

BOOK VIII.

ARGUMENT.

THE SECOND BATTLE, AND THE DISTRESS OF THE GREEKS.

Jupiter assembles a council of the deities, and threatens them with the pains of Tartarus if they assist either side: Minerva only obtains of him that she may direct the Greeks by her counsels. (189) he balances the fates of both, and affrights the Greeks with his thunders and lightnings. Nestor alone continues in the field in great danger: Diomed relieves him; whose exploits, and those of Hector, are excellently described. Juno endeavours to animate Neptune to the assistance of the Greeks, but in vain. The acts of Teucer, who is at length wounded by Hector, and carried off. Juno and Minerva prepare to aid the Grecians, but are restrained by Iris, sent from Jupiter. The night puts an end to the battle. Hector continues in the field, (the Greeks being driven to their fortifications before the ships,) and gives orders to keep the watch all night in the camp, to prevent the enemy from re-embarking and escaping by flight. They kindle fires through all the fields, and pass the night under arms.

The time of seven and twenty days is employed from the opening of the poem to the end of this book. The scene here (except of the celestial machines) lies in the field towards the seashore.

Aurora now, fair daughter of the dawn,
Sprinkled with rosy light the dewy lawn;
When Jove convened the senate of the skies,
Where high Olympus' cloudy tops arise,
The sire of gods his awful silence broke;
The heavens attentive trembled as he spoke:

"Celestial states! immortal gods! give ear,
Hear our decree, and reverence what ye hear;
The fix'd decree which not all heaven can move;
Thou, fate! fulfil it! and, ye powers, approve!
What god but enters yon forbidden field,

Who yields assistance, or but wills to yield,
Back to the skies with shame he shall be driven,
Gash'd with dishonest wounds, the scorn of heaven;
Or far, oh far, from steep Olympus thrown,
Low in the dark Tartarean gulf shall groan,
With burning chains fix'd to the brazen floors,
And lock'd by hell's inexorable doors;
As deep beneath the infernal centre hurl'd,(190)
As from that centre to the ethereal world.
Let him who tempts me, dread those dire abodes:
And know, the Almighty is the god of gods.
League all your forces, then, ye powers above,
Join all, and try the omnipotence of Jove.

Let down our golden everlasting chain(191)
Whose strong embrace holds heaven, and earth, and main
Strive all, of mortal and immortal birth,
To drag, by this, the Thunderer down to earth
Ye strive in vain! if I but stretch this hand,
I heave the gods, the ocean, and the land;
I fix the chain to great Olympus' height,
And the vast world hangs trembling in my sight!
For such I reign, unbounded and above;
And such are men, and gods, compared to Jove."

The all-mighty spoke, nor durst the powers reply:
A reverend horror silenced all the sky;
Trembling they stood before their sovereign's look;
At length his best-beloved, the power of wisdom, spoke:

"O first and greatest! God, by gods adored
We own thy might, our father and our lord!
But, ah! permit to pity human state:
If not to help, at least lament their fate.
From fields forbidden we submit refrain,
With arms unaiding mourn our Argives slain;
Yet grant my counsels still their breasts may move,
Or all must perish in the wrath of Jove."

The cloud-compelling god her suit approved,

And smiled superior on his best beloved;
Then call'd his coursers, and his chariot took;
The stedfast firmament beneath them shook:
Rapt by the ethereal steeds the chariot roll'd;
Brass were their hoofs, their curling manes of gold:
Of heaven's undrossy gold the gods array,
Refulgent, flash'd intolerable day.

High on the throne he shines: his coursers fly
Between the extended earth and starry sky.
But when to Ida's topmost height he came,
(Fair nurse of fountains, and of savage game,)
Where o'er her pointed summits proudly raised,
His fane breathed odours, and his altar blazed:
There, from his radiant car, the sacred sire
Of gods and men released the steeds of fire:
Blue ambient mists the immortal steeds embraced;
High on the cloudy point his seat he placed;
Thence his broad eye the subject world surveys,
The town, and tents, and navigable seas.

