

## BOOK VIII.

### ARGUMENT.

Alcinous calls a council, in which it is resolved to transport Ulysses into his country. After which splendid entertainments are made, where the celebrated musician and poet, Demodocus, plays and sings to the guests. They next proceed to the games, the race, the wrestling, discus, &c., where Ulysses casts a prodigious length, to the admiration of all the spectators. They return again to the banquet and Demodocus sings the loves of Mars and Venus. Ulysses, after a compliment to the poet, desires him to sing the introduction of the wooden horse into Troy, which subject provoking his tears, Alcinous inquires of his guest his name, parentage, and fortunes.

Now fair Aurora lifts her golden ray,  
And all the ruddy orient flames with day:  
Alcinous, and the chief, with dawning light,  
Rose instant from the slumbers of the night;  
Then to the council-seat they bend their way,  
And fill the shining thrones along the bay.

Meanwhile Minerva, in her guardian care,

Shoots from the starry vault through fields of air;  
In form, a herald of the king, she flies  
From peer to peer, and thus incessant cries;

"Nobles and chiefs who rule Phaeacia's states,  
The king in council your attendance waits;  
A prince of grace divine your aid implores,  
O'er unknown seas arrived from unknown shores."

She spoke, and sudden with tumultuous sounds  
Of thronging multitudes the shore rebounds:  
At once the seats they fill; and every eye  
Glazed, as before some brother of the sky.  
Pallas with grace divine his form improves,  
More high he treads, and more enlarged he moves:  
She sheds celestial bloom, regard to draw;  
And gives a dignity of mien, to awe;  
With strength, the future prize of fame to play,  
And gather all the honours of the day.

Then from his glittering throne Alcinous rose;  
"Attend (he cried) while we our will disclose.  
Your present aid this godlike stranger craves,  
Toss'd by rude tempest through a war of waves;  
Perhaps from realms that view the rising day,  
Or nations subject to the western ray.

Then grant, what here all sons of wine obtain  
(For here affliction never pleads in vain);  
Be chosen youth prepared, expert to try  
The vast profound and hid the vessel fly;  
Launch the tall back, and order every oar;  
Then in our court indulge the genial hour.  
Instant, you sailors to this task attend;  
Swift to the palace, all ye peers ascend;  
Let none to strangers honours due disclaim:  
Be there Demodocus the bard of fame,  
Taught by the gods to please, when high he sings  
The vocal lay, responsive to the strings."

Thus spoke the prince; the attending peers obey;  
In state they move; Alcinous heads the way  
Swift to Demodocus the herald flies,  
At once the sailors to their charge arise;  
They launch the vessel, and unfurl the sails,  
And stretch the swelling canvas to the gales;  
Then to the palace move: a gathering throng,  
Youth, and white age, tumultuous pour along.  
Now all accesses to the dome are fill'd;  
Eight boars, the choicest of the herd, are kill'd;  
Two beeves, twelve fatlings, from the flock they bring  
To crown the feast; so wills the bounteous king,  
The herald now arrives, and guides along

The sacred master of celestial song;  
Dear to the Muse! who gave his days to flow  
With mighty blessings, mix'd with mighty woe;  
With clouds of darkness quench'd his visual ray,  
But gave him skill to raise the lofty lay.  
High on a radiant throne sublime in state,  
Encircled by huge multitudes, he sate;  
With silver shone the throne; his lyre, well strung  
To rapturous sounds, at hand Poutonous hung.  
Before his seat a polish'd table shines,  
And a full goblet foams with generous wines;  
His food a herald bore; and now they fed;  
And now the rage of craving hunger fled.

Then, fired by all the Muse, aloud he sings  
The mighty deeds of demigods and kings;  
From that fierce wrath the noble song arose,  
That made Ulysses and Achilles foes;  
How o'er the feast they doom the fall of Troy;  
The stern debate Atrides hears with joy;  
For Heaven foretold the contest, when he trod  
The marble threshold of the Delphic god,  
Curious to learn the counsels of the sky,  
Ere yet he loosed the rage of war on Troy.

