

Laomedon. Long since the courts of heaven
Begrudge us thee, our Caesar, and complain
That thou regard'st the triumphs of mankind,
Here where the wrong is right, the right is wrong,
Where wars abound so many, and myriad-faced
Is crime; where no meet honour hath the plough;
The fields, their husbandmen led far away,
Rot in neglect, and curved pruning-hooks
Into the sword's stiff blade are fused and forged.
Euphrates here, here Germany new strife
Is stirring; neighbouring cities are in arms,
The laws that bound them snapped; and godless war
Rages through all the universe; as when
The four-horse chariots from the barriers poured
Still quicken o'er the course, and, idly now
Grasping the reins, the driver by his team
Is onward borne, nor heeds the car his curb.

GEORGIC II

Thus far the tilth of fields and stars of heaven;
Now will I sing thee, Bacchus, and, with thee,
The forest's young plantations and the fruit

Of slow-maturing olive. Hither haste,
O Father of the wine-press; all things here
Teem with the bounties of thy hand; for thee
With viny autumn laden blooms the field,
And foams the vintage high with brimming vats;
Hither, O Father of the wine-press, come,
And stripped of buskin stain thy bared limbs
In the new must with me.

First, nature's law

For generating trees is manifold;
For some of their own force spontaneous spring,
No hand of man compelling, and possess
The plains and river-windings far and wide,
As pliant osier and the bending broom,
Poplar, and willows in wan companies
With green leaf glimmering gray; and some there be
From chance-dropped seed that rear them, as the tall
Chestnuts, and, mightiest of the branching wood,
Jove's Aesculus, and oaks, oracular
Deemed by the Greeks of old. With some sprouts forth
A forest of dense suckers from the root,
As elms and cherries; so, too, a pigmy plant,
Beneath its mother's mighty shade upshoots
The bay-tree of Parnassus. Such the modes
Nature imparted first; hence all the race
Of forest-trees and shrubs and sacred groves

Springs into verdure.

Other means there are,
Which use by method for itself acquired.
One, sliving suckers from the tender frame
Of the tree-mother, plants them in the trench;
One buries the bare stumps within his field,
Truncheons cleft four-wise, or sharp-pointed stakes;
Some forest-trees the layer's bent arch await,
And slips yet quick within the parent-soil;
No root need others, nor doth the pruner's hand
Shrink to restore the topmost shoot to earth
That gave it being. Nay, marvellous to tell,
Lopped of its limbs, the olive, a mere stock,
Still thrusts its root out from the sapless wood,
And oft the branches of one kind we see
Change to another's with no loss to rue,
Pear-tree transformed the ingrafted apple yield,
And stony cornels on the plum-tree blush.

Come then, and learn what tilth to each belongs
According to their kinds, ye husbandmen,
And tame with culture the wild fruits, lest earth
Lie idle. O blithe to make all Ismarus
One forest of the wine-god, and to clothe
With olives huge Tabernus! And be thou
At hand, and with me ply the voyage of toil
I am bound on, O my glory, O thou that art

Justly the chiefest portion of my fame,
Maecenas, and on this wide ocean launched
Spread sail like wings to waft thee. Not that I
With my poor verse would comprehend the whole,
Nay, though a hundred tongues, a hundred mouths
Were mine, a voice of iron; be thou at hand,
Skirt but the nearer coast-line; see the shore
Is in our grasp; not now with feigned song
Through winding bouts and tedious preludings
Shall I detain thee.

Those that lift their head
Into the realms of light spontaneously,
Fruitless indeed, but blithe and strenuous spring,
Since Nature lurks within the soil. And yet
Even these, should one engraft them, or transplant
To well-drilled trenches, will anon put of
Their woodland temper, and, by frequent tilth,
To whatso craft thou summon them, make speed
To follow. So likewise will the barren shaft
That from the stock-root issueth, if it be
Set out with clear space amid open fields:
Now the tree-mother's towering leaves and boughs
Darken, despoil of increase as it grows,
And blast it in the bearing. Lastly, that
Which from shed seed ariseth, upward wins
But slowly, yielding promise of its shade

To late-born generations; apples wane
Forgetful of their former juice, the grape
Bears sorry clusters, for the birds a prey.

