

BOOK XI.

ARGUMENT

THE THIRD BATTLE, AND THE ACTS OF AGAMEMNON.

Agamemnon, having armed himself, leads the Grecians to battle; Hector prepares the Trojans to receive them, while Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva give the signals of war. Agamemnon bears all before him and Hector is commanded by Jupiter (who sends Iris for that purpose) to decline the engagement, till the king shall be wounded and retire from the field. He then makes a great slaughter of the enemy. Ulysses and Diomed put a stop to him for a time but the latter, being wounded by Paris, is obliged to desert his companion, who is encompassed by the Trojans, wounded, and in the utmost danger, till Menelaus and Ajax rescue him. Hector comes against Ajax, but that hero alone opposes multitudes, and rallies the Greeks. In the meantime Machaon, in the other wing of the army, is pierced with an arrow by Paris, and carried from the fight in Nestor's chariot. Achilles (who overlooked the action from his ship) sent Patroclus to inquire which of the Greeks was wounded in that manner; Nestor entertains him in his tent with an account of the accidents of the day, and a long recital of some former wars which he remembered, tending to put Patroclus upon persuading Achilles to fight for his countrymen, or at least to permit him to do it, clad in Achilles' armour. Patroclus, on his return, meets Eurypylus also wounded, and assists him in that distress.

This book opens with the eight and-twentieth day of the poem, and the same day, with its various actions and adventures is extended through the twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth, and part of the eighteenth books. The scene lies in the field near the monument of Ilus.

The saffron morn, with early blushes spread,(219)
Now rose refulgent from Tithonus' bed;
With new-born day to gladden mortal sight,
And gild the courts of heaven with sacred light:
When baleful Eris, sent by Jove's command,
The torch of discord blazing in her hand,
Through the red skies her bloody sign extends,
And, wrapt in tempests, o'er the fleet descends.
High on Ulysses' bark her horrid stand
She took, and thunder'd through the seas and land.

Even Ajax and Achilles heard the sound,
Whose ships, remote, the guarded navy bound,
Thence the black fury through the Grecian throng
With horror sounds the loud Orthian song:
The navy shakes, and at the dire alarms
Each bosom boils, each warrior starts to arms.
No more they sigh, inglorious to return,
But breathe revenge, and for the combat burn.

The king of men his hardy host inspires
With loud command, with great example fires!
Himself first rose, himself before the rest
His mighty limbs in radiant armour dress'd,
And first he cased his manly legs around
In shining greaves with silver buckles bound;
The beaming cuirass next adorn'd his breast,
The same which once king Cinyras possess'd:
(The fame of Greece and her assembled host
Had reach'd that monarch on the Cyprian coast;
'Twas then, the friendship of the chief to gain,
This glorious gift he sent, nor sent in vain:)
Ten rows of azure steel the work infold,
Twice ten of tin, and twelve of ductile gold;
Three glittering dragons to the gorget rise,
Whose imitated scales against the skies
Reflected various light, and arching bow'd,
Like colour'd rainbows o'er a showery cloud
(Jove's wondrous bow, of three celestial dies,
Placed as a sign to man amidst the skies).
A radiant baldric, o'er his shoulder tied,
Sustain'd the sword that glitter'd at his side:
Gold was the hilt, a silver sheath encased
The shining blade, and golden hangers graced.
His buckler's mighty orb was next display'd,

That round the warrior cast a dreadful shade;
Ten zones of brass its ample brim surround,
And twice ten bosses the bright convex crown'd:
Tremendous Gorgon frown'd upon its field,
And circling terrors fill'd the expressive shield:
Within its concave hung a silver thong,
On which a mimic serpent creeps along,
His azure length in easy waves extends,
Till in three heads the embroider'd monster ends.
Last o'er his brows his fourfold helm he placed,
With nodding horse-hair formidably graced;
And in his hands two steely javelins wields,
That blaze to heaven, and lighten all the fields.

That instant Juno, and the martial maid,
In happy thunders promised Greece their aid;
High o'er the chief they clash'd their arms in air,
And, leaning from the clouds, expect the war.

Close to the limits of the trench and mound,
The fiery coursers to their chariots bound
The squires restrain'd: the foot, with those who wield
The lighter arms, rush forward to the field.
To second these, in close array combined,
The squadrons spread their sable wings behind.
Now shouts and tumults wake the tardy sun,

As with the light the warriors' toils begun.
Even Jove, whose thunder spoke his wrath, distill'd
Red drops of blood o'er all the fatal field;(220)
The woes of men unwilling to survey,
And all the slaughters that must stain the day.

Near Ilus' tomb, in order ranged around,
The Trojan lines possess'd the rising ground:
There wise Polydamas and Hector stood;
Æneas, honour'd as a guardian god;
Bold Polybus, Agenor the divine;
The brother-warriors of Antenor's line:
With youthful Acamas, whose beauteous face
And fair proportion match'd the ethereal race.
Great Hector, cover'd with his spacious shield,
Plies all the troops, and orders all the field.
As the red star now shows his sanguine fires
Through the dark clouds, and now in night retires,
Thus through the ranks appear'd the godlike man,
Plunged in the rear, or blazing in the van;
While streamy sparkles, restless as he flies,
Flash from his arms, as lightning from the skies.
As sweating reapers in some wealthy field,
Ranged in two bands, their crooked weapons wield,
Bear down the furrows, till their labours meet;
Thick fall the heapy harvests at their feet:

So Greece and Troy the field of war divide,
And falling ranks are strow'd on every side.
None stoop'd a thought to base inglorious flight;(221)
But horse to horse, and man to man they fight,
Not rabid wolves more fierce contest their prey;
Each wounds, each bleeds, but none resign the day.
Discord with joy the scene of death descries,
And drinks large slaughter at her sanguine eyes:
Discord alone, of all the immortal train,
Swells the red horrors of this direful plain:
The gods in peace their golden mansions fill,
Ranged in bright order on the Olympian hill:
But general murmurs told their griefs above,
And each accused the partial will of Jove.
Meanwhile apart, superior, and alone,
The eternal Monarch, on his awful throne,
Wrapt in the blaze of boundless glory sate;
And fix'd, fulfill'd the just decrees of fate.
On earth he turn'd his all-considering eyes,
And mark'd the spot where Ilion's towers arise;
The sea with ships, the fields with armies spread,
The victor's rage, the dying, and the dead.

