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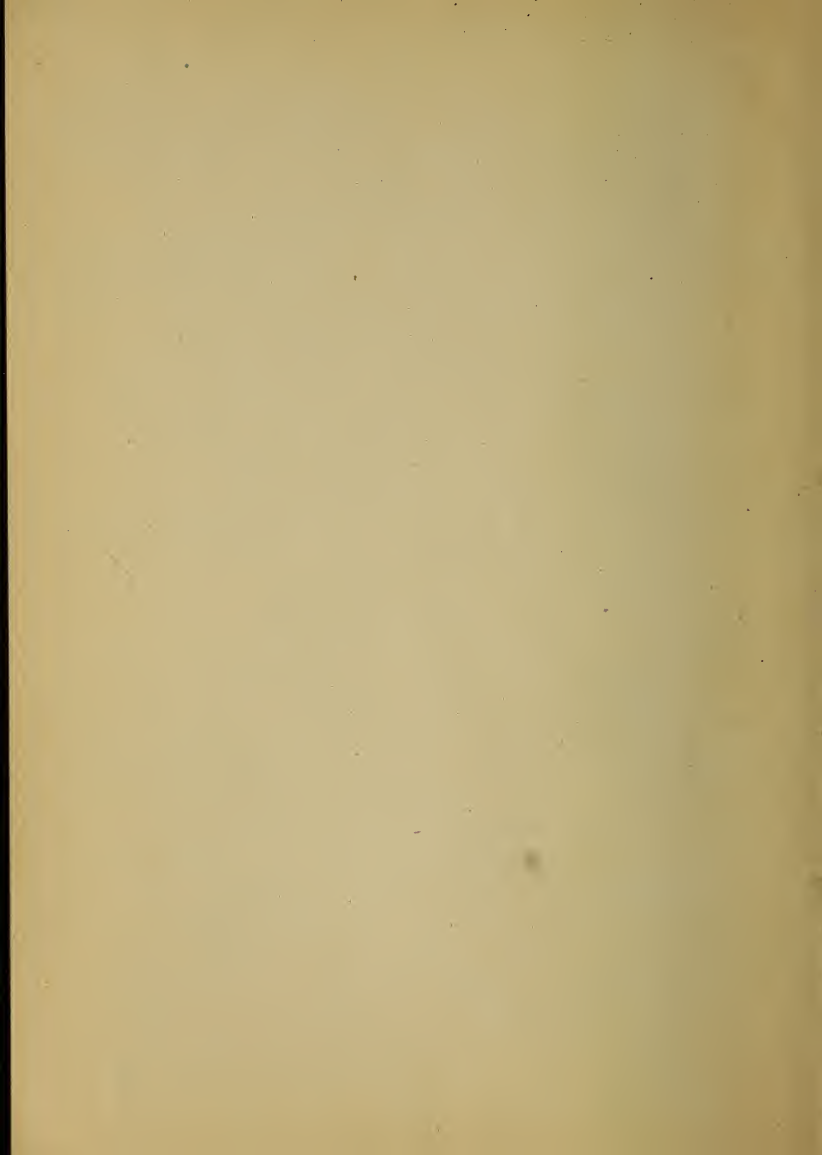
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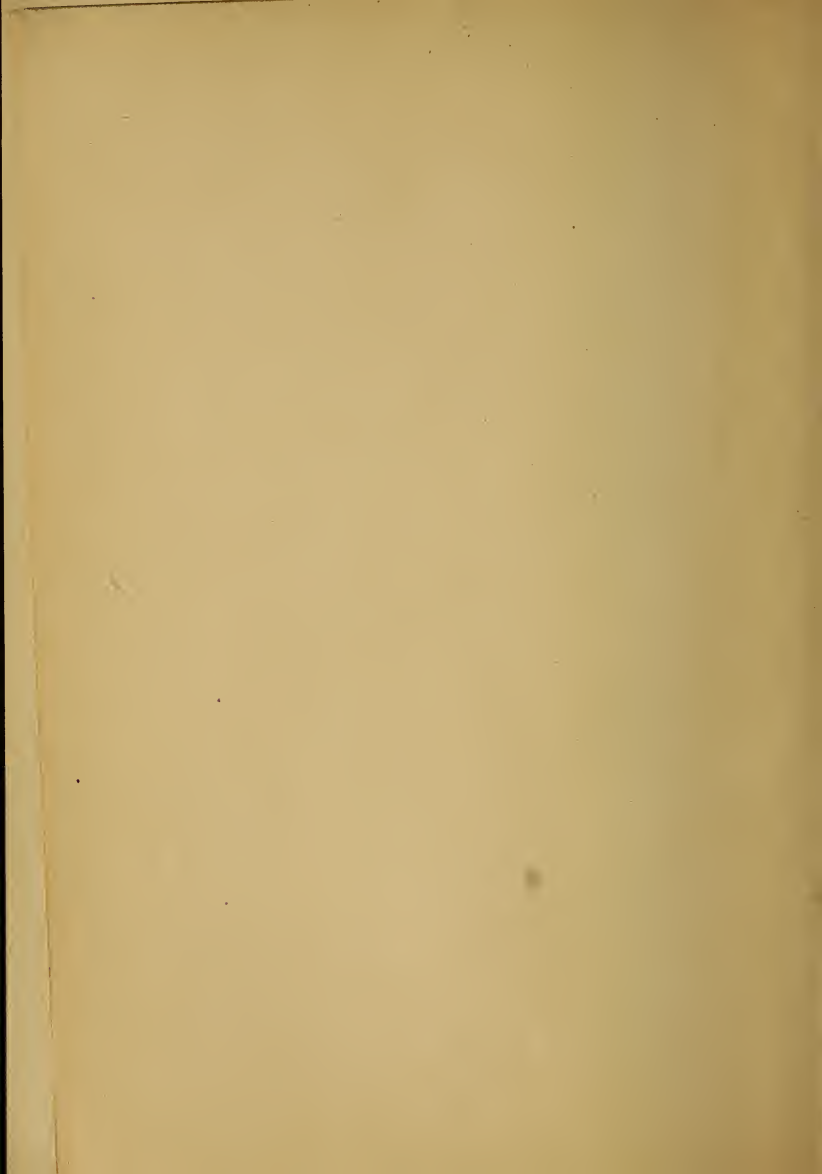
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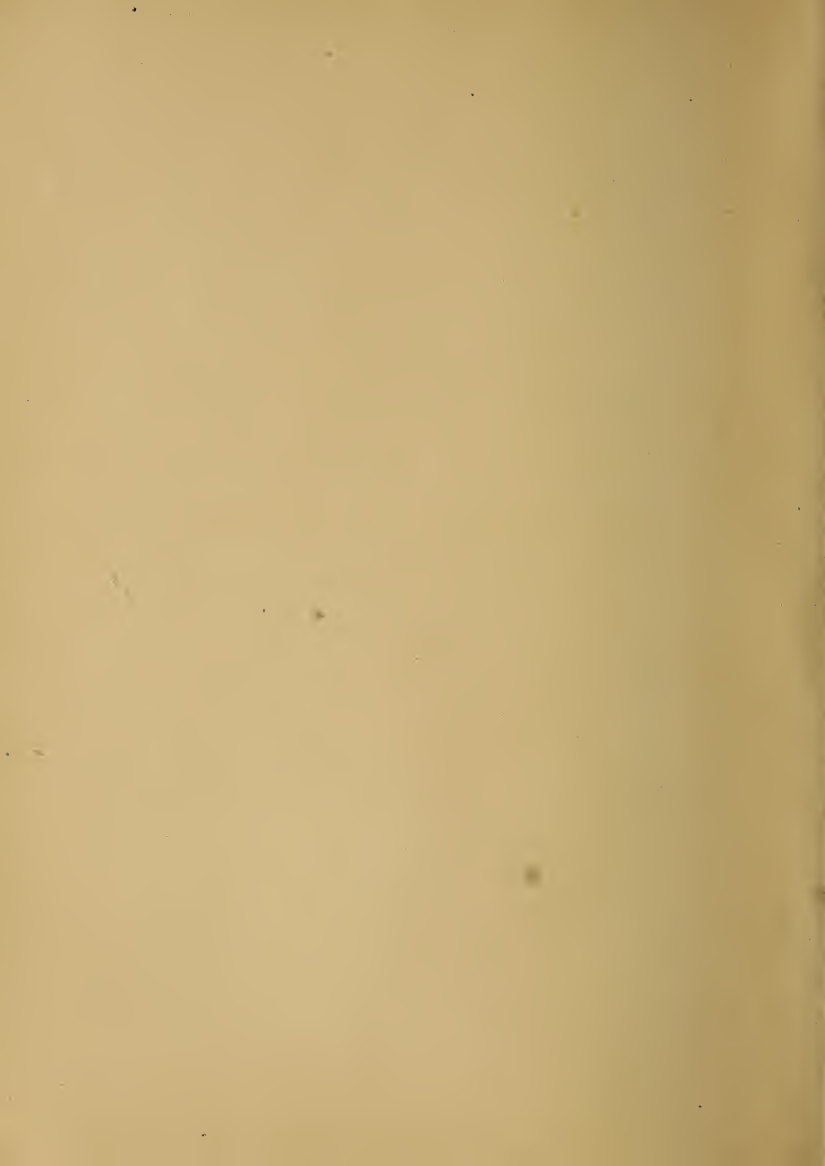
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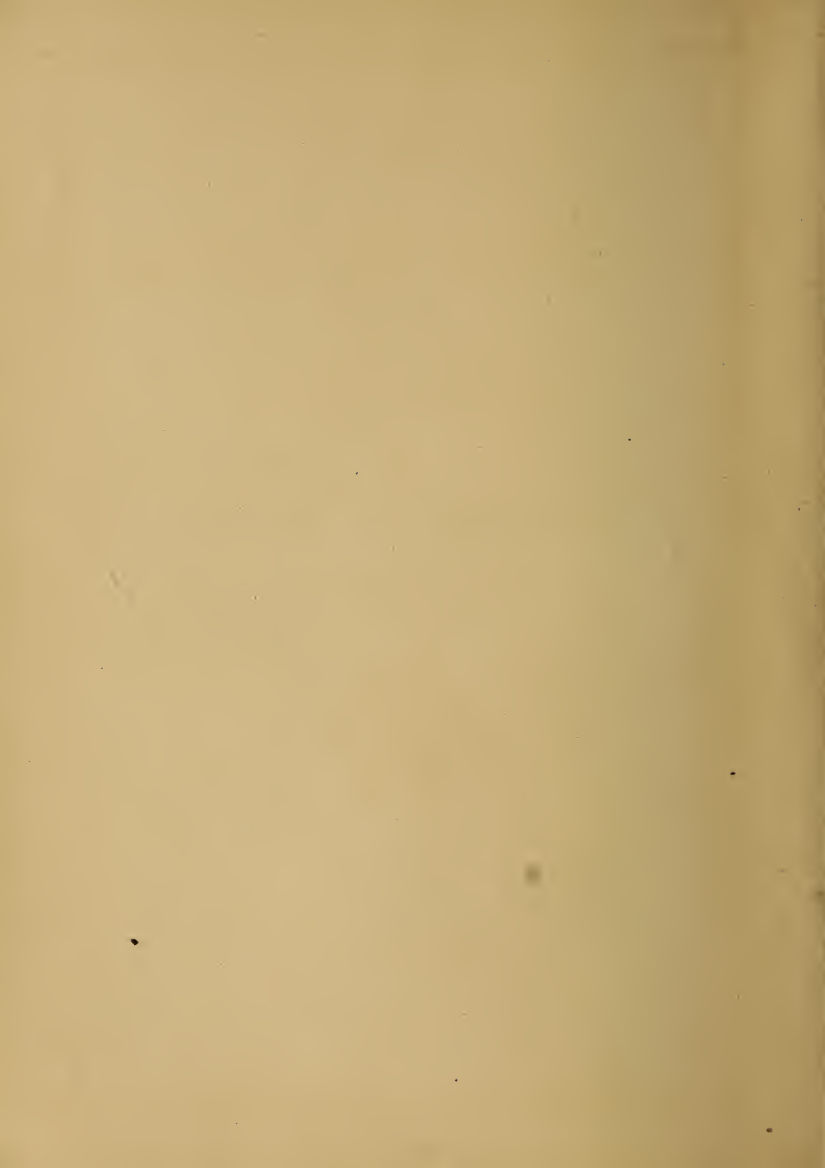








THE GEORGICS OF VERGIL.



Vergilius Maro, Publius

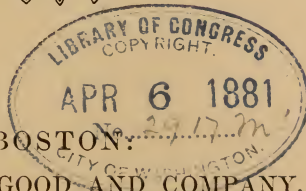
THE
GEORGICS OF VERGIL

Translated into English Verse

BY
HARRIET WATERS PRESTON.

Vergil

33



BOSTON:
JAMES R. OSGOOD AND COMPANY.
1881.

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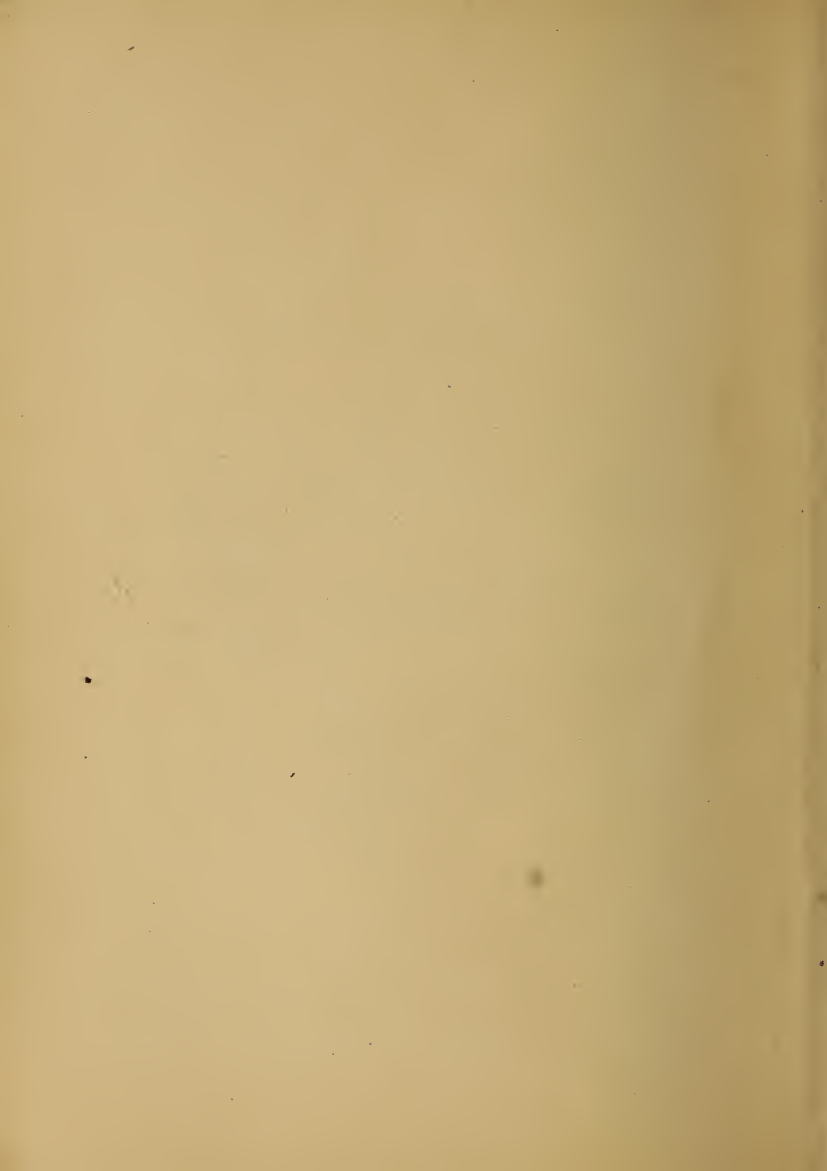
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PREFACE.

ICAN offer no apology for this attempt to render the Georgics of Vergil into English verse other than my own great love of the poem, and the venturesome hope of being able to impart a portion of the pleasure which it gives me to some few of the many who are unlikely to read it in the original.

Of the best known of the Latin poets, the Georgics is the least known work; yet it is, in some respects, the most finished and symmetrical, and we have reason to believe that it came nearer than any other to satisfying the poet's own fastidious standard of excellence. It is also, or so it seems to me, the most characteristic of the man. We encounter his undisguised self upon almost every page: his ardor in patriotism, his loyalty in friendship, the immense capacity for gratitude which was in him, consistent with so true a dignity of spirit, his sympathy with the laboring poor, his extreme tenderness for the brute creation, his feeling for landscape, his love of home and of the country, the glimmer of humor, the

grace of modesty, the touch of melancholy, which invest his image with an undying charm. The very homeliness of Vergil's theme in this agricultural treatise favors the naturalness of his manner, the intimacy of his self-revelation; and, from this point of view, it seems a little surprising that the translation of the *Georgics* has been so much less frequently attempted than that of his other poems. The beautiful prose translation of Connington, and the metrical one of the gifted author of "*Lorna Doone*," are the only modern English versions with which I am acquainted.

To seek, with the sweet sound of Vergil's most perfect hexameters in one's ear, for a simple and genuinely English verse ever so remotely suggestive of their musical effect, is a discouraging matter. Certain characteristics of such a verse, however, have long seemed to me predetermined and indispensable. It must have melody, and it must have variety. It must therefore be rhymed, yet not too regularly and monotonously rhymed; it must have a freely movable *cæsura*; it must be a verse in which a two or a three syllabled foot might be employed almost indifferently. I did, in truth, listen for years to catch the echo of just such a verse. To say that the one which I finally adopted was, in all respects, satisfactory, would be to shame my own ideal. But it has some of the needful qualities. The *iambus*, which is its

basis, may be frequently replaced by an anapest, without altering the pace of the measure, as the spondee of the hexameter may be replaced by a dactyl. By making successive rhymes follow alternate, while avoiding a division into stanzas or any other, save the paragraphs sanctioned by Vergil's best editors, I have hoped to mitigate the monotonous effect upon the ear of pages of consecutive rhyme; while the fact that the proper names which Vergil introduces so abundantly (and even with a sort of predilection, enjoying, as it would seem, the mere exercise of subjecting them to his rhythm) have transferred themselves almost without effort to the English line, encourages me to hope that the movement, at least of the latter, may be slightly akin to that of the matchless original.

It is, perhaps, superfluous to add that, in the matter of rhymes, I have not strictly confined myself to those which are called perfect, which I think should rather be called major rhymes, but have sparingly introduced the imperfect or minor. All I can say is that in the case of a long rhymed poem, my own ear not only sanctions but demands a certain number of these minor rhymes. I have been reprov'd before now, for making this distinction, by critics to whose judgment I am very much inclined to defer; and, after all, I make it, for, to me, it represents a fixed musical fact.

There is a graver objection which will certainly be urged by those, justly high in authority, against the ambitious experiment upon one of the great works of the world here submitted to their scrutiny. My version of the *Georgics* is not very literal. It is not rendered line for line, or even foot for foot. I have sometimes inverted the order of clauses; I have often expanded the expression; I have in one or two instances — no more, as the Latinist will readily believe — condensed it; I have even, though very rarely, introduced an epithet, and, still more rarely, I have suppressed one. I say this not so much to forestall criticism, as to show that I have foreseen, and, in some sort, deliberately invited it; and I can hardly explain why I have done so without saying a few words, though diffidently and reluctantly, on what it seems almost presumptuous to call my own theory of poetical translation.