Touch'd at the song, Ulysses straight resign'd

To soft affliction all his manly mind.  
Before his eyes the purple vest he drew,  
Industrious to conceal the falling dew;  
But when the music paused, he ceased to shed  
The flowing tear, and raised his drooping head;  
And, lifting to the gods a goblet crown'd,  
He pour'd a pure libation to the ground.

Transported with the song, the listening train  
Again with loud applause demand the strain;  
Again Ulysses veil'd his pensive head.  
Again unmann'd, a shower of sorrows shed;  
Conceal'd he wept; the king observed alone  
The silent tear, and heard the secret groan;  
Then to the bard aloud--"O cease to sing,  
Dumb be thy voice and mute the harmonious string;  
Enough the feast has pleased, enough the power  
Of heavenly song has crown'd the genial hour!  
Incessant in the games your strength display,  
Contest, ye brave the honours of the day!  
That pleased the admiring stranger may proclaim  
In distant regions the Phaeacian fame:  
None wield the gauntlet with so dire a sway,  
Or swifter in the race devour the way;  
None in the leap spring with so strong a bound,  
Or firmer, in the wrestling, press the ground."

Thus spoke the king; the attending peers obey;  
In state they move, Alcinous lends the way;  
His golden lyre Demodocus unstrung,  
High on a column in the palace hung;  
And guided by a herald's guardian cares,  
Majestic to the lists of Fame repairs.

Now swarms the populace: a countless throng,  
Youth and boar age; and man drives man along.  
The games begin; ambitious of the prize,  
Acroneus, Thoon, and Eretmeus rise;  
The prize Ocyalus and Pymneus claim,  
Anchialus and Ponteus, chiefs of fame.  
There Proreus, Nautes, Eratreus, appear  
And famed Amphialus, Polyneus' heir;  
Euryalus, like Mars terrific, rose,  
When clad in wrath he withers hosts of foes;  
Naubolides with grace unequall'd shone,  
Or equall'd by Laodamas alone.  
With these came forth Ambasineus the strong:  
And three brave sons, from great Alcinous sprung.

Ranged in a line the ready racers stand,  
Start from the goal, and vanish o'er the strand:  
Swift as on wings of winds, upborne they fly,

And drifts of rising dust involve the sky.  
Before the rest, what space the hinds allow  
Between the mule and ox, from plough to plough,  
Clytonius sprung: he wing'd the rapid way,  
And bore the unrivall'd honours of the day.  
With fierce embrace the brawny wrestlers join;  
The conquest, great Euryalus, is thine.  
Amphialus sprung forward with a bound,  
Superior in the leap, a length of ground.  
From Elatreus' strong arm the discus flies,  
And sings with unmatch'd force along the skies.  
And Laodam whirls high, with dreadful sway,  
The gloves of death, victorious in the fray.

While thus the peerage in the games contends,  
In act to speak, Laodamas ascends.

"O friends (he cries), the stranger seems well skill'd  
To try the illustrious labours of the field:  
I deem him brave: then grant the brave man's claim,  
Invite the hero to his share of fame.  
What nervous arms he boasts! how firm his tread!  
His limbs how turn'd! how broad his shoulders spread!  
By age unbroke!--but all-consuming care  
Destroys perhaps the strength that time would spare:  
Dire is the ocean, dread in all its forms!

Man must decay when man contends with storms."

"Well hast thou spoke (Euryalus replies):

Thine is the guest, invite him thou to rise."

Swift as the word, advancing from the crowd,

He made obeisance, and thus spoke aloud:

"Vouchsafes the reverend stranger to display

His manly worth, and share the glorious day?

Father, arise! for thee thy port proclaims

Expert to conquer in the solemn games.

To fame arise! for what more fame can yield

Than the swift race, or conflict of the field?

Steal from corroding care one transient day,

To glory give the space thou hast to stay;

Short is the time, and lo! e'en now the gales

Call thee aboard, and stretch the swelling sails."

To whom with sighs Ulysses gave reply:

"Ah why the ill-suiting pastime must I try?

To gloomy care my thoughts alone are free;

Ill the gay sorts with troubled hearts agree;

Sad from my natal hour my days have ran,

A much-afflicted, much-enduring man!

Who, suppliant to the king and peers, implores

A speedy voyage to his native shore."



