

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,

Are now waxed common. Of harsh Eurystheus who  
The story knows not, or that praiseless king  
Busiris, and his altars? or by whom  
Hath not the tale been told of Hylas young,  
Latonian Delos and Hippodame,  
And Pelops for his ivory shoulder famed,  
Keen charioteer? Needs must a path be tried,  
By which I too may lift me from the dust,  
And float triumphant through the mouths of men.  
Yea, I shall be the first, so life endure,  
To lead the Muses with me, as I pass  
To mine own country from the Aonian height;  
I, Mantua, first will bring thee back the palms  
Of Idumaea, and raise a marble shrine  
On thy green plain fast by the water-side,  
Where Mincius winds more vast in lazy coils,  
And rims his margent with the tender reed.  
Amid my shrine shall Caesar's godhead dwell.  
To him will I, as victor, bravely dight  
In Tyrian purple, drive along the bank  
A hundred four-horse cars. All Greece for me,  
Leaving Alpheus and Molorchus' grove,  
On foot shall strive, or with the raw-hide glove;  
Whilst I, my head with stripped green olive crowned,  
Will offer gifts. Even 'tis present joy  
To lead the high processions to the fane,

And view the victims felled; or how the scene  
Sunders with shifted face, and Britain's sons  
Inwoven thereon with those proud curtains rise.  
Of gold and massive ivory on the doors  
I'll trace the battle of the Gangarides,  
And our Quirinus' conquering arms, and there  
Surging with war, and hugely flowing, the Nile,  
And columns heaped on high with naval brass.  
And Asia's vanquished cities I will add,  
And quelled Niphates, and the Parthian foe,  
Who trusts in flight and backward-volleying darts,  
And trophies torn with twice triumphant hand  
From empires twain on ocean's either shore.  
And breathing forms of Parian marble there  
Shall stand, the offspring of Assaracus,  
And great names of the Jove-descended folk,  
And father Tros, and Troy's first founder, lord  
Of Cynthus. And accursed Envy there  
Shall dread the Furies, and thy ruthless flood,  
Cocytus, and Ixion's twisted snakes,  
And that vast wheel and ever-baffling stone.  
Meanwhile the Dryad-haunted woods and lawns  
Unsullied seek we; 'tis thy hard behest,  
Maecenas. Without thee no lofty task  
My mind essays. Up! break the sluggish bonds  
Of tarrance; with loud din Cithaeron calls,

Steed-taming Epidaurus, and thy hounds,  
Taygete; and hark! the assenting groves  
With peal on peal reverberate the roar.  
Yet must I gird me to rehearse ere long  
The fiery fights of Caesar, speed his name  
Through ages, countless as to Caesar's self  
From the first birth-dawn of Tithonus old.

    If eager for the prized Olympian palm  
One breed the horse, or bullock strong to plough,  
Be his prime care a shapely dam to choose.  
Of kine grim-faced is goodliest, with coarse head  
And burly neck, whose hanging dewlaps reach  
From chin to knee; of boundless length her flank;  
Large every way she is, large-footed even,  
With incurved horns and shaggy ears beneath.  
Nor let mislike me one with spots of white  
Conspicuous, or that spurns the yoke, whose horn  
At times hath vice in't: liker bull-faced she,  
And tall-limbed wholly, and with tip of tail  
Brushing her footsteps as she walks along.  
The age for Hymen's rites, Lucina's pangs,  
Ere ten years ended, after four begins;  
Their residue of days nor apt to teem,  
Nor strong for ploughing. Meantime, while youth's delight  
Survives within them, loose the males: be first  
To speed thy herds of cattle to their loves,

Breed stock with stock, and keep the race supplied.  
Ah! life's best hours are ever first to fly  
From hapless mortals; in their place succeed  
Disease and dolorous eld; till travail sore  
And death unpitying sweep them from the scene.  
Still will be some, whose form thou fain wouldst change;  
Renew them still; with yearly choice of young  
Preventing losses, lest too late thou rue.