I think, then, that while the approbation of exact scholars is the translator's highest reward, and indispensable to anything like content with his own work, it is nevertheless not his first duty to vindicate his own scholarship to them. Every metrical translator believes, and is bound to believe, that there are many among the learned who might vastly have bettered his own work, had they chosen to undertake it; but he addresses that class only indirectly. His main business is with those

who are not learned, to transmit to them something as like as may be to the impression which he himself has received from the original; that impression being a complex whole which includes the sound and sense and spirit of the poem. And since it is not possible that this integral poetical impression should be precisely the same thing to any two readers, so it can never be that any one person will convey it precisely as any other would have done. In the matter of literal exactness, the two extremes are fairly represented by those two recent renderings of the Agamemnon of Æschylus,—Mr. Fitzgerald's and Mr. Browning's. I am neither poet enough to have dared follow the former, nor scholar enough to have presumed to imitate the latter. Moreover, I must confess that my *beau-idéal* of a poetical translation is nearly equidistant from the two. I believe it to approach much more nearly the simple ideal of some of the earlier English translators,—say Fairfax, in his excessively quaint, but beautiful and animated, version of Tasso,—corrected, indeed, by a somewhat more cultivated conscience about introducing extraneous matter: or rather, I may say, corrected by the creation of such a conscience; for one can hardly suppose that scruples of this nature existed in the mind of Fairfax at all, and they must still have been feeble in the mind of Dryden when he appended to Vergil's vivid picture of the cave-dwelling nations, in the

third book of the "Georgics," the remark, natural at the period, but not wholly relevant : —

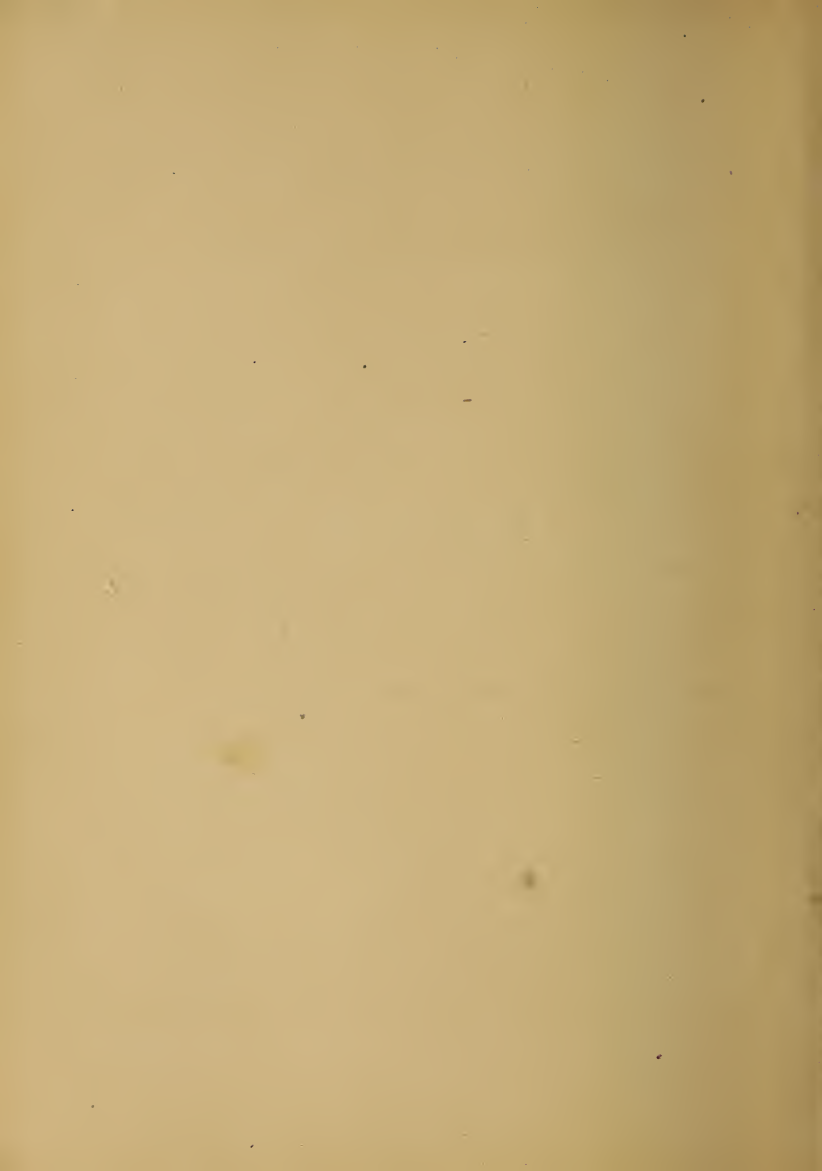
"Such are the cold Rhipæan race, and such
The savage Scythian, *and unwarlike Dutch.*"

For the rest, I have never wittingly swerved from the sense or tampered with the imagery of my revered author. That I have sometimes done so unwittingly is only too probable; and sins of ignorance or indolence committed within the scope of my own purpose, I shall be grateful, even though I may not be entirely glad, to see signalized.

HARRIET WATERS PRESTON.

BOSTON, February 1, 1881.

BOOK I.



THE GEORGICS OF VERGIL.



BOOK I.



WILL try, Mæcēnas, a song of rustic things :

Of the growing of gladsome crops, and the
favoring star

For turning the sod and binding the wanderings
Of the vine to the elm, and the care that oxen are,
And the zeal of him who maketh his flock increase,
And the lore of him who nurtures the thrifty bees.
O ye most luminous powers, whom still the year
Followeth in its march along the sky! —
O lights of the world, Bacchus and Ceres dear,
Through whom earth bringeth forth abundantly,
Oaks of Chaōnia yield to the corn and vine,
And draughts of the Achelōus are mixt with wine!
And ye, field-haunting Fauns, whose gifts I sing,
Dance hither, Fauns! dance hither, each Dryad maid,

And help me! — Help me also thou, O King
Neptune, whom once the smitten earth obeyed,
And, gaping under the trident's mighty blow,
Sent forth a furious horse from the depths below!
Dresser of groves, I will even call on thee
Whose herds by the hundred, with hides all snowy-white,
Browse the lush brakes of Ceos! And favor me,
Thou Shepherd Pan, by Mænālus, thy delight!
From lawns Lycæan, aye, from thy leafy home,
O Tegeæan, arise, arise and come!
May lady Minerva of the olive lend her
Aid, and the young lord of the hookéd plough,
And old Silēnus with uptorn cypress tender,
And rural divinities all, attend me now,
Who bring to the growing fruits unsown and new
And shed on the sowing the largess of heaven's dew!
Thou too, O Cæsar, of whom we know not yet
Where, in the halls divine, thy place shall be; —
Whether a city's guardian thou be set,
Or one of the gods who shelter husbandry,
And thee, the mighty circle of earth salute,
As monarch of storms, and giver of all good fruit; —

Or yet as deity of the unmeasured main
Thou comest, binding thine own brows the while
With the beech-myrtle of thy mother : — vain
To other shrines the seaman to beguile, —
Far Thule serves thee, and one of Tethys' daughters
Brings thee, as bride, a dowry of all waters ; —
Or else, mayhap, in the lagging months and burning,
Thou springest, as a new star, to heaven's height,
Just where the Virgin from the Scorpion turning
Makes entry for thee : — the fierce claws disunite
Before thee, and the grasping monster yields
His unjust holding in the celestial fields : —
Whate'er thy lot, — for Tartarus may aspire
To no such ruler, nor thou to that sad throne,
Though Greece the Elysian glory so admire,
Nor hearkeneth Proserpine her mother's moan, —
Make smooth my sailing, favor my bold essay,
Pity the hind with me, assume thy way,
Begin to hearken to mortals when they pray !



WITH the running of cold hill-streams in the early
spring,

And the crumbling of clods at the touch of the western air,
Bid thou thy bullocks begin their laboring

At the plough, and hail the flash of the cleanséd share.

Whose land hath twice felt sun and frost shall house
Barn-bursting harvests in answer to his vows.

But ere we cleave with the iron that unknown sea,

Learn we of the winds, and the weather's changeful face,

And what the ancestral haunts and habits be

Of things that grow :— the loved of every place,

And the rejected ;— for here springeth corn,

And there, anon, the exuberant grape is born,

And everywhere the unbidden green we find

Of grass and tender saplings. Tmolus groweth

Sweet saffron, — knowest thou not ? — and ivory, Ind ;

The soft Sabæan his own frankincense knoweth,

Nude Pontian men bring iron and the beaver strong,

Epīrus, palms, for the Elian mares of song.

For still, upon chosen spots hath Nature lain

Rigorous bonds and the yoke of a changeless law,

Since ever Deucalion flung his stones amain
Over the empty, early world, and saw
Straightway the obdurate human race arise.
Give, then, to the austere earth thy energies ;
Bid thy stout oxen, while the year is new,
Turn the fat soil and let it open lie,
Till dusty Summer have baked it through and through
With his ripe suns. Thou shalt use differently
Thy churlish land, nor toss it to the light
Or ere Arctūrus rule the September night.
So shall not weeds thy abundant harvest harm,
Nor some slight moisture fail the sterile spot.
But on the alternate seasons hold thine arm,
And the field newly gathered assail thou not.
Suffer it rather for so long to lie
Fallow and thirsty, under the parching sky.
Else, in due time, the yellow grain renew
Where erst the pulse, with its gayly quivering pods,
Or the rustling leafage of bitter lupine grew,
Or tiny vetch, upborne upon fragile rods ;
For oats and flax, they tell us, exhaust the ground,
And poppies, in their Lethæan slumber drowned.


Thus turning-about makes easy all thy toil ;
Drench, then, with dung the desert, nor stay thy hand,
But fling abroad, o'er all the outwearied soil,
The grimy ash, — and lo ! the relievéd land
Bears newly, even as that thou hast not drest
Thanks thee from out the fulness of its rest.
Oft, too, it boots to burn an unfruitful field
Till the light stubble with crackling flame be spent ;
Whereby, mayhappen, the turf is made to yield
The hidden wealth of its utmost nutriment,
All noxious damp is bidden to transpire,
All vice expelled, by the purging of the fire.
For whiles the burning opens the myriad ways,
Mysterious pores, whereby the young plant is fed,
And whiles indures the veins, their gaping stays,
So the fine rains it nevermore shall dread,
Nor ardor of sudden sunshine work it ill,
Nor surly Boreas with his piercing chill.

NE too shall gladden the land who breaketh up
The slumbering glebe with rakes and harrows
of osier,

And ruddy Ceres, from the Olympian top,
Cheer him who smites the furrow's long exposure
Crosswise again, with plough reversed, and wields,
With keen intent, the sceptre of the fields.

BUT pray to the gods, ye tillers of the ground,
For weeping summers and winters fair and dry !
The dust of winter maketh the grain abound,
And Mysia doth exult, and, throned on high,
Gargărus is dazed at his own fruitfulness.
And shall I praise his love and labor less
Who ceaseth never, but hard upon the sowing
Hath all his furrows level lain, howso
They sterile be ? for the streamlets in their flowing
He to his garden-plot beguiles : — and lo,
From the grooved summit of the hill the wave
Descends, the feverish, dying blades to save !

And over the polished pebbles murmuring deep
It comes, to heal with spray the scorched plain.
Him, also, will I ever in honor keep,
Who, lest the stalk sink under its weight of grain,
Feeds down the luxuriant plants, when first they lift
Their tender faces above the furrow's rift ;
And likewise him, by bibulous channels draining
The stagnant waters of the unwholesome fen,
When, in the season of doubtful sun and raining,
A full flood goeth out, until the plain
Be strewn all over with slime, and the young seeds rot
In poisoned hollows, reeking with vapors hot.

VEN so heavy the cares of tillage be
To man and beast, however versed in toil.
And still behoves to hover incessantly
About the crop, lest wanton geese despoil,
Or cranes of Strymon, or unillumined shade,
Or bitter succory the field invade.
The father of humankind himself ordains
The husbandman should tread no path of flowers,

But waken the sleeping land by sleepless pains.
So pricketh he these indolent hearts of ours,
Lest his realms be in hopeless torpor held.
For ere Jove's day, no hind the land compelled,
Nor might he stablish a landmark, nor divide
His holding from his fellow's ; but all, as one,
Wrought without question, and the earth satisfied
Richly their needs. Now those old days are done ;
Jove to the serpent his black poison gave,
Bade the wolf prey, and lifted the angry wave,
And he smote from the trees their honey-dew, and hid
The fire in the rock, and the running rivers of wine
Shut in strait channels. And all these things he did,
That man himself, by pondering, might divine
All mysteries, and, in due time, conceive
The varying arts whereby we have leave to live ; —
Seeking his food by the plough, his fire inviting
Out of its rocky fastness. Also then
It was the conscious rivers began delighting.
In alder-craft they had grown, and sailor men
Numbered the stars, and called them all by name, —
The Pléads, the Hyads, and lights of the Bear aflame.

And the ways were found to snare and lime the steps
Of the wood's wild things, and to gird the glades with
hounds,

And to fling the casting-net in the river-deeps,
And to drag the drenchéd lines from the sea's profounds,
And to set in the wood the saw with steely edge,
Where the men of yore had cloven it with the wedge.

Other arts followed ; for, lo, unflinching toil,
Backed by stern need, the world hath overcome.

Ceres appointed the tillage of the soil
When failed the acorns out of their leafy home,
The holy arbutus vanished, and no more
Dodōna nourished the faithful, as before.

Yet even upon the grain fell plagues erelong,
Mildew defiled the stalks, and everywhere
The barbéd thistles gathered in lawless throng,
Till villanous weeds displaced the harvest there
Caltrops and cleavers, darnel, wild-oats forlorn,
Darkened the gracious glistening of the corn.

Wield, therefore, a tireless rake against thy foe ;
Scare birds with din ; pay vows to Heaven for rain ;
Shred thy plant's leafage, lest too dense it grow,

And dark, and thou consider, with longings vain,
Thy neighbor's mighty gathering, and assuage,
As in the forests of the primeval age,
Under a shaken oak thy hunger's rage.

BE now the weapons, in order due, rehearst,
Which, if he lack, the sturdiest husbandman
Sows not nor gathers: the massy plough, the first,
The Eleusinian mother's laboring van,
Rollers and sledges meet for the threshing-floor,
And the mattock's cruel weight; and, furthermore,
All the light wicker stuff by Celeus wrought,
Hurdles of arbute, and, for the winnowing,
Iacchus' mystic fan. With long forethought
These various tools do thou together bring,
If that thou wouldest the country's life divine
Worthily live, and call its honors thine.
But earlier yet, even in the forest, thou
Shalt choose a growing elm, and mightily bend
Till thou have shaped a plough-beam for thy plough;
The eight-foot pole then fasten unto its end,

The mould-boards twain set firm upon either side,
Where the stout beam the share-head doth divide.
And, sure, the linden light thou hast long since felled
For the yoke ; and the lofty beech in its turn laid low
For the handle ; so that, from behind impelled,
Thy rustic chariot may freely come and go,
For, hung in the searching smoke, this beechen wood
Winneth a vigor hardly to be withstood.



FULL many a precept given by them of yore
Might I deliver, would men but hear, nor scorn
So trivial cares : and first, of a threshing-floor.
Smooth shall it be, by heavy rollers worn,
And skilfully wrought, and packed with Cretan clay
That never a grass-blade through its chinks find way ;
For the pests that mock thee are manifold. Small mice
Build house and granary safely underground,
Owls have their nooks, blind moles a couch devise,
And earth's most villanous creatures most abound.
The weevil swarms in the stacks, and the busy ant,
Toiling and moiling against a winter of want.

Again : the forest search for the walnut-tree
In the time of bursting leaves and odorous bloom :
If many flowers have set, thou shalt verily see
A marvellous threshing after the fierce heats come ;
But, if the shadow of leaves alone be thrown,
The fruit of thy threshing shall be chaff alone.
There be who plant not till they have steeped their seeds
In the olive's bitter juices, or in lye ;
For so the yield of the dubious pulse exceeds,
And cooks by a lesser fire. Yet seen have I
The fruit of long and diligent labor lost.
That which thou gatherest year by year bears most,
But evermore, under a fixt decree,
Waste all things and decline and backward glide,
Even as a far-spent oarsman thou mayest see
Holding his boat against an unfriendly tide
Till the tense arm relax, and the current strong
Hurrieth the unresisting bark along.

BE it ours to study, with intent as keen,
Arctūrus and the glittering Dragon, and
The twin Kids' darkling weather, as ere hath been
Theirs who through wild seas come to their own land,
Face gales of Pontus, or attempt the strait
Of purple-peopled Abūdōs, infatuate.
When Libra sways the firmament, and hath made
Equal our slumbering and our waking hours,
Parting the world midway between light and shade,
Ye men of the soil, expend your oxen's powers
Putting in barley, till hard upon the time
When stubborn winter bringeth its rain and rime.
And so of the flax and the poppy of Ceres' love:
Drive the plough briskly, cover the grains with mould,
While the land is dry, while the rains yet linger above.
Thee too, lucern, the furrow that shall enfold
Must fallow be, and crumbling to dust away;
While beans are sown ere the ending of the May.
Thy millet be newly planted, year by year,
At the season when the White Bull of the gilded horn
Leads off the signs, and Sirius doth disappear,

Being, by a hostile star, of glory shorn.
But if thou ask of the land its richer grains,
And the bearded wheat alone reward thy pains,
The daughters of Atlas ere the Dawn shall hide,
And the Gnosian star of the burning crown decline,
Or ever the furrow's claim be satisfied
The seed to embrace, or undue haste of thine
Trust the year's hope to a soil unready yet.
Many there be who will plant ere Maia set,
But the so desired harvest mocks their want
With hollow ears. Yet, haply, if thou dost deign
The vetch or the humble kidney-bean to plant,
Or the lentil of Pelusium, signal plain
Setting Boötes doth in heaven display.
Sow, then, until hoary winter's midmost day.

Here the cause wherefore the resplendent sun,
Dividing the dominion of the sky,
Through twelve great signs his high career doth run.
The zones of heaven are five. Incessantly
One gloweth ruddy under the torrid flame

Of the flashing orb. On either side the same,
Far to the uttermost left and right, extend
Realms darksome, with cerulean ice and rain.
Yet the gods, willing poor mortals to befriend,
Award them generously, midway these twain,
Other twin regions which the sidelong march
Of the mighty zodiac doth overarch.
And this our world, that Scythia-ward doth rise,
As though the dizzy Rhipæan peaks to climb,
Falleth away to the South, where Afric lies.
High over the North ascends one pole sublime ;
But the Manes tread under foot the nether pole,
And the inky Stygian waters over it roll ;
And there the mighty Dragon of many coils
Winding about, like a river of fire, doth seem
To take the twin Bears in his terrible toils, —
The Bears, who shrink with fear from the Ocean stream.
But here, they say, there is darkness infinite, —
No change, no sound, but a rayless, timeless night.
Or else, mayhappen, when fair Aurora saith
Here her farewell, withdrawing the daylight thus,
She seeks those realms. But when the earliest breath

Of the Orient's quivering steeds moves over us
Once more, — then Vesper, star of the rosy face,
Beameth her last on that mysterious place.
So is it that we seek our weather lore
In a fitful sky, seed-time and harvest learn,
And when on treacherous deeps to ply the oar,
When launch the full-rigged craft, when timely turn
Forestward for the felling of the pine.
Not vainly, then, the year's fourfold design
We ponder, nor the star's rising, nor its decline.

BUT if cold rains imprison the churl forsooth,
Then is the time each indoor task to speed
Against brightening weather ; then the plough's blunted
tooth

Is sharpened ; and for the vineyard's day of need
Hollowed are trees for troughs, and branded plain
Are the cattle, and numberéd all the sacks of grain.
There are forkéd props to be cut the vines to bear,
And Amerian willow ties for the tender sprays,
And bramble twigs to be wrought into wicker-ware,

And corn to be roasted and ground on these dull days ;
For the laws of the gods and men alike allow
Even upon holy days these tasks, I trow.
Due reverence ne'er forbade thee drain thy field,
Fence crop, snare birds, nor kindle the brier, 't is clear,
Nor the bleating flock to the healthful stream to yield.
With apples and oil, no less the muleteer
May saddle his plodding beast, and bid depart,
Black pitch to bring and millstones from the mart.



