

***The First Book of Ovid's Metamorphoses, translated into
English metre***

The Poet's Of shapes transformed to bodies strange I
introduction purpose to entreat.

Ye gods, vouchsafe (for you are they that
wrought this wondrous feat)
To further this mine enterprise, and from the
world begun
Grant that my verse may to my time his course
directly run.

The creation Before the sea and land were made, and
heaven that all doth hide,
In all the world one only face of nature did abide
Which Chaos hight; a huge, rude heap, and
nothing else but even
A heavy lump and clotted clod of seeds
together driven
Of things at strife among themselves for want of
order due.

10 No sun as yet with lightsome beams the
shapeless world did view;
No moon in growing did repair her horns with
borrowed light.
Nor yet the earth amidst the air did hang by
wondrous flight,
Just peisèd by her proper weight; nor, winding in
and out,

Did Amphitrite with her arms embrace the earth
about.

For where was earth, was sea and air; so was the
earth unstable,

The air all dark, the sea likewise to bear a ship
unable.

No kind of thing had proper shape, but each
confounded other;

For in one selfsame body strove the hot and cold
together,

The moist with dry, the soft with hard, the light
with things of weight.

This strife did God and nature break and set in
order straight.

The earth from heaven, the sea from earth he
parted orderly,

And from the thick and foggy air he took the
lightsome sky;

Which when he once unfolded had and severed
from the blind

And clodded heap, he, setting each from other,
did them bind

In endless friendship to agree. The fire most pure
and bright,

The substance of the heaven itself, because it was
so light

Did mount aloft and set itself in highest place of
all.

The second room of right to air for lightness did
befall.

The earth, more gross, drew down with it each
weighty kind of matter

And set itself in lowest place. Again, the waving
water

Did lastly challenge for his place the utmost
coast and bound

Of all the compass of the earth, to close the
steadfast ground.

Now when he in this foresaid wise (what god so
e'er he was)

Had broke and into members put this rude
confusèd mass,

Then first, because in every part the earth should
equal be,

He made it like a mighty ball in compass, as we
see.

And here and there he cast in seas, to whom he
gave a law:

To swell with every blast of wind and every
stormy flaw,

And with their waves continually to beat upon
the shore

Of all the earth within their bounds enclosed by
them afore.

Moreover, springs and mighty meres and lakes
he did augment,

And flowing streams of crooked brooks in
winding banks he pent.

Of which the earth doth drink up some, and
some with restless race

Do seek the sea, where, finding scope of larger
room and space,

Instead of banks they beat on shores. He did
command the plain

And champaign grounds to stretch out wide, and
valleys to remain

Aye underneath, and eke the woods to hide them
decently

With tender leaves, and stony hills to lift
themselves on high.

And as two zones do cut the heaven upon the
righter side

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And other twain upon the left likewise the same
divide,

The middle in outrageous heat exceeding all the
rest;

Even so likewise through great foresight to God
it seemèd best

The earth included in the same should so divided
be,

As with the number of the heaven her zones
might full agree.

Of which the middle zone in heat, the utmost
twain in cold,

Exceed so far that there to dwell no creature
dare be bold.

Between these two so great extremes two other
zones are fixed

Where temperature of heat and cold indifferently
is mixed.

Now over this doth hang the air which, as it is
more slighty

60

Than earth or water, so again than fire it is more
weighty.

There hath he placèd mist and clouds and, for to
fear men's minds,

The thunder and the lightning eke, with cold and
blustering winds.
And yet the maker of the world permitteth not
alway
The winds to use the air at will. For at this
present day,
Though each from other placèd be in sundry
coasts aside,
The violence of their boisterous blasts things
scarcely can abide.
They so turmoil as though they would the world
in pieces rend;
So cruel is those brothers' wrath when that they
do contend.
And therefore to the morning grey, the realm of
Nabathy,
To Persis and to other lands and countries that
do lie
Far underneath the morning star did Eurus take
his flight.
Likewise the setting of the sun and shutting in of
night
Belong to Zephyr. And the blasts of blustereing
Boreas reign
In Scythia and in other lands set under Charles
his wain.
And unto Auster doth belong the coast of all the
south,
Who beareth showers and rotten mists continual
in his mouth.
Above all these he set aloft the clear and
lightsome sky

80

Without all dregs of earthly filth or grossness
utterly.

The bounds of things were scarcely yet by him
thus pointed out

But that appeared in the heaven stars glistening
all about

Which in the said confusèd heap had hidden
been before.

And to th'intent with lively things each region
for to store,

The heavenly soil to gods and stars and planets
first he gave;

The waters next both fresh and salt he let the
fishes have;

The subtle air to flickering fowls and birds he
hath assigned;

The earth to beasts both wild and tame of sundry
sort and kind.

Howbeit, yet of all this while the creature
wanting was

Far more divine, of nobler mind, which should
the residue pass

In depth of knowledge, reason, wit and high
capacity,

90

And which of all the residue should the lord and
ruler be.

Then either he that made the world and things in
order set

Of heavenly seed engendered man; or else the
earth, as yet

Young, lusty, fresh and in her flowers, and
parted from the sky

100

But late before the seed thereof as yet held
inwardly,
The which Prometheus, tempering straight with
water of the spring,
Did make in likeness to the gods that govern
everything.
And where all other beasts behold the ground
with grovelling eye,
He gave to man a stately look replete with
majesty
And willed him to behold the heaven with
count'nance cast on high,
To mark and understand what things were in the
starry sky.
And thus the earth, which late before had neither
shape nor hue,
Did take the noble shape of man and was
transformèd new.

*The golden
age*

Then sprang up first the golden age, which of
itself maintained

The truth and right of everything unforced
and unconstrained.
There was no fear of punishment; there was no
threatening law
In brazen tables nailèd up to keep the folk in
awe.
There was no man would crouch or creep to
judge with cap in hand;
They livèd safe without a judge in every realm
and land.
The lofty pine-tree was not hewn from
mountains, where it stood

In seeking strange and foreign lands to rove upon
the flood;

Men knew none other countries yet than where
themselves did keep.

There was no town enclosed yet with walls and
ditches deep.

No horn nor trumpet was in use, no sword nor
helmet worn;

The world was such that soldiers' help might
easily be forborne.

The fertile earth as yet was free, untouched of
spade or plough;

And yet it yielded of itself of everything enough.

And men themselves contented well with plain
and simple food

That on the earth of nature's gift without their
travail stood;

Did live by raspis, hips and haws, by cornels,
plums and cherries,

By sloes and apples, nuts and pears and
loathsome brambleberries,

And by the acorns dropped on ground by Jove's
broad tree in field.

The springtime lasted all the year, and Zephyr
with his mild

And gentle blast did cherish things that grew of
own accord.

The ground, untilled, all kind of fruits did
plenteously afford.

No muck nor tillage was bestowed on lean and
barren land

To make the corn of better head and ranker for
to stand.

Then streams ran milk, then streams ran wine;
and yellow honey flowed
From each green tree whereon the rays of fiery
Phoebus glowed.

*The decline of
the world*

But when that, into Limbo once Saturnus
being thrust,

130

The rule and charge of all the world was
under Jove unjust
And that the silver age came in, more somewhat
base than gold,
More precious yet than freckled brass,
immediately the old
And ancient spring did Jove abridge and made
thereof anon
Four seasons: winter, summer, spring and
autumn off and on.
Then first of all began the air with fervent heat
to swelt;
Then icicles hung roping down; then,, for the
cold was felt,
Men gan to shroud themselves in house. Their
houses were the thicks
And bushy queaches, hollow caves or hurdles
made of sticks.
Then first of all were furrows drawn and corn
was cast in ground;
The simple ox with sorry sighs to heavy yoke
was bound.

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Next after this succeeded straight the third
and brazen age,
More hard of nature, somewhat bent to cruel
wars and rage,

But yet not wholly past all grace. Of iron is the
last,
In no part good and tractable as former ages
past.
For when that of this wicked age once opened
was the vein,
Therein all mischief rushèd forth. Then faith and
truth were fain,
And honest shame, to hide their heads; for whom
stepped stoutly in
Craft, treason, violence, envy, pride and wicked
lust to win.
The shipman hoist his sails to wind whose names
he did not know;
And ships that erst in tops of hills and mountains
had ygrow
Did leap and dance on uncouth waves. And men
began to bound
With dowels and ditches drawn in length the free
and fertile ground
Which was as common as the air and light of sun
before.
Not only corn and other fruits for sust'nance and
for store
Were now exacted of the earth, but eft they gan
to dig
And in the bowels of the ground unsatiably to rig
For riches couched and hidden deep in places
near to hell,
The spurs and stirrers unto vice, and foes to
doing well.
Then hurtful iron came abroad; then came forth
yellow gold,

More hurtful than the iron far; then came forth
battle bold

That fights with both and shakes his sword in
cruel bloody hand.

Men live by ravine and by stealth. The
wandering guest doth stand

In danger of his host, the host in danger of his
guest,

And fathers of their son-in-laws; yea, seldom
time doth rest

Between born brothers such accord and love as
ought to be.

The goodman seeks the goodwife's death, and his
again seeks she;

The stepdames fell their husbands' sons with
poison do assail;

To see their fathers live so long the children do
bewail.

All godliness lies underfoot. And Lady Astrey,
last

Of heavenly virtues, from this earth in slaughter
drownèd passed.

Crimes of And to th'intent the earth alone thus should
giants and not be oppressed
men

And heaven above in slothful ease and
careless quiet rest,

Men say that giants went about the realm of
heaven to win,

To place themselves to reign as gods and lawless
lords therein.

And hill on hill they heaped up aloft unto the sky

Till God Almighty from the heaven did let his
thunder fly.

The dint whereof the airy tops of high Olympus
brake

And pressèd Pelion violently from under Ossa
strake.

When whelmèd in their wicked work those
cursèd caitiffs lay,

180

The earth, their mother, took their blood yet
warm and (as they say)

Did give it life. And for because some imps
should still remain

Of that same stock, she gave it shape and limbs
of men again.

This offspring eke against the gods did bear a
native spite;

In slaughter and in doing wrong was all their
whole delight.

Their deeds declarèd them of blood engendered
for to be.

Jove summons The which as soon as Saturn's son from heaven
parliament aloft did see,

He fetched a sigh and therewithal, revolving in
his thought

The shameful act which at a feast Lycaon late
had wrought,

As yet unknown or blown abroad, he gan thereat
to storm

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And stomach like an angry Jove. And therefore,
to reform

Such heinous acts, he summoned straight his
Court of Parliament

Whereto resorted all the gods that had their
summons sent.

High in the welkin is a way apparent to the sight
In starry nights, which of his passing whiteness
Milky hight.

It is the street that to the court and princely
palace leads

Of mighty Jove, whose thunderclaps each living
creature dreads.

On both the sides of this same way do stand in
stately port

The sumptuous houses of the peers (for all the
common sort

Dwell scattering here and there abroad); the face
of all the sky

The houses of the chief estates and princes do
supply.

And sure and if I may be bold to speak my fancy
free,

I take this place of all the heaven the palace for
to be.

Now when the gods assembled were and each
had ta'en his place,

Jove, standing up aloft and leaning on his ivory
mace,

Right dreadfully his bushy locks did thrice or
four times shake,

Wherewith he made both sea and land and
heaven itself to quake,

And afterward in wrathful words his angry mind
thus brake:

‘I never was in greater care nor more
perplexity

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How to maintain my sovereign state and
princely royalty
When with their hundred hands apiece the
adder-footed rout
Did practise for to conquer heaven and for to
cast us out.
For though it were a cruel foe, yet did that war
depend
Upon one ground, and in one stock it had his
final end.
But now, as far as any sea about the world doth
wind,
I must destroy both man and beast and all the
mortal kind.
I swear by Styx's hideous streams that run within
the ground,
All other means must first be sought; but when
there can be found
No help to heal a festered sore, it must away be
cut
Lest that the parts that yet are sound in danger
should be put.

220

We have a number in the world that man's estate
surmount
Of such whom for their private gods the country
folks account,
As satyrs, fauns and sundry nymphs, with silvans
eke beside,
That in the woods and hilly grounds continually
abide.
Whom into heaven since that as yet we vouch
not safe to take

And of the honour of this place co-partners for to
make,

Such lands as to inhabit in we erst to them
assigned.

That they should still enjoy the same, it is my
will and mind.

But can you think that they in rest and safety
shall remain

When proud Lycaon lay in wait by secret means
and train

230

To have confounded me, your lord, who in my
hand do bear

The dreadful thunder, and of whom even you do
stand in fear?’

The House was moved at his words and
earnestly required

The man that had so traitorously against their
lord conspired.

Even so when rebels did arise to stroy the Roman
name

By shedding of our Caesar's blood, the horror of
the same

Did pierce the hearts of all mankind and made
the world to quake;

Whose fervent zeal in thy behalf, O August, thou
did take

As thankfully as Jove doth hear the loving care
of his.

Who, beckoning to them with his hand,
forbiddeth them to hiss;

240

And therewithal through all the House attentive
silence is.

As soon as that his majesty all muttering had
allayed,

He brake the silence once again and thus unto
them said:

Lycaon

‘Let pass this careful thought of yours; for he
that did offend

Hath dearly bought the wicked act the which
he did intend.

Yet shall you hear what was his fault and
vengeance for the same.

A foul report and infamy unto our hearing came
Of mischief usèd in those times; which wishing
all untrue,

I did descend in shape of man th’infamèd earth
to view.

It were a process overlong to tell you of the sin

250

That did abound in every place whereas I
entered in;

The bruit was lesser than the truth and partial in
report.

The dreadful dens of Maenalus, where savage
beasts resort,

And Cyllen had I overpassed, with all the pine-
trees high

Of cold Lycaeus, and from thence I entered by
and by

The harbourless and cruel house of late
th’Arcadian king

Such time as twilight on the earth dim darkness
gan to bring.

I gave a sign that god was come, and straight the
common sort

260

Devoutly prayed; whereat Lycaon first did make
a sport

And after said, "By open proof ere long I mind to
see

If that this wight a mighty god or mortal creature
be.

The truth shall try itself." He meant (the sequel
did declare)

To steal upon me in the night and kill me
unbeware.

And yet he was not so content, but went and cut
the throat

Of one that lay in hostage there which was an
Epirot.

And part of him he did to roast and part he did
to stew;

Which when it came upon the board, forthwith I
overthrew.

The house with just revenging fire upon the
owner's head.

Who, seeing that, slipped out of doors amazed
for fear and fled

Into the wild and desert woods where, being all
alone,

270

As he endeavoured (but in vain) to speak and
make his moan,

He fell a-howling. Wherewithal for very rage and
mood

He ran me quite out of his wits and waxèd
furious wood,

Still practising his wonted lust of slaughter on
the poor

And silly cattle, thirsting still for blood as
heretofore.

His garments turned to shaggy hair, his arms to
rugged paws;

So is he made a ravening wolf whose shape
expressly draws

To that the which he was before. His skin is
hoary grey,

His look still grim with glaring eyes; and every
kind of way

His cruel heart in outward shape doth well itself
bewray.

Thus was one house destroyèd quite. But that
one house alone

Deserveth not to be destroyed; in all the earth is
none

But that such vice doth reign therein as that ye
would believe

That all had sworn and sold themselves to
mischief, us to grieve.

And therefore, as they all offend, so am I fully
bent

That all forthwith (as they deserve) shall have
due punishment.'

These words of Jove some of the gods did
openly approve

And with their sayings more to wrath his
angry courage move;

And some did give assent by signs. Yet did it
grieve them all

That such destruction utterly on all mankind
should fall,

Demanding what he purposed with all the earth
to do

When that he had all mortal men so clean
destroyed, and who

On holy altars afterward should offer
frankincense,

And whether that he were in mind to leave the
earth fro thence

To savage beasts to waste and spoil because of
man's offence.

The flood

The king of gods bade cease their thoughts
and questions in that case

And cast the care thereof on him. Within a
little space

He promised for to frame anew another kind of
men

By wondrous means, unlike the first, to fill the
world again.

And now his lightning had he thought on all the
earth to throw,

But that he feared lest the flames perhaps so high
should grow

As for to set the heaven on fire and burn up all
the sky.

He did remember furthermore how that by
destiny

A certain time should one day come wherein
both sea and land

And heaven itself should feel the force of
Vulcan's scorching brand,

So that the huge and goodly work of all the
world so wide

Should go to wreck; for doubt whereof forthwith
he laid aside

His weapons that the Cyclopes made, intending
to correct

Man's trespass by a punishment contrary in
effect.

And namely with incessant showers from heaven
ypourèd down

310 He did determine with himself the mortal kind to
drown.

In Aeolus' prison by and by he fettered Boreas
fast

With all such winds as chase the clouds or
break them with their blast,

And set at large the southern wind; who straight
with watery wings

And dreadful face as black as pitch forth out of
prison flings.

His beard hung full of hideous storms; all
dankish was his head,

With water streaming down his hair that on his
shoulders shed.

His ugly forehead wrinkled was with foggy mists
full thick,

And on his feathers and his breast a stilling dew
did stick.

As soon as he between his hands the hanging
clouds had crushed,

320 With rattling noise a-down from heaven the rain
full sadly gushed.

The rainbow, Juno's messenger, bedecked in
sundry hue,

To maintain moisture in the clouds great waters
thither drew.
The corn was beaten to the ground; the tillman's
hope of gain
For which he toiled all the year lay drownèd in
the rain.
Jove's indignation and his wrath began to grow
so hot
That for to quench the rage thereof his heaven
sufficèd not;
His brother Neptune with his waves was fain to
do him ease.
Who, straight assembling all the streams that fall
into the seas,
Said to them, standing in his house: 'Sirs, get you
home apace;
You must not look to have me use long
preaching in this case.
Pour out your force (for so is need), your heads
each one unpend,
And from your open springs your streams with
flowing waters send.'
He had no sooner said the word but that,
returning back,
Each one of them unloosed his spring and let his
waters slack.
And to the sea with flowing streams yswollen
above their banks,
One rolling in another's neck, they rushèd forth
by ranks.
Himself with his three-tinèd mace did lend the
earth a blow

That made it shake and open ways for waters
forth to flow.

The floods at random where they list through all
the fields did stray;

Men, beasts, trees, corn and with their gods were
churches washed away.

If any house were built so strong against their
force to stand,

Yet did the water hide the top; and turrets in
that pond

Were overwhelmed. No difference was between
the sea and ground,

For all was sea. There was no shore nor landing
to be found.

Some climbèd up to tops of hills, and some
rowed to and fro

In boats where they, not long before, to plough
and cart did go.

One over corn and tops of towns whom waves
did overwhelm

Doth sail in ship; another sits a-fishing in an elm.

In meadows green were anchors cast (so fortune
did provide),

And crooked ships did shadow vines, the which
the flood did hide.

And where but t'other day before did feed the
hungry goat,

The ugly seals and porpoises now to and fro did
float.

The seanymps wondered under waves the
towns and groves to see;

And dolphins played among the tops and boughs
of every tree.

The grim and greedy wolf did swim among the
silly sheep;

The lion and the tiger fierce were borne upon the
deep.

It booted not the foaming boar his crooked tusks
to whet;

The running hart could in the stream by
swiftness nothing get.

The fleeting fowls, long having sought for land to
rest upon,

360

Into the sea with weary wings were driven to fall
anon.

Th'outrageous swelling of the sea the lesser
hillocks drowned;

Unwonted waves on highest tops of mountains
did rebound.

The greatest part of men were drowned; and
such as scaped the flood,

Forlorn with fasting overlong, did die for want of
food.

Against the fields of Aony and Attic lies a land

*Deucalion and
Pyrrha*

That Phocis hight, a fertile ground while that it
was a land,

But at that time a part of sea and even a
champaign field

Of sudden waters, which the flood by forced rage
did yield;

Whereas a hill with forked top, the which
Parnassus hight,

370

Doth pierce the clouds and to the stars doth raise
his head upright.

When at this hill (for yet the sea had whelmèd
all beside)

Deucalion and his bedfellow, without all other
guide,

Arrived in a little bark, immediately they went
And to the nymphs of Corycus with full devout
intent

Did honour due, and to the gods to whom that
famous hill

Was sacred, and to Themis eke in whose most
holy will

Consisted then the oracles. In all the world so
round

A better nor more righteous man could never yet
be found

Than was Deucalion, nor again a woman, maid
nor wife,

380 That fearèd God so much as she nor led so good
a life.

When Jove beheld how all the world stood
like a plash of rain

And of so many thousand men and women
did remain

But one of each, howbeit those both just and
both devout,

He brake the clouds and did command that
Boreas with his stout

And sturdy blasts should chase the flood, that
earth might see the sk

And heaven the earth. The seas also began
immediately

Their raging fury for to cease. Their ruler laid
away

His dreadful mace and with his words their
woodness did allay.

He callèd Triton to him straight, his trumpeter,
who stood

390

In purple robe on shoulder cast aloft upon the
flood,

And bade him take his sounding trump and out
of hand to blow

Retreat, that all the streams might hear and
cease from thence to flow.

He took his trumpet in his hand; his trumpet was
a shell

Of some great whelk or other fish, in fashion like
a bell

That gathered narrow to the mouth and, as it did
descend,

Did wax more wide and writhen still down to the
nether end.

When that this trump amid the sea was set to
Triton's mouth,

He blew so loud that all the streams both east,
west, north and south

Might easily hear him blow retreat, and all that
heard the sound

400

Immediately began to ebb and draw within their
bound.

Then gan the sea to have a shore and brooks to
find a bank,

And swelling streams of flowing floods within
her channels sank.

Then hills did rise above the waves that had
them overflow.

And, as the waters did decrease, the ground did
seem to grow.

And after long and tedious time the trees did
show their tops

All bare, save that upon the boughs the mud did
hang in knops.

The world restorèd was again, which though
Deucalion joyed

Then to behold, yet for because he saw the earth
was void

And silent like a wilderness, with sad and
weeping eyes

And ruthless voice he then did speak to Pyrrha in
this wise:

‘O sister, O my loving spouse, O silly woman
left

As only remnant of thy sex that water hath
bereft,

Whom nature first by right of birth hath linkèd
to me fast,

In that we brothers' children been, and secondly
the chaste

And steadfast bond of lawful bed, and lastly now
of all

The present perils of the time that lately did
befall:

On all the earth from east to west where Phoebus
shows his face

There is no mo but thou and I of all the mortal
race.

The sea hath swallowed all the rest. And scarcely
are we sure

That our two lives from dreadful death in safety
shall endure;

For even as yet the dusky clouds do make my
heart adrad.

Alas, poor wretched silly soul, what heart
would'st thou have had

To bear these heavy haps if chance had let thee
scape alone?

Who should have been thy consort then? Who
should have rued thy moan?

Now trust me truly, loving wife, had thou as now
been drowned,

I would have followed after thee and in the sea
been found.

Would God I could my father's art of clay to
fashion men

And give them life, that people might frequent
the world again.

Mankind, alas, doth only now within us two
consist

As moulds whereby to fashion men; for so the
gods do list.'

And with these words the bitter tears did
trickle down their cheek

Until at length between themselves they did
agree to seek

To God by prayer for his grace and to demand
his aid

By answer of his oracle; wherein they nothing
stayed,

But to Cephisus sadly went, whose stream as at
that time

Began to run within his banks, though thick with
muddy slime.

Whose sacred liquor straight they took and
sprinkled with the same

Their heads and clothes, and afterward to
Themis' chapel came,

The roof whereof with cindery moss was almost
overgrown;

440

For since the time the raging flood the world had
overflown,

No creature came within the church, so that the
altars stood

Without one spark of holy fire or any stick of
wood.

As soon as that this couple came within the
chapel door,

They fell down flat upon the ground and,
trembling, kissed the floor

And said: 'If prayer that proceeds from humble
heart and mind

May in the presence of the gods such grace and
favour find

As to appease their worthy wrath, then vouch
thou safe to tell,

O gentle Themis, how the loss that on our kind
befell

May now eftsoons recovered be, and help us to
repair

450

The world, which drownèd under waves doth lie
in great despair.'

The goddess, movèd with their suit, this answer
did them make:

‘Depart you hence. Go hill your heads and let
your garments slake
And both of you your grandam's bones behind
your shoulders cast.’
They stood amazèd at these words till Pyrrha at
the last,
Refusing to obey the hest the which the goddess
gave,
Brake silence and with trembling cheer did
meekly pardon crave;
For sure, she said, she was afraid her grandam's
ghost to hurt
By taking up her buried bones to throw them in
the dirt.
And with the answer hereupon eftsoons in hand
they go,
The doubtful words whereof they scan and
canvas to and fro.
Which done, Prometheus’ son began by counsel
wise and sage
His cousin-german's fearfulness thus gently to
assuage:
‘Well, either in these doubtful words is hid some
mystery
Whereof the gods permit us not the meaning to
espy,
Or, questionless, and if the sense of inward
sentence deem
Like as the tenor of the words apparently do
seem,
It is no breach of godliness to do as God doth
bid.

I take our grandam for the earth; the stones
within her hid

I take for bones; these are the bones the which
are meanèd here.'

470

Though Titan's daughter at this wise conjecture
of her fere

Were somewhat moved, yet none of both did
steadfast credit give,

So hardly could they in their hearts the heavenly
hests believe.

But what and if they made a proof? What harm
could come thereby?

They went their ways and veiled their heads and
did their coats untie

And at their backs did throw the stones by name
of bones foretold.

The stones (who would believe the thing, but
that the time of old

Reorts it for a steadfast truth?) of nature tough
and hard

Began to wax both soft and smooth and shortly
afterward

To win therewith a better shape; and, as they did
increase,

480

A milder nature in them grew and rudeness gan
to cease.

For at the first their shape was such as in a
certain sort

Resembled man, but of the right and perfect
shape came short;

Even like to marble images new drawn and
roughly wrought

Before the carver by his art to purpose hath them
brought.

Such parts of them where any juice or moisture
did abound

Or else were earthy turned to flesh; and such as
were so sound

And hard as would not bow nor bend did turn to
bones; again,

The part that was a vein before doth still his
name retain.

Thus by the mighty power of God ere lenger time
was passed

490

The mankind was restored by stones the which a
man did cast;

And likewise also by the stones the which a
woman threw

The womankind repaired was and made again of
new.

Of these are we the crooked imps and stony race
indeed,

Bewraying by our toiling life from whence we do
proceed.

*The rebirth of
animal life*

The lusty earth of own accord soon after forth
did bring,

According to their sundry shapes, each other
living thing.

As soon as that the moisture once caught heat
against the sun,

And that the fat and slimy mud in moorish
grounds begun

To swell through warmth of Phoebus' beams, and
that the fruitful seed

500

Of things well cherished in the fat and lively soil
indeed,

As in their mother's womb, began in length of
time to grow

To one or other kind of shape wherein
themselves to show,

Even so, when that seven-mouthèd Nile the
watery fields forsook

And to his ancient channel eft his bridled
streams betook,

So that the sun did heat the mud the which he
left behind,

The husbandmen that tilled the ground among
the clods did find

Of sundry creatures sundry shapes. Of which
they spièd some

Even in the instant of their birth but newly then
begun;

And some unperfect, wanting breast or shoulders
in such wise

510

That in one body oftentimes appearèd to the eyes

One half thereof alive to be, and all the rest
beside,

Both void of life and seemly shape, stark earth to
still abide.

For when that moisture with the heat is
tempered equally,

They do conceive and of them twain engender by
and by

All kind of things. For though that fire with
water aye debateth,

Yet moisture mixed with equal heat all living
things createth.

And so those discords in their kind, one striving
with the other,

In generation do agree and make one perfect
mother.

And therefore when the miry earth, bespread
with slimy mud

520

Brought over all but late before by violence of
the flood,

Caught heat by warmness of the sun and
calmness of the sky,

Things out of number in the world forthwith it
did supply.

Whereof in part the like before in former times
had been,

And some so strange and ugly shapes as never
erst were seen.

*Apollo and the
Python*

In that she did such monsters breed was greatly
to her woe;

But yet thou, ugly Python, wert engendered by
her tho,

A terror to the new-made folk which never erst
had known

So foul a dragon in their life, so monstrously
forgrown,

So great a ground thy poison-paunch did
underneath thee hide.

530

The god of shooting, who nowhere before that
present tide

Those kind of weapons put in use but at the
speckled deer

Or at the roes so wight of foot, a thousand shafts
well near
Did on that hideous serpent spend, of which
there was not one
But forcèd forth the venomèd blood along his
sides to gon;
So that, his quiver almost void, he nailed him to
the ground
And did him nobly at the last by force of shot
confound.
And lest that time might of this work deface the
worthy fame,
He did ordain in mind thereof a great and
solemn game
Which of the serpent that he slew of Pythians
bare the name;
Where whoso could the mastery win in feats of
strength or sleight
Of hand or foot or rolling wheel might claim to
have of right
An oaken garland fresh and brave. There was not
anywhere
As yet a bay; by means whereof was Phoebus
fain to wear
The leaves of every pleasant tree about his
golden hair.

Daphne *and*
Apollo

Peneian Daphne was the first where Phoebus
set his love,

Which not blind chance but Cupid's fierce and
cruel wrath did move.

The Delian god, but late before surprised with
passing pride

For killing of the monstrous worm, the god of
love espied

With bow in hand already bent and letting
arrows go.

550

To whom he said, 'And what hast thou, thou
wanton baby, so

With warlike weapons for to toy? It were a better
sight

To see this kind of furniture on our two
shoulders bright,

Who, when we list, with steadfast hand both
man and beast can wound,

Who t'other day with arrows keen have nailed to
the ground

The serpent Python so forswollen, whose filthy
womb did hide

So many acres of the ground in which he did
abide.

Content thyself, son, sorry loves to kindle with
thy brand;

For these our praises to attain thou must not take
in hand.'

To him quoth Venus' son again, 'Well, Phoebus, I
agree

560

Thy bow to shoot at every beast, and so shall
mine at thee.

And look how far that under god each beast is
put by kind,

So much thy glory less than ours in shooting
shalt thou find.'

This said, with drift of feathered wings in broken
air he flew

And to the forked and shady top of Mount
Parnassus drew.
There from his quiver full of shafts two arrows
did he take
Of sundry works: t'one causeth love, the t'other
doth it slake.
That causeth love is all of gold with point full
sharp and bright;
That chaseth love is blunt, whose steal with
leaden head is dight.
The god this fixed in the nymph Peneis for the
nonce;
The t'other pierced Apollo's heart and overraught
his bones.
Immediately in smouldering heat of love the
t'one did swelt;
Again, the t'other in her heart no spark nor
motion felt.
In woods and forests is her joy the savage beasts
to chase
And as the prize of all her pain to take the skin
and case.
Unwedded Phoebe doth she haunt and follow as
her guide;
Unordered do her tresses wave, scarce in a fillet
tied.
Full many a wooer sought her love; she, loathing
all the rout,
Impatient and without a man walks all the
woods about.
And as for Hymen or for love and wedlock, often
sought,

580

She took no care; they were the furthest end of
all her thought.

Her father many a time and oft would say, 'My
daughter dear,

Thou owest me a son-in-law to be thy lawful
fere.'

Her father many a time and oft would say, 'My
daughter dear,

Of nephews thou my debtor art, their grandsire's
heart to cheer.'

She, hating as a heinous crime the bond of
bridely bed,

Demurely casting down her eyes and blushing
somewhat red,

Did fold about her father's neck with fawning
arms and said,

'Dear father, grant me while I live my
maidenhead for to have,

As to Diana heretofore her father freely gave.'

590

Thy father, Daphne, could consent to that thou
dost require

But that thy beauty and thy form impugn thy
chaste desire,

So that thy will and his consent are nothing in
this case

By reason of the beauty bright that shineth in thy
face.

Apollo loves and longs to have this Daphne to his
fere,

And as he longs, he hopes; but his foredooms do
fail him there.

And as light hain when corn is reaped, or hedges
burn with brands

That passers-by when day draws near throw
loosely fro their hands,

So into flames the god is gone and burneth in his
breast

And feeds his vain and barren love in hoping for
the best.

600

Her hair unkembed about her neck down flaring
did he see;

‘O Lord, and were they trimmed,’ quoth he, ‘how
seemly would she be!’

He sees her eyes as bright as fire the stars to
represent;

He sees her mouth, which to have seen he holds
him not content.

Her lily arms mid part and more above the elbow
bare,

Her hands, her fingers and her wrists him
thought of beauty rare.

And sure he thought such other parts as
garments then did hide

Excellèd greatly all the rest the which he had
espied.

But swifter than the whirling wind she flees and
will not stay

To give the hearing to these words the which he
had to say:

‘I pray thee, nymph Peneis, stay! I chase not
as a foe.

610

Stay, nymph! The lambs so flee the wolves,
the stags the lions so;

With flittering feathers silly doves so from the
goshawk fly,

And every creature from his foe. Love is the
cause that I
Do follow thee; alas, alas, how would it grieve
my heart
To see thee fall among the briars, and that the
blood should start
Out of thy tender legs, I – wretch – the causer of
thy smart.
The place is rough to which thou run'st; take
leisure, I thee pray;
Abate thy flight and I myself my running pace
will stay.
Yet would I wish thee take advice and wisely for
to view
What one he is that for thy grace in humble wise
doth sue.
I am not one that dwells among the hills and
stony rocks;
I am no shepherd with a cur attending on the
flocks;
I am no carl nor country clown, nor neatherd
taking charge
Of cattle grazing here and there within this forest
large.
Thou dost not know, poor simple soul, God wot
thou dost not know
From whom thou flee'st. For if thou knew, thou
would'st not flee me so.
In Delphos is my chief abode; my temples also
stand
At Claros and at Patara within the Lycian land,
And in the Isle of Tenedos the people honour me.

630

The king of gods himself is known my father for
to be.

By me is known that was, that is and that that
shall ensue.

By me men learn to sundry tunes to frame sweet
ditties true.

In shooting have I steadfast hand; but surer hand
had he

That made this wound within my heart that
heretofore was free.

Of physic and of surgery I found the arts for
need;

The power of every herb and plant doth of my
gift proceed.

Now woe is me that ne'er an herb can heal the
hurt of love

And that the arts that others help their lord doth
helpless prove!

As Phoebus would have spoken more, away
Peneis stale

640

With fearful steps and left him in the midst of
all his tale.

And as she ran, the meeting winds her garments
backward blew

So that her naked skin appeared behind her as
she flew;

Her goodly yellow golden hair that hangèd loose
and slack

With every puff of air did wave and toss behind
her back.

Her running made her seem more fair. The
youthful god therefore

Could not abide to waste his words in dalliance
anmore

But, as his love advisèd him, he gan to mend his
pace

And with the better foot before the fleeing
nymph to chase.

And even as, when the greedy grew'nd doth
course the silly hare

650

Amidst the plain and champaign field without all
covert bare,

Both twain of them do strain themselves and lay
on footmanship

Who may best run with all his force the t'other to
outstrip,

The t'one for safety of his life, the t'other for his
prey

(The grew'nd, aye pressed with open mouth to
bear the hare away,

Thrusts forth his snout and girdeth out and at
her loins doth snatch

As though he would at every stride between his
teeth her latch;

Again, in doubt of being caught, the hare aye
shrinking slips

Upon the sudden from his jaws and from
between his lips);

So fared Apollo and the maid. Hope made Apollo
swift,

660

And fear did make the maiden fleet, devising
how to shift.

Howbeit, he that did pursue of both the swifter
went,

As furthered by the feathered wings that Cupid
 had him lent;
So that he would not let her rest, but pressèd at
 her heel
So near that through her scattered hair she might
 his breathing feel.
But when she saw her breath was gone and
 strength began to fail,
The colour faded in her cheeks and, ginning for
 to quail,
She lookèd to Peneus' stream and said, 'Now,
 father dear,
And if you streams have power of gods, then
 help your daughter here.
O let the earth devour me quick on which I seem
 too fair,
Or else this shape which is my harm by changing
 straight appar.''
This piteous prayer scarce said, her sinews
 waxèd stark,
And therewithal about her breast did grow a
 tender bark.
Her hair was turnèd into leaves, her arms in
 boughs did grow;
Her feet that were erewhile so swift now rooted
 were as slow.
Her crown became the top; and thus of that she
 erst had been
Remainèd nothing in the world but beauty fresh
 and green.
Which when that Phoebus did behold, affection
 did so move,

The tree to which his love was turned he could
no less but love.

And as he softly laid his hand upon the tender
plant,

680

Within the bark new overgrown he felt her heart
yet pant.

And, in his arms embracing fast her boughs and
branches lithe,

He proffered kisses to the tree; the tree did from
him writhe.

‘Well,’ quoth Apollo, ‘though my fere and spouse
thou cannot be,

Assurèdly from this time forth yet shalt thou be
my tree.

Thou shalt adorn my golden locks and eke my
pleasant harp;

Thou shalt adorn my quiver full of shafts and
arrows sharp.

Thou shalt adorn the valiant knights and royal
emperors

When for their noble feats of arms like mighty
conquerors

Triumphantly with stately pomp up to the
Capitol

690

They shall ascend with solemn train that do their
deeds extol.

Before Augustus’ palace door full duly shalt thou
ward,

The oak amid the palace yard aye faithfully to
guard.

And as my head is never pulled nor never more
without

A seemly bush of youthful hair that spreadeth
round about,

Even so this honour give I thee: continually to
have

Thy branches clad from time to time with leaves
both fresh and brave.'

Now when that Paean of this talk had fully made
an end,

The laurel to his just request did seem to
condescend

By bowing of her new-made boughs and tender
branches down

700

And wagging of her seemly top as if it were her
crown.

There is a land in Thessaly, enclosed on every
side

The

With woody hills, that Tempe hight, through
mid whereof doth glide

transformation

of Io

Peneus gushing full of froth from foot of Pindus
high;

Which with his headlong falling down doth cast
up violently

A misty stream like flakes of smoke, besprinkling
all about

The tops of trees on either side, and makes a
roaring-out

That may be heard a great way off. This is the
fixèd seat,

This is the house and dwelling-place and
chamber of the great

710

And mighty river. Here he sits in court of pebble
stone

And ministers justice to the waves and to the
nymphs each one

That in the brooks and waters dwell. Now hither
did resort

(Not knowing if they might rejoice and unto
mirth exhort

Or comfort him) his country brooks: Spercheus,
well-beseen

With sedgy head and shady banks of poplars
fresh and green;

Enipeus, restless, swift and quick; old father
Apidane;

Amphrysus with his gentle stream; and Aeas clad
with cane;

With divers other rivers mo which, having run
their race,

Into the sea their weary waves do lead with
restless pace.

From hence the careful Inachus absents himself
alone,

720

Who in a corner of his cave with doleful tears
and moan

Augments the waters of his stream, bewailing
piteously

His daughter Io, lately lost. He knew not
certainly

And if she were alive or dead. But for he had her
sought

And could not find her anywhere, assuredly he
thought

She did not live above the mould ne drew the
vital breath,

Misgiving worser in his mind, if aught be worse
than death.

It fortun'd on a certain day that Jove espied
this maid

Come running from her father's stream alone;
to whom he said,

'O damsel worthy Jove himself, like one day for
to make

730

Some happy person whom thou list unto thy bed
to take,

I pray thee, let us shroud ourselves in shadow
here together –

Of this or that' (he pointed both) 'it makes no
matter whether –

Until the hottest of the day and noon be
overpast.

And if for fear of savage beasts perchance thou
be aghast

To wander in the woods alone, thou shalt not
need to fear;

A god shall be thy guide to save thee harmless
everywhere,

And not a god of meaner sort, but even the same
that hath

The heavenly sceptre in his hand, who in my
dreadful wrath

Do dart down thunder wanderingly. And
therefore make no haste

740

To run away.' She ran apace and had already
passed

The fen of Lerna and the field of Lyrcey set with
trees

When Jove, intending now in vain no lenger
time to leese,

Upon the country all about did bring a foggy
mist

And caught the maiden whom, poor fool, he usèd
as he list.

Queen Juno, looking down that while upon
the open field,

When in so fair a day such mists and darkness
she beheld,

Did marvel much, for well she knew those mists
ascended not

From any river, moorish ground or other dankish
plot.

She looked about her for her Jove, as one that
was acquainted

750

With such escapes and with the deed had often
him attained.

Whom when she found not in the heaven, 'Unless
I guess amiss,

Some wrong against me', quoth she, 'now my
husband working is.'

And with that word she left the heaven and
down to earth she came,

Commanding all the mists away. But Jove
foresees the same,

And to a cow as white as milk his leman he
conveys.

She was a goodly heifer, sure; and Juno did her
praise

760

Although, God wot, she thought it not, and
curiously she sought
Where she was bred, whose cow she was, who
had her thither brought –
As though she had not known the truth. Her
husband by and by,
Because she should not search too near, devised
a cleanly lie
And told her that the cow was bred even now
out of the ground.
Then Juno, who her husband's shift at fingers'
ends had found,
Desired to have the cow of gift. What should he
do as tho?
Great cruelty it were to yield his lover to her
foe;
And not to give would breed mistrust. As fast as
shame provoked,
So fast again at other side his love his mind
revoked,
So much that love was at the point to put all
shame to flight,
But that he feared if he should deny a gift so
light
As was a cow to her that was his sister and his
wife

770

Might make her think it was no cow and breed
perchance some strife.
Now when that Juno had by gift her
husband's leman got,
Yet altogether out of fear and careless was
she not.

She had him in a jealousy and thoughtful was
she still
For doubt he should invent some means to steal
her from her, till
To Argus, old Arestor's son, she put her for to
keep.
This Argus had an hundred eyes, of which by
turn did sleep
Always a couple, and the rest did duly watch and
ward
And of the charge they took in hand had ever
good regard.
What way so ever Argus stood, with face, with
back or side
To Io ward, before his eyes did Io still abide.
All day he let her graze abroad; the sun once
underground,
He shut her up and by the neck with withen
with her bound.
With crops of trees and bitter weeds now was she
daily fed;
And in the stead of costly couch and good soft
featherbed
She sat a-nights upon the ground, and on such
ground whereas
Was not sometime so much as grass; and
oftentimes she was
Compelled to drink of muddy pits. And when she
did devise
To Argus for to lift her hands in meek and
humble wise,

790

She saw she had no hands at all; and when she
did assay

To make complaint, she lowèd out, which did
her so affray

That oft she started at the noise and would have
run away.

Unto her father Inach's banks she also did resort,
Where many a time and oft before she had been
wont to sport.

Now, when she looked in the stream and saw her
horned head,

She was aghast and from herself would all in
haste have fled.

The nymphs her sisters knew her not, nor yet her
own dear father;

Yet followed she both him and them and suffered
them the rather

To touch and stroke her where they list, as one
that pressèd still

To set herself to wonder at and gaze upon their
fill.

800

The good old Inach pulls up grass and to her
straight it bears;

She, as she kissed and licked his hands, did shed
forth dreary tears.

And, had she had her speech at will to utter forth
her thought,

She would have told her name and chance and
him of help besought.

But for because she could not speak, she printed
in the sand

Two letters with her foot whereby was given to
understand

The sorrowful changing of her shape. Which
seen, straight cried out
Her father Inach, 'Woe is me!' And clasping her
about
Her white and seemly heifer's neck and crystal
horns both twain,
He shriekèd out full piteously, 'Now woe is me!'
again.

810

'Alas, art thou my daughter dear, whom through
the world I sought
And could not find? And now by chance art to
my presence brought?
My sorrow, certes, lesser far a thousand fold had
been
If never had I seen thee more than thus to have
thee seen.
Thou stand'st as dumb and to my words no
answer can thou give,
But from the bottom of thy heart full sorry sighs
dost drive
As tokens of thine inward grief and dolefully
dost moo
Unto my talk – the only thing left in thy power
to do.
But I, mistrusting nothing less than this so great
mischance,
By some great marriage earnestly did seek thee
to advance
In hope some issue to have seen between my son
and thee.
But now thou must a husband have among the
herds, I see,

820

And eke thine issue must be such as other cattles
be.

O that I were a mortal wight, as other creatures
are,

For then might death in length of time quite rid
me of this care!

But now, because I am a god and fate doth death
deny,

There is no help but that my grief must last
eternally.'

As Inach made this piteous moan, quick-
sighted Argus drave

His daughter into further fields to which he
could not have

Access, and he himself aloof did get him to a hill
From whence he, sitting at his ease, viewed
every way at will.

Now could no lenger Jove abide his lover so
forlorn,

And thereupon he called his son that Maia had
him borne,

Commanding Argus should be killed. He made
no long abode,

But tied his feathers to his feet and took his
charmed rod,

With which he bringeth things asleep and
fetcheth souls from hell,

And put his hat upon his head. And when that all
was well,

He leapèd from his father's towers and down to
earth he flew,

And there both hat and wings also he lightly
from him threw,

840

Retaining nothing but his staff, the which he
closely held

Between his elbow and his side, and through the
common field

Went plodding like some good plain soul that
had some flock to feed;

And as he went, he piped still upon an oaten
reed.

Queen Juno's herdman, far in love with this
strange melody,

Bespake him thus: 'Good fellow mine, I pray thee
heartily,

Come sit down by me on this hill, for better feed
I know

Thou shalt not find in all these fields, and (as the
thing doth show)

It is a cool and shadowy plot, for shepherds very
fit.'

Down by his elbow by and by did Atlas' nephew
sit.

And, for to pass the time withal for seeming
overlong,

850

He held him talk of this and that; and now and
then among

He played upon his merry pipe to cause his
watching eyes

To fall asleep. Poor Argus did the best he could
devise

To overcome the pleasant naps; and though that
some did sleep,

Yet of his eyes the greater part he made their
watch to keep.

And after other talk, he asked (for lately was it
found)

Who was the founder of that pipe that did so
sweetly sound.

Pan *and* Then said the god, 'There dwelt sometime a
Syrinx nymph of noble fame

Among the hills of Arcady, that Syrinx had to
name.

Of all the nymphs of Nonacris and fairy far and
near

860 In beauty and in personage this lady had no
 peer.

Full often had she given the slip both to the
satyrs quick

And other gods that dwell in woods and in the
forests thick

Or in the fruitful fields abroad. It was her whole
desire

To follow chaste Diana's guise in maidenhead
and attire.

Whom she did counterfeit so nigh that such as
did her see

Might at a blush have taken her Diana for to be,

But that the nymph did in her hand a bow of
cornel hold,

Whereas Diana evermore did bear a bow of gold;

And yet she did deceive folk so. Upon a certain
day

870 God Pan, with garland on his head of pine-tree,
 saw her stray

From Mount Lycaeus all alone and thus to her
did say:

“Unto a god's request, O nymph, vouchsafe thou
to agree,
That doth desire thy wedded spouse and husband
for to be.”

There was yet more behind to tell: as how
that Syrinx fled

Through wayless woods and gave no ear to
that that Pan had said,
Until she to the gentle stream of sandy Ladon
came

Where, for because it was so deep she could not
pass the same,

She piteously to change her shape the
watery nymphs besought;

And how, when Pan between his arms to catch
the nymph had thought,

Instead of her he caught the reeds new grown
upon the brook,

And as he sighed with his breath the reeds he
softly shook

Which made a still and mourning noise, with
strangeness of the which

And sweetness of the feeble sound the god,
delighted much,

Said, ‘Certes, Syrinx, for thy sake it is my full
intent

To make my comfort of these reeds wherein thou
dost lament;’

And how that there of sundry reeds with wax
together knit

He made the pipe which of her name the Greeks
call Syrinx yet.

*The death of
Argus and the
story of Io
concluded*

But as Cyllenius would have told this tale, he
cast his sight

On Argus. And behold, his eyes had bid him
all good-night.

There was not one that did not sleep, and fast he
gan to nod.

Immediately he ceased his talk and with his
charmed rod

So stroked all his heavy eyes that earnestly they
slept.

Then with his woodknife by and by he lightly to
him stepped

And lent him such a perilous blow whereas the
shoulders grew

Unto the neck that straight his head quite from
the body flew.

Then tumbling down the headlong hill his
bloody corse he sent,

That all the way by which he rolled was stained
and besprent.

There li'st thou, Argus, underfoot with all thy
hundred lights,

And all the light is clean extinct that was within
those sights;

One endless night thy hundred eyes hath now
bereft for aye.

Yet would not Juno suffer so her herdsman's eyes
decay,

But in her painted peacock's tail and feathers did
them set,

Where they remain like precious stones and
glaring eyes as yet.

She took his death in great despite and, as
her rage did move,

Determined for to wreak her wrath upon her
husband's love.

Forthwith she cast before her eyes right strange
and ugly sights,

Compelling her to think she saw some fiends or
wicked sprites.

And in her heart such secret pricks and piercing
stings she gave her

As though the world from place to place with
restless sorrow drove her.

Thou, Nilus, wert assigned to stay her pains and
travels past;

To which as soon as Io came with much ado at
last,

With weary knuckles on thy brim she kneelèd
sadly down

And, stretching forth her fair long neck and
crystal horned crown,

Such kind of countenance as she had she lifted to
the sky

And there with sighing sobs and tears and lowing
dolefully

Did seem to make her moan to Jove, desiring
him to make

Some end of those her troublous storms endured
for his sake.

He took his wife about the neck and, sweetly
kissing, prayed

That Io's penance yet at length might by her
grant be stayed.

'Thou shalt not need to fear', quoth he, 'that ever
she shall grieve thee

From this day forth. And in this case the better to
believe me,

The Stygian waters of my words impartial
witness been.'

As soon as Juno was appeased, immediately
was seen

That Io took her native shape in which she
first was born

And eke became the selfsame thing the which
she was befor.

For by and by she cast away her rough and hairy
hide,

Instead whereof a soft smooth skin with tender
flesh did bide.

Her horns sank down; her eyes and mouth were
brought in lesser room;

Her hands, her shoulders and her arms in place
again did come.

Her cloven clees to fingers five again reduced
were,

On which the nails like polished gems did shine
full bright and clear.

In fine, no likeness of a cow save whiteness did
remain,

So pure and perfect as no snow was able it to
stain.

She vaunted herself upon her feet, which then
was brought to two;

And though she gladly would have spoke, yet
durst she not so do

Without good heed, for fear she should have
lowèd like a cow.

And therefore softly with herself she gan to
practise how

Distinctly to pronounce her words that
intermitted were.

Now as a goddess is she had in honour
everywhere

940

Among the folk that dwell by Nile yclad in linen
weed.

Of her in time came Epaphus, begotten of the
seed

Of mighty Jove. This noble imp now jointly with
his mother

Through all the cities of that land have temples,
t'one with t'other.

*Epaphus and
Phaëton*

There was his match in heart and years, the
lusty Phaëton,

A stalworth stripling strong and stout, the
golden Phoebus' son.

Whom, making proud and stately vaunts of his so
noble race

And unto him in that respect in nothing giving
place,

The son of Io could not bear, but said unto him
thus:

'No marvel though thou be so proud and full of
words, iwis;

950

For every fond and trifling tale the which thy
mother makes

Thy giddy wit and hare-brained head forthwith
for gospel takes.

Well, vaunt thyself of Phoebus still; for when the
truth is seen,

Thou shalt perceive that father's name a forged
thing to been.'

At this reproach did Phaeton wax as red as any
fire;

Howbeit for the present time did shame repress
his ire.

Unto his mother Clymen straight he goeth to
detect

The spiteful words that Epaphus against him did
object.

'Yea, mother,' quoth he, 'and which ought your
greater grief to be,

I, who at other times of talk was wont to be so
free

And stout, had ne'er a word to say; I was
ashamed to take

So foul a foil – the more because I could none
answer make.

But if I be of heavenly race exacted, as ye say,

Then show some token of that high and noble
birth, I pray,

And vouch me for to be of heaven.' With that he
gently cast

His arms about his mother's neck and, clasping
her full fast,

Besought her, as she loved his life and as she
loved the life

Of Merops and had kept herself as undefilèd wife

And as she wishèd wealthily his sisters to
bestow,

She would some token give whereby his rightful
sire to know.

970

It is a doubtful matter whether Clymen, movèd
more

With this her Phaeton's earnest suit exacting it so
sore

Or with the slander of the bruit laid to her
charge before,

Did hold up both her hands to heaven and,
looking on the sun,

‘My right dear child, I safely swear’, quoth she to
Phaëton,

‘That of this star, the which so bright doth glister
in thine eye,

Of this same sun that cheers the world with light
indifferently

Wert thou begot. And if I feign, then with my
heart I pray

That never may I see him more unto my dying
day.

But if thou have so great desire thy father for to
know,

980

Thou shalt not need in that behalf much labour
to bestow.

The place from whence he doth arise adjoineth
to our land;

And if thou think thy heart will serve, then go
and understand

The truth of him.’ When Phaeton heard his
mother saying so,

He gan to leap and skip for joy. He fed his fancy
tho
Upon the heaven and heavenly things; and so
with willing mind
From Ethiope first, his native home, and
afterward through Inde,
Set underneath the morning star, he went so long
till as
He found me where his father's house and daily
rising was.

FINIS PRIMI LIBRI.

The Second Book of Ovid's Metamorphoses

Phaëton *and* The princely palace of the sun stood gorgeous to
Apollo behold

On stately pillars builded high of yellow
burnished gold

Beset with sparkling carbuncles that like to fire
did shine.

The roof was framèd curiously of ivory pure and
fine;

The two door-leaves of silver clear a radiant light
did cast.

But yet the cunning workmanship of things
therein far passed

The stuff whereof the doors were made. For
there a perfect plat

Had Vulcan drawn of all the world: both of the
surges that

Embrace the earth with winding waves, and of
the steadfast ground,

10 And of the heaven itself also that both encloseth
round.

And first and foremost in the sea the gods
thereof did stand:

Loud sounding Triton with his shirl and writhen
trump in hand;

Unstable Proteu, changing aye his figure and his
hue

From shape to shape a thousand sithes, as list
him to renew;
Aegaeon, leaning boistrously on backs of mighty
whales;
And Doris with her daughters all, of which some
cut the wales
With splayèd arms, some sat on rocks and dried
their goodly hair,
And some did ride upon the backs of fishes here
and there.
Not one in all points fully like another could ye
see,
Nor very far unlike, but such as sisters ought to
be.
The earth had towns, men, beasts and woods
with sundry trees and rods,
And running rivers with their nymphs and other
country gods.
Directly over all these same the plat of heaven
was pight
Upon the two door-leaves: the signs of all the
zodiac bright,
Indifferently six on the left and six upon the
right.
When Clymen's son had climbèd up at length
with weary pace
And set his foot within his doubted father's
dwelling place,
Immediately he pressed forth to put himself in
sight
And stood aloof; for near at hand he could not
bide the light.

30

In purple robe and royal throne of emeralds fresh
and green

Did Phoebus sit, and on each hand stood waiting
well beseen

Days, months, years, ages, seasons, times and eke
the equal hours.

There stood the Springtime with a crown of fresh
and fragrant flowers;

There waited Summer, naked stark all save a
wheaten hat;

And Autumn smeared with treading grapes late
at the pressing fat;

And lastly, quaking for the cold, stood Winter all
forlorn

With rugged head as white as dove and garments
all to torn,

Forladen with the icicles that dangled up and
down

Upon his grey and hoary beard and snowy frozen
crown.

40

The sun, thus sitting in the midst, did cast his
piercing eye

(With which full lightly when he list he all things
doth espy)

Upon his child that stood aloof, aghast and
trembling sore

At sight of such unwonted things, and thus
bespake him there:

‘O noble imp, O Phaëton, which art not such, I
see,

Of whom thy father should have cause ashamed
for to be,

Why hast thou travelled to my court? What is
thy will with me?’

Then answered he, ‘Of all the world O only
perfect light,

O father Phoebus – if I may usurp that name of
right

And that my mother for to save herself from
worldly shame

50

Hide not her fault with false pretence and colour
of thy name –

Some sign apparent grant whereby I may be
known thy son

And let me hang no more in doubt.’ He had no
sooner done

But that his father, putting off the bright and
fiery beams

That glistered round about his head like clear
and golden streams,

Commanded him to draw him near and, him
embracing, said,

‘To take me for thy rightful sire thou need not be
afraid;

Thy mother Clymen of a truth from falsehood
standeth free.

And for to put thee out of doubt, ask what thou
wilt of me

And I will give thee thy desire. The lake whereby
of old

60

We gods do swear (the which mine eyes did
never yet behold)

Phaëton begs
Apollo's

Bear witness with thee of my grant.’ He scarce
this tale had told

chariot

But that the foolish Phaëton straight for a day
did crave
The guiding of his winged steeds and chariot for
to have.
Then did his father by and by forthink him of his
oath
And, shaking twenty times his head as one that
was full wroth,
Bespake him thus: 'Thy words have made me
rashly to consent
To that which shortly both of us, I fear me, shall
repent.
O, that I might retract my grant! My son, I do
protest
I would deny thee nothing else save this thy fond
request.
I may dissuade. There lies herein more peril than
thou ween;
The things the which thou dost desire of great
importance been,
More than thy weakness well can wield, a charge
(as well appears)
Of greater weight than may agree with these thy
tender years.
Thy state is mortal, weak and frail; the thing
thou dost desire
Is such whereto no mortal man is able to aspire.
Yea, foolish boy, thou dost desire – and all for
want of wit –
A greater charge than any god could ever have as
yet.

80

For were there any of them all so overseen and
blind

To take upon him this my charge, full quickly
should he find

That none but I could sit upon the fiery axle-tree.

No, not even he that rules this waste and endless
space we see,

Not he that darts with dreadful hand the thunder
from the sky

Shall drive this chair. And yet what thing in all
the world, perdie,

Is able to compare with Jove? Now first the
morning way

Lies steep upright, so that the steeds in coolest of
the day

And being fresh have much ado to climb against
the hill.

Amidst the heaven the ghastly height
augmenteth terror still;

My heart doth wax as cold as ice full many a
time and oft

For fear to see the sea and land from that same
place aloft.

90

The evening way doth fall plump down,
requiring strength to guide,

That Tethys, who doth harbour me within her
surges wide,

Doth stand in fear lest from the heaven I
headlong down should slide.

Besides all this, the heaven aye swims and
wheels about full swift

And with his rolling drives the stars their proper
course to shift.
Yet do I keep my native course against this brunt
so stout,
Not giving place as others do, but boldly bearing
out
The force and swiftness of that heaven that
whirleth so about.
Admit thou had my wingèd steeds and chariot in
thine hand;
What could'st thou do? Dost think thyself well
able to withstand
The swiftness of the whirled pools, but that their
brunt and sway
(Yea, do the best and worst thou can) shall bear
thee quite away?
Perchance thou dost imagine there some towns
of gods to find
With groves and temples riched with gifts, as is
among mankind.
Thou art deceived utterly; thou shalt not find it
so.
By blind by-ways and ugly shapes of monsters
must thou go.
And though thou knew the way so well as that
thou could not stray,
Between the dreadful Bull's sharp horns yet must
thou make thy way;
Against the cruel bow the which th'Aemonian
Archer draws;
Against the ramping Lion armed with greedy
teeth and paws;

Against the Scorpion stretching far his fell and
venomed claws;

And eke the Crab that casteth forth his crooked
clees awry,

Not in such sort as th'other doth, and yet as
dreadfully.

Again, thou neither hast the power nor yet the
skill, I know,

My lusty coursers for to guide, that from their
nostrils throw

And from their mouths the fiery breath that
breedeth in their breast.

For scarcely will they suffer me, who knows their
nature best,

When that their cruel courages begin to catch a
heat;

That hardly should I deal with them, but that I
know the feat.

But lest my gift should to thy grief and utter peril
tend,

My son, beware and (while thou may'st) thy fond
request amend.

Because thou would be known to be my child,
thou seem'st to crave

A certain sign. What surer sign, I pray thee, canst
thou have

Than this my fear so fatherly the which I have of
thee,

Which proveth me most certainly thy father for
to be?

Behold and mark my countenance. O, would to
God thy sight

130

Could pierce within my woeful breast, to see the
heavy plight
And heaps of cares within my heart. Look
through the world so round;
Of all the wealth and goods therein, if aught
there may be found
In heaven or earth or in the sea, ask what thou
likest best
And sure it shall not be denied. This only one
request
That thou hast made I heartily beseech thee to
relent,
Which, for to term the thing aright, is even a
punishment
And not an honour as thou think'st. My Phaeton,
thou dost crave
Instead of honour even a scourge and
punishment for to have.
Thou fondling, thou, what dost thou mean with
fawning arms about
My neck thus flatteringly to hang? Thou needest
not to doubt.
I have already sworn by Styx: ask what thou wilt
of me
And thou shalt have. Yet let thy next wish
somewhat wiser be.'

140

Thus ended his advertisement. And yet the
wilful lad
Withstood his counsel, urging still the
promise that he had,
Desiring for to have the chair as if he had
been mad.

His father, having made delay as long as he
could shift,
Did lead him where his chariot stood which was
of Vulcan's gift.
The axle-tree was massy gold; the buck was
massy gold;
The utmost fellies of the wheels, and where the
tree was rolled.
The spokes were all of silver bright. The
chrysolites and gems
That stood upon the collars, trace and hounes in
their hems
Did cast a sheer and glimmering light as Phoebus
shone thereon.
Now while the lusty Phaëton stood gazing
hereupon
And wondered at the workmanship of
everything, behold,
The early Morning in the east began me to
unfold
Her purple gates and showed her house
bedecked with roses red.
The twinkling stars withdrew which by the
morning star are led,
Who, as the captain of that host that hath no
peer or match,
Doth leave his standing last of all within that
heavenly watch.
Now when his father saw the world thus glister
red and trim
And that his waning sister's horns began to
waxen dim,

He bade the feather-footed hours go harness in
his horse.

The goddesses with might and main themselves
thereto enforce.

160

His fiery-foaming steeds full fed with juice of
ambrosy

They take from manger trimly dight and to their
heads do tie

Strong reinèd bits and to the chariot do them
well appoint.

Then Phoebus did with heavenly salve his
Phaeton's head anoint,

That scorching fire could nothing hurt; which
done, upon his hair

He put the fresh and golden rays himself was
wont to wear.

And then, as one whose heart misgave the
sorrows drawing fast,

With sorry sighs he thus bespake his reckless son
at last:

‘And if thou canst, at least yet this thy father's
lore obey:

Son, spare the whip and rein them hard; they
run so swift away

170

As that thou shalt have much ado their
fleeing course to stay.

Directly through the zones all five beware thou
do not ride.

A broad by-way cut out askew that bendeth on
the side

Contained within the bonds of three the midmost
zones doth lie,

Which from the grisly northern Bear and
southern pole doth fly;

Keep on this way. My chariot rakes thou plainly
shalt espy.

And to th'intent that heaven and earth may well
the heat endure,

Drive neither overhigh nor yet too low. For be
thou sure,

And if thou mount above thy bounds, the stars
thou burnest clean.

Again, beneath, thou burn'st the earth. Most
safety is the mean.

180

And lest perchance thou overmuch the right
hand way should take

And so misfortune should thee drive upon the
writhen Snake,

Or else by taking overmuch upon the lefter hand
Unto the Altar thou be driven that doth against it
stand,

Indifferently between them both I wish thee for
to ride.

The rest I put to Fortune's will, who be thy
friendly guide

And better for thee than thyself as in this case
provide!

Whiles that I prattle here with thee, behold, the
dankish night

Beyond all Spain, her utmost bound, is passèd
out of sight.

We may no lenger tarriance make; my wonted
light is called;

190

The morning with her count'nance clear the
darkness hath appalled.

Take rein in hand – or if thy mind by counsel
altered be,
Refuse to meddle with my wain and, while thou
yet art free
And dost at ease within my house in safeguard
well remain,
Of this thine unadvised wish not feeling yet the
pain,
Let me alone with giving still the world his
wonted light
And thou thereof as heretofore enjoy the
harmless sight.'

*Phaëton drives
Apollo's
chariot*

Thus much in vain. For Phaëton, both young
in years and wit,

Into the chariot lightly leapt and, vaunting
him in it,

Was not a little proud that he the bridle gotten
had.

200

He thanked his father, whom it grieved to see his
child so mad.

While Phoebus and his reckless son were
intertalking this,

Eoüs, Aethon, Phlegon and the fiery Pyrois,

The restless horses of the sun, began to neigh so
high

With flaming breath that all the heaven might
hear them perfectly.

And with their hoofs they mainly beat upon the
latticed grate,

The which when Tethys (knowing nought of this
her cousin's fate)

210

Had put aside and given the steeds the free and
open scope

Of all the compass of the sky within the heavenly
cope,

They girded forth and, cutting through the
clouds that let their race,

With splayèd wings they overflow the eastern
wind apace.

The burden was so light as that the jennets felt it
not;

The wonted weight was from the wain, the
which they well did wot.

For like as ships amidst the seas that scant of
ballast have

Do reel and totter with the wind and yield to
every wave,

Even so the wain for want of weight it erst was
wont to bear

Did hoise aloft and scale and reel, as though it
empty were.

Which when the cartware did perceive, they left
the beaten way

And, taking bridle in the teeth, began to run
astray.

The rider was so sore aghast he knew no use of
rein

220

Nor yet his way; and though he had, yet had it
been in vain

Because he wanted power to rule the horses and
the wain.

Then first did sweat cold Charles his wain
through force of Phoebus' rays

And in the sea forbidden him to dive in vain
assays.
The Serpent at the frozen pole, both cold and
slow by kind,
Through heat waxed wroth and stirred about a
cooler place to find.
And thou, Boötes, though thou be but slow of
footmanship,
Yet wert thou fain (as fame reports) about thy
wain to skip.
Now when unhappy Phaëton from top of all the
sky
Beheld the earth that underneath a great way off
did lie,
He waxèd pale for sudden fear; his joints and
sinews quook;
The greatness of the glistening light his eyesight
from him took.
Now wished he that he never had his father's
horses see;
It irked him that he thus had sought to learn his
pedigree.
It grieved him that he had prevailed in gaining
his request;
To have been counted Merops' son he thought it
now the best.
Thus thinking was he headlong driven, as when a
ship is borne
By blustering winds, her sailcloths rent, her stern
in pieces torn
And tackling brust, the which the pilot, trusting
all to prayer,

Abandons wholly to the sea and fortune of the
air.

240

What should he do? Much of the heaven he
passèd had behind

And more he saw before; both which he
measured in his mind,

Eft looking forward to the west, which to
approach as then

Might not betide, and to the east eft looking back
again.

He wist not what was best to do, his wits were
ravished so.

For neither could he hold the reins, nor yet durst
let them go;

And of his horses' names was none that he
remembered tho.

Strange, uncouth monsters did he see dispersèd
here and there

And dreadful shapes of ugly beasts that in the
welkin were.

There is a certain place in which the hideous
Scorpion throws

250

His arms in compass far abroad, much like a
couple of bows,

With writhen tail and clasping clees, whose
poison limbs do stretch

On every side, that of two signs they full the
room do reach.

Whom when the lad beheld all moist with black
and loathly sweat,

With sharp and needle-pointed sting as though
he seemed to threat,

He was so sore astraught for fear, he let the
bridles slack.

Which when the horses felt lie loose upon their
sweating back,

At rovers straight throughout the air by ways
unknown they ran

Whereas they never came before since that the
world began.

For look what way their lawless rage by chance
and fortune drew,

260

Without controlment or restraint that way they
freely flew.

Among the stars that fixèd are within the
firmament

They snatched the chariot here and there. One
while they coursing went

Upon the top of all the sky; anon again full
round

They troll me down to lower ways and nearer to
the ground

So that the moon was in a maze to see her
brother's wain

Run under hers. The singèd clouds began to
smoke amain.

Each ground, the higher that it was and nearer to
the sky,

The sooner was it set on fire and made therewith
so dry

That everywhere it gan to chink. The meads and
pastures green

270

Did sear away, and with the leaves the trees
were burnèd clean;

*The burning of
the world*

The parched corn did yield wherewith to work
his own decay.

Tush, these are trifles! Mighty towns did
perish that same day

Whose countries with their folk were burnt;
and forests full of wood

Were turned to ashes with the rocks and
mountains where they stood.

Then Athe, Cilician Taure and Tmole and Oeta
flamed high;

And Ide, erst full of flowing springs, was then
made utter dry.

The learned virgins' daily haunt, the sacred
Helicon,

And Thracian Haemus (not as yet surnamed
Oeagrion)

Did smoke both twain. And Etna, hot of nature
aye before,

280

Increased by force of Phoebus' flame, now raged
ten times more.

The forked Parnassus, Eryx, Cynth and Othrys
then did swelt,

And all the snow of Rhodope did at that present
melt.

The like outrage Mount Dindymus and Mime and
Mycale felt.

Cithaeron, born to sacred use, with Oss and
Pindus high

And Olymp, greater than them both, did burn
excessively.

The passing cold that Scythy had defended not
the same,

But that the barren Caucasus was partner of this
flame.

And so were eke the airy Alps and Appenine
beside,

For all the clouds continually their snowy tops
do hide.

290

Then wheresoever Phaëton did chance to cast his
view,

The world was all on flaming fire. The breath the
which he drew

Came smoking from his scalding mouth as from a
seething pot;

His chariot also under him began to wax red-hot.
He could no lenger dure the sparks and cinder
flying out.

Again, the culm and smouldering smoke did
wrap him round about,

The pitchy darkness of the which so wholly had
him hent

As that he wist not where he was nor yet which
way he went.

The winged horses forcibly did draw him where
they would.

The Ethiopians at that time (as men for truth
uphold),

300

The blood by force of that same heat drawn to
the outer part

And there adust from that time forth, became so
black and swart.

The moisture was so drièd up in Liby land that
time

That altogether dry and scorched continueth yet
that clime.

The nymphs with hair about their ears bewailed
their springs and lakes.

Boeotia for her Dirce's loss great lamentation
makes;

For Amymone Argos wept; and Corinth for the
spring

Pyrene, at whose sacred stream the Muses used
to sing.

The rivers further from the place were not in
better case.

For Tanais in his deepest stream did boil and
steam apace;

Old Peneu and Caïcus, of the country Teuthrany,

And swift Ismenus in their banks by like
misfortune fry.

Then burned the Psophian Erymanth and (which
should burn again)

The Trojan Xanthus and Lycormas with his
yellow vein.

Maeander, playing in his banks aye winding to
and fro,

Migdonian Melas, with his waves as black as any
sloe,

Eurotas, running by the foot of Tenare, boiled
tho.

Then sod Euphrates, cutting through the midst of
Babylon;

Then sod Orontes and the Scythian swift
Thermodoon.

Then Ganges, Colchian Phasis and the noble
Ister,

320

Alpheus' and Sperchin's banks with flaming fire
did glister.

The gold that Tagus' stream did bear did in the
channel melt;

Amid Caister of this fire the raging heat was felt
Among the choirs of singing swans that with
their pleasant lay

Along the banks of Lydian brakes from place to
place did stray.

And Nile for fear did run away into the furthest
clime

Of all the world and hid his head, which to this
present time

Is yet unfound; his mouths all seven clean void of
water been

Like seven great valleys where, save dust, could
nothing else be seen.

By like misfortune Hebrus dried and Strymon,
both of Thrace;

330

The western rivers Rhine and Rhone and Po were
in like case,

And Tiber, unto whom the gods a faithful
promise gave

Of all the world the monarchy and sovereign
state to have.

The ground did cranny everywhere, and light did
pierce to hell

And made afraid the king and queen that in that
realm do dwell.

The sea did shrink, and whereas waves did late
before remain

Became a champaign field of dust and even a
sandy plain.

340

The hills, erst hid far under waves, like islands
did appear

So that the scattered Cyclads for the time
augmented were.

The fishes drew them to the deeps; the dolphins
durst not play

Above the water as before; the seals and porpoise
lay

With bellies upward on the waves stark dead;
and fame doth go

That Nereus with his wife and daughters all were
fain as tho

To dive within the scalding waves. Thrice
Neptune did advance

His arms above the scalding sea with sturdy
countenance

And thrice for hotness of the air was fain himself
to hide.

But yet the earth, the nurse of things, enclosed
on every side

Between the waters of the sea and springs that
now had hidden

Themselves within their mother's womb, for all
the pains abidden

Up to the neck put forth her head and, casting up
her hand

350

Between her forehead and the sun as panting she
did stand,

With dreadful quaking all that was she fearfully
did shake

And, shrinking somewhat lower down, with
sacred voice thus spake:

*The
plea*

earth's

'O king of gods, and if this be thy will and my
desert,

Why dost thou stay with deadly dint thy
thunder down to dart?

And if that needs I perish must through force of
fiery flame,

Let thy celestial fire, O God, I pray thee, do the
same.

A comfort shall it be to have thee author of my
death.

I scarce have power to speak these words' – the
smoke had stopped her breath –

'Behold my singèd hair; behold my dim and
blearèd eye;

360

See how about my scorched face the scalding
embers fly.

Is this the guerdon wherewithal ye quite my
fruitfulness?

Is this the honour that ye gave me for my
plenteousness

And duty done with true intent? For suffering of
the plough

To draw deep wounds upon my back and rakes
to rend me through?

For that I over all the year continually am
wrought?

For giving fodder to the beasts and cattle, all for
nought?

For yielding corn and other food wherewith to
keep mankind?

And that to honour you withal sweet
frankincense I find?

370

But put the case that my desert destruction duly
crave;

What hath thy brother, what the seas deservèd
for to have?

Why do the seas, his lotted part, thus ebb and
fall so low,

Withdrawing from thy sky to which it ought
most near to grow?

But if thou neither dost regard thy brother,
neither me,

At least have mercy on thy heaven. Look round
about and see

How both the poles begin to smoke; which if the
fire appal,

To utter ruin (be thou sure) thy palace needs
must fall.

Behold how Atlas gins to faint; his shoulders,
though full strong,

Uneath are able to uphold the sparkling ax-tree
long.

If sea and land do go to wreck and heaven itself
do burn,

380

To old confusèd Chaos then of force we must
return.

Put to thy helping hand therefore to save the
little left,

If aught remain, before that all be quite and
clean bereft.'

*The death of
Phaëton*

When ended was this piteous plaint, the earth
did hold her peace;

She could no longer dure the heat, but was
compelled to cease.

Into her bosom by and by she shrunk her singèd
head

More nearer to the Stygian caves arid ghosts of
persons dead.

The sire of heaven, protesting all the gods – and
him also

That lent the chariot to his child – that all of
force must go

To havoc if he helpèd not, went to the highest
part

390

And top of all the heaven from whence his
custom was to dart

His thunder and his lightning down. But neither
did remain

A cloud wherewith to shade the earth, nor yet a
shower of rain.

Then with a dreadful thunderclap up to his ear
he bent

His fist and at the waggoner a flash of lightning
sent

Which strake his body from the life and threw it
over wheel;

And so with fire he quenched fire. The steeds did
also reel

Upon their knees and, starting up, sprang
violently, one here

And there another, that they brast in pieces all
their gear.

They threw the collars from their necks and,
breaking quite asunder,

400

The trace and harness flang away. Here lay the
bridles; yonder

The ax-tree pluckèd from the naves; and in
another place
The shivered spokes of broken wheels. And so at
every pace
The pieces of the chariot torn lay strewèd here
and there.
But Phaeton, fire yet blasting still among his
yellow hair,
Shot headlong down and glid along the region of
the air
Like to a star in winter nights (the weather clear
and fair)
Which, though it do not fall indeed, yet falleth to
our sight;
Whom, almost in another world and from his
country quite,
The river Padus did receive and quenched his
burning head.
The waternymphs of Italy did take his carcass
dead
And buried it, yet smoking still with Jove's three-
forkèd flame,
And wrote this epitaph in the stone that lay upon
the same:
*Here lies the lusty Phaeton, which took in hand to
guide
His father's chariot; from the which although he
chanced to slide,
Yet that he gave a proud attempt it cannot be
denied.*

*The
transformation*

With ruthful cheer and heavy heart his father
made great moan

*of Phaëton's
sisters*

And would not show himself abroad, but
mourned at home alone.
And if it be to be believed, as bruited is by fame,
A day did pass without the sun. The brightness of
the flame
420 Gave light; and so unto some kind of use that
mischief came.
But Clymen, having spoke as much as mothers
usually
Are wonted in such wretched case
discomfortably
And half beside herself for woe, with torn and
scratched breast,
Searched through the universal world from east
to furthest west,
First seeking for her son's dead corse and after
for his bones.
She found them by a foreign stream, entumbled
under stones.
There fell she grovelling on his grave and,
reading there his name,
Shed tears thereon and laid her breast all bare
upon the same.
The daughters also of the sun, no less than did
their mother,
430 Bewailed in vain with floods of tears the fortune
of their brother
And, beating piteously their breasts, incessantly
did call

The buried Phaeton day and night, who heard
 them not at all,
About whose tomb they prostrate lay. Four times
 the moon had filled
The circle of her joinèd horns, and yet the sisters
 held
Their custom of lamenting still (for now
 continual use
Had made it custom). Of the which the eldest,
 Phaëtuse,
About to kneel upon the ground, complained her
 feet were numb;
To whom as fair Lampety was rising for to come,
Her feet were held with sudden roots. The third,
 about to tear
Her ruffled locks, filled both her hands with
 leaves instead of hair.
One wept to see her legs made wood; another
 did repine
To see her arms become long boughs. And,
 shortly to define,
While thus they wondered at themselves, a
 tender bark began
To grow about their thighs and loins, which
 shortly overran
Their bellies, breasts and shoulders eke and
 hands successively,
That nothing save their mouths remained, aye
 calling piteously
Upon the woeful mother's help. What could the
 mother do
But run, now here, now there, as force of nature
 drew her to,

And deal her kisses while she might? She was
 not so content,
 But tare their tender branches down; and from
 the slivers went
 Red drops of blood, as from a wound. The
 daughter that was rent
 Cried, 'Spare us, mother! Spare, I pray! For in the
 shape of tree
 The bodies and the flesh of us, your daughters,
 wounded be.
 And now farewell!' That word once said, the
 bark grew over all.
 Now from these trees flow gummy tears that
 amber men do call,
 Which, hardened with the heat of sun as from
 the boughs they fall,
 The trickling river doth receive and sends as
 things of price
 To deck the dainty dames of Rome and make
 them fine and nice.

The
transformation
of Cygnus

Now present at this monstrous hap was
 Cygnus, Stenel's son,

 Who, being by the mother's side akin to
 Phaëton,
 Was in condition more akin. He, leaving up his
 charge
 (For in the land of Ligury his kingdom stretchèd
 large),
 Went mourning all along the banks and pleasant
 stream of Po
 Among the trees increaséd by the sisters late ago.

Anon his voice became more small and shrill
than for a man;

Grey feathers muffled in his face; his neck in
length began

Far from his shoulders for to stretch; and,
furthermore, there goes

A fine red string across the joints in knitting of
his toes.

With feathers closèd are his sides, and on his
mouth there grew

470

A broad blunt bill; and, finally, was Cygnus
made a new

And uncouth fowl that hight a swan, who neither
to the wind,

The air, nor Jove betakes himself, as one that
bare in mind

The wrongful fire sent late against his cousin
Phaeton.

In lakes and rivers is his joy; the fire he aye doth
shun

And chooseth him the contrary continually to
wone.

*Apollo mourns
for Phaëton*

Forlorn and altogether void of that same
beauty sheen

Was Phaeton's father in that while which erst
had in him been,

Like as he looketh in th'eclipse. He hates the
irksome light,

He hates himself, he hates the day and sets his
whole delight

480

In making sorrow for his son, and in his grief
doth storm

And chafe, denying to the world his duty to
perform.

'My lot', quoth he, 'hath had enough of this
unquiet state

From first beginning of the world. It irks me,
though too late,

Of restless toils and thankless pains. Let whoso
will for me

Go drive the chariot in the which the light
should carried be.

If none dare take the charge in hand and all the
gods persist

As insufficient, he himself go drive it if he list,
That at the least, by venturing our bridles for to
guide,

His lightning, making childless sires, he once
may lay aside.

490 By that time that he hath assayed the unappallèd
force

That doth remain and rest within my fiery-footed
horse,

I trow he shall by trièd proof be able for to tell
How that he did not merit death that could not
rule them well.'

The gods stood. all about the sun thus storming
in his rage,

Beseeching him in humble wise his sorrow to
assuage

And that he would not on the world continual
darkness bring.

Jove eke excused him of the fire the which he
chanced to fling

And with entreatance mingled threats, as did
become a king.

Then Phoebus gathered up his steeds, that yet for
fear did run

500

Like flighted fiends, and in his mood without
respect begun

To beat his whipstock on their pates and lash
them on the sides.

It was no need to bid him chafe; for ever as he
rides

He still upbraids them with his son and lays
them on the hides.

*Jupiter and
Callisto*

And Jove almighty went about the walls of
heaven to try

If aught were perished with the fire, which
when he did espy

Continuing in their former state all strong and
safe and sound,

He went to view the works of men and things
upon the ground.

Yet for his land of Arcady he took most care and
charge.

The springs and streams that durst not run he set
again at large;

510

He clad the earth with grass, the trees with
leaves both fresh and green,

Commanding woods to spring again that erst had
burnèd been.

Now as he often went and came, it was his
chance to light

Upon a nymph of Nonacris, whose form and
beauty bright

Did set his heart on flaming fire. She usèd not to
spin
Nor yet to curl her frizzled hair with bodkin or
with pin;
A garment with a buckled belt fast girded did she
wear,
And in a white and slender caul slight trussed
was her hair.
Sometime a dart, sometime a bow she used for to
bear;
She was a knight of Phoebe's troop. There came
not at the Mount
Of Maenalus of whom Diana made so great
account.
But favour never lasteth long. The sun had gone
that day
A good way past the point of noon when, weary
of her way,
She drew to shadow in a wood that never had
been cut.
Here off her shoulder by and by her quiver did
she put
And hung her bow unbent aside and couched her
on the ground,
Her quiver underneath her head. Whom when
that Jove had found
Alone and weary, 'Sure', he said, 'my wife shall
never know
Of this escape; and if she do, I know the worst, I
trow.
She can but chide. Shall fear of chiding make me
to forslow?'