Nor steeds crave less selection; but on those  
Thou think'st to rear, the promise of their line,  
From earliest youth thy chiefest pains bestow.  
See from the first yon high-bred colt afield,  
His lofty step, his limbs' elastic tread:  
Dauntless he leads the herd, still first to try  
The threatening flood, or brave the unknown bridge,  
By no vain noise affrighted; lofty-necked,  
With clean-cut head, short belly, and stout back;  
His sprightly breast exuberant with brawn.  
Chestnut and grey are good; the worst-hued white  
And sorrel. Then lo! if arms are clashed afar,  
Bide still he cannot: ears stiffen and limbs quake;  
His nostrils snort and roll out wreaths of fire.  
Dense is his mane, that when uplifted falls  
On his right shoulder; betwixt either loin  
The spine runs double; his earth-dinting hoof  
Rings with the ponderous beat of solid horn.

Even such a horse was Cyllarus, reined and tamed  
By Pollux of Amyclae; such the pair  
In Grecian song renowned, those steeds of Mars,  
And famed Achilles' team: in such-like form  
Great Saturn's self with mane flung loose on neck  
Sped at his wife's approach, and flying filled  
The heights of Pelion with his piercing neigh.

Even him, when sore disease or sluggish old  
Now saps his strength, pen fast at home, and spare  
His not inglorious age. A horse grown old  
Slow kindling unto love in vain prolongs  
The fruitless task, and, to the encounter come,  
As fire in stubble blusters without strength,  
He rages idly. Therefore mark thou first  
Their age and mettle, other points anon,  
As breed and lineage, or what pain was theirs  
To lose the race, what pride the palm to win.  
Seest how the chariots in mad rivalry  
Poured from the barrier grip the course and go,  
When youthful hope is highest, and every heart  
Drained with each wild pulsation? How they ply  
The circling lash, and reaching forward let  
The reins hang free! Swift spins the glowing wheel;  
And now they stoop, and now erect in air  
Seem borne through space and towering to the sky:  
No stop, no stay; the dun sand whirls aloft;

They reek with foam-flakes and pursuing breath;  
So sweet is fame, so prized the victor's palm.  
'Twas Ericthonius first took heart to yoke  
Four horses to his car, and rode above  
The whirling wheels to victory: but the ring  
And bridle-reins, mounted on horses' backs,  
The Pelethronian Lapithae bequeathed,  
And taught the knight in arms to spurn the ground,  
And arch the upgathered footsteps of his pride.  
Each task alike is arduous, and for each  
A horse young, fiery, swift of foot, they seek;  
How oft so-e'er yon rival may have chased  
The flying foe, or boast his native plain  
Epirus, or Mycenae's stubborn hold,  
And trace his lineage back to Neptune's birth.

These points regarded, as the time draws nigh,  
With instant zeal they lavish all their care  
To plump with solid fat the chosen chief  
And designated husband of the herd:  
And flowery herbs they cut, and serve him well  
With corn and running water, that his strength  
Not fail him for that labour of delight,  
Nor puny colts betray the feeble sire.  
The herd itself of purpose they reduce  
To leanness, and when love's sweet longing first  
Provokes them, they forbid the leafy food,

And pen them from the springs, and oft beside  
With running shake, and tire them in the sun,  
What time the threshing-floor groans heavily  
With pounding of the corn-ears, and light chaff  
Is whirled on high to catch the rising west.  
This do they that the soil's prolific powers  
May not be dulled by surfeiting, nor choke  
The sluggish furrows, but eagerly absorb  
Their fill of love, and deeply entertain.

