

“Slack not your speed, nor, as defeated, mourn;  
Their legs and feet will sooner tire than yours,  
For both are past the vigour of their youth.”

Thus he; the horses, of his voice in awe,  
Put forth their pow'rs, and soon the leaders near'd.

510

Meanwhile the chieftains, seated in the ring,  
Look'd for the cars, that scour'd the dusty plain.  
The first to see them was Idomeneus,  
The Cretan King; for he, without the ring,  
Was posted high aloft; and from afar  
He heard and knew the foremost horseman's voice;

Well too he knew the gallant horse that led,  
All bay the rest, but on his front alone

A star of white, full-orbèd as the moon:

520

Then up he rose, and thus the Greeks address'd:

“O friends, the chiefs and councillors of Greece,  
Can ye too see, or I alone, the cars?

A diff'rent chariot seems to me in front,  
A diff'rent charioteer; and they who first

Were leading, must have met with some mischance.  
I saw them late, ere round the goal they turn'd,

But see them now no more; though all around  
My eyes explore the wide-spread plain of Troy.

Perchance the charioteer has dropp'd the reins,  
Or round the goal he could not hold the mares;

530

Perchance has miss'd the turn, and on the plain  
Is lying now beside his broken car,

While from the course his mettled steeds have flown.  
Stand up, and look yourselves; I cannot well

Distinguish; but to me it seems a chief,  
Who reigns o'er Greeks, though of Ætolian race,

The son of Tydeus, valiant Diomed.”

Sharply Oileus' active son replied:

“Idomeneus, why thus, before the time,  
So rashly speak? while the high-stepping steeds  
Are speeding yet across the distant plain.

540

Thine eyes are not the youngest in the camp,  
Nor look they out the sharpest from thy head;

But thou art ever hasty in thy speech,  
And ill becomes thee this precipitance,

Since others are there here, thy betters far.  
The same are leading now, that led at first,

Eumelus' mares; 'tis he that holds the reins.”

To whom in anger thus the Cretan chief:

550

“ Ajax, at wrangling good, in judgment naught,  
And for aught else, among the chiefs of Greece  
Of small account—so stubborn is thy soul;  
Wilt thou a tripod or a caldron stake,  
And Agamemnon, Atreus' son, appoint  
The umpire to decide whose steeds are first?  
So shalt thou gain thy knowledge at thy cost.”

He said: up sprang Oïleus' active son,  
In anger to reply; and farther yet  
Had gone the quarrel, but Achilles' self  
Stood up, and thus the rival chiefs address'd:

560

“ Forbear, both Ajax and Idomeneus,  
This bitter interchange of wordy war;  
It is not seemly; and yourselves, I know,  
Another would condemn, who so should speak.  
But stay ye here, and seated in the ring,  
Their coming wait; they, hurrying to the goal,  
Will soon be here; and then shall each man know  
Whose horses are the second, whose the first.”

570

Thus he; but Tydeus' son drew near, his lash  
Still laid upon his horses' shoulder-points;  
As lightly they, high-stepping, scour'd the plain.  
Still on the charioteer the dust was flung;  
As close upon the flying-footed steeds  
Follow'd the car with gold and tin inlaid;  
And lightly, as they flew along, were left  
Impress'd the wheel-tracks on the sandy plain.  
There in the midst he stood, the sweat profuse  
Down-pouring from his horses' heads and chests;  
Down from the glitt'ring car he leap'd to earth,  
And lean'd his whip against the chariot yoke;  
Nor long delay'd the valiant Sthenelus,  
But eagerly sprang forth to claim the prize;  
Then to his brave companions gave in charge  
To lead away the woman, and to bear  
The tripod, while himself unyok'd the steeds.

580

Next came the horses of Antilochus,  
Who had by stratagem, and not by speed,  
O'er Meneläus triumph'd; yet ev'n so  
Atrides' flying coursers press'd him hard;  
For but so far as from the chariot-wheel  
A horse, when harness'd to a royal car;

590

Whose tail, back-streaming, with the utmost hairs  
Brushes the felloes; close before the wheel,  
Small space between, he scours the wide-spread plain:  
So far was Menelæus in the rear

Of Nestor's son; at first, a discus' cast  
Between them lay; but rapidly his ground  
He gain'd—so well the speed and courage serv'd  
Of Æthe, Agamemnon's beauteous mare;  
And, but a little farther were the course,  
Had pass'd him by, nor left the race in doubt.  
Behind the noble son of Atreus came,

600

A jav'lin's flight apart, Meriones,  
The faithful follower of Idomeneus:  
His were the slowest horses, and himself  
The least experienc'd in the rapid race.  
Dragging his broken car, came last of all,  
His horses driv'n in front, Admetus' son;  
Achilles swift of foot with pity saw,  
And to the Greeks his wingèd words address'd:

610

“ See where the best of all the last appears;  
But let him take, as meet, the second prize;  
The first belongs of right to Tydeus' son.”

Thus he; they all assented to his words;  
And, by the gen'ral voice of Greece, the mare  
Had now been his; but noble Nestor's son,  
Antilochus, stood up, his right to claim,  
And to Achilles, Peleus' son, replied:

620

“ Achilles, thou wilt do me grievous wrong,  
If thou thy words accomplish; for my prize  
Thou tak'st away, because mishap befell  
His car and horses, by no fault of his;  
Yet had he to th' Immortals made his pray'r,  
He surely had not thus been last of all.

But, pitying him, if so thy mind incline,  
Thy tents contain good store of gold, and brass,  
And sheep, and female slaves, and noble steeds;  
For him, of these, hereafter mayst thou take

630

A prize of higher value; or ev'n now,  
And with th' applause of all; but for the mare,  
I will not give her up; and let who will  
Stand forth, my own right hand shall guard my prize.”

He said; and smil'd Achilles swift of foot,  
Delighted; for he lov'd the noble youth,



To whom his wingèd words he thus address'd:

“ Antilochus, if such be thy request,  
That for Eumelus I should add a prize,  
This too I grant thee; and to him I give  
My breastplate, from Asteropæus won,  
Of brass, around whose edge is roll'd a stream  
Of shining tin; a gift of goodly price.”

640

He said, and bade Automedon, his friend  
And comrade, bring the breastplate from his tent;  
He went, and brought it; in Eumelus' hand  
He plac'd it; he with joy the gift receiv'd.  
Then Menelæus, sad at heart, arose,  
Burning with wrath against Antilochus;  
And while the herald in the monarch's hand  
His royal sceptre plac'd, and bade the Greeks  
Keep silence, thus the godlike hero spoke:

650

“ Antilochus, till now reputed wise,  
What hast thou done? thou hast impugn'd my skill,  
And sham'd my horses, who hast brought thine own,  
Inferior far, before them to the goal.  
But come, ye chiefs and councillors of Greece,  
Judge ye between us, fav'ring neither side:  
That none of all the brass-clad Greeks may say  
That Menelæus hath by false reports  
O'erborne Antilochus, and holds his prize:  
His horses fairly worsted, and himself  
Triumphant only by superior pow'r.  
Or come now, I myself will judgment give;  
Nor deem I any Greek will find to blame  
In my decision, for 'tis fair and just.  
Antilochus, come forward, noble chief;  
And standing, as 'tis meet, before the car  
And horses, in thy hand the slender whip  
Wherewith thou drov'st, upon the horses lay  
Thy hand, and by Earth-shaking Neptune swear  
That not of malice, and by set design,  
Thou didst by fraud impede my chariot's course.”

660

670

To whom Antilochus with prudent speech:  
“ Have patience with me yet; for I, O King,  
O Menelæus, am thy junior far;  
My elder and superior thee I own.  
Thou know'st th' o'er-eager vehemence of youth,  
How quick in temper, and in judgment weak.

Set then thy heart at ease; the mare I won  
I freely give; and if aught else of mine 680  
Thou shouldst desire, would sooner give it all,  
Than all my life be low'r'd, illustrious King,  
In thine esteem, and sin against the Gods."

Thus saying, noble Nestor's son led forth,  
And plac'd in Meneläus' hands the mare:  
The monarch's soul was melted, like the dew  
Which glitters on the ears of growing corn,  
That bristle o'er the plain; ev'n so thy soul,  
O Meneläus, melted at his speech;  
To whom were thus address'd thy wingèd words: 690

" Antilochus, at once I lay aside  
My anger; thou art prudent, and not apt  
To be thus led astray; but now thy youth  
Thy judgment hath o'erpow'r'd; seek not henceforth  
By trick'ry o'er thine elders to prevail.  
To any other man of all the Greeks  
I scarce so much had yielded; but for that  
Thyself hast labour'd much, and much endur'd,  
Thou, thy good sire, and brother, in my cause;  
I yield me to thy pray'rs; and give, to boot, 700  
The mare, though mine of right; that these may know  
I am not of a harsh, unyielding mood."

He said, and to Noëmon gave in charge,  
The faithful comrade of Antilochus,  
The mare; himself the glitt'ring caldron took.  
Of gold two talents, to the fourth assign'd,  
Fourth in the race, Meriones receiv'd;  
Still the fifth prize, a vase with double cup,  
Remain'd; Achilles this to Nestor gave,  
Before th' assembled Greeks, as thus he spoke: 710  
" Take this, old man, and for an heir-loom keep,  
In mem'ry of Patroclus' fun'ral games,  
Whom thou no more amid the Greeks shalt see.  
Freely I give it thee; for thou no more  
Canst box, or wrestle, or in sportive strife  
The jav'lin throw, or race with flying feet;  
For age with heavy hand hath bow'd thee down."