He counterfeiteth Phoebe straight in count'nance
and array

And says, 'O virgin of my troop, where did'st
thou hunt today?'

The damsel started from the ground and said,
'Hail, goddess dear,

Of greater worth than Jove, I think, though Jove
himself did hear.'

Jove heard her well, and smiled thereat; it made
his heart rejoice

To hear the nymph prefer him thus before
himself in choice.

He fell to kissing, which was such as out of
square might seem

And in such sort as that a maid could nothing
less beseem.

And as she would have told what woods she
ranged had for game,

He took her fast between his arms and, not
without his shame,

Bewrayèd plainly what he was and wherefore
that he came.

The wench against him strove as much as any
woman could.

I would that Juno had it seen, for then I know
thou would

Not take the deed so heinously. With all her
might she strove.

But what poor wench or who alive could
vanquish mighty Jove?

Jove, having sped, flew straight to heaven. She
hateth in her heart

The guiltless fields and wood where Jove had
played that naughty part.

Away she goes in such a grief as that she had
well nigh

Forgot her quiver with her shafts and bow that
hanged by.

Dictynna, guarded with her
train and proud of
killing deer

550

In ranging over Maenalus,
espying, called her near.

The damsel, hearing Phoebe call,
did run away amain;

She feared lest in Phoebe's shape
that Jove had come again.

But when she saw the troop of
nymphs that guarded her
about,

She thought there was no more
deceit and came among the
rout.

O Lord, how hard a matter is't for
guilty hearts to shift

And keep their count'nance! From
the ground her eyes scarce
durst she lift.

She pranks not by her mistress'
side; she presses not to be

The foremost of the company, as
when she erst was free.

She standeth mute, and by
changing of her colour aye

560

The treading of her shoe awry she
plainly doth bewray;

Diana might have found the fault,
but that she was a may.

A thousand tokens did appear
apparent to the eye

By which the nymphs themselves,
they say, her fault did well
espy.

Nine times the moon full to the
world had showed her
hornèd face

When, fainting through her
brother's flames and
hunting in the chase,

She found a cool and shady lawn
through midst whereof she
spied

A shallow brook with trickling
stream on gravel bottom
glide.

And, liking well the pleasant
place, upon the upper brim

She dipped her foot; and finding
there the water cool and
trim,

‘Away’, she said ‘with standers-by,
and let us bathe us here.’

Then Parrhasis cast down her
head with sad and bashful
cheer.

The rest did strip them to their
skins; she only sought delay

Until that, would or would she
not, her clothes were
plucked away.

Then with her naked body straight
her crime was brought to
light,

Which ill, ashamed, as with her
hands she would have hid
from sight,

‘Fie, beast!’ quoth Cynthia, ‘Get
thee hence! Thou shalt not
here defile

The transformation of Callisto This sacred spring.’ And from her
train she did her quite
exile.

The matron of the thundering
Jove had inkling of the fact,
Delaying till convenient time
the punishment to exact.

580

There is no cause of further stay.
To spite her heart withal

Her husband's leman bare a boy
that Arcas men did call.

On whom she casting lowering
look with fell and cruel
mind,

Said, ‘Was there, arrant strumpet
thou, none other shift to
find

But that thou needs must be with
bairn, that all the world
must see

My husband's open shame and
thine in doing wrong to
me?

But neither unto heaven nor hell
this trespass shalt thou
bear;

I will bereave thee of thy shape,
 through pride whereof thou
 were

So hardy to entice my fere.’
 Immediately with that

She raught her by the foretop fast
 and fiercely threw her flat

Against the ground. The wretched
 wench her arms up meekly
 cast;

Her arms began with grisly hair to
 wax all rugged fast.

Her hands gan warp and into paws
 ill-favouredly to grow

And for to serve instead of feet.
 The lips that late ago

Did like the mighty Jove so well
 with side and flaring flaps

Became a wide deformèd mouth.
 And further, lest perhaps

Her prayers and her humble words
 might cause her to relent,

She did bereave her of her speech;
 instead whereof there went

An ireful, hoarse and dreadful
 voice out from a
 threatening throat.

But yet the selfsame mind that
 was before she turned her
 coat

Was in her still in shape of bear;
 the grief whereof she shows

By thrusting forth continual sighs,
and up she ghastly throws
Such kind of hands as then
remained unto the starry
sky.

And for because she could not
speak, she thought Jove
inwardly

To be unthankful. O, how oft she,
daring not abide

Alone among the desert woods,
full many a time and tide

Would stalk before her house in
grounds that were her own
erewhile!

How oft, O, did she in the hills the
barking hounds beguile

And in the lawns, where she
herself had chased erst her
game,

Now fly herself to save her life
when hunters sought the
same!

Full oft at sight of other beasts she
hid her head for fear,

Forgetting what she was herself.
For though she were a bear,

Yet when she spied other bears
she quook for very pain

And feared wolves, although her
sire among them did
remain.

Behold, Lycaon's daughter's son
that Arcas had to name,
About the age of fifteen years
within the forest came
Of Erymanth, not knowing aught
of this his mother's case.
There, after pitching of his toils, as
he the stags did chase,
Upon his mother suddenly it was
his chance to light;
Who for desire to see her son did
stay herself from flight
And wistly on him cast her look,
as one that did him know.
But he, not knowing what she
was, began his heels to
show.
And when he saw her still persist
in staring on his face,
He was afraid and from her sight
withdrew himself apace.
But when he could not so be rid,
he took an armèd pike
In full intent her through the heart
with deadly wound to
strike.
But God Almighty held his hand
and, lifting both away,
Did disappoint the wicked act. For
straight he did convey
Them through the air with
whirling winds to top of all
the sky

And there did make them
neighbour stars about the
pole on high.

When Juno shining in the
heaven her husband's
minion found,

She swelled for spite; and
down she comes to watery
Tethys round

And unto old Oceanus, whom
even the gods aloft

Did reverence for their just deserts
full many a time and oft.

To whom, demanding her the
cause, 'And ask ye', quoth
she, 'why

That I which am the queen of gods
come hither from the sky?

Good cause there is, I warrant
you. Another holds my
room.

For never trust me while I live if,
when the night is come

And overcasteth all the world with
shady darkness whole,

Ye see not in the height of heaven
(hard by the northern pole

Whereas the utmost circle runs
about the axle-tree

In shortest circuit) gloriously
installed for to be

In shape of stars the stinging
wounds that make me ill

apaid.
Now is there, trow ye, any cause
why folk should be afraid
To do to Juno what they list or
dread her wrathful mood,
Which only by my working harm
do turn my foes to good?
O, what a mighty act is done! How
passing is my power!
I have bereft her woman's shape,
and at this present hour
She is become a goddess! Lo, this
is the scourge so sore
Wherewith I strike mine enemies!
Lo, here is all the spite
That I can do; this is the end of all
my wondrous might!
No force. I would he should, for
me, her native shape
restore
And take away her brutish shape
like as he hath before
Done by his paramour, that fine
and proper piece
Of Argos whom he made a cow – I
mean Phoroneu's niece.
Why makes he not a full divorce
from me and in my stead
Straight take his sweetheart to his
wife and coll her in my
bed?
He cannot do a better deed, I
think, than for to take

660

Lycaon to his father-in-law. But if
that you do make
Account of me, your foster-child,
then grant that for my sake
The oxen and the wicked wain of
stars in number seven,
. For whoredom sake but late ago
receivèd into heaven,
May never dive within your
waves. Ne let that strumpet
vile
By bathing of her filthy limbs your
waters pure defile.'

The raven becomes black

The gods did grant her her
request; and straight to
heaven she flew
In handsome chariot through
the air which painted
peacocks drew,
As well beset with blazing eyes
late ta'en from Argus' head
As thou, thou prating raven, white
by nature being bred,
Had'st on thy feathers justly late a
colly colour spread.
For this same bird in ancient time
had feathers fair and white
As ever was the driven snow, or
silver clear and bright.
He might have well compared
himself in beauty with the
doves

670

That have no blemish, or the swan
that running water loves,
Or with the geese that afterward
should with their gagging
out

Preserve the Roman Capitol beset
with foes about.

His tongue was cause of all his
harm; his tattling tongue
did make

His colour, which before was
white, become so foul and
black.

Coronis of Larissa was the fairest
maid of face

In all the land of Thessaly. She
stood in Phoebus' grace

As long as that she kept her
chaste, or at the least as
long

As that she scapèd unespied in
doing Phoebus wrong.

But at the last Apollo's bird her
privy packing spied,

Whom no entreatance could
persuade but that he swiftly
hied

Him to his master to bewray the
doings of his love.

Now as he flew, the prattling crow
her wings apace did move

And, overtaking, fell in talk and
was inquisitive

The crow's story

690

For what intent and to what place
he did so swiftly drive.

And when she heard the cause
thereof, she said, 'Now trust
me, sure,

This message on the which thou
go'st no goodness will
procure.

And therefore hearken what I say;
disdain thou not at all

To take some warning by thy
friend in things that may
befall.

Consider what I erst have been
and what thou seest me
now,

And what hath been the ground
hereof. I boldly dare avow

That thou shalt find my
faithfulness imputed for a
crime.

For Pallas in a wicker chest had
hid upon a time

A child called Ericthonius, whom
never woman bare,

And took it unto maidens three
that Cecrops' daughters
were,

Not telling them what was within,
but gave them charge to
keep

The casket shut and for no cause
within the same to peep.

700

I, standing close among the leaves
upon an elm on high,
Did mark their doings and their
words. And there I did espy
How Pandrosos and Herse kept
their promise faithfully;
Aglauros calls them cowards both
and makes no more ado
But takes the casket in her hand
and doth the knots undo:
And there they saw a child whose
parts beneath were like a
snake.

Straight to the goddess of this
deed a just report I make,
For which she gave me this
reward: that never might I
more

Account her for my lady and my
mistress as before.

And in my room she put the fowl
that flies not but by night.

A warning unto other birds my
luck should be of right

710

To hold their tongues for being
shent. But you will say,
perchance,

I came unsent for of myself; she
did me not advance.

I dare well say, though Pallas now
my heavy mistress stand,

Yet if perhaps ye should demand
the question at her hand,

As sore displeasèd as she is, she
would not this deny,
But that she chose me first herself
to bear her company.
For, well I know, my father was a
prince of noble fame,
Of Phocis king by long descent;
Coroneu was his name.
I was his darling and his joy, and
many a wealthy peer
(I would not have you think
disdain) did seek me for
their fere.
My form and beauty did me hurt.
For as leisurely
Went jetting up and down the
shore upon the gravel dry,
As yet I customably do, the god
that rules the seas,
Espying me, fell straight in love.
And when he saw none ease
In suit but loss of words and time,
he offered violence
And after me he runs apace. I scud
as fast fro thence
From sand to shore, from shore to
sand, still playing fox to
hole,
Until I was so tired that he had
almost got the goal.
Then called I out on god and man.
But, as it did appear,

730

There was no man so near at hand
that could my crying hear.

A virgin goddess pitied me
because I was a maid

And at the utter plunge and pinch
did send me present aid.

I cast mine arms to heaven; mine
arms waxed light with
feathers black.

I went about to cast in haste my
garments from my back,

And all was feathers; in my skin
the rooted feathers stack.

I was about with violent hand to
strike my naked breast;

But neither had I hand nor breast
that naked more did rest.

I ran, but of my feet as erst
remainèd not the print;

Methought I glided on the ground.
Anon with sudden dint

I rose and hovered in the air and
from that instant time

740

Did wait on Pallas faithfully
without offence or crime.

But what avails all this to me, and
if that in my place

The wicked wretch Nyctimene,
who late for lack of grace

Was turned to an odious bird, to
honour callèd be?

I pray thee, did'st thou never hear
how false Nyctimene

(A thing all over Lesbos known)
defiled her father's couch?

The beast is now become a bird
whose lewdness doth so
touch

And prick her guilty conscience
that she dares not come in
sight

Nor show herself abroad a-days,
but fleeteth in the night

For shame lest folk should see her
fault. And every other bird

Doth in the air and ivy-tods with
wondering at her gird.'

'A mischief take thy tattling
tongue,' the raven
answered tho.

'Thy vain forespeaking moves me
not.' And so he forth did go

And tells his lord Apollo how he
saw Coronis lie

With Isthys, a gentleman that
dwelt in Thessaly.

*The raven becomes black
(conclusion)*

When Phoebus heard his
lover's fault, he fiercely gan
to frown

And cast his garland from his
head and threw his viol
down.

His colour changed, his face
looked pale; and, as the
rage of ire

That boilèd in his belking breast
 had set his heart on fire,
 He caught me up his wonted tools
 and bent his golden bow
 And by and by with deadly stripe
 of unavowed blow
 Strake through the breast the
 which his own had touched
 so oft afore.
 She, wounded, gave a piteous
 shriek and (drawing from
 the sore
 The deadly dart the which, the
 blood pursuing after fast,
 Upon her white and tender limbs a
 scarlet colour cast)
 Said, 'Phoebus, well, thou might
 have wreaked this trespass
 on my head
 And yet forborne me till the time I
 had been brought abed.
 Now in one body by thy means a
 couple shall be dead.'
 Thus much she said; and with the
 blood her life did fade
 away.
 The body, being void of soul,
 became as cold as clay.
 Then all too late, alas, too late gan
 Phoebus to repent
 That of his lover he had ta'en so
 cruel punishment.

He blames himself for giving ear
so unadvisedly;
He blames himself in that he took
it so outrageously.
He hates and bans his faithful bird
because he did inform
Him of his lover's naughtiness that
made him so to storm.
He hates his bow, he hates his
shaft that rashly from it
went,
And eke he hates his hasty hands
by whom the bow was
bent.
He takes her up between his arms,
endeavouring all too late
By plaster made of precious herbs
to stay her helpless fate.
But when he saw there was no
shift but that she needs
must burn
And that the solemn sacred fire
was pressed to serve the
turn,
Then from the bottom of his heart
full sorry sighs he fet
(For heavenly powers with watery
tears their cheeks may
never wet),
In case as when a cow beholds the
cruel butcher stand
With lancing axe imbrued with
blood and lifting up his

hand
 Aloft to snatch her sucking calf
 that hangeth by the heels
 And of the axe the deadly dint
 upon his forehead feels.
 Howbeit after sweet perfumes
 bestowed upon her corse
 And much embracing, having sore
 bewailed her wrong
 divorce,
 He followed to the place assigned
 her body for to burn.
 There could he not abide to see
 his seed to ashes turn,
 But took the baby from her womb
 and from the fiery flame
 And unto double Chiron's den
 conveyèd straight the same.
 The raven, hoping for his truth to
 be rewarded well,
 He maketh black, forbidding him
 with whiter birds to dwell.
 The centaur Chiron in the
 while was glad of Phoebus'
 boy;
 And as the burden brought
 some care, the honour
 brought him joy.
 Upon a time with golden locks
 about her shoulders spread
 A daughter of the centaur's (whom
 a certain nymph had bred

About the brook Caïcus' banks)
that hight Ocyrhoë

Came thither. This same fair
young nymph could not
contented be

To learn the craft of surgery as
perfect as her sire

But that to learn the secret dooms
of fate she must aspire.

And therefore, when the furious
rage of frenzy had her
caught

And that the sprite of prophecy
enflamèd had her thought,

She looked upon the child and
said, 'Sweet babe, the gods
thee make

A man. For all the world shall fare
the better for thy sake;

All sores and sickness shalt thou
cure. Thy power shall eke
be such

To make the dead alive again; for
doing of the which

Against the pleasure of the gods
thy grandsire shall thee
strike

So with his fire that never more
thou shalt perform the like.

And of a god a bloodless corse,
and of a corse (full
strange!)

Thou shalt become a god again,
and twice thy nature
change.

And thou, my father lief and dear,
who now by destiny

Art born to live for evermore and
never for to die,

Shalt suffer such outrageous pain
throughout thy members all

By wounding of a venom'd dart
that on thy foot shall fall

That oft thou shalt desire to die,
and in the latter end

The fatal darts shall break thy
thread and thy desire thee
send.'

There was yet more behind to tell
when suddenly she fet

A sore deep sigh and down her
cheeks the tears did trickle
wet.

'Mine own misfortune', quoth she,
'now hath overtake me
sure.

I cannot utter any more, for words
wax out of ure.

My cunning was not worth so
much as that it should
procure

The wrath of God; I feel by proof
far better had it been

If that the chance of things to
come I never had foreseen.

For now my native shape
 withdraws. Methinks I have
 delight

To feed on grass and fling in
 fields, I feel myself so light.

I am transformed to a mare like
 other of my kin.

But wherefore should this brutish
 shape all over wholly win,

Considering that, although both
 horse and man my father
 be,

Yet is his better part a man as
 plainly is to see?’

The latter end of this complaint
 was fumbled in such wise

As what she meant the standers-by
 could scarcely well devise.

Anon she neither seemed to speak
 nor fully for to neigh,

But like to one that counterfeits in
 sport the mare to play.

Within a while she neighed plain,
 and down her arms were
 pight

Upon the ground all clad with hair
 and bare her body right.

Her fingers joinèd all in one, at
 end whereof did grow

Instead of nails a round tough
 hoof of whelkèd horn
 below.

Her head and neck shot forth in
length; her kirtle train
became

A fair long tail; her flaring hair
was made a hanging mane.

And as her native shape and voice
most monstrously did pass,

So by the uncouth name of mare
she after termèd was.

Mercury and Battus

The centaur Chiron wept
hereat and, piteously
dismayed,

Did call on thee, although in
vain, thou Delphian god,
for aid.

For neither lay it in thy hand to
break Jove's mighty hest,

And thought it had, yet in thy
state as then thou did not
rest.

In Elis did thou then abide and in
Messene land;

It was the time when under shape
of shepherd with a wand

Of olive and a pipe of reeds thou
kept Admetus' sheep.

Now in this time that, save of
love, thou took none other
keep

And mad'st thee merry with thy
pipe, the glistening Maia's
son

By chance abroad the fields of
Pyle spied certain cattle run
Without a herd, the which he stole
and closely did them hide
Among the woods. This pretty
sleight no earthly creature
spied
Save one old churl that Battus
hight. This Battus had the
charge
Of wealthy Neleus' feeding
grounds and all his pastures
large
And kept a race of goodly mares.
Of him he was afraid
And, lest by him his privy theft
should chance to be
bewrayed,
He took a bribe to stop his mouth
and thus unto him said:
'My friend, I pray thee, if
perchance that any man
enquire
This cattle, say thou saw them not.
And take thou for thy hire
This fair young bullock.' T'other
took the bullock at his hand
And, showing him a certain stone
that lay upon the land,
Said, 'Go thy way. As soon this
stone thy doings shall
bewray

As shall do.' So Mercury did seem
to go his way.

Anon he comes me back again
and, altered both in speech

And outward shape, said,
'Countryman, Ich heartily
bezeech

And if thou zawest any kie come
roiling through this ground

Or driven away, tell what he was
and where they may be
vound.

And I chill githee vor thy pain an
heifer an' her match.'

The carl, perceiving double gain
and greedy for to catch,

Said, 'Under yon same hill they
were and under yon same
hill

Cham zure they are,' and with his
hand he pointed thereuntil.

At that Mercurius, laughing, said,
'False knave, and dost
bewray

Me to myself? Dost thou bewray
me to myself, I say?'

And with that word straight to a
stone he turned his double
heart

In which the slander yet remains
without the stone's desert.

This done, arose with waving
wings and from that place
did fly.

And as he hovered in the air, he
viewed the fields below
Of Attic and the town itself with
all the trees that grow
In Lycy where the learned clerks
did wholesome precepts
show.

By chance the very selfsame day
the virgins of the town
Of old and ancient custom bare in
baskets on their crown
Beset with garlands fresh and gay
and strewed with flowers
sweet

To Pallas' tower such sacrifice as
was of custom meet.

The wingèd god, beholding them
returning in a troop,

Continued not directly forth but
gan me down to stoop

And fetched a windlass round
about. And as the hungry
kite,

Beholding unto sacrifice a bullock
ready dight,

Doth soar about his wished prey,
desirous for to snatch

But that he dareth not for such as
stand about and watch;

So Mercury with nimble wings
doth keep a lower gait
About Minerva's lofty towers in
round and wheeling rate.
As far as doth the morning star
in clear and streaming light
Excel all other stars in heaven;
as far also as bright
Dame Phoebe dims the morning
star; so far did Herse's face
Stain all the ladies of her troop.
She was the very grace
And beauty of that solemn pomp
and all that train so fair.
Jove's son was ravished with the
sight and, hanging in the
air,
Began to swelt within himself; in
case as, when the powder
Hath driven the pellet from the
gun, the pellet gins to
smoulder
And in his flying wax more hot. In
smoking breast he shrouds
His flames not brought from
heaven above but caught
beneath the clouds.
He leaves his journey toward
heaven and takes another
race,
Not minding any lenger time to
hide his present case,

So great a trust and confidence his
beauty to him gave.

Which though it seemed of itself
sufficient force to have,

Yet was he curious for to make
himself more fine and
brave.

He kemberd his hair and stroked
his beard and pried on
every side

To see that in his furniture no
wrinkle might be spied;

And for because his cloak was
fringed and guarded broad
with gold,

He cast it on his shoulder up most
seemly to behold.

He takes in hand his charmed rod
that bringeth things asleep

And wakes them when he list
again, and lastly taketh
keep

That on his fair well-formèd feet
his golden shoes sit clean

And that all other things thereto
well correspondent been.

In Cecrops' court were
chambers three set far from
all resort

With ivory beds all furnished
in far most royal sort,

Of which Aglauros had the left
and Pandrose had the right

And Herse had the middlemost.
She that Aglauros hight
First marked the coming of the
god and, asking him his
name,
Demanded him for what intent
and cause he thither came.
Pleione's nephew, Maia's son, did
make her answer thus:
'I am my father's messenger his
pleasure to discuss
To mortal folk and hellish fiends
as list him to command.
My father is the mighty Jove. To
that thou dost demand
I will not feign a false excuse; I
ask no more but grant
To keep thy sister's counsel close
and for to be the aunt
Of such the issue as on her my
chance shall be to get.
Thy sister Herse is the cause that
hath me hither fet;
I pray thee, bear thou with my
love that is so firmly set.'
Aglauros cast on Mercury her
scornful eyes aside
With which against Minerva's will
her secrets late she spied,
Demanding him in recompense a
mighty mass of gold,
And would not let him enter in
until the same were told.

The warlike goddess cast on her a
 stern and cruel look
 And fetched such a cutting sigh
 that forcibly it shook
 Both breast and breastplate,
 wherewithal it came unto
 her thought
 How that Aglauros late ago
 against her will had
 wrought
 In looking on the leman child,
 contrary to her oath,
 The which she took her in the
 chest, for which she waxèd
 wroth.
 Again she saw her cankered heart
 maliciously repine
 Against her sister and the god and
 furthermore, in fine,
 How that the gold which Mercury
 had given her for her meed
 Would make her both in wealth
 and pride all others to
 exceed.

The punishment of Aglauros

She goes me straight to Envy's
 house, a foul and irksome
 cave
 Replete with black and loathly
 filth and stinking like a
 grave.
 It standeth in a hollow dale where
 neither light of sun

Nor blast of any wind or air may
for the deepness come;
A dreary, sad and doleful den aye
full of slothful cold
As which, aye dimmed with
smouldering smoke, doth
never fire behold.
When Pallas, that same manly
maid, approachèd near this
plot,
She stayed without (for to the
house in enter might she
not)
And with her javelin point did
give a push against the
door.
The door flew open by and by and
fell me in the floor.
There saw she Envy sit within fast
gnawing on the flesh
Of snakes and toads, the filthy
food that keeps her vices
fresh.
It loathed her to behold the sight.
Anon the elf arose
And left the gnawèd adder's flesh,
and slothfully she goes
With lumpish leisure like a snail;
and when she saw the face
Of Pallas and her fair attire
adorned with heavenly
grace

She gave a sigh, a sorry sigh, from
bottom of her heart.
Her lips were pale, her cheeks
were wan, and all her face
was swart,
Her body lean as any rake; she
lookèd eke askew.
Her teeth were furred with filth
and dross; her gums were
waryish blue.
The working of her festered gall
had made her stomach
green,
And all bevenomed was her
tongue. No sleep her eyes
had seen;
Continual cark and cankered care
did keep her waking still.
Of laughter (save at others' harms)
the hellhound can no skill;
It is against her will that men have
any good success.
And if they have, she frets and
fumes within her mind no
less
Than if herself had taken harm. In
seeking to annoy
And work distress to other folk
herself she doth destroy.
Thus is she torment to herself.
Though Pallas did her hate,
Yet spake she briefly these few
words to her without her

gate:

‘Infect thou with thy venom one of
Cecrops’ daughters three.

It is Aglauros whom I mean, for so
it needs must be.’

This said, she pight her spear in
ground and took her rise
thereon

And, winding from that wicked
wight, did take her flight
anon.

The caitiff cast her eye aside
and, seeing Pallas gone,

Began to mumble with herself
the devil's Paternoster

And, fretting at her good
success, began to blow and
bluster.

She takes a crookèd staff in hand
bewreathed with knobbed
pricks

And, covered with a colly cloud,
wherever that she sticks

Her filthy feet she tramples down
and sears both grass and
corn,

That all the fresh and fragrant
fields seem utterly forlorn;

And with her staff she tippeth off
the highest poppy heads.

Such poison also everywhere
ungraciously she sheds

That every cottage where she
comes and every town and
city

Do take infection at her breath. At
length (the more is pity)

She found the fair Athenian town
that flowed freshly then

In feastful peace and joyful wealth
and learned wits of men.

And for because she nothing saw
that might provoke to
weep,

It was a corsie to her heart her
hateful tears to keep.

Now when she came within the
court, she went without
delay

Directly to the lodgings where
King Cecrops' daughters
lay.

There did she as Minerva bade.
She laid her scurvy fist

Besmeared with venom and with
filth upon Aglauros' breast,

The which she filled with hookèd
thorns, and, breathing on
her face,

Did shed the poison in her bones
which spread itself apace

As black as ever virgin pitch
through lungs and lights
and all.

And to th'intent that cause of grief
abundantly should fall,
She placed aye before her eyes her
sister's happy chance
In being wedded to the god and
made the god to glance
Continually in heavenly shape
before her wounded
thought.
And all these things she painted
out; which in conclusion
wrought
Such corsies in Aglauros' breast
that, sighing day and night,
She gnawed and fretted in herself
for very cankered spite.
And like a wretch she wastes
herself with restless care
and pine,
Like as the ice whereon the sun
with glimmering light doth
shine.
Her sister Herse's good success
doth make her heart to
yearn,
In case as when that fire is put to
green-felled wood or fern
Which giveth neither light nor
heat, but smoulders quite
away.
Sometime she minded to her sire
her sister to bewray

1020

Who, well she knew, would ill
abide so lewd a part to
play.

And oft she thought with wilful
hand to burst her fatal
thread

Because she would not see the
thing that made her heart
to bleed.

At last she sat her in the door and
leanèd to a post

To let the god from entering in. To
whom, now having lost

Much talk and gentle words in
vain, she said, 'Sir, leave, I
pray;

For hence I will not (be you sure)
unless you go away.'

'I take thee at thy word,' quoth he,
and therewithal he pushed

His rod against the barrèd door,
and wide it open rushed.

She, making proffer for to rise, did
feel so great a weight

Through all her limbs that for her
life she could not stretch
her straight.

She strove to set herself upright;
but striving bootèd not.

1030

Her hamstrings and her knees
were stiff; a chilling cold
had got

In at her nails through all her
limbs; and eke her veins
began

For want of blood and lively heat
to wax both pale and wan.

And as the fretting fistula,
forgrown and past all cure,

Runs in the flesh from place to
place and makes the sound
and pure

As bad or worser than the rest,
even so the cold of death

Strake to her heart and closed her
veins and lastly stopped her
breath.

She made no proffer for to speak,
and though she had done so

It had been vain. For way was
none for language forth to
go.

Her throat congealèd into stone,
her mouth became hard
stone,

1040

And like an image sat she still. Her
blood was clearly gone,

The which the venom of her heart
so fouly did infect

That ever after all the stone with
freckled spots was specked.

Jupiter and Europa

When Mercury had punished
thus Aglauros' spiteful
tongue

And cankered heart,
immediately from Pallas'
town he flung
And, flying up with flittering
wings, did pierce to heaven
above.
His father called him straight
aside but, showing not his
love,
Said, 'Son, my trusty messenger
and worker of my will,
Make no delay but out of hand fly
down in haste until
The land that on the left side looks
upon thy mother's light,
Yon same where standeth on the
coast the town that Sidon
hight. .
The king hath there a herd of neat
that on the mountains feed;
Go, take and drive them to the sea
with all convenient speed.'
He had no sooner said the word
but that the herd begun,
Driven from the mountain to the
shore appointed, for to run
Whereas the daughter of the king
was wonted to resort
With other ladies of the court,
there for to play and sport.
Between the state of majesty and
love is set such odds

1060

As that they cannot dwell in one.
The sire and king of gods
Whose hand is armed with triple
fire, who only with his
frown
Makes sea and land and heaven to
quake, doth lay his sceptre
down
With all the grave and stately port
belonging thereunto
And, putting on the shape of bull,
as other cattle do
Goes lowing gently up and down
among them in the field -
The fairest beast to look upon that
ever man beheld.
For why his colour was as white as
any winter's snow
Before that either trampling feet
or southern wind it thaw.
His neck was brawned with rolls
of flesh, and from his chest
before
A dangling dewlap hung me down
good half a foot and more.
His horns were small, but yet so
fine as that ye would have
thought
They had been made by cunning
hand or out of wax been
wrought.
More clear they were a
hundredfold than is the

1070

crystal stone.

In all his forehead fearful frown or
wrinkle there was none,

No fierce, no grim nor grisly look,
as other cattle have,

But altogether so demure as
friendship seemed to crave.

Agenor's daughter marvelled much
so tame a beast to see,

But yet to touch him at the first
too bold she durst not be.

Anon she reaches to his mouth her
hand with herbs and
flowers;

The loving beast was glad thereof
and neither frowns nor
lowers,

But till the hopèd joy might come
with glad and fawning
cheer

1080

He licks her hands and scarce, ah,
scarce, the residue he
forbear.

Sometime he frisks and skips
about and shows her sport
at hand;

Anon he lays his snowy side
against the golden sand.

So fear by little driven away, he
offered eft his breast

To stroke and coy and eft his
horns with flowers to be
dressed.

At last Europa, knowing not (for
so the maid was called)
On whom she ventured for to ride,
was ne'er a whit appalled
To set herself upon his back. Then
by and by the god
From main dry land to main moist
sea gan leisurely to plod.
At first he did but dip his feet
within the outmost wave
And back again; then further in
another plunge he gave,
And so still further, till at the last
he had his wishèd prey
Amid the deep where was no
means to scape with life
away.
The lady, quaking all for fear,
with rueful count'nance cast
Aye toward shore from whence
she came, held with her
right hand fast
One of his horns and with the left
did stay upon his back.
The weather flasket and whiskèd
up her garments, being
slack.

‘An heifer all alone in field’, quoth Phoebus, ‘–
mark her well –
Which never bare the pinching yoke nor drew,
the plough as yet
Shall meet thee. Follow after her; and where
thou see'st her sit,
There build a town and let thereof Boeötia be the
name.’
Down from Parnassus' stately top scarce fully
Cadmus came
When, roiling softly in the vale before the herd
alone,
He saw an heifer on whose neck of servage print
was none.
He followed after leisurely as her that was his
guide
And thankèd Phoebus in his heart that did so
well provide.
Now had he passed Cephissus' ford and eke the
pleasant grounds
About the city Panope contained within those
bounds.
The heifer stayed and, lifting up her forehead to
the sky
Full seemly for to look upon with horns like
branches high,
Did with her lowing fill the air and, casting back
her eye
Upon the rest that came aloof, as softly as she
could
Kneeled down and laid her hairy side against the
grassy mould.

Then Cadmus gave Apollo thanks and, falling flat
below,

Did kiss the ground and hail the fields which yet
he did not know.

He was about to sacrifice to Jove, the heavenly
king,

And bade his servants go and fetch him water of
the spring.

An old, forgrown, unfellèd wood stood near
at hand thereby

And in the midst a queachy plot with sedge
and osiers high

Where, curbed about with pebble stone in
likeness of a bow,

There was a spring with silver streams that forth
thereof did flow.

Here lurked in his lowering den god Mars his
grisly snake

With golden scales and fiery eyes, beswollen
with poison black;

Three spurting tongues, three rows of teeth
within his head did stick.

No sooner had the Tyrian folk set foot within this
thick

And queachy plot and dipped down their bucket
in the well,

But that to bustle in his den began this serpent
fell

And, peering with a marble head, right horribly
to hiss.

The Tyrians let their pitchers slip for sudden fear
of this

And, waxing pale as any clay, like folk amazed
and flight

Stood trembling like an aspen leaf. The speckled
serpent straight

Comes trailing out in waving links and knotty
rolls of scales

And, bending into bunchy boughts, his body
forth he hales.

And, lifting up above the waist himself unto the
sky,

50

He overlooketh all the wood, as huge and big
well nigh

As is the Snake that in the heaven about the
northern pole

Divides the Bears. He makes no stay, but deals
his dreadful dole

Among the Tyrians. Whether they did take them
to their tools

Or to their heels, or that their fear did make
them stand like fools

And help themselves by none of both, he
snapped up some alive

And swept in others with his tail; and some he
did deprive

Of life with rankness of his breath; and other
some again

He stings and poisons unto death till all at last
were slain.

Now when the sun was at his height and
shadows waxed short

60

And Cadmus saw his company make tarriance
in that sort,

He marvelled what should be their let and went
to seek them out.
His harness was a lion's skin that wrapped him
about;
His weapons were a long strong spear with head
of iron tried
And eke a light and piercing dart, and thereunto
beside –
Worth all the weapons in the world – a stout and
valiant heart.
When Cadmus came within the wood and saw
about that part
His men lie slain upon the ground, and eke their
cruel foe
Of body huge stand over them and licking with
his blo
And blasting tongue their sorry wounds, 'Well,
trusty friends,' quoth he,
'I either of your piteous deaths will straight
revenger be
Or else will die myself therefore.' With that he,
raughting fast
A mighty millstone, at the snake with all his
might it cast.
The stone with such exceeding force and
violence forth was driven
As of a fort the bulwarks strong and walls it
would have riven.
And yet it did the snake no harm; his scales, as
hard and tough
As if they had been plates of mail, did fence him
well enough,

So that the stone rebounded back against his
freckled slough.

But yet his hardness saved him not against the
piercing dart;

For, hitting right between the scales that yielded
in that part

Whereas the joints do knit the back, it thirlèd
through the skin

And piercèd to his filthy maw and greedy guts
within.

He, fierce with wrath, wrings back his head and,
looking on the stripe,

The javelin steal that stickèd out between his
teeth doth gripe.

The which with wresting to and fro at length he
forth did wind,

Save that he left the head thereof among his
bones behind.

When of his courage through the wound more
kindled was the ire,

His throat-boll swelled with puffed veins, his
eyes gan sparkle fire;

There stood about his smeared chaps a loathly
foaming froth.

His scaled breast ploughs up the ground; the
stinking breath that go'th

Out from his black and hellish mouth infects the
herbs full foul.

Sometime he winds himself in knots as round as
any bowl;

Sometime he stretcheth out in length as straight
as any beam;

Anon again with violent brunt he rusheth like a
 stream
 Increased by rage of late-fall'n rain, and with his
 mighty sway
 Bears down the wood before his breast that
 standeth in his way.
 Agenor's son retiring back, doth with his lion's
 spoil
 Defend him from his fierce assaults and makes
 him to recoil,
 Aye holding at the weapon's point. The serpent,
 waxing wood,
 Doth crash the steel between his teeth and bites
 it till the blood
 Dropped, mixed with poison from his mouth, did
 dye the green grass black.
 But yet the wound was very light because he
 writhèd back
 And pulled his head still from the stroke and
 made the stripe to die
 By giving way, until that Cadmus, following
 irefully
 The stroke, with all his power and might did
 through the throat him rive
 And nailed him to an oak behind the which he
 eke did cleave.
 The serpent's weight did make the tree to bend;
 it grieved the tree
 His body of the serpent's tail thus scourgèd for to
 be.

*Cadmus sows
 the serpent's*

While Cadmus wondered at the hugeness of
 the vanquished foe,

teeth

110 Upon the sudden came a voice – from whence
 he could not know,
But sure he was he heard the voice – which said,
 ‘Agenor's son,
What gazest thus upon this snake? The time will
 one day come
That thou thyself shalt be a snake.’ He, pale and
 wan for fear,
Had lost his speech, and ruffled up stiff staring
 stood his hair.
Behold, man's helper at his need, Dame Pallas,
 gliding through
The vacant air, was straight at hand, and bade
 him take a plough
And cast the serpent's teeth in ground, as of the
 which would spring
Another people out of hand. He did in everything
As Pallas bade: he took a plough and eared a
 furrow low
And sowed the serpent's teeth whereof the
 foresaid folk should grow.
120 Anon (a wondrous thing to tell) the clods began
 to move,
And from the furrow first of all the pikes
 appeared above;
Next rose up helms with feathered crests, and
 then the pouldrons bright;
Successively the curats whole, and all the armour
 right.
Thus grew up men like corn in field in ranks of
 battle ray

With shields and weapons in their hands to fight
the field that day.

Even so, when stages are attired against some
solemn game

With cloths of arras gorgeously, in drawing up
the same

The faces of the images do first of all them show;
And then by piecemeal all the rest in order seems
to grow

130 Until at last they stand out full upon their feet
below.

Affrighted at these new-found foes, gan
Cadmus for to take

Him to his weapons by and by resistance for
to make.

‘Stay, stay thyself,’ cried one of them that late
before were bred

Out of the ground, ‘and meddle not with civil
wars.’ This said,

One of the brothers of that brood with lancing
sword he slew;

Another sent a dart at him, the which him
overthrew.

The third did straight as much for him and made
him yield the breath,

The which he had received but now, by stroke of
forcèd death.

Likewise outraged all the rest until that, one by
one,

140 By mutual stroke of civil war dispatched everych
one,

This brood of brothers all behewn and weltered
in their blood

Lay sprawling on their mother's womb, the
ground where erst they stood,
Save only five that did remain. Of whom Echion,
led
By Pallas' counsel, threw away the helmet from
his head
And with his brothers gan to treat, atonement for
to make.
The which at length, by Pallas' help, so good
success did take
That faithful friendship was confirmed and hand
in hand was plight.
These afterward did well assist the noble Tyrian
knight
In building of the famous town that Phoebus had
behigh.

*The
transformation
of Actaeon*

Now Thebes stood in good estate; now,
Cadmus, might thou say

That when thy father banished thee it was a
lucky day.
To join alliance both with Mars and Venus was
thy chance,
Whose daughter thou had'st ta'en to wife, who
did thee much advance
Not only through her high renown but through a
noble race
Of sons and daughters that she bare; whose
children in like case
It was thy fortune for to see all men and women
grown.

But aye the end of everything must marked be
and known;

For none the name of blessedness deserveth for
to have

Unless the tenor of his life last blessed to his
grave.

160

Among so many prosperous haps that flowed
with good success

Thine eldest nephew was a cause of care and
sore distress,

Whose head was armed with palmed horns,
whose own hounds in the wood

Did pull their master to the ground and fill them
with his blood.

But if you sift the matter well, ye shall not find
desert

But cruel fortune to have been the cause of this
his smart.

For who could do with oversight? Great
slaughter had been made

Of sundry sorts of savage beasts one morning,
and the shade

Of things was waxed very short. It was the time
of day

That mid between the east and west the sun doth
seem to stay,

170

Whenas the Theban stripling thus bespake his
company,

Still ranging in the wayless woods some further
game to spy:

‘Our weapons and our toils are moist and stained
with blood of deer;

This day hath done enough, as by our quarry
may appear.

As soon as with her scarlet wheels next morning
bringeth light,

We will about our work again. But now Hyperion
bright

Is in the midst of heaven and sears the fields
with fiery rays.

Take up your toils and cease your work, and let
us go our ways.'

They did even so, and ceased their work. There
was a valley thick

With pineapple and cypress trees that armed be
with prick.

Gargaphy hight this shady plot; it was a sacred
place

To chaste Diana and the nymphs that waited on
her grace.

Within the furthest end thereof there was a
pleasant bower

So vaulted with the leafy trees the sun had there
no power,

Not made by hand nor man's device; and yet no
man alive

A trimmer piece of work than that could for his
life contrive.

With flint and pommy was it walled by nature
half about,

And on the right side of the same full freshly
flowed out

A lively spring with crystal stream, whereof the
upper brim

Was green with grass and matted herbs that
smellèd very trim.

When Phoebe felt herself wax faint of following
of her game,

It was her custom for to come and bathe her in
the same.

That day she, having timely left her hunting in
the chase,

Was entered with her troop of nymphs within
this pleasant place.

She took her quiver and her bow, the which she
had unbent,

And eke her javelin to a nymph that served that
intent.

Another nymph to take her clothes among her
train she chose;

Two loosed her buskins from her legs and pulled
off her hose.

The Theban lady Crocale, more cunning than the
rest,

Did truss her tresses handsomely which hung
behind undressed;

And yet her own hung waving still. Then Niphe,
neat and clean,

With Hyale, glistering like the grass in beauty
fresh and sheen,

And Rhanis, clearer of her skin than are the rainy
drops,

And little bibbling Phiale, and Psece, that pretty
mops,

Poured water into vessels large to wash their
lady with.

Now while she keeps this wont, behold, by
wandering in the frith

He wist not wither (having stayed his pastime till
the morrow),

Comes Cadmus' nephew to this thick and,
entering in with sorrow

(Such was his cursed cruel fate), saw Phoebe
where she washed.

The damsels, at the sight of man quite out of
count'nance dashed

210

Because they everych one were bare and naked
to the quick,

Did beat their hands against their breasts and
cast out such a shriek

That all the wood did ring thereof and, clinging
to their dame,

Did all they could to hide both her and eke
themselves fro shame.

But Phoebe was of personage so comely and so
tall

That by the middle of her neck she overpeered
them all.

Such colour as appears in heaven by Phoebus'
broken rays

Directly shining on the clouds, or such as is
always

The colour of the morning clouds before the sun
doth show,

Such sanguine colour in the face of Phoebe gan
to glow,

220

There standing naked in his sight. Who, though
she had her guard

Of nymphs about her, yet she turned her body
from himward.
And, casting back an angry look, like as she
would have sent
An arrow at him had she had her bow there
ready bent,
So raught she water in her hand and for to wreak
the spite
Besprinkled all the head and face of this unlucky
knight
And thus forespake the heavy lot that should
upon him light:
'Now make thy vaunt among thy mates, thou
saw'st Diana bare.
Tell if thou can; I give thee leave. Tell hardly; do
not spare.'
This done, she makes no further threats but by
and by doth spread
A pair of lively old hart's horns upon his
sprinkled head.
She sharps his ears; she makes his neck both
slender, long and lank;
She turns his fingers into feet, his arms to
spindle-shank.
She wraps him in a hairy hide beset with
speckled spots
And planteth in him fearfulness. And so away he
trots,
Full greatly wondering to himself what made
him in that case
To be so wight and swift of foot. But when he
saw his face

And hornèd temples in the brook, he would have
cried, 'Alas!'

But as for then no kind of speech out of his lips
could pass,

He sighed and brayed; for that was then the
speech that did remain.

And down the eyes that were not his his bitter
tears did rain.

No part remainèd (save his mind) of that he erst
had been.

What should he do? Turn home again to Cadmus
and the queen?

Or hide himself among the woods? Of this he
was afraid,

And of the t'other ill ashamed. While doubting
thus he stayed,

His hounds espied him where he was. And
Blackfoot first of all

And Stalker, special good of scent, began
aloud to call.

This latter was a hound of Crete, the other was of
Spart.

Then all the kennel fell in round, and every for
his part

Did follow freshly in the chase more swifter than
the wind:

Spy, Eatall, Scalecliff, three good hounds come
all of Arcas' kind;

Strong Killbuck, currish Savage, Spring and
Hunter fresh of smell,

And Lightfoot, who to lead a chase did bear
away the bell;

Fierce Woodman, hurt not long ago in hunting of
a boar,
And Shepherd, wont to follow sheep and neat to
field afore,
And Laund, a fell and eager bitch that had a wolf
to sire;
Another bratch called Greedygut with two her
puppies by her,
And Ladon, gaunt as any grew'nd, a hound in
Sycion bred;
Blab, Fleetwood, Patch, whose fleckèd skin with
sundry spots was spread;
Wight, Bowman, Roister, Beauty, fair and white
as winter's snow,
And Tawny, full of dusky hairs that over all did
grow;
With lusty Ruffler, passing all the residue there
in strength,
And Tempest, best of footmanship in holding out
at length;
And Coal and Swift and little Wolf, as wight as
any other,
Accompanied with a Cyprian hound that was his
native brother;
And Snatch, amid whose forehead stood a star as
white as snow,
The residue being all as black and sleek as any
crow;
And shaggy Rug, with other twain that had a sire
of Crete
And dam of Sparta – t'one of them called
Jollyboy, a great

And large-flewed hound, the t'other Churl, who
ever gnarring went;

And Ringwood with a shirl loud mouth, the
which he freely spent;

With divers mo whose names to tell it were but
loss of time.

These fellows over hill and dale in hope of prey
do climb,

Through thick and thin and craggy cliffs where
was no way to go.

He flies through grounds where oftentimes he
chasèd had ere tho;

Even from his own folk is he fain, alas, to flee
away.

He strained oftentimes to speak, and was about
to say,

'I am Actaeon. Know your lord and master, sirs, I
pray.'

But use of words and speech did want to utter
forth his mind.

Their cry did ring through all the wood,
redoubled with the wind.

First Slow did pinch him by the haunch, and next
came Killdeer in,

And Hillbred fastened on his shoulder, bote him
through the skin.

These came forth later than the rest but, coasting
thwart a hill,

They did gaincope him as he came and held their
master still

Until that all the rest came in and fastened on
him too.

No part of him was free from wound. He could
none other do

But sigh and in the shape of hart with voice as
harts are wont

(For voice of man was none now left to help him
at the brunt)

By braying show his secret grief among the
mountains high

And, kneeling sadly on his knees with dreary
tears in eye,

290

As one by humbling of himself that mercy
seemed to crave,

With piteous look instead of hands his head
about to wave.

Not knowing that it was their lord, the huntsmen
cheer their hounds

With wonted noise and for Actaeon look about
the grounds.

They halloo, who could loudest cry, still calling
him by name

As though he were not there; and much his
absence they do blame

In that he came not to the fall, but slacked to see
the game.

As often as they namèd him, he sadly shook his
head;

And fain he would have been away thence in
some other stead.

But there he was. And well he could have found
in heart to see

300

His dogs' fell deeds, so that to feel in place he
had not be.

They hem him in on every side and, in the shape
of stag,
With greedy teeth and griping paws their lord in
pieces drag.
So fierce was cruel Phoebe's wrath, it could not
be allayed
Till of his fault by bitter death the ransom he had
paid.

Juno *and* Much muttering was upon this fact. Some
Semele thought there was extended

 A great deal more extremity than needed;
 some commended
Diana's doing, saying that it was but worthily
For safeguard of her womanhood. Each party did
apply
Good reasons to defend their case. Alone the
wife of Jove
Of liking or misliking it not all so greatly strove,
As secretly rejoiced in heart that such a plague
was light
On Cadmus' image, turning all the malice and
the spite
Conceivèd erst against the wench that Jove had
fet fro Tyre
Upon the kindred of the wench. And for to fierce
her ire
Another thing clean overthwart there cometh in
the nick:
The Lady Semel great with child by Jove as then
was quick.
Hereat she gan to fret and fume and, for to ease
her heart

Which else would burst, she fell in hand with
scolding out her part.

‘And what a goodyear have I won by scolding
erst?’ she said.

320

‘It is that arrant quean herself against whose
wicked head

I must assay to give assault. And if, as men me
call,

I be that Juno who in heaven bear greatest swing
of all,

If in my hand I worthy be to hold the royal
mace,

And if I be the queen of heaven and sovereign of
this place,

Or wife and sister unto Jove (his sister well I
know;

But as for wife, that name is vain – I serve but
for a show

To cover other private scapes), I will confound
that whore.

Now with a mischief is she bagged and beareth
out before

Her open shame to all the world and shortly
hopes to be

330

The mother of a son by Jove, the which hath
happed to me

Not passing once in all my time, so sore she doth
presume

Upon her beauty! But, I trow, her hope shall
soon consume;

For never let me counted be for Saturn's
daughter more

If by her own dear darling Jove, on whom she
trusts so sore,

I send her not to Styx's stream.' This ended, up
she rose

And, coverèd in golden cloud, to Semel's house
she goes.

And ere she sent away the cloud, she takes an
old wife's shape

With hoary hair and rivelled skin, with slow and
crooked gait;

As though she had the palsy had her feeble limbs
did shake,

340

And eke she faltered in the mouth as often as she
spake.

She seemed old beldame Beroe of Epidaur to be,
This lady Semel's nurse, as right as though it had
been she.

So when that after mickle talk of purpose
ministered

Jove's name was opened, by and by she gave
a sigh and said,

'I wish with all my heart that Jove be cause to
thee of this.

But, daughter dear, I dread the worst; I fear it be
amiss.

For many varlets under name of gods to serve
their lust

Have into undefilèd beds themselves full often
thrust.

And though it been the mighty Jove, yet doth
not that suffice

350

Unless he also make the same apparent to our
eyes;

And if it be even very he, I say, it doth behove
He prove it by some open sign and token of his
love.

And therefore pray him for to grant that look in
what degree,

What order, fashion, sort and state he use to
company

With mighty Juno, in the same in every point
and case

To all intents and purposes he thee likewise
embrace;

And that he also bring with him his bright three-
forkèd mace.'

With such instructions Juno had informèd
Cadmus' niece,

And she, poor silly simple soul, immediately
on this

360

Requested Jove to grant a boon the which she
did not name.

'Ask what thou wilt, sweetheart,' quoth he, 'thou
shalt not miss the same.

And for to make thee sure hereof, the grisly
Stygian lake

Which is the fear and god of gods bear witness
for thy sake.'

She, joying in her own mischance, not having
any power

To rule herself but making speed to haste her
fatal hour

In which she through her lover's help should
work her own decay,

Said, 'Such as Juno findeth you when you and
she do play

370

The games of Venus, such, I pray thee, show
thyself to me
In every case.' The god would fain have stopped
her mouth, but she
Had made such haste that out it was; which
made him sigh full sore,
For neither she could then unwish the thing she
wished before
Nor he revoke his solemn oath. Wherefore with
sorry heart
And heavy count' nance by and by to heaven he
doth depart
And makes to follow after him with look full
grim and stour
The slaky clouds all grisly black, as when they
threat a shower;
To which he added mixed with wind a fierce and
flashing flame
With dry and dreadful thunderclaps and
lightning to the same
Of deadly unavaoided dint. And yet, as much as
may,
He goes about his vehement force and fierceness
to allay.

380

He doth not arm him with the fire with which he
did remove
The giant with the hundred hands, Typhoeus,
from above;
It was too cruel and too sore to use against his
love.
The Cyclopes made another kind of lightning far
more light

Wherein they put much less of fire, less
 fierceness, lesser might;
 It hight in heaven the second mace. Jove arms
 himself with this
 And enters into Cadmus' house where Semel's
 chamber is.
 She, being mortal, was too weak and feeble to
 withstand
 Such troublous tumults of the heavens, and
 therefore out of hand
 Was burnèd in her lover's arms. But yet he took
 away
 His infant from the mother's womb, unperfect as
 it lay,
 And (if a man may credit it) did in his thigh it
 sow,
 Where, biding out the mother's time, it did to
 ripeness grow.
 And when the time of birth was come, his aunt,
 the Lady Ine,
 Did nurse him for a while by stealth and kept
 him trim and fine.
 The nymphs of Nysa afterward did in their
 bowers him hide
 And brought him up with milk, till time he might
 abroad be spied.

*The judgement
 of Tiresias*

Now while these things were done on earth
 and that by fatal doom

 The twice-born Bacchus had a time to man's
 estate to come,
 They say that Jove, disposed to mirth, as he and
 Juno sat

A-drinking nectar after meat, in sport and
pleasant rate

Did fall a-jesting with his wife and said, 'A
greater pleasure

In Venus' games ye women have than men
beyond all measure.'

She answered, 'No.' To try the truth they both of
them agree

The wise Tiresias in this case indifferent judge to
be,

Who both the man and woman's joys by trial
understood.

For finding once two mighty snakes engendering
in a wood,

He strake them overthwart the backs; by means
whereof, behold,

(As strange a thing to be of truth as ever yet was
told)

He, being made a woman straight, seven winters
livèd so.

The eighth he, finding them again, did say unto
them tho,

'And if to strike ye have such power as for to
turn their shape

That are the givers of the stripe, before you
hence escape

One stripe now will I lend you more.' He strake
them as befor,

And straight returned his former shape in which
he first was born.

Tiresias, therefore being ta'en to judge this
jesting strife,

420

Gave sentence on the side of Jove. The which the
queen, his wife,
Did take a great deal more to heart than needed
and in spite,
To wreak her teen upon her judge, bereft him of
his sight.
But Jove (for to the gods it is unleafy to undo
The things which other of the gods by any means
have do)
Did give him sight in things to come for loss of
sight of eye
And so his grievous punishment with honour did
supply.
By means whereof within a while in city, field
and town
Through all the coast of Aony was bruited his
renown.
And folk to have their fortunes read that daily
did resort
Were answered so as none of them could give
him misreport.

Echo *and*
Narcissus

The first that of his soothfast words had proof
in all the realm

430

Was freckled Liriope whom sometime,
surprised in his stream,
The flood Cephissus did enforce. This lady bare a
son
Whose beauty at his very birth might justly love
have won;
Narcissus did she call his name. Of whom the
prophet sage,

Demanded if the child should live to many years
of age,
Made answer, 'Yea, full long, so that himself he
do not know.'
The soothsayer's words seemed long but vain,
until the end did show
His saying to be true indeed by strangeness of
the rage
And strangeness of the kind of death that did
abridge his age.
For when years three times five and one he fully
lived had,
So that he seemed to stand between the state of
man and lad,
The hearts of divers trim young men his beauty
gan to move,
And many a lady fresh and fair was taken in his
love.
But in that grace of Nature's gift such passing
pride did reign
That to be touched of man or maid he wholly did
disdain.
A babbling nymph that Echo hight (who, hearing
others talk,
By no means can restrain her tongue but that it
needs must walk,
Nor of herself hath power to gin to speak to any
wight)
Espied him driving into toils the fearful stags of
flight.
This Echo was a body then and not an only
voice,

450

Yet of her speech she had that time no more than
now the choice,

That is to say, of many words the latter to repeat.

The cause thereof was Juno's wrath. For when
that with the feat

She might have often taken Jove in dalliance
with his dames,

And that by stealth and unbewares in midst of all
his games,

This elf would with her tattling talk detain her
by the way

Until that Jove had wrought his will and they
were fled away.

The which when Juno did perceive, she said with
wrathful mood,

‘This tongue that hath deluded me shall do thee
little good;

For of thy speech but simple use hereafter shalt
thou have.’

The deed itself did straight confirm the
threatenings that she gave;

Yet Echo of the former talk doth double oft the
end

460

And back again with just report the words erst
spoken send.

Now when she saw Narcissus stray about the
forest wide,

She waxèd warm, and step for step fast after
him she hied.

The more she followed after him and nearer that
she came,

The hotter ever did she wax, as nearer to her
flame;

Like as the lively brimstone doth which, dipped
about a match

And put but softly to the fire, the flame doth
lightly catch.

O Lord, how often would she fain, if nature
would have let,

Entreated him with gentle words some favour for
to get!

But nature would not suffer her nor give her
leave to gin.

470

Yet, so far forth as she by grant at nature's hand
could win,

Aye ready with attentive ear she hearkens for
some sound

Whereto she might reply her words, from which
she is not bound.

By chance the stripling, being strayed from all
his company,

Said, 'Is there anybody nigh?' Straight Echo
answered, 'I.'

Amazed, he casts his eye aside and looketh
round about,

And 'Come!', that all the forest rung, aloud he
calleth out.

And 'Come!' saith she. He looketh back and,
seeing no man follow,

'Why fly'st?' he crieth once again; and she the
same doth halloo.

He still persists and, wondering much what kind
of thing it was

480

From which that answering voice by turn so duly
seemed to pass,

Said, 'Let us join.' She, by her will desirous to
have said,
'In faith, with none more willingly at any time or
stead,'
Said, 'Let us join.' And, standing somewhat in
her own conceit,
Upon these words she left the wood and forth
she yedeth straight
To coll the lovely neck for which she longed had
so much.
He runs his way and will not be embraced of no
such
And saith, 'I first will die ere thou shalt take of
me thy pleasure.'
She answered nothing else thereto but, 'Take of
me thy pleasure.'
Now when she saw herself thus mocked, she gat
her to the woods
And hid her head for very shame among the
leaves and buds;
And ever since she lives alone in dens and
hollow caves.
Yet stack her love still to her heart, through
which she daily raves
The more for sorrow of repulse. Through restless
cark and care
Her body pines to skin and bone and waxeth
wondrous bare.
The blood doth vanish into air from out of all her
veins,
And nought is left but voice and bones. The voice
yet still remains;

Her bones, they say, were turned to stones. From
 thence she, lurking still
 In woods, will never show her head in field nor
 yet on hill.
 Yet is she heard of every man; it is her only
 sound
 And nothing else that doth remain alive above
 the ground.
 Thus had he mocked this wretched nymph and
 many mo beside
 That in the waters, woods and groves or
 mountains did abide.
 Thus had he mockèd many men; of which one,
 discontent
 To see himself deluded so, his hands to heaven
 up bent
 And said, 'I pray to God he may once feel fierce
 Cupid's fire,
 As I do now, and yet not joy the things he doth
 desire.'
 The goddess Rhamnuse, who doth wreak on
 wicked people take,
 Assented to his just request for ruth and pity's
 sake.

*The death of
 Narcissus*

There was a spring withouten mud as silver
 clear and still,
 Which neither shepherds, nor the goats that
 fed upon the hill,
 Nor other cattle troubled had, nor savage beast
 had stirred,
 Nor branch, nor stick, nor leaf of tree, nor any
 fowl nor bird.

The moisture fed and kept aye fresh the grass
that grew about,
And with their leaves the trees did keep the heat
of Phoebus out.
The stripling, weary with the heat and hunting in
the chase
And much delighted with the spring and coolness
of the place,
Did lay him down upon the brim; and as he
stoopèd low
To staunch his thirst, another thirst of worse
effect did grow.
For, as he drank, he chanced to spy the image of
his face,
The which he did immediately with fervent love
embrace.
He feeds a hope without cause why. For, like a
foolish noddie,
He thinks the shadow that he sees to be a lively
body.
Astraughted, like an image made of marble stone
he lies,
There gazing on his shadow still with fixèd
staring eyes.
Stretched all along upon the ground, it doth him
good to see
His ardent eyes, which like two stars full bright
and shining be,
And eke his fingers, fingers such as Bacchus
might beseem,
And hair that one might worthily Apollo's hair it
deem,

530

His beardless chin and ivory neck, and eke the
perfect grace

Of white and red indifferently bepainted in his
face.

All these he wond'reth to behold, for which (as I
do gather)

Himself was to be wondered at or to be pitied
rather.

He is enamoured of himself for want of taking
heed;

And where he likes another thing, he likes
himself indeed.

He is the party whom he woos, and suitor that
doth woo;

He is the flame that sets on fire, and thing that
burneth too.

O Lord, how often did he kiss that false, deceitful
thing!

How often did he thrust his arms midway into
the spring

To have embraced the neck he saw, and could
not catch himself!

540

He knows not what it was he saw. And yet the
foolish elf

Doth burn in ardent love thereof. The very
selfsame thing

That doth bewitch and blind his eyes increaseth
all his sting.

Thou fondling, thou, why dost thou raught the
fickle image so?

The thing thou seekest is not there. And if aside
thou go,

The thing thou lovest straight is gone. It is none
other matter

That thou dost see than of thyself the shadow in
the water.

The thing is nothing of itself. With thee it doth
abide;

With thee it would depart if thou withdrew
thyself aside.

No care of meat could draw him thence nor
yet desire of rest

550

But, lying flat against the ground and leaning
on his breast,

With greedy eyes he gazeth still upon the falsèd
face;

And through his sight is wrought his bane. Yet
for a little space

He turns and sets himself upright and, holding
up his hands,

With piteous voice unto the wood that round
about him stands

Cries out and says, 'Alas, ye woods, and was
there ever any

That loved so cruelly as I? You know; for unto
many

A place of harbour have you been and fort of
refuge strong.

Can you remember anyone in all your time so
long

That hath so pined away as I? I see and am full
fain;

560

Howbeit, that I like and see I cannot yet attain,

So great a blindness in my heart through doting
love doth reign!

And, for to spite me more withal, it is no journey
far,

No drenching sea, no mountain high, no wall, no
lock, no bar;

It is but even a little drop that keeps us two
asunder.

He would be had. For look how oft I kiss the
water under,

So oft again with upward mouth he riseth toward
me.

A man would think to touch at least I should yet
able be;

It is a trifle in respect that lets us of our love.

What wight so ever that thou art, come hither up
above!

570 O peerless piece, why dost thou me, thy lover,
thus delude?

Or whither fli'st thou, of thy friend thus earnestly
pursued?

Iwis, I neither am so foul nor yet so grown in
years

That in this wise thou should'st me shun. To have
me to their feres

The nymphs themselves have sued ere this. And
yet, as should appear,

Thou dost pretend some kind of hope of
friendship by thy cheer.

For when I stretch mine arms to thee, thou
stretchest thine likewise;

And if I smile, thou smilest too. And when that
from mine eyes

The tears do drop, I well perceive the water
stands in thine.

Like gesture also dost thou make to every beck of
mine.

580

And, as by moving of thy sweet and lovely lips I
ween,

Thou speakest words, although mine ears
conceive not what they been.

It is myself, I well perceive! It is mine image sure
That, in this sort deluding me, this fury doth
procure!

I am enamoured of myself; I do both set on fire
And am the same that swelteth too through
impotent desire.

What shall I do? Be wooed or woo? Whom shall I
woo therefore?

The thing I seek is in myself; my plenty makes
me poor.

O would to God I for a while might from my
body part!

This wish is strange to hear – a lover wrapped all
in smart

590

To wish away the thing the which he loveth as
his heart!

My sorrow takes away my strength. I have not
long to live

But in the flower of youth must die. To die it
doth not grieve,

For that by death shall come the end of all my
grief and pain.

I would this youngling whom I love might lenger
life obtain,

For in one soul shall now decay we steadfast
lovers twain.'

This said, in rage he turns again unto the
foresaid shade

And rores the water with the tears and
slobbering that he made,

That through his troubling of the well his
image gan to fade.

Which when he saw to vanish so, 'O whither dost
thou fly?

600

Abide, I pray thee heartily,' aloud he gan to cry.

'Forsake me not so cruelly that loveth thee so
dear,

But give me leave a little while my dazzled eyes
to cheer

With sight of that which for to touch is utterly
denied,

Thereby to feed my wretched rage and fury for a
tide.'

As in this wise he made his moan, he strippèd off
his coat

And with his fist outrageously his naked stomach
smote.

A ruddy colour where he smote rose on his
stomach sheer,

Like apples which do partly white and stripèd
red appear

Or as the clusters, ere the grapes to ripeness fully
come,

610

An orient purple here and there begins to grow
on some.

Which things as soon as in the spring he did
 behold again,
He could no longer bear it out but, fainting
 straight for pain,
As lithe and supple wax doth melt against the
 burning flame
Or morning dew against the sun that glareth on
 the same,
Even so by piecemeal, being spent and wasted
 through desire,
Did he consume and melt away with Cupid's
 secret fire.
His lively hue of white and red, his cheerfulness
 and strength
And all the things that likèd him did wanze away
 at length,
So that in fine remainèd not the body which of
 late
The wretched Echo loved so. Who, when she saw
 his state,
Although in heart she angry were and mindful of
 his pride,
Yet ruing his unhappy case, as often as he cried,
'Alas!' she cried, 'Alas!' likewise with shirl
 redoubled sound.
And when he beat his breast or strake his feet
 against the ground
She made like noise of clapping too. These are
 the words that last
Out of his lips, beholding still his wonted image,
 passed:
'Alas, sweet boy, beloved in vain, farewell!' And
 by and by

630

With sighing sound the selfsame words the Echo
did reply.

With that he laid his weary head against the
grassy place,

And death did close his gazing eyes that
wondered at the grace

And beauty which did late adorn their master's
heavenly face.

And afterward, when into hell received was his
sprite,

He goes me to the well of Styx and there both
day and night

Stands tooting on his shadow still as fondly as
before.

The waternymphs, his sisters, wept and wailed
for him sore

And on his body strewed their hair clipped off
and shorn therefore.

The woodnymphs also did lament, and Echo did
rebound

To every sorrowful noise of theirs with like
lamenting sound.

The fire was made to burn the corse and waxen
tapers light;

640

A hearse to lay the body on with solemn pomp
was dight.

But as for body, none remained. Instead thereof
they found

A yellow flower with milk-white leaves new
sprung upon the ground.

Pentheus
scorns

This matter all Achaia through did spread the
prophet's fame,

Bacchus

650

That everywhere of just desert renowned was
his name.
But Penthey, old Echion's son, who proudly did
d disdain
Both god and man, did laugh to scorn the
prophet's words as vain,
Upbraiding him most spitefully with losing of his
sight
And with the fact for which he lost fruition of
this light.
The good old father (for these words his patience
much did move)
Said, 'O, how happy should'st thou be and
blessed from above
If thou wert blind as well as I, so that thou might
not see
The sacred rites of Bacchus' band! For sure the
time will be,
And that full shortly, as I guess, that hither shall
resort
Another Bacchus, Semel's son, whom if thou not
support
With pomp and honour like a god, thy carcass
shall be tattered
And in a thousand places eke about the woods be
scattered.
And for to read thee what they are that shall
perform the deed,
It is thy mother and thine aunts that thus shall
make thee bleed.

660

I know it shall so come to pass, for why thou
shalt disdain

To honour Bacchus as a god; and then thou shalt
with pain

Feel how that, blinded as I am, I saw for thee too
much.'

As old Tiresias did pronounce these words and
other such,

Echion's son did trouble him. His words prove
true indeed,

For, as the prophet did forespeak, so fell it out
with speed.

Anon this new-found Bacchus comes. The woods
and fields rebound

With noise of shouts and howling out and such
confused sound.

The folk run flocking out by heaps, men, maids
and wives together;

The noblemen and rascal sort ran gadding also
thither

The orgies of this unknown god full fondly to
perform.

670

The which when Penthey did perceive, he gan to
rage and storm

And said unto them, 'O ye imps of Mars his
snake by kind,

What aileth you? What fiend of hell doth thus
enrage your mind?

Hath tinkling sound of pots and pans, hath noise
of crookèd horn,

Have fond illusions such a force that them whom
heretofore

No arming sword, no bloody trump, no men in
battle ray

Could cause to shrink, now sheepish shrieks of
simple women fray

And drunken woodness wrought by wine and
rouths of filthy frekes

And sound of toying tympan daunts and quite
their courage breaks?

Shall I at you, ye ancient men which from the
town of Tyre

680

To bring your household gods by sea in safety
did aspire

And settled them within this place, the which ye
now do yield

In bondage quite without all force and fighting
in the field?

Or wonder at you younger sort, approaching
unto me

More near in courage and in years, whom meet it
were to see

With spear and not with thyse in hand, with
glittering helm on head

And not with leaves? Now call to mind of whom
ye all are bred

And take the stomachs of that snake which,
being one alone,

Right stoutly in his own defence confounded
many one.

He for his harbour and his spring his life did
nobly spend;

690

Do you no more but take a heart your country to
defend.

He put to death right valiant knights; your battle
is with such
As are but meacocks in effect. And yet ye do so
much
In conquering them that by the deed the old
renown ye save
Which from your fathers by descent this present
time ye have.
If fatal Destinies do forbid that Thebe long shall
stand,
Would God that men with cannon-shot might
raze it out of hand!
Would God the noise of fire and sword did in our
hearing sound,
For then in this our wretchedness there could no
fault be found!
Then might we justly wail our case that all the
world might see;
We should not need of shedding tears ashamed
for to be.
But now our town is taken by a naked beardless
boy
Who doth not in the feats of arms nor horse nor
armour joy,
But for to moist his hair with myrrh and put on
garlands gay
And in soft purple silk and gold his body to
array.
But put to you your helping hand, and straight
without delay
I will compel him point by point his lewdness to
bewray,

710

Both in usurping Jove's high name in making
him his son

And forging of these ceremonies lately now
begun.

Hath King Acrisius heart enough this fondling for
to hate

That makes himself to be a god, and for to shut
the gate

Of Argos at his coming there? And shall this
rover make

King Penthey and the noble town of Thebe thus
to quake?

Go quickly, sirs' – these words he spake unto his
servants – 'Go

And bring the captain hither bound with speed.
Why stay ye so?'

His grandsire, Cadmus, Athamas and others
of his kin

Reproved him by gentle means, but nothing
could they win.

The more entreatance that they made, the fiercer
was he still;

The more his friends did go about to break him
of his will,

The more they did provoke his wrath and set his
rage on fire.

720

They made him worse in that they sought to
bridle his desire.

So have I seen a brook ere this, where nothing
let the stream,

Run smooth with little noise or none; but
whereas any beam

Or craggèd stones did let his course and make
him for to stay,
It went more fiercely from the stop with foamy
wrath away.
Behold, all bloody come his men, and straight he
them demanded
Where Bacchus was and why they had not done
as he commanded.
'Sir,' answered they, 'we saw him not; but this
same fellow here,
A chief companion in his train and worker in this
gear,
We took by force,' and therewithal presented to
their lord
A certain man of Tyrrhene land, his hands fast
bound with cord
Whom they frequenting Bacchus' rites had found
but late before.
A grim and cruel look, which ire did make to
seem more sore,
Did Penthey cast upon the man. And though he
scarcely stayed
From putting him to torments straight, 'O
wretched man,' he said,
'Who by thy worthy death shalt be a sample unto
other,
Declare to me the names of thee, thy father and
thy mother,
And in what country thou wert born, and what
hath causèd thee
Of these strange rites and sacrifice a follower for
to be.'

*The story of
Acoetes*

He, void of fear, made answer thus: 'Acoetes
is my name.

Of parents but of low degree in Lydy land I
came.

No ground for painful ox to till, no sheep to bear
me wool

My father left me; no, nor horse, nor ass, nor
cow, nor bull.

God wot, he was but poor himself. With line and
baited hook

The frisking fishes in the pools upon his reed he
took.

His hands did serve instead of lands; his
substance was his craft.

Now have I made you true account of all that he
me left

As well of riches as of trades, in which I was his
heir

And successor. For when that death bereft him
use of air,

Save water he me nothing left. It is the thing
alone

750

Which for my lawful heritage I claim, and other
none.

Soon after, I (because that loath I was to aye
abide

In that poor state) did learn a ship by cunning
hand to guide

And for to know the rainy sign that hight
th'Olenian Goat

Which with her milk did nourish Jove. And also I
did note

The Pleiads and the Hyads moist and eke the
silly Plough

With all the dwellings of the winds that make the
seas so rough,

And eke such havens as are meet to harbour
vessels in

With every star and heavenly sign that guides to
shipmen been.

Now as by chance I late ago did toward Delos
sail,

760

I came on coast of Scios Isle and, seeing day to
fail,

Took harbour there and went a-land. As soon as
that the night

Was spent and morning gan to peer with ruddy
glaring light,

I rose and bade my company fresh water fetch
aboard.

And, pointing them the way that led directly to
the ford,

I went me to a little hill and viewèd round about
To see what weather we were like to have ere
setting out.

Which done, I called my watermen and all my
mates together

And willed them all to go aboard, myself first
going thither.

“Lo, here we are!” Opheltes said (he was the
master's mate)

770

And, as he thought, a booty found in desert fields
alate,

He dragged a boy upon his hand that for his
beauty sheen

A maiden rather than a boy appeared for to
been.

This child, as one forlaid with wine and dreint
with drowsy sleep,

Did reel as though he scarcely could himself
from falling keep.

I marked his count'nance, weed and pace; no
inkling could I see

By which I might conjecture him a mortal wight
to be.

I thought, and to my fellows said, "What god I
cannot tell,

But in this body that we see some godhead sure
doth dwell.

What god so ever that thou art, thy favour to us
show

And in our labours us assist and pardon these
also."

"Pray for thyself and not for us," quoth Dictys by
and by.

(A nimbler fellow for to climb upon the mast on
high

And by the cable down to slide there was not in
our keel).

Swart Melanth, patron of the ship, did like his
saying well;

So also did Alcimedon, and so did Libys too,

And black Epopeus eke, whose charge it did
belong unto

To see the rowers at their times their duties duly
do.

And so did all the rest of them; so sore men's
eyes were blinded

Where covetousness of filthy gain is more than
reason minded.

790

“Well, sirs,” quoth I, “but by your leave ye shall
not have it so;

I will not suffer sacrilege within this ship to go,
For I have here the most to do.” And with that
word I stepped

Upon the hatches, all the rest from entrance to
have kept.

The rankest ruffian of the rout that Lycab had to
name

(Who, for a murder being late driven out of
Tuscan, came

To me for succour) waxèd wood and with his
sturdy fist

Did give me such a churlish blow because I did
resist

That overboard he had me sent, but that with
much ado

I caught the tackling in my hand and held me
fast thereto.

800

The wicked varlets had a sport to see me handled
so.

Then Bacchus (for it Bacchus was), as though he
had but tho

Been waked with their noise from sleep and that
his drowsy brain,

Discharged of the wine, begun to gather sense
again,

Said, “What ado? What noise is this? How came I
here, I pray?

Sirs, tell me whither you do mean to carry me
away.”

“Fear not, my boy,” the patron said. “No more
but tell me where

Thou dost desire to go a-land, and we will set
thee there.”

“To Naxosward,” quoth Bacchus tho, “set ship
upon the foam.

There would I have harbour take, for Naxos is
my home.”

810

Like perjured caitiffs by the sea and all the gods
thereof

They falsely sware it should be so, and
therewithal in scoff

They bade me hoise up sail and go. Upon the
righter hand

I cast about to fetch the wind, for so did Naxos
stand.

“What mean'st? Art mad?” Opheltes cried, and
therewithal begun

A fear of losing of their prey through every man
to run.

The greater part with head and hand a sign did
to me make,

And some did whisper in mine ear the left hand
way to take.

I was amazed and said, “Take charge henceforth
who will for me;

For of your craft and wickedness I will no
furtherer be.”

820

Then fell they to reviling me, and all the rout
gan grudge,

Of which Aethalion said in scorn, “Belike in you,
Sir Snudge,

Consists the safeguard of us all.” And with that
word he takes

My room and, leaving Naxos quite, to other
countries makes.

The god then, dallying with these mates, as
though he had at last

Begun to smell their subtle craft, out of the
foredeck cast

His eye upon the sea; and then, as though he
seemed to weep,

Said, “Sirs, to bring me on this coast ye do not
promise keep.

I see that this is not the land the which I did
request.

For what occasion in this sort deserve I to be
dressed?

830

What commendation can you win or praise
thereby receive

If men a lad, if many one ye compass to
deceive?”

I wept and sobbed all this while; the wicked
villains laughed

And rowed forth with might and main as though
they had been straight.

Now even by him (for sure than he in all the
world so wide

There is no god more near at hand at every time
and tide)

I swear unto you that the things the which I shall
declare,

Like as they seem incredible, even so most true
they are.

840

The ship stood still amid the sea as in a dusty
dock.

They, wondering at this miracle and making but
a mock,

Persist in beating with their oars and on with all
their sails;

To make their galley to remove no art nor labour
fails.

But ivy troubled so their oars that forth they
could not row,

And both with berries and with leaves their sails
did overgrow.

And he himself with clustered grapes about his
temple round

Did shake a javelin in his hand that round about
was bound

With leaves of vines; and at his feet there seemed
for to couch

Of tigers, lynx and panthers shapes most ugly for
to touch.

I cannot tell you whether fear or woodness were
the cause,

But every person leapeth up and from his labour
draws.

850

And there one Medon first of all began to waxen
black

And, having lost his former shape, did take a
curbèd back.

“What monster shall we have of thee?” quoth
Lycab. And with that

This Lycab's chaps did waxen wide, his nostrils
waxed flat,

His skin waxed tough and scales thereon began
anon to grow.
And Libys, as he went about the oars away to
throw,
Perceived how his hands did shrink and were
become so short
That now for fins and not for hands he might
them well report.
Another, as he would have clasped his arm about
the cord,
Had ne'er an arm. And so, bemaïmed in body,
overboard
He leapeth down among the waves; and forkèd is
his tail,
As are the horns of Phoebe's face when half her
light doth fail.
They leap about and sprinkle up much water on
the ship;
One while they swim above, and down again
anon they slip.
They fetch their frisks as in a dance, and
wantonly they writhe
Now here, now there, among the waves their
bodies bain and lithe.
And with their wide and hollow nose the water
in they snuff,
And by their noses out again as fast they do it
puff.
Of twenty persons (for our ship so many men did
bear)
I only did remain, nigh straught and trembling
still for fear.

870

The god could scarce recomfort me, and yet he
said, "Go to,
Fear not, but sail to Diaward." His will I gladly
do.

And so as soon as I came there, with right devout
intent

His chaplain I became; and thus his orgies I
frequent.'

*The death of
Pentheus*

'Thou mak'st a process very long', quoth
Pentheus, 'to th'intent

That, choler being cooled by time, mine
anger might relent.

But, sirs' (he spake it to his men), 'go take him
by and by;

With cruel torments out of hand go cause him for
to die.'

Immediately they led away Acoetes out of sight
And put him into prison strong from which there
was no flight.

880

But while the cruel instruments of death, as
sword and fire,

Were in preparing wherewithal t'accomplish
Pentheus's ire,

It is reported that the doors did of their own
accord

Burst open and his chains fall off. And yet this
cruel lord

Persisteth fiercer than before, not bidding others
go,

But goes himself unto the hill Cithaeron, which
as tho,

To Bacchus being consecrate, did ring of chanted
songs

And other loud confusèd sounds of Bacchus'
drunken throngs.

And even as, when the bloody trump doth to the
battle sound,

The lusty horse, straight neighing out, bestirs
him on the ground

890 And taketh courage thereupon t'assail his enemy
proud;

Even so, when Penthey heard afar the noise and
howling loud

That Bacchus' frantic folk did make, it set his
heart on fire

And kindled fiercer than before the sparks of
settled ire.

There is a goodly plain about the middle of
the hill,

Environed in with woods, where men may
view each way at will.

Here looking on these holy rites with lewd
profanèd eyes

King Penthey's mother first of all her foresaid son
espies,

And like a bedlam first of all she doth upon him
run,

And with her javelin furiously she first doth
wound her son.

900 'Come hither, sisters, come!' she cries, 'Here is
that mighty boar;

Here is the boar that stroys our fields; him will I
strike therefore.'

With that they fall upon him all as though they
had been mad

And, clustering all upon a heap, fast after him
they gad.

He quakes and shakes; his words are now
become more meek and cold;

He now condemns his own default and says he
was too bold.

And, wounded as he was, he cries, 'Help, Aunt
Autonoë!

Now for Actaeon's blessed soul some mercy show
to me!'

She wist not who Actaeon was, but rent without
delay

His right hand off; and Ino tare his t'other hand
away.

910

To lift unto his mother tho the wretch had ne'er
an arm;

But, showing her his maimed corse and wounds
yet bleeding warm,

'O mother, see!' he says. With that Agave
howleth out

And writhed with her neck awry and shook her
hair about

And, holding (from his body torn) his head in
bloody hands,

She cries, 'O fellows, in this deed our noble
conquest stands.'

No sooner could the wind have blown the rotten
leaves fro trees

When winter's frost hath bitten them, than did
the hands of these

Most wicked women Penthey's limbs from one
another tear.

The Thebans, being now by this example brought
in fear,

Frequent this new-found sacrifice and with sweet
frankincense

God Bacchus' altars load with gifts in every place
do cense.

FINIS TERTII LIBRI.

The Fourth Book of Ovid's Metamorphoses

The daughters of Minyas Yet would not stout Alcithoë Duke Minyas'
daughter, bow

The orgies of this new-found god in conscience
to allow.

But still she stiffly doth deny that Bacchus is the
son

Of Jove; and in this heresy her sisters with her
run.

The priest had bidden holiday, and that as well
the maid

As mistress (for the time aside all other business
laid)

In buckskin coats with tresses loose and
garlands on their hair

Should in their hands the leafy spears surnamed
thyrses bear,

Foretelling them that, if they did the god's
commandment break,

10 He would with sore and grievous plagues his
wrath upon them wreak.

The women straight, both young and old, do
thereunto obey.

Their yarn, their baskets and their flax unspun
aside they lay

And burn to Bacchus frankincense whom
solemn they call

By all the names and titles high that may to him
befall:

As Bromius and Lyaeus eke, begotten of the
flame,

Twice born, the sole and only child that of two
mothers came;

Unshorn Thyony, Nyseus, Lenaeus and the
setter

Of vines whose pleasant liquor makes all tables
fare the better;

Nyctelius and th'Elelean sire, Iacchus, Euan
eke,

20

With divers other glorious names that through
the land of Greek

To thee, O Liber, wonted are to attributed be.

Thy youthful years can never waste; there
dwelleth aye in thee

A childhood tender, fresh and fair. In heaven
we do thee see

Surmounting every other thing in beauty and in
grace;.

And when thou stand'st without thy horns, thou
hast a maiden's face.