To care of sire the mother's care succeeds.  
When great with young they wander nigh their time,  
Let no man suffer them to drag the yoke  
In heavy wains, nor leap across the way,  
Nor scour the meads, nor swim the rushing flood.  
In lonely lawns they feed them, by the course  
Of brimming streams, where moss is, and the banks  
With grass are greenest, where are sheltering caves,  
And far outstretched the rock-flung shadow lies.  
Round wooded Silarus and the ilex-bowers  
Of green Alburnus swarms a winged pest-  
Its Roman name Asilus, by the Greeks  
Termed Oestros- fierce it is, and harshly hums,  
Driving whole herds in terror through the groves,  
Till heaven is maddened by their bellowing din,  
And Tanager's dry bed and forest-banks.  
With this same scourge did Juno wreak of old



The terrors of her wrath, a plague devised  
Against the heifer sprung from Inachus.  
From this too thou, since in the noontide heats  
'Tis most persistent, fend thy teeming herds,  
And feed them when the sun is newly risen,  
Or the first stars are ushering in the night.

But, yearning ended, all their tender care  
Is to the calves transferred; at once with marks  
They brand them, both to designate their race,  
And which to rear for breeding, or devote  
As altar-victims, or to cleave the ground  
And into ridges tear and turn the sod.  
The rest along the greensward graze at will.  
Those that to rustic uses thou wouldst mould,  
As calves encourage and take steps to tame,  
While pliant wills and plastic youth allow.  
And first of slender withies round the throat  
Loose collars hang, then when their free-born necks  
Are used to service, with the self-same bands  
Yoke them in pairs, and steer by steer compel  
Keep pace together. And time it is that oft  
Unfreighted wheels be drawn along the ground  
Behind them, as to dint the surface-dust;  
Then let the beechen axle strain and creak  
'Neath some stout burden, whilst a brazen pole  
Drags on the wheels made fast thereto. Meanwhile

For their unbroken youth not grass alone,  
Nor meagre willow-leaves and marish-sedge,  
But corn-ears with thy hand pluck from the crops.  
Nor shall the brood-kine, as of yore, for thee  
Brim high the snowy milking-pail, but spend  
Their udders' fullness on their own sweet young.

But if fierce squadrons and the ranks of war  
Delight thee rather, or on wheels to glide  
At Pisa, with Alpheus fleeting by,  
And in the grove of Jupiter urge on  
The flying chariot, be your steed's first task  
To face the warrior's armed rage, and brook  
The trumpet, and long roar of rumbling wheels,  
And clink of chiming bridles in the stall;  
Then more and more to love his master's voice  
Caressing, or loud hand that claps his neck.  
Ay, thus far let him learn to dare, when first  
Weaned from his mother, and his mouth at times  
Yield to the supple halter, even while yet  
Weak, tottering-limbed, and ignorant of life.  
But, three years ended, when the fourth arrives,  
Now let him tarry not to run the ring  
With rhythmic hoof-beat echoing, and now learn  
Alternately to curve each bending leg,  
And be like one that struggleth; then at last  
Challenge the winds to race him, and at speed

Launched through the open, like a reinless thing,  
Scarce print his footsteps on the surface-sand.  
As when with power from Hyperborean climes  
The north wind stoops, and scatters from his path  
Dry clouds and storms of Scythia; the tall corn  
And rippling plains 'gin shiver with light gusts;  
A sound is heard among the forest-tops;  
Long waves come racing shoreward: fast he flies,  
With instant pinion sweeping earth and main.

A steed like this or on the mighty course  
Of Elis at the goal will sweat, and shower  
Red foam-flakes from his mouth, or, kindlier task,  
With patient neck support the Belgian car.  
Then, broken at last, let swell their burly frame  
With fattening corn-mash, for, unbroke, they will  
With pride wax wanton, and, when caught, refuse  
Tough lash to brook or jagged curb obey.

