

## BOOK VI.

### ARGUMENT.

Pallas appearing in a dream in to Nausicaa (the daughter of Alcinous, king of Phaeacia, commands her to descend to the river, and wash the robes of state, in preparation for her nuptials.

Nausicaa goes with her handmaidens to the river; where, while the garments are spread on the bank, they divert themselves in sports. Their voices awaken Ulysses, who, addressing himself to the princess, is by her relieved and clothed, and receives directions in what manner to apply to the king and queen of the island.

While thus the weary wanderer sunk to rest,  
And peaceful slumbers calmed his anxious breast,  
The martial maid from heavens aerial height  
Swift to Phaeacia wing'd her rapid flight,  
In elder times the soft Phaeacian train  
In ease possess'd the wide Hyperian plain;  
Till the Cyclopean race in arms arose  
A lawless nation of gigantic foes;  
Then great Nausithous from Hyperia far,  
Through seas retreating from the sounds of war,  
The recreant nation to fair Scheria led,

Where never science rear'd her laurell'd head;  
There round his tribes a strength of wall he raised;  
To heaven the glittering domes and temples blazed;  
Just to his realms, he parted grounds from grounds,  
And shared the lands, and gave the lands their bounds.  
Now in the silent grave the monarch lay,  
And wise Alcinous held the legal sway.

To his high palace through the fields of air  
The goddess shot; Ulysses was her care.  
There, as the night in silence roll'd away,  
A heaven of charms divine Nausicaa lay:  
Through the thick gloom the shining portals blaze;  
Two nymphs the portals guard, each nymph a Grace,  
Light as the viewless air the warrior maid  
Glides through the valves, and hovers round her head;  
A favourite virgin's blooming form she took,  
From Dymas sprung, and thus the vision spoke:

"Oh Indolent! to waste thy hours away!  
And sleep'st thou careless of the bridal day!  
Thy spousal ornament neglected lies;  
Arise, prepare the bridal train, arise!  
A just applause the cares of dress impart,  
And give soft transport to a parent's heart.  
Haste, to the limpid stream direct thy way,

When the gay morn unveils her smiling ray;  
Haste to the stream! companion of thy care,  
Lo, I thy steps attend, thy labours share.  
Virgin, awake! the marriage hour is nigh,  
See from their thrones thy kindred monarchs sigh!  
The royal car at early dawn obtain,  
And order mules obedient to the rein;  
For rough the way, and distant rolls the wave,  
Where their fair vests Phaeacian virgins lave,  
In pomp ride forth; for pomp becomes the great  
And majesty derives a grace from state."  
Then to the palaces of heaven she sails,  
Incumbent on the wings of wafting gales;  
The seat of gods; the regions mild of peace,  
Full joy, and calm eternity of ease.  
There no rude winds presume to shake the skies,  
No rains descend, no snowy vapours rise;  
But on immortal thrones the blest repose;  
The firmament with living splendours glows.  
Hither the goddess winged the aerial way,  
Through heaven's eternal gates that blazed with day.

Now from her rosy car Aurora shed  
The dawn, and all the orient flamed with red.  
Up rose the virgin with the morning light,  
Obedient to the vision of the night.

The queen she sought, the queen her hours bestowed  
In curious works; the whirling spindle glow'd  
With crimson threads, while busy damsels call  
The snowy fleece, or twist the purpled wool.  
Meanwhile Phaeacia's peers in council sate;  
From his high dome the king descends in state;  
Then with a filial awe the royal maid  
Approach'd him passing, and submissive said:

"Will my dread sire his ear regardful deign,  
And may his child the royal car obtain?  
Say, with my garments shall I bend my way?  
Where through the vales the mazy waters stray?  
A dignity of dress adorns the great,  
And kings draw lustre from the robe of state.  
Five sons thou hast; three wait the bridal day.  
And spotless robes become the young and gay;  
So when with praise amid the dance they shine,  
By these my cares adorn'd that praise is mine."

Thus she: but blushes ill-restrain'd betray  
Her thoughts intentive on the bridal day,  
The conscious sire the dawning blush survey'd,  
And, smiling, thus bespoke the blooming maid  
"My child, my darling joy, the car receive;  
That, and whate'er our daughter asks, we give."

Swift at the royal nod the attending train  
The car prepare, the mules incessant rein,  
The blooming virgin with despatchful cares  
Tunics, and stoles, and robes imperial, bears.  
The queen, assiduous to her train assigns  
The sumptuous viands, and the flavorful wines.  
The train prepare a cruse of curious mould,  
A cruse of fragrance, form'd of burnish'd gold;  
Odour divine! whose soft refreshing streams  
Sleek the smooth skin, and scent the snowy limbs.