To thee obeyeth all the east as far as Ganges
goes,

Which doth the scorched land of Inde with
tawny folk enclose.

Lycurgus with his twibill sharp and Penthey,
who of pride

Thy godhead and thy mighty power rebelliously
denied,

30

Thou, right redoubted, did'st confound; thou
into sea did'st send

The Tyrrhene shipmen. Thou with bits the
sturdy necks dost bend
Of spotted lynxes; throngs of frows and satyrs
on thee tend,
And that old hag that with a staff his staggering
limbs doth stay,
Scarce able on his ass to sit for reeling every
way.
Thou comest not in any place but that is heard
the noise
Of gaggling women's tattling tongues and
shouting out of boys,
With sound of timbrels, tabors, pipes and
brazen pans and pots
Confusedly among the rout that in thine orgies
trots.
The Theban women for thy grace and favour
humbly sue
And, as the priest did bid, frequent thy rites
with reverence due.
Alonely Minyas' daughters, bent of wilfulness
with working
Quite out of time to break the feast, are in their
houses lurking
And there do fall to spinning yarn or weaving in
the frame
And keep their maidens to their work. Of which
one pleasant dame,
As she with nimble hand did draw her slender
thread and fine,
Said, 'While that others idly do serve the god of
wine,

Let us that serve a better saint, Minerva, find
some talk

To ease our labour while our hands about our
profit walk.

And for to make the time seem short, let each of
us recite

(As everybody's turn shall come) some tale that
may delight.'

Her saying liked the rest so well that all consent
therein,

And thereupon they pray that first the eldest
would begin.

She had such store and choice of tales she wist
not which to tell.

She doubted if she might declare the fortune
that befell

To Dercetis of Babylon, whom now with scaly
hide

In altered shape the Philistine believeth to
abide

In watery pools; or rather how her daughter,
taking wings,

In shape of dove on tops of towers in age now
sadly sings;

Or how a certain waternymph by witchcraft
and by charms

Converted into fishes dumb of young men many
swarms

Until that of the selfsame sauce herself did taste
at last;

Or how the tree that used to bear fruit white in
ages past

Doth now bear fruit in manner black, by
sprinkling up of blood.

This tale, because it was not stale nor common,
seemèd good

To her to tell; and thereupon she in this wise
begun,

Her bus hand still drawin out the flaxen thread
she sun:

Pyramus *and* 'Within the town of whose huge walls so
Thisbe monstrous high and thick

The fame is given Semiramis for making
them of brick,

Dwelt hard together two young folk in houses
joined so near

70 That under all one roof well nigh both twain
conveyèd were.

The name of him was Pyramus, and Thisbe
called was she.

So fair a man in all the east was none alive as
he,

Nor ne'er a woman, maid nor wife in beauty
like to her.

This neighbourhood bred acquaintance first;
this neighbourhood first did stir

The secret sparks; this neighbourhood first an
entrance in did show

For love to come to that to which it afterward
did grow.

And if that right had taken place they had been
man and wife,

But still their parents went about to let which
for their life

They could not let; for both their hearts with
equal flame did burn.

No man was privy to their thoughts and, for to
serve their turn,

Instead of talk they used signs. The closelier
they suppressed

The fire of love, the fiercer still it ragèd in their
breast.

The wall that arted house from house had riven
therein a cranny

Which shrunk at making of the wall. This fault,
not marked of any

Of many hundred years before (what doth not
love espy?),

These lovers first of all found out and made a
way whereby

To talk together secretly; and through the same
did go

Their loving whisperings very light and safely
to and fro.

Now as at one side Pyramus and Thisbe on the
t'other

Stood often drawing one of them the pleasant
breath from other,

“O thou envious wall,” they said, “why let'st
thou lovers thus?

What matter were it if that thou permitted both
of us

In arms each other to embrace? Or if thou think
that this

Were overmuch, yet mightest thou at least
make room to kiss.

And yet thou shalt not find us churls; we think
ourselves in debt

For this same piece of courtesy in vouching safe
to let

Our sayings to our friendly ears thus freely
come and go.”

Thus having where they stood in vain
complained of their woe,

When night drew near they bade adieu and
each gave kisses sweet

Unto the parget on their side, the which did
never meet.

Next morning with her cheerful light had driven
the stars aside,

And Phoebus with his burning beams the dewy
grass had dried.

These lovers at their wonted place by fore-
appointment met

Where, after much complaint and moan, they
covenanted to get

Away from such as watchèd them and in the
evening late

To steal out of their fathers' house and eke the
city gate.

And to th'intent that in the fields they strayed
not up and down,

They did agree at Ninus' tomb to meet without
the town

And tarry underneath a tree that by the same
did grow,

Which was a fair high mulberry with fruit as
white as snow

Hard by a cool and trickling spring. This
bargain pleased them both.
And so daylight, which to their thought away
but slowly go'th,
Did in the ocean fall to rest; and night from
thence doth rise.
As soon as darkness once was come, straight
Thisbe did devise
A shift to wind her out of doors, that none that
were within
Perceivèd her. And, muffling her with clothes
about her chin
That no man might discern her face, to Ninus'
tomb she came
Unto that tree and sat her down there
underneath the same.
Love made her bold. But see the chance: there
comes besmeared with blood
About the chaps a lioness all foaming from the
wood
From slaughter lately made of kine, to staunch
her bloody thirst
With water of the foresaid spring. Whom Thisbe
spying first
Afar by moonlight, thereupon with fearful steps
gan fly
And in a dark and irksome cave did hide herself
thereby.
And as she fled away for haste, she let her
mantle fall,
The which for fear she left behind, not looking
back at all.

Now when the cruel lioness her thirst had
staunchèd well,

In going to the wood she found the slender
weed that fell

From Thisbe, which with bloody teeth in pieces
she did tear.

The night was somewhat further spent ere
Pyramus came there;

Who, seeing in the subtle sand the print of lion's
paw,

Waxed pale for fear. But when also the bloody
cloak he saw

All rent and torn, "One night", he said, "shall
lovers two confound,

Of which long life deserved she of all that live
on ground.

My soul deserves of this mischance the peril for
to bear;

I, wretch, have been the death of thee, which to
this place of fear

Did cause thee in the night to come and came
not here before.

My wicked limbs and wretched guts with cruel
teeth therefore

Devour ye, O ye lions all that in this rock do
dwell!

But cowards use to wish for death." The slender
weed that fell

From Thisbe up he takes and straight doth bear
it to the tree

Which was appointed erst the place of meeting
for to be.

And when he had bewept and kissed the
garment which he knew,
“Receive thou my blood too,” quoth he. And
therewithal he drew
His sword, the which among his guts he thrust,
and by and by
Did draw it from the bleeding wound,
beginning for to die,
And cast himself upon his back. The blood did
spin on high
As, when a conduit pipe is cracked, the water,
bursting out,
Doth shoot itself a great way off and pierce the
air about.
The leaves that were upon the tree, besprinkled
with his blood,
Were dyed black. The root also, bestainèd as it
stood,
A deep dark purple colour straight upon the
berries cast.
Anon, scarce ridded of her fear with which she
was aghast,
For doubt of disappointing him comes Thisbe
forth in haste
And for her lover looks about, rejoicing for to
tell
How hardly she had scaped that night the
danger that befell.
And as she knew right well the place and
fashion of the tree
(As which she saw so late before), even so when
she did see

160

The colour of the berries turned, she was
uncertain whether

It were the tree at which they both agreed to
meet together.

While in this doubtful stound she stood, she
cast her eye aside

And there beweltered in his blood her lover she
espied

Lie sprawling with his dying limbs. At which
she started back

And lookèd pale as any box; a shuddering
through her strake,

Even like the sea which suddenly with whizzing
noise doth move

When with a little blast of wind it is but
touched above.

But when, approaching nearer him, she knew it
was her love,

She beat her breast, she shriekèd out she tare
her golden hairs

And, taking him between her arms, did wash
his wounds with tears.

170

She ment her weeping with his blood and,
kissing all his face

(Which now became as cold as ice), she cried in
woeful case,

“Alas! What chance, my Pyramus, hath parted
thee and me?

Make answer, O my Pyramus! It is thy Thisb,
even she

Whom thou dost love most heartily that
speaketh unto thee.

Give ear and raise thy heavy head.” He, hearing
Thisbe's name,
Lift up his dying eyes and, having seen her,
closed the same.
But when she knew her mantle there and saw
his scabbard lie
Without the sword, “Unhappy man, thy love
hath made thee die.
Thy love”, she said, “hath made thee slay
thyself. This hand of mine
Is strong enough to do the like. My love no less
than thine
Shall give me force to work my wound. I will
pursue the dead
And, wretched woman as I am, it shall of me be
said
That like as of thy death I was the only cause
and blame,
So am I thy companion eke and partner in the
same.
For death which only could, alas, asunder part
us twain
Shall never so dissever us but we will meet
again.
And you, the parents of us both, most wretched
folk alive,
Let this request that I shall make in both our
names belive
Entreat you to permit that we, whom chaste
and steadfast love
And whom even death hath joined in one, may
as it doth behove

In one grave be together laid. And thou,
 unhappy tree,
 Which shroudest now the corse of one and shalt
 anon through me
 Shroud two, of this same slaughter hold the
 sicker signs for aye:
 Black be the colour of thy fruit and mourning-
 like alway,
 Such as the murder of us twain may evermore
 bewray.”
 This said, she took the sword yet warm with
 slaughter of her love
 And, setting it beneath her breast, did to her
 heart it shove.
 Her prayer with the gods and with their parents
 took effect.
 For when the fruit is throughly ripe, the berry is
 bespecked
 With colour tending to a black; and that which
 after fire
 Remainedè rested in one tomb, as Thisbe did
 desire.'

200

Venus
Mars

and

This tale thus told, a little space of pausing
 was betwixt

And then began Leuconoe thus, her sisters
 being whist:

‘This sun that with his streaming light all
 worldly things doth cheer
 Was ta'en in love. Of Phoebus' loves now list
 and you shall hear.
 It is reported that this god did first of all espy

(For everything in heaven and earth is open to
his eye)

How Venus with the warlike Mars advoutery
did commit.

It grievèd him to see the fact and so discovered
it.

210

He showed her husband, Juno's son,
th'advoutery and the place

In which this privy scape was done; who was in
such a case

That heart and hand and all did fail in working
for a space.

Anon he featly forged a net of wire so fine and
slight

That neither knot nor noose therein apparent
was to sight.

This piece of work was much more fine than
any handwarp woof

Or that whereby the spider hangs in sliding
from the roof;

And, furthermore, the subtleness and sleight
thereof was such,

It followed every little pull and closed with
every touch.

And so he set it handsomely about the haunted
couch.

220

Now when that Venus and her mate were met
in bed together,

Her husband by his new-found snare, before
conveyed thither,

Did snarl them both together fast in midst of all
their play

And, setting ope the ivory doors, called all the
 gods straightway
To see them. They with shame enough fast
 locked together lay.
A certain god among the rest, disposed for to
 sport,
Did wish that he himself also were shamed in
 that sort;
The residue laughed. And so in heaven there
 was no talk awhile

Phoebus *and* But of this pageant, how the smith the lovers
Leucothoë did beguile.

230 'Dame Venus, highly stomaching this great
 displeasure, thought
 To be revenged on the part by whom the
 spite was wrought.
And like as he her secret loves and meetings
 had bewrayed,
So she with wound of raging love his guerdon
 to him paid.
What now avails, Hyperion's son, thy form and
 beauty bright?
What now avail thy glistering eyes with clear
 and piercing sight?
For thou that with thy gleams art wont all
 countries for to burn
Art burnt thyself with other gleams that serve
 not for thy turn.
And thou that ought'st thy cheerful look on all
 things for to show
Alonely on Leucothoë dost now the same
 bestow.

Thou fast'nest on that maid alone the eyes that
thou dost owe

To all the world. Sometime more rathe thou
risest in the east;

Sometime again thou mak'st it late before thou
fall to rest.

And for desire to look on her, thou often dost
prolong

Our winter nights, and in thy light thou failest
eke among.

The fancy of thy faulty mind infects thy feeble
sight,

And so thou mak'st men's hearts afraid by
daunting of thy light.

Thou look'st not pale because the globe of
Phoebe is between

The earth and thee, but love doth cause this
colour to be seen.

Thou lovest this Leucothoë so far above all
other

That neither now for Clymene, for Rhodos, nor
the mother

Of Circe, nor for Clytië (who at that present
tide,

Rejected from thy company, did for thy love
abide

Most grievous torments in her heart) thou
seemest for to care.

Thou mindest her so much that all the rest
forgotten are.

Her mother was Eurynome, of all the fragrant
clime

Of Araby esteemed the flower of beauty in her
time.

But when her daughter came to age, the
daughter passed the mother

As far in beauty as before the mother passed all
other.

Her father was King Orchamus and ruled the
public weal

Of Persey, counted by descent the seventh from
ancient Bele.

260

Far underneath the western clime of Hesperus
do run

The pastures of the fiery steeds that draw the
golden sun.

There are they fed with ambrosy instead of
grass all night,

Which doth refresh their weary limbs and
keepeth them in plight

To bear their daily labour out. Now while the
steeds there take

Their heavenly food and night by turn his
timely course doth make,

The god, disguisèd in the shape of Queen
Eurynome,

Doth press within the chamber door of fair
Leucothoë,

His lover, whom amid twelve maids he found
by candlelight

Yet spinning on her little rock, and went me to
her right

270

And, kissing her as mothers use to kiss their
daughters dear,

Said, "Maids, withdraw yourselves a while and
sit not listening here.

I have a secret thing to talk." The maids avoid
each one.

The god then, being with his love in chamber
all alone,

Said, "I am he that metes the year, that all
things do behold,

By whom the earth doth all things see, the eye
of all the world.

Trust me, I am in love with thee." The lady was
so nipped

With sudden fear that from her hands both rock
and spindle slipped.

Her fear became her wondrous well. He made
no mo delays

But turned to his proper shape and took his
glistering rays.

The damsel, being sore abashed at this so
strange a sight

And overcome with sudden fear to see the god
so bright,

Did make no outcry nor no noise, but held her
patience still

And suffered him by forced power his pleasure
to fulfil.

'Hereat did Clytie sore repine, for she
beyond all measure

Was then enamoured of the sun. And stung
with this displeasure

That he another leman had, for very spite and
ire

She plays the blab and doth defame Leucothoe
to her sire.

He, cruel and unmerciful, would no excuse
accept,

But holding up her hands to heaven when
tenderly she wept

And said it was the sun that did the deed
against her will,

Yet like a savage beast full bent his daughter for
to spill

He put her deep in delvèd ground and on her
body laid

A. huge great heap of heavy sand. The sun, full
ill apaid,

Did with his beams disperse the sand and made
an open way

To bring thy buried face to light; but such a
weight there lay

Upon thee that thou could'st not raise thine
hand aloft again,

And so a corse both void of blood and life thou
did'st remain.

There never chanced since Phaeton's fire a thing
that grieved so sore

The ruler of the wingèd steeds as this did. And
therefore

He did attempt if by the force and virtue of his
ray

He might again to lively heat her frozen limbs
convey.

But for as much as destiny so great attempts
denies,

*The
transformation
of Clytie*

He sprinkles both the corse itself and place
wherein it lies

With fragrant nectar and therewith, bewailing
much his chance,

Said, "Yet above the starry sky thou shalt
thyself advance."

Anon the body, in this heavenly liquor steepèd
well,

Did melt and moisted all the earth with sweet
and pleasant smell.

And by and by, first taking root among the
clods within,

By little and by little did with growing top
begin

A pretty spirk of frankincense above the tomb
to win.

'Although that Clytie might excuse her
sorrow by her love

And seem that so to play the blab her
sorrow did her move,

Yet would the author of the light resort to her
no more,

But did withhold the pleasant sports of Venus
used before.

The nymph, not able of herself the frantic fume
to stay,

With restless care and pensiveness did pine
herself away.

Bare-headed, on the bare, cold ground with
flaring hair unkempt

320

She sat abroad both night and day and clearly
did exempt

Herself by space of thrice three days from
sustenance and repast,

Save only dew and save her tears with which
she brake her fast.

And in that while she never rose, but stared on
the sun

And ever turned her face to his as he his course
did run.

Her limbs stick fast within the ground, and all
her upper part

Did to a pale ash-coloured herb clean void of
blood convert,

The flower whereof, part red, part white,
beshadowed with a blue,

Most like a violet in the shape, her countenance
overgrew.

And now, though fastened with a root, she
turns her to the sun

And keeps in shape of herb the love with which
she first begun.'

She made an end; and at her tale all
wondered. Some denied

330

Her saying to be possible, and other some
replied

That such as are indeed true gods may all
things work at will,

But Bacchus is not any such. This arguing once
made still,

To tell her tale as others had Alcithoe's turn was
come

Who, with her shuttle shooting through her web
within the loom,
Said, 'Of the shepherd Daphnis' love of Ida,
whom erewhile
A jealous nymph, because he did with lemans
her beguile,
For anger turned to a stone (such fury love doth
send!),
I will not speak; it is to know. Ne yet I do
intend
To tell how Scithon, variably digressing from
his kind,
Was sometime woman, sometime man, as likèd
best his mind.
And Celmis also will I pass, who for because he
clung
Most faithfully to Jupiter when Jupiter was
young
Is now become an adamant. So will I pass this
hour
To show you how the Curets were engendered
of a shower;
Or how that Crocus and his love, fair Smilax,
turnèd were
To little flowers. With pleasant news your
minds now will I cheer.
Learn why the fountain Salmacis diffamèd is of
yore,
Why with his waters overstrong it weakeneth
men so sore
That whoso bathes him there comes thence a
perfect man no more.

350

The operation of this well is known to every
wight,

But few can tell the cause thereof, the which I
will recite.

*Salmacis and
Hermaphroditus*

‘The waternymphs did nurse a son of
Mercury's in Ide

Begot on Venus, in whose face such beauty
did abide

As well therein his father both and mother
might be known,

Of whom he also took his name. As soon as he
was grown

To fifteen years of age, he left the country
where he dwelt

And Ida that had fostered him. The pleasure
that he felt

To travel countries and to see strange rivers
with the state

Of foreign lands all painfulness of travel did
abate.

360

Through Lycy land he travellèd to Cary, that
doth bound

Next unto Lycia. There he saw a pool which to
the ground

Was crystal clear. No fenny sedge, no barren
reek, no reed

Nor rush with pricking point was there, nor
other moorish weed.

The water was so pure and sheer, a man might
well have seen

And numbered all the gravel stones that in the
bottom been.

370

The utmost borders from the brim environed
were with clowres

Beclad with herbs aye fresh and green and
pleasant smelling flowers.

A nymph did haunt this goodly pool, but such a
nymph as neither

To hunt, to run, nor yet to shoot had any kind
of pleasure.

Of all the waterfairies she alonely was unknown

To swift Diana. As the bruit of fame abroad
hath blown,

Her sisters oftentimes would say, "Take
lightsome dart or bow

And in some painful exercise thine idle time
bestow."

But never could they her persuade to run, to
shoot or hunt

Or any other exercise, as Phoebe's knights are
wont.

Sometime her fair, well-formèd limbs she
batheth in her spring;

Sometime she down her golden hair with boxen
comb doth bring.

And at the water as a glass she taketh counsel
aye

How everything becometh her. Erewhile in fine
array

380

On soft sweet herbs or soft green leaves herself
she nicely lays;

Erewhile again a-gathering flowers from place
to place she strays.

And, as it chanced, the selfsame time she was a-
 sorting gays
To make a posy when she first the young man
 did espy
And, in beholding him, desired to have his
 company.
But though she thought she stood on thorns
 until she went to him,
Yet went she not before she had bedecked her
 neat and trim
And pried and peered upon her clothes that
 nothing sat awry
And framed her count'nance as might seem
 most amorous to the eye.
 'Which done, she thus begun: "O child most
 worthy for to be
 Esteemed and taken for a god, if (as thou
 seem'st to me)
 Thou be a god, to Cupid's name thy beauty
 doth agree.
Or if thou be a mortal wight, right happy folk
 are they
By whom thou cam'st into this world; right
 happy is, I say,
Thy mother and thy sister too, if any be; good
 hap
That woman had that was thy nurse and gave
 thy mouth her pap.
But far above all other, far more blest than
 these is she
Whom thou vouchsafest for thy wife and
 bedfellow for to be.

400

Now, if thou have already one, let me by stealth
obtain

That which shall pleasure both of us. Or if thou
do remain

A maiden free from wedlock bond, let me then
be thy spouse

And let us in the bridely bed ourselves together
rouse.”

‘This said, the nymph did hold her peace,
and therewithal the boy

Waxed red; he wist not what love was. And
sure it was a joy

To see it, how exceeding well his blushing him
became.

For in his face the colour fresh appeared like
the same

That is in apples which do hang upon the sunny
side;

Or ivory shadowed with a red; or such as is
espied

Of white and scarlet colours mixed appearing in
the moon

When folk in vain with sounding brass would
ease unto her doon.

410

When at the last the nymph desired most
instantly but this,

As to his sister brotherly to give her there a
kiss,

And therewithal was clasping him about the
ivory neck,

“Leave off”, quoth he, “or I am gone and leave
thee at a beck

With all thy tricks." Then Salmacis began to be
afraid
And, "To your pleasure leave I free this place,
my friend," she said.
With that she turns her back as though she
would have gone her way;
But evermore she looketh back and, closely as
she may,
She hides her in a bushy queach where,
kneeling on her knee,
She always hath her eye on him. He, as a child
and free
And thinking not that any wight had watched
what he did,
Roams up and down the pleasant mead. And by
and by amid
The flattering waves he dips his feet, no more
but first the sole,
And to the ankles afterward both feet he
plungeth whole.
And, for to make the matter short, he took so
great delight
In coolness of the pleasant spring that straight
he strippèd quite
His garments from his tender skin. When
Salmacis beheld
His naked beauty, such strong pangs so ardently
her held
That utterly she was astraught; and even as
Phoebus' beams
Against a mirror pure and clear rebound with
broken gleams,

430

Even so her eyes did sparkle fire. Scarce could
she tarriance make;

Scarce could she any time delay her pleasure
for to take.

She would have run and in her arms embraced
him straightway;

She was so far beside herself that scarcely could
she stay.

He, clapping with his hollow hands against his
naked sides,

Into the water lithe and bairn with arms
displayed glides

And, rowing with his hands and legs, swims in
the water clear

Through which his body fair and white doth
glisteringly appear,

As if a man an ivory image or a lily white

Should overlay or close with glass that were
most pure and bright.

440

‘ “The prize is won,” cried Salmacis aloud;
“he is mine own.”

And therewithal in all post haste she, having
lightly thrown

Her garments off, flew to the pool and cast her
thereinto

And caught him fast between her arms for
aught that he could do.

Yea, maugre all his wrestling and his struggling
to and fro,

She held him still and kissed him a hundred
times and mo

And, willed he, nilled he, with her hands she
touched his naked breast.

450

And now on this side, now on that, for all he
did resist

And strive to wrest him from her gripes, she
clung unto him fast

And wound about him like a snake which,
snatched up in haste

And being by the prince of birds borne lightly
up aloft,

Doth writhe herself about his neck and griping
talons oft

And cast her tail about his wings displayed in
the wind;

Or like as ivy runs on trees about the utter rind;
Or as the crabfish, having caught his enemy in
the seas,

Doth clasp him in on every side with all his
crooked clees.

‘But Atlas’ nephew still persists and utterly
denies

The nymph to have her hoped sport; she
urges him likewise

And, pressing him with all her weight, fast
cleaving to him still,

“Strive, struggle, wrest and writhe,” she said,
“thou froward boy, thy fill;

460

Do what thou canst, thou shalt not scape. Ye
gods of heaven, agree

That this same wilful boy and I may never
parted be.”

The gods were pliant to her boon. The bodies of
them twain

Were mixed and joined both in one; to both
them did remain

One count'nance. Like as if a man should in one
bark behold
Two twigs both growing into one and still
together hold,
Even so, when through her hugging and her
grasping of the t'other
The members of them mingled were and
fastened both together,
They were not any lenger two but, as it were, a
toy
Of double shape. Ye could not say it was a
perfect boy
Nor perfect wench; it seemed both and none of
both to been.
Now when Hermaphroditus saw how in the
water sheen,
To which he entered in a man, his limbs were
weakened so
That out fro thence but half a man he was
compelled to go,
He lifteth up his hands and said (but not with
manly rere),
"O noble father Mercury and Venus mother
dear,
This one petition grant your son which both
your names doth bear,
That whoso comes within this well may so be
weakened there
That of a man but half a man he may fro thence
retire."
Both parents, movèd with the chance, did
stablish this desire

480

The which their double-shapèd son had made,
and thereupon

Infected with an unknown strength the sacred
spring anon.'

The

Their tales did end, and Minyas' daughters
still their business ply

transformation

of Minyas'

daughters

In spite of Bacchus, whose high feast they
break contemptuously,

When on the sudden, seeing nought, they heard
about them round

Of tubbish timbrels perfectly a hoarse and
jarring sound

With shreaming shawms and jingling bells; and
furthermore they felt

A scent of saffron and of myrrh that very hotly
smelt.

And (which a man would ill believe) the web
they had begun

Immediately waxed fresh and green; the flax
the which they spun

490

Did flourish full of ivy leaves, and part thereof
did run

Abroad in vines. The thread itself in branches
forth did spring;

Young burgeons full of clustered grapes their
distaffs forth did bring.

And as the web they wrought was dyed a deep
dark purple hue,

Even so upon the painted grapes the self same
colour grew.

500

The day was spent, and now was come the time
which neither night

Nor day, but even the bound of both a man may
term of right.

The house at sudden seemed to shake, and all
about it shine

With burning lamps, and glittering fires to flash
before their eyen,

And likenesses of ugly beasts with ghastful
noises yelled.

For fear whereof in smoky holes the sisters were
compelled

To hide their heads, one here and there
another, for to shun

The glistering light. And while they thus in
corners blindly run,

Upon their little pretty limbs a fine crisp film
there goes,

And slender fins instead of hands their
shortened arms enclose.

But how they lost their former shape, of
certainty to know

The darkness would not suffer them. No
feathers on them grow,

And yet with sheer and vellum wings they
hover from the ground.

And when they go about to speak they make
but little sound,

According as their bodies give, bewailing their
despite

510

By chirping shrilly to themselves. In houses
they delight

And not in woods. Detesting day, they flitter
towards night;
Wherethrough they of the evening late in Latin
take their name,
And we in English language bats or rearmice
call the same.

*Juno visits the
Furies*

Then Bacchus' name was revered through
all the Theban coast,

And Ino of her nephew's power made
everywhere great boast.
Of Cadmus' daughters she alone no sorrows
tasted had,
Save only that her sisters' haps perchance had
made her sad.
Now Juno, noting how she waxed both proud
and full of scorn,
As well by reason of the sons and daughters she
had borne
As also that she was advanced by marriage in
that town
To Athamas, Kin Aeolus' son, a prince of great
renown,
But chiefly that her sister's son who nursèd was
by her
Was then exalted for a god, began thereat to stir
And, fretting at it in herself, said, 'Could this
harlot's burd
Transform the Lydian watermen and drown
them in the ford?
And make the mother tear the guts in pieces of
her son?

And Minyas' all three daughters clad with
wings, because they spun

Whiles others, howling, up and down like
frantic folk did run?

And can I, Juno, nothing else save sundry woes
bewail?

Is that sufficient? Can my power no more than
so avail?

He teaches me what way to work. A man may
take, I see,

Example at his enemy's hand the wiser for to
be.

He shows enough and overmuch the force of
furious wrath

By Penthey's death. Why should not Ine be
taught to tread the path

The which her sisters heretofore and kindred
trodden hath?'

There is a steep and irksome way, obscure
with shadow fell

Of baleful yew, all sad and still, that leadeth
down to hell.

The foggy Styx doth breathe up mists, and
down this way do wave

The ghosts of persons lately dead and buried in
the grave.

Continual cold and ghastly fear possess this
queachy plot

On either side; the silly ghost, new parted,
knoweth not

The way that doth directly lead him to the
Stygian city

Or where black Pluto keeps his court that never
showeth pity.

A thousand ways, a thousand gates that always
open stand

This city hath. And as the sea the streams of all
the land

Doth swallow in his greedy gulf and yet is never
full,

Even so that place devoureth still and hideth in
his gulf

The souls and ghosts of all the world. And
though that ne'er so many

Come thither, yet the place is void as if there
were not any.

The ghosts, without flesh, blood or bones, there
wander to and fro,

Of which some haunt the judgement place; and
other come and go

To Pluto's court; and some frequent the former
trades and arts

The which they used in their life; and some
abide the smarts

And torments for their wickedness and other ill
deserts.

So cruel hate and spiteful wrath did boil in
Juno's breast

That in the high and noble court of heaven
she could not rest,

But that she needs must hither come; whose
feet no sooner touched

The threshold but it gan to quake, and
Cerberus, erst couched,

560

Start sternly up with three fell heads which
barked all together.

She called the daughters of the night, the cruel
Furies, thither.

They sat a-kembing foul black snakes from off
their filthy hair

Before the dungeon door, the place where
caitiffs punished were,

The which was made of adamant. When in the
dark in part

They knew Queen Juno, by and by upon their
feet they start.

There Tityus, stretchèd out at least nine acres
full in length,

Did with his bowels feed a gripe that tare them
out by strength.

The water fled from Tantalus that touched his
nether lip,

And apples hanging over him did ever from him
slip.

There also laboured Sisyphus that drave against
the hill

570

A rolling stone that from the top came tumbling
downward still.

Ixion on his restless wheel, to which his limbs
were bound,

Did fly and follow both at once in turning ever
round.

And Danaus' daughters, for because they did
their cousins kill,

Drew water into running tubs which evermore
did spill.

When Juno with a lowering look had viewed
them all throughout

And on Ixion specially before the other rout,
She turns from him to Sisyphus and with an
angry cheer

Says, 'Wherefore should this man endure
continual penance here

And Athamas, his brother, reign in wealth and
pleasure free,

580 Who through his pride hath aye disdained my
husband, Jove, and me?'

And therewithal she poured out th'occasion of
her hate

And why she came and what she would. She
would that Cadmus' state

Should with the ruin of his house be brought to
swift decay,

And that to mischief Athamas the fiends should
force some way.

She bids, she prays, she promises – and all is
with a breath –

And moves the Furies earnestly. And as these
things she saith,

The hateful hag Tisiphone with hoary ruffled
hair,

Removing from her face the snakes that loosely
dangled there,

Said thus: 'Madam, there is no need long
circumstance to make.

590 Suppose your will already done. This loathsome
place forsake

And to the wholesome air of heaven yourself
again retire.'

Queen Juno went right glad away with grant of
her desire;
And as she would have entered heaven, the
Lady Iris came
And purgèd her with streaming drops. Anon
upon the same
The furious fiend Tisiphone doth clothe her out
of hand
In garment streaming gory blood and taketh in
her hand
A burning cresset steeped in blood and girdeth
her about
With wreathed snakes, and so goes forth. And at
her going out
Fear, Terror, Grief and Pensiveness for company
she took,
And also Madness with his slight and ghastly
staring look.

600

Ino
Athamas

and

Within the house of Athamas no sooner foot
she set

But that the posts began to quake and doors
look black as jet;
The sun withdrew him. Athamas and eke his
wife were cast
With ugly sights in such a fear that out of doors
aghast
They would have fled. There stood the fiend
and stopped their passage out
And, splaying forth her filthy arms beknit with
snakes about,
Did toss and wave her hateful head. The swarm
of scalèd snakes

Did make an irksome noise to hear as she her
tresses shakes.
About her shoulders some did crawl; some,
trailing down her breast,
610 Did hiss and spit out poison green and spurt
with tongues infest.
Then from amid her hair two snakes with
venomed hand she drew,
Of which she one at Athamas and one at Ino
threw.
The snakes did crawl about their breasts,
inspiring in their heart
Most grievous motions of the mind. The body
had no smart
Of any wound; it was the mind that felt the
cruel stings.
A poison made in syrup wise she also with her
brings:
The filthy foam of Cerberus, the casting of the
snake
Echidna bred among the fens about the Stygian
lake,
Desire of gadding forth abroad, forgetfulness of
mind,
620 Delight in mischief, woodness, tears, and
purpose whole inclined
To cruel murder; all the which she did together
grind
And, mingling them with new-shed blood, had
boiled them in brass
And stirred them with a hemlock stalk. Now
while that Athamas

And Ino stood and quaked for fear, this poison
rank and fell

She turnèd into both their breasts and made
their hearts to swell.

Then, whisking often round about her head her
baleful brand,

She made it soon by gathering wind to kindle in
her hand.

Thus as it were in triumph wise accomplishing
her hest,

To dusky Pluto's empty realm she gets her home
to rest

And putteth off the snarlèd snakes that girded
in her breast.

Immediately King Aeolus' son, stark mad,
comes crying out

Through all the court, 'What mean ye, sirs?
Why go ye not about

To pitch our toils within this chase? I saw even
now here ran

A lion with her two young whelps.' And
therewithal he gan

To chase his wife as if indeed she had a lion
been.

And like a bedlam boisterously he snatcheth
from between

The mother's arms his little babe, Learchus,
smiling on him

And reaching forth his pretty arms, and flung
him fiercely from him

A twice or thrice as from a sling, and dashed his
tender head

Against a hard and rugged stone until he saw
him dead.

The wretched mother (whether grief did move
her thereunto

Or that the poison spread within did force her
so to do)

Howled out and frantically, with scattered hair
about her ears

And with her little Melicert whom hastily she
bears

In naked arms, she crieth out, 'Ho, Bacchus!' At
the name

Of Bacchus Juno gan to laugh and, scorning,
said in game,

'This guerdon, lo, thy foster-child requiteth for
the same.'

There hangs a rock about the sea, the foot
whereof is eat

So hollow with the saltish waves which on the
same do beat

That like a house it keepeth off the moisting
showers of rain;

The top is rough and shoots his front amidst the
open main.

Dame Ino – madness made her strong – did
climb this cliff anon

And headlong down, without regard of hurt
that hung thereon,

Did throw her burden and herself. The water
where she dashed

In sprinkling upward glistened red. But Venus,
sore abashed

660

At this her niece's great mischance without
 offence or fault,
Her uncle gently thus bespake: 'O ruler of the
 haught
And swelling seas, O noble Neptune, whose
 dominion large
Extendeth to the heaven whereof the mighty
 Jove hath charge,
The thing is great for which I sue; but show
 thou for my sake
Some mercy on my wretched friends whom in
 thine endless lake
Thou seest tossèd to and fro. Admit thou them
 among
Thy gods. Of right even here to me some favour
 doth belong,
At least wise if amid the sea engendered erst I
 were
Of froth, as of the which yet still my pleasant
 name I bear.'
Neptunus granted her request and by and by
 bereft them
Of all that ever mortal was, instead whereof he
 left them
A haught and stately majesty; and, altering
 them in hue,
With shape and names most meet for gods he
 did them both endue.
Leucothoe was the mother's name; Palaemon
 was the son.
The Theban ladies, following her as fast as
 they could run,

670

Did of her feet perceive the print upon the
utter stone.
And, taking it for certain sign that both were
dead and gone,
In making moan for Cadmus' house they wrang
their hands and tare
Their hair and rent their clothes and railed on
Juno out of square
As nothing just, but more outrageous far than
did behove
In so revenging of herself upon her husband's
love.
The goddess Juno could not bear their railing
and, 'In faith,
You also will I make to be as witnesses', she
saith,
'Of my outrageous cruelty.' And so she did
indeed.
For she that lovèd Ino best was following her
with speed
Into the sea; but as she would herself have
downward cast,
She could not stir, but to the rock, as nailèd,
stickèd fast.
The second, as she knocked her breast, did feel
her arms wax stiff.
Another, as she stretchèd out her hands upon
the cliff,
Was made a stone and there stood still, aye
stretching forth her hands
Into the water as before. And as another stands
A-tearing of her ruffled locks, her fingers
hardened were

690

And fastened to her frizzled top, still tearing of
her hair.

And look, what gesture each of them was taken
in that tide,

Even in the same, transformed to stones, they
fastened did abide.

And some were altered into birds which
Cadmies callèd be

And in that gulf with flittering wings still to and
fro do flee.

*The
transformation
of Cadmus*

Nought knoweth Cadmus that his daughter
and her little child

Admitted were among the gods that rule the
surges wild.

Compelled with grief and great mishaps that
had ensued together

And strange foretokens, often seen since first his
coming thither,

He utterly forsakes his town the which he
buildèd had,

As though the fortune of the place so hardly
him bested

700

And not his own. And, fleeting long like
pilgrims, at the last

Upon the coast of Illiry his wife and he were
cast

Where, nigh forpined with cares and years,
while of the chances passed

Upon their house and of their toils and former
travails ta'en

They sadly talked between themselves, 'Was my
spearhead the bane
Of that same ugly snake of Mars', quoth
Cadmus, 'when I fled
From Sidon, or did I his teeth in ploughèd
pasture spread?
If for the death of him the gods so cruel
vengeance take,
Drawn out in length upon my womb then trail I
like a snake.'
He had no sooner said the word but that he gan
to glide
Upon his belly like a snake; and on his
hardened side
He felt the scales new budding out, the which
was wholly fret
With speckled drops of black and grey as thick
as could be set.
He falleth grovelling on his breast, and both his
shanks do grow
In one round spindle bodkin-wise with
sharpened point below.
His arms as yet remained still; his arms that did
remain
He stretchèd out and said with tears that
plenteously did rain
A-down his face, which yet did keep the native
fashion sound,
'Come hither, wife, come hither, wight most
wretched on the ground,
And while that aught of me remains, vouchsafe
to touch the same.

720

Come, take me by the hand as long as hand
may have his name,

Before this snakish shape do whole my body
overrun.'

He would have spoken more, when suddenly
his tongue begun

To split in two and speech did fail. And as he
did attempt

To make his moan, he hissed; for nature now
had clean exempt

All other speech. His wretched wife her naked
stomach beat

And cried, 'What meaneth this? Dear Cadmus,
where are now thy feet?

Where are thy shoulders and thy hands, thy hue
and manly face

With all the other things that did thy princely
person grace

Which now I overpass? But why, ye gods, do ye
delay

730

My body into like misshape of serpent to
convey?'

When this was spoken, Cadmus licked his wife
about the lips

And (as a place with which he was acquainted
well) he slips

Into her bosom, lovingly embracing her, and
cast

Himself about her neck as oft he had in time
forepast.

Such as were there (their folk were there) were
flighted at the sight;

740

For by and by they saw their necks did glisten
 slick and bright
And on their snakish heads grew crests, and
 finally they both
Were into very dragons turned and forth
 together go'th,
T'one trailing by the t'other's side, until they
 gained a wood
The which direct against the place where as
 they were then stood.
And now, remembering what they were
 themselves in times forepast,
They neither shun nor hurten men with stinging
 nor with blast.

Perseus *and*
Atlas

But yet a comfort to them both in this their
 altered hue

 Became that noble imp of theirs that Indy
 did subdue,
 Whom all Achaia worshipped with temples
 builded new.
All only Acrise, Abas' son (though of the
 selfsame stock),
Remained who out of Argos' walls unkindly did
 him lock
And movèd wilful war against his godhead,
 thinking that
There was not any race of gods; for he believed
 not
That Persey was the son of Jove or that he was
 conceived
By Danaë of golden shower through which she
 was deceived.

750

But yet ere long (such present force hath truth)
 he doth repent
As well his great impiety against god Bacchus
 meant
As also that he did disdain his nephew for to
 know.
But Bacchus now full gloriously himself in
 heaven doth show;
And Persey, bearing in his hand the monster
 Gorgon's head,
That famous spoil which here and there with
 snakish hair was spread,
Doth beat the air with waving wings. And as he
 overflew
The Lybic sands, the drops of blood that from
 the head did sue
Of Gorgon (being new cut off) upon the ground
 did fall;
Which, taking them and, as it were, conceiving
 therewithal,
Engendered sundry snakes and worms. By
 means whereof that clime
Did swarm with serpents ever since even to this
 present time.
 From thence he like a watery cloud was
 carried with the weather
 Through all the heaven, now here, now
 there, as light as any feather.
And from aloft he views the earth that
 underneath doth lie
And swiftly over all the world doth in
 conclusion fly.

770

Three times the chilling Bears, three times the
Crab's fell clees he saw;

Ofttimes to west, ofttimes to east did drive him
many a flaw.

Now at such time as unto rest the sun began to
draw,

Because he did not think it good to be abroad
all night,

Within King Atlas' western realm he ceased
from his flight,

Requesting that a little space of rest enjoy he
might

Until such time as Lucifer should bring the
morning grey

And morning bring the lightsome sun that
guides the cheerful day.

This Atlas, Iapet's nephew, was a man that did
excel

In stature every other wight that in the world
did dwell.

The utmost coast of all the earth and all that
sea wherein

The tirèd steeds and wearied wain of Phoebus
dived been

780

Were in subjection to this king. A thousand
flocks of sheep,

A thousand herds of rother-beasts he in his
fields did keep,

And not a neighbour did annoy his ground by
dwelling nigh.

To him the wandering Persey thus his language
did apply:

‘If high renown of royal race thy noble heart
may move,
I am the son of Jove himself; or if thou more
approve
The valiant deeds and haught exploits, thou
shalt perceive in me
Such doings as deserve with praise extollèd for
to be.
I pray thee of thy courtesy, receive me as thy
guest
And let me only for this night within thy palace
rest.’

790

King Atlas callèd straight to mind an ancient
prophecy
Made by Parnassian Themis, which this
sentence did imply:
‘The time shall one day, Atlas, come in which
thy golden tree
Shall of her fair and precious fruit despoiled
and robbèd be;
And he shall be the son of Jove that shall enjoy
the prey.’
For fear hereof he did enclose his orchard every
way
With mighty hills and put an ugly dragon in the
same
To keep it. Further he forbade that any stranger
came
Within his realm. And to this knight he said
presumptuously,
‘Avoid my land, unless thou wilt by utter peril
try

800

That all thy glorious acts whereof thou dost so
loudly lie

And Jove thy father be too far to help thee at
thy need.'

To these his words he added force and went
about indeed

To drive him out by strength of hand. To speak
was loss of wind,

For neither could entreating fair nor stoutness
turn his mind.

'Well then,' quoth Persey, 'sith thou dost mine
honour set so light,

Take here a present.' And with that he turns
away his sight

And from his left side drew me out Medusa's
loathly head.

As huge and big as Atlas was, he turned in that
stead

Into a mountain. Into trees his beard and locks
did pass;

810

His hands and shoulders made the ridge; that
part which lately was

His head became the highest top of all the hill;
his bones

Were turned to stones; and therewithal he grew
me all at once

Beyond all measure up in height (for so God
thought it best)

So far that heaven with all the stars did on his
shoulders rest.

*Perseus and the
sea monster*

In endless prison by that time had Aeolus
locked the wind,

And now the cheerly morning star that
putteth folk in mind
To rise about their daily work shone brightly in
the sky.
Then Persey unto both his feet did straight his
feathers tie
And girt his woodknife to his side and from the
earth did sty.
And, leaving nations numberless beneath him
every way,
At last upon King Cephey's fields in Ethiope did
he stay,
Where clean against all right and law by Jove's
commandment
Andromed for her mother's tongue did suffer
punishment.
Whom to a rock by both the arms when
fastened he had seen,
He would have thought of marble stone she had
some image been
But that her tresses to and fro the whisking
wind did blow
And trickling tears warm from her eyes a-down
her cheeks did flow.
Unwares hereat gan secret sparks within his
breast to glow;
His wits were straught at sight thereof and
ravished in such wise
That how to hover with his wings he scarcely
could devise.
As soon as he had stayed himself, 'O lady fair,'
quoth he,

‘Not worthy of such bands as these but such
wherewith we see
Together knit in lawful bed the earnest lovers
be,
I pray thee, tell me what thyself and what this
land is named
And wherefore thou dost wear these chains.’
The lady, ill ashamed,
Was at the sudden stricken dumb, and like a
fearful maid
She durst not speak unto a man. Had not her
hands been stayed,
She would have hid her bashful face; howbeit,
as she might
With great abundance of her tears she stopped
up her sight.
But when that Persey oftentimes was earnestly
in hand
To learn the matter, for because she would not
seem to stand
In stubborn silence of her faults, she told him
what the land
And what she hight and how her mother for her
beauty's sake
Through pride did unadvisedly too much upon
her take.
And ere she full had made an end, the water
gan to roar;
An ugly monster from the deep was making to
the shore
Which bare the sea before his breast. The virgin
shriekèd out.

850

Her father and her mother both stood mourning
thereabout

In wretched case both twain, but not so
wretched as the maid

Who wrongly for her mother's fault the bitter
ransom paid.

They brought not with them any help but, as
the time and case

Required, they wept and wrang their hands and
straightly did embrace

Her body fastened to the rock. Then Persey
them bespake

And said, 'The time may serve too long this
sorrow for to make,

But time of help must either now or never else
be take.

Now if I, Persey, son of her whom in her
father's tower

The mighty Jove begat with child in shape of
golden shower,

Who cut off ugly Gorgon's head bespread with
snakish hair

And in the air durst trust these wings my body
for to bear,

860

Perchance should save your daughter's life, I
think ye should as then

Accept me for your son-in-law before all other
men.

To these great thews (by the help of God) I
purpose for to add

A just desert in helping her that is so hard
bested.

I covenant with you by my force and manhood
for to save her,
Conditionally that to my wife in recompense I
have her.'

Her parents took his offer straight (for who
would stick thereat?)

And prayed him fair and promised him that
for performing that

They would endow him with the right of all
their realm beside.

Like as a galley with her nose doth cut the
waters wide,

Enforced by the sweating arms of rowers with
the tide,

Even so the monster with his breast did bear
the waves aside

And was now come as near the rock as well a
man might fling

Amid the pure and vacant air a pellet from a
sling;

When on the sudden Persey pushed his foot
against the ground

And stied upward to the clouds. His shadow did
rebound

Upon the sea; the beast ran fierce upon the
passing shade.

And as an eagle, when he sees a dragon in a
glade

Lie beaking of his bluish back against the sunny
rays,

Doth seize upon him unbeware and with his
talons lays

Sure hold upon his scaly neck, lest writhing
back his head

His cruel teeth might do him harm; so Persey in
that stead,

Descending down the air amain, with all his
force and might

Did seize upon the monster's back. And
underneath the right

Fin hard unto the very hilt his hooked sword
did smite.

The monster, being wounded sore, did
sometime leap aloft

And sometime under water dive, bestirring him
full oft

As doth a chafèd boar beset with barking dogs
about.

But Persey with his lightsome wings, still
keeping him without

The monster's reach, with hookèd sword doth
sometime hew his back

Whereas the hollow scales give way, and
sometime he doth hack

The ribs on both his mailèd sides, and sometime
he doth wound

His spindle-tail where into fish it grows most
small and round.

The whale at Persey from his mouth such waves
of water cast

Bemixèd with the purple blood that, all
bedreint at last,

His feathers very heavy were. And doubting any
more

900

To trust his wings now waxing wet, he straight
began to soar

Up to a rock which in the calm above the water
stood

But in the tempest evermore was hidden with
the flood.

And leaning thereunto and with his left hand
holding just

The top thereof, a dozen times his weapon he
did thrust

Among his guts. The joyful noise and clapping
of their hands,

The which were made for loosening of
Andromed from her bands,

Filled all the coast and heaven itself. The
parents of the maid,

Cassiope and Cepheus, were glad and well
apaid

And, calling him their son-in-law, confessèd
him to be

The help and safeguard of their house.
Andromede, the fee

And cause of Persey's enterprise, from bonds
now being free,

He washèd his victorious hands. And lest the
snaky head

With lying on the gravel hard should catch
some harm, he spread

910

Soft leaves and certain tender twigs that in the
water grew

And laid Medusa's head thereon. The twigs, yet
being new

And quick and full of juicy pith, full lightly to
them drew
The nature of this monstrous head; for both the
leaf and bough
Full strangely at the touch thereof became both
hard and tough.
The seanympths tried this wondrous fact in
divers other rods
And were full glad to see the change, because
there was no odds
Of leaves or twigs or of the seeds new shaken
from the cods.
For still like nature ever since is in our coral
found
That, look how soon it toucheth air, it waxeth
hard and sound.
And that which under water was a stick, above
is stone.
Three altars to as many gods he makes of turf
anon.
Upon the left hand Mercury's; Minerva's on the
right;
And in the middle Jupiter's. To Pallas he did
dight
A cow; a calf to Mercury; a bull to royal Jove.
Forthwith he took Andromede, the prize for
which he strove,
Endowèd with her father's realm. For now the
god of love
And Hymen unto marriage his mind in haste
did move.
Great fires were made of sweet perfumes, and
curious garlands hung

930

About the house which everywhere of mirthful
music rung,
The gladsome sign of merry minds. The palace
gates were set
Wide open; none from coming in were by the
porters let.
All noblemen and gentlemen that were of any
port
To this same great and royal feast of Cephey did
resort.

*The head of
Medusa*

When, having taken their repast as well of
meat as wine,

Their hearts began to pleasant mirth by
leisure to incline,
The valiant Persey of the folk and fashions of
the land
Began to be inquisitive. One Lyncid out of hand
The rites and manners of the folk did do him
t'understand.
Which done, he said, 'O worthy knight, I pray
thee tell us by
What force or wile thou got'st the head with
hairs of adders sly.'
Then Persey told how underneath cold Atlas lay
a plain
So fencèd in on every side with mountains high
that vain
Were any force to win the same. In entrance of
the which
Two daughters of King Phorcys dwelt, whose
chance and hap was such

940

That one eye servèd both their turns; whereof
 by wily sleight
 And stealth in putting forth his hand he did
 bereave them quite
 As they from t'one to t'other were delivering of
 the same.
 From whence by long blind crooked ways
 unhandsomely he came
 Through ghastly groves by ragged cliffs unto
 the dreary place
 Whereas the Gorgons dwelt. And there he saw
 (a wretched case!)
 The shapes as well of men as beasts lie scattered
 everywhere
 In open fields and common ways, the which
 transformèd were
 From living things to stones at sight of foul
 Medusa's hair;
 But yet that he through brightness of his
 monstrous brazen shield,
 The which he in his left hand bare, Medusa's
 face beheld.
 And while that in a sound dead sleep were all
 her snakes and she,
 He softly parèd off her head; and how that he
 did see
 Swift Pegasus, the wingèd horse, and eke his
 brother grow
 Out of their mother's new-shed blood. Moreover
 he did show
 A long discourse of all his haps, and not so long
 as true:

As namely of what seas and lands the coasts he
 overflowed;
And eke what stars with stying wings he in the
 while did view.
But yet his tale was at an end ere any looked
 therefore.
 Upon occasion by and by of words rehearsed
 before
 There was a certain nobleman demanded
 him wherefore
 She only of the sisters three hair mixed with
 adders bore.
‘Sir,’ answered Persey, ‘sith you ask a matter
 worth report,
I grant to tell you your demand. She both in
 comely port
And beauty every other wight surmounted in
 such sort
That many suitors unto her did earnestly resort.
And though that whole from top to toe most
 beautiful she were,
In all her body was no part more goodly than
 her hair.
I know some parties yet alive that say they did
 her see.
It is reported how she should abused by
 Neptune be
In Pallas' church; from which foul fact Jove's
 daughter turned her eye
And with her target hid her face from such a
 villainy.

And lest it should unpunished be, she turned
her seemly hair
To loathly snakes, the which (the more to put
her foes in fear)
Before her breast continually she in her shield
doth bear.'

FINIS QUARTI LIBRI.

The Fifth Book of Ovid's Metamorphoses

The fight in Now while that Danae's noble son was telling of
Cepheus' these things
palace

Amid a throng of Cephey's lords, through all the
palace rings

A noise of people nothing like the sound of such
as sing

At wedding feasts, but like the roar of such as
tidings bring

Of cruel war. This sudden change from feasting
unto fray

Might well be likened to the sea which, standing
at a stay,

The woodness of the winds makes rough by
raising of the wave.

King Cephey's brother, Phiney, was the man that
rashly gave

The first occasion of this fray; who, shaking in
his hand

10 A dart of ash with head of steel, said, 'Lo, lo,
here I stand

To challenge thee that wrongfully my ravished
spouse dost hold.

Thy wings nor yet thy forged dad in shape of
feigned gold

Shall now not save thee from my hands.' As with
that word he bent
His arm aloft the foresaid dart at Persey to have
sent,
'What dost thou, brother?' Cephey cried, 'What
madness moves thy mind
To do so foul a deed? Is this the friendship he
shall find
Among us for his good deserts? And wilt thou
needs requite
The saving of thy niece's life with such a foul
despite?
Whom Persey hath not from thee ta'en, but (if
thou be advised)
But Neptune's heavy wrath because his
seanymphs were despised,
But horned Hammon, but the beast which from
the sea arrived
On my dear bowels for to feed. That time wert
thou deprived
Of thy betrothèd, when her life upon the losing
stood.
Unless perchance to see her lost it would have
done thee good
And eased thy heart to see me sad? And may it
not suffice
That thou did'st see her to the rock fast bound
before thine eyes
And did'st not help her, being both her husband
and her eme?
Unless thou grudge that any man should come
within my realm

To save her life, and seek to rob him of his just
reward?

Which if thou think to be so great, thou should'st
have had regard

Before to fetch it from the rock to which thou
saw'st it bound.

I pray thee, brother, seeing that by him the
means is found

That in mine age without my child I go not to
the ground,

Permit him to enjoy the prize for which we did
compound

And which he hath by due desert of purchase
dearly bought.

For, brother, never let it sink nor enter in thy
thought

That I set more by him than thee; but this may
well be said,

I rather had to give her him than see my
daughter dead.'

He gave him not a word again, but looked eft on
him

And eft on Persey irefully, with count'nance
stour and grim,

Not knowing which were best to hit. And after
little stay

He shook his dart and flung it forth with all the
power and sway

That anger gave at Persey's head. But harm it did
him none;

It stickèd in the bedstead's head that Persey sat
upon.

Then Persey, sternly starting up and pulling
out the dart,
Did throw it at his foe again; and therewithal
his heart
Had cliven asunder, had he not behind an altar
start.
The altar (more the pity was) did save the
wicked wight.
Yet threw he not the dart in vain; it hit one
Rhoetus right
Amid the forehead, who therewith sank down.
And when the steal
Was plucked out, he sprawled about and spurned
with his heel
And all berayed the board with blood. Then all
the other rout
As fierce as fire flang darts, and some there were
that crièd out
That Cephey with his son-in-law was worthy for
to die.
But he had wound him out of doors, protesting
solemnly,
As he was just and faithful prince, and swearing
eke by all
The gods of hospitality that that same broil did
fall
Full sore against his will. At hand was warlike
Pallas straight
And shadowed Persey with her shield and gave
him heart in fight.
There was one Atis, born in Inde (of fair
Limniace,

The river Ganges' daughter, thought the issue for
to be),
Of passing beauty, which with rich array he did
augment.
He ware that day a scarlet cloak, about the
which there went
A guard of gold; a chain of gold he ware about
his neck;
And eke his hair, perfumed with myrrh, a costly
crown did deck.
Full sixteen years he was of age. Such cunning
skill he could
In darting as to hit his mark far distant when he
would;
Yet how to handle bow and shafts much better
did he know.
Now as he was about that time to bend his
horned bow,
A firebrand Persey raught that did upon the
altar smoke
And dashed him overthwart the face with
such a violent stroke
That all be battered was his head, the bones
asunder broke.
When Lycabas of Assur land, his most assured
friend
And dear companion, being no dissembler of his
mind,
Which most entirely did him love, beheld him on
the ground
Lie weltering with disfigured face and through
that grievous wound

Now gasping out his parting ghost, his death he
 did lament;
 And, taking hastily up the bow that Atis erst had
 bent,
 'Encounter thou with me,' he said. 'Thou shalt
 not long enjoy
 Thy triumphing in bravery thus for killing of this
 boy,
 By which thou get'st more spite than praise.' All
 this was scarcely said
 But that the arrow from the string went strained
 to the head.
 Howbeit Persey, as it happed, so warily did it
 shun
 As that it in his coat-plights hung. Then to him
 did he run
 With Harpe in his hand, bestained with grim
 Medusa's blood,
 And thrust him through the breast therewith. He,
 cothing as he stood,
 Did look about where Atis lay with dim and
 dazzling eyes
 Now waving under endless night, and down by
 him he lies
 And, for to comfort him withal, together with
 him dies.
 Behold, through greedy haste to fight one
 Phorbas, Methion's son,
 A Swevite, and of Lyby land one called
 Amphimedon,
 By fortune sliding in the blood with which the
 ground was wet,

Fell down; and as they would have rose, Perseus'
falchion met
With both of them. Amphimedon upon the ribs
he smote,
And with the like celerity he cut me Phorbas'
throat.
But unto Eryth, Actor's son, that in his hand did
hold
A broad brown bill, with his short sword he durst
not be too bold
To make approach. With both his hands a great
and massy cup
Embossed with cunning portraiture aloft he
taketh up
And sends it at him. He spews up red blood and,
falling down
Upon his back, against the ground doth knock
his dying crown.
Then down he Polydaemon throws, extract of
royal race,
And Abaris, the Scythian, and Clytus in like case
And Elice with his unshorn locks and also
Phlegyas
And Lycet, old Sperchesy's son, with divers
others mo,
That on the heaps of corses slain he treads as he
doth go.
And Phiney, daring not presume to meet his
foe at hand,
Did cast a dart which happed to light on Idas,
who did stand
Aloof as neuter (though in vain), not meddling
with the fray.

Who, casting back a frowning look at Phiney,
thus did say:

‘Sith, whether that I will or no, compelled I am
perforce

To take a part, have, Phiney, here him whom
thou dost enforce

To be thy foe and with this wound my wrongful
wound requite.’

But as he from his body pulled the dart with all
his might

To throw it at his foe again, his limbs so feeble
were

With loss of blood that down he fell and could
not after stir.

There also lay Odites slain, the chief in all the
land

Next to King Cephey, put to death by force of
Clymen's hand.

Protoenor was by Hypsey killed, and Lyncide did
as much

For Hypsey. In the throng there was an ancient
man and such

A one as lovèd righteousness and greatly feared
God;

Emathion called was his name. Whom sith his
years forbode

To put on arms, he fights with tongue,
inveighing earnestly

Against that wicked war, the which he banned
bitterly.

As on the altar he himself with quivering hands
did stay,

One Chromis tipped off his head. His head, cut
off, straightway
Upon the altar fell, and there his tongue, not
fully dead,
Did babble still the banning words the which it
erst had said
And breathed forth his fainting ghost among the
burning brands.

130

Then Brote and Hammon, brothers, twins,
stout champions of their hands,
In wrestling peerless (if so be that wrestling
could sustain
The furious force of slicing swords), were both
by Phiney slain.
And so was Alphit, Ceres' priest, that ware upon
his crown
A stately mitre fair and white with tables
hanging down.
Thou also, Iapet's son, for such affairs as these
unmeet
But meet to tune thine instrument with voice and
ditty sweet,
The work of peace, wert thither called
th'assembly to rejoice
And for to set the marriage forth with pleasant
singing voice.
As with his viol in his hand he stood a good way
off,
There cometh to him Pettalus and says in way of
scoff,
'Go, sing the residue to the ghosts about the
Stygian lake,'

140

And in the left side of his head his dagger point
he strake.
He sank down dead with fingers still yet
warbling on the string,
And so mischance knit up with woe the song that
he did sing.
But fierce Lycormas could not bear to see him
murdered so
Without revengement. Up he caught a mighty
lever tho
That wonted was to bar the door a-right side of
the house,
And therewithal to Pettalus he lendeth such a
souse
Full in the noddle of the neck that, like a
snetchèd ox
Straight tumbling down, against the ground his
grovelling face he knocks.
And Pelates, a Garamant, attempted to have
caught
The left door bar; but as thereat with stretchèd
hand he raught,
One Coryt, son of Marmarus, did with a javelin
strike
Him through the hand, that to the wood fast
nailèd did it stick.
As Pelates stood fastened thus, one Abas goared
his side;
He could not fall but, hanging still upon the post,
there died
Fast nailed by the hand. And there was
overthrown a knight

160

Of Persey's band called Melaney, and one that
Doryl hight,

A man of greatest lands in all the realm of
Nasamone.

That occupied so large a ground as Doryl was
there none,

Nor none that had such store of corn. There
came a dart askew

And lighted in his cods, the place where present
death doth sue.

When Alcyon of Barcey, he that gave this deadly
wound,

Beheld him yesking forth his ghost and falling to
the ground

With watery eyes, the white turned up, 'Content
thyself', he said,

'With that same little plot of ground whereon thy
corse is laid

Instead of all the large fat fields which late thou
did'st possess.'

And with that word he left him dead. Perseus, to
redress

This slaughter and this spiteful taunt, straight
snatchèd out the dart

170

That stickèd in the fresh warm wound and with
an angry heart

Did send it at the thrower's head. The dart did
split his nose

Even in the midst, and at his neck again the head
out goes,

So that it peerèd both the ways. Whiles fortune
doth support

And further Persey thus, he kills (but yet in
sundry sort)

Two brothers by the mother, t'one called Clytie,
t'other Dane.

For on a dart through both his thighs did Clytie
take his bane,

And Danus with another dart was stricken in the
mouth.

There dièd also Celadon, a gypsy of the south;
And so did bastard Astrey too, whose mother
was a Jew;

180

And sage Aethion, well foreseen in things that
should ensue,

But utterly beguiled as then by birds that awkly
flew.

King Cephey's harness-bearer, called Thoäctes,
lost his life,

And Agyrt, whom for murdering late his father
with a knife

The world spake shame of. Natheless, much
more remained behind

Than was dispatched off of hand. For all were
full in mind

To murder one; the wicked throng had sworn to
spend their blood

Against the right and such a man as had
deserved good.

At other side (although in vain) of mere affection
stood

The father and the mother-in-law and eke the
heavy bride,

190

Who filled with their piteous plaint the court on
every side.

But now the clattering of the swords and harness
at that tide

With grievous groans and sighs of such as
wounded were or died

Did raise up such a cruel roar that nothing could
be heard.

For fierce Bellona so renewed the battle
afterward

That all the house did swim in blood. Duke
Phiney with a rout

Of more than a thousand men environed round
about

The valiant Persey all alone. The darts of
Phiney's band

Came thicker than the winter's hail doth fall
upon the land

By both his sides, his eyes and ears. He warily
thereupon

Withdraws and leans his back against a huge
great arch of stone;

And, being safe behind, he sets his face against
his foe,

Withstanding all their fierce assaults. There did
assail him tho

Upon the left side Molpheus, a prince of Choany,
And on the right Ethemon, born hard by in
Araby.

Like as the tiger, when he hears the lowing out
of neat

In sundry meads, enforced sore through
abstinence from meat,

Would fain be doing with them both and cannot
tell at which

210

Were best to give adventure first, so Persey (who
did itch
To be at host with both of them and doubtful
whether side
To turn him on, the right or left), upon
advantage spied,
Did wound me Molphey on the leg and from him
quite him drave.
He was contented with his flight; for why
Ethemmon gave
No respite to him to pursue but, like a frantic
man,
Through eagerness to wound his neck, without
regarding when
Or how to strike for haste, he burst his brittle
sword in twain
Against the arch; the point whereof, rebounding
back again,
Did hit himself upon the throat. Howbeit, that
same wound
Was insufficient for to send Ethemon to the
ground.
He trembled, holding up his hands for mercy; but
in vain.

220

For Persey thrust him through the heart with
Hermes' hookèd skene.
But when he saw that valiantness no lenger
could avail
By reason of the multitude that did him still
assail,
'Sith you yourselves me force to call mine enemy
to mine aid,

I will do so. If any friend of mine be here,' he
said,
'Sirs, turn your faces all away.' And therewithal
he drew
Out Gorgon's head. One Thessalus straight,
raging, to him flew
And said, 'Go, seek some other man whom thou
may'st make abashed
With these thy foolish juggling toys.' And as he
would have dashed
His javelin in him with that word to kill him out
of hand,
With gesture throwing forth his dart all marble
did he stand.
His sword through Lyncid's noble heart had
Amphyx thought to shove;
His hand was stone and neither one nor other
way could move.
But Niley, who did vaunt himself to be the river's
son
That through the bounds of Egypt land in
channels seven doth run
And in his shield had graven part of silver, part
of gold,
The said seven channels of the Nile, said, 'Persey,
here behold
From whence we fetch our pedigree. It may
rejoice thy heart
To die of such a noble hand as mine.' The latter
part
Of these his words could scarce be heard; the
dint thereof was drowned.

Ye would have thought him speaking still with
open mouth, but sound

Did none forth pass. There was for speech no
passage to be found.

Rebuking them cries Eryx, 'Sirs, it is not Gorgon's
face,

It is your own faint hearts that make you stony
in this case.

Come, let us on this fellow run and to the ground
him bear

That fights by witchcraft.' As with that his feet
forth stepping were,

They stack still fastened to the floor. He could
not move aside;

An armed image all of stone he speechless did
abide.

All these were justly punished. But one there was
a knight

Of Persey's band, in whose defence as Acont
stood to fight,

He waxèd overgrown with stone at ugly Gorgon's
sight.

Whom still as yet Astyages supposing for to live,
Did with a long sharp arming sword a washing
blow him give;

The sword did clink against the stone and out the
sparkles drive.

While all amazed Astyages stood wondering at
the thing,

The selfsame nature on himself the Gorgon's
head did bring;

And in his visage which was stone a count'nance
did remain

Of wondering still. A weary work it were to tell
you plain

The names of all the common sort. Two hundred
from that fray

Did scape unslain, but none of them did go alive
away.

260

The whole two hundred, every one, at sight of
Gorgon's hair

Were turnèd into stocks of stone. Then, at the
length, for fear

Did Phiney of his wrongful war forthink himself
full sore.

But now, alas, what remedy? He saw there stand
before

His face his men like images in sundry shapes all
stone.

He knew them well and by their names did call
them everych one,

Desiring them to succour him, and, trusting not
his sight,

He feels the bodies that were next; and all were
marble uite.

He turns himself from Perseyward, and humbly
as he stands

He wries his arms behind his back. And, holding
up his hands

270

‘O noble Persey, thou hast got the upper hand,’
he said.

‘Put up that monstrous shield of thine; put up
that Gorgon's head

That into stones transformeth men. Put up, I thee
desire.

Not hatred, nor because to reign as king I did
aspire,
Have movèd me to make this fray. The only force
of love
In seeking my betrothed spouse did hereunto me
move.
The better title seemeth thine because of thy
desert,
And mine by former promise made. It irks me at
the heart
In that I did not give thee place. None other
thing I crave,
O worthy knight, but that thou grant this life of
mine to save.
Let all things else beside be thine.' As thus he
humbly spake,
Not daring look at him to whom he did
entreatence make,
'The thing', quoth Persey, 'which to grant both I
can find in heart
And is no little courtesy to show without desert
Upon a coward, I will grant, O fearful duke, to
thee.
Set fear aside. Thou shalt not hurt with any
weapon be.
I will, moreover, so provide as that thou shalt
remain
An everlasting monument of this day's toil and
pain.
The palace of my father-in-law shall henceforth
be thy shrine
Where thou shalt stand continually before my
spouse's eyen,

That, of her husband having aye the image in her
sight,

She may from time to time receive some comfort
and delight.'

He had no sooner said these words but that he
turned his shield

With Gorgon's head to that same part where
Phiney with a mild

And fearful count'nance set his face. Then also,
as he wried

His eyes away, his neck waxed stiff, his tears to
stone were dried.

A count'nance in the stony stock of fear did still
appear

With humble look and yielding hands and
ghastly ruthful cheer.

With conquest and a noble wife doth Persey
home repair,

And in revengement of the right against the
wrongful heir,

As in his grandsire's just defence, he falls in hand
with Proete.

Who, like no brother but a foe, did late before
defeat

King Acrise of his towns by war and of his roal
seat;

But neither could his men of war nor fortress
won by wrong

Defend him from the grisly look of grim Medusa
long.

And yet thee, foolish Polydect, of little Seriph
king,

Such rooted rancour inwardly continually did
sting

That neither Persey's prowess tried in such a sort
of broils

Nor yet the perils he endured nor all his
troublous toils

Could cause thy stomach to relent. Within thy
stony breast

310 Works such a kind of festered hate as cannot be
repressed.

Thy wrongful malice hath none end. Moreover,
thou, of spite

Repining at his worthy praise, his doings dost
backbite,

Upholding that Medusa's death was but a forgèd
lie

So long till Persey, for to show the truth
apparently,

Desiring such as were his friends to turn away
their eye,

Drew out Medusa's ugly head. At sight whereof
anon

The hateful tyrant Polydect was turnèd to a
stone.

Minerva visits The goddess Pallas all this while did keep
Helicon continually

Her brother Persey company till now that she
did sty

320 From Seriph in a hollow cloud. And, leaving on
the right

The isles of Scyre and Gyarus, she made from
thence her flight

Directly over that same sea as near as eye could
aim

To Thebe and Mount Helicon. And when she
thither came,

She stayed herself and thus bespake the learned
sisters nine:

‘A rumour of an uncouth spring did pierce these
ears of mine,

The which the wingèd steed should make by
stamping with his hoof.

This is the cause of my repair: I would for certain
proof

Be glad to see the wondrous thing. For present
there I stood

And saw the selfsame Pegasus spring of his
mother's blood.’

330

Dame Urany did entertain and answer Pallas
thus:

‘What cause so ever moves your grace to come
and visit us,

Most heartily you welcome are. And certain is
the fame

Of this our spring, that Pegasus was causer of the
same.’

And with that word she led her forth to see the
sacred spring.

Who, musing greatly with herself at strangeness
of the thing,

Surveyed the woods and groves about of ancient
stately port.

And when she saw the bowers to which the
Muses did resort

And pleasant fields beclad with herbs of sundry
hue and sort,

She said that for their studies' sake they were in
happy case

340

And also that to serve their turn they had so trim
a place.

The story of Then one of them replièd thus: 'O noble lady,
Pyreneus who

(But that your virtue greater works than these
are calls you to)

Should else have been of this our troop, your
saying is full true.

To this our trade of life and place is
commendation due.

And sure we have a lucky lot and if the world
were such

As that we might in safety live; but lewdness
reigns so much

That all things make us maids afraid. Methinks I
yet do see

The wicked tyrant Pyren still; my heart is yet
scarce free

From that same fear with which it happed us
flighted for to be.

350

This cruel Pyren was of Thrace and with his men
of war

The land of Phocis had subdued, and from this
place not far

Within the city Daulis reigned by force of
wrongful hand.

One day to Phoebus' templesward that on
Parnassus stand

As we were going, in our way he met us
courteously

And, by the name of goddesses saluting
reverently,

Said, "O ye dames of Meony" – for why he knew
us well –

"I pray you, stay and take my house until this
storm" – there fell

That time a tempest and a shower – "be passed;
the gods aloft

Have entered smaller sheds than mine full many
a time and oft."

360

The rainy weather and his words so moved us
that we

To go into an outer house of his did all agree.

As soon as that the shower was passed and
heaven was voided clear

Of all the clouds which late before did
everywhere appear

Until that Boreas had subdued the rainy southern
wind,

We would have by and by been gone. He shut
the doors, in mind

To ravish us; but we with wings escaped from his
hands.

He, purposing to follow us, upon a turret stands

And saith he needs will after us the same way we
did fly.

And with that word full frantically he leapeth
down from high

370

And, pitching evelong on his face, the bones
asunder crashed

Pierus'
daughters
challenge the
Muses

And, dying, all abroad the ground his wicked
blood bedashed.'

Now as the Muse was telling this, they heard
a noise of wings,

And from the leafy boughs aloft a sound of
greeting rings.

Minerva, looking up thereat, demanded whence
the sound

Of tongues that so distinctly spake did come so
plain and round.

She thought some woman or some man had
greeted her that stound.

It was a flight of birds. Nine pies, bewailing their
mischance,

In counterfeiting everything from bough to
bough did dance.

As Pallas wondered at the sight, the Muse thus
spake in sum:

380

'These also, being late ago in challenge
overcome,

Made one kind more of birds than was of ancient
time befor.

In Macedon they were about the city Pella born
Of Piërus, a great rich chuff, and Euip, who, by
aid

Of strong Lucina travailing nine times, nine
times was laid

Of daughters in her childbed safe. This fond and
foolish rout

Of doltish sisters, taking pride and waxing very
stout

Because they were in number nine, came
flocking all together

Through all the towns of Thessaly and all Achaia
hither

And us with these or suchlike words to combat
did provoke:

390

“Cease off, ye Thespian goddesses, to mock the
simple folk

With fondness of your melody. And if ye think
indeed

Ye can do aught, contend with us and see how ye
shall speed.

I warrant you, ye pass us not in cunning nor in
voice.

Ye are here nine and so are we. We put you to
the choice

That either we will vanquish you and set you
quite beside

Your fountain made by Pegasus, which is your
chiefest pride,

And Aganippe too; or else confound you us, and
we

Of all the woods of Macedon will dispossessed be
So far as snowy Paeony. And let the nymphs be
judges.”

400

Now in good sooth it was a shame to cope with
suchy drudges,

But yet more shame it was to yield. The chosen
nymphs did swear

By Styx and sat them down on seats of stone that
growèd there.

Then straight without commission or election of
the rest
The foremost of them, pressing forth undecently,
professed
The challenge to perform and sung the battles of
the gods.
She gave the giants all the praise, the honour
and the odds,
Abasing sore the worthy deeds of all the gods.
She tells
How Typhon, issuing from the earth and from
the deepest hells,
Made all the gods above afraid so greatly that
they fled
And never stayed till Egypt land and Nile, whose
stream is shed
In channels seven, received them forwearied
altogether;
And how the hellhound Typhon did pursue them
also thither,
By means whereof the gods each one were fain
themselves to hide
In forged shapes. She said that Jove, the prince
of gods, was wried
In shape of ram, which is the cause that at this
present tide
Jove's image which the Lybian folk by name of
Hammon serve
Is made with crooked whelked horns that inward
still dó curve;
That Phoebus in a raven lurked, and Bacchus in a
geat,
And Phoebus' sister in a cat, and Juno in a neat,

420

And Venus in the shape of fish, and how that last
of all

Mercurius hid him in a bird which ibis men do
call.

This was the sum of all the tale which she with
rolling tongue

And yelling throat-boll to her harp before us
rudely sung.

‘Our turn is also come to speak, but that
perchance your grace

To give the hearing to our song hath now no
time nor space.’

‘Yes, yes,’ quoth Pallas, ‘tell on forth in order all
your tale,’

And down she sat among the trees which gave a
pleasant swale.

The Muse made answer thus: ‘To one Calliope
here by name

This challenge we committed have and ordering
of the same.

430

Then rose up fair Calliope with goodly bush of
hair

Trim wreathed up with ivy leaves, and with her
thumb gan stir

The quivering strings to try them, if they were in
tune or no.

Which done, she played upon her lute and sung
her ditty so:

*The rape of
Proserpine*

‘ “Dame Ceres first to break the earth with
plough the manner found;

She first made corn and stover soft to grow
upon the ground;

She first made laws. For all these things we are
to Ceres bound.

Of her must I as now entreat. Would God I could
resound

Her worthy laud; she, doubtless, is a goddess
worthy praise.

Because the giant Typhon gave presumptuously
assays

440 To conquer heaven, the hugy isle of Trinacris is
laid

Upon his limbs, by weight whereof perforce he
down is weighed.

He strives and struggles for to rise full many a
time and oft.

But on his right hand toward Rome Pelorus
stands aloft;

Pachynus stands upon his left; his legs with
Lilyby

Are pressed down; his monstrous head doth
under Etna lie.

From whence he, lying bolt upright, with
wrathful mouth doth spit

Out flames of fire. He wrestleth oft and
walloweth for to wit

And if he can remove the weight of all that
mighty land

Or tumble down the towns and hills that on his
body stand.

450 By means whereof it comes to pass that oft the
earth doth shake,

And even the king of ghosts himself for very fear
doth quake,

Misdoubting lest the earth should cleave so wide
that light of day
Might by the same pierce down to hell and there
the ghosts affray.
Forecasting this, the prince of fiends forsook his
darksome hole
And, in a chariot drawn with steeds as black as
any coal,
The whole foundation of the Isle of Sicil warily
viewed.
When throughly he had searched each place that
harm had none ensued,
As carelessly he ranged abroad, he chancèd to be
seen
Of Venus sitting on her hill; who, taking straight
between
Her arms her wingèd Cupid, said, 'My son, mine
only stay,
My hand, mine honour and my might, go, take
without delay
Those tools which all wights do subdue and
strike them in the heart
Of that same god that of the world enjoys the
lowest part.
The gods of heaven and Jove himself, the power
of sea and land
And he that rules the powers on earth, obey thy
mighty hand;
And wherefore, then, should only hell still
unsubduèd stand?
Thy mother's empire and thine own why dost
thou not advance?

The third part now of all the world now hangs in
doubtful chance.

And yet in heaven, too, now their deeds thou
see'st me fain to bear.

470

We are despised; the strength of love with me
away doth wear.

See'st not the darter, Dian, and Dame Pallas have
already

Exempted them from my behests? And now of
late so heady

Is Ceres' daughter too, that if we let her have her
will

She will continue all her life a maid unwedded
still;

For that is all her hope and mark whereat she
minds to shoot.

But thou, if aught thy gracious turn our honour
may promote

Or aught our empire beautify which jointly we
do hold,

This damsel to her uncle join.' No sooner had she
told

These words but Cupid, opening straight his
quiver, chose therefro

480

One arrow, as his mother bade, among a
thousand mo.

But such a one it was as none more sharper was
than it,

Nor none went straighter from the bow the
aimèd mark to hit.

He set his knee against his bow and bent it out of
hand

And made his forkèd arrow's steal in Pluto's heart
to stand.

‘ “Near Enna walls there stands a lake;
Pergusa is the name.

Caister heareth not mo songs of swans than
doth the same.

A wood environs every side the water round
about

And with his leaves as with a veil doth keep the
sun-heat out.

The boughs do yield a cool fresh air; the
moistness of the ground

Yields sundry flowers; continual spring is all the
year there found.

While in this garden Proserpine was taking her
pastime

In gathering either violets blue or lilies white as
lime,

And while of maidenly desire she filled her
maund and lap,

Endeavouring to outgather her companions
there, by hap

Dis spied her; loved her; caught her up – and all
at once, well near.

So hasty, hot and swift a thing is love, as may
appear.

The lady with a wailing voice, affright, did often
call

Her mother and her waiting maids, but mother
most of all.

And as she from the upper part her garment
would have rent,

500

By chance she let her lap slip down, and out her
flowers went.

And such a silly simpleness her childish age yet
bears

That even the very loss of them did move her
more to tears.

The catcher drives his chariot forth and, calling
every horse

By name, to make away apace he doth them still
enforce

And shakes about their necks and manes their
rusty bridle reins;

And throuh the deepest of the lake perforce he
them constrains,

And through the Palick pools, the which from
broken ground do boil

And smell of brimstone very rank, and also by
the soil

Whereas the Bacchies folk of Corinth with the
double seas

510

Between unequal havens twain did rear a town
for ease.

‘ “Between the fountains of Cyan and
Arethuse of Pise

An arm of sea that meets enclosed with
narrow horns there lies.

Of this the pool called Cyane, which beareth
greatest fame

Among the nymphs of Sicily, did algates take the
name.

Who, vauncing her unto the waist amid her pool,
did know

Dame Proserpine and said to Dis, 'Ye shall no
further go;

You cannot Ceres' son-in-law be, will she so or
no.

You should have sought her courteously and not
enforced her so.

And if I may with great estates my simple things
compare,

520

Anapus was in love with me; but yet he did not
fare

As you do now with Proserpine. He was content
to woo,

And I, unforced and unconstrained, consented
him unto.'

This said, she spreaded forth her arms and
stopped him of his way.

His hasty wrath Saturnus' son no lenger then
could stay

But, cheering up his dreadful steeds, did smite
his royal mace

With violence in the bottom of the pool in that
same place.

The ground straight yielded to his stroke and
made him way to hell,

And down the open gap both horse and chariot
headlong fell.

Dame Cyan, taking sore to heart as well the
ravishment

530

Of Proserpine against her will as also the
contempt

Against her fountain's privilege, did shroud in
secret heart

An inward corsie comfortless, which never did
depart
Until she, melting into tears, consumed away
with smart.
The selfsame waters of the which she was but
late ago
The mighty goddess now she pines and wastes
herself into.
Ye might have seen her limbs wax lithe; ye might
have bent her bones;
Her nails waxed soft. And first of all did melt the
smallest ones,
As hair and fingers, legs and feet (for these same
slender parts
Do quickly into water turn), and afterward
converts
To water shoulder, back, breast, side. And
finally, instead
Of lively blood within her veins corrupted there
was spread
Thin water, so that nothing now remainèd
whereupon
Ye might take hold. To water all consumèd was
anon.

540

*Ceres searches
for her
daughter*

‘ “The careful mother in the while did seek
her daughter dear

Through all the world, both sea and land, and
yet was ne’er the near.
The morning with her dewy hair her slugging
never found,

Nor yet the evening star that brings the night
upon the ground.

Two seasoned pine-trees at the mount of Etna
did she light

And bare them restless in her hands through all
the dankish night.

550

Again as soon as cheerful day did dim the stars,
she sought

Her daughter still from east to west. And, being
overwrought,

She caught a thirst. No liquor yet had come
within her throat.

By chance she spièd near at hand a pelting
thatchèd cote

With peevish doors. She knocked thereat, and
out there comes a trot.

The goddess askèd her some drink, and she
denied it not,

But out she brought her by and by a draught of
merry-go-down

And therewithal a hotchpotch made of steeped
barley brown

And flax and coriander seed and other simples
more,

The which she in an earthen pot together sod
before.