Now had the Grecians snatch'd a short repast,
And buckled on their shining arms with haste.
Troy roused as soon; for on this dreadful day
The fate of fathers, wives, and infants lay.
The gates unfolding pour forth all their train;
Squadrons on squadrons cloud the dusky plain:

Men, steeds, and chariots shake the trembling ground,
The tumult thickens, and the skies resound;
And now with shouts the shocking armies closed,
To lances lances, shields to shields opposed,
Host against host with shadowy legends drew,
The sounding darts in iron tempests flew;
Victors and vanquish'd join promiscuous cries,
Triumphant shouts and dying groans arise;
With streaming blood the slippery fields are dyed,
And slaughter'd heroes swell the dreadful tide.
Long as the morning beams, increasing bright,
O'er heaven's clear azure spread the sacred light,
Communal death the fate of war confounds,
Each adverse battle gored with equal wounds.
But when the sun the height of heaven ascends,
The sire of gods his golden scales suspends,(192)
With equal hand: in these explored the fate
Of Greece and Troy, and poised the mighty weight:
Press'd with its load, the Grecian balance lies
Low sunk on earth, the Trojan strikes the skies.
Then Jove from Ida's top his horrors spreads;
The clouds burst dreadful o'er the Grecian heads;
Thick lightnings flash; the muttering thunder rolls;
Their strength he withers, and unmans their souls.
Before his wrath the trembling hosts retire;
The gods in terrors, and the skies on fire.

Nor great Idomeneus that sight could bear,
Nor each stern Ajax, thunderbolts of war:
Nor he, the king of war, the alarm sustain'd
Nestor alone, amidst the storm remain'd.
Unwilling he remain'd, for Paris' dart
Had pierced his courser in a mortal part;
Fix'd in the forehead, where the springing man
Curl'd o'er the brow, it stung him to the brain;
Mad with his anguish, he begins to rear,
Paw with his hoofs aloft, and lash the air.
Scarce had his falchion cut the reins, and freed
The encumber'd chariot from the dying steed,
When dreadful Hector, thundering through the war,
Pour'd to the tumult on his whirling car.
That day had stretch'd beneath his matchless hand
The hoary monarch of the Pylian band,
But Diomed beheld; from forth the crowd
He rush'd, and on Ulysses call'd aloud:

"Whither, oh whither does Ulysses run?
Oh, flight unworthy great Laertes' son!
Mix'd with the vulgar shall thy fate be found,
Pierced in the back, a vile, dishonest wound?
Oh turn and save from Hector's direful rage
The glory of the Greeks, the Pylian sage."
His fruitless words are lost unheard in air,

Ulysses seeks the ships, and shelters there.
But bold Tydides to the rescue goes,
A single warrior midst a host of foes;
Before the coursers with a sudden spring
He leap'd, and anxious thus bespoke the king:

"Great perils, father! wait the unequal fight;
These younger champions will oppress thy might.
Thy veins no more with ancient vigour glow,
Weak is thy servant, and thy coursers slow.
Then haste, ascend my seat, and from the car
Observe the steeds of Tros, renown'd in war.
Practised alike to turn, to stop, to chase,
To dare the fight, or urge the rapid race:
These late obey'd Æneas' guiding rein;
Leave thou thy chariot to our faithful train;
With these against yon Trojans will we go,
Nor shall great Hector want an equal foe;
Fierce as he is, even he may learn to fear
The thirsty fury of my flying spear."

Thus said the chief; and Nestor, skill'd in war,
Approves his counsel, and ascends the car:
The steeds he left, their trusty servants hold;
Eurymedon, and Sthenelus the bold:
The reverend charioteer directs the course,

And strains his aged arm to lash the horse.
Hector they face; unknowing how to fear,
Fierce he drove on; Tydides whirl'd his spear.
The spear with erring haste mistook its way,
But plunged in Eniopeus' bosom lay.
His opening hand in death forsakes the rein;
The steeds fly back: he falls, and spurns the plain.
Great Hector sorrows for his servant kill'd,
Yet unrevenged permits to press the field;
Till, to supply his place and rule the car,
Rose Archeptolemus, the fierce in war.
And now had death and horror cover'd all;(193)
Like timorous flocks the Trojans in their wall
Inclosed had bled: but Jove with awful sound
Roll'd the big thunder o'er the vast profound:
Full in Tydides' face the lightning flew;
The ground before him flamed with sulphur blue;
The quivering steeds fell prostrate at the sight;
And Nestor's trembling hand confess'd his fright:
He dropp'd the reins: and, shook with sacred dread,
Thus, turning, warn'd the intrepid Diomed:

"O chief! too daring in thy friend's defence
Retire advised, and urge the chariot hence.
This day, averse, the sovereign of the skies
Assists great Hector, and our palm denies.

Some other sun may see the happier hour,
When Greece shall conquer by his heavenly power.
'Tis not in man his fix'd decree to move:
The great will glory to submit to Jove."

"O reverend prince! (Tydides thus replies)
Thy years are awful, and thy words are wise.
But ah, what grief! should haughty Hector boast
I fled inglorious to the guarded coast.
Before that dire disgrace shall blast my fame,
O'erwhelm me, earth; and hide a warrior's shame!"
To whom Gerenian Nestor thus replied:(194)
"Gods! can thy courage fear the Phrygian's pride?
Hector may vaunt, but who shall heed the boast?
Not those who felt thy arm, the Dardan host,
Nor Troy, yet bleeding in her heroes lost;
Not even a Phrygian dame, who dreads the sword
That laid in dust her loved, lamented lord."
He said, and, hasty, o'er the gasping throng
Drives the swift steeds: the chariot smokes along;
The shouts of Trojans thicken in the wind;
The storm of hissing javelins pours behind.
Then with a voice that shakes the solid skies,
Pleased, Hector braves the warrior as he flies.
"Go, mighty hero! graced above the rest
In seats of council and the sumptuous feast:

Now hope no more those honours from thy train;
Go less than woman, in the form of man!
To scale our walls, to wrap our towers in flames,
To lead in exile the fair Phrygian dames,
Thy once proud hopes, presumptuous prince! are fled;
This arm shall reach thy heart, and stretch thee dead."

Now fears dissuade him, and now hopes invite.
To stop his coursers, and to stand the fight;
Thrice turn'd the chief, and thrice imperial Jove
On Ida's summits thunder'd from above.
Great Hector heard; he saw the flashing light,
(The sign of conquest,) and thus urged the fight:

"Hear, every Trojan, Lycian, Dardan band,
All famed in war, and dreadful hand to hand.
Be mindful of the wreaths your arms have won,
Your great forefathers' glories, and your own.
Heard ye the voice of Jove? Success and fame
Await on Troy, on Greece eternal shame.
In vain they skulk behind their boasted wall,
Weak bulwarks; destined by this arm to fall.
High o'er their slighted trench our steeds shall bound,
And pass victorious o'er the levell'd mound.
Soon as before yon hollow ships we stand,
Fight each with flames, and toss the blazing brand;

Till, their proud navy wrapt in smoke and fires,
All Greece, encompass'd, in one blaze expires."

Furious he said; then bending o'er the yoke,
Encouraged his proud steeds, while thus he spoke:

"Now, Xanthus, Æthon, Lampus, urge the chase,
And thou, Podargus! prove thy generous race;
Be fleet, be fearless, this important day,
And all your master's well-spent care repay.
For this, high-fed, in plenteous stalls ye stand,
Served with pure wheat, and by a princess' hand;
For this my spouse, of great Action's line,
So oft has steep'd the strengthening grain in wine.
Now swift pursue, now thunder uncontroll'd:
Give me to seize rich Nestor's shield of gold;
From Tydeus' shoulders strip the costly load,
Vulcanian arms, the labour of a god:
These if we gain, then victory, ye powers!
This night, this glorious night, the fleet is ours!"

That heard, deep anguish stung Saturnia's soul;
She shook her throne, that shook the starry pole:
And thus to Neptune: "Thou, whose force can make
The stedfast earth from her foundations shake,
Seest thou the Greeks by fates unjust oppress'd,

Nor swells thy heart in that immortal breast?