Now mounting the gay seat, the silken reins  
Shine in her hand; along the sounding plains  
Swift fly the mules; nor rode the nymph alone;  
Around, a bevy of bright damsels shone.  
They seek the cisterns where Phaeacian dames  
Wash their fair garments in the limpid streams;  
Where, gathering into depth from falling rills,  
The lucid wave a spacious bason fills.  
The mules, unharness'd, range beside the main,  
Or crop the verdant herbage of the plain.

Then emulous the royal robes they lave,  
And plunge the vestures in the cleansing wave  
(The vestures cleansed o'erspread the shelly sand,  
Their snowy lustre whitens all the strand);

Then with a short repast relieve their toil,  
And o'er their limbs diffuse ambrosial oil;  
And while the robes imbibe the solar ray,  
O'er the green mead the sporting virgins play  
(Their shining veils unbound). Along the skies,  
Toss'd and retoss'd, the ball incessant flies.  
They sport, they feast; Nausicaa lifts her voice,  
And, warbling sweet, makes earth and heaven rejoice.

As when o'er Erymanth Diana roves,  
Or wide Tuygetus' resounding groves;  
A sylvan train the huntress queen surrounds,  
Her rattling quiver from her shoulders sounds:  
Fierce in the sport, along the mountain's brow  
They bay the boar, or chase the bounding roe;  
High o'er the lawn, with more majestic pace,  
Above the nymphs she treads with stately grace;  
Distinguish'd excellence the goddess proves;  
Exults Latona as the virgin moves.  
With equal grace Nausicaa trod the plain,  
And shone transcendent o'er the beauteous train.

Meantime (the care and favourite of the skies  
Wrapp'd in imbowering shade, Ulysses lies,  
His woes forgot! but Pallas now address'd  
To break the bands of all-composing rest.

Forth from her snowy hand Nausicaa threw  
The various ball; the ball erroneous flew  
And swam the stream; loud shrieks the virgin train,  
And the loud shriek redoubles from the main.  
Waked by the shrilling sound, Ulysses rose,  
And, to the deaf woods wailing, breathed his woes:

"Ah me! on what inhospitable coast,  
On what new region is Ulysses toss'd;  
Possess'd by wild barbarians fierce in arms;  
Or men, whose bosom tender pity warms?  
What sounds are these that gather from the shores?  
The voice of nymphs that haunt the sylvan bowers,  
The fair-hair'd Dryads of the shady wood;  
Or azure daughters of the silver flood;  
Or human voice? but issuing from the shades,  
Why cease I straight to learn what sound invades?"

Then, where the grove with leaves umbrageous bends,  
With forceful strength a branch the hero rends;  
Around his loins the verdant cincture spreads  
A wreathy foliage and concealing shades.  
As when a lion in the midnight hours,  
Beat by rude blasts, and wet with wintry showers,  
Descends terrific from the mountains brow;  
With living flames his rolling eye balls glow;

With conscious strength elate, he bends his way,  
Majestically fierce, to seize his prey  
(The steer or stag;) or, with keen hunger bold,  
Spring o'er the fence and dissipates the fold.  
No less a terror, from the neighbouring groves  
(Rough from the tossing surge) Ulysses moves;  
Urged on by want, and recent from the storms;  
The brackish ooze his manly grace deforms.  
Wide o'er the shore with many a piercing cry  
To rocks, to caves, the frightened virgins fly;  
All but the nymph; the nymph stood fix'd alone,  
By Pallas arm'd with boldness not her own.  
Meantime in dubious thought the king awaits,  
And, self-considering, as he stands, debates;  
Distant his mournful story to declare,  
Or prostrate at her knee address the prayer.  
But fearful to offend, by wisdom sway'd,  
At awful distance he accosts the maid:

"If from the skies a goddess, or if earth  
(Imperial virgin) boast thy glorious birth,  
To thee I bend! If in that bright disguise  
Thou visit earth, a daughter of the skies,  
Hail, Dian, hail! the huntress of the groves  
So shines majestic, and so stately moves,  
So breathes an air divine! But if thy race