560

While Ceres was a-eating this, before her gazing
stood

A hard fast boy, a shrewd pert wag that could no
manners good;

He laughed at her and in scorn did call her
greedy gut.

The goddess, being wroth therewith, did on the
hotchpotch put

The liquor ere that all was eat and in his face it
threw.

Immediately the skin thereof became of speckled
hue

And into legs his arms did turn. And in his
altered hide

A wriggling tail straight to his limbs was added
more beside.

And to th'intent he should not have much power
to worken scathe,

His body in a little room together knit she hath.

570

For as with pretty lizards he in fashion doth
agree,

So than the lizard somewhat less in every point
is he.

The poor old woman was amazed, and bitterly
she wept.

She durst not touch the uncouth worm who into
corners crept.

And of the flecked spots like stars that on his
hide are set

A name agreeing thereunto in Latin doth he get;

It is our swift, whose skin with grey and yellow
specks is fret.

‘ “What lands and seas the goddess sought it
were too long to sayen.

The world did want. And so she went to Sicil
back again

And, as in going everywhere she searchèd busily,

580

She also came to Cyane, who would assuredly

Have told her all things had she not transformed
been before.

But mouth and tongue for utterance now would
serve her turn no more.

Howbeit, a token manifest she gave her for to
know

What was become of Proserpine. Her girdle she
did show

Still hovering on her holy pool, which slightly
from her fell

As she that way did pass; and that her mother
knew too well.

For when she saw it, by and by, as though she
had but then

Been new advertised of her chance, she piteously
began

To rend her ruffled hair and beat her hands
against her breast.

590

As yet she knew not where she was, but yet with
rage oppressed

She cursed all lands and said they were
unthankful everych one,

Yea, and unworthy of the fruits bestowed them
upon.

But bitterly above the rest she banned Sicily,
In which the mention of her loss she plainly did
espy.

And therefore there with cruel hand the earing
ploughs she brake

And man and beast that tilled the ground to
death in anger strake.

She marred the seed and eke forbade the fields to
yield their fruit.

600

The plenteousness of that same isle, of which
there went such bruit
Through all the world, lay dead. The corn was
killèd in the blade;
Now too much drought, now too much wet did
make it for to fade.
The stars and blasting winds did hurt, the hungry
fowls did eat
The corn in ground. The tines and briars did
overgrow the wheat,
And other wicked weeds the corn continually
annoy,
Which neither tilth nor toil of man was able to
destroy.

‘ “Then Arethuse, flood Alphey's love, lifts
from her Elian waves

Her head and, shedding to her ears her dewy
hair that waves

About her forehead, said, ‘O thou that art the
mother dear

Both of the maiden sought through all the world
both far and near

And eke of all the earthly fruits, forbear thine
endless toil

610

And be not wroth without a cause with this thy
faithful soil.

The land deserves no punishment. Unwillingly,
God wot,

She opened to the ravisher that violently her
smote.

It is not, sure, my native soil for which I thus
entreat;

I am but here a sojourner. My native soil and
seat
Is Pisa, and from Ely town I fetch my first
descent.
I dwell but as a stranger here. But, sure, to my
intent
This country likes me better far than any other
land.
Here now I, Arethusa, dwell; here am I settled.
And
I humbly you beseech, extend your favour to the
same.
A time will one day come when you to mirth
may better frame
And have your heart more free from care, which
better serve me may
To tell you why I from my place so great a space
do stray
And unto Ortygy am brought through so great
seas and waves.
The ground doth give me passage free, and by
the lowest caves
Of all the earth I make my way. And here I raise
my head
And look upon the stars again, near out of
knowledge fled.
Now while I underneath the earth the lake of
Styx did pass,
I saw your daughter Proserpine with these same
eyes. She was
Not merry, neither rid of fear as seemèd by her
cheer,

630

But yet a queen, but yet of great god Dis the
stately fere,

But yet of that same droopy realm the chief and
sovereign peer.'

‘ “Her mother stood as stark as stone when
she these news did hear,

And long she was like one that in another
world had been.

But when her great amazèdness by greatness of
her teen

Was put aside, she gets her to her chariot by and
by

And up to heaven in all post haste immediately
doth sty

And there beslubbered all her face. Her hair
about her ears,

To royal Jove in way of plaint this spiteful tale
she bears:

‘As well for thy blood as for mine, a suitor unto
thee

640

I hither come. If no regard may of the mother be,

Yet let the child her father move, and have not
lesser care

Of her, I pray, because that I her in my body
bare.

Behold, our daughter, whom I sought so long, is
found at last –

If finding you it term when of recovery means is
past,

Or if you finding do it call to have a knowledge
where

She is become. Her ravishment we might consent
to bear,

So restitution might be made. And though there
were to me

No interest in her at all yet, for as much as she
Is yours, it is unmeet she be bestowed upon a
thief.'

650

Jove answered thus: 'My daughter is a jewel dear
and lief,

A collop of mine own flesh cut as well as out of
thine.

But if we in our hearts can find things rightly to
define,

This is not spite but love. And yet, madam, in
faith I see

No cause of such a son-in-law ashamed for to be,
So you contented were therewith. For put the
case that he

Were destitute of all things else, how great a
matter is't

Jove's brother for to be? But sure in him is
nothing missed,

Nor he inferior is to me save only that by lot
The heavens to me, the hells to him the Destinies
did allot.

660

But if you have so sore desire your daughter to
divorce,

Though she again to heaven repair, I do not
greatly force,

But yet conditionally that she have tasted there
no food;

For so the Destinies have decreed.' He ceased,
and Ceres stood

Full bent to fetch her dauhter out; but Destinies
her withstood
Because the maid had broke her fast. For as she
happed one day
In Pluto's orchard recklessly from place to place
to stray,
She, gathering from a bowing tree a ripe
pomegranate, took
Seven kernels out and sucked them. None
chanced hereon to look
Save only one Ascalaphus, whom Orphne (erst a
dame
Among the other elves of hell not of the basest
fame)
Bare to her husband Acheron within her dusky
den.
He saw it and, by blabbing it ungraciously as
then,
Did let her from returning thence. A grievous
sigh the queen
Of hell did fetch, and of that wight that had a
witness been
Against her made a cursèd bird. Upon his face
she shed
The water of the Phlegeton; and by and by his
head
Was nothing else but beak and down and mighty
glaring eyes.
Quite altered from himself between two yellow
wings he flies.
He groweth chiefly into head and hookèd talons
long,

And much ado he hath to flask his lazy wings
among.

The messenger of mourning was he made, a
filthy fowl,

A sign of mischief unto men, the sluggish
screeching owl.

‘ “This person for his lavish tongue and
telling tales might seem

To have deserved punishment. But what
should men esteem

To be the very cause why you, Acheloy's
daughters, wear

Both feet and feathers like to birds, considering
that you bear

The upper parts of maidens still? And comes it so
to pass

Because, when Lady Proserpine a-gathering
flowers was,

Ye mermaids kept her company? Whom after
you had sought

Through all the earth in vain, anon, of purpose
that your thought

Might also to the seas be known, ye wished that
ye might

Upon the waves with hovering wings at pleasure
rule your flight

And had the gods to your request so pliant that
ye found

With yellow feathers out of hand your bodies
clothed round.

Yet lest that pleasant tune of yours, ordained to
delight

The hearing, and so high a gift of music perish
might

For want of utterance, human voice to utter
things at will

And count'nance of virginity remainèd to you
still.

But mean between his brother and his heavy
sister go'th

700

God Jove and parteth equally the year between
them both.

And now the goddess Proserpine indifferendy
doth reign

Above and underneath the earth, and so doth she
remain

One half year with her mother and the residue
with her fere.

Immediately she altered is as well in outward
cheer

As inward mind; for where her look might late
before appear

Sad even to Dis, her count'nance now is full of
mirth and grace,

Even like as Phoebus, having put the watery
clouds to chase,

Doth show himself a conqueror with bright and
shining face.

‘ “Then fruitful Ceres, void of care in that she
did recover

710

Her daughter, prayed thee, Arethuse, the
story to discover

What causèd thee to fleet so far and wherefore
thou became

*The
transformation
of Arethusa*

A sacred spring. The waters whist. The goddess
of the same
Did from the bottom of the well her goodly head
up rear
And, having drièd with her hand her fair green
hanging hair,
The river Alphey's ancient loves she thus began
to tell:

‘ “ ‘I was’, quoth she, ‘a nymph of them that
in Achaia dwell.

720

There was not one that earnest the lawns
and forests sought
Or pitched her toils more handsomely. And
though that of my thought
It was no part to seek the fame of beauty, though
I were
All courage, yet the prick and prize of beauty I
did bear.
My overmuch commended face was unto me a
spite.
This gift of body, in the which another would
delight,
I, rudesby, was ashamed of. Methought it was a
crime
To be beliked. I bear it well in mind that on a
time,
In coming weary from the chase of Stymphalus,
the heat
Was fervent and my travailing had made it twice
as great.

I found a water neither deep nor shallow which
did glide

Without all noise, so calm that scarce the moving
might be spied.

And throughly to the very ground it was so crisp
and clear

That every little stone therein did plain aloft
appear.

The hoary sallows and the poplars, growing on
the brim

Unset, upon the shoring banks did cast a shadow
trim.

I entered in and first of all I dippèd but my feet,
And after to my knees. And, not content to wade
so fleet,

I put off all my clothes and hung them on a
sallow by

And threw myself amid the stream; which as I
dallyingly

Did beat and draw and with myself a thousand
masteries try

In casting of mine arms abroad and swimming
wantonly,

I felt a bubbling in the stream, I wist not how
nor what,

And on the river's nearest brim I stepped for fear.
With that,

“O Arethusa, whither run'st?” and “Whither
run'st thou?” cried

Flood Alphey from his waves again with hollow
voice. I hied

Away, unclothèd as I was (for on the further side

My clothes hung still). So much more hot and
eager then was he,
And, for I naked was, I seemed the readier for to
be.
My running and his fierce pursuit was like as
when ye see
The silly doves with quivering wings before the
goshawk sty,
The goshawk sweeping after them as fast as he
can fly.
To Orchomen and Psophey land and Cyllen I did
hold
Out well, and thence to Maenalus and Erymanth
the cold,
And so to Ely. All this way no ground of me he
won.
But, being not so strong as he, this restless race
to run
I could not long endure, and he could hold it out
at length.
Yet over plains and woody hills, as long as lasted
strength,
And stones and rocks and desert grounds I still
maintained my race.
The sun was full upon my back. I saw before my
face
A lazy shadow, were it not that fear did make me
see't.
But certainly he fearèd me with trampling of his
feet,
And of his mouth the boistrous breath upon my
hairlace blew.

760

Forwearied with the toil of flight, "Help, Dian, I,
thy true

And trusty squire," I said, "who oft have carried
after thee

Thy bow and arrows, now am like attached for to
be."

The goddess, moved, took a cloud of such as
scattered were

And cast upon me. Hidden thus in misty darkness
there,

The river poured upon me still and hunted round
about

The hollow cloud, for fear perchance I should
have scaped out.

And twice, not knowing what to do, he stalked
about the cloud

When Dian had me hid, and twice he callèd out
aloud,

"Ho, Arethuse, ho, Arethuse." What heart had I,
poor wretch, then?

770

Even such as hath the silly lamb that dares not
stir nor quetch when

He hears the howling of the wolf about or near
the folds;

Or such as hath the squatted hare that in her
form beholds

The hunting hounds on every side and dares not
move a whit.

He would not thence, for why he saw no footing
out as yet;

And therefore watched he narrowly the cloud
and eke the place.

780

A chill cold sweat my siegèd limbs oppressed,
and down apace
From all my body steaming drops did fall of
watery hue.
Which way so e'er I stirred my foot, the place
was like a stew.
The dew ran trickling from my hair. In half the
while I then
Was turned to water that I now have told the tale
again.
His lovèd waters Alphey knew and, putting off
the shape
Of man, the which he took before because I
should not scape,
Returnèd to his proper shape of water by and by
Of purpose for to join with me and have my
company.
But Delia brake the ground at which I, sinking
into blind
By-corners, up again myself at Ortygy do wind,
Right dear to me because it doth Diana's
surname bear
And for because to light again I first was raised
there.'

790

‘ “Thus far did Arethusa speak. And then the
fruitful dame
Two dragons to her chariot put. And, reining
hard the same,
Midway between the heaven and earth she in the
air went
And unto Prince Triptolemus her lightsome
chariot sent

To Pallas' city load with corn, commanding him
to sow
Some part in ground new broken up, and some
thereof to strew
In ground long tilled before. Anon the young
man up did sty
And, flying over Europe and the realm of Asias
high,
Alighted in the Scythian land. There reignèd in
that coast
A king called Lyncus, to whose house he entered
for to host.
And being there demanded how and why he
thither came
And also of his native soil and of his proper
name,
'I hight', quoth he, 'Triptolemus and born was in
the town
Of Athens in the land of Greece, that place of
high renown.
I neither came by sea nor land but through the
open air.
I bring with me Dame Ceres' gifts which, being
sown in fair
And fertile fields, may fruitful harvests yield and
finer fare.'
The savage king had spite and, to th'intent that
of so rare
And gracious gifts himself might seem first
founder for to be,
He entertained him in his house and, when
asleep was he,

810

He came upon him with a sword. But as he
would have killed him,

Dame Ceres turned him to a lynx and, waking
t'other, willed him

His sacred team-ware through the air to drive
abroad again."

*The
punishment of
Pireus'
daughters*

'The chief of us had ended this her learnèd
song, and then

The nymphs with one consent did judge that
we, the goddesses

Of Helicon, had won the day. But when I saw
that these

Unnurtured damsels overcome began to fall a-
scolding,

I said, "So little sith to us you think yourselves
beholding

For bearing with your malapertness in making
challenge, that

Besides your former fault ye eke do fall to railing
flat,

Abusing thus our gentleness, we will from hence
proceed

820

The punishment and of our wrath the rightful
humour feed."

Euippy's daughters grinned and jeered and set
our threatenings light;

But as they were about to prate and bent their
fists to smite

Their wicked hands with hideous noise, they saw
the stumps of quills

New budding at their nails, and how their arms
soft feather hills.
Each saw how other's mouth did purse and
harden into bill,
And so, becoming uncouth birds, to haunt the
woods at will.
For as they would have clapped their hands,
their wings did up them heave
And, hanging in the air, the scolds of woods, did
pies them leave.
Now also, being turned to birds, they are as
eloquent
As e'er they were, as chattering still, as much to
babbling bent.'

FINIS QUINTI LIBRI.

The Sixth Book of Ovid's Metamorphoses

Minerva Tritonia unto all these words attentive hearing bends,
and

Arachne

And both the Muses' learnèd song and rightful wrath
commends.

And thereupon within herself this fancy did arise:
'It is no matter for to praise; but let our self devise
Some thing to be commended for, and let us not
permit

Our majesty to be despised without revenging it.'
And therewithal she purposed to put the Lydian maid
Arachne to her neckverse, who (as had to her been
said)

Presumèd to prefer herself before her noble grace
10 In making cloth. This damsel was not famous for the
place

In which she dwelt, nor for her stock, but for her art.
Her sire

Was Idmon, one of Colophon, a pelting purple-dyer.
Her mother was deceased; but she was of the baser
sort

And egal to her make in birth, in living and in port.
But though this maid were meanly born and dwelt
but in a shed

At little Hypaep, yet her trade her fame abroad did
spread

Even all the Lydian cities through. To see her
wondrous work
The nymphs that underneath the vines of shady
Tmolus lurk
Their vineyards oftentimes forsook. So did the
nymphs also
20 About Pactolus oftentimes their golden streams forgo.
And evermore it did them good not only for to see
Her cloths already made, but while they eke a-making
be,
Such grace was in her workmanship. For were it so
that she
The new-shorn fleeces from the sheep in bundles
deftly makes,
Or afterward doth kemb the same and draws it out in
flakes
Along like clouds, or on the rock doth spin the
handwarp woof,
Or else embroidereth, certainly ye might perceive by
proof
She was of Pallas' bringing up. Which thing she,
natheless,
Denieth and, disdaining such a mistress to confess,
30 'Let her contend with me,' she said. 'And if she me
amend,
I will refuse no punishment the which she shall
extend.'
Minerva took an old wife's shape and made her
hair seem grey
And with a staff her feeble limbs pretended for to
stay.

Which done, she thus began to speak: 'Not all that age
doth bring

We ought to shun. Experience doth of long
continuance spring.

Despise not mine admonishment. Seek fame and chief
report

For making cloth and arras work among the mortal
sort,

But humbly give the goddess place and pardon of her
crave

For these thine unadvised words. I warrant thou shalt
have

40 Forgiveness if thou ask it her.' Arachne bent her
brows

And, lowering on her, left her work. And hardly she
eschews

From flying in the lady's face. Her count'nance did
bewray

Her moody mind; which bursting forth in words, she
thus did say:

'Thou comest like a doting fool; thy wit is spent with
years.

Thy life hath lasted overlong, as by thy talk appears.

And if thou any daughter have or any daughter-in-
law,

I would she heard these words of mine. I am not such
a daw

But that without thy teaching I can well enough
advise

Myself. And lest thou shouldest think thy words in
any wise

50 Avail, the selfsame mind I keep with which I first
begun.

Why comes she not herself, I say? This match why
doth she shun?’

Then said the goddess, ‘Here she is.’ And therewithal
she cast

Her old wife's rivelled shape away and showed herself
at last

Minerva-like. The nymphs did straight adore her
majesty;

So did the young new-married wives that were of
Mygdony.

The maiden only, unabashed, would nought at all
relent;

But yet she blushed, and suddenly a ruddiness
besprent

Her cheeks which wanzed away again, even like as
doth the sky

Look sanguine at the break of day and turneth by and
by

60 To white at rising of the sun. As hot as any fire

She sticketh to her tackling still; and, through a fond
desire

Of glory, to her own decay all headlong forth she
runs.

For Pallas now no lenger warns, ne now no lenger
shuns,

Ne seeks the challenge to delay. Immediately they
came

And took their places severally, and in a several frame
Each strained a web, the warp whereof was fine. The
web was tied

Upon a beam. Between the warp a sleigh of reed did
slide.

The woof on sharpened pins was put betwixt the warp
and wrought
With fingers. And as oft as they had through the warp
it brought,
70 They strake it with a boxen comb. Both twain of them
made haste
And, girding close for handsomeness their garments
to their waist,
Bestirred their cunning hands apace. Their
earnestness was such
As made them never think of pain. They weavèd very
much
Fine purple that was dyed in Tyre and colours set so
trim
That each in shadowing other seemed the very same
with him.
Even like as after showers of rain, when Phoebus'
broken beams
Do strike upon the clouds, appears a compassed bow
of gleams
Which bendeth over all the heaven, wherein although
there shine
A thousand sundry colours, yet the shadowing is so
fine
80 That, look men ne'er so wistly, yet beguileth it their
eyes;
So like and even the selfsame thing each colour seems
to rise
Whereas they meet, which further off do differ more
and more.
Of glittering gold with silken thread was weavèd
there good store,

And stories put in portraiture of things done long
afore.

Minerva painted Athens town and Mars's rock
therein

And all the strife between herself and Neptune,
who should win

The honour for to give the name to that same noble
town.

In lofty thrones on either side of Jove were settled
down

Six peers of heaven with count'nance grave and full of
majesty,

90 And every of them by his face discernèd well might
be.

The image of the mighty Jove was king-like. She had
made

Neptunus standing, striking with his long three-tinèd
blade

Upon the ragged rock; and from the middle of the
clift

She portrayed issuing out a horse, which was the
noble gift

For which he challenged to himself the naming of the
town.

She pictured out herself with shield and morion on
her crown,

With curat on her breast and spear in hand with
sharpened end.

She makes the earth (the which her spear doth seem
to strike) to send

An olive-tree with fruit thereon, and that the gods
thereat

100

Did wonder. And with victory she finished up that
plat.

Yet to th'intent examples old might make it to be
known

To her that for desire of praise so stoutly held her
own

What guerdon she should hope to have for her
attempt so mad,

Four like contentions in the four last corners she did
add.

The Thracians Haeme and Rhodope the foremost
corner had,

Who, being sometime mortal folk, usurped to them
the name

Of Jove and Juno and were turned to mountains for
the same.

A Pigmy woman's piteous chance the second corner
showed,

Whom Juno turned to a crane because she was so
lewd

110

As for to stand at strife with her for beauty, charging
her

Against her native countryfolk continual war to stir.

The third had proud Antigone, who durst of pride
contend

In beauty with the wife of Jove, by whom she in the
end

Was turned to a stork. No whit availèd her the town

Of Troy or that Laomedon, her father, ware a crown,

But that she clad in feathers white her lazy wings
must flap

And with a bobbèd bill bewail the cause of her
mishap.

The last had childless Cinyras, who, being turned to
stone,
Was pictured prostrate on the ground and weeping all
alone
120 And culling fast between his arms a temple's greces
fine
To which his daughters' bodies were transformed by
wrath divine.
The utmost borders had a wreath of olive round
about.
And this is all the work the which Minerva portrayed
out.
For with the tree that she herself had made but late
afore
She bounded in her arras cloth, and then did work no
more.
The Lydian maiden in her web did portray to the
full
How Europe was by royal Jove beguiled in shape
of bull.
A swimming bull, a swelling sea so lively had she
wrought
That bull and sea in very deed ye might them well
have thought.
130 The lady seemèd looking back to landward and to cry
Upon her women and to fear the water sprinkling
high
And shrinking up her fearful feet. She portrayed also
there
Astery struggling with an erne, which did away her
bear;

And over Leda she had made a swan his wings to
splay.

She added also how by Jove in shape of satyr gay
The fair Antiope with a pair of children was besped;
And how he took Amphitryo's shape when in
Alcmena's bed

He gat the worthy Hercules; and how he also came
To Danae like a shower of gold, to Aegine like a
flame,

140

A shepherd to Mnemosyne, and like a serpent sly
To Proserpine. She also made Neptunus leaping by
Upon a maid of Aeolus' race in likeness of a bull,
And in the stream Enipeus' shape begetting on a trull
The giants Othe and Ephialt, and in the shape of ram
Begetting one Theophane, Bisalty's imp, with lamb.
And in a lusty stallion's shape she made him hovering
there

Dame Ceres with the yellow locks, and her whose
golden hair

Was turned to crawling snakes on whom he gat the
wingèd horse;

She made him in a dolphin's shape Melantho to
enforce.

150

Of all these things she missèd not their proper shapes,
nor yet

The full and just resemblance of their places for to
hit.

In likeness of a country clown was Phoebus pictured
there,

And how he now ware goshawk's wings, and now a
lion's hair,

And how he in a shepherd's shape was practising a
wile

The daughter of one Macary, Dame Issa, to beguile;
And how the fair Erigone by chance did suffer rape
By Bacchus, who deceived her in likeness of a grape;
And how that Saturn in the shape of jennet did beget
The double Chiron. Round about the utmost verge
was set

160

A narrow trail of pretty flowers with leaves of ivy
fret.

Not Pallas, no, nor spite itself could any quarrel
pick

To this her work. And that did touch Minerva to
the quick,

Who thereupon did rend the cloth in pieces every
whit

Because the lewdness of the gods was blazèd so in it.
And with an arras weaver's comb of box she fiercely
smit

Arachne on the forehead full a dozen times and more.
The maid, impatient in her heart, did stomach this so
sore

That by and by she hung herself. Howbeit, as she hing
Dame Pallas, pitying her estate, did stay her in the
string

170

From death and said, 'Lewd callet, live; but hang thou
still for me.

And lest hereafter from this curse that time may set
thee free,

I will that this same punishment enacted firmly be
As well on thy posterity for ever as on thee.'

And after, when she should depart, with juice of
Hecate's flower

She sprinkled her. And by and by the poison had such
power

That with the touch thereof her hair, her ears and
nose did fade,

And very small it both her head and all her body
made.

Instead of legs to both her sides stick fingers long and
fine;

The rest is belly. From the which she ne'ertheless doth
twine

180

A slender thread and practiseth in shape of spider still

The spinner's and the webster's crafts of which she
erst had skill.

Niobe

All Lydia did repine hereat and of this deed the
fame

and her

children

Through Phrygie ran, and through the world was
talking of the same.

Before her marriage Niobe had known her very well,

When yet a maid in Maeony* and Sipyle she did
dwell.

And yet Arachne's punishment at home before her
eyes

To use discreeter kind of talk it could her not advise

Nor (as behoveth) to the gods to yield in humble
wise.

For many things did make her proud. But neither did
the town

190

The which her husband buided had, nor houses of
renown

Of which they both descended were, nor yet the
puissance

Of that great realm wherein they reigned so much her
mind enhance

(Although the liking of them all did greatly her
delight)

As did the offspring of herself. And certainly she
might

Have been of mothers counted well most happy, had
she not

So thought herself. For she whom sage Tiresias had
begot,

The prophet Manto, through instinct of heavenly
power did say

These kind of words in open street: 'Ye Thebans, go
your way

Apace, and unto Laton and to Laton's children pray

200

And offer godly frankincense and wreathe your hair
with bay.

Latona by the mouth of me commands you so to do.'

The Theban women, by and by obeying thereunto,

Decked all their heads with laurel leaves as Manto did
require

And, praying with devout intent, threw incense in the
fire.

Behold, out cometh Niobe environed with a guard

Of servants and a solemn train that followed
afterward.

She was herself in raiment made of costly cloth of
gold

Of Phrygia fashion, very brave and gorgeous to
behold.

210 And of herself she was right fair and beautiful of face,
But that her wrathful stomach then did somewhat
stain her grace.

She, moving with her portly head her hair (the which
as then

Did hang on both her shoulders loose), did pause a
while. And when

With lofty look her stately eyes she rollèd had about,
‘What madness is it’, quoth she, ‘to prefer the
heavenly rout

Of whom ye do but hear, to such as daily are in
sight?

Or why should Laton honoured be with altars? Never
wight

To my most sacred majesty did offer incense. Yet
My father was that Tantalus whom only as most fit
The gods among them at their boards admitted for to
sit.

220 A sister of the Pleiads is my mother. Finally,
My grandsire on the mother's side is that same Atlas
high

That on his shoulders beareth up the heavenly axle-
tree.

Again, my other grandfather is Jove and, as you see,
He also is my father-in-law, wherein I glory may.
The realm of Phrygia here at hand doth unto me
obey.

In Cadmus' palace I thereof the lady do remain,
And jointly with my husband I as peerless princess
reign

Both over this same town whose walls my husband's
harp did frame

And also over all the folk and people in the same.

In whatsoever corner of my house I cast mine eye,

A world of riches and of goods I everywhere espy.

Moreover, for the beauty, shape and favour grown in
me

Right well I know I do deserve a goddess for to be.

Besides all this, seven sons I have and daughters
seven likewise,

By whom shall shortly son-in-laws and daughter-in-
laws arise.

Judge you now if that I have cause of stateliness or
no.

How dare ye, then, prefer to me Latona, that same fro
The Titan, Coeus' imp, to whom (then ready down to
lie)

The hugy earth a little plot to child on did deny?

From heaven, from earth and from the sea your
goddess banished was

And, as an outcast, through the world from place to
place did pass

Until that Delos, pitying her, said, "Thou dost fleet on
land

And I on sea," and thereupon did lend her out of hand
A place unstable. Of two twins there brought abed
was she;

And this is but the seventh part of the issue borne by
me.

Right happy am I. Who can this deny? And shall so
still

Continue. Who doth doubt of that? Abundance hath
and will

Preserve me. I am greater than the froward Fortune
may

Impeach me. For although she should pull many
things away,

250 Yet should she leave me many more. My state is out
of fear.

Of this my huge and populous race surmise you that it
were

Possible some of them should miss; yet can I never be
So spoilèd that no mo than two shall tarry still with
me.

Leave quickly this lewd sacrifice and put me off this
bay

That on your heads is wreathèd thus.' They laid it
straight away

And left their holy rites undone, and closely as they
may

With secret whispering to themselves to Laton they
did pray.

How much from utter barrenness the goddess was,
so much

Disdained she more, and in the top of Cynthus
framed such

260 Complaint as this to both her twins: 'Lo, I, your
mother dear,

Who in my body once you twain with painful travail
bare,

Lo, I, whose courage is so stout as for to yield to none
Of all the other goddesses except Jove's wife alone,
Am lately doubted whether I a goddess be or no.

And if you help not, children mine, the case now
standeth so

That I the honour must from hence of altars quite
forgo.

But this is not mine only grief. Besides her wicked
fact,

Most railing words hath Niobe to my defacing raked.

She durst prefer her bairns to you. And as for me, she
named

270 Me barren in respect of her, and was no whit
ashamed

To show her father's wicked tongue which she by
birth doth take.'

This said, Latona was about entreatance for to make;

'Cease off,' quoth Phoebus. 'Long complaint is nothing
but delay

Of punishment.' And the selfsame words did Phoebe
also say.

And by and by they, through the air both gliding
swiftly down,

On Cadmus' palace hid in clouds did light in Thebe
town.

A field was underneath the wall both level, large
and wide,

Betrampled every day with horse that men therein
did ride,

Where store of cars and horses' hoofs the clods to dust
had trod.

280 A couple of Amphion's sons on lusty coursers rode

In this same place. Their horses fair caparisons did
wear

Of scarlet, and their bridles brave with gold bedeckèd
were.

Of whom as Niob's eldest son, Ismenus, happed to
bring

His horse about and reined him in to make him keep
the ring,

He cried, 'Alas!' and in his breast with that an arrow
stack.

And by and by his dying hand did let the bridle slack,
And on the right side of the horse he slipped to the
ground.

The second brother, Sipylus, did chance to hear the
sound

Of quivers clattering in the air and, giving straight the
rein

290 And spur together to his horse, began to fly amain

As doth the master of a ship who, when he sees a
shower

Approaching by some misty cloud that gins to gloom
and lower,

Doth clap on all his sails because no wind should
scape him by,

Though ne'er so small. Howbeit, as he turnèd for to
fly,

He was not able for to scape the arrow which did
strike

Him through the neck. The nock thereof did shaking
upward stick;

The head appearèd at his throat. And as he forward
gave

Himself in flying, so to ground he grovelling also
drave

And toppled by the horse's mane and feet amid his
race

300 And with his warm new-shedded blood berayèd all
the place.

But Phaedimus and Tantalus, the heir of the name
Of Tantalus his grandfather, who customably came
From other daily exercise to wrestling, had begun
To close and each at other now with breast to breast
to run,

When Phoebus' arrow, being sent with force from
strained string,

Did strike through both of them as they did fast
together cling.

And so they sighed both at once, and both at once for
pain

Fell down to ground, and both of them at once their
eyes did strain

To see their latest light, and both at once their ghosts
did yield.

310 Alphenor this mischance of theirs with heavy heart
beheld,

And scratched and beat his woeful breast; and
therewith, flying out

To take them up between his arms, was, as he went
about

This work of kindly pity, killed. For Phoebus with a
dart

Of deadly dint did rive him through the bulk and
brake his heart.

And when the steal was pluckèd out, a parcel of his
liver

Did hang upon the hookèd head. And so he did
deliver

His life and blood into the air, departing both
together.

But Damasicthon, on whose head came never scissor,
felt

More wounds than one. It was his chance to have a
grievous pelt

320 Upon the very place at which the leg is first begun

And where the hamstrings by the joint with supple
sinews run.

And while to draw this arrow out he with his hand
assayed,

Another through his weasand went, and at the
feathers stayed.

The blood did drive out this again and, spinning high,
did spout

A great way off and pierced the air with sprinkling all
about.

The last of all, Iliony, with stretchèd hands and
speech

Most humble (but in vain) did say, 'O gods, I you
beseech

Of mercy all in general.' He wist not what he said

Ne how that unto all of them he ought not to have
prayed.

330 The god that held the bow in hand was movèd; but as
then

The arrow was already gone so far that back again

He could not call it. Ne'ertheless, the wound was very
small

Of which he died, for why his heart it did but lightly
gall.

The rumour of the mischief self and moan of
people and

The weeping of her servants gave the mother
t'understand

The sudden stroke of this mischance. She wondered
very much

And stormèd also that the gods were able to do such
A deed or durst attempt it; yea, she thought it more
than right

That any of them over her should have so mickle
might.

340 Amphion had fordone himself already with a knife

And ended all his sorrows uite toether with his life.

Alas, alas, how greatly doth this Niobe differ here
From t' other Niobe who a-late, disdaining any peer,
Did from Latona's altars drive her folk and through
the town

With haughty look and stately gait went pranking up
and down!

Then spited at among her own, but piteous now to
those

That heretofore for her deserts had been her greatest
foes.

She falleth on the corses cold and, taking no regard,
Bestowed her kisses on her sons as whom she
afterward

350 Did know she never more should kiss. From whom
she, lifting tho

Her blue and bruised arms to heaven, said, 'O thou
cruel foe,

Latona, feed, yea, feed thyself, I say, upon my woe

And overgorge thy stomach, yea, and glut thy cruel
heart

With these my present painful pangs of bitter griping
smart.

In corses seven I seven times dead am carried to my
grave.

Rejoice, thou foe, and triumph now in that thou
seem'st to have

The upper hand. What? Upper hand? No, no, it is not
so.

As wretched as my case doth seem, yet have I left me
mo

Than thou for all thy happiness canst of thine own
account.

360 Even after all these corses yet I still do thee
surmount.'

Upon the end of these same words the twanging of
the string

In letting of the arrow fly was clearly heard. Which
thing

Made everyone save Niobe afraid; her heart was so

With sorrow hardened that she grew more bold. Her
daughters tho

Were standing all with mourning weed and hanging
hair before

Their brothers' coffins. One of them, in pulling from
the sore

An arrow sticking in his heart, sank down upon her
brother

With mouth to mouth, and so did yield her fleeting
ghost. Another,

In comforting the wretched case and sorrow of her
mother,

370

Upon the sudden held her peace. She stricken was
within

With double wound, which caused her her talking for
to blin

And shut her mouth; but first her ghost was gone.
One, all in vain

Attempting for to scape by flight, was in her flying
slain.

Another on her sister's corse doth tumble down stark
dead.

This quakes and trembles piteously; and she doth hide
her head.

And when that six with sundry wounds dispatched
were and gone,

At last as yet remained one. And for to save that one
Her mother with her body whole did cling about her
fast

And, wrying her, did over her her garments wholly
cast

380

And crièd out, 'O, leave me one! This little one yet
save!

Of many but this only one, the least of all I crave.'

But while she prayed, for whom she prayed was
killed. Then down she sat,

Bereft of all her children quite and drawing to her
fate

Among her daughters and her sons and husband
newly dead.

Her cheeks waxed hard; the air could stir no hair
upon her head;

The colour of her face was dim and clearly void of
blood;

And sadly under open lids her eyes unmoved stood.

In all her body was no life. For even her very tongue
And palate of her mouth was hard, and each to other
clung.

390 Her pulses ceased for to beat; her neck did cease to
bow,

Her arms to stir, her feet to go. All power forwent as
now,

And into stone her very womb and bowels also bind.

But yet she wept and, being hoist by force of whirling
wind,

Was carried into Phrygie. There upon a mountain's
top

She weepeth still in stone; from stone the dreary tears
do drop.

Then all, both men and women, feared Latona's
open ire

And far with greater sumptuousness and earnest
desire

Did worship the great majesty of this their goddess,
who

Did bear at once both Phoebus and his sister Phoebe
too.

400 And through occasion of this chance (as men are wont
to do

In cases like) the people fell to telling things of old,

Of whom a man among the rest this tale ensuing told:

Diana ‘The ancient folk that in the fields of fruitful Lycia
and the dwelt

Lycian

peasants

Due penance also for their spite to this same
goddess felt.

The baseness of the parties makes the thing itself
obscure,

Yet is the matter wonderful. Myself, I you assure,
Did presently behold the pond and saw the very place
In which this wondrous thing was done. My father
then in case,

410 Not able for to travel well by reason of his age,
To fetch home certain oxen thence made me to be his
page,

Appointing me a countryman of Lycia to my guide.
With whom as I went plodding in the pasture
grounds, I spied
Amidst a certain pond an old square altar coloured
black

With cinder of the sacrifice that still upon it stack.
About it round grew wavering reeds. My guide anon
did stay

And softly, "O be good to me," he in himself did say.
And I with like soft whispering did say, "Be good to
me."

And then I asked him whether that the altar we did
see

420 Belongèd to the waternymphs or fauns or other god
Peculiar to the place itself upon the which we yode.

He made me answer thus: "My guest, no god of
country race

Is in this altar worshippèd. That goddess claims this
place

From whom the wife of mighty Jove did all the world
forfend

When, wandering restless here and there, full hardly
in the end

Unsettled Delos did receive, then floating on the
wave,

As tide and weather to and fro the swimming island
drave.

There, maugre Juno, who with might and main
against her strave,

Latona, staying by a date and olive-tree that stead
In travail, of a pair of twins was safely brought abed.

430 And after her deliverance folk report that she for fear
Of Juno's wrath did fly from hence and in her arms
did bear

Her babes, which afterward became two gods. In
which her travel

In summer, when the scorching sun is wont to burn
the gravel

Of Lycy country, where the fell Chimaera hath his
place,

The goddess, weary with the long continuance of her
race,

Waxed thirsty by the means of drought with going in
the sun.

Her babes had also sucked her breasts as long as milk
would run.

By chance she spied this little pond of water here
below.

And country carls were gathering there these osier
twigs that grow

440 So thick upon a shrubby stalk, and of these rushes
green

And flags that in these moorish plots so rife of
growing been.

She, coming hither, kneelèd down the water up to
take

To cool her thirst. The churlish clowns forfended her
the lake.

Then gently said the goddess, 'Sirs, why do you me
forfend

The water? Nature doth to all in common water send.
For neither sun, nor air, nor yet the water private be;
I seek but that which Nature's gift hath made to all
things free.

And yet I humbly crave of you to grant it unto me.

I did not go about to wash my weary limbs and skin;

450 I would but only quench my thirst. My throat is scalt
within

For want of moisture, and my chaps and lips are
parching dry,

And scarcely is there way for words to issue out
thereby.

A draught of water will to me be heavenly nectar
now,

And sure I will confess I have receivèd life of you.

Yea, in your giving of a drop of water unto me

The case so standeth as you shall preserve the lives of
three.

Alas, let these same silly souls that in my bosom
stretch

Their little arms' – by chance her babes their pretty
dolls did reach –

'To pity move you.' What is he so hard that would not
yield

460

To this, the gentle goddess's entreatance meek and
mild?

Yet they, for all the humble words she could devise to
say,

Continued in their wilful mood of churlish saying nay
And threatened for to send her thence unless she went
away,

Reviling her most spitefully. And not contented so,
With hands and feet the standing pool they troubled
to and fro

Until, with trampling up and down maliciously, the
soft

And slimy mud that lay beneath was raised up aloft.

With that the goddess was so wroth that thirst was
quite forgot.

And unto such unworthy carls herself she humbleth
not

470

Ne speaketh meaner words than might beseem a
goddess well

But, holding up her hands to heaven, 'For ever
mought you dwell

In this same pond,' she said. Her wish did take effect
with speed,

For underneath the water they delight to be indeed.

Now dive they to the bottom down, now up their
heads they pop;

Another while with sprawling legs they swim upon
the top.

And oftentimes upon the banks they have a mind to
stand,

And oftentimes from thence again to leap into the
pond.

And there they now do practise still their filthy
tongues to scold,
And shamelessly (though underneath the water) they
do hold
480 Their former wont of brawling still amid the water
cold.
Their voices still are hoarse and harsh, their throats
have puffed gowls,
Their chaps with brawling widened are, their
hammer-headed jowls
Are joined to their shoulders just, the necks of them
do seem
Cut off, the ridgebone of their back sticks up of colour
green,
Their paunch – which is the greatest part of all their
trunch – is grey;
And so they up and down the pond, made newly
frogs, do play.”

The When one of Lyce (I wot not who) had spoken in
flaying of this sort,
Marsyas

Another of a satyr straight began to make report
Whom Phoebus, overcoming on a pipe (made late ago
By Pallas), put to punishment. ‘Why flayest thou me
490 so?
Alas!’ he cried, ‘It irketh me. Alas, a sorry pipe
Deserveth not so cruelly my skin from me to strip.’
For all his crying, o’er his ears quite pullèd was his
skin.
Nought else he was than one whole wound. The grisly
blood did spin

From every part; the sinews lay discovered to the eye;
The quivering veins without a skin lay beating
nakedly.

The panting bowels in his bulk ye might have
numbered well,

And in his breast the sheer small strings a man might
easily tell.

The country fauns, the gods of woods, the satyrs of
his kin,

500 The Mount Olympus, whose renown did ere that time
begin,

And all the nymphs and all that in those mountains
kept their sheep

Or grazèd cattle thereabouts, did for this satyr weep.

The fruitful earth waxed moist therewith and,
moisted, did receive

Their tears and in her bowels deep did of the same
conceive.

And when that she had turnèd them to water, by and
by

She sent them forth again aloft to see the open sky.

The river that doth rise thereof, beginning there his
race,

In very deep and shoring banks to seaward runs apace
Through Phrygie; and according as the satyr, so the
stream

510 Is callèd Marsyas, of the brooks the clearest in that
realm.

Mourning With such examples as these same the common
for the folk returned

house of
Amphion

To present things, and every man through all the
city mourned

For that Amphion was destroyed with all his issue so.
But all the fault and blame was laid upon the mother
tho.

For her alonely Pelops mourned, as men report, and
he

In opening of his clothes did show, that every man
might see,

His shoulder on the left side bare of ivory for to be.

This shoulder at his birth was like his t'other, both in
hue

And flesh, until his father's hands most wickedly him
slew

520 And that the gods, when they his limbs again together
drew

To join them in their proper place and form by nature
due,

Did find out all the other parts save only that which
grew

Between the throat-boll and the arm. Which when
they could not get,

This other made of ivory white in place thereof they
set;

And by that means was Pelops made again both
whole and sound.

The neighbour princes thither came, and all the
cities round

About besought their kings to go and comfort
Thebe: as Arge.

And Sparta and Mycene, which was under Pelops'
charge,
And Calydon, unhated of the frowning Phoebe yet,
530 The wealthy town Orchomenos and Corinth, which in
it
Had famous men for workmanship in metals, and the
stout
Messene, which full twenty years did hold besiegers
out,
And Patrae and the lowly town Cleona, Neley's Pyle
And Troezen, not surnamèd yet Pittheia for a while,
And all the other borough towns and cities which do
stand
Within the narrow balk at which two seas do meet at
hand
Or which do bound upon the balk without in main
firm land.

Tereus Alone Athens (who would think?) did neither come
and nor send.

Philomel

War barrèd them from courtesy, the which they did
intend.
540 The king of Pontus with an host of savage people lay
In siege before their famous walls and curstly did
them fray
Until that Tereus, king of Thrace, approaching to their
aid,
Did vanquish him and with renown was for his labour
paid.
And sith he was so puissant in men and ready coin

And came of mighty Mars's race, Pandion sought to
join

Alliance with him by and by and gave him to his fere
His daughter Procne. At this match (as after will
appear)

Was neither Juno, president of marriage wont to be,
Nor Hymen, no, nor any one of all the Graces three.

550 The Furies, snatching tapers up that on some hearse
did stand,

Did light them and before the bride did bear them in
their hand.

The Furies made the bridegroom's bed. And on the
house did ruck

A cursèd owl, the messenger of ill success and luck.

And all the night-time, while that they were lying in
their beds,

She sat upon the bedstead's top right over both their
heads.

Such handsel Procne had the day that Tereus did her
wed;

Such handsel had they when that she was brought of
child abed.

All Thracia did rejoice at them and thanked their gods
and willed

That both the day of Procne's match with Tereus
should be held

560 For feastful and the day likewise that Itys first was
born;

So little know we what behoves. The sun had now
outworn

Five harvests and by course five times had run his
yearly race

When Procne, flattering Tereus, said, 'If any love or
grace

Between us be, send either me my sister for to see
Or find the means that hither she may come to visit
me.

You may assure your father-in-law she shall again
return

Within a while. Ye do to me the highest great good
turn

That can be, if you bring to pass I may my sister see.'
Immediately the king commands his ships afloat to
be,

570 And shortly after, what with sail and what with force
of oars,

In Athens' haven he arrives and lands at Pirey shores.

As soon as of his father-in-law the presence he
obtained

And had of him been courteously and friendly
entertained,

Unhappy handsel entered with their talking first
together.

The errands of his wife, the cause of his then coming
thither,

He had but new begun to tell and promised that when
She had her sister seen she should with speed be sent
again,

When (see the chance) came Philomel in raiment very
rich

And yet in beauty far more rich, even like the fairies
which

580 Reported are the pleasant woods and water springs to
haunt,

So that the like apparel and attire to them you grant.
King Tereus at the sight of her did burn in his desire,
As if a man should chance to set a gulf of corn on fire
Or burn a stack of hay. Her face indeed deserved love.
But as for him, to fleshly lust even nature did him
move;

For of those countries commonly the people are above
All measure prone to lechery. And therefore both by
kind

His flame increased and by his own default of vicious
mind.

590 He purposed fully to corrupt her servants with reward
Or for to bribe her nurse, that she should slenderly
regard

Her duty to her mistressward. And rather than to fail,
The lady even herself with gifts he minded to assail
And all his kingdom for to spend, or else by force of
hand

To take her and in maintenance thereof by sword to
stand.

There was not under heaven the thing but that he
durst it prove,

So far unable was he now to stay his lawless love.

Delay was deadly. Back again with greedy mind he
came

Of Procne's errands for to talk, and underneath the
same

He works his own ungraciousness. Love gave him
power to frame

600 His talk at will. As oft as he demanded out of square,
Upon his wife's importunate desire himself he bare.

He also wept, as though his wife had willèd that
likewise.

O God, what blindness doth the hearts of mortal men
disguise!

By working mischief Tereus gets him credit for to
seem

A loving man and winneth praise by wickedness
extreme.

Yea, and the foolish Philomel the selfsame thing
desires

Who, hanging on her father's neck with flattering
arms, requires

Against her life and for her life his licence for to go

To see her sister. Tereus beholds her wistly tho

610 And, in beholding, handles her with heart. For when
he saw

Her kiss her father and about his neck her arms to
draw,

They all were spurs to prick him forth and wood to
feed his fire

And food of forcing nourishment to further his desire.

As oft as she her father did between her arms
embrace,

So often wished he himself her father in that case.

For nought at all should that in him have wrought the
greater grace.

Her father could not say them nay, they lay at him so
sore.

Right glad thereof was Philomel and thanked him
therefore;

And, wretched wench, she thinks she had obtained
such a thing

620

As both to Procne and herself should joy and comfort
bring,

When both of them in very deed should afterward it
rue.

To endward of his daily race and travel Phoebus
drew,

And on the shoring side of heaven his horses
downward flew.

A princely supper was prepared and wine in gold was
set,

And after meat to take their rest the princes did them
get.

But though the king of Thrace that while were absent
from her sight,

Yet swelted he and, in his mind revolving all the
night

Her face, her gesture and her hands, imagined all the
rest

(The which as yet he had not seen) as liked his fancy
best.

630

He feeds his flames himself. No wink could come
within his eyes

For thinking aye on her. As soon as day was in the
skies,

Pandion, holding in his hand the hand of Tereus
pressed

To go his way and shedding tears, betook him thus
his guest:

‘Dear son-in-law, I give thee here, sith godly cause
constrains,

This damsel. By the faith that in thy princely heart
remains

And for our late alliance sake and by the gods above,

I humbly thee beseech that as a father thou do love
And maintain her, and that as soon as may be (all
delay

Will unto me seem overlong) thou let her come away,
The comfort of my careful age on whom my life doth
stay.

And thou, my daughter Philomel, it is enough, iwis,
That from her father set so far thy sister Procne is;
If any spark of nature do within thy heart remain,
With all the haste and speed thou canst return to me
again.'

In giving charge, he kissèd her; and down his cheeks
did rain

The tender tears. And as a pledge of faith he took the
right

Hands of them both and, joining them, did each to
other plight,

Desiring them to bear in mind his commendations to
His daughter and her little son. And then with much
ado

For sobbing, at the last he bade adieu as one
dismayed;

The foremisgiving of his mind did make him sore
afraid.

As soon as Tereus and the maid together were
aboard

And that their ship from land with oars was halèd
on the ford,

'The field is ours!' he cried aloud; 'I have the thing I
sought.'

And up he skipped; so barbarous and so beastly was
his thought

That scarce even there he could forbear his pleasure
to have wrought.

His eye went never off of her, as when the scareful
erne,

With hookèd talons trussing up a hare among the
fern,

Hath laid her in his nest from whence the prisoner
cannot scape;

660 The ravening fowl with greedy eyes upon his prey
doth gape.

Now was their journey come to end; now were they
gone a-land

In Thracia, when that Tereus took the lady by the
hand

And led her to a pelting grange that peakishly did
stand

In woods forgrown. There, waxing pale and trembling
sore for fear

And dreading all things and with tears demanding
sadly where

Her sister was, he shut her up, and therewithal
bewrayed

His wicked lust; and so by force, because she was a
maid

And all alone, he vanquished her. It bootèd nought at
all

That she on sister, or on sire or on the gods did call.

670 She quaketh like the wounded lamb which, from the
wolf's hoar teeth

New shaken, thinks herself not safe; or as the dove
that see'th

Her feathers with her own blood stained who,
shuddering still, doth fear

The greedy hawk that did her late with griping talons
tear.

Anon, when that this mazèdness was somewhat
overpassed,

She rent her hair and beat her breast and up to
heavenward cast

Her hands in mourning wise and said, 'O cankered
carl, O fell

And cruel tryant, neither could the godly tears that
fell

A-down my father's cheeks when he did give thee
charge of me,

Ne of my sister that regard that ought to be in thee,

680 Nor yet my chaste virginity, nor conscience of the law

Of wedlock from this villainy thy barbarous heart
withdraw!

Behold, thou hast confounded all! My sister thorough
me

Is made a cuckquean; and thyself through this offence
of thee

Art made a husband to us both, and unto me a foe:

A just deservèd punishment for lewdly doing so.

But to th'intent, O perjured wretch, no mischief may
remain

Unwrought by thee, why doest thou from murdering
me refrain?

Would God thou had it done before this wicked rape.
From hence

Then should my soul most blessèdly have gone
without offence.

690 But if the gods do see this deed and if the gods, I say,

Be aught and in this wicked world bear any kind of
 sway,
And if with me all other things decay not, sure the
 day
Will come that for this wickedness full dearly thou
 shalt pay.
Yea, I myself, rejecting shame, thy doings will
 bewray.
And if I may have power to come abroad, them blaze
 I will
In open face of all the world. Or if thou keep me still
As prisoner in these woods, my voice the very woods
 shall fill
And make the stones to understand. Let heaven to this
 give ear,
And all the gods and powers therein, if any god be
 there.'

700

 The cruel tyrant, being chafed and also put in fear
 With these and other such her words, both causes
 so him stung
That, drawing out his naked sword that at his girdle
 hung,
He took her rudely by the hair and wrung her hands
 behind her,
Compelling her to hold them there while he himself
 did bind her.
When Philomela saw the sword, she hoped she should
 have died
And for the same her naked throat she gladly did
 provide.
But as she yearned and callèd aye upon her father's
 name

And strived to have spoken still, the cruel tyrant came
And with a pair of pinions fast did catch her by the
tongue

710

And with his sword did cut it off. The stump whereon
it hung

Did patter still. The tip fell down and, quivering on
the ground,

As though that it had murmured it made a certain
sound.

And as an adder's tail cut off doth skip a while, even
so

The tip of Philomela's tongue did wriggle to and fro

And nearer to her mistressward in dying still did go.

And after this most cruel act, for certain men report

That he (I scarcely dare believe) did oftentimes resort

To maimèd Philomela and abused her at his will.

Yet after all this wickedness he, keeping count'nance
still,

720

Durst unto Procne home repair; and she immediately

Demanded where her sister was. He, sighing
feignèdly,

Did tell her falsely she was dead, and with his subtle
tears

He maketh all his tale to seem of credit in her ears.

Her garments glittering all with gold she from her
shoulders tears

And puts on black and setteth up an empty hearse
and keeps

A solemn obit for her soul; and piteously she weeps

And waileth for her sister's fate who was not in such
wise

As that was for to be bewailed. The sun had in the
skies

Passed through the twelve celestial signs and finished
full a year.

730 But what should Philomela do? She watched was so
near

That start she could not for her life. The walls of that
same grange

Were made so high of main hard stone that out she
could not range.

Again, her tongueless mouth did want the utterance
of the fact.

Great is the wit of pensiveness, and when the head is
racked

With hard misfortune sharp forecast of practice
entereth in.

A warp of white upon a frame of Thracia she did pin
And weavèd purple letters in between it, which
bewrayed

The wicked deed of Tereus. And having done, she
prayed

A certain woman by her signs to bear them to her
mistress.

740 She bare them and delivered them, not knowing
ne'ertheless

What was in them. The tyrant's wife unfolded all the
clout

And of her wretched fortune read the process whole
throughout.

She held her peace. A wondrous thing it is she should
so do,

But sorrow tied her tongue and words agreeable unto

Her great displeasure were not at commandment at
that stound,
And weep she could not. Right and wrong she
reckoneth to confound,
And on revengement of the deed her heart doth
wholly ground.

*Procne's
revenge*

It was the time that wives of Thrace were wont to
celebrate

The three year rites of Bacchus which were done
a-night-times late.

750

A-night-times soundeth Rhodope of tinkling pans and
pots;

A-night-times, giving up her house, abroad Queen
Procne trots

Disguised like Bacchus' other frows and armed to the
proof

With all the frantic furniture that serves for that
behoof.

Her head was covered with a vine; about her loose
was tucked

A red deer's skin; a lightsome lance upon her shoulder
rucked.

In post gads terrible Procne through the woods, and
at her heels

A flock of frows; and where the sting of sorrow which
she feels

Enforceth her to furiousness, she feigns it to proceed
Of Bacchus' motion. At the length she, finding out
indeed

760

The outset grange, howled out and cried, 'Now, well!'
and open brake

The gates and straight her sister thence by force of
hand did take

And, veiling her in like attire of Bacchus hid her head
With ivy leaves and home to court her sore amazed
led.

As soon as Philomela wist she set her foot within
That cursed house, the wretched soul to shudder
did begin,

And all her face waxed pale. Anon her sister, getting
place,

Did pull off Bacchus' mad attire and, making bare her
face,

Embraced her between her arms. But she, considering
that

Queen Procne was a cuckquean made by means of
her, durst nat

770 Once raise her eyes, but on the ground fast fixed held
the same.

And where she would have taken God to witness that
the shame

And villainy was wrought to her by violence, she was
fain

To use her hand instead of speech. Then Procne
chafed amain

And was not able in herself her choler to restrain

But, blaming Philomela for her weeping, said these
words:

'Thou must not deal in this behalf with weeping but
with swords,

Or with some thing of greater force than swords. For
my part, I

Am ready, yea, and fully bent all mischief for to try.

780

This palace will I either set on fire and in the same
Bestow the cursed Tereus, the worker of our shame,
Or pull away his tongue or put out both his eyes, or
cut
Away those members which have thee to such
dishonour put,
Or with a thousand wounds expulse that sinful soul of
his.

The thing that I do purpose on is great, whate're it is.
I know not what it may be yet.' While Procne
hereunto

Did set her mind, came Itys in, who taught her what
to do.

She, staring on him cruelly, said, 'Ah, how like thou
art

Thy wicked father,' and without mo words a
sorrowful part

She purposèd, such inward ire was boiling in her
heart.

790

But notwithstanding, when her son approached to her
near

And lovingly had greeted her by name of mother dear
And with his pretty arms about the neck had hugged
her fast

And flattering words with childish toys in kissing
forth had cast,

The mother's heart of hers was then constrainèd to
relent;

Assuagèd wholly was the rage to which she erst was
bent,

And from her eyes against her will the tears enforcèd
went.

But when she saw how pity did compel her heart to
yield,

She turned to her sister's face from Itys and beheld
Now t'one, now t'other earnestly, and said, 'Why
tattles he

800

And she sits dumb, bereft of tongue? As well why
calls not she

Me sister as this boy doth call me mother? See'st thou
not,

Thou daughter of Pandion, what a husband thou hast
got?

Thou growest wholly out of kind. To such a husband
as

Is Tereus, pity is a sin.' No more delay there was.

She draggèd Itys after her, as when it haps in Inde

A tiger gets a little calf that sucks upon a hind

And drags him through the shady woods. And when
that they had found

A place within the house far off and far above the
ground,

Then Procne strake him with a sword, now plainly
seeing whither

810

He should and holding up his hands and crying,
'Mother, mother,

And flying to her neck, even where the breast and
side do bound,

And never turned away her face. Enough had been
that wound

Alone to bring him to his end. The t'other sister slit

His throat. And while some life and soul was in his
members yet,

In gobbets they them rent; whereof were some in
pipkins boiled

And other some on hissing spits against the fire were
broiled.

And with the jellied blood of him was all the chamber
foiled.

To this same banquet Procne bade her husband,
knowing nought

Nor nought mistrusting of the harm and lewdness
she had wrought.

820 And feigning a solemnity according to the guise

Of Athens, at the which there might be none in any
wise

Besides her husband and herself, she banished from
the same

Her household folk and sojourners and such as
guestwise came.

King Tereus, sitting in the throne of his forefathers,
fed

And swallowed down the selfsame flesh that of his
bowels bred.

And he, so blinded was his heart, 'Fetch Itys hither,'
said.

No lenger her most cruel joy dissemble could the
queen

But, of her murder coveting the messenger to been,
She said, 'The thing thou askest for thou hast within.'
About

830 He looked round and asked, 'Where?' To put him out
of doubt,

As he was yet demanding, 'Where?' and calling for
him, out

Leapt Philomel with scattered hair aflight, like one
that fled

Had from some fray where slaughter was, and threw
the bloody head

Of Itys in his father's face. And never more was she
Desirous to have had her speech that able she might
be

Her inward joy with worthy words to witness frank
and free.

The tyrant with a hideous noise away the table shoves
And rears the fiends from hell. One while with
yawning mouth he proves

To perbrake up his meat again and cast his bowels
out.

840

Another while with wringing hands he weeping goes
about

And of his son he terms himself the wretched grave.
Anon

With naked sword and furious heart he followeth
fierce upon

Pandion's daughters. He that had been present would
have deemed

Their bodies to have hovered up with feathers. As
they seemed,

So hovered they with wings indeed. Of whom the one
away

To woodward flies, the other still about the house
doth stay.

And of their murder from their breasts not yet the
token go'th,

For even still yet are stained with blood the feathers
of them both.

And he, through sorrow and desire of vengeance
waxing wight,
850 Became a bird upon whose top a tuft of feathers light
In likeness of a helmet's crest doth trimly stand
upright.
Instead of his long sword, his bill shoots out a passing
space.
A lapwing namèd is this bird; all armèd seems his
face.

Boreas The sorrow of this great mischance did stop
and Pandion's breath

Orithyia

Before his time and long ere age determined had
his death.
Erecthey, reigning after him, the government did
take,
A prince of such a worthiness as no man well can
make
Resolution if he more in arms or justice did excel.
Four sons and daughters four he had, of which a
couple well
860 Did each in beauty other match. The one of these
whose name
Was Procris unto Cephalus, King Aeolus' son, became
A happy wife. The Thracians and King Tereus were a
let
To Boreas, so that long it was before the god could
get
His dear-belov'd Orithyia while trifling he did stand
With fair entreatance rather than did use the force of
hand.

But when he saw he no relief by gentle means could
find,
Then, turning unto boisterous wrath (which unto that
same wind
Is too familiar and too much accustomed by kind),
He said, 'I servèd am but well; for why laid I apart
870 My proper weapons, fierceness, force and ire and
cruel heart,
And fell to fawning like a fool, which did me but
disgrace?
For me is violence meet. Through this the pestered
clouds I chase;
Through this I toss the seas; through this I turn up
knotty oaks
And harden snow and beat the ground in hail with
sturdy strokes.
When I my brothers chance to get in open air and sky
(For that is my field in the which my masteries I do
try),
I charge upon them with such brunt that of our
meeting smart
The heaven between us sounds and from the hollow
clouds doth start
Enforcèd fire. And when I come in holes of hollow
ground
880 And fiercely in those empty caves do rouse my back
up round,
I trouble even the ghosts and make the very world to
quake.
This help in wooing of my wife to speed I should have
take.
Erecthey should not have been prayed my father-in-
law to be;

He should have been compelled thereto by stout
extremity.'

In speaking these or other words as sturdy, Boreas
gan

To flask his wings, with waving of the which he
raisèd then

So great a gale that all the earth was blasted
therewithal

And troubled was the main broad sea. And as he
trailed his pall

Bedusted over highest tops of things, he swept the
ground.

890

And having now in smoky clouds himself enclosed
round,

Between his dusky wings he caught Orithyia, straught
for fear,

And like a lover very soft and easily did her bear.

And as he flew, the flames of love enkindled more
and more

By means of stirring. Neither did he stay his flight
before

He came within the land and town of Cicones with his
prey.

And there soon after, being made his wife, she
happed to lay

Her belly; and a pair of boys she at a burden brings,

Who else in all resembled full their mother, save in
wings

The which they of their father took. Howbeit (by
report)

900

They were not born with wings upon their bodies in
this sort.

While Calais and Zetes had no beard upon their chin,

They both were callow. But as soon as hair did once
begin
In likeness of a yellow down upon their cheeks to
sprout;
Then (even as comes to pass in birds) the feathers
budded out
Together on their pinions too and spreaded round
about
On both their sides. And finally, when childhood once
was spent
And youth come on, together they with other Minies
went
To Colchos in the galley that was first devised in
Greece
Upon a sea as then unknown, to fetch the golden
fleece.

FINIS SEXTI LIBRI.

The Seventh Book of Ovid's Metamorphoses

Jason and Medea And now in ship of Pagasa the Minies cut the seas;

And leading under endless night his age in great
disease

Of scarcity was Phiney seen, and Boreas' sons had
chased

Away the maiden-faced fowls that did his victuals
waste.

And after suffering many things in noble Jason's
band,

In muddy Phasis' gushing stream at last they went a-
land.

There, while they, going to the king, demand the
golden fleece

(Brought thither certain years before by Phrixus out
of Greece)

And of their dreadful labours wait an answer to
receive,

10 Aeëtes' daughter in her heart doth mighty flames
conceive.

And after struggling very long, when reason could not
win

The upper hand of rage, she thus did in herself
begin:

‘In vain, Medea, dost thou strive. Some god,
whate’er he is,

Against thee bends his force. For what a
wondrous thing is this!

Is anything like this which men do term by name of
love?

For why should I my father's hests esteem so hard
above

All measure? Sure, in very deed they are too hard
and sore.

Why fear I lest yon stranger, whom I never saw
before,

Should perish? What should be the cause of this my
fear so great?

20

Unhappy wench, and if thou canst, suppress this
uncouth heat

That burneth in thy tender breast. And if so be I
could,

A happy turn it were, and more at ease then be I
should.

But now an uncouth malady perforce against my
will

Doth hale me. Love persuades me one, another thing
my skill.

The best I see and like; the worst I follow headlong
still.

Why, being of the royal blood, so fondly dost thou
rave

Upon a stranger thus to dote, desiring for to have
An husband of another world? At home thou
mightest find

A lover meet for thine estate on whom to set thy
mind.

30

And yet it is but even a chance if he shall live or no.

God grant him for to live! I may without offence
pray so,
Although I loved him not; for what hath Jason
trespassed me?
Who would not pity Jason's youth unless they cruel
be?
What creature is there but his birth and prowess
might him move?
And, setting all the rest aside, who would not be in
love
With Jason's goodly personage? My heart, assuredly,
Is touched therewith. But if that I provide not
remedy,
With burning breath of blasting bulls needs singed
must he be.
Of seeds that he himself must sow a harvest shall he
see
Of armed men in battle ray upon the ground up
grow,
Against the which it hoveth him his manhood for to
show.
And as a prey he must be set against the dragon fell.
If I these things let come to pass, I may confess right
well
That of a tiger I was bred and that within my breast
A heart more hard than any steel or stony rock doth
rest.
Why, rather, do I not his death with wrathful eyes
behold
And joy with others, seeing him to utter peril sold?
Why do I not enforce the bulls against him? Why, I
say,

50

Exhort I not the cruel men which shall in battle ray
Arise against him from the ground, and that same
dragon too

Within whose eyes came never sleep? God shield I
so should do!

But prayer smally boots, except I put to helping
hand.

And shall I like a caitiff then betray my father's
land?

Shall I a stranger save whom we nor none of ours
doth know

That he, by me preserved, may without me
homeward row

And take another to his wife and leave me, wretched
wight,

To torments? If I wist that he could work me such a
spite

Or could in any other's love than only mine delight,
The churl should die for me. But sure he beareth not
the face

60

Like one that would do so. His birth, his courage
and his grace

Do put me clearly out of doubt he will not me
deceive;

No, nor forget the great good turns he shall by me
receive.

Yet shall he to me first his faith for more assurance
plight,

And solemnly he shall be sworn to keep the
covenant right.

Why fear'st thou now without a cause? Step to it out
of hand

And do not any lenger time thus lingering fondly
stand.

For aye shall Jason think himself beholding unto
thee

And shall thee marry solemnly; yea, honoured shalt
thou be

Of all the mothers great and small throughout the
towns of Greece

70 For saving of their sons that come to fetch the
golden fleece.

And shall I then leave brother, sister, father, kith
and kin

And household gods and native soil and all that is
therein

And sail I know not whither with a stranger? Yea.
Why not?

My father surely cruel is, my country rude, God wot,
My brother yet a very babe; my sister, I dare say,
Contented is with all her heart that I should go
away.

The greatest god is in myself; the things I do forsake
Are trifles in comparison of those that I shall take.

For saving of the Greekish ship renowned shall I be.

80 A better place I shall enjoy, with cities rich and free

Whose fame doth flourish fresh even here and
people that excel

In civil life and all good arts and, whom I would not
sell

For all the goods within the world, Duke Aeson's
noble son;

Whom had I to my lawful fere assuredly once won,

Most happy, yea, and blest of God I might myself
 account,
 And with my head above the stars to heaven I
 should surmount.
 But men report that certain rocks (I know not what)
 do meet
 Amid the waves and monstrously again asunder
 fleet;
 And how Charybdis, utter foe to ships that pass
 thereby,
 Now sowpeth in, now speweth out the sea
 incessantly;
 And ravening Scylla, being hemmed with cruel dogs
 about,
 Amidst the gulf of Sicily doth make a barking out.
 What skilleth that? As long as I enjoy the thing I
 love
 And hang about my Jason's neck, it shall no whit me
 move
 To sail the dangerous seas; as long as him I may
 embrace,
 I cannot, surely, be afraid in any kind of case.
 Or if I chance to be afraid, my fear shall only tend
 But for my husband. Call'st thou him thy husband?
 Dost pretend
 Gay titles to thy foul offence, Medea? Nay, not so.
 But rather look about how great a lewdness thou
 dost go
 And shun the mischief while thou may'st.' She had
 no sooner said
 These words but right and godliness and
 shamefastness were stayed

Before her eyes, and frantic love did fly away
dismayed.

She went me to an altar that was dedicate of old
To Persey's daughter, Hecate (of whom the
witches hold

As of their goddess), standing in a thick and secret
wood

So close it could not well be spied. And now the
raging mood

Of furious love was well allayed and clearly put to
flight,

When, spying Aeson's son, the flame that seemed
quenched quite

110 Did kindle out of hand again. Her cheeks began to
glow,

And flushing over all her face the scarlet blood did
flow.

And even as, when a little spark that was in ashes
hid,

Uncovered with the whisking winds, is from the
ashes rid,

Eftsoons it taketh nourishment and kindleth in such
wise

That to his former strength again and flaming it
doth rise;

Even so her quailed love, which late ye would have
thought had quite

Been vanished out of mind, as soon as Jason came in
sight,

Did kindle to his former force in viewing of the
grace

With which he did avaunce himself, then coming
there in place.

And, as it chanced, far more fair and beautiful of
face

She thought him then than ever erst. But sure it doth
behave

Her judgement should be borne withal because she
was in love.

She gaped and gazèd in his face with fixèd staring
eyen,

As though she never had him seen before that
instant time.

So far she was beside herself, she thought it should
not be

The face of any worldly wight the which she then
did see.

She was not able for her life to turn her eyes away.

But when he took her by the hand and, speaking,
gan to pray

Her softly for to succour him and promised faithfully

To take her to his wedded wife, she, falling by and
by

A-weeping, said, 'Sir, what I do I see apparently.

Not want of knowledge of the truth but love shall
me deceive.

You shall be saved by my means. And now I must
receive

A faithful promise at your hand for saving of your
life.'

He made a solemn vow and sware to take her to his
wife

By triple Hecate's holy rites, and by what other
power

So ever else had residence within that secret bower,

And by the sire of him that should his father-in-law
become
Who all things doth behold, and as he hoped to
overcome
140 The dreadful dangers which he had soon after to
assay.
Duke Jason, being credited, received of her
straightway
Enchanted herbs and, having learnt the usage of the
same,
Departed thence with merry heart and to his lodging
came.
Next morn had chased the streaming stars, and
folk by heaps did flock
To Mars's sacred field and there stood thronging
in a shock
To see the strange pastimes. The king, most stately
to behold,
With ivory mace above them all did sit in throne of
gold.
Anon the brazen-hoofed bulls from stony nostrils
cast
Out flakes of fire; their scalding breath the growing
grass did blast.
150 And look what noise a chimney full of burning fuel
makes,
Or flint in softening in the kell when first the fire it
takes
By sprinkling water thereupon; such noise their
boiling breasts,
Turmoiling with the fiery flames enclosed in their
chests,

Such noise their scorched throat-bolls make. Yet
stoutly Jason went
To meet them. They their dreadful eyes against him
grimly bent
And eke their horns with iron tipped, and strake the
dust about
In stamping with their cloven clees, and with their
bellowing out
Set all the field upon a smoke. The Minies, seeing
that,
Were past their wits with sudden fear. But Jason
feelèd nat
So much as any breath of theirs; such strength hath
sorcery.
Their dangling dewlaps with his hand he coyed
unfearfully.
And, putting yokes upon their necks, he forced them
to draw
The heavy burden of the plough which erst they
never saw
And for to break the field which erst had never felt
the share.
The men of Colchos, seeing this, like men amazed
fare.
The Minies with their shouting out their mazèdness
augment
And unto Jason therewithal give more
encouragement.
Then in a soldier's cap of steel a viper's teeth he
takes
And sows them in the new-ploughed field. The
ground, them soaking, makes

170

The seed foresteeded in poison strong both supple,
lithe and soft,

And of these teeth a right strange grain there grows
anon aloft.

For even as in the mother's womb an infant doth
begin

To take the lively shape of man and formed is within
To due proportion piece by piece in every limb, and
when

Full ripe he is he takes the use of air with other
men;

So when that of the viper's teeth the perfect shape of
man

Within the bowels of the earth was formèd, they
began

To rise together orderly upon the fruitful field.

And (which a greater wonder is) immediately they
wield

180

Their weapons growing up with them. Whom when
the Greeks beheld

Preparing for to push their pikes, which sharply
headed were,

In Jason's face, down went their heads, their hearts
did faint for fear.

And also she that made him safe began abashed to
be;

For when against one naked man so huge an army
she

Beheld of armed enemies bent, her colour did abate
And suddenly both void of blood and lively heat she
sat.

And lest the chanted weeds the which she had him
given before

Should fail at need, a helping charm she whispered
overmore

And practised other secret arts the which she kept in
store.

190 He, casting straight a mighty stone amid his thickest
foes,

Doth void the battle from himself and turns it unto
those.

These earth-bred brothers by and by did one another
wound

And never ceased till that all lay dead upon the
ground.

The Greeks were glad and in their arms did clasp
their champion stout

And, clinging to him, earnestly embraced him about.

And thou, O fond Medea, too, could'st well have
found in heart

The champion for to have embraced, but that
withheld thou wert

By shamefastness. And yet thou had'st embraced
him, if dread

Of staining of thine honour had not stayed thee in
that stead.

200 But yet, as far forth as thou may'st, thou dost in
heart rejoice

And secretly (although without expressing it in
voice)

Dost thank thy charms and eke the gods as authors
of the same.

Now was remaining as the last conclusion of this
game

By force of chanted herbs to make the watchful
dragon sleep

Within whose eyes came never wink, who had in
 charge to keep
 The goodly tree upon the which the golden fleeces
 hung.
 With crested head and hooked paws and triple
 spurting tongue
 Right ugly was he to behold. When Jason had
 besprent
 Him with the juice of certain herbs from Lethey
 river sent
 And thrice had mumbled certain words which are of
 force to cast
 So sound a sleep on things that even as dead a time
 they last,
 Which make the raging surges calm and flowing
 rivers stay,
 The dreadful dragon by and by, whose eyes before
 that day
 Wist never erst what sleeping meant, did fall so fast
 asleep
 That Jason safely took the fleece of gold that he did
 keep.
 Of which his booty being proud, he led with him
 away
 The author of his good success, another fairer prey.
 And so with conquest and a wife he loosed from
 Colchos strand
 And in Larissa haven safe did go again a-land.

Medea
rejuvenates
Aeson

The ancient men of Thessaly together with their
 wives

To church with offering gon for saving of their
children's lives.
Great heaps of fuming frankincense were fried in the
flame,
And vowed bulls to sacrifice with horns fair gilded
came.
But from this great solemnity Duke Aeson was away,
Now at death's door and spent with years. Then
Jason thus gan say:
'O wife, to whom, I do confess, I owe my life indeed,
Though all things thou to me hast given and thy
deserts exceed
Belief, yet if enchantment can (for what so hard
appears
Which strong enchantment cannot do?), abate thou
from my years
And add them to my father's life.' As he these words
did speak,
The tears were standing in his eyes. His godly suit
did break
Medea's heart, who therewithal bethought her of her
sire,
In leaving whom she had expressed a far unlike
desire.
But yet, bewraying not her thoughts, she said, 'O
husband, fie,
What wickedness hath scaped your mouth! Suppose
you then that I
Am able of your life the term where I will to
bestow?
Let Hecate never suffer that! Your suit, as well you
know,

Against all right and reason is. But I will put in
proof

A greater gift than you require and more for your
behoof.

240 I will assay your father's life by cunning to prolong,
And not with your years for to make him young
again and strong,
So our three-formed goddess grant with present help
to stand
A furtherer of the great attempt the which I take in
hand.'

Before the moon should circlewise close both her
horns in one,

Three nights were yet as then to come. As soon
as that she shone

Most full of light and did behold the earth with
fulsome face,

Medea, with her hair not trussed so much as in a
lace

But flaring on her shoulders twain and barefoot,
with her gown

Ungirded, gat her out of doors and wandered up and
down

250 Alone the dead time of the night. Both man and
beast and bird

Were fast asleep. The serpents sly in trailing forward
stirred

So softly as ye would have thought they still asleep
had been.

The moisting air was whist; no leaf ye could have
moving seen.

The stars alonely fair and bright did in the welkin
shine,
To which she, lifting up her hands, did thrice herself
incline;
And thrice with water of the brook her hair
besprinkled she;
And, gasping thrice, she oped her mouth. And,
bowing down her knee
Upon the bare hard ground, she said, 'O trusty time
of night
Most faithful unto privities, O golden stars, whose
light
Doth jointly with the moon succeed the beams that
blaze by day,
And thou, three-headed Hecate, who knowest best
the way
To compass this our great attempt and art our
chiefest stay,
Ye charms and witchcrafts and thou earth, which
both with herb and weed
Of mighty working furnishest the wizards at their
need,
Ye airs and winds, ye elves of hills, of brooks, of
woods alone,
Of standing lakes and of the night, approach ye
everych one.
Through help of whom (the crooked banks much
wondering at the thing)
I have compelled streams to run clean backward to
their spring.
By charms I make the calm seas rough and make the
rough seas plain

And cover all the sky with clouds and chase them
thence again;

By charms I raise and lay the winds and burst the
viper's jaw

And from the bowels of the earth both stones and
trees do draw.

Whole woods and forests I remove; I make the
mountains shake

And even the earth itself to groan and fearfully to
quake;

I call up dead men from their graves; and thee, O
lightsome moon,

I darken oft, though beaten brass abate thy peril
soon.

Our sorcery dims the morning fair and darks the sun
at noon.

The flaming breath of fiery bulls ye quenched for my
sake

And caused their unwieldy necks the bended yoke to
take.

Among the earth-bred brothers you a mortal war did
set

And brought asleep the dragon fell, whose eyes were
never shut.

By means whereof deceiving him that had the
golden fleece

In charge to keep, you sent it thence by Jason into
Greece.

Now have I need of herbs that can by virtue of their
juice

To flowering prime of lusty youth old withered age
reduce.

I am assured ye will it grant. For not in vain have
shone

These twinkling stars, ne yet in vain this chariot all
alone

By draught of dragons hither comes.' With that was
fro the sky

A chariot softly glancèd down and stayèd hard
thereby.

290 As soon as she had gotten up and with her hand
had coyed

The dragons' reinéd necks and with their bridles
somewhat toyed,

They mounted with her in the air whence, looking
down, she saw

The pleasant Temp of Thessaly and made her
dragons draw

To places further from resort. And there she took the
view

What herbs on high Mount Pelion and what on Ossa
grew,

And what on Mountain Othrys and on Pindus
growing were,

And what Olympus (greater than Mount Pindus far)
did bear.

Such herbs of them as likèd her she pulled up root
and rind,

Or cropped them with a hookèd knife. And many
she did find

300 Upon the banks of Apidane agreeing to her mind

And many at Amphrysus' fords. And thou, Enipeus,
eke

Did'st yield her many pretty weeds of which she well
did like.

Peneus' and Spercheus' streams contributory were,
And so were Boebe's rushy banks of such as growèd
there.

About Anthedon, which against the Isle Euboea
stands,

A certain kind of lively grass she gathered with her
hands,

The name whereof was scarcely known or what the
herb could do

Until that Glaucus afterward was changèd thereinto.

Nine days with wingèd dragons drawn, nine nights
in chariot swift

310

She, searching every field and frith, from place to
place did shift.

She was no sooner home returned but that the
dragons fell,

Which lightly of her gathered herbs had taken but
the smell,

Did cast their sloughs and with their sloughs their
rivelled age forgo.

She would none other house than heaven to hide her
head as tho,

But kept her still without the doors. And as for man,
was none

That once might touch her. Altars twain of turf she
buildd; one

Upon her left hand unto Youth, another on the right
To triple Hecate. Both the which as soon as she had
dight

With vervain and with other shrubs that on the
fields do rise,

320

Not far from thence she digged two pits and, making
sacrifice,

Did cut a couple of black rams' throats and fillèd
with their blood

The open pits, on which she poured of warm milk
pure and good

A bowlful and another bowl of honey clarified.

And, babbling to herself, therewith full bitterly she
cried

On Pluto and his ravished wife, the sovereign states
of hell,

And all the elves and gods that on or in the earth do
dwell

To spare old Aeson's life a while and not in haste
deprive

His limbs of that same agèd soul which kept them
yet alive.

Whom when she had sufficiently with mumbling
long besought,

330

She bade that Aeson's feebled corse should out of
doors be brought

Before the altars. Then with charms she cast him in
so deep

A slumber that upon the herbs he lay for dead
asleep.

Which done, she willèd Jason thence a great way off
to go,

And likewise all the ministers that servèd her as tho,
And not presume those secrets with unhallowed eyes
to see.

They did as she commanded them. When all were
voided, she,

340

With scattered hair about her ears like one of
Bacchus' frows,

Devoutly by and by about the burning altars goes
And, dipping in the pits of blood a sort of clifted
brands,

Upon the altars kindled them that were on both her
hands.

And thrice with brimstone, thrice with fire and
thrice with water pure

She purgèd Aeson's aged corse that slept and
slumbered sure.

The medicine, seething all the while a-wallop in
a pan

Of brass, to spurt and leap aloft and gather froth
began.

There boiled she the roots, seeds, flowers, leaves,
stalks and juice together

Which from the fields of Thessaly she late had
gathered thither.

She cast in also precious stones fetched from the
furthest east

And, which the ebbing ocean washed, fine gravel
from the west.

She put thereto the dew that fell upon a Monday
night;

350

And flesh and feathers of a witch, a cursed odious
wight

Which in the likeness of an owl abroad a-nights did
fly

And infants in their cradles change or suck them
that they die;

The singles also of a wolf* which, when he list,
could take

The shape of man and, when he list, the same again
forsake.

And from the River Cyniphis, which is in Lyby land,
She had the fine sheer-scaled films of watersnails at
hand.

And of an endless-lived hart the liver had she got,
To which she added of a crow that then had lived
not

So little as nine hundred years the head and bill
also.

360 Now when Medea had with these and with a
 thousand mo

 Such other kind of nameless things bested her
 purpose through

For lengthening of the old man's life, she took a
withered bough

Cut lately from an olive-tree and, jumbling all
together,

Did raise the bottom to the brim. And as she stirred
hither

And thither with the withered stick, behold, it
waxèd green!

Anon the leaves came budding out, and suddenly
were seen

As many berries dangling down as well the bough
could bear.

And where the fire had from the pan the scumming
cast, or where

The scalding drops did fall, the ground did spring-
like flourish there

370 And flowers with fodder fine and soft immediately
 arose.

Which when Medea did behold, with naked knife
she goes

And cuts the old man's throat and, letting all his
old blood go,

Supplies it with the boiled juice; the which when
Aeson tho

Had at his mouth or at his wound received in, his
hair

As well of head as beard from grey to coal-black
turned were.

His lean, pale, hoar and withered corse grew
fulsome, fair and fresh;

His furrowed wrinkles were fulfilled with young and
lusty flesh.