"Wise wanders, Laodam, thy erring tongue  
The sports of glory to the brave belong  
(Retorts Euryalus): he bears no claim  
Among the great, unlike the sons of Fame.  
A wandering merchant he frequents the main  
Some mean seafarer in pursuit of gain;  
Studious of freight, in naval trade well skill'd,  
But dreads the athletic labours of the field."  
Incensed, Ulysses with a frown replies:  
"O forward to proclaim thy soul unwise!  
With partial hands the gods their gifts dispense;  
Some greatly think, some speak with manly sense;  
Here Heaven an elegance of form denies,  
But wisdom the defect of form supplies;  
This man with energy of thought controls,  
And steals with modest violence our souls;  
He speaks reservedly, but he speaks with force,  
Nor can one word be changed but for a worse;  
In public more than mortal he appears,  
And as he moves, the praising crowd reveres;  
While others, beauteous as the ethereal kind,  
The nobler portion want, a knowing mind,  
In outward show Heaven gives thee to excel.  
But Heaven denies the praise of thinking well  
I'll bear the brave a rude ungovern'd tongue,  
And, youth, my generous soul resents the wrong.

Skill'd in heroic exercise, I claim  
A post of honour with the sons of Fame.  
Such was my boast while vigour crown'd my days,  
Now care surrounds me, and my force decays;  
Inured a melancholy part to bear  
In scenes of death, by tempest and by war  
Yet thus by woes impair'd, no more I waive  
To prove the hero--slander stings the brave."

Then gliding forward with a furious bound  
He wrench'd a rocky fragment from the ground  
By far more ponderous, and more huge by far  
Than what Phaeacia's sons discharged in air.  
Fierce from his arm the enormous load he flings;  
Sonorous through the shaded air it sings;  
Couch'd to the earth, tempestuous as it flies,  
The crowd gaze upward while it cleaves the skies.  
Beyond all marks, with many a giddy round  
Down-rushing, it up-turns a hill of ground.

That Instant Pallas, bursting from a cloud,  
Fix'd a distinguish'd mark, and cried aloud:

"E'en he who, sightless, wants his visual ray  
May by his touch alone award the day:  
Thy signal throw transcends the utmost bound

Of every champion by a length of ground:  
Securely bid the strongest of the train  
Arise to throw; the strongest throws in vain."

She spoke: and momentary mounts the sky:  
The friendly voice Ulysses hears with joy.  
Then thus aloud (elate with decent pride)  
"Rise, ye Phaeacians, try your force (he cried):  
If with this throw the strongest caster vie,  
Still, further still, I bid the discus fly.  
Stand forth, ye champions, who the gauntlet wield,  
Or ye, the swiftest racers of the field!  
Stand forth, ye wrestlers, who these pastimes grace!  
I wield the gauntlet, and I run the race.  
In such heroic games I yield to none,  
Or yield to brave Laodamas alone:  
Shall I with brave Laodamas contend?  
A friend is sacred, and I style him friend.  
Ungenerous were the man, and base of heart,  
Who takes the kind, and pays the ungrateful part:  
Chiefly the man, in foreign realms confined,  
Base to his friend, to his own interest blind:  
All, all your heroes I this day defy;  
Give me a man that we our might may try.  
Expert in every art, I boast the skill  
To give the feather'd arrow wings to kill;

Should a whole host at once discharge the bow,  
My well-aim'd shaft with death prevents the foe:  
Alone superior in the field of Troy,  
Great Philoctetes taught the shaft to fly.  
From all the sons of earth unrivall'd praise  
I justly claim; but yield to better days,  
To those famed days when great Alcides rose,  
And Eurytus, who bade the gods be foes  
(Vain Eurytus, whose art became his crime,  
Swept from the earth, he perish'd in his prime:  
Sudden the irremeable way he trod,  
Who boldly durst defy the bowyer god).  
In fighting fields as far the spear I throw  
As flies an arrow from the well-drawn bow.  
Sole in the race the contest I decline,  
Stiff are my weary joints, and I resign;  
By storms and hunger worn; age well may fail,  
When storms and hunger doth at once assail."

