EVERYMAN I WILL GO WITH THEE & BE THY GUIDE IN THY MOST NEED TO GO BY THY SIDE
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CLASSICAL

THE ECLOGUES AND
GEORGICS OF VIRGIL
TRANSLATED BY
T. F. ROYDS, M.A.
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IN TWO STYLES OF BINDING, CLOTH, FLAT BACK, COLOURED TOP, AND LEATHER, ROUND CORNERS, GILT TOP.

LONDON: J. M. DENT & CO.
NEW YORK: E. P. DUTTON & CO.
THE SAGES OF OLD LIVe AGAIN IN US GLANVILL
The Eclogues & Georgics of Virgil
Translated into English Verse by T. F. Royds

London: Published by J. M. Dent & Co
And in New York by E. P. Dutton & Co
"And art thou then that Virgil, that well-spring
From which such copious floods of eloquence
Have issued?" I with front abash'd replied:
"Glory and light of all the tuneful train!
May it avail me, that I long with zeal
Have sought thy volume, and with love immense
Have conn'd it o'er. My master thou, and guide!"

CARY'S Dante.
INTRODUCTION

"Thou that singest wheat and woodland,
   Tilth and vineyard, hive and horse and herd;
All the charm of all the Muses
   Often flowering in a lonely word;
Poet of the happy Tityrus
   Piping underneath his beechen bowers;
Poet of the poet-satyrm
   Whom the laughing shepherd bound with flowers."
   Tennyson.

"Throughout the Middle Ages Virgil was a beneficent wizard, a romance-writer and a sorcerer, his name recurring strangely among all the greatest names of history or fable. To the scholarship of the Renaissance he became a poet again, but still Prince of poets, still with something of divine attributes. For us, who inherit from all these ages, he is the gathered sum of what to all these ages he has been. But it is as a voice of Nature that he now appeals to us most; as a voice of one who in his strength and sweetness is not too steadfastly felicitous to have sympathy with human weakness and pain. Through the imperial roll of his rhythm there rises a note of all but intolerable pathos; and in the most golden flow of his verse he still brings us near him by a faint accent of trouble. This is why he beyond all other poets is the Comforter; and in the darkest times, when the turmoil within or around us, confusus sonus urbis et illatabile murmure, seems too great to sustain, we may still hear him saying, as Dante heard him in the solemn
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splendour of dawn on the Mountain of Purgatory: "My son, here may be agony, but not death; remember, remember!"—J. W. Mackail.

The earlier and later Virgil of the Eclogues and the Georgics has never yet quite reached his mark in English. It is easy for a great narrative and heroic poem, dealing with a consummate epic theme, to triumph over a foreign tongue. It is much harder for a set of select pastorals, or for writings like the Georgics, that depend on the grace, imagination, and style of their writer, to be made really effective and ideally alive in translation. But in reading the Aeneid, whether in Dryden’s or some more modern version like Fairfax Taylor’s, if we have anything at all of Tennyson’s sense of Virgil the "landscape-lover" and lord of language, expressed in his memorial lines, we are left with an insatiable thirst for other vintages. For there, if we have learnt to be possessed by the golden theme—

"Ilion falling, Rome arising,
Wars, and filial faith, and Dido’s pyre;"

we are not less held by the spirit and individuality of the poet. Once having formed our first oncoming attachment to Virgil, we, his English readers, must wish to know him too in his
Eclogues and his Georgics, and in those reflections of his life and habit to be found in pages more intimate than an epic in its large poetry can allow.

No doubt there is a temptation in all his poems to look for more than Virgil ever meant to give. But it is part of the delightful interest of the Eclogues, that we seem there to be continually surprising the young craftsman, either in his 'prentice work, studying his craft and unblushingly imitating his forerunners, or casting furtive shadows of himself and his history on the idyllic grass where Tityrus and Corydon are the ideal counterfeits. Professor Nettleship, in an essay accompanying his reprint of the Ancient Lives of Virgil (published by the Clarendon Press in 1879), worked out comparatively after a most interesting fashion some of the cross-evidences that bear on the poet's life afforded by Suetonius and others.

Virgil's debt to Theocritus, and then to Catullus; his succession in the line of the Roman poets, of which he was the prince and chief; his attachment to the cause of Julius Cæsar, which unlike that of Horace was steadfast and sincere; all these emerge more clearly in this survey of the old biographers. It drives us to the fifth Eclogue, with a sense of the
imminent presence of Julius Cæsar himself; and to the ninth, to find the idyllic echo of Virgil's ejection when Mantua was sacrificed to the military despotism.

*Lycidas.* Pray, Mœris, whither wendest? To the town? 
*Mœris.* O Lycidas, this have we lived to see, Unfeared before: strange holders of our farm Say "This is mine: begone, ye farmers old!" Now crushed beneath the unresting wheel of Chance, To such we sorrowing bear these kids and pray A murrain with them.

*Lycidas.* I had heard, methought, From where the climbing mountains first begin To fall in gentle slopes adown the vale, Even to the water and the ancient grove Of windworn beeches, all the country side Was saved from harm by your Menalcas' songs.

*Mœris.* Yea, thou hadst heard: ’twas thus that rumour ran. But Lycidas, amid this clash of arms Our songs avail no more than, as men say, Doves of Dodona when the eagle stoops. Had not from hollow holm-oak on my left A raven warned me to leave argument Unsaid and yield, neither thy Mœris here Nor great Menalcas had been living now.

*Lycidas.* Ah! can such evil fall on any man? Ah me! so nearly had we lost thy charms. So nearly thee, Menalcas!

The nobility and heightened style of the fifth *Eclogue* would, it is pointed out, perfectly suit so great a subject as Julius Cæsar.
are certain minor details in Virgil which are corroborative too. In Suetonius' *Life of Julius Cæsar* there are two fancies mentioned which appear in the same *Eclogue*. "One is that on the night before his death Cæsar dreamed he was soaring above the clouds and touching the right hand of Jupiter himself. The reader is irresistibly reminded of Virgil's 'candidus insuetum miratur limen Olympi sub pedibusque videt nubes et sidera Daphnis:' in the sheen of his divinity he looks for the first time on the threshold of heaven and sees the clouds and stars beneath his feet:—

Where the deep transported mind may soar
Above the wheeling poles, and at Heaven's door
Look in and see each blissful deity
How he before the thunderous throne doth lie."

The other refers to the tradition that a number of horses which Cæsar had consecrated and set free in the neighbourhood of the Rubicon, for some days before his murder shed floods of tears and refused to touch any food.

By connecting him in time, through history and tradition, with Julius Cæsar, we place Virgil as readily as we place Milton in Cromwell's dynasty. In the literary order, if we place him first by his discipleship to a Greek poet, Theocritus, we turn then to Catullus.
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Speaking of his debt to Catullus, Professor Nettleship says:—"Nothing is more natural than that the susceptible young poet should have been deeply influenced by the style of his illustrious elder contemporary. But partly the growth of Virgil's own mind, partly the study of philosophy, partly his respect for Lucretius, for Helvius Cinna the learned and admired of Catullus, for Varius the epic and Asinius Pollio the tragic poet, may have given a more serious turn to his aspirations."

However, it is well we should remember that just as the Latin poet had his pedigree, Virgil is here an adopted English poet, and that his many translators have made for him an English pedigree too. In his introduction to the Æneid volume in this series, Mr. J. P. Maine has given an interesting account of the poets, early and late, who have translated that poem. But the comparative English triumph of Virgil in his epic form has never been equalled by any correspondent success in the pastorals and the Georgics.

Dryden's is still the proverbial English name that we attach to Virgil's, and when we take up a new translation, it is by his standard that we must half-consciously try it. But Dryden, writing with whatever mastery of verse, was
too robust to be a sure interpreter of a poet of another tongue in his more intimate art; one requiring that the translator should be at least as patient as his original, as sensitive to the light and shade of words, as anxious about the curious felicity of his language. There were other translators of Dryden's time and after him, worse than he; before him came the adventurous John Ogilby, who published the first complete Virgil in English. That was in 1649, the year of Charles the First's death, and Ogilby in 1654 published what he called his second Virgil. Ogilby was often dull and tedious, and he missed the finer sense of some passages, and the whole charm and music of others; but occasionally in his Bucolicks, where he is more unequal than in the Æneid, he has his memorable lines. A passage from the end of the second 'Eclog,' as he phonetically spells it, will give a certain taste of his quality—good in phrase, weak in movement:

"Behold, they now unyoke the weary steer,  
And the sun setting, larger shades appear:  
Still Love burns me: Is there no mean in Love?  
Ah Coridon! what madness doth thee move?  
On the green Elm hangs my half-pruned Vine.  
But rather now some needfull task designe,  
Prepare soft twigs, the limber Bul-rush winde,  
And if Alexis scorn, some other findee."

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Compare this with Dryden's, and then with the present version; and you have some idea of the prime difficulty and the hard-won increase in art of Virgil's translators.

The interesting point to be noted in Ogilby is that he was learning his translator's craft as he went along. His *Aeneid* is better than his *Eclog*; in the *Georgics* he is best of all. There sometimes he rewards the flagging reader with a faint Shakespearean echo resounding in the Virgilian line, before he falls back into the usual Ogilbean mode:

“There is a flower which grows in meadow ground,  
Swains call Amello, easie to be found.”

This couplet is from the fourth book of the *Georgics*. The following five lines from the end of the same book are still more notable:

“His head then from his Ivory shoulders torn,  
Was down the channel of swift Hebrus borne,  
And whilst his dying tongue could move at all  
Eurydice, Eurydice, did call,  
And all the banks resound Eurydice.”

Dryden, who was associated with Ogilby at a later period, and who like Pope turned him into a by-word, was not above borrowing from him on occasion. There is no comparison in art between the two; and there is no room here to
trace the line of those who after Dryden tried to put Virgil, "the most translated and the most untranslatable of poets," into English.

One is almost tempted to steal from Dryden, as it is, his Dedication to the Eclogues, in which there is more than a taste of his admirable prose quality. And beside it, Addison's essay on the Georgics, usually included in the editions of Dryden's, might be placed. But these critical services to Virgil are well known, and perhaps another, more modern but less familiar, written in verse, may still more effectively close the English tribute to his genius, and this we find in the sonnet upon the Georgics by Mr. J. B. B. Nichols:

"On Tuscan farms revolve each changeless year
The world-old toils of the world in order meet:
Labour is good and rest from labour sweet,
Kind leafage and mossed cave and living mere:
Through silver olive-orchards ploughs the steer,
And shepherds sing in shaded summer heat;
But who has eyes to track the wood-god's feet,
The wine-god's world-song who has ears to hear?

Virgil, our brain-sick life tossed to and fro,
Nature or Art too tired, too blind, to know,
Feels yet their secret in thy magic scrol
That high-rapt calm so far remote from us
Yet not too steadfastly felicitous
Nor too divinely alien to console."

1907. A. R. R.
The *Editio Princeps* of Virgil is that printed at Rome by Sweynam and Pannartz. It was not dated, but it is almost certain that it was printed before the Venice folio edition of V. de Spira, which was issued in 1470. The best modern critical editions of the text are those of Ribbeck (4 vols. 1895) and F. A. Hirtzel (*Scriptorum Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxoniensis*, 1900). Of the editions containing explanatory notes, that of Conington and Nettleship, revised by Haverfield, is the standard English commentary. That of A. Sidgwick (2 vols. Cambridge) is more elementary, but will be found valuable. Those of Kennedy (London, 1879) and of Papillon and Haigh (Oxford, 2 vols. 1890–91) may also be referred to.

The best modern prose translations are those of J. W. Mackail (London, 1885) and Conington (London, 1870).

**Eclogues.** English Translations, Verse:

F. Wrangham, 1815; C. S. Calverley, 1836; R. M. Millington, 1870; Samuel Palmer, 1883; E. J. L. Scott, 1884; Rt. Hon. Sir G. O. Morgan, 1897; John Sargeaunt (Broadway Booklets), 1903.

**Georgics.** English Translations, Verse:

W. Mills, 1780; Sotheby, 1800, 1815; W. Stawell and others, 1808; J. M. King, 1843, 1871 (different translation; (with Heyne text) literally and rhythmically translated, W. Sewell, 1846, 1854; W. H. Bathurst, 1849; E. Cobbold, 1852; J. B. Rose, 1865; R. D. Blackmore, 1871; Kennedy, 1876; J. Rhoades, 1881; H. W. Preston, 1881; Lord Burghclere, 1904.

Prose: I. Butt, 1834.

Beside these separate versions of the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*, others appeared in the collective editions of Ogilby, 1649–54; Dryden, 1697, etc.

Students of Virgil would also do well to consult Sellar, *Poets of the Augustan Age* (Oxford, 1883), and Nettleship *Introduction to the Study of Virgil*. 
THE ECLOGUES AND GEORGICS OF VIRGIL
TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH VERSE
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L. E. UPCOTT, A.M.
ET SCHOLARIBUS MARLBURIENSIBUS
PRÆTERITIS PRÆSENTIBUS FUTURIS
OPUSCULUM HOC
DEDICAT
T. F. R.
MARLBURIENSIS
Let the classic page thy fancy lead
Through rural scenes: such as the Mantuan swain
Paints in the matchless harmony of song.

THOMSON.
PREFACE

It seems a pity that one of the world's greatest poets should be unknown to many who could pass a fair examination in Shakspeare. All poetry loses heavily by translation, but it is better to know a great poet through a barbarian language than not to know him at all.

Of the extant translations of the Eclogues and Georgics none is written by a master excepting the antiquated version of Dryden. Dissatisfaction with the work of his predecessors, combined with a period of leisure, induced this translator to try his hand. The only translation of these poems that he has read with pleasure is the rhymed version of the Georgics by the author of Lorna Doone. Of its kind surely this is unmatchable, but the distance of Blackmore from Virgil is great, and where dignity is required all rhymed versions seem to fail utterly to echo the long roll of "the stateliest measure ever moulded by the lips of man."

The present version aims at combining accuracy with beauty of form. Literalness has not
been sought. Whether it justifies its existence is a question that must be left to the already weary critic.

The translator desires to express his obligation to the Rev. E. D. Stone and to Mr. L. E. UPCOTT for numerous improvements throughout the work.

T. F. R.
THE ECLOGUES, BUCOLICS, OR PASTORALS OF VIRGIL
THE ECLOGUES OF VIRGIL

ECLOGUE I

MELIBŒUS. TITYRUS.

M. Thou, Tityrus, 'neath the leafy beeches lying,
Drawest wild wood-notes from thine oaten straw.
We to the sweet farm say a long farewell,
To home and country: thou in shady ease
Teachest the woods "fair Amaryll" their song.

T. O Melibœus, 'twas a very god
That granted me this peace, for he a god
Will ever be to me; from my own folds
A tender lamb his altar oft shall stain.
'Twas he allowed my kine to stray afield—
See, there they go!—and me to work my will
Upon a rustic pipe.

M. I envy not,
Nay, I admire: such foul disorder reigns
O'er all the countryside. Lo! sick at heart
I lead the little she-goats on, scarce dragging
This one; for lately in the hazel-copse
She travailed hard: on the bare flint, alas!

7
Twin-kids, the hope of all the flock, she bare. Often, I know, but for my crooked mind, The heaven-struck oak had warned me of this woe. But nathless tell me, Tityrus, who he is, This god of thine.

_T._ The city men call Rome I in my simpleness thought like to ours, Whither we shepherds often use to drive Our tender weanling lambs. For so I knew The pup to match his sire, the kid her dam, So loved I to compare small things with great. But verily this city o'er the rest Hath so upraised her head, as cypresses O'er limber withies hold preëminence.

_M._ And wherefore this great longing to see Rome?

_T._ For Freedom, blessed Freedom, which, though late, Looked on my slothfulness, when now my beard Fell hoarier to the steel; yea, looked on me And came belated, now that Amaryll Had called me hers, and Galaté was gone. For, I will own it, while I was a slave To Galaté, nor hope of liberty Nor thrift of wage was mine. Though from my pens Full many a victim met the knife, and though
I pressed rich cheeses for the ungrateful town,
No heavy price e'er filled my homeward hand.

_M._ I wondered why fair Amaryll was crying
So sadly to the gods; I wondered why
She left ripe apples on their tree: 'twas this—
Her Tityrus was gone. The very pines,
The watersprings and these thine orchard trees
Were calling "Tityrus!"

_T._ What could I do?
Nor otherwise could I cast off my bonds,
Nor otherwhere find heaven so strong to save. 50
There, Melibœus, did I see that youth
For whom twelve days each year mine altars
smoke.
There gave he speedy answer to my prayer:
"Feed still, my boys, your kine, still rear your
bulls."

_M._ Happy old man! Thy farm is still thine
own,
And shall be aye, and great enough for thee.
Though barren stone and muddy bogrush spread
O'er wasted pastures, yet no fodder strange
Shall tempt thy lambing ewes, nor neighbour's
flock
Infest them with disease. O happy old man! 60
Here 'mid loved streams and god-frequented
founts
Thou'lt court the cooling shade. Here, as of old,
The willow boundary-fence, that paradise
Of Hybla’s honey-bee, shall whisper dreams
O’er drowsy heads; here ’neath a beetling rock
The leaf-dresser shall waft his song to heaven.
The while thou’lt hear thy deep-voiced wood-doves coo
And turtles purring in the topmost elm.

T. Therefore shall stags browse buoyant in
the sky,
And seas leave all their fish stark on the
strand,
Therefore shall nations stray o’er alien soil,
And Arar slake the exile Parthian’s thirst,
And Germans quaff the Tigris: sooner this
Than from my memory shall those features fade.

M. But we depart, to thirsty Africa
Or Scythian wolds, or rushing Cretan streams,
Or Britons wholly sundered from the world.
Ah! shall I ever long years hence behold
My own dear home—a wretched bothy then
With turf-piled roof—and marvel as I gaze
At a few ears of corn, my realm of old?
Shall brutal soldiery possess my tilth
So newly ploughed? shall aliens hold these
Crops?
See to what depths of misery we are come
Through civil strife! For these my harvests
stand!
Now, Melibœus, graft thy sapling pears,
And set thy vines arow. Go hence, my goats,
Go, little flock once happy. Nevermore
In grotto green reclining shall I watch
You dangle from a bosky crag afar.

No carols shall I sing, and nevermore
With this my crook to lead you shall ye browse
The bitter willow and sweet lucerne-bloom.

T. Yet this one night thou mightest rest with me
On fresh-plucked leaves. Ripe apples shalt thou have,
And mealy chestnuts, and no lack of cheese.
E'en now the distant farms send up their smoke,
And shadows lengthen from the lofty hills.
ECLOGUE II

The shepherd Corydon all vainly burned
With passion for the favourite of his lord,
Beauteous Alexis. Nought his love availed,
Save that beneath the dark-tressed beechwood deep
To the lone wilderness his careful tongue
Trilled forth this unpremeditated strain:
Cruel Alexis, carest thou no whit
For all my lays, nor pitiest at all?
Thou'lt be my death at last! Now kine and sheep
Seek shade and coolness, now the lizard lurks
In thorny brakes, and Thestylis compounds
For reapers weary with the scorching heat
A savoury mess of garlic and wild thyme.
But as I track thee 'neath the blazing sun—
A grating cricket-choir in every bush
Makes symphony with me. Rather would I Bear with the sullen ire and high disdain
Of Amaryllis, rather would I choose Menalcas, though he wears a swarthly skin.
O fair white youth, confide not overmuch
In colour. For the privet-blossoms fall,
But gathered are the dusky hyacinths.
Thou spurnest me, nor askest what I am,
How great my flocks, how deep my foaming pails,
Which neither summer's heat nor winter's frost
E'er lightened yet. A thousand lambs of mine
Roam the Sicilian hills. I know the songs
Wherewith Amphion called his cattle home
On Acte's Aracynthus. Nor am I
Ill-favoured, for I saw myself yestreen
In the sea's marge, when all the waves were laid
By sleeping winds. Can the glassed image lie?
Judge thou and see if Daphnis be more fair.
O deign to haunt rough field and lowly cot
With me, to shoot the stag, and with green wand
To gather flocks of kids! Then thou and I
Will mimic Pan with woodland melodies.
Pan taught to join with wax a row of reeds,
The shepherd and the sheep are dear to Pan.
Nor, prithee, loathe to chase thy gentle lip
Along the reeds. To understand this art
What pains Amyntas took! I have a pipe
Of seven unequal hemlock-stems compacted.
Damoetas gave it me, and dying said:
"Now serve thy second master." Thus he said,
And fool Amyntas burned with jealousy.
Two fawns have I beside; I found them laid
Deep in a perilous glen; whose hides are flecked
E'en yet with white, and twice a day they drain
A ewe's full udder. Lo! they wait for thee. 50
Thestylis long has asked them for her own,
Yea, and shall take them, since thou countest cheap
My choicest gifts. Come to me, beauteous boy!
See, the Nymphs bring thee basketfuls of lilies,
See, the bright Naiad plucks wan violets
And poppy-heads, to blend with daffodil
And scented fennel-flower: then weaving in
Cassia and many a fragrant herb, she sets
Dusk hyacinths in yellow marigold.
Myself will gather quinces silvered o'er 60
With downy fleece, chestnuts, my Amaryll's joy,
And waxen plums: to plums be honour too;
Bays will I add, with you, ye sister myrtles:
So shall ye mingle your delicious breath.
Corydon, thou'rt a boor! Alexis cares
Nought for thy gifts, and if with gifts thou strive
Iollas would out-gift thee. Out! alack!
What has my folly wrought? I have let loose
The southern gale upon my flowers, wild boars
Into my running rills. Whom dost thou fear, 70
Infatuate boy? For woods have been the haunt
Of Trojan Paris and the holy gods.
Let Pallas dwell within the wallèd towns
Herself hath planted, but the woods 'fore all
Shall be my joy. The grisly lioness
Follows the wolf, the wolf in turn the goat,
The playful goat follows the lucerne-bloom,
And Corydon thee, Alexis: each is drawn
By his peculiar joy. See, now the steers
Drag home the ploughshares hanging from the yoke,
And shadows deepen with departing day.
But me Love burns: how should Love cease to burn?
Ah Corydon, Corydon, what frenzy now
Hath seized thee? To thy leaf-dark elm-tree clings
Thy half-pruned vine. Why dost not rather strive
At least to finish out some common task,
Plaiting soft rush and withy? Another love,
If this disdaineth thee, will soon be thine.
ECLOGUE III

MENALCAS. DAMOETAS. PALÆMON.