Thus while the morning-beams, increasing bright,
O'er heaven's pure azure spread the glowing light,
Commutual death the fate of war confounds,

Each adverse battle gored with equal wounds.
But now (what time in some sequester'd vale
The weary woodman spreads his sparing meal,
When his tired arms refuse the axe to rear,
And claim a respite from the sylvan war;
But not till half the prostrate forests lay
Stretch'd in long ruin, and exposed to day)
Then, nor till then, the Greeks' impulsive might
Pierced the black phalanx, and let in the light.
Great Agamemnon then the slaughter led,
And slew Bienor at his people's head:
Whose squire Oileus, with a sudden spring,
Leap'd from the chariot to revenge his king;
But in his front he felt the fatal wound,
Which pierced his brain, and stretch'd him on the ground.
Atrides spoil'd, and left them on the plain:
Vain was their youth, their glittering armour vain:
Now soil'd with dust, and naked to the sky,
Their snowy limbs and beauteous bodies lie.

Two sons of Priam next to battle move,
The product, one of marriage, one of love:(222)
In the same car the brother-warriors ride;
This took the charge to combat, that to guide:
Far other task, than when they wont to keep,
On Ida's tops, their father's fleecy sheep.

These on the mountains once Achilles found,
And captive led, with pliant osiers bound;
Then to their sire for ample sums restored;
But now to perish by Atrides' sword:
Pierced in the breast the base-born Isus bleeds:
Cleft through the head his brother's fate succeeds,
Swift to the spoil the hasty victor falls,
And, stript, their features to his mind recalls.
The Trojans see the youths untimely die,
But helpless tremble for themselves, and fly.
So when a lion ranging o'er the lawns.
Finds, on some grassy lair, the couching fawns,
Their bones he cracks, their reeking vitals draws,
And grinds the quivering flesh with bloody jaws;
The frightened hind beholds, and dares not stay,
But swift through rustling thickets bursts her way;
All drown'd in sweat, the panting mother flies,
And the big tears roll trickling from her eyes.

Amidst the tumult of the routed train,
The sons of false Antimachus were slain;
He who for bribes his faithless counsels sold,
And voted Helen's stay for Paris' gold.
Atrides mark'd, as these their safety sought,
And slew the children for the father's fault;
Their headstrong horse unable to restrain,

They shook with fear, and dropp'd the silken rein;
Then in the chariot on their knees they fall,
And thus with lifted hands for mercy call:

"O spare our youth, and for the life we owe,
Antimachus shall copious gifts bestow:
Soon as he hears, that, not in battle slain,
The Grecian ships his captive sons detain,
Large heaps of brass in ransom shall be told,
And steel well-tempered, and persuasive gold."

These words, attended with the flood of tears,
The youths address'd to unrelenting ears:
The vengeful monarch gave this stern reply:
"If from Antimachus ye spring, ye die;
The daring wretch who once in council stood
To shed Ulysses' and my brother's blood,
For proffer'd peace! and sues his seed for grace?
No, die, and pay the forfeit of your race."

This said, Pisander from the car he cast,
And pierced his breast: supine he breathed his last.
His brother leap'd to earth; but, as he lay,
The trenchant falchion lopp'd his hands away;
His sever'd head was toss'd among the throng,
And, rolling, drew a bloody train along.

Then, where the thickest fought, the victor flew;
The king's example all his Greeks pursue.
Now by the foot the flying foot were slain,
Horse trod by horse, lay foaming on the plain.
From the dry fields thick clouds of dust arise,
Shade the black host, and intercept the skies.
The brass-hoof'd steeds tumultuous plunge and bound,
And the thick thunder beats the labouring ground,
Still slaughtering on, the king of men proceeds;
The distanced army wonders at his deeds,
As when the winds with raging flames conspire,
And o'er the forests roll the flood of fire,
In blazing heaps the grove's old honours fall,
And one refulgent ruin levels all:
Before Atrides' rage so sinks the foe,
Whole squadrons vanish, and proud heads lie low.
The steeds fly trembling from his waving sword,
And many a car, now lighted of its lord,
Wide o'er the field with guideless fury rolls,
Breaking their ranks, and crushing out their souls;
While his keen falchion drinks the warriors' lives;
More grateful, now, to vultures than their wives!

Perhaps great Hector then had found his fate,
But Jove and destiny prolong'd his date.
Safe from the darts, the care of heaven he stood,

Amidst alarms, and death, and dust, and blood.