Abash'd, the numbers hear the godlike man,  
Till great Alcinous mildly thus began:

"Well hast thou spoke, and well thy generous tongue  
With decent pride refutes a public wrong:  
Warm are thy words, but warm without offence;  
Fear only fools, secure in men of sense;

Thy worth is known. Then hear our country's claim,  
And bear to heroes our heroic fame:  
In distant realms our glorious deeds display,  
Repeat them frequent in the genial day;  
When, blest with ease, thy woes and wanderings end,  
Teach them thy consort, bid thy sons attend;  
How, loved of Jove, he crown'd our sires with praise,  
How we their offspring dignify our race.

"Let other realms the deathful gauntlet wield,  
Or boast the glories of the athletic field:  
We in the course unrivall'd speed display,  
Or through cerulean billows plough the way;  
To dress, to dance, to sing, our sole delight,  
The feast or bath by day, and love by night:  
Rise, then, ye skill'd in measures; let him bear  
Your fame to men that breathe a distant air;  
And faithful say, to you the powers belong  
To race, to sail, to dance, to chant the song.

"But, herald, to the palace swift repair,  
And the soft lyre to grace our pastimes bear."

Swift at the word, obedient to the king,  
The herald flies the tuneful lyre to bring.  
Up rose nine seniors, chosen to survey

The future games, the judges of the day  
With instant care they mark a spacious round  
And level for the dance the allotted ground:  
The herald bears the lyre: intent to play,  
The bard advancing meditates the lay.  
Skill'd in the dance, tall youths, a blooming band,  
Graceful before the heavenly minstrel stand:  
Light bounding from the earth, at once they rise,  
Their feet half-viewless quiver in the skies:  
Ulysses gazed, astonish'd to survey  
The glancing splendours as their sandals play.  
Meantime the bard, alternate to the strings,  
The loves of Mars and Cytherea sings:  
How the stern god, enamour'd with her charms  
Clasp'd the gay panting goddess in his arms,  
By bribes seduced; and how the sun, whose eye  
Views the broad heavens, disclosed the lawless joy.  
Stung to the soul, indignant through the skies  
To his black forge vindictive Vulcan flies:  
Arrived, his sinewy arms incessant place  
The eternal anvil on the massy base.  
A wondrous net he labours, to betray  
The wanton lovers, as entwined they lay,  
Indissolubly strong; Then instant bears  
To his immortal dome the finish'd snares:  
Above, below, around, with art dispread,

The sure inclosure folds the genial bed:  
Whose texture even the search of gods deceives,  
Thin as the filmy threads the spider weaves,  
Then, as withdrawing from the starry bowers,  
He feigns a journey to the Lemnian shores,  
His favourite isle: observant Mars descries  
His wish'd recess, and to the goddess flies;  
He glows, he burns, the fair-hair'd queen of love  
Descends, smooth gliding from the courts of Jove,  
Gay blooming in full charms: her hand he press'd  
With eager joy, and with a sigh address'd:

"Come, my beloved! and taste the soft delights:  
Come, to repose the genial bed invites:  
Thy absent spouse, neglectful of thy charms,  
Prefers his barbarous Sintiens to thy arms!"

Then, nothing loth, the enamour'd fair he led,  
And sunk transported on the conscious bed.  
Down rush'd the toils, inwrapping as they lay  
The careless lovers in their wanton play:  
In vain they strive; the entangling snares deny  
(Inextricably firm) the power to fly.  
Warn'd by the god who sheds the golden day,  
Stern Vulcan homeward treads the starry way:  
Arrived, he sees, he grieves, with rage he burns:

Full horribly he roars, his voice all heaven returns.

"O Jove (he cried) O all ye powers above,  
See the lewd dalliance of the queen of love!  
Me, awkward me, she scorns; and yields her charms  
To that fair lecher, the strong god of arms.  
If I am lame, that stain my natal hour  
By fate imposed; such me my parent bore.  
Why was I born? See how the wanton lies!  
Oh sight tormenting to a husband's eyes!  
But yet, I trust, this once e'en Mars would fly  
His fair-one's arms--he thinks her, once, too nigh.  
But there remain, ye guilty, in my power,  
Till Jove refunds his shameless daughter's dower.  
Too dear I prized a fair enchanting face:  
Beauty unchaste is beauty in disgrace."