But no device so fortifies their power  
As love's blind stings of passion to forefend,  
Whether on steed or steer thy choice be set.  
Ay, therefore 'tis they banish bulls afar  
To solitary pastures, or behind  
Some mountain-barrier, or broad streams beyond,  
Or else in plenteous stalls pen fast at home.  
For, even through sight of her, the female wastes  
His strength with smouldering fire, till he forget

Both grass and woodland. She indeed full oft  
With her sweet charms can lovers proud compel  
To battle for the conquest horn to horn.  
In Sila's forest feeds the heifer fair,  
While each on each the furious rivals run;  
Wound follows wound; the black blood laves their limbs;  
Horns push and strive against opposing horns,  
With mighty groaning; all the forest-side  
And far Olympus bellow back the roar.  
Nor wont the champions in one stall to couch;  
But he that's worsted hies him to strange climes  
Far off, an exile, moaning much the shame,  
The blows of that proud conqueror, then love's loss  
Avenged not; with one glance toward the byre,  
His ancient royalties behind him lie.  
So with all heed his strength he practiseth,  
And nightlong makes the hard bare stones his bed,  
And feeds on prickly leaf and pointed rush,  
And proves himself, and butting at a tree  
Learns to fling wrath into his horns, with blows  
Provokes the air, and scattering clouds of sand  
Makes prelude of the battle; afterward,  
With strength repaired and gathered might breaks camp,  
And hurls him headlong on the unthinking foe:  
As in mid ocean when a wave far of  
Begins to whiten, mustering from the main

Its rounded breast, and, onward rolled to land  
Falls with prodigious roar among the rocks,  
Huge as a very mountain: but the depths  
Upsethe in swirling eddies, and disgorge  
The murky sand-lees from their sunken bed.

Nay, every race on earth of men, and beasts,  
And ocean-folk, and flocks, and painted birds,  
Rush to the raging fire: love sways them all.  
Never than then more fiercely o'er the plain  
Prowls heedless of her whelps the lioness:  
Nor monstrous bears such wide-spread havoc-doom  
Deal through the forests; then the boar is fierce,  
Most deadly then the tigress: then, alack!  
Ill roaming is it on Libya's lonely plains.  
Mark you what shivering thrills the horse's frame,  
If but a waft the well-known gust conveys?  
Nor curb can check them then, nor lash severe,  
Nor rocks and caverned crags, nor barrier-floods,  
That rend and whirl and wash the hills away.  
Then speeds amain the great Sabellian boar,  
His tushes whets, with forefoot tears the ground,  
Rubs 'gainst a tree his flanks, and to and fro  
Hardens each wallowing shoulder to the wound.  
What of the youth, when love's relentless might  
Stirs the fierce fire within his veins? Behold!  
In blindest midnight how he swims the gulf

Convulsed with bursting storm-clouds! Over him  
Heaven's huge gate thunders; the rock-shattered main  
Utters a warning cry; nor parents' tears  
Can backward call him, nor the maid he loves,  
Too soon to die on his untimely pyre.  
What of the spotted ounce to Bacchus dear,  
Or warlike wolf-kin or the breed of dogs?  
Why tell how timorous stags the battle join?  
O'er all conspicuous is the rage of mares,  
By Venus' self inspired of old, what time  
The Potnian four with rending jaws devoured  
The limbs of Glaucus. Love-constrained they roam  
Past Gargarus, past the loud Ascanian flood;  
They climb the mountains, and the torrents swim;  
And when their eager marrow first conceives  
The fire, in Spring-tide chiefly, for with Spring  
Warmth doth their frames revisit, then they stand  
All facing westward on the rocky heights,  
And of the gentle breezes take their fill;  
And oft unmated, marvellous to tell,  
But of the wind impregnate, far and wide  
O'er craggy height and lowly vale they scud,  
Not toward thy rising, Eurus, or the sun's,  
But westward and north-west, or whence up-springs  
Black Auster, that glooms heaven with rainy cold.  
Hence from their groin slow drips a poisonous juice,

By shepherds truly named hippomanes,  
Hippomanes, fell stepdames oft have culled,  
And mixed with herbs and spells of baneful bode.