He said, and plac'd it in his hand; th' old man  
Receiv'd with joy the gift, and thus replied:

" All thou hast said, my son, is simple truth: 720  
No firmness now my limbs and feet retain,

Nor can my arms with freedom, as of old,  
 Straight from the shoulder, right and left, strike out.  
 Oh that such youth and vigour yet were mine,  
 As when th' Epeians in Buprasium held  
 The royal Amarynceus' fun'ral games,  
 And when the monarch's sons his prizes gave!  
 Then could not one of all th' Epeian race,  
 Or Pylians, or Ætolians, vie with me.  
 In boxing, Clytomedes, CEnops' son, 73°  
 I vanquish'd; then Anchæus, who stood up  
 To wrestle with me, I with ease o'erthrew;  
 Iphiclus I outran, though fleet of foot;  
 In hurling with the spear, with Phyleus strove,  
 And Polydorus, and surpass'd them both.  
 The sons of Actor in the chariot-race  
 Alone o'ercame me; aided by the crowd  
 Who envied my success, and saw, displeas'd,  
 The richest prizes by a stranger gain'd.  
 They were twin brothers; one who held the reins, 74°  
 Still drove, and drove; the other plied the whip.  
 Such was I once; but now must younger men  
 Engage in deeds like these; and I, the chief  
 Of heroes once, must bow to weary age.  
 But honour thou with fitting fun'ral games  
 Thy comrade; I accept, well-pleas'd, thy gift,  
 My heart rejoicing that thou still retain'st  
 Of me a kindly mem'ry, nor o'erlook'st  
 The place of honour, which among the Greeks  
 Belongs to me of right; for this, the Gods 75°  
 Reward thee with a worthy recompense! "

He said; Achilles listen'd to the praise  
 Of Neleus' son; then join'd the gen'ral throng.  
 Next, he set forth the prizes, to reward  
 The labours of the sturdy pugilists;  
 A hardy mule he tether'd in the ring,  
 Unbroken, six years old, most hard to tame;  
 And for the vanquish'd man, a double cup;  
 Then rose, and to the Greeks proclaim'd aloud:  
 "Thou son of Atreus, and ye well-greav'd Greeks, 76°  
 For these we bid two champions brave stand forth,  
 And in the boxer's manly toil contend;  
 And he, whose stern endurance Phœbus crowns  
 With vict'ry, recognis'd by all the Greeks,



He to his tent shall lead the hardy mule;  
The loser shall the double cup receive."

He said; up sprang Epeius, tall and stout,  
A boxer skill'd, the son of Panopeus,  
Who laid his hand upon the mule, and said:

"Stand forth, if any care the cup to win;  
The mule, methinks, no Greek can bear away  
From me, who glory in the champion's name.  
Is't not enough, that in the battle-field  
I claim no special praise? 'tis not for man  
In all things to excel; but this I say,  
And will make good my words, who meets me here,  
I mean to pound his flesh, and smash his bones.  
See that his seconds be at hand, and prompt  
To bear him from the ring, by me subdued."

770

He said; they all in silence heard his speech:

780

Only Euryalus, a godlike chief,  
Son of Mecistheus, Talaïon's son,  
Stood forth opposing; he had once in Thebes  
Join'd in the fun'ral games of Œdipus,  
And there had vanquish'd all of Cadmian race.  
On him attended valiant Diomed,  
With cheering words, and wishes of success.  
Around his waist he fasten'd first the belt,  
Then gave the well-cut gauntlets for his hands,  
Of wild bull's-hide. When both were thus equipp'd,  
Into the centre of the ring they stepp'd:  
There, face to face, with sinewy arms uprais'd,  
They stood awhile, then clos'd; strong hand with hand  
Mingling, in rapid interchange of blows.  
Dire was the clatter of their jaws; the sweat  
Pour'd forth, profuse, from ev'ry limb; then rush'd  
Epeius on, and full upon the cheek,  
Half turn'd aside, let fall a stagg'ring blow;  
Nor stood Euryalus; but, legs and feet  
Knock'd from beneath him, prone to earth he fell;  
And as a fish, that flounders on the sand,  
Thrown by rude Boreas on the weedy beach,  
Till cover'd o'er by the returning wave;  
So flounder'd he beneath that stunning blow.  
But brave Epeius took him by the hand,  
And rais'd him up; his comrades crowded round  
And bore him from the field, with dragging steps,

790

800

Spitting forth clotted gore, his heavy head  
 Rolling from side to side; within his tent  
 They laid him down, unconscious; to the ring 810  
 Then back returning, bore away the cup.

Achilles next before the Greeks display'd  
 The prizes of the hardy wrestlers' skill:  
 The victor's prize, a tripod vast, fire-proof,  
 And at twelve oxen by the Greeks apprais'd;  
 And for the vanquish'd man, a female slave  
 Pric'd at four oxen, skill'd in household work.  
 Then rose, and loudly to the Greeks proclaim'd,  
 "Stand forth, whoe'er this contest will essay."

He said; and straight uprose the giant form 820  
 Of Ajax Telamon: with him uprose  
 Ulysses, skill'd in ev'ry crafty wile.  
 Girt with the belt, within the ring they stood,  
 And each, with stalwart grasp, laid hold on each;  
 As stand two rafters of a lofty house,  
 Each propping each, by skilful architect  
 Design'd the tempest's fury to withstand.  
 Creak'd their backbones beneath the tug and strain  
 Of those strong arms; their sweat pour'd down like rain;  
 And bloody weals of livid purple hue 830  
 Their sides and shoulders streak'd, as sternly they  
 For vict'ry and the well-wrought tripod strove.  
 Nor could Ulysses Ajax overthrow,  
 Nor Ajax bring Ulysses to the ground,  
 So stubbornly he stood; but when the Greeks  
 Were weary of the long-protracted strife,  
 Thus to Ulysses mighty Ajax spoke:  
 "Ulysses sage, Laertes' godlike son,  
 Or lift thou me, or I will thee uplift:  
 The issue of our struggle rests with Jove." 840

He said, and rais'd Ulysses from the ground;  
 Nor he his ancient craft remember'd not,  
 But lock'd his leg around, and striking sharp  
 Upon the hollow of the knee, the joint  
 Gave way; the giant Ajax backwards fell,  
 Ulysses on his breast; the people saw,  
 And marvell'd. Then in turn Ulysses strove  
 Ajax to lift; a little way he mov'd,  
 But fail'd to lift him fairly from the ground;  
 Yet crook'd his knee, that both together fell, 850



And side by side, defil'd with dust, they lay.

And now a third encounter had they tried  
But rose Achilles, and the combat stay'd:  
"Forbear, nor waste your strength in farther strife;  
Ye both are victors; both then bear away  
An equal meed of honour; and withdraw,  
That other Greeks may other contests wage."  
Thus spoke Achilles; they his words obey'd,  
And brushing off the dust, their garments donn'd.

860

The prizes of the runners, swift of foot,  
Achilles next set forth; a silver bowl,  
Six measures its content, for workmanship  
Unmatch'd on earth, of Sidon's costliest art  
The product rare; thence o'er the misty sea  
Brought by Phœnicians, who, in port arriv'd,  
Gave it to Thoas: by Eunëus last,  
The son of Jason, to Patroclus paid,  
In ransom of Lycaon, Priam's son;  
Which now Achilles, on his friend's behalf,  
Assign'd as his reward, whoe'er should prove  
The lightest foot, and speediest in the race.  
A steer, well fatten'd, was the second prize,  
And half a talent, for the third, of gold.  
He rose, and to the Greeks proclaim'd aloud,  
"Stand forth, whoe'er this contest will essay."

870

He said: uprose Oileus' active son;  
Uprose Ulysses, skill'd in ev'ry wile,  
And noble Nestor's son, Antilochus,  
Who all the youth in speed of foot surpass'd.  
They stood in line: Achilles pointed out  
The limits of the course; as from the goal  
They stretch'd them to the race, Oileus' son  
First shot ahead; Ulysses following close;  
Nor farther than the shuttle from the breast  
Of some fair woman, when her outstretch'd arm  
Has thrown the woof athwart the warp, and back  
Withdraws it tow'rd her breast; so close behind  
Ulysses press'd on Ajax, and his feet  
Trod in his steps, ere settled yet the dust.  
His breath was on his shoulders, as the plain  
He lightly skimm'd; the Greeks with eager shouts  
Still cheering, as he strain'd to win the prize.  
But as they near'd the goal, Ulysses thus

880

890

To blue-ey'd Pallas made his mental pray'r:  
 "Now hear me, Goddess, and my feet befriend."  
 Thus as he pray'd, his pray'r the Goddess heard,  
 And all his limbs with active vigour fill'd;  
 And, as they stretch'd their hands to seize the prize,  
 Tripp'd up by Pallas, Ajax slipp'd and fell,  
 Amid the offal of the lowing kine

900

Which o'er Patroclus Peleus' son had slain.  
 His mouth and nostrils were with offal fill'd.  
 First in the race, Ulysses bore away  
 The silver bowl; the steer to Ajax fell;  
 And as upon the horn he laid his hand,  
 Sputt'ring the offal out, he call'd aloud:  
 "Lo, how the Goddess has my steps bewray'd,  
 Who guards Ulysses with a mother's care."