Be mortal, and this earth thy native place,  
Blest is the father from whose loins you sprung,  
Blest is the mother at whose breast you hung.  
Blest are the brethren who thy blood divide,  
To such a miracle of charms allied:  
Joyful they see applauding princes gaze,  
When stately in the dance you swim the harmonious maze.  
But blest o'er all, the youth with heavenly charms,  
Who clasps the bright perfection in his arms!  
Never, I never view'd till this blast hour  
Such finish'd grace! I gaze, and I adore!  
Thus seems the palm with stately honours crown'd  
By Phoebus' altars; thus o'erlooks the ground;  
The pride of Delos. (By the Delian coast,  
I voyaged, leader of a warrior-host,  
But ah, how changed I from thence my sorrow flows;  
O fatal voyage, source of all my woes;)   
Raptured I stood, and as this hour amazed,  
With reverence at the lofty wonder gazed:  
Raptured I stand! for earth ne'er knew to bear  
A plant so stately, or a nymph so fair.  
Awed from access, I lift my suppliant hands;  
For Misery, O queen! before thee stands.  
Twice ten tempestuous nights I roll'd, resign'd  
To roaring blows, and the warring wind;  
Heaven bade the deep to spare; but heaven, my foe,

Spares only to inflict some mightier woe.  
Inured to cares, to death in all its forms;  
Outcast I rove, familiar with the storms.  
Once more I view the face of human kind:  
Oh let soft pity touch thy generous mind!  
Unconscious of what air I breathe, I stand  
Naked, defenceless on a narrow land.  
Propitious to my wants a vest supply  
To guard the wretched from the inclement sky:  
So may the gods, who heaven and earth control,  
Crown the chaste wishes of thy virtuous soul,  
On thy soft hours their choicest blessings shed;  
Blest with a husband be thy bridal bed;  
Blest be thy husband with a blooming race,  
And lasting union crown your blissful days.  
The gods, when they supremely bless, bestow  
Firm union on their favourites below;  
Then envy grieves, with inly-pining hate;  
The good exult, and heaven is in our state."

To whom the nymph: "O stranger, cease thy care;  
Wise is thy soul, but man is bore to bear;  
Jove weighs affairs of earth in dubious scales,  
And the good suffers, while the bad prevails.  
Bear, with a soul resign'd, the will of Jove;  
Who breathes, must mourn: thy woes are from above.

But since thou tread'st our hospitable shore,  
'Tis mine to bid the wretched grieve no more,  
To clothe the naked, and thy way to guide.  
Know, the Phaecian tribes this land divide;  
From great Alcinous' royal loins I spring,  
A happy nation, and a happy king."

Then to her maids: "Why, why, ye coward train,  
These fears, this flight? ye fear, and fly in vain.  
Dread ye a foe? dismiss that idle dread,  
'Tis death with hostile step these shores to tread;  
Safe in the love of heaven, an ocean flows  
Around our realm, a barrier from the foes;  
'Tis ours this son of sorrow to relieve,  
Cheer the sad heart, nor let affliction grieve.  
By Jove the stranger and the poor are sent;  
And what to those we give to Jove is lent.  
Then food supply, and bathe his fainting limbs  
Where waving shades obscure the mazy streams."

Obedient to the call, the chief they guide  
To the calm current of the secret tide;  
Close by the stream a royal dress they lay,  
A vest and robe, with rich embroidery gay;  
Then unguents in a vase of gold supply,  
That breathed a fragrance through the balmy sky.

To them the king: "No longer I detain  
Your friendly care: retire, ye virgin train!  
Retire, while from my wearied limbs I lave  
The foul pollution of the briny wave.  
Ye gods! since this worn frame refection know,  
What scenes have I surveyed of dreadful view!  
But, nymphs, recede! sage chastity denies  
To raise the blush, or pain the modest eyes."

The nymphs withdrawn, at once into the tide  
Active he bounds; the flashing waves divide  
O'er all his limbs his hands the waves diffuse,  
And from his locks compress the weedy ooze;  
The balmy oil, a fragrant shower, he sheds;  
Then, dressed, in pomp magnificently treads.  
The warrior-goddess gives his frame to shine  
With majesty enlarged, and air divine:  
Back from his brows a length of hair unfurls,  
His hyacinthine locks descend in wavy curls.  
As by some artist, to whom Vulcan gives  
His skill divine, a breathing statue lives;  
By Pallas taught, he frames the wondrous mould,  
And o'er the silver pours the fusile gold  
So Pallas his heroic frame improves  
With heavenly bloom, and like a god he moves.

A fragrance breathes around; majestic grace  
Attends his steps: the astonished virgins gaze.  
Soft he reclines along the murmuring seas,  
Inhaling freshness from the fanning breeze.

The wondering nymph his glorious port survey'd,  
And to her damsels, with amazement, said:

"Not without care divine the stranger treads  
This land of joy; his steps some godhead leads:  
Would Jove destroy him, sure he had been driven  
Far from this realm, the favourite isle of heaven.  
Late, a sad spectacle of woe, he trod  
The desert sands, and now he looks a god.  
Oh heaven! in my connubial hour decree  
This man my spouse, or such a spouse as he!  
But haste, the viands and the bowl provide."  
The maids the viands and the bowl supplied:  
Eager he fed, for keen his hunger raged,  
And with the generous vintage thirst assuaged.