His limbs waxed frolic, bair and lithe. At which he
wondering much,

Remembered that at forty years he was the same or
such.

380 And as from dull unwieldsome age to youth he
backward drew,

Even so a lively youthful sprite did in his heart
renew.

Medea's The wonder of this monstrous act had Bacchus
plot to kill seen from high

Pelias

And, finding that to youthful years his nurses
might thereby

Restored be, did at her hand receive it as a gift.

And lest deceitful guile should cease, Medea found a
shift

To feign that Jason and herself were fallen at odds
in wrath.

And thereupon in humble wise to Pelias' court she
go'th
Where, for because the king himself was feeble
sore with age,
His daughters entertained her; whom Medea, being
sage,
390 Within a while through false pretence of feigned
friendship brought
To take her bait. For as she told what pleasures she
had wrought
For Jason, and among the rest as greatest sadly told
How she had made his father young that withered
was and old
And tarried long upon that point, they hoped glad
and fain
That their old father might likewise his youthful
years regain.
And this they craving instantly, did proffer for her
pain
What recompense she would desire. She held her
peace a while
As though she doubted what to do, and with her
subtle guile
Of counterfeited gravity more eager did them make.
400 As soon as she had promised them to do it for their
sake,
'For more assurance of my grant, yourselves', quoth
she, 'shall see
The oldest ram in all your flock a lamb straight
made to be
By force of my confections strong.' Immediately a
ram

So old that no man thereabouts remembered him a
lamb
Was thither by his warpèd horns which turned
inward to
His hollow temples drawn, whose withered throat
she slit in two.
And when she clean had drained out that little blood
that was,
Upon the fire with herbs of strength she set a pan of
brass
And cast his carcass thereinto. The medicine did
abate
The largeness of his limbs and seared his dossers
from his pate
And with his horns abridged his years. Anon was
plainly heard
The bleating of a new-yeaned lamb from mid the
kettleward.
And as they wondered for to hear the bleating,
straight the lamb
Leaped out and, frisking, ran to find the udder of
some dam.
King Pelias' daughters were amazed; and when they
did behold
Her promise come to such effect, they were a
thousandfold
More earnest at her than before. Thrice Phoebus,
having plucked
The collars from his horses' necks, in Iber had them
ducked.
And now in heaven the streaming stars the fourth
night shinèd clear,

420

When false Medea on the fire had hangèd water
sheer

With herbs that had no power at all. The king and
all his guard

Which had the charge that night about his person
for to ward

Were through her nightspells and her charms in
deadly sleep all cast,

And Pelias' daughters with the witch, which egged
them forward, passed

Into his chamber by the watch and compassed in his
bed.

Then, 'Wherefore stand ye doubting thus like fools?'
Medea said.

'On! Draw your swords and let ye out his old blood,
that I may

Fill up his empty veins again with youthful blood
straightway.

Your father's life is in your hands. It lieth now in
you

430

To have him old and withered still or young and
lusty. Now

If any nature in ye be, and that ye do not feed

A fruitless hope, your duty to your father do with
speed.

Expulse his age by sword and let the filthy matter
out.'

Through these persuasions which of them so ever
went about

To show herself most natural became the first that
wrought

Against all nature. And for fear she should be
wicked thought,

She executes the wickedness which most to shun she
sought.

Yet was not any one of them so bold that durst abide
To look upon their father when she strake, but wried
aside

440

Her eyes; and so their cruel hands, not marking
where they hit,

With faces turned another way at all adventure smit.
He, all beweltered in his blood, awakèd with the
smart

And, maimed and mangled as he was, did give a
sudden start,

Endeavouring to have risen up. But when he did
behold

Himself among so many swords, he, lifting up his
old

Pale waryish arms, said, 'Daughters mine, what do
ye? Who hath put

These wicked weapons in your hands your father's
throat to cut?'

With that their hearts and hands did faint; and as he
talkéd yet,

Medea, breaking of his words, his windpipe quickly
slit

450

And in the scalding liquor torn did drown him by
and by.

*Medea's
flight*

But had she not with winged worms straight
mounted in the sky,

She had not scapèd punishment. But, stying up
on high,

She over shady Pelion flew, where Chiron erst did
dwell,

And over Othrys and the grounds renowned for that
befell

To ancient Ceramb, who, such time as old
Deucalion's flood

Upon the face of all the earth like one main water
stood,

By help of nymphs with feathered wings was in the
aïr lift

And so escaped from the flood undrownèd by the
shift.

She left Aeolian Pitany upon her left hand and

460 The serpent that became a stone upon the Lesbian
sand;

And Ida woods where Bacchus hid a bullock (as is
said)

In shape of stag, the which his son had thievishly
conveyed;

And where the sire of Corytus lies buried in the dust;
The fields which Maeras (when he first did into
barking brust)

Affrayed with strangeness of the noise; and eke
Eurypyl's town,

In which the wives of Cos had horns like oxen on
their crown

Such time as Herc'les with his host departed from
the isle;

And Rhodes to Phoebus consecrate; and Ialyse,
where erewhile

The Telchines with their noisome sight did
everything bewitch,

470 At which their heinous wickedness Jove taking
rightful pritch,

Did drown them in his brother's waves. Moreover
she did pass

By Ceos and old Carthey walls, where Sir Alcidas
Did wonder how his daughter should be turned to a
dove.

The swanny Temp and Hyrie's pool she viewèd from
above,

The which a sudden swan did haunt. For Phylly
there for love

Of Hyrie's son did at his bidding birds and lions
tame

And, being willed to break a bull, performed straight
the same,

Till, wrathful that his love so oft so straitly should
him use,

When for his last reward he asked the bull, he did
refuse

480 To give it him. The boy, displeased, said, 'Well, thou
wilt anon

Repent thou gave it not,' and leapt down headlong
from a stone.

They all supposed he had been fallen; but, being
made a swan,

With snowy feathers in the air to flacker he began.

His mother Hyrie, knowing not he was preserved so,

Resolved into melting tears for pensiveness and woe

And made the pool that bears her name. Not far
from hence doth stand

The city Brauron where sometime, by mounting
from the land

With waving pinions, Ophy's imp, Dame Combe, did
eschew

Her children which with naked swords to slay her
did pursue.

490

Anon she kenned Calaury fields, which did
sometime pertain

To chaste Diana, where a king and eke his wife both
twain

Were turned to birds. Cyllene hill upon her right
hand stood

In which Menephron like a beast of wild and savage
mood

To force his mother did attempt. Far thence she
spied where sad

Cephisus mournèd for his niece whom Phoebus
turned had

To ugly shape of swelling seal, and Eumel's palace
fair,

Lamenting for his son's mischance with whewling in
the air.

At Corinth with her winged snakes at length she did
arrive.

Here men (so ancient fathers said that were as then
alive)

500

Did breed of dewy mushrooms. But after that her
teen

With burning of her husband's bride by witchcraft
wreaked had been

And that King Creon's palace she on blazing fire had
seen

And in her own dear children's blood had bathed her
wicked knife,

Not like a mother but a beast bereaving them of life,

Lest Jason should have punished her, she took her
wingèd snakes

And, flying thence again, in haste to Pallas' city
makes,
Which saw the ancient Periphas and righteous
Pheney too
Together flying, and the niece of Polypemon, who
Was fastened to a pair of wings as well as t'other
two.

510 *The* Aegeus entertained her, wherein he was to blame
arrival of
Theseus

Although he had no further gone but stayed upon
the same;
He thought it not to be enough to use her as his
guest
Unless he took her to his wife. And now was Thesey
pressed,
Unknown unto his father yet, who by his knightly
force
Had set from robbers clear the balk that makes the
straight divorce
Between the seas Ionian and Aegean. To have killed
This worthy knight Medea had a goblet ready filled
With juice of flintwort venomous, the which she
long ago
Had out of Scythy with her brought. The common
bruit is so
520 That of the teeth of Cerberus this flintwort first did
grow.
There is a cave that gapeth wide with darksome
entry low;
There goes a way slope down by which, with triple
chain made new

Of strong and sturdy adamant, the valiant Herc'le
drew
The currish hellhound Cerberus, who, dragging
arseward still
And writhing back his scowling eyes because he had
no skill
To see the sun and open day, for very moody wrath
Three barkings yellèd out at once and spit his
slavering froth
Upon the greenish grass. This froth (as men suppose)
took root
And, thriving in the battling soil, in burgeons forth
did shoot
To bane and mischief men withal. And for because
the same
Did grow upon the bare hard flints, folk gave the
foresaid name
Of flintwort thereunto. The king by egging of his
queen
Did reach his son this bane as if he had his enemy
been.
And Thesey, of this treason wrought not knowing
aught, had ta'en
The goblet at his father's hand which held his deadly
bane,
When suddenly by the ivory hilts that were upon his
sword
Aegeus knew he was his son and, rising from the
board,
Did strike the mischief from his mouth. Medea with
a charm
Did cast a mist and so scaped death deserved for the
harm

540

Intended. Now albeit that Aegeus were right glad
That in the saving of his son so happy chance he
 had,
Yet grieved it his heart full sore that such a wicked
 wight
With treason wrought against his son should scape
 so clear and quite.
 Then fell he unto kindling fire on altars
 everywhere
 And glutted all the gods with gifts. The thick-
 necked oxen were
With garlands wreathed about their horns knocked
 down for sacrifice.
A day of more solemnity than this did never rise
Before on Athens, by report. The ancients of the
 town
Made feasts; so did the meaner sort and every
 common clown.
550 And as the wine did sharp their wits, they sung this
 song: 'O knight
Of peerless prowess, Theseus, thy manhood and thy
 might
Through all the coast of Marathon with worthy
 honour sounds
For killing of the Cretish bull that wasted those same
 grounds.
The folk of Cremona think themselves beholden
 unto thee,
For that without disquieting their fields may tillèd
 be.
By thee the land of Epidaur beheld the clubbish son

Of Vulcan dead. By thee likewise the country that
doth run

Along Cephissus' banks beheld the fell Procrustes
slain.

The dwelling-place of Ceres, our Eleusis, glad and
fain

560 Beheld the death of Cercyon. That orpèd Sinis, who
Abused his strength in bending trees and tying folk
thereto

Their limbs asunder for to tear when, loosened from
the stops,

The trees unto their
proper place did
trice their strained
tops,

Was killed by thee. Thou made the
way that leadeth to the town
Alcathoe in Boeotia clear by putting
Sciron down.

To this same outlaw's scattered
bones the land denied rest,
And likewise did the sea refuse to
harbour such a guest
Till, after floating to and fro long
while, as men do say,
At length they hardened into stones.
And at this present day

570

The stones are called Sciron's cliffs.
Now if we should account
Thy deeds together with thy years,
thy deeds would far surmount
Thy years. For thee, most valiant
prince, these public vows we
keep;
For thee with cheerful hearts we
quaff these bowls of wine so
deep.'

The palace also of the noise and
shouting did resound,
The which the people made for joy.
There was not to be found
In all the city any place of sadness.
Natheless

(So hard it is of perfect joy to find so
great excess

But that some sorrow therewithal is
meddled more or less)

Aegeus had not in his son's recovery
such delight

580

But that there followed in the neck a
piece of Fortune's spite.

Minos threatens war

King Minos was preparing war;
who, though he had great
store

Of ships and soldiers, yet the
wrath the which he had
before

Conceivèd in his father's breast for
murdering of his son,

Androgeus, made him far more
strong and fiercer for to run

To rightful battle to revenge the
great displeasure done.

Howbeit, he thought it best ere he
his warfare did begin

To find the means of foreign aids
some friendship for to win.

And thereupon with flying fleet,
where passage did permit,

He went to visit all the isles that in
those seas do sit.

590

Anon the isles Astypaley and Anaphe
both twain,

The first constrained for fear of war,
the last in hope of gain,

Took part with him. Low Mycony
 did also with him hold;
 So did the chalky Cimoly; and
 Siphney, which of old
 Was very rich with veins of gold;
 and Scyros, full of bold
 And valiant men; and Seriphy, the
 smooth or rather fell;
 And Parey, which for marblestone
 doth bear away the bell;
 And Sithney, which a wicked wench
 called Arne did betray
 For money, who upon receipt thereof
 without delay
 Was turnèd to a bird which yet of
 gold is gripple still
 And is as black as any coal, both
 feathers, feet and bill:
 A caddow is the name of her. But yet
 Oliary
 And Didymy and Andrey eke, and
 Tene and Gyary
 And Pepareth, where olive-trees
 most plenteously do grow,
 In no wise would agree their help on
 Minos to bestow.
 Then Minos, turning
 lefthandwise, did sail to
 Oenope
 Where reigned that time King
 Aeacus. This isle had callèd be
 Of old by name of Oenope; but
 Aeacus turned the name

610

And after of his mother's name
Aegina called the same.

The common folk ran out by heaps,
desirous for to see

A man of such renown as Minos
bruted was to be.

The king's three sons, Duke Telamon,
Duke Peley and the young

Duke Phocus, went to meet with
him. Old Aeacus also, clung

With age, came after leisurely and
asked him the cause

Of his repair. The ruler of the
hundred shires gan pause

And, musing on the inward grief that
nipped him at the heart,

Did shape him answer thus: 'O
prince, vouchsafe to take my
part

In this same godly war of mine;
assist me in the just

Revenge of my murdered son
that sleepeth in the dust.

I crave your comfort for his death.'
Aegina's son replied,

620

'Thy suit is vain and of my realm
perforce must be denied.

For unto Athens is no land more sure
than this allied;

Such leagues between us are which
shall infringed for me abide.'

Away went Minos sad and said, 'Full
dearly shalt thou buy

Thy leagues.' He thought it for to be
a better policy

To threaten war than war to make
and there to spend his store

And strength, which in his other
needs might much avail him
more.

As yet might from Oenopia walls
the Cretish fleet be kenned

When thitherward with puffed
sails and wind at will did tend

A ship from Athens, which anon,
arriving at the strand,

Set Cephala with ambassage from his
countrymen a-land.

The king's three sons, though long it
were since last they had him
seen,

Yet knew they him. And after old
acquaintance eft had been

Renewed by shaking hands, to court
they did him straight convey.

This prince, which did allure the
eyes of all men by the way,

As in whose stately person still
remainèd to be seen

The marks of beauty which in flower
of former years had been,

Went holding out an olive branch
that grew in Attic land.

And for the reverence of his age
there went on either hand

A nobleman of younger years: Sir
Clytus on the right

And Butes on the left, the sons of
one that Pallas hight.

When greeting first had passed
between these nobles and the
king,

Then Cephal, setting straight
abroach the message he did
bring,

Desirèd aid and showed what
leagues stood then in force
between

His country and the Aeginites and
also what had been

Decreed betwixt their ancestors,
concluding in the end

That under colour of this war, which
Minos did pretend

To only Athens, he indeed the
conquest did intend

Of all Achaia. When he thus by help
of learnèd skill

His country message furthered had,
King Aeacus, leaning still

His left hand on his sceptre, said,
‘My lords, I would not have

Your state of Athens seem so strange
as succour here to crave.

I pray, command. For be ye sure that
what this isle can make

Is yours. Yea, all that e’er I have
shall hazard for your sake.

I want no strength; I have such store
 of soldiers that I may
 Both vex my foes and also keep my
 realm in quiet stay.
 And now I think me blest of God that
 time doth serve to show
 Without excuse the great good will
 that I to Athens owe.'
 'God hold it, sir,' quoth Cephalus,
 'God make the number grow
 Of people in this town of yours; it
 did me good a-late
 When such a goodly sort of youth of
 all one age and rate
 Did meet me in the street. But yet
 methinks that many miss
 Which at my former being here I
 have beheld ere this.'

The plague at Aegina

At that the king did sigh and thus
 with plaintful voice did say:
 'A sad beginning afterward in
 better luck did stay.
 I would I plainly could the same
 before your faces lay.
 Howbeit, I will disorderly repeat it
 as I may.
 And lest I seem to weary you with
 overlong delay,
 The men that you so mindfully
 enquire for lie in ground
 And nought of them save bones and
 dust remaineth to be found.

670

But as it happed, what loss thereby
did unto me redound!

A cruel plague through Juno's wrath,
who dreadfully did hate

This land that of her husband's love
did take the name a-late,

Upon my people fell. As long as that
the malady

None other seemed than such as
haunts man's nature usually

And of so great mortality the hurtful
cause was hid,

We strove by physic of the same the
patients for to rid.

The mischief overmastered art; yea,
physic was to seek

To do itself good. First the air with
foggy stinking reek

Did daily overdrip the earth and
close calm clouds did make

680

The weather faint; and while the
moon four times her light did
take

And filled her empty horns therewith
and did as often slake,

The warm south winds with deadly
heat continually did blow.

Infected were the springs and ponds
and streams that ebb and
flow.

And swarms of serpents crawled
about the fields that lay
untilled,

Which with their poison even the
brooks and running waters
filled.

‘In sudden dropping down of
dogs, of horses, sheep and
kine,

Of birds and beasts both wild and
tame as oxen, wolves and
swine,

The mischief of this secret sore first
outwardly appears.

The wretched ploughman was
amazed to see his sturdy
steers

Amid the furrow sinking down ere
half his work was done.

Whole flocks of sheep did faintly
bleat, and therewithal begun

Their fleeces for to fall away and
leave the naked skin,

And all their bodies with the rot
attaintèd were within.

The lusty horse, that erst was fierce
in field renown to win

Against his kind, grew cowardly and,
now forgetting quite

The ancient honour which he
pressed so oft to get in fight,

Stood sighing sadly at the rack as
waiting for to yield

His weary life without renown of
combat in the field.

700

The boar to chafe, the hind to run,
the cruel bear to fall

Upon the herds of rother-beasts had
now no lust at all.

A languishing was fallen on all. In
ways, in woods, in plains

The filthy carrions lay, whose stench
the air itself disdains.

A wondrous thing to tell, not dogs,
not ravening fowls, nor yet

Hoar-coated wolves would once
attempt to taste of them a bit.

Look where they fell, there rotted
they and with their savour
bred

More harm and further still abroad
the foul infection spread.

‘With loss that touchèd yet more
near, on husbandmen it crept

And ragingly within the walls of
this great city stepped.

It took men first with swelting heat
that scalt their guts within,

710

The signs whereof were steaming
breath and fiery-coloured
skin.

The tongue was harsh and swollen,
the mouth through drought of
burning veins

Lay gaping up hale in breath, and as
the patient strains

To draw it in, he sucks therewith
corrupted air beside.

No bed, no clothes, though ne'er so
thin, the patients could abide,
But laid their hardened stomachs flat
against the bare cold ground.
Yet no abatement of the heat therein
their bodies found,
But heat the earth. And as for leech,
was none that help could
hight;
The surgeons and physicians too
were in the selfsame plight.
Their cureless cunning hurt
themselves. The nearer any
man
Approacheth his diseased friend and
doth the best he can
To succour him most faithfully, the
sooner did he catch
His bane. All hope of health was
gone. No easement nor
dispatch
Of this disease except in death and
burial did they find.
Look, whereunto that each man's
mind and fancy was inclined,
That followed he. He never passed
what was for his behoof.
For why, that nought could do them
good was felt too much by
proof.
In every place without respect of
shame or honesty,

730

At wells, at brooks, at ponds, at pits
by swarms they thronging lie.

But sooner might they quench their
life than staunch their thirst
thereby.

And therewithal so heavy and
unwieldy they become

That, wanting power to rise again,
they dièd there. Yet some

The selfsame waters guzzled still
without regard of fear.

So weary of their loathsome beds the
wretched people were

That out they leapt. Or if to stand
their feeble force denied,

They wallowed down and out of
doors immediately them hied.

It was a death to every man his own
house to abide.

And for they did not know the cause
whereof the sickness came,

The place (because they did it know)
was blamèd for the same:

Ye should have seen some, half
fordead, go plundering here
and there

740

By highways sides while that their
legs were able them to bear,

And some lie weeping on the ground
or rolling piteously

Their weary eyes which afterwards
should never see the sky,

Or stretching out their limbs to
heaven that overhangs on
high;
Some here, some there, and yonder
some, in whatsoever coast
Death, finding them, enforcèd them
to yield their fainting ghost.
'What heart had I, suppose you,
then, or ought I then to have?
In faith, I might have loathed my
life and wished me in my
grave
As other of my people were. I could
not cast mine eye
In any place, but that dead folk there
strewed I did spy
Even like as from a shaken twig
when rotten apples drop,
Or mast from beeches, holms or oaks
when poles do scar their top.
Yon stately church with greces long
against our court you see;
It is the shrine of Jupiter. What
wight was he or she
That on those altars burnèd not their
frankincense in vain?
How oft, yea, even with frankincense
that partly did remain
Still unconsumèd in their hands did
die both man and wife
As each of them with mutual care
did pray for other's life!

760

How often died the mother there in
suing for her son

Unheard upon the altarstone, her
prayer scarce begun!

How often at the temple door, even
while the priest did bid

His beads and pour pure wine
between their horns, at
sudden slid

The oxen down without stroke
given! Yea, once when I had
thought

Myself by offering sacrifice Jove's
favour to have sought

For me, my realm and these three
imps, the ox with grievous
groan

Upon the sudden sunk me down, and
little blood or none

Did issue scarce to stain the knife
with which they slit his
throat.

The sickly inwards eke had lost the
signs whereby we note

What things the gods for certainty
would warn us of before;

For even the very bowels were
attainted with the sore.

770

Before the holy temple doors and
(that the death might be

The more despiteful) even before the
altars did I see

The stinking corses scattered. Some
with halters stopped their
wind,
By death expulsiing fear of death,
and of a wilful mind
Did haste their end, which of itself
was coming on apace.
The bodies which the plague had
slain were (O most wretched
case!)
Not carried forth to burial now. For
why, such store there was
That scarce the gates were wide
enough for coffins forth to
pass.
So either loathly on the ground
unburied did they lie
Or else without solemnity were
burnt in bonfires high.
No reverence nor regard was had.
Men fell together by
The ears for firing. In the fire that
was prepared for one
Another stranger's corse was burnt.
And lastly, few or none
Were left to mourn. The silly souls of
mothers with their small
And tender babes and age with
youth, as fortune did befall,
Went wandering ghastly up and
down unmournèd for at all.
In fine, so far outrageously this
helpless murrain raves,

790

There was not wood enough for fire
nor ground enough for graves.

‘Astonied at the stourness of so
stout a storm of ills,

I said, “O father Jupiter, whose
mighty power fulfils

Both heaven and earth, if flying fame
report thee not amiss

In vouching that thou did'st embrace
in way of love ere this

The river Asop's daughter, fair
Aegina even by name,

And that to take me for thy son thou
count it not a shame,

Restore thou me my folk again or
kill thou me likewise.”

He gave a sign by sudden flash of
lightning from the skies

And double peal of thundercracks. “I
take this same,” quoth I,

“And as I take it for a true and
certain sign whereby

Thou dost confirm me for thy son, so
also let it be

A hansel of some happy luck thou
mindest unto me.”

800

Hard by us, as it happed that time,
there was an oaken tree

With spreaded arms as bare of
boughs as lightly one shall
see.

This tree (as all the rest of oaks) was
sacred unto Jove,

And sprouted of an acorn which was
fet from Dodon grove.
Here marked we how the pretty ants,
the gatherers-up of grain,
One following other all along in
order of a train,
Great burdens in their little mouths
did painfully sustain
And nimbly up the rugged bark their
beaten path maintain.
As wondering at the swarm I stood, I
said, "O father dear,
As many people give thou me as ants
are creeping here
And fill mine empty walls again."
Anon the oak did quake
And, unconstrained of any blast, his
lofty branches shake,
The which did yield a certain sound.
With that for dreadful fear
A shuddering through my body
strake and up stood stiff my
hair.
But yet I kissèd reverently the
ground and eke the tree.
Howbeit, I durst not be so bold of
hope acknown to be.
Yet hopèd I and in my heart did
shroud my secret hope.
Anon came night, and sleep upon my
careful carcass crope.
Methought I saw the selfsame oak
with all his boughs and twigs

And all the pismires creeping still
upon his taunts and sprigs.

Which, trembling with a sudden
braid, these harvest folk off
threw

And shed them on the ground about,
who on the sudden grew

In bigness more and more and from
the earth themselves did lift

And stood upright against the tree
and therewithal did shift

Their meagreness and coal-black hue
and number of their feet

And clad their limbs with shape of
man. Away my sleep did fleet.

And when I woke, misliking of my
dream, I made my moan

That in the gods I did perceive but
slender help or none.

But straight much trampling up and
down and shuffling did I hear,

And (which to me that present time
did very strange appear)

Of people talking in my house
methought I heard the rere.

Now while I, musing on the same,
supposed it to have been

Some fancy of the foolish dream
which lately I had seen,

Behold, in comes me Telamon in
haste and, thrusting ope

My chamber door, said, "Sir, a sight
of things surmounting hope

And credit shall you have; come
forth!" Forth came I by and
by,

And even such men for all the world
there standing did I spy

As in my sleep I dreamèd of and
knew them for the same.

They, coming to me, greeted me
their sovereign lord by name.

And I, my vows to Jove performed,
my city did divide

840

Among my new inhabitants and gave
them land beside

Which by decease of such as were
late owners of the same

Lay waste. And in remembrance of
the race whereof they came

The name of Emmets I them gave.
Their persons you have seen;

Their disposition is the same that
erst in them hath been.

They are a sparing kind of folk, on
labour wholly set,

A gatherer and an horder-up of such
as they do get.

These fellows, being like in years
and courage of the mind,

Shall go a warfare way as soon as
that the eastern wind

Which brought you hither luckily' –
the eastern wind was it

850

That brought them hither – 'turning,
to the southern coast do flit.'

Cephalus' javelin

With this and other suchlike talk
they brought the day to end.

The even in feasting and the
night in sleeping they did
spend.

The sun next morrow in the heaven
with golden beams did burn,
And still the eastern wind did blow
and hold them from return.

Sir Pallas' sons to Cephal came (for
he their elder was),

And he and they to Aeacus' court
together forth did pass.

The king as yet was fast asleep. Duke
Phocus at the gate

Did meet them and received them
according to their state,

For Telamon and Peleus already
forth were gone

To muster soldiers for the wars. So
Phocus all alone

Did lead them to an inner room
where goodly parlours were

And causèd them to sit them down.
As he was also there

Now sitting with them, he beheld a
dart in Cephal's hand

With golden head, the steal whereof
he well might understand

Was of some strange and unknown
tree. When certain talk had
passed

870

A while of other matters there, 'I
am', quoth he at last,
'A man that hath delight in woods
and loves to follow game,
And yet I am not able, sure, by any
means to aim
What wood your javelin steal is of.
Of ash it cannot be,
For then the colour should be brown.
And if of cornel tree,
It would be full of knobbèd knots. I
know not what it is,
But sure mine eyes did never see a
fairer dart than this.'

Cephalus and Procris

880

The one of those same brethren
twain, replying to him, said,
'Nay then, the special property
will make you more dismayed
Than doth the beauty of this dart. It
hitteth whatsoever
He throws it at. The stroke thereof
by chance is rulèd never.
For having done his feat, it flies all
bloody back again
Without the help of any hand.' The
prince was earnest then
To know the truth of all: as whence
so rich a present came,
Who gave it him, and whereupon the
party gave the same.
Duke Cephal answered his demand
in all points, one except,

The which (as known apparently) for
shame he overleapt:
His beauty, namely, for the which he
did receive the dart.
And, for the loss of his dear wife
right pensive at the heart,
He thus began with weeping eyes:
‘This dart, O goddess’ son,
(Ye ill would think it) makes me
yearn and long shall make me
doon
If long the gods do give me life. This
weapon hath undone
My dear beloved wife and me. Oh,
would to God this same
Had never unto me been given.
There was a noble dame
That Procris hight. But you,
perchance, have oftener heard
the name
Of great Orithyia, whose renown
was bruited so by fame
That blustering Boreas ravished her.
To this Orithyia she
Was sister. If a body should compare
in each degree
The face and natures of them both,
he could none other deem
But Procris worthier of the twain of
ravishment should seem.
Her father and our mutual love did
make us man and wife.

Men said I had (and so I had indeed)
a happy life.

Howbeit God's will was otherwise.
For had it pleasèd him,
Of all this while and even still yet in
pleasure should I swim.

900

The second month that she and I by
band of lawful bed

Had joined together been, as I my
masking toils did spread

To overthrow the horned stags, the
early Morning grey,

Then newly having chased night and
gun to break the day

From Mount Hymettus' highest tops
that freshly flourish aye,

Espied me and against my will
conveyed me quite away.

I trust the goddess will not be
offended that I say

The truth of her. Although it would
delight one to behold

Her ruddy cheeks, although of day
and night the bounds she
hold,

Although on juice of ambrosy
continually she feed,

910

Yet Procris was the only wight that I
did love indeed.

On Procris only was my heart; none
other word had I

But Procris only in my mouth; still
“Procris” did I cry.

I op'nèd what a holy thing was
wedlock, and how late
It was ago since she and I were
coupled in that state;
Which band (and specially so soon)
it were a shame to break.
The goddess, being moved at the
words that I did speak,
Said, "Cease thy plaint, thou carl,
and keep thy Procris still for
me.
But, if my mind deceive me not, the
tune will shortly be
That wish thou wilt thou had her
not." And so in anger she
To Procris sent me back again. In
going homeward as
Upon the goddess' sayings with
myself I musing was,
I gan to dread bad measures lest my
wife had made some scape.
Her youthful years begarishèd with
beauty, grace and shape
In manner made me to believe the
deed already done.
Again, her manners did forbid
mistrusting oversoon.
But I had been away; but even the
same from whom I came
A shrewd example gave how lightly
wives do run in blame;
But we poor lovers are afraid of all
things. Hereupon

930

I thought to practise feats, which
thing repented me anon
And shall repent me while I live. The
purpose of my drifts
Was for t'assault her honesty with
great rewards and gifts.
The Morning, fooding this my fear,
to further my device
My shape (which thing methought I
felt) had altered with a trice;
By means whereof anon unknown to
Pallas' town I came
And entered so my house. The house
was clearly void of blame
And showed signs of chastity in
mourning ever sith
Their master had been rapt away. A
thousand means wherewith
To come to Procris' speech had I
devised, and scarce at last
Obtained I it. As soon as I mine eye
upon her cast,
My wits were ravished in such wise
that nigh I had forgot
The purposed trial of her troth. Right
much ado, God wot,
I had to hold mine, own, that I the
truth bewrayèd not.
To keep myself from kissing her full
much ado I had,
As reason was I should have done.
She looked very sad;

940

And yet as sadly as she looked, no
 wight alive can show
 A better count'nance than did she.
 Her heart did inward glow
 In longing for her absent spouse.
 How beautiful a face,
 Think you, Sir Phocus, was in her
 whom sorrow so did grace?
 What should I make report how oft
 her chaste behaviour strave
 And overcame most constantly the
 great assaults I gave?
 Or tell how oft she shut me up with
 these same words: "To one
 (Where'er he is) I keep myself, and
 none but he alone
 Shall sure enjoy the use of me"?
 What creature, having his
 Wits perfect, would not be content
 with such a proof as this
 Of her most steadfast chastity? I
 could not be content,
 But still to purchase to myself more
 woe I further went.
 At last, by proffering endless wealth
 and heaping gifts on gifts,
 In overlading her with words I drave
 her to her shifts.
 Then cried I out, "Thine evil heart
 myself I tardy take.
 Where of a strange advouterer the
 count'nance I did make,

I am indeed thy husband. O
unfaithful woman thou,
Even I myself can testify thy lewd
behaviour now.”
She made none answer to my words
but, being stricken dumb
And with the sorrow of her heart
alonely overcome,
Forsaketh her entangling house and
naughty husband quite
And, hating all the sort of men by
reason of the spite
That I had wrought her, strayed
abroad among the mountains
high
And exercised Diana's feats. Then
kindled by and by
A fiercer fire within my bones than
ever was before
When she had thus forsaken me by
whom I set such store.
I prayed her she would pardon me
and did confess my fault,
Affirming that myself likewise with
such a great assault
Of riches might right well have
been enforced to yield to
blame,
The rather if performance had
ensued of the same.
When I had this submission made
and she sufficiently

Revenge her wronged chastity, she
then immediately
Was reconciled; and afterward we
lived many a year
In joy, and never any jar between us
did appear.
Besides all this – as though her love
had been too small a gift –
She gave me eke a goodly grew'nd
which was of foot so swift
That, when Diana gave him her, she
said he should outgo
All others. And with this same
grew'nd she gave this dart
also,
The which you see I hold in hand.
Perchance ye fain would
know
What fortune to the grew'nd befell. I
will unto you show
A wondrous case. The strangeness of
the matter will you move.
The crinks of certain prophesies,
surmounting far above
The reach of ancient wits to read,
the brooknymphs did
expound;
And mindless of her own dark
doubts Dame Themis being
found,
Was as a reckless prophetess thrown
flat against the ground;

For which presumptuous deed of
 theirs she took just
 punishment.

‘To Thebes in Boeotia straight a
 cruel beast she sent

Which wrought the bane of many
 a wight. The countryfolk did
 feed

Him with their cattle and themselves
 until (as was agreed)

That all we youthful gentlemen that
 dwellèd thereabout,

Assembling, pitched our corded toils
 the champaign fields
 throughout.

But net ne toil was none so high that
 could his wightness stop;

He mounted over at his ease the
 highest of the top.

Then every man let slip their
 grew’nds, but he them all
 outstripped

And even as nimbly as a bird in
 dalliance from them whipped.

Then all the field desired me to let
 my Laelaps go

(The grew’nd that Procris unto me
 did give was named so)

Who, struggling for to wrest his neck
 already from the band,

Did stretch his collar. Scarcely had
 we let him out of hand

But that where Laelaps was become
we could not understand.
The print remained of his feet upon
the parched sand,
But he was clearly out of sight. Was
never dart, I trow,
Nor pellet from enforced sling, nor
shaft from Cretish bow
That flew more swift than he did
run. There was not far fro
thence
About the middle of the lawn a
rising ground, from whence
A man might overlook the fields. I
gat me to the knap
Of this same hill and there beheld of
this strange course the hap
In which the beast seems one while
caught and, ere a man would
think,
Doth quickly give the grew'nd the
slip and from his biting
shrink.
And like a wily fox he runs not forth
directly out
Nor makes a windlass over all the
champaign fields about
But, doubling and indenting still,
avoids his enemy's lips
And, turning short, as swift about as
spinning wheel he whips
To disappoint the snatch. The
grew'nd, pursuing at an inch,

1020

Doth cote him, never losing ground,
but, likely still to pinch,
Is at the sudden shifted of.
Continually he snatches
In vain; for nothing in his mouth
save only air he latches.
Then thought I for to try what help
my dart at need could show.
Which as I chargèd in my hand by
level aim to throw
And set my fingers to the thongs, I,
lifting from below
Mine eyes, did look right forth again;
and straight amidst the field
(A wondrous thing!) two images of
marble I beheld,
Of which ye would have thought the
t'one had fled on still apace
And that with open barking mouth
the t'other did him chase.
In faith it was the will of God (at
least, if any gods
Had care of them) that in their pace
there should be found none
odds.'
Thus far; and then he held his
peace. 'But tell us ere we
part',
Quoth Phocus, 'what offence or
fault committed hath your
dart?'
His dart's offence he thus declared:
'My lord, the ground of all

1030

My grief was joy. Those joys of mine
remember first I shall.

It doth me good even yet to think
upon that blissful time

(I mean the fresh and lusty years of
pleasant youthful prime)

When I, a happy man, enjoyed so
fair and good a wife

And she with such a loving make did
lead a happy life.

The care was like of both of us, the
mutual love all one.

She would not to have lain with Jove
my presence have forgone;

Ne was there any wight that could of
me have won the love,

No, though Dame Venus had herself
descended from above.

The glowing brands of love did burn
in both our breasts alike.

Such time as first with crazèd beams
the sun is wont to strike

The tops of towers and mountains
high, according to the wont

Of youthful men, in woody parks I
went abroad to hunt.

But neither horse nor hounds to
make pursuit upon the scent

Nor servingman nor knotty toil
before or after went.

For I was safe with this same dart.
When weary waxed mine arm

1050

With striking deer and that the day
did make me somewhat
warm,

Withdrawing for to cool myself, I
sought among the shades

For air that from the valleys cold
came breathing in at glades.

The more excessive was my heat, the
more for air I sought.

I waited for the gentle air; the air
was that that brought

Refreshing to my weary limbs. And
(well I bear't in thought),

“Come, air!” I would was to sing,
“Come, ease the pain of me!

Within my bosom lodge thyself most
welcome unto me,

And, as thou heretofore art wont,
abate my burning heat.”

By chance (such was my destiny)
proceeding to repeat

1060

Mo words of dalliance like to these, I
used for to say,

“Great pleasure do I take in thee; for
thou from day to day

Dost both refresh and nourish me.
Thou makest me delight

In woods and solitary grounds. Now
would to God I might

Receive continual at my mouth this
pleasant breath of thine.”

Some man (I wot not who) did hear
these doubtful words of mine

1070

And, taking them amiss, supposed
that this same name of "air",
The which I called so oft upon, had
been some lady fair.

He thought that I had loved some
nymph. And thereupon
straightway

He runs me like a hare-brained blab
to Procris to bewray

This fault, as he surmised it, and
there with lavish tongue

Reported all the wanton words that
he had heard me sung.

A thing of light belief is love. She (as
I since have heard)

For sudden sorrow swoounded down.
And when long afterward

She came again unto herself, she
said she was accursed

And born to cruel destiny; and me
she blamed worst

For breaking faith. And, fretting at a
vain surmisèd shame,

She dreaded that which nothing was;
she feared a headless name.

She wist not what to say or think.
The wretch did greatly fear

Deceit; yet could she not believe the
tales that talked were.

1080

Unless she saw her husband's fault
apparent to her eye

She thought she would not him
condemn of any villainy.

Next day, as soon as morning light
 had driven the night away,
I went abroad to hunt again. And
 speeding, as I lay
Upon the grass, I said, "Come, air,
 and ease my painful heat."
And on the sudden as I spake there
 seemed for to beat
A certain sighing in mine ears, of
 what I could not guess.
But ceasing not for that, I still
 proceeded natheless
And said, "O come, most pleasant
 air." With that I heard a
 sound
Of rustling softly in the leaves that
 lay upon the ground;
And, thinking it had been some
 beast, I threw my flying dart.
It was my wife, who, being now sore
 wounded at the heart,
Cried out, "Alas!" As soon as I
 perceived by the shriek
It was my faithful spouse, I ran me
 to the voiceward like
A madman that had lost his wits.
 There found I her half dead,
Her scattered garments staining in
 the blood that she had bled,
And (wretched creature as I am!) yet
 drawing from the wound
The gift that she herself had given.
 Then softly from the ground

I lifted up that body of hers of which
I was more chare
Than of mine own, and from her
breast her clothes in haste I
tare.

1100

And, binding up her cruel wound, I
strivèd for to stay
The blood and prayed she would not
thus by passing so away
Forsake me as a murderer. She,
waxing weak at length
And drawing to her death apace,
enforcèd all her strength
To utter these few words at last: "I
pray thee humbly by
Our bond of wedlock, by the gods as
well above the sky
As those to whom I now must pass,
as ever I have aught
Deserved well by thee, and by the
love which, having brought
Me to my death, doth even in death
unfaded still remain,
To nestle in thy bed and mine let
never Air obtain."

1110

This said, she held her peace, and I
perceived by the same
And told her also how she was
beguilèd in the name.
But what availed telling then? She
cothed, and with her blood
Her little strength did fade. Howbeit,
as long as that she could

See aught, she stared in my face and,
gasping still on me,
Even in my mouth she breathed
forth her wretched ghost. But
she
Did seem with better cheer to die for
that her conscience was
Dischargèd quite and clear of
doubts.' Now in conclusion, as
Duke Cephal, weeping, told this tale
to Phocus and the rest,
Whose eyes were also moist with
tears to hear the piteous gest,
Behold, King Aeacus and with him
his eldest sons both twain
Did enter in, and after them there
followed in a train
Of well-appointed men of war new
levied, which the king
Delivered unto Cephalus to Athens
town to bring.

FINIS SEPTIMI LIBRI.

The Eighth Book of Ovid's Metamorphoses

Scylla and The daystar now beginning to disclose the morning
Minos bright

And for to cleanse the droopy sky from darkness of
the night,

The eastern wind went down, and flakes of foggy clouds gan show.

And from the south a merry gale on Cephal's sails
did blow,

The which did hold so fresh and large that he and
all his men

Before that he was lookèd for arrivèd safe again

In wishèd haven. In that while King Minos with his
fleet

Did waste the coast of Megara. And first he thought
it meet

To make a trial of the force and courage of his men

Against the town Alcathoë where Nisus reignèd
then;

Among whose honourable hair that was of colour
grey

One scarlet hair did grow upon his crown, whereon
the stay

Of all his kingdom did depend. Six times did
Phoebe fill

Her horns with borrowed light, and yet the war
hung wavering still

In fickle Fortune's doubtful scales; and long with
fleeting wings
Between them both flew Victory. A turret of the
king's
Stood hard adjoining to the wall which, being
touchèd, rings;
For Phoebus (so men say) did lay his golden viol
there,
And so the stones the sound thereof did ever after
bear.

20

King Nisus' daughter oftentimes resorted to this wall
And strake it with a little stone to raise the sound
withal
In time of peace. And in the war she many a time
and oft
Beheld the sturdy storms of Mars from that same
place aloft.
And by continuance of the siege the captains' names
she knew,
Their arms, horse, armour and array in every band
and crew.
But specially above the rest she noted Minos' face.
She knew enough, and more than was enough as
stood the case.

30

For were it that he hid his head in helm with
feathered crest,
To her opinion in his helm he stained all the rest;
Or were it that he took in hand of steel his target
bright,
She thought in wielding of his shield he was a
comely knight;

Or were it that he raised his arm to throw the
piercing dart,
The lady did commend his force and manhood
joined with art;
Or drew he with his arrow nocked his bended bow
in hand,
She swore that so in all respects was Phoebus wont
to stand.
But when he showed his visage bare, his helmet laid
aside,
And on a milk-white steed brave trapped in purple
robe did ride,
She scarce was mistress of herself; her wits were
almost straight.
A happy dart she thought it was that he in fingers
caught;
And happy called she those reins that he in hand
had raught.
And if she might have had her will, she could have
found in heart
Among the enemies to have gone; she could have
found in heart
From down the highest turret there her body to
have thrown
Among the thickest of the tents of Gnossus to have
flown,
Or for to ope the brazen gates and let the enemy in,
Or whatsoever else she thought might Minos' favour
win.
And as she sat beholding still the king of Candy's
tent,
She said, 'I doubt me whether that I rather may
lament

50

Or of this woeful war be glad. It grieves me at
the heart
That thou, O Minos, unto me, thy lover, enemy art.
But had not this same warfare been, I never had
him known.
Yet might he leave this cruel war and take me as his
own.
A wife, a fere, a pledge for peace he might receive
of me.
O flower of beauty, O thou prince most peerless, if
that she
That bare thee in her womb were like in beauty
unto thee,
A right good cause had Jove on her enamoured for
to be.
O, happy were I if with wings I through the air
might glide
And safely to King Minos' tent from this same turret
slide.
Then would utter who I am and how the fiery flame
Of Cupid burnèd in my breast, desiring him to name
What dowry he would ask with me in loan of his
love –
Save only of my father's realm no question he
should move.
For rather than by traitorous means my purpose
should take place,
Adieu, desire of hoped love! Yet oftentimes such
grace
Hath from the gentle conqueror proceeded erst, that
they

60

Which took the foil have found the same their profit
and their stay.

Assuredly, the war is just that Minos takes in hand
As in revengement of his son late murdered in this
land.

And as his quarrel seemeth just, even so it cannot
fail;

70 But rightful war against the wrong must, I believe,
prevail.

Now if this city in the end must needs be taken,
why

Should his own sword and not my love be means to
win it by?

It were yet better he should speed by gentle means
without

The slaughter of his people, yea, and (as it may fall
out)

With spending of his own blood too. For sure I have
a care,

O Minos, lest some soldier wound thee ere he be
aware.

For who is he in all the world that hath so hard a
heart

That wittingly against thy head would aim his cruel
dart?

I like well this device, and on this purpose will I
stand:

80 To yield myself, endowèd with this city, to the hand
Of Minos, and in doing so to bring this war to end.

But smally it availeth me the matter to intend;

The gates and issues of this town are kept with
watch and ward,

And of the keys continually my father hath the
guard.

My father only is the man of whom I stand in dread;
My father only hindereth me of my desired speed.

Would God that I were fatherless! Tush, every wight
may be

A god as in their own behalf and if their hearts be
free

From fearfulness. For fortune works against the
fond desire

90 Of such as through faint-heartedness attempt not to
aspire.

Some other, feeling in her heart such flames of
Cupid's fire,

Already would have put in proof some practice to
destroy

What thing so ever of her love the furtherance
might annoy.

And why should any woman have a bolder heart
than I?

Through fire and sword I boldly durst adventure for
to fly.

And yet in this behalf at all there needs no sword
nor fire;

There needeth but my father's hair to accomplish
my desire.

That purple hair of his to me more precious were
than gold;

That purple hair of his would make me blest a
thousandfold;

100 That hair would compass my desire and set my
heart at rest.'

Night, chiefest nurse of thoughts to such as are
with care oppressed,
Approachèd while she spake these words, and
darkness did increase
Her boldness. At such time as folk are wont to find
release
Of cares that all the day before were working in
their heads
By sleep, which falleth first of all upon them in
their beds,
Her father's chamber secretly she entered, where
(alas
That ever maiden should so far the bounds of
nature pass!)

She robbed her father of the hair upon the which
the fate
Depended both of life and death and of his royal
state.

And, joying in her wicked prey, she bears it with
her so
As if it were some lawful spoil acquired of the foe.
And, passing through a postern gate, she marched
through the mid
Of all her enemies (such a trust she had in that she
did)
Until she came before the king; whom, troubled
with the sight,
She thus bespake: 'Enforced, O king, by love against
all right,
I, Scylla, Nisus' daughter, do present unto thee here
My native soil, my household gods and all that else
is dear.

For this my gift none other thing in recompense I
 crave
 Than of thy person, which I love, fruition for to
 have.
 120 And in assurance of my love, receive thou here of
 me
 My father's purple hair; and think I give not unto
 thee
 A hair, but even my father's head.'And, as these
 words she spake,
 The cursèd gift with wicked hand she proffered him
 to take.
 But Minos did abhor her gift and, troubled in his
 mind
 With strangeness of the heinous act so sore against
 her kind,
 He answered, 'O thou slander of our age, the gods
 expel
 Thee out of all this world of theirs and let thee
 nowhere dwell!
 Let rest on neither sea nor land be granted unto
 thee!
 Assure thyself that, as for me, I never will agree
 130 That Candy, Jove's own foster place, as long as I
 there reign
 Shall unto such a monstrous wight a harbour place
 remain.'
 This said, he, like a righteous judge, among his
 vanquished foes
 Set order under pain of death. Which done, he
 willèd those
 That servèd him to go aboard and anchors up to
 weigh.

When Scylla saw the Candian fleet afloat to go
away

And that the captain yielded not so good reward as
she

Had for her lewdness lookèd for, and when in fine
she see

That no entreatance could prevail, then, bursting
out in ire,

With stretchèd hands and scattered hair as furious
as the fire

140 She, shreaming, cried out aloud, 'And whither dost
thou fly,

Rejecting me, the only means that thou hast
conquered by?

O cankered churl, preferred before my native soil,
preferred

Before my father, whither fly'st, O carl of heart most
hard?

Whose conquest, as it is my sin, so doth it well
deserve

Reward of thee, for that my fault so well thy turn
did serve.

Doth neither thee the gift I gave, nor yet my faithful
love,

Nor yet that all my hope on thee alonely rested,
move?

For whither shall I now resort, forsaken thus of
thee?

To Megara, the wretched soil of my nativity?

150 Behold, it lieth vanquished and trodden underfoot.

But put the case it flourished still; yet could it
nothing boot.

I have foreclosed it to myself through treason when
I gave
My father's head to thee, whereby my countryfolk I
drave
To hate me justly for my crime. And all the realms
about
My lewd example do abhor. Thus have I shut me
out
Of all the world, that only Crete might take me in.
Which if
Thou like a churl deny and cast me up without
relief,
The Lady Europe surely was not mother unto thee,
But one of Afric Syrts where none but serpents
fostered be,
But even some cruel tiger bred in Armen or in Inde,
Or else the gulf Charybdis raised with rage of
southern wind.
Thou wert not got by Jove, ne yet thy mother was
beguiled
In shape of bull; of this thy birth the tale is false
compiled.
But rather some unwieldy bull even altogether wild
That never lowèd after cow was, out of doubt, thy
sire.
O father Nisus, put thou me to penance for my hire.
Rejoice thou in my punishment, thou town by me
betraed.
I have deservèd, I confess, most justly to be paid
With death. But let some one of them that through
my lewdness smart

170

Destroy me. Why dost thou, that by my crime a
gainer art,

Commit like crime thyself? Admit this wicked act of
me

As to my land and fatherward indeed most heinous
be;

Yet oughtest thou to take it as a friendship unto
thee.

But she was meet to be thy wife that in a cow of
tree

Could play the harlot with a bull and in her womb
could bear

A bairn in whom the shapes of man and beasts
confounded were.

How say'st thou, carl? Compel not these my words
thine ears to glow?

Or do the winds that drive thy ships in vain my
sayings blow?

In faith, it is no wonder though thy wife, Pasiphaë,

180

Preferred a bull to thee, for thou more cruel wert
than he.

Now woe is me! To make more haste it standeth me
in hand.

The water sounds with oars and hales from me and
from my land.

In vain thou strivest, O thou churl, forgetful quite of
my

Deserts; for even in spite of thee pursue thee still
will I.

Upon thy curbèd keel will I take hold and, hanging
so,

Be drawn along the sea with thee wherever thou do
go.'

She scarce had said these words but that she
leaped on the wave;

And, getting to the ships by force of strength
that love her gave,

Upon the king of Candy's keel in spite of him she
clave.

190

Whom when her father spied (for now he hovered
in the air

And, being made a hobby-hawk, did soar between a
pair

Of nimble wings of iron mail), he soused down
amain

To seize upon her as she hung and would have torn
her fain

With bowing beak. But she for fear did let the
carrack go.

And as she was about to fall, the lightsome air did
so

Uphold her that she could not touch the sea, as
seemed tho.

Anon all feathers she became and forth away did
fly,

Transformed to a pretty bird that stieth to the sky.

And for because like clipped hair her head doth
bear a mark,

200

The Greeks it 'ciris' call, and we do name the same
a lark.

Theseus
and the
Minotaur

As soon as Minos came a-land in Crete, he by
and by

Performed his vows to Jupiter in causing for to
die

A hundred bulls for sacrifice; and then he did adorn
His palace with the enemy's spoils by conquest won
beforn.

The slander of his house increased, and now
appearèd more

The mother's filthy whoredom by the monster that
she bore

Of double shape, an ugly thing. This shameful
infamy,

This monster borne him by his wife, he minds by
policy

To put away; and in a house with many nooks and
crinks

From all men's sights and speech of folk to shut it
up he thinks.

Immediately one Daedalus, renownèd in that land
For fine device and workmanship in building, went
in hand

To make it. He confounds his work with sudden
stops and stays

And with the great uncertainty of sundry winding
ways

Leads in and out and to and fro at divers doors
astray.

And as with trickling stream the brook Maeander
seems to play

In Phrygia and with doubtful race runs counter to
and fro

And, meeting with himself, doth look if all his
streams or no

Come after and, retiring eft clean backward to his
spring

220

And marching eft to open sea as straight as any
string,

Indenteth with reversèd stream; even so of winding
ways

Unnumerable Daedalus within his work conveys.

Yea, scarce himself could find the means to wind
himself well out,

So busy and so intricate the house was all about.

Within this maze did Minos shut the monster
that did bear

The shape of man and bull. And when he twice
had fed him there

With blood of Attic princes' sons that given for
tribute were,

The third time, at the ninth year's end, the lot did
chance to light

On Theseus, King Aegeus' son; who like a valiant
knight

230

Did overcome the Minotaur and by the policy

Of Minos' eldest daughter (who had taught him for
to tie

A clew of linen at the door to guide himself
thereby),

As busy as the turnings were, his way he out did
find,

Which never man had done before. And straight he,
having wind,

With Minos' daughter sailed away to Dia, where,
unkind

And cruel creature that he was, he left her post
alone

Upon the shore. Thus desolate and making doleful
moan,

God Bacchus did both comfort her and take her to
his bed.

And with an everlasting star, the more her fame to
spread,

240 He took the chaplet from her head and up to
heaven it threw.

The chaplet thirlèd through the air; and, as it
gliding flew,

The precious stones were turned to stars which
blazèd clear and bright

And took their place (continuing like a chaplet still
to sight)

Amid between the Kneeler-down and him that
gripes the snake.

The death Now in this while gan Daedalus a weariness to
of Icarus take

Of living like a banished man and prisoner such
a time

In Crete, and longed in his heart to see his native
clime.

But seas enclosed him as if he had in prison be.

Then thought he, 'Though both sea and land King
Minos stop fro me,

250 I am assured he cannot stop the air and open sky.

To make my passage that way, then, my cunning
will I try.

Although that Minos like a lord held all the world
beside,

Yet doth the air from Minos' yoke for all men free
abide.'

This said, to uncouth arts he bent the force of all his
wits

To alter nature's course by craft. And orderly he
knits

A row of feathers one by one, beginning with the
short

And overmatching still each quill with one of longer
sort,

That on the shoring of a hill a man would think
them grow.

Even so the country organ-pipes of oaten reeds in
row

260

Each higher than another rise. Then fastened he
with flax

The middle quills and joined in the lowest sort with
wax.

And when he thus had finished them, a little he
them bent

In compass, that the very birds they full might
represent.

There stood me by him Icarus, his son, a pretty lad,
Who, knowing not that he in hands his own
destruction had,

With smiling mouth did one while blow the feathers
to and fro

Which in the air on wings of birds did flask not long
ago,

And with his thumbs another while he chafes the
yellow wax

And lets his father's wondrous work with childish
toys and knacks.

270

As soon as that the work was done, the workman by
and by

Did peise his body on his wings and in the air on
high
Hung wavering and did teach his son how he
should also fly.
'I warn thee,' quoth he, 'Icarus, a middle race to
keep.
For if thou hold too low a gait, the dankness of the
deep
Will overlade thy wings with wet. And if thou
mount too high,
The sun will singe them. Therefore see between
them both thou fly.
I bid thee not behold the star Bootes in the sky,
Nor look upon the bigger Bear to make thy course
thereby,
Nor yet on Orion's naked sword. But ever have an
eye
To keep the race that I do keep, and I will guide
thee right.'
In giving counsel to his son to order well his flight,
He fastened to his shoulders twain a pair of uncouth
wings;
And as he was in doing it and warning him of
things,
His aged cheeks were wet, his hands did quake. In
fine he gave
His son a kiss, the last that he alive should ever
have.
And then he, mounting up aloft, before him took his
way,
Right fearful for his follower's sake, as is the bird
the day

That first she tolleth from her nest among the
branches high

Her tender young ones in the air to teach them for
to fly.

290

So heartens he his little son to follow, teaching him

A hurtful art. His own two wings he waveth very
trim

And looketh backward still upon his son's. The
fishermen

Then standing angling by the sea and shepherds
leaning then

On sheephooks and the ploughmen on the handles
of their plough,

Beholding them, amazed were and thought that
they that through

The air could fly were gods. And now did on their
left side stand

The isles of Paros and of Dele and Samos, Juno's
land,

And on their right Lebinthus and the fair Calydna,
fraught

With store of honey, when the boy a frolic courage
caught

300

To fly at random. Whereupon, forsaking quite his
guide,

Of fond desire to fly to heaven above his bounds he
stied.

And there the nearness of the sun, which burned
more hot aloft,

Did make the wax, with which his wings were
glued, lithe and soft.

As soon as that the wax was molt, his naked arms
he shakes;

And, wanting wherewithal to wave, no help of air
he takes.

But, calling on his father loud, he drownèd in the
wave;

And by this chance of his those seas his name
forever have.

His wretched father (but as then no father) cried in
fear,

‘O Icarus, O Icarus, where art thou? Tell me where
That I may find thee, Icarus.’ He saw the feathers
swim

Upon the waves, and cursed his art that had so
spited him.

At last he took his body up and laid it in a grave
And to the isle the name of him then buried in it
gave.

Daedalus And as he of his wretched son the corse in
and ground did hide,

Partridge

The cackling partridge from a thick and leafy
thorn him spied

And, clapping with his wings, for joy aloud to call
began.

There was of that same kind of bird no mo but he as
then.

In times forepast had none been seen. It was but
late anew

Since he was made a bird; and that thou, Daedalus,
may'st rue,

320

For while the world doth last, thy shame shall
thereupon ensue.

For why thy sister, ignorant of that which after
happ'd,

Did put him to thee to be taught, full twelve years
old and apt

To take instruction. He did mark the middle bone
that goes

Through fishes, and according to the pattern ta'en
of those

He filed teeth upon a piece of iron one by one

And so devised first the saw, where erst was never
none.

Moreover, he two iron shanks so joined in one
round head

That, opening an indifferent space, the one point
down shall tread

And t'other draw a circle round. The finding of
these things

330

The spiteful heart of Daedalus with such a malice
stings

That headlong from the holy tower of Pallas down
he threw

His nephew, feigning him to fall by chance, which
was not true.

But Pallas, who doth favour wits, did stay him in
his fall

And, changing him into a bird, did clad him over all
With feathers soft amid the air. The quickness of his
wit

(Which erst was swift) did shed itself among his
wings and feet.

And as he Partridge hight before, so hights he
partridge still.

Yet mounteth not this bird aloft, ne seems to have a
will

To build her nest in tops of trees among the boughs
on high,

340 But flecketh near the ground and lays her eggs in
hedges dry.

And for because her former fall she aye in mind
doth bear,

She ever since all lofty things doth warily shun for
fear.

The And now, forwearied, Daedalus alighted in the
Calydonian land
boar-hunt

Within the which the burning hills of fiery Etna
stand;

To save whose life King Cocalus did weapon take in
hand,

For which men thought him merciful. And now
with high renown

Had Theseus ceased the woeful pay of tribute in the
town

Of Athens. Temples decked were with garlands
everywhere,

And supplications made to Jove and warlike Pallas
were

350 And all the other gods. To whom, more honour for
to show,

Gifts, blood of beasts and frankincense the people
did bestow

As in performance of their vows. The right
redoubted name
Of Theseus through the land of Greece was spread
by flying fame.
And now the folk that in the land of rich Achaia
dwelt
Prayed him of succour in the harms and perils that
they felt.
Although the land of Calydon had then Meleäger,
Yet was it fain in humble wise to Theseus to prefer
A supplication for the aid of him. The cause
wherefore
They made such humble suit to him was this: there
was a boar
The which Diana, for to wreak her wrath conceived
before,
Had thither as her servant sent the country for to
waste.
For men report that Oeney, when he had in
storehouse placed
The full increase of former year, to Ceres did assign
The firstlings of his corn and fruits; to Bacchus, of
the vine;
And unto Pallas olive oil. This honouring of the
gods
Of grain and fruits who put their help to toiling in
the clods
Ambitiously to all, even those that dwell in heaven,
did climb.
Diana's altars, as it happed, alonely at that time
Without reward of frankincense were overskipped,
they say.

370

Even gods are subject unto wrath. 'He shall not
scape away

Unpunished. Though unworshippèd he passèd me
with spite,

He shall not make his vaunt he scaped me
unrevengèd quite,'

Quoth Phoebe. And anon she sent a boar to Oeney's
ground

Of such a hugeness as no bull could ever yet be
found

In Epire; but in Sicily are bulls much less than he.

His eyes did glister blood and fire. Right dreadful
was to see

His brawnèd neck; right dreadful was his hair which
grew as thick

With pricking points as one of them could well by
other stick.

And like a front of armèd pikes set close in battle
ray

380

The sturdy bristles on his back stood staring up
alway.

The scalding foam with gnashing hoarse which he
did cast aside

Upon his large and brawnèd shield did white as
curds abide.

Among the greatest elephants in all the land of Inde

A greater tush than had this boar ye shall not
lightly find.

Such lightning flashèd from his chaps as searèd up
the grass.

Now trampled he the spindling corn to ground
where he did pass;

Now, ramping up their ripèd hope, he made the
ploughmen weep

And chanked the kernel in the ear. In vain their
floors they sweep;

In vain their barns for harvest long the likely store
they keep.

390

The spreaded vines with clustered grapes to ground
he rudely sent,

And, full of berries, loaden boughs from olive-trees
he rent.

On cattle also did he rage; the shepherd nor his dog
Nor yet the bulls could save the herds from outrage
of this hog.

The folk themselves were fain to fly. And yet they
thought them not

In safety when they had themselves within the city
got

Until their prince, Meleäger, and with their prince a
knot

Of lords and lusty gentlemen of hand and courage
stout

With chosen fellows for the nonce of all the lands
about

Enflamèd were to win renown. The chief that
thither came

400

Were both the twins of Tyndarus* of great renown
and fame,

The one in all activity of manhood, strength and
force,

The other for his cunning skill in handling of a
horse;

And Jason, he that first of all the galley did invent;

And Theseus with Pirithous, between which two
there went

A happy league of amity; and two of Thesty's race†;
And Lynce, the son of Apharey; and Idas, swift of
pace;

And fierce Leucippus; and the brave Acastus with
his dart,

In handling of the which he had the perfect skill
and art;

And Caeney who, by birth a wench, the shape of
man had won;

410 And Dryas and Hippothoüs; and Phoenix eke, the
son

Of old Amyntor; and a pair of Actor's imps‡; and
Phyle,

Who came from Elis. Telamon was also there that
while;

And so was also Peleus, the great Achilles' sire;

And Pheret's son§; and Iolay the Theban, who with
fire

Helped Hercules the monstrous heads of Hydra off
to sear.

The lively lad Eurytion and Echion, who did bear
The prick and prize for footmanship, were present
also there;

And Lexel of Narytium, too; and Panopey beside;

And Hyle and cruel Hippasus; and Nestor, who that
tide

420 Was in the prime of lusty youth. Moreover, thither
went

Three children of Hippocoön¶ from old Amyclae
sent;

And he that of Penelope the father-in-law became||;
 And eke the son of Parrhasus, Ancaeus called by
 name.

There was the son of Ampycus*, of great forecasting
 wit;

And Oecley's son†, who of his wife was unbetrayèd
 yet.

And from the city Tegea there came the paragon
 Of Lycy forest, Atalant, a goodly lady, one
 Of Schoeney's daughters, then a maid. The garment
 she did wear

A braided button fastened at her gorget. All her hair
 Untrimmèd in one only knot was trussèd. From her
 left

Side hanging on her shoulder was an ivory quiver
 deft

Which, being full of arrows, made a clattering as
 she went;

And in her right hand she did bear a bow already
 bent.

Her furniture was such as this. Her count'nance and
 her grace

Was such as in a boy might well be called a wench's
 face

And in a wench be called a boy's. The prince of
 Calydon

No sooner cast his eye on her but, being caught
 anon

In love, he wished her to his wife. But unto this
 desire

God Cupid gave not his consent. The secret flames
 of fire

He haling inward still, did say, 'O happy man is he
Whom this same lady shall vouchsafe her husband
for to be.'

The shortness of the time and shame would give
him leave to say

No more; a work of greater weight did draw him
then away.

A wood thick grown with trees which stood
unfelled to that day.

Beginning from a plain, had thence a large
prospect throughout

The falling grounds that every way did muster
round about.

As soon as that the men came there, some pitchèd
up the toils,

Some took the couples from the dogs and some
pursued the foils

In places where the swine had tracked, desiring for
to spy

Their own destruction. Now there was a hollow
bottom by

To which the watershoots of rain from all the high
grounds drew.

Within the compass of this pond great store of
osiers grew

And sallows lithe and flackering flags and moorish
rushes eke,

And lazy reeds on little shanks and other baggage
like.

From hence the boar was rousèd out. And fiercely
forth he flies

Among the thickest of his foes, like thunder from
the skies

When clouds in meeting force the fire to burst by
violence out.

He bears the trees before him down, and all the
wood about

Doth sound of crashing. All the youth with hideous
noise and shout

460 Against him bend their boar-spear points with hand
and courage stout.

He rushes forth among the dogs that held him at a
bay

And, now on this side, now on that, as any come in
way

He rips their skins and splitteth them and chaseth
them away.

Echion first of all the rout a dart at him did throw,
Which missed and in a maple-tree did give a little
blow.

The next (if he that threw the same had used lesser
might)

The back at which he aimed it was likely for to
smite.

It overflowed him. Jason was the man that cast the
dart.

With that the son of Ampycus* said, 'Phoebus, if
with heart

470 I have and still do worship thee, now grant me for
to hit

The thing that I do level at.' Apollo grants him it
As much as lay in him to grant. He hit the swine
indeed,

But neither entered he his hide nor causèd him to
bleed.

For why Diana, as the dart was flying, took away
The head of it; and so the dart could headless bear
no sway.

But yet the moody beast thereby was set the more
on fire

And, chafing like the lightning swift, he uttereth
forth his ire.

The fire did sparkle from his eyes, and from his
boiling breast

He breathed flaming flakes of fire conceived in his
chest.

480 And look with what a violent brunt a mighty bullet
goes

From engines bent against a wall or bulwarks full of
foes,

With even such violence rushed the swine among
the hunts amain

And overthrew Eupalamon and Pelagon both twain
That in the right wing placed were. Their fellows,
stepping to

And drawing them away, did save their lives with
much ado.

But as for poor Enaesimus, Hippocoon's son had not
The luck to scape the deadly dint. He would away
have got

And, trembling, turned his back for fear; the swine
him overtook

And cut his hamstrings, so that straight his going
him forsook.

490 And Nestor to have lost his life was like by fortune
ere

The siege of Troy, but that he took his risk upon his
spear
And, leaping quickly up upon a tree that stood hard
by,
Did safely from the place behold his foe whom he
did fly.
The boar then, whetting sharp his tusks against the
oaken wood,
To mischief did prepare himself with fierce and
cruel mood.
And, trusting to his weapons which he sharpened
had anew,
In great Orithyia's thigh a wound with hooked groin
he drew.
The valiant brothers, those same twins of Tyndarus*
(not yet
Celestial signs), did both of them on goodly coursers
sit
As white as snow; and each of them had shaking in
his fist
A lightsome dart with head of steel to throw, it
where he list.
And for to wound the bristled boar they surely had
not missed,
But that he still recovered so the coverts of the
wood
That neither horse could follow him nor dart do any
good.
Still after followed Telamon whom, taking to his
feet
No heed at all for eagerness, a maple root did meet
Which trippèd up his heels and flat against the
ground him laid.

And while his brother Peleus relievèd him, the maid
Of Tegea took an arrow swift and shot it from her
bow.

510

The arrow, lighting underneath the aver's ear below
And somewhat razing of the skin, did make the
blood to show.

The maid herself not gladder was to see that lucky
blow

Than was the prince Meleäger. He was the first that
saw

And first that showed to his mates the blood that
she did draw

And said, 'For this thy valiant act due honour shalt
thou have.'

The men did blush and, cheering up each other,
courage gave

With shouting; and disorderly their darts by heaps
they threw.

The number of them hindered them, not suffering to
ensue

That any lighted on the mark at which they all did
aim.

520

Behold, enraged against his end the hardy knight
that came

From Arcady rushed rashly with a poleaxe in his fist
And said, 'You younglings, learn of me what
difference is betwixt

A wench's weapons and a man's, and all of you give
place

To my redoubted force. For though Diana in this
chase

Should with her own shield him defend, yet should
this hand of mine

Even maugre Dame Diana's heart confound this
orpèd swine.'

Such boasting words as these through pride
presumptuously he crakes

And, straining out himself upon his tiptoes, straight
he takes

His poleaxe up with both his hands. But as this
bragger meant

530

To fetch his blow, the cruel beast his malice did
prevent

And in his cods, the speeding place of death, his
tushes puts

And rippeth up his paunch. Down falls Ancaeus,
and his guts

Come tumbling out besmeared with blood and
foiled all the plot.

Pirithoüs, Ixion's son, at that abashed not

But, shaking in his valiant hand his hunting staff,
did go

Still stoutly forward face to face t'encounter with
his foe;

To whom Duke Theseus cried afar, 'O dearer unto
me

Than is myself, my soul, I say, stay! Lawful we it
see

For valiant men to keep aloof. The overhardy heart

540

In rash adventuring of himself hath made Ancaeus
smart.'

This said, he threw a weighty dart of cornel with a
head

Of brass which, being levelled well, was likely to
have sped,
But that a bough of chestnut-tree thick-leavèd by
the way
Did latch it and by means thereof the dint of it did
stay.
Another dart that Jason threw by fortune missed
the boar
And light between a mastiff's chaps and through his
guts did gore
And nailed him to the earth. The hand of Prince
Meleäger
Played hitty-missy. Of two darts his first did fly too
far
And lighted in the ground; the next amid his back
sticked fast.
And while the boar did play the fiend and turned
round aghast
And, grunting, flang his foam about together mixed
with blood,
The giver of the wound (the more to stir his
enemy's mood)
Stepped in and underneath the shield did thrust his
boar-spear through.
Then all the hunters, shouting out, demeaned joy
enough,
And glad was he that first might come to take him
by the hand.
About the ugly beast they all with gladness gazing
stand
And, wondering what a field of ground his carcass
did possess,

There durst not any be so bold to touch him.
Nev'ertheless

They every of them with his blood their hunting
staves made red.

560 Then steppèd forth Meleäger and, treading on his
head,

Said thus: 'O lady Atalant, receive thou here my fee
And of my glory vouch thou safe partaker for to be.'
Immediately the ugly head with both the tushes
brave

And eke the skin with bristles stour right grisly he
her gave.

The lady for the giver's sake was in her heart as
glad

As for the gift; the rest repined that she such honour
had.

Through all the rout was murmuring. Of whom with
roaring rere

And arms displayed that all the field might easily
see and hear,

The Thesties crièd, 'Dame, come off and lay us
down this gear.

570 And thou, a woman, offer not us men so great a
shame

As we to toil and thou to take the honour of our
game.

Ne let that fair smooth face of thine beguile thee,
lest that he

That, being doted in thy love, did give thee this our
fee

Be overfar to rescue thee.' And with that word they
took

The gift from her, and right of gift from him. He
could not brook

This wrong but, gnashing with his teeth for anger
that did boil

Within, said fiercely, 'Learn ye, you that other folks
despoil

Of honour given, what difference is between your
threats and deeds.'

And therewithal Plexippus' breast, who no such
matter dreads,

580

With wicked weapon he did pierce. As Toxey
doubting stood

What way to take, desiring both t'avenge his
brother's blood

And fearing to be murdered as his brother was
before,

Meleager (to dispatch all doubts of musing any
more)

Did heat his sword for company in blood of him
again

Before Plexippus' blood was cold that did thereon
remain.

*Althaea's
revenge*

Althaea, going toward church with presents for
to yield

Due thanks and worship to the gods that for her
son had killed

The boar, beheld her brothers brought home dead;
and by and by

She beat her breast and filled the town with
shrieking piteously

590

And, shifting all her rich array, did put on
mourning weed.

But when she understood what man was doer of the
deed,

She left all mourning and from tears to vengeance
did proceed.

There was a certain firebrand which, when Oeney's
wife did lie

In childbed of Meleager, she chancèd to espy

The Destinies putting in the fire. And in the putting
in

She heard them speak these words as they his fatal
thread did spin:

‘O lately born, like time we give to thee and to this
brand.’

And when they so had spoken, they departed out of
hand.

Immediately the mother caught the blazing bough
away

600 And quenched it. This bough she kept full charily
many a day,

And in the keeping of the same she kept her son
alive.

But now, intending of his life him clearly to
deprive,

She brought it forth and, causing all the coals and
shivers to

Be laïd by, she like a foe did kindle fire thereto.

Four times she was about to cast the firebrand in
the flame;

Four times she pullèd back her hand from doing of
the same.

As mother and as sister both she strove what way to
go;

The divers names drew diversely her stomach to
and fro.
Her face waxed often pale for fear of mischief to
ensue;
610 And often red about the eyes through heat of ire she
grew.
One while her look resembled one that threatened
cruelness;
Another while ye would have thought she minded
piteousness.
And though the cruel burning of her heart did dry
her tears,
Yet burst out some. And as a boat, which tide
contrary bears
Against the wind, feels double force and is
compelled to yield
To both, so Thesty's daughter now, unable for to
wield
Her doubtful passions, diversely is carried off and
on,
And changeably she waxes calm and storms again
anon.
But better sister ginneth she than mother for to be
620 And, to th'intent her brothers' ghosts with blood to
honour, she
In meaning to be one way kind doth work another
way
Against kind. When the plaguey fire waxed strong,
she thus did say:
'Let this same fire my bowels burn.' And as, in
cursed hands
The fatal wood she holding, at the hellish altar
stands,

She said, 'Ye triple goddesses of wreak, ye
hellhounds three,

Behold ye all this furious fact and sacrifice of me.

I wreak, and do against all right. With death must
death be paid;

On mischief mischief must be heaped; on corse
must corse be laid.

Confounded let this wicked house with heaped
sorrows be.

630 Shall Oeney joy his happy son in honour for to see

And Thesty mourn, bereft of his? Nay; better yet it
were

That each with other company in mourning you
should bear.

Ye brothers' ghosts and souls new dead, I wish no
more but you

To feel the solemn obsequies which I prepare as
now,

And that mine offering you accept which dearly I
have bought,

The issue of my wretched womb. Alas, alas, what
thought

I for to do? O brothers, I beseech you bear with me!

I am his mother; so to do my hands unable be!

His trespass, I confess, deserves the stopping of his
breath,

640 But yet I do not like that I be author of his death.

And shall he then with life and limb and honour,
too, scape free

And, vaunting in his good success, the king of
Calydon be;

And you, dear souls, lie rakèd up but in a little
dust?

I will not surely suffer it. But let the villain trust
That he shall die and draw with him to ruin and
decay

His kingdom, country and his sire that doth upon
him stay.

Why, where is now the mother's heart and pity that
should reign

In parents and the ten months' pains that once I did
sustain?

O, would to God thou burnèd had a baby in this
brand

And that I had not ta'en it out and quenched it with
my hand!

That all this while thou livèd hast, my goodness is
the cause.

And now most justly unto death thine own desert
thee draws.

Receive the guerdon of thy deed, and render thou
again

Thy twice-given life – by bearing first and
secondarily when

I caught this firebrand from the flame – or else
come deal with me

As with my brothers, and with them let me
entombèd be.

I would, and cannot. What, then, shall I stand to in
this case?

One while my brothers' corses seem to press before
my face

With lively image of their deaths; another while my
mind

660

Doth yield to pity, and the name of mother doth me
blind.

Now woe is me! To let you have the upper hand is
sin,

But ne'ertheless the upper hand, O brothers, do you
win,

Conditionally that, when that I to comfort you
withal

Have wrought this feat, myself to you resort in
person shall.'

This said, she turned away her face and with a
trembling hand

Did cast the deathful brand amid the burning
fire. The brand

Did either sigh or seem to sigh in burning in the
flame,

Which sorry and unwilling was to fasten on the
same.

Meleager, being absent and not knowing aught at
all,

670

Was burnèd with this flame and felt his bowels to
appal

With secret fire. He bare out long the pain with
courage stout,

But yet it grievèd him to die so cowardly without

The shedding of his blood. He thought Ancaeus for
to be

A happy man that died of wound. With sighing
callèd he

Upon his agèd father and his sisters and his brother

And lastly on his wife too, and by chance upon his
mother.

His pain increased with the fire and fell therewith
again,

And at the selfsame instant quite extinguished were
both twain.

680 And as the ashes soft and hoar by leisure overgrew
The glowing coals, so leisurely his spirit from him
drew.

Then droopèd stately Calydon. Both young and
old did mourn;

The Lords and Commons did lament; and
married wives with torn

And tattered hair did cry, 'Alas!' His father did
beray

His hoary head and face with dust and on the earth
flat lay,

Lamenting that he livèd had to see that woeful day.

For now his mother's guilty hand had for that
cursèd crime

Done execution on herself by sword before her
time.

If God to me a hundred mouths with sounding
tongues should send

And reason able to conceive, and thereunto should
lend

690 Me all the grace of eloquence that e'er the Muses
had,

I could not show the woe wherewith his sisters were
bested.

Unmindful of their high estate, their naked breasts
they smit

Until they made them black and blue. And while his
body yet

Remainèd, they did cherish it and cherish it again.

They kissed his body; yea, they kissed the chest that
did contain

His corse. And after that the corse was burnt to
ashes, they

Did press his ashes with their breasts, and down
along they lay

Upon his tomb and there embraced his name upon
the stone

And filled the letters of the same with tears that
from them gon.

700

At length Diana, satisfied with slaughter brought
upon

The house of Oeney, lifts them up with feathers
everych one

(Save Gorge and the daughter-in-law of noble
Alcmene) and

Makes wings to stretch along their sides and hornèd
nebs to stand

Upon their mouths. And finally she, altering quite
their fair

And native shape, in shape of birds doth send them
through the air.

*Acheloïis
and the
nymphs*

The noble Theseus in this while, with others
having done

His part in killing of the boar, to Athensward
begun

To take his way. But Acheloy, then being swollen
with rain,

Did stay him of his journey and from passage him
restrain.

710

‘Of Athens valiant knight,’ quoth he, ‘come
underneath my roof

And for to pass my raging stream as yet attempt no
proof.

This brook is wont whole trees to bear and evelong
stones to carry

With hideous roaring down his stream. I oft have
seen him harry

Whole sheepecotes standing near his banks with
flocks of sheep therein.

Nought bootied bulls their strength; nought steeds
by swiftness there could win.

Yea, many lusty men this brook hath swallowed
when the snow

From mountains molten caused him his banks to
overflow.

The best is for you for to rest until the river fall

Within his bounds and run again within his channel
small.’

720

‘Content’, quoth Theseus, ‘Acheloy, I will not sure
refuse

Thy counsel nor thy house.’ And so he both of them
did use.

Of pommy hollowed diversely and ragged pebble
stone

The walls were made. The floor with moss was soft
to tread upon.

The roof thereof was checkerwise with shells of
purple wrought

And pearl. The sun then full two parts of day to end
had brought,

And Theseus down to table sat with such as late
before

Had friendly borne him company at killing of the
boar.

At one side sat Ixion's son, and on the other sat
The Prince of Troezen, Lelex, with a thin-haired
hoary pate,

730

And then such other as the brook of Acarnania did
Vouchsafe the honour to his board and table for to
bid,

Who was right glad of such a guest. Immediately
there came

Barefooted nymphs who brought in meat. And
when that of the same

The lords had taken their repast, the meat away
they took

And set down wine in precious stones. Then
Theseus, who did look

Upon the sea that underneath did lie within their
sight,

Said, 'Tell us what is yon same place,' and with his
finger right

He pointed thereunto, 'I pray, and what that island
hight –

Although it seemeth mo than one.' The river
answered thus:

740

'It is not one main land alone that kennèd is of us.

There are upon a five of them. The distance of the
place

Doth hinder to discern between each isle the perfect
space.

And that the less ye wonder may at Phoebe's act
alate

To such as had neglected her upon contempt or
hate,

These isles were sometime waternymphs who
having killèd neat

Twice five and callèd to their feast the country gods
to eat,

Forgetting me, kept frolic cheer. At that I gan to
swell

And ran more large than ever erst; and being
overfell

In stomach and in stream, I rent the wood from
wood and field

750

From field, and with the ground the nymphs (as
then with stomachs mild

Remembering me) I tumbled to the sea. The waves
of me

And of the sea the ground, that erst all whole was
wont to be,

Did rend asunder into all the isles you yonder see

And made a way for waters now to pass between
them free.

They now of Urchins have their name. But of these
islands, one

A great way off – behold ye – stands, a great way
off alone,

As you may see. The mariners do call it Perimele.

With her (she was as then a nymph) so far in love I
fell

That of her maidenhood I her spoiled; which thing
displeased so sore

760

Her father, Sir Hippodamas, that from the craggy
shore

He threw her headlong down to drown her in the
sea. But I

Did latch her straight and, bearing her afloat, did
loud thus cry:

“O Neptune with thy three-tined mace, who hast by
lot the charge

Of all the waters wild that bound upon the earth at
large,

To whom we holy streams do run, in whom we take
our end,

Draw near and gently to my boon effectually attend.

This lady whom I bear afloat myself hath hurt. Be
meek

And upright. If Hippodamas perchance were
fatherlike

Or if that he extremity through outrage did not
seek,

770 He oughted to have pitied her and for to bear with
me.

Now help us, Neptune, I thee pray, and condescend
that she

Whom from the land her father's wrath and
cruelness doth chase,

Who through her father's cruelty is drowned, may
find the grace

To have a place; or rather let herself become a
place,

And I will still embrace the same.” The king of seas
did move

His head and, as a token that he did my suit
approve,

He made his surges all to shake. The nymph was
sore afraid.

Howbeit she swam, and as she swam my hand I
softly laid
Upon her breast which quivered still. And while I
touched the same
780 I sensibly did feel how all her body hard became
And how the earth did overgrow her bulk. And, as I
spake,
New earth enclosed her swimming limbs, which by
and by did take
Another shape and grew into a mighty isle.' With
that
The river ceased, and all men there did wonder
much thereat.
Pirithous, being over haught of mind and such a
one
As did despise both god and man, did laugh
them everych one
To scorn for giving credit and said thus: 'The words
thou spak'st
Are feigned fancies, Acheloy; and overstrong thou
mak'st
The gods to say that they can give and take 'way
shapes.' This scoff
790 Did make the hearers all amazed, for none did like
thereof.
And Lelex, of them all the man most ripe in years
and wit,
Said thus: 'Unmeasurable is the power of heaven,
and it
Can have none end. And look what God doth mind
to bring about

Must take effect. And in this case to put ye out of
doubt,

*Baucis and
Philemon*

‘Upon the hills of Phrygie near a teil there stands
a tree

Of oak enclosed with a wall. Myself the place
did see,

For Pitthey unto Pelops’ fields did send me, where
his father

Did sometime reign. Not far fro thence there is a
pool which rather

Had been dry ground inhabited; but now it is a
mere

800

And moorcocks, coots and cormorants do breed and
nestle there.