Thus as he spoke, loud laugh'd the merry Greeks.

Antilochus the sole remaining prize

910

Receiv'd, and, laughing, thus the Greeks address'd:

"I tell you, friends, but what yourselves do know,  
 How of the elder men th' immortal Gods  
 Take special care; for Ajax' years not much  
 Exceed mine own; but here we see a man,  
 One of a former age, and race of men;  
 A hale old man we call him; but for speed  
 Not one can match him, save Achilles' self."

Thus he, with praise implied of Peleus' son;  
 To whom in answer thus Achilles spoke:

920

"Antilochus, not unobserv'd of me  
 Nor unrewarded shall thy praise remain:  
 To thy half talent add this second half."

Thus saying, in his hand he plac'd the gold;  
 Antilochus with joy the gift receiv'd.

Next, in the ring the son of Peleus laid  
 A pond'rous spear, a helmet, and a shield,  
 By brave Patroclus from Sarpedon won;  
 Then rose, and loudly to the Greeks proclaim'd:

930

"For these we call upon two champions brave  
 To don their arms, their sharp-edg'd weapons grasp,  
 And public trial of their prowess make;  
 And he who first his rival's flesh shall reach,  
 And, through his armour piercing, first draw blood,  
 He shall this silver-studded sword receive,  
 My trophy from Asteropæus won,

Well-wrought, of Thracian metal; but the arms  
In common property they both shall hold,  
And in my tent a noble banquet share."

He said; uprose great Ajax Telamon, 94°  
And Tydeus' son, the valiant Diomed.

First, from the crowd apart, they donn'd their arms;  
Then, eager for the fight, with haughty stare  
Stood in the midst; the Greeks admiring gaz'd.

When, each approaching other, near they came,  
Thrice rush'd they on, and thrice in combat clos'd.

Then through the buckler round of Diomed  
Great Ajax drove his spear; nor reach'd the point  
Tydides' body, by the breastplate stay'd:

While, aim'd above the mighty shield's defence, 95°  
His glitt'ring weapon flash'd at Ajax' throat.

For Ajax fearing, shouted then the Greeks  
To cease the fight, and share alike the prize;

But from Achilles' hand the mighty sword,  
With belt and scabbard, Diomed receiv'd.

Next in the ring the son of Peleus plac'd  
A pond'rous mass of iron, as a quoit

Once wielded by Eëtion's giant strength,

But to the ships with other trophies borne,

When by Achilles' hand Eëtion fell. 96°

Then rose, and loudly to the Greeks proclaim'd:

"Stand forth, whoe'er this contest will essay.

This prize who wins, though widely may extend

His fertile fields, for five revolving years

It will his wants supply; nor to the town

For lack of iron, with this mass in store,

Need he his shepherd or his ploughman send."

He said; and valiant Polypœtes rose,

Epeius, and Leonteus' godlike strength,

And mighty Ajax, son of Telamon. 97°

In turns they took their stand; Epeius first

Uprais'd the pond'rous mass, and through the air

Hurl'd it, amid the laughter of the Greeks.

Next came Leonteus, scion true of Mars;

The third was Ajax; from whose stalwart hand

Beyond the farthest mark the missile flew.

But when the valiant Polypœtes took

The quoit in hand, far as a herdsman throws

His staff, that, whirling, flies among the herd;



So far beyond the ring's extremest bound 980  
 He threw the pond'rous mass; loud were the shouts;  
 And noble Polypœtes' comrades rose,  
 And to the ships the monarch's gift convey'd.

The archers' prizes next, of iron hoar,  
 Ten sturdy axes, double-edg'd, he plac'd,  
 And single hatchets ten; then far away  
 Rear'd on the sand a dark-prow'd vessel's mast,  
 On which, with slender string, a tim'rous dove  
 Was fasten'd by the foot, the archers' mark;  
 That who should strike the dove, should to his tent 990  
 The axes bear away; but who the string  
 Should sever, but should fail to strike the bird,  
 As less in skill, the hatchets should receive.

Thus spoke Achilles; straight uprose the might  
 Of royal Teucer, and Meriones,  
 The faithful follower of Idomeneus.  
 They in a brass-bound helmet shook the lots.  
 The first was Teucer's; with impetuous force  
 He shot; but vow'd not to the Archer-King  
 Of firstling lambs a solemn hecatomb. 1000  
 The dove he struck not, for the Archer-God  
 Withheld his aid; but close beside her foot  
 The arrow sever'd the retaining string.  
 The bird releas'd, soar'd heav'nward; while the string  
 Dropp'd, from the mast suspended, tow'rds the earth,  
 And loudly shouted their applause the Greeks.  
 Then snatch'd Meriones in haste the bow  
 From Teucer's hand; his own already held  
 His arrow, pointed straight; he drew the string,  
 And to the far-destroying King he vow'd 1010  
 Of firstling lambs a solemn hecatomb.  
 Aloft amid the clouds he mark'd the dove,  
 And struck her, as she soar'd, beneath the wing:  
 Right through the arrow pass'd; and to the earth  
 Returning, fell beside Meriones.  
 The bird upon the dark-prow'd vessel's mast  
 Lighted awhile; anon, with drooping head,  
 And pinions flutt'ring vain, afar she fell,  
 Lifeless; th' admiring crowd with wonder gaz'd.  
 Meriones the axes bore away, 1020  
 While Teucer to the ships the hatchets bore.  
 Last, in the ring the son of Peleus laid

A pond'rous spear, and caldron, burnish'd bright,  
Pric'd at an ox's worth, untouch'd by fire,  
For those who with the jav'lin would contend.  
Uprose then Agamemnon, King of men,  
The son of Atreus, and Meriones,  
The faithful follower of Idomeneus;  
But Peleus' godlike son address'd them thus:

“How far, Atrides, thou excell'st us all,  
And with the jav'lin what thy pow'r and skill  
Pre-eminent, we know; take thou this prize,  
And bear it to thy ships; and let us give  
To brave Meriones the brazen spear;  
If so it please thee, such were my advice.”

He said; and Agamemnon, King of men,  
Assenting, gave to brave Meriones  
The brazen spear; while in Talthybius' care,  
His herald, plac'd the King his noble prize.

1030

## BOOK XXIV

### ARGUMENT

PRIAM, by command of Jupiter, and under conduct of Mercury, seeks Achilles in his tent, who admonished previously by Thetis, consents to accept ransom for the body of Hector. Hector is mourned, and the manner of his funeral, circumstantially described, concludes the poem.

THE games were ended, and the multitude  
Amid the ships their sev'ral ways dispers'd:  
Some to their supper, some to gentle sleep  
Yielding, delighted; but Achilles still  
Mourn'd o'er his lov'd companion; not on him  
Lighted all-conqu'ring sleep, but to and fro  
Restless he toss'd, and on Patroclus thought,  
His vigour and his courage; all the deeds  
They two together had achiev'd; the toils,  
The perils they had undergone, amid  
The strife of warriors, and the angry waves. 10  
Stirr'd by such mem'ries, bitter tears he shed;  
Now turning on his side, and now again  
Upon his back; then prone upon his face;  
Then starting to his feet, along the shore  
All objectless, despairing, would he roam;  
Nor did the morn, above the sea appearing,  
Unmark'd of him arise; his flying steeds  
He then would harness, and, behind the car  
The corpse of Hector trailing in the dust, 20  
Thrice make the circuit of Patroclus' tomb;  
Then would he turn within his tent to rest,  
Leaving the prostrate corpse with dust defil'd;  
But from unseemly marks the valiant dead  
Apollo guarded, who with pity view'd  
The hero, though in death; and round him threw  
His golden ægis; nor, though dragg'd along,  
Allow'd his body to receive a wound.  
Thus foully did Achilles in his rage  
Misuse the mighty dead; the blessed Gods 30



With pitying grief beheld the sight, and urg'd  
 That Hermes should by stealth the corpse remove.  
 The counsel pleas'd the rest; but Juno still,  
 And Neptune, and the blue-ey'd Maid, retain'd  
 The hatred, unappeas'd, with which of old  
 Troy and her King and people they pursued;  
 Since Paris to the rival Goddesses,  
 Who to his sheepfold came, gave deep offence,  
 Preferring her who brought him in return  
 The fatal boon of too successful love. 40

But when the twelfth revolving day was come,  
 Apollo thus th' assembled Gods address'd:

“Shame on ye, Gods, ungrateful! have ye not,  
 At Hector's hand, of bulls and choicest goats  
 Receiv'd your off'rings meet? and fear ye now  
 Ev'n his dead corpse to save, and grant his wife,  
 His mother, and his child, his aged sire  
 And people, to behold him, and to raise  
 His fun'ral pile, and with due rites entomb?  
 But fell Achilles all your aid commands; 50

Of mind unrighteous, and inflexible  
 His stubborn heart; his thoughts are all of blood;  
 Ev'n as a lion, whom his mighty strength  
 And dauntless courage lead to leap the fold,  
 And 'mid the trembling flocks to seize his prey;  
 Ev'n so Achilles hath discarded ruth,  
 And conscience, arbiter of good and ill.