Now past the tomb where ancient Ilus lay,
Through the mid field the routed urge their way:
Where the wild figs the adjoining summit crown,
The path they take, and speed to reach the town.
As swift, Atrides with loud shouts pursued,
Hot with his toil, and bathed in hostile blood.
Now near the beech-tree, and the Scaean gates,
The hero halts, and his associates waits.
Meanwhile on every side around the plain,
Dispersed, disorder'd, fly the Trojan train.
So flies a herd of beeves, that hear dismay'd
The lion's roaring through the midnight shade;
On heaps they tumble with successless haste;
The savage seizes, draws, and rends the last.
Not with less fury stem Atrides flew,
Still press'd the rout, and still the hindmost slew;
Hurl'd from their cars the bravest chiefs are kill'd,
And rage, and death, and carnage load the field.

Now storms the victor at the Trojan wall;
Surveys the towers, and meditates their fall.
But Jove descending shook the Idaean hills,
And down their summits pour'd a hundred rills:
The unkindled lightning in his hand he took,

And thus the many-coloured maid bespoke:

"Iris, with haste thy golden wings display,
To godlike Hector this our word convey--
While Agamemnon wastes the ranks around,
Fights in the front, and bathes with blood the ground,
Bid him give way; but issue forth commands,
And trust the war to less important hands:
But when, or wounded by the spear or dart,
That chief shall mount his chariot, and depart,
Then Jove shall string his arm, and fire his breast,
Then to her ships shall flying Greece be press'd,
Till to the main the burning sun descend,
And sacred night her awful shade extend."

He spoke, and Iris at his word obey'd;
On wings of winds descends the various maid.
The chief she found amidst the ranks of war,
Close to the bulwarks, on his glittering car.
The goddess then: "O son of Priam, hear!
From Jove I come, and his high mandate bear.
While Agamemnon wastes the ranks around,
Fights in the front, and bathes with blood the ground,
Abstain from fight; yet issue forth commands,
And trust the war to less important hands:
But when, or wounded by the spear or dart,

The chief shall mount his chariot, and depart,
Then Jove shall string thy arm, and fire thy breast,
Then to her ships shall flying Greece be press'd,
Till to the main the burning sun descend,
And sacred night her awful shade extend."

She said, and vanish'd. Hector, with a bound,
Springs from his chariot on the trembling ground,
In clanging arms: he grasps in either hand
A pointed lance, and speeds from band to band;
Revives their ardour, turns their steps from flight,
And wakes anew the dying flames of fight.
They stand to arms: the Greeks their onset dare,
Condense their powers, and wait the coming war.
New force, new spirit, to each breast returns;
The fight renew'd with fiercer fury burns:
The king leads on: all fix on him their eye,
And learn from him to conquer, or to die.

Ye sacred nine! celestial Muses! tell,
Who faced him first, and by his prowess fell?
The great Iphidamas, the bold and young,
From sage Antenor and Theano sprung;
Whom from his youth his grandsire Cisseus bred,
And nursed in Thrace where snowy flocks are fed.
Scarce did the down his rosy cheeks invest,

And early honour warm his generous breast,
When the kind sire consign'd his daughter's charms
(Theano's sister) to his youthful arms.
But call'd by glory to the wars of Troy,
He leaves untasted the first fruits of joy;
From his loved bride departs with melting eyes,
And swift to aid his dearer country flies.
With twelve black ships he reach'd Percope's strand,
Thence took the long laborious march by land.
Now fierce for fame, before the ranks he springs,
Towering in arms, and braves the king of kings.
Atrides first discharged the missive spear;
The Trojan stoop'd, the javelin pass'd in air.
Then near the corslet, at the monarch's heart,
With all his strength, the youth directs his dart:
But the broad belt, with plates of silver bound,
The point rebated, and repell'd the wound.
Encumber'd with the dart, Atrides stands,
Till, grasp'd with force, he wrench'd it from his hands;
At once his weighty sword discharged a wound
Full on his neck, that fell'd him to the ground.
Stretch'd in the dust the unhappy warrior lies,
And sleep eternal seals his swimming eyes.
Oh worthy better fate! oh early slain!
Thy country's friend; and virtuous, though in vain!
No more the youth shall join his consort's side,

At once a virgin, and at once a bride!
No more with presents her embraces meet,
Or lay the spoils of conquest at her feet,
On whom his passion, lavish of his store,
Bestow'd so much, and vainly promised more!
Unwept, uncover'd, on the plain he lay,
While the proud victor bore his arms away.

Coon, Antenor's eldest hope, was nigh:
Tears, at the sight, came starting from his eye,
While pierced with grief the much-loved youth he view'd,
And the pale features now deform'd with blood.
Then, with his spear, unseen, his time he took,
Aim'd at the king, and near his elbow strook.
The thrilling steel transpierced the brawny part,
And through his arm stood forth the barbed dart.
Surprised the monarch feels, yet void of fear
On Coon rushes with his lifted spear:
His brother's corpse the pious Trojan draws,
And calls his country to assert his cause;
Defends him breathless on the sanguine field,
And o'er the body spreads his ample shield.
Atrides, marking an unguarded part,
Transfix'd the warrior with his brazen dart;
Prone on his brother's bleeding breast he lay,
The monarch's falchion lopp'd his head away:

The social shades the same dark journey go,
And join each other in the realms below.

The vengeful victor rages round the fields,
With every weapon art or fury yields:
By the long lance, the sword, or ponderous stone,
Whole ranks are broken, and whole troops o'erthrown.
This, while yet warm distill'd the purple flood;
But when the wound grew stiff with clotted blood,
Then grinding tortures his strong bosom rend,
Less keen those darts the fierce Ilythiae send:
(The powers that cause the teeming matron's throes,
Sad mothers of unutterable woes!)
Stung with the smart, all-panting with the pain,
He mounts the car, and gives his squire the rein;
Then with a voice which fury made more strong,
And pain augmented, thus exhorts the throng:

"O friends! O Greeks! assert your honours won;
Proceed, and finish what this arm begun:
Lo! angry Jove forbids your chief to stay,
And envies half the glories of the day."