M. Who owns this flock, Damoetas? answer me. Melibœus?

D. Nay, 'tis Ægon's: lately he Entrusted it to me.

M. Poor wretched sheep! While he courts his Neära, full of fear Lest she prefer me to himself, the sheep Are by this hireling knave milked twice an hour, And ewes are drained and milk stolen from the lambs.

D. Mind thou what taunts thou castest at a man. We know whom thou—and in what shrine it was—When he-goats leered and Nymphs laughed naughtily.

M. Doubtless 'twas then what time they saw me hack Micon's young vineyard with my dastard knife.

D. Or by these olden beeches when thou brakest
The bow and reeds of Daphnis: moved with grief,
Spiteful Menalcas, when thou sawest them
Given to the lad; yea, and hadst grieved to death,
But for this vengeance.

M. What can masters do
When villains make so bold? Saw I not thee,
Thou scoundrel, stalk and capture Damon's goat,
Though loud Lycisca barked? And when I cried:

"Ho! gone away! Tityrus, call the flock!"

Thou didst lie hidden in the sedges near.

D. Should he not pay me, since my music won.
The goat my pipe had earned? For—knowst thou this?
The goat was mine: Damon confessed the same
Himself, and yet denied his power to pay.

M. Thou conquer him in song? Didst ever own
A Pan-pipe waxen-joined? Wast thou not wont,
Thou dunce, at cross-roads with thy scrannel straw
To mince and maul a miserable song?
D. Well, shall we try in turn what each can do?  
I stake this cow: twice daily milketh she,  
Feedeth twin calves; what better canst desire?  
Now do thou name thy pledge.

M. I would not dare  
To wager thee one lambkin from the flock:  
A cruel stepmother have I at home,  
A father too; and twice a day the twain  
Number the flock, and one of them the kids.  
But what will in thine eyes be better far,  
Since folly pleases thee, two beechwood cups 40  
Carved by th' inspired Alcmedon I'll stake.  
A limber vine graved by his cunning tool  
Winds o'er them, tangled with the wandering fruit  
Of ivy pale. Two figures central stand:  
Conon, and who was he whose pencil drew  
The whole round of the sun, and shewed the world  
What time to reap, and when to lean on plough?  
Ne'er have I lipped them yet, but keep them stored.

D. That same Alcmedon carved me two cups,  
And wreathed lithe bear's-breech round the handles twain,  
And Orpheus with the charmèd woods behind  
Set midmost. Never have I lipped them yet,
But keep them stored. If yon cow holds thine eyes,
What vaunt is this of cups?

M. Thou'lt not to-day
Escape me; wheresoe'er thy challenge lead,
There will I come; only let one be judge,
Even—lo! Palæmon, who approacheth now.
I'll make thy challenges for ever cease.

D. Say on, if aught thou canst: I'll not be slow,
I fear no judge,—but lay it well to heart,
Neighbour Palæmon, ’tis no trivial game.

P. Sing both, for on the soft grass we are set,
And field and tree are with new verdure clad,
And woods are leafy, and the golden year
Is fairest now. Damætas, lead the song,
Then follow thou, Menalcas. Sing in turn:
Respond and antiphon the Muses love.

D. Jove’s the beginning of song: all earth is full of his glory,
Valleys are blessed by him, yea, and he loveth my lays.

M. I am beloved by Phœbus: he knoweth I render his bounties
Ever to him, hyacinths blushing so sweetly and bays.
D. My Galatea's a frolicsome lass: she pelts me with apples,
Then in the withy-bed hides, carefully shewing the place.

M. My flame cometh unbidden to me, my beloved Amyntas;
Soothly my dogs know his better than Delia's face.

D. Gifts have I won for mine, for of late I remembered an elm-tree
Whither a wood-dove's mate built her aërial nest.

M. What I was able, I did: sent mine ten beautiful apples
Plucked from a wild wood tree; ten other wait his behest.

D. O how many and sweet are the sayings of my Galatea!

Up to the ears of the gods help them, ye breezes, to soar.

M. That thou despisest me not in thy heart what boots it, Amyntas,

If I watch at the nets while thou art hunting the boar?

D. Send me thy Phyllis, I pray, for 'tis my birthday, Iollas;

Follow thyself when I slay heifers to prosper my wheat.
M. Phyllis I love before others, her dear eyes mourned my departing:
"Farewell, sweet one, a long farewell," I heard her repeat.

D. Wolves are a pest to the folds, rains trample the ripening harvest,
Winds to the trees bring woe, Amaryll's anger to me.

M. Moisture is sweet to the seeds, to the weaned kids strawberry bushes,
Willow to pregnant ewes, I, O Amyntas, to thee.

D. Pollio loves my muse, although she was nursed in the country:
Fatten a calf for a new votary, Pierides.

M. Nay, but a well-grown bull—for Pollio too is a poet—
Bold with his horn, with his hoof scattering dust to the breeze.

D. Pollio, who loves thee, let him fly to thy paradise with thee;
Bear for him balm, ye thorns: rivers, with honey o'erflow.

M. Mævius, he may adore thy songs whom Bavius pleases;
He-goats, give him your milk: foxes, be yoked to his plough.

D. Ye boys gathering flowers and the ground-loving strawberry culling,
Run away quick, chilly snakes skulk where the grasses are high.

_M._ Warily walk, ye sheep, for the bank gives treacherous holding;

See! the big ram his wool seeks in the meadow to dry.

_D._ Tityrus, frighten the grazing goats far away from the river:

They shall be washed in the spring all, when the season is meet.

_M._ Ho! lads, fetch up the sheep: if the milk be stolen by the noonday.

(Lately it was, ye know), vainly we tug at the teat.

_D._ Ah! how lean is my bull in the midst of the fattening vetches!

Love o'er master and herd, Love ever ringeth a knell.

_M._ Love is no tempter of these, whose bones scarce hold them together.

Over my tender lambs some eye is casting a spell.

_D._ Tell me, O tell me, the land—and I'll make thee my Phoebus Apollo—

Where three yards and a half measure the arch of the sky.

_M._ Tell me, O tell me, the land where flowers grow, bearing engraven

Names of kings, and at last thou shalt have Phyllis for aye.
P. 'Tis not for us to judge so great a strife
Betwixt you. Thou hast earned the cow, and thou,
And whoso shrinks from Love’s sweet treachery
And proves his bitterness. But come, my lads,
Close now the sluice: the meads have drunk their fill.
ECLOGUE IV

This famous poem was written in B.C. 40. It is still an open question who the divine child is, and whether Virgil owed anything to Isaiah. (Cf. Is. vii. 14, 15; ix. 7; xi. 6-8; xxxv. 1.) Recent studies of Virgil's Messianic idea will be found in the Hibbert Journal for January and the Expositor for April, June and August of this year (1907).

MUSES of Sicily, lift a nobler strain!
Some love not shrubs and lowly tamarisks.
If woods we sing, let woods be seem a prince.
The last age told by Cumæ's seer¹ is come,
A mighty roll of generations new
Is now arising. Justice² now returns
And Saturn's realm, and from high heaven descends
A worthier race of men. Only do thou
Smile, chaste Lucina, on the infant boy,
With whom the iron age will pass away.
The golden age in all the earth be born;
For thine Apollo reigns. Under thy rule,
Thine, Pollio, shall this glorious era spring,
And the great progress of the months begin.

¹ The Sibyl.
² Cf. Geo. II. 565.
Under thy rule all footprints of our guilt
Shall perish, and the peaceful earth be freed
From everlasting fear. Thou, child, shalt know
The life of gods, and see commingled choirs
Of gods and heroes, and be seen of them,
And rule a world by righteous father tamed. 20
Then Earth shall haste to bring thee birthday
gifts,
Uncultured Earth: the ivy's gadding curls
And fox-glove and the water-lily twined
With laughing bear's-breech. Uncompelled
thy goats
Shall bring their udders heavy-laden home,
And monstrous lions scare thy herds no more.
Thy very cot shall bloom with winsome flowers,
Serpents shall cease, the treacherous poison-
plant
Shall fail, Assyrian balm shall fill the land.
But when thou'lt read the praise of famous
men 30
And thy sire's deeds, and know true excellence,
The plain shall softly teem with yellowing corn,
And grapes shall blush upon the unkempt briar,
And honeydew shall weep from seasoned oaks.
Nathless some taint of old iniquity
Shall stay, to bid men tempt with ships the sea
And build them city-walls and furrow earth
With ploughshares. A new Tiphys shall arise,
A second Argo fraught with chosen knights,
And other wars shall rage, and once again
Shall valorous Achilles fare to Troy.

And when strong time hath wrought thee to a
man,
The seafarer shall roam the wave no more,
Nor ships make merchandise: for all the earth
Shall be all-fruitful. Neither shall the vine
Suffer the pruning-hook, nor fields the hoe.
And lusty husbandmen from ox's neck
Shall loose the yoke; and wool with divers hues
Need not to cheat, for lo! the living ram
Shall softly blush with purple fleece, or glow
With saffron yellow; grazing lambs shall wear
Vestments of scarlet in the bounteous meads.
"So run, fair ages," to their spindles sang
The Fates that weave the stedfast web of God.

Take thy great heritage, thine hour is come,
Blest offspring of the gods, great seed of Jove.

See how Creation bows her massy dome,
Oceans and continents and æry deeps:
All nature gladdens at the coming age.
O may a long life's evening then be mine,
And breath to tell thy deeds! Not Linus then
Nor Thracian Orpheus shall surpass my song,
E'en though the beautiful Apollo help
Linus, his son, and Orpheus call to aid
Calliopé that bare him. Nay, though Pan
Before Arcadian judges with me strive,
Before Arcadia would he yield the palm.
    Learn, babe, to laugh when mother calls thee now,
Thy mother weary with her ten long months.
Learn, baby, now: who has not known the smile
Of parents' eyes, he is not meet to share
Tables of gods or beds of goddesses.
ECLOGUE V

MENALCAS. MOPSUS.

_Me._ O MOPSUS, since we're met here, good men both,
Thou skilled to tune the slender reeds, and I
To utter verses, prithee, sit we down
Amid these elms and hazel underwoods,

_Mo._ Thou art the elder; I must yield to thee,
Whether where west winds fan the flickering shade
Or 'neath the cave we go. Mark how the cave
Is fretted with the wild-vine's clusters rare.

_Me._ Only Amyntas hopes to rival thee
On our hills.

_Mo._ Yea, and haply would essay

To outsing Phœbus?

_Me._ Mopsus, lead the song,
If aught of love for Phyllis thou canst tell,
Or praise for Alcon, or for Codrus hate,
Sing on—let Tityrus tend the browsing kids.

_Mo._ Well, I will try what songs I wrote yestreen
On a green beechwood bole, and marked the tune
Betwixt the lines. Then bid Amyntas sing.

_Me._ As yield lithe willows to the olive pale,  
Or to the crimson rose-bed lowly nard,  
So doth Amyntas yield, I ween, to thee.  

_Mo._ But cease thy talking: we have raught the cave.

"The Nymphs for Daphnis by a hard fate slain 
Wept, and ye woods and rivers shared their pain.  
His mother praying clasped his wretched corse  
And strove to move the cold stars to remorse.  
No neatherd, Daphnis, for that death of thine  
Drove to the cooling stream his pastured kine.  
No beast to taste the water-spring had heart,  
And from sweet meadow-grasses stood apart,  
Daphnis, I learned from woods and mountains lone  

How Libyan lions for thy death made moan.  
Tigers were yoked to cars at thy command,  
And pageants of the Bacchic dancers planned,  
And soft leaves woven round the supple wand,  
The vine her tree, the grapes their vine adorn,  
Herds worship bulls, and fields are crowned with corn;  
So dost thou grace all thine. Of thee bereft  
By Pales and by Phoebus fields were left.  
In furrows where we sowed big barley-seeds
Now spring wild oats and worthless darnel-weeds.

For bright narcissus and soft violet-flowers
The thistle and the sharp Christ-thorn are ours.
Sprinkle the ground with leaves, o'ershade the rills
With trees, ye shepherds, for so Daphnis wills.
And build a tomb and carve thereon this rhyme:
'Here, famed from greenwood to the stars sublime,
Lies Daphnis, tender of a flock most fair,
Himself the shepherd e'en more debonair.'"

Me. Singer divine, such is thy song to me
As sleep on grassy lawns to weary heads,
Or grateful draughts from leaping water-springs
In summer's heat. Nor on the reeds alone,
But in the song thou equallest thy lord.
O happy youth, thou'lt soon be famed as he.
Yet I in turn will sing thee this of mine
As best I can; thy Daphnis will I praise
To starland, yea, to starland will I praise Daphnis, for this thy Daphnis loved me too.

Mo. Thou couldst ne'er grant to me a greater boon.
The youth was worthy of it, and long since
Stimichon praised to me that song of thine.
ME. "Now glistening Daphnis marvels at
Heaven's door,
And clouds and stars beneath the awful floor.
Then buxom Pleasure rules the woods and
glades,
Pan and the shepherds and the Dryad maids.
Net against deer, wolf against sheepfold cease
To plot deceit. good Daphnis loveth peace.
The unkempt mountains pass the glad voice
round,
'He is a god' the reboant rocks resound,
'He is a god indeed' echoes the bushy
ground.

Be favourable and gracious to thine own!
Behold four altars: two for thee alone,
Daphnis, and two for Phœbus. On his twain
Yearly shall great burnt-offerings be slain;
Two foaming milk-pails shall crown each of
thine,
And two bowls of the olive's unctuous wine.
Joy for the banquet shall the grape afford
With Chian wine from sparkling flagons poured.
Before hearth-fires shall winter's feast be laid,
At harvest-season underneath the shade.

Damœtas and Ægon shall enchant the meal,
Alphesibœus dance a satyr-reel.
This shall be thine wheneer to Nymphs we yield
Our yearly vows, or sanctify the field.
Long as rivers hold fish and boars love hills,
Long as the bee his bag with thyme fulfills
And crickets drink the dew, so long thy name
Shall live all-glorious on the lips of Fame.
Henceforth the swains shall pay thee every year
The vows that Ceres and that Bacchus hear. 90
Grant thou their prayers, and they the broken vow shall fear."

_Mo._ Ah! what reward is worth so good a song?
For not the South wind whispering through the reeds,
Nor league-long rollers thundering on the strand,
Nor tumbling streams in rocky watercourses
Adown a valley, ever charmed me so.

_Me._ Yet first accept thou this frail hemlock-stem,
It taught me "Corydon for Alexis burned."
Aye, taught me "Who, Damœtas, owns this flock?"

_Mo._ Then do thou take this crook: Anti-
genesis
Oft asked and ne'er received it, though e'en then
He was a loveable youth: 'tis shod with brass
And knotted evenly—a perfect crook.
ECLOGUE VI

The rhymes of Sicily were the first toy of my Thalia, and the humble woods her early habitation. When I sang of kings and battles, Phoebus plucked my ear and warning said: "A shepherd, Tityrus, should feed fat sheep and sing a fine-drawn song."

Thou'lt soon see many who will long to tell thy praises, Varus, and recount sad wars, so I upon a slender reed will court the rustic Muse. At thy command I sing. And if one raptured reader shall be found, Varus, our tamarisks and all the grove shall hymn thy glory; Phoebus loves no scroll better than that prescribed with thy name.

Begin, ye Muses.

Once upon a time two yokels, Chromis and Mnasyllus, saw Silenus lying in a cave asleep. His veins were puffed with wine of yesterday, as ever; near his head the slipped wreath lay, and from worn handle trailed his massy jar.

1 The Muse of pastoral poetry.
Him they assail, for oft the ancient rogue
Had falsely promised them a song, and bind
Fetters upon him wov'n of his own wreaths.
Then Ægle comes and cheers their dubious hands,
Ægle, most beautiful of all the Naiads,
And stains with crimson mulberry-juice his brows
Wide-wakened now. He, laughing at the trick,
Cries: "Wherefore are ye plaiting on these gyves?
Boys, loose me: 'tis enough to shew your power.
I'll sing whate'er ye list; your meed shall be 30 Songs, and hers somewhat else." Then straight he sang.
And as he sang, Fauns and wild things were seen
To romp his measures, and staid oaks to nod
Their haughty crests: not the Parnassian rock
Joys so in Phoebus, not by Rhodope
And Ismarus is Orpheus worshipped more.
He sang how through the vasty void concurred
The seeds of earth, air, sea and liquid fire;
And how from these originals was born
The sum of things, and into order rolled
The amorphous universe itself, and earth
Hardened her crust and sundered Nereus off
In seas, and slowly terrene forms assumed.
Then the first sunrise greets the wondering earth,
And clouds rise higher and the rains descend.
Meantime the forests spring, and fourfoot beasts
Prowl sparsely o'er the unaccustomed hills.
And next told he of stones by Pyrrha cast,
Of Saturn's realm, of vultured Caucasus
And thief Prometheus; how the Argonauts
Lost Hylas at the fount, and called him loud
Till "Hylas! Hylas!" filled the vocal shore.
Next of Pasiphaë consoled with love
Of snowy bull, but happier far had bulls
Been never born. Ah! miserable maid,
What frenzy seized thee then? The Prætides
Befooled the fields with bellowings of kine,
But none of them such loathly wedlock sought
With beasts, though she had learned to fear the plough
And often searched her smooth brow for the horns.
Ah! miserable maiden, o'er the hills
Thou wanderest now. He with his snowy side
Cradled in softly-flowering hyacinths
Beneath dark holm-oak champeth the wan grass,
Or followeth some favourite in the herd.
"Close, Nymphs, Dictæan Nymphs, close now the glades:
Haply the wandering footprints of the bull
Will meet our eyes: haply by pasture green
Allured, or following the herd, some cows
Will lead him safely to the Cretan stalls.”

Then hymns he Atalanta marvelling
At golden apples; then he tells the tale
Of Phaëthon’s sisters mossy-kirtled now
With bitter bark, and springing from the soil
As lofty alder-trees. And then he sings
How Gallus by the stream Permessus straying
Was guided by a gracious Muse to hills
Aonian, how Apollo’s choir all stood
And did obeisance, how that bard divine,
The shepherd Linus, beautifully crowned
With braided flowers and bitter parsley, cried:
“Lo! take these reeds: the Muses give them thee,
The same erst given to Ascra’s Hesiod,
Who playing on them lured the mountain-ash
Down from her stablished citadel. On these
Tell thou the birthday of the Grynean grove,
Until no wood delight Apollo more.”

What need to speak of Scylla’s glistering loins
Girdled with barking monsters, how she scathed
Ulysses and his fleet, so legend runs,
And in deep whirlpool with her fell sea-hounds
Tore limb from limb his terror-stricken crews.
Known is the tale how Tereus changed his form,
And known the gruesome gift, the horrid feast,
By Philomel prepared; how swiftly she
Fled to the wilderness, how pinion-borne
She poised disconsolate o'er her ancient home.

What things from Phoebus musing long ago
Happy Eurotas learned and taught his trees,
All these our poet sings; the smitten vales
Echo to Heaven, till now the gloaming star
Bids fold the flock and duly tell their tale,
And moves unwelcome up the wistful sky.
ECLOGUE VII

MELIBŒUS. CORYDON. THYRSIS.

BENEATH a whispering holm-oak chanced to sit
Daphnis. Their flocks Thyris and Corydon
Had gathered there: Thyris was lord of sheep,
Corydon of she-goats full-bagged with milk,
Both in the flower of youth, Arcadians both,
And skilled to match the amœbæan song.
Hither, while my young myrtles for the frost
I clothed, my he-goat, king of all the flock,
Had strayed away, and so Daphnis I found.
He in turn spying me cried: "Hither, quick! 10
O Melibœus; goats and kids are safe;
If thou hast leisure, rest beneath the shade.
Hither the steers self-guided o'er the leas
Will come to drink, here Mincio with lush reeds
Broiders his grassy banks, and sacred oaks
Hum with innumerous bees." What could I do?
I had nor Phyllis nor Alcippe then
To put my weanling lambs in fold at home,
And 'twas a mighty war betwixt these twain.
Nathless their sport before my task I set,
And so they both in turn 'gan sing their songs Antiphonal, for thus the inspiring Muse, Daughter of Memory, willed. These Corydon, Those Thyrsis, each in order meet, rehearsed.