Fast flies meanwhile the irreparable hour,  
As point to point our charmed round we trace.  
Enough of herds. This second task remains,  
The wool-clad flocks and shaggy goats to treat.  
Here lies a labour; hence for glory look,  
Brave husbandmen. Nor doubtfully know  
How hard it is for words to triumph here,  
And shed their lustre on a theme so slight:  
But I am caught by ravishing desire  
Above the lone Parnassian steep; I love  
To walk the heights, from whence no earlier track  
Slopes gently downward to Castalia's spring.

Now, awful Pales, strike a louder tone.  
First, for the sheep soft pencotes I decree  
To browse in, till green summer's swift return;  
And that the hard earth under them with straw  
And handfuls of the fern be littered deep,  
Lest chill of ice such tender cattle harm  
With scab and loathly foot-rot. Passing thence  
I bid the goats with arbutle-leaves be stored,  
And served with fresh spring-water, and their pens  
Turned southward from the blast, to face the suns  
Of winter, when Aquarius' icy beam

Now sinks in showers upon the parting year.  
These too no lightlier our protection claim,  
Nor prove of poorer service, howsoe'er  
Milesian fleeces dipped in Tyrian reds  
Repay the barterer; these with offspring teem  
More numerous; these yield plenteous store of milk:  
The more each dry-wrung udder froths the pail,  
More copious soon the teat-pressed torrents flow.  
Ay, and on Cinyps' bank the he-goats too  
Their beards and grizzled chins and bristling hair  
Let clip for camp-use, or as rugs to wrap  
Seafaring wretches. But they browse the woods  
And summits of Lycaeus, and rough briers,  
And brakes that love the highland: of themselves  
Right heedfully the she-goats homeward troop  
Before their kids, and with plump udders clogged  
Scarce cross the threshold. Wherefore rather ye,  
The less they crave man's vigilance, be fain  
From ice to fend them and from snowy winds;  
Bring food and feast them with their branchy fare,  
Nor lock your hay-loft all the winter long.

But when glad summer at the west wind's call  
Sends either flock to pasture in the glades,  
Soon as the day-star shineth, hie we then  
To the cool meadows, while the dawn is young,  
The grass yet hoary, and to browsing herds



The dew tastes sweetest on the tender sward.  
When heaven's fourth hour draws on the thickening drought,  
And shrill cicadas pierce the brake with song,  
Then at the well-springs bid them, or deep pools,  
From troughs of holm-oak quaff the running wave:  
But at day's hottest seek a shadowy vale,  
Where some vast ancient-timbered oak of Jove  
Spreads his huge branches, or where huddling black  
Ilex on ilex cowers in awful shade.  
Then once more give them water sparingly,  
And feed once more, till sunset, when cool eve  
Allays the air, and dewy moonbeams slake  
The forest glades, with halcyon's song the shore,  
And every thicket with the goldfinch rings.

Of Libya's shepherds why the tale pursue?  
Why sing their pastures and the scattered huts  
They house in? Oft their cattle day and night  
Graze the whole month together, and go forth  
Into far deserts where no shelter is,  
So flat the plain and boundless. All his goods  
The Afric swain bears with him, house and home,  
Arms, Cretan quiver, and Amyclaeon dog;  
As some keen Roman in his country's arms  
Plies the swift march beneath a cruel load;  
Soon with tents pitched and at his post he stands,  
Ere looked for by the foe. Not thus the tribes