The mighty Jove and Mercury, his son, in shape of
men

Resorted thither on a time. A thousand houses when
For room to lodge in they had sought, a thousand
houses barred

Their doors against them. Ne'ertheless one cottage
afterward

Receivèd them, and that was but a pelting one
indeed.

The roof thereof was thatched all with straw and
fennish reed.

Howbeit, two honest ancient folk, of whom she
Baucis hight

And he Philemon, in that cote their faith in youth
had plight

And in that cote had spent their age. And for they
patiently

810

Did bear their simple poverty, they made it light
thereby

And showed it nothing to be repined at at all.

It skills not whether there for hinds or master you
do call;

For all the household were but two, and both of
them obeyed

And both commanded. When the gods at this same
cottage stayed

And, ducking down their heads, within the low-
made wicket came,

Philemon, bringing each a stool, bade rest upon the
same

Their limbs, and busy Baucis brought them
cushions, homely gear.

Which done, the embers on the hearth she gan
abroad to stir

And laid the coals together that were raked up
overnight

820

And with the brands and dried leaves did make
them gather might

And with the blowing of her mouth did make them
kindle bright.

Then from an inner house she fetched sear sticks
and clifted brands

And put them broken underneath a skillet with her
hands.

Her husband from their gardenplot fetched
coleworts, of the which

She shredded small the leaves, and with a fork took
down a flitch

Of resty bacon from the balk made black with
smoke, and cut

A piece thereof and in the pan to boiling did it put.
And while this meat a-seething was, the time in talk
they spent,
By means whereof away without much tediousness
it went.

830

There hung a bowl of beech upon a spirget by a
ring;

The same with warmèd water filled the two old folk
did bring

To bathe their guests' foul feet therein. Amid the
house there stood

A couch whose bottom, sides and feet were all of
sallow wood

And on the same a mat of sede. They cast upon this
bed

A covering which was never wont upon it to be
spread

Except it were at solemn feasts; and yet the same
was old

And of the coarsest, with a bed of sallow meet to
hold.

The gods sat down. The aged wife, right chare and
busy as

A bee, set out a table of the which the third foot
was

840

A little shorter than the rest. A tile-sherd made it
even

And took away the shoringness. And when they had
it driven

To stand up level, with green mints they by and by
it wiped.

Then set they on it Pallas' fruit* with double colour
striped

And cornels kept in pickle moist and endive and a
root

Of radish and a jolly lump of butter fresh and soot
And eggs rear-roasted. All these cates in earthen
dishes came.

Then set they down a graven cup made also of the
same

Self kind of plate and mazers made of beech, whose
inner side

Was rubbed with yellow wax. And when they
pausèd had a tide,

850 Hot meat came piping from the fire. And shortly
thereupon

A cup of green hedge wine was brought. This ta'en
away, anon

Came in the latter course which was of nuts, dates,
drièd figs,

Sweet smelling apples in a maund made flat of osier
twigs,

And prunes and plums and purple grapes cut newly
from the tree,

And in the midst a honeycomb new taken from the
bee.

Besides all this there did ensue good count'nance
overmore

With will not poor nor niggardly. Now all the while
before

As often as Philemon and Dame Baucis did perceive
The empty cup to fill alone and wine to still receive,
860 Amazèd at the strangeness of the thing, they gan
straightway

With fearful hearts and hands held up to frame
themselves to pray,

Desiring for their slender cheer and fare to
pardoned be.

They had but one poor goose which kept their little
tenantry,

And this to offer to the gods, their guests, they did
intend.

The gander, wight of wing, did make the slow old
folk to spend

Their pains in vain and mocked them long. At
length he seemed to fly

For succour to the gods themselves, who bade he
should not die.

“For we be gods,” quoth they, “and all this wicked
township shall

Abye their guilt. On you alone this mischief shall
not fall.

870

No more but give you up your house and follow up
this hill

Together, and upon the top thereof abide our will.”

They both obeyed. And as the gods did lead the way
before,

They laggèd slowly after with their staves and
laboured sore

Against the rising of the hill. They were not mickle
more

Than full a flight-shot from the top when, looking
back, they saw

How all the town was drowned save their little shed
of straw.

And as they wondered at the thing and did bewail
the case

Of those that had their neighbours been, the old
poor cote so base

880

Whereof they had been owners erst became a
church. The props

Were turned into pillars huge; the straw upon the
tops

Was yellow, so that all the roof did seem of
burnished gold;

The floor with marble pavèd was; the doors on
either fold

Were graven. At the sight hereof Philemon and his
make

Began to pray in fear. Then Jove thus gently them
bespake:

“Declare, thou righteous man, and thou, O woman
meet to have

A righteous husband, what ye would most chiefly
wish or crave.”

Philemon, taking conference a little with his wife,
Declarèd both their meanings thus: “We covet
during life

Your chaplains for to be to keep your temple. And
because

890

Our years in concord we have spent, I pray, when
death near draws

Let both of us together leave our lives, that neither I
Behold my wife's decease nor she see mine when I
do die.”

Their wish had sequel to their will. As long as life
did last

They kept the church; and being spent with age of
years forepast,

By chance as standing on a time without the temple
door

They told the fortune of the place, Philemon old
 and poor
 Saw Baucis flourish green with leaves, and Baucis
 saw likewise
 Philemon branching out in boughs and twigs before
 her eyes.
 And as the bark did overgrow the heads of both,
 each spake
 To other while they might. At last they each of
 them did take
 Their leave of other both at once, and therewithal
 the bark
 Did hide their faces both at once. The Phrygians in
 that park
 Do at this present day still show the trees that
 shaped were
 Of their two bodies, growing yet together jointly
 there.
 These things did ancient men report of credit very
 good;
 For why there was no cause why they should lie. As
 I there stood
 I saw the garlands hanging on the boughs and,
 adding new,
 I said, "Let them whom God doth love be gods, and
 honour due
 Be given to such as honour him with fear and
 reverence true."

The
sacrilege of
Erysichthon

He held his peace, and both the thing and he
 that did it tell

Did move them all, but Theseus most. Whom,
being minded well
To hear of wondrous things, the brook of Calydon
thus bespake:
‘There are, O valiant knight, some folk that had the
power to take
Strange shape for once and all their lives continued
in the same;
And other some to sundry shapes have power
themselves to frame,
As thou, O Proteu, dwelling in the sea that clips the
land.
For now a younker, now a boar, anon a lion, and
Straightway thou did'st become a snake and by and
by a bull,
That people were afraid of thee to see thy hornèd
skull.
And oftentimes thou seemed a stone, and now and
then a tree,
And counterfeiting water sheer thou seemèdst oft to
be
A river, and another while contrary thereunto
Thou wert a fire. No lesser power than also thus to
do
Had Erysichthon's daughter, whom Autolychus took
to wife.
Her father was a person that despisèd all his life
The power of gods and never did vouchsafe them
sacrifice.
He also is reported to have hewn in wicked wise
The grove of Ceres and to fell her holy woods,
which aye

Had undiminished and unhacked continued to that
day.

930

There stood in it a warry oak which was a wood
alone.

Upon it round hung fillets, crowns and tables many
one,

The vows of such as had obtained their heart's
desire. Full oft

The woodnymphs underneath this tree did fetch
their frisks aloft,

And oftentimes with hand in hand they dancèd in a
round

About the trunk, whose bigness was of timber good
and sound

Full fifteen fathom. All the trees within the wood
beside

Were unto this as weeds to them, so far it did them
hide.

Yet could not this move Triop's son his axe therefro
to hold,

But bade his servants cut it down. And when he did
behold

940

Them stinting at his hest, he snatched an axe with
furious mood

From one of them and wickedly said thus:
“Although this wood

Not only were the darling of the goddess but also
The goddess even herself, yet would I make it ere I
go

To kiss the clowres with her top that pranks with
branches so.”

This spoken, as he sweaked his axe aside to fetch
his blow,

The menaced oak did quake and sigh, the acorns
that did grow

Thereon together with the leaves to wax full pale
began

And, shrinking in for fear, the boughs and branches
lookèd wan.

As soon as that his cursed hand had wounded once
the tree,

950 The blood came spinning from the carf as freshly as
ye see

It issue from a bullock's neck whose throat is newly
cut

Before the altar, when his flesh to sacrifice is put.

They were amazed everych one. And one among
them all

To let the wicked act durst from the tree his hatchet
call.

The lewd Thessalian, facing him, said, "Take thou
here to thee

The guerdon of thy godliness," and, turning from
the tree,

He choppèd off the fellow's head. Which done, he
went again

And hewed on the oak. Straight from amid the tree
as then

There issued such a sound as this: "Within this tree
dwell I,

960 A nymph to Ceres very dear, who now before I die

In comfort of my death do give thee warning thou
shalt buy

Thy doing dear within a while." He goeth wilfully

Still thorough with his wickedness, until at length
the oak,

Pulled partly by the force of ropes and cut with
axe's stroke,

Did fall and with his weight bare down of
underwood great store.

The woodnymphs, with the losses of the wood's and
theirs right sore

Amazèd, gathered on a knot and all in mourning
weed

Went sad to Ceres, praying her to wreak that
wicked deed

Of Erysichthon's. Ceres was content it should be so,

970 And with the moving of her head in nodding to and
fro

She shook the fields, which laden were with fruitful
harvest tho.

And therewithal a punishment most piteous she
proceeds

To put in practice, were it not that his most heinous
deeds

No pity did deserve to have at anybody's hand.

With helpless hunger him to pine in purpose she did
stand.

And for as much as she herself and Famine might
not meet

(For Fate forbiddeth Famine to abide within the leet
Where Plenty is), she thus bespake a fairy of the
hill:

“There lieth in the utmost bounds of Tartary the
chill

980 A dreary place, a wretched soil, a barren plot; no
grain,

No fruit, no tree is growing there, but there doth
aye remain
Unwieldsome Cold with trembling Fear and
Paleness white as clout
And foodless Famine. Will thou her immediately
without
Delay to shed herself into the stomach of the wretch
And let no plenty staunch her force, but let her
working stretch
Above the power of me. And lest the longness of the
way
May make thee weary, take thou here my chariot;
take, I say,
My dragons for to bear thee through the air.” In
saying so,
She gave her them. The nymph mounts up and,
flying thence as tho,
Alights in Scythia land and up the craggèd top of
high
Mount Caucasus did cause her snakes with much
ado to sty;
Where, seeking long for Famine, she the gap-
toothed elf did spy
Amid a barren stony field a-ramping up the grass
With ugly nails and chanking it. Her face pale-
coloured was;
Her hair was harsh and shirl;-her eyes were sunken
in her head;
Her lips were hoar with filth; her teeth were furred
and rusty red.
Her skin was starched and so sheer a man might
well espy
The very bowels in her bulk how every one did lie.

And eke above her curbed loins her withered hips
were seen;
1000 Instead of belly was a space where belly should
have been.
Her breast did hang so sagging down as that a man
would ween
That scarcely to her ridge-bone had her ribs been
fastened well.
Her leanness made her joints bollen big and knee-
pans for to swell,
And with exceeding mighty knobs her heels behind
boined out.
Now when the nymph beheld this elf afar (she was
in doubt
To come too near her) she declared her lady's
message. And
In that same little while, although the nymph aloof
did stand
And though she were but newly come, yet seemed
she to feel
The force of Famine. Whereupon she, turning back
her wheel,
1010 Did rein her dragons up aloft, who straight with
courage free
Conveyed her into Thessaly. Although that Famine
be
Aye contrary to Ceres' work, yet did she then agree
To do her will and, gliding through the air
supported by
The wind, she found th'appointed house. And,
entering by and by
The caitiff's chamber where he slept (it was in time
of night),

She huggèd him between her arms there snorting
bolt upright

And, breathing her into him, blew upon his face and
breast,

That hunger in his empty veins might work as he
did rest.

And when she had accomplished her charge, she
then forsook

1020 The fruitful climates of the world and home again
betook

Herself unto her fruitless fields and former dwelling
place.

The gentle sleep did all this while with feathers soft
embrace

The wretched Erysichthon's corse who, dreaming
straight of meat,

Did stir his hungry jaws in vain as though he had to
eat.

And, chanking tooth on tooth apace, he grinds them
in his head

And occupies his empty throat with swallowing,
and instead

Of food devours the lithèr air. But when that sleep
with night

Was shaken off, immediately a furious appetite

Of feeding gan to rage in him which in his greedy
gums

1030 And in his meatless maw doth reign unstaunched.
Anon there comes

Before him whatsoever lives on sea, in air or land.

And yet he crieth still for more. And though the
platters stand

Before his face full furnishèd, yet doth he still
complain
Of hunger, craving meat at meal. The food that
would sustain
Whole households, townships, shires and realms
suffice not him alone.
The more his pampered paunch consumes, the more
it maketh moan.
And as the sea receives the brooks of all the worldly
realms
And yet is never satisfied for all the foreign streams,
And as the fell and ravening fire refuseth never
wood
But burneth faggots numberless and with a furious
mood
The more it hath, the more it still desireth
evermore,
Increasing in devouring through increasement of
the store;
So wicked Erysichthon's mouth in swallowing of his
meat
Was ever hungry more and more and longèd aye to
eat.
Meat tolled in meat; and as he ate the place was
empty still.
The hunger of his brinkless maw, the gulf that
nought might fill,
Had brought his father's goods to nought. But yet
continued aye
His cursèd hunger unappeased, and nothing could
allay
The flaming of his starvèd throat. At length, when
all was spent

1050 And into his unfillèd maw both goods and lands
 were sent,

Erysicthon's An only daughter did remain, unworthy to have had
daughter

So lewd a father. Her he sold, so hard he was
 bested.

But she of gentle courage could no bondage well
 abide

And therefore, stretching out her hands to seaward
 there beside,

“Now save me”, quoth she, “from the yoke of
 bondage, I thee pray,

O thou that my virginity enjoyest as a prey.”

Neptunus had it, who to this her prayer did consent.

And though her master, looking back (for after him
 she went),

Had newly seen her, yet he turned her shape and
 made her man

1060 And gave her look of fisherman. Her master,
 looking then

Upon her, said, “Good fellow, thou that on the
 shore dost stand

With angling rod and baited hook and hanging line
 in hand,

I pray thee, as thou dost desire the sea. aye calm to
 thee

And fishes for to bite thy bait and stricken still to
 be,

Tell where the frizzle-toppèd wench in coarse and
 sluttish gear

That stood right now upon this shore – for well I
 wot that here

I saw her standing – is become. For further than this
place
No footstep is appearing.” She, perceiving by the
case
That Neptune's gift made well with her and being
glad to see
1070 Herself enquired for of herself, said thus: “Whoe'er
you-be,
I pray you for to pardon me. I turnèd not mine eye
At one side ne at other from this place, but did
apply
My labour hard. And that you may the lesser stand
in doubt,
So Neptune further still the art and craft I go about,
As now a while no living wight upon this level sand
(Myself excepted), neither man nor woman, here
did stand.”
Her master did believe her words and, turning
backward, went
His way beguiled; and straight to her her native
shape was sent.
But when her father did perceive his daughter for to
have
1080 A body so transformable, he oftentimes her gave
For money. But the damsel still escapèd, now a
mare
And now a cow and now a bird, a hart, a hind or
hare,
And ever fed her hungry sire with undeservèd fare.
But after that the malady had wasted all the meats
As well of store as that which she had purchased by
her feats,

Most cursèd caitiff as he was, with biting he did
rend

His flesh and by diminishing his body did intend
To feed his body till that death did speed his fatal
end.

But what mean I to busy me in foreign matters
thus?

1090

To alter shapes within precinct is lawful even to us,

My lords. For sometime I am such as you do now
me see;

Sometime I wind me in a snake; and oft I seem to
be

A captain of the herd with horns. For taking horns
on me

I lost a tine which heretofore did arm me, as the
print

Doth plainly show.' With that same word he sighèd
and did stint.

FINIS OCTAVI LIBRI.

The Ninth Book of Ovid's Metamorphoses

Acheloüs and 'What aileth thee', quoth Theseus, 'to sigh so
Hercules sore? And how

Befell it thee to get this maim that is upon thy
brow?'

The noble stream of Calydon made answer, who
did wear

A garland made of reeds and flags upon his
sedgy hair,

'A greivous penance you enjoin. For who would
gladly show

The combats in the which himself did take the
overthrow?

Yet will I make a just report in order of the same.

For why to have the worser hand was not so
great a shame

As was the honour such a match to undertake.
And much

10 It comforts me that he who did me overcome
was such

A valiant champion. If perchance you erst have
heard the name

Of Deianire, the fairest maid that ever God did
frame

She was, in mine opinion. And the hope to win
her love

Did mickle envy and debate among her wooers
move.

With whom I entering to the house of him that
should have be

My father-i'-law, "Parthaon's son," I said, "accept
thou me

Thy son-i'-law;" and Hercules in selfsame sort
did woo.

And all the other suitors straight gave place unto
us two.

He vaunted of his father Jove and of his famous
deeds

20 And how against his stepdame's spite his prowess
still proceeds.

And I again at other side said thus: "It is a shame
That god should yield to man." (This strife was
long ere he became

A god.) "Thou seest me a lord of waters in thy
realm,

Where I in wide and winding banks do bear my
flowing stream.

No stranger shalt thou have of me sent far from
foreign land,

But one of household, or at least a neighbour
here at hand.

Alonely let it be to me no hindrance that the wife
Of Jove abhors me not, ne that upon the pain of
life

She sets me not to task. For where thou boastest
thee to be

30 Alcmena's son, Jove either is not father unto thee

Or, if he be, it is by sin. In making Jove thy
father

Thou mak'st thy mother but a whore. Now
choose thee whether rather
Thou had to grant this tale of Jove surmised for
to be,
Or else thyself begot in shame and born in
bastardy.”
‘At that he grimly bends his brows, and much
ado he hath
To hold his hands, so sore his heart enflamed
is with wrath.
He said no more but thus: “My hand doth serve
me better than
My tongue. Content I am, so I in fighting
vanquish can,
That thou shalt overcome in words.” And
therewithal he gan
Me fiercely to assail. Methought it was a shame
for me,
That had even now so stoutly talked, in doings
faint to be.
I, casting off my greenish cloak, thrust stiffly out
at length
Mine arms and strained my pawing arms to hold
him out by strength
And framed every limb to cope. With both his
hollow hands
He caught up dust and sprinkled me; and I
likewise with sands
Made him all yellow too. One while he at my
neck doth snatch;
Another while my clear crisp legs he striveth for
to catch

Or trips at me; and everywhere the vantage he
doth watch.

My weightiness defended me and clearly did
defeat

50

His stout assaults as, when a wave with hideous
noise doth beat

Against a rock, the rock doth still both safe and
sound abide

By reason of his massiness. We drew a while
aside.

And then, encountering fresh again, we kept our
places stout,

Full minded not to yield an inch, but for to hold
it out.

Now were we standing foot to foot; and I with all
my breast

Was leaning forward and with head against his
head did rest,

And with my griping fingers I against his fingers
thrust.

So have I seen two mighty bulls together fiercely
joust

In seeking as their prize to have the fairest cow
in all

60

The field to be their make, and all the herd both
great and small

Stand gazing on them fearfully, not knowing
unto which

The conquest of so great a gain shall fall. Three
times a twitch

Gave Hercules and could not wrench my leaning
breast him fro,

But at the fourth he shook me off and made me
to let go

My hold. And with a push (I will tell truth) he
had a knack

To turn me off, and heavily he hung upon my
back.

And if I may believèd be (as sure I mean not, I,
To vaunt myself vaingloriously by telling of a
lie),

Methought a mountain whelmèd me. But yet
with much ado

70

I wrested in my sweating arms and hardly did
undo

His griping hands. He, following still his vantage,
suffered not

Me once to breathe or gather strength, but by
and by he got

Me by the neck. Then was I fain to sink with
knee to ground

And kiss the dust. Now when in strength too
weak myself I found,

I took me to my sleights and slipped in shape of
snake away

Of wondrous length. And when that I of purpose
him to fray

Did bend myself in swelling rolls and made a
hideous noise

Of hissing with my forkèd tongue, he, smiling at
my toys

And laughing them to scorn, said thus: "It is my
cradle game

80

To vanquish snakes, O Acheloy. Admit thou
overcame

All other snakes, yet what art thou comparèd to
 the snake
 Of Lerna, who by cutting off did still
 increasement take?
 For of a hundred heads not one so soon was
 pared away
 But that upon the stump thereof there budded
 other tway.
 This sprouting snake, whose branching heads by
 slaughter did revive
 And grow by cropping, I subdued and made it
 could not thrive.
 And thinkest thou, who, being none, would'st
 seem a snake, to scape?
 Who dost with forgèd weapons fight and under
 borrowed shape?"
 This said, his fingers of my neck he fastened in
 the nape;
 Methought he gripped my throat as though he
 did with pinions nip.
 I struggled from his churlish thumbs my pinchèd
 chaps to slip;
 But, do the best and worst I could, he overcame
 me so.
 Then thirdly did remain the shape of bull. And
 quickly tho
 I, turning to the shape of bull, rebelled against
 my foe.
 He, stepping to my left side close, did fold his
 arms about
 My wattled neck and, following me then running
 mainly out,

Did drag me back and made me pitch my horns
against the ground,

And in the deepest of the sand he overthrew me
round.

And yet not so content, such hold his cruel hand
did take

100

Upon my whelked horn that he asunder quite it
brake

And pulled it from my maimèd brow. The
waterfairies came

And, filling it with fruit and flowers, did
consecrate the same;

And so my horn the treasury of plenteousness
became.'

As soon as Acheloy had told this tale, a
waiting maid

With flaring hair that lay on both her
shoulders and arrayed

Like one of Dame Diana's nymphs with solemn
grace forth came

And brought that rich and precious horn and
heapèd in the same

All kind of fruits that harvest sends, and specially
such fruit

As serves for latter course at meals of every sort
and suit.

110

As soon as daylight came again and that the
sunny rays

Did shine upon the tops of things, the princes
went their ways.

They would not tarry till the flood were
altogether fallen

And that the river in his banks ran low again and
calm.

Then Acheloy amid his waves his crab-tree face
did hide

And head, disarmed of a horn. And though he
did abide

In all parts else both safe and sound, yet this
deformity

Did cut his comb. And for to hide this blemish
from the eye,

He hides his hurt with sallow leaves or else with
sedge and reed.

The shirt of But of the selfsame maid the love killed thee,
Nessus fierce Ness, indeed

120 When, piercing swiftly through thy back, an
arrow made thee bleed.

For as Jove's issue with his wife was onward on
his way

In going to his countryward, enforced he was to
stay

At swift Euenus' bank because the stream was
risen sore

Above his bounds through rage of rain that fell
but late before.

Again, so full of whirlpools and of gulls the
channel was

That scarce a man could anywhere find place of
passage. As,

Not caring for himself but for his wife, he there
did stand,

This Nessus came unto him (who was strong of
body and

130

Knew well the fords) and said, 'Use thou thy
strength, O Hercules,

In swimming. I will find the means this lady shall
with ease

Be set upon the further bank.' So Hercules
betook

His wife to Nessus. She for fear of him and of the
brook

Looked pale. Her husband, as he had his quiver
by his side

Of arrows full and on his back his heavy lion's
hide

(For to the further bank he erst his club and bow
had cast),

Said, 'Sith I have begun, this brook both must
and shall be passed.'

He never casteth further doubts nor seeks the
calmest place,

But through the roughest of the stream he cuts
his way apace.

Now as he on the further side was taking up his
bow,

140

He heard his wedlock shrieking out and did her
calling know

And cried to Ness (who went about to deal
unfaithfully

In running with his charge away), 'Ho, whither
dost thou fly,

Thou roister, thou, upon vain hope by swiftness
to escape

My hands? I say, give ear, thou Ness, for all thy
double shape,

And meddle not with that that's mine. Though no
regard of me
Might move thee to refrain from rape, thy father
yet might be
A warning, who for offering shame to Juno now
doth feel
Continual torment in his limbs by turning on a
wheel.
For all that thou hast horse's feet which do so
bold thee make,
Yet shalt thou not escape my hands. I will thee
overtake
With wound and not with feet.' He did according
as he spake.
For with an arrow as he fled he strake him
through the back,
And out before his breast again the hookèd iron
stack.
And when the same was pullèd out, the blood
amain ensued
At both the holes, with poison foul of Lerna
snake imbrued.
This blood did Nessus take and said within
himself, 'Well, sith
I needs must die, yet will I not die unrevenged.'
And with
The same he stained a shirt and gave it unto
Deianire,
Assuring her it had the power to kindle Cupid's
fire.
A great while after, when the deeds of worthy
Hercules

150

160

Were such as fillid all the world and also did
appease
The hatred of his stepmother, as he upon a day
With conquest from Oechalia came and was
about to pay
His vows to Jove upon the mount of Cený,
tattling Fame
(Who in reporting things of truth delights to
sauce the same
With tales, and of a thing of nought doth ever
greater grow
Through false and newly forged lies that she
herself doth sow)
Told Deianire that Hercules did cast a liking to
A lady callèd Iole. And Deianira, who
Was jealous over Hercules, gave credit to the
same.
And when that of a leman first the tidings to her
came,
She, being stricken to the heart, did fall to tears
alone
And in a lamentable wise did make most woeful
moan.
Anon she said, 'What mean these tears thus
gushing from mine eyen?
My husband's leman will rejoice at these
same tears of mine.
Nay, sith she is to come, the best it were to shun
delay
And for to work some new device and practice
while I may
Before that in my bed her limbs the filthy
strumpet lay.

And shall I then complain, or shall I hold my
tongue with skill?

Shall I return to Calydon, or shall I tarry still?

Or shall I get me out of doors and let them have
their will?

What if that I, Meleäger, remembering me to be
Thy sister, to attempt some act notorious did
agree

And in a harlot's death did show, that all the
world might see,

What grief can cause the womankind to
enterprise among,

And specially when thereunto they forcèd are by
wrong?’

With wavering thoughts right violently her
mind was tossèd long.

At last she did prefer before all others for to
send

The shirt bestainèd with the blood of Nessus to
the end

To quicken up the quailing love. And so, not
knowing what

She gave, she gave her own remorse and grief to
Lichas that

Did know as little as herself; and, wretched
woman, she

Desired him gently to her lord presented it to
see.

The noble prince, receiving it without mistrust
therein,

Did wear the poison of the snake of Lerna next
his skin.

200

To offer incense and to pray to Jove he did
begin,
And on the marble altar he full bowls of wine
did shed
Whenas the poison, with the heat resolving,
largely spread
Through all the limbs of Hercules. As long as e'er
he could,
The stoutness of his heart was such that sigh no
whit he would.
But when the mischief grew so great all patience
to surmount,
He thrust the altar from him straight and filled
all the Mount
Of Oeta with his roaring out. He went about to
tear
The deathful garment from his back; but where
he pullèd, there
He pulled away the skin. And (which is
loathsome to report)
It either cleavèd to his limbs and members in
such sort
As that he could not pull it off, or else it tare
away
The flesh, that bare his mighty bones and grisly
sinews lay.
The scalding venom, boiling in his blood, did
make it hiss
As when a gad of steel red hot in water quenched
is.
There was no measure of his pain. The frying
venom hent

210

His inwards, and a purple sweat from all his
body went.

His singèd sinews, shrinking, cracked; and with a
secret strength

The poison even within his bones the marrow
melts at length.

And, holding up his hands to heaven, he said
with hideous rere,

‘O Saturn's daughter, feed thyself on my
distresses here.

Yea, feed and, cruel wight, this plague behold
thou from above

And glut thy savage heart therewith. Or if thy
foe may move

Thee unto pity (for to thee I am an utter foe),

Bereave me of my hateful soul, distressed with
helpless woe

And born to endless toil. For death shall unto me
be sweet,

And for a cruel stepmother is death a gift most
meet.

And is it I that did destroy Busiris, who did foil

His temple floors with strangers' blood? Is't I that
did despoil

Antaeus of his mother's help? Is't I that could not
be

Abashèd at the Spaniard who in one had bodies
three?

Nor at the triple-headed shape, O Cerberus, of
thee?

Are you the hands that by the horns the bull of
Candy drew?

230

Did you King Augy's stable cleanse, whom
afterward ye slew?

Are you the same by whom the fowls were
scared from Stymphaly?

Caught you the stag in Maidenwood which did
not run but fly?

Are you the hands whose puissance receivèd for
your pay

The golden belt of Thermoodon? Did you convey
away

The apples from the dragon fell that wakèd night
and day?

Against the force of me defence the Centaurs
could not make;

Nor yet the boar of Arcady; nor yet the ugly
snake

Of Lerna, who by loss did grow and double force
still take.

What! Is it I that did behold the pampered jades
of Thrace

With mangers full of flesh of men on which they
fed apace?

240

Is't I that down at sight thereof their greasy
mangers threw

And both the fatted jades themselves and eke
their master slew?

The Nemean lion by these arms lies dead upon
the ground.

These arms the monstrous giant Cake by Tiber
did confound.

Upon these shoulders have I borne the weight of
all the sky.

Jove's cruel wife is weary of commanding me;
yet I

Unweary am of doing still. But now on me is
light

An uncouth plague, which neither force of hand
nor virtue's might

Nor art is able to resist. Like wasting fire it
spreads

Among mine inwards and throughout on all my
body feeds.

250

But all this while Eurysthey lives in health. And
some men may.

Believe there be some gods indeed!' Thus much
did Hercule say.

*The death of
Hercules*

And, wounded, over Oeta high he, stalking,
gan to stray,

As when a bull in maimèd bulk a deadly dart
doth bear

And that the doer of the deed is shrunk aside for
fear.

Oft sighing might you him have seen, oft
trembling, oft about

To tear the garment with his hands from top to
toe throughout

And throwing down the mighty trees and chafing
with the hills

Or casting up his hands to heaven, where Jove
his father dwells.

Behold, as Lichas, trembling, in a hollow rock
did lurk,

260

He spied him. And as his grief did all in fury
work,

He said, 'Art thou, Sir Lichas, he that broughtest
unto me

This plaguey present? Of my death must thou the
worker be?'

He quaked and shaked and looked pale and
fearfully gan make

Excuse. But as with humbled hands he, kneeling
to him, spake,

The furious Herc'le caught him up and,
swingeing him about

His head a half a dozen times or more, he flung
him out

Into th'Euboean sea with force surmounting any
sling.

He hardened into pebble stone as in the air he
hing.

And even as rain, congealed by wind, is laid to
turn to snow

270

And of the snow, round rollèd up, a thicker mass
to grow

Which falleth down in hail, so men in ancient
time report

That Lichas, being swung about by violence in
that sort

(His blood then being drained out and having
left at all

No moisture), into pebble stone was turned in his
fall.

Now also in th'Euboean sea appears a high short
rock

In shape of man, against the which the shipmen
shun to knock

As though it could them feel. And they do call it
 by the name
 Of Lichas still. But thou, Jove's imp of great
 renown and fame,
 Did'st fell the trees of Oeta high and, making of
 the same
 A pile, did'st give to Poean's son* thy quiver and
 thy bow
 And arrows, which should help again Troy town
 to overthrow.
 He put to fire and, as the same was kindling in
 the pile,
 Thyself did'st spread thy lion's skin upon the
 wood the while
 And, leaning with thy head against thy club,
 thou laid'st thee down
 As cheerfully as if with flowers and garlands on
 thy crown
 Thou had'st been set a-banqueting among full
 cups of wine.
 Anon on every side about those careless limbs of
 thine
 The fire began to gather strength and crackling
 noise did make,
 Assailing him whose noble heart for dalliance
 did it take.

The gods for this defender of the earth were
 sore afraid;
 To whom with cheerful count'nance Jove,
 perceiving it, thus said:
 'This fear of yours is my delight, and gladly even
 with all

My heart I do rejoice, O gods, that mortal folk
me call
Their king and father, thinking me aye mindful
of their weal,
And that mine offspring should do well
yourselves do show such zeal.
For though that you do attribute your favour to
desert,
Considering his most wondrous acts, yet I, too,
for my part
Am bound unto you. Ne'ertheless, for that I
would not have
Your faithful hearts without just cause in fearful
passions wave,
I would not have you of the flames in Oeta make
account.
For as he hath all other things, so shall he them
surmount.
Save only on that part that he hath taken of his
mother,
The fire shall have no power at all. Eternal is the
t'other,
The which he takes of me, and cannot die ne
yield to fire.
When this is rid from earthly dross, then will I
lift it higher
And take it into heaven. And I believe this deed
of mine
Will gladsome be to all the gods. If any do
repine,
If any do repine, I say, that Herc'le should
become

A god, repine he still for me and look he sour
and glum.

310

But let him know that Hercules deserveth this
reward

And that he shall against his will allow it
afterward.'

The gods assented everych one, and Juno seemed
to make

No evil count'nance to the rest, until her husband
spake

The last. For then her look was such as well they
might perceive

She did her husband's noting her in evil part
conceive.

While Jove was talking with the gods, as
much as fire could waste,

So much had fire consumed. And now, O
Hercules, thou hast

No carcass for to know thee by. That part is quite
bereft

Which of thy mother thou did'st take; alonely
now is left

320

The likeness that thou took'st of Jove. And as the
serpent sly

In casting off his withered slough renews his
years thereby

And waxeth lustier than before and looketh crisp
and bright

With scourèd scales, so Hercules, as soon as that
his sprite

Had left his mortal limbs, gan in his better part
to thrive

And for to seem a greater thing than when he
was alive

And with a stately majesty right reverend to
appear.

His mighty father took him up above the cloudy
sphere

And in a chariot placèd him among the
streaming stars.

Huge Atlas felt the weight thereof. But nothing
this disbars

330

Eurysthey's malice. Cruelly he prosecutes the
hate

Upon the offspring which he bare against the
father late.

*The
transformation
of Galantis*

But yet to make her moan unto and wail her
misery

And tell her son's great works, which all the
world could testify,

Old Alcmen had Dame Iole. By Hercules' last will
In wedlock and in hearty love she joined was to
Hyll,

By whom she then was big with child when thus
Alcmena said:

'The gods at least be merciful and send thee then
their aid

And short thy labour, when the fruit the which
thou go'st withal,

Now being ripe, enforceth thee with fearful voice
to call

340

Upon Illithyia, president of childbirths, whom
the ire

Of Juno at my travailing made deaf to my desire.
For when the sun through twice five signs his
course had fully run
And that the painful day of birth approached of
my son,
My burden strainèd out my womb and that that I
did bear
Became so great that of so huge a mass ye well
might swear
That Jove was father. Neither was I able to
endure
The travail any lenger time. Even now, I you
assure,
In telling it a shuddering cold through all my
limbs doth strike,
And partly it renews my pains to think upon the
like.
I, being in most cruel throes nights seven and
days eke seven
And tirèd with continual pangs, did lift my hands
to heaven
And, crying out aloud, did call Lucina to mine
aid
To loose the burden from my womb. She came as
I had prayed,
But so corrupted long before by Juno, my most
foe,
That for to martyr me to death with pain she
purposed tho.
For when she heard my piteous plaints and
groanings, down she sat
On yon same altar which you see there standing
at my gate.

360

Upon her left knee she had pitched her right
ham, and beside

She stayed the birth with fingers one within
another tied

In lattice-wise. And secretly she whispered
witching spells

Which hindered my deliverance more than all
her doings else.

I laboured still and, forced by pain and torments
of my fits,

I railed on Jove (although in vain) as one beside
her wits,

And aye I wishèd for to die. The words that I did
speak

Were such as even the hardest stones of very flint
might break.

The wives of Thebe, being there, for safe
deliverance prayed

And, giving cheerful words, did bid I should not
be dismayed.

Among the other women there that to my labour
came

There was an honest yeoman's wife; Galantis was
her name.

370

Her hair was yellow as the gold; she was a jolly
dame

And stoutly servèd me, and I did love her for the
same.

This wife (I know not how) did smell some
packing gone about

On Juno's part. And as she oft was passing in and
out,

She spied Lucina set upon the altar, holding fast

Her arms together on her knees and with her
fingers cast

Within each other on a knot, and said unto her
thus:

“I pray you, whosoe'er you be, rejoice you now
with us;

My Lady Alcmen hath her wish and safe is
brought abed.”

Lucina leaped up amazed at that that she had
said

380

And let her hands asunder slip. And I
immediately

With loosening of the knot had safe deliverance
by and by.

They say that, in deceiving Dame Lucina, Galant
laughed;

And therefore by the yellow locks the goddess,
wroth, her caught

And draggèd her. And as she would have risen
from the ground,

She kept her down and into legs her arms she did
confound.

Her former stoutness still remains; her back doth
keep the hue

That erst was in her hair; her shape is only
altered new.

And for with lying mouth she helped a woman
labouring, she

Doth kindle also at her mouth. And now she
haunteth free

390

Our houses as she did before, a weasel, as we
see.’

*The
transformation
of Dryope*

With that she sighs to think upon her
servant's hap, and then

Her daughter-in-law immediately replièd thus
again:

‘But mother, she whose altered shape doth move
your heart so sore

Was neither kith nor kin to you. What will you
say, therefore,

If of mine own dear sister I the wondrous fortune
show

(Although my sorrow and the tears that from
mine eyes do flow

Do hinder me and stop my speech) ? Her mother
– you must know

My father by another wife had me – bare never
mo

But this same Lady Dryope, the fairest lady tho

In all the land of Oechaly. Whom, being then no
maid

(For why the god of Delos and of Delphos* had
her frayed),

Andraemon taketh to his wife and thinks him
well apaid.

There is a certain leaning lake whose bowing
banks do show

A likeness of the salt sea shore. Upon the brim do
grow

All round about it myrtle-trees. My sister thither
goes,

Unwares what was her destiny, and (which you
may suppose

Was more to be disdained at) the cause of
coming there

Was to the fairies of the lake fresh garlands for to
bear.

And in her arms a baby, her sweet burden, she
did hold

Who, sucking on her breast, was yet not full a
twelvemonth old.

Not far from this same pond did grow a lote-tree,
flourished gay

With purple flowers and berries sweet and leaves
as green as bay.

Of these same flowers to please her boy my sister
gathered some;

And I had thought to do so too, for I was thither
come.

I saw how from the slivered flowers red drops of
blood did fall

And how that, shuddering horribly, the branches
quaked withal.

You must perceive that – as too late the
countryfolk declare –

A nymph called Lotis, flying from foul Priap's
filthy ware,

Was turnèd into this same tree, reserving still her
name.

My sister did not know so much who, when she
backward came,

Afraid at that that she had seen, and having
sadly prayed

The nymphs of pardon, to have gone her way
again assayed.

Her feet were fastened down with roots; she
strivèd all she might
To pluck them up, but they so sure within the
earth were pight
That nothing save her upper parts she could that
present move.
A tender bark grows from beneath up leisurely
above.
And softly overspreads her loins. Which when
she saw, she went
About to tear her hair; and full of leaves her
hand she hent.
Her head was overgrown with leaves. And little
Amphise (so
Had Eurytus, his grandsire, named her son not
long ago)
Did feel his mother's dugs wax hard. And as he
still them drew
In sucking, not a whit of milk nor moisture did
ensue.
I, standing by thee, did behold thy cruel chance;
but nought
I could relieve thee, sister mine. Yet to my power
I wrought
To stay the growing of thy trunk and of thy
branches by
Embracing thee. Yea, I protest, I would right
willingly
Have in the selfsame bark with thee been closèd
up. Behold,
Her husband, good Andraemon, and her
wretched father old,

Sir Eurytus, came thither and enquired for
Dryope.

440

And as they asked for Dryope, I showed them
Lote the tree.

They kissed the wood which yet was warm and,
falling down below,

Did hug the roots of that their tree. My sister
now could show

No part which was not wood except her face. A
dew of tears

Did stand upon the wretched leaves late formèd
of her hairs.

And while she might and while her mouth did
give her way to speak,

With such complaint as this her mind she last of
all did break:

“If credit may be given to such as are in
wretchedness,

I swear by God, I never yet deservèd this distress.

I suffer pain without desert. My life hath guiltless
been.

450

And if I lie, I would these boughs of mine which
now are green

Might withered be and I hewn down and burnèd
in the fire.

This infant from his mother's womb remove you,
I desire,

And put him forth to nurse and cause him
underneath my tree

Ofttimes to suck and oftentimes to play. And
when that he

Is able for to speak, I pray you let him greet me
here

And sadly say, 'In this same trunk is hid my
mother dear.'

But learn him for to shun all ponds and pulling
flowers from trees,

And let him in his heart believe that all the
shrubs he sees

Are bodies of the goddesses. Adieu, dear
husband, now;

460

Adieu, dear father, and adieu, dear sister. And in
you

If any love of me remain, defend my boughs, I
pray,

From wound of cutting hook and axe and bit of
beast for aye.

And for I cannot stoop to you, raise you
yourselves to me

And come and kiss me while I may yet touched
and kissèd be,

And lift me up my little boy. I can no longer talk,

For now about my lily neck as if it were a stalk

The tender rind begins to creep and overgrows
my top.

Remove your fingers from my face; the spreading
bark doth stop

My dying eyes without your help." She had no
sooner left

470

Her talking, but her life therewith together was
bereft.

But yet a good while after that her native shape
did fade

Her new-made boughs continued warm.' Now
while that Iole made

Report of this same wondrous tale and while
Alcmena (who
Did weep) was drying up the tears of Iole,
weeping too,
By putting to her thumb, there happed a sudden
thing so strange
That unto mirth from heaviness their hearts it
straight did change.

*Iolaiis recovers
his youth* For at the door in manner even a very boy as
then

With short soft down about his chin, revokéd
back again
To youthful years, stood Iolay with count'nance
smooth and trim.

480

Dame Hebe, Juno's daughter, had bestowed this
gift on him,
Entreated at his earnest suit; whom, minding
fully there
The giving of like gift again to any to forswear,
Dame Themis would not suffer. 'For', quoth she,
'this present hour
Is cruel war in Thebe town, and none but Jove
hath power
To vanquish stately Canapey. The brothers shall
alike
Wound either other. And alive a prophet shall go
seek
His own quick ghost among the dead, the earth
him swallowing in.
The son, by taking vengeance for his father's
death, shall win

490

The name of kind and wicked man in one and
selfsame case.

And, flight with mischiefs, from his wits and
from his native place

The Furies and his mother's ghost shall restlessly
him chase

Until his wife demand of him the fatal gold for
meed

And that his cousin Phegey's sword do make his
sides to bleed.

Then shall the fair Callirhoë, Achelous' daughter,
pray

The mighty Jove in humble wise to grant her
children may

Retire again to youthful years and that he will
not see

The death of him that did revenge unvengèd for
to be.

Jove, movèd at her suit, shall cause his daughter-
in-law to give

Like gift and back from age to youth Callirhoe's
children drive.'

500

When Themis through foresight had spoke
these words of prophecy,

The gods began among themselves vain talk
to multiply.

They moiled why others might not give like gift
as well as she.

First Pallant's daughter grudgèd that her husband
old should be;

The gentle Ceres murmured that her Iasion's hair
was hoar;

And Vulcan would have called again the years
long spent before

By Ericthonius; and the nice Dame Venus, having
care

Of time to come, the making young of old
Anchises sware.

So every god had one to whom he special favour
bare.

And through this partial love of theirs seditiously
increased

510

A hurly-burly, till the time that Jove among
them pressed

And said, 'So smally do you stand in awe of me
this hour

As thus to rage? Thinks any of you himself to
have such power

As for to alter destiny? I tell you, Iolay

Recovered hath by destiny his years erst passed
away.

Callirhoe's children must return to youth by
destiny

And not by force of arms or suit sustained
ambitiously.

And to th'intent with milder minds ye may this
matter bear,

Even I myself by Destinies am ruled. Which if I
were

Of power to alter, think you that our Aeacus
should stoop

520

By reason of his feeble age or Rhadamanth
should droop?

Or Minos, who by reason of his age is now
disdained

And lives not in so sure a state as heretofore he
reigned?’

The words of Jove so moved the gods that
none of them complained

Sith Rhadamanth and Aeacus were both with
age constrained,

And Minos also who, as long as lusty youth did
last,

Did even with terror of his name make mighty
realms aghast.

But then was Minos weakened sore and greatly
stood in fear

Of Milet, one of Deione's race, who proudly did
him bear

Upon his father Phoebus and the stoutness of his
youth.

530 And though he feared he would rebel, yet
durst not he his mouth

Once open for to banish him his realm until at
last,

Departing of his own accord, Miletus swiftly
passed

The Goat Sea and did build a town upon the
Asian ground

Which still retains the name of him that first the
same did found.

And there the daughter of the brook Maeander,
which doth go

So often backward, Cyanee, a nymph of body so
Exceeding comely as the like was seldom heard
of, as

She by her father's winding banks for pleasure
walking was,

Was known by Milet. Unto whom a pair of twins
 she brought,
 540 And of the twins the names were Caun and
 Byblis. Byblis ought
 To be a mirror unto maids in lawful wise to love.
Caun and This Byblis cast a mind to Caun, but not as
Byblis did behove

 A sister to her brotherward. When first of all
 the fire
 Did kindle, she perceived it not. She thought in
 her desire
 Of kissing him so oftentimes no sin ne yet no
 harm
 In clipping him about the neck so often with her
 arm.
 The glittering gloss of godliness beguiled her
 long. Her love
 Began from evil unto worse by little to remove.
 She comes to see her brother decked in brave
 and trim attire,
 550 And for to seem exceeding fair it was her whole
 desire.
 And if that any fairer were in all the flock than
 she,
 It spites her. In what case she was as yet she did
 not see.
 Her heat exceeded not so far as for to vow; and
 yet
 She suffered in her troubled breast full many a
 burning fit.
 Now calleth she him master; now she utter
 hateth all

560

The names of kin. She rather had he should her
Byblis call
Than sister. Yet no filthy hope she durst permit
to creep
Within her mind awake. But as she lay in quiet
sleep,
She oft beheld her love and oft she thought her
brother came
And lay with her, and (though asleep) she
blushèd at the same.
When sleep was gone, she long lay dumb, still
musing on the sight,
And said with wavering mind, 'Now woe is me,
most wretched wight.
What means the image of this dream that I have
seen this night?
I would not wish it should be true. Why dreamèd
I, then, so?
Sure he is fair, although he should be judgèd by
his foe.
He likes me well. And were he not my brother, I
might set
My love on him, and he were me right worthy
for to get.
But unto this same match the name of kindred is
a let.
Well, so that I awake do still me undefilèd keep,
Let come as often as they will such dreamings in
my sleep.
In sleep there is no witness by. In sleep yet may I
take
As great a pleasure (in a sort) as if I were awake.

570

O Venus and thy tender son, Sir Cupid, what
delight,
How present feeling of your sport hath touched
me this night!
How lay I as it were resolved, both marrow, flesh
and bone!
How glads it me to think thereon! Alas, too soon
was gone
That pleasure, and too hasty and despiteful was
the night
In breaking of my joys! O Lord, if name of
kindred might
Between us two removed be, how well it would
agree,
O Caun, that of thy father I the daughter-in-law
should be!
How fitly might my father have a son-in-law of
thee!
Would God that all save ancestors were common
to us twain;
I would thou were of nobler stock than I. I
cannot sayen,
O pearl of beauty, what she is whom thou shalt
make a mother.
Alas, how ill befalls it me that I could have none
other
Than those same parents which are thine! So
only still my brother
And not my husband may'st thou be. The thing
that hurts us both
Is one, and that between us aye inseparably
go'th.

What mean my dreams then? What effect have
dreams? And may there be

Effect in dreams? The gods are far in better case
than we,

For why the gods have matched with their
sisters, as we see.

So Saturn did ally with Ops, the nearest of his
blood;

So Tethys with Oceanus; so Jove did think it
good

To take his sister Juno to his wife. What then?
The gods

Have laws and charters by themselves. And sith
there is such odds

Between the state of us and them, why should I
sample take

Our worldly matters equal with the heavenly
things to make?

This wicked love shall either from my heart be
driven away

Or, if it cannot be expelled, God grant I perish
may

And that my brother kiss me laid on hearse to go
to grave.

But my desire the full consent of both of us doth
crave.

Admit the matter liketh me; he will for sin it
take.

But yet the sons of Aeolus no scrupulousness did
make

In going to their sisters' beds. And how come I to
know

The feats of them? To what intent these samples
do I show?

Ah, whither am I headlong driven? Avaunt, foul
filthy fire!

And let me not in other wise than sister-like
desire

My brother's love. Yet if that he were first in love
with me,

His fondness to incline unto perchance I could
agree.

610

Shall I therefore, who would not have rejected
him if he

Had sued to me, go sue to him? And canst thou
speak indeed

And canst thou utter forth thy mind and tell him
of thy need?

My love will make me speak. I can. Or if that
shame do stay

My tongue, a sealèd letter shall my secret love
bewray.'

This likes her best. Upon this point now rests
her doubtful mind.

So, raising up herself, upon her left side she
inclined

And, leaning on her elbow, said, 'Let him advise
him what

To do, for I my frantic love will utter plain and
flat.

Alas, to what ungraciousness intend I for to fall?

620

What fury raging in my heart my senses doth
appal?'

In thinking so, with trembling hand she framèd
her to write

The matter that her troubled mind in musing did
indite.

Her right hand holds the pen; her left doth hold
the empty wax.

She gins; she doubts; she writes; she in the tables
findeth lacks.

She notes, she blurs, dislikes and likes, and
changeth this for that.

She lays away the book, and takes it up. She
wots not what

She would herself. Whatever thing she mindeth
for to do

Misliketh her. A shamefastness with boldness
mixed thereto

Was in her count'nance. She had once writ
'sister'; out again

The name of 'sister' for to raze she thought it
best. And then

She snatched the tables up and did these
following words engrave:

'The health which, if thou give her not, she is
not like to have

Thy lover wisheth unto thee. I dare not, ah,
for shame

I dare not tell thee who I am nor let thee hear
my name.

And if thou do demand of me what thing I do
desire,

Would God that nameless I might plead the
matter I require

And that I were unknown to thee by name of
Byblis, till

Assurance of my suit were wrought according to
my will.

As tokens of my wounded heart might these to
thee appear:

640 My colour pale, my body lean, my heavy
mirthless cheer,

My watery eyes, my sighs without apparent
causes why,

My oft embracing of thee, and such kisses (if
perdie

Thou marked them) as very well thou might
have felt and found

Not for to have been sister-like. But though with
grievous wound

I then were stricken to the heart, although the
raging flame

Did burn within, yet take I God to witness of the
same,

I did as much as lay in me this outrage for to
tame.

And long I strived (wretched wench!) to scape
the violent dart

Of Cupid. More I have endured of hardness and
of smart

650 Than any wench, a man would think, were able
to abide.

Force forceth me to show my case, which fain I
still would hide,

And mercy at thy gentle hand in fearful wise to
crave.

Thou only may'st the life of me, thy lover, spill
or save.

Choose which thou wilt. No enemy craves this
thing, but such a one

As, though she be allied so sure as surer can be
none,

Yet covets she more surely yet allièd for to be
And with a nearer kind of band to link herself to
thee.

Let aged folks have skill in law; to age it doth
belong

To keep the rigour of the laws and search out
right from wrong.

660

Such youthful years as ours are yet rash folly
doth beseem;

We know not what is lawful yet. And therefore
we may deem

That all is lawful that we list, ensuing in the
same

The doings of the mighty gods. Not dread of
worldly shame

Nor yet our father's roughness, no, nor
fearfulness should let

Our purpose. Only let all fear aside be wholly
set.

We underneath the name of kin our pleasant
scapes may hide.

Thou knowest I have liberty to talk with thee
aside,

And openly we kiss and cull. And what is all the
rest

That wants? Have mercy on me now, who
plainly have expressed

670

My case; which thing I had not done, but that
the utter rage

Of love constrains me thereunto, the which I
cannot swage.

Deserve not on my tomb thy name subscribed for
to have,

That thou art he whose cruelty did bring me to
my grave.'

Thus much she wrote in vain, and wax did
want her to indite,

And in the margin she was fain the latter
verse to write.

Immediately to seal her shame she takes a
precious stone

The which she moistens with tears; from tongue the
moisture quite was gone.

She called a servant shamefastly and, after
certain fair

And gentle words, 'My trusty man, I pray thee,
bear this pair

Of tables', quoth she, 'to my' – and a great while
afterward

She added, 'brother'. Now through chance or
want of good regard

The table slipped down to ground in reaching to
himward.

The handsel troubled sore her mind; but yet she
sent them. And

Her servant, spying time, did put them into
Cauny's hand.

Maeander's nephew suddenly in anger flung
away

The tables ere he half had read, scarce able for to
stay

His fistock from the servant's face, who quaked,
and thus did say:

‘Avaunt, thou bawdy ribald, while thou may’st.
For were it not

For shame, I should have killèd thee.’ Away,
afraid, he got

690

And told his mistress of the fierce and cruel
answer made

By Cauny. By and by the hue of Byblis gan to
fade,

And all her body was benumbed with icy cold for
fear

To hear of this repulse. As soon as that her
senses were

Returned again, her furious flames returned with
her wits.

And thus she said so oft that scarce her tongue
the air hits:

‘And worthily! For why was I so rash as to
discover

By hasty writing this my wound, which most
I ought to cover?

I should with doubtful, glancing words have felt
his humour first

And made a train to try him, if pursue or no he
durst.

700

I should have viewed first the coast to see the
weather clear,

And then I might have launched safe and boldly
from the pier.

But now I hoist up all my sails before I tried the
wind,

And therefore am I driven upon the rocks against
my mind
And all the sea doth overwhelm me. Neither may
I find
The means to get to harbour or from danger to
retire.
Why did not open tokens warn to bridle my
desire,
Then when the tables, falling in delivering them,
declared
My hope was vain? And ought not I then either
to have spared
From sending them as that day, or have changed
whole my mind?
Nay, rather shifted of the day; for had I not been
blind,
Even God himself by soothfast signs the sequel
seemed to hit.
Yea, rather than to writing thus my secrets to
commit
I should have gone and spoke myself and
presently have showed
My fervent love. He should have seen how tears
had from me flowed.
He should have seen my piteous look right lover-
like. I could
Have spoken more than into those my tablets
enter would.
About his neck against his will mine arms I
might have wound
And, had he shaken me off, I might have seemèd
for to swound.

I humbly might have kissed his feet and,
kneeling on the ground,
Besought him for to save my life. All these I
might have proved
Whereof, although no one alone his stomach
could have moved,
Yet all together might have made his hardened
heart relent.
Perchance there was some fault in him that was
of message sent;
He stepped unto him bluntly, I believe, and did
not watch
Convenient time, in merry cue at leisure him to
catch.
These are the things that hindered me. For
certainly I know
No sturdy stone nor massy steel doth in his
stomach grow.
He is not made of adamant. He is no tiger's
whelp.
He never suckèd lioness. He might with little
help
Be vanquished. Let us give fresh charge upon
him. While I live, 730
Without obtaining victory I will not over give.
For firstly, if it lay in me my doings to revoke,
I should not have begun at all. But feeling that
the stroke
Is given, the second point is now to give the push
to win.
For neither he, although that I mine enterprise
should blin,

740

Can ever while he lives forget my deed. And sith
I shrink,
My love was light or else I meant to trap him he
shall think;
Or at the least he may suppose that this my rage
of love
Which broileth so within my breast proceeds not
from above
By Cupid's stroke but of some foul and filthy lust.
In fine,
I cannot but to wickedness now more and more
incline.
By writing is my suit commenced; my meaning
doth appear;
And, though I cease, yet can I not accounted be
for clear.
Now that that doth remain behind is much as in
respect
My fond desire to satisfy and little in effect
To aggravate my fault withal.' Thus much she
said. And so
Unconstant was her wavering mind, still floating
to and fro,
That, though it irked her for to have attempted,
yet proceeds
She in the selfsame purpose of attempting, and
exceeds
All measure. And, unhappy wench, she takes
from day to day
Repulse upon repulse, and yet she hath not grace
to stay.

750

Soon after, when her brother saw there was
with her no end,

He fled his country for because he would not
so offend
And in a foreign land did build a city. Then men
say
That Byblis through despair and thought all
wholly did dismay.
She tare her garments from her breast, and
furiously she wrung
Her hands and beat her arms and, like a bedlam,
with her tongue
Confessèd her unlawful love. But, being of the
same
Disappointed, she forsook her land and hateful
house for shame
And followed after flying Caun. And as the frows
of Thrace
In doing of the three-years rites of Bacchus, in
like case
The married wives of Bubassy saw Byblis
howling out
Through all their champaign fields. The which
she leaving, ran about
In Caria to the Lelegs, who are men in battle
stout,
And so to Lycia. She had passed Crag, Limyre
and the brook
Of Xanthus and the country where Chimaera,
that same puck,
Hath goatish body, lion's head and breast and
dragon's tail,
When woods did want. And Byblis now,
beginning for to quail

770

Through weariness in following Caun, sank down
and laid her head

Against the ground and kissed the leaves that
wind from trees had shed.

The nymphs of Caria went about in tender arms
to take

Her often up. They oftentimes persuaded her to
slake

Her love, and words of comfort to her deaf-eared
mind they spake.

She still lay dumb, and with her nails the
greenish herbs she held

And moisted with a stream of tears the grass
upon the field.

The waternymphs (so folk report) put under her
a spring

Which never might be dried. And could they give
a greater thing?

Immediately, even like as when ye wound a
pitch-tree rind

The gum doth issue out in drops, or as the
western wind

780

With gentle blast together with the warmth of
sun unbind

The ice, or as the clammy kind of cement which
they call

Bitumen issueth from the ground full fraughted
therewithal;

So Phoebus' niece, Dame Byblis, then consuming
with her tears,

Was turned to a fountain which in those same
valleys bears

*The
transformation
of Iphis*

The title of the founder still and gusheth freshly
out

From underneath a sugarchest as if it were a
spout.

The fame of this same wondrous thing
perhaps had filled all

The hundred towns of Candy, had a greater
not befall

More nearer home by Iphis' means, transformed
late before.

790

For in the shire of Phaestus, hard by Gnossus,
dwelt of yore

A yeoman of the meaner sort that Lictus had to
name.

His stock was simple and his wealth according to
the same;

Howbeit his life so upright was as no man could
it blame.

He came unto his wife, then big and ready down
to lie,

And said, 'Two things I wish thee: t'one, that,
when thou out shalt cry,

Thou may'st dispatch with little pain; the other,
that thou have

A boy. For girls to bring them up a greater cost
do crave

And I have no ability. And therefore, if thou
bring

A wench (it goes against my heart to think upon
the thing),

800

Although against my will, I charge it straight
destroyèd be.

The bond of nature needs must bear in this
behalf with me.'

This said, both wept exceedingly, as well the
husband who

Did give commandment as the wife that was
commanded to.

Yet Telethusa earnestly at Lict her husband lay
(Although in vain) to have good hope and of
himself more stay.

But he was full determined. Within a while the
day

Approached that the fruit was ripe, and she did
look to lay

Her belly every minute, when at midnight in her
rest

Stood by her (or did seem to stand) the goddess
Isis, dressed

810

And trainèd with the solemn pomp of all her
rites. Two horns

Upon her forehead like the moon with ears of
ripened corns

Stood glistening as the burnished gold. Moreover
she did wear

A rich and stately diadem. Attendant on her were
The barking bug Anubis and the saint of Bubast
and

The pied-coat Apis and the god that gives to
understand

By finger holden to his lips that men should
silence keep,

And Lybian worms, whose stinging doth enforce
continual sleep,

And thou, Osiris, whom the folk of Egypt ever
seek

And never can have sought enough, and rattle-
rattles eke.

Then, even as though that Telethuse had fully
been awake

And seen these things with open eyes, thus Isis to
her spake:

‘My servant Telethusa, cease this care and break
the charge

Of Lict; and when Lucina shall have let thy fruit
at large,

Bring up the same, whate'er it be. I am a goddess
who

Delights in helping folk at need. I hither come to
do

Thee good. Thou shalt not have a cause hereafter
to complain

Of serving of a goddess that is thankless for thy
pain.’

When Isis had this comfort given, she went her
way again.

A joyful wight rose Telethuse and, lifting to
the sky

Her hardened hands, did pray her dream
might work effectually.

Her throes increased and forth alone anon the
burden came.

A wench was born to Lictus, who knew nothing
of the same.

The mother, making him believe it was a boy,
did bring
It up, and none but she and nurse were privy to
the thing.
The father, thanking God, did give the child the
grandsire's name,
The which was Iphis. Joyful was the mother of
the same
Because the name did serve alike to man and
woman both;
And so the lie through godly guile forth
unperceivèd go'th.
The garments of it were a boy's; the face of it
was such
As either in a boy or girl of beauty uttered much.
When Iphis was of thirteen years, her father did
ensure
The brown Ianthè unto her, a wench of look
demure
Commended for her favour and her person more
than all
The maids of Phaestus. Telest men her father's
name did call;
He dwelt in Dictis. They were both of age and
favour like
And under both one schoolmaster they did for
nurture seek.
And hereupon the hearts of both the dart of love
did strike
And wounded both of them alike. But unlike was
their hope.

Both longèd for the wedding day together for to
cope.

850

For whom Ianthe thinks to be a man she hopes to
see

Her husband; Iphis loves whereof she thinks she
may not be

Partaker, and the selfsame thing augmenteth still
her flame.

Herself, a maiden, with a maid (right strange!) in
love became.

She scarce could stay her tears. 'What end
remains for me?' quoth she,

'How strange a love, how uncouth, how
prodigious reigns in me!

If that the gods did favour me, they should
destroy me quite.

Or if they would not me destroy, at leastwise yet
they might

Have given me such a malady as might with
nature stand

Or nature were acquainted with. A cow is never
fond

860

Upon a cow, nor mare on mare. The ram delights
the ewe,

The stag the hind, the cock the hen. But never
man could show

That female yet was ta'en in love with female
kind. O would

To God I never had been born! Yet lest that
Candy should

Not bring forth all that monstrous were, the
daughter of the sun

Did love a bull; howbeit there was a male to dote
upon.

My love is furiouslyer than hers, if truth confessèd
be.

For she was fond of such a lust as might be
compassed; she

Was servèd by a bull beguiled by art in cow of
tree,

And one there was for her with whom advoutery
to commit.

870

If all the cunning in the world and sleights of
subtle wit

Were here, or if that Daedalus himself with
uncouth wing

Of wax should hither fly again, what comfort
should he bring?

Could he with all his cunning crafts now make a
boy of me?

Or could he, O Ianthè, change the native shape
of thee?

Nay, rather, Iphis, settle thou thy mind and call
thy wits

About thee; shake thou off these flames that
foolishly by fits

Without all reason reign. Thou see'st what nature
hath thee made,

Unless thou wilt deceive thyself. So far forth
wisely wade

As right and reason may support, and love as
women ought.

880

Hope is the thing that breeds desire; hope feeds
the amorous thought.

This hope thy sex denieth thee. Not watching
doth restrain
Thee from embracing of the thing whereof thou
art so fain,
Nor yet the husband's jealousy, nor roughness of
her sire,
Nor yet the coyness of the wench doth hinder thy
desire;
And yet thou canst not her enjoy. No, though
that god and man
Should labour to their uttermost and do the best
they can
In thy behalf, they could not make a happy
wight of thee.
I cannot wish the thing but that I have it. Frank
and free
The gods have given me what they could. As I
will, so wills he
That must become my father-in-law; so wills my
father too.
But nature, stronger than them all, consenteth
not thereto.
This hindereth me, and nothing else. Behold, the
blissful time,
The day of marriage, is at hand. Ianthe shall be
mine,
And yet I shall not her enjoy. Amid the water we
Shall thirst. O Juno, president of marriage, why
with thee
Comes Hymen to this wedding where no
bridegroom you shall see,
But both are brides that must that day together
coupled be?

This spoken, she did hold her peace. And now
the t'other maid
Did burn as hot in love as she, and earnestly
she prayed
900 The bridal day might come with speed. The thing
for which she longed
Dame Telethusa fearing sore, from day to day
prolonged
The time, oft feigning sickness, oft pretending
she had seen
Ill tokens of success. At length all shifts
consumed been.
The wedding day, so oft delayed, was now at
hand. The day
Before it, taking from her head the kerchief quite
away
And from her daughter's head likewise, with
scattered hair she laid
Her hands upon the altar and with humble voice
thus prayed:
 'O Isis, who dost haunt the town of Paraetony
 and
 The fields by Mareotis lake and Pharos, which
 doth stand
910 By Alexandria, and the Nile divided into seven
Great channels, comfort thou my fear and send
me help from heaven.
Thyself, O goddess, even thyself and these thy
relics I
Did once behold and knew them all, as well thy
company

As eke thy sounding rattles and thy cressets
burning by;
And mindfully I marked what commandment
thou did'st give.
That I escape unpunished, that this same wench
doth live,
Thy counsel and thy hest it is. Have mercy now
on twain
And help us.' With that word the tears ran down
her cheeks amain.
The goddess seemed for to move her altar;
and indeed
She movèd it. The temple doors did tremble
like a reed,
And horns in likeness to the moon about the
church did shine,
And rattles made a raughtish noise. At this same
lucky sign,
Although not wholly careless, yet right glad she
went away.
And Iphis followed after her with larger pace
than aye
She was accustomed, and her face continued not
so white.
Her strength increased, and her look more
sharper was to sight.
Her hair grew shorter, and she had a much more
lively sprite
Than when she was a wench. For thou, O Iphis,
who right now
A mother wert, art now a boy. With offerings,
both of you,

To church retire and there rejoice with faith
unfearful! They

With offerings went to church again and there
their vows did pay.

They also set a table up, which this brief metre
had:

*The vows that Iphis vowed a wench he hath
performed a lad.*

Next morrow over all the world did shine with
lightsome flame

When Juno and Dame Venus and Sir Hymen
jointly came

To Iphis' marriage, who, as then transformed to a
boy,

Did take Ianthe to his wife and so her love enjoy.

FINIS NONI LIBRI.

The Tenth Book of Ovid's Metamorphoses

Orpheus *and* From thence in saffron-coloured robe flew
Eurydice Hymen through the air

And into Thracia, being called by Orpheus, did
repair.

He came indeed at Orpheus's call; but neither did
he sing

The words of that solemnity nor merry
countenance bring

Nor any handsel of good luck. His torch with
drizzling smoke

Was dim; the same to burn out clear no stirring
could provoke.

The end was worse than the sign. For as the
bride did roam

Abroad accompanied with a train of nymphs to
bring her home,

A serpent lurking in the grass did sting her in the
ankle,

10 Whereof she died incontinent, so swift the bane
 did rankle.

Whom when the Thracian poet had bewailed
sufficiently

On earth, the ghosts departed hence he minding
for to try,

Down at the gate of Taenarus did go to Limbo
lake.

And thence by ghastly folk and souls late buried
he did take

His journey to Persephone and to the king of
Ghosts

That like a lordly tyrant reigns in those
unpleasant coasts.

And, playing on his tuned harp, he thus began to
sound:

‘O you, the sovereigns of the world set
underneath the ground,

To whom we all (whatever thing is made of
mortal kind)

20

Repair; if by your leave I now may freely speak
my mind,

I come not hither as a spy the shady hell to see

Nor yet the foul three-headed cur, whose hairs
all adders be,

To tie in chains. The cause of this my voyage is
my wife,

Whose foot a viper stinging, did abridge her
youthful life.

I would have borne it patiently; and so to do I
strave.

But Love surmounted power. This god is known
great force to have

Above on earth. And whether he reign here or no
I doubt,

But I believe he reigns here too. If fame that flies
about

Of former rape report not wrong, Love coupled
also you.

30

By these same places full of fear, by this huge
Chaos now

And by the stillness of this waste and empty
kingdom, I
Beseech ye, of Eurydice unreel the destiny
That was so swiftly reelèd up. All things to you
belong,
And though we, lingering for a while, our
pageants do prolong,
Yet soon or late we all to one abiding-place do
roam.
We haste us thither all; this place becomes our
latest home;
And you do over humankind reign longest time.
Now when
This woman shall have livèd full her time, she
shall again
Become your own. The use of her but for a while
I crave.
And if the Destinies for my wife deny me for to
have
Release, I fully am resolved for ever here to
dwell.
Rejoice you in the death of both.' As he this tale
did tell
And playèd on his instrument, the bloodless
ghosts shed tears.
To tire on Tityus' growing heart the greedy
gripe forbears;
The shunning water Tantalus endeavoureth not
to drink;
And Danaus' daughters ceased to fill their tubs
that have no brink.
Ixion's wheel stood still; and down sat Sisypheus
upon

50

His rolling stone. Then first of all (so fame for
truth hath gone)

The Furies, being stricken there with pity at his
song,

Did weep. And neither Pluto nor his lady were so
strong

And hard of stomach to withhold his just petition
long.

They callèd forth Eurydice, who was as yet
among

The newcome ghosts and limpèd of her wound.
Her husband took

Her with condition that he should not back upon
her look

Until the time that he were past the bounds of
Limbo quite,

Or else to lose his gift. They took a path that
steep upright

Rose dark and full of foggy mist. And now they
were within

A kenning of the upper earth, when Orpheus did
begin

To doubt him lest she followed not; and through
an eager love,

60

Desirous for to see her, he his eyes did backward
move.

Immediately she slippèd back. He, reaching out
his hands,

Desirous to be caught and for to catch her
grasping stands.

But nothing save the slippery air (unhappy man!)
he caught.

She, dying now the second time, complained of
Orpheus nought.

For why, what had she to complain, unless it
were of love

Which made her husband back again his eyes
upon her move?

Her last farewell she spake so soft that scarce he
heard the sound,

And then revolted to the place in which he had
her found.

This double dying of his wife set Orpheus in a
stound

No less than him who, at the sight of Pluto's
dreadful hound

That on the middle neck of three doth bear an
iron chain,

Was stricken in a sudden fear and could it not
restrain

Until the time, his former shape and nature being
gone,

His body quite was overgrown and turned into
stone;

Or than the foolish Olenus, who on himself did
take

Another's fault and, guiltless, needs himself
would guilty make

Together with his wretched wife Lethaea, for
whose pride

They both, becoming stones, do stand even yet
on watery Ide.

He would have gone to hell again and earnest
suit did make;

80

But Charon would not suffer him to pass the
Stygian lake.

Seven days he sat forlorn upon the bank and
never ate

A bit of bread. Care, tears and thought and
sorrow were his meat.

And, crying out upon the gods of hell as cruel, he
Withdrew to lofty Rhodope and Haeme which
beaten be

With northern winds. Three times the sun had
passed through the sheer

And watery sign of Pisces and had finished full
the year.

And Orphey, were it that his ill success he still
did rue

Or that he vowed so to do, did utterly eschew
The womankind. Yet many a one desirous were
to match

90

With him; but he them with repulse did all alike
dispatch.

He also taught the Thracian folk a stews of males
to make

And of the flowering prime of boys the pleasure
for to take.

Orpheus'
audience of
trees

There was a hill, and on the hill a very level
plot

Fair green with grass; but as for shade or
covert was there not.

As soon as that this poet born of gods in that
same place

100

Sat down and touched his tuned strings, a
shadow came apace.

There wanted neither Chaon's tree nor yet the
trees to which

Fresh Phaeton's sisters turned were, nor beech,
nor holm, nor witch,

Nor gentle asp, nor wifeless bay, nor lofty
chestnut-tree,

Nor hazel spalt, nor ash whereof the shafts of
spears made be,

Nor knotless fir, nor cheerful plane, nor maple
fleckèd grain,

Nor lote, nor sallow which delights by waters to
remain,

Nor slender-twigged tamarisk, nor box aye green
of hue,

Nor fig-trees loaden with their fruit of colours
brown and blue,

Nor double-coloured myrtle-trees. Moreover
thither came

The writhing ivy and the vine that runs upon a
frame,

Elms clad with vines and ashes wild and pitch-
trees black as coal

And, full of trees with goodly fruit red striped,
orchards whole,

And palm-trees lithe which in reward of
conquest men do bear,

110

And pineapple with tufted top and harsh and
prickling hair,

The tree to Cybel, mother of the gods, most dear,
for why

Her minion Attis, putting off the shape of man,
did die
And hardened into this same tree. Among this
company
Was present with a piked top the cypress, now a
tree,
Sometime a boy beloved of the god that with a
string
Doth arm his bow and with a string in tune his
viol bring.
For, hallowed to the nymphs that in the fields of
Carthey were,
There was a goodly mighty stag whose horns
such breadth did bear
As that they shadowed all his head. His horns of
gold did shine;
And down his breast hung from his neck a chain
with jewels fine.
Amid his front with pretty strings a tablet, being
tied,
Did waver as he went; and from his ears on
either side
Hung pearls of all one growth about his hollow
temples bright.
This goodly spitter, being void of dread, as
having quite
Forgot his native fearfulness, did haunt men's
houses and
Would suffer folk (yea, though unknown) to coy
him with their hand.
But more than unto all folk else he dearer was to
thee,

130

O Cypariss, the fairest wight that ever man did
see

In Cea. Thou to pastures, thou to water springs
him led,

Thou wreathèdst sundry flowers between his
horns upon his head.

Sometime a horseman, thou his back for pleasure
did'st bestride

And, haltering him with silken bit, from place to
place did'st ride.

In summertime about high noon, when Titan
with his heat

Did make the hollow crabbèd clees of Cancer for
to sweat,

Unweeting Cyparissus with a dart did strike this
hart

Quite through. And when that of the wound he
saw he must depart,

He purposed for to die himself. What words of
comfort spake

Not Phoebus to him, willing him the matter light
to take

And not more sorrow for it than was requisite to
make?

140

But still the lad did sigh and sob, and as his last
request

Desired God he might thenceforth from
mourning never rest.

Anon through weeping overmuch his blood was
drained quite;

His limbs waxed green; his hair which hung
upon his forehead white

Began to be a bristled bush and, taking by and
by

A stiffness, with a sharpened top did face the
starry sky.

The god did sigh and sadly said, 'Myself shall
mourn for thee,

And thou for others; and aye one in mourning
thou shalt be.'

Such wood as this had Orpheus drawn about him
as among

The herds of beasts and flocks of birds he sat
amidst the throng.

And when his thumb sufficiently had tried every
string

And found that, though they severally in sundry
sounds did ring,

Yet made they all one harmony, he thus began to
sing:

'O Muse, my mother, frame my song of Jove.
For everything

Is subject unto royal Jove. Of Jove the
heavenly king

I oft have showed the glorious power. I erst in
graver verse

The giants slain in Phlegra fields with thunder
did rehearse.

But now I need a milder style to tell of pretty
boys

That were the darlings of the gods, and of
unlawful joys

That burned in the breasts of girls, who for their
wicked lust

According as they did deserve received penance
just.

The king of gods did burn erewhile in love of
Ganymede,

The Phrygian, and the thing was found which
Jupiter that stead

Had rather be than that he was. Yet could he not
beteem

The shape of any other bird than eagle for to
seem.

And so he, soaring in the air with borrowed
wings, trussed up

The Trojan boy, who still in heaven even yet
doth bear his cup

And brings him nectar, though against Dame
Juno's will it be.

*The
transformation
of Hyacinthus*

‘And thou, Amyclae's son (had not thy heavy
destiny

Abridged thee before thy time), had'st also
placed been

By Phoebus in the firmament. Howbeit, as is
seen,

Thou art eternal so far forth as may be. For as oft
As watery Pisces giveth place to Aries, that the
soft

And gentle springtide doth succeed the winter
sharp and stour,

So often thou renew'st thyself and on the fair
green clowre

Dost shoot out flowers. My father bare a special
love to thee

Above all others, so that while the god went oft
to see

Eurotas and unwallèd Spart, he left his noble
town

Of Delphos (which amid the world is situate in
renown)

Without a sovereign. Neither harp nor bow
regarded were.

180

Unmindful of his godhead, he refused not to bear

The nets, nor for to hold the hounds, nor as a
painful mate

To travel over craggèd hills, through which
continual gait

His flames augmented more and more. And now
the sun did stand

Well near midway between the nights last past
and next at hand.

They stripped themselves and nointed them with
oil of olive fat

And fell to throwing of a sledge that was right
huge and flat.

First Phoebus, peising it, did throw it from him
with such strength

As that the weight drave down the clouds in
flying. And at length

It fell upon substantial ground, where plainly it
did show

190

As well the cunning as the force of him that did
it throw.

Immediately, upon desire himself the sport to
try,

The Spartan lad made haste to take up
unadvisedly
The sledge before it still did lie. But as he was in
hand
To catch it, it, rebounding up against the
hardened land,
Did hit him full upon the face. The god himself
did look
As pale as did the lad, and up his swoounding
body took.
Now culls he him, now wipes he from the wound
the blood away;
Another while his fading life he strives with
herbs to stay.
Nought bootéd leechcraft. Helpless was the
wound. And like as one
Bruised violet stalks or poppy stalks or lilies
growing on
Brown spindles, straight they, withering, droop
with heavy heads and are
Not able for to hold them up, but with their tops
do stare
Upon the ground; so Hyacinth, in yielding of his
breath,
Chopped down his head. His neck, bereft of
strength by means of death,
Was even a burden to itself and down did loosely
writhe
On both his shoulders, now at one and now at
other lithe.
“Thou fad'st away, my Hyacinth, defrauded of
the prime

Of youth," quoth Phoebus, "and I see thy wound,
my heinous crime.

Thou art my sorrow and my fault; this hand of
mine hath wrought

210

Thy death. I like a murderer have to thy grave
thee brought.

But what have I offended, though, unless that to
have played

Or if that to have lovèd an offence it may be
said?

Would God I render might my life with and
instead of thee.

To which sith fatal destiny denieth to agree,
Both in my mind and in my mouth thou
evermore shalt be.

My viol stricken with my hand, my songs shall
sound of thee,

And in a new-made flower thou shalt with letters
represent

Our sighings. And the time shall come ere many
years be spent

That in thy flower a valiant prince shall join
himself with thee

220

And leave his name upon the leaves for men to
read and see."

While Phoebus thus did prophesy, behold, the
blood of him

Which dyed the grass ceased blood to be, and up
there sprang a trim

And goodly flower more orient than the purple
cloth ingrain

In shape of lily, were it not that lilies do remain

Of silver colour, whereas these of purple hue are
seen.

Although that Phoebus had the cause of this
great honour been,

Yet thought he not the same enough. And
therefore did he write

His sighs upon the leaves thereof. And so in
colour bright

The flower hath ai writ thereon, which letters are
of grief.

230

So small the Spartans thought the birth of
Hyacinth reprieve

Unto them, that they worship him from that day
unto this.

And as their fathers did before, so they do never
miss

With solemn pomp to celebrate his feast from
year to year.

*The Propoets
and the
Cerastes*

‘But if perchance that Amathus, the rich in
metals, were

Demanded if it would have bred the Propoets,
it would swear

Yea, even as gladly as the folk whose brows
sometime did bear

A pair of whelkèd horns, whereof they Cerasts
namèd are.

Before their door an altar stood of Jove that
takes the care

Of aliens and of travellers, which loathsome was
to see

For lewdness wrought thereon. If one that had a
stranger be

Had looked thereon, he would have thought
there had on it been killed

Some sucking calves or lambs. The blood of
strangers there was spilled.

Dame Venus, sore offended at this wicked
sacrifice,

To leave her cities and the land of Cyprus did
devise.

But then, bethinking her, she said, "What hath
my pleasant ground,

What have my cities trespassèd? What fault in
them is found?

Nay, rather let this wicked race by exile
punished been,

Or death, or by some other thing that is a mean
between

Both death and exile. What is that save only for
to change

Their shape?" In musing with herself what figure
were most strange,

She cast her eye upon a horn. And therewithal
she thought

The same to be a shape right meet upon them to
be brought.

And so she from their mighty limbs their native
figure took

And turned them into boisterous bulls with grim
and cruel look.

Yet durst the filthy Propoets stand in stiff
opinion that

Dame Venus was no goddess, till she, being
wroth thereat,

To make their bodies common first compelled
them everych one,

And after changed their former kind. For when
that shame was gone

And that they waxèd brazen fast, she turned
them to stone,

260 In which between their former shape was
difference small or none.

The story of 'Whom for because Pygmalion saw to lead
Pygmalion their life in sin,

Offended with the vice whereof great store is
packed within

The nature of the womankind, he led a single
life.

And long it was ere he could find in heart to take
a wife.

Now in the while by wondrous art an image he
did grave

Of such proportion, shape and grace as nature
never gave

Nor can to any woman give. In this his work he
took

A certain love. The look of it was right a
maiden's look,

And such a one as that ye would believe had life
and that

270 Would moved be, if womanhood and reverence
letted not.

So artificial was the work. He wond'reth at his
art

And of his counterfeited corse conceiveth love in
heart.
He often touched it, feeling if the work that he
had made
Were very flesh or ivory. still. Yet could he not
persuade
Himself to think it ivory. For he oftentimes it
kissed
And thought it kissèd him again. He held it by
the fist
And talkèd to it. He believed his fingers made a
dint
Upon her flesh, and fearèd lest some black or
bruised print
Should come by touching overhard. Sometime
with pleasant bourds
And wanton toys he dallyingly doth cast forth
amorous words.
Sometime (the gifts wherein young maids are
wonted to delight)
He brought her ouches, fine round stones and
lilies fair and white
And pretty singing birds and flowers of thousand
sorts and hue,
And painted balls and amber from the tree
distillèd new.
In gorgous garments, furthermore, he did her
also deck
And on her fingers put me rings and chains about
her neck.
Rich pearls were hanging at her ears and tablets
at her breast.

