as they approached beneath the wall.

Unceasingly along the lofty towers
The Ajaces stalked, encouraging the Greeks—
These with mild words, and those whom they beheld
Neglectful of the fight, with stern rebuke:
"Comrades, both ye for glorious deeds renowned,
Ye too less famous, and ye still unknown—
For gifted are not all in war alike—
Now is there work for each; and this ye know.
Let no one, hearing Hector's menaces,
Fall back upon the ships, but onward press
With mutual exhortation; so may Jove,
Who hurls the lightning, grant us to repel
Fierce war, and drive the Trojans to their walls."

Thus either Ajax shouting in the front
Cheered on the Greeks. And as when flakes of snow
Fall fast on wintry day, when prescient Jove
Hath lulled the winds, and in the sight of men
Hurling his weapons, pours incessant down
Thick shower, until the lofty mountain tops,
The flowery plains, and pleasant works of man,
Havens and shores beside the sea, are hid,
Save where the snow, that wraps all else in white,
Is melted by the wave; so frequent flew—
Now from the Trojans, from the Achaians now—
On either side, that ceaseless shower of stones;
And all along the wall rang wild uproar.

Yet never had the Trojans and their chief,
Illustrious Hector, burst the massive gates,
And ponderous cross-bar, had not prudent Jove
Urged on his son Sarpedon to the assault.
He sallying forth, like lion that attacks
The feeble herd, before him held his shield,
Whose plates of brass a cunning smith had forged,
And firmly sewn with many a stout bull's-hide
On golden rods continuous drawn around.
Holding this forth, and brandishing two spears,
He strode, like lion in the mountains bred,
That, famished long, and bold in conscious might,
Invades the well-fenced fold; and though he find
The wakeful shepherds watching o'er their sheep
With dogs and javelins, yet is loth to fly
Without his prey,—which greedily he tears,
Or falls himself beneath quick huntsman's dart:
So was Sarpedon's noble spirit moved
To mount the wall, and burst the battlements.
Hippolochus' brave son he then addressed:
"Why, Glaucus, are we honoured above all
In Lycia with precedence at the feast,
And with the brimming goblet? Why adored
Like gods? Why share we pleasant tract of land,
Fruitful in corn and wine, by Xanthus' stream?
Honoured so highly, shall we not sustain
The brunt of war, and stem the glowing fight?
So shall some mail-clad Lycian proudly exclaim:
'Not all inglorious are our kings who rule
In Lycia, feasting on the fattest sheep,
And quaffing wine the sweetest and the best:
Surely, in valour greatly they excel—
Foremost to rush into the glowing fight.'
Could we, my friend, by shunning war, elude
Approach of age and death, neither would I.
Stand in the battle-front myself, nor urge Thee to the glorious onset. But since fate Presses around us in ten thousand forms, Beyond the power of mortal man to shun, Fame let us win, or fame to others yield."

He spoke; nor did brave Glaucus disobey: Right onward the heroic pair advanced, Followed by all the Lycians. At the sight Shuddered Menestheus, Peteus' son, whose tower The gallant foe now threatened with assault: Along the rampart eagerly he looked, If haply to the rescue he might call Some valiant chieftain. Near him he beheld The Ajaces, who on war were ever bent, And Teucer, lately from his tent returned. Yet vain his shouts; so loud to heaven uprose From shields, from helmets, and from battered gates A deafening clamour; for the Lycian bands Strove now to burst through every gate by force. A herald then to Ajax he despatched: "Haste, noble Thoas, haste, and hither call
Ajax; or rather call the brothers twain;
Such ills the Lycians threaten, who before
Were ever ardent in the strenuous fight.
But if there too fierce turmoil hath arisen,
Let Telamonian Ajax come alone,
And Teucer follow, skilful with his bow.”

He ceased; nor did the herald disobey,
But hastily along the rampart sped,
And, drawing near, to either Ajax spoke:
“Hear, ye Ajaces, captains of the host
Of brass-mailed Greeks:—a summons to you both
I bring from noble Peteus’ much-loved son,
Who, hard beset by foes, entreats your aid—
The aid of both—could both the call obey.
Such ills the Lycians threaten, who before
Were ever ardent in the strenuous fight.
But if here too fierce turmoil hath arisen,
Let Telamonian Ajax come alone,
And Teucer follow, skilful with his bow.”

Nor did the Telamonian chief refuse;
But instantly addressed Oileus' son:

"Ajax, do thou, and Lycomedes here
Exhort our comrades. Thither I myself
Hasten, to stem the battle: that achieved—
I straight return to join your ranks again."