Soothly on all must toil be spent, and all
Trained to the trench and at great cost subdued.
But reared from truncheons olives answer best,
As vines from layers, and from the solid wood
The Paphian myrtles; while from suckers spring
Both hardy hazels and huge ash, the tree
That rims with shade the brows of Hercules,
And acorns dear to the Chaonian sire:
So springs the towering palm too, and the fir
Destined to spy the dangers of the deep.
But the rough arbutus with walnut-fruit
Is grafted; so have barren planes ere now
Stout apples borne, with chestnut-flower the beech,
The mountain-ash with pear-bloom whitened o'er,
And swine crunched acorns 'neath the boughs of elms.

Nor is the method of inserting eyes
And grafting one: for where the buds push forth
Amidst the bark, and burst the membranes thin,
Even on the knot a narrow rift is made,
Wherein from some strange tree a germ they pen,
And to the moist rind bid it cleave and grow.
Or, otherwise, in knotless trunks is hewn
A breach, and deep into the solid grain

A path with wedges cloven; then fruitful slips
Are set herein, and- no long time- behold!
To heaven upshot with teeming boughs, the tree
Strange leaves admires and fruitage not its own.

Nor of one kind alone are sturdy elms,
Willow and lotus, nor the cypress-trees
Of Ida; nor of self-same fashion spring
Fat olives, orchades, and radii
And bitter-berried pausians, no, nor yet
Apples and the forests of Alcinous;
Nor from like cuttings are Crustumian pears
And Syrian, and the heavy hand-fillers.
Not the same vintage from our trees hangs down,
Which Lesbos from Methymna's tendril plucks.
Vines Thasian are there, Mareotids white,
These apt for richer soils, for lighter those:
Psithian for raisin-wine more useful, thin
Lageos, that one day will try the feet
And tie the tongue: purples and early-ripes,
And how, O Rhaetian, shall I hymn thy praise?
Yet cope not therefore with Falernian bins.
Vines Aminaeon too, best-bodied wine,
To which the Tmolian bows him, ay, and king
Phanaeus too, and, lesser of that name,
Argitis, wherewith not a grape can vie
For gush of wine-juice or for length of years.

Nor thee must I pass over, vine of Rhodes,
Welcomed by gods and at the second board,
Nor thee, Bumastus, with plump clusters swollen.
But lo! how many kinds, and what their names,
There is no telling, nor doth it boot to tell;
Who lists to know it, he too would list to learn
How many sand-grains are by Zephyr tossed
On Libya's plain, or wot, when Eurus falls
With fury on the ships, how many waves
Come rolling shoreward from the Ionian sea.
Not that all soils can all things bear alike.
Willows by water-courses have their birth,
Alders in miry fens; on rocky heights
The barren mountain-ashes; on the shore
Myrtles throng gayest; Bacchus, lastly, loves
The bare hillside, and yews the north wind's chill.
Mark too the earth by outland tillers tamed,
And Eastern homes of Arabs, and tattooed
Geloni; to all trees their native lands
Allotted are; no clime but India bears
Black ebony; the branch of frankincense
Is Saba's sons' alone; why tell to thee
Of balsams oozing from the perfumed wood,
Or berries of acanthus ever green?
Of Aethiop forests hoar with downy wool,
Or how the Seres comb from off the leaves

Their silky fleece? Of groves which India bears,
Ocean's near neighbour, earth's remotest nook,
Where not an arrow-shot can cleave the air
Above their tree-tops? yet no laggards they,
When girded with the quiver! Media yields
The bitter juices and slow-lingering taste
Of the blest citron-fruit, than which no aid
Comes timelier, when fierce step-dames drug the cup
With simples mixed and spells of baneful power,
To drive the deadly poison from the limbs.
Large the tree's self in semblance like a bay,
And, showered it not a different scent abroad,
A bay it had been; for no wind of heaven
Its foliage falls; the flower, none faster, clings;
With it the Medes for sweetness lave the lips,
And ease the panting breathlessness of age.