All kind of things became her well. And when
she was undressed

She seemèd not less beautiful. He laid her in a
bed

The which with scarlet dyed in Tyre was richly
overspread

And, terming her his bedfellow, he couchèd
down her head

Upon a pillow soft, as though she could have felt
the same.

‘The feast of Venus, hallowed through the isle
of Cyprus, came;

And bullocks white with gilden horns were
slain for sacrifice

And up to heaven of frankincense the smoky
fume did rise

Whenas Pygmalion, having done his duty that
same day,

Before the altar standing, thus with fearful heart
did say:

“If that you gods can all things give, then let my
wife, I pray” –

He durst not say be yon same wench of ivory,
but – “be like

My wench of ivory.” Venus, who was nought at
all to seek

What such a wish as that did mean, then present
at her feast,

For handsel of her friendly help did cause three
times at least

The fire to kindle and to spire thrice upward in
the air.

As soon as he came home, straightway
Pygmalion did repair
Unto the image of his wench and, leaning on the
bed,
Did kiss her. In her body straight a warmness
seemed to spread.
He put his mouth again to hers and on her breast
did lay
His hand. The ivory waxèd soft and, putting
quite away
All hardness, yielded underneath his fingers, as
we see
A piece of wax made soft against the sun or
drawn to be
In divers shapes by chafing it between one's
hands and so
To serve to uses. He, amazed, stood wavering to
and fro
'Tween joy and fear to be beguiled. Again he
burnt in love,
Again with feeling he began his wished hope to
prove.
He felt it very flesh indeed. By laying on his
thumb
He felt her pulses beating. Then he stood no
longer dumb
But thanked Venus with his heart. And at the
length he laid
His mouth to hers who was as then become a
perfect maid.
She felt the kiss and blushed thereat and, lifting
fearfully

320

Her eyelids up, her lover and the light at once
did spy.

The marriage that herself had made the goddess
blessed so

That, when the moon with fulsome light nine
times her course had go,

This lady was delivered of a son that Paphos
hight,

Of whom the island takes that name. Of him was
born a knight

Called Cinyras who, had he had none issue,
surely might

Of all men underneath the sun been thought the
happiest wight.

Myrrha *and*
Cinyras

‘Of wicked and most cursed things to speak I
now commence.

Ye daughters and ye parents all, go, get ye far
from hence.

Or if ye minded be to hear my tale, believe me
nought

330

In this behalf, ne think that such a thing was
ever wrought.

Or if ye will believe the deed, believe the
vengeance too

Which lighted on the party that the wicked act
did do.

But if that it be possible that any wight so much
From nature should degenerate as for to fall to
such

A heinous crime as this is, I am glad for Thracia,
I

Am glad for this same world of ours, yea, glad
exceedingly

I am for this my native soil, for that there is such
space

Between it and the land that bred a child so void
of grace.

I would the land Panchaia should of amony be
rich

340

And cinnamon and costus sweet and incense
also, which

Doth issue largely out of trees, and other flowers
strange,

As long as that it beareth myrrh; not worth it
was the change

New trees to have of such a price. The god of
love denies

His weapons to have hurted thee, O Myrrha, and
he tries

Himself unguilty by thy fault. One of the Furies
three

With poisoned snakes and hellish brands hath
rather blasted thee.

To hate one's father is a crime as heinous as may
be;

But yet more wicked is this love of thine than
any hate.

The youthful lords of all the east and peers of
chief estate

350

Desire to have thee to their wife and earnest suit
do make.

Of all (excepting only one) thy choice, O Myrrha,
take.

'She feels her filthy love and strives against it,
and within
Herself said, "Whither runs my mind? What
think I to begin?
Ye gods, I pray, and godliness, ye holy rites and
awe
Of parents, from this heinous crime my vicious
mind withdraw
And disappoint my wickedness – at leastwise if it
be
A wickedness that I intend. As far as I can see
This love infringeth not the bonds of godliness a
whit.
For every other living wight Dame Nature doth
permit
To match without offence of sin. The heifer
thinks no shame
To bear her father on her back; the horse
bestrides the same
Of whom he is the sire; the goat doth buck the
kid that he
Himself begat; and birds do tread the selfsame
birds, we see,
Of whom they hatchèd were before. In happy
case they are
That may do so without offence. But man's
malicious care
Hath made a bridle for itself, and spiteful laws
restrain
The things that Nature setteth free. Yet are there
realms, men sayen,
In which the mother with the son and daughter
with the father

370

Do match, wherethrough of godliness the bond
augments the rather

With doubled love. Now woe is me it had not
been my lot

In that same country to be born, and that this
luckless plot

Should hinder me. Why think I thus? Avaunt,
unlawful love!

I ought to love him, I confess; but so as doth
behave

His daughter. Were not Cinyras my father, then,
iwis,

I might obtain to lie with him. But now because
he is

Mine own, he cannot be mine own. The nearness
of our kin

Doth hurt me. Were I further off, perchance I
more might win.

And if I wist that I thereby this wickedness might
shun,

I would forsake my native soil and far from
Cyprus run.

380

This evil heat doth hold me back that, being
present still,

I may but talk with Cinyras and look on him my
fill

And touch and kiss him, if no more may further
granted be.

Why, wicked wench! And canst thou hope for
further? Dost not see

How by thy fault thou dost confound the rights
of name and kin?

And wilt thou make thy mother be a cuckquean
by thy sin?

Wilt thou thy father's leman be? Wilt thou be
both the mother

And sister of thy child? Shall he be both thy son
and brother?

And stand'st thou not in fear at all of those same
sisters three

Whose heads with crawling snakes instead of
hair bematted be,

390

Which, pushing with their cruel brands folks'
eyes and mouths, do see

Their sinful hearts? But thou, now while thy
body yet is free,

Let never such a wickedness once enter in thy
mind.

Defile not mighty Nature's hest by lust against
thy kind.

What though thy will were fully bent? Yet even
the very thing

Is such as will not suffer thee the same to end to
bring.

For why he, being well disposed and godly,
mindeth aye

So much his duty that from right and truth he
will not stray.

Would God like fury were in him as is in me this
day!"

'This said, her father Cinyras (who doubted
what to do

400

By reason of the worthy store of suitors
which did woo

His daughter), bringing all their names, did will
her for to show

On which of them she had herself most fancy to
bestow.

At first she held her peace awhile and, looking
wistly on

Her father's face, did boil within; and scalding
tears anon

Ran down her visage. Cinyras, who thought them
to proceed

Of tender-hearted shamefastness, did say there
was no need

Of tears, and dried her cheeks and kissed her.
Myrrha took of it

Exceeding pleasure in herself. And when that he
did wit

What husband she did wish to have, she said,
“One like to you.”

410

He, understanding not her thought, did well her
words allow

And said, “In this thy godly mind continue.” At
the name

Of godliness she cast me down her look for very
shame,

For why her guilty heart did know she well
deservèd blame.

‘High midnight came, and sleep both care and
carcasses oppressed.

But Myrrha, lying broad awake, could neither
sleep nor rest.

She fries in Cupid's flames and works continually
upon

Her furious love. One while she sinks in deep
despair. Anon

She fully minds to give attempt, but shame doth
hold her in.

She wishes and she wots not what to do, nor how
to gin.

420

And like as when a mighty tree with axes hewèd
round,

Now ready with a stripe or twain to lie upon the
ground,

Uncertain is which way to fall and tott'reth every
way;

Even so her mind with doubtful wound affeebled
then did stray

Now here, now there uncertainly, and took of
both increase.

No measure of her love was found, no rest nor
yet-release

Save only death. Death likes her best. She riseth
full in mind

To hang herself. About a post her girdle she doth
bind,

And said, "Farewell, dear Cinyras, and
understand the cause

Of this my death." And with that word about her
neck she draws

430

The noose. Her trusty nurse, that in another
chamber lay,

By fortune heard the whispering sound of these
her words, folk say.

The agèd woman, rising up, unbolts the door.
And when

She saw her in that plight of death, she,
shrieking out, began
To smite herself and scratched her breast and
quickly to her ran
And rent the girdle from her neck. Then,
weeping bitterly
And holding her between her arms, she asked the
question why
She went about to hang herself so unadvisedly.
The lady held her peace as dumb and, looking on
the ground
Unmovably, was sorry in her heart for being
found
Before she had dispatched herself. Her nurse still
at her lay
And, showing her her empty dugs and naked
head all grey,
Besought her for the pains she took with her
both night and day
In rocking and in feeding her, she would
vouchsafe to say
Whate'er it were that grieved her. The lady
turned away
Displeased and fetched a sigh. The nurse was
fully bent in mind
To bolt the matter out; for which not only she
did bind
Her faith in secret things to keep, but also said,
"Put me
In trust to find a remedy. I am not, thou shalt
see,
Yet altogether dulled by age. If furiousness it be,

I have both charms and chanted herbs to help. If
any wight

Bewitcheth thee, by witchcraft I will purge and
set thee quite.

Or if it be the wrath of God, we shall with
sacrifice

Appease the wrath of God right well. What may I
more surmise?

No thieves have broken in upon this house and
spoiled the wealth.

Thy mother and thy father both are living and in
health.”

When Myrrha heard her father named, a
grievous sigh she fet

Even from the bottom of her heart. Howbeit, the
nurse as yet

Misdeemed not any wickedness. But ne'ertheless
she guessed

There was some love and, standing in one
purpose, made request

To break her mind unto her. And she set her
tenderly

Upon her lap. The lady wept and sobbed bitterly.

Then, culling her in feeble arms, she said, “I well
espy

Thou art in love. My diligence in this behalf I
swear

Shall serviceable to thee be. Thou shalt not need
to fear

That e'er thy father shall it know.” At that same
word she leapt

From nurse's lap like one that had been past her
wits and stepped

With fury to her bed at which she, leaning down
her face,

Said, "Hence, I pray thee! Force me not to show
my shameful case."

And when the nurse did urge her still, she
answered, "Either get

Thee hence, or cease to ask me why myself I thus
do fret.

The thing that thou desir'st to know is
wickedness." The old

Poor nurse gan quake and, trembling both for
age and fear, did hold

Her hands to her. And kneeling down right
humbly at her feet,

One while she fair entreated her with gentle
words and sweet;

Another while, unless she made her privy of her
sorrow,

She threatened her and put her in a fear she
would next morrow

Bewray her, how she went about to hang herself.
But if

She told her, she did plight her faith and help to
her relief.

She lifted up her head and then with tears fast
gushing out

Beslubbered all her nurse's breast. And going oft
about

To speak, she often stayed and with her
garments hid her face

For shame and lastly said, "O happy is my
mother's case

That such a husband hath.” With that a grievous
sigh she gave
And held her peace. These words of hers a
trembling chillness drave
In nurse's limbs which pierced her bones; for
now she understood
The case. And all her hoary hair up stiffly staring
stood,
And many things she talked to put away her
cursed love,
If that it had been possible the madness to
remove.
The maid herself to be full true the counsel doth
espy,
Yet if she may not have her love she fully minds
to die.
“Live still,” quoth nurse. “Thou shalt obtain” –
she durst not say “thy father”,
But stayed at that. And for because that Myrrha
should the rather
Believe her, she confirmed her words by oath.
The yearly feast
Of gentle Ceres came, in which the wives both
most and least
Apparelled all in white are wont the firstlings of
the field,
Fine garlands made of ears of corn, to Ceres for
to yield.
And for the space of thrice three nights they
counted it a sin
To have the use of any man, or once to touch his
skin.

‘Among these women did the queen frequent
the secret rites.

500

Now while that of his lawful wife his bed was
void a-nights,

The nurse was double diligent. And finding
Cinyras

Well washed with wine, she did surmise there
was a pretty lass

In love with him, and highly she her beauty
setteth out.

And being asked of her years, she said she was
about

The age of Myrrha. “Well,” quoth he, “then bring
her to my bed.”

Returning home, she said, “Be glad, my
nursechild; we have sped.”

Not all so wholly in her heart was wretched
Myrrha glad

But that her fore-misgiving mind did also make
her sad.

Howbeit, she also did rejoice as in a certain kind,
Such discord of affections was within her
cumbered mind.

510

‘It was the time that all things rest. And now
Boötes bright,

The driver of the oxen seven about the
northpole pight,

Had somewhat turned his wain aside, when
wicked Myrrha sped

About her business. Out of heaven the golden
Phoebe fled.

With clouds more black than any pitch the stars
did hide their head.

The night becometh utter void of all her wonted
light.

And first before all other hid their faces out of
sight

Good Icar and Erigone his daughter, who for love
Most virtuous to her fatherward was taken up
above

And made a star in heaven. Three times had
Myrrha warning given

By stumbling to retire; three times the deathful
owl that even

With doleful noise prognosticates unhappy luck.
Yet came

She forward still. The darkness of the night
abated shame.

Her left hand held her nurse, her right the dark
blind way did grope.

Anon she to the chamber came; anon the door
was ope;

Anon she entered in. With that her faltering
hams did quake,

Her colour died, her blood and heart did clearly
her forsake.

The nearer she approachèd to her wickedness,
the more

She trembled. Of her enterprise it irkèd her full
sore,

530 And fain she would she might unknown
have turnèd back. Nurse led

Her, pausing, forward by the hand. And, putting
her to bed,

“Here take this damsel, Cinyras; she is thine
own,” she said.

And so she laid them breast to breast. The
wicked father takes
His bowels into filthy bed, and there with words
aslakes
The maiden's fear and cheers her up. And lest
this crime of theirs
Might want the rightful terms, by chance as in
respect of years
He "daughter" did her call, and she him "father".
Being sped
With cursèd seed in wicked womb, she left her
father's bed;
Of which soon after she became great baggèd
with her shame.
Next night the lewdness doubled; and no end
was of the same
Until at length that Cinyras, desirous for to know
His lover that so many nights upon him did
bestow,
Did fetch a light; by which he saw his own most
heinous crime
And eke his daughter. Natheless, his sorrow at
that time
Repressed his speech. Then hanging by he drew
a rapier bright.
Away ran Myrrha, and by means of darkness of
the night
She was delivered from the death. And, straying
in the broad
Date-bearing fields of Araby, she through
Panchaia yode
And, wandering full nine months, at length she
rested, being tired,

550

In Saba land. And when the time was near at
hand expired

And that uneath the burden of her womb she
well could bear,

Not knowing what she might desire, distressed
between the fear

Of death and tediousness of life, this prayer she
did make:

“O gods, if of repentant folk you any mercy take,
Sharp vengeance, I confess, I have deservèd, and
content

I am to take it patiently. Howbeit, to th'intent
That neither with my life the quick nor with my
death the dead

Annoyed be, from both of them exempt me this
same stead

And, altering me, deny to me both life and
death.” We see

560

To such as do confess their faults some mercy
showed to be.

The gods did grant her this request, the last that
she should make.

The ground did overgrow her feet and ankles as
she spake,

And from her bursten toes went roots which,
writhing here and there,

Did fasten so the trunk within the ground she
could not stir.

Her bones did into timber turn, whereof the
marrow was

The pith, and into waterish sap the blood of her
did pass.

570

Her arms were turned to greater boughs, her
fingers into twig;
Her skin was hardened into bark. And now her
belly big
The eching tree had overgrownen and overta'en
her breast
And hasted for to win her neck and hide it with
the rest.
She made no tarriance nor delay, but met the
coming tree
And shrunk her face within the bark thereof.
Although that she
Together with her former shape her senses all
did lose,
Yet weepeth she, and from her tree warm drops
do softly ooze.
The which her tears are had in price and honour,
and the myrrh
That issueth from her gummy bark doth bear the
name of her
'And shall do while the world doth last. The
misbegotten child
Grew still within the tree and from his mother's
womb defiled
Sought means to be deliverèd. Her burdened
womb did swell
Amid the tree and stretched her out. But words
wherewith to tell
And utter forth her grief did want. She had no
use of speech
With which Lucina in her throes she might of
help beseech.

580

Yet like a woman labouring was the tree and,
bowing down,

Gave often sighs and shed forth tears as though
she there should drown.

Lucina to this woeful tree came gently down and
laid

Her hand thereon and, speaking words of ease,
the midwife played.

The tree did cranny, and the bark, dividing,
made a way

And yielded out the child alive, which cried and
wailed straightway.

The waternymphs upon the soft sweet herbs the
child did lay

590

And bathed him with his mother's tears. His face
was such as spite

Must needs have praised. For such he was in all
conditions right

As are the naked Cupids that in tables pictured
be.

But to th'intent he may with them in every point
agree,

Let either him be furnished with wings and
quiver light

Or from the Cupids take their wings and bows
and arrows quite.

Venus *and* 'Away slips fleeting time unspied and mocks
Adonis us to our face,

And nothing may compare with years in
swiftness of their pace.

That wretched imp whom wickedly his
grandfather begat

600

And whom his cursed sister bare, who hidden
was alate

Within the tree and lately born, became
immediately

The beautifulest babe on whom man ever set his
eye.

Anon a stripling he became, and by and by a
man,

And every day more beautiful than other he
became,

That in the end Dame Venus fell in love with
him, whereby

He did revenge the outrage of his mother's
villainy.

For as the armèd Cupid kissed Dame Venus,
unbeware

An arrow sticking out did raze her breast upon
the bare.

The goddess, being wounded, thrust away her
son. The wound

Appeared not to be so deep as afterward was
found;

610

It did deceive her at the first. The beauty of the
lad

Enflamed her. To Cythera Isle no mind at all she
had,

Nor unto Paphos where the sea beats round
about the shore,

Nor fishy Gnide, nor Amathus that hath of metals
store.

Yea, even from heaven she did abstain. She loved
Adonis more

Than heaven. To him she clingèd aye and bare
him company.

And in the shadow wont she was to rest
continually

And for to set her beauty out most seemly to the
eye

By trimly decking of herself. Through bushy
grounds and groves

And over hills and dales and lawns and stony
rocks she roves

620

Bare-kneed, with garment tucked up according to
the wont

Of Phoebe; and she cheered the hounds with
hallooing like a hunt,

Pursuing game of hurtless sort, as hares made
low before

Or stags with lofty heads or bucks. But with the
sturdy boar

And ravening wolf and bear whelps armed with
ugly paws and eke

The cruel lions, which delight in blood and
slaughter seek,

She meddled not. And of these same she warnèd
also thee,

Adonis, for to shun them if thou would'st have
warnèd be.

“Be bold on cowards,” Venus said, “for whoso
doth advance

Himself against the bold may hap to meet with
some mischance.

630

Wherefore I pray thee, my sweet boy, forbear too
bold to be,

For fear thy rashness hurt thyself and work the
woe of me.

Encounter not the kind of beasts whom nature
armed hath,

For doubt thou buy thy praise too dear,
procuring thee some scathe.

Thy tender youth, thy beauty bright, thy
count'nance fair and brave,

Although they had the force to win the heart of
Venus, have

No power against the lions nor against the
bristled swine.

The eyes and hearts of savage beasts do nought
to these incline.

The cruel boars bear thunder in their hooked
tushes, and

Exceeding force and fierceness is in lions to
withstand.

And sure I hate them at my heart." To him
demanding "Why?",

"A monstrous chance," quoth Venus, "I will tell
thee by and by

That happened for a fault. But now unwonted
toil hath made

Me weary; and behold, in time this poplar with
his shade

Allureth, and the ground for couch doth serve to
rest upon.

I pray thee, let us rest us here." They sat them
down anon,

And, lying upward with her head upon his lap
along,

*Atalanta and
Hippomenes*

She thus began, and in her tale she bussed him
among:

“ ‘Perchance thou hast ere this time heard of
one that overcame

The swiftest men in footmanship; no fable
was that fame.

She overcame them, out of doubt. And hard it is
to tell

Thee whether she in footmanship or beauty more
excel.

Upon a season, as she asked of Phoebus what he
was

That should her husband be, he said, ‘For
husband do not pass,

O Atalanta. Thou at all of husband hast no need;
Shun husbanding. But yet thou canst not shun it,
I thee read.

Alive, thou shalt not be thyself.’ She, being sore
afraid

Of this Apollo's oracle, did keep herself a maid
And livèd in the shady woods. When wooers to
her came

And were of her importunate, she drave away
the same

660

With boisterous words and with sore condition of
the game.

‘I am not to be had’, quoth she, ‘unless ye able be
In running for to vanquish me. Ye must contend
with me

In footmanship. And whoso wins the wager, I
agree

To be his wife. But if that he be found too slow,
then he
Shall lose his head. This of your game the very
law shall be.'

She was indeed unmerciful. But such is beauty's
power
That, though the said condition were extreme
and oversour,
Yet many suitors were so rash to undertake the
same.

Hippomenes as a looker-on of this uncourteous
game
Sat by and said, 'Is any man so mad to seek a
wife
With such apparent peril and the hazard of his
life?'

And utterly he did condemn the young men's
love. But when
He saw her face and body bare (for why the lady
then
Did strip her to the naked skin) the which was
like to mine
Or rather, if that thou wert made a woman, like
to thine,
He was amazed. And holding up his hands to
heaven he saith,
'Forgive me, you with whom I found such fault
even now. In faith,
I did not know the wager that ye ran for.' As he
praiseth
The beauty of her, in himself the fire of love he
raiseth.

And through an envy, fearing lest she should
away be won,

He wished that ne'er a one of them so swift as
she might run.

'And wherefore', quoth he, 'put not I myself in
press to try

The fortune of this wager? God himself
continually

Doth help the bold and hardy sort.' Now while
Hippomenes

Debates these things within himself and other
like to these,

The damsel runs as if her feet were wings. And
though that she

Did fly as swift as arrow from a Turkey bow, yet
he

More wondered at her beauty than at swiftness
of her pace.

Her running greatly did augment her beauty and
her grace.

The wind, aye whisking from her feet the labels
of her socks,

Upon her back as white as snow did toss her
golden locks

And eke th'embroidered garters that were tied
beneath her ham.

A redness mixed with white upon her tender
body came,

As when a scarlet curtain strained against a
plastered wall

Doth cast like shadow, making it seem ruddy
therewithal.

Now while the stranger noted this, the race was
fully run,
And Atalant, as she that had the wager clearly
won,
Was crowned with a garland brave. The
vanquished, sighing sore,
Did lose their lives according to agreement made
before.

700

Howbeit, nought at all dismayed with these
men's luckless case,
He stepped forth and, looking full upon the
maiden's face,
Said, 'Wherefore dost thou seek renown in
vanquishing of such
As were but dastards? Cope with me. If fortune
be so much
My friend to give me victory, thou needest not
hold scorn
To yield to such a noble man as I am. I am born
The son of noble Megarey, Onchesty's son, and
he
Was son to Neptune. Thus am I great-grandchild
by degree
In right descent of him that rules the waters.
Neither do
I out of kind degenerate from virtue meet
thereto.

710

Or if my fortune be so hard as vanquished for to
be,
Thou shalt obtain a famous name by overcoming
me.'
In saying thus, Atlanta cast a gentle look on him

And, doubting whether she rather had to lose the
day or win,
‘ “Said thus: ‘What god, an enemy to the
beautiful, is bent
To bring this person to his end and therefore
hath him sent
To seek a wife with hazard of his life? If I should
be
Myself the judge in this behalf, there is not, sure,
in me
That doth deserve so dearly to be earned.
Neither doth
His beauty move my heart at all; yet is it such, in
sooth,
As well might move me. But because as yet a
child he is,
His person moves me not so much as doth his
age, iwis;
Besides that manhood is in him and mind
un’fraid of death,
Besides that of the watery race from Neptune, as
he saith,
He is the fourth, besides that he doth love me
and doth make
So great account to win me to his wife that for
my sake
He is contented for to die, if fortune be so sore
Against him to deny him me. Thou stranger,
hence, therefore!
Away, I say, now while thou may'st and shun my
bloody bed!
My marriage cruel is and craves the losing of thy
head.

730

There is no wench but that would such a
husband gladly catch,

And she that wise were might desire to meet
with such a match.

But why now, after heading of so many, do I care
For thee? Look thou to that. For sith so many
men as are

Already put to slaughter cannot warn thee to
beware

But that thou wilt be weary of thy life, die! Do
not spare!

And shall he perish then because he sought to
live with me,

And for his love unworthily with death rewarded
be?

All men of such a victory will speak too foul a
shame.

But all the world can testify that I am not to
blame.

740

Would God thou would'st desist. Or else, because
thou art so mad,

I would to God a little more thy feet of swiftness
had.

Ah, what a maidens countenance is in this
childish face!

Ah, foolish boy, Hippomenes, how wretched is
thy case!

I would thou never had'st me seen. Thou worthy
art of life.

And if so be I happy were and that to be a wife
The cruel Destinies had not me forbidden, sure
thou art

The only wight with whom I would be matched
with all my heart.'

‘ “This spoken, she, yet raw and but new
stricken with the dart

Of Cupid, being ignorant, did love and knew
it nat.

750

Anon her father and the folk assembled willèd
that

They should begin their wonted race. Then
Neptune's issue prayed

With careful heart and voice to me, and thus
devoutly said:

‘O Venus, favour mine attempt and send me
down thine aid

To compass my desired love which thou hast on
me laid.'

His prayer moved me, I confess, and long I not
delayed

Before I helped him. Now there is a certain field,
the which

The Cyprian folk call Damasene, most fertile and
most rich

Of all the Cyprian fields. The same was
consecrate to me

In ancient time and of my church the glebeland
wont to be.

760

Amid this field with golden leaves there grows a
goodly tree

The crackling boughs whereof are all of yellow
gold. I came

And gathered golden apples three and, bearing
thence the same

Within my hand, immediately to Hippomen I gat,

Invisible to all wights else save him, and taught
him what
To do with them. The trumpets blew; and,
girding forward, both
Set forth and on the hovering dust with nimble
feet each go'th.
A man would think they able were upon the sea
to go
And never wet their feet, and on the ails of corn
also
That still is growing in the field and never down
them tread.
The man took courage at the shout and words of
them that said,
'Now, now is time, Hippomenes, to ply it; hie
apace!
Enforce thyself with all thy strength; lag not in
any case!
Thou shalt obtain.' It is a thing right doubtful
whether he
At these well-willing words of theirs rejoicèd
more or she.
O Lord, how often when she might outstrip him
did she stay
And gazèd long upon his face, right loath to go
her way!
A weary breath proceeded from their parchèd
lips, and far
They had to run. Then Neptune's imp, her
swiftness to disbar,
Trolled down at one side of the way an apple of
the three.

780

Amazed thereat and covetous of the goodly
apple, she
Did step aside and snatchèd up the rolling fruit
of gold.
With that Hippomenes coted her. The folk that
did behold
Made noise with clapping of their hands. She
recompensed her sloth
And loss of time with footmanship, and straight
again outgo'th
Hippomenes, leaving him behind. And being
stayed again
With taking up the second, she him overtook.
And when
The race was almost at an end, he said, 'O
goddess, thou
That art the author of this gift, assist me friendly
now.'

790

And therewithal, of purpose that she might the
longer be
In coming, he with all his might did bowl the last
of three
Askew at one side of the field. The lady seemed
to make
A doubt in taking of it up. I forcèd her to take
It up, and to the apple I did put a heavy weight
And made it of such massiness she could not lift
it straight.
And lest that I in telling of my tale may longer be
Than they in running of their race, outstrippèd
quite was she.
And he that won her, marrying her, enjoyed her
for his fee.

‘ “Think'st thou I was not worthy thanks,
Adonis? Thinkest thou

I earned not that he to me should
frankincense allow?

800

But he, forgetful, neither thanks nor frankincense
did give,

By means whereof to sudden wrath he justly did
me drive.

For being grieved with the spite, because I would
not be

Despised of such as were to come, I thought it
best for me

To take such vengeance of them both as others
might take heed

By them. And so against them both in anger I
proceed.

A temple of the mother of the gods that vowed
was

And builded by Echion in a darksome grove they
pass.

There through my might Hippomenes was
touched and stirred so

That needs he would to venery, though out of
season, go.

810

Not far from this same temple was with little
light a den

With pommy vaulted naturally, long consecrate
ere then

For old religion, not unlike a cave, where priests
of yore

Bestowed had of images of wooden gods good
store.

Hippomenes, entering hereinto, defiled the holy
place

With his unlawful lust, from which the idols
turned their face.

And Cybel with the towered tops, disdainig,
doubted whether

She in the lake of Styx might drown the wicked
folk together.

The penance seemèd overligh; and therefore she
did cause

Thin yellow manes to grow upon their necks,
and hooked paws

Instead of fingers to succeed. Their shoulders
were the same

They were before; with wondrous force deep-
breasted they became.

Their look became fierce, cruel, grim and sour. A
tufted tail,

Stretched out in length far after them, upon the
ground doth trail.

Instead of speech they roar; instead of bed they
haunt the wood.

And, dreadful unto others, they for all their cruel
mood

With tamed teeth chank Cybel's bits in shape of
lions. Shun

These beasts, dear heart; and not from these
alonely see thou run,

But also from each other beast that turns not
back to flight

But offereth with his boisterous breast to try the
chance of fight,

830

Lest that thine overhardiness be hurtful to us
both.”

*The death of
Adonis*

‘This warning given, with yoked swans away
through air she go'th.

But manhood by admonishment restrained
could not be.

By chance his hounds, in following of the track, a
boar did see

And roused him. And as the swine was coming
from the wood,

Adonis hit him with a dart askew and drew the
blood.

The boar straight with his hooked groin the
hunting-staff out drew

Bestained with his blood, and on Adonis did
pursue;

Who, trembling and retiring back, to place of
refuge drew.

And hiding in his cods his tusks as far as he
could thrust,

840

He laid him all along for dead upon the yellow
dust.

Dame Venus in her chariot drawn with swans
was scarce arrived

At Cyprus, when she knew afar the sigh of him
deprived

Of life. She turned her cygnets back; and when
she from the sky

Beheld him dead and in his blood beweltered for
to lie,

She leaped down and tore at once her garments
from her breast

And rent her hair and beat upon her stomach
with her fist

And, blaming sore the Destinies, said, "Yet shall
they not obtain

Their will in all things. Of my grief remembrance
shall remain,

Adonis, while the world doth last. From year to
year shall grow

850 A thing that of my heaviness and of thy death
shall show

The lively likeness. In a flower thy blood I will
bestow.

Had'st thou the power, Persephone, rank-scented
mints to make

Of women's limbs? And may not I like power
upon me take

Without disdain and spite, to turn Adonis to a
flower?"

This said, she sprinkled nectar on the blood,
which through the power

Thereof did swell like bubbles sheer that rise in
weather clear

On water. And before that full an hour expired
were,

Of all one colour with the blood a flower she
there did find

Even like the flower of that same tree whose fruit
in tender rind

860 Have pleasant grains enclosed. Howbeit the use
of them is short,

For why the leaves do hang so loose through
lightness in such sort

As that the winds, that all things pierce, with
every little blast
Do shake them off and shed them so as that they
cannot last.'

FINIS DECIMI LIBRI.

The Eleventh Book of Ovid's Metamorphoses

The death of Orpheus Now while the Thracian poet with this song
delights the minds

Of savage beasts and draws both stones and trees
against their kinds,

Behold, the wives of Cicony with red deer skins
about

Their furious breasts, as in the field they gadded
on a rout,

Espied him from a hillock's top still singing to his
harp.

Of whom one shook her head at him and thus
began to carp:

'Behold,' says she, 'behold, yon same is he that
doth disdain

Us women.' And with that same word she sent
her lance amain

At Orpheus's singing mouth. The lance, armed
round about with leaves,

10 Did hit him; and without a wound a mark behind
it leaves.

Another threw a stone at him which, vanquished
with his sweet

And most melodious harmony, fell humbly at his
feet

As sorry for the furious act it purposèd. But rash
And heady riot out of frame all reason now did
dash,

And frantic outrage reigned. Yet had the
sweetness of his song
Appeased all weapons, saving that the noise,
now growing strong
With blowing shawms and beating drums and
bedlam howling out
And clapping hands on every side by Bacchus'
drunken rout,
Did drown the sound of Orpheus's harp. Then first
of all stones were
Made ruddy with the prophet's blood and could
not give him ear.
And first the flock of Bacchus' frows by violence
broke the ring
Of serpents, birds and savage beasts that for to
hear him sing
Sat gazing round about him there. And then with
bloody hands
They ran upon the prophet, who among them
singing stands.
They flocked about him, like as when a sort of
birds have found
An owl a-daytimes in a toad and hem him in full
round;
As when a stag by hungry hounds is in a
morning found,
The which forestall him round about and pull
him to the ground,
Even so the prophet they assail and throw their
thyrses green
At him, which for another use than that invented
been.

Some cast me clods, some boughs of trees and
some threw stones. And lest
That weapon wherewithal to wreak their
woodness (which increased)
Should want, it chanced that oxen by were tilling
of the ground
And labouring men with brawnèd arms not far
fro thence were found
A-digging of the hardened earth and earning of
their food
With sweating brows. They, seeing this same
rout, no longer stood
But ran away and left their tools behind them.
Everywhere
Through all the field their mattocks, rakes and
shovels scattered were.
Which when the cruel fiends had caught and had
asunder rent
The horned oxen, back again to Orpheyward
they went
And, wicked wights, they murdered him, who
never till that hour
Did utter words in vain nor sing without
effectual power.
And through that mouth of his, O Lord, which
even the stones had heard
And unto which the witless beasts had often
given regard,
His ghost, then breathing into air, departed. Even
the fowls
Were sad for Orphey, and the beast with sorry
sighing howls.

The rugged stones did mourn for him; the woods,
which many a time

Had followed him to hear him sing, bewailèd
this same crime.

Yea, even the trees, lamenting him, did cast their
leafy hair;

The rivers also with their tears, men say,
increased were.

Yea, and the nymphs of brooks and woods upon
their streams did sail

With scattered hair about their ears in boats with
sable sail.

His members lay in sundry steads. His head and
harp both came

To Hebrus. And (a wondrous thing) as down the
stream they swam,

His harp did yield a mourning sound; his lifeless
tongue did make

A certain lamentable noise as though it still yet
spake;

And both the banks in mourning wise made
answer to the same.

At length a-down their country stream to open
sea they came

And lighted on Methymny shore in Lesbos land.
And there

No sooner on the foreign coast now cast a-land
they were,

But that a cruel-natured snake did straight upon
them fly

And, licking on his ruffled hair the which was
dropping dry,

Did gape to tire upon those lips that had been
wont to sing
Most heavenly hymns. But Phoebus, straight
preventing that same thing,
Dispoints the serpent of his bit and turns him
into stone
With gaping chaps. Already was the ghost of
Orpheus gone
To Pluto's realm; and there he all the places eft
beheld
The which he heretofore had seen. And as he
sought the field
Of fair Elysion where the souls of goodly folk do
wone,
He found his wife Eurydice, to whom he straight
did run
And held her in embracing arms. There now he
one while walks
Together with her cheek by cheek; another while
he stalks
Before her; and another while he followeth her.
And now
Without all kind of forfeiture he safely might
avow
His looking backward at his wife. But Bacchus,
grievèd at
The murder of the chaplain of his orgies, suffered
not
The mischief unrevenged to be. For by and by he
bound
The Thracian women by the feet with writhen
root in ground,

As many as consenting to this wicked act were
found.

80

And look how much that each of them the
prophet did pursue,

So much he, sharpening of their toes, within the
ground them drew.

And as the bird, that finds her leg besnarlèd in
the net

(The which the fowler subtly hath closely for
her set)

And feels she cannot get away, stands flickering
with her wings

And with her fearful leaping up draws closer still
the strings;

So each of these, when in the ground they
fastened were, assayed,

Aflighted sore, to fly away. But every one was
stayed

With winding root which held her down. Her
frisking could not boot.

And while she looked what was become of toe,
of nail and foot,

90

She saw her legs grow round in one and turning
into wood.

And as her thighs with violent hand she sadly
striking stood,

She felt them tree; her breast was tree; her
shoulders eke were tree.

Her arms long boughs ye might have thought
and not deceived be.

*Midas' golden
touch*

But Bacchus was not so content. He quite
forsook their land

100

And with a better company removed out of
hand
Unto the vineyard of his own Mount Tmolus and
the river
Pactolus, though as yet no streams of gold it did
deliver
Ne spited was for precious sands. His old
accustomed rout
Of woodwards and of frantic frows environed
him about.
But old Silenus was away. The Phrygian
ploughmen found
Him reeling both for drunkenness and age and
brought him bound
With garlands unto Midas, king of Phrygia, unto
whom
The Thracian Orphey and the priest Eumolpus,
coming from
The town of Athens, erst had taught the orgies.
When he knew
His fellow and companion of the selfsame badge
and crew,
Upon the coming of this guest he kept a feast the
space
Of twice five days and twice five nights together
in that place.
And now th'eleventh time Lucifer had mustered
in the sky
The heavenly host, when Midas comes to Lydia
jocundly
And yields the old Silenus to his foster-child. He,
glad

110

That he his foster-father had eftsoons recovered,
bade
King Midas ask him what he would. Right glad of
that was he,
But not a whit at latter end the better should he
be.
He, minding to misuse his gifts, said, 'Grant that
all and some
The which my body toucheth bare may yellow
gold become.'
God Bacchus, granting his request, his hurtful
gift performed,
And that he had not better wished he in his
stomach stormed.
Rejoicing in his harm, away full merry goes the
king
And for to try his promise true he toucheth
everything.
Scarce giving credit to himself, he pulled young
green twigs
From off an holm-tree; by and by all golden were
the sprigs.
He took a flintstone from the ground; the stone
likewise became
Pure gold. He touched next a clod of earth; and
straight the same
By force of touching did become a wedge of
yellow gold.
He gathered ears of ripened corn; immediately,
behold,
The corn was gold. An apple then he pullèd from
a tree;

Ye would have thought the Hesperids had given
it him. If he

On pillars high his fingers laid, they glistered like
the sun.

The water where he washed his hands did from
his hands so run

As Danae might have been therewith beguiled.
He scarce could hold

His passing joys within his heart for making all
things gold.

While he thus joyed, his officers did spread the
board anon

And set down sundry sorts of meat and manchet
thereupon.

Then whether his hand did touch the bread, the
bread was massy gold;

Or whether he chewed with hungry teeth his
meat, ye might behold

The piece of meat between his jaws a plate of
gold to be.

In drinking wine and water mixed, ye might
discern and see

The liquid gold run down his throat. Amazèd at
the strange

Mischance and being both a wretch and rich, he
wished to change

His riches for his former state. And now he did
abhor

The thing which even but late before he chiefly
longèd for.

No meat his hunger slakes; his throat is shrunken
up with thirst;

And justly doth his hateful gold torment him as
accurst.

Then, lifting up his sorry arms and hands to
heaven, he cried,

‘O father Bacchus, pardon me. My sin I will not
hide.

Have mercy, I beseech thee, and vouchsafe to rid
me quite

From this same harm that seems so good and
glorious unto sight.’

The gentle Bacchus straight upon confession of
his crime

Restorèd Midas to the state he had in former
time

And, having made performance of his promise,
he bereft him

The gift that he had granted him. And lest he
should have left him

Bedaubèd with the dregs of that same gold which
wickedly

He wishèd had, he willèd him to get him by and
by

To that great river which doth run by Sardis
town, and there

Along the channel up the stream his open arms
to bear

Until he cometh to the spring, and then his head
to put

Full underneath the foaming spout where
greatest was the gut,

And so in washing of his limbs to wash away his
crime.

160

The king, as was commanded him, against the
stream did climb.

And straight the power of making gold,
departing quite from him,

Infects the river, making it with golden stream to
swim.

The force whereof the banks about so soaked in
their veins

That even as yet the yellow gold upon the clods
remains.

*The judgement
of Midas*

Then Midas, hating riches, haunts the pasture
grounds and groves

And up and down with Pan among the lawns
and mountains roves.

But still a head more fat than wise and doltish
wit he hath,

The which, as erst, yet once again must work
their master scathe.

The mountain Tmole from lofty top to seaward
looketh down

And, spreading far his burly sides, extendeth to
the town

170

Of Sardis with the t'one side and to Hypaep with
the t'other.

There Pan among the fairy elves that dancèd
round together,

In setting of his cunning out for singing and for
play

Upon his pipe of reeds and wax, presuming for to
say

Apollo's music was not like to his, did take in
hand

A far unequal match whereof the Tmole for
judge should stand.

The ancient judge sits down upon his hill and
rids his ears

From trees and only on his head an oaken
garland wears,

Whereof the acorns dangled down about his
hollow brow.

And looking on the god of neat, he said, 'Ye need
not now

180

To tarry longer for your judge.' Then Pan blew
loud and strong

His country pipe of reeds and with his rude and
homely song

Delighted Midas' ears (for he by chance was in
the throng).

When Pan had done, the sacred Tmole to
Phoebus turned his look,

And with the turning of his head his bushy hair
he shook.

Then Phoebus with a crown of bay upon his
golden hair

Did sweep the ground with scarlet robe. In left
hand he did bear

His viol made of precious stones and ivory
intermixed,

And in his right hand for to strike his bow was
ready fixed.

He was the very pattern of a good musician
right.

190

Anon he gan with cunning hand the tuned
strings to smite,

The sweetness of the which did so the judge of
them delight
That Pan was willèd for to put his reedpipe in his
case
And not to fiddle nor to sing where viols were in
place.
The judgement of the holy hill was likèd well
of all
Save Midas, who found fault therewith and
wrongful did it call.
Apollo could not suffer well his foolish ears to
keep
Their human shape, but drew them wide and
made them long and deep
And filled them full of whitish hairs and made
them down to sag
And through too much unstableness continually
to wag.
His body, keeping in the rest his manly figure
still,
Was punished in the part that did offend for
want of skill.
And so a slow-paced ass's ears his head did after
bear.
This shame endeavoureth he to hide; and
therefore he did wear
A purple nightcap ever since. But yet his barber
who
Was wont to not him spied it and, being eager to
Disclose it, when he neither durst to utter it nor
could
It keep in secret still, he went and diggèd up the
mould

210

And, whispering softly in the pit, declared what
ears he spied
His master have and, turning down the clowre
again, did hide
His blabbed words within the ground and,
closing up the pit,
Departed thence and never made mo words at all
of it.
Soon after there began a tuft of quivering reeds
to grow
Which, being ripe, bewrayed their seed and him
that did them sow.
For when the gentle southern wind did lightly on
them blow,
They uttered forth the words that had been
buried in the ground
And so reproved the ass's ears of Midas with
their sound.

*The
ingratitude of
Troy*

Apollo after this revenge from Tmolus took
his flight

220

And, sweeping through the air, did on the
selfsame side alight
Of Hellespontus in the realm of King Laomedon.
There stood upon the right side of Sigaeum and
upon
The left of Rhoetey cliff that time an altar built
of old
To Jove, that heareth all men's words. Here
Phoebus did behold
The foresaid King Laomedon beginning for to lay

Foundation of the walls of Troy; which work
from day to day

Went hard and slowly forward and required no
little charge.

Then he together with the god that rules the
surges large

Did put themselves in shape of men and
bargained with the king

Of Phrygia for a sum of gold his work to end to
bring.

Now when the work was done, the king their
wages them denied

230

And falsely faced them down with oaths it was
not as they said.

‘Thou shalt not mock us unrevenged,’ quoth
Neptune. And anon

He caused all the surges of the sea to rush upon
The shore of covetous Troy and made the
country like the deep.

The goods of all the husbandmen away he quite
did sweep

And overwhelmed their fields with waves. And,
thinking this too small

A enance for the falsehood, he demanded
therewithal

His daughter for a monster of the sea. Whom,
being bound

Unto a rock, stout Hercules delivering safe and
sound,

Required his steeds which were the hire for
which he did compound.

240

And when that of so great desert the king denied
the hire,

The twice-forsworn false town of Troy he sacked
in his ire.

And Telamon in honour of his service did enjoy
The lady Hesione, daughter of the covetous king
of Troy.

For Peleus had already got a goddess to his wife
And livèd unto both their joys a right renowned
life.

And sure he was not prouder of his grandsire
than of thee

That wert become his father-in-law. For many
mo than he

Have had the hap of mighty Jove the nephews
for to be;

But never was it heretofore the chance of any
one

To have a goddess to his wife, save only his
alone.

For unto watery Thetis thus old Proteu did
foretell:

‘Go, marry; thou shalt bear a son whose doings
shall excel

His father's far in feats of arms, and greater he
shall be

In honour, high renown and fame than ever erst
was he.’

This caused Jove the watery bed of Thetis to
forbear,

Although his heart were more than warm with
love of her, for fear

The world some other greater thing than Jove
himself should breed,

And willed the son of Aeacus, this Peleus, to
 succeed
 In that which he himself would fain have done,
 and for to take
 260 The lady of the sea in arms a mother her to
 make.
Peleus *and* There is a bay of Thessaly that bendeth like a
Thetis bow;

 The sides shoot forth where, if the sea of any
 depth did flow,
 It were a haven. Scarcely doth the water hide the
 sand.
 It hath a shore so firm that if a man thereon do
 stand
 No print of foot remains behind; it hindereth not
 one's pace
 Ne covered is with hovering reek. Adjoining to
 this place
 There is a grove of myrtle-trees with fruit of dual
 colour
 And in the midst thereof a cave. I cannot tell you
 whether
 That nature or the art of man were maker of the
 same.
 270 It seemed rather made by art. Oft Thetis hither
 came
 Stark naked, riding bravely on a bridled
 dolphin's back;
 There Peleus as she lay asleep upon her often
 brake.
 And for because that at her hands entreatance
 nothing wins

, He, folding her about the neck with both his
arms, begins
To offer force. And, surely, if she had not fallen
to wiles
And shifted oftentimes her shape, he had
obtained erewhiles.
But she became sometimes a bird; he held her
like a bird.
Anon she was a massy log; but Peleus never
stirred
A whit for that. Then thirdly she of speckled
tiger took
The ugly shape; for fear of whose most fierce and
cruel look
His arms he from her body twitched. And at his
going thence
In honour of the watery gods he burned
frankincense
And pourèd wine upon the sea with fat of neat
and sheep,
Until the prophet that doth dwell within
Carpathian deep
Said thus: 'Thou son of Aeacus, thy wish thou
sure shalt have.
Alonely when she lies asleep within her pleasant
cave
Cast grins to trap her unbewares; hold fast with
snarling knot.
And though she feign a hundred shapes, deceive
thee let her not,
But stick unto't, whate'er it be, until the time that
she

Returneth to the native shape she erst was wont
to be.'

When Proteu thus had said, within the sea he
ducked his head

And suffered on his latter words the water for to
spread.

The lightsome Titan downward drew and with
declining chair

Approached to the western sea, when Nerey's
daughter fair,

Returning from the sea, resorts to her
accustomed couch.

And Peleus scarcely had begun her naked limbs
to touch

But that she changed from shape to shape, until
at length she found

Herself surprised. Then, stretching out her arms
with sighs profound,

She said, 'Thou overcomest me, and not without
the aid

Of God.' And then she Thetis-like appeared in
shape of maid.

The noble prince, embracing her, obtained her at
his will

To both their joys and with the great Achilles did
her fill.

A happy wight was Peleus in his wife; a
happy wight

Was Peleus also in his son. And if ye him
acquit

Of murdering Phocus, happy him in all things
count ye might.

310

But guilty of his brother's blood and banished for
the same
From both his father's house and realm, to
Trachin sad he came.
The son of lightsome Lucifer, King Ceyx, who in
face
Expressed the lively beauty of his father's
heavenly grace,
Without all violent rigour and sharp executions
reigned
In Trachin. He right sad that time, unlike
himself, remained
Yet mourning for his brother's chance,
transformèd late before.
When Peleus thither came, with care and travail
tirèd sore,
He left his cattle and his sheep (whereof he
brought great store)
Behind him in a shady vale not far from Trachin
town
And with a little company himself went thither
down.
As soon as leave to come to court was granted
him, he bare
A branch of olive in his hand and humbly did
declare
His name and lineage. Only of his crime no word
he spake
But of his flight another cause pretendedly did
make,
Desiring leave within his town or country to
abide.

320

The king of Trachin gently thus to him again
replied:

‘Our bounty to the meanest sort, O Peleus, doth
extend;

We are not wont the desolate our country to
forfend.

And though I be of nature most inclinèd good to
do,

Thine own renown, thy grandsire Jove are
forcements thereunto.

Misspend no longer time in suit. I gladly do
agree

To grant thee what thou wilt desire. These things
that thou dost see,

I would thou should account them as thine own,
such as they be;

330

I would they better were.’ With that he weepèd.
Peleus and

His friends desirèd of his grief the cause to
understand.

*The
transformation
of Daedalion*

He answered thus: ‘Perchance ye think this
bird that lives by prey

And puts all other birds in fear had wings and
feathers aye.

He was a man. And as he was right fierce in feats
of arms

And stout and ready both to wreak and also offer
harms,

So was he of a constant mind. Daedalion men
him hight.

Our father was that noble star that brings the
morning bright

And in the welkin last of all gives place to
Phoebus' light.

My study was to maintain peace; in peace was
my delight,

And for to keep me true to her to whom my faith
is plight.

My brother had felicity in war and bloody fight.

His prowess and his force, which now doth chase
in cruel flight

The doves of Thisbe since his shape was altered
thus anew,

Right puissant princes and their realms did
heretofore subdue.

He had a child called Chione, whom nature did
endue

With beauty so that, when to age of fourteen
years she grew,

A thousand princes, liking her, did for her favour
sue.

By fortune as bright Phoebus and the son of Lady
May

Came t'one from Delphos, t'other from Mount
Cyllen, by the way

They saw her both at once and both at once were
ta'en in love.

Apollo till the time of night deferred his suit to
move;

But Hermes could not bear delay. He strokèd on
the face

The maiden with his charmèd rod which hath
the power to chase

And bring in sleep; the touch whereof did cast
her in so dead

A sleep that Hermes by and by his purpose of her
sped.

As soon as night with twinkling stars the welkin
had besprent,

Apollo in an old wife's shape to Chion closely
went

And took the pleasure which the son of Maia had
forehent.

Now when she full her time had gone, she bare
by Mercury

360

A son that hight Autolychus, who proved a wily
pie

And such a fellow as in theft and filching had no
peer.

He was his father's own son right; he could men's
eyes so blear

As for to make the black things white and white
things black appear.

And by Apollo (for she bare a pair) was born his
brother

Philammon, who in music art excellèd far all
other

As well in singing as in play. But what availèd it
To bear such twins and of two gods in favour to
have sit

And that she to her father had a stout and valiant
knight

Or that her grandsire was the son of Jove, that
god of might?

370

Doth glory hurt to any folk? It surely hurtèd her.

For, standing in her own conceit, she did herself
prefer
Before Diana and dispraised her face; who,
therewithal
Inflamed with wrath, said, "Well, with deeds we
better please her shall."
Immediately she bent her bow and let an arrow
go
Which strake her through the tongue, whose
spite deserved wounding so.
Her tongue waxed dumb; her speech gan fail that
erst was overrife;
And as she strived for to speak, away went blood
and life.
How wretched was I then, O God! How strake it
to my heart!
What words of comfort did I speak to ease my
brother's smart!
To which he gave his ear as much as doth the
stony rock
To hideous roaring of the waves that do against
it knock.
There was no measure nor none end in making
of his moan,
Nor in bewailing comfortless his daughter that
was gone.
But when he saw her body burn, four times with
all his might
He rushed forth to thrust himself amid the fire in
sight.
Four times he, being thence repulsed, did put
himself to flight

And ran me whereas was no way, as doth a
 bullock when
 A hornet stings him in the neck. Methought he
 was as then
 More wighter far than any man. Ye would have
 thought his feet
 Had had some wings. So fled he quite from all
 and, being fleet
 Through eagerness to die, he gat to Mount
 Parnassus' knap.
 And there Apollo, pitying him and ruing his
 mishap,
 Whenas Daedalion from the cliff himself had
 headlong flung,
 Transformed him to a bird and on the sudden as
 he hung
 Did give him wings and bowing beak and hooked
 talons keen
 And eke a courage full as fierce as ever it had
 been.
 And, furthermore, a greater strength he lent him
 therewithal
 Than one would think conveyed might be within
 a room so small.
 And now in shape of goshawk he to none
 indifferent is,
 But wreaks his teen on all birds. And because
 himself ere this
 Did feel the force of sorrow's sting within his
 wounded heart,
 He maketh others oftentimes to sorrow and to
 smart.'

*The slaughter
of Peleus'
cattle*

As Ceyx of his brother's chance this wondrous
story saith,

Comes running thither all in haste and almost
out of breath

Anetor the Phocian, who was Peley's herdman.
He

Said, 'Peley, Peley, I do bring sad tidings unto
thee.'

'Declare it, man,' quoth Peleus, 'whatever that it
be.'

King Ceyx at his fearful words did stand in
doubtful stound.

'Thiz noontide,' quoth the herdman, 'ich did
drive your cattle down

410

To zea, and zome o' them did zit upon the yellow
zand

And lookèd on the large main pool of water near
at hand.

Zome roilèd zoftly up and down, and zome o'
them did zwim

And bare their jolly horned heads above the
water trim.

A church stands near the zea, not decked with
gold nor marble stone

But made of wood and hid with trees that
dreeping hang thereon.

A visherman that zat and dried hiz nets upo' the
zhore

Did tell'z that Nereus and his nymphs did haunt
the place of yore

420

And how that they been gods o' zea. There butts
a plot vorgrown

With zallow trees upon the zame, the which is
overblown

With tides and is a marsh. Vrom thence a wolf,
an orpèd wight,

With hideous noise of rustling made the grounds
near hand affright.

Anon he comes me buskling out, bezmearèd all
his chaps

With blood daubaken and with voam as vierce as
thunder claps.

Hiz eyen did glaster red as vire, and though he
ragèd zore

Vor vamine and vor madness both, yet ragèd he
much more

In madness. Vor he carèd not his hunger vor to
zlake

Or i' the death of oxen two or three an end to
make,

But wounded all the herd and made a havoc of
them all;

And zome of us, too, in devence did happen vor
to vall

430

In danger of his deadly chaps and lost our lives.
The zhore

And zea is stained with blood and all the ven is
on a roar.

Delay breeds loss. The case denies now doubting
for to stand.

While owt remains, let all of us take weapon in
our hand.

Let's arm ourzelves and let uz altogether on him
vall.'

The herdman held his peace. The loss moved
Peleus not at all.

But calling his offence to mind, he thought
that Nerey's daughter,

The childless Lady Psamathe, determined with
that slaughter

To keep an obit to her son whom he before had
killed.

Immediately upon this news the king of Trachin
willed

440

His men to arm them and to take their weapons
in their hand,

And he addressed himself to be the leader of the
band.

His wife Alcyone, by the noise admonished of the
same

In dressing of her head, before she had it brought
in frame

Cast down her hair and, running forth, caught
Ceyx fast about

The neck desiring him with tears to send his folk
without

Himself and in the life of him to save the lives of
twain.

'O princess, cease your godly fear,' quoth Peleus
then again.

'Your offer doth deserve great thanks. I mind not
war to make

Against strange monsters. I as now another way
must take.

The seagods must be pacified.' There was a castle
high

And in the same a lofty tower whose top doth
face the sky,

A joyful mark for mariners to guide their vessels
by.

To this same turret up they went and there with
sighs beheld

The oxen lying everywhere stark dead upon the
field

And eke the cruel stroy-good with his bloody
mouth and hair.

Then Peleus, stretching forth his hands to
seaward, prayed in fear

To waterish Psamath that she would her sore
displeasure stay

And help him. She no whit relents to that that he
did pray.

But Thetis for her husband made such earnest
suit that she

Obtained his pardon. For anon the wolf (who
would not be

Revoked from the slaughter for the sweetness of
the blood)

Persisted sharp and eager still until that, as he
stood

Fast biting on a bullock's neck, she turned him
into stone

As well in substance as in hue, the name of wolf
alone

Reserved. For although in shape he seemèd still
yet one,

The very colour of the stone bewrayed him to be
none

And that he was not to be feared. Howbeit,
froward fate

Permits not Peleus in that land to have a settled
state.

He wandereth like an outlaw to the Magnetes.
There at last

470

Acastus the Thessalian purged him of his murder
past.

In this meantime the Trachine king, sore
vexed in his thought

Ceyx *and*
Alcyone

With signs that both before and since his
brother's death were wrought,

For counsel at the sacred spells (which are but
toys to food

Fond fancies and not councillors in peril to do
good)

Did make him ready to the god of Claros for to
go.

For heathenish Phorbas and the folk of Phlegia
had as tho

The way to Delphos stopped, that none could
travel to or fro.

But ere he on his journey went, he made his
faithful make

Alcyone privy to the thing. Immediately there
strake

480

A chillness to her very bones, and pale was all
her face

Like box, and down her heavy cheeks the tears
did gush apace.

Three times about to speak, three times she
washed her face with tears.

And, stinting oft, with sobs she thus complained
in his ears:

‘What fault of mine, O husband dear, hath
turned thy heart fro me?

Where is that care of me that erst was wont
to be in thee?

And canst thou, having left thy dear Alcyone,
merry be?

Do journeys long delight thee now? Doth now
mine absence please

Thee better than my presence doth? Think I that
thou at ease

Shalt go by land? Shall I have cause but only for
to mourn

490

And not to be afraid? And shall my care of thy
return

Be void of fear? No, no! The sea me sore afraid
doth make.

To think upon the sea doth cause my flesh for
fear to quake.

I saw the broken ribs of ships alate upon the
shore;

And oft on tombs I read their names whose
bodies long before

The sea had swallowed. Let not fond vain hope
seduce thy mind

That Aeolus is thy father-in-law, who holds the
boisterous wind

In prison and can calm the seas at pleasure.
When the winds

Are once let loose upon the sea, no order then
them binds.

Then neither land hath privilege, nor sea
exemption finds.

500

Yea, even the clouds of heaven they vex and
with their meeting stout

Enforce the fire with hideous noise to brust in
flashes out.

The more that I do know them (for right well I
know their power

And saw them oft, a little wench within my
father's bower),

So much the more I think them to be feared. But
if thy will

By no entreatance may be turned at home to
tarry still

But that thou needs wilt go, then me, dear
husband, with thee take.

So shall the sea us equally together toss and
shake.

So worser than I feel I shall be certain not to
fear.

So shall we whatsoever haps together jointly
bear.

510

So shall we on the broad main sea together
jointly sail.'

These words and tears wherewith the imp of
Aeolus did assail

Her husband born of heavenly race did make
his heart relent.

For he loved her no less than she loved him. But
fully bent

He seemed neither for to leave the journey which
he meant

To take by sea nor yet to give Alcyone leave as
tho

Companion of his perilous course by water for to
go.

He many words of comfort spake her fear away
to chase,

But nought he could persuade therein to make
her like the case.

This last assuagement of her grief he added in
the end,

520

Which was the only thing that made her loving
heart to bend:

‘All tarriance will assuredly seem overlong to me.
And by my father's blazing beams, I make my
vow to thee

That at the furthest ere the time (if God thereto
agree)

The moon do fill her circle twice again I will
here be.’

When in some hope of his return this promise
had her set,

He willed a ship immediately from harbour to be
fet

And throughly rigged for to be, that neither mast
nor sail

Nor tackling, no, nor other thing should
appertaining fail.

Which when Alcyone did behold, as one whose
heart misgave

530

The haps at hand, she quaked again and tears
out gushing drave.

And, straining Ceyx in her arms with pale and
piteous look,
Poor wretched soul, her last farewell at length
she sadly took
And swounded flat upon the ground. Anon the
watermen
(As Ceyx sought delays and was in doubt to turn
again)
Set hand to oars, of which there were two rows
on either side,
And all at once with equal stroke the swelling
sea divide.
She, lifting up her watery eyes, beheld her
husband stand
Upon the hatches, making signs by beckoning
with his hand;
And she made signs to him again. And after that
the land
Was far removed from the ship and that the sight
began
To be unable to discern the face of any man,
As long as e'er she could, she looked upon the
rowing keel.
And when she could no longer time for distance
ken it well,
She lookèd still upon the sails that flaskèd with
the wind
Upon the mast. And when she could the sails no
longer find,
She gat her to her empty bed with sad and sorry
heart
And laid her down. The chamber did renew
afresh her smart

And of her bed did bring to mind the dear
departed part.

From harbour now they quite were gone; and
now a pleasant gale

550

Did blow. The master made his men their
oars aside to hale

And hoisèd up the topsail on the highest of the
mast

And clapped on all his other sails, because no
wind should waste.

Scarce full t'one half (or, sure, not much above)
the ship had run

Upon the sea and every way the land did far
them shun,

When toward night the wallowing waves began
to waxen white

And eke the heady eastern wind did blow with
greater might.

Anon the master cried, 'Strike the topsail! Let the
main

Sheet fly and fardel it to the yard!' Thus spake
he, but in vain.

For why, so hideous was the storm upon the
sudden braid

560

That not a man was able there to hear what
other said,

And loud the sea with meeting waves extremely
raging roars.

Yet fell they to it of themselves. Some haled
aside the oars;

Some fenced in the galley's sides; some down the
sailcloths rend;

Some pump the water out and sea to sea again
do send;
Another hales the sailyards down. And while
they did each thing
Disorderly, the storm increased and from each
quarter fling
The winds with deadly feud and bounce the
raging waves together.
The pilot, being sore dismayed, saith plain, he
knows not whither
To wend himself nor what to do or bid, nor in
what state
Things stood; so huge the mischief was and did
so overmate
All art. For why of rattling ropes, of crying men
and boys,
Of flushing waves and thundering air confused
was the noise.
The surges, mounting up aloft, did seem to mate
the sky
And with their sprinkling for to wet the clouds
that hang on high.
One while the sea, when from the brink it raised
the yellow sand,
Was like in colour to the same. Another while
did stand
A colour on it blacker than the lake of Styx.
Anon
It lieth plain and loometh white with seething
froth thereon.
And with the sea the Trachine ship aye alteration
took:

One while as from a mountain's top it seemed
down to look

To valleys and the depth of hell; another while,
beset

With swelling surges round about which near
above it met,

It looked from the bottom of the whirlpool up
aloft

As if it were from hell to heaven. A hideous
flushing oft

The waves did make in beating full against the
galley's side.

The galley, being stricken, gave as great a sound
that tide

As did sometime the battleram of steel or now
the gun

In making battery to a tower. And as fierce lions
run

Full breast with all their force against the armed
men that stand

In order bent to keep them off with weapons in
their hand,

Even so, as often as the waves by force of wind
did rave,

So oft upon the netting of the ship they mainly
drave

And mounted far above the same. Anon off fell
the hoops;

And having washed the pitch away, the sea made
open loops

To let the deadly water in. Behold, the clouds did
melt

600

And showers large came pouring down. The
seamen that them felt
Might think that all the heaven had fallen upon
them that same time
And that the swelling sea likewise above the
heaven would climb.
The sails were throughly wet with showers, and
with the heavenly rain
Was mixed the waters of the sea. No lights at all
remain
Of sun or moon or stars in heaven; the darkness
of the night,
Augmented with the dreadful storm, takes
double power and might.
Howbeit, the flashing lightnings oft do put the
same to flight
And with their glancing now and then do give a
sudden light.
The lightning sets the waves on fire. Above the
netting skip
The waves and with a violent force do light
within the ship.
And as a soldier stouter than the rest of all his
band
That oft assails a city walls defended well by
hand
At length attains his hope and, for to purchase
praise withal,
Alone among a thousand men gets up upon the
wall;
So, when the lofty waves had long the galley's
sides essayed,

610

At length the tenth wave, rising up with huger
force and braid,
Did never cease assaulting of the weary ship till
that
Upon the hatches like a foe victoriously it gat.
A part thereof did still as yet assault the ship
without,
And part had gotten in. The men, all trembling,
ran about
As in a city comes to pass when of the enemies
some
Dig down the walls without and some already in
are come.
All art and cunning was to seek; their hearts and
stomachs fail.
And look how many surges came their vessel to
assail,
So many deaths did seem to charge and break
upon them all.
One weeps; another stands amazed; the third
them blest doth call
Whom burial doth remain. To God another
makes his vow
And, holding up his hands to heaven, the which
he sees not now,
Doth pray in vain for help. The thought of this
man is upon
His brother and his parents whom he clearly
hath forgone;
Another calls his house and wife and children
unto mind;
And every man in general the things he left
behind.

Alcyone moveth Ceyx' heart; in Ceyx' mouth is
none

630

But only one Alcyone. And though she were
alone

The wight that he desired most, yet was he very
glad

She was not there. To Trachinward to look desire
he had,

And homeward fain he would have turned his
eyes which never more

Should see the land. But when he knew not
which way was the shore

Nor where he was, the raging sea did roll about
so fast

And all the heaven with clouds as black as pitch
was overcast

That never night was half so dark, there came a
flaw at last

That with his violence brake the mast and strake
the stern away.

A billow, proudly pranking up as vaunting of his
prey

640

By conquest gotten, walloweth whole and
breaketh not asunder,

Beholding with a lofty look the waters working
under.

And look, as if a man should from the places
where they grow

Rend down the mountains Athe and Pind and
whole them overthrow

Into the open sea, so soft the billow, tumbling
down,

With weight and violent stroke did sink and in
the bottom drown

The galley. And the most of them that were
within the same

Went down therewith and never up to open air
came

But died strangled in the gulf. Another sort again
Caught pieces of the broken ship. The king
himself was fain

650 A shiver of the sunken ship in that same hand to
hold

In which he erst a royal mace had held of yellow
gold.

His father and his father-in-law he calls upon –
alas,

In vain. But chiefly in his mouth his wife
Alcyone was.

In heart was she; in tongue was she. He wished
that his corse

To land where she might take it up the surges
might enforce

And that by her most loving hands he might be
laid in grave.

In swimming still, as often as the surges leave
him gave

To ope his lips, he harped still upon Alcyone's
name;

And when he drowned in the waves he muttered
still the same.

660 Behold, even full upon the wave a flake of water
black

Did break and underneath the sea the head of
Ceyx strake.

That night the lightsome Lucifer for sorrow was
so dim

As scarcely could a man discern or think it to be
him.

And for as much as out of heaven he might not
step aside,

With thick and darksome clouds that night his
count'nance he did hide.

Alcyone, of so great mischance not knowing
aught as yet,

Did keep a reckoning of the nights that in the
while did flit

And hasted garments both for him and for herself
likewise

To wear at his homecoming, which she vainly
did surmise.

670

To all the gods devoutly she did offer
frankincense,

But most above them all the church of Juno she
did cense.

And for her husband (who as then was none) she
kneeled before

The altar, wishing health and soon arrival at the
shore

And that none other woman might before her be
preferred.

Of all her prayers this one piece effectually was
heard.

For Juno could not find in heart entreated for to
be

For him that was already dead. But to th'intent
that she

680

From Dame Alcyone's deadly hands might keep
her altars free,

She said, 'Most faithful messenger of my
commandments, O

Thou rainbow, to the sluggish house of Slumber
swiftly go

And bid him send a dream in shape of Ceyx to
his wife

Alcyone for to show her plain the losing of his
life.'

Dame Iris takes her pall wherein a thousand
colours were

And, bowing like a stringèd bow upon the cloudy
sphere,

Immediately descended to the drowsy house of
Sleep

Whose court the clouds continually do closely
overdreep.

Among the dark Cimmerians is a hollow
mountain* found

And in the hill a cave that far doth run within
the ground,

The chamber and the dwelling place where
slothful Sleep doth couch.

690

The light of Phoebus' golden beams this place
can never touch.

A foggy mist with dimness mixed streams
upward from the ground,

And glimmering twilight evermore within the
same is found.

No watchful bird with barbèd bill and combèd
crown doth call

The morning forth with crowing out. There is no
noise at all
Of waking dog nor gagging goose, more waker
than the hound,
To hinder sleep. Of beast ne wild ne tame there
is no sound.
No boughs are stirred with blasts of wind. No
noise of tattling tongue
Of man or woman ever yet within that bower
rung.
Dumb quiet dwelleth there. Yet from the roche's
foot doth go
The River of Forgetfulness, which runneth
trickling so.
Upon the little pebble stones which in the
channel lie
That unto sleep a great deal more it doth
provoke thereby.
Before the entry of the cave there grows a poppy
store
With seeded heads and other weeds innumerable
more,
Out of the milky juice of which the night doth
gather sleeps
And over all the shadowed earth with dankish
dew them dreeps.
Because the craking hinges of the door no noise
should make,
There is no door in all the house nor porter at
the gate.
Amid the cave, of ebony a bedstead standeth
high

710

And on the same a bed of down with coverings
black doth lie

In which the drowsy god of sleep his lither limbs
doth rest.

About him, forging sundry shapes, as many
dreams lie pressed

As ears of corn do stand in fields in harvest time
or leaves

Do grow on trees or sea to shore of sandy cinder
heaves.

As soon as Iris came within this house and with
her hand

Had put aside the dazzling dreams that in her
way did stand,

The brightness of her robe through all the sacred
house did shine.

The god of sleep, scarce able for to raise his
heavy eyen,

A three or four times at the least did fall again to
rest

720

And with his nodding head did knock his chin
against his breast.

At length he, shaking of himself, upon his elbow
leaned.

And, though he knew for what she came, he
asked her what she meant.

‘O Sleep’, quoth she, ‘the rest of things, O
gentlest of the gods,

Sweet Sleep, the peace of mind with whom
crook'd care is aye at odds,

Which cherishest men's weary limbs appalled
with toiling sore

730

And makest them as fresh to work and lusty as
before,

Command a dream (that in their kinds can
everything express)

To Trachin, Herc'les' town, himself this instant to
address;

And let him lively counterfeit to Queen Alcyona

The image of her husband who is drownèd in the
sea

By shipwreck. Juno willeth so.' Her message
being told,

Dame Iris went her way. She could her eyes no
longer hold

From sleep. But when she felt it come, she fled
that instant time

And by the bow that brought her down to
heaven again did climb.

Among a thousand sons and mo that father
Slumber had

He called up Morph, the feigner of man's shape,
a crafty lad.

None other could so cunningly express man's
very face,

His gesture and his sound of voice and manner of
his pace

Together with his wonted weed and wonted
phrase of talk.

740

But this same Morphey only in the shape of man
doth walk.

There is another who the shapes of beast or bird
doth take

Or else appeareth unto men in likeness of a
snake.

The gods do call him Icelos, and mortal folk him
name
Phobetor. There is also yet a third who from
these same
Works diversely, and Phantasos he highteth; into
streams
This turns himself and into stones and earth and
timber beams
And into every other thing that wanteth life.
These three
Great kings and captains in the night are wonted
for to see.
The meaner and inferior sort of others haunted
be.
Sir Slumber overpassed the rest, and of the
brothers all
To do Dame Iris' message he did only Morphey
call.
Which done, he, waxing luskish, straight laid
down his drowsy head
And softly shrunk his lazy limbs within his
sluggish bed.
Away flew Morphey through the air – no
flickering made his wings –
And came anon to Trachin. There his feathers
off he flings
And in the shape of Ceyx stands before Alcyone's
bed,
Pale, wan, stark nak'd and like a man that was
but lately dead.
His beard seemed wet, and of his head the hair
was dropping dry.

And, leaning on her bed, with tears he seemèd
thus to cry:

760

‘Most wretched woman, knowest thou thy loving
Ceyx now,

Or is my face by death deformed? Behold me
well, and thou

Shalt know me. For thy husband, thou thy
husband's ghost shalt see.

No good thy prayers and thy vows have done at
all to me.

For I am dead. In vain of my return no reckoning
make.

The cloudy south amid the sea our ship did tardy
take

And, tossing it with violent blasts, asunder did it
shake.

And floods have filled my mouth which called in
vain upon thy name.

No person whom thou may'st misdeem brings
tidings of the same;

Thou hearest not thereof by false report of flying
fame,

770

But I myself, I presently my shipwreck to thee
show.

Arise, therefore, and woeful tears upon thy
spouse bestow.

Put mourning raiment on and let me not to
Limbo go

Unmournèd for.’ In showing of this shipwreck,
Morphey so

Did feign the voice of Ceyx that she could none
other deem

But that it should be his indeed. Moreover he did
seem

To weep in earnest, and his hands the very
gesture had

Of Ceyx. Queen Alcyone did groan and, being
sad,

Did stir her arms and thrust them forth his body
to embrace,

Instead whereof she caught but air. The tears ran
down her face.

780

She cried, 'Tarry! Whither fly'st? Together let us
go!'

And all this while she was asleep. Both with her
crying so

And flighted with the image of her husband's
ghastly sprite

She started up and sought about if find him there
she might

(For why her grooms, awaking with the shriek,
had brought a light).

And when she nowhere could him find, she gan
her face to smite

And tare her nightclothes from her breast and
strake it fiercely and,

Not passing to untie her hair, she rent it with her
hand.

And when her nurse of this her grief desired to
understand

The cause, 'Alcyone is undone, undone and cast
away

790

With Ceyx, her dear spouse,' she said. 'Leave
comforting, I pray.

By shipwreck he is perished; I have seen him;
and I knew
His hands. When in departing I to hold him did
pursue
I caught a ghost; but such a ghost as well discern
I might
To be my husband's. Natheless he had not to my
sight
His wonted count'nance, neither did his visage
shine so bright
As heretofore it had been wont. I saw him,
wretched wight,
Stark naked, pale and with his hair still wet;
even very here
I saw him stand.' With that she looks if any print
appear
Of footing whereas he did stand upon the floor
behind.
'This, this is it that I did fear in far-forecasting
mind
When, flying me, I thee desired thou should'st
not trust the wind.
But sith thou wentest to thy death, I would that I
had gone
With thee; ah, meet, it meet had been thou
should'st not go alone
Without me. So it should have come to pass that
neither I
Had overlivèd thee nor yet been forced twice to
die.
Already absent in the waves now tossèd have I
be.

Already have I perished. And yet the sea hath
thee

Without me. But the cruelty were greater far of
me

Than of the sea if after thy decease I still would
strive

In sorrow and in anguish still to pine away alive.

But neither will I strive in care to lengthen still
my life

Nor, wretched wight, abandon thee, but like a
faithful wife

At leastwise now will come as thy companion.
And the hearse

Shall join us, though not in the selfsame coffin,
yet in verse.

Although in tomb the bones of us together may
not couch,

Yet in a graven epitaph my name thy name shall
touch.'

Her sorrow would not suffer her to utter any
more.

She sobbed and sighed at every word until her
heart was sore.

The morning came, and out she went right
pensive to the shore

To that same place in which she took her
leave of him before.

While there she musing stood and said, 'He
kissed me even here,

Here weighed he his anchors up, here loosed he
from the pier,'

And while she called to mind the things there
marked with her eyes,
In looking on the open sea a great way off she
spies
A certain thing much like a corse come hovering
on the wave.
At first she doubted what it was. As tide it nearer
drave,
Although it were a good way off, yet did it
plainly show
To be a corse. And though that whose it was she
did not know
Yet for because it seemed a wreck her heart
thereat did rise.
And as it had some stranger been, with water in
her eyes
She said, 'Alas, poor wretch, whoe'er thou art,
alas for her
That is thy wife, if any be.' And as the waves did
stir,
The body floated nearer land; the which the
more that she
Beheld, the less began in her of staid wit to be.
Anon it did arrive on shore. Then plainly she did
see
And know it, that it was her fere. She shrieked,
'It is he!'
And therewithal her face, her hair and garments
she did tear
And, unto Ceyx stretching out her trembling
hands with fear,
Said, 'Com'st thou home in such a plight to me,
O husband dear?

Return'st in such a wretched plight?' There was a
certain pier
That builded was by hand of waves the first
assaults to break
And at the haven's mouth to cause the tide to
enter weak.
She leaped thereon. (A wonder sure it was she
could do so.)
She flew and with her new-grown wings did beat
the air as tho;
And on the waves, a wretched bird, she whiskèd
to and fro.
And with her croaking neb, then grown to
slender bill and round,
Like one that wailed and mournèd still she made
a moaning sound.
Howbeit, as soon as she did touch his dumb and
bloodless flesh
And had embraced his loved limbs with wings
made new and fresh
And with her hardened neb had kissed him
coldly, though in vain,
Folk doubt if Ceyx, feeling it, to raise his head
did strain
Or whether that the waves did lift it up; but
surely he
It felt. And through compassion of the gods both
he and she
Were turned to birds. The love of them eke
subject to their fate
Continued after; neither did the faithful bond
abate

Of wedlock in them, being birds, but stands in
steadfast state.

They tread and lay and bring forth young, and
now the alcyon* sits

In wintertime upon her nest (which on the water
flits)

A sevensnight, during all which time the sea is
calm and still

860

And every man may to and fro sail safely at his
will.

For Aeolus for his offspring's sake the winds at
home doth keep

And will not let them go abroad for troubling of
the deep.

*The
transformation
of Aesacus*

An ancient father, seeing them about the
broad sea fly,

Did praise their love for lasting to the end so
steadfastly.

His neighbour or the selfsame man made answer
(such is chance),

'Even this fowl also whom thou see'st upon the
surges glance

With spindle-shanks' – he pointed to the wide-
jowled cormorant –

'Before that he became a bird of royal race might
vaunt.

And if thou covet lineally his pedigree to seek,

870

His ancestors were Ilus and Assaracus, and eke

Fair Ganymede whom Jupiter did ravish as his
joy,

Laomedon and Priamus, the last that reigned in
Troy.

Stout Hector's brother was this man. And had he
not in prime

Of lusty youth been ta'en away, his deeds
perchance in time

Had purchased him as great a name as Hector,
though that he

Of Dymant's daughter Hecuba had fortune born
to be.

For Aesacus reported is begotted to have been
By scape in shady Ida on a maiden fair and sheen
Whose name was Alexothoë, a poor man's
daughter that

880

With spade and mattock for himself and his a
living gat.

This Aesacus the city hates and gorgeous court
doth shun,

And in the unambitious fields and woods alone
doth wone.

He seldom haunts the town of Troy. Yet, having
not a rude

And blockish wit nor such a heart as could not
be subdued

By love, he spied Eperië (whom oft he had
pursued

Through all the woods) then sitting on her father
Cebrius' brim

A-drying of her hair against the sun, which
hangèd trim

Upon her back. As soon as that the nymph was
ware of him

890

She fled, as when the grizzled wolf doth scare
the fearful hind

Or when the falcon far from brooks a mallard
haps to find.

The Trojan knight runs after her and, being swift
through love,

Pursueth her whom fear doth force apace her
feet to move.

Behold, an adder lurking in the grass there as she
fled

Did bite her foot with hookèd tooth and in her
body spread

His venom. She did cease her flight and sudden
fell down dead.

Her lover, being past his wits, her carcass did
embrace

And cried, "Alas, it irketh me, it irks me of this
chase.

But this I feared not. Neither was the game of
that I willed

Worth half so much. Now two of us thee,
wretched soul, have killed.

900

The wound was given thee by the snake; the
cause was given by me.

The wickeder of both am I, who, for to comfort
thee,

Will make thee satisfaction with my death." With
that at last

Down from a rock, the which the waves had
undermined, he cast

Himself into the sea. Howbeit Dame Tethys,
pitying him,

Received him softly; and as he upon the waves
did swim,
She covered him with feathers. And though fain
he would have died,
She would not let him. Wroth was he that death
was him denied
And that his soul compelled should be against his
will to bide
Within his wretched body still from which it
would depart,
And that he was constrained to live perforce
against his heart.
And as he on his shoulders now had newly taken
wings,
He mounted up and down upon the sea his body
dings.
His feathers would not let him sink. In rage he
diveth down,
And desperately he strives himself continually to
drown.
His love did make him lean; long legs, long neck
doth still remain.
His head is from his shoulders far; of sea he is
most fain.
And for he underneath the waves delighteth for
to drive,
A name according thereunto the Latins do him
give.'

The Twelfth Book of Ovid's Metamorphoses

*The
Trojan
War*

King Priam, being ignorant that Aesacus, his son,

Did live in shape of bird, did mourn; and at a tomb
whereon

His name was written Hector and his brother solemnly
Did keep an obit. Paris was not at this obsequy.

Within a while with ravished wife he brought a lasting
war

Home unto Troy. There followed him a thousand ships
not far

Conspired together with the aid that all the Greeks
could find.

And vengeance had been ta'en forthwith, but that the
cruel wind

Did make the seas unsailable, so that their ships were
fain

10 At road at fishy Aulis in Boeotia to remain.

Here, as the Greeks according to their wont made
sacrifice

To Jove and on the altar old the flame aloft did rise,
They spied a speckled snake creep up upon a plane-
tree by,

Upon the top whereof there was among the branches
high

A nest, and in the nest eight birds; all which and eke
their dam

That flickering flew about her loss the hungry snake
did cram

Within his maw. The standers by were all amazed
thereat.

But Calchas, Thestor's son, who knew what meaning
was in that,

Said, 'We shall win. Rejoice, ye Greeks; by us shall
perish Troy.

20 But long the time will be before we may our will
enjoy.'

And then he told them how the birds nine years did
signify

Which they before the town of Troy, not taking it,
should lie.

The serpent, as he wound about the boughs and
branches green,

Became a stone; and still in stone his snakish shape is
seen.

The seas continued very rough and suffered not
their host

Embarkèd for to ass from thence to take the further
coast.

Some thought that Neptune favoured Troy because
himself did build

The walls thereof. But Calchas (who both knew and
never held

His peace in time) declarèd that the goddess Phoebe
must

30 Appeasèd be with virgin's blood for wrath conceivèd
just.

As soon as pity yielded had to case of public weal

And reason got the upper hand of father's loving zeal,
So that the lady Iphigen before the altar stood
Among the weeping ministers to give her maiden's
blood,

The goddess, taking pity, cast a mist before their eyes
And, as they prayed and stirred about to make the
sacrifice,

Conveys her quite away and with a hind her room
supplies.

Thus with a slaughter meet for her Diana being
pleased,

The raging surges with her wrath together were
appeased.