Yet Ægæe, Helice, thy power obey,(195)

And gifts unceasing on thine altars lay.

Would all the deities of Greece combine,

In vain the gloomy Thunderer might repine:

Sole should he sit, with scarce a god to friend,

And see his Trojans to the shades descend:

Such be the scene from his Idaean bower;

Ungrateful prospect to the sullen power!"

Neptune with wrath rejects the rash design:

"What rage, what madness, furious queen! is thine?

I war not with the highest. All above

Submit and tremble at the hand of Jove."

Now godlike Hector, to whose matchless might

Jove gave the glory of the destined fight,

Squadrons on squadrons drives, and fills the fields

With close-ranged chariots, and with thicken'd shields.

Where the deep trench in length extended lay,

Compacted troops stand wedged in firm array,

A dreadful front! they shake the brands, and threat

With long-destroying flames the hostile fleet.

The king of men, by Juno's self inspired,

Toil'd through the tents, and all his army fired.

Swift as he moved, he lifted in his hand

His purple robe, bright ensign of command.
High on the midmost bark the king appear'd:
There, from Ulysses' deck, his voice was heard:
To Ajax and Achilles reach'd the sound,
Whose distant ships the guarded navy bound.
"O Argives! shame of human race! (he cried:
The hollow vessels to his voice replied,)
Where now are all your glorious boasts of yore,
Your hasty triumphs on the Lemnian shore?
Each fearless hero dares a hundred foes,
While the feast lasts, and while the goblet flows;
But who to meet one martial man is found,
When the fight rages, and the flames surround?
O mighty Jove! O sire of the distress'd!
Was ever king like me, like me oppress'd?
With power immense, with justice arm'd in vain;
My glory ravish'd, and my people slain!
To thee my vows were breathed from every shore;
What altar smoked not with our victims' gore?
With fat of bulls I fed the constant flame,
And ask'd destruction to the Trojan name.
Now, gracious god! far humbler our demand;
Give these at least to 'scape from Hector's hand,
And save the relics of the Grecian land!"

Thus pray'd the king, and heaven's great father heard

His vows, in bitterness of soul preferr'd:
The wrath appeas'd, by happy signs declares,
And gives the people to their monarch's prayers.
His eagle, sacred bird of heaven! he sent,
A fawn his talons truss'd, (divine portent!)
High o'er the wondering hosts he soar'd above,
Who paid their vows to Panomphaean Jove;
Then let the prey before his altar fall;
The Greeks beheld, and transport seized on all:
Encouraged by the sign, the troops revive,
And fierce on Troy with doubled fury drive.
Tydides first, of all the Grecian force,
O'er the broad ditch impell'd his foaming horse,
Pierced the deep ranks, their strongest battle tore,
And dyed his javelin red with Trojan gore.
Young Agelaus (Phradmon was his sire)
With flying coursers shunn'd his dreadful ire;
Struck through the back, the Phrygian fell oppress'd;
The dart drove on, and issued at his breast:
Headlong he quits the car: his arms resound;
His ponderous buckler thunders on the ground.
Forth rush a tide of Greeks, the passage freed;
The Atridae first, the Ajaces next succeed:
Meriones, like Mars in arms renown'd,
And godlike Idomen, now passed the mound;
Evaemon's son next issues to the foe,

And last young Teucer with his bended bow.
Secure behind the Telamonian shield
The skilful archer wide survey'd the field,
With every shaft some hostile victim slew,
Then close beneath the sevenfold orb withdrew:
The conscious infant so, when fear alarms,
Retires for safety to the mother's arms.
Thus Ajax guards his brother in the field,
Moves as he moves, and turns the shining shield.
Who first by Teucer's mortal arrows bled?
Orsilochus; then fell Ormenus dead:
The godlike Lycophon next press'd the plain,
With Chromius, Daetor, Ophelestes slain:
Bold Hamopaon breathless sunk to ground;
The bloody pile great Melanippus crown'd.
Heaps fell on heaps, sad trophies of his art,
A Trojan ghost attending every dart.
Great Agamemnon views with joyful eye
The ranks grow thinner as his arrows fly:
"O youth forever dear! (the monarch cried)
Thus, always thus, thy early worth be tried;
Thy brave example shall retrieve our host,
Thy country's saviour, and thy father's boast!
Sprung from an alien's bed thy sire to grace,
The vigorous offspring of a stolen embrace:
Proud of his boy, he own'd the generous flame,