Meanwhile the gods the dome of Vulcan throng;  
Apollo comes, and Neptune comes along;  
With these gay Hermes trod the starry plain;  
But modesty withheld the goddess train.  
All heaven beholds, imprison'd as they lie,  
And unextinguish'd laughter shakes the sky.  
Then mutual, thus they spoke: "Behold on wrong  
Swift vengeance waits; and art subdues the strong!  
Dwells there a god on all the Olympian brow



More swift than Mars, and more than Vulcan slow?  
Yet Vulcan conquers, and the god of arms  
Must pay the penalty for lawless charms."

Thus serious they; but he who gilds the skies,  
The gay Apollo, thus to Hermes cries:  
"Wouldst thou enchain'd like Mars, O Hermes, lie  
And bear the shame like Mars to share the joy?"

"O envied shame! (the smiling youth rejoin'd;)  
And thrice the chains, and thrice more firmly bind;  
Gaze all ye gods, and every goddess gaze,  
Yet eager would I bless the sweet disgrace."

Loud laugh the rest, e'en Neptune laughs aloud,  
Yet sues importunate to loose the god.  
"And free, (he cries) O Vulcan! free from shame  
Thy captives; I ensure the penal claim."

"Will Neptune (Vulcan then) the faithless trust?  
He suffers who gives surety for the unjust:  
But say, if that lewd scandal of the sky,  
To liberty restored, perfidious fly:  
Say, wilt thou bear the mulct?" He instant cries,  
"The mulct I bear, if Mars perfidious flies."

To whom appeased: "No more I urge delay;  
When Neptune sues, my part is to obey."  
Then to the snares his force the god applies;  
They burst; and Mars to Thrace indignant flies:  
To the soft Cyprian shores the goddess moves,  
To visit Paphos and her blooming groves,  
Where to the Power an hundred altars rise,  
And breathing odours scent the balmy skies;  
Concealed she bathes in consecrated bowers,  
The Graces unguents shed, ambrosial showers,  
Unguents that charm the gods! she last assumes  
Her wondrous robes; and full the goddess blooms.

Thus sung the bard: Ulysses hears with joy,  
And loud applauses read the vaulted sky.

Then to the sports his sons the king commands,  
Each blooming youth before the monarch stands,  
In dance unmatch'd! A wondrous ball is brought  
(The work of Polypus, divinely wrought);  
This youth with strength enormous bids it fly,  
And bending backward whirls it to the sky;  
His brother, springing with an active bound,  
At distance intercepts it from the ground.  
The ball dismissed, in dance they skim the strand,  
Turn and return, and scarce imprint the sand.

The assembly gazes with astonished eyes,  
And sends in shouts applauses to the skies.

Then thus Ulysses: "Happy king, whose name  
The brightest shines in all the rolls of fame!  
In subjects happy with surprise I gaze;  
Thy praise was just; their skill transcends thy praise."

Pleas'd with his people's fame, the monarch hears,  
And thus benevolent accosts the peers:  
"Since wisdom's sacred guidance he pursues,  
Give to the stranger-guest a stranger's dues:  
Twelve princes in our realm dominion share,  
O'er whom supreme, imperial power I bear;  
Bring gold, a pledge of love: a talent bring,  
A vest, a robe, and imitate your king.  
Be swift to give: that he this night may share  
The social feast of joy, with joy sincere.  
And thou, Euryalus, redeem thy wrong;  
A generous heart repairs a slanderous tongue."

The assenting peers, obedient to the king,  
In haste their heralds send the gifts to bring.  
Then thus Euryalus: "O prince, whose sway  
Rules this bless'd realm, repentant I obey;  
Be his this sword, whose blade of brass displays

A ruddy gleam; whose hilt a silver blaze;  
Whose ivory sheath, inwrought with curious pride,  
Adds graceful terror to the wearer's side."

He said, and to his hand the sword consign'd:  
"And if (he cried) my words affect thy mind,  
Far from thy mind those words, ye whirlwinds, bear,  
And scatter them, ye storms, in empty air!  
Crown, O ye heavens, with joy his peaceful hours,  
And grant him to his spouse, and native shores."