WITH varying influence over tasks like these
Hath Luna each her following days ended.
Shun aye the fifth ; for then the Eumenides
Were born, and pallid Orcus, and Earth's fell brood,
Cœus and Japetus and Typhœus dire
(Brethren who dared against high heaven conspire ;
For thrice huge Ossa did they essay to lift
On Pelion, and leafy Olympus on the twain ;
But thrice the Father, launching his lightning swift,
Levelled the pile). On the seventeenth morn again
Thy vines are set, thy bullock shall broken be,

And the leashes put to thy warp ; but the ninth shall see
Thy runaway thief o'erta'en and thy slave go free.

A HERE be many labors meet for the cool night
season,

Or the dewy hours while yet the morn is new.
Then is light stubble reapt, and with equal reason
Sere meadow lands ; for never doth healing dew
Quite fail the darkness. And one man well I know
Who tarrieth late by his winter fireside's glow,
Feathering the wooden torch with dexterous knife ;
While singing, singing to lighten her long toil,
Plieth her comb at the web, the busy wife,
Or setteth her sweet must over the flame to boil,
Skimming the liquor with the vine's gathered leaves,
What time the very brazen vessel heaves.
But in high summer is reapt the yellow wheat,
And in high summer is thresht the ripened corn.
If, therefore, he plough or sow, it still is meet
The laborer strive unclad ; and lo, his turn
For resting and feasting comes in winter weather,

When the crops are housed, and the hinds make merry
together.

Oh, dear the season that bringeth surcease of care,
As the port to the mariner when his craft opprest
Cometh safe home, and the seamen jovial are,
And all the prow is with blooming garlands drest !
But still must the oak be shorn, and the olive gray
And berries of sanguine myrtle stored, and bay.
Likewise is now the season of the year
Snares for the crane and nets for the stag to fling,
To hunt the tremulous hare, and smite the deer
With hempen coils of the Balearic sling
Warily cast, while the snow-fall heavy lies,
And the river-channel toileth in gathering ice.

BUT how of the autumn stars and storms to sing,
Or all the sleepless vigilance owed of men
When the great heats pass, and the days are shortening ?
Or how of the deluge-laden spring-tide, when
Upon tender stalks milk-full, and ears that sway
Light in the acre, falleth a swift dismay ?

Yea, I have seen, when harvest days are early,
And the first reapers, the golden fields among,
Shredding from slender stems the ripened barley,
Shock as of all the winds together flung
In battle. Then the very stalks, upturn
By the furious hurricane, aloft are borne,
And whirled into the blackness of the storm
The culms and the wingéd stubble. Or yet again
Far over the deep the clouds their squadrons form,
And the mighty mass rolls inland, foul with rain ;
And, like a foe, the flood bursts out of the sky,
And the very æther topples from on high.
Lost now the happy labor of man and beast !
Nor seed nor furrow resists the whelming wave !
The dikes are full, and the running streams increast
Till they roar again, and panteth each ocean cave
And inlet, and, by night, the vivid lance
Of the lightning in the Father's hand doth glance.
Earth shakes as the bolt descends, wild creatures flee,
And slavish fear strikes into the heart of man ;
But he, with his flaming sword, smites Rhodope
Or Athos, or the Acroceraunian

Peaks, while the rushing rainfall thickens the sky,
And the wood sighs loud in the gale, and the sea-sands cry.
Meet is it, therefore, thou consider with awe
The lights and laws of the firmament; so discern
The depths where shivering Saturn doth withdraw,
The orbit where the fires of Mercury burn.
But venerate first the gods, and most of all
Great Ceres on her annual festival.
In the clear season when the herbs are springing,
And winter passeth away, and is no more,
Be ready betimes, thy pious offering bringing,
For the lambs are fat, and mellow the wines in store,
And slumbers upon the densely wooded hill
Are sweet. Then let the rustic youth fulfil
The Ambarvalia. Milk and honey and wine
Be poured, and thrice the blessed victim round
The ripening field, while jovial dancers join
His train, and summon, with clamor of sweet sound,
Ceres into their homes. Ay, let men stay
The sickle, while, oak-chapleted, they pray,
And lift to the Mother many an untaught lay.

BUT the Father, he hath appointed manifold
And faithful signs of torrents alike and dearth.
So that we know what winds compel the cold
And the moon's monthly message unto the earth,
And the tokens of sinking gales, and the warnings all
Which bid the husbandman shelter his flock in stall.
For when great winds are gathering, forevermore
The breast of ocean heaveth distressfully,
Dry shrieks are heard in the mountains, and from the shore
The inarticulate waves make hoarse reply,
And mightily swells the murmur of the trees.
Oh! barely then the keel shall escape the seas,
When the fast gull cometh in from the outer deep,
Making the shore with a warning note and harsh,
When high and dry on the sand the cormorants leap,
And the heron spurns his haunt in the lonely marsh,
And overtops the very clouds in his flight.
Also, when wind is coming, behold at night
How many the meteors, and how they glide
Swiftly adown the declivity of the dark!
And the trains of whitening fire they leave, how wide,

How long ! Nor wilt thou fail, by times, to mark
How chaff and the dropping leaf are whirled amain,
And flocks of thistle-down skim the watery plain.
Then shines the lightning out of the angry North,
And the houses of Eurus and Zephyrus shake to the roar
Of the thunder ; and while the wealth of the field goes forth
On the swollen dikes, away from the friendly shore
The mariner gathers in his rain-drenched sails.
Ah, never unheralded come the rainy gales !
The soaring crane drops into the valley low ;
'Ware of their rising, the bullock snuffs the air
With nostrils wide ; and hurriedly to and fro
About the lakes the twittering swallows fare ;
While the garrulous frogs, away in the miry fen,
Deliver their old complaining note again ;
Also the ant, incessantly travelling
The same strait way with the eggs of her hidden store ;
The rainbow quenching its thirst ; and loud on the wing,
Spurning the pastures whereon they fed before,
A mighty army of crows, all tell of storm.
So do sea-birds, various in name and form,
And they the Asian meadow that explore,

In the sweet shallows of the Caÿster diving,
When showers of spray from their shaken wings they pour,
Or, smitten anew, by zest of wanton striving
Head-foremost seek the wave, and plunge therein
In the gay feint their plumage to make clean.
E'en the grim raven, albeit alone he treads
Waste and dry places, for the storm doth hark
And loudly hail. And it is foreknown of maids
Carding their flax when all without is dark,
And the lamp burns dim for the fungus gathering thick,
And the oil that sputters about the floating wick.

BUT when the rain is over and gone, appear
To the foreseeing eye signs no less true
Of Empyrean calms, and of sunshine clear.
The hosts of the uttermost stars come out to view ;
No fleece trails over the heaven ; and the rising moon
Sheddeth a light beyond her brother's boon.
The halcyons loved of Thetis fold their wings
On the warm sands ; the beast of the filthy sty
His mumbled fodder no more at random flings ;

Mists cling to the meadows ; and from the roof-tree high,
After sunseting, we hear the bird of night
Tell o'er and o'er the tale of her vain despite.
Anon behold aloft in the limpid air
The sea-hawk Nisus, and Scylla shall expiate
The rape of that fatal tress of purple hair.
Whithersoever she flies, he, fierce with hate,
Clamoring follows, and looseth not his prey,
Whithersoever they take their airy way.
List also the rooks in their leafy homes on high, —
Glad creatures these, — aye singing under their breath
With burden of soft sighs. I know not why,
But deem a joy unwonted gendereth
Such hubbub, for that now they see again
Their nests and their young in the sweet light after rain.
Not theirs the wisdom of our humanity
Divinely lent, nor more mysterious lore :
They follow the changeful temper of the sky.
If the wet South clear, if the rare deeps dim once more,
Their mood is changed, as a wind-blown vapor's way.
Therefore the fields are vocal, hence the play
Of the happy flocks, and the rooks' exultant lay.

BUT wouldest thou feel no treachery at all
In midnight calms, no doubt of the hour at hand,
Look narrowly unto the swift processional
Of following suns and moons, and understand.
When Luna rallieth first her scattered sheen,
If the round be dark her misty horns between,
There are floods to fall on the fields of earth and sea ;
But if her face be bright with a virgin glow,
Beware of the coming gale. For, verily,
Fair Phœbe glows in the wind : it hath aye been so.
Her risings, also, thou shalt enumerate ;
And on the fourth, which governeth all her fate,
If over the heaven a radiant crescent float,
Through the long morrow, and for days many more,
Even to the month's end, are tempests quite forgot ;
And grateful mariners all along the shore
Pay votive rites to Glaucus and Panopéa
And to Melicertes, child of Leucothéa.
The witness of the day-star next receive,
Rising, or setting in the wave. The tale
Sun-told at dawning, and rehearst at eve

To the climbing constellations, shall not fail.
Shows he a hollow morning face, withdrawn
In maculate vapors? Lo, an ominous dawn,
And a wind coming out of the South with peril fraught
For cattle and crops and trees. Nor less the dread
When the lucid rising rays in clouds are caught,
Broken and quenched, and from the saffron bed
Of her Tithōnus Aurora cometh pale.
Then rings the roof to the bound of the ruthless hail,
And ill shall the tender vine-bough shelter then
The growing grape. Yet of the westering sun
Regard the changeful colors with keener ken,
Forecasting a deluge when his brow is dun,
Gales when it glows; while flecks of dark on the fire
Bespeak a strife wherein wind and cloud conspire.
On no such even will I my cable loose,
Or venture me on the deep. But if, perchance,
When Sol, returning, the vanisht day renews,
If stainless all his glorious countenance,
Heed not light clouds, but watch with a tranquil mind
The waving of forest leaves in the shrill north wind.
And, verily, of the great orb thou mayest invite

Yet deeper intimations ; bid him tell
The innermost secrets of the dusky night,
The humid hush of the brooding storm dispel,
And open the storehouses where peaceful skies
Await fair winds. Who dares his word despise ?
Hath he not many a time, by signs, foretold
The instant perils of the unconscious state,
Blind heavings of rebellions manifold ?
Did he not, pitying Rome for Cæsar's fate,
Shroud his bright head in black, till impious men
Trembled lest primal night were come again ?
Ay, but then too the earth and the ocean spake,
And dogs abhorréd, and birds of evil tongue ;
And we beheld the fields of the Cyclops quake,
And billows of molten rock and fire-balls flung
From Ætna's riven furnaces ; while, afar,
All Germany heard aghast the din of war ;
And shudderings, as of unimagined fear,
Passed over the Alps ; while in sacred groves, long dumb,
A terrible cry arose for men to hear ;
And pallid spectres out of the night did come
Fearfully ; cattle spake unto men afraid ;

The earth was rent ; the streams, in their course, were stayed ;
And the gods of bronze and ivory, in the fanes,
Did weep and sweat for anguish. One dread day
Royal Eridānus deluged all the plains,
Tearing the trees from dizzying heights away,
Swamping the beast in the stall. And evermore
Threads of ill-omen strayed the entrails o'er,
And stately cities did echo all the night
To the howling of wolves. O never, verily,
Fell thunderbolts out of air so calm and bright,
Such comets blazed along the alarméd sky,
Till the hour came when, on Philippi's plain,
Romans with Romans measured spears again.
Aye : twice unstayed of pitiful Providence
The Balkan slopes, the Emathian prairies, ran
Crimson with gore of ours. O long, long hence,
In those far marches, shall the laboring man
Upturn the rusted javelin with his share,
Smite with his fork the empty helm, or bare
With awe the bones of the mighty to the air.

GODS of the soil, my father's gods and mine,
And Romulus, and mother Vesta, who defend
The Tuscan Tiber and castled Palatine,
Suffer our young hero succor still to lend
To this distracted century. Long ago
Blood of our blood atoned with ample flow
The broken oaths of Laomedontian Troy.
But long, O Cæsar, hath heaven grudged us thee ;
For human victories minister annoy
To minds celestial : wherefore it is we see
Chaos of right and wrong, and terrible throes
Of strife abroad, and infinite crimes and woes.
The plough receiveth no more its honor due ;
The fields are waste ; their tillers are all afar ;
The curvéd sickle is ta'en and shaped anew
Into a pitiless brand. Rumors of war
Have suddenly in all the earth increast :
At once from Germany and the utmost east
Of the Euphrates they arise ; to-day
Even sister towns the bonds of peace despise ;
And impious Mars holds universal sway.

And the world is like a charioteer who flies
Forth of the stalls into the course, with vain
Intent his violent horses to restrain ;
They have their will ; the car recks not the rein.

BOOK II.



BOOK II.

GNOUGH of watching the stars and tilling the field !
To thee, O Bacchus, my strain I now address ;
I will sing, too, of the olive's tardy yield,
And all the young offspring of the wilderness.
Come to me, father of the wine-press, — here
Where the land is overflowing with thy cheer !
Come to the autumnal fields, where vines are weighed
Earthward with thy rich honors, and vats a-foam
And brimming with the vintage newly made, —
O jubilant father of the wine-press, come !
And lend thine aid and fling thy buskins by
What time in the must our naked feet we dye !

BUT, first, of the generation of all trees :
Innumerable the modes of Nature here ;
For some possess, unbidden of men's decrees,
Their rural haunts, and follow at will the clear

Meanderings of the waters. And such be
Slim osiers, flexile broom, and the poplar-tree,
And the gray willows that whiten in the wind.
So too, from the springing of a seed, self-sown,
Tall chestnuts, and the bay-oak, — of its kind
Leafiest in Jove's dominions, — and that one
That dwelleth beside the oracles of Greece.
Otherwise yet, the plums and the cherry-trees
Assemble closely about the parent stem
Their lusty suckers. The very Parnassian bay
Loves the great mother-shade, while young, like them.
Such and so variable is Nature's way.
Thus fruit-trees grow, and they of the wild green woods
And the shades of consecrated solitudes.

BUT man hath wonderful modes of increase found
Of his good wit. From the fond parent tree
He severs and sets in furrows of the ground
The juvenile plants ; and bedded slips hath he,
Some cloven in transverse wise, and some acute.
The forest-denizen, seeing at his foot

The layer's lowly arch, hath prescience clear
Of others fed upon his own life and soil.
Some flourish even rootless ; for we hear
Of venturous gardeners, who, in faith, despoil
The tree of its topmost spray to hide in earth.
Nay, there are tales of yet more marvellous birth :
There issueth from the dry, sawn olive-wood
Ofttimes a living rootlet, and we are ware
Of separate boughs, in harmless wise, endued
With alien fruitage ; so the engrafted pear
Hath ripened apples, and the empurpled plum
Beside the stony cornel found a home.

MARK then, ye husbandmen, the curious thought
Each several plant, after its own kind, doth ask.
Tame the wild fruit by tendance, and suffer not
Your fields to rest. Oh, ever-glorious task,
Taburnus vast, in olive robes, to drape
And set the slopes of Ismărus with the grape !
And thou, Mæcēnas, our glory and our pride,
Our most renowned, and worthiest so to be,

Make thou the voyage I have ventured by my side !
Let us loosen sail ! Let us fly to the open sea !
Yet is not mine the daring that would essay
To compass the universe in my numbers ; nay,
Not were my tongues an hundred, and my voice
An hundred fold uplifted, — a brazen roar ;
Come, therefore, friend, for the country of our choice
Lies hard at hand, and soon may we touch the shore ;
And I summon thee now to list no mythic strain,
Preludings weary, and wanderings wide and vain !



THE plants that seek unbidden the shores of light,
However strong of limb, and of leafage fair,
Bring not forth of their kind. Yet Nature's might
Doth only sleep in the soil, and if with care
They grafted be, and in artful furrows set,
The mood of their savagery they quite forget,
And the lesson given of man right aptly learn.
Ay, even the sterile root-stalk, borne away
And set in the open, increase doth return.
But they that under the shadowing limbs delay

Of the great mother reft of their young shall be,
And withered in all their fair fertility.
But slow is the life of the seed-sown tree, and late
In the long to-be shall men sit under its shade,
And fruits, forgetting their sap, degenerate,
And birds on the grapes of the wilding vine have preyed ;
And he must labor and spend, who would impose
Laws of the furrow on each green thing that grows !
Layers of the vine, truncheons of olive-wood,
And stalks of the Paphian myrtle, shall reward
In kindest wise thy care ; while it is good
To slip the spreading ash and the hazel hard,
And them of the mighty crown of shade, — the trees
Consecrate evermore to Hercules.
Nor elsewise doth the aërial palm ascend,
Nor Jove's Chaōnian oaks, nor firs that see
Visions of drowning seamen. But thou shalt lend
Grafts of rude arbute unto the walnut-tree,
Shalt bid the unfruitful plane sound apples bear,
Chestnuts the beech, the ash blow white with the pear,
And, under the elm, the sow on acorns fare.



ET know that grafting and budding are not one.
The eye first rendeth away its tenuous vest,
Pushing beneath the bark. And this being done,
Close thou, in a narrow groove therein depressed,
The germ of the alien plant, and bid it find
Life in the sap that circles throughout the rind.
But fair, with never a knot, the stem shall be
Thou rivest deep with wedges, to set therein
Slips of a more prolific ancestry,
The which, ere long, shall high in the æther win
With lusty shoots, until the old trunk have known
Marvel of new leaves, and fruitage not its own.
Also, the manifold kinds of willows note,
And them of the lotus and the elm-tree brave ;
Nor be the Idæan cypresses forgot ;
Nor all the shapes that unctuous olives have, —
Some oval, and some as bitter berries round,
And some like acorns. And divers kinds are found
Of apples, and all Alcinoüs' orchard growth ;
Nor do the Syrian and the Crustumian pear
Derive their fruit from the same scions, both ;

Nor the huge hand-fillers. And our trees upbear
Grapes of another vintage on their vines
Than Lesbia plucks from Methymnæan bines.
The soils are sterile Thasia's vine that breed,
While the pearly grapes of Mareōtis love
A wealthier dwelling. Psithia brews indeed
A wine from the o'er-ripe fruit ; while they who prove
The vintage of Lagos, howso light it be,
Reel in their gait, and stammer in slavery.
Costliest of all, the crimson liquors still ;
And, Rhætic, what of thee ? Dare never to vie
With treasures the Falernian vaults that fill ;
Nor yet shall the wines of Tmolus issue try,
Nor even the royal growth of Phanæ's cape,
With juice of the hardy Aminæan grape ;
Nor any nor all of these, for bounteous flow
And that fine virtue that outlasteth years,
With the lesser Argite. Nor disdain I so
The exuberant clusters that Bumastus bears,
Nor thee, O Rhodian, joyfully dedicate
Unto the gods, when the revel's hour is late !
But what doth it boot of names and kinds to tell

Surpassing number? He who would know them all
Might count the grains of the desert-sand as well,
Aroused of the hurricane, or the waves that fall
On all the Ionian beaches, when the East
Hath smitten the ships and wrought his fearfullest.



ALL grounds do verily not all growths invite.
Willows for the stream, alders for the tangled fen,
The childless ash for the bleak and stony height,
While the strand in the myrtle glorieth. And then
Bethink how Bacchus joys in a sunny hill,
And the yew in the bitter breath of the north-wind still,
Ay, range the uttermost lands of man subdued,
From homes of orient Araby to the haunts
Where the wild Scythian hath his limbs tattooed,
And, lo, each realm engendereth its own plants.
Black ebony thrives in Indian lands alone,
And the spicy frankincense is Saba's own.
And what shall I say of the balsam's odorous dew,
Or the tears of the evergreen acacia-trees?
Or how the fame of the Ethiop groves renew,

White with soft wool, like that most delicate fleece
The Serian men do gather? or explore
The wildernesses of earth's remotest shore,
Where India borders upon the ocean river,
And where no arrow, howso fairly sped,
Hath overflown the topmost leafage ever,
Though swift to handle the bow that race be bred?
Remains the blessed apple of Media,
Bitter and ripening late; and yet men say
There is none more meet, by healing, to expel
Dark venom from his veins who hath sometime quafft
A brewage of herbs whereof the malignant spell
Of some hard stepmother maketh a deadly draught.
Now this same citron-tree is fair and tall,
Favoring in look the laurel most of all,
And, but for its fine odor widely borne,
A laurel it might be deemed. The leaves of it
And clinging flowers are scarce by the tempest shorn;
And Median men do find its juices fit
The face to anoint, the sorry heart assuage,
And soften the weary pain of panting age.

