

BOOK VI.

ARGUMENT.

THE EPISODES OF GLAUCUS AND DIOMED, AND OF HECTOR AND ANDROMACHE.

The gods having left the field, the Grecians prevail. Helenus, the chief augur of Troy, commands Hector to return to the city, in order to appoint a solemn procession of the queen and the Trojan matrons to the temple of Minerva, to entreat her to remove Diomed from the fight. The battle relaxing during the absence of Hector, Glaucus and Diomed have an interview between the two armies; where, coming to the knowledge, of the friendship and hospitality passed between their ancestors, they make exchange of their arms. Hector, having performed the orders of Helenus, prevails upon Paris to return to the battle, and, taking a tender leave of his wife Andromache, hastens again to the field.

The scene is first in the field of battle, between the rivers Simois and Scamander, and then changes to Troy.

Now heaven forsakes the fight: the immortals yield
To human force and human skill the field:
Dark showers of javelins fly from foes to foes;
Now here, now there, the tide of combat flows;

While Troy's famed streams, that bound the deathful plain
On either side, run purple to the main.

Great Ajax first to conquest led the way,
Broke the thick ranks, and turn'd the doubtful day.
The Thracian Acamas his falchion found,
And hew'd the enormous giant to the ground;
His thundering arm a deadly stroke impress'd
Where the black horse-hair nodded o'er his crest;
Fix'd in his front the brazen weapon lies,
And seals in endless shades his swimming eyes.
Next Teuthras' son distain'd the sands with blood,
Axylus, hospitable, rich, and good:
In fair Arisbe's walls (his native place)(161)
He held his seat! a friend to human race.
Fast by the road, his ever-open door
Obliged the wealthy, and relieved the poor.
To stern Tydides now he falls a prey,
No friend to guard him in the dreadful day!
Breathless the good man fell, and by his side
His faithful servant, old Calesius died.

By great Euryalus was Dresus slain,
And next he laid Opheltius on the plain.
Two twins were near, bold, beautiful, and young,
From a fair naiad and Bucolion sprung:

(Laomedon's white flocks Bucolion fed,
That monarch's first-born by a foreign bed;
In secret woods he won the naiad's grace,
And two fair infants crown'd his strong embrace;)
Here dead they lay in all their youthful charms;
The ruthless victor stripp'd their shining arms.

Astyalus by Polypoetes fell;
Ulysses' spear Pidytes sent to hell;
By Teucer's shaft brave Aretaon bled,
And Nestor's son laid stern Ablerus dead;
Great Agamemnon, leader of the brave,
The mortal wound of rich Elatus gave,
Who held in Pedasus his proud abode,(162)
And till'd the banks where silver Satnio flow'd.
Melanthius by Eurypylus was slain;
And Phylacus from Leitus flies in vain.

Unbless'd Adrastus next at mercy lies
Beneath the Spartan spear, a living prize.
Scared with the din and tumult of the fight,
His headlong steeds, precipitate in flight,
Rush'd on a tamarisk's strong trunk, and broke
The shatter'd chariot from the crooked yoke;
Wide o'er the field, resistless as the wind,
For Troy they fly, and leave their lord behind.

Prone on his face he sinks beside the wheel:
Atrides o'er him shakes his vengeful steel;
The fallen chief in suppliant posture press'd
The victor's knees, and thus his prayer address'd:

"O spare my youth, and for the life I owe
Large gifts of price my father shall bestow.
When fame shall tell, that, not in battle slain,
Thy hollow ships his captive son detain:
Rich heaps of brass shall in thy tent be told,(163)
And steel well-temper'd, and persuasive gold."

He said: compassion touch'd the hero's heart
He stood, suspended with the lifted dart:
As pity pleaded for his vanquish'd prize,
Stern Agamemnon swift to vengeance flies,
And, furious, thus: "Oh impotent of mind!(164)
Shall these, shall these Atrides' mercy find?
Well hast thou known proud Troy's perfidious land,
And well her natives merit at thy hand!
Not one of all the race, nor sex, nor age,
Shall save a Trojan from our boundless rage:
Ilion shall perish whole, and bury all;
Her babes, her infants at the breast, shall fall;(165)
A dreadful lesson of exampled fate,
To warn the nations, and to curb the great!"