And the brave son repays his cares with fame.
Now hear a monarch's vow: If heaven's high powers
Give me to raze Troy's long-defended towers;
Whatever treasures Greece for me design,
The next rich honorary gift be thine:
Some golden tripod, or distinguished car,
With coursers dreadful in the ranks of war:
Or some fair captive, whom thy eyes approve,
Shall recompense the warrior's toils with love."

To this the chief: "With praise the rest inspire,
Nor urge a soul already fill'd with fire.
What strength I have, be now in battle tried,
Till every shaft in Phrygian blood be dyed.
Since rallying from our wall we forced the foe,
Still aim'd at Hector have I bent my bow:
Eight forky arrows from this hand have fled,
And eight bold heroes by their points lie dead:
But sure some god denies me to destroy
This fury of the field, this dog of Troy."

He said, and twang'd the string. The weapon flies
At Hector's breast, and sings along the skies:
He miss'd the mark; but pierced Gorgythio's heart,
And drench'd in royal blood the thirsty dart.
(Fair Castianira, nymph of form divine,

This offspring added to king Priam's line.)
As full-blown poppies, overcharged with rain,(196)
Decline the head, and drooping kiss the plain;
So sinks the youth: his beauteous head, depress'd
Beneath his helmet, drops upon his breast.
Another shaft the raging archer drew,
That other shaft with erring fury flew,
(From Hector, Phoebus turn'd the flying wound,)
Yet fell not dry or guiltless to the ground:
Thy breast, brave Archeptolemus! it tore,
And dipp'd its feathers in no vulgar gore.
Headlong he falls: his sudden fall alarms
The steeds, that startle at his sounding arms.
Hector with grief his charioteer beheld
All pale and breathless on the sanguine field:
Then bids Cebriones direct the rein,
Quits his bright car, and issues on the plain.
Dreadful he shouts: from earth a stone he took,
And rush'd on Teucer with the lifted rock.
The youth already strain'd the forceful yew;
The shaft already to his shoulder drew;
The feather in his hand, just wing'd for flight,
Touch'd where the neck and hollow chest unite;
There, where the juncture knits the channel bone,
The furious chief discharged the craggy stone:
The bow-string burst beneath the ponderous blow,

And his numb'd hand dismiss'd his useless bow.
He fell: but Ajax his broad shield display'd,
And screen'd his brother with the mighty shade;
Till great Alaster, and Mecistheus, bore
The batter'd archer groaning to the shore.

Troy yet found grace before the Olympian sire,
He arm'd their hands, and fill'd their breasts with fire.
The Greeks repulsed, retreat behind their wall,
Or in the trench on heaps confusedly fall.
First of the foe, great Hector march'd along,
With terror clothed, and more than mortal strong.
As the bold hound, that gives the lion chase,
With beating bosom, and with eager pace,
Hangs on his haunch, or fastens on his heels,
Guards as he turns, and circles as he wheels;
Thus oft the Grecians turn'd, but still they flew;
Thus following, Hector still the hindmost slew.
When flying they had pass'd the trench profound,
And many a chief lay gasping on the ground;
Before the ships a desperate stand they made,
And fired the troops, and called the gods to aid.
Fierce on his rattling chariot Hector came:
His eyes like Gorgon shot a sanguine flame
That wither'd all their host: like Mars he stood:
Dire as the monster, dreadful as the god!

Their strong distress the wife of Jove survey'd;
Then pensive thus, to war's triumphant maid:

"O daughter of that god, whose arm can wield
The avenging bolt, and shake the sable shield!
Now, in this moment of her last despair,
Shall wretched Greece no more confess our care,
Condemn'd to suffer the full force of fate,
And drain the dregs of heaven's relentless hate?
Gods! shall one raging hand thus level all?
What numbers fell! what numbers yet shall fall!
What power divine shall Hector's wrath assuage?
Still swells the slaughter, and still grows the rage!"