"And blest be thou, my friend, (Ulysses cries,)  
Crown him with every joy, ye favouring skies  
To thy calm hours continued peace afford,  
And never, never mayst thou want this sword,"

He said, and o'er his shoulder flung the blade.  
Now o'er the earth ascends the evening shade:  
The precious gifts the illustrious heralds bear,  
And to the court the embodied peers repair.  
Before the queen Alcinous' sons unfold  
The vests, the robes, and heaps of shining gold;  
Then to the radiant thrones they move in state:  
Aloft, the king in pomp imperial sate.

Thence to the queen: "O partner of our reign,

O sole beloved! command thy menial train  
A polish'd chest and stately robes to bear,  
And healing waters for the bath prepare;  
That, bathed, our guest may bid his sorrows cease,  
Hear the sweet song, and taste the feast in peace.  
A bowl that flames with gold, of wondrous frame,  
Ourself we give, memorial of our name;  
To raise in offerings to almighty Jove,  
And every god that treads the courts above."

Instant the queen, observant of the king,  
Commands her train a spacious vase to bring,  
The spacious vase with ample streams suffice,  
Heap the high wood, and bid the flames arise.  
The flames climb round it with a fierce embrace,  
The fuming waters bubble o'er the blaze.  
Herself the chest prepares; in order roll'd  
The robes, the vests are ranged, and heaps of gold  
And adding a rich dress inwrought with art,  
A gift expressive of her bounteous heart.  
Thus spoke to Ithacus: "To guard with bands  
Insolvable these gifts, thy care demands;  
Lest, in thy slumbers on the watery main,  
The hand of rapine make our bounty vain."

Then bending with full force around he roll'd

A labyrinth of bands in fold on fold,  
Closed with Circaean art. A train attends  
Around the bath: the bath the king ascends  
(Untasted joy, since that disastrous hour,  
He sail'd ill-fated from Calypso's bower);  
Where, happy as the gods that range the sky,  
He feasted every sense with every joy.  
He bathes; the damsels with officious toil,  
Shed sweets, shed unguents, in a shower of oil;  
Then o'er his limbs a gorgeous robe he spreads,  
And to the feast magnificently treads.  
Full where the dome its shining valves expands,  
Nausicaa blooming as a goddess stands;  
With wondering eyes the hero she survey'd,  
And graceful thus began the royal maid:

"Hail, godlike stranger! and when heaven restores  
To thy fond wish thy long-expected shores,  
This ever grateful in remembrance bear:  
To me thou owest, to me, the vital air."

"O royal maid! (Ulysses straight returns)  
Whose worth the splendours of thy race adorns,  
So may dread Jove (whose arm in vengeance forms  
The writhen bolt, and blackens heaven with storms),  
Restore me safe, through weary wanderings toss'd,

To my dear country's ever-pleasing coast,  
As while the spirit in this bosom glows,  
To thee, my goddess, I address my vows;  
My life, thy gift I boast!" He said, and sate  
Fast by Alcinous on a throne of state.

Now each partakes the feast, the wine prepares,  
Portions the food, and each his portion shares.

The bard a herald guides; the gazing throng  
Pay low obeisance as he moves along:

Beneath a sculptur'd arch he sits enthroned,  
The peers encircling form an awful round.

Then, from the chine, Ulysses carves with art  
Delicious food, an honorary part:

"This, let the master of the lyre receive,  
A pledge of love! 'tis all a wretch can give.

Lives there a man beneath the spacious skies  
Who sacred honours to the bard denies?

The Muse the bard inspires, exalts his mind;  
The muse indulgent loves the harmonious kind."

The herald to his hand the charge conveys,  
Not fond of flattery, nor displeas'd with praise.

When now the rage of hunger was allay'd,  
Thus to the lyrist wise Ulysses said:

"O more than man! thy soul the muse inspires,  
Or Phoebus animates with all his fires;  
For who, by Phoebus uninform'd, could know  
The woe of Greece, and sing so well the woe?  
Just to the tale, as present at the fray,  
Or taught the labours of the dreadful day:  
The song recalls past horrors to my eyes,  
And bids proud Ilion from her ashes rise.  
Once more harmonious strike the sounding string,  
The Epaeon fabric, framed by Pallas, sing:  
How stern Ulysses, furious to destroy,  
With latent heroes sack'd imperial Troy.  
If faithful thou record the tale of Fame,  
The god himself inspires thy breast with flame  
And mine shall be the task henceforth to raise  
In every land thy monument of praise."