He said: the driver whirls his lengthful thong;
The horses fly; the chariot smokes along.
Clouds from their nostrils the fierce coursers blow,

And from their sides the foam descends in snow;
Shot through the battle in a moment's space,
The wounded monarch at his tent they place.

No sooner Hector saw the king retired,
But thus his Trojans and his aids he fired:
"Hear, all ye Dardan, all ye Lycian race!
Famed in close fight, and dreadful face to face:
Now call to mind your ancient trophies won,
Your great forefathers' virtues, and your own.
Behold, the general flies! deserts his powers!
Lo, Jove himself declares the conquest ours!
Now on yon ranks impel your foaming steeds;
And, sure of glory, dare immortal deeds."

Writh words like these the fiery chief alarms
His fainting host, and every bosom warms.
As the bold hunter cheers his hounds to tear
The brindled lion, or the tusky bear:
With voice and hand provokes their doubting heart,
And springs the foremost with his lifted dart:
So godlike Hector prompts his troops to dare;
Nor prompts alone, but leads himself the war.
On the black body of the foe he pours;
As from the cloud's deep bosom, swell'd with showers,
A sudden storm the purple ocean sweeps,

Drives the wild waves, and tosses all the deeps.
Say, Muse! when Jove the Trojan's glory crown'd,
Beneath his arm what heroes bit the ground?
Assaeus, Dolops, and Autonomous died,
Opites next was added to their side;
Then brave Hipponous, famed in many a fight,
Opheltius, Orus, sunk to endless night;
Æsymnus, Agelaus; all chiefs of name;
The rest were vulgar deaths unknown to fame.
As when a western whirlwind, charged with storms,
Dispels the gather'd clouds that Notus forms:
The gust continued, violent and strong,
Rolls sable clouds in heaps on heaps along;
Now to the skies the foaming billows rears,
Now breaks the surge, and wide the bottom bares:
Thus, raging Hector, with resistless hands,
O'erturns, confounds, and scatters all their bands.
Now the last ruin the whole host appals;
Now Greece had trembled in her wooden walls;
But wise Ulysses call'd Tydides forth,
His soul rekindled, and awaked his worth.
"And stand we deedless, O eternal shame!
Till Hector's arm involve the ships in flame?
Haste, let us join, and combat side by side."
The warrior thus, and thus the friend replied:

"No martial toil I shun, no danger fear;
Let Hector come; I wait his fury here.
But Jove with conquest crowns the Trojan train:
And, Jove our foe, all human force is vain."

He sigh'd; but, sighing, raised his vengeful steel,
And from his car the proud Thymbraeus fell:
Molion, the charioteer, pursued his lord,
His death ennobled by Ulysses' sword.
There slain, they left them in eternal night,
Then plunged amidst the thickest ranks of fight.
So two wild boars outstrip the following hounds,
Then swift revert, and wounds return for wounds.
Stern Hector's conquests in the middle plain
Stood check'd awhile, and Greece respired again.

The sons of Merops shone amidst the war;
Towering they rode in one refulgent car:
In deep prophetic arts their father skill'd,
Had warn'd his children from the Trojan field.
Fate urged them on: the father warn'd in vain;
They rush'd to fight, and perish'd on the plain;
Their breasts no more the vital spirit warms;
The stern Tydides strips their shining arms.
Hypirochus by great Ulysses dies,
And rich Hippodamus becomes his prize.

Great Jove from Ide with slaughter fills his sight,
And level hangs the doubtful scale of fight.
By Tydeus' lance Agastrophus was slain,
The far-famed hero of Paeonian strain;
Wing'd with his fears, on foot he strove to fly,
His steeds too distant, and the foe too nigh:
Through broken orders, swifter than the wind,
He fled, but flying left his life behind.
This Hector sees, as his experienced eyes
Traverse the files, and to the rescue flies;
Shouts, as he pass'd, the crystal regions rend,
And moving armies on his march attend.
Great Diomed himself was seized with fear,
And thus bespoke his brother of the war:

"Mark how this way yon bending squadrons yield!
The storm rolls on, and Hector rules the field:
Here stand his utmost force."--The warrior said;
Swift at the word his ponderous javelin fled;
Nor miss'd its aim, but where the plumage danced
Razed the smooth cone, and thence obliquely glanced.
Safe in his helm (the gift of Phoebus' hands)
Without a wound the Trojan hero stands;
But yet so stunn'd, that, staggering on the plain.
His arm and knee his sinking bulk sustain;
O'er his dim sight the misty vapours rise,

And a short darkness shades his swimming eyes.
Tydides followed to regain his lance;
While Hector rose, recover'd from the trance,
Remounts his car, and herds amidst the crowd:
The Greek pursues him, and exults aloud:
"Once more thank Phoebus for thy forfeit breath,
Or thank that swiftness which outstrips the death.
Well by Apollo are thy prayers repaid,
And oft that partial power has lent his aid.
Thou shall not long the death deserved withstand,
If any god assist Tydides' hand.
Fly then, inglorious! but thy flight, this day,
Whole hecatombs of Trojan ghosts shall pay,"

Him, while he triumph'd, Paris eyed from far,
(The spouse of Helen, the fair cause of war;)
Around the fields his feather'd shafts he sent,
From ancient Ilus' ruin'd monument:
Behind the column placed, he bent his bow,
And wing'd an arrow at the unwary foe;
Just as he stoop'd, Agastrophus's crest
To seize, and drew the corslet from his breast,
The bowstring twang'd; nor flew the shaft in vain,
But pierced his foot, and nail'd it to the plain.
The laughing Trojan, with a joyful spring,
Leaps from his ambush, and insults the king.