So spake the imperial regent of the skies;
To whom the goddess with the azure eyes:

"Long since had Hector stain'd these fields with gore,
Stretch'd by some Argive on his native shore:
But he above, the sire of heaven, withstands,
Mocks our attempts, and slights our just demands;
The stubborn god, inflexible and hard,
Forgets my service and deserved reward:
Saved I, for this, his favourite son distress'd,
By stern Eurystheus with long labours press'd?
He begg'd, with tears he begg'd, in deep dismay;

I shot from heaven, and gave his arm the day.
Oh had my wisdom known this dire event,
When to grim Pluto's gloomy gates he went;
The triple dog had never felt his chain,
Nor Styx been cross'd, nor hell explored in vain.
Averse to me of all his heaven of gods,
At Thetis' suit the partial Thunderer nods;
To grace her gloomy, fierce, resenting son,
My hopes are frustrate, and my Greeks undone.
Some future day, perhaps, he may be moved
To call his blue-eyed maid his best beloved.
Haste, launch thy chariot, through yon ranks to ride;
Myself will arm, and thunder at thy side.
Then, goddess! say, shall Hector glory then?
(That terror of the Greeks, that man of men)
When Juno's self, and Pallas shall appear,
All dreadful in the crimson walks of war!
What mighty Trojan then, on yonder shore,
Expiring, pale, and terrible no more,
Shall feast the fowls, and glut the dogs with gore?"

She ceased, and Juno rein'd the steeds with care:
(Heaven's awful empress, Saturn's other heir:)
Pallas, meanwhile, her various veil unbound,
With flowers adorn'd, with art immortal crown'd;
The radiant robe her sacred fingers wove

Floats in rich waves, and spreads the court of Jove.
Her father's arms her mighty limbs invest,
His cuirass blazes on her ample breast.
The vigorous power the trembling car ascends:
Shook by her arm, the massy javelin bends:
Huge, ponderous, strong! that when her fury burns
Proud tyrants humbles, and whole hosts o'erturns.

Saturnia lends the lash; the coursers fly;
Smooth glides the chariot through the liquid sky.
Heaven's gates spontaneous open to the powers,
Heaven's golden gates, kept by the winged Hours.
Commission'd in alternate watch they stand,
The sun's bright portals and the skies command;
Close, or unfold, the eternal gates of day
Bar heaven with clouds, or roll those clouds away.
The sounding hinges ring, the clouds divide.
Prone down the steep of heaven their course they guide.
But Jove, incensed, from Ida's top survey'd,
And thus enjoin'd the many-colour'd maid.

"Thaumantia! mount the winds, and stop their car;
Against the highest who shall wage the war?
If furious yet they dare the vain debate,
Thus have I spoke, and what I speak is fate:

Their coursers crush'd beneath the wheels shall lie,
Their car in fragments, scatter'd o'er the sky:
My lightning these rebellious shall confound,
And hurl them flaming, headlong, to the ground,
Condemn'd for ten revolving years to weep
The wounds impress'd by burning thunder deep.
So shall Minerva learn to fear our ire,
Nor dare to combat hers and nature's sire.
For Juno, headstrong and imperious still,
She claims some title to transgress our will."

Swift as the wind, the various-colour'd maid
From Ida's top her golden wings display'd;
To great Olympus' shining gate she flies,
There meets the chariot rushing down the skies,
Restrains their progress from the bright abodes,
And speaks the mandate of the sire of gods.

"What frenzy goddesses! what rage can move
Celestial minds to tempt the wrath of Jove?
Desist, obedient to his high command:
This is his word; and know his word shall stand:
His lightning your rebellion shall confound,
And hurl ye headlong, flaming, to the ground;
Your horses crush'd beneath the wheels shall lie,
Your car in fragments scatter'd o'er the sky;

Yourselves condemn'd ten rolling years to weep
The wounds impress'd by burning thunder deep.
So shall Minerva learn to fear his ire,
Nor dare to combat hers and nature's sire.
For Juno, headstrong and imperious still,
She claims some title to transgress his will:
But thee, what desperate insolence has driven
To lift thy lance against the king of heaven?"