C. Dear Nymphs of Libethrus, vouchsafe me the boon
   Of the sweet tongue ye granted my Codrus of yore:
Like Apollo he sings; if I match not his tune,
   This pipe shall hang mute on the pine evermore.
T. Ye shepherds, adorn your new poet with bays,
   That Codrus's withers with envy be wrung; 30
Or crown me with foxglove, if fulsome his praise,
   Lest my talent be marred by his poisonous tongue.
C. To Diana this boar's head so bristly supplies
   Little Micon, with antlers of hart many-tined.
If my luck shall endure, large as life shall she rise,
   Smooth marble; red buskin her ankle shall bind.
T. Priapus, this milk and these cakes once a year
   For guarding so poor a demesne are full meed.
We have wrought thee in marble, but golden, I swear,
    Thou shalt stand if the heavy ewes fruitfully breed.
C. O daughter of Nereus, than sweet thyme more sweet,
    Snowy-white as the swan, as the pale ivy fair,
When thou hearest my fed cattle's home-coming feet,
    O hither, if Corydon still is thy care.
T. Nay, call me more bitter than crowfoot, my dear,
    Rough as broom, as abandoned as weed of the sea,
If without thee I count not each day a full year. 
    Shame, kine, that ye linger so long on the lea!
C. O moss-pillowed fountains, grass softer than sleep,
    Green arbutus netting the shimmering shade,
Lo! summer is here: bid him scorch not the sheep;
    And the soft vine with burgeoning shoots is arrayed.
T. Here are fires never-failing and pine-faggots good
    Under soot-blackened rafters we laugh at the cold,
As high banks are laughed at by rivers in flood,
Or as one wolf despises the numberless fold.
C. Bearded chestnuts and junipers tower to the sky,
And apples lie strewn under every tree.
All Nature is smiling; but streams will be dry
If beauteous Alexis depart from the lea. 60
T. Parched meadows distempered and dying are seen,
And the leafy vine-shade is denied to the hills;
But at Phyllis's coming the forest is green,
And bountiful rains shall replenish the rills.
C. Bacchus joys in the vine, poplar charms Hercules,
To fair Venus her myrtle, to Phoebus his bay.
My Phyllis loves hazels: while Phyllis love these,
Bay and myrtle to hazel must ever give way.
T. Give me pines in the garden and ashes afield,
Give me poplar by rivers and fir on the braes:
But the ash and the pine to thy beauty must yield,
If thou comest, O Lycidas, oft to my gaze.

M. These I remember. Vainly Thyrsis strove,
Thenceforth 'twas "Corydon, Corydon" for me.
ECLOGUE VIII

The Muse of Damon and Alphesibœus,
Two swains, to whom forgetful of their grass,
Marvelling heifers listened as they strove;
Whose song held lynxes spell-bound, and con-
strained Rivers to pause and backward turn their streams,
The Muse of Damon and Alphesibœus.

Thou, Pollio, whether now thou traversest
The rocks of great Timavus, or the marge
Of waves Illyrian skirtest,—when will come
The day when I may tell thy glorious deeds? 10
O give me leave to publish through the world
Thy songs: of Sophoclean buskin thine
Alone are worthy. In thy name I sing,
In thine I cease. List thou to songs begun
At thy command, and let this ivy-spray
'Mid victory's laurels o'er thy temples climb.

The chill night-shadows scarce had left the sky,
What time the dewdrop on the gentle grass
Is sweetest to the flock, when Damon thus
Leaning upon smooth olive-staff began— 20
"Rise, Morning Star, lead on the kindly day,
While o'er unloving Nysa I make moan,  
Nysa too truly loved. Nothing availed  
Gods witnessing my troth, yet on the gods  
In this last agony ere death I call.  
_Sing with me, flute, a song of Mænalus._  
Mænalus ever keepeth soughing grove  
And whispering pines, e'er heareth shepherd-loves,  
And Pan who first rebuked the silent reeds.  
_Sing with me, flute, a song of Mænalus._  
30  
Nysa weds Mopsus now! Where Love is Love  
All things are possible. Horses will mate  
With griffins soon, and in our grandsons' time  
Wild deer come fearlessly with hounds to drink.  
_Sing with me, flute, a song of Mænalus._  
Mopsus, behold thy bride! cut torches new,  
Shower wedding nuts: Hesper brings night for thee.  
_Sing with me, flute, a song of Mænalus._  
A worthy husband thine! Scorn, if thou must,  
All others, loathe my Panpipe and my goats,  
40  
My shaggy eyebrows and my beard unshorn,  
And doubt if any god heeds mundane things.  
_Sing with me, flute, a song of Mænalus._  
Once in our orchards—thou wast tiny then—  
I watched thee culling apples dewy-fresh—  
I shewed them—with thy mother. The twelfth  
year's kiss
Had touched my brow, and standing on tiptoe
I just could reach the brittle branches. There
I saw and fell: my heart was mine no more!

*Sing with me, flute, a song of Mænalus.*

I know what love is now: on Tmaros born
Or Rhodope or utmost Garamanth
On flinty rocks: no kith nor kin of ours.

*Sing with me, flute, a song of Mænalus.*

Taught by fierce Love, a mother stained her
hands
With blood of sons. O cruel cruel mother!
Yea, cruel she, but Love far crueller.
O heartless Love! O cruel cruel mother!

*Sing with me, flute, a song of Mænalus.*

Now let the scared wolf flee the sheep, hard
oaks
Bear golden apples, daffodillies bloom
On alders, and the bark of tamarisks
Sweat richest amber, owl put swan to shame
And Tityrus be Orpheus in the woods
And match Arion 'mid the dolphin-shoals.

*Sing with me, flute, a song of Mænalus.*

Let earth become mid-seas. Forests, farewell!
Down from some heaven-girt mountain will I
plunge
Into the waves precipitate. Take, dear,
This gift, my latest ere I pass away.

*Cease, flute, cease now the song of Mænalus.*"
Thus Damon. What Alphesibœus then
Answered, ye Muses, tell. I can no more.

A. Bring water, and with woolly fillet
wreathe
These altars, kindle choicest frankincense
And richest vervain, that through mystic rites
Some witless warping blast my lover's mind.
Nought for this purpose lacketh save a song.

Lead from the town, my songs, lead Daphnis
home.

Songs can draw down the very moon from
heaven,
Circe transformed with songs Ulysses' crew,
The cold snake in the meads is split with songs.

Lead from the town, my songs, lead Daphnis
home.

Bound with these three threads of three several
hues
Thine image round these altars, lo! I bear
Three times; uneven numbers please the god.

Lead from the town, my songs, lead Daphnis
home.

Twine, Amaryll, three colours in three knots;
Twine them and say but this: "Love-bonds I
twine."

Lead from the town, my songs, lead Daphnis
home.
As clay doth harden in the self-same fire
That melteth wax, even so may my love
Make Daphnis hard to others, soft to me.
Strew barley-meal, burn crackling bays in pitch,
Daphnis burns me; I burn these bays o'er him.

_Lead from the town, my songs, lead Daphnis home._

As when a heifer seeketh her lost mate
Through copse and lofty grove, and finds him not;
Weary and lorn on couches of green sedge
Beside a stream she sinks, nor recks to yield
To gathering night: may such a love possess
Daphnis, and be it far from me to heal.

_Lead from the town, my songs, lead Daphnis home._

This well-worn coat the recreant left with me,
Dear pledge of his return. Into thy lap,
Earth, I entrust it buried at my door.
Such pledge demands my Daphnis for its due.

_Lead from the town, my songs, lead Daphnis home._

Mæris himself gave me these poison-plants
Gathered in Pontus: Pontus hath great store.
By them he oft turned wolf before mine eyes
And lurked in underwoods, oft raised the dead
Out of abysmal tombs, oft charmed away  
The embattled corn to wave in other fields.

Lead from the town, my songs, lead Daphnis home.

Bring, Amaryll, bring cinders out and cast  
Over thy head into a running stream,  
And look not back. With these will I assail  
Daphnis, for Daphnis fears nor god nor song.

Lead from the town, my songs, lead Daphnis home.

Lo! on the altar, while we linger here,  
The unlighted cinder flickers into flame.  
Good may it bode! Something it bodes for sure.  
Hylax barks on the threshold. Is it true?  
Or is 't that lovers weave them empty dreams?

Cease! from the town comes Daphnis: cease,  
my songs.
ECLOGUE IX

LYCIDAS. MÆRIS.

L. Pray, Mœris, whither wendest? To the town?

M. O Lycidas, this have we lived to see, Unfeared before: strange holders of our farm Say "This is mine: begone, ye farmers old!" Now crushed beneath the unresting wheel of Chance, To such we sorrowing bear these kids and pray A murrain with them.

L. I had heard, methought, From where the climbing mountains first begin To fall in gentle slopes adown the vale, Even to the water and the ancient grove Of windworn beeches, all the country side Was saved from harm by your Menalcas' songs.

M. Yea, thou hadst heard: 'twas thus that rumour ran. But, Lycidas, amid this clash of arms Our songs avail no more than, as men say, Doves of Dodona when the eagle stoops. Had not from hollow holm-oak on my left A raven warned me to leave argument
Unsaid and yield, neither thy Mœris here
Nor great Menalcas had been living now.

L. Ah! can such evil fall on any man?
Ah me! so nearly had we lost thy charms,
So nearly thee, Menalcas! Who then else
Should hymn the Nymphs? Who strew the ground with flowers?
Who shade the founts with curtain green? Who sing
The melodies I caught from thee of late
Silently, when to darling Amaryll
Thy journey led? "Tityrus, short the way;
Till I return feed thou my milking goats,
And lead them fed to drink, and on the road
See thou cross not the billy-goat—he butts."

M. Nay these, which yet unfinishèd he sang
To Varus: "If but Mantua be saved,
Mantua to lost Cremona, ah! too near,
Varus, thy name shall tuneful-throated swans
Bear upward to the stars."

L. So may thy bees
Shun yews of Corsica, so may thy kine
Pastured on good lucerne their udders fill.
If aught thou hast, begin. The Muses made
Me too a singer, yea, I too have songs
And shepherds call me bard. I trust them not.
For I, methinketh, utter nought as yet.
Worthy of Varius's or Cinna's muse;
I gabble gooselike 'mid those swans of song.

_M._ E'en now the silent broodings of my heart,
Lycidas, are hot therewith, if memory
May call it back, for 'tis a noble song.

"Hither, O Galatea; sad sea-waves
Make sorry playground. Here is shining spring,
Here amid streams blow many-coloured
flowers,
Here poplars hoary-tressed droop o'er the cave,
And lo! the limber vine plaits leafy bowers.
Hither! and let mad billows beat the strand."

_L._ What of those songs I heard thee sing
alone
One cloudless night? Well do I know the tune
If but the words would come.

_M._ "O Daphnis, why
Scannest the risings of the ancient stars?
Now peereth Dionæan Cæsar's star,
The star that comes to bless the field with fruits
And flush on sunny hills the reddening grape.

_Daphnis_, engraft thy pears, for thee, thy sons
And their seed after them."

Time bears away
All things, even the mind: oft in my youth
I sang a livelong summer's day to sleep.
But now my songs are all forgot, and Mœris
Mourns for his very voice: some leering wolf
Hath eyed incautious Mœris. But nathless
Menalcas oft enough will sing thee those.

L. Thy pleas prolong my eagerness. Behold,
The dreaming sea hath lulled her tide for thee, 70
And stilled is every moan of murmuring winds.
Here half the way is done: Bianor's grave
Is seen afar: here where the husbandmen
Harvest the leafy trees, here let us sing.
Lay down the kids; 'tis near enough to town.
But if we fear lest darkness gather rain,
Let us sing carols all the way: 'twill be
Less tedious; I will ease thee of thy load,
So shall our song be light.

M. Boy, say no more.
Let us perform the present task: these songs 80
We shall sing better when Menalcas comes.
ECLOGUE X

GALLUS.

O grant me this last labour, Arethuse.
A few songs for my Gallus must be sung,
A few, yet worthy of Lycoris' ears.
Who would grudge songs to Gallus? So from thee
When thou shalt underglide Sicilian waves,
May bitter Doris fend her brine. Begin:
The fretful loves of Gallus let us sing,
While the flat-muzzled goats soft boscage browse.
Not sole are we: the listening woods reply.
What woods or glades hid you, ye Naiad maids,
When Gallus lay a-dying of a love
That none requited? For ye lingered not
On Pindus or Parnassus, or beside
Aonian Aganippe then. Him lying
'Neath a lone oak e'en bays and tamarisks
Bewept, yea, e'en pine-crested Mænalus,
Even the crags of cold Lycaeus mourned.
Around us stand the sheep. They scorn us not;
And think no scorn of them, thou bard divine:
E'en lovely Adonis pastured sheep by streams.
The shepherd and slow-footed swineherd came,  
And dripping from the autumn acorn-woods  
Menalca. “Whence that love of thine?” they cry.

Apollo came: “Gallus, ah, why so mad?  
Thy loved Lycoris through the inclement camp  
And snowy march follows another flame.”

So spake Apollo. Came Silvanus too,  
With rural glory crowned, and brandishing  
Fennels and giant lilies in his hand.

Came Pan the god of Arcady: our eyes saw  
Saw him, his cheeks incarnadined with blood  
Of elder-berries and vermilion dye.  

“Shall there not be an end?” he said, “for this  
Love cares not: grass is sated not with rills,  
Nor goats with leaves, nor bees with sweet lucerne,  
Nor cruel Love with tears.” But sadly he:  

“You this, Arcadians, ye shall ever sing  
Unto your mountains; none are skilled as ye.  
O then how calm will be my last long sleep,  
If but your flute e’er celebrate my loves!  
O that I had been counted one of you,  
To keep your flock or cull your mellow grapes;  
Whether ’twere Phyllis or Amyntas or—  
Whoe’er my flame. Amyntas, art thou dark?  
Yet dark are violets and hyacinths—  
’Mid willow-trees and limber vines with me  
I trow my love would lie. Garlands for me
Would Phyllis pluck, Amyntas sing me songs.
Here are cool founts, Lycoris, here soft meads,
And copses: here fain would I swoon with thee
Till time bring death. But thee mad Passion holds
Servant of stubborn Mars 'mid hurtling spears
And brunt of battle. Thou far from thy home,
Lone and without me, yet unsorrowing
(Ah! 'tis too true), beholdest Alpine snows
And frozen Rhine. May the frost harm thee not!
May the rough ice cut not thy delicate feet!
I will away, and my Eubœan rhymes
Will tune to the Sicilian shepherd's reed.
My purpose holds to suffer in the woods
And dens of savage beasts, to grave my loves
On sapling trees, so shall grow tree and love Together. Meantime with a rout of Nymphs
I will range Mænalus, or hunt fierce boars.
No frost shall e'er forbid me to beset Arcadian glades with hounds. I seem e'en now To fare through rocks and bellowing groves, with joy
Speeding the Cretan shaft from Parthian bow.
As though such physic could my fever cool,
As though that god could melt at human pain!
Now neither Hamadryads, nay, nor songs
Please us: ye very woods, once more begone!
No pains of ours have power to change his mind,
Nor if we drink the ice-bound Hebrus or
Suffer Sithona’s snows and wintry rains,
Nor if we tend beneath the scorching Crab
The flocks of Ethiopia, where the bark
Shrivels and perishes on lofty elms.
Love conquers all: we too must yield to Love.”

This will suffice your poet to have sung,

O divine Muses, while he sat and wove
A basket of thin mallow: ye will add
New grace for Gallus, him for whom my love
Groweth from hour to hour as alders green
Upshoot in early spring. Arise: ’tis late.
Baneful is shade to singers, baneful is
The shade of junipers: earth’s kindly fruits
Are marred by shade. Go home, my full-fed goats,
Cometh the Evening Star, my goats, go home.
THE GEORGICS OF VIRGIL
Thou that seest Universal
Nature moved by Universal Mind;
Thou majestic in thy sadness
At the doubtful doom of human kind.

TENNYSON.
BOOK I

OF HUSBANDRY
BOOK I

OF HUSBANDRY

What makes the valleys laugh and sing, what star
Should speed the plough and marry vine to elm,
The care of kine and how to rear a flock,
What skill shall keep the parsimonious bee,
Hence is my song, Mæcenas. O ye stars,
The brilliant escort of the gliding year;
Liber and bounteous Ceres, if ye bade
Earth change the acorn for the fattening ear,
And with pure water mix the new-found grape;
Ye Fauns, the guardian angels of the farm,
Ye Fauns, and Dryad maidens, join the dance:
I sing your favours.

Thou, whose trident-blow
Compelled the earth to yield the neighing horse,
Neptune; thou warden of the sacred groves,
The herdsman of three hundred snow-white kine,
That tear the lush grass in the Cean isle;
And Pan, great shepherd, leave thy native grove,
Leave the Lycaeæan glades: if aught thou carest
For thine own Mænalus, thy present help
I ask, O god of Tegea, for my task.
Minerva, planter of the olive-tree;
Thou, boy-inventor of the curved plough;
Silvanus, bearing uptorn from the roots
A sapling cypress; gods and goddesses,
All ye who carefully protect the fields,
And rear new fruits unsown by human hand,
And send the generous rain upon the crops;
And thou, great Cæsar, though 'tis not revealed
What company of gods will greet thee friend,
Whether to visit towns and care for states
Thy pleasure is, and that the mighty earth
May hail thee nursing-sire of fruits and lord
Of sun and shower, crowned with thy mother's tree;¹
Whether the boundless sea confess thy sway
And sailors' prayers to thee alone ascend,
Far Thule worship thee, and for her child
Tethys endower thee with all her waves;
Whether thou take thy place among the stars
And urge the drudging months, where empty space
Between the Virgin and the chasing Claws
Invites thee—lo! to thee the Scorpion folds
His hot limbs and yields half his share of sky—
Whate'er thy choice—for neither Tartarus
Dare hail thee king, nor may so reckless be
Thy lust of tyranny, though Grecian hearts

¹ The myrtle, sacred to Venus. Cf. Ecl. vii. 66.
Dream wonders of Elysium, and though
Proserpina heed not her mother's call—
Grant that my course be smooth, and prosper
this
My venturous enterprise, and with me cast
Upon the groping rustic pity's eye,
Then take thy throne and love the frequent
prayer.

When spring awakes, and from the snow-clad
peak
Cold streamlets trickle, and at Zephyr's breath
Crumbles and cracks the clod, straight on the
plough
Lean until ox complain and share reflect
The deep-ploughed soil. That harvest best of all
Repays the greedy farmer for his prayers
Which twice has felt the summer, twice the frost;
Lo! burst his barns with surfeiting of grain.
But ere the untried surface we explore,
First we must learn the changeful moods of
heaven,
And all the winds, and of each several field
The natural character, what this consents,
What that declines to bear. Here cereals thrive,
There grapes more gladly ripen, here again
Green saplings flourish and unbidden grass.
Behold how Tmolus perfumed saffron sends,
How India ivory, and how the soft
Sabæans incense, while Chalybians nude
Forge us our steel, and Pontic shores supply 70
The stinking castor, and Epirus breeds
The mares that win upon the Eleān plain.
Thus on each region Nature long ago
Her stern necessities and changeless laws
Imposed, what time into the empty world
Deucalion cast the stones that yielded men,
Their hardy sons.  Come, then, be strong to toil;
Soon as the year begins your stoutest bulls
Must turn the rich land, that the inverted clods
Be baked by dusty summer's riper suns.  80
But if the land is poor, 'twill be enough
To drive a shallow blade beneath the Bear:
There, lest rank weeds annoy the abundant crop,
Here, lest its hard-won moisture leave the sand.

Each second season let the stubbles lie
And arm themselves with solid idleness;
Or 'neath another star sow golden corn,
Where last you harvested the wealthy pods
Of quivering pulse, or else the slender vetch
And bitter lupine with its brittle stalks, 90
A rustling forest.  For repeated crops
Of poppies, sleepy things, or flax or oats
Scorch up the plain, which yet will bear them well
If regular rotation be observed.
OF HUSBANDRY

Only fear not to soak with generous dung
The thirsty ground, fear not to scatter wide
The grimy cinder o'er the exhausted fields.
A change of crop will also rest the land,
Which thus is saved from lying month by month
A thankless fallow. Often too 'tis good
To burn the stubbles and with crackling flames
Consume the empty stalks: whether from thence
The earth derives a hidden store of strength
And fattening food, or whether 'tis that fire
Bakes out the subtlest vice and sweats away
Excessive damp, or whether by the heat
New pores are opened and the choked are cleared,
And so the young blade fed; or does the fire
Harden the earth and bind the gaping cracks,
A shield against the piercing rain, against
The sun's intemperate ardour, yea, a shield
Against the North wind's penetrating cold?