"He bleeds! (he cries) some god has sped my dart!
Would the same god had fix'd it in his heart!
So Troy, relieved from that wide-wasting hand,
Should breathe from slaughter and in combat stand:
Whose sons now tremble at his darted spear,
As scatter'd lambs the rushing lion fear."

He dauntless thus: "Thou conqueror of the fair,
Thou woman-warrior with the curling hair;
Vain archer! trusting to the distant dart,
Unskill'd in arms to act a manly part!
Thou hast but done what boys or women can;
Such hands may wound, but not incense a man.
Nor boast the scratch thy feeble arrow gave,
A coward's weapon never hurts the brave.
Not so this dart, which thou may'st one day feel;
Fate wings its flight, and death is on the steel:
Where this but lights, some noble life expires;
Its touch makes orphans, bathes the cheeks of sires,
Steps earth in purple, gluts the birds of air,
And leaves such objects as distract the fair."
Ulysses hastens with a trembling heart,
Before him steps, and bending draws the dart:
Forth flows the blood; an eager pang succeeds;
Tydides mounts, and to the navy speeds.

Now on the field Ulysses stands alone,
The Greeks all fled, the Trojans pouring on;
But stands collected in himself, and whole,
And questions thus his own unconquer'd soul:

"What further subterfuge, what hopes remain?
What shame, inglorious if I quit the plain?
What danger, singly if I stand the ground,
My friends all scatter'd, all the foes around?
Yet wherefore doubtful? let this truth suffice,
The brave meets danger, and the coward flies.
To die or conquer, proves a hero's heart;
And, knowing this, I know a soldier's part."

Such thoughts revolving in his careful breast,
Near, and more near, the shady cohorts press'd;
These, in the warrior, their own fate enclose;
And round him deep the steely circle grows.
So fares a boar whom all the troop surrounds
Of shouting huntsmen and of clamorous hounds;
He grinds his ivory tusks; he foams with ire;
His sanguine eye-balls glare with living fire;
By these, by those, on every part is plied;
And the red slaughter spreads on every side.
Pierced through the shoulder, first Deiopis fell;

Next Ennomus and Thoon sank to hell;
Chersidamas, beneath the navel thrust,
Falls prone to earth, and grasps the bloody dust.
Charops, the son of Hippasus, was near;
Ulysses reach'd him with the fatal spear;
But to his aid his brother Socus flies,
Socus the brave, the generous, and the wise.
Near as he drew, the warrior thus began:

"O great Ulysses! much-enduring man!
Not deeper skill'd in every martial sleight,
Than worn to toils, and active in the fight!
This day two brothers shall thy conquest grace,
And end at once the great Hippasian race,
Or thou beneath this lance must press the field."
He said, and forceful pierced his spacious shield:
Through the strong brass the ringing javelin thrown,
Plough'd half his side, and bared it to the bone.
By Pallas' care, the spear, though deep infix'd,
Stopp'd short of life, nor with his entrails mix'd.

The wound not mortal wise Ulysses knew,
Then furious thus (but first some steps withdrew):
"Unhappy man! whose death our hands shall grace,
Fate calls thee hence and finish'd is thy race.
Nor longer check my conquests on the foe;

But, pierced by this, to endless darkness go,
And add one spectre to the realms below!"

He spoke, while Socus, seized with sudden fright,
Trembling gave way, and turn'd his back to flight;
Between his shoulders pierced the following dart,
And held its passage through the panting heart:
Wide in his breast appear'd the grisly wound;
He falls; his armour rings against the ground.

Then thus Ulysses, gazing on the slain:

"Famed son of Hippasus! there press the plain;

There ends thy narrow span assign'd by fate,

Heaven owes Ulysses yet a longer date.

Ah, wretch! no father shall thy corpse compose;

Thy dying eyes no tender mother close;

But hungry birds shall tear those balls away,

And hovering vultures scream around their prey.

Me Greece shall honour, when I meet my doom,

With solemn funerals and a lasting tomb."

Then raging with intolerable smart,

He writhes his body, and extracts the dart.

The dart a tide of spouting gore pursued,

And gladden'd Troy with sight of hostile blood.

Now troops on troops the fainting chief invade,

Forced he recedes, and loudly calls for aid.

Thrice to its pitch his lofty voice he rears;
The well-known voice thrice Menelaus hears:
Alarm'd, to Ajax Telamon he cried,
Who shares his labours, and defends his side:
"O friend! Ulysses' shouts invade my ear;
Distressed he seems, and no assistance near;
Strong as he is, yet one opposed to all,
Oppress'd by multitudes, the best may fall.
Greece robb'd of him must bid her host despair,
And feel a loss not ages can repair."

Then, where the cry directs, his course he bends;
Great Ajax, like the god of war, attends,
The prudent chief in sore distress they found,
With bands of furious Trojans compass'd round.(223)
As when some huntsman, with a flying spear,
From the blind thicket wounds a stately deer;
Down his cleft side, while fresh the blood distils,
He bounds aloft, and scuds from hills to hills,
Till life's warm vapour issuing through the wound,
Wild mountain-wolves the fainting beast surround:
Just as their jaws his prostrate limbs invade,
The lion rushes through the woodland shade,
The wolves, though hungry, scour dispersed away;
The lordly savage vindicates his prey.
Ulysses thus, unconquer'd by his pains,

A single warrior half a host sustains:
But soon as Ajax leaves his tower-like shield,
The scattered crowds fly frightened o'er the field;
Atrides' arm the sinking hero stays,
And, saved from numbers, to his car conveys.