Now on return her care Nausicaa bends,  
The robes resumes, the glittering car ascends,  
Far blooming o'er the field; and as she press'd  
The splendid seat, the listening chief address'd:

"Stranger, arise! the sun rolls down the day.  
Lo, to the palace I direct thy way;  
Where, in high state, the nobles of the land  
Attend my royal sire, a radiant band  
But hear, though wisdom in thy soul presides,  
Speaks from thy tongue, and every action guides;  
Advance at distance, while I pass the plain  
Where o'er the furrows waves the golden grain;  
Alone I reascend--With airy mounds  
A strength of wall the guarded city bounds;  
The jutting land two ample bays divides:  
Full through the narrow mouths descend the tides;  
The spacious basins arching rocks enclose,  
A sure defence from every storm that blows.  
Close to the bay great Neptune's fane adjoins;  
And near, a forum flank'd with marble shines,  
Where the bold youth, the numerous fleets to store,  
Shape the broad sail, or smooth the taper oar:  
For not the bow they bend, nor boast the skill  
To give the feather'd arrow wings to kill;  
But the tall mast above the vessel rear,  
Or teach the fluttering sail to float in air.  
They rush into the deep with eager joy,  
Climb the steep surge, and through the tempest fly;  
A proud, unpolish'd race--To me belongs  
The care to shun the blast of slanderous tongues;

Lest malice, prone the virtuous to defame,  
Thus with wild censure taint my spotless name:  
'What stranger this whom thus Nausicaa leads!  
Heavens, with what graceful majesty he treads!  
Perhaps a native of some distant shore,  
The future consort of her bridal hour:  
Or rather some descendant of the skies;  
Won by her prayer, the aerial bridegroom flies,  
Heaven on that hour its choicest influence shed,  
That gave a foreign spouse to crown her bed!  
All, all the godlike worthies that adorn  
This realm, she flies: Phaeacia is her scorn.'  
And just the blame: for female innocence  
Not only flies the guilt, but shuns the offence:  
The unguarded virgin, as unchaste, I blame;  
And the least freedom with the sex is shame,  
Till our consenting sires a spouse provide,  
And public nuptials justify the bride,  
But would'st thou soon review thy native plain?  
Attend, and speedy thou shalt pass the main:  
Nigh where a grove with verdant poplars crown'd,  
To Pallas sacred, shades the holy ground,  
We bend our way; a bubbling fount distills  
A lucid lake, and thence descends in rills;  
Around the grove, a mead with lively green  
Falls by degrees, and forms a beauteous scene;

Here a rich juice the royal vineyard pours;  
And there the garden yields a waste of flowers.  
Hence lies the town, as far as to the ear  
Floats a strong shout along the waves of air.  
There wait embower'd, while I ascend alone  
To great Alcinous on his royal throne.  
Arrived, advance, impatient of delay,  
And to the lofty palace bend thy way:  
The lofty palace overlooks the town,  
From every dome by pomp superior known;  
A child may point the way. With earnest gait  
Seek thou the queen along the rooms of state;  
Her royal hand a wondrous work designs,  
Around a circle of bright damsels shines;  
Part twist the threads, and part the wool dispose,  
While with the purple orb the spindle glows.  
High on a throne, amid the Scherian powers,  
My royal father shares the genial hours:  
But to the queen thy mournful tale disclose,  
With the prevailing eloquence of woes:  
So shalt thou view with joy thy natal shore,  
Though mountains rise between and oceans roar."

She added not, but waving, as she wheel'd,  
The silver scourge, it glitter'd o'er the field;  
With skill the virgin guides the embroider'd rein,



Slow rolls the car before the attending train,  
Now whirling down the heavens, the golden day  
Shot through the western clouds a dewy ray;  
The grove they reach, where, from the sacred shade,  
To Pallas thus the pensive hero pray'd:

"Daughter of Jove! whose arms in thunder wield  
The avenging bolt, and shake the dreadful shield;  
Forsook by thee, in vain I sought thy aid  
When booming billows closed above my head;  
Attend, unconquer'd maid! accord my vows,  
Bid the Great hear, and pitying, heal my woes."

This heard Minerva, but forbore to fly  
(By Neptune awed) apparent from the sky;  
Stern god! who raged with vengeance, unrestrain'd.  
Till great Ulysses hail'd his native land.