Thus saying, quick the son of Telamon
Rushed forth; and with him gallant Teucer sped,
(Sprung from the self-same sire,) whose bended bow
Pandion carried. When they reached the wall
By great Menestheus guarded, him they found,
Together with his comrades, sorely pressed;
For on the towers the valiant Lycians sprang,
Like a dark whirlwind. Face to face they met;
And tumult loud arose.

Ajax was first
To slay a foeman, lofty-souled Epicles,
Sarpedon's comrade, with a rugged stone,
That lay against a buttress of the wall—
A giant block, which scarce a man might lift
With both his hands, though boasting vigorous youth,
In these our days; but he the mass upheaving,
Hurled it, and breaking through the four-coned helm,
Crushed all his skull. From the high tower he fell, 420
As sinks a diver; and life left his limbs.
Now Teucer with an arrow Glaucus struck,
Hippolochus' brave son, as toward the wall
He rushed amain. His arm the archer saw
Without the shield, and thither winged a dart
That quelled his might. Back from the tower he sprang,
Lest the wound seen should bitter taunt provoke.
At his retreat deep grief Sarpedon stung;
Yet was he not forgetful of the war,
But taking aim, wounded Alcmæon, son Of Thestor, with his spear; and as he strove
To draw the weapon back, he with it drew
The wounded chieftain. Prone to earth he fell;
And all around him his bright armour clanged.
Then on a buttress laying his strong hands,
Sarpedon tugged amain; when from above,
All stript and shattered, fell the mighty wall,
And bridged wide passage for invading foe.
Ajax and Teucer at Sarpedon both
Took aim together. Teucer with a shaft
Struck the bright belt which clasped around his breast
The man-encircling shield; but Jove himself
Averted fate, unwilling that his son
Should perish at the ships. With sudden spring
Ajax rushed on, and smote him on the shield;
But though he failed to pierce it, yet the blow
His ardour checked. Back from the breach some space
The hero drew,—yielding, but not repulsed:
For still on glory bent, despite the stroke,
Hopeful he turned with valorous spirit, and cheered
The godlike Lycians: "Lycians, why relax
Your strenuous efforts? Hard it is for me,
Though brave, to burst the massive wall by force,
And win alone a passage to the ships:
Unite with me, and victory will be ours."

He spoke. With ardour fired at his rebuke,
Around their king and counsellor they flocked.
The Argives too, a desperate strife foreseeing,
Strengthened their phalanxes within the wall.
Nor could the Lycians, bursting through by force,
Win passage to the ships; nor could the Greeks
Drive back the Lycians, when they once had reached
The rampart, and obtained a footing there.
But as two men with measures in their hands
Dispute the boundaries in a narrow field;
So here, divided by the buttresses,
Warrior smote warrior on his ox-hide shield,
Or lighter buckler. As they turned their backs,
Many were wounded by the pitiless spear,
And many in front right through their tunics pierced;
While with the blood of Trojans and of Greeks
Were sprinkled all the battlements and walls.
Yet were the Trojans impotent to turn
The Greeks to flight. And as with scrupulous care
Some poor and honest matron, weighing wool,
Adjusts the balance, labouring to procure
Scant pittance for her children; even so
Equally was the battle poised, till Jove
Glory to Hector gave, great Priam's son,
Who foremost leapt within the Achaian wall.
A shout he gave that pierced through all the host:
On, Trojans, on, ye tamers of the steed:
Burst through the Argive rampart; hurl the torch;
And with unearthly fire consume the ships."

That cheering cry by all his comrades heard—
Straight to the wall they rushed in close array,
And lifting in their hands sharp-pointed spears,
Mounted the battlements. A rugged stone,
That lay before the gates, now Hector seized;
Broad at the base, but at the summit sharp,
Which not two men, strongest of all the host,
In these our days could lift upon a wain;
But he upheaved it easily alone,—
Since Jove had made it buoyant in his grasp.
As in one hand a shepherd lifts with ease
Fleece of a ram, and scarce the burden feels;
So Hector, the enormous block uplifting,
Bore it against the lofty twofold gates,
Whose double bar a massive bolt secured.
Close to the gates he stood, and poising well
The missile, hurled it on the centre beams,
His feet asunder planted, so to enforce
The heavier blow, and wrenched both hinges off.
Within the wall ponderous the vast stone fell:
Loud roared the gates; the bars at once gave way;
And, split to shivers, flew the planks beneath
The stone’s resistless impulse. Through the breach
Bounded illustrious Hector, in aspect
Like to swift Night. Shone with terrific gleam
The brass around him; and in either hand
He grasped a javelin. As he leapt within,
His eyes flashed fire; and no one save a god
Had stayed his onset. Turning ’mid the throng,
He bade the Trojans o’er the rampart mount;
And they anon his cheering voice obeyed.
Some scaled the rampart; others through the gates
Impetuous poured: in terror to their ships
The Danai fled; and uproar wild arose.
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