Of Scythia by the far Maeotic wave,  
Where turbid Ister whirls his yellow sands,  
And Rhodope stretched out beneath the pole  
Comes trending backward. There the herds they keep  
Close-pent in byres, nor any grass is seen  
Upon the plain, nor leaves upon the tree:  
But with snow-ridges and deep frost afar  
Heaped seven ells high the earth lies featureless:  
Still winter? still the north wind's icy breath!  
Nay, never sun disparts the shadows pale,  
Or as he rides the steep of heaven, or dips  
In ocean's fiery bath his plunging car.  
Quick ice-crusts curdle on the running stream,  
And iron-hooped wheels the water's back now bears,  
To broad wains opened, as erewhile to ships;  
Brass vessels oft asunder burst, and clothes  
Stiffen upon the wearers; juicy wines  
They cleave with axes; to one frozen mass  
Whole pools are turned; and on their untrimmed beards  
Stiff clings the jagged icicle. Meanwhile  
All heaven no less is filled with falling snow;  
The cattle perish: oxen's mighty frames  
Stand island-like amid the frost, and stags  
In huddling herds, by that strange weight benumbed,  
Scarce top the surface with their antler-points.  
These with no hounds they hunt, nor net with toils,

Nor scare with terror of the crimson plume;  
But, as in vain they breast the opposing block,  
Butcher them, knife in hand, and so dispatch  
Loud-bellowing, and with glad shouts hale them home.  
Themselves in deep-dug caverns underground  
Dwell free and careless; to their hearths they heave  
Oak-logs and elm-trees whole, and fire them there,  
There play the night out, and in festive glee  
With barm and service sour the wine-cup mock.  
So 'neath the seven-starred Hyperborean wain  
The folk live tameless, buffeted with blasts  
Of Eurus from Rhipaeian hills, and wrap  
Their bodies in the tawny fells of beasts.

    If wool delight thee, first, be far removed  
All prickly boskage, burrs and caltrops; shun  
Luxuriant pastures; at the outset choose  
White flocks with downy fleeces. For the ram,  
How white soe'er himself, be but the tongue  
'Neath his moist palate black, reject him, lest  
He sully with dark spots his offspring's fleece,  
And seek some other o'er the teeming plain.  
Even with such snowy bribe of wool, if ear  
May trust the tale, Pan, God of Arcady,  
Snared and beguiled thee, Luna, calling thee  
To the deep woods; nor thou didst spurn his call.

    But who for milk hath longing, must himself

Carry lucerne and lotus-leaves enow  
With salt herbs to the cote, whence more they love  
The streams, more stretch their udders, and give back  
A subtle taste of saltness in the milk.  
Many there be who from their mothers keep  
The new-born kids, and straightway bind their mouths  
With iron-tipped muzzles. What they milk at dawn,  
Or in the daylight hours, at night they press;  
What darkling or at sunset, this ere morn  
They bear away in baskets- for to town  
The shepherd hies him- or with dash of salt  
Just sprinkle, and lay by for winter use.  
Nor be thy dogs last cared for; but alike  
Swift Spartan hounds and fierce Molossian feed  
On fattening whey. Never, with these to watch,  
Dread nightly thief afold and ravening wolves,  
Or Spanish desperadoes in the rear.  
And oft the shy wild asses thou wilt chase,  
With hounds, too, hunt the hare, with hounds the doe;  
Oft from his woodland wallowing-den uprouse  
The boar, and scare him with their baying, and drive,  
And o'er the mountains urge into the toils  
Some antlered monster to their chiming cry.  
Learn also scented cedar-wood to burn  
Within the stalls, and snakes of noxious smell  
With fumes of galbanum to drive away.