Victorious Ajax plies the routed crew;
And first Doryclus, Priam's son, he slew,
On strong Pandocus next inflicts a wound,
And lays Lysander bleeding on the ground.
As when a torrent, swell'd with wintry rains,
Pours from the mountains o'er the deluged plains,
And pines and oaks, from their foundations torn,
A country's ruins! to the seas are borne:
Fierce Ajax thus o'erwhelms the yielding throng;
Men, steeds, and chariots, roll in heaps along.

But Hector, from this scene of slaughter far,
Raged on the left, and ruled the tide of war:
Loud groans proclaim his progress through the plain,
And deep Scamander swells with heaps of slain.
There Nestor and Idomeneus oppose
The warrior's fury; there the battle glows;
There fierce on foot, or from the chariot's height,
His sword deforms the beauteous ranks of fight.
The spouse of Helen, dealing darts around,

Had pierced Machaon with a distant wound:
In his right shoulder the broad shaft appear'd,
And trembling Greece for her physician fear'd.
To Nestor then Idomeneus begun:
"Glory of Greece, old Neleus' valiant son!
Ascend thy chariot, haste with speed away,
And great Machaon to the ships convey;
A wise physician skill'd our wounds to heal,
Is more than armies to the public weal."
Old Nestor mounts the seat; beside him rode
The wounded offspring of the healing god.
He lends the lash; the steeds with sounding feet
Shake the dry field, and thunder toward the fleet.

But now Cebriones, from Hector's car,
Survey'd the various fortune of the war:
"While here (he cried) the flying Greeks are slain,
Trojans on Trojans yonder load the plain.
Before great Ajax see the mingled throng
Of men and chariots driven in heaps along!
I know him well, distinguish'd o'er the field
By the broad glittering of the sevenfold shield.
Thither, O Hector, thither urge thy steeds,
There danger calls, and there the combat bleeds;
There horse and foot in mingled deaths unite,
And groans of slaughter mix with shouts of fight."

Thus having spoke, the driver's lash resounds;
Swift through the ranks the rapid chariot bounds;
Stung by the stroke, the coursers scour the fields,
O'er heaps of carcasses, and hills of shields.
The horses' hoofs are bathed in heroes' gore,
And, dashing, purple all the car before;
The groaning axle sable drops distils,
And mangled carnage clogs the rapid wheels.
Here Hector, plunging through the thickest fight,
Broke the dark phalanx, and let in the light:
(By the long lance, the sword, or ponderous stone.
The ranks he scatter'd and the troops o'erthrown:)
Ajax he shuns, through all the dire debate,
And fears that arm whose force he felt so late.
But partial Jove, espousing Hector's part,
Shot heaven-bred horror through the Grecian's heart;
Confused, unnerved in Hector's presence grown,
Amazed he stood, with terrors not his own.
O'er his broad back his moony shield he threw,
And, glaring round, by tardy steps withdrew.
Thus the grim lion his retreat maintains,
Beset with watchful dogs, and shouting swains;
Repulsed by numbers from the nightly stalls,
Though rage impels him, and though hunger calls,
Long stands the showering darts, and missile fires;

Then sourly slow the indignant beast retires:
So turn'd stern Ajax, by whole hosts repell'd,
While his swoln heart at every step rebell'd.

As the slow beast, with heavy strength endued,
In some wide field by troops of boys pursued,
Though round his sides a wooden tempest rain,
Crops the tall harvest, and lays waste the plain;
Thick on his hide the hollow blows resound,
The patient animal maintains his ground,
Scarce from the field with all their efforts chased,
And stirs but slowly when he stirs at last:
On Ajax thus a weight of Trojans hung,
The strokes redoubled on his buckler rung;
Confiding now in bulky strength he stands,
Now turns, and backward bears the yielding bands;
Now stiff recedes, yet hardly seems to fly,
And threatens his followers with retorted eye.
Fix'd as the bar between two warring powers,
While hissing darts descend in iron showers:
In his broad buckler many a weapon stood,
Its surface bristled with a quivering wood;
And many a javelin, guiltless on the plain,
Marks the dry dust, and thirsts for blood in vain.
But bold Eurypylos his aid imparts,
And dauntless springs beneath a cloud of darts;

Whose eager javelin launch'd against the foe,
Great Apisaon felt the fatal blow;
From his torn liver the red current flow'd,
And his slack knees desert their dying load.
The victor rushing to despoil the dead,
From Paris' bow a vengeful arrow fled;
Fix'd in his nervous thigh the weapon stood,
Fix'd was the point, but broken was the wood.
Back to the lines the wounded Greek retired,
Yet thus retreating, his associates fired:

"What god, O Grecians! has your hearts dismay'd?
Oh, turn to arms; 'tis Ajax claims your aid.
This hour he stands the mark of hostile rage,
And this the last brave battle he shall wage:
Haste, join your forces; from the gloomy grave
The warrior rescue, and your country save."
Thus urged the chief: a generous troop appears,
Who spread their bucklers, and advance their spears,
To guard their wounded friend: while thus they stand
With pious care, great Ajax joins the band:
Each takes new courage at the hero's sight;
The hero rallies, and renews the fight.