The monarch spoke; the words, with warmth address'd,
To rigid justice steel'd his brother's breast
Fierce from his knees the hapless chief he thrust;
The monarch's javelin stretch'd him in the dust,
Then pressing with his foot his panting heart,
Forth from the slain he tugg'd the reeking dart.
Old Nestor saw, and roused the warrior's rage;
"Thus, heroes! thus the vigorous combat wage;
No son of Mars descend, for servile gains,
To touch the booty, while a foe remains.
Behold yon glittering host, your future spoil!
First gain the conquest, then reward the toil."

And now had Greece eternal fame acquired,
And frighted Troy within her walls, retired,
Had not sage Helenus her state redress'd,
Taught by the gods that moved his sacred breast.
Where Hector stood, with great Æneas join'd,
The seer reveal'd the counsels of his mind:

"Ye generous chiefs! on whom the immortals lay
The cares and glories of this doubtful day;
On whom your aids, your country's hopes depend;
Wise to consult, and active to defend!
Here, at our gates, your brave efforts unite,

Turn back the routed, and forbid the flight,
Ere yet their wives' soft arms the cowards gain,
The sport and insult of the hostile train.
When your commands have hearten'd every band,
Ourselves, here fix'd, will make the dangerous stand;
Press'd as we are, and sore of former fight,
These straits demand our last remains of might.
Meanwhile thou, Hector, to the town retire,
And teach our mother what the gods require:
Direct the queen to lead the assembled train
Of Troy's chief matrons to Minerva's fane;(166)
Unbar the sacred gates, and seek the power,
With offer'd vows, in Ilion's topmost tower.
The largest mantle her rich wardrobes hold,
Most prized for art, and labour'd o'er with gold,
Before the goddess' honour'd knees be spread,
And twelve young heifers to her altars led:
If so the power, atoned by fervent prayer,
Our wives, our infants, and our city spare,
And far avert Tydides' wasteful ire,
That mows whole troops, and makes all Troy retire;
Not thus Achilles taught our hosts to dread,
Sprung though he was from more than mortal bed;
Not thus resistless ruled the stream of fight,
In rage unbounded, and unmatch'd in might."

Hector obedient heard: and, with a bound,
Leap'd from his trembling chariot to the ground;
Through all his host inspiring force he flies,
And bids the thunder of the battle rise.
With rage recruited the bold Trojans glow,
And turn the tide of conflict on the foe:
Fierce in the front he shakes two dazzling spears;
All Greece recedes, and 'midst her triumphs fears;
Some god, they thought, who ruled the fate of wars,
Shot down avenging from the vault of stars.

Then thus aloud: "Ye dauntless Dardans, hear!
And you whom distant nations send to war!
Be mindful of the strength your fathers bore;
Be still yourselves, and Hector asks no more.
One hour demands me in the Trojan wall,
To bid our altars flame, and victims fall:
Nor shall, I trust, the matrons' holy train,
And reverend elders, seek the gods in vain."

This said, with ample strides the hero pass'd;
The shield's large orb behind his shoulder cast,
His neck o'er shading, to his ankle hung;
And as he march'd the brazen buckler rung.

Now paused the battle (godlike Hector gone),(167)

Where daring Glaucus and great Tydeus' son
Between both armies met: the chiefs from far
Observed each other, and had mark'd for war.

Near as they drew, Tydides thus began:

"What art thou, boldest of the race of man?
Our eyes till now that aspect ne'er beheld,
Where fame is reap'd amid the embattled field;
Yet far before the troops thou dar'st appear,
And meet a lance the fiercest heroes fear.
Unhappy they, and born of luckless sires,
Who tempt our fury when Minerva fires!
But if from heaven, celestial, thou descend,
Know with immortals we no more contend.
Not long Lycurgus view'd the golden light,
That daring man who mix'd with gods in fight.
Bacchus, and Bacchus' votaries, he drove,
With brandish'd steel, from Nyssa's sacred grove:
Their consecrated spears lay scatter'd round,
With curling vines and twisted ivy bound;
While Bacchus headlong sought the briny flood,
And Thetis' arms received the trembling god.
Nor fail'd the crime the immortals' wrath to move;
(The immortals bless'd with endless ease above;)
Deprived of sight by their avenging doom,
Cheerless he breathed, and wander'd in the gloom,

Then sunk unpitied to the dire abodes,
A wretch accursed, and hated by the gods!
I brave not heaven: but if the fruits of earth
Sustain thy life, and human be thy birth,
Bold as thou art, too prodigal of breath,
Approach, and enter the dark gates of death."