But no, not Mede-land with its wealth of woods,
Nor Ganges fair, and Hermus thick with gold,
Can match the praise of Italy; nor Ind,
Nor Bactria, nor Panchaia, one wide tract
Of incense-teeming sand. Here never bulls
With nostrils snorting fire upturned the sod
Sown with the monstrous dragon's teeth, nor crop
Of warriors bristled thick with lance and helm;
But heavy harvests and the Massic juice
Of Bacchus fill its borders, overspread

With fruitful flocks and olives. Hence arose
The war-horse stepping proudly o'er the plain;
Hence thy white flocks, Clitumnus, and the bull,
Of victims mightiest, which full oft have led,
Bathed in thy sacred stream, the triumph-pomp
Of Romans to the temples of the gods.
Here blooms perpetual spring, and summer here
In months that are not summer's; twice teem the flocks;
Twice doth the tree yield service of her fruit.
But ravening tigers come not nigh, nor breed
Of savage lion, nor aconite betrays
Its hapless gatherers, nor with sweep so vast
Doth the scaled serpent trail his endless coils
Along the ground, or wreath him into spires.
Mark too her cities, so many and so proud,
Of mighty toil the achievement, town on town
Up rugged precipices heaved and reared,
And rivers undergliding ancient walls.
Or should I celebrate the sea that laves
Her upper shores and lower? or those broad lakes?
Thee, Larius, greatest and, Benacus, thee
With billowy uproar surging like the main?
Or sing her harbours, and the barrier cast
Athwart the Lucrine, and how ocean chafes
With mighty bellowings, where the Julian wave
Echoes the thunder of his rout, and through

Avernian inlets pours the Tuscan tide?
A land no less that in her veins displays
Rivers of silver, mines of copper ore,
Ay, and with gold hath flowed abundantly.
A land that reared a valiant breed of men,
The Marsi and Sabellian youth, and, schooled
To hardship, the Ligurian, and with these
The Volscian javelin-armed, the Decii too,
The Marii and Camilli, names of might,
The Scipios, stubborn warriors, ay, and thee,
Great Caesar, who in Asia's utmost bounds
With conquering arm e'en now art fending far
The unwarlike Indian from the heights of Rome.
Hail! land of Saturn, mighty mother thou
Of fruits and heroes; 'tis for thee I dare
Unseal the sacred fountains, and essay
Themes of old art and glory, as I sing
The song of Ascrea through the towns of Rome.

Now for the native gifts of various soils,
What powers hath each, what hue, what natural bent
For yielding increase. First your stubborn lands
And churlish hill-sides, where are thorny fields
Of meagre marl and gravel, these delight
In long-lived olive-groves to Pallas dear.
Take for a sign the plenteous growth hard by
Of oleaster, and the fields strewn wide

With woodland berries. But a soil that's rich,
In moisture sweet exulting, and the plain
That teems with grasses on its fruitful breast,
Such as full oft in hollow mountain-dell
We view beneath us- from the craggy heights
Streams thither flow with fertilizing mud-
A plain which southward rising feeds the fern
By curved ploughs detested, this one day
Shall yield thee store of vines full strong to gush
In torrents of the wine-god; this shall be
Fruitful of grapes and flowing juice like that
We pour to heaven from bowls of gold, what time
The sleek Etruscan at the altar blows
His ivory pipe, and on the curved dish
We lay the reeking entrails. If to rear
Cattle delight thee rather, steers, or lambs,
Or goats that kill the tender plants, then seek
Full-fed Tarentum's glades and distant fields,
Or such a plain as luckless Mantua lost
Whose weedy water feeds the snow-white swan:
There nor clear springs nor grass the flocks will fail,
And all the day-long browsing of thy herds
Shall the cool dews of one brief night repair.
Land which the burrowing share shows dark and rich,
With crumbling soil- for this we counterfeit
In ploughing- for corn is goodliest; from no field

More wains thou'lt see wend home with plodding steers;
Or that from which the husbandman in spleen
Has cleared the timber, and o'erthrown the copse
That year on year lay idle, and from the roots
Uptorn the immemorial haunt of birds;
They banished from their nests have sought the skies;
But the rude plain beneath the ploughshare's stroke
Starts into sudden brightness. For indeed
The starved hill-country gravel scarce serves the bees
With lowly cassias and with rosemary;
Rough tufa and chalk too, by black water-worms
Gnawed through and through, proclaim no soils beside
So rife with serpent-dainties, or that yield
Such winding lairs to lurk in. That again,
Which vapoury mist and flitting smoke exhales,
Drinks moisture up and casts it forth at will,
Which, ever in its own green grass arrayed,
Mars not the metal with salt scurf of rust-
That shall thine elms with merry vines enwreath;
That teems with olive; that shall thy tilth prove kind
To cattle, and patient of the curved share.
Such ploughs rich Capua, such the coast that skirts
Thy ridge, Vesuvius, and the Clanian flood,
Acerrae's desolation and her bane.
How each to recognize now hear me tell.
Dost ask if loose or passing firm it be-