BUT neither shall Media's groves, her wealth untold,
Nor the beautiful river Ganges, verily,
Nor the current of Hermus running thick with gold,
Contest men's praise, my Italy, with thee ;
Nor Ind nor Bactra venture in any wise
To vie, nor sands of Arabia sweet with spice.
Not thine the soil that bullocks breathing fire
Once turned for the sowing of the dragon's teeth ;
Thou hast ripened no such harvest, dense and dire,
Of the helms and spears of men upon any heath :
But the ever-flowing fount in the groaning vine
Of Massicus, and the olive-trees, are thine ;
And the flocks are glad in thee ; and the fiery horse
Issueth out of thy pastures to the battle ;
And the great bulls bathed in thy holy watercourse,
Clitumnus, and all the consecrated cattle
Come forth snow-white, and meet for the gods of Rome
And the temples whither they lead the triumphs home.
Perpetual spring is here, and summer days
In months that are not summer's. Herd and tree
Give increase twice ; while the tiger's ravening ways

Are far, and the lion's cruel progeny.
And he who gathereth herbs doth never light,
For sorrow, upon the treacherous aconite ;
Nor ever a mailéd monster sweeps the soil
With measureless curves, nor here, as otherwhere,
Heapeth a train so huge in ominous coil.
Here, too, are noble cities, many and fair,
And the dwellings of men do throng the sheer cliff-side,
And rivers under the ancient ramparts glide.
But how shall I tell of the tribute of the sea
Brought hither ? or the marvel of mighty lakes ?
Thee, Larius, most of all, and after thee
Benācus, where the insurgent billow makes
A noise like ocean's own ? or the ports rehearse,
The added strength of the Lucrine barriers,
The angry chafing of the excluded deep
Outside the Julian harbor, loud in vain,
While yet the Avernian channels feel the sweep
And spray of waters from the Tyrrhenian main ?
Ay, and this land of ours hath metal treasure,
Hath veins of silver and copper, and no measure
Of gold in her streams. Her sons are terrible :

The Marsians and the Sabellians in their prime,
Hardened Ligurians, Volscian spearmen fell,
And the renowned Camilli, are of this clime ;
Decius and Marius also, and their sons,
And the race of the Scipios, those doughty ones ;
And thou, consummate Cæsar, who hast subdued
The ends of Asia, and dost now restrain
From Rome effeminate India's dastard brood.
Hail, Saturn's land, great mother of fruits and men !
For thee will I praise the arts of the olden days,
Unseal the sacred fountain of song, and raise
Ascræan measures along the Roman ways !

MARK now the varying genius of the earth
In various parts. Of soils consider the hue
And the strength, and whether they bring richly forth.
Lo, desolate tracts, and hillsides bleak to view,
Regions of rocks and brambles and thin clay
Do nevertheless rejoice in olives gray
And full of years ; the which are prophesied
By the oleasters thronging there anigh,

And the wildwood berries upon every side ;
But fields there be where the grass grows lush and high,
Sweet soils and unctuous, and that laugh with glee
For the very wealth of their fertility.
Such be the hollow dells discernéd oft
From mountain summits, and fed by falling streams
With riches and refreshment from aloft.
Uplifted to the south-wind the valley seems,
And the ploughman coming with his curvéd share
Misliketh its fair ferns. Yet, verily, there
Shall passing vigorous vines in after days
Lavish their clusters, gush with the sacred rills
We are wont to pour from golden pateras,
What time his pipe the stout Tyrrhenian fills
By the altar-side, and the chargers bend and groan
With the smoking entrails offered thereupon.
But carest thou rather for flocks and herds, — to feed
Steers and the offspring of sheep, and goats that prey
Upon all sown crops, — behold, the opulent mead
Of far Tarentum allureth thee away,
Or the lost Mantuan plain, lamented ever !
Haunted of white swans is yon sedgy river ;

And there are limpid fountains and grass in store,
And the herds who browse thereon the long day through
Do spend of that fair pasturage no more
Than one brief night restoreth by its cool dew.
But the true grain-lands are black with fruitfulness,
Answering with fatness to the share's impress,
Crumbling without the compulsion of the plough.
Thou shalt never see from any other plains,
Drawn of the staggering bullocks home, I trow,
So rich a harvest upon the rolling wains.
Yet the forest-clearings too are apt for corn, —
They by the axe of the wrathful planter shorn,
When he carrieth ruin into shades unstirred
For many a year, and in the wood lays low
The ancestral dwelling of the woodland bird,
Who wandereth abroad in heaven, exiled so,
The while the desert blossoms under the share.
Now there be gravelly wastes, which hardly bear
Rosemary and humble cassia for the bees.
While scabious tufa, and the Cretan clay
Devoured of the dark water-tortoises,
Do verily lure from other fields away,


And flatter with many a tortuous hiding-place
And feed with sweetness all the serpent-race.
But the land of delicate exhalations, gleams
Of wandering mist and copious draughts of dew
Given back, of waywardness, in running streams ;
The land whose garment of greenness aye is new,
Where, nevertheless, no salt corrosion whelms
The iron in scales, — ah, that is the home of elms
With vines, as with a glorious network, bound !
It fatteneth flocks ; it is full of olive-trees ;
Obedient unto the plough that soil is found
Of him who tilleth it. Wealthier tracks than these
The shores beneath Vesuvius hardly show,
Nor Capua nor lone Acerræ, where men know
Never the hour of Clanius' overflow.

AND now will I tell of every soil the test.
Thou seekest a land that is passing dense or
light ;

Since that for the sheaves of Ceres aye is best,
And this the Lyæan clusters doth invite.

The eye foretells thee that which is better worth ;—
Yet sink thou still a pit in the solid earth,
And when thou hast all the removed soil restored,
And levelled it with thy feet, —if it fall away
It is rare, and ready to bear the vine adored
And to nourish the flock. But the mould that will not stay
There where its wont was, and doth still exceed
The hollow, — that is heavy and strong indeed,
Its ridges are stiff, its clods are obstinate,
And thou seekest oxen of might to cleave the same.
But the saline earth man cannot ameliorate :
It is bitter of savor, also, by its fame,
And the apple ripened in so untoward a place
Forgetteth its name, and the grape its ancient race.
And thus it is proven. From the smoky rafter
The hamper woven of osier thou shalt take
Or the strainer of the vineyard, and thereafter
Pour of yon villanous earth therein, and slake
With sweet spring water, filling it full, and, lo,
Big drop by drop shall the liquid ooze and flow
The wicker through, and the bitter taste thereof
Shall twist the sorry assayer's lips awry.

But he who the fatness of a soil would prove
Gathereth a handful up, then flings it by,
And that which clingeth unto the hand like pitch,
Nor crumbles apart, is over moist and rich,
And its grasses tall exceedingly. Yet, for me,
I like not this luxuriance of blade
Outrunning the ear, — this rank fertility.
Remain lands heavy or light, by weight betrayed,
The dark and the pale discerned of the eye alone,
And the cold and churlish, hardly to be foreknown
By the pine, and the baneful fir, and the ivy dun.

HESE cares fulfilled, be timely labor given
To furrowing deep some spacious mountain-side,
Till the brisk breeze coming out of the northern heaven
Have searched the upturned clod, and wholly dried,
Or ever thou set the vine of joyfulness :
For friable soils do beyond measure bless
Its bearing ; and these come of the winds' blowing,
And the gelid hoar-frost, and the sturdy hind
The loosened ridges diligently o'erthrowing.

But they to uttermost providence inclined
Have heed that the plant's earliest nurseries,
Wherein they are trained for their upholding trees,
Do liken the vineyards where their home shall be.
Else will the estrangement from their mother earth
Bewilder the young things, coming suddenly.
And some consider the aspects of their birth,
And on the rind the quarters of heaven they write,
Thus to restore, in the vine's unwonted site,
The front it bore to the fiery south wind's rage,
The back it turned to the bitterness of the north ;
So potent still are the ways of tender age !
But first consider whether is better worth
To place thy vines on the level or the steep,
And if thou lovest the lowlands rich and deep,
Set thick thy plants, and verily they shall bear
The more exuberantly. But if thou choose
Hillocks abrupt, or the open slopes and fair,
Give thy rows ample space, nor yet refuse
To draw, with diligent measurement and true,
The undeviate lines of each green avenue.
Even as the cohorts of a Roman legion

Are marshalled in the stupendous day of war,
When the lines of battle are ta'en, and all the region
Becometh a sea of arms, and burns afar
With the quiver of brazen waves, while the dire onset
Still tarrieth, and the war-god walketh yet,
His choice unmade, the awaiting hosts between ;
So uniform all thy vineyard's companies.
Not that the eye alone may revel therein
With vain delight, but the land not otherwise
May nourish them all alike, nor the branches have
Broad room in the ambient air to climb and wave.




WHAT now of the trenches' depth? Intrust thy vine
Secure to a narrow furrow and a small ;
But the sturdy tree it is bidden to entwine
Is deeplier set, and the oak more deep than all,
Whose airiest bough ascends no higher ever
Than its roots go down toward Tartarus. Wherefore never
Is it shaken of gales or frost or flooding rain ;
But, standing in its unmoved tranquillity,
Outlives unnumbered sons and cycles of men,

Uplifting vigorous arms unto the sky,
Or spreading abroad ; the steadfast centre made,
And the stay of all its glorious round of shade.

NET never thy vineyard face the setting day,
Nor dream of staying thy vines on hazel-props.
Withhold the hand would sever the last light spray
For bedding, or the twigs of the tall tree-tops ;
For love of the soil doth make the lowlier strong :
Nor ever, with blunted blade, the soft shoots wrong,
Nor suffer the olive with its woody wealth
Inside thy nurseries, lest there fall a spark
Of fire from the heedless laborers, and, by stealth,
Feed long on the fatness under the outer bark,
Till it seize the pith, and into the æther soar,
Leaping the leafage with a terrible roar,
And running along the branches, thence to spring
Victorious above the summits fair and tall ;
Then, all the forest in flames enveloping,
It flingeth abroad in heaven a smoky pall
Pitch-black, impenetrable. And this, the rather

When the winds are up in the mountains, and they gather
In tempest, and fall upon the burning trees,
And swoop the flame, and carry it bodily.
Ah, never in desolated tracts like these
Shall the stem of the severed vine reverdured be,
The sucker spring, but only the oleaster,
Baneful and bitter-leaved, o'erlive disaster !

 OLD him unwise who counselleth to lay bare
The rigid mould while Boreas breathes amain ;
For winter bindeth in frost-bands everywhere
The land, and the buried seed may scarce attain
To fasten its rootlet in the unyielding clod.
But come when the roseate spring-time is abroad
With snowy storks, of the trailing serpent hated,
To plant thy vineyard. Or let this be done
In the first light chill of summer days belated
In earliest autumn, ere the receding sun
Touch the dark solstice with his flying steeds.
But spring is good for the grove and the wood ; the seeds
Of plants to be the earth all palpitant prays

In spring-time of the almighty father Sky,
Who, tarrying not from her so glad embrace,
Cometh in showers of full fertility,
And the mightiest things that be, commingled so,
Minister being unto the least that grow.
Then the bird-haunted boughs with melody ring,
And the very herds of the stall have seasons set
For love's delight. Then the warm zephyrs bring
Delicious languors unto the land, and get
Fair offspring of the fields ; and everywhere
Light mists arise and succulent grasses dare
Trust the new sunshine. The vine-branches young
Fear never the surgent Auster, nor the streams
Forth of the clouds by northerly tempests flung,
But lavish their buds and leaflets. O, meseems,
They were days like these that shone when earth was new !
Spring was it, beautiful spring, the great sphere through,
And suave the tenor of the primeval time.
The wintry East withheld its pitiless breath,
While the cattle drank the light of the earliest prime,
And the iron children of men, on their bleak heath,
Sprang up agaze, and the beasts of the field were given

Their woodland homes, and the stars were set in heaven.
And but for this most merciful interval
Between the frost and the fire, this rest from pain,
If the skies to the earth relented never at all,
The labor of all these tender lives were vain.
Remaineth yet the setting of slips. Behold,
Thou shalt cover them deep with well enriched mould,
And the scaly shell or the porous pebble hide
Therewith ; for so shall the rains of heaven find way,
And the gentle vapors about the root abide,
Whence the plant hath life, and leapeth into the day ;
But some with stones their slips from the floods do shield,
And some with ponderous shards have half concealed,
While the dog-star burns o'er the parched and gaping field.



WHY planting done, be instant ever to loose
The soil at the stem, and the pitiless mattocks
ply ;

Nor even as yet the patient earth refuse,
Again and again, with the burrowing share to try,
Bidding thy laboring bullocks come and go

The length and the breadth of every vineyard row,
Till the time is come when thou dost ready make
Slim reeds, and the peeléd wands that liken spears,
And carefully fit the sturdy ashen stake
Bifurcate, which the wandering vine upbears
Till it learn to scorn the winds of heaven, and soar
The elm-tree's topmost layers of greenness o'er.



WHEN aye, in the early days, when leaves are soft,
And the tendrils launched with laughter into
the air

Do strike, unstayed, for the sunny void aloft,
The delicate life thou shalt regard, and spare
The knife's rude edge, and the undue foliage rather,
With curvéd and careful fingers, choose and gather.
But when the extending branches do infold
The elms in a strong embrace, and ere the fear
Of the iron have touched them, do not thou withhold
Thy blade, but the flowing tresses freely shear.
Then is the time to wield an unflinching sway,
And curb the career of every flowing spray.

ALSO thou shalt thy roaming flocks with skill
Restrain by wattled hedges from the vines,
While tender these, and all unlearnéd in ill ;
For more than the sun of summer when he shines
His fiercest, or the perils of winter storm,
Shall the bold gambols thy plantations harm
Of wanton goats, and buffaloes of the wood,
And browsing sheep and greedy bullocks. More
Than the chill of the gathered hoar-frost, or the flood
Of fire on the scorching rocks, thou shalt deplore
The venomous tooth of grazing things, — the mark
Indelibly set upon the wounded bark.
Therefore, and to atone no other crime,
Are goats on the vine-god's altars laid alway,
And still have place the sports of the olden time
At the cross-roads and hamlets of Attica,
Where the sons of Theseus, merry with wine, compete,
And the prize is his who keepeth his footing feat
On the oiled goat-skin laid in the meadow fair.
Also the Ausonian exiles out of Troy
Recite their unkempt measures, and rend the air

With roustering laughter. And they do employ
Masks rudely fashioned of hollow bark, and all
The jovial chorus of their mad carnival
Is raised unto thee, O Bacchus, while they suspend
Thy rustic likeness upon some lofty pine,
And the beaming countenance thereof doth lend
A more prolific progeny to the vine ;
For the circling hills and the deep vales overflow
Wherever the god his comely face doth show.
Oh, meet is the reverence unto Bacchus paid !
We will praise him still in the songs of our fatherland,
We will pour the sacred wine, the chargers lade,
And the victim kid shall unresisting stand,
Led by his horns to the altar, where we turn
The hazel-spits while the dripping entrails burn !

NOW the care of the vines remaineth yet ; — a toil
Interminable, for thrice in the year must be,
Ay, even and four times, ploughed the difficult soil,
And the clods o'erthrown, behoveth diligently
With the back of the prongéd fork to shatter and move,

And to lighten the shade of all the leafy grove ;
For the tillers of earth a weary round do tread,
And the path is ever the same of the whirling year,
And after the uttermost leaves of the vine are shred,
And the sylvan crown dishonored by the drear
And chilling breath of the northern blast, no less
The cares of the coming year the hind do press,
Till he falleth anew on the vines with Saturn's blade
And shapelier fashions. Nor do thou delay,
But, earlier than all thy fellows, ply the spade,
And carry thy prunings to be burned away,
And house thy stakes, yet stay thy gathering.
Then, too, in the fall of the year, as in its spring,
The grapes are in peril of a shade too dense,
Or bound, mayhap, in a tangle of weed and brier ;
And the one and the other asketh a toil immense ;
And howso broad the acres of thy desire,
The few are better for tillage. Furthermore,
Thou must gather the reed along the river-shore,
And the rough broom in the wood, and cherish the life
Of native willows, wherewith to tie thy boughs.
So shall thy nurseries have rest from the knife,

And the last, sole dresser sing in the perfect rows.
Yet, even yet, must the earth be wrought with zeal
To the finest of powder, for that Jove hath still
Terrors in air for the ripened clusters' weal.



U T is nowise thus with the culture of olive-trees :
No curv'd knife nor tyrannous rake ask they
When once they have grasped the soil and faced the
breeze,
Earth giveth the plants to drink, and doth repay,
With heavy harvests, the cleaving share alone.
Thus the rich fruit that ministers peace is grown.



S O also all the trees that are good for fruit.
Once 'ware of their sturdy limbs, their proper
powers,
They make for the stars with many a buoyant shoot,
All un beholden to any care of ours.
Yea, boughs in the wildwood are with fruitage bent,
And the aviaries of the desert radiant

With blood-red berries. Even the cytisus
Hath life in its leaves, and the forest's lofty growth
Serves to illumine the darkling hours for us
With torch and fire-light. And shall man be loth,
In steadfast purpose of heart, all seed to sow?
But wherefore dwell on the lordlier things that grow?
Behold the humble broom, and the willow-trees,
Food for the flock, for the shepherd shade, provide,
And garden-hedges and pabulum of bees.
O, merrily wave the box-groves o'er thy side,
Cytōrus! Fair the Narycian shades of fir,
And happy the fields to see, where laborer
Wields never the rake in hard anxiety!
Yea, the stern forests, of the peaks possess
Highest on Caucāsus, they, incessantly
Beaten and broken by the spirited East,
Yield serviceable woods. The pine for the main,
And the cedar and cypress for our homes, are ta'en
Thence. One tree giveth the wain its drum-like wheels,
And one the spokes to be wrought in fashion round
By the farmer, and one the ships their curvéd keels.
The willows in withes, the elms in leaves, abound;

Stout spears are fashioned of myrtle and cornel, too,
For the battle, and bended bows of Iturean yew.
Also the linden smooth and the supple box
Docile to the keen blade and chisel be
That lend them forms of beauty. Unto the shocks
Of the torrent the alder answereth buoyantly
Sped down the Po; and under the hollow rind
Of the ilex, and in its empty heart, we find
The hidden homes of bees. Ah, who shall tell
If all the bounty of Bacchus may compare
With theirs? He hath been the cause of crime as well.
The Centaurs, mad for slaying, his creatures were,
Rhœtus and Pholus and Hylæus, — he
Who flingeth his huge bowl at the Lapithæ!



HAPPY beyond all happiness — did they
Their weal but know — those husbandmen
obscure,
Whose life, deep hidden from strife of arms away,
The all-righteous earth and kind doth well secure.
What though for them no towering mansion pours

At early morning, forth of its haughty doors
And halls, a surge of courtiers untold.
Gaping on the rich portals, as they pass,
Fair with mosaic of tortoise-shell, the gold
Of broidered vestments and the Corinthian brass?
They with no Tyrian dyes their white wool soil,
Nor yet with cinnamon foul their limpid oil.
But they are at peace in life, in guile untaught,
And dowered with manifold riches. Theirs the ease
Of acres ample, and many a shady grot,
And slumber of sweetness under sheltering trees,
And living lakes, and the cool of Tempe's valley,
And the lowing of herds are theirs continually;
Theirs are the haunts of game on the wooded hill,
And theirs a hardy youth, unto humble ways
Attempered, and patient in their toil, and still
The old have honor of them, and the gods have praise.
Justice, methinks, when driven from earth away,
Left her last footprint among such as they.