Then, mounting on the pinions of the wind,
She flew; and Juno thus her rage resign'd:

"O daughter of that god, whose arm can wield
The avenging bolt, and shake the dreadful shield
No more let beings of superior birth
Contend with Jove for this low race of earth;
Triumphant now, now miserably slain,
They breathe or perish as the fates ordain:
But Jove's high counsels full effect shall find;
And, ever constant, ever rule mankind."

She spoke, and backward turn'd her steeds of light,
Adorn'd with manes of gold, and heavenly bright.
The Hours unloosed them, panting as they stood,
And heap'd their mangers with ambrosial food.
There tied, they rest in high celestial stalls;

The chariot propp'd against the crystal walls,
The pensive goddesses, abash'd, controll'd,
Mix with the gods, and fill their seats of gold.

And now the Thunderer meditates his flight
From Ida's summits to the Olympian height.
Swifter than thought, the wheels instinctive fly,
Flame through the vast of air, and reach the sky.
'Twas Neptune's charge his coursers to unbrace,
And fix the car on its immortal base;
There stood the chariot, beaming forth its rays,
Till with a snowy veil he screen'd the blaze.
He, whose all-conscious eyes the world behold,
The eternal Thunderer sat, enthroned in gold.
High heaven the footstool of his feet he makes,
And wide beneath him all Olympus shakes.
Trembling afar the offending powers appear'd,
Confused and silent, for his frown they fear'd.
He saw their soul, and thus his word imparts:
"Pallas and Juno! say, why heave your hearts?
Soon was your battle o'er: proud Troy retired
Before your face, and in your wrath expired.
But know, whoe'er almighty power withstand!
Unmatch'd our force, unconquer'd is our hand:
Who shall the sovereign of the skies control?
Not all the gods that crown the starry pole.

Your hearts shall tremble, if our arms we take,
And each immortal nerve with horror shake.
For thus I speak, and what I speak shall stand;
What power soe'er provokes our lifted hand,
On this our hill no more shall hold his place;
Cut off, and exiled from the ethereal race."

Juno and Pallas grieving hear the doom,
But feast their souls on Ilion's woes to come.
Though secret anger swell'd Minerva's breast,
The prudent goddess yet her wrath repress'd;
But Juno, impotent of rage, replies:
"What hast thou said, O tyrant of the skies!
Strength and omnipotence invest thy throne;
'Tis thine to punish; ours to grieve alone.
For Greece we grieve, abandon'd by her fate
To drink the dregs of thy unmeasured hate.
From fields forbidden we submit refrain,
With arms unaiding see our Argives slain;
Yet grant our counsels still their breasts may move,
Lest all should perish in the rage of Jove."

The goddess thus; and thus the god replies,
Who swells the clouds, and blackens all the skies:

"The morning sun, awaked by loud alarms,

Shall see the almighty Thunderer in arms.
What heaps of Argives then shall load the plain,
Those radiant eyes shall view, and view in vain.
Nor shall great Hector cease the rage of fight,
The navy flaming, and thy Greeks in flight,
Even till the day when certain fates ordain
That stern Achilles (his Patroclus slain)
Shall rise in vengeance, and lay waste the plain.
For such is fate, nor canst thou turn its course
With all thy rage, with all thy rebel force.
Fly, if thy wilt, to earth's remotest bound,
Where on her utmost verge the seas resound;
Where cursed Iapetus and Saturn dwell,
Fast by the brink, within the streams of hell;
No sun e'er gilds the gloomy horrors there;
No cheerful gales refresh the lazy air:
There arm once more the bold Titanian band;
And arm in vain; for what I will, shall stand."

Now deep in ocean sunk the lamp of light,
And drew behind the cloudy veil of night:
The conquering Trojans mourn his beams decay'd;
The Greeks rejoicing bless the friendly shade.