He mightily assists the fields who breaks
With hoes the idle lumps, and harrows them
With wattled withies; golden Ceres smiles
From high Olympus on his industry;
Him too she loves who ploughs from end to end,
Then turns his share and makes a flank attack
On the long ridge, who constant at his post
Harasses and subdues the stubborn earth.
For dripping summers, sunny winters pray:
Blithest the crop that winter wraps in dust,
Blithest the field; no cultivation else
Makes Mysia so proud, or Gargara
So startled at its own fertility.
What of the man who casts the missile seed,
Then closes with the fields and lays the heaps
Of barren sand; next to the seedling crops
Escorts the purity of running streams?
When the burnt field’s agape with dying blade,
Lo! from some sloping eminence he lures
The channelled waves, which wake ’mid pebbles smooth
Rough melodies, and with refreshing spray
Slake the parched land. What shall I say of him
Who, lest the big ears bow the o’erweighted stalk,
Feeds down the extravagance in tender youth,
When ridge and blade are level? What of him
Who drains the stagnant swamp with thirsty sand,
Most chiefly in the fickle months when streams
O’erflow their banks, and the whole country-side
In slimy mantle dress, whence shallow pools
Lie sweating out their moisture to the sun.
And yet when man and beast have spared no pains
To tame the earth, the unconscionable goose,
Strymonian crane and bitter succory
Cease not to plague; likewise the grievous shade.
No easy path the earth’s Creator willed:
He first taught method as the means, and spurred
The wits of men by cares, and suffered not
His realms to slumber ’neath inveterate sloth.
Before Jove’s reign no farmers tilled the soil;
No fence or boundary-stone to mark the fields
Religion sanctioned: to the common store
All labour tended, and the earth herself
Gave all more freely for that no man asked.
Then Jove endowed that cursed thing, the snake,
With venom, and the wolf with thirst for blood,
Lashed the still sea, shook honey off the trees,
Robbed men of fire and emptied river-beds
Which flowed apace with wine, to make men prove
And hammer out by practice divers arts,
Now slowly learning how to plough and sow,
Now striking from flint-vein the lurking fire.
Then rivers first the hollowed alder felt;
Then sailors told the number of the stars
And called them by their names, the brilliant Bear,
Lycaon’s child, Pleiad and Hyad too;
Then came the wiles of trapping and the use
Of birdlime, then too hounds were trained to watch
Large covert-sides. And some with cast-net flog
The river's breadth and try the deepest pools,
While others scour the sea with dripping mesh.
Then strident saws were born of stubborn steel—
For logs were cleft with splintering wedge before—
Then divers arts ensued. Toil conquered all,
Unconquerable Toil, and Poverty,
The spur of would-be idlers. Ceres first,
When arbute-berries failed and oaks denied
The wonted acorn in Dodona's woods,
Taught men the use and method of the plough.
Soon corn received its special plagues: the stalks
Were gnawed by mildew, and the thistle reared
Its head of sloth: death takes the crops, up comes
A mass of matted undergrowth, behold
Clivers and caltrops, o'er the smiling tilth
Wild oat and darnel hold their barren sway!
So ply your hoes and give the weeds no peace,
Scare birds with noise, correct the leafy hedge
Too lavish with its shade, pray hard for rain.
OF HUSBANDRY

Neglect these things, lo! 'neath your helpless
gaze
Another's barns shall overflow, while you
From woodland oak shall shake a scanty meal.

Now hear what weapons hardy rustics need
Ere they can plough or sow the crop to come:
Firstly a ploughshare and the curvèd plough
With massive frame, and next the lumbering
wains
Of Eleusinian Ceres, threshing-boards
Wheel-less and wheeled, and hoes of crushing
weight;
Cheap wicker-ware of Celeüs besides,
Harrasons of wattled arbute, winnowing fans
Of dread Iacchus. These must you provide
And store up long beforehand, else you lose
The glorious guerdon that God's earth affords.
The growing elm by mighty force is tamed
To ploughbeam and the form of curvèd plough.
Eight feet of pole are fastened at its root,
Twin earth-boards and share-beam avec double
spine,
And handle to control it from behind.
A lime that weighs so light, or towering beech,
Is felled beforehand for the yoke: their
strength
Is hung above the hearth and searched by smoke
Mæcenas, many ancient rules I know,
Unless I weary thee by chronicling
The petty cares of farming. First of all
The threshing-floor by giant rolling-stone
Is levelled, kneaded by the hand, and mixed
With holding clay to strengthen it, lest weeds
Creep through, and drought cause gaping cracks,
and then
The vermin come and mock: the tiny mouse
Is wont to build his house and barns beneath, 220
Or eyeless moles to excavate their beds;
The toad is found in holes; all noxious beasts
That plague the earth appear; the weevil spoils
Enormous heaps of grain, the emmet too
With cautious forethought for her helpless age.

Now mark you, when throughout the wood
you see
The walnut-trees in flower, and bending low
Their fragrant boughs: if all the blossoms set,
Good crops will follow them, and great will be
The threshing, great will be the summer heat; 230
But if in wealth of leaves the shade excels,
You thresh in vain a liberal crop of straw.
Oft have I seen a sower dress his seed
With soda and black lees of olive oil,
To plump the beans within the specious pod
And make them quickly sodden, though the fire
Be very small beneath. I have known seed, Selected carefully with time and pains, Revert to type, unless the human hand Chose out the biggest year by year. Thus fate Drags all to ruin with a backward pull; As when a rower hardly drives his boat Against the stream: if once he drop his arms, Forthwith the rushing current whirls him down.

Then we must watch Arcturus and the Kids And the bright Snake, what time they rise and set, Like wind-tossed sailors on their homeward way Tempting the Pontus and the oyster-fraught Jaws of Abydus. When the Balance strikes Equality of time for work and sleep, And now divides the day in equal parts Of light and dark, then, swains, exert your kine, Sow fields with barley to the very verge Of winter and the impracticable rains. Now too 'tis time to sow a field with flax Or poppies, Ceres' friend. Delay no more: Lean on the plough while yet the earth is dry And rain-clouds fall not. Beans are sown in spring; Then too the crumbling soil receives lucerne, And millet's yearly crop, what time the Bull 260
Milk-white with gold horns openeth the year,
While foot by foot the Dog gives ground and sinks.
But if for barns of wheat and hardy spelt
You cultivate the ground, and rest your hopes
On corn alone, first let the morning hide
Atlas his daughters, and the fiery Crown
Of Cretan fame depart, before you trust
The furrows with the seed, their due, and haste
To lend a year's hope to the reluctant earth.
Many begin ere Maia's star has set,
Whose hopes are ever mocked with empty ears.
But if you sow the vetch or kidney bean,
Nor scorn Pelusian lentils, then is given
No doubtful warning when Boötes sets.
Begin and sow on half-way through the frosts.

Therefore the heaven is strictly portioned out
And told by twelve stars to obey the sun.
Five zones possess it; one reflects the sun's
Perpetual splendour and perpetual heat;
To right and left two keep the utmost flanks,
Steel-blue, regions of ice and murky rain;
Twixt these twain and the first, two were vouchsafed
By God's grace to poor mortals, and a path
Was cleft between them through the midst, that here
OF HUSBANDRY

The stellar host might slant its rolling march.
As leaps the world to Scythia aloft
And the Rhipæan heights, so does it sink
Crestfall’n to Libya’s south. This pole looks down
From high above us always; that one lies
Deep ’neath the Stygian gloom and unseen dead.

Here like some mighty river glides the Snake
With tortuous windings round and through the Bears,
The Bears that fear to dip in Ocean’s wave.
There, men say, is the calm of timeless night
And curtained thraldom of eternal dark;
Or remeant Morn leads back from us the day,
And soon as we glow with the breath of East,
There blushing Evening lights her vigil fires.
Hence is it that we read the ambiguous sky
And foretell storms, and hence we choose the day
Proper for harvest and the time to sow,
And when ’tis safe to smite the treacherous main
With oars, and when to launch the sailing-ships,
Or seasonably cut a pine-tree down.
No fools are we that muse upon the stars,
Their risings and their settings, and the four Equal yet diverse seasons of the year.
Should chilly downpour keep the swain at home,
Much, that ere long he must have done in haste
'Neath fairer skies, can now be done at ease: 310
He whets for use the blunt share's iron tooth,
Makes grape-troughs from a tree-trunk, brands his beasts,
And stamps the proper numbers on his bins,
Or sharpens stakes and two-pronged forks, and cuts
Amerian withies for the buxom vine.
Now is the time to weave of bramble wands
The supple basket, now to dry your corn
And crush it with a stone. E'en holy days
Have duties granted them by God and man:
No ordinance forbids to flood young crops, 320
To fence the standing corn, set traps for birds,
Burn rebel thorns, and plunge the bleating flock
In health-renewing brook. Often with oil
Or apples cheap the ass's driver loads
His crawling charge, returning home from town
With dented millstone or black lump of pitch.

The Moon herself has sown good luck and ill
Among her days: avoid the fifth: on that
Pale Orcus and the Eumenides were born;
Then Earth, O horror! dread Typhœus bare, 330
Cœus, Iapetus and brothers three
That swore to ope the gates of heaven. Three times
They strove to place Ossa on Pelion,
So runs the story, and up Ossa roll
Bosky Olympus to the top: three times
The Father smote asunder with his bolt
The castled mountains. Choose the seventeenth day
For planting vines and taking up young steers
To train, and adding leash to warp; the ninth
Is dear to runaways but bad for thieves.

A host of labours in the cool of night,
Or when at early dawn the Morning star
Bedews the earth, are with less labour done.
The brittle stubble and the parchèd mead
Night softens for the scythe; the gentle dew
Fails not at night. Through the long lamp-lit hours
Sits one torch-pointing with his sharpest blade;
The while his wife consoles his tedious toil
With song, and runs her shrill comb through the warp,
Or on a great fire boils the sweet must down,
And skims the billows of the stormy pot
With leafen ladle.

But the ruddy corn
At summer's height we cut; our threshing-floors
Behold at summer's height the toasted grain.
Plough stripped, sow stripped; winter brings idleness
To husbandmen: 'tis then that they enjoy
Their gains, and feast each other with good cheer;
For good King Winter shall unbind their cares:
As when a heavy-laden ship has touched its haven, and the exultant crew has crowned the stern with flowers. Yet even now 'tis time
To strip the oak of acorns and the bay
Of berries, and to gather olive fruit
And blood-juiced myrtles; aye, to snare the crane
And net the stag, to hunt the long-eared hare
And shoot the doe, whirling the hempen thongs
Of Baleäric sling, what time the snow
Lies deep, and rivers are a sheet of ice.

Dost bid me sing of autumn stars and storms,
And what to fear when summer days grow cool,
And shadows earlier creep? or when spring showers
Fall, while the plumy harvest now stands forth
Embattled on the plain, the milky ears
Swelling with fatness on the fair green stalk?
Oft when the husbandman to golden fields
Had led the reaper, and from brittle stem
Now strewed the barley, saw I every wind
Clash in a battle shock, and far and wide
Tear from its earthy home and hurl aloft
The pregnant crop: so savagely the storm
Bore the light haulm and flying straw away.
Oft a great host of waters holds the heaven,
And marshalled from on high the swollen clouds
Amass a hideous storm; down drops the sky,
And all the oxen's toil and happy crops
Drowns in a mighty deluge; dykes are filled,
And with a roar the hollow rivers grow,
And seethes through every panting creek the main.
Throned in the rain-cloud midnight Jove himself
Wields his great bolts with luminous hand; the earth
Trembles and quakes; beasts flee and panic fear
Brings low the hearts of nations; He o'erthrows
Athos, Ceraunia or Rhodope
With spear of flame; louder the South wind howls,
Thicker the rain beats; threshed by hurricanes
Now woodland wails, now seashore moans reply.

Then watch and pray: each month observe the stars;
So
THE GEORGICS OF VIRGIL
See whither Saturn's chilly orb retires,
And mark the wandering fires of Mercury,
What paths they roam. Above all fear the gods,
And on the blithe grass slaughter every year
A victim to great Ceres, when the storms
Of winter cease and now 'tis sunny spring.
Then lambs are fat, then mellowest the wine,
Sweet then is sleep, and deep the mountain shade.
Bid all the young hinds help you to adore
Ceres, and bring her honeycombs, with milk
And sweet wine mixed, and lead the auspicious lamb
Thrice round the firstfruits, while the youthful band
All jubilant attend, with lusty shout Inviting Ceres to their homes. Let none
Set sickle to the ripe corn ere he wreathe His brows with twined oaken spray, and praise Queen Ceres with rude verse and ruder dance.

Moreover, that we surely might foreknow
Hot days, and wet, and cold-compelling winds,
Great Jove ordained what warnings on her way
The monthly Moon should shew: what sign should lull
The South wind, what repeated sight should urge
The swain to drive his fatlings nearer home. 420
Straight, when the winds arise, either the sea
Rages and swells, and on the lofty hills
Are heard dry cracklungs, or the strand rolls far
Its thunderous discords, and the vocal woods
Increase their sighing. Verily the wave
Hardly forbears to whelm the curvèd ships,
When gulls fly swiftly from the open sea
And carry harsh cries shorewards, when on land
The amphibious cormorant disports, and
herns
Forsake their swamp to soar above the clouds.
Oft you shall see the stars, when wind is near,
Shoot headlong from the sky, and through the
night
Leave in their wake long whitening seas of
flame;
Oft you shall see light straw and fallen leaves
Dance in the gusts, and feathers on a pond
Join hands and play. But when the lightning
darts
From savage North, and thunder-peals resound
From East and West, then all the land’s aswim
With brimming dykes, and every mariner
Reefs his wet canvas. Never unawares
Does rain attack men: either cranes descend
From cloudland and take covert in deep vales,
Or heifers sniff the breeze with nose in air,
Or swallows circle shrieking round the pool,
And mudlark froggy chants his ancient strain.
Oft too the ant from inner sanctuaries
Brings out her eggs, wearing a narrow path.
The giant rainbow drinks, and from the fields,
With humming of interminable wings,
The rooks, an endless army, wend their way.
All kinds of sea-birds and all Asia's fowl
That probe the mudflats round Caýster's stream,
Their marshy paradise, in emulous joy
Will deluge back and wings with drenching spray;
Now you may see them run to meet the surf,
Now plunge beneath the billows, wantoning
In bathing's frolic luxury. Then the crow,
That wicked fowl, keeps calling for the rain
With all his voice, in splendid solitude
Pacing the dry sea-sand. Even at night,
Wool-carding maidens at their lamp-lit task
Foreknow the coming storm, for lo! their oil
Sputters, and mouldy fungus forms around.

When rain is past, fair days and open calms
You may no less foresee and recognise
By sure signs: for the brightness of the stars
Does not seem diminished then, nor does the moon
Appear beholden to her brother's rays;
No woolly cloudlets flit across the sky.
Nor halcyons, loved of Thetis, spread their wings
On shore to evening suns; and filthy swine
Forget to toss their loosened beds of straw.
The mists, more deeply bosomed in the vales,
Lie pillowed on the plain; from highest roof
The screech-owl sees the twilight sun to rest,
And fills the deaf sky with her vesper hymns.
High in the clear blue dome the osprey hangs:
Where makes her speedy way through spersèd air
The ciris, lo! with a rush of wings he stoops, 479
Vengeful and fierce; baffled he mounts again,
And she meanwhile cleaves faster than before
Her aëry way. Thus Nisus is avenged,
And Scylla expiates the severed hair.
Then rooks thrice and again subdue their throats
And babble softly: often revelling
In some great joy, on their aërial beds
They gossip 'mid the leaves; when showers are o'er,
So glad to see their nurseries again
And much-loved little ones. Think you that God
Has given them some spark of wit divine, 490
Or Fate some deeper insight? Hardly this.
Nay, when the wind veers and the docile clouds
Have changed their course, and from the watery South
Jove turns the dry to mist and haze to clear,  
The phases of their minds are changed: their breasts  
Conceive emotions now far otherwise  
Than when the storm-wind drove the scudding clouds;  
Hence is that rural concert of the birds  
And joy of beasts and rooks grown musical. 499

But if the fiery sun you watch, and moons  
In ordered sequence, you shall ne'er mistake  
To-morrow's hour, nor shall you be beguiled  
By nights of specious calm. When first the moon  
Recalls her truant fires, if she embrace  
Black air with misty arms, then land and sea  
Must soon expect a firmament of rain;  
And if a virgin blush suffuse her face,  
Prepare for wind; for wind she'll surely blush.  
But if at her fourth rising—for the fourth  
Gives men the wisest counsel—she is clear,  
And moves through ether with unblunted horns,  
All that same morrow and its brother days,  
Until the month be ended, will be free  
From rain and wind; sailors returning safe  
Shall pay their vows to Glaucus, Panope  
And Ino's son. The sun, too, giveth signs  
Both orient and when plunging 'neath the waves;
OF HUSBANDRY

Unerring signs accompany the sun,
Some early, some when stars begin to rise.
If e'er embosomed in a cloud at dawn
He deck his dappled orb with spots, and blear
The middle of his disc, beware of showers;
For from the deep the South wind drives amain
O'er woodland, farm and fold. When at sunrise
Through banks of cloud the scattered rays peep out,
Or when with pallid cheek Aurora leaves
Tithonus' saffron couch, ah! then the leaf
Shall hardly save the mellow grape, the hail
So madly romps upon the rattling roofs.
This, too, 'twill profit to recall, what time
The sun has crossed the heavens to his rest:
Often we notice divers wandering hues
Upon his face: blue forecasts rain; east wind
Is told by red; but if dark spots begin
To mingle with a fiery glow, then all
Will be one raging sea of wind and rain.
Let no man urge me on that night to tempt
The deep, or loose my cable from the shore.
But if the sun both bring and hide the day
With face untarnished, clouds shall fright you not;
The woods shall sway to North wind, pure and dry.
Then what the evening shadows bring, whence comes
The calming breeze that banishes the clouds,
The secrets of the moisture-laden South,
All this the sun will tell. Who dares accuse
The sun of falsehood? He it is that warns
Of dark seditions, treachery, and wars
Of hidden growth. Yea, he it was that shewed
At Cæsar's death compassion upon Rome,
Veiling in umber haze his dazzling head,
When froward mortals feared eternal night.
But at that time the earth and sea besides,
Unseasonable birds and hell-sent dogs,
Gave portents. Often Etna 'neath our gaze
Burst her great furnaces and shed her heart
O'er Cyclopean fields, a boiling flood
Of liquid rocks and solid balls of flame!
The Germans heard the din of heavenly wars;
Unwonted tremors shook the Alps; a voice 559
Of awful power rang through the silent groves;
Pale phantoms of strange aspect were espied
Through the night shadows; beasts were heard to speak,
O horror! rivers stood, earth oped her mouth,
Bronze statues sweated, ivory shed tears.
Whirling the woods away in one mad eddy,
Eridanus the king of rivers rose,
And carried steer and stall across the plains.
Nor at that time did entrails cease to shew
The gloomy threats of filaments, nor wells
To run with blood, nor high-built citadels
To echo to the nightly howl of wolves.
Never so oft before did bolts descend
From azure skies, or awful meteors blaze.
So once again Philippi's land beheld
The clash of Roman ranks, of Roman steel;
Nor were the gods displeased that twice our blood
Should glut the lean earth of Emathia
And Hæmus' broad champaign. The time will come,
I doubt not, when the farmer on those plains,
Driving his bent plough deep, will bring to light
Old weapons, rough and rusted half away,
Or strike on headless helms his heavy hoes,
And gaze in wonder on the giant bones
Uprooted from their earthy sepulchres.

O native gods and heroes, Romulus,
And mother Vesta, guardian of the stream
Of Tuscan Tiber and our Palatine,
This prince at least forbid ye not to save
A fallen generation! Blood enough
Long have we shed to purge the treachery
Of Troy's Laomedon; long have the halls
Of heaven, O Cæsar, envied us thy rule,
Vexed that thou lov'st the palms of earth, a place
Where right and wrong unseat each other, where
Wars roll unceasingly and wickedness
Assumes a thousand faces; to the plough
Due honour is denied; fields lie unkempt,
For war has stolen the husbandmen away,
And straightened all their sickles into swords.
Euphrates here, there Germany makes war, 600
And sister-cities, spurning mutual faith,
Rear adverse standards; everywhere is war,
Unrighteous war: as when the four-horse cars
Dash from their bars and seize the course; idly
Each driver holds the reins, his whirling team
Obey him not, and their will is his law.

END OF BOOK I.
BOOK II

OF TREES

Thus far of husbandry, thus far of stars
That rule the months; now will I hymn the vine,
And all the company of greenwood shrubs,
Yea, and the olive’s slowly-growing child.
Hither, O vintage-lord; here all is full
Of thy good gifts; for thee the vineyard laughs
With autumn leafiness, for thee the juice
O’erbrims the foaming vat; O god of wine,
Come hither, cast thy buskin, and with me
Imbrue thy bare foot in the virgin must.