Thus raged both armies like conflicting fires,
While Nestor's chariot far from fight retires:

His coursers steep'd in sweat, and stain'd with gore,
The Greeks' preserver, great Machaon, bore.
That hour Achilles, from the topmost height
Of his proud fleet, o'erlook'd the fields of fight;
His feasted eyes beheld around the plain
The Grecian rout, the slaying, and the slain.
His friend Machaon singled from the rest,
A transient pity touch'd his vengeful breast.
Straight to Menoetius' much-loved son he sent:
Graceful as Mars, Patroclus quits his tent;
In evil hour! Then fate decreed his doom,
And fix'd the date of all his woes to come.

"Why calls my friend? thy loved injunctions lay;
Whate'er thy will, Patroclus shall obey."

"O first of friends! (Pelides thus replied)
Still at my heart, and ever at my side!
The time is come, when yon despairing host
Shall learn the value of the man they lost:
Now at my knees the Greeks shall pour their moan,
And proud Atrides tremble on his throne.
Go now to Nestor, and from him be taught
What wounded warrior late his chariot brought:
For, seen at distance, and but seen behind,
His form recall'd Machaon to my mind;

Nor could I, through yon cloud, discern his face,
The coursers pass'd me with so swift a pace."

The hero said. His friend obey'd with haste,
Through intermingled ships and tents he pass'd;
The chiefs descending from their car he found:
The panting steeds Eurymedon unbound.
The warriors standing on the breezy shore,
To dry their sweat, and wash away the gore,
Here paused a moment, while the gentle gale
Convey'd that freshness the cool seas exhale;
Then to consult on farther methods went,
And took their seats beneath the shady tent.
The draught prescribed, fair Hecamede prepares,
Arsinous' daughter, graced with golden hairs:
(Whom to his aged arms, a royal slave,
Greece, as the prize of Nestor's wisdom gave:)
A table first with azure feet she placed;
Whose ample orb a brazen charger graced;
Honey new-press'd, the sacred flour of wheat,
And wholesome garlic, crown'd the savoury treat,
Next her white hand an antique goblet brings,
A goblet sacred to the Pylia kings
From eldest times: emboss'd with studs of gold,
Two feet support it, and four handles hold;
On each bright handle, bending o'er the brink,

In sculptured gold, two turtles seem to drink:
A massy weight, yet heaved with ease by him,
When the brisk nectar overlook'd the brim.
Temper'd in this, the nymph of form divine
Pours a large portion of the Pramnian wine;
With goat's-milk cheese a flavourous taste bestows,
And last with flour the smiling surface strows:
This for the wounded prince the dame prepares:
The cordial beverage reverend Nestor shares:
Salubrious draughts the warriors' thirst allay,
And pleasing conference beguiles the day.

Meantime Patroclus, by Achilles sent,
Unheard approached, and stood before the tent.
Old Nestor, rising then, the hero led
To his high seat: the chief refused and said:

"'Tis now no season for these kind delays;
The great Achilles with impatience stays.
To great Achilles this respect I owe;
Who asks, what hero, wounded by the foe,
Was borne from combat by thy foaming steeds?
With grief I see the great Machaon bleeds.
This to report, my hasty course I bend;
Thou know'st the fiery temper of my friend."
"Can then the sons of Greece (the sage rejoin'd)

Excite compassion in Achilles' mind?
Seeks he the sorrows of our host to know?
This is not half the story of our woe.
Tell him, not great Machaon bleeds alone,
Our bravest heroes in the navy groan,
Ulysses, Agamemnon, Diomed,
And stern Eurypylus, already bleed.
But, ah! what flattering hopes I entertain!
Achilles heeds not, but derides our pain:
Even till the flames consume our fleet he stays,
And waits the rising of the fatal blaze.
Chief after chief the raging foe destroys;
Calm he looks on, and every death enjoys.
Now the slow course of all-impairing time
Unstrings my nerves, and ends my manly prime;
Oh! had I still that strength my youth possess'd,
When this bold arm the Epeian powers oppress'd,
The bulls of Elis in glad triumph led,
And stretch'd the great Itymonaeus dead!
Then from my fury fled the trembling swains,
And ours was all the plunder of the plains:
Fifty white flocks, full fifty herds of swine,
As many goats, as many lowing kine:
And thrice the number of unrivall'd steeds,
All teeming females, and of generous breeds.
These, as my first essay of arms, I won;

Old Neleus gloried in his conquering son.
Thus Elis forced, her long arrears restored,
And shares were parted to each Pylian lord.
The state of Pyle was sunk to last despair,
When the proud Elians first commenced the war:
For Neleus' sons Alcides' rage had slain;
Of twelve bold brothers, I alone remain!
Oppress'd, we arm'd; and now this conquest gain'd,
My sire three hundred chosen sheep obtain'd.
(That large reprisal he might justly claim,
For prize defrauded, and insulted fame,
When Elis' monarch, at the public course,
Detain'd his chariot, and victorious horse.)
The rest the people shared; myself survey'd
The just partition, and due victims paid.
Three days were past, when Elis rose to war,
With many a courser, and with many a car;
The sons of Actor at their army's head
(Young as they were) the vengeful squadrons led.
High on the rock fair Thryoessa stands,
Our utmost frontier on the Pylian lands:
Not far the streams of famed Alphaeus flow:
The stream they pass'd, and pitch'd their tents below.
Pallas, descending in the shades of night,
Alarms the Pylians and commands the fight.
Each burns for fame, and swells with martial pride,

Myself the foremost; but my sire denied;
Fear'd for my youth, exposed to stern alarms;
And stopp'd my chariot, and detain'd my arms.
My sire denied in vain: on foot I fled
Amidst our chariots; for the goddess led.