Oft under long-neglected cribs, or lurks  
A viper ill to handle, that hath fled  
The light in terror, or some snake, that wont  
'Neath shade and sheltering roof to creep, and shower  
Its bane among the cattle, hugs the ground,  
Fell scourge of kine. Shepherd, seize stakes, seize stones!  
And as he rears defiance, and puffs out  
A hissing throat, down with him! see how low  
That cowering crest is veiled in flight, the while,  
His midmost coils and final sweep of tail  
Relaxing, the last fold drags lingering spires.  
Then that vile worm that in Calabrian glades  
Uprears his breast, and wreathes a scaly back,  
His length of belly pied with mighty spots-  
While from their founts gush any streams, while yet  
With showers of Spring and rainy south-winds earth  
Is moistened, lo! he haunts the pools, and here  
Housed in the banks, with fish and chattering frogs  
Crams the black void of his insatiate maw.  
Soon as the fens are parched, and earth with heat  
Is gaping, forth he darts into the dry,  
Rolls eyes of fire and rages through the fields,  
Furious from thirst and by the drought dismayed.  
Me list not then beneath the open heaven  
To snatch soft slumber, nor on forest-ridge  
Lie stretched along the grass, when, slipped his slough,

To glittering youth transformed he winds his spires,  
And eggs or younglings leaving in his lair,  
Towers sunward, lightening with three-forked tongue.

Of sickness, too, the causes and the signs  
I'll teach thee. Loathly scab assails the sheep,  
When chilly showers have probed them to the quick,  
And winter stark with hoar-frost, or when sweat  
Unpurged cleaves to them after shearing done,  
And rough thorns rend their bodies. Hence it is  
Shepherds their whole flock steep in running streams,  
While, plunged beneath the flood, with drenched fell,  
The ram, launched free, goes drifting down the tide.  
Else, having shorn, they smear their bodies o'er  
With acrid oil-lees, and mix silver-scum  
And native sulphur and Idaean pitch,  
Wax mollified with ointment, and therewith  
Sea-leek, strong hellebores, bitumen black.  
Yet ne'er doth kindlier fortune crown his toil,  
Than if with blade of iron a man dare lance  
The ulcer's mouth ope: for the taint is fed  
And quickened by confinement; while the swain  
His hand of healing from the wound withholds,  
Or sits for happier signs imploring heaven.  
Aye, and when inward to the bleater's bones  
The pain hath sunk and rages, and their limbs  
By thirsty fever are consumed, 'tis good

To draw the enkindled heat therefrom, and pierce  
Within the hoof-clefts a blood-bounding vein.  
Of tribes Bisaltic such the wonted use,  
And keen Gelonian, when to Rhodope  
He flies, or Getic desert, and quaffs milk  
With horse-blood curdled.

Seest one far afield

Oft to the shade's mild covert win, or pull  
The grass tops listlessly, or hindmost lag,  
Or, browsing, cast her down amid the plain,  
At night retire belated and alone;  
With quick knife check the mischief, ere it creep  
With dire contagion through the unwary herd.  
Less thick and fast the whirlwind scours the main  
With tempest in its wake, than swarm the plagues  
Of cattle; nor seize they single lives alone,  
But sudden clear whole feeding grounds, the flock  
With all its promise, and extirpate the breed.  
Well would he trow it who, so long after, still  
High Alps and Noric hill-forts should behold,  
And Iapydian Timavus' fields,  
Ay, still behold the shepherds' realms a waste,  
And far and wide the lawns untenanted.

Here from distempered heavens erewhile arose  
A piteous season, with the full fierce heat  
Of autumn glowed, and cattle-kindreds all

And all wild creatures to destruction gave,  
Tainted the pools, the fodder charged with bane.  
Nor simple was the way of death, but when  
Hot thirst through every vein impelled had drawn  
Their wretched limbs together, anon o'erflowed  
A watery flux, and all their bones piecemeal  
Sapped by corruption to itself absorbed.  
Oft in mid sacrifice to heaven- the white  
Wool-woven fillet half wreathed about his brow-  
Some victim, standing by the altar, there  
Betwixt the loitering carles a-dying fell:  
Or, if betimes the slaughtering priest had struck,  
Nor with its heaped entrails blazed the pile,  
Nor seer to seeker thence could answer yield;  
Nay, scarce the up-stabbing knife with blood was stained,  
Scarce sullied with thin gore the surface-sand.  
Hence die the calves in many a pasture fair,  
Or at full cribs their lives' sweet breath resign;  
Hence on the fawning dog comes madness, hence  
Racks the sick swine a gasping cough that chokes  
With swelling at the jaws: the conquering steed,  
Uncrowned of effort and heedless of the sward,  
Faints, turns him from the springs, and paws the earth  
With ceaseless hoof: low droop his ears, wherefrom  
Bursts fitful sweat, a sweat that waxes cold  
Upon the dying beast; the skin is dry,