"What, or from whence I am, or who my sire,
(Replied the chief,) can Tydeus' son inquire?
Like leaves on trees the race of man is found,
Now green in youth, now withering on the ground;
Another race the following spring supplies;
They fall successive, and successive rise:
So generations in their course decay;
So flourish these, when those are pass'd away.
But if thou still persist to search my birth,
Then hear a tale that fills the spacious earth.

"A city stands on Argos' utmost bound,
(Argos the fair, for warlike steeds renown'd,)
Aeolian Sisyphus, with wisdom bless'd,
In ancient time the happy wall possess'd,
Then call'd Ephyre: Glaucus was his son;
Great Glaucus, father of Bellerophon,
Who o'er the sons of men in beauty shined,
Loved for that valour which preserves mankind.

Then mighty Praetus Argos' sceptre sway'd,
Whose hard commands Bellerophon obey'd.
With direful jealousy the monarch raged,
And the brave prince in numerous toils engaged.
For him Antaea burn'd with lawless flame,
And strove to tempt him from the paths of fame:
In vain she tempted the relentless youth,
Endued with wisdom, sacred fear, and truth.
Fired at his scorn the queen to Praetus fled,
And begg'd revenge for her insulted bed:
Incensed he heard, resolving on his fate;
But hospitable laws restrain'd his hate:
To Lycia the devoted youth he sent,
With tablets seal'd, that told his dire intent.(168)
Now bless'd by every power who guards the good,
The chief arrived at Xanthus' silver flood:
There Lycia's monarch paid him honours due,
Nine days he feasted, and nine bulls he slew.
But when the tenth bright morning orient glow'd,
The faithful youth his monarch's mandate show'd:
The fatal tablets, till that instant seal'd,
The deathful secret to the king reveal'd.
First, dire Chimaera's conquest was enjoin'd;
A mingled monster of no mortal kind!
Behind, a dragon's fiery tail was spread;
A goat's rough body bore a lion's head;

Her pitchy nostrils flaky flames expire;
Her gaping throat emits infernal fire.

"This pest he slaughter'd, (for he read the skies,
And trusted heaven's informing prodigies,
Then met in arms the Solymaeon crew,(169)
(Fiercest of men,) and those the warrior slew;
Next the bold Amazons' whole force defied;
And conquer'd still, for heaven was on his side.

"Nor ended here his toils: his Lycian foes,
At his return, a treacherous ambush rose,
With levell'd spears along the winding shore:
There fell they breathless, and return'd no more.

"At length the monarch, with repentant grief,
Confess'd the gods, and god-descended chief;
His daughter gave, the stranger to detain,
With half the honours of his ample reign:
The Lycians grant a chosen space of ground,
With woods, with vineyards, and with harvests crown'd.
There long the chief his happy lot possess'd,
With two brave sons and one fair daughter bless'd;
(Fair e'en in heavenly eyes: her fruitful love
Crown'd with Sarpedon's birth the embrace of Jove;)
But when at last, distracted in his mind,

Forsook by heaven, forsaking humankind,
Wide o'er the Aleian field he chose to stray,
A long, forlorn, uncomfortable way!(170)
Woes heap'd on woes consumed his wasted heart:
His beauteous daughter fell by Phoebe's dart;
His eldest born by raging Mars was slain,
In combat on the Solymaeian plain.
Hippolochus survived: from him I came,
The honour'd author of my birth and name;
By his decree I sought the Trojan town;
By his instructions learn to win renown,
To stand the first in worth as in command,
To add new honours to my native land,
Before my eyes my mighty sires to place,
And emulate the glories of our race."

He spoke, and transport fill'd Tydides' heart;
In earth the generous warrior fix'd his dart,
Then friendly, thus the Lycian prince address'd:
"Welcome, my brave hereditary guest!
Thus ever let us meet, with kind embrace,
Nor stain the sacred friendship of our race.
Know, chief, our grandsires have been guests of old;
Oeneus the strong, Bellerophon the bold:
Our ancient seat his honour'd presence graced,
Where twenty days in genial rites he pass'd.