Now firstly trees have birth in many ways:
For some by man unasked grow up apace
Quite wilfully, and overrun the plains
And winding rivers: willows hoary-leaved,
Poplars, lithe osiers and the supple broom.
But others rise from fallen seed: such are
The lofty chestnut and Jove’s forest-king,
The Æsculus, and oak of voice divine
To men of Hellas. Others from the root
Throw out a lavish undergrowth, as elms
And cherries; even the Parnassian bay
Rears her small head from deep maternal shade.
These early methods Nature gave; by these
Each bosk and shrub and holy wood grows green.

Others experience's course has found.
This nurseryman will plant a row of shoots
Torn from the weeping parent-stem; while that
Will bury logs or sharpened poles or stakes
Twice-cleft; some trees await the living arch
Of boughs depressed into their mother's soil; 30
Others demand no root: their severed tops
Are rendered to the earth and sprout anew.
Nay, e'en from fragments of the olive-trunk,
Dry timber, roots will peep; and oft we see
Tree mimic tree with debtless borrowings:
Pears change their face and grafted apples bear,
And plum-trees blush with stony cornel fruit.

Then list, ye swains, and learn the several modes
Of planting every kind, and gently lead
Wild fruits beneath your hand, that so the earth
Be nowhere idle. Mark how Ismarus
Is green with vines, how huge Taburnus wears
An olive vesture. Lend, O lend thine aid,
Mæcenas, my delight, most justly called
The chief part of my fame; spread thy swift sails
And speed with me across the vasty deep
Whereon my ship is launched. I would not wish
To reach the bounds of knowledge in my verse,
Nay, not though I possessed a hundred tongues,
A hundred mouths and voice of brass; come near
And hug the shore; the land is in our grasp;
I will not test thy patience now with myth,
Circumlocution and a prelude long.

What things by their unaided effort gain
The shores of light, rear an unfruitful head,
But proud and lusty; for productive power
Is in the soil. Yet even such, if man
Engraft or move them to a well-worked trench,
Renounce their sylvan creed and meekly take,
With careful management, what shape you please.
Yea, and the barren sucker from the roots
Will do the same, if planted out afield
And given space; now with thick leaf and bough
Its mother overshadows it and blasts
Her tender offspring and its hope of fruit.
The tree that haply springs from foundling seed
Grows slow: posterity enjoys its shade;
Apples their juicy pedigrees forget,
And starveling grapes will ripen for the birds.
All trees alike demand your toil, and all must with unstinted trouble be subdued and made to march in line. But olive-trees are better reared from stocks, from layers of vines, and Paphian myrtles from the solid wood; from suckers do men raise the hazel tough and towering ash, and poplar's leafy shade that crowned Alcides, and the acorn-bough of Jove Chaonian: e'en the lofty palm is born of suckers, and the destined pine for perils on the sea. But arbuti have walnuts grafted on their rugged boles, and barren planes bear healthy apple sprays; the chestnut blossoms on the whitening beech, the mountain ash grows hoary with the pear, and swine champ acorns in the elm-tree shade.

Nor by one method shall you graft and bud. When buds from mid-bark peep into the day and burst their slender cauls, a narrow slit is let into the swelling; then a bud of alien birth is shut therein, and taught to know the moist rind as a part of self. Or knotless trunks are opened with the axe and deeply cleft with wedges; then insert a cutting big with promise, and behold! A mighty tree, with furniture complete,
OF TREES

Goes forth to greet the sun, and stands aghast
At foreign leaves and fruit she cannot own.

Moreover, different varieties
Are found of lusty elm, lotus and willow
And Ida's cypresses; and different
Are fruitful olive-trees, Shuttles, Oblongs
And pungent Bitters; apples vary too
All through the orchards of Alcinoüs;
Nor are the pear-tree scions all the same,
Crustumian, Syrian and the Warden large.
One kind of cluster hangs upon our trees,
Another dangles from Methymna's vine;
Thasians there are and Mareotid whites
(Rich soils prefer the second, light the first),
Psithian for raisin wine, and dry Lagene,
Plotting to mock the foot and trip the tongue;
Purple and Rathripe; and what meed of
verse,
Rhætic, shall I accord thee? Strive not so
To rival aught from the Falernian stores.
There's Aminnean, very sound, to which
Tmolus and e'en the mighty Phanae bow,
And small Argitis, unsurpassed alike
For lasting qualities and flow of juice.
Nor, Rhodian, thee would I forget, so sure
To please at second course both gods and men.
Nor, Ox-grape, thee, whose teats with fullness swell.
But all the many kinds and many names
Are counted not, nor profits it to count;
He who would number them, the same would wish
To tell the tale of sand that Zephyr stirs
On Libya’s waste, or when the East wind drives
Most vehemently on the ships, to know
How many rollers reach the Ionian strand.

Not every land can nourish every tree.
Rivers are fringed with willows; alders grow
In thick morasses; rocky hills give birth
To barren mountain-ashes; myrtle-groves
Grow strongest by the shore; while Bacchus loves
An open eminence, and yews prefer
North winds and cold. Behold where men subdue
The very limits of the world, behold
The rude Gelonians in their paint, and homes
Of Eastern Arabs: to each tree its land.
Black ebony knows India alone,
Sabæans only grow the incense-spray.
Need I describe to thee the balsam-bole
Oozing sweet odours, and the berry fruit
Of ever-verdant thorn; or Ethiop groves
OF TREES

In woolly raiment soft and white, or how
The Chinese comb a silky fleece from leaves;
Of woods that hang o'er India's ocean waves,
The farthest corner of the world, whose trees
No arrow can o'ershoot, so high they soar?
Yet India's men can use the quiver well.
The citron-apple Media provides,
Blest fruit of bitter juice and lingering taste.
If e'er you fear the wicked step-dame's cup,
With poison-plants and horrid spells infused,
No help more present is, nor power so sure
To drive the deadly venom from the limbs.
The tree is huge and features well a bay,
And but that it diffuses perfume strong
Of other kind, a bay it is: its leaves
No breezes move, its flower most closely clings;
With it the Medes relieve their lung-bound sires
And tainted exhalations of the sick.

But neither Media's pageantry of woods,
Nor glorious Ganges, nay, nor Hermus' stream
Whose mud is gold, with Italy may vie;
Not Bactra, India, nor sandy world
Of rich Panchæa, incense-queen. This land
No bulls with breath of fire have ever ploughed,
Here were no teeth of hideous dragon sown,
Nor human corn-field eared with helm and spear
Stood forth: but with the wine-god's Massic dew
And pregnant crops it teems; olives and kine
Possess it and increase. The war-horse hence
Invades the plain with step superb, and hence
White flocks, Clitumnus, and huge victim bulls,
Oft sprinkled with thy hallowed stream, have led
A Roman triumph to the temple doors.
Here spring ne'er fades and summer's reign extends
To months that are not hers; twice yean the ewes,
And twice the fruit-trees into season come.
But where are cruel tigers and the tribe
Of ravening lions, where the monkshood fell
That cheats the unhappy hand? These are not found;
Nor scaly snakes so vast a train unfold,
Nor wreath so many coils into a spire.
Consider all the noble works of men:
Cities magnifical by years of toil
On sheer rocks built, with age-encrusted walls,
And stately rivers gliding underneath.
What of the higher and the lower sea,
Of giant lakes, great Larius and thee,
Benacus, with thy ocean roar and roll?
Why tell of harbours and the bar imposed
On Lake Lucrinus, and the fretful moan
OF TREES

Of angry seas, where breakers die without
And Julian waters laugh aloud within,
And where Tyrrhenic swell Avernian waves?
Rich veins of silver has our land displayed,
Rich copper-streams; with gold she flowed amain.

A race of warriors has our land brought forth,
Marsian, Sabellian, and Ligurian
Inured to ill, and Volscian spearman true,
The Decii, Marii and Camilli famed,
The sons of Scipio proved in war, and thee,
Great Cæsar, thee, who in the farthest East
With conquering arm art warding from our hills
The coward Indian. Land of Saturn, hail!

Great mother of corn and wine, great mother of men:
For thee I now essay the ancient themes
Of praise and skill, for thee I dare to ope
The sacred fountain-head and chant anew
Through Roman streets the song of Ascra's bard.\(^1\)

Now learn the genius of each soil, its strength,
Its colour and its proper fertile power.
What lands are stubborn and what hills unkind,
Possessed by gravel, thorn and lean white clay,
These glory in the tree that Pallas loves,
The long-lived olive. You shall know the place:

\(^1\) Hesiod.
Wild olives there abound and fields are strewn
With woodland berries. But a loamy land,
Rejoicing in sweet moisture, and a plain
That teems with grass and has a flowing breast,
Such as we often see from mountain-tops
Deep down, with streamlets filtering from the heights
And bringing generous ooze, a pleasant spot
That courts the South wind and is rank with fern
So hateful to the curvèd plough: some day
’Twill bring you lusty vines that run with juice,
So lavish is it with the grape, so free
With that good liquor which is poured from gold
Unto the gods, when at the altar steps
Sleek Tuscanstune the ivory and we serve
The smoking entrails on their bending plates.

But if your mind be set on horse and ox,
Or lambing-pens, or goats that blast the tilth,
Seek far Tarentum’s deeply-verdurous glades,
Or such a fair demesne as Mantua lost,
Cruelly robbed, the nurse of snowy swans
Along a reedy river: water-springs
And pasture green will never fail your flocks,
And all the grass that through a summer’s day
Your kine shall graze, one short night dewy-cool
Will bring again. But swarthy-featured soil
And greasy to the urgent plough, yet loose
And friable— for ploughing mimics this—
Is best for corn; no other surface sends
So many laden wagons toiling home.
Or that is best from which the grumbling swain
Has cleared the bushes and upset the sloth
Of venerable thickets; roots and all
He lifts the ancient strongholds of the birds. 250
Their nests forsaken up they soar; the earth,
But now unkempt, receives the plough and
smiles.
The hungry gravel of the hills, indeed,
Hardly affords to bees their humble fare,
Cassia and rosemary; and tufa rough
And chalk all honeycombed by watersnakes
Tell you that baneful serpents nowhere else
Obtain sweet food and mazy homes so free.
The land which breathes a transitory smoke
And subtle mist, and drinks the moisture in 260
To give it out at will, which clothes itself
In year-long greenery, nor spoils your steel
With rust and briny roughness, that will wreathe
A rich vine-tapestry about your elms;
Gladly it bears the olive, kind 'twill prove
Beneath your hand to flock and crooked plough.
Such wealthy Capua and the vales that lie
Beside Vesuvius till, such Clanius
Whose flood Acerræ’s desolate plains abhor.

Now learn how you may recognise your soil,
Foreknowing if ’tis loose or very stiff
(For one kind favours corn, the other wine,
The loose Lyæus and Ceres the stiff).
First scan the ground with care, then sink a well
Deep in a firm place, shovel back the earth
And try to tread it level; if its bulk
Be not enough, ’tis thin and suited best
To flocks and juicy vines; but if its home
Refuses to receive it, and the soil
Superfluously lies atop the pit,
The land is close; prepare for sticky clods
And stubborn ridges; strong must be your kine
For taming such a field. But land that’s salt
And bears a bitter name—a worthless land,
That neither bears nor hearkens to the plough,
Where grape and apple their good name belie—
Will give you proof on this wise: take you down
Close-textured baskets from the chimney smoke,
And wine-press strainers; these are trodden full
Of pure spring water and the vicious field:
The water, you shall see, will all escape
In big drops through the withy mesh; its taste
Gives no uncertain sign, for bitterness
Will twist to sorrow mouths that smiled before.
Fat land on this wise briefly we divine:
When tossed from hand to hand it never cracks,
But pitch-like to the fingers clingingly
Grows soft. A moist land makes the herbage
tall,
And is itself inordinately rich.
Ah! save me from that grossly liberal field, 300
So prone to overfeed the stripling ear!
Heavy soil needs no speech to tell its tale,
Neither does light. Black and each several hue
Promptly confess their nature to the eye.
But wicked cold is harder to detect:
Only pitch-pines and noxious yews—sometimes
Black ivy too—reveal its dark abode.

When all these things are well bethought, take
care
To bake the earth right soon; first intersect
The massy hills with trenches, first expose
The upturned ridges to the north, before
You plant the gladsome vine. A crumbling soil
Is best of all; the wind and cutting frost
And stalwart spadesman lifting right and left
The loosened acres, will effect you this.
Those men who never close precaution's eye.
First, for the training of the unwedded vines, 
Seek out a spot like that wherein they hope 
Later to plant them out, lest the young crop 
Suddenly should not own its mother new. 320 
Nay more, they note the province of the sky 
Upon the bark, that as each stood before, 
Fronting the southern heat or frigid pole, 
So may it stand again. Such influence 
Has habit on the young. But first inquire: 
Will hill or level better suit your vine? 
If flat and loamy be your tilth, plant thick; 
You shall not thereby thin the wine-god's gift. 
But if your farm is laid in steeps and slopes, 
Be free with space, and none the less take care 330 
That when the trees are set, line, path, and fence 
Shall be exactly true. As in dread war, 
When the long legion rolls its column out 
In battle order on the open plain, 
And countless ripples from the marshalled lines 
Illume the earth with twinkling sheen of bronze, 
Nor yet begins the fierce tumult, but Mars 
Uncertain wanders in the interspace: 
Line upon line let all your parallels 
Be true and equal; not for this alone, 340 
To feed the vacant fancy with the view, 
But because on no other terms will earth 
Dispense impartial strength, nor otherwise 
Will growing boughs have licence to expand.
And would you learn of me the depth of trench?
Myself would fear not to entrust my vines
To shallow furrows. But the guardian tree
Is deeplier buried in the dark earth's womb;
The æsculus chiefest, for how far its top
Stretches to heav'n, so far its roots extend
To Tartarus beneath. Therefore no storm,
No wind or swollen rain, shall rend it thence:
Stablished it is, and as the years roll on
Sees many a son and grandson pass away,
And moves not yet; on this side and on that
Its brawny arms are spread, and from the midst
Itself sustains a firmament of shade.

Let not your vineyards face the setting sun;
And plant no hazel 'mid the vines, nor choose
The topmost switches, or from highest tree
Break shoots; so closely do they love the ground;
Wound not with blunted knife the nursling vines,
Nor mix with them the woodland olive trunks:
For often to the unwary shepherd fire
Breaks forth, and lurking secretly at first
Beneath the unctuous bark, soon grasps the bole,
And climbing thence into the upper leaves
Roars mightily to heaven, and running on
Through bough and tree-top holds victorious sway.
The whole wood wallows in the flame; black clouds
Roll up in pitchy volumes to the sky.
But chiefly, if a storm upon the wood
Swoops, and the wind drives on the gathered fire.
When this befalls, recuperative power
Is gone: the knife is used, but nothing green
Can mother earth recall. Wild olive-trees
With bitter leaves do barrenly survive.

Obey no silly sage who bids you move
A country stiffened by the North wind’s breath.
For then frore winter seals the land: your plants
Are set; he suffers not the frozen root
To make its hold. The seed-time of the vine
Is when the long snake’s enemy arrives,
White bird of rosy spring; or at first chill
Of autumn, when the hot team of the sun
Has reached not winter but run summer through.
Spring showers her leafy blessings on the trees,
Spring clothes the woods; in spring the swelling earth
Demands the seed of life. Then Father Air
With fruitful rains omnipotent descends
Upon the bosom of his smiling bride,
And with her greatness mingling greatly feeds
Her teeming womb. Then pathless brakes resound
With birds in full song; cattle seek their kind
On certain days; the gravid earth brings forth,
And to warm Zephyr fields unbind their breasts;
The gentle moisture freely flows; young plants
Kiss the new suns unshrinking, nor do vines
Fear rising South winds or a flood of rain
Driven by the mighty North, but carelessly
Put forth their buds and let each leaf expand.

Thus dawned, I trow, the birthday of the world,
And kept its even way. That time was spring;
In spring the huge earth rioted; East winds
Withheld their wintry blasts, when the first beasts
Drank in the light, and man, an iron race,
First reared his head from out the stony fields,
When God first peopled woods with savage beasts,
And gemmed the sky with stars. Nor otherwise
Could infant Nature bear her travail now,
Were not so great tranquillity vouchsafed
Between the heat and cold, what time the earth
Duly enfolds new graces from above.

Now list: whate'er the seedlings that ye
plant,
Scatter rich dung and unforgotten heap
Much mould upon them, or with them inter
Rough shells or stones of porous sort, for so
The rains will creep between and subtle air
Will penetrate, and fill their hearts with joy.
There are who load the surface with a stone
Or sherd of vasty weight; these are a shield
Against intemperate rains, or when the heat
Of Sirius makes the meadows gape with thirst.

When all is safely planted, it remains
To draw the earth about the roots, and ply
Stern hoes; or deeply drive the frequent plough,
And e'en through vineyards guide the straining
steer.
Then must you furnish shafts of barkless wand,
Smooth reeds and ashen poles and stalwart
forks,
That the young plant, relying on their
strength,
May rise to mock the winds, and, climbing
higher,
Attain the topmost storey of the elm.
And while sweet childhood's bloom is on the leaves,
Spare yet their tenderness; while the vine-spray
Leaps blithely into foamless seas of air
Unbridled, unrestrained, no pruner's blade
May violate the vine; only the leaves
Must with bent finger-tips be nicely thinned.
But when with stronger stem they clasp the elms,
And skyward plunge, then clip their leafy locks,
Then lop their errant limbs: from touch of steel
They shrank before, but play the tyrant now
And sternly check the extravagance of boughs.

Next plait your fences, and let every flock
Be kept in bounds, most chiefly when the leaf
Is in its untried nonage, for beside
Fierce winter's storms and scorching summer's eye,
Wild cows and pestilent roes unceasingly
Make sport, and sheep and greedy heifers browse.
No strangle-grip of hoary cold, no heat
Of summer's heavy hand on dewless rocks,
Will mar the leaf as they, whose venomous bite
Scars deadly signatures on nibbled stems.
'Tis for no other fault that everywhere
The goat is slaughtered to the god of wine:
For this the old plays step upon the stage,
For this at cross-roads and on village greens
The sons of Theseus set a prize of wit,
And, joying in their cups, through the soft meads
Dance on greased wine-skins: yea, Ausonian swains,

Troy's children, rollick in the unlettered muse
And laughter uncontrolled, and take them masks
Of frightful mien from strips of hollowed bark,
And hail thee, Bacchus, in their jocund songs,
Whose waxen puppets dangle from the pine.
From thee, their spring, all vineyards flow anew
With juicy wealth; deep glades and echoing vales
And all whereon thy comely face has shined,
Conceive and bear. Then duly will we praise
Bacchus, with proper hymn and native lay,

And bring him cakes and flesh. Led by the horn,
At altar-step the doomèd goat shall stand,
While entrail-fatness smokes on hazel-spits.

And then the vine that other task requires
Which knows no end or fullness: every year
Twice or three times the soil is cleft, and hoes
With head reversed for ever smash the clod,
And all the trees are lightened of their leaves.
The farmer knows his rolling round of toil,
And each year sees its remeant self again.  

When the last lingering leaf has left the vine,  
And chill North robbed the woodlands of their pride,  
Then the keen swain into the coming year  
Stretches his business, and continually  
With Saturn's hook vexes the wastrel vine,  
And shapes it in the pruning.  Be the first  
To delve the ground, be first to cart and burn  
The prunings, and be first to house the poles;  
To gather in be last.  Twice in the year  
The shade assails the vine, twice weed and briar  
O'errun and choke it: both will give you toil:  
Then praise a large, but till a small demesne.  
Beside, in woods rough wands of butcher-broom,  
And on the banks the river-reed, are cut,  
And undressed withy beds demand your hand.  
Now vines are tied, trees lay the sickle by,  
And now the latest vine-dresser has sung  
His rows completed; none the less the earth  
Must slumber not; now stir the drowsy dust,  
And tell ripe bunches to beware of rain.  

But olives need no culture, nor desire  
The moonèd sickle and the clinging rake,  
When once firm-rooted they have stood the breeze.
The earth herself with curvèd fang exposed
Affords them moisture, and at plough’s desire
A load of fruitage; therefore with the plough
Rear olives plump and pleasing unto Peace.

And fruit-trees too, when once they feel their strength
And solid trunk’s stability, shoot up
Of their own power to starland, and require 510
No help of ours. Meantime through all the grove
Reign pregnancy and birth: the wild bird-homes
Are red with berries, clover-fields are shorn,
The high wood yields the pine-wood brand, and fires
Draw nourishment and shed their nightly glow.
And do men doubt to plant and lavish toil?
I need no loftier theme than lowly broom
And willows. These give frondage to the sheep
Or shade to shepherds, fences for the crops
And fodder for the honey-bee. Behold 520
Cytorus all a waving sea of box,
Pitch-groves of the Narycian pine, and fields
That knew no hoes nor any care of man.
Even the bare woods on Caucasian heights,
That savage East winds ever lash and dash,
Yield divers products; pine for ship-builders,
Cedar and cypress for the architect.
Hence farmers get the cart-wheel's smoothened spoke,
And drum-wheels for the wagons; hence the ship
Receives her archèd hull. Willows are rich
In supple wands, elms prodigal in leaves;
But myrtles and the cornel, warrior-tree,
Give sturdy spear-shafts; and the bended yew
Makes Ityræan bows; smooth linden-trees
And lathe-turned box-wood likewise take their form,
By keen blade hollowed; yea, and alders light
Speed down the roaring torrent of the Po;
And bees are known to hide their clustered swarms
In rotten holm-oak's hollow bark and bole.
Hath any gift of Bacchus proved so rich?
Bacchus has sown the cause of crime: 'twas he
That tamed the frenzied Centaurs unto death,
Rhœetus and Pholus, and Hylæus strong
Scaring the Lapithææ with brandished bowl.