Since one for corn hath liking, one for wine,
The firmer sort for Ceres, none too loose
For thee, Lyaeus?- with scrutinizing eye
First choose thy ground, and bid a pit be sunk
Deep in the solid earth, then cast the mould
All back again, and stamp the surface smooth.
If it suffice not, loose will be the land,
More meet for cattle and for kindly vines;
But if, rebellious, to its proper bounds
The soil returns not, but fills all the trench
And overtops it, then the glebe is gross;
Look for stiff ridges and reluctant clods,
And with strong bullocks cleave the fallow crust.
Salt ground again, and bitter, as 'tis called-
Barren for fruits, by tilth untamable,
Nor grape her kind, nor apples their good name
Maintaining- will in this wise yield thee proof:
Stout osier-baskets from the rafter-smoke,
And strainers of the winepress pluck thee down;
Hereinto let that evil land, with fresh
Spring-water mixed, be trampled to the full;
The moisture, mark you, will ooze all away,
In big drops issuing through the osier-withes,
But plainly will its taste the secret tell,
And with a harsh twang ruefully distort
The mouths of them that try it. Rich soil again

We learn on this wise: tossed from hand to hand
Yet cracks it never, but pitch-like, as we hold,
Clings to the fingers. A land with moisture rife
Breeds lustier herbage, and is more than meet
Prolific. Ah I may never such for me
O'er-fertile prove, or make too stout a show
At the first earing! Heavy land or light
The mute self-witness of its weight betrays.
A glance will serve to warn thee which is black,
Or what the hue of any. But hard it is
To track the signs of that pernicious cold:
Pines only, noxious yews, and ivies dark
At times reveal its traces.

All these rules

Regarding, let your land, ay, long before,
Scorch to the quick, and into trenches carve
The mighty mountains, and their upturned clods
Bare to the north wind, ere thou plant therein
The vine's prolific kindred. Fields whose soil
Is crumbling are the best: winds look to that,
And bitter hoar-frosts, and the delver's toil
Untiring, as he stirs the loosened glebe.
But those, whose vigilance no care escapes,
Search for a kindred site, where first to rear
A nursery for the trees, and eke whereto
Soon to translate them, lest the sudden shock

From their new mother the young plants estrange.
Nay, even the quarter of the sky they brand
Upon the bark, that each may be restored,
As erst it stood, here bore the southern heats,
Here turned its shoulder to the northern pole;
So strong is custom formed in early years.
Whether on hill or plain 'tis best to plant
Your vineyard first inquire. If on some plain
You measure out rich acres, then plant thick;
Thick planting makes no niggard of the vine;
But if on rising mound or sloping bill,
Then let the rows have room, so none the less
Each line you draw, when all the trees are set,
May tally to perfection. Even as oft
In mighty war, whenas the legion's length
Deploys its cohorts, and the column stands
In open plain, the ranks of battle set,
And far and near with rippling sheen of arms
The wide earth flickers, nor yet in grisly strife
Foe grapples foe, but dubious 'twixt the hosts
The war-god wavers; so let all be ranged
In equal rows symmetric, not alone
To feed an idle fancy with the view,
But since not otherwise will earth afford
Vigour to all alike, nor yet the boughs
Have power to stretch them into open space.

Shouldst haply of the furrow's depth inquire,
Even to a shallow trench I dare commit
The vine; but deeper in the ground is fixed
The tree that props it, aesculus in chief,
Which howso far its summit soars toward heaven,
So deep strikes root into the vaults of hell.
It therefore neither storms, nor blasts, nor showers
Wrench from its bed; unshaken it abides,
Sees many a generation, many an age
Of men roll onward, and survives them all,
Stretching its titan arms and branches far,
Sole central pillar of a world of shade.