The parting heroes mutual presents left;
A golden goblet was thy grandsire's gift;
O Eneas a belt of matchless work bestowed,
That rich with Tyrian dye refulgent glow'd.
(This from his pledge I learn'd, which, safely stored
Among my treasures, still adorns my board:
For Tydeus left me young, when Thebe's wall
Beheld the sons of Greece untimely fall.)
Mindful of this, in friendship let us join;
If heaven our steps to foreign lands incline,
My guest in Argos thou, and I in Lycia thine.
Enough of Trojans to this lance shall yield,
In the full harvest of yon ample field;
Enough of Greeks shall dye thy spear with gore;
But thou and Diomed be foes no more.
Now change we arms, and prove to either host
We guard the friendship of the line we boast."

Thus having said, the gallant chiefs alight,
Their hands they join, their mutual faith they plight;
Brave Glaucus then each narrow thought resign'd,
(Jove warm'd his bosom, and enlarged his mind,)
For Diomed's brass arms, of mean device,
For which nine oxen paid, (a vulgar price,)
He gave his own, of gold divinely wrought,(171)
A hundred beeves the shining purchase bought.

Meantime the guardian of the Trojan state,
Great Hector, enter'd at the Scaean gate.(172)
Beneath the beech-tree's consecrated shades,
The Trojan matrons and the Trojan maids
Around him flock'd, all press'd with pious care
For husbands, brothers, sons, engaged in war.
He bids the train in long procession go,
And seek the gods, to avert the impending woe.
And now to Priam's stately courts he came,
Rais'd on arch'd columns of stupendous frame;
O'er these a range of marble structure runs,
The rich pavilions of his fifty sons,
In fifty chambers lodged: and rooms of state,(173)
Opposed to those, where Priam's daughters sate.
Twelve domes for them and their loved spouses shone,
Of equal beauty, and of polish'd stone.
Hither great Hector pass'd, nor pass'd unseen
Of royal Hecuba, his mother-queen.
(With her Laodice, whose beauteous face
Surpass'd the nymphs of Troy's illustrious race.)
Long in a strict embrace she held her son,
And press'd his hand, and tender thus begun:

"O Hector! say, what great occasion calls
My son from fight, when Greece surrounds our walls;

Com'st thou to supplicate the almighty power
With lifted hands, from Ilion's lofty tower?
Stay, till I bring the cup with Bacchus crown'd,
In Jove's high name, to sprinkle on the ground,
And pay due vows to all the gods around.
Then with a plenteous draught refresh thy soul,
And draw new spirits from the generous bowl;
Spent as thou art with long laborious fight,
The brave defender of thy country's right."

"Far hence be Bacchus' gifts; (the chief rejoin'd;)
Inflaming wine, pernicious to mankind,
Unnerves the limbs, and dulls the noble mind.
Let chiefs abstain, and spare the sacred juice
To sprinkle to the gods, its better use.
By me that holy office were profaned;
Ill fits it me, with human gore distain'd,
To the pure skies these horrid hands to raise,
Or offer heaven's great Sire polluted praise.
You, with your matrons, go! a spotless train,
And burn rich odours in Minerva's fane.
The largest mantle your full wardrobes hold,
Most prized for art, and labour'd o'er with gold,
Before the goddess' honour'd knees be spread,
And twelve young heifers to her altar led.
So may the power, atoned by fervent prayer,

Our wives, our infants, and our city spare;
And far avert Tydides' wasteful ire,
Who mows whole troops, and makes all Troy retire.
Be this, O mother, your religious care:
I go to rouse soft Paris to the war;
If yet not lost to all the sense of shame,
The recreant warrior hear the voice of fame.
Oh, would kind earth the hateful wretch embrace,
That pest of Troy, that ruin of our race!(174)
Deep to the dark abyss might he descend,
Troy yet should flourish, and my sorrows end."

This heard, she gave command: and summon'd came
Each noble matron and illustrious dame.
The Phrygian queen to her rich wardrobe went,
Where treasured odours breathed a costly scent.
There lay the vestures of no vulgar art,
Sidonian maids embroider'd every part,
Whom from soft Sidon youthful Paris bore,
With Helen touching on the Tyrian shore.
Here, as the queen revolved with careful eyes
The various textures and the various dyes,
She chose a veil that shone superior far,
And glow'd refulgent as the morning star.
Herself with this the long procession leads;
The train majestically slow proceeds.