A man may lose his best-lov'd friend, a son,  
 Or his own mother's son, a brother dear:  
 He mourns and weeps, but time his grief allays, 60  
 For fate to man a patient mind hath giv'n:

But godlike Hector's body, after death,  
 Achilles, unrelenting, foully drags,  
 Lash'd to his car, around his comrade's tomb.  
 This is not to his praise; though brave he be,  
 Yet thus our anger he may justly rouse,  
 Who in his rage insults the senseless clay.”

To whom, indignant, white-arm'd Juno thus:  
 “Some show of reason were there in thy speech,  
 God of the silver bow, could Hector boast  
 Of equal dignity with Peleus' son. 70

A mortal one, and nurs'd at woman's breast;  
 The other, of a Goddess born, whom I

Nurtur'd and rear'd, and to a mortal gave  
 In marriage; gave to Peleus, best belov'd  
 By all th' Immortals, of the race of man.  
 Ye, Gods, attended all the marriage rites;  
 Thou too, companion base, false friend, wast there,  
 And, playing on thy lyre, didst share the feast."

To whom the Cloud-compeller answer'd thus: 80  
 "Juno, restrain thy wrath; they shall not both  
 Attain like honour; yet was Hector once,  
 Of all the mortals that in Ilium dwell,  
 Dearest to all the Gods, and chief to me;  
 For never did he fail his gifts to bring,  
 And with burnt-off'rings and libations due  
 My altars crown; such worship I receiv'd.  
 Yet shall bold Hector's body, not without  
 The knowledge of Achilles, be remov'd;  
 For day and night his Goddess-mother keeps 90  
 Her constant watch beside him. Then, some God  
 Bid Thetis hither to my presence haste;  
 And I with prudent words will counsel her,  
 That so Achilles may at Priam's hand  
 Large ransom take, and set brave Hector free."

He said; and promptly on his errand sprang  
 The storm-swift Iris; in the dark-blue sea  
 She plung'd, midway 'twixt Imbros' rugged shore  
 And Samos' isle; the parting waters splash'd,  
 As down to ocean's lowest depths she dropp'd, 100  
 Like to a plummet, which the fisherman  
 Lets fall, encas'd in wild bull's horn, to bear  
 Destruction to the sea's voracious tribes.  
 There found she Thetis in a hollow cave,  
 Around her rang'd the Ocean Goddesses:  
 She, in the midst, was weeping o'er the fate  
 Her matchless son awaiting, doom'd to die  
 Far from his home, on fertile plains of Troy.  
 Swift-footed Iris at her side appear'd,  
 And thus address'd her: "Hasten, Thetis; Jove, 110  
 Lord of immortal counsel, summons thee."  
 To whom the silver-footed Goddess thus:  
 "What would with me the mighty King of Heav'n?  
 Press'd as I am with grief, I am asham'd  
 To mingle with the Gods; yet will I go:  
 Nor shall he speak in vain, whate'er his words."

Thus as she spoke, her veil the Goddess took,  
 All black, than which none deeper could be found;  
 She rose to go; the storm-swift Iris led  
 The way before her; ocean's parted waves 120  
 Around their path receded; to the beach  
 Ascending, upwards straight to Heav'n they sprang.  
 Th' all-seeing son of Saturn there they found,  
 And rang'd around him all th' immortal Gods.  
 Pallas made way; and by the throne of Jove  
 Sat Thetis, Juno proff'ring to her hand  
 A goblet fair of gold, and adding words  
 Of welcome; she the cup receiv'd, and drank.  
 Then thus began the sire of Gods and men:  
 "Thou, Thetis, sorrowing to Olympus com'st, 130  
 Borne down by ceaseless grief; I know it well;  
 Yet hear the cause for which I summon'd thee.  
 About Achilles, thy victorious son,  
 And valiant Hector's body, for nine days  
 Hath contest been in Heav'n; and some have urg'd  
 That Hermes should by stealth the corpse remove.  
 This to Achilles' praise I mean to turn,  
 And thus thy rev'ence and thy love retain.  
 Then haste thee to the camp, and to thy son  
 My message bear; tell him that all the Gods 140  
 Are fill'd with wrath; and I above the rest  
 Am angry, that beside the beak'd ships,  
 He, mad with rage, the corpse of Hector keeps:  
 So may he fear me, and the dead restore.  
 Iris meantime to Priam I will send,  
 And bid him seek the Grecian ships, and there  
 Obtain his son's release; and with him bring  
 Such presents as may melt Achilles' heart."  
 He said; the silver-footed Queen obey'd;  
 Down from Olympus' heights in haste she sped, 150  
 And sought her son; him found she in his tent,  
 Groaning with anguish, while his comrades round,  
 Plying their tasks, the morning meal prepar'd.  
 For them a goodly sheep, full-fleec'd, was slain.  
 Close by his side his Goddess-mother stood,  
 And gently touch'd him with her hand, and said,  
 "How long, my son, wilt thou thy soul consume  
 With grief and mourning, mindful nor of food  
 Nor sleep? nor dost thou wisely, to abstain



From woman's love; for short thy time on earth: 160  
 Death and imperious fate are close at hand.  
 Hear then my words; a messenger from Jove  
 To thee I come, to tell thee that the Gods  
 Are fill'd with wrath, and he above the rest  
 Is angry, that beside the beak'd ships  
 Thou, mad with rage, the corpse of Hector keep'st.  
 Then ransom take, and liberate the dead."

To whom Achilles, swift of foot, replied:  
 "So be it; ransom let him bring, and bear  
 His dead away, if such the will of Jove." 170

Thus, in the concourse of the ships, they two,  
 Mother and son, their lengthen'd converse held.

Then Saturn's son to Iris gave command:  
 "Haste thee, swift Iris, from th' abodes of Heav'n,  
 To Troy, to royal Priam bear my words;  
 And bid him seek the Grecian ships, and there  
 Obtain his son's release; and with him take  
 Such presents as may melt Achilles' heart.  
 Alone, no Trojan with him, must he go;  
 Yet may a herald on his steps attend, 180  
 Some aged man, his smoothly-rolling car  
 And mules to drive; and to the city back  
 To bring his dead, whom great Achilles slew.  
 Nor let the fear of death disturb his mind:  
 Hermes shall with him, as his escort, go,  
 And to Achilles' presence safely bring.  
 Arriv'd within the tent, nor he himself  
 Will slay him, but from others will protect.  
 Not ignorant is he, nor void of sense,  
 Nor disobedient to the Gods' behest; 190  
 But will with pitying eyes his suppliant view."

He said; and on his errand sped in haste  
 The storm-swift Iris; when to Priam's house  
 She came, the sounds of wailing met her ear.  
 Within the court, around their father, sat  
 His sons, their raiment all bedew'd with tears;  
 And in the midst, close cover'd with his robe,  
 Their sire, his head and neck with dirt defil'd,  
 Which, wallowing on the earth, himself had heap'd,  
 With his own hands, upon his hoary head, 200  
 Throughout the house his daughters loudly wail'd  
 In mem'ry of the many and the brave

Who lay in death, by Grecian warriors slain.

Beside him stood the messenger of Jove,  
And whisper'd, while his limbs with terror shook:

“Fear nothing, Priam, son of Dardanus,  
Nor let thy mind be troubled; not for ill,  
But here on kindly errand am I sent:

To thee I come, a messenger from Jove,  
Who from on high looks down on thee with eyes  
Of pitying love; he bids thee ransom home  
The godlike Hector's corpse; and with thee take  
Such presents as may melt Achilles' heart.

210

Alone, no Trojan with thee, must thou go;  
Yet may a herald on thy steps attend,  
Some aged man, thy smoothly-rolling car  
And mules to drive, and to the city back  
To bring thy dead, whom great Achilles slew.

Nor let the fear of death disturb thy mind:  
Hermes shall with thee, as thine escort, go,  
And to Achilles' presence safely bring.

220

Arriv'd within the tent, nor he himself  
Will slay thee, but from others will protect;  
Not ignorant is he, nor void of sense,  
Nor disobedient to the Gods' behest,  
But will with pitying eyes his suppliant view.”

Swift-footed Iris said, and vanish'd straight:  
He to his sons commandment gave, the mules  
To yoke beneath the smoothly-rolling car,  
And on the axle fix the wicker seat.

230

Himself the lofty cedar-chamber sought,  
Fragrant, high-roof'd, with countless treasures stor'd;  
And call'd to Hecuba his wife, and said,

“Good wife, a messenger from Jove hath come,  
Who bids me seek the Grecian ships, and there  
Obtain my son's release; and with me take  
Such presents as may melt Achilles' heart.

Say then, what think'st thou? for my mind inclines  
To seek the ships within the Grecian camp.”

So he; but Hecuba lamenting cried,

240

“Alas, alas! where are thy senses gone?

And where the wisdom, once of high repute  
'Mid strangers, and 'mid those o'er whom thou reign'st?  
How canst thou think alone to seek the ships,  
Ent'ring his presence, who thy sons has slain,

Many and brave? an iron heart is thine!  
 Of that bloodthirsty and perfidious man,  
 If thou within the sight and reach shalt come,  
 No pity will he feel, no rev'rence show:  
 Rather remain we here apart and mourn; 250  
 For him, when at his birth his thread of life  
 Was spun by fate, 'twas destin'd that afar  
 From home and parents, he should glut the maw  
 Of rav'ning dogs, by that stern warrior's tent,  
 Whose inmost heart I would I could devour:  
 Such for my son were adequate revenge,  
 Whom not in ignominious flight he slew;  
 But standing, thoughtless of escape or flight,  
 For Trojan men and Troy's deep-bosom'd dames."