And rigidly repels the handler's touch.  
These earlier signs they give that presage doom.  
But, if the advancing plague 'gin fiercer grow,  
Then are their eyes all fire, deep-drawn their breath,  
At times groan-laboured: with long sobbing heave  
Their lowest flanks; from either nostril streams  
Black blood; a rough tongue clogs the obstructed jaws.  
'Twas helpful through inverted horn to pour  
Draughts of the wine-god down; sole way it seemed  
To save the dying: soon this too proved their bane,  
And, reinvigorate but with frenzy's fire,  
Even at death's pinch- the gods some happier fate  
Deal to the just, such madness to their foes-  
Each with bared teeth his own limbs mangling tore.  
See! as he smokes beneath the stubborn share,  
The bull drops, vomiting foam-dabbled gore,  
And heaves his latest groans. Sad goes the swain,  
Unhooks the steer that mourns his fellow's fate,  
And in mid labour leaves the plough-gear fast.  
Nor tall wood's shadow, nor soft sward may stir  
That heart's emotion, nor rock-channelled flood,  
More pure than amber speeding to the plain:  
But see! his flanks fail under him, his eyes  
Are dulled with deadly torpor, and his neck  
Sinks to the earth with drooping weight. What now  
Besteads him toil or service? to have turned

The heavy sod with ploughshare? And yet these  
Ne'er knew the Massic wine-god's baneful boon,  
Nor twice replenished banquets: but on leaves  
They fare, and virgin grasses, and their cups  
Are crystal springs and streams with running tired,  
Their healthful slumbers never broke by care.  
Then only, say they, through that country side  
For Juno's rites were cattle far to seek,  
And ill-matched buffaloes the chariots drew  
To their high fanes. So, painfully with rakes  
They grub the soil, aye, with their very nails  
Dig in the corn-seeds, and with strained neck  
O'er the high uplands drag the creaking wains.  
No wolf for ambush pries about the pen,  
Nor round the flock prowls nightly; pain more sharp  
Subdues him: the shy deer and fleet-foot stags  
With hounds now wander by the haunts of men  
Vast ocean's offspring, and all tribes that swim,  
On the shore's confine the wave washes up,  
Like shipwrecked bodies: seals, unwonted there,  
Flee to the rivers. Now the viper dies,  
For all his den's close winding, and with scales  
Erect the astonished water-worms. The air  
Brooks not the very birds, that headlong fall,  
And leave their life beneath the soaring cloud.  
Moreover now nor change of fodder serves,

And subtlest cures but injure; then were foiled  
The masters, Chiron sprung from Phillyron,  
And Amythaon's son Melampus. See!  
From Stygian darkness launched into the light  
Comes raging pale Tisiphone; she drives  
Disease and fear before her, day by day  
Still rearing higher that all-devouring head.  
With bleat of flocks and lowings thick resound  
Rivers and parched banks and sloping heights.  
At last in crowds she slaughters them, she chokes  
The very stalls with carrion-heaps that rot  
In hideous corruption, till men learn  
With earth to cover them, in pits to hide.  
For e'en the fells are useless; nor the flesh  
With water may they purge, or tame with fire,  
Nor shear the fleeces even, gnawed through and through  
With foul disease, nor touch the putrid webs;  
But, had one dared the loathly weeds to try,  
Red blisters and an unclean sweat o'erran  
His noisome limbs, till, no long tarriance made,  
The fiery curse his tainted frame devoured.

#### GEORGIC IV