O farmers all too blest, could they but know
The blessings that are theirs, for whom Earth pours
From her own breast an easy sustenance,
Remote from war's mellay, most righteous Earth!
No portals proud of lofty palaces
Pour from each room long waves of morning guests, 550
None gape at dædal door-posts tortoise-decked,
And raiment shot with frivolous gold, and bronze,
The pride of Corinth; white wool is not stained
With poisons of Assyria, nor oil
Yields its pure service to the cassia’s wiles.
But careless peace and life that knows no guile,
Profuse in divers wealth, broad lands and ease,
Grottoes and living lakes, Tempe’s cool vales,
Lulled by the low of kine soft slumber sweet
Beneath a tree, glades and the haunts of beasts,
All these they have. Youth tolerant of toil
And faring humbly, reverence for age,
Gods had in honour, these their portion are.
When Justice fled this world of wickedness,
’Twas in their midst that her last steps were seen.

Now be my chiefest prayer that the sweet Maids
Whose priest I am, and whom I greatly love,
The Muses, may receive me and instruct
In all the ways of heaven and the stars,
The sun’s eclipses and the travailings
That vex the moon; what makes the earth to shake,
What power persuades the mighty sea to swell,  
Break bounds and refluvent on himself recoil;  
Whence is that eagerness of winter suns  
To plunge in ocean, whence the long delay  
That binds the winter nights. But if the blood  
Run cold about my heart, nor suffer me  
To touch these mysteries of Nature's realm,  
Green fields and stream-fed valleys be my joy,  
Rivers and woodlands be my humble love. 580  
O for the plains, Spercheüs and the mount  
That bears the revellings of Spartan maids,  
Taýgetus! O for cool Hæmian dells!  
Leave me there canopied with endless shade.  

Happy was he whose wit availed to grasp  
The origin of things, who trampled low  
The thronging horrors of unpitying death  
And roarings of unsated Acheron!  
Blest too is he who knows the rural gods,  
Pan and grey-haired Silvanus and the Nymphs,  
Sweet sisters! He regards no lictor's rod;  
No royal robes distract his gaze, no strife  
That rends unbrothered brothers, no descent  
Of Dacian hordes from privy Danube's flood,  
Nor Rome's own turmoil and the doom that broods  
O'er other kingdoms; never pitied he  
Him that hath not, nor envied him that hath.
What fruits the branches, what the willing earth,
Freely afford, he gathers, nor beholds
State archives, ruthless laws and city broils. 600
Others may vex the treacherous firth with oars
And rush upon the sword; through palaces
And courts of kings their headlong course they hold.
One blasts with ruin town and hapless home,
Lusting to quaff the jewelled cup and sleep
On Sarra's purple dyes; another hoards
And gloats o'er buried gold. While these are rapt
With wonder at the tribune's flow of words,
Those gape and stare at peers and populace,
Rolling their frequent plaudits through the rows
Not once nor twice. Some wade through brothers' blood,
And with a laugh change all the sweets of home
For exile kingdoms 'neath an alien sky.

Meantime the husbandman with crooked plough
Has cleft the earth: hence labour's yearly meed,
Hence feeds he fatherland and grandchild small,
Hence are milch-cow and honest steer maintained.

1 Tyre.
Earth never rests: either with fruit she flows,
Or with young lambs, or with the wheaten sheaf
Beloved of Ceres: increase loads the drills
And barns are overcome. Now winter's here,
And Sicyon's berry makes the oil-press move,
The swine plod homeward acorn-sleek, the woods
Yield arbutes: many-fruited Autumn lays
Her produce down; on sunny rocks o'erhead
The vintage mellows to the ripening sun.
His darling children cling and kiss the while,
His chaste home keeps its purity, the cows
Drag udders deep, and in the meadows lush
Kids fat and bonny wrestle horn to horn.

The husbandman himself keeps holiday,
And on the greensward, round the altar fire,
Pours wine and hails thee, wine-press god; the
while
His comrades wreathe the bowl. Then on the
elm
He sets a mark, whereat with wingèd dart
His shepherds vie, and for the wrestling match
The rustic bares his horny nerve and thew.
Such was the life the Sabines lived of yore,
Such Remus and his twin; 'twas this, in sooth,
That made Etruria strong, and Rome herself
The fairest thing the world has ever seen,
Seven hills enfolded in one city wall.
Before the sceptred sway of Dictè's Jove,
Before men banqueted on slaughtered kine,  
Whose blood be on them! golden Saturn lived  
A life like this on earth. Not yet was heard  
The blare of martial clarion, not yet  
On the hard anvil loudly rang the sword.  
Lo! many laps our mares have run: 'tis time  
To loose the harness from their smoking  
crests.  

END OF BOOK II
BOOK III

OF BEASTS
BOOK III

OF BEASTS

Thee too, great Pales, and thee, shepherd-god
Amphrysus-famed, and all the woods and streams
Beloved of Lyceus will I sing.
All themes that else had laid the charm of song
On empty minds are worn: who does not know
The altars of Busiris the unblest,
And stern Eurystheus? Every bard has told
Of youthful Hylas and of Leto’s isle,
Of ivory-shouldered Pelops, charioteer,
And Hippodame. Some path must be essayed
Whereby I too may lift me from the ground
And drink Fame’s nectar from the lips of men.

I first, if life be granted me enough,
Will lure the muses from Aonia’s hill
And lead them home with me. I first will bring
The palms of Edom, Mantua, for thee,
And on the green lawn, river-bordered, build
A marble fane, where tirèd Mincio curls
His broader wanderings fringed with swaying reed.
Cæsar shall stand in midmost shrine, my god. 20
For him will I assume the victor's robe,
And, bright with Tyrian purple, by the stream
Will drive a hundred four-horse cars. All Greece
Shall leave Alpheüs and the Nemean grove,
And at my bidding strive with speed of foot
And cruel boxing-glove. Myself, arrayed
In crown of olive leafage, will bring gifts.
E'en now I joy to shed the blood of bulls,
And shrineward lead the solemn pomp, or see
How stage-fronts part and don another face, 30
And purple curtains raise the inwoven Celt.
Upon the doors an Indian battle-scene
Is wrought of solid ivory and gold,
With conquering Quirinus and the Nile
Heaving with waves of war and flowing big,
And columns haughty with the bronze of ships.
By them shall stand proud Asia's cities tamed,
Niphates beaten back, and bended bows
Of craven Parthian turning in mid-flight,
And trophies twain, the spoils of diverse foes, 40
And triumphs won on either side the sea.
There Parian stones shall live and breathe as men,
Assaracus his seed, and the great race
Of heavenly origin, forefather Tros,
And Phœbus sire of Troy. There rueful Spite
Shall quake at Furies, and the heartless stream
Cocytus, and Ixion’s tangled snakes,  
The monster wheel and ever-thwarting stone.  

Meantime the innocence of wood and glen  
All Dryad-haunted, at thy stern command,  
Mæcenas, be my quest. Without thine aid  
The mind conceives no lofty thought: arise  
And tarry not; Cithæron’s loud halloo  
Calls thee, Taÿgetus his hounds give tongue,  
Horse-schooling Epidaurus cheers, the woods  
Join voice and bellow back the louder sound.  
But soon I fain would gird myself and sing  
Of Cæsar’s burning wars, and give his name  
As many years of glory as have passed  
Since first Tithonus gat the royal line.  

Whoso aspires to win Olympian palms  
With horse and car; whoso would have his kine  
Strong to the plough, let him give special heed  
To choice of dams: a cow of savage mien  
And coarse head on a massive neck is best,  
With dewlap drooping right from throat to knee.  
Her length of body cannot be too great,  
Her scale is grand, her very foot is big,  
And ’neath her moonèd horns are shaggy ears.  
I would not spurn a mottle-white, or one  
Shy of the yoke and mettlesome of horn,  
Bull-like of visage, tall from end to end,
With tail that sweeps her footsteps when she moves.
Of timely wedlock and Lucina's toil
The fifth year is the first, the tenth the last;
The rest give neither fitness for the stud,
Nor strength for ploughing: meantime loose the males
While rampant youth is rife among the herds;
Be first to trust to Love's sweet bond your kine,
Cross strain with strain and keep the breed alive.

The fairest morns are swiftest to decay
For wretched mortals: melancholy age,
Toil, trouble and diseases follow soon,
And tyrant death snatches with pitiless hand.
Some you will aye be fain to change for other;
Then keep renewing; resupply each place
Before 'tis empty—thus you shall not lose—
And choose the herd's successors every year.

The horse requires the same selective care.
On those to which you trust the stud's renown, 90
Straight from the teat bestow your chiefest pains.
A colt of noble lineage from the first
Steps higher in the paddock and puts down
A lighter foot; he leads the way abroad,
Foremost he dares the threatening stream, foremost
He treads the untried bridge, nor starts aside
At harmless sounds. His head is carried high
And finely drawn, his back is full of beef,
His barrel short, and o'er his fiery chest
A wealth of muscle plays. (Blue roans and bays
Are good; the worst of all are whites and duns.)
Then, if he hear a distant din of arms,
He cannot rest, his ears this way and that
He turns, and snorting, with each limb a-shake,
Beneath his nostrils rolls the gathered fire.
His bushy mane he tosses to the off,
A double backbone runs between his loins,
And with firm hoof of heavy-sounding horn
He paws the earth. Of such was Cyllarus,
Whose bridle Amyclæan Pollux ruled,
Of such were those that live in Grecian song,
The pairs of great Achilles and of Mars.
Yea, such was Saturn's self, when, at the approach
Of Ops, about his equine neck he shed
His hasty mane, and, neighing as he fled,
Filled lofty Pelion with the shrilly sound.

Yet e'en so good a steed, when slow with years
Or worn with wasting sickness, keep at home,
Nor grant indulgence to his praiseless age.
The stallion waxes cold with years; in vain
He tries the ungrateful task; if to the fight
He ever comes: as, impotently strong,
A fire devours the stubbles, so he raves
Fruitlessly. Therefore shall you chiefly care
For youth and mettle: manners should come next,
And pedigree, and how each bears defeat
Or glories in the palm. Now see you not
How when the cars have leaped from prison forth,
And gripped the plain in headlong rivalry,
The young men's hopes are high; strong ecstasy
Exhausts their throbbing hearts; with whirling lash
They urge the mares and, leaning, give them rein,
While flying axles are aglow with speed?
Now on the ground they run, now borne aloft
They tread the air and rise upon the wind;
Nor tarry they nor rest; the tawny sand
Rises in cloud, and each is wet with foam
And breath of his pursuer, so intense
Their love of praise, so much they lust to win.

'Twas Ericthonius first made bold to yoke
Four steeds and stand on winning wheels at speed.
Pelethron's Lapithæ gave men the bit
And riding in a ring astride: 'twas they
Who taught the panoplied dragoon to prance.
And place his lofty steps. Each work is hard;
For each the breeder's quest is youth and fire
And keenness for the course, though that old steed
Have often pressed the routed enemy,
And name Epirus as his nursing-sire,
Or brave Mycenæ; nay, although he claim Neptune the proven founder of his line.

These wishes won, men stir themselves betimes,
And lavish care to plump with solid flesh
The chosen chief and husband of the herd.
Sweet-flow'ring grass they cut, and living streams
And corn they bring, lest to his pleasing toil
He prove unequal, and his weedy sons
Reflect the leanness of their pauper sire.
The mares themselves they stint and keep them low
With purpose: when the wonted love begins
To crave sweet intercourse, no leafy shade
Nor water-springs do they allow them now.
And oft they shake and tire them galloping
Beneath the fiery sun, when threshing-floors
Groan 'neath the heavily-pounded corn, and when
The tossed chaff floats on rising wings of West.
All this they do lest theconceptive field
Be dulled with surfeit and its furrows clogged
With idle fat, nor rather eagerly
Reach for the seed and store it deep within. 170

And now the care of sires begins to wane
Before the claims of mothers. When they roam
Heavy in foal and near their time, let none
Permit them then to bear the wagon-yoke
And draw a heavy load, or leap a lane,
And scour the fields in ecstasy of speed,
And breast the thrusting current of the stream.
In empty glades and by full-flowing brooks
They browse, where moss abounds and grassy banks
Are greenest, where the cave may shelter them
And jutting brows o’erspread their rocky shade.

Around the groves of Silarus and the mount
Alburnus, green with holm-oaks, swarms a fly:
Asilus is its Roman name, to Greeks
It is the Oestrus: most unmusical
And harsh it buzzes—lo! the frightened herds
Fly helter-skelter through the woods, the sky
Is mad with bellowings, Tanager’s dry bed
And all the forest shudders at the sound.
This fearful monster Juno used of old
For horrid vengeance and designèd scourge
Upon the Inachian heifer. Mark it well—
’Tis more ferocious in the noon-day heat—
OF BEASTS

And ward it from the pregnant cows: feed them
At sunrise or when stars lead in the night.

The calving done, your care is all transferred
To the young entry: promptly do men brand
The symbols of their race, and mark them out,
These to be reared for increase of the herd,
Those consecrate to altar-rites, and those 200
To cleave the earth and break the hummocked
plain
His upturned clods. The residue are fed
In pastures green. But those that you would mould
Unto the use and business of the farm,
Urge them in calfhood, start upon the road
Of subjugation in the plastic age,
Ere young desire has hardened into will.
First twine beneath their throats loose necklaces
Of slender willow; then, soon as their necks
Confess to servitude, unite a pair 210
By these same collars, and compel the twain
To step in unison; and often now
Let them be hitched to unencumbered wheels,
Whose burthen lightly marks the topmost dust;
But soon let beechen axles creak and groan
Under a serious weight, with brazen pole
And body all complete. Meantime mere grass,
And slender willow-leaves and marshland sedge
Will not suffice the raw young calves: for them
Your hand shall gather springing corn as well;
Nor, as our fathers did, shall you allow
The nursing dams to fill the snowy pail;
Nay! give their pretty sons an udder-full.

But if to war and bloody tournaments
Ambition leads you; if to glide on wheels
Past Pisa's stream, Alpheüs, and to urge
In Jove's own wood the wingèd chariot:
The steed's first duty is to look unmoved
On arms and doughty knights, and to endure
The cornet and the whirr of travelling wheels,
And in the stable hear the rattled bits.
Then let him learn to revel more and more
In pleasant flattery and the sounding clap
Of master's hand upon his handsome neck.

This he should dare as soon as ever weaned,
And oft in season grant his tender nose
To the soft halter, ere his strength is formed,
And yet in trembling innocence of life.
But when, three summers done, the fourth
begins,
Longe him at speed, and let him learn to time
His steps in consonance, let hock and knee
Be flexed in graceful order, and the scene
Be one of effort under governance.
Then he may call the winds to match his speed,
And scour the open seeming bridle-free,
And scarcely skim with flying hoof the sand:
As when the North wind swoops with gathered might
From Hyperborean shores, and drives apart
The dry cloud-mountains and the Scythian storms;
Then the deep corn-fields and the seedless main
A soft breath ruffles, and a tree-top wail
Sways through the woods, and lengthening rollers press
Toward the land; while on he flies, and sweeps Meadow and main together in his flight.

And now at Elis on the spreading plain
Your steed shall sweat to victory, and the foam
Fly bloody from his jaws; unless he bear
A Belgian carriage on his gentle neck
More aptly. Now you have him tamed, and now
Let his stout belly swell with rich compounds.

But tame him first, for else his haughty soul
Outgrows him, and when caught he scorns to brook
The whirling lash or heed the wolf-bit's fang.
No careful toil is such a stay of strength
As to repel the goads of blinding love,
Whether in horses or in kine you choose
To find your joy. And therefore is the bull
Banished to lonely pastures far away,
Behind tall mountains and across wide streams;
Or else kept close in paddocks full of grass.
For his fair lady withers all his strength,
And burns him with her glamour, nor allows
Visions of leaf or herb to haunt his mind,
Sweet charmer that she is, and oft constrains
Her lovers proud to try a joust of horns.
In Sila's deeps a beauteous heifer feeds:
Her suitors ply thick interchange of blows
Right furiously; black blood drenches their sides;
Horn fronting horn they lean and thrust; deeply
They roar, and woods and welkin wide resound.
Nor will the rivals share a home; the one
Beaten departs, and leads an exile's life
On unknown shores afar, with many a groan
For honour in the dust and blows received
From his proud conqueror, loves lost beside
All unavenged. Thus, looking long behind,
The monarch quits his patrimonial realms.
Most strictly then he practises his strength,
And 'mid hard rocks upon a couch unstrown
Lies all the night long, pastured on rough leaves.
And sharp-edged rushes; then he proves himself,  
And learns to mass his rage in lowered horns,  
Goring a tree-trunk, butting at the winds,  
And tossing sand in mimicry of war.  
Then with regenerate might and nerves restrung  
He rears his standard, and unheralded  
Bears madly on the foe; like as a wave  
 Begins to whiten on the open sea  
Far off, and draws its bosom from the deep,  
And rolling landward makes a thunderous roar  
Among the rocks, nor falls in lesser mass  
Than would the cliff itself; the under-deep  
Whirls hotly up and heaves the dark sand high.  

All things terrestrial, whether man or brute,  
The ocean tribes, tame beasts, gay-feathered birds,  
Rush on to passion’s pyre. Love rules them all,  
The same love; never fiercer prowls abroad  
The lioness, forgetful of her whelps,  
Nor uncouth bears deal death so wantonly  
And bloodshed through the forest; fiercest then  
Are boars, the tigress at her worst; ah! then  
’Tis ill to stray through Libya’s lonely wastes!  
Mark how the stallion shakes from stem to stern  
If he but catch the wind he knows so well.  
No man with bit or cruel lash, no rocks
Nor beetling crags, no rivers in his path
Delay him now, though mountains helplessly
Hurtle adown their flood. Lo! forth he comes,
The boar of Samnium, and whets his tusks,
And ploughs the earth before him with his hoof,
And rubs against a tree-trunk; up and down
He hardens both his shoulders to the wounds.
How fared the youth whose deeply-aching bones
Unswerving love enflamed? In blind midnight
He swims the strait distraught with violent squalls;
Over him booms the mighty mouth of heaven,
And surf-lashed boulders roar anxiety;
Though weeping parents call him back, and though
A hapless maid shall blend her death with his,
He comes not. What of Bacchus' dappled lynx?
What of the bold society of wolves
And dogs? What battles wage the peaceful stags?
In sooth the rage of mares transcendeth all:
Venus herself inspired them, when of old
The Potniad team champed Glaucus' mangled limbs.
Love leads them over Gargara and o'er
Ascanius, vocal stream; mountains are climbed
And rivers swum. Soon as the flame is set
Beneath their passionate hearts—most oft in spring,
Because in spring new heat is in their bones—
They lift their faces to the Western gale,
And stand on high rocks quaffing the light air;
And oft, unknown by stallion—wondrous truth—
But heavy with the wind, o’er crag and fell,
And down through bosomed valley-deeps they run;
On, on, not to the cradle of the Dawn,
But Boreas\(^1\) and Caurus,\(^2\) or the land
Whence Auster’s\(^3\) blackness looms into the day
And mars the face of Heaven with icy tears.
And now the Horse-rage, properly so named
By swains, sheds viscid moisture from the groin;
The Horse-rage sought of wicked stepmothers,
Who mingle herbs and prophecies of ill.

But time flies on, irrevocable time,
While we with love-lit eyes divert our course
To gaze on each delight. Hence, steed and steer!
The half of duty yet remains, to urge
The fleecy flock and shaggy nanny-goats.
Here is your scope, ye hearty husbandmen,

\(^1\) The North wind.
\(^2\) The North-West wind.
\(^3\) The South wind.
Here rests your hope of praise. And well I know
How hard it is to make mere words avail
To broaden out so strait a theme in song.
But sweet love lifts me o'er the lonely heights
Parnassian; o'er the cliffs I joy to wend,
Whence no worn pathway softly lies adown
The sward that wanders to Castalia.