MY heart's desire, all other desires above,
Is aye the minister and priest to be
Of the sweet Muses, whom I utterly love.
So might they graciously open unto me
The heavens, and the courses that the stars do run
Therein, and all the labors of moon and sun,
And the source of the earthquake, and the terrible swell
Of mounting tides all barriers that break
And on themselves recoil. Me might they tell
Wherefore the suns of the wintry season make
Such haste to their bath in the ocean bed, and why
The reluctant nights do wear so slowly by.
Yet if it be not given me to fulfil
This my so great desire to manifest
Some part of Nature's marvel, or ere the chill
Of age my abounding pulses do arrest, —
Yet will I joy the fresh wild vales among,
And the streams and the forest love, myself unsung!
Oh, would that I might along thy meadows roam,
Sperchēus, or the inspiréd course behold
Of Spartan maids on Taygētus! Who will come

And lead me into the Hæmian valleys cold,
Where, in the deep shade, I may sit me down ?
For he is verily happy who hath known
The wonderful wherefore of the things of sense,
And hath trodden under foot implacable Fate,
And the manifold shapes of Fear, and the violence
Of roaring Acheron, the insatiate ;
Yet blesséd is he as well, that homely man,
Who knoweth the gods of the country-side and Pan,
Silvānus old, and the Nymphs their sisterhood !
Him not the purple of kings, the fagots of power,
Lure ever aside from his meek rectitude,
Nor the brethren false whom their own strifes devour,
Nor the Dacian hordes that down the Ister come,
Nor the throes of dying states, nor the things of Rome.
Not his the misery of another's need,
Nor envy of his abundance ; but the trees
Glad unto his gathering their fruits concede,
And the willing fields their corn. He never sees
What madness is in the forum, nor hath awe
Of written codes, or the rigor of iron law.
There be who vex incessantly with their oars

The pathless billows of ocean ; who make haste
Unto the fray, or hover about the doors
Of palace-chambers, or carry ruthless waste
To the homes of men, and to their firesides woe.
One heapeth his wealth and hideth his gold, that so
He may drink from jewelled cups and take his rest
Upon purple of Tyre. One standeth in mute amaze
Before the Rostra, — vehemently possest
With greed of the echoing plaudits they upraise,
The plebs and the fathers in their places set.
These joy in hands with the blood of their brothers wet,
And forth of their own dear thresholds, many a time,
Driven into exile, they are fain to seek
The alien citizenship of some far clime.
But the tillers of earth have only need to break,
Year after year, the clods with the rounded share,
And life is the fruit their diligent labors bear
For the land at large, and the babes at home, and the
 beeves
In the stall, and the generous bullocks. Evermore
The seasons are prodigal of wheaten sheaves
And fruits and younglings, till, for the coming store

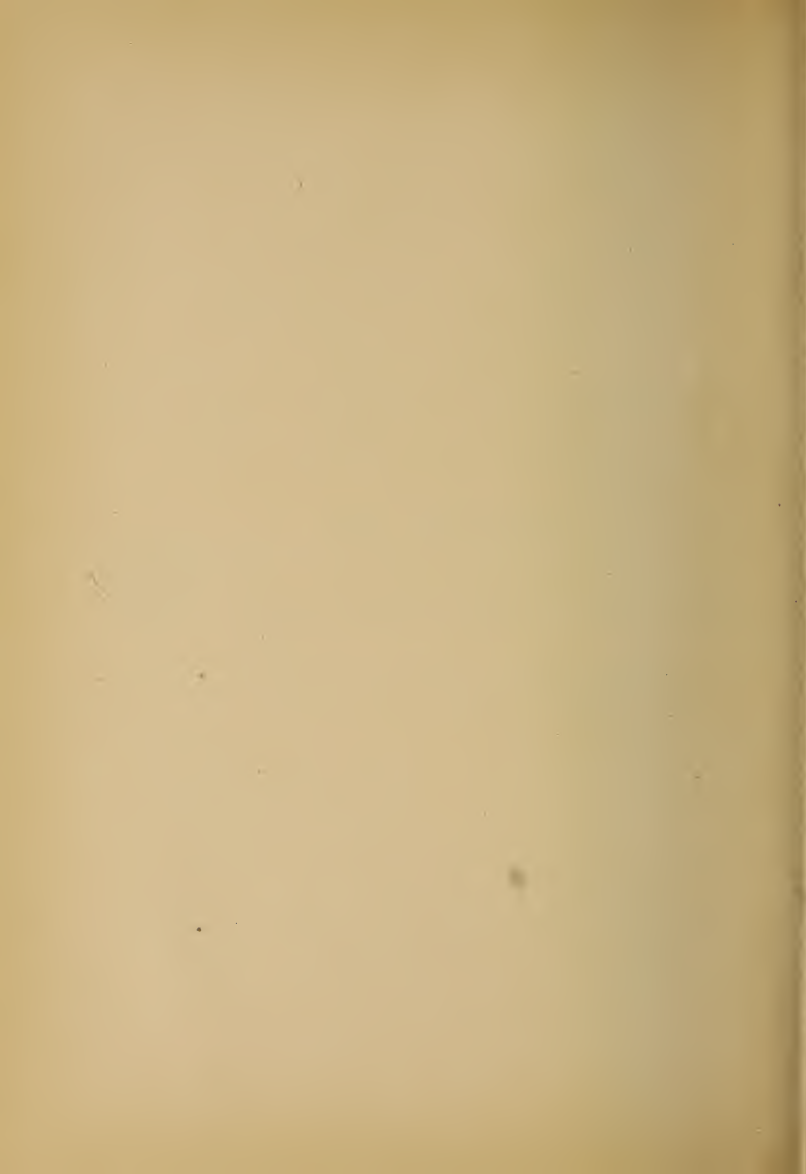
Of the laden lands, the barns too strait are grown ;
For winter is near, when olives of Sicyōn
Are bruised in press, and all the lusty swine
Come gorged from thickets of arbutus and oak ;
Or the autumn is dropping increase, and the vine
Mellowing its fruit on sunny steeps, while the folk
Indoors hold fast by the old-time purity,
And the little ones sweetly cling unto neck and knee.
Plump kids go butting amid the grasses deep,
And the udders of kine their milky streams give down ;
Then the hind doth gather his fellows, and they keep
The merry old feast-days, and with garlands crown,
Lenæan sire, the vessels of thy libation,
By turf-built altar fires with invocation !
And games are set for the herdsmen, and they fling
At the bole of the elm the rapid javelin,
Or bare their sturdy limbs for the rustic ring ;
Oh, such, methinks, was the life the old Sabine
Led in the land, and the illustrious two,
Romulus and Remus ! Thus Etruria grew
To greatness, and thus did Rome, beyond a doubt,
Become the crown of the cities of earth, and fling

A girdle of walls her seven hills round about,
Before the empire of the Dictæan king
Began, or the impious children of men were fain
To feast on the flesh of kindly oxen slain.
Ay, such the life that in the cycle of gold
Saturn lived upon earth, or ever yet
Men's ears had hearkened the blare of trumpets bold,
Or the sparkle of blades on cruel anvils beat.



UT the hour is late, and the spaces vast appear
We have rounded in our race, and the time is
here
To ease our weary steeds of their steaming gear.

BOOK III.



BOOK III.

UNTO thee, mighty Pales, and unto thee,
Immortal shepherd of the Amphr̄ysus, now
My hymn I raise ; and hearken, ye streams, to me
And forests upon Lycæus' mountain-brow !
For the themes that held enthralled in song's delight
The idle spirits of men are long gone trite.
Lives any yet who hath never heard the tale
Of hard Eurystheus ? or of the rites accurst
Offered of Busiris ? or Alcīdes' wail
For his lost Hylas ? Any, as yet unverst
In the lore of Leto and her Delian shrine,
Or the story of Hippodamīa, and the shine
Of the ivory shoulder of Pelops, horseman keen ?
But the path I strive to follow climbeth steps
Winning whereunto I shall be crowned of men,
And the praise of my doings hover about their lips,

If life but last! And, first, unto mine own land
Will I lead in triumph home the Muses' band, —
Ay, unto thee, my Mantua, will I bear
The palms of Edom, and in thy green plain set
A temple of marble by the water fair,
Whose reedy banks are as a delicate net
Inwoven, — there, by the spacious curves, and slow,
Still wanderings of the noble Mincio,
Its midmost shrine shall Cæsar's image keep.
And I, in my triumphal robes of pride, —
Purple of Tyre, — will bid a century sweep
Of four-horse chariots adown the river side.
From the Alphēan plain, the Nemean wood,
In the great races, and with the cestus rude,
Hasteneth all Greece to vie. Then will I bind
My brows with olive, and offer sacrifice,
While the slain bullocks, and the trains that wind
Majestic unto the temples, glad mine eyes.
Or the varying scenes of the mimic stage appear,
Where the purple curtain riseth, as though it were
Uplifted of the wild Britons thereon wrought.
But the gold and ivory door-posts of my fane

Shall bear the story of the great battle fought
With the Gangaridæ, writ in sculpture plain ;
And the arms of conquering Quirinus. There anigh
The Nile's great current runneth tumultuously,
Surging with battle array of brazen beaks.
Then the cities of Asia in their devastation
Shall be set forth, and the victory-crownéd peaks
Of the Niphâtes, and the Parthian nation
Fighting, as they fly, with arrows backward flung.
Likewise the trophies twain from enemies wrung
Diverse, — the twofold spoils of the East and West.
And there shall be breathing shapes of Parian stone ;
The sons of Assaræcus, of the names possest
Which they of the race of Jove do bear alone ;
And Tros, the founder of Troy, and holy Apollo,
The author of it. And envious foes shall follow
With fear the pictured shapes of the Furies fell,
And the hideous river Cocÿtus, and the vain
Toil of Ixion with the impracticable
Stone, and the writhéd serpents of his pain,
And the monstrous wheel. But we, the while they gaze,
Will be following, along the happy woodland ways

And glades inviolate of the Dryad choir,
Thy strong behests, Mæcēnas, upon whose aid
They still rely who greatly do aspire.
Wherefore, arise and come, and let there be made
An end to slothful tarrying! Loudly call
The voices along Cithæron's mountain-wall,
And Epidaurus, tamer of steeds, and the hounds
Of Taÿgētus, while the murmur of their assent
Sounds through the sighing forests and resounds.
Hereafter will I gird me with intent
That Cæsar's name and the fame of his wars be told
For years to come, as many as years have rolled
Since the prime birthday of Tithōnus old.

NOW the breeder of horses, — he with envy smit
Of palmy honors in the Olympian game, —
Or the raiser of bullocks brave, for the ploughing meet,
Taketh heed first to the mother and her frame.
Of cows, behoveth it, such an one to seek, —
Uncomely, stern of look and sturdy of neck,
With dewlaps that from chin to ankle fall.

The flanks are never too long, the very foot
Is huge, and largely fashioned the members all,
And the horns are curv'd back, over ears hirsute ;
Nor care I if the hide be spotted with white,
The face like a bull's, and ready the horns for fight,
And the neck to the yoke reluctant. Then the tail
Must lash the steps, however the stature tower.
So come we unto the years wherein avail
Lucina's rites, and the hymenæal hour.
Earlier than the fourth was never known begin
The fruitful time, and the tenth its end hath seen ;
None others for the getting of progeny
Are meet, nor yet for the labor of the plough.
Wherefore, while yet thy lusty creatures be
Glad with the vigor of early youth, do thou
Unbind thy bulls and hasten thee to commend
Thy herds to Venus, that so thou mayst forefend
Their wasting by a promiscuous increase.
For this belongeth unto our mortal doom, —
That the best day flies fastest. Cometh disease,
Labor and age and the clutch of the pitiless tomb.
Some then must fail, and some thou well mayst spare ;

So guard thee early from loss, provide, repair,
And be the young of the flock thine annual care.


NOR less intent the vigilance thou shalt vow,
Always and from the beginning of their days,
Unto those of thine equine herd whom thou
Hast chosen for the continuing of their race.
For the foal, thou knowest, of illustrious birth,
Steps high in the field, and his light foot spurns the earth;
In ways untried he is leader evermore,
Gallantly breasteth he the turbulent stream,
And dares the bridge, unmoved of the vain uproar.
Slender the head, and the haughty neck of him
Is arched, the belly short, and the back hath room;
And his fiery bosom, soon as the hour is come
For wedlock, swells with a riotous delight.
Bay-red his noblest color, or, haply, gray;
But turn thee ever away from the cream and the white.
Then, when the terrible music of the fray
Soundeth far off, he cannot be let from going,
With ears alert, and quivering limbs, and blowing

His nostrils out, the flames of his gathered wrath ;
While the tossings of his abundant mane do still
Sweep the right shoulder falling, and his path
Rings hollow under the beat of his mighty heel.
Oh, such, methinks, was the terrible courser tamed
Of Pollux in Am̄yclæ, Cyllārus named !
And such were they the poets of Greece have sung, —
The horses of Mars, and great Achilles' pair,
And such was Saturn's self what time he flung
His veiling mane o'er the neck of his flying mare
At the coming of angry Rhea, and did fill
With whinnying sharp all Pelion's lofty hill.

BUT even a steed like this must suffer the sloth
Of growing years and the heaviness of disease.
Then take him away from his fellows, nor be loth
To cover the shame of his infirmities.
For the labor of age is vain, cold its desire,
And its fleeting battle-rage as a stubble-fire,
Bodiless, bootless. Therefore thy earliest thought
Is given to the glory of thy stallion's youth.

Other and lesser traits of him are sought
Thereafter, and the ancestral breed, forsooth ;
And how he hath won the victor's palm and worn,
And how the misery of the conquered borne.
Who hath not seen the stream of chariots fly
Forth of the barriers, and devour the plain
With headlong emulation ? Oh, how high
The hopes of the youth ! and what a thrill doth drain
With every beat the exultant heart, as, lo,
They coil the lash, or, flinging them prone, let go
The reins ! The axles burn with the speed of their flight.
They sink from view, then, springing aloft, they seem
Swept through the void, and outlined upon the light.
No stop, no stay, while the rising sand-clouds gleam,
And the drivers are dashed with flying foam, and feel
The breath of those who follow them. Such the zeal
And the passion of men for praise and victory !
Now Erichthonius first did dare the feat
Of coupling a car with horses four, while he
Towered over the wheels in exultation fleet.
But the rein and the ring and the seat of the rider brave
The Pelethronian Lapithæ found and gave

Unto mankind. They taught the steed aright,
Curling a scornful hoof, to curvet and spring
As is meet for a battle charger in the fight.
But courser and charger are one in that they bring
Like toil to the breeder. Whether for those or these
The spirit of youth and its fine dexterities
Are sought, and the uttermost fleetness in the way.
Ay, though the one have erewhile driven before him
His flying enemies, and the other may
Glory in Epīrus as the land that bore him,
Or brave Mycenæ, or his lineage trace
Even to the first of old king Neptune's race.

HEREON the breeder, with assiduous care
To round their limbs with fatness, richly feeds
The elected stallions who the honors wear
Of lordly rank and the fathering of steeds,
Serving them corn in plenty and water pure
And flowering grasses; forbidding them endure
Howso slight labor: lest the weakly frame
Of the son accuse the abstinence of the sire.

But the mares he starveth to leanness without shame,
And drives them, vext with the stings of their young desire,
From running streams and succulent leaves away,
Or gallops anon till they falter under the ray
Of the blazing noon, what time the threshing-floor
Groans heavily 'neath the press of bruised grain,
And the idle chaff, as the west wind surgeth o'er,
Is carried abroad. For other cares are vain
If the seed-land, spent with an ecstasy too keen
Of bearing, furrowed unto no end have been,
And seizeth no more the germ to hide within.




THUS far of the sires. The dams be now thy care.
And in the set months when their foals they carry
Harness them unto no heavy wains, nor dare
Suffer them leap in the road. And be thou wary
Lest they scour the meadows in all too fleet a course,
Or breast the stream when the ravening waves are hoarse.
But feed them rather in solitary places,
On shadowy hills or by full-flowing streams
Bordered with moss, and the greenest of all grasses,

Where they may lie, untouched by the ardent beams,
In the shelter of mighty rocks and hollow caves.
Now in the wooded land that Silārus laves —
Alburnus, of the evergreen ilex-trees —
Myriads of winged creatures throng the air,
In the language of Rome asīli called ; but these
Are gadflies unto the Greeks ; and they do scare
All herds with the piercing resonance of their wings,
And drive them asunder, until their bellowings
Madden the very woods, the stricken sky,
And the banks of Tanāger, spent with summer suns.
And such the scourge fierce Juno did apply
In terrible spite to the heifer Io once.
But the sires again, whom fervors of noon excite,
Thou shalt part from the pregnant dams, and feed while
the light
Of dawn is new, or the stars lead on the night.



SO come the calves of the flock to birth ; and he —
The breeder — careth henceforth for these alone ;
Hastening to brand with name and pedigree,
That they who are set for the flock's increase be known,
And they who shall serve at the altars of the gods,
Or furrow the field and break its bristling clods.
The remnant leave to graze in the verdant mead.
But unto those who are meet for the energies
And the passion of rustic life give thou good heed,
Admonish them oft, and rule in steadfast wise ;
For soft the spirit of youth, continually
And easy to be entreated. Wherefore tie
Loose coils of delicate withe round the free neck
Of the young creature, till he have wonted grown
And doth no more of such compulsion reck.
Then, of two circlets cunningly bound in one,
Thou shalt fashion a yoke and bid thy bullocks twain
Keep equal step thereunder. Or yet again
They are harnessed to empty carts whose wheels do make
Barely an imprint upon the dusty road.
Nor yet, for long, shall the ashen axle quake

And groan with the labor of its ponderous load,
Or the gilded pole its banded circles draw.
But the younglings, docile as yet unto no law,
Thou shalt not suffer to feed on grass alone,
Or sedge of the fen, or the willow foliage thin,
But serve them with gathered fodder out of thine own
Hand ; nor dream of the motherly cow to win
Pails brimming white in the fashion of our sires,
But lavish all on the young one's dear desires.

R, if thy ruling passion thee incline
To ride among the fierce alarums of war,
To speed thy flying chariot through the divine
Bosage of Jove, or skim the banks afar
In Pisa of Alphēus, bestow thy care
First on thy racer, till thou have taught him bear
The vision of men at arms for strife arrayed,
And to suffer the blast of the cornet, and discern
The cry of the wheels behind him, unafraid,
And the jingle of reins in the stall. And he shall learn
Increasingly, as he groweth, to rejoice

In the soft flatteries of his master's voice,
And the silken smoothing of his mane to love.
So try him from the earliest hour when thou
Dost from the udders of the mare remove.
And often in pliant headstalls, him allow
To show his face, even in his witless years,
Even while weak, and shaken of idle fears.
Then, in the fourth summer, after three fulfilled,
Let him essay his paces in the ring,
Till he in sonorous, even steps be skilled,
And knoweth aright his wreathéd limbs to fling
Alternate, and the will of his lord obey.
Then loosen thy rein, and let him have free way
And call to the breeze, as, flying over the level,
He leaveth barely a footprint in the sand.
Even so do the dry north winds arise and revel
When they swoop from the Hyperborean marches, and
The clouds disperse, and herald the Scythian cold ;
And light and swift, at first, are the billows rolled
Over the flooded fields and the bearded grain.
Then cometh a murmur in the topmost trees,
And the breakers long press inland from the main ;

And the gale is abroad o'er lands alike and seas.
But he, thy reeking courser, scoureth over
The uttermost reaches of the Elian field,
Till the blood-besprinkled foam his lips doth cover.
Or yet, mayhap, his neck doth easier yield
To the light harness of the Belgian car.
Then, when at last his powers obedient are,
Feed with farrago rich of mingled grains
Till unto a mighty bulk his limbs have grown,
For ere thy docile servitor he remains
He will rise full oft in his wrath and will disown
Touch, howso light, of the lash in lordly hand,
And the iron tyranny of the bit withstand.

BUT all that thy most diligent care can lend
Of power unto thy beasts will not exceed
What the blind fury of passion may expend,
If horses or beeves thy pleasure be to breed.
Lead then thy bulls into pastures lone away,
Where mountain-barriers may their course delay,
Or the breadth of mighty rivers. Or them detain

Secure in the yards and feed abundantly,
For the strength of their youth consumes in ardors vain
If they do but look on the heifer young : and she
No memory of refreshing groves doth suffer
In them, nor the banquet of sweet grass they offer,
Albeit her soft enticements do compel
To clashing horns and their decision dread
Her lovers, howsoe'er indomitable.
Behold the beauteous creature who hath fed
In the great forest of Sila, and behold
Her amorous pair in furious conflict rolled ;
They deal swift hurts alternately, and the gore
Runs black from all their bodies, and they do knit
Their obstinate horns, and push with so fierce roar
That the forest and all the æther echo it.
And two such enemies never more may bide
Under the self-same shelter side by side,
But the conquered goeth away into far exile,
Scorned of his foe, and wistful glances throwing
At the stalls where he and his fathers reigned erewhile,
And he filleth alien shores with his great lowing
Over the sting of his loss and wounds and shame.