To whom in answer Priam, godlike sire: 260  
 "Seek not to hinder me; nor be thyself  
 A bird of evil omen in my house;  
 For thou shalt not persuade me. If indeed  
 This message had been brought by mortal man,  
 Prophet, or seer, or sacrificing priest,  
 I should have deem'd it false, and laugh'd to scorn  
 The idle tale; but now (for I myself  
 Both saw and heard the Goddess) I must go;  
 Nor unfulfill'd shall be the words I speak:  
 And if indeed it be my fate to die 270  
 Beside the vessels of the brass-clad Greeks,  
 I am content! by fierce Achilles' hand  
 Let me be slain, so once more in my arms  
 I hold my boy, and give my sorrow vent."  
 Then raising up the coffer's polish'd lid,  
 He chose twelve gorgeous shawls, twelve single cloaks,  
 As many rugs, as many splendid robes,  
 As many tunics; then of gold he took  
 Ten talents full; two tripods, burnish'd bright,  
 Four caldrons; then a cup of beauty rare, 280  
 A rich possession, which the men of Thrace  
 Had giv'n, when there he went ambassador;  
 Ev'n this he spar'd not, such his keen desire  
 His son to ransom. From the corridor  
 With angry words he drove the Trojans all:  
 "Out with ye, worthless rascals, vagabonds!  
 Have ye no griefs at home, that here ye come  
 To pester me? or is it not enough



That Jove with deep affliction visits me,  
 Slaying my bravest son? ye to your cost 290  
 Shall know his loss: since now that he is gone,  
 The Greeks shall find you easier far to slay.  
 But may my eyes be clos'd in death, ere see  
 The city sack'd, and utterly destroy'd."

He said, and with his staff drove out the crowd;  
 Before the old man's anger fled they all;  
 Then to his sons in threat'ning tone he cried;  
 To Paris, Helenus, and Agathon,  
 Pammon, Antiphonus, Polites brave,  
 Deiphobus, and bold Hippothöus, 300  
 And godlike Dius; all these nine with threats  
 And angry taunts the aged sire assail'd:

"Haste, worthless sons, my scandal and my shame!  
 Would that ye all beside the Grecian ships  
 In Hector's stead had died! Oh woe is me,  
 Who have begotten sons, in all the land  
 The best and bravest; now remains not one;  
 Mestor, and Troilus, dauntless charioteer,  
 And Hector, who a God 'mid men appear'd,  
 Nor like a mortal's offspring, but a God's: 310  
 All these hath Mars cut off; and left me none,  
 None but the vile and refuse; liars all,  
 Vain skipping coxcombs, in the dance alone  
 And in nought else renown'd; base plunderers,  
 From their own countrymen, of lambs and kids.  
 When, laggards, will ye harness me the car  
 Equipp'd with all things needed for the way?"

He said; they quail'd beneath their father's wrath,  
 And brought the smoothly-running mule-wain out,  
 Well-fram'd, new-built; and fix'd the wicker seat; 320  
 Then from the peg the mule-yoke down they took,  
 Of boxwood wrought, with boss and rings complete;  
 And with the yoke, the yoke-band brought they forth,  
 Nine cubits long; and to the polish'd pole  
 At the far end attach'd; the breast-rings then  
 Fix'd to the pole-piece; and on either side  
 Thrice round the knob the leathern thong they wound,  
 And bound it fast, and inward turn'd the tongue.  
 Then the rich ransom, from the chambers brought,  
 Of Hector's head, upon the wain they pil'd; 330  
 And yok'd the strong-hoof'd mules, to harness train'd,

The Mysians' splendid present to the King:  
 To Priam's car they harness'd then the steeds,  
 Which he himself at polish'd manger fed.

Deep thoughts revolving, in the lofty halls  
 Were met the herald and the aged King,  
 When Hecuba with troubled mind drew near;  
 In her right hand a golden cup she bore  
 Of luscious wine, that ere they took their way  
 They to the Gods might due libations pour; 34°  
 Before the car she stood, and thus she spoke:  
 "Take, and to father Jove thine off'ring pour,  
 And pray that he may bring thee safely home  
 From all thy foes; since sore against my will  
 Thou needs wilt venture to the ships of Greece.  
 Then to Idæan Jove, the cloud-girt son  
 Of Saturn, who th' expanse of Troy surveys,  
 Prefer thy pray'r, beseeching him to send,  
 On thy right hand, a wingèd messenger,  
 The bird he loves the best, of strongest flight; 35°  
 That thou thyself mayst see and know the sign,  
 And, firm in faith, approach the ships of Greece.  
 But should th' all-seeing Jove the sign withhold,  
 Then not with my consent shouldst thou attempt,  
 Whate'er thy wish, to reach the Grecian ships."

To whom, in answer, godlike Priam thus:  
 "O woman, I refuse not to obey  
 Thy counsel; good it is to raise the hands  
 In pray'r to Heav'n, and Jove's protection seek."  
 The old man said; and bade th' attendant pour 36°  
 Pure water on his hands; with ewer she,  
 And basin, stood beside him: from his wife,  
 The due ablutions made, he took the cup;  
 Then pour'd the wine, and looking up to Heav'n  
 He rais'd his voice, and thus he pray'd aloud:  
 "O father Jove, who rul'st on Ida's height,  
 Most great, most glorious! grant that I may find  
 Some pity in Achilles' heart; and send,  
 On my right hand, a wingèd messenger,  
 The bird thou lov'st the best, of strongest flight, 37°  
 That I myself may see and know the sign,  
 And, firm in faith, approach the ships of Greece."  
 Thus as he pray'd, the Lord of counsel heard;  
 And sent forthwith an eagle, feather'd king,

Dark bird of chase, and Dusky thence surnam'd:  
 Wide as the portals, well secur'd with bolts,  
 That guard some wealthy monarch's lofty hall,  
 On either side his ample pinions spread.  
 On the right hand appear'd he, far above  
 The city soaring; they the fav'ring sign 380  
 With joy beheld, and ev'ry heart was cheer'd.  
 Mounting his car in haste, the aged King  
 Drove through the court, and through the echoing porch;  
 The mules in front, by sage Idæus driv'n,  
 That drew the four-wheel'd wain; behind them came  
 The horses, down the city's steep descent  
 Urg'd by th' old man to speed; the crowd of friends  
 That follow'd mourn'd for him, as doom'd to death.  
 Descended from the city to the plain,  
 His sons and sons-in-law to Ilium took 390  
 Their homeward way; advancing o'er the plain  
 They two escap'd not Jove's all-seeing eye;  
 Pitying he saw the aged sire; and thus  
 At once to Hermes spoke, his much-lov'd son:  
 "Hermes, for thou in social converse lov'st  
 To mix with men, and hear'st whome'er thou wilt;  
 Haste thee, and Priam to the Grecian ships  
 So lead, that none of all the Greeks may see  
 Ere to Achilles' presence he attain."

He said; nor disobey'd the heav'nly Guide; 400  
 His golden sandals on his feet he bound,  
 Ambrosial work; which bore him o'er the waves,  
 Swift as the wind, and o'er the wide-spread earth;  
 Then took his rod, wherewith he seals at will  
 The eyes of men, and wakes again from sleep.  
 This in his hand he bore, and sprang for flight.  
 Soon the wide Hellespont he reach'd, and Troy,  
 And pass'd in likeness of a princely youth,  
 In op'ning manhood, fairest term of life.

The twain had pass'd by Ilus' lofty tomb, 410  
 And halted there the horses and the mules  
 Beside the margin of the stream to drink;  
 For darkness now was creeping o'er the earth:  
 When through the gloom the herald Hermes saw  
 Approaching near, to Priam thus he cried:  
 "O son of Dardanus, bethink thee well;  
 Of prudent counsel great is now our need."



A man I see, and fear he means us ill.

Say, with the horses shall we fly at once,  
Or clasp his knees, and for his mercy sue? " 420

The old man heard, his mind confus'd with dread;

So grievously he fear'd, that every hair

Upon his bended limbs did stand on end;

He stood astounded; but the Guardian-God

Approach'd and took him by the hand, and said:

" Where, father, goest thou thus with horse and mule

In the still night, when men are sunk in sleep?

And fear'st thou not the slaughter-breathing Greeks,

Thine unrelenting foes, and they so near?

If any one of them should see thee now, 430

So richly laden in the gloom of night,

How wouldst thou feel? thou art not young thyself,

And this old man, thy comrade, would avail

But little to protect thee from assault.

I will not harm thee, nay will shield from harm,

For like my father's is, methinks, thy face."

To whom in answer Priam, godlike sire:

" 'Tis as thou say'st, fair son; yet hath some God

Extended o'er me his protecting hand,

Who sends me such a guide, so opportune. 440

Bless'd are thy parents in a son so grac'd

In face and presence, and of mind so wise."

To whom in answer thus the Guardian-God:

" O father, well and wisely dost thou speak;

But tell me this, and truly: dost thou bear

These wealthy treasures to some foreign land,

That they for thee in safety may be stor'd?

Or have ye all resolv'd to fly from Troy

In fear, your bravest slain, thy gallant son,

Who never from the Greeks' encounter flinch'd? " 450

To whom in answer Priam, godlike sire:

" Who art thou, noble Sir, and what thy race,

That speak'st thus fairly of my hapless son? "

To whom in answer thus the Guardian-God:

" Try me, old man; of godlike Hector ask;

For often in the glory-giving fight

These eyes have seen him; chief, when to the ships

The Greeks he drove, and with the sword destroy'd.