Nor toward the sunset let thy vineyards slope,
Nor midst the vines plant hazel; neither take
The topmost shoots for cuttings, nor from the top
Of the supporting tree your suckers tear;
So deep their love of earth; nor wound the plants
With blunted blade; nor truncheons intersperse
Of the wild olive: for oft from careless swains
A spark hath fallen, that, 'neath the unctuous rind
Hid thief-like first, now grips the tough tree-bole,
And mounting to the leaves on high, sends forth
A roar to heaven, then coursing through the boughs
And airy summits reigns victoriously,
Wraps all the grove in robes of fire, and gross
With pitch-black vapour heaves the murky reek

Skyward, but chiefly if a storm has swooped
Down on the forest, and a driving wind
Rolls up the conflagration. When 'tis so,
Their root-force fails them, nor, when lopped away,
Can they recover, and from the earth beneath
Spring to like verdure; thus alone survives
The bare wild olive with its bitter leaves.

Let none persuade thee, howso weighty-wise,
To stir the soil when stiff with Boreas' breath.
Then ice-bound winter locks the fields, nor lets
The young plant fix its frozen root to earth.
Best sow your vineyards when in blushing Spring
Comes the white bird long-bodied snakes abhor,
Or on the eve of autumn's earliest frost,
Ere the swift sun-steeds touch the wintry Signs,
While summer is departing. Spring it is
Blesses the fruit-plantation, Spring the groves;
In Spring earth swells and claims the fruitful seed.
Then Aether, sire omnipotent, leaps down
With quickening showers to his glad wife's embrace,
And, might with might commingling, rears to life
All germs that teem within her; then resound
With songs of birds the greenwood-wildernesses,
And in due time the herds their loves renew;
Then the boon earth yields increase, and the fields
Unlock their bosoms to the warm west winds;

Soft moisture spreads o'er all things, and the blades
Face the new suns, and safely trust them now;
The vine-shoot, fearless of the rising south,
Or mighty north winds driving rain from heaven,
Bursts into bud, and every leaf unfolds.
Even so, methinks, when Earth to being sprang,
Dawned the first days, and such the course they held;
'Twas Spring-tide then, ay, Spring, the mighty world
Was keeping: Eurus spared his wintry blasts,
When first the flocks drank sunlight, and a race
Of men like iron from the hard glebe arose,
And wild beasts thronged the woods, and stars the heaven.
Nor could frail creatures bear this heavy strain,
Did not so large a respite interpose
'Twixt frost and heat, and heaven's relenting arms
Yield earth a welcome.

For the rest, whate'er
The sets thou plantest in thy fields, thereon
Strew refuse rich, and with abundant earth
Take heed to hide them, and dig in withal
Rough shells or porous stone, for therebetween
Will water trickle and fine vapour creep,
And so the plants their drooping spirits raise.
Aye, and there have been, who with weight of stone
Or heavy potsherd press them from above;
This serves for shield in pelting showers, and this

When the hot dog-star chaps the fields with drought.

The slips once planted, yet remains to cleave
The earth about their roots persistently,
And toss the cumbrous hoes, or task the soil
With burrowing plough-share, and ply up and down
Your labouring bullocks through the vineyard's midst,
Then too smooth reeds and shafts of whittled wand,
And ashen poles and sturdy forks to shape,
Whereby supported they may learn to mount,
Laugh at the gales, and through the elm-tops win
From story up to story.

Now while yet

The leaves are in their first fresh infant growth,
Forbear their frailty, and while yet the bough
Shoots joyfully toward heaven, with loosened rein
Launched on the void, assail it not as yet
With keen-edged sickle, but let the leaves alone
Be culled with clip of fingers here and there.
But when they clasp the elms with sturdy trunks
Erect, then strip the leaves off, prune the boughs;
Sooner they shrink from steel, but then put forth
The arm of power, and stem the branchy tide.

Hedges too must be woven and all beasts
Barred entrance, chiefly while the leaf is young
And witless of disaster; for therewith,
Beside harsh winters and o'erpowering sun,