See, then, that thou invigorate all his frame
With labor, and be his nightly couch unstrewn
Save with the stones of the field, and let his fare
Be foliage rude, and the cutting sedge alone,
And suffer him scatter the sand, and lash the air
Preluding battle, and bore with angry horn
At the boles of trees, in the transport of his self-scorn.
Then, when his prowess is ripened, maketh he
A sudden onset upon the heedless foe.
A wave, beginning to whiten in mid-sea,
Rolleth its bellying volume shoreward, so
Roars over the rocks, and, curling to its fall,
Foams to its crest, o'erleaps the sea-cliff tall,
And scatters the sand of the deep's dark bed o'er all.

YEA, all the generations of living things,
Of men and ravening beasts and grazing flocks,
The watery tribes, and they of the painted wings,
Plunge in the self-same fires, and suffer the shocks
Alike of maddening passion. Under its goad
The never so merciless lioness roams abroad

And mindeth not her whelps. The unshapely bear
Lavisheth carnage along the ways of men
And of the forest, and yet more wanton are
Than their fierce wont the boar and the tiger then.
And ill in the hour when the lust of the brute hath sway
Is it wandering in Libyan deserts far away.
Nay, hast thou never felt the shuddering strong
Of thy steed's body if he do but scent
The familiar odor borne the breeze along?
Then shall no mastery howso violent
Of stinging lash, nor the rider's bit restrain,
Nor cliffs nor caves nor barrier streams detain,
Nor the breaker that teareth a mountain from its base.
Even the Sabellian boars do rushing whet
Rapacious tusks and the loosened soil displace
With restless feet, and on the tree-stems fret
Their flanks alternate, and wound and callous make.
What then of the stripling, when the flames awake
Of pitiless love, and fire his very marrow?
Late is the night, with sudden tempest black,
And the surge tumultuous where the strait is narrow,
Yet will he breast the sea, while over his track,

In thunder part the portals of heaven high,
And the billows that lash the crags give grim reply.
But he stayeth not for the cry of the wretched pair
Who bore him ; nor for hers, his hapless love,
Who will pass by a cruel death. And why declare
What stings the spotted lynxes of Bacchus move,
Or the savage offspring of dogs and wolves, or the rage
Of the mighty stag, and the warfare he doth wage ?
For the fury of all these tribes is naught to theirs,
The daughters of them enraged in days gone by,
Of Venus' self the chariot-harnessed mares
Who Glaucus rent for his crimes in Potniæ.
Now driven of love through floods and mountains o'er,
Nor Gargărus heed they, nor Ascanius' roar ;
But suddenly, when the smouldering fire doth blaze,
In the insatiate marrow, and oftenest
In spring, because the ardor of the spring days
Rekindles their own, their flight they do arrest
On some precipitous verge, and, panting there,
Invite the soft caress of the western air ;
And verily, howsoever strange the tale,
They oft-times of no sire impregnate be,

But only of Zephyr. Many a hollow vale
And stony waste they scour unceasingly,
Yet make they never for the orient sun,
Nor yet for thy dwelling, Eurus, but they run
Toward the homes of Boreas and Caurus, and the realm
Where Auster is born in blackness, and the air
In mournfullest pall of chilling rain doth whelm ;
So falleth, drop by drop, from the groin of the mare,
The very hippomānes, — oft, as shepherds tell,
Mixt with the brewage of herbs, whereof the spell
Of some hard step-mother maketh a potion fell.

BUT the unreturning hours do fleet and fleet,
While we, enamored of one only strain,
Round the same circle. Wherefore it seemeth meet
We sing of the herds no more ; for yet remain
The ways of the woolly flocks to celebrate,
And the long-haired goats. And the toil is truly great,
But, nevertheless, there is fame to be had therein,
Ye sturdy churls ; nor dubious hope have I
The meed of the conqueror in song to win,

And a lowly theme with praise to glorify.
Oh, sweet thy lonelier peaks to journey o'er,
Parnassus, or, following the gentle slope, explore
A path to Castaly never trod before !

UND to mine utterance, then, thy majesty,
Most reverend Pales, the while I give com-
mand

That sheep right tenderly fed and hous'd be
Until the leafy Spring revisit the land ;
And straw, and trusses of gathered fern also,
Thou with no stint shalt over the hard earth strew,
Lest haply thy soft creatures do sustain
Injury, that cometh of the icy cold,
In many a loathsome malady. And again
Feast them on arbut foliage within the fold,
And carry them clearest water ; and do thou mind
That all their cotes, fast closed to the winter wind,
Affront the sunshine low and the southern sky,
What time the skirts of the receding year
Are sprinkled of chill Aquarius from on high.

Nor hold thou, in any wise, the weal less dear —
For that their worth is verily one — of these
Than theirs who yield thee that Milesian fleece
Enrubied in Tyrian vats, and barteréd
For so great price. Their progeny, be it known,
Are more in number, and they are wont to shed
Their treasure of milk so far more freely down
That pails o'erflowing with foam but seem to drain
The udders, and the glad rivers flow again
Until the pressure of the fingers flag.
Meanwhile the hairy side and the hoary chin
Are yearly shorn of thy Cinyphian stag,
And the rude webs that these thy tonsures win
Meet for the shelter of tented legions be,
Or the sails of the sad wayfarers of the sea.
Fed in the wilderness of the Lycæan steep,
On diet of mountain briars and brambles rude,
The way to their homes they still in memory keep,
And lead their offspring out of the solitude,
Albeit they scarce may pass the threshold o'er
For the heaviness of their teats. Wherefore the more,
Because they ask so little of human care,

Shalt thou a screen from the snowy gales provide
And cheerfully still their leafy fodder bear,
Nor cover the hay-loft, all the winter-tide ;
But soon as ever the summer's gladdening word
Goes forth in the west wind unto either herd,
Though chilly the wold beneath the morning-star,
We will hasten unto the pastures hoary-white,
While the dawn is young, and the tender grasses are
Dew-pearled as yet, for the roaming flock's delight.
But when the unclouded heavens are thirsty grown,
And the glowing hour is ten, and the querulous drone
Of the cicada shrilleth in all the leaves,
Lead we to water at well or limpid pool,
Or where, mayhappen, a wooden trough receives
The running rills ; then off to the valleys cool,
To while the noon, where the spreading branches be
And olden shadow of Jove's own mighty tree,
Or 'neath the impenetrable ilex grove
Slumbering hard by, in darkness consecrate.
Then once again to the trickling streams we move,
Or idly feed, while the afternoon wears late,
Until vesper brings the cool, and the glades once more

Are dewy with moonrise, and the songs do soar
Of the finch from the thorn, and the halcyon from the
shore.

NOR yet will I slight in these my rustic strains
The wanderings of the shepherds of Afric, and
Their lone encampments upon the silent plains.
By day and by night for moons they roam the land,
Leading and feeding their flocks, nor ever bide
In the homes of men : the desert is so wide.
His roof and his home, his weapons and his wares,
The Libyan herdsman carrieth still, and leads
Laconian dogs, and the Cretan quiver bears,
Even as the intrepid Roman soldier speeds
To shoulder his cruel pack, and march, and show
An ordered camp in the front of the dreaming foe.
Not thus the Scythians by the Cimmerian Sea,
Or the stream of Hister, troubled with sands of gold,
Or where the measureless bulk of Rhodope
Sweeps to the north. Perpetually in fold
The flocks are holden there, nor grasses green

Do deck the field, nor any leaves are seen ;
But the very heart of the land is hard with frost
And formless, under enormous heaps of snow, —
Seven fathoms far and wide, it lieth lost. —
It is winter forevermore, and ever blow
The icy winds, and the sun's enfeebled ray
Clears not the cloudy pallor of heaven away,
Neither in the mid-course of his airy team
Nor where his car, precipitately descending,
Flings over the billows wide one ruddy beam ;
And the sometime running waters aye are tending
To gather in sudden crusts which grow and grow
Till the rings of an iron chain do stay the flow ;
And the clumsy wain goes heavily where the keel
Did push before ; and brazen vessels even
Are ofttimes rent, and the very robes congeal
And stiffen that men indue, and the wine is riven
With axes. Pools are solid unto their deeps,
And icicles bristle around unshorn lips ;
Nor less, the while, the universal air
Is murk with snow-fall, and the huge oxen stand
Still, while the frost makes hoary every hair.

But the stags have gathered them into a serried band,
Stupefied under the new-descended mass
Their uttermost antlers barely overpass.
And the charge of the hounds shall fright them never again,
Nor scarlet feathers hurry the trembling things
Into any net ; for lo, they have striven in vain,
And an end is come unto all their laborings
And pantings under the mountain of the drift,
When the huntsman falleth on them with weapon swift
And smites them, belling the while right mournfully,
And slays and bears them away with gleeful shout.
Oh, a safe life and an easeful, leadeth he,
The Scythian, in his deep dwelling hollowed out
Of the bowels of earth, by the fireside, where he rolls
For the burning heart-of-oak and huge elm boles !
There speeds the night with merriment, and men drain
Draughts of the acid juice of the service-tree,
Or malten beverage, wherein they are fain
To find the like of the wine-cup's jollity.
The blast of the North scarce tames these peoples bold,
And, smitten of the Rhipæan East, they fold
In tawny furs their bodies from the cold.

NOW, if thou follow the breeding of sheep for wool,
The prickly shrub and the burr and caltrop
shun,

Nor less the feed that is all too bountiful ;
And white be thy flock and soft-fleeced every one.
Nay, were thy ram's whole body fair as snow,
Put him away, if only his tongue do show
Black where the palate is moist, and seek again
Through all the populous field, lest his increase
Defiléd be by a dusky spot or stain.
The Arcadian god, with glory of so white fleece, —
Thus runs the tale, — thee, Luna, did enthrall,
Calling into the woods, nor didst thou spurn his call.

BUT the raiser of milk assiduously shall bear
To the flocks in fold both melilot and lucern,
And salted grasses ; for, nourished upon such fare,
They for the running streams do greatly yearn,
And their udders increase, and a delicate saline taste
Is in the milk ; and many there be who haste

To part from the side of the dam the kids new-born,
And circle their tender necks with an iron ring.
The milk which is given after the earliest morn
Goeth at night to the press, but the farm-hands bring
The fruit of the darkling hours, with rising day,
In moulds to the town hard by, or haply lay
Dredged with rare salt for the winter's use away.

MOR let the breeding of noble dogs be found
Thy least endeavor ; but in thy pack unite
Swift Spartan whelps to the keen Molossian hound,
And fatten with whey. For thou needest have no fright
In all thy stables, with such custodians,
Of the stealth of the murderous Iberians,
Or the midnight raids of wolves or robbers heed.
Then oft shalt thou hunt the tremulous wild ass
And after the hare and doe thy pack shall speed,
Or drive, with baying, into the dark morass
The scared wild boar, or over the mountains high
Urge the great stag to the net with ringing cry.

LEARN, too, the art to kindle under thy stalls
Fires of the galbānus and sweet cedar-wood,
Because the pungent odor thereof appalls
The offensive serpent. And when thy sheds have stood
Long years unmoved, the viper, vile to touch
And timorous, hides from the daylight under such
And lieth in wait to foul with venomous dew
His victims among the cattle. Haste thee, then,
O shepherd, and him with stocks and stones pursue,
And beat him down, nor suffer him lift again
The sibilant menace of his tumid head.
So shall the reptile bury him deep for dread, —
His midmost knots incontinently undone,
And stilled his quivering tail, and dragging slow
The very last of his writhings. Such an one
Informeth all the Calabrian glades with woe,
And ever his bulging bosom doth erect,
And scaly back, and belly long bedeckt
With monstrous markings. He, while the channels yet
Of the streams are full with spring-tide, and the land
With the floods that come in the wake of Auster wet,

Dwells in the ponds or hovers about the strand,
And filleth his livid maw, in cruel greed,
With chattering frogs and fishes. Then, indeed,
When the fens turn dry, and the fires of summer make
The fields to gape, he rolleth his burning eyes,
And leaps to the land, the sometime water-snake,
Frenzied with thirst, and fear of the ardent skies,
And he ravageth all the region. Heaven forefend
That I my limbs in the grassy grove extend,
And suffer me not beneath the open sky
To court sweet slumber at that perilous tide
When he creepeth anear in the new-found bravery
Of youth ; for his outworn sheath is flung aside,
And leaving his brooded eggs, his curling young,
He flashes aloft the steel of his three-forked tongue.



NEAR also what the signs and sources be
Of thy dumb creatures' maladies. For thy sheep
Are smit sometimes with a loathsome leprosy
When the chill of the winter's rain hath gone too deep
Or that of the hoary frost ; or the body shorn

Is fouled with sweat, or the brier hath rudely torn.
Then shall thy shepherds lead unto water sweet
The stricken flock, and see they are all besprent ;
And the long-fleeced ram shall bodily plunge in it
Till the current carry him down ; and an unguent
Of oil and sulphur and silver scales prepare,
And pitch and wax and the sea-leek mingle there,
Bitumen black, and the pungent hellebore.
Or better still the fortune that shall await
Thy kindly care, if thou put thy knife to the sore ;
Seeing the ill that is hidden grows more great,
While thou but sittest and prayest the gods for aid,
Nor ever a healing hand to the wound have laid ;
So, when the body is wholly rackt with pain,
And the fierce insatiate fever burneth deep,
Behoves to temper the fire, and smite the vein
Beneath the foot till the blood therefrom do leap.
Such is the wont of the wild Gelonian men ;
So do the Thracians of Bisaltia, when
They hie them to Rhodope for pasturage
Or the Dacian desert, and with milk of mares
Commingled with horses' blood their thirst assuage.

But the dam who still remote from her fellows fares,
Who daintily pulls at the grass-tips, or doth make
For the restful shade, or all in languor take
Her feed, as she lies outstretched in the open plain,
Who strayeth at night into lonely haunts away,
And alway followeth last of the moving train, —
Her, without any tarrying, thou shalt slay ;
Or else the infection of her ill severe
Will taint the flock or ever thou knowest fear.
For the squall at sea, the herald of tempest dire,
Strikes not more suddenly than the pests that fall
Ofttimes on the flock ; nor singly do they expire,
But the summer camp is desolated all :
The flock that is and the hope of the coming days
Perish in one, — the first and last of the race.
As well he knoweth who the ascent hath made
Of Alpine summits, or, haply, ta'en his way
To the hill-forts of the Noric land, or strayed
Along the Timāvus in Iapydia,
Where the shepherd's realm lies desert many a year,
And the glades are solitary far and near.
For there, on a burning autumn long gone by,

The very heavens with pestilence were stricken,
The peaceful flocks all given over to die ;—
Yes, even the savage beasts in their lairs did sicken,
And the ways of death were manifold ; for, indeed,
The fountains of water were poisoned and the feed.
And first a pitiless fever did contract
The veins, and cramp the sufferer's limbs. Thereon
Followed the flow of a deathful cataract,
Where the bones dissolvéd piecemeal and were gone.
And ofttimes, in the midst of a sacred rite
Among the ministers of the altar, dight
In woolly cap, and fillet like unto snow,
Fell the ill-fated victim and expired,
Or ever the lagging priest could deal his blow ;
Nor were the entrails upon the altar fired ;
Nor might the soothsayer answer men who prayed.
The knife came clean from the throat, and the thin gore made
Barely a stain on the surface of the sand.
Then perished amid the meadow blossoms gay
The bullocks in never counted numbers, and
At cribs o'erflowing their sweet lives yielded they.
And unto the kindly canine race there came

Fierce madness, and breathless coughing racked the frame
And the swollen jaws of the unwieldy sow.
The conquering courser e'en forgot his pride
And passion, — forgot the grasses where they grow,
And turned him, sick, from the limpid fount aside,
Restlessly pawing the earth. Despondent hung
His ears, the while there were fitful sweatings wrung
Out of his members, and the same were cold
As ice, in the sufferers ordained to die,
Whose hard, hot skin gave not unto mortal hold.
And these so ominous warnings, verily,
Were given long days before the fatal end.
But when the advancing ill began to tend
Ever to worse, the eyes did kindle as flame ;
Deep-drawn, and mingled with groanings of distress
And spasms in all the entrails, the breath came ;
Dark gore from the nostrils flowed, and the tongue did press
The throbbing throat most cruelly. One sole way
There seemed the pangs of the dying to allay,
And wine was given them in inserted horns,
Which yet did hasten the end, and feed the fire ;
For now on himself, the death-struck creature turns,

(May the gods avert from the pious woe so dire, —
Reserve it unto our foes!) and, in despair,
Doth his own failing members mangle and tear.
And oft the steaming bullock, striving to thole
The ponderous plough, fell prostrate suddenly
With bloody vomit, and cry of mortal dole.
Then did the ploughman hasten him to untie
The yoke, and the bereavéd one divide
Right sorrowfully from his fated brother's side;
And the share stood fixed, and the task was left undone.
The shadiest grove, the sweetest of meads no more
Might waken the longing of the passing one,
Nor rivers brighter than amber, where they pour
Over the pebbles toward the fair champaign.
For the long flanks lay unnerved, and the eyes in vain
Struggled with stupor, while the enfeebled neck
Swayed heavily earthward. And what boots him now
To have lovingly toiled for men, who little reck
The weight of the clods he hath lifted with his plough?
What boots the innocent life that ne'er hath known
The flow of the Massic cup, nor boards that groan
With manifold courses? But the herb of the field

And the leaf of the tree supplied their banquetings,
And the wine of the feast was that the rivers yield
When they run fast and clear, and the bubbling springs ;
And the healing slumbers ne'er were stolen, of these
Meek revellers, by hard anxieties !

Men say that never in all those regions far

Were the oxen sought in vain, ere that dread time,
For the sacred service of Juno ; but her car,

Unequally drawn of buffaloes, did climb

The way to the stately temples. And men did lay

Their helpless hands to the mattock, and essay

Themselves to turn the sod and bury the grain,

Or patiently bow their necks to the yoke and o'er

The steeps of the mountains draw the creaking wain.