Soon as to Ilion's topmost tower they come,
And awful reach the high Palladian dome,
Antenor's consort, fair Theano, waits
As Pallas' priestess, and unbars the gates.
With hands uplifted and imploring eyes,
They fill the dome with supplicating cries.
The priestess then the shining veil displays,
Placed on Minerva's knees, and thus she prays:

"Oh awful goddess! ever-dreadful maid,
Troy's strong defence, unconquer'd Pallas, aid!
Break thou Tydides' spear, and let him fall
Prone on the dust before the Trojan wall!
So twelve young heifers, guiltless of the yoke,
Shall fill thy temple with a grateful smoke.
But thou, atoned by penitence and prayer,
Ourselves, our infants, and our city spare!"
So pray'd the priestess in her holy fane;
So vow'd the matrons, but they vow'd in vain.

While these appear before the power with prayers,
Hector to Paris' lofty dome repairs.(175)
Himself the mansion raised, from every part
Assembling architects of matchless art.
Near Priam's court and Hector's palace stands
The pompous structure, and the town commands.

A spear the hero bore of wondrous strength,
Of full ten cubits was the lance's length,
The steely point with golden ringlets join'd,
Before him brandish'd, at each motion shined
Thus entering, in the glittering rooms he found
His brother-chief, whose useless arms lay round,
His eyes delighting with their splendid show,
Brightening the shield, and polishing the bow.
Beside him Helen with her virgins stands,
Guides their rich labours, and instructs their hands.

Him thus inactive, with an ardent look
The prince beheld, and high-resenting spoke.
"Thy hate to Troy, is this the time to show?
(O wretch ill-fated, and thy country's foe!)
Paris and Greece against us both conspire,
Thy close resentment, and their vengeful ire.
For thee great Ilion's guardian heroes fall,
Till heaps of dead alone defend her wall,
For thee the soldier bleeds, the matron mourns,
And wasteful war in all its fury burns.
Ungrateful man! deserves not this thy care,
Our troops to hearten, and our toils to share?
Rise, or behold the conquering flames ascend,
And all the Phrygian glories at an end."

"Brother, 'tis just, (replied the beauteous youth,)
Thy free remonstrance proves thy worth and truth:
Yet charge my absence less, O generous chief!
On hate to Troy, than conscious shame and grief:
Here, hid from human eyes, thy brother sate,
And mourn'd, in secret, his and Ilion's fate.
'Tis now enough; now glory spreads her charms,
And beauteous Helen calls her chief to arms.
Conquest to-day my happier sword may bless,
'Tis man's to fight, but heaven's to give success.
But while I arm, contain thy ardent mind;
Or go, and Paris shall not lag behind."

He said, nor answer'd Priam's warlike son;
When Helen thus with lowly grace begun:

"Oh, generous brother! (if the guilty dame
That caused these woes deserve a sister's name!)
Would heaven, ere all these dreadful deeds were done,
The day that show'd me to the golden sun
Had seen my death! why did not whirlwinds bear
The fatal infant to the fowls of air?
Why sunk I not beneath the whelming tide,
And midst the roarings of the waters died?
Heaven fill'd up all my ills, and I accursed
Bore all, and Paris of those ills the worst.

Helen at least a braver spouse might claim,
Warm'd with some virtue, some regard of fame!
Now tired with toils, thy fainting limbs recline,
With toils, sustain'd for Paris' sake and mine
The gods have link'd our miserable doom,
Our present woe, and infamy to come:
Wide shall it spread, and last through ages long,
Example sad! and theme of future song."

The chief replied: "This time forbids to rest;
The Trojan bands, by hostile fury press'd,
Demand their Hector, and his arm require;
The combat urges, and my soul's on fire.
Urge thou thy knight to march where glory calls,
And timely join me, ere I leave the walls.
Ere yet I mingle in the direful fray,
My wife, my infant, claim a moment's stay;
This day (perhaps the last that sees me here)
Demands a parting word, a tender tear:
This day, some god who hates our Trojan land
May vanquish Hector by a Grecian hand."

He said, and pass'd with sad presaging heart
To seek his spouse, his soul's far dearer part;
At home he sought her, but he sought in vain;
She, with one maid of all her menial train,

Had hence retired; and with her second joy,
The young Astyanax, the hope of Troy,
Pensive she stood on Ilion's towery height,
Beheld the war, and sicken'd at the sight;
There her sad eyes in vain her lord explore,
Or weep the wounds her bleeding country bore.