Wild buffaloes and pestering goats for ay
Besport them, sheep and heifers glut their greed.
Nor cold by hoar-frost curdled, nor the prone
Dead weight of summer upon the parched crags,
So scathe it, as the flocks with venom-bite
Of their hard tooth, whose gnawing scars the stem.
For no offence but this to Bacchus bleeds
The goat at every altar, and old plays
Upon the stage find entrance; therefore too
The sons of Theseus through the country-side-
Hamlet and crossway- set the prize of wit,
And on the smooth sward over oiled skins
Dance in their tipsy frolic. Furthermore
The Ausonian swains, a race from Troy derived,
Make merry with rough rhymes and boisterous mirth,
Grim masks of hollowed bark assume, invoke
Thee with glad hymns, O Bacchus, and to thee
Hang puppet-faces on tall pines to swing.
Hence every vineyard teems with mellowing fruit,
Till hollow vale o'erflows, and gorge profound,
Where'er the god hath turned his comely head.
Therefore to Bacchus duly will we sing
Meet honour with ancestral hymns, and cates
And dishes bear him; and the doomed goat
Led by the horn shall at the altar stand,
Whose entrails rich on hazel-spits we'll roast.

This further task again, to dress the vine,
Hath needs beyond exhausting; the whole soil
Thrice, four times, yearly must be cleft, the sod
With hoes reversed be crushed continually,
The whole plantation lightened of its leaves.
Round on the labourer spins the wheel of toil,
As on its own track rolls the circling year.
Soon as the vine her lingering leaves hath shed,
And the chill north wind from the forests shook
Their coronal, even then the careful swain
Looks keenly forward to the coming year,
With Saturn's curved fang pursues and prunes
The vine forlorn, and lops it into shape.
Be first to dig the ground up, first to clear
And burn the refuse-branches, first to house
Again your vine-poles, last to gather fruit.
Twice doth the thickening shade beset the vine,
Twice weeds with stifling briers o'ergrow the crop;
And each a toilsome labour. Do thou praise
Broad acres, farm but few. Rough twigs beside
Of butcher's broom among the woods are cut,
And reeds upon the river-banks, and still
The undressed willow claims thy fostering care.
So now the vines are fettered, now the trees
Let go the sickle, and the last dresser now
Sings of his finished rows; but still the ground

Must vexed be, the dust be stirred, and heaven
Still set thee trembling for the ripened grapes.

Not so with olives; small husbandry need they,
Nor look for sickle bowed or biting rake,
When once they have gripped the soil, and borne the breeze.
Earth of herself, with hooked fang laid bare,
Yields moisture for the plants, and heavy fruit,
The ploughshare aiding; therewithal thou'lt rear
The olive's fatness well-beloved of Peace.

Apples, moreover, soon as first they feel
Their stems wax lusty, and have found their strength,
To heaven climb swiftly, self-impelled, nor crave
Our succour. All the grove meanwhile no less
With fruit is swelling, and the wild haunts of birds
Blush with their blood-red berries. Cytisus
Is good to browse on, the tall forest yields
Pine-torches, and the nightly fires are fed
And shoot forth radiance. And shall men be loath
To plant, nor lavish of their pains? Why trace
Things mightier? Willows even and lowly brooms
To cattle their green leaves, to shepherds shade,
Fences for crops, and food for honey yield.
And blithe it is Cytorus to behold
Waving with box, Narycian groves of pitch;
Oh! blithe the sight of fields beholden not
To rake or man's endeavour! the barren woods

That crown the scalp of Caucasus, even these,
Which furious blasts for ever rive and rend,
Yield various wealth, pine-logs that serve for ships,
Cedar and cypress for the homes of men;
Hence, too, the farmers shave their wheel-spokes, hence
Drums for their wains, and curved boat-keels fit;
Willows bear twigs enow, the elm-tree leaves,
Myrtle stout spear-shafts, war-tried cornel too;
Yews into Ituraean bows are bent:
Nor do smooth lindens or lathe-polished box
Shrink from man's shaping and keen-furrowing steel;
Light alder floats upon the boiling flood
Sped down the Padus, and bees house their swarms
In rotten holm-oak's hollow bark and bole.
What of like praise can Bacchus' gifts afford?
Nay, Bacchus even to crime hath prompted, he
The wine-infuriate Centaurs quelled with death,
Rhoetus and Pholus, and with mighty bowl
Hylaeus threatening high the Lapithae.
Oh! all too happy tillers of the soil,
Could they but know their blessedness, for whom
Far from the clash of arms all-equal earth
Pours from the ground herself their easy fare!
What though no lofty palace portal-proud
From all its chambers vomits forth a tide
Of morning courtiers, nor agape they gaze

On pillars with fair tortoise-shell inwrought,
Gold-purpled robes, and bronze from Ephyre;
Nor is the whiteness of their wool distained
With drugs Assyrian, nor clear olive's use
With cassia tainted; yet untroubled calm,
A life that knows no falsehood, rich enow
With various treasures, yet broad-acred ease,
Grottoes and living lakes, yet Tempes cool,
Lowling of kine, and sylvan slumbers soft,
They lack not; lawns and wild beasts' haunts are there,
A youth of labour patient, need-inured,
Worship, and reverend sires: with them from earth
Departing justice her last footprints left.