The wolf went prowling about the fold no more,

A nightly terror unto the flock ; for, lo,

He had cowered to a sharper fear, and the timorous doe

And fleet-foot stag did unregarding roam

With ravening dogs about men's dwellings. And then

There came a time when the sea did fling as foam,

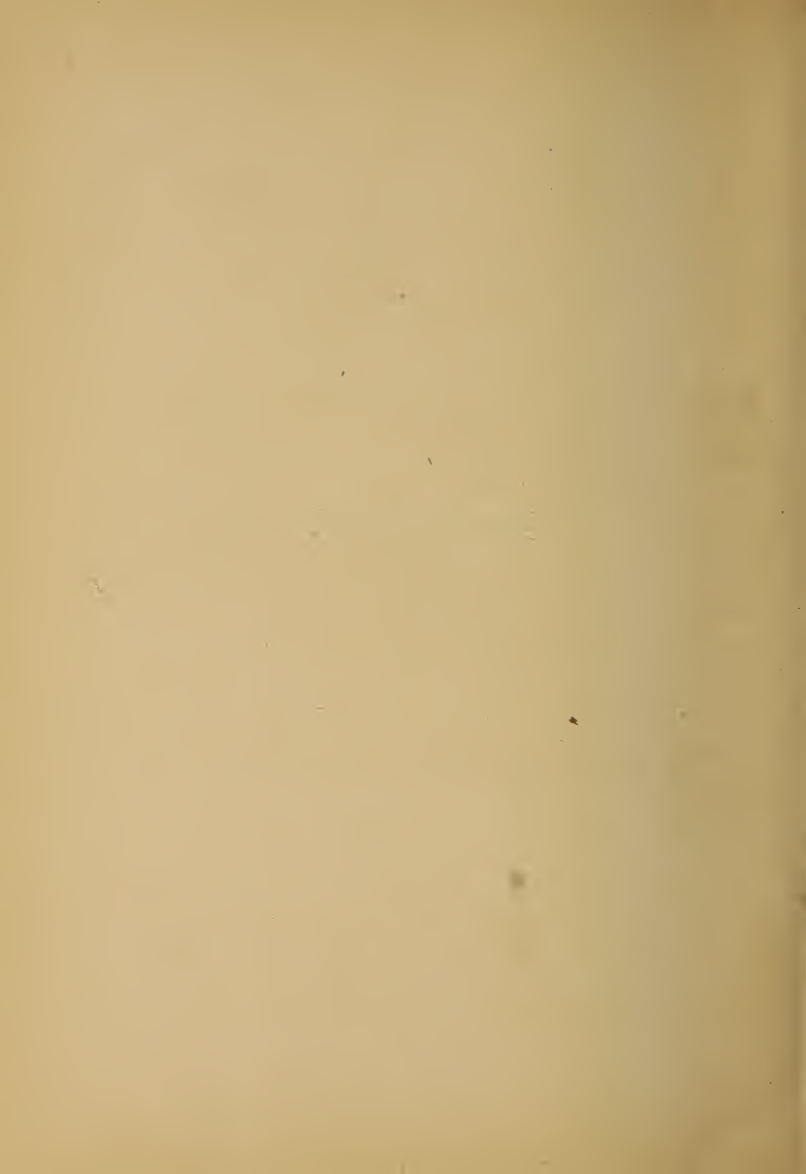
Or the rejected bodies of shipwrecked men,

Her tribes to the shore. And in the self-same days

The seals escaped to the rivers in their amaze ;
And in her tortuous hole the viper died,
Having sought sanctuary there in vain,
And the venomous hydra, bristling terrified
In scaly armor. The fields of air were sane
Even unto the birds no longer then, who sped
Precipitately from their dwellings overhead ;
Nor change of pasture might any more avail
The flock, for misery came of every one
Of the precious healing arts ; their heads did fail, —
Amythæonian Melampus, and the son
Of Philÿra, Chiron. And pale Tisiphōne
Brake forth of the Stygian shades, ferociously
Tossing her cruel head in the light of day,
Driving before her Pestilence and Affright.
And the arid banks of the rivers rang alway,
And the pasture slopes, with bellowings infinite
And sorrowful bleatings ; while the goddess of woe
Multiplied slaughter, and the heaps did grow
In the very stalls of putrefying dead,
Whose skins were good no more for the garments of men.
Nor was the filth of their flesh abolishéd

By floods of water, nor could the fire make clean ;
Hardly might even be shorn the victim's fleece,
So was it eaten away by dire disease.
And the webs, if woven, crumbled under the touch ;
Or did men seek, infatuate, to assume
Those hateful vestments, out of the limbs of such
There brake a sudden torrent of sweat, a fume
Of loathsomeness. Then burning pustules came,
Nor long delayed the accurséd fire to claim
Its piteous prey in the infected frame.

BOOK IV.



BOOK IV.

THE honey of heaven's own giving next I sing,
And lend me thine aid, Mæcēnas, also here ;
For the slender theme shall waken thy wondering
When thou see'st the ways of a mimic race appear,
Its works and its wars and its high-souled chivalry ;
And not as the labor slight shall the glory be,
If the stern gods will, and Apollo favor me.

ASHELTERED place for the hive shall first be
sought,
Where never is reft the homeward-winging bee,
By frolic winds, of the pollen he hath brought.
And suffer not sheep nor petulant kid make free
With the flowers anigh, nor the vagrant heifer pass,
To scatter the dew and bruise the springing grass.

And the gayly harnessed lizard and bee-eater
Put from those opulent dwellings far apart ;
Yea, all the birds, but the swallow chiefly, her
With the mark of a bloody hand upon her heart ;
For they ravage the region far and wide, and seize
And bear in their beaks away the wandering bees,
A delicate morsel for their boisterous brood.
But choose thee a site beside a bubbling spring,
Or a pool with vesture of verdant moss indued,
Or a rivulet through the grasses hurrying
Where a palm or an oleaster tall may cool
With grateful shadow the rustic vestibule,
That so in the happy, early spring, when first
The new-made monarchs their wingéd hosts array,
And gamesome and glad for their deliverance burst
The young from the hive, they may cool them from their
play
On grassy banks hard by, or a sheltering tree
Invite to its leafy hospitality.
Then into the water, be it quick or still,
Fling stones, or carry a willow over it
For a bridge, whereon the bees may rest at will,

And spread their wings to dry in the sunny heat,
What time the wind may have caught them straying wide,
And sprinkled with spray or plunged them in the tide.
Green grow the cassia in all the region round,
The blossom of thyme make sweet the summer slopes,
And heavily breathing savory abound,
And violets quaff the trickling water-drops.
But whether the hives that are wrought for bees of thine
Be hollowed of bark or woven of osier fine,
Make aye their openings narrow ; for that oft
The honey is curdled by the wintry chill,
And again the ardor of summer maketh soft,
And the cold and the heat alike do work it ill ;
Wherefore not vainly do the diligent bees
Besmear with layers of wax the interstices
Of their small dwellings, and their openings fill
With flowers and the pollen of flowers, and alway keep,
Gathered and stored for the uses of their skill,
A glue more dense than the gum the pine-trees weep
On Phrygian Ida. But, if men say aright,
The bees themselves, oft burrowing out of sight,
Make snug their secret domiciles underground,

Or deep in the heart of crumbling rocks dispose ;
Or where a cavernous tree-trunk shuts them round
With hollow bark. Do thou then deftly close
The chinks in their cells with delicate paste of clay,
And gather a few light leaves thereon to lay ;
But suffer never a yew those roofs anigh,
Nor roast at the fire the ruddy crab, nor set
Thy hive where thou hast a fathomless fen hard by,
Reeking with odors heavy and foul ; nor yet
Where the rocks ring hollow when thy blow hath stirred,
And the startled shape recoils of the spoken word.



FOR the rest : when Sol in golden armor dight
Hath driven the winter into banishment,
And earth and air do bask in the summer light,
The bees range over the country-side, intent
On forest-nooks where the purple flowerets gleam,
Or pause on the wing to sip the running stream,
Then build they a bower for their young ; and would I
knew
The secret of sweetness them doth gladden so !

For they the new-wrought wax of their cells imbue
With wonder of honey, over-rich to flow.
Thereon, when out of their prisons break the swarm,
And sail for the stars through the sunny air and warm,
Thou shalt follow the dun cloud carried in the wind's
wake

To the water sweet or the shades alluring still,
And with scattered herbs a savor of sweetness make,
The lowly balm or the bruised melisphyll,
Then raise, with beaten cymbals, a martial din,
Till thou the bees to their perfumed seats do win,
And, clinging by twos, they hide their cells within.

BUT go they to war, — for the wrath of rival kings
Carrieth commotion to this busy race, —
At once and afar, thou knowest their quiverings
Of heart for strife, and the rage of the populace ;
For a brazen murmur of Mars, — a grating call,
As the broken blast of a trumpet, summons all
The laggards unto the fray. Excitedly,
On flashing wings, they hurry them to the meet,

And, making ready for battle as they fly,
They on their beaks their stinging javelins whet,
And throng the king and the royal cell about,
And loudly unto the foe their challenge shout,
Till the battle-field is clear, and wholly fair
The heaven of spring. Then sally they from their gates,
And loud is the concourse in the deeps of air
What time the confuséd host agglomerates
Into a mighty sphere, and gathered so
Is rolled precipitately upon the foe.
Then the sky thickens as it were with hail
Or the rain of acorns out of a shaken oak.
But they of the royal pinions rise and sail
Round the ranged bands, whose vision doth provoke
Heroic valor within the tiny breast ;
Till they of the high resolve become possest
Right steadfast in the enemy's front to stand
Till the one or the other army breaks in rout
Under the weight of the victor's heavy hand.
Yet a handful of dust flung upward, past a doubt,
This mighty conflict suddenly may compose,
And the fury of all those spirits bellicose.

BUT soon as the rival chiefs return from strife,
Do thou on the seeming worsè straightway fall
And slay, lest mischief come of his fruitless life ;
While the better is bidden reign in his void hall :
For twain they are, and eminent to behold
The one, and flecked all over with rugged gold
And burning in ruddy mail ; but the other lags
Unkempt, inglorious, and along the way
The sprawling bulk of his body slowly drags.
And the forms of the people vary — so they say —
Even as the faces of their sovereigns do :
For some are coarse, and squalid unto the view,
As wayworn and bedraggled travellers be
Who spue from fevered lips the dust o' the road ;
But the others do dazzle and flash incessantly
With equal dashes of golden fire bestrewed ;
And this, the worthier race, whence thou shalt get
Sweet honey in its season, nor only sweet,
But clear and strong, for the taming of Bacchus meet.



NOW when the wingéd creatures, far dispread
In the free heaven, do sport them without aim,
Spurning their hives and their homes abandonéd, —
Forbid these volatile ones their wanton game.
Whereto, — and, verily, 't is an easy thing
Thou needest but shear the pinions of the king,
For never, the while the monarch's feet delay,
Dare any subject creature insolent
Along the loftier æther pursue his way,
Nor sever the standard from the royal tent.
Let neighboring gardens then the bees invite,
Odorous, and all with saffron blossoms bright,
And old Priāpus, him of the Hellespont,
Defend with sickle of willow from the theft
Of man and bird. And diligent souls are wont
To plant by the hive the thyme, or the pine-tree reft
From its home in the hills. Ay, such as these do wear
Their hands with labor the wilding plants to bear
And set in the earth, and water with kindly care.

AND verily were it not that I draw near
My destined port, — nigh ready to furl my sail
And finish my task, — right gladly would I here
Sing of all blossoming gardens where avail
Man's loving cares, and of the roseate bowers
Of Pæstum, twice in a summer fair with flowers,
And the joy of the endive where the rivulets pass,
And the joy of their verdant banks in parsley-blow, —
And how the cucumber twines amid the grass,
And wonderfully its fruit increaseth so.
And the flexile thorn-twigs would I celebrate,
And sing of the sweet narcissus flowering late,
And the myrtle that loves the sea, and the ivy dun.
I mind how, under Tarentum's turrets high,
Where the brown waves of the river Galæsus run,
Freshening the yellow fields of harvest, I
An exile of Corÿcus, a man of eld,
Tilling a few spent acres, once beheld.
Nor apt for the plough were these, nor the bearing of
corn,
To nourish the flock, nor kindly unto the vine.

But how had he filled the home of briers forlorn
With goodly garden-herbs, and bidden to shine
White lilies and vervain round his ordered beds,
And esculent poppies bear aloft their heads !
The treasure of kings in his content he found,
And, lingering late in the field, he came at eve
To a humble board with unbought dainties crowned.
His the first rose of the summer to receive,
The first of the autumn's apples : and he, anon,
When fetters of ice were laid the streams upon,
And the frost of surly winter had riven the rocks,
And the streams were chained with ice, was fain to
shear

The blooming hyacinth of her lovely locks ;
While he chid for its tarrying the vernal year
And the lazy zephyrs long upon the way,
Wherefore his new-born swarms did see the day
Earlier in spring, and in their numbers more
Than all beside. He, from his combs exprest
The foaming honey in more abundant store,
And limes and the most luxuriant pines possess ;
And never a fruit did set in flowering-time

Upon his trees, but ripened in autumn's prime.
His even the art the elms well grown to bear
Afar, and set them anew in ordered rows,
Likewise the fruited sloe and the hardy pear
And the plane-tree, offering shade where water flows
And wanderers drink. But these fair themes must I,
Narrowed in envious limits, hasten by,
Leaving their tale to my posterity.

BUT favor me yet, while I the story tell
Of marvellous powers the bees do hold of
Jove,

Because in his natal hour they served him well ;
Swift to the cymbal's brazen din to move
Of the Curētes, and unwearying,
In the caverns of Dicte, fed the heavenly king.
For they, of all the little creatures of earth,
Alone do gather in cities, and uprear,
As one, the sons to whom they have given birth,
And order their ways, lifelong, by laws austere ;
While the joys of the hearth, and certain habitations

Are theirs, and a fatherland among the nations,
And theirs the forethought, even in summer-tide,
To toil for the time of tempest and of want,
And that they have gleaned, securely away to hide.
While some do, under a steadfast covenant,
Watch over the store ; and some are busy a-field ;
And some are gathering the lucid gums distilled
From tree-stems, or the tears of the daffodil,
Wherewith to make the beginnings of the comb
Within the walls of the hive, and thence, with skill
To hang the persistent wax ; and other some
The full-grown hope of the race lead forth to light ;
And others yet, with honey as nectar bright,
The crowded cells distend. While unto a few
It falleth to stand like sentries at the gates,
By turns the cloudy tokens of rain to view
In heaven, or on the returning toilers wait
And ease of their fardels. Else, in battle array
Forming, they from their dwellings chase away
That indolent folk, the drones. And everywhere
Is the glow of toil, and the honey's thymy scent.
No busier the monster band of Cyclops, there

In the mountain, on their thunderbolts intent,
Handling the molten masses, prompt to ply
The bellows, fashioned of bull's-hide mightily,
Or to quench the hiss of the metal in the wave ;
While the weight of their anvils maketh Ætna groan,
And the powerful arms a giant rhythm have,
As the bulk of the iron is lifted and is thrown
From one to other upon the forceps strong.
Not otherwise — dare I liken, in my song,
Small things with great — are the Cecropian bees,
By the inborn hunger of possession driven
To labor in kind. Wherefore their fortresses
And towns are aye in the ward of the ancients given,
And the curious carving of each roof-tree small.
But the young and strong, returning at even-fall,
Weary of limb, their treasure of thyme unlade ;
For that they have supped on cassia, or arbute-boughs,
Or off the golden willow a banquet made,
Or where the crocus's fiery blossom shows,
Or dark-blue hyacinth, or the lime-tree sheen.
And the rest of all is one, as their toil hath been,
Till the morn returns again, and the gates are wide.

And the bees do never upon their going stay,
But range, until, admonished of even-tide,
Back from their feasting in all the fields come they,
And, ready for rest and shelter yet once more,
Buzz in the boundaries, murmur about the door,
Till unto their bedchambers they softly creep
And silence followeth, all the night unbroken,
While each tired body getteth his own sweet sleep.
And never, in sooth, if coming rains give token,
Venture they far abroad, nor scale the height
Of heaven when the East is risen in his might.
But, under the sheltering ramparts of their town,
Go safe to water, and brief the flights they make ;
Or, as light skiffs the turbulent waves would drown
Take ballast of sand, they tiny pebbles take
And lift in the air, and, stayed thereon, resist
The fluctuant motions of the hollow mist.
This also is matter of praise and wonderment, —
The custom of bees in bringing forth their young ;
For never do they cohabit, nor are spent
Their frames with fury of passion, nor yet wrung
With anguish of travail, but, off dainty leaves

And delicate grass-blades, evermore receives
Her little ones on her lips the mother bee.
She, too, whenever the throne doth vacant fall,
Findeth a king, with following of Romans wee,
And shapeth anew each waxen court and hall.
Wherefore though oft the bees, alluréd wide
By love of the beauteous blossoms, and by pride
In the gathering of honey, break on cruel stones
Their fragile wings, and under their burdens die ;
Though narrow the life-span of these generous ones, —
Seven summers barely, — yet immortally
The race lives on, and steadfast evermore
The star of their line. They sires of sires tell o'er,
Ay, and they render homage unto their king,
Such as not Egypt, nor the famed Lydian land,
Nor Median Hydaspes, nor the Parthians bring.
One only soul hath all the obedient band,
He sitting secure ; but, once their monarch lost,
Rent is the covenant of the loyal host,
And rent the curious wicker cells wherein
Was laid their honey treasure ; for he the lord
Of all their labor and all their love hath been.

Forever throng and press the vociferous horde
Round the king's going, and on their shoulders bear
Him oft ; for him imperil their bodies fair,
And wounds for him and glorious death do dare.



AND some who deepliest on these marvels dwell
Discover an emanation in the bees
Of the world-soul divine, — a breath as well
Of the pure æther. Unto the thought of these
One same divinity dwelleth everywhere
In the reaches of earth and sea, and the deeps of air ;
Out of whose infinite sources all that live,
Men and the tribes of the field and of the wood,
Their vapor of being do at birth receive,
Then tender it back again, and in the flood
Remerge. For death herein is found no place.
They to the host of the stars do wing their ways,
And the summits of heaven behold their endless days.

NOW he who is fain to enter the tiny house,
And steal the treasure of sweetness hid therein,
Carrieth water within his mouth, and blows
First over the hive, the bees therefrom to win,
Or drives them forth with waving of pungent smoke.
The opulent produce of this busy folk
Is twice in the year exprest and harvested :
Once when the Pléad Taÿgëte first doth smile
Over the land, and under her light foot tread
The river Oceānus ; and again, erewhile,
When the self-same star is flying from heaven, fain
To hide from the stormy Fish in the winter main,
Sadly. But what immeasurable wrath,
What lacerate wounds for them who seek her store,
What venom infused, the insulted creature hath !
She drives her barb in the veins with a thrust so sore,
The living weapon doth in the wound remain.
But if thou drest the winter's cruel strain,
And, taking thought for the morrow of bees, dost feel
Pity on their sore hearts and fortunes low,
What lets thee from enkindling for their weal

Thyme branches under the hive, dissevering so
The empty cells? For the lizard unbeknown
Hides there, and the beetle blind his couch hath strewn,
Or the doingless drone sits down at another's board,
Or the hornet fierce doth war with arms unfair,
Or the direful moth, or the spider most abhorred
Still of Minerva, curtains the doorways there
With swaying webs. The lowlier fallen before
Yón stricken race, they labor to rise the more,
And flower-built granaries crowd with richer store.



THE like, moreover, of human maladies,
Anguish of sickness, languor in all the frame,
The law of their being bringeth unto the bees.
Note then the unvarying symptoms of the same :
The color is changed in them who suffer thus,
And wild the countenance and cadaverous ;
Till the bodies of such as lose the light of day
Forth of their homes are by their fellows borne,
And laid with sorrowful funeral rites away ;
Else cling they unto the portals, all forlorn

With knitted feet, or in their cells lie still,
Famished and spent and shrunken with mortal chill.
Dull now the murmur that falleth upon the ear ;
A deep, incessant whispering, like the tone
Of wintry Auster within a forest sere,
Or the vexed ocean when his billows moan
Refluent, or even as ravening fires do roar
Shut in close furnaces. Wherefore let me implore
Thou light the galbānus for its fragrant smoke
Hard by ; or proffer honey in tubes of reed :
So putting a heart in thy outwearied folk,
And tolling them forth to their remembered feed.
And flavor the lure wherewith thou then dost ply
With bruised galls and savor of rose-leaves dry,
Or the rich liquor that remaineth of wine
Long boiled, or the juices of Psithias' dead-ripe fruit,
Or Attic thyme, or the centaury's fragrance fine.
But free in the fields, asking no long pursuit,
There groweth a star-like flower the laborers call
Amellus, hardy and many-branched and tall ;
And the golden head of it is ringed around
With countless rays of the violet's dusky hue ;

Bitter to taste, yet in fair garlands bound
For holy altars. In valleys grazed anew,
Or oft, by the windings of Mella, shepherds cull
This flower, whose root with sweet wine thou shalt mull,
And set by the doors of the hive in baskets full.