We gaz'd in wonder; from the fight restrain'd

By Peleus' son, with Agamemnon wroth. 460

His follower I; one ship convey'd us both;  
 One of the Myrmidons I am; my sire  
 Polyctor, rich, but aged, ev'n as thou.  
 Six sons he hath, besides myself, the sev'nth;  
 And I by lot was drafted for the war.  
 I from the ships am to the plain come forth;  
 For with the dawn of day the keen-ey'd Greeks  
 Will round the city marshal their array.  
 They chafe in idleness; the chiefs in vain  
 Strive to restrain their ardour for the fight." 470

To whom in answer Priam, godlike sire:  
 "If of Achilles, Peleus' son, thou art  
 Indeed a follower, tell me all the truth;  
 Lies yet my son beside the Grecian ships,  
 Or hath Achilles torn him limb from limb,  
 And to his dogs the mangled carcase giv'n?"

To whom in answer thus the Guardian-God:  
 "On him, old man, nor dogs nor birds have fed,  
 But by the ship of Peleus' son he lies  
 Within the tent; twelve days he there hath lain, 480  
 Nor hath corruption touch'd his flesh, nor worms,  
 That wont to prey on men in battle slain.  
 The corpse, indeed, with each returning morn,  
 Around his comrade's tomb Achilles drags,  
 Yet leaves it still uninjur'd; thou thyself  
 Mightst see how fresh, as dew-besprent, he lies,  
 From blood-stains cleans'd, and clos'd his many wounds,  
 For many a lance was buried in his corpse.  
 So, ev'n in death, the blessed Gods above,  
 Who lov'd him well, protect thy noble son." 490

He said; th' old man rejoicing heard his words,  
 And answer'd, "See, my son, how good it is  
 To give th' immortal Gods their tribute due;  
 For never did my son, while yet he liv'd,  
 Neglect the Gods who on Olympus dwell;  
 And thence have they remember'd him in death.  
 Accept, I pray, this goblet rich-emboss'd;  
 Be thou my guard, and, under Heav'n, my guide,  
 Until I reach the tent of Peleus' son."

To whom in answer thus the Guardian-God: 500  
 "Old father, me thy younger wouldst thou tempt,  
 In vain; who bidd'st me at thy hands accept  
 Thy proffer'd presents, to Achilles' wrong.

I dread his anger; and should hold it shame  
 To plunder him, through fear of future ill.  
 But, as thy guide, I could conduct thee safe,  
 As far as Argos, journeying by thy side,  
 On ship-board or on foot; nor by the fault  
 Of thy conductor shouldst thou meet with harm."

Thus spoke the heav'nly Guide, and on the car 510  
 Mounting in haste, he took the whip and reins,  
 And with fresh vigour mules and horses fill'd.  
 When to the ship-tow'rs and the trench they came,  
 The guard had late been busied with their meal;  
 And with deep sleep the heav'nly Guide o'erspread  
 The eyes of all; then open'd wide the gates,  
 And push'd aside the bolts, and led within  
 Both Priam, and the treasure-laden wain.  
 But when they reach'd Achilles' lofty tent,  
 (Which for their King the Myrmidons had built 520  
 Of fir-trees fell'd, and overlaid the roof  
 With rushes mown from off the neighb'ring mead;  
 And all around a spacious court enclos'd  
 With cross-set palisades; a single bar  
 Of fir the gateway guarded, which to shut  
 Three men, of all the others, scarce suffic'd,  
 And three to open; but Achilles' hand  
 Unaided shut with ease the massive bar)  
 Then for the old man Hermes op'd the gate,  
 And brought within the court the gifts design'd 530  
 For Peleus' godlike son; then from the car  
 Sprang to the ground, and thus to Priam spoke:  
 "Old man, a God hath hither been thy guide;  
 Hermes I am, and sent to thee from Jove,  
 Father of all, to bring thee safely here.  
 I now return, nor to Achilles' eyes  
 Will I appear; beseems it not a God  
 To greet a mortal in the sight of all.  
 But go thou in, and clasp Achilles' knees,  
 And supplicate him for his father's sake,  
 His fair-hair'd mother's, and his child's, that so 540  
 Thy words may stir an answer in his heart."  
 Thus saying, Hermes to Olympus' heights  
 Return'd; and Priam from his chariot sprang,  
 And left Idæus there, in charge to keep  
 The horses and the mules, while he himself



Enter'd the dwelling straight, where wont to sit  
 Achilles, lov'd of Heav'n. The chief he found  
 Within, his followers seated all apart;  
 Two only in his presence minister'd, 55°  
 The brave Automedon, and Alcimus,  
 A warrior bold; scarce ended the repast  
 Of food and wine; the table still was set.  
 Great Priam enter'd, unperceiv'd of all;  
 And standing by Achilles, with his arms  
 Embrac'd his knees, and kiss'd those fearful hands,  
 Blood-stain'd, which many of his sons had slain.  
 As when a man, by cruel fate pursued,  
 In his own land hath shed another's blood,  
 And flying, seeks beneath some wealthy house 56°  
 A foreign refuge; wond'ring, all behold:  
 On godlike Priam so with wonder gaz'd  
 Achilles; wonder seiz'd th' attendants all,  
 And one to other look'd; then Priam thus  
 To Peleus' son his suppliant speech address'd:  
 "Think, great Achilles, rival of the Gods,  
 Upon thy father, ev'n as I myself  
 Upon the threshold of unjoyous age:  
 And haply he, from them that dwell around  
 May suffer wrong, with no protector near 57°  
 To give him aid; yet he, rejoicing, knows  
 That thou still liv'st; and day by day may hope  
 To see his son returning safe from Troy;  
 While I, all hapless, that have many sons,  
 The best and bravest through the breadth of Troy,  
 Begotten, deem that none are left me now.  
 Fifty there were, when came the sons of Greece;  
 Nineteen the offspring of a single womb;  
 The rest, the women of my household bore.  
 Of these have many by relentless Mars 58°  
 Been laid in dust; but he, my only one,  
 The city's and his brethren's sole defence,  
 He, bravely fighting in his country's cause,  
 Hector, but lately by thy hand hath fall'n:  
 On his behalf I venture to approach  
 The Grecian ships; for his release to thee  
 To make my pray'r, and priceless ransom pay.  
 Then thou, Achilles, reverence the Gods;  
 And, for thy father's sake, look pitying down

On me, more needing pity; since I bear 590  
 Such grief as never man on earth hath borne,  
 Who stoop to kiss the hand that slew my son."

Thus as he spoke, within Achilles' breast  
 Fond mem'ry of his father rose; he touch'd  
 The old man's hand, and gently put him by;  
 Then wept they both, by various mem'ries stirr'd:  
 One, prostrate at Achilles' feet, bewail'd  
 His warrior son; Achilles for his sire,  
 And for Patroclus wept, his comrade dear;  
 And through the house their weeping loud was heard. 600  
 But when Achilles had indulg'd his grief,  
 And eas'd the yearning of his heart and limbs,  
 He rose, and with his hand the aged sire  
 He rais'd, and thus with gentle words address'd:

"Alas, what sorrows, poor old man, are thine!  
 How couldst thou venture to the Grecian ships  
 Alone, and to the presence of the man  
 Whose hand hath slain so many of thy sons,  
 Many and brave? an iron heart is thine!  
 But sit thou on this seat; and in our hearts, 610  
 Though fill'd with grief, let us that grief suppress;  
 For woful lamentation nought avails.

Such is the thread the Gods for mortals spin,  
 To live in woe, while they from cares are free.  
 Two coffers lie beside the door of Jove,  
 With gifts for man: one good, the other ill;  
 To whom from each the Lord of lightning gives,  
 Him sometimes evil, sometimes good befalls;  
 To whom the ill alone, him foul disgrace  
 And grinding mis'ry o'er the earth pursue: 620  
 By God and man alike despis'd he roams.

Thus from his birth the Gods to Peleus gave  
 Excellent gifts; with wealth and substance bless'd  
 Above his fellows; o'er the Myrmidons  
 He rul'd with sov'reign sway; and Heav'n bestow'd  
 On him, a mortal, an immortal bride.  
 Yet this of ill was mingled in his lot,  
 That in his house no rising race he saw  
 Of future Kings; one only son he had,  
 One doom'd to early death; nor is it mine 630  
 To tend my father's age; but far from home  
 Thee and thy sons in Troy I vex with war.

Much have we heard too of thy former wealth  
 Above what Lesbos northward, Macar's seat,  
 Contains, and Upper Phrygia, and the shores  
 Of boundless Hellespont, 'tis said that thou  
 In wealth and number of thy sons wast bless'd.  
 But since on thee this curse the Gods have brought,  
 Still round thy city war and slaughter rage.  
 Bear up, nor thus with grief incessant mourn;  
 Vain is thy sorrow for thy gallant son;  
 Thou canst not raise him, and mayst suffer more."

640

To whom in answer Priam, godlike sire:  
 "Tell me not yet, illustrious chief, to sit,  
 While Hector lies, uncar'd for, in the tent;  
 But let me quickly go, that with mine eyes  
 I may behold my son; and thou accept  
 The ample treasures which we tender thee:  
 Mayst thou enjoy them, and in safety reach  
 Thy native land, since thou hast spar'd my life,  
 And bidd'st me still behold the light of Heav'n."