Now, noble Pales, swell the louder strain.
First I ordain that sheep have herbage green
In comfortable folds, while summer's leaf
Is yet returning, and the frozen ground
Be strewn with plenteous straw and sheaves of fern,
Lest chilly ice afflict the delicate flock,
And burden them with scab and foot-rot foul.
Then these I leave and bid supply the goats
With leafy arbute and with living stream,
Also that cots shall face the winter sun,
Averse from winds to noon-day, at the time
When cold Aquarius dies his rainy death
Upon the utmost year. Nor do the goats
Deserve less care from man, for equally
Will they repay us, though high bidders buy
Milesian fleeces seethed in Tyrian reds:
They drop more young, their yield of milk is grand;
The higher drainèd udders froth the pail,  
So much more freely do the rivers flow  
When teats are pressed again. And, furthermore, 
Cinyphian goats are shorn of grizzled beards  
And bosky bristles for campaigners' use,  
And eke to clothe poor sailors on the sea.  
Woods and Lyæan heights their pasture are, 390  
The prickly briar and the mountain thorn  
Their food; the nightly fold unsought they seek,  
With little ones at heel, and laden udders  
Trailing across the threshold. Then be sure—  
Since they so seldom ask the help of man—  
To keep the ice and snowy winds away,  
And bring them stuff and bushy nutriment  
Ungrudgingly, nor keep the hay-loft closed  
All through the winter. But when zephyrs call,  
And smiling summer orders either flock 400  
To glade and mead, what time the Morning star  
First peeps, let us enjoy the cool champaign,  
While morn is young and meadows hoary-tressed,  
And flocks suck dew from every luscious blade.  
Then, soon as heaven's fourth hour has gathered  
thirst  
And sing-song crickets through the bushes swell  
Their noisy plaints, at wells and ponds profound  
The flocks from holm-oak conduits shall imbibe  
The running water. But in hottest day  
To some umbrageous dell shall they retire, 410
Where Jove's great oak, a thousand summers strong,
Spreads out his mighty arms, or where the grove,
Blackened by many a holm-oak, watches o'er
With holy shade. Then you shall give again
Pellucid founts and feed till setting sun,
When cooler evening tones the air, and glades
Grow dewy-fresh beneath the rising moon,
And halcyon hymns make shores melodious,
And copses sweeten with the blackcap's song.

Of Libyan sheep and shepherd need I tell,
And camps with only here and there a roof?
Oft day and night and all the whole month through
The flock is grazing into league on league
Of wilderness, nor knows a dwelling; far
The long plain lies. His chattels and his goods
The Libyan neatherd carries, hearth and home
And weapons, Cretan quiver, Spartan hound:
As the stout Roman in his country's cause
Beneath the tyrannous baggage presses on,
And long ere foe announced has pitched his tent
And stands in column ready to deploy.

Quite different 'tis where Scythian tribes are found,
OF BEASTS

And waves Mæotian and the Danube's stream
Rolling the golden sand in angry swirls,
And where returning Rhodope points straight
For middle North. There herds are always stalled,
And ne'er a herb is seen upon the plain,
Nor leaves upon a tree, but everywhere
 Behold the landscape masked in monster drifts
And ice so deep, seven cubits high they tower. 440
'Tis winter always, and the North-West winds
Are ever breathing cold. There, too, the sun
Never dispels at all the ghostly gloom,
Nor riding up to highest heaven, nor when
In River Ocean's roseate flood he laves
His swooping car. Upon the rapid stream
Lo! sudden films are forming, and the wave
Supports the iron tire upon its back;
Hostess of ships before, it entertains
Broad wagons now. Bronze vessels daily split,

Clothes harden on the body, liquid wine
Is chopped with hatchets, and whole ponds at once
Become a block of ice, and icicles
Stand stiff and awkward on the uncombed beard.
Meantime the air is blind with falling flakes:
Sheep die, the ox's bulky carcase stands
Embedded in the snow, the huddled stags
Are paralysed beneath the unusual mass,  
And e'en their topmost tines are hardly seen.  
These with no questing tufters1 nor with nets 460  
Or purple feather-scare do men assail,  
But, as with futile breast they strain against  
The stubborn mountain, knife them with the hand,  
Silencing their deep cries, and bear them home  
With boisterous mirth. Themselves have peace and ease  
In deep-dug subterranean lairs, and roll  
Great stacks of oak-logs and elm-trunks entire  
Upon the blazing hearths. And here with games  
They lead the night-hours, well content to quaff  
Beer and rough cider, counting them for wine. 470  
Such are the Northmen 'neath the sevenfold Bear,  
A wild ungoverned people, buffeted  
By the Rhipæan East, whose limbs are swathed  
In tawny hairiness of cattle-hides.

If wool be your desire, then thorny brakes,  
Clivers and caltrops must be done away.  
Avoid rich pasture, too, and straight select  
White flocks with downy fleeces. But the ram,  
How white soe'er his person, if there lurk

1 Hounds used on Exmoor to rouse a deer.
A black tongue in the moisture of his mouth, 480
Reject him, lest he stain with dusky spots
His children's fleeces: cast your eye around
And take another from the well-stocked downs.
With such a gift, a snowy fleece to wit,
(Dare we believe it?) Pan, Arcadia's god,
Enslaved the raptured Moon, into deep groves
Calling her; neither did she spurn the call.

But who loves milk will bring with careful hand
Lucerne and lotus freely to the pens,
And salted grass. This lures them to the streams,
And makes them stretch their udders more and hide
A salty savour in the milk they yield.
And many wean the new-dropped kid at once,
And arm its muzzle with an iron spike.
The morning milk, the milk of orient hours,
At night they press; but that of setting suns
And sombre eve the shepherd stores in cans
And takes to town at daybreak, or 'tis touched
With scanty salt and kept for winter use.

Let not your care of dogs be last or least, 500
But swell with generous whey swift Sparta's whelp,
And fierce Molossian too. With these to watch,
Your fold shall fear no robber of the night,
Nor wolf-invasion, nor shall you look round
To shrink from sneaking Spaniard's restless blade.
And often you shall course the timorous ass,
And chase with hounds the hare, with hounds the doe.
With crashes of hound-music shall you force
The wallowing boar to leap from woodland slough,
And o'er the mountains rouse a royal stag,
And with loud holloas press him to the nets.

And learn to light a scented cedar-fire
Among your stalls; and scare with reek of gum
The loathsome water-snake. Oft 'neath some fence
That long has stood, a clammy viper hides,
Fearing to meet the searching eye of heaven,
Or else the snake whose wont is to ascend
To roof-tree shadows, very curse of cows
And poisoner of sheep, enjoys a bed
Low on the ground. Now, swain, for sticks and stones;
And when with puff and hiss he means to strike,
Down him. And now his head is gone to ground
In abject flight, his middle straightens out,
And all the long procession of his tail
Falls smooth, and slow his final orbits writhe.
Mark too that most abominable snake
Of glens Calabrian, with towering breast
And rolling rings of scaly back behind,
And long lean belly spotted big and clear.
While any streams are gushing still, and
while
Lands ooze with wet of spring and rainy South,
He haunts the pools and, lurking in the banks,
Insatiate crams his hellish maw with fish
And loud-protesting frogs. But when the marsh
Is scorched, and fields are open-mouthed with heat,
Out leaps he on the dry, and ramps abroad,
Rolling his flame-shot eyes, wildly athirst
And mad with heatstroke. Ne’er invite me then
To take a restful slumber under heaven,
Or lie grass-pillowed on a bosky ridge,
When young and dapper from discarded slough
He surges, leaving young or eggs at home,
And in life’s newness rises high in air,
While three-forked fangs make lightning round his lips.

Now of diseases shalt thou also learn,
Their causes and their symptoms. Filthy scab
Plagues the poor sheep if e'er a chilling shower
Or the cold shock of winter's hoary grip
Strikes through to living flesh, or sweat dries on
Unwashen after shearing; body-cuts
From barbed brambles will induce the same.
Therefore do shepherds in sweet flowing streams
Rinse the whole flock: beneath the fall the ram
Is swamped, and floats all sodden down the stream.

And some anoint with bitter lees of oil
The fleeceless body, mixing silver scum
And natural sulphur, pitch from Ida's pines,
Wax fat with oil, squill, stinking hellebore
And black bitumen. But no help at need
Is found so strong as when a man makes bold
To lance the ulcer's crown: the mischief grows
And gathers life from secrecy, while swains,
Fearing to lay the surgeon hand to sores,
Sit asking Providence for better fate.
Nay, when the pain sinks deep into the bones,
And racks the bleater's marrow, when his limbs
Consume away with fever dry, 'tis wise
To quench the savage fires, and strike the vein
That throbs with blood atwixt the parted hoof,
As is the manner of Gelonian fierce
And the Bisaltæ, when they take their flight
To Getan deserts and to Rhodope,
And quaff milk thickened with the blood of mares.

If e'er you spy afar a sheep too fond
Of sympathetic shade, or clipping high
The charmless grasses, if she follow last,
Or in mid-pasture drop upon the plain,
And lone and last yield to the gathering night,
Take knife at once and check the fault, before
The dreadful taint creep through the heedless flock.

Not near so fiercely o'er the ocean sweep
The racing whirlwinds when they bring the storm,
As throng the plagues of cattle. And they seize
Not one, nor two, but summer-pastures whole
Without a cry, old ewes and lambs unborn;
Root, branch and all they go. He knows 'tis true
Who sees now after such a lapse of time
The soaring Alps, the Iapydian meads
Through which Timavus flows, the village walls
On Noric ridges, realms of shepherd-kings
Kingless, and glades all vast with emptiness.

Here once a grievous epidemic fell
From tainted heaven, and waxed into a blaze
With all the heat of autumn: every tribe
Of cattle and wild things was given to death;
While ponds were putrid, pastures stank of filth. The road to hell was various: fiery thirst Coursed through the veins and shrank the wretched limbs, But then the watery tide swelled in again And crumbled bone on bone into itself Till all was liquor rotten with disease. Oft in the midst of sacrificial rite And doing on of bands of snowy wool, The unslain beast 'mid waiting acolytes Fell dying. Or if priestly hand ere that Had slaughtered with the knife, no answering flame Shot from those filaments on altar laid, The prophet, asked for rede, had none to give, And knife-blades hardly reddened 'neath the throat, And sand scarce blushed with niggard splash of gore. In pleasant grass the calves are dying fast, At laden mangers their sweet souls they yield; Madness attacks the faithful dog, and swine Heave with asthmatic coughs and fight for breath Through swollen throats. The champion courser falls Joyless of racing, reckless of his food; From water-springs averse he stamps the ground Incessantly, his ears hang loose, and sweat
Breaks fitfully upon them, growing cold
As death draws near; his hide is dry and hard,
Nor yields to pressure of the kneading hand.
These are the early signs before the end.
But as the gathering distemper grows
And waxes fierce, then bloodshot eyes and breath
Deep-drawn and sometimes weighted with a groan;
Long sobs convulse the belly, from the nose
Black blood drips and the rough tongue rasps against
The obstructed throat. 'Tis time for drenching-horn
And draughts of wine, the only hope that smiled
On dying sufferers; but soon this too was turned to their destruction, and anew
The strengthened fever raged: in death's weak hour—
Heaven visit such confusion on our foes
And serve the righteous better!—they themselves tore their own limbs asunder with bare teeth.

Lo! smoking 'neath the toilsome plough the ox Falls groaning out his life, while bloody foam Falls from his mouth. The downcast ploughman goes,
The yokemate, sorrowing at his brother's death, 
Is loosed, and stiff in mid-task stands the plough 
No shade of lofty groves, no grassy leas 
Shall wake his soul, nay, nor the stream that rolls 
Purer than amber o'er its bouldered bed 
Unto the plain; but his deep flanks give way, 
Oblivion leans upon his waning eyes, 
And earthward sinks the dead weight of his neck
What help are honest service now and toil?
What profit to have turned the heavy land
With ploughshare? Yet no Massic vineyard's wealth
Nor sumptuous banquets steal their strength away:
On leaves and grass, a simple fare, they feed,
Their cups are crystal springs and leaping brooks,
And no care breaks the soundness of their sleep.

Never before, men say, among those fields
Were oxen sought in vain for Juno's rites,
And chariots drawn unto the lofty shrines
By ill-matched buffaloes. So human-kind
With painful harrows score the ground: the seed
They bury with their very finger-nails,
And up the steep hill-sides drag creaking wains
With strained necks. No wolf around the fold
Prowls thievishly, nor takes his nightly walk
About the sleeping flocks; a stronger care
Subdues him; timid does and fleeting stags
Through hound and homestead freely wander now.
Now too the wide sea's offspring, and all things
That walk his paths, are cast up by the tide,
Stark as wrecked corpses where the breaker turned;
And wondering rivers watch the seals ascend.
Safe in his tortuous lair the viper dies,
Vain stronghold; crazed with fear the water-snake
Meets death with scales on end; the very birds
From uncongenial air stricken descend
And leave life far above them 'neath a cloud.
And worse—'tis idle to give other food,
And costly cures are poison; medicine-men
Give up the fight, even Phillyrides
And Amythaon's son were helpless here.
Tisiphone the Pale comes fiercely forth
From Stygian gloom to light of day, and drives
Disease and Dread before her; every day
Her ravening head looms higher o'er the land.
With bleat and bellow of unnumbered beasts
The rivers and dry banks and mountain-sides
Mourn. Now by rank and legion she destroys, 
And in the very stalls heaps up her slain, 
All decomposing in a loathsome mess; 
Until men learn to bury them in pits 
And earth them over. For the hides are waste, 
And neither fire nor water serve to purge 
The useless flesh, and none can shear the wool 
Riddled with exudations and disease, 
Nor touch the rotten web, if web there be; 
Nay, if one tried to wear the filthy stuff, 
Burning pustules appeared, and rancid sweat 
Flowed down the noisome limbs, and very soon 
The awful fire consumed the infected frame.
BOOK IV

OF BEES
BOOK IV

OF BEES

Now hear the history of heaven-dropped honey,
A boon divine. This portion of my theme
Behold thou too, Mæcenas. I display
Heroic scenes upon a puny scale,
Great-hearted leaders and a finished frame
Of manners, aims, and social grades, and wars.
I work with little things, but passing great
Is my reward, if cruel Providence
Consents to aught and Phœbus hears a prayer.

First find a site well suited to the bees,
Where ne’er a wind has access, for the winds
Prevent the carrying of the pollen home;
And where no sheep nor mischief-headed kid
Can crumple up the flowers, nor straying cow
Shake down the dew, and crush the rising blade.
Suffer no gaudy lizard’s wrinkled back
Within the rich demesne, nor feathered foes,
The bee-eater and Procne,¹ finger-marked
With blood upon her bosom; these will deal

¹ The swallow.
Destruction everywhere, the bees themselves 20
They catch and bear, sweet meat for savage brood.
But crystal springs and lakelets mossy-green,
And tiny rivers slipping through the grass—
Make these your own; and let a palm-tree tall,
Or great wild olive, shade the bees' front door;
That when their kings lead forth the early swarms,
First-fruits of spring, and new-born from the comb
Young bees are playing; then a friendly bank
May woo them to take refuge from the heat,
Or tree persuade them to enjoy its shade. 30
Into the middle, be the water still
Or flowing free, cast willow logs cross-wise,
And massy boulders, that no saving bridge
May fail them for the spreading of their wings
To summer suns, if Eurus,\(^1\) as they pause,
Have damped or plunged them headlong in the tide.
All round let cassia green and odorous thyme,
And realms of heavy-scented savory
Bloom, and sweet nurseries of violets quaff
The quickening fountain. But the hives themselves,
Whether you have them sewn of hollow bark,

\(^1\) The East wind.
Or whether plaited of tough osier-wands,
Need narrow inlet-holes: for winter's cold
Congeals the honey, and again the heat
Softens it all to juice. Bees have to fear
Both powers alike, nor do they without cause
So keenly plaster little chinks with wax
And fill up cracks with propolis and flowers,
And store for this same service a cement
More holding e'en than birdlime and the pitch 50
Of Phrygian Ida. Often too in holes
Scooped out, so runs belief, beneath the ground
They keep warm house, and may be found deep down
In hollow rocks and cavities of trees.
Yet give them help, smear o'er their draughty cribs
A muddy coating warm and smooth, strew leaves
Lightly atop; permit no yew-tree near,
Nor burn red crabs upon the hearth close by;
And 'ware the deep morass and stinking mire,
Or place where hollow rocks alive with sound 60
Catch shouts and send their echo bounding back.

Now when the golden sun has put to rout
Winter, and chased him 'neath the earth, with light
Opening the summer sky, forthwith the bees
Range wood and glade, make boot upon gay flowers,
And lightly sip the surfaces of streams.
Returning glad with some mysterious joy
They brood o'er grub and cell; and cunningly
Are new combs wrought and clammy honey formed.
So when you see them streaming forth, a swarm,
And swimming up through summer's liquid blue
To starland; when before your charméd gaze
Their dark host lengthens out upon the wind,
Watch them: they always make for leafy bowers
And running waters. Hither follow them
And sprinkle perfumes that I shew you here,
The waxflower's humble stalk and pounded balm;
Clash cymbals too and make your kettles ring:
Behold, all uncompelled they occupy
Their scented chamber, of their own sweet will
They dive, as ever, deep into their nest.

But if for war they issue forth—for oft
Tumultuous enmities possess two kings—
Long ere the fight you shall foreknow the host,
Hearts brave and beating fiercely with the joy
Of coming battle; for a martial strain
OF BEES

Of brazen clarion hoarsely chides the slow,
And sounds are heard that mock the broken voice
Of trumpets: in and out, a vibrant mass
With wings a-spin they hasten, whetting stings 90
Upon their beaks and bracing every thew;
Then round the kings' own royal palace doors
They cluster, calling loudly for the foe.
So when a fair spring day and cloudless field
Have blessed them, out they come: in highest heaven
They rush together with a roar; the twain
Roll into one great ball and headlong fall.
Not thicker pelt the hailstones from the sky,
Not thicker rains the mast from shaken oak.
The kings, proudwinged between the fighting lines,
Roll mighty thoughts within so strait a breast,
Each constant not to yield till of the twain
One sees the rearward of his routed foes.
This stirring enterprise, these doughty deeds—
One little dash of dust, and all is stilled!

But when you have the leaders both recalled
From battle, put the baser one to death,
That he, mere spendthrift, cumber not the ground,
And let the better wear his crown alone.
One will be rough, with glittering spots of gold;
For lo! two kinds: this one of noble mien
And ruddy-scaled and bright; that slatternly,
Unkempt, and grovelling and corpulent.
Two types of kings, two also of the race:
One gross and horrid, such as may remind
Of wayfarers who from a cloud of dust
Thirsty emerge, and spew the cloying dirt
From drouthy lips; the other shines and gleams,
All starred with even points of purest gold.
This is the better stock, sweet honey hence
Your hands shall strain at proper time of year,
Nor only sweet, but liquid-clear as well,
And sure to tame the harshness of the grape.

But when the swarms play aimless round the sky,
And spurn the combs, and leave their houses cold,
Keep their light heads from such frivolity.
Nor is this hard: just pinion both the kings;
While these remain, not one will dare to rove
The heaven’s high seas or move his flag from home.
Let gardens lure with breath of saffron bloom,
And lord Priapus, child of Hellespont,
Keep guard with willow club for thief and bird.
Who minds such things must carry thyme himself,
And pine-trees from the hills, and plant them wide
Around the colony, himself must wear
His hands with stubborn toil, himself must set
Shrubs that will bloom, and spread the genial rains.

Even I, were I not shortening my sail
On labour's utmost confines, hasting now
To turn my prow to land, would haply sing The art that makes rich gardens show their wealth,
The rosaries of Paestum twice in bloom,
How happy endives gulp the stream, whose banks
Rejoice in parsley green, how cucumbers Writhe through the grass, and nobly run to paunch.
Nor had I failed to hymn the arching limbs Of bear's-breech and late-flowering daffodils, Shore-loving myrtles and the ivy pale.

I mind me once how, 'neath the soaring towers Of proud Æbalia, where Galæsus' stream, Dark-flowing, gives the golden tilth to drink, I saw an ancient man: from Corycus
He hailed; a few waste fields were all his farm.
No plough could make them bear, they fed no beasts,
Nor were they civil to the god of wine.
Yet leek and lentil sparse amid the scrub,
With lily borders, vervain, poppies nice,
His pride in these was regal wealth to him.
When darkness drove him to his hut, his board
Groaned 'neath a feast unbought; he e'er was
first
To pluck the vernal rose, the autumn fruit,
And when with sombre winter's lingering cold Rivers were bridled and rocks splitting still,
He would be gathering the silken tresses
Of hyacinth betimes, with chiding speech
For loitering warmth and west winds all too late.
And so with fruitful hive and frequent swarm
He first was rich; 'twas he that earliest drew
The exuberant honey from the shrunken comb;
Lime-trees he had and most luxuriant pines,
And what his fruit-trees promised in the flower,
The same in autumn fully formed they bore.
Also late elms he planted out in line,
And pears exceeding hard, and sloe-trees too
Now red with plums, and planes affording shade
Already for carousals. But myself
Unfriendly Time forbids to treat of these:
I leave them here for later lips to sing.
OF BEES

Come now, I will describe the character
That Jove himself upon the bees impressed; 180
What wage they won when, following the sweet
Clang of Curetan bronze, in Dicte's cave
They fed the King of Heaven. For they alone
Share common rights in city, house and child,
And live beneath the majesty of law;
To home and country they alone are true,
And, mindful of the winter soon to come,
Work hard in summer, to the common store
Contributing their gains. For some preside
O'er getting of the food, and duty-bound 190
Are busy in the fields; others indoors
Fix tears of daffodils and tough bark-glue
For bases to the combs, then hang thereto
The sticky wax; and some escort abroad
The grown-up sons, the city's hope and crown;
And others pack the honeyed excellence
Close, with pure nectar plumping every cell;
And some by lot are warders of the gate,
And scan the clouds in turn and watch for showers,
Or else relieve home-comers of their load, 200.
Or all unite and chase the lazy drones
Across the border. On the hot work runs,
And fragrant combs are redolent of thyme.