BUT the offspring of bees oft faileth suddenly,
Nor means hath any the master to restore
Their line; wherefore commemorate will I
That which the lord of Arcadia learned of yore,
And how from the weltering gore of bullocks slain
The honeyed race hath wakened to life again;
So then, — the marvellous fable to relate,
From its first origin in the long ago, —
A land there is where the dwellers fortunate,
In Macedonian Canōpus, behold the slow
Submerging of all the land by river Nile
And visit their fields in pictured craft, the while.
Hard by the Persians dwell, who carry the quiver,
But Egypt getteth her green from that black loam
Borne wide abroad by her seven-disparted river,

Swept onward still from the dusky Ethiop's home ;
And the lineage of bees is indestructible
In all that land by the power of this one spell.
For a site confined is chosen, seeing it falls
In with this very purpose, and thereupon
A structure set, and bounded by four straight walls,
With a narrow tiled roof above them thrown,
And windows four, affronting the winds of heaven,
And a slantwise entrance unto the daylight given ;
Thereafter a youthful steer is found and ta'en,
With horns already curling his forehead o'er,
And the breath of his mouth and of his nostrils twain
Smothered and stayed although he struggle sore ;
And all with violent beatings bruised and blent
The viscera within the whole integument.
Then do men leave the carcass imprisoned so,
First crowding the ribs with thyme-boughs odorous
And new-culled cassia. When first the west winds blow
And waken to life the waters do they thus,
Ere the rosy blossoms in all the meadows gleam,
Or the prattling swallow hang his nest from the beam.
And the days go by, and the liquor seethes lukewarm

In the macerate bones, till, wonderful to behold,
Myriads of living things, footless, do swarm
Thereout, then straightway resonant wings unfold
And throng and throng the æther like summer rain,
Or shafts the string of the archer's bow that strain
When the agile Parthians people a battle-plain.



UT what divinity showed us this device?
Tell us, O Muses! How did our race receive
Its earliest hint of so strange artifice?
When Aristæus the shepherd essayed to leave
The borders of the Penēus and Tempe's vale,
He had wholly lost his bees, thus runs the tale,
And sorry with sickness, and with hunger faint,
He stayed his foot the uttermost source beside
Of the holy stream, and uttered wild complaint:—
“My mother, my mother Cyrēne, who dost bide
Deep under these gurgling waters, tell me why
Thou barest me to so cruel destiny?
Is not my race illustrious, ay, divine?
Thou saidest Apollo of Thymbra was my sire.

Oh, whither is fled that sometime love of thine ?
Why didst thou bid me unto the skies aspire ?
For now, behold, my mother although thou be,
I am losing the crown of my mortality.

My hard-won fame for the curious care I spent
Alike on the harvest and the herd, — the vain
Fruition of infinite experiment.

If then thou hold mine honor in such disdain,
Uproot my nurseries fair with thine own hand,
Set fire to my stalls like a foe, my harvest-land
Lay waste, and the promise of my crop consume,
Or wield thee a ruthless axe my vines among !”

Then, under the waters in her far-off room,
The mother discerned the cry of her son's wrong.
She sat with her nymphs about her, and they did pull
For the spinning, fleeces of Milesian wool,
Saturate with hue of ocean's hyaline.

There were Drymo and Xantho, Ligēa, Phyllodōce,
With bright hair clustering about the neck's white sheen ;
Nessæa and Spio, Thalīa, Cymodōce ;
And the golden-tressed Lycorias was also set
Beside Cydippe, — the one a virgin yet,

The other happy in her first motherhood.
And Beroë was there and Clio, — sisters these
Born of the ocean, and gold-girt, and indued
Alike with garments fashioned of tintured fleece ;
And Ephÿre and Opis, and the Asian maid
Deiōpēa ; and last among them stayed
Swift Arethusa, with arrows laid in rest ;
While Clymēne in their circle sang the tale
Of the futile anger of Vulcan, and how the zest
Of Mars in theft and strategy did prevail ;
Then the loves of the mighty gods innumerable,
Beginning with Chaos, would in order tell.
But, captivate by the melody, while they all
Slow from their spindles the soft flax unwound,
Again the ears of the mother caught that call
Of anguish, and from their glassy seats around
All startled sprang. Her fellow-nymphs before,
The yellow-haired Arethusa first upbore
Her head above the waters and gazed amain,
And far off sounded her voice : “ O sister mine,
Cyrēne, thou wast verily not in vain
Heart-stricken by yon sad cry ! That son of thine,

Thy dearest Aristæus, dissolved in woe,
Stands where the waters of Father Penëus flow,
And thy hard heart most bitterly doth upbraid.”
Then was the mother smitten anew with fear.
“Go bring him, — bring him hither to me !” she said,
“Who better than he hath right to enter here
O’er the sill of the gods ?” And the flood she bade
 divide,
That her boy might find free footing under the tide.
So came he ; while before him still withdrew
The tall waves, curving crag-like, and gave him place.
And, following along, those vaulted spaces through,
Under the billows, he saw with deep amaze
The watery world, the seat of his mother’s rule,
And the ringing groves and many a cave-locked pool :
And the great sway of the waves benumbed his brain ;
For all the rivers of the wide world were there,
Moving in their channels subterranean, —
Phasis and Lycus, and the deep fountains where
Enīpus and father Tiber their rise take,
And Anio still, and Hypānis that doth make
Perpetual murmur upon his rocky bed,

And Mysian Caicus, and the bull-visaged Po,
Having the two horns gilded upon his head,
Than which no river of all the earth doth flow
Through richer fields, or more impetuously
Discharge his tribute into the purple sea.
So, now, the wanderer being fully come
Unto Cyrène's bower, did, entering in,
Pass under the spar-hung ceilings of her home,
And she the story of his wild weeping win ;
The while the sisterhood in procession fair,
For the laving of his hands, pure water bare
And napless towels. But others yet, intent,
The viands heap, and plenish the drainéd cup ;
And, all with spices of Araby redolent,
Sweetly the smoke of the altar fires goes up,
Till the voice of the mother soundeth : " Lift we thus
Mæonian cups, and unto Oceānus
Libation pour ! " Then made she orison
To the lord of life in the sea ; and the sister maids,
Whereof an hundred haunt the rivers alone,
An hundred minister in the woodland shades ;
Thrice then on the fire the liquid nectar shed ;

Thrice leaped the blaze till the roof-tree shone o'er head,
And, staying her soul on the omen, thus she said :—


“**D**OWN in the abysses of the Carpathian Sea
A prophet of Neptune, steel-blue Proteus, bides.
With a finny train and biped horses he
In a chariot over the plain of ocean glides,
And visiteth even now Pallēne, and
The ports of his Macedonian fatherland.
And we of the nymphs do hold him in deep awe ;
So even doth hoary Nereus : for he knoweth
All things which are and have been, and them which draw
Hither out of the future he foreshoweth ;
Neptune ordains it, — there where he doth keep
Sea-calves and herds of monsters, under the deep.
This Proteus, child, must thou in fetters bind
Till he deliver the cause of all the woe
Thou sufferest, and promise issue to thy mind.
He giveth no oracles otherwise than so
Compelled, nor softeneth he for any prayers.
O'erpower him, therefore, and chain him unawares,

And circumvent and shatter his idle craft.
Now I myself, when the fires of noon are hot,
And the herbs of the field all faint for their dew-draught,
And the herd for the shade, will show the secret spot
Wherein the ancient many a time doth steal,
Weary of the waters, and his form conceal ;
For, while he lieth asleep, thou mayst draw near
Unstayed. But when thou hast grappled him and bound,
His manifold transformations will appear,
All shapes of savagery mock thee and astound ;
And now of a bristling boar he takes the form,
And now of a tiger fell, or mailéd worm,
And now of a lioness with tawny mane ;
Anon, with a sudden hissing, as of fire,
He slips thy chains, and is lost in the wave again :
Wherefore do thou, son, with implacable ire,
The more he changeth, tighten thy bonds the more,
Till he taketh again the shape that erst he wore
When thou sawest the slumber steal his eyelids o'er.”

SO saying, she an ambrosial balm did shed,
And saturate all the body of her son,
Till even the ringlets of his comely head
Breathed perfume, and a subtle power did run
His members through. Now there is a mountain-side
Vast, excavate in a grotto, where the tide,
Forced mightily inward by the wind, is cleft,
And seeketh sinuous channels, far withdrawn.
Herein full many a mariner, storm-bereft,
Hath found safe harborage in the years agoe ;
And Proteus cherisheth here a lurking-place
Behind a mighty rock. Through devious ways,
Hither the Nymph conducts her child, and leaves
In hiding, and from the outer sunshine turned,
While a nebulous veil herself, hard by, receives.
Lo now, in the firmament, fleet Sirius burned,
The planet of thirsty Ind ; and the sun on high
Had half devoured his course, and the herbs were dry ;
And under the fierce combustion of those rays,
The very slime of the river-beds grew hot,
And the waters vanished out of their hollow ways.

Then Proteus, even as his wont was ever, sought
A refuge out of the billows in the caves.
The humid folk of the universal waves
Leaped round his going, scattering bitter dew,
And seals lay stretched in slumber about the strand,
The while, from a rocky throne, he did review
And tell the number of all his ocean band,
As a herdsman upon the hills, at even-fall,
Leadeth his flock from pasture back to stall,
While the bleating of tender lambs the ear doth whet
Of the listening wolf. But, ready for mastery,
Seized Aristæus, that thing of eld, ere yet
His weary limbs unto sleep composéd he ;
Falling upon him with a mighty cry,
Clinching with manacles there where he did lie.
And the monster, not oblivious in the least
Of his old arts, miraculous feats essayed
Of infinite transformation. Horrible beast
And fire and a flowing stream, by turns, was made,
Till, baffled of flight, and beaten in every guise,
He came to himself, and spake in mortal wise :—
“ Under whose orders, thou most insolent youth,

Invadest thou my dominions? What's thy will?"
But he: "Thou knowest, thou knowest full well, in sooth,
O Proteus! He who would cheat thee wasteth skill.
Have done then, also, with all those wiles of thine;
For, verily, the lead I follow is divine.
Because of my fallen fortunes come I here,
Desiring an oracle." He spake no more.
With a mighty spasm, then the soothsayer
Did roll his burning orbs the invader o'er,
Green glaring, and, while he ground his teeth with hate,
There issued out of his lips the word of fate.

" THOU art smit by the wrath of a god, and dost
atone
Great crimes. It is Orpheus in his misery
Thee scourgeth now, for a wrong unwitting done
Unto him. So may thy fates deliver thee.
He is wild with sorrowing after his vanished bride,
Who hasted unto her death, by the river-side,
From thy pursuing, nor e'er discernéd so
In the tall grass at her feet the hydra fell.

But her Dryad mates uplifted a cry of woe,
Whose echoes high as the mountain peaks did swell,
And the summits of Rhodōpe bewailed her sore,
And the hills of Pangæum, and Rhesus' martial shore,
And the river Hebrus, and the dwellers in Thrace,
And Athenian Orithyia. But he was fain,
By the ocean strand, in a solitary place,
To soothe with the hollow lyre his heart in pain ;
And 'Wo for thee, my belovéd !' he sang alway,
'For thee' in the dawning, 'thee' in the dying day.
Thereafter did his footsteps even invade
The jaws of Tænārus and the doors of Dis.
Through the dark of the awesome grove his way he made,
Till he came to the Manes' home, and saw, I wis,
The king in his terror, and essayed to move,
With prayers of a man, the hearts that know not love.
Then, from the lowest deeps of Erēbus, rose
The shadowy folk, thrilled by his minstrelsy, —
Tenuous, the far-off images of those
Who here lost life. So myriad birds do fly,
Driven of the rainy gale, the deepening night,
To leafy cover down from a mountain height.

The spirits of mothers and of men were there,
And many a shape of high-souled hero dead,
And young things laid on the bale, for the despair
Of them who bore them — striplings and maids unwed,
Prisoned mid the coarse reeds and murky mire,
And sluggish oozings of the Cocytus dire ;
And by the ninefold circle of Styx compelled.
But him the secret corners of Tartarus
And houses of death with deep amaze beheld ;
And they of the braided tresses, tortuous
With livid serpents, even the Eumenides ;
Yea, the dog Cerberus, astonied as these,
Held his three mouths agape ; and the wind impelling
The wheel of Ixion, and the wheel did rest.
He had wellnigh 'scaped the snares of yon dread dwelling :
He had turned to go ; and, given unto his quest,
Eurydice, by the will of Proserpine,
Was following his feet to the upper air divine,
When a sudden craze on that bold lover came : —
Oh, surely, if Hades aught at all doth know
Of pardon, there shall be pardon for the same !
But, reckless, conquered of his own heart, — ah, woe !

On the very confines of the light stayed he,
And lookéd back upon his Eurydice !
Undone his work now, and annulled the bonds
Of the stern tyrant ; while an all-piercing shriek
Is three times heard around the Avernian ponds.
'Oh, what is this madness, Orpheus ?' 'gan she speak,
'Why hast thou wrought this ruin for hapless me,
Ay, and for thine own self ? Listen,' said she,
'The cruel Fates are calling me back again ;
A drowsiness creepeth o'er my swimming eyes :
I must say farewell ! Meseems that I am ta'en
And carried along the black immensities,
Outstretching these incapable palms of mine,
Feeling after thee ; but, ah, no longer thine !'
Turning even so, she vanished out of sight,
As a vapor breaks and is lost in the viewless air.
No longer, for all his frantic striving, might
He clasp that shadow, and his full heart declare ;
And never again will he be let to cross
Of Orcus' janitor over the guardian fosse.
What can he do now ? Whither himself betake ?
Will all his wailing over his twice-lost love

Soften the Manes, or compassion wake
In the gods of the under-world? Nay, she did move
Cold o'er the waves e'en then in the Stygian boat.
Seven full months, under the sky-ward cliffs remote
By the desert water of Strymon, men do say
He wept his woe in the gelid caverns drear,
And wrought it into so masterful a lay
That the oaks and the softening tigers came to hear.
So, mid the poplar foliage, Philomel
The sorrowful tale of her lost young doth tell,
Whom, featherless yet, the brutal husbandman
Hath marked and torn from the parent nest. But she
The self-same strophe of mourning doth again
And yet again deliver distressfully ;
Keeping her perch on the bough the livelong night,
Filling all space with queryings infinite !
No other love, no nuptials, any more
Might sway the soul of Orpheus ; but he did move,
Alone the Hyperborean glaciers o'er,
Or yet, by the snow-bound banks of Tanaïs rove,
Or wander the meadows, widowed ne'er of frost,
Rhipēan, still bewailing the vanished ghost,

And the mocking gifts of Pluto. At the end,
The dames of the Cicōnes, in their fierce despite
At his so deep devotion, him did rend
Young limb from limb, in the midst of a sacred rite
At the nightly orgies of Bacchus, and were fain
To strew his parted members over the plain
Then, when Cēāgrian Hebrus, rolling by,
Did carry in his mid stream that marble head
Disseveréd from the neck, incessantly
The stiffening tongue, and the isolate voice yet said : —
' Eurydice ! Ah, poor Eurydice !'
So with escaping soul entreated he,
And the shores replied, far off, ' Eurydice ! ' ”

DROTEUS thus far, — then with a mighty bound
Retreated into the deep, and, wheresoe'er
He goes, the foaming waters are whirled around
Under the eddy. But Aristæus' fear
Was calméd of Cyrēne, who fled not so,
But straightway unto her son did counsel show.

“**N**OW mayst thou ease thy spirit of anxious care,
My child, for here was the source of every
ill.

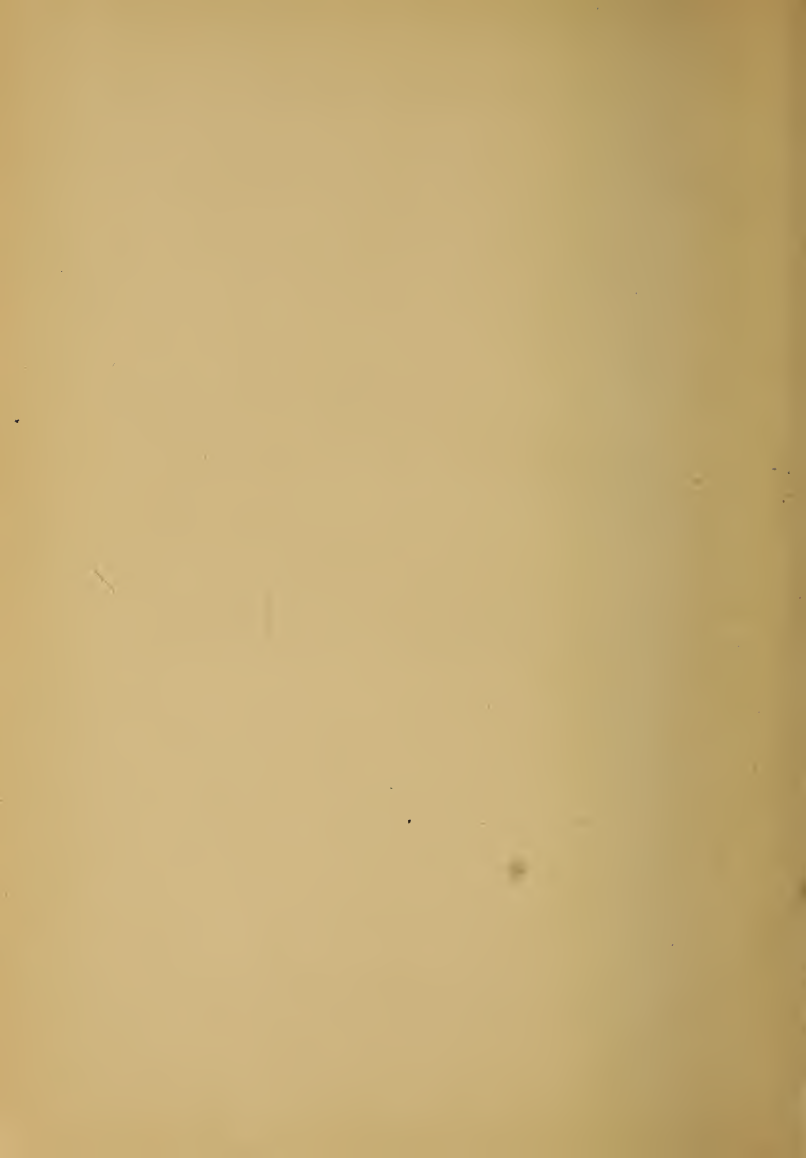
That wretched fate of the bees did they prepare,
The nymphs who danced with *her* on the wooded hill.
Do thou then, seeking for peace by prayer and gift,
Unto the kind wood-nymphs thine offerings lift ;
For pardon is won of them when vows are paid,
And quieted soon their ire. Yet listen, son,
While the manner of this thy sacrifice is made
Plain, and the ritual of thine orison.
Four bulls of excellent comeliness, who now
Do peacefully graze on green Lycaeus' brow,
Select thou first, and, after, as many more
Of heifers yet by the yoke inviolate.
Then set thou up for thy victims altars four
At the shrines of the goddesses, high and consecrate,
And let the sacred blood from the throat, and bear
The bodies to a lone grove, and leave them there.
Then, when her ninth arising upon the skies
Aurora showeth, do thou to Orpheus proffer

The poppies of Lethe for a sacrifice,
And also a sheep with ebon fleeces offer,
And, once more having appeased with heifer slain
Eurydice, revisit the grove again."



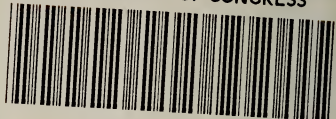
HE came, at his mother's word, without delay
To the shrines, and the ordered altars did evoke.
Four bulls of excellent comeliness did slay,
Four heifers, all inviolate by the yoke.
Then, when Aurora her ninth arising made,
The appointed sacrifice to Orpheus paid,
And came to the grove, and a wordless wonder spied.
For the molten viscera were all alive with bees :
They buzzed in the belly, strove in the riven side,
Then rose and floated away toward the topmost trees,
And their following long made all the æther dim,
Till they hung like clustered fruit from the swaying limb.

THUS did I sing of the care of field and flock
And all the trees of the forest, while, afar,
Euphrātes deep was feeling the thunder-shock
Of bolts the heroic Cæsar launched in war,
And he victorious, winning his way to heaven
By righteous laws, unto willing peoples given.
But I, Vergilius, all that while possess
And nourishéd of my sweet Parthenōpe,
Did put forth blossoms of an inglorious rest,
Trifling with pastoral strains. For I am he
Who, daring and young, the song of thee essayed,
O Titýrus, under the beech-tree's breadth of shade!





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