650

To whom Achilles thus with stern regard:  
 "Old man, incense me not; I mean myself  
 To give thee back thy son; for here of late  
 Despatch'd by Jove, my Goddess-mother came,  
 The daughter of the aged Ocean-God:  
 And thee too, Priam, well I know, some God  
 (I cannot err) hath guided to our ships.  
 No mortal, though in vent'rous youth, would dare  
 Our camp to enter; nor could hope to pass  
 Unnotic'd by the watch, nor easily  
 Remove the pond'rous bar that guards our doors.  
 But stir not up my anger in my grief;  
 Lest, suppliant though thou be, within my tent  
 I brook thee not, and Jove's command transgress."

660

He said; the old man trembled, and obey'd;  
 Then to the door-way, with a lion's spring,  
 Achilles rush'd; not unaccompanied;  
 With him Automedon and Alcimus,  
 His two attendants, of his followers all,  
 Next to the lost Patroclus, best-esteem'd;  
 They from the yoke the mules and horses loos'd;  
 Then led the herald of the old man in,  
 And bade him sit; and from the polish'd wain  
 The costly ransom took of Hector's head.

670



Two robes they left, and one well-woven vest,  
 To clothe the corpse, and send with honour home.  
 Then to the female slaves he gave command  
 To wash the body, and anoint with oil,  
 Apart, that Priam might not see his son; 680  
 Lest his griev'd heart its passion unrestrain'd  
 Should utter, and Achilles, rous'd to wrath,  
 His suppliant slay, and Jove's command transgress.

When they had wash'd the body, and with oil  
 Anointed, and around it wrapp'd the robe  
 And vest, Achilles lifted up the dead  
 With his own hands, and laid him on the couch;  
 Which to the polish'd wain his followers rais'd.  
 Then groaning, on his friend by name he call'd:  
 "Forgive, Patroclus! be not wroth with me, 690  
 If in the realm of darkness thou shouldst hear  
 That godlike Hector to his father's arms,  
 For no mean ransom, I restore; whereof  
 A fitting share for thee I set aside."

This said, Achilles to the tent return'd;  
 On the carv'd couch, from whence he rose, he sat  
 Beside the wall; and thus to Priam spoke:

"Old man, thy son, according to thy pray'r,  
 Is giv'n thee back; upon the couch he lies;  
 Thyself shalt see him at the dawn of day. 700  
 Meanwhile the ev'ning meal demands our care.  
 Not fair-hair'd Niobe abstain'd from food  
 When in the house her children lay in death,  
 Six beauteous daughters and six stalwart sons.  
 The youths, Apollo with his silver bow,  
 The maids, the Archer-Queen, Diana, slew,  
 With anger fill'd that Niobe presum'd  
 Herself with fair Latona to compare,  
 Her many children with her rival's two;  
 So by the two were all the many slain. 710  
 Nine days in death they lay; and none was there  
 To pay their fun'ral rites; for Saturn's son  
 Had giv'n to all the people hearts of stone.  
 At length th' immortal Gods entomb'd the dead.  
 Nor yet did Niobe, when now her grief  
 Had worn itself in tears, from food refrain.  
 And now in Sipylus, amid the rocks,  
 And lonely mountains, where the Goddess nymphs

That love to dance by Achelöus' stream,  
 'Tis said, were cradled, she, though turn'd to stone, 720  
 Broods o'er the wrongs inflicted by the Gods.  
 So we too, godlike sire, the meal may share;  
 And later, thou thy noble son mayst mourn,  
 To Troy restor'd—well worthy he thy tears."

This said, he slaughter'd straight a white-fleec'd sheep;  
 His comrades then the carcass flay'd and dress'd:  
 The meat prepar'd, and fasten'd to the spits;  
 Roasted with care, and from the fire withdrew.  
 The bread Automedon from baskets fair  
 Apportion'd out; the meat Achilles shar'd. 730  
 They on the viands set before them fell.  
 The rage of thirst and hunger satisfied,  
 In wonder Priam on Achilles gaz'd,  
 His form and stature; as a God he seem'd;  
 And he too look'd on Priam, and admir'd  
 His venerable face, and gracious speech.  
 With mutual pleasure each on other gaz'd,  
 Till godlike Priam first address'd his host:

"Dismiss me now, illustrious chief, to rest;  
 And lie we down, in gentle slumbers wrapp'd; 740  
 For never have mine eyes been clos'd in sleep,  
 Since by thy hand my gallant son was slain:  
 But groaning still, I brood upon my woes,  
 And in my court with dust my head defile.  
 Now have I tasted bread, now ruddy wine  
 Hath o'er my palate pass'd; but not till now."

Thus he; his comrades and th' attendant maids  
 Achilles order'd in the corridor  
 Two mattresses to place, with blankets fair  
 Of purple wool o'erlaid; and on the top 750  
 Rugs and soft sheets for upper cov'ring spread.  
 They from the chamber, torch in hand, withdrew,  
 And with obedient haste two beds prepar'd.  
 Then thus Achilles spoke in jesting tone:  
 "Thou needs must sleep without, my good old friend;  
 Lest any leader of the Greeks should come,  
 As is their custom, to confer with me;  
 Of them whoe'er should find thee here by night  
 Forthwith to Agamemnon would report,  
 And Hector might not be so soon restor'd. 760  
 But tell me truly this; how many days

For godlike Hector's fun'ral rites ye need;  
That for so long a time I may myself  
Refrain from combat, and the people stay."

To whom in answer Priam, godlike sire:  
"If by thy leave we may indeed perform  
His fun'ral rites, to thee, Achilles, great  
Will be our gratitude, if this thou grant.  
Thou know'st how close the town is hemm'd around;  
And from the mountain, distant as it is, 770  
The Trojans well may fear to draw the wood.  
Nine days to public mourning would we give;  
The tenth, to fun'ral rites and fun'ral feast;  
Then on th' eleventh would we raise his mound;  
The twelfth, renew the war, if needs we must."

To whom Achilles swift of foot replied:  
"So shall it be, old Priam; I engage  
To stay the battle for the time requir'd."  
Thus speaking, with his hand the old man's wrist  
He grasp'd, in token that he need not fear. 780  
Then in the corridor lay down to rest  
Old Priam and the herald, Elders sage;  
While in his tent's recess Achilles slept,  
The fair Brisëis resting by his side.

In night-long slumbers lay the other Gods,  
And helmèd chiefs, by gentle sleep subdued;  
But on the eyes of Hermes, Guardian-God,  
No slumber fell, deep pond'ring in his mind  
How from the ships in safety to conduct  
The royal Priam, and the guard elude. 790  
Above the sleeper's head he stood, and cried:  
"Old man, small heed thou tak'st of coming ill,  
Who, when Achilles gives thee leave to go,  
Sleep'st undisturb'd, surrounded by thy foes.  
Thy son hath been restor'd, and thou hast paid  
A gen'rous price; but to redeem thy life,  
If Agamemnon and the other Greeks  
Should know that thou art here, full thrice as much  
Thy sons, who yet are left, would have to pay."

He said; the old man trembled, and arous'd 800  
The herald; while the horses and the mules  
Were yok'd by Hermes, who with silent speed  
Drove through th' encampment, unobserv'd of all.  
But when they came to eddying Xanthus' ford,



Fair-flowing stream, born of immortal Jove,  
 To high Olympus Hermes took his flight,  
 As morn, in saffron robe, o'er all the earth  
 Was light diffusing; they with fun'ral wail  
 Drove cityward the horses; following came  
 The mules that drew the litter of the dead. 810  
 The plain they travers'd o'er, observ'd of none,  
 Or man or woman, till Cassandra, fair  
 As golden Venus, from the topmost height  
 Of Pergamus, her father in his car  
 Upstanding saw, the herald at his side.  
 Him too she saw, who on the litter lay;  
 Then lifted up her voice, and cried aloud  
 To all the city, "Hither, Trojans, come,  
 Both men and women, Hector see restor'd;  
 If, while he liv'd, returning from the fight, 820  
 Ye met him e'er rejoicing, who indeed  
 Was all the city's chiefest joy and pride."

She said; nor man nor woman then was left  
 Within the city; o'er the minds of all  
 Grief pass'd, resistless; to the gates in throngs  
 They press'd, to crowd round him who brought the dead.  
 The first to clasp the body were his wife  
 And honour'd mother; eagerly they sprang  
 On the smooth-rolling wain, to touch the head  
 Of Hector; round them, weeping, stood the crowd. 830  
 Weeping, till sunset, all the live-long day  
 Had they before the gates for Hector mourn'd;  
 Had not old Priam from the car address'd  
 The crowd: "Make way, that so the mules may pass;  
 When to my house I shall have brought my dead,  
 Ye there may vent your sorrow as ye will."