But he who found not whom his soul desired,
Whose virtue charm'd him as her beauty fired,
Stood in the gates, and ask'd "what way she bent
Her parting step? If to the fane she went,
Where late the mourning matrons made resort;
Or sought her sisters in the Trojan court?"
"Not to the court, (replied the attendant train,)
Nor mix'd with matrons to Minerva's fane:
To Ilion's steepy tower she bent her way,
To mark the fortunes of the doubtful day.
Troy fled, she heard, before the Grecian sword;
She heard, and trembled for her absent lord:
Distracted with surprise, she seem'd to fly,
Fear on her cheek, and sorrow in her eye.
The nurse attended with her infant boy,
The young Astyanax, the hope of Troy."

Hector this heard, return'd without delay;
Swift through the town he trod his former way,

Through streets of palaces, and walks of state;
And met the mourner at the Scaean gate.
With haste to meet him sprung the joyful fair.
His blameless wife, Aetion's wealthy heir:
(Cilician Thebe great Aetion sway'd,
And Hippoplacus' wide extended shade:)
The nurse stood near, in whose embraces press'd,
His only hope hung smiling at her breast,
Whom each soft charm and early grace adorn,
Fair as the new-born star that gilds the morn.
To this loved infant Hector gave the name
Scamandrius, from Scamander's honour'd stream;
Astyanax the Trojans call'd the boy,
From his great father, the defence of Troy.
Silent the warrior smiled, and pleas'd resign'd
To tender passions all his mighty mind;
His beauteous princess cast a mournful look,
Hung on his hand, and then dejected spoke;
Her bosom laboured with a boding sigh,
And the big tear stood trembling in her eye.

"Too daring prince! ah, whither dost thou run?
Ah, too forgetful of thy wife and son!
And think'st thou not how wretched we shall be,
A widow I, a helpless orphan he?
For sure such courage length of life denies,

And thou must fall, thy virtue's sacrifice.
Greece in her single heroes strove in vain;
Now hosts oppose thee, and thou must be slain.
O grant me, gods, ere Hector meets his doom,
All I can ask of heaven, an early tomb!
So shall my days in one sad tenor run,
And end with sorrows as they first begun.
No parent now remains my griefs to share,
No father's aid, no mother's tender care.
The fierce Achilles wrapt our walls in fire,
Laid Thebe waste, and slew my warlike sire!
His fate compassion in the victor bred;
Stern as he was, he yet revered the dead,
His radiant arms preserved from hostile spoil,
And laid him decent on the funeral pile;
Then raised a mountain where his bones were burn'd,
The mountain-nymphs the rural tomb adorn'd,
Jove's sylvan daughters bade their elms bestow
A barren shade, and in his honour grow.

"By the same arm my seven brave brothers fell;
In one sad day beheld the gates of hell;
While the fat herds and snowy flocks they fed,
Amid their fields the hapless heroes bled!
My mother lived to wear the victor's bands,
The queen of Hippoplacia's sylvan lands:

Redeem'd too late, she scarce beheld again
Her pleasing empire and her native plain,
When ah! oppress'd by life-consuming woe,
She fell a victim to Diana's bow.

"Yet while my Hector still survives, I see
My father, mother, brethren, all, in thee:
Alas! my parents, brothers, kindred, all
Once more will perish, if my Hector fall,
Thy wife, thy infant, in thy danger share:
Oh, prove a husband's and a father's care!
That quarter most the skilful Greeks annoy,
Where yon wild fig-trees join the wall of Troy;
Thou, from this tower defend the important post;
There Agamemnon points his dreadful host,
That pass Tydides, Ajax, strive to gain,
And there the vengeful Spartan fires his train.
Thrice our bold foes the fierce attack have given,
Or led by hopes, or dictated from heaven.
Let others in the field their arms employ,
But stay my Hector here, and guard his Troy."

The chief replied: "That post shall be my care,
Not that alone, but all the works of war.
How would the sons of Troy, in arms renown'd,
And Troy's proud dames, whose garments sweep the ground

Attain the lustre of my former name,
Should Hector basely quit the field of fame?
My early youth was bred to martial pains,
My soul impels me to the embattled plains!
Let me be foremost to defend the throne,
And guard my father's glories, and my own.