Me before all things may the Muses sweet,
Whose rites I bear with mighty passion pierced,
Receive, and show the paths and stars of heaven,
The sun's eclipses and the labouring moons,
From whence the earthquake, by what power the seas
Swell from their depths, and, every barrier burst,
Sink back upon themselves, why winter-suns
So haste to dip 'neath ocean, or what check
The lingering night retards. But if to these
High realms of nature the cold curdling blood
About my heart bar access, then be fields
And stream-washed vales my solace, let me love
Rivers and woods, inglorious. Oh for you

Plains, and Spercheius, and Taygete,
By Spartan maids o'er-revelled! Oh, for one,
Would set me in deep dells of Haemus cool,
And shield me with his boughs' o'ershadowing might!
Happy, who had the skill to understand
Nature's hid causes, and beneath his feet
All terrors cast, and death's relentless doom,
And the loud roar of greedy Acheron.
Blest too is he who knows the rural gods,
Pan, old Silvanus, and the sister-nymphs!
Him nor the rods of public power can bend,
Nor kingly purple, nor fierce feud that drives
Brother to turn on brother, nor descent
Of Dacian from the Danube's leagued flood,
Nor Rome's great State, nor kingdoms like to die;
Nor hath he grieved through pitying of the poor,
Nor envied him that hath. What fruit the boughs,
And what the fields, of their own bounteous will
Have borne, he gathers; nor iron rule of laws,
Nor maddened Forum have his eyes beheld,
Nor archives of the people. Others vex
The darksome gulfs of Ocean with their oars,
Or rush on steel: they press within the courts
And doors of princes; one with havoc falls
Upon a city and its hapless hearths,
From gems to drink, on Tyrian rugs to lie;

This hoards his wealth and broods o'er buried gold;
One at the rostra stares in blank amaze;
One gaping sits transported by the cheers,
The answering cheers of plebs and senate rolled
Along the benches: bathed in brothers' blood
Men revel, and, all delights of hearth and home
For exile changing, a new country seek
Beneath an alien sun. The husbandman
With hooked ploughshare turns the soil; from hence
Springs his year's labour; hence, too, he sustains
Country and cottage homestead, and from hence
His herds of cattle and deserving steers.
No respite! still the year o'erflows with fruit,
Or young of kine, or Ceres' wheaten sheaf,
With crops the furrow loads, and bursts the barns.
Winter is come: in olive-mills they bruise
The Sicyonian berry; acorn-cheered
The swine troop homeward; woods their arbutus yield;
So, various fruit sheds Autumn, and high up
On sunny rocks the mellowing vintage bakes.
Meanwhile about his lips sweet children cling;
His chaste house keeps its purity; his kine
Drop milky udders, and on the lush green grass
Fat kids are striving, horn to butting horn.
Himself keeps holy days; stretched o'er the sward,
Where round the fire his comrades crown the bowl,

He pours libation, and thy name invokes,
Lenaeus, and for the herdsmen on an elm
Sets up a mark for the swift javelin; they
Strip their tough bodies for the rustic sport.
Such life of yore the ancient Sabines led,
Such Remus and his brother: Etruria thus,
Doubt not, to greatness grew, and Rome became
The fair world's fairest, and with circling wall
Clasped to her single breast the sevenfold hills.
Ay, ere the reign of Dicte's king, ere men,
Waxed godless, banqueted on slaughtered bulls,
Such life on earth did golden Saturn lead.
Nor ear of man had heard the war-trump's blast,
Nor clang of sword on stubborn anvil set.
But lo! a boundless space we have travelled o'er;
'Tis time our steaming horses to unyoke.

GEORGIC III

Thee too, great Pales, will I hymn, and thee,
Amphrysian shepherd, worthy to be sung,
You, woods and waves Lycaean. All themes beside,
Which else had charmed the vacant mind with song,