Full of the god he raised his lofty strain:  
How the Greeks rush'd tumultuous to the main;  
How blazing tents illumined half the skies,  
While from the shores the winged navy flies;  
How e'en in Ilion's walls, in deathful bands,  
Came the stern Greeks by Troy's assisting hands:  
All Troy up-heaved the steed; of differing mind,  
Various the Trojans counsell'd: part consign'd  
The monster to the sword, part sentence gave



To plunge it headlong in the whelming wave;  
The unwise award to lodge it in the towers,  
An offering sacred to the immortal powers:  
The unwise prevail, they lodge it in the walls,  
And by the gods' decree proud Ilion falls:  
Destruction enters in the treacherous wood,  
And vengeful slaughter, fierce for human blood.

He sung the Greeks stern-issuing from the steed,  
How Ilion burns, how all her fathers bleed;  
How to thy dome, Deiphobus! ascends  
The Spartan king; how Ithacus attends  
(Horrid as Mars); and how with dire alarms  
He fights--subdues, for Pallas strings his arms

Thus while he sung, Ulysses' griefs renew,  
Tears bathe his cheeks, and tears the ground bedew  
As some fond matron views in mortal fight  
Her husband falling in his country's right;  
Frantic through clashing swords she runs, she flies,  
As ghastly pale he groans, and faints and dies;  
Close to his breast she grovels on the ground,  
And bathes with floods of tears the gaping wound;  
She cries, she shrieks: the fierce insulting foe  
Relentless mocks her violence of woe:  
To chains condemn'd, as wildly she deplores;

A widow, and a slave on foreign shores.

So from the sluices of Ulysses' eyes  
Fast fell the tears, and sighs succeeded sighs:  
Conceal'd he grieved: the king observed alone  
The silent tear, and heard the secret groan;  
Then to the bard aloud: "O cease to sing,  
Dumb be thy voice, and mute the tuneful string;  
To every note his tears responsive flow,  
And his great heart heaves with tumultuous woe;  
Thy lay too deeply moves: then cease the lay,  
And o'er the banquet every heart be gay:  
This social right demands: for him the sails,  
Floating in air, invite the impelling gales:  
His are the gifts of love: the wise and good  
Receive the stranger as a brother's blood.

"But, friend, discover faithful what I crave;  
Artful concealment ill becomes the brave:  
Say what thy birth, and what the name you bore,  
Imposed by parents in the natal hour?  
(For from the natal hour distinctive names,  
One common right, the great and lowly claims:)  
Say from what city, from what regions toss'd,  
And what inhabitants those regions boast?  
So shalt thou instant reach the realm assign'd,

In wondrous ships, self-moved, instinct with mind;  
No helm secures their course, no pilot guides;  
Like man intelligent, they plough the tides,  
Conscious of every coast, and every bay,  
That lies beneath the sun's all-seeing ray;  
Though clouds and darkness veil the encumber'd sky,  
Fearless through darkness and through clouds they fly;  
Though tempests rage, though rolls the swelling main,  
The seas may roll, the tempests rage in vain;  
E'en the stern god that o'er the waves presides,  
Safe as they pass, and safe repass the tides,  
With fury burns; while careless they convey  
Promiscuous every guest to every bay,  
These ears have heard my royal sire disclose  
A dreadful story, big with future woes;  
How Neptune raged, and how, by his command,  
Firm rooted in a surge a ship should stand  
A monument of wrath; how mound on mound  
Should bury these proud towers beneath the ground.  
But this the gods may frustrate or fulfil,  
As suits the purpose of the Eternal Will.  
But say through what waste regions hast thou stray'd  
What customs noted, and what coasts survey'd;  
Possess'd by wild barbarians fierce in arms,  
Or men whose bosom tender pity warms?  
Say why the fate of Troy awak'd thy cares,

Why heaved thy bosom, and why flowed thy tears?  
Just are the ways of Heaven: from Heaven proceed  
The woes of man; Heaven doom'd the Greeks to bleed,  
A theme of future song! Say, then, if slain  
Some dear-loved brother press'd the Phrygian plain?  
Or bled some friend, who bore a brother's part,  
And claim'd by merit, not by blood, the heart?"