"Along fair Arene's delightful plain
Soft Minyas rolls his waters to the main:
There, horse and foot, the Pylian troops unite,
And sheathed in arms, expect the dawning light.
Thence, ere the sun advanced his noon-day flame,
To great Alphaeus' sacred source we came.
There first to Jove our solemn rites were paid;
An untamed heifer pleased the blue-eyed maid;
A bull, Alphaeus; and a bull was slain
To the blue monarch of the watery main.
In arms we slept, beside the winding flood,
While round the town the fierce Epeians stood.
Soon as the sun, with all-revealing ray,
Flamed in the front of Heaven, and gave the day.
Bright scenes of arms, and works of war appear;
The nations meet; there Pylos, Elis here.
The first who fell, beneath my javelin bled;
King Augias' son, and spouse of Agamede:
(She that all simples' healing virtues knew,
And every herb that drinks the morning dew:)

I seized his car, the van of battle led;
The Epeians saw, they trembled, and they fled.
The foe dispersed, their bravest warrior kill'd,
Fierce as the whirlwind now I swept the field:
Full fifty captive chariots graced my train;
Two chiefs from each fell breathless to the plain.
Then Actor's sons had died, but Neptune shrouds
The youthful heroes in a veil of clouds.
O'er heapy shields, and o'er the prostrate throng,
Collecting spoils, and slaughtering all along,
Through wide Buprasian fields we forced the foes,
Where o'er the vales the Olenian rocks arose;
Till Pallas stopp'd us where Alisium flows.
Even there the hindmost of the rear I slay,
And the same arm that led concludes the day;
Then back to Pyle triumphant take my way.
There to high Jove were public thanks assign'd,
As first of gods; to Nestor, of mankind.
Such then I was, impell'd by youthful blood;
So proved my valour for my country's good.

"Achilles with unactive fury glows,
And gives to passion what to Greece he owes.
How shall he grieve, when to the eternal shade
Her hosts shall sink, nor his the power to aid!
O friend! my memory recalls the day,

When, gathering aids along the Grecian sea,
I, and Ulysses, touch'd at Phthia's port,
And entered Peleus' hospitable court.
A bull to Jove he slew in sacrifice,
And pour'd libations on the flaming thighs.
Thyself, Achilles, and thy reverend sire
Menoetius, turn'd the fragments on the fire.
Achilles sees us, to the feast invites;
Social we sit, and share the genial rites.
We then explained the cause on which we came,
Urged you to arms, and found you fierce for fame.
Your ancient fathers generous precepts gave;
Peleus said only this:--'My son! be brave.'
Menoetius thus: 'Though great Achilles shine
In strength superior, and of race divine,
Yet cooler thoughts thy elder years attend;
Let thy just counsels aid, and rule thy friend.'
Thus spoke your father at Thessalia's court:
Words now forgot, though now of vast import.
Ah! try the utmost that a friend can say:
Such gentle force the fiercest minds obey;
Some favouring god Achilles' heart may move;
Though deaf to glory, he may yield to love.
If some dire oracle his breast alarm,
If aught from Heaven withhold his saving arm,
Some beam of comfort yet on Greece may shine,

If thou but lead the Myrmidonian line;
Clad in Achilles' arms, if thou appear,
Proud Troy may tremble, and desist from war;
Press'd by fresh forces, her o'er-labour'd train
Shall seek their walls, and Greece respire again."

This touch'd his generous heart, and from the tent
Along the shore with hasty strides he went;
Soon as he came, where, on the crowded strand,
The public mart and courts of justice stand,
Where the tall fleet of great Ulysses lies,
And altars to the guardian gods arise;
There, sad, he met the brave Euaemon's son,
Large painful drops from all his members run;
An arrow's head yet rooted in his wound,
The sable blood in circles mark'd the ground.
As faintly reeling he confess'd the smart,
Weak was his pace, but dauntless was his heart.
Divine compassion touch'd Patroclus' breast,
Who, sighing, thus his bleeding friend address'd:

"Ah, hapless leaders of the Grecian host!
Thus must ye perish on a barbarous coast?
Is this your fate, to glut the dogs with gore,
Far from your friends, and from your native shore?
Say, great Eurypylus! shall Greece yet stand?"

Resists she yet the raging Hector's hand?
Or are her heroes doom'd to die with shame,
And this the period of our wars and fame?"

Eurypylyus replies: "No more, my friend;
Greece is no more! this day her glories end;
Even to the ships victorious Troy pursues,
Her force increasing as her toil renews.
Those chiefs, that used her utmost rage to meet,
Lie pierced with wounds, and bleeding in the fleet.
But, thou, Patroclus! act a friendly part,
Lead to my ships, and draw this deadly dart;
With lukewarm water wash the gore away;
With healing balms the raging smart allay,
Such as sage Chiron, sire of pharmacy,
Once taught Achilles, and Achilles thee.
Of two famed surgeons, Podalirius stands
This hour surrounded by the Trojan bands;
And great Machaon, wounded in his tent,
Now wants that succour which so oft he lent."

To him the chief: "What then remains to do?
The event of things the gods alone can view.
Charged by Achilles' great command I fly,
And bear with haste the Pylian king's reply:
But thy distress this instant claims relief."

He said, and in his arms upheld the chief.
The slaves their master's slow approach survey'd,
And hides of oxen on the floor display'd:
There stretch'd at length the wounded hero lay;
Patroclus cut the forky steel away:
Then in his hands a bitter root he bruised;
The wound he wash'd, the styptic juice infused.
The closing flesh that instant ceased to glow,
The wound to torture, and the blood to flow.