"Yet come it will, the day decreed by fates!
(How my heart trembles while my tongue relates!)
The day when thou, imperial Troy! must bend,
And see thy warriors fall, thy glories end.
And yet no dire presage so wounds my mind,
My mother's death, the ruin of my kind,
Not Priam's hoary hairs defiled with gore,
Not all my brothers gasping on the shore;
As thine, Andromache! Thy griefs I dread:
I see thee trembling, weeping, captive led!
In Argive looms our battles to design,
And woes, of which so large a part was thine!
To bear the victor's hard commands, or bring
The weight of waters from Hyperia's spring.
There while you groan beneath the load of life,
They cry, 'Behold the mighty Hector's wife!'
Some haughty Greek, who lives thy tears to see,
Imbitters all thy woes, by naming me.
The thoughts of glory past, and present shame,

A thousand griefs shall waken at the name!
May I lie cold before that dreadful day,
Press'd with a load of monumental clay!
Thy Hector, wrapt in everlasting sleep,
Shall neither hear thee sigh, nor see thee weep."

Thus having spoke, the illustrious chief of Troy
Stretch'd his fond arms to clasp the lovely boy.
The babe clung crying to his nurse's breast,
Scared at the dazzling helm, and nodding crest.
With secret pleasure each fond parent smiled,
And Hector hasted to relieve his child,
The glittering terrors from his brows unbound,
And placed the beaming helmet on the ground;
Then kiss'd the child, and, lifting high in air,
Thus to the gods preferr'd a father's prayer:

"O thou! whose glory fills the ethereal throne,
And all ye deathless powers! protect my son!
Grant him, like me, to purchase just renown,
To guard the Trojans, to defend the crown,
Against his country's foes the war to wage,
And rise the Hector of the future age!
So when triumphant from successful toils
Of heroes slain he bears the reeking spoils,
Whole hosts may hail him with deserved acclaim,

And say, 'This chief transcends his father's fame:'
While pleased amidst the general shouts of Troy,
His mother's conscious heart o'erflows with joy."

He spoke, and fondly gazing on her charms,
Restored the pleasing burden to her arms;
Soft on her fragrant breast the babe she laid,
Hush'd to repose, and with a smile survey'd.
The troubled pleasure soon chastised by fear,
She mingled with a smile a tender tear.
The soften'd chief with kind compassion view'd,
And dried the falling drops, and thus pursued:

"Andromache! my soul's far better part,
Why with untimely sorrows heaves thy heart?
No hostile hand can antedate my doom,
Till fate condemns me to the silent tomb.
Fix'd is the term to all the race of earth;
And such the hard condition of our birth:
No force can then resist, no flight can save,
All sink alike, the fearful and the brave.
No more--but hasten to thy tasks at home,
There guide the spindle, and direct the loom:
Me glory summons to the martial scene,
The field of combat is the sphere for men.
Where heroes war, the foremost place I claim,

The first in danger as the first in fame."

Thus having said, the glorious chief resumes
His towery helmet, black with shading plumes.
His princess parts with a prophetic sigh,
Unwilling parts, and oft reverts her eye
That stream'd at every look; then, moving slow,
Sought her own palace, and indulged her woe.
There, while her tears deplored the godlike man,
Through all her train the soft infection ran;
The pious maids their mingled sorrows shed,
And mourn the living Hector, as the dead.

But now, no longer deaf to honour's call,
Forth issues Paris from the palace wall.
In brazen arms that cast a gleamy ray,
Swift through the town the warrior bends his way.
The wanton courser thus with reins unbound(176)
Breaks from his stall, and beats the trembling ground;
Pamper'd and proud, he seeks the wonted tides,
And laves, in height of blood his shining sides;
His head now freed, he tosses to the skies;
His mane dishevell'd o'er his shoulders flies;
He snuffs the females in the distant plain,
And springs, exulting, to his fields again.
With equal triumph, sprightly, bold, and gay,

In arms refulgent as the god of day,
The son of Priam, glorying in his might,
Rush'd forth with Hector to the fields of fight.

And now, the warriors passing on the way,
The graceful Paris first excused his stay.
To whom the noble Hector thus replied:
"O chief! in blood, and now in arms, allied!
Thy power in war with justice none contest;
Known is thy courage, and thy strength confess'd.
What pity sloth should seize a soul so brave,
Or godlike Paris live a woman's slave!
My heart weeps blood at what the Trojans say,
And hopes thy deeds shall wipe the stain away.
Haste then, in all their glorious labours share,
For much they suffer, for thy sake, in war.
These ills shall cease, whene'er by Jove's decree
We crown the bowl to heaven and liberty:
While the proud foe his frustrate triumphs mourns,
And Greece indignant through her seas returns."