Thus as he spoke, obedient to his word  
 They stood aside, and for the car made way:  
 But when to Priam's lordly house they came,  
 They laid him on a rich-wrought couch, and call'd 840  
 The minstrels in, who by the hero's bed  
 Should lead the melancholy chorus; they  
 Pour'd forth the music of the mournful dirge,  
 While women's voices join'd in loud lament.  
 White-arm'd Andromache the wail began,  
 The head of Hector clasping in her hands:

" My husband, thou art gone in pride of youth,  
 And in thine house hast left me desolate;  
 Thy child an infant still, thy child and mine,  
 Unhappy parents both! nor dare I hope 850  
 That he may reach the ripeness of his youth;  
 For ere that day shall Troy in ruin fall,  
 Since thou art gone, her guardian! thou whose arm  
 Defended her, her wives, and helpless babes!  
 They now shall shortly o'er the sea be borne,  
 And with them I shall go; thou too, my child,  
 Must follow me, to servile labour doom'd,  
 The suff'ring victim of a tyrant Lord;  
 Unless perchance some angry Greek may seize  
 And dash thee from the tow'r—a woful death! 860  
 Whose brother, or whose father, or whose son  
 By Hector hath been slain; for many a Greek  
 By Hector's hand hath bit the bloody dust;  
 Not light in battle was thy father's hand!  
 Therefore for him the gen'ral city mourns;  
 Thou to thy parents bitter grief hast caus'd,  
 Hector! but bitt'rest grief of all hast left  
 To me! for not to me was giv'n to clasp  
 The hand extended from thy dying bed,  
 Nor words of wisdom catch, which night and day,  
 With tears, I might have treasur'd in my heart." 870

Weeping she spoke—the women join'd the wail.  
 Then Hecuba took up the loud lament:  
 " Hector, of all my children dearest thou!  
 Dear to th' Immortals too in life wast thou,  
 And they in death have borne thee still in mind;  
 For other of my sons, his captives made,  
 Across the wat'ry waste, to Samos' isle  
 Or Imbros, or th' inhospitable shore  
 Of Lemnos, hath Achilles, swift of foot, 880  
 To slav'ry sold; thee, when his sharp-edg'd spear  
 Had robb'd thee of thy life, he dragg'd indeed  
 Around Patroclus' tomb, his comrade dear,  
 Whom thou hadst slain; yet so he rais'd not up  
 His dead to life again; now liest thou here,  
 All fresh and fair, as dew-besprent; like one  
 Whom bright Apollo, with his arrows keen,  
 God of the silver bow, hath newly slain."

Weeping, she spoke; and rous'd the gen'ral grief.  
 Then Helen, third, the mournful strain renew'd: 890  
 "Hector, of all my brethren dearest thou!  
 True, godlike Paris claims me as his wife,  
 Who bore me hither—would I then had died!  
 But twenty years have pass'd since here I came,  
 And left my native land; yet ne'er from thee  
 I heard one scornful, one degrading word;  
 And when from others I have borne reproach,  
 Thy brothers, sisters, or thy brothers' wives,  
 Or mother, (for thy sire was ever kind  
 Ev'n as a father) thou hast check'd them still 900  
 With tender feeling, and with gentle words.  
 For thee I weep, and for myself no less;  
 For, through the breadth of Troy, none love me now,  
 None kindly look on me, but all abhor."

Weeping she spoke, and with her wept the crowd.  
 At length the aged Priam gave command:  
 "Haste now, ye Trojans, to the city bring  
 Good store of fuel; fear no treach'rous wile;  
 For when he sent me from the dark-ribb'd ships,  
 Achilles promis'd that from hostile arms 910  
 Till the twelfth morn we should no harm sustain."

He said; and they the oxen and the mules  
 Yok'd to the wains, and from the city throng'd:  
 Nine days they labour'd, and brought back to Troy  
 Good store of wood; but when the tenth day's light  
 Upon the earth appear'd, weeping, they bore  
 Brave Hector out; and on the fun'ral pile  
 Laying the glorious dead, applied the torch.

While yet the rosy-finger'd morn was young  
 Round noble Hector's pyre the people press'd: 920  
 When all were gather'd round, and closely throng'd,  
 First on the burning mass, as far as spread  
 The range of fire, they pour'd the ruddy wine,  
 And quench'd the flames: his brethren then and friends  
 Weeping, the hot tears flowing down their cheeks,  
 Collected from the pile the waiten'd bones;  
 These in a golden casket they enclos'd,  
 And o'er it spread soft shawls of purple dye;  
 Then in a grave they laid it, and in haste  
 With stone in pond'rous masses cover'd o'er; 930



And rais'd a mound, and watch'd on ev'ry side,  
From sudden inroad of the Greeks to guard.  
The mound erected, back they turn'd; and all  
Assembled duly, shar'd the solemn feast  
In Priam's palace, Heav'n-descended King.  
Such were the rites to glorious Hector paid.

THE END

## NOTES

### NOTE I.

Bk. ii. l. 253, 254 (Hom. iii. l. 222, 223).—

τῷ δ' ἄρ' Ἀχαιοὶ  
ἐκπάργλως κοτέοντο νεμέσσηθέν τ' ἐνὶ θυμῷ.

Derby has a note in his 6th edition—

“The text in the original leaves it somewhat in doubt whether the anger of the Greeks was directed against Thersites or Agamemnon.”

On reconsideration Derby adopted the latter view, and altered his translation thus:

“'gainst him he knew  
Incensed the public mind, and bawling loud,  
With scurril words, he thus addressed the king.”

There is good reason for the change, as the rest of the poem shows that the army was conceived as “deeply dissatisfied” with Agamemnon. See for instance xix. init. (Derby, l. 91 ff.), xiii. init. (Derby, l. 126 ff.).

### NOTE II.

Bk. iv. l. 252 (Hom. iv. l. 214).—

τοῦ δ' ἐξελκομένοιο πάλιν ἄγεν ὄξεις ὄγκοι.

In the 6th edition Derby corrected his translation to—

“From the close-fitting belt the shaft he drew,  
Breaking the pointed barbs.”

The correction is justified. The Greek could hardly bear the meaning given in the text; and, as the arrow was buried almost up to the head, the slender barbs would naturally be broken when Machaon tugged it out of the armour.

### NOTE III.

Bk. vii. l. 135 (Hom. vii. l. 121).—

αἴσιμα παρεϊπών.

It is better to take this phrase, both here and in vi. (Derby, l. 75; Hom. l. 62), as meaning “*perverting* right counsel, *twisting* the right, by his words” (lit. *uttering awry*; cp. our “*perverting* justice,” “*distorting* the truth”).

The Greek easily bears this sense; and it is quite clear from the context that Nestor feels Menelaus ought to have accepted the challenge. And so he ought: the quarrel was his; and Agamemnon has no reason to give except that Menelaus would do well to save his skin.

Derby's rendering of the phrase in vi. is somewhat ambiguous.

### NOTE IV.

Bk. x. l. 560 (Hom. x. l. 504).—

ἢ ὁ γε δίφρον ἐλών . . .  
ῥυμοῦ ἐξερούοι ἢ ἐκφέροι ὑψὸς ἀέρας.

In the 6th edition this is translated more accurately—

“Or by the pole to draw, or raised on high  
Bear off the car.”

It is never stated that Diomed did carry off the car, and the pre-

sumption is that he was checked by Pallas, and that Ulysses and he rode off on the horses.

Lower down, the 6th edition wisely omits all mention of a car (there is none in the Greek), reading, for l. 567, 568

“ And mounted straight; Ulysses with his bow  
The flying horses touched,”

for l. 585, 586—

“ the son of Tydeus leaped  
Down to the ground,”

and for l. 599—

“ And from the steeds dismounted.”

## NOTE V.

Bk. xi. l. 724 (Hom. xi. l. 635).—

*δύω δ' ὑπὸ πύθμενες ἦσαν.*

It is better to translate this, “ and below there were two supports.”

Much light has been thrown on the whole passage by Schliemann's discovery of a similar cup at Mycenæ (see Schuchardt, p. 241). The cup is in gold, with a dove on each of the two handles, while a golden prop runs from either handle to the base.

## NOTE VI.

Bk. xvi. l. 72, 73 (Hom. xvi. l. 60, 61).—

*οὐδ' ἄρα πῶς ἦν  
ἀσπερχές κεχολῶσθαι ἐνὶ φρεσίν.*

Better as Lang, Leaf, and Myers translate it—

“ no man may be angry of heart for ever.”

Achilles is surprised to find that he cannot nurse his anger as long as he had wished.

## NOTE VII.

Bk. xvi. l. 639 (Hom. xvi. l. 556).—Altered, in the 6th edition, to “ Ye two Ajaces,” which is more correct.

## NOTE VIII.

Bk. xvii. l. 689 ff. (Hom. xvii. l. 609).—

*διφρῶ ἐφεσταῖος.*

Rather, “ upstanding on a car.” “ His ” can hardly be right. For the next lines show that it is the car of Meriones, driven by the latter's own charioteer Cæranus, “ the chief ” who had left the ships on foot being Idomeneus

“ The fact was that Idomeneus was on foot when Hector prepared to throw at him. But Cæranus, charioteer of Meriones, observing his danger, drove instantly to his aid. Idomeneus had just time to mount, and the spear designed for him struck Cæranus.” So Cowper, who, following the Scholiast, takes the passage correctly.

Lower down, l. 702, the words “ from the car ” are due to a mistaken inference of Derby's. There is nothing corresponding to them in the Greek: and it is plain from the sequel that Meriones never quits the battle. It is more natural, therefore, to assume that he is not on the car at all, but standing on the ground, when he stoops down, picks up the fallen reins, gives them to Idomeneus, and sends him off to the ships, while he himself stays in the post of danger. In l. 707 read “ the fleet steeds,” not “ his fleet steeds.”

F.M.S.