The victors keep the field; and Hector calls
A martial council near the navy walls;

These to Scamander's bank apart he led,
Where thinly scatter'd lay the heaps of dead.
The assembled chiefs, descending on the ground,
Attend his order, and their prince surround.
A massy spear he bore of mighty strength,
Of full ten cubits was the lance's length;
The point was brass, refulgent to behold,
Fix'd to the wood with circling rings of gold:
The noble Hector on his lance reclined,
And, bending forward, thus reveal'd his mind:

"Ye valiant Trojans, with attention hear!
Ye Dardan bands, and generous aids, give ear!
This day, we hoped, would wrap in conquering flame
Greece with her ships, and crown our toils with fame.
But darkness now, to save the cowards, falls,
And guards them trembling in their wooden walls.
Obey the night, and use her peaceful hours
Our steeds to forage, and refresh our powers.
Straight from the town be sheep and oxen sought,
And strengthening bread and generous wine be brought
Wide o'er the field, high blazing to the sky,
Let numerous fires the absent sun supply,
The flaming piles with plenteous fuel raise,
Till the bright morn her purple beam displays;
Lest, in the silence and the shades of night,

Greece on her sable ships attempt her flight.
Not unmolested let the wretches gain
Their lofty decks, or safely cleave the main;
Some hostile wound let every dart bestow,
Some lasting token of the Phrygian foe,
Wounds, that long hence may ask their spouses' care.
And warn their children from a Trojan war.
Now through the circuit of our Ilion wall,
Let sacred heralds sound the solemn call;
To bid the sires with hoary honours crown'd,
And beardless youths, our battlements surround.
Firm be the guard, while distant lie our powers,
And let the matrons hang with lights the towers;
Lest, under covert of the midnight shade,
The insidious foe the naked town invade.
Suffice, to-night, these orders to obey;
A nobler charge shall rouse the dawning day.
The gods, I trust, shall give to Hector's hand
From these detested foes to free the land,
Who plough'd, with fates averse, the watery way:
For Trojan vultures a predestined prey.
Our common safety must be now the care;
But soon as morning paints the fields of air,
Sheathed in bright arms let every troop engage,
And the fired fleet behold the battle rage.
Then, then shall Hector and Tydides prove

Whose fates are heaviest in the scales of Jove.
To-morrow's light (O haste the glorious morn!)
Shall see his bloody spoils in triumph borne,
With this keen javelin shall his breast be gored,
And prostrate heroes bleed around their lord.
Certain as this, oh! might my days endure,
From age inglorious, and black death secure;
So might my life and glory know no bound,
Like Pallas worshipp'd, like the sun renown'd!
As the next dawn, the last they shall enjoy,
Shall crush the Greeks, and end the woes of Troy."

The leader spoke. From all his host around
Shouts of applause along the shores resound.
Each from the yoke the smoking steeds untied,
And fix'd their headstalls to his chariot-side.
Fat sheep and oxen from the town are led,
With generous wine, and all-sustaining bread,
Full hecatombs lay burning on the shore:
The winds to heaven the curling vapours bore.
Ungrateful offering to the immortal powers!(197)
Whose wrath hung heavy o'er the Trojan towers:
Nor Priam nor his sons obtain'd their grace;
Proud Troy they hated, and her guilty race.

The troops exulting sat in order round,

And beaming fires illumined all the ground.
As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night,(198)
O'er heaven's pure azure spreads her sacred light,
When not a breath disturbs the deep serene,
And not a cloud o'ercasts the solemn scene,
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And stars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole,
O'er the dark trees a yellower verdure shed,
And tip with silver every mountain's head:
Then shine the vales, the rocks in prospect rise,
A flood of glory bursts from all the skies:
The conscious swains, rejoicing in the sight,
Eye the blue vault, and bless the useful light.
So many flames before proud Ilion blaze,
And lighten glimmering Xanthus with their rays.
The long reflections of the distant fires
Gleam on the walls, and tremble on the spires.
A thousand piles the dusky horrors gild,
And shoot a shady lustre o'er the field.
Full fifty guards each flaming pile attend,
Whose umber'd arms, by fits, thick flashes send,
Loud neigh the coursers o'er their heaps of corn,
And ardent warriors wait the rising morn.