When the Cyclopes swiftly forge the bolts.
From yielding ore, some draw and drive the wind
With bull’s-hide bellows, some in cisterns plunge
The hissing bronze, while Etna groans beneath
The anvil’s weight; with rhythmic rise and fall
They ply as one man their tremendous arms,
Turning the metal with strong pincers’ jaws; 210
So, to compare the little with the great,
A natural love of property doth urge
The bees of Cecrops, each in office meet.
The old have town to keep and comb to fence
And dædal chambers to construct; the young
Fly homeward late and weary, heavy-breeched
With thyme; on arbutus beside they feed,
Grey willow, ruddy crocus, cassia,
And sumptuous lime and umber hyacinth.

One rest is set for all, one time of toil: 220
At dawn they hasten out, none loiter then;
Again when eve has warned them to depart
From meadow-pasture, then is shelter sought,
Then body’s wants supplied; buzzings begin,
And murmured vespers ring round porch and door.
After, when chambers have them safe at rest,
Silence attends them into night, and sleep,
The sleep they love, broods o’er their tired limbs.
They go not, when rain threatens, far afield,
Nor trust the sky when East grows boisterous,
But, courting safety 'neath the city walls,
Sip water there and make short journeys thence;
And oft, like yachts which cheat the unsteady wave
By ballasting with sand, they lift small stones
To poise them through the unsubstantial cloud.

'Twill surely wake your wonder to observe
How bees heed not the joys of sex, nor yield
To love's soft pleasures, travelling with child,
But cull their progeny with lips unwed
From happy leaf and herb; unwed a king
And little citizens they resupply,
And give new life to hall and waxen realm.
And oft in wandering o'er the cruel flints
They fray their wings, and joyfully lay down
Burden and breath together; so intense
Their love of flowers and honey's glorious toil.
And so, though after such a narrow lease
Death comes (for seven short summers span their life),
Yet aye the race endures: through year on year
Son, sire and grandsire pass, and fortunes stand
Unchanged. And more: not e'en great Lydia,
Egypt, Hydaspes or the Parthian tribes
So venerate their king. The sovereign safe,  
One mind rules all. Bereave the bees of him,  
And social bonds are snapped, with their own jaws  
They rend the honeyed fabric, and themselves  
Tear down the waxen storeys of the comb.  
He guides the labourers, all worship him  
And throng about him with innumerous hum  
Closely, and often raise him on their backs  
And hurl their bodies to the fight, and seek  
A gallant martyrdom amid the blows.

Following signs and instances like these,  
Some testify that bees possess a share  
Of the World-Spirit and the Mind Divine.  
For God, they say, is immanent in all,  
Land, sea and sky's immensity; from Him  
All flocks and herds, wild nature and mankind,  
Each at their birth, draw down their ghostly lives;  
Then all unto the same are rendered back  
At dissolution, nor give room for death,  
But float up living to the starry heights,  
And duly there assume the astral form.

Whene'er you break into their little home  
And filch their hoard, first with a water-draught  
Rinse face and mouth, and smoke the bees away.
OF BEES

Twice do men gather in the pregnant combs,
Twice cometh harvest: when Taýgete,
The Pleiad, shews her comely cheek to Earth,
And spurns with backward heel the ocean stream;

Or when she flies before the watery Fish,
And drops sad-featured into winter's wave.
Their rage is boundless: when provoked they breathe
Poison into their bites, and leave their stings
Deep buried in the veins, and in the wound
Lay down their very souls. But if you fear
Cold winter's rigour, and are provident,
And have compassion on their bruised hearts
And shattered fortunes, never doubt e'en then

To fumigate with thyme and cut away
The empty cells. For oft the combs are gnawed
By undetected newts, and cockroaches
That tabernacle in the darkest nooks,
And drones that laugh at honest toil, and reap
Where others sowed; or hornet rough and rude
Invades and scorns the impotent defence,
Or maggots ravage, or Minerva's hate,
The spider, nets the door with gaping mesh.
The more they lose, the harder will they strain
To build anew the ruin of their race,

Loading the flowery garners that they weave.
But if, since nature e'en on bees has laid
Our troubles, with the sorrows of disease
Their bodies pine, the symptoms will be plain:
The sick change colour, visages are marred
With hideous leanness; lo! they carry out
The light-forsaken corpses, and perform
Death's melancholy rites; or haply hang
Linked foot in foot before the entrances,
Or stay within and close the wicket, all
310
Stupid from want and overpowered with cold.
Then buzzings deepen in long monotone,
As the cold South wind moans through shuddering woods,
As vexed seas roar when broken waves recoil,
As blaze in prisoned furnaces the fires
Devouringly. Here will I counsel thus:
Burn scented galbanum, and minister
Through reeden conduits honey, coaxing them
And cheering sufferers to the wonted food.
'Twill also help to mingle pounded galls,
320
Dried roses, must boiled thick with liberal fire,
Or raisins from the Psithian vine, and thyme
Cecropian, and the pungent centaury.
The meadows know a flower, yclept by swains
"The starwort": 'tis an easy one to find;
For from one root it rears a mighty forest.
Its disc is gold; its many-petaled fringe
Pale purple shadowed with dark violet.
Often the altars of the gods are decked
With chaplets wreathed of it; 'tis rough to taste;
In sheep-clipped dells and near the winding stream
Of Mella shepherds gather it. Take thou
And seethe the roots in fragrant wine, and serve
Full baskets in the doorway of the hive.

But if a man lose his whole stock at once,
Nor have wherefrom to found another line,
Let me declare the famed discovery
Of Arcady's bee-lord; how oft ere now
Kine have been slain and from their putrid gore
A swarm had birth. I will derive the tale,
And carefully unroll it from the source.
Where Pella's happy-starred Canopians dwell
Beside the overflow of standing Nile,
And ride in painted shallops round their farms;
And where the country feels the leaning side
Of quivered Persia; and the rushing stream,
Seven-mouthed at last, that travels all the way
From dark-faced Indian, spreads its fruitful mud
And blackens Egypt into living green:
All dwellers there trust in this art alone.
They choose a little nook all ready-cramped
To meet the purpose, roof it straitly in
With crouching tiles, and closely press the walls;
Then add four windows, one for every wind,
Catching the light aslant. A steer is sought
Whose horns are curling from a two-years' brow;
His nostrils twain and portal of his breath,
How hard soe'er he do resist, are blocked;
Then clubbed to death, his flesh, with hide entire,
Is pounded to a jelly. Thus confined
They leave him, placing fresh-plucked cassia
And thyme beneath his flank. The deed is done
When earliest zephyrs crisp the idle stream,
Ere flowering meadows blush with various hue,
Ere nesting martins prattle 'neath the eaves.
Meantime, within the warm decaying bones
The fretful humours rise, and living things
In wondrous wise, mere legless trunks at first,
Then dight with buzzing wings, swarm to and fro,
And clutch the thin air more and more, until
They volley forth like showers from summer clouds,
Or as the leaping bow-strings pour the arrows
When Parthian skirmishers invite the charge.

What god, ye Muses, forged for us this art?
Whence sprang its venturous trial? Thus, ye say:
The shepherd Aristæus lost his bees
Through want and sickness, so the fable runs,
OF BEES

And, from Peneian Tempe journeying,
Stood at the holy river's distant source
With many a sigh and tear, and with these
words

Prayed her that bare him: "Hearken, mother
mine,
Cyrene, mother, who inhabitest
These surging deeps, wherefore of seed divine—
If Thymbra's Phœbus gat thy son indeed—
Barest thou me the enemy of fate?
Whither hath fled thy love of me, and why
Didst bid me hope for heaven? Lo! even this,
The jewel of my mortal life, wrought out
Through careful culture of my farm and fold
And manifold experience of toil,
I leave, even I, thy son. Then loose thy hate:
Root up with thine own hand my blossoming
trees,
Bring cruel fire upon my stalls, consume
My harvests, burn my seedling crops, and hurl
The brutal axe upon my darling vines,
If thus thou'rt wearied with all praise of mine."

But chambered deep beneath the watery dome
His mother heard. Around her sate the Nymphs,
Spinning fine fleeces, full-hued, glassy-green,
Drymo, Ligea and Phyllodoce,
And Xanths, whose bright tresses as a stream
Fell o'er their glistening necks; Nesæa too, Spio, Thalia and Cymodoce; Cydippe and gold-haired Lycorias, The one a maid, the other newly proved Beneath Lucina's yoke; and Beroë And sister Clio, daughters of the Sea, Gold-girdled both and swathed in painted fells; Ephyre, Opis, and Deiope From Asia's meadows; and swift Arethuse, 410 Her arrows now laid by; while in their midst Clymene told of Vulcan's idle pain, And Mars's treachery and stolen sweets, And all the thronging love-joys of the gods From Chaos on. As to the enchanted maids Down from the spindles streamed the downy tasks, Again there sounded in his mother's ears The grief of Aristæus: all the Nymphs Were sore amazed in their glassy thrones. But, bold before her sisters, Arethuse 420 Thrust out her golden head above the wave Spying, and spake afar: "Cyrene dear, Not vain thy fright at such a grievous cry; Thy very son, whom thou dost chiefly love, Stands by the wave of Father Peneüs Weeping, and calls thee cruel by thy name." To whom his mother, thrilled with strange dismay:
"Come, lead him unto me; 'tis right for him
To touch the thresholds of the gods." There-
with
She bade the abysmal stream stand wide
apart
And give him passage. Him the obedient
wave,
Bellying into mountain form, encircled,
And took into its bosom vast, and sent
Beneath the river. And admiring now
His mother's palace and her watery realms,
And lake-including caves and booming groves
He fared, and at the deep's tremendous pulse
Astounded, saw in diverse quarters all
The rivers gliding 'neath the mighty earth,
Phasis and Lycus, and the fount wherefrom
Profound Enipeus gushes into light,
The source of rocky-roaring Hypanis
And Mysian Caïcus, and whence flows
Sire Tiber and the Anio's stream, and he,
Bull-visaged and with twin horns gilded o'er,
Eridanus, the fiercest flood that rolls
Between fat seedlands to the gleaming main.
When to the chamber ceiled with stalactites
He gat him, and Cyrene knew her son
His empty tears, her sisters meetly bring
Pure limpid founts and napkins fine and soft;
Some spread in turn rich victuals, and set out
Full flagons, while the altars reek with fume
Of Arab incense-fires. Then quoth Cyrene:
"Take beakers of the Lydian wine and pour
To Ocean." Saying thus, she prayed herself
To Ocean, sire of all things, and the Nymphs,
Sisters, whereof a hundred keep the woods,
A hundred keep the rivers. Thrice she drenched
The blazing hearth with liquid nectar, thrice 460
The flame shone roofwards and shone back again.

Cheering his heart with this herself began:
"In Neptune's realm, 'neath the Carpathian
wave,
There dwells a seer, blue Proteus, who with
team
Of fishy steeds, two-footed, travels o'er
The vasty deep. He now revisiteth
His own Pallene and Emathia's ports.
We Nymphs and, yea, e'en Nereus full of years,
Do homage to him; for he knoweth all,
What was and is and what is soon to be; 470
'Twas so that Neptune willed, whose monstrous
herd
Of ugly sea-cows 'neath the surge he feeds.
Capture him first with chains, my son, that so
He may unfold the cause of this disease,
And give thee hope of weal; for without force
OF BEES

He gives no tittle of advice, nor him
Shalt thou with praying soften; capture him
And force upon him fetters shrewd and sure:
With these his ruses shall be turned to nought.
But I myself, 'neath hottest noonday sun,
When pastures thirst and cattle seek the shade,
Will guide thee to the ancient sire's retreat,
Whither he hies him weary from the wave,
That as in sleep he lies thou mayst attack
Full easily. But when thou hast him gripped
With hand and chain, then divers beastly shapes
Will mock thy power. For he will suddenly
Turn into bristled boar or tigress dire,
Scaled dragon or a tawny lioness,
Or crackle sharply into flame, and so
Elude thy bonds, or into water glide
And thinly ooze away. As oft as he
Change him to every shape, so oft do thou
Tighten the clasping fetters, till his limbs
Assume that form wherein thou sawest him
When sleep's beginning lightly hid his eyes."

She spake, and shed ambrosia's liquid scent,
Steeping her son's whole being in the fume;
O'er his unruffled hair a sweet breath moved,
And buxom vigour leaped into his limbs.
Scooped in the hollow of a mountain's side
A long cove lies, where many a wind-borne wave
Drives all its length and crumbles far within; 'Tis matchless anchorage in time of stress.
Proteus himself is wont to lurk within,
Behind a massive boulder. Here the Nymph
Within a sunless alcove hid the youth,
While she herself amid a cloud afar
Stood secret. Now the bane of thirsty Ind,
The savage Dog-star, blazed, and th' ardent
Sun
Had drunk the middle of his aëry course;
Parched was the herb, and with the growing heat
The hollow dry-lipped river-beds were baked
Down to the mud: when Proteus from the waves
Came up to seek the cavern that he knew.
Round him the great sea's dewy offspring frisked,
Scattering wide the bitter brine; the seals
Sprawled into sleep at random on the beach.
He, like some watcher of a mountain fold,
When evening brings the calves from pasture home,
And wolves wax keener at the bleat of lambs,
Sate him amid them on a central rock
And told their tale. When Aristæus saw
His chance, scarce suffering age to lay to rest
Its weary limbs, rushed on him with a shout,
And forced the handcuffs on him as he lay.
He, unforgetful of his wizardry,
Changed into every kind of marvel, fire,
Dread beast and flowing stream. But when his
   guile
Found no escape, he sought himself again
Baffled, and lastly spake with human lips:
"Presumptuous youth, pray, who hath bidden
thee
Enter my courts? What wouldest thou from
here?"
But he replied: "Proteus, thou, thou dost know,
Nor canst deceive me aught; so cease thy shifts.
By divine precept led I came to ask
A prophet's rede for fortunes in distress."
He spake and ceased. Thereat, 'neath hard
   constraint,
Rolling his burning eyes of lustrous grey
And gnashing on him grievously, the seer
Thus loosed his tongue to prophecy at last:

"Vengeance divine pursues thee; great the
crime
That thou dost purge: far short of thy deserts
These penalties, unless Fate interpose,
Unhappy Orpheus urges on thee, wroth
To madness at the stealing of his bride.
For she, poor doomèd girl, in headlong flight
Along the rivers to escape from thee,
Saw not before her in the herbage tall
A monstrous hydra, tenant of the banks. 550
But Dryad maids, boon comrades of her age,
Crowned with their cries the lofty hills; sorrowed
The peaks of Rhodope and high Pangæa,
Thrace, land of Mars, and Hebrus, Getæn tribe,
And Actæ’s Orithyia. He himself,
Solacing love’s despair with hollow lyre,
Sang ‘Ah! sweet wife, sweet wife!’ from dawn till eve,
From dawn till eve lone on the lonely strand.
E’en Tænarus’ jaws, the lofty gates of Dis,
And the black grove replete with dreadful night
He entered, and sought converse with the dead,
And the awful king, and hearts that never bend To human prayers. But, startled by his song,
From lowest mansions of dark Erebus Came subtle shades and light-forsaken wraiths,
As myriad birds that nestle in the leaves Countless, when evening or a wintry shower Has driven them from the mountains: mothers and men,
And great-souled heroes who have lived their lives,
And boys and unwed maids, and youths whose pyre
Burned in a father's and a mother's sight;
Round whom the swart mud and the loathly reed,
And slow unlovely welter of Cocytus
As fetters lie, and nine times interfused
Styx wardeth them. Even inmost Tartarus,
Death's very shrine, e'en the Eumenides,
Their hair with blue snakes broidered, saw and feared,
And Cerberus held his triple mouth agape,
And stillèd winds made Ixion's wheel to stand.
Now he had turned his steps and safely passed
All danger, and restored Eurydice
Was coming to the outer air, behind
Following,—for so Proserpina decreed—
When sudden madness seized her thoughtless spouse,
Sin pardonable sure, could Hell condone:
He stood, and 'neath the very shores of light,
(Alas for memory and for mind's control!)
Looked back on his Eurydice. Poured out
Was all his toil, broken the mutual bond
Given by the lord inexorable, and thrice
The Avernian waters rumbled through and through.
'Orpheus,' she cried, 'what frenzy hath undone
Thee and thy wretched wife? Lo! back again
The cruel Fates are calling me, and sleep
Hideth my swimming eyes. And now farewell.
Unfathomed night enfolds me, backward borne,
Stretching, not thine, my helpless hands to thee.'
She spake, and from his vision suddenly,
Like smoke that mingles with the unbodied air,
Fled sheer away; vainly he clutched the dark,
Longing to speak of many things beside:
She saw him nevermore: Hell's ferryman
Forbade to cross the watery bar again.
What should he do, and whither should he fly,
His wife twice torn from him? Could words,
could tears
Be found to melt the powers that rule the dead?
Coldly she floated in the Stygian barge.
For seven long succeeding months, 'tis said,
'Neath soaring crags by Strymon's lonely wave
He mourned, and to the cold stars told his grief,
With oaks and charmèd tigers in his train.
As when the sorrowing nightingale bewails
Her stolen nestlings in the poplar shade;
The which some brutal churl unfeathered saw
And dragged them from the nest: the live-long night
She mourns, and sitting on a bough repeats
Her song of agony, and far and wide
OF BEES

Makes heard the burden of her piteous tale. No love, no wedlock bent his soul again. Alone he roamed the Hyperborean ice,

The snowy Tanaīs and regions aye
Unwidowed of Rhipæan frost, wailing For lost Eurydice and gifts of Dis
Made giftless; but offended by his faith,
Ciconian ladies in a festal night,
Revelling in the Bacchanalian rout,
In fragments rended him and strewed his limbs
The wide fields o'er. Torn from its marble neck
Œagrian Hebrus bore the head adown
The middle of his flood, and as it rolled

The cold tongue and the orphan voice were crying,

'Eurydice, ah, poor Eurydice!'
'Eurydice,' with fleeting breath they called,
And all the way the banks gave back the name."
Thus Proteus spake, and deeply dived away;
And where he dived the bubbles rose and foamed
Around the wreathèd splash.

Not so Cyrene;
For she unprayed made answer to his fear:
"Son, cast away thy melancholy mood.
Here is the cause of thy disease, for this
The Nymphs with whom she used to thread the dance
In the high groves, did send upon thy bees

That miserable doom. Hold out thy gifts
And sue for peace and pardon; supplicate
The gracious Dell-Nymphs, who will hear thy
vows,
And grant forgiveness, and forsake their ire.
But firstly in meet order I will tell
The method of thy prayer. Choose out four bulls
Unblemished, passing large, from thine that graze
The heights of green Lycaeus; add to these 650
Four heifers never humbled to the yoke.
Four altars at the goddesses' high fanes
Create for them, and from their throats let fall
The holy blood-stream, and the carcases
Leave in a shady grove. But afterwards,
When the ninth morning hath unveiled her brows,
Lethæan poppies, death-gifts, thou shalt send
To Orpheus, and a black-wooled sheep shalt slay,
Then seek the grove once more and sacrifice
A cow-calf to the appeased Eurydice.” 660
He lingers not, but swiftly carries out
His mother's precepts: to the shrine he fares,
And rears the altars four and leads four bulls
Unblemished, passing large, and adds to these
Four heifers never humbled to the yoke.
When the ninth morning has unveiled her brows,
He sends death-gifts to Orpheus, and once more
Visits the grave. Here suddenly they see
A wondrous prodigy: within the kine,
Throughout the molten flesh, are buzzing bees;
From bursten ribs they pour, and trail in clouds
Endless, and now upon a tree-top swarm,
And hang a cluster from the drooping boughs.

All this of tillage and the care of beasts
And trees I sang, when mighty Cæsar's arms
Were thundering o'er the deep Euphrates' tide,
And when he gave the willing peoples law,
Victorious, and essayed the path to heaven.
In those stern days 'twas sweet Parthenope
Nurtured me Virgil, glorying in the toil
Of peace inglorious, while with shepherds' lays
My muse held dalliance, and youthful-bold
I sang thee, Tityrus, in the beech-tree shade.
"Optima quaeque dies miseris mortalibus ævi
Prima fugit."

The fairest morns are swiftest to decay,
   Soon hushed the babblings of their tender hours,
   Sullied the bee's clear wing, faded the flowers,
And Now rides o'er the grave of Yesterday.
But Memory's treasures shall not pass away,
   Nor shall Time turn her sweetness into sour;
   Though castles crumble 'neath his wasteful power,
Fame weaves the amaranthine wreath of bay.
And I, whose barbarous tongue makes bold to sing
   The song of Mantua, glorying to fulfil
   Inglorious leisure lent by body's ill,
Lay down my task, but not my glorying.
   I pass; but Mantua's reed shall murmur still,
And in rapt ears ambrosial music ring.

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