40 The thousand ships had wind at poop. And when they
had abode

Much trouble, at the length all safe they gat the
Phrygian road.

The Amid the world, 'tween heaven and earth and sea,
house of there is a place

Rumour

Set from the bounds of each of them indifferently
in space,

From whence is seen whatever thing is practised
anywhere

Although the realm be ne'er so far, and roundly to the
ear

Comes whatsoever spoken is. Fame hath his dwelling
there,

Who in the top of all the house is lodgèd in a tower.

A thousand entries, glades and holes are framèd in this
bower.

There are no doors to shut; the doors stand open night
and day.

50

The house is all of sounding brass and roareth every
way,

Reporting double every word it heareth people say.

There is no rest within; there is no silence anywhere.

Yet is there not a yelling out, but humming, as it were

The sound of surges being heard far off or like the
sound

That at the end of thunderclaps long after doth
redound

When Jove doth make the clouds to crack. Within the
courts is press

Of common people which to come and go do never
cease.

And millions both of truths and lies run gadding
everywhere,

And words confusely fly in heaps, of which some fill
the ear

60

That heard not of them erst, and some coal-carriers'
part do play

To spread abroad the things they heard. And ever by
the way

The thing that was invented grows much greater than
before,

And everyone that gets it by the end adds somewhat
more.

Light Credit dwelleth there; there dwells rash Error;
there doth dwell

Vain Joy; there dwelleth heartless Fear and Bruit, that
loves to tell

Uncertain news upon report whereof he doth not know

The author; and Sedition, who fresh rumours loves to
sow.

This Fame beholdeth what is done in heaven, on sea
and land,

And what is wrought in all the world he lays to
understand.

Cygnnet He gave the Troyans warning that the Greeks with
and valiant men

Achilles

And ships approached, that unwares they could not
take them then.

For Hector and the Trojan folk well armèd were at
hand

To keep the coast and bid them base before they came
a-land.

Protesilay by fatal doom was first that died in field
Of Hector's spear; and after him great numbers mo
were killed

Of valiant men. That battle did the Greeks full dearly
cost.

And Hector with his Phrygian folk of blood no little
lost

In trying what the Greeks could do. The shore was red
with blood.

And now King Cygnnet, Neptune's son, had killèd where
he stood

80 A thousand Greeks. And now the stout Achilles caused
to stay

His chariot, and his lance did slay whole bands of men
that day.

And, seeking Cygnnet, through the field, or Hector, he
did stray.

At last with Cygnet he did meet (for Hector had delay
Until the tenth year afterward). Then, hasting forth his
horses

With flaxen manes, against his foe his chariot he
enforces

And, brandishing his shaking dart, he said, 'O noble
wight,

A comfort let it be to thee that such a valiant knight

As is Achilles killeth thee.' In saying so he threw

A mighty dart which, though it hit the mark at which
it flew,

90

Yet pierced it not the skin at all. Now when this
blunted blow

Had hit on Cygnet's breast and did no print of hitting
show,

'Thou goddess' son', quoth Cygnet, '(for by fame we do
thee know),

Why wond'rest at me for to see I cannot wounded be?'

(Achilles wondred much thereat.) 'This helmet which
ye see

Bedecked with horses' yellow manes, this shield that I
do bear,

Defend me not. For ornaments alonely I them wear.

For this same cause arms Mars himself likewise. I will
disarm

Myself, and yet unrazèd will I pass without all harm.

It is to some effect not born to be of Nerey's race,

100

So that a man be born of him that with three-forkèd
mace

Rules Nereus and his daughters too and all the sea
beside.'

This said, he at Achilles sent a dart that should abide

Upon his shield. It pierced through the steel and
through ninefold

Of oxen hides, and stayed upon the tenth. Achilles
bold

Did wrest it out and forcibly did throw the same again.

His body, being hit again, unwounded did remain

And clear from any print of wound. The third went eke
in vain,

And yet did Cynet to the same ive full his naked
breast.

Achilles chafed like a bull that in the open list

110

With dreadful horns doth push against the scarlet
clothes that there

Are hanged up to make him fierce and, when he would
them tear,

Doth find his wounds deluded. Then Achilles looked
upon

His javelin's socket, if the head thereof were loose or
gone.

The head stack. fast. 'My hand, belike, is weakened
then', quoth he,

'And all the force it had before is spent on one, I see.

For sure I am it was of strength, both when I first
down threw

Lyrnessus' walls and when I did Isle Tenedos subdue

And eke Axaetion's Thebe with her proper blood
embrew;

And when so many of the folk of Teuthrany I slew

120

That with their blood Caïcus' stream became of purple
hue;

And when the noble Telephus did of my dart of steel

The double force of wounding and of healing also feel.

Yea, even the heaps of men slain here by me that on
this strand

Are lying still to look upon do give to understand
That this same hand of mine both had and still hath
strength.' This said

(As though he had distrusted all his doings ere that
stead),

He threw a dart against a man of Lycia land that hight
Menoetes, through whose curats and his breast he
strake him quite.

And when he saw with dying limbs him sprawling on
the ground,

130 He stepped to him straight and pulled the javelin from
the wound

And said aloud, 'This is the hand, this is the selfsame
dart

With which my hand did strike even now Menoetes to
the heart.

Aainst m t'other copemate will I use the same; I pray
To God it may have like success.' This said, without
delay

He sent it toward Cygnet. And the weapon did not
stray

Nor was not shunnèd, in so much it lighted full upon
His shoulder; and it gave a rap as if upon some stone
It lighted had, rebounding back. Howbeit, where it hit
Achilles saw it blood and was vainly glad of it.

140 For why there was no wound; it was Menoetes' blood.
Then leapt

He hastily from his chariot down and like a madman
stepped

To careless Cygnet with his sword. He saw his sword
did pare
His target and his morion both. But when it touched
the bare,
His body was so hard it did the edge thereof abate.
He could no longer suffer him to triumph in that rate
But with the pommel of his sword did thump him on
the pate
And bobbed him well about the brows a dozen times
and more
And, pressing on him as he still gave back, amazed
him sore
And troubled him with buffeting, not respiting a whit.
Then Cygnet gan to be afraid, and mists began to flit
Before his eyes and dimmed his sight. And as he still
did yield
In giving back, by chance he met a stone amid the
field
Against the which Achilles thrust him back with all his
might
And, throwing him against the ground, did cast him
bolt upright.
Then, bearing boistrously with both his knees against
his chest
And leaning with his elbows and his target on his
breast,
He shut his headpiece close and just and underneath
his chin
So hard it strained that way for breath was neither out
nor in
And closèd up the vent of life. And having gotten so

160

The upper hand, he went about to spoil his vanquished
foe.

But nought he in his armour found. For Neptune had
as tho

Transformed him to the fowl whose name he bare but
late ago.

This labour, this encounter brought the rest of many
days,

And either party in their strength a while from battle
stays.

Now while the Phrygians watch and ward upon the
walls of Troy

And Greeks likewise within their trench, there
came a day of joy

In which Achilles for his luck in Cygnet's overthrow

A cow in way of sacrifice on Pallas did bestow.

Whose inwards when he had upon the burning altar
cast

170

And that the acceptable fume had through the air
passed

To godward and the holy rites had had their dues, the
rest

Was set on boards for men to eat in dishes finely
dressed.

The princes, sitting down, did feed upon the roasted
flesh,

And both their thirst and present cares with wine they
did refresh.

Not harps nor songs nor hollow flutes to hear did them
delight;

They talkéd till they nigh had spent the greatest part
of night.

And all their communication was of feats of arms in
fight

That had been done by them or by their foes. And
every wight

Delights to open oftentimes by turn as came about

The perils and the narrow brunts himself had shifted
out.

For what thing should be talked before Achilles
rather? Or

What kind of things than such as these could seem
more meeter for

Achilles to be talking of? But in their talk most breme

Was then Achilles' victory of Cygnet. It did seem

A wonder that the flesh of him should be so hard and
tough

As that no weapon might have power to raze or pierce
it through

But that it did abate the edge of steel. It was a thing

That both Achilles and the Greeks in wondrous maze
did bring.

Then Nestor said, 'This Cygnet is the person now alone

Of your time that defied steel and could be pierced of
none.

But I have seen now long ago one Caen of Perrheby;

I saw one Caen of Perrheby a thousand wounds defy

With unattainted body. In Mount Othrys he did dwell

And was renownèd for his deeds. And, which in him
right well

A greater wonder did appear, he was a woman born.'

This uncouth made them all much more amazèd than
beforn,

And every man desired him to tell it. And among

The rest, Achilles said, 'Declare, I pray thee – for we
long
To hear it, every one of us – O eloquent old man,
200 The wisdom of our age, what was that Caen and how
he won
Another than his native shape, and in what road, or in
What fight or skirmish 'tween you first acquaintance
did begin,
And who in fine did vanquish him, if any vanquished
him.'

The Then Nestor: 'Though the length of time have made
story of my senses dim
Caeney

And divers things erst seen in youth now out of
mind be gone,
Yet bear I still mo things in mind; and of them all is
none
Among so many both of peace and war that yet doth
take
More steadfast root in memory. And if that time may
make
A man great store of things through long continuance
for to see,
210 Two hundred years already of my life full passèd be,
And now I go upon the third. This foresaid Caeney was
The daughter of one Elaty. In beauty she did pass
The maidens all of Thessaly. From all the cities by
And from thy cities also, O Achilles, came (for why
She was thy countrywoman) store of wooers, who in
vain

In hope to win her love did take great travail, suit and
pain.

Thy father also had perchance attempted here to
match,

But that thy mother's marriage was already then
dispatched

Or she at least affiancèd. But Caeney matched with
none.

220 Howbeit, as she on the shore was walking all alone

The god of sea did ravish her, so fame doth make
report.

And Neptune, for the great delight he had in Venus'
sport,

Said, "Caeney, ask me what thou wilt and I will give it
thee."

(This also bruited is by fame.) "The wrong here done
to me",

Quoth Caeney, "makes me wish great things. And
therefore to th'intent

I may no more constrainèd be to such a thing, consent
I may no more a woman be. And if thou grant thereto,
It is even all that I desire or wish thee for to do."

In baser tune these latter words were uttered, and her
voice

230 Did seem a man's voice, as it was indeed. For to her
choice

The god of sea had given consent. He granted him
beside

That free from wounding and from hurt he should
from thence abide

And that he should not die of steel. Right glad of this
same grant,

Away went Caeney and the fields of Thessaly did
haunt
And in the feats of chivalry from that time spent his
life.

The ‘The overbold Ixion's son* had taken to his wife
battle of
the
Lapiths
and the
Centaurs

Hippodame. And, covering boards in bowers of
boughs of trees,
His cloud-bred brothers one by one he placed in
degrees.

240 There were the lords of Thessaly. I also was among
The rest. A cheerful noise of feast through all the
palace rung;

Some made the altars smoke, and some the bridal
carols sung.

Anon comes in the maiden bride, a goodly wench of
face,

With wives and maidens following her with comely
gait and grace.

We said that Sir Pirithoüs was happy in his wife,
Which handsel had deceived us well near through
sudden strife.

For of the cruel Centaurs thou, most cruel Euryt, tho,
Like as thy stomach was with wine far overcharged, so
As soon as thou beheld'st the bride thy heart began to
frayne,

And doubled with thy drunkenness thy raging lust did
reign.

250 The feast was troubled by and by with tables
overthrown.

The bride was halèd by the head, so far was fury
grown.

Fierce Euryt caught Hippodame, and every of the rest
Caught such as comèd next to hand or such as liked
him best.

It was the lively image of a city ta'en by foes.

The house did ring of women's shrieks. We all up
quickly rose,

And first said Theseus thus: "What ail'st? Art mad, O
Eurytus,

That darest, seeing me alive, misuse Pirithoüs,

Not knowing that in one thou dost abuse us both?"
And lest

He might have seemed to speak in vain, he thrust 'way
such as pressed

260 About the bride and took her from them, fretting sore
thereat.

No answer made him Eurytus for such a deed as that
Defended could not be with words), but with his saucy
fist

He flew at gentle Theseus' face and bobbed him on the
breast.

By chance hard by an ancient cup of image-work did
stand

Which, being huge, himself more huge, Sir Theseus
took in hand

And threw't at Euryt's head. He spewed as well at
mouth as wound

Mixed clods of blood and brain and wine, and on the
soilèd ground

Lay sprawling bolt upright. The death of him did set
the rest

His double-limbèd brothers so on fire that all the quest
With one voice crièd out, "Kill! Kill!" The wine had
given them heart.

Their first encounter was with cups and cans thrown
overthwart

And brittle tankards and with bowls, pans, dishes, pots
and trays,

Things serving late for meat and drink and then for
bloody frays.

First Amycus, Ophion's son, without remorse began
To reave and rob the bridehouse of his furniture. He
ran

And pullèd down a lampbeam full of lights and, lifting
it

Aloft like one that with an axe doth fetch his blow to
slit

An ox's neck in sacrifice, he on the forehead hit

A Lapith namèd Celadon and crushèd so his bones

280 That none could know him by the face. Both eyes flew
out at once;

His nose was beaten back and to his palate battered
flat.

One Pelates, a Macedon, exceeding wroth thereat,

Pulled out a maple trestle's foot and knapped him in
the necks,

That bobbing with his chin against his breast to
ground he becks.

And as he spitted out his teeth with blackish blood, he
lent

Another blow to Amycus which straight to hell him
sent.

Gryne, standing by and lowering with a fell grim
visage at

The smoking altars, said, "Why use we not these
same?" With that

He caught a mighty altar up with burning fire thereon

290 And it among the thickest of the Lapiths threw anon.

And two he overwhelmed therewith called Brote and
Orion.

This Orion's mother, Mycale, is known of certainty

The moon, resisting, to have drawn by witchcraft from
the sky.

"Full dearly shalt thou buy it", quoth Exadius, "may I
get

A weapon." And with that instead of weapon he did
set

His hand upon a vowed hart's horn that on a pine-tree
high

Was nailed, and with two tines thereof he strake out
either eye

Of Gryne; whereof some stack upon the horn and some
did fly

Upon his beard and there with blood like jelly mixed
did lie.

300 A flaming firebrand from amidst an altar Rhoetus
snatched,

With which upon the left side of his head Charaxus
latched

A blow that cracked his skull. The blaze among his
yellow hair

Ran singeing up, as if dry corn with lightning blasted
were.

And in his wound the searèd blood did make a
grievous sound,

As, when a piece of steel red hot ta'en up with tongs is
drowned

In water by the smith, it spurts and hisseth in the
trough.

Charaxus from his curlèd head did shake the fire; and
though

He wounded were, yet caught he up upon his
shoulders twain

A stone, the jamb of either door, that well would load
a wain.

310 The mass thereof was such as that it would not let him
hit

His foe. It lighted short, and with the falling down of it
A mate of his that Comet hight it all in pieces smit.

Then Rhoet, restraining not his joy, said thus: "I would
the rout

Of all thy mates might in the selfsame manner prove
them stout."

And with his half-burnt brand the wound he searchèd
new again,

Not ceasing for to lay on load upon his pate amain

Until his head was crushed and of his scalp the bones
did swim

Among his brains. In jolly ruff he passèd straight from
him

To Coryt and Euagrus and to Dryant on a row.

320

Of whom when Coryt (on whose cheeks young mossy
down gan grow)

Was slain, "What praise or honour", quoth Euagrus,
"hast thou got

By killing of a boy?" Mo words him Rhoetus suffered
not

To speak, but in his open mouth did thrust his burning
brand

And down his throat-boll to his chest. Then, whisking
in his hand

His firebrand round about his head, he fiercely did
assail

The valiant Dryant. But with him he could not so
prevail.

For as he triumphed in his luck, proceeding for to
make

Continual slaughter of his foes, Sir Dryant with a stake
Whose point was hardened in the fire did cast at him a
foin

330

And thrust him through the place in which the neck
and shoulders join.

He groaned and from his cannel-bone could scarcely
pull the stake.

And being soiled with his blood, to flight he did him
take.

Orneus also ran away, and Lycidas likewise;

And Medon, whose right shoulderplate was also
wounded, flies.

So did Pisenor, so did Caun, and so did Mermeros,

Who, late outrunning every man, now, wounded,
slower goes.

And so did Phole and Menelas and Abas, who was
wont

To make a spoil among wild boars as oft as he did
hunt;
And eke the wizard Astylos, who counsellèd his mates
340 To leave that fray. But he to them in vain of leaving
prates.
He eke to Nessus (who for fear of wounding seemed
shy)
Said, "Fly not, thou shalt scape this fray of Herc'les'
bow to die."
But Lycid and Eurynomos and Imbreus and Are
Escaped not death. Sir Dryant's hand did all alike them
spare.
Caenaeus also, though that he in flying were not slack,
Yet was he wounded on the face; for as he looked
back,
A weapon's point did hit him full midway between the
eyes
Whereas the nose and forehead meet. For all this din
yet lies
Aphipnas snorting fast asleep, not minding for to
wake,
350 Wrapped in a cloak of bearskins which in Ossa Mount
were take.
And in his lither hand he held a pot of wine. Whom
when
That Phorbas saw (although in vain) not meddling
with them, then
He set his fingers to the thong; and saying, "Thou shalt
drink
Thy wine with water taken from the Stygian fountain's
brink,"
He threw his dart at him. The dart (as he that time by
chance

Lay bolt upright upon his back) did through his throat-
boll glance.

He died and felt no pain at all. The black swart blood
gushed out

And on the bed and in the pot fell flushing like a
spout.

I saw Petraeus go about to pull out of the ground

360

An oaken tree. But as he had his arms about it round

And shook it to and fro to make it loose, Pirithous
cast

A dart which nailed to the tree his writhing stomach
fast.

Through prowess of Pirithoüs (men say) was Lycus
slain;

Through prowess of Pirithoüs died Chrome. But they
both twain

Less honour to their conqueror were than Dictys was
or than

Was Helops. Helops with a dart was stricken, which
through ran

His head and, entering at the right ear, to the left ear
went.

And Dictys, from a slippery knap down sliding, as he
meant

To shun Pirithous pressing on, fell headlong down and
with

370

His hugeness brake the greatest ash that was in all the
frith

And goared his guts upon the stump. To wreak his
death comes Phare,

And from the mount a mighty rock with both his
hands he tare;

Which as he was about to throw, Duke Theseus did
prevent

And with an oaken plant upon his mighty elbow leant
Him such a blow as that he brake the bones and
passed no further.

For leisure would not serve him then his maimèd corse
to murder.

He leapt on high Bianor's back, who none was wont to
bear

Besides himself. Against his sides his knees fast
nipping were;

And, with his left hand taking hold upon his foretop
hair,

380 He cuffed him with his knobbèd plant about the
frowning face

And made his wattled brows to break. And with his
oaken mace

He overthrew Nedymnus; and Lycespes with his dart;
And Hippasus, whose beard did hide his breast the
greater part;

And Riphey, taller than the trees; and Therey, who
was wont

Among the hills of Thessaly for cruel bears to hunt
And bear them angry home alive. It did Demoleon
spite

That Theseus had so good success and fortune in his
fight.

An old long pine-tree rooted fast he strave with all his
might

To pluck up whole, both trunk and root. Which when
he could not bring

390 To pass, he brake it off and at his enemy did it fling.

But Theseus by admonishment of heavenly Pallas (so
He would have folk believe it were) start back a great
way fro

The weapon as it came. Yet fell it not without some
harm.

It cut from Crantor's left side bulk his shoulder, breast
and arm.

This Crantor was thy father's squire, Achilles, and was
given

Him by Amyntor, ruler of the Dolops, who was driven
By battle for to give him as an hostage for the peace
To be observèd faithfully. When Peleus in the press
A great way off beheld him thus fallen dead of this
same wound,

400 “O Crantor, dearest man to me of all above the
ground,

Hold here an obit-gift,” he said. And both with force of
heart

And hand at stout Demoleon's head he threw an ashen
dart,

Which brake the wattling of his ribs and sticking in the
bone

Did shake. He pullèd out the steal with much ado
alone;

The head thereof stack still behind among his lungs
and lights.

Enforced to courage with his pain, he riseth straight
uprights

And, pawing at his enemy with his horsish feet, he
smites

Upon him. Peleus bare his strokes upon his burgonet

And fenced his shoulders with his shield and evermore
did set

410 His weapon upward with the point, which by his
shoulders pierced

Through both his breasts at one full blow. Howbeit,
your father erst

Had killèd Hyle and Phlegrey and Hiphinoüs aloof
And Danes, who boldly durst at hand his manhood put
in proof.

To these was added Dorylas, who ware upon his head
A cap of wolf's skin; and the horns of oxen dyèd red
With blood were then his weapon. I (for then my
courage gave

Me strength) said, "See how much thy horns less force
than iron have,"

And therewithal with manly might a dart at him I
drave.

Which when he could not shun, he clapped his right
hand flat upon

420 His forehead where the wound should be; for why his
hand anon

Was nailèd to his forehead fast. He roarèd out amain.

And as he stood amazed and began to faint for pain,
Your father Peleus (for he stood hard by him) strake
him under

The middle belly with his sword and ripped his womb
asunder.

Out girds me Doryl straight and trails his guts upon
the ground

And, trampling underneath his feet, did break them;
and they wound

About his legs so snarling that he could no further go

But fell down dead with empty womb. Nought bootéd
Cyllar tho
His beauty in that frantic fray – at least wise if we
grant
430 That any might in that strange shape of nature's
beauty vaunt.
His beard began but then to bud; his beard was like
the gold;
So also were his yellow locks which, goodly to behold,
Midway beneath his shoulders hung. There rested in
his face
A sharp and lively cheerfulness with sweet and
pleasant grace.
His neck, breast, shoulders, arms and hands, as far as
he was man,
Were such as never carver's work yet stain them could
or can.
His nether part likewise, which was a horse, was every
whit
Full equal with his upper part, or little worse than it.
For had ye given him horse's neck and head, he was a
beast
440 For Castor to have ridden on. So burly was his breast;
So handsome was his back to bear a saddle; and his
hair
Was black as jet, but that his tail and feet milk-whitish
were.
Full many females of his race did wish him to their
make.
But only Dame Hylonome for lover he did take.
Of all the half-brutes in the woods there did not any
dwell

More comely than Hylonome. She used herself so well
In dalliance and in loving and in uttering of her love
That she alone held Cyllarus. As much as did behove
In suchy limbs, she trimmèd them as most the eye
might move.

450 With combing smooth she made her hair; she
wallowed her full oft

In roses and in rosemary or violets sweet and soft.
Sometime she carried lilies white. And twice a day she
washed

Her visage in the spring that from the top of Pagas
passed;

And in the stream she twice a day did bathe her limbs.
And on

Her leftside or her shoulders came the comeliest things
and none

But finest skins of choicest beasts. Alike each lovèd
other.

Together they among the hills roamed up and down;
together

They went to covert; and that time together they did
enter

The Lapith's house and there the fray together did
adventure.

460 A dart on Cyllar's left side came (I know not who it
sent)

Which somewhat underneath his neck his breast
asunder splint.

As lightly as his heart was razed, no sooner was the
dart

Plucked out, but all his body waxed stark cold and
dyèd swart.

Immediately Hylonome his dying limbs up stayed
And put her hand upon the wound to stop the blood
and laid

Her mouth to his and laboured sore to stay his passing
sprite.

But when she saw him throughly dead, then, speaking
words which might

Not to my hearing come for noise, she stucked herself
upon

The weapon that had gorèd him and died with him
anon,

470 Embracing him between her arms. There also stood
before

Mine eyes the grim Phaeocomes, both man and horse,
who wore

A lion's skin upon his back fast knit with knots afore.

He snatching up a timber log which scarcely two good
team

Of oxen could have stirred, did throw the same with
force extreme

At Phonoleny's son. The log him all in fitters strake

And of his head the brainpan in a thousand pieces
brake,

That at his mouth, his ears and eyes and at his nostrils
too

His crushèd brain came roping out, as cream is wont
to do

From sieves or riddles made of wood or as a cullis out

480 From strainer or from colander. But as he went about

To strip him from his harness as he lay upon the
ground

(Your father knoweth this full well), my sword his guts
did wound.

Teleboas and Cthonius both were also slain by me.

Sir Cthonius for his weapon had a forkèd bough of
tree;

The t'other had a dart. His dart did wound me – you
may see

The scar thereof remaining yet. Then was the time that
I

Should sent have been to conquer Troy. Then was the
time that I

Might through my force and prowess, if not vanquish
Hector stout,

Yet at the least have held him wag, I put you out of
doubt.

490 But then was Hector nobody, or but a babe. And now

Am I forspent and worn with years. What should I tell
you how

Pyraetus died by Periphas? Or wherefore should I
make

Long process for to tell you of Sir Ampycus, that strake
The four-foot Oecley on the face with dart of cornel-
tree,

The which had neither head nor point? Or how that
Macare

Of mountain Pelethrony with a lever lent a blow

To Erigdupus on the breast which did him overthrow?

Full well I do remember that Cymelius threw a dart

Which lighted full in Nessay's flank about his privy part.

500 And think not you that Mops, the son of Ampycus,
could do

No good but only prophesy. This stout Odites, who

Had both the shapes of man and horse, by Mops's dart
was slain.

And, labouring for to speak his last, he did but strive
in vain;

For Mops's dart together nailed his tongue and nether
chap

And, piercing through his throat, did make a wide and
deadly gap.

Five men had Caen already slain; their wounds I
cannot say.

The names and number of them all right well I bear
away.

The names of them were Styphelus and Brome and
Helymus,

Pyracmon with his forest bill and stout Antimachus.

Out steps the biggest centaur there, huge Latreus,
armèd in

Alesus of Emathia's spoil, slain late before by him.

His years were mid 'tween youth and age; his courage
still was young;

And on his auburn head hoar hairs peered here and
there among.

His furniture was then a sword, a target and a lance
Emathian-like. To both the parts he did his face
advance

And, brandishing his weapon brave, in circlewise did
prance

About and stoutly spake these words: "And must I bear
with you,

Dame Caeney? For none other than a mother, I avow,
No better than a mother will I count thee while I live.

520 Rememb'rest not what shape by birth Dame Nature did
thee give?
Forget'st thou how thou purchasèdst this counterfeited
shape
Of man? Considerest what thou art by birth, and how
for rape
Thou art become the thing thou art? Go take thy
distaff and
Thy spindle, and in spinning yarn go exercise thy
hand.
Let men alone with feats of arms." As Latreus made
this stout
And scornful taunting, in a ring still turning him
about,
This Caeney with a dart did hit him full upon the side
Whereas the horse and man were joined together in a
hide.
The stripe made Latreus mad, and with his lance in
rage he strake
530 Upon Sir Caeney's naked ribs. The lance rebounded
back
Like hailstones from a tilèd house, or as a man should
pat
Small stones upon a drumslade's head. He came more
near with that
And in his brawnèd side did strive to thrust his sword.
There was
No way for sword to enter in. "Yet shalt thou not so
pass
My hands," said he. "Well, sith the point is blunted,
thou shalt die
Upon the edge." And with that word he fetched his
blow awry

And, sidling, with a sweeping stroke along his belly
smit.

The stripe did give a clink as if it had on marble hit,
And therewithal the sword did break and on his neck
did light.

540

When Caeney had sufficiently given Latreus leave to
smite

His flesh which was unmainable, "Well now", quoth
he, "let's see

If my sword able be or no to bite the flesh of thee."

In saying so, his dreadful sword as far as it would go

He underneath his shoulder thrust and, wrenching to
and fro

Among his guts, made wound in wound. Behold, with
hideous cry

The double-membered Centaurs, sore abashed, upon
him fly

And throw their weapons all at him. Their weapons
down did fall

As if they had rebated been, and Caeney for them all
Abides unstricken through. Yea, none was able blood
to draw.

550

The strangeness of the case made all amazed that it
saw.

"Fie, fie, for shame", quoth Monychus, "that such a
rabble can

Not overcome one wight alone who scarcely is a man.

Although, to say the very truth, he is the man and we

Through faintness that that he was born by nature for
to be.

What profits these huge limbs of ours? What helps our
double force?

Or what avails our double shape of man as well as
horse,
By puissant nature joined in one? I cannot think that
we
Of sovereign goddess Juno were begot, or that we be
Ixion's sons, who was so stout of courage and so
haught
560 As that he durst on Juno's love attempt to give assault.
The enemy that doth vanquish us is scarcely half a
man.
Whelm blocks and stones and mountains whole upon
his hard brainpan
And press ye out his lively ghost with trees. Let timber
choke
His chaps; let weight enforce his death instead of
wounding stroke.”
This said, by chance he gets a tree blown down by
blustering blasts
Of southern winds and on his foe with all his might it
casts
And gave example to the rest to do the like. Within
A while the shadows which did hide Mount Pelion
waxèd thin,
And not a tree was left upon Mount Othrys ere they
went.
570 Sir Caeney, underneath this great huge pile of timber
pent,
Did chafe and on his shoulders hard the heavy logs did
bear.
But when above his face and head the trees up stackèd
were,

So that he had no venting place to draw his breath,
one while

He fainted, and another while he heavèd at the pile
To tumble down the logs that lay so heavy on his back
And for to win the open air again above the stack,
As if the Mountain Ida, lo, which yonder we do see
So high, by earthquake at a time should chance to
shaken be.

Men doubt what did become of him. Some hold
opinion that

580 The burden of the woods had driven his soul to Limbo
flat.

But Mopsus said it was not so. For he did see a brown
Bird flying from amid the stack and towering up and
down.

It was the first time and the last that ever I beheld
That fowl. When Mopsus softly saw him soaring in the
field,

He looked wistly after him and cried out on high,
“Hail, peerless pearl of Lapith race; hail, Caeney, late
ago

A valiant knight and now a bird of whom there is no
mo.”

The author causèd men believe the matter to be so.

Our sorrow set us in a rage. It was to us a grief

590 That by so many foes one knight was killed without
relief.

Then ceased we not to wreck our teen till most was
slain in fight

And that the rest, discomfited, were fled away by
night.’

As Nestor all the process of this battle did rehearse

Between the valiant Lapiths and misshapen
Centaurs fierce,
Tlepolemus, displeased sore that Hercules was passed
With silence, could not hold his peace, but out these
words did cast:

‘My lord, I muse you should forget my father's praise
so quite.

For often unto me himself was wonted to recite
How that the cloud-bred folk by him were chiefly put
to flight.’

The Right sadly Nestor answered thus: ‘Why should you
death of me constrain
Nestor's
brothers

To call to mind forgotten griefs and for to rear
again

The sorrows now outworn by time? Or force me to
declare

The hatred and displeasure which I to your father
bear?

In sooth, his doings greater were than might be well
believed.

He filled the world with high renown, which nobly he
achieved.

Which thing I would I could deny. For neither set we
out

Deiphobus, Polydamus, nor Hector, that most stout
And valiant knight, the strength of Troy; for who will
praise his foe?

Your father overthrew the walls of Messene long ago
And razed Pyle and Ely towns, unworthy serving so.

And fierce against my father's house he used both
sword and fire.

And (not to speak of others whom he killèd in his ire)
Twice six we were, the sons of Nele, all lusty
gentlemen.

Twice six of us, excepting me, by him were murdered
then.

The death of all the rest might seem a matter not so
strange,

But strange was Periclymen's death, who had the
power to change

And leave and take what shape he list (by Neptune to
him given,

The founder of the house of Nele). For when he had
been driven

To try all shapes and none could help, he last of all
became

620 The fowl that in his hooked feet doth bear the flashing
flame

Sent down from heaven by Jupiter. He, practising
those birds,

With flapping wings and bowing beak and hooked
talons girds

At Herc'le and bescratched his face. Too certain, I may
say,

Thy father aimed his shaft at him. For as he towering
lay

Among the clouds, he hit him underneath the wing.
The stroke

Was small; howbeit, because therewith – the sinews
being broke –

He wanted strength to maintain flight, he fell me to
the ground

Through weakness of his wing. The shaft that stickèd
in the wound

By reason of the burden of his body pierced his side
And at the left side of his neck all bloody forth did
glide.

Now tell me, O thou beautiful Lord Admiral of the
Fleet

Of Rhodes, if me to speak the praise of Herc'le it be
meet.

But lest that of my brothers' deaths men think I do
desire

A further venge than silence of the prowess of thy sire,
I love thee even with all my heart and take thee for
my friend.'

When Nestor of his pleasant tales had made this
friendly end,

They called for a bowl of wine and from the table
went,

And all the residue of the night in sleeping soundly
spent.

*The
death of
Achilles*

But Neptune, like a father, took the matter sore to
heart

That Cygnet to a swan he was constrained to
convert.

And, hating fierce Achilles, he did wreak his cruel teen
Upon him more uncourteously than had beseeming
been.

For when the wars well near full twice five years had
lasted, he

Unshorn Apollo thus bespake: 'O nephew unto me

Most dear of all my brother's imps, who helpèdst me to
lay
Foundation of the walls of Troy for which we had no
pay,
And canst thou sighs forbear to see the Asian empire
fall?
And doth it not lament thy heart when thou to mind
dost call
So many thousand people slain in keeping Ilion wall?
Or – to th'intent particularly I do not speak of all –
650 Rememb'rest thou not Hector's ghost, who harried was
about
His town of Troy? Where ne'ertheless Achilles, that
same stout
And far in fight more butcherly, who strives with all
his might
To stroy the work of me and thee, lives still in
healthful plight.
If ever he do come within my danger he shall feel
What force is in my triple mace. But sith with sword of
steel
I may not meet him as my foe, I pray thee, unbeware
Go kill him with a sudden shaft and rid me of my
care.'

660 Apollo did consent, as well his uncle for to please
As also for a private grudge himself had for to ease.
And in a cloud he down among the host of Troy did
slide
Where Paris dribbling out his shafts among the Greeks
he spied.
And, telling him what god he was, said, 'Wherefore
dost thou waste

Thine arrows on the simple sort? If any care thou hast
Of those that are thy friends, go turn against Achilles'
head

And like a man revenge on him thy brothers that are
dead.'

In saying this, he brought him where Achilles with his
brand

Was beating down the Trojan folk, and levelled so his
hand

As that Achilles tumbled down stark dead upon the
land.

670 This was the only thing whereof the old king Priam
might

Take comfort after Hector's death. That stout and
valiant knight

Achilles, who had overthrown so many men in fight,
Was by that coward carpet-knight bereavèd of his life
Who like a caitiff stale away the Spartan prince's wife.
But if of weapon womanish he had foreknown it had
His destiny been to lose his life, he would have been
more glad

That Queen Penthesilea's bill had slain him out of
hand.

Now was the fear of Phrygian folk, the only glory and
Defence of Greeks, that peerless prince in arms,
Achilles, turned

680 To ashes. That same god that had him armed him also
burned.

Now is he dust; and of that great Achilles bideth still
A thing of nought that scarcely can a little coffin fill.
Howbeit, his worthy fame doth live and spreadeth
over all

The world, a measure meet for such a person to befall.
This matcheth thee, Achilles, full; and this can never
die.

His target also, to th'intent that men might plainly spy
What wight's it was, did move debate, and for his
armour burst

Out deadly feud. Not Diomed nor Ajax Oileus durst
Make claim or challenge to the same, nor Atreus'
younger son

690 Nor yet his elder, though in arms much honour they
had won.

Alone the sons of Telamon and Laert did assay
Which of them two of that great prize should bear the
bell away.

But Agamemnon from himself the burden puts and
clears

His hands of envy, causing all the captains and the
peers

Of Greece to meet amid the camp together in a place,
To whom he put the hearing and the judgement of the
case.

FINIS DUODECIMI LIBRI.

The Thirteenth Book of Ovid's Metamorphoses

Ajax The lords and captains being set together with the
claims king

Achilles'
arms

And all the soldiers standing round about them in a
ring,

The owner of the sevenfold shield, to these did Ajax
rise.

And as he could not bridle wrath, he cast his
frowning eyes

Upon the shore and on the fleet that there at anchor
lies

And, throwing up his hands, 'O God, and must we
plead', quoth he,

'Our case before our ships? And must Ulysses stand
with me?

But like a wretch he ran his way when Hector came
with fire,

Which I, defending, from these ships did force him to
retire.

10 It easier is, therefore, with words in print to maintain
strife

Than for to fight it out with fists. But neither am I rife
In words nor he in deeds. For look, how far I him
excel

In battle and in feats of arms, so far bears he the bell

From me in talking. Neither think I requisite to tell
My acts among you. You yourselves have seen them
very well.

But let Ulysses tell you his, done all in hudder-
mudder

And whereunto the only night is privy and none
other.

The prize is great, I do confess, for which we strive.
But yet

It is dishonour unto me for that in claiming it

20 So base a person standeth in contention for the same.

To think it mine already ought to counted be no
shame

Nor pride in me, although the thing of right great
value be

Of which Ulysses stands in hope. For now already he
Hath won the honour of this prize, in that when he
shall sit

Besides the cushion, he may brag he strave with me
for it.

And though I wanted valiantness, yet should nobility
Make with me. I of Telamon am known the son to be,
Who under valiant Hercules the walls of Troy did
scale

And in the ship of Pagasa to Colchos land did sail.

30 His father was that Aeacus who executeth right

Among the ghosts where Sisyphus heaves up with all
his might

The massy stone aye tumbling down. The highest
Jove of all

Acknowledgeth this Aeacus and doth his son him call.

Thus am I, Ajax, the third from Jove. Yet let this
pedigree,

O Achives, in this case of mine available not be
Unless I prove it fully with Achilles to agree.

He was my brother, and I claim that was my
brother's. Why

Should'st thou, that art of Sisyphe's blood and for to
filch and lie

Expressest him in every point, by forged pedigree

40

Ally thee to the Aeacids, as though we did not see

Thee to the house of Aeacus a stranger for to be?

And is it reason that you should this armour me deny

Because I former was in arms and needed not a spy

To fetch me forth? Or think you him more worthy it
to have

That came to warfare hindermost and feigned himself
to rave,

Because he would have shunned the war, until a
subtler head

And more unprofitable for himself, Sir Palamed,

Escried the crafty fetches of his fearful heart and
drew

Him forth a warfare, which he sought so cowardly to
eschew?

50

Must he now needs enjoy the best and richest armour,
who

Would none at all have worn unless he forcèd were
thereto,

And I with shame be put beside my cousin-german's
gifts

Because to shun the foremost brunt of wars I sought
no shifts?

Would God this mischief-master had in very deed
been mad

Or else believèd so to be, and that we never had
Brought such a panion unto Troy. Then should not
Poean's son

In Lemnos like an outlaw to the shame of all us wone.
Who, lurking now (as men report) in woods and
caves, doth move

The very flints with sighs and groans and prayers to
God above

60 To send Ulysses his desert. Which prayer, if there be
A god, must one day take effect. And now behold
how he,

By oath a soldier of our camp, yea, and as well as we
A captain too, alas, who was by Hercules assigned
To have the keeping of his shafts, with pain and
hunger pined,

Is clad and fed with fowls and dribs his arrows up
and down

At birds, which were by destiny prepared to stroy
Troy town!

Yet liveth he because he is not still in company
With sly Ulysses. Palamed, that wretched knight,
perdie,

Would eke he had abandoned been. For then should
still the same

70 Have been alive, or at the least have died without our
shame.

But this companion, bearing, ah, too well in wicked
mind

His madness which Sir Palamed by wisdom out did
find,

Appeachèd him of treason, that he practised to betray
The Greekish host. And for to vouch the fact, he
showed straightway

A mass of gold that he himself had hidden in his tent
And forgèd letters which he feigned from Priam to be
sent.

Thus, either by his murdering men or else by
banishment,

Abateth he the Greekish strength. This is Ulysses'
fight.

This is the fear he puts men in. But though he had
more might

80 Than Nestor hath in eloquence, he shall not compass
me

To think his lewd abandoning of Nestor for to be
No fault; who, being cast behind by wounding of his
horse

And slow with age, with calling on Ulysses waxing
hoarse,

Was ne'ertheless betrayed by him. Sir Diomed knows
this crime

Is unsurmised. For he himself did at that present time
Rebuke him oftentimes by name and fiercely him
upbraid

With flying from his fellow so who stood in need of
aid.

With rightful eyes doth God behold the deeds of
mortal men.

Lo, he that helpèd not his friend wants help himself
again.

90 And as he did forsake his friend in time of need, so he
Did in the selfsame peril fall forsaken for to be.

He made a rod to beat himself. He called and crièd
out

Upon his fellows. Straight I came; and there I saw the
lout

Both quake and shake for fear of death and look as
pale as clout.

I set my shield between him and his foes and him
bestrid

And saved the dastard's life. Small praise redounds of
that I did.

But if thou wilt contend with me, let's to the selfsame
place

Again; be wounded as thou wert and in the foresaid
case

Of fear, beset about with foes; couch underneath my
shield;

100 And then contend thou with me there amid the open
field.

Howbeit, I had no sooner rid this champion of his
foes

But, where for wounds he scarce before could totter
on his toes,

He ran away apace as though he nought at all did ail.

Anon comes Hector to the field and bringeth at his
tail

The gods. Not only thy heart there, Ulysses, did thee
fail

But even the stoutest courages and stomachs gan to
quail,

So great a terror brought he in. Yet in the midst of all
His bloody ruff, I coped with him and with a foiling
fall

Did overthrow him to the ground. Another time,
when he
110 Did make a challenge, you, my lords, by lot did
choose out me
And I did match him hand to hand. Your wishes were
not vain.
For if you asked me what success our combat did
obtain,
I came away unvanquishèd. Behold, the men of Troy
Brought fire and sword and all the fiends our navy to
destroy.
. And where was sly Ulysses then with all his talk so
smooth?
This breast of mine was fain to fence your thousand
ships, forsooth,
The hope of your returning home. For saving that
same day
So many ships, this armour give. But (if that I shall
say
The truth) the greater honour now this armour bears
away,
120 And our renowns together link. For, as of reason
ought,
An Ajax for this armour, not an armour now is sought
For Ajax. Let Dulichius match with these the horses
white
Of Rhesus, dastard Dolon, and the coward carpet-
knight,
King Priam's Helen, and the stealth of Pallady by
night.
Of all these things was nothing done by day nor
nothing wrought

Without the help of Diomed. And therefore, if ye
thought

To give them to so small deserts, divide the same and
let

Sir Diomed have the greater part. But what should
Ithacus get

And if he had them, who doth all his matters in the
dark,

130 Who never weareth armour, who shoots aye at his
own mark

To trap his foe by stealth unwares? The very
headpiece may

With brightness of the glistening gold his privy feats
bewray

And show him lurking. Neither well of force
Dulichius were

The weight of great Achilles' helm upon his pate to
wear.

It cannot but a burden be, and that right great, to
bear

With whose same shrimpish arms of his Achilles'
mighty spear.

Again his target, graven with the whole huge world
thereon,

Agrees not with a fearful hand, and chiefly such a one
As taketh filching even by kind. Thou, losel, thou dost
seek

140 A gift that will but weaken thee. Which if the folk of
Greek

Shall give thee through their oversight, it will be unto
thee

Occasion of thine enemies spoiled, not feared, for to
be;

And flight (wherein, thou coward, thou all others
may'st outbrag)

Will hindered be when after thee such masses thou
shalt drag.

Moreover, this thy shield, that feels so seld the force
of fight,

Is sound. But mine is gashed and hacked and stricken
thorough quite

A thousand times with bearing blows. And therefore
mine must walk

And put another in his stead. But what needs all this
talk?

Let's now be seen another while what each of us can
do.

150

The thickest of our armèd foes this armour throw into

And bid us fetch the same fro thence. And which of
us doth fetch

The same away, reward ye him therewith.' Thus far
did stretch

The words of Ajax; at the end whereof there did
ensue

A muttering of the soldiers, till Lae'rtes' son, the
prew,

Stood up and raisèd soberly his eyelids from the
ground

(On which he had a little while them pitchèd in a
stound)

And, looking on the noblemen who longed his words
to hear,

He thus began with comely grace and sober pleasant
cheer:

Ulysses
claims

Achilles'
arms

‘My lords, if my desire and yours might erst have
taken place,

It should not at this present time have been a
doubtful case

What person hath most right to this great prize for
which we strive.

Achilles should his armour have, and we still him
alive.

Whom sith that cruel destiny to both of us denies' –

With that same word, as though he wept, he wiped
his watery eyes –

‘What wight of reason rather ought to be Achilles'
heir

Than he through whom to this your camp Achilles
did repair?

Alonely let it not avail Sir Ajax here that he

Is such a dolt and grosshead as he shows himself to
be,

Ne let my wit (which aye hath done you good, O
Greeks) hurt me.

170

But suffer this mine eloquence, such as it is, which
now

Doth for his master speak and oft ere this hath spoke
for you,

Be undisdained. Let none refuse his own good gifts he
brings.

For as for stock and ancestors and other suchlike
things

Whereof ourselves no founders are, I scarcely dare
them grant

To be our own. But for as much as Ajax makes his
vaunt

To be the fourth from Jove, even Jove the founder is
also

Of my house, and than four descents I am from him
no mo.

Laërtes is my father and Arcesius his, and he

Begotten was of Jupiter. And in this pedigree

180 Is neither any damned soul nor outlaw, as ye see.

Moreover, by my mother's side I come of Mercury:

Another honour to my house. Thus both by father's
side

And mother's, as you may perceive, I am to gods
allied.

But neither for because I am a better gentleman

Than Ajax by the mothers side, nor that my father
can

Avouch himself unguilty of his brother's blood, do I

This armour claim. Weigh you the case by merits
uprightly,

Provided no prerogative of birthright Ajax bear

For that his father Telamon and Peleus brothers were.

190 Let only prowess in this prize the honour bear away.

Or if the case on kindred or on birthright seem to
stay,

His father Peleus is alive, and Pyrrhus eke, his son;

What title then can Ajax make? This gear of right
should wone

To Phthia or to Scyros Isle. And Teucer is as well

Achilles' uncle as is he. Yet doth not Teucer mell.
And if he did, should he obtain? Well, sith the case
doth rest

On trial which of us can prove his doings to be best,
I needs must say my deeds are mo than well I can
express;

Yet will I show them orderly as near as I can guess.

200 Foreknowing that her son should die, the lady Thetis
hid

Achilles in a maid's attire; by which fine sleight she
did

All men deceive and Ajax too. This armour in a pack
With other women's trifling toys I carried on my
back,

A bait to train a manly heart. Apparelled like a maid,
Achilles took the spear and shield in hand and with
them played.

Then said I, "O thou goddess' son, why should'st thou
be afraid

To raze great Troy, whose overthrow for thee is only
stayed?"

And, laying hand upon him, I did send him, as you
see,

To valiant doings meet for such a valint man as he.

210 And therefore all the deeds of him are my deeds. I did
wound

King Teleph with his spear and, when he lay upon the
ground,

I was entreated with the spear to heal him safe and
sound.

That Thebe lieth overthrown is my deed, you must
think;.

I made the folk of Tenedos and Lesbos for to shrink.
Both Chryse and Cillas, Phoebus' towns, and Scyros I
did take,

And my right hand Lyrnessus' walls to ground did
level make.

I gave you him that should confound (besides a
number mo)

The valiant Hector. Hector, that our most renownèd
foe,

Is slain by me. This armour here I sue again to have;

220 This armour, by the which I found Achilles. I it gave

Achilles while he was alive and, now that he is gone,
I claim it as mine own again. What time, the grief of
one

Had pierced the hearts of all the Greeks and that our
thousand sail

At Aulis by Euboea stayed because the winds did fail,
Continuing either none at all or clean against us long,
And that our Agamemnon was by Destinies
overstrong

Commanded for to sacrifice his guiltless daughter to
Diana, which her father then refusing for to do,
Was angry with the gods themselves and, though-he
were a king,

230 Continued also father-like; by reason, I did bring

His gentle nature to relent for public profit's sake.

I must confess (whereat his grace shall no displeasure
take),

Before a partial judge I undertook a right hard case.

Howbeit, for his brother's sake and for the royal mace

Committed and his people's weal, at length he was
content

To purchase praise with blood. Then was I to the
mother sent,

Who not persuaded was to be but compassed with
some guile.

Had Ajax on this errand gone, our ships had all this
while

Lain still there yet for want of wind. Moreover, I was
sent

240

To Ilion as ambassador. I boldly thither went

And entered and beheld the court, wherein there was
as then

Great store of princes, dukes, lords, knights and other
valiant men.

And yet I boldly, ne'ertheless, my message did at
large,

The which the whole estate of Greece had given me
erst in charge.

I made complaint of Paris and accused him to his
head,

Demanding restitution of Queen Helen that same
stead

And of the booty with her ta'en. Both Priamus the
king

And eke Antenor, his ally, the words of me did sting.

And Paris and his brothers and the residue of his train

250

That under him had made the spoil could hard and
scarce refrain

Their wicked hands. You, Menelay, do know I do not
feign.

And that day was the first in which we jointly gan
sustain

A taste of perils, store whereof did then behind
remain.

It would be overlong to tell each profitable thing
That during this long lasting war I well to pass did
bring

By force as well as policy. For after that the first
Encounter once was overpast, our enemies never
durst

Give battle in the open field, but held themselves
within

Their walls and bulwarks till the time the tenth year
did begin.

Now what did'st thou of all that while, that canst do
nought but strike?

Or to what purpose servèdst thou? For if thou my
deeds seek,

I practised sundry policies to trap our foes unaware;
I fortified our camp with trench which heretofore lay
bare.

I heartened our companions with a quiet mind to
bear

The longness of the weary war; I taught us how we
were

Both to be fed and furnishèd. And to and fro I went
To places where the council thought most meet I
should be sent.

Behold, the king, deceived in his dream by false
pretence

Of Jove's commandment, bade us raise our seige and
get us hence.

The author of his doing so may well be his defence.

Now Ajax should have letted this and called them
back again

To sack the town of Troy. He should have fought with
might and main.

Why did he not restrain them when they ready were
to go?

Why took he not his sword in hand? Why gave he not
as tho

Some counsel for the fleeting folk to follow at the
brunt?

In faith, it had a trifle been to him that aye is wont
Such vaunting in his mouth to have. But he himself
did fly

As well as others. I did see and was ashamed, I,
To see thee when thou fled'st and did'st prepare so
cowardly

To sail away. And thereupon I thus aloud did cry:

“What mean ye, sirs? What madness doth you move
to go to ship

And suffer Troy, as good as ta'en, thus out of hand to
slip?

What else this tenth year bear ye home than shame?”
With suchlike word

And other which the eloquence of sorrow did afford,
I brought them from their flying ships. Then
Agamemnon called

Together all the captains who with fear were yet
appalled.

But Ajax durst not then once creak. Yet durst
Thersites be

So bold as rail upon the kings, and he was paid by me

For playing so the saucy jack. Then stood I on my
toes

290 And to my fearful countrymen gave heart against
their foes

And shed new courage in their minds through talk
that fro me goes.

From that time forth whatever thing hath valiantly
achieved

By this good fellow been, is mine, who him from
flight reprieved.

And now to touch thee: which of all the Greeks
commendeth thee

Or seeketh thee? But Diomed communicates with me
His doings and alloweth me, and thinks him well
apaid

To have Ulysses ever as companion at the braid.

And somewhat worth you will it grant, I trow, alone
for me

Out of so many thousand Greeks by Diomed picked to
be.

300 No lot compellèd me to go, and yet I, setting light

As well the peril of my foes as danger of the night,
Killed Dolon, who about the selfsame feat that night
did stray

That we went out for. But I first compelled him to
bewray

All things concerning faithless Troy and what it went
about.

When all was learned and nothing left behind to
hearken out,

I might have then come home with praise. I was not
so content.

Proceeding further, to the camp of Rhesus straight I
went

And killèd both himself and all his men about his tent
And, taking both his chariot and his horses which
were white,

310 Returnèd home in triumph like a conqueror from
fight.

Deny you me the armour of the man whose steeds the
foe

Requirèd for his playing of the spy a-night, and so
May Ajax be more kind to me than you are! What
should I

Declare unto you how my sword did waste right
valiantly

Sarpedon's host of Lycia? I by force did overthrow
Alastor, Chrome and Coeranos and Haly on a row.

Alcander and Noëmon, too, and Prytanis beside

And Thoön and Theridamas and Charops also died

By me, and so did Eunomos, enforced by cruel fate;

320 And many mo in sight of Troy I slew of baser state.

There also are, O countrymen, about me woundings
which

The place of them make beautiful. See here' – his
hand did twitch

His shirt aside – 'and credit not vain words. Lo, here
the breast

That always to be one in your affairs hath never
missed.

And yet of all this while no drop of blood hath Ajax
spent

Upon his fellows. Woundless is his body and unrent.

But what skills that, as long as he is able for to vaunt

He fought against both Troy and Jove to save our
fleet? I grant

330 He did so. For I am not of such nature as of spite
Well doings to deface, so that he challenge not the
right

Of all men to himself alone and that he yield to me
Some share, who of the honour look a partner for to
be.

Patroclus also, having on Achilles' armour, sent
The Trojans and their leader hence, to burn our navy
bent.

And yet thinks he that none durst meet with Hector
saving he,

Forgetting both the king and eke his brother, yea, and
me,

Where he himself was but the ninth appointed by the
king

And by the fortune of his lot preferred to do the
thing!

But now for all your valiantness, what issue had, I
pray,

340 Your combat? Shall I tell? Forsooth, that Hector went
his way

And had no harm. Now woe is me, how grieveth it
my heart

To think upon that season when the bulwark of our
part,

Achilles, died! When neither tears nor grief nor fear
could make

Me for to stay, but that upon these shoulders I did
take,

I say, upon these shoulders I Achilles' body took

And this same armour clapped thereon, which now to
wear I look.

Sufficient strength I have to bear as great a weight as
this,

And eke a heart wherein regard of honour rooted is.

Think you that Thetis for her son so instantly
besought

350 Sir Vulcan this same heavenly gift to give her, which
is wrought

With such exceeding cunning, to th'intent a soldier
that

Hath neither wit nor knowledge should it wear? He
knows not what

The things engraven on the shield do mean. Of ocean
sea,

Of land, of heaven and of the stars no skill at all hath
he.

The Bear that never dives in sea he doth not
understand,

The Pleiads, nor the Hyads, nor the cities that do
stand

Upon the earth, nor yet the sword that Orion holds in
hand.

He seeks to have an armour of the which he hath no
skill.

And yet in finding fault with me, because I had no
will

360 To follow this same painful war and sought to shun
the same

And made it somewhat longer time before I thither
came,

He sees not how he speaks reproach to stout Achilles'
name.

For if to have dissembled in this case ye count a
crime,

We both offenders be. Or if protracting of the time
Ye count blameworthy, yet was I the timelier of us
twain.

Achilles' loving mother him, my wife did me detain.
The former time was given to them; the rest was
given to you.

And therefore do I little pass although I could not
now

Defend my fault, sith such a man of prowess, birth
and fame

370 As was Achilles was with me offender in the same.

But yet was he espièd by Ulysses' wit, but nat
Ulysses by Sir Ajax' wit. And lest ye wonder at
The railing of this foolish dolt at me, he doth object
Reproach to you. For if that I offended to detect
Sir Palamed of forgèd fault, could you without your
shame

Arraign him and condemn him eke to suffer for the
same?

But neither could Sir Palamed excuse him of the
crime

So heinous and so manifest; and you yourselves that
time

380 Not only his indictment heard, but also did behold
His deed avouchèd to his face by bringing in the gold.

And as for Philoctetes, that he is in Lemnos, I
Deserve not to be touched therewith. Defend your
crime; for why

You all consented thereunto. Yet do not I deny

But that I gave the counsel to convey him out of way
From toil of war and travail, that by rest he might
assay

To ease the greatness of his pains. He did thereto
obey

And by so doing is alive. Not only faithful was
This counsel that I gave the man, but also happy, as
The good success hath showed since. Whom sith the
Destinies do

390 Require in overthrowing Troy, appoint not me
thereto,

But let Sir Ajax rather go. For he with eloquence
Or by some subtle policy shall bring the man from
thence

And pacify him, raging through disease and wrathful
ire.

Nay, first the River Simois shall to his spring retire
And Mountain Ida shall thereon have standing never
a tree,

Yea, and the faithless town of Troy by Greeks shall
rescued be

Before that Ajax' blockish wit shall aught at all avail
When my attempts and practices in your affairs do
fail.

For though thou, Philoctetes, with the king offended
be

400 And with thy fellows everych one and most of all
with me,

Although thou curse and ban me to the hellish pit for
aye

And wishest in thy pain that I by chance might cross
thy way

Of purpose for to draw my blood, yet will I give assay
To fetch thee hither once again. And (if that Fortune
say

Amen) I will as well have thee and eke thine arrows
as

I have the Trojan prophet who by me surprisèd was,
Or as I did the oracles and Trojan fates disclose,
Or as I from her chapel through the thickest of her
foes

The Phrygian Pallad's image fetched. And yet doth
Ajax still

410

Compare himself with me! Ye know it was the
Destinies' will

That Troy should never taken be by any force until
This image first were got. And where was then our
valiant knight

Sir Ajax? Where the stately words of such a hardy
wight?

Why feareth he? Why dares Ulysses, venturing
through the watch,

Commit his person to the night his business to
dispatch?

And through the pikes not only for to pass the
guarded wall,

But also for to enter to the strongest tower of all

And for to take the idol from her chapel and her
shrine

And bear her thence amid his foes? For had this deed
of mine

420

Been left undone, in vain his shield of oxen hides
sevenfold

Should yet the son of Telamon have in his left hand
hold.

That night subdued I Troy town; that night did I it
win

And opened it for you likewise with ease to enter in.

Cease to upbraid me by these looks and mumbling
words of thine

With Diomed; his praise is in this fact as well as mine.

And thou thyself, when for our ships thou did'st in
rescue stand,

Wert not alone; the multitude were helping thee at
hand.

I had but only one with me, who (if he had not
thought

A wise man better than a strong and that preferment
ought

430 Not always follow force of hand) would now himself
have sought

This armour. So would t'other Ajax better stayèd do,

And fierce Eurypyl and the son of haught Andraemon,
too.

No less might eke Idomeney and eke Meriones,

His countryman, and Menelay. For every one of these

Are valiant men of hand and not inferior unto thee

In martial feats. And yet they are contented ruled to
be

By mine advice. Thou hast a hand that serveth well in
fight;

Thou hast a wit that stands in need of my direction
right.

Thy force is witless; I have care of that that may
ensue.

440

Thou well canst fight; the king doth choose the times
for fighting due

By mine advice. Thou only with thy body canst avail;

But I with body and with mind to profit do not fail.

And look how much the master doth excel the galley-
slave,

Or look how much pre-eminence the captain ought to
have

Above his soldier; even so much excel I also thee.

A wit far passing strength of hand enclosed is in me.

In wit rests chiefly all my force. My lords, I pray,
bestow

This gift on him who aye hath been your watchman,
as ye know.

And for my ten years' cark and care endured for your
sake

450

Full recompense for my deserts with this same
honour make.

Our labour draweth to an end; all lets are now by me

Dispatchèd. And by bringing Troy in case to taken be,

I have already taken it. Now, by the hope that ye

Conceive within a while of Troy the ruin for to see,

And by the gods of whom alate our enemies I bereft,

And as by wisdom to be done yet anything is left,

If any bold adventurous deed or any perilous thing

That asketh hazard both of life and limb to pass to
bring,

Or if ye think of Trojan fates there yet doth aught
remain,

460

Remember me. Or if from me this armour you
restrain,

Bestow it on this same.' With that he showed with his
hand

Minerva's fatal image which hard by in sight did
stand.

Ulysses The lords were moved with his words, and then
wins the appeared plain
arms

The force that is in eloquence. The learnèd man
did gain

The armour of the valiant. He that did so oft sustain
Alone both fire and sword and Jove and Hector could
not bide

One brunt of wrath; and whom no force could
vanquish ere that tide,

Now only anguish overcomes. He draws his sword
and says,

'Well, this is mine yet; unto this no claim Ulysses
lays.

470 This must I use against myself; this blade that
heretofore

Hath bathed been in Trojan blood must now his
master gore,

That none may Ajax overcome save Ajax.' With that
word

Into his breast (not wounded erst) he thrust his
deathful sword.

His hand to pull it out again unable was. The blood.
Did spout it out. Anon the ground, bestainèd, where
he stood

-Did breed the pretty purple flower upon a clowre of
green

Which of the wound of Hyacinth had erst engendered
been.

The selfsame letters eke that for the child were
written then

Were now again amid the flower new written for the
man.

480 The former time complaint, the last a name did
represent:

The fall Ulysses, having won the prize, within a while was
of Troy sent

To Thoant's and Hypsiphyle's realm, the land
defamed of old

For murdering all the men therein by women
overbold.

At length attaining land and luck according to his
mind,

To carry Herc'les' arrows back he set his sails to wind.
Which when he with the lord of them among the
Greeks had brought

And of the cruel war at length the utmost feat had
wrought,

At once both Troy and Priam fell. And Priam's
wretched wife

Lost after all her woman's shape and barked all her
life

490 In foreign country. In the place that bringeth to a
strait

The long spread sea of Hellespont did Ilion burn in
height.

The kindled fire with blazing flame continued
unallayed,

And Priam with his agèd blood Jove's altar had
berayed.
And Phoebus' priestess, casting up her hands to
heaven on high,
Was dragged and haled by the hair. The Grays most
spitefully
(As each of them had prisoners ta'en in meed of
victory)
Did draw the Trojan wives away, who, lingering
while they mought
Among the burning temples of their gods, did hang
about
Their sacred shrines and images. Astyanax down was
cast
From that same turret from the which his mother in
time past
Had showed him his father stand oft, fighting to
defend
Himself and that same famous realm of Troy that did
descend
From many noble ancestors. And now the northern
wind
With prosperous blasts to get them thence did put the
Greeks in mind.
The shipmen went aboard and hoist up sails and
made fro thence.
'Adieu, dear Troy,' the women cried. 'We halèd are
from hence.'
And therewithal they kissed the ground and left, yet
smoking still,
Their native houses. Last of all took ship against her
will

Queen Hecub, who (a piteous case to see) was found
amid
510 The tombs in which her sons were laid. And there, as
Hecub did
Embrace their chests and kiss their bones, Ulysses,
void of care,
Did pull her thence. Yet raught she up and in her
bosom bare
Away a crumb of Hector's dust and left on Hector's
grave
Her hoary hairs and tears, which for poor offerings
she him gave.

The Against the place where Ilion was there is another
deaths of land
Polydorus
and
Polyxena

Manurèd by the Biston men. In this same realm
did stand
King Polymnestor's palace rich, to whom King Priam
sent
His little infant Polydore to foster, to th'intent
He might be out of danger from the wars; wherein he
meant
520 Right wisely, had he not with him great riches sent, a
bait
To stir a wicked covetous mind to treason and deceit.
For when the state of Troy decayed, the wicked king
of Thrace
Did cut his nursechild's weasand and (as though the
sinful case

Together with the body could have quite been put
away)

He threw him also in the sea. It happened by the way
That Agamemnon was compelled with all his fleet to
stay

Upon the coast of Thrace until the sea were waxen
calm

And till the hideous storms did cease and furious
winds were fallen.

Here, rising ghastly from the ground which far about
him brake,

530 Achilles with a-threatening look did like resemblance
make

As when at Agamemnon he his wrongful sword did
shake

And said, 'Unmindful part ye hence of me, O Greeks?
And must

My merits thankless thus with me be buried in the
dust?

Nay, do not so! But to th'intent my death due honour
have,

Let Polyxene in sacrifice be slain upon my grave.'

Thus much he said. And shortly his companions,
doing as

By vision of his cruel ghost commandment given
them was,

Did fetch her from her mother's lap, whom at that
time well near

In that most great adversity alonely she did cheer.

540 The haughty and unhappy maid (and rather to be
thought

A man than woman) to the tomb with cruel hands
was brought

To make a cursèd sacrifice. Who, minding constantly
Her honour, when she, standing at the altar pressed
to die,

Perceived the savage ceremonies in making ready and
The cruel Neoptolemus with naked sword in hand
Stand staring with ungentle eyes upon her gentle
face,

She said, 'Now use thou when thou wilt my gentle
blood. The case

Requires no more delay. Bestow thy weapon in
my chest

Or in my throat;' in saying so she proffered bare her
breast

550 And eke her throat. 'Assure yourselves, it never shall
be seen

That any wight shall by my will have slave of
Polyxene.

Howbeit, with such a sacrifice no god ye can delight.
I would desire no more but that my wretched mother
might

Be ignorant of this my death. My mother hind'reth me
And makes the pleasure of my death much lesser for
to be.

Howbeit, not the death of me should justly grieve her
heart

But her own life. Now to th'intent I freely may depart
To Limbo, stand ye men aloof; and sith I ask but
right,

Forbear to touch me. So my blood unstained in his
sight

560 Shall far more acceptable be, whatever wight he be

Whom ye prepare to pacify by sacrificing me.

Yet (if that these last words of mine may purchase
any grace)

I, daughter of King Priam erst and now in prisoner's
case,

Beseech you all unransomèd to render to my mother

My body and for burial of the same to take none
other

Reward than tears; for
while she could she
did redeem with
gold.'

This said, the tears that she
forbare the people could
not hold;

And even the very priest himself
full sore against his will

And weeping thrust her through
the breast, which she held
stoutly still.

570

She, sinking softly to the ground
with fainting legs, did bear

Even to the very latter gasp a
count'nance void of fear.

And when she fell, she had a care
such parts of her to hide

As womanhood and chastity
forbiddeth to be spied.

The Trojan women took her up
and, mourning, reckonèd

King Priam's children and what
blood that house alone had
shed.

They sighed for fair Polyxene; they
sighèd eke for thee,

Who late wert Priam's wife, who
late wert counted for to be

The flower of Asia in his flower
and queen of mothers all,

But now the booty of the foe, as
evil lot did fall,

And such a booty as the sly
Ulysses did not pass

Upon her, saving that erewhile she
Hector's mother was.

So hardly for his mother could a
master Hector find!

Embracing in her agèd arms the
body of the mind

That was so stout, she poured
thereon with sobbing sighs
unsoft

The tears that for her husband and
her children had so oft

And for her country shedded been.
She weepèd in her wound

And kissed her pretty mouth and
made her breast with
strokes to sound

According to her wonted guise and
in the jellied blood

Berayèd all her grizzled hair and
in. a sorrowful mood

Said these and many other words
with breast bescratched and
rent:

‘O daughter mine, the last for
whom thy mother may
lament

(For what remains?), O
daughter, thou art dead and
gone! I see

Thy wound which at the very
heart strikes me as well as

thee.
And lest that any one of mine
unwounded should depart,
Thou also gotten hast a wound.
Howbeit, because thou wert
A woman, I believèd thee from
weapon to be free.
But notwithstanding that thou art
a woman, I do see
Thee slain by sword. Even he that
killed thy brothers killeth
thee,
Achilles, the decay of Troy and
maker bare of me.
What time that he of Paris' shaft
by Phoebus' means was
slain,
I said, "Of fierce Achilles now no
fear doth more remain."
But then, even then, he most of all
was fearèd for to be.
The ashes of him rageth still
against our race, I see;
We feel an enemy of him, dead
and buried in his grave.
To feed Achilles' fury I a fruitful
issue gave.
Great Troy lies underfoot, and
with a right great grievous
fall
The mischiefs of the commonweal
are fully ended all.

610

But though to others Troy be gone,
yet stands it still to me;
My sorrows run as fresh a race as
ever and as free.

I, late ago a sovereign state,
advanced with such store
Of daughters, sons and son-in-laws
and husband overmore
And daughter-in-laws, am carried
like an outlaw bare and
poor,

By force and violence haled from
my children's tombs, to be
Presented to Penelope a gift, who,
showing me

In spinning my appointed task,
shall say, "This same is she
That was sometime King Priam's
wife; this was the famous
mother

Of Hector." And now, after loss of
such a sort of other,

Thou, who alonely in my grief my
comfort did'st remain,

To pacify our enemy's wrath upon
his tomb art slain.

620

Thus bare I deathgifts for my foes.
To what intent am I,

Most wretched wight, remaining
still? Why do I linger? Why

Doth hurtful age preserve me still
alive? To what intent,

Ye cruel gods, reserve ye me that
hath already spent
Too many years, unless it be new
burials for to see?
And who would think that
Priamus might happy
counted be
Sith Troy is razèd? Happy man is
he in being dead.
His life and kingdom he forwent
together; and this stead
He sees not thee, his daughter,
slain. But peradventure
thou
Shall, like the daughter of a king,
have sumptuous burial now
And with thy noble ancestors thy
body laid shall be.
Our lineage hath not so good luck.
The most that shall to thee
Be yielded are thy mother's tears
and in this foreign land,
To hide thy murdered corse
withal, a little heap of sand.
For all is lost. Nay, yet remains
(for whom I well can find
In heart to live a little while) an
imp unto my mind
Most dear, now only left alone,
sometime of many mo
The youngest, little Polydore,
delivered late ago

To Polymnestor, king of Thrace,
 who dwells within these
 bounds.

But wherefore do I stay so long in
 washing of her wounds

And face berayed with gory
 blood?' In saying thus, she
 went

To seaward with an agèd pace and
 hoary hair berent.

And, wretched woman, as she
 called for pitchers for to
 draw

Up water, she of Polydore on
 shore the carcass saw

And eke the mighty wounds at
 which the tyrant's sword
 went thorough.

The Trojan ladies shriekèd out.
 But she was dumb for
 sorrow.

The anguish of her heart
 foreclosed as well her
 speech as eke

Her tears, devouring them within.
 She stood astonied, like

As if she had been stone. One
 while the ground she stared
 upon;

Another while a ghastly look she
 cast to heaven; anon

She lookèd on the face of him that
 lay before her killed.

Sometimes his wounds, his
wounds, I say, she specially
beheld.

And therewithal she armed herself
and furnished her with ire,
Wherethrough, as soon as that her
heart was fully set on fire,
As though she still had been a
queen to vengeance she her
bent,

Enforcing all her wits to find some
kind of punishment.

And as a lion, robbèd of her
whelps, becometh wood

And, taking on the footing of her
enemy where he stood,

Pursueth him, though out of sight;
even so Queen Hecube

(Now having ment her tears with
wrath), forgetting quite that
she

Was old but not her princely heart,
to Polymnestor went,

The cursèd murderer, and desired
his presence to th'intent

To show to him a mass of gold (so
made she her pretence)

Which for her little Polydore was
hid not far from thence.

The Thracian king, believing
her, as eager of the prey,

Went with her to a secret
place. And as they there did

stay,
With flattering and deceitful
tongue he thus to her did
say:
‘Make speed, I pray thee, Hecuba,
and give thy son this gold.
I swear by God it shall be his, as
well that I do hold
Already as that thou shalt give.’
Upon him speaking so
And swearing and forswearing too,
she looked sternly tho
And, being sore enflamed with
wrath, caught hold upon
him and,
Straight calling out for succour to
the wives of Troy at hand,
Did in the traitor's face bestow her
nails and scratched out
His eyes; her anger gave her heart
and made her strong and
stout.
She thrust her fingers in as far as
could be and did bore
Not now his eyes (for why his eyes
were pulled out before)
But both the places of the eyes
berayed with wicked blood.
The Thracians, at their tyrant's
harm for anger waxing
wood,
Began to scare the Trojan wives
with darts and stones. Anon

Queen Hecub, running at a stone,
 with gnarring seized
 thereon

And worried it between her teeth.

And as she oped her chap

To speak, instead of speech she
 barked. The place of this
 mishap

Remaineth still and of the thing
 there done bears yet the
 name.

Long mindful of her former ills,
 she sadly for the same

Went howling in the fields of
 Thrace. Her fortune moved
 not

Her Trojans only but the. Greeks,
 her foes, to ruth. Her lot

Did move even all the gods to
 ruth, and so effectually

That Hecub to deserve such end
 even Juno did deny.

Aurora's grief for Memnon

Although the Morning of the
 selfsame wars had favourer
 been,

She had no leisure to lament
 the fortune of the queen

Nor on the slaughters and the fall
 of Ilion for to think.

A household care more nearer
 home did in her stomach
 sink,

For Memnon, her beloved son,
whom dying she beheld
Upon the fierce Achilles' spear
amid the Phrygian field.
She saw it, and her ruddy hue
with which she wonted was
To dye the breaking of the day did
into paleness pass,
And all the sky was hid with
clouds. But when his corse
was gone
To burningward, she could not
find in heart to look
thereon.
But with her hair about her ears
she kneelèd down before
The mighty Jove and thus gan
speak unto him, weeping
sore:
 'Of all that have their dwelling
 place upon the golden sky
The lowest (for through all the
world the fewest shrines
have I)
But yet a goddess, I do come, not
that thou should'st decree
That altars, shrines and holidays
be made to honour me;
Yet if thou mark how much that I,
a woman, do for thee
In keeping night within her
bounds by bringing to thee
light,

Thou well may'st think me worthy
some reward to claim of
right.

But neither now is that the thing
the Morning cares to have,
Ne yet her state is such as now
due honour for to crave.

710

Bereft of my dear Memnon, who in
fighting valiantly

To help his uncle (so it was your
will, O gods) did die

Of stout Achilles' sturdy spear
even in his flowering prime,

I sue to thee, O king of gods, to do
him at this time

Some honour as a comfort of his
death and ease this heart

Of mine, which greatly grievèd is
with wound of piercing
smart.'

No sooner Jove had granted
Dame Aurora her desire

But that the flame of Memnon's
corse, that burnèd in the
fire,

Did fall; and flaky rolls of smoke
did dark the day, as when

A foggy mist steams upward from
a river or a fen

720

And suffereth not the sun to shine
within it. Black as coal

The cinder rose and, into one
round lump assembling

whole,
Grew gross and took both shape
and hue. The fire did life it
send;
The lightness of the substance self
did wings unto it lend.
And at the first it flittered like a
bird, and by and by
It flew, a feathered bird indeed.
And with that one gan fly
Innumerable mo of selfsame
brood, who once or twice
Did soar about the fire and made a
piteous shrieking thrice.
The fourth time in their flying
round themselves they all
withdrew
In battles twain, and fiercely forth
of either side one flew
To fight a combat. With their bills
and hookèd talons keen
And with their wings courageously
they wreak their wrathful
teen.
And mindful of the valiant man of
whom they issued been,
They never ceased jobbing each
upon the other's breast
Until they, falling both down dead
with fighting overpressed,
Had offered up their bodies as a
worthy sacrifice

Unto their cousin Memnon, who to
ashes burnèd lies.

These sudden birds were namèd of
the founder of their stock;

For men do call them Memnon's
birds. And every year a
flock

Repair to Memnon's tomb, where
two do in the foresaid wise

In manner of a year-mind slay
themselves in sacrifice.

Thus, whereas others did lament
that Dymant's daughter
barked,

Aurora's own grief busied her, that
smally she it marked;

Which thing she to this present
time with piteous tears doth
show,

For through the universal world
she sheddeth moisting dew.

The flight of Aeneas

Yet suffered not the Destinies
all hope to perish quite

Together with the town of
Troy. That good and godly
knight,

The son of Venus, bare away by
night upon his back

His agèd father and his gods, an
honourable pack.

Of all the riches of the town that
only prey he chose,

750

So godly was his mind. And like a
banished man he goes
By water with his own young son,
Ascanius, from the Isle
Antandros, and he shuns the shore
of Thracia, which erewhile
The wicked tyrant's treason did
with Polydore's blood
defile.

And, having wind and tide at will,
he safely with his train
Arrivèd at Apollo's town where
Anius then did reign.

Who, being both Apollo's priest
and of that place the king,
Did entertain him in his house and
unto church him bring
And showed him both the city and
the temples known of old
And eke the sacred trees by which
Latona once took hold

760

When she of childbirth travailed.
As soon as sacrifice
Was done with oxen's inwards,
burnt according to the
guise,
And casting incense in the fire and
shedding wine thereon,
They joyful to the court returned;
and there they took anon
Repast of meat and drink. Then
said the good Anchises this:

‘O Phoebus' sovereign priest,
unless I take my marks
amiss,

As I remember, when I first of all
this town did see

Four daughters and a son of thine
thou haddest here with
thee.’

Anius' daughters

King Anius shook his head,
whereon he ware a mitre
white,

And answered thus: ‘O noble
prince, in faith thou
guessest right.

770

Of children five a father then thou
diddest me behold,

Who now (with such unconstancy
are mortal matters rolled)

Am in a manner childless quite.
For what avails my son

Who in the Isle of Anderland a
great way hence doth
wone?

Which country takes his name of
him. And in the selfsaid
place,

Instead of father, like a king he
holds the royal mace.

Apollo gave his lot to him; and
Bacchus, for to show

His love, a greater gift upon his
sisters did bestow

780

Than could be wished or credited.
For whatsoever they
Did touch was turned into corn
and wine and oil
straightway.

And so there was rich use in them.
As soon as that the fame
Hereof to Agamemnon's ears, the
scourge of Trojans, came,
Lest you might taste your storms
alone and we not feel the
same

In part, an host he hither sent and,
whether I would or no,
Did take them from me, forcing
them among the Greeks to
go

To feed the Greekish army with
their heavenly gift. But they
Escaped whither they could by
flight. A couple took their
way

To Isle Euboea; t'other two to
Anderland did fly,
Their brother's realm. An host of
men pursued them by and
by

And threatened war unless they
were delivered. Force of
fear,

790

Subduing nature, did constrain the
brother (men must bear

With fearfulness) to render up his
sisters to their foe.

For neither was Aeneas there nor
valiant Hector (who

Did make your war last ten years
long) the country to defend.

Now when they should like
prisoners have been
fettered, in the end

They, casting up their hands
(which yet were free) to
heaven, did cry

To Bacchus for to succour them;
who helped them by and by
—

At leastwise if it may be termed a
help in wondrous wise

To alter folk. For never could I
learn ne can surmise

The manner how they lost their
shape. The thing itself is
known.

With feathered wings as white as
snow they quite away are
flown,

Transformèd into dovehouse
doves, thy wise Dame
Venus' birds.'

800

The flight of Aeneas
(continued)

When that the time of meat
was spent with these and
suchlike words,

The table was removèd straight
and then they went to

sleep.
Next morrow, rising up as soon as
day began to peep,
They went to Phoebus' oracle,
which willèd them to go
Unto their mother country and the
coasts their stock came fro.
King Anius bare them company.
And when away they
should,
He gave them gifts. Anchises had a
sceptre all of gold;
Ascanius had a quiver and a cloak
right brave and trim;
Aeneas had a standing cup
presented unto him.
The Theban, Therses, who had
been King Anius' guest
erewhile,
Did send it out of Thessaly. But
Alcon, one of Myle,
Did make the cup, and he thereon
a story portrayed out.
It was a city with seven gates in
circuit round about
Which men might easily all
discern. The gates did
represent
The city's name and showed plain
what town thereby was
meant.
Without the town were funerals a-
doing for the dead

With hearses, tapers, fires and
tombs. The wives with
ruffled head

And stomachs bare pretended
grief; the nymphs seemed
tears to shed

And wail the drying of their wells.
The leafless trees did sear;

And, licking on the parchèd
stones, goats roamèd here
and there.

Behold, amid this Theban town
was lively portrayed out

Echion's daughters twain, of which
the one with courage stout

Did proffer both her naked throat
and stomach to the knife,

And t'other with a manly heart did
also spend her life

For safeguard of her countryfolk;
and how that thereupon

They both were carried solemnly
on hearses and anon

Were burned in the chiefest place
of all the Theban town.

Then (lest their lineage should
decay, who died with such
renown)

Out of the ashes of the maids there
issued two young men,

And they unto their mothers' dust
did obsequies again.

Thus much was graved curiously
in ancient precious brass,
And on the brim a trail of flowers
of bear-breech gilded was.
The Trojans also gave to him as
costly gifts again:
Because he was Apollo's priest
they gave to him as then
A chest to keep in frankincense;
they gave him furthermore
A crown of gold wherein were set
of precious stones great
store.

Then, calling to remembrance
that the Trojans issued were
Of Teucer's blood, they sailed
to Crete. But long they
could not there

840

Abide th'infection of the air. And
so they did forsake
The hundred cities and with speed
to Italyward did make.
The winter waxed hard and rough
and tossed them very sore.
And when their ships arrived were
upon the perilous shore
Among the Strophad Isles, the bird
Aëlle did them fear.
The coasts of Dulich, Ithaca and
Same they passèd were
And eke the court of Neritos,
where wise Ulysses reigned,

And came to Ambrace, for the
 which the gods strong strife
 maintained.

There saw they turned into stone
 the judge whose image yet
 At Actium in Apollo's church in
 sign thereof doth sit.

They viewed also Dodon grove
 where oaks spake, and the
 coast

Of Chaon where the sons of King
 Molossus scaped a most

Ungracious fire by taking wings.
 From thence they coasted
 by

The country of the Phaeacs,
 fraught with fruit
 abundantly.

Then took they land in Epire, and
 to Buthrotos they went,

Whereas the Trojan prophet dwelt,
 whose reign did represent

An image of their ancient Troy.
 There being certified

Of things to come by Helen (who
 while there they did abide

Informed them right faithfully of
 all that should betide),

They passed into Sicily. With
 corners three this land

Shoots out into the sea; of which
 Pachynus' front doth stand

Against the south coast, Lilyby
doth face the gentle west,
And Pelore unto Charles's wain
doth northward bare his
breast.

The Trojans under Pelore gat with
oars and prosperous tides,
And in the even by Zancle shore
their fleet at anchor rides.

Upon the left side restlessly
Charybdis aye doth beat
them

And swalloweth ships and spews
them up as fast as it doth
eat them.

And Scylla beateth on their right,
which from the navel down
Is patched up with cruel curs and
upward to the crown

Doth keep the count'nance of a
maid. And (if that all be
true

That poets feign) she was
sometime a maid right fair
of hue.

To her made many wooers suit, all
which she did eschew.

And, going to the salt-seanymphs
(to whom she was right
dear),

She vaunted to how many men she
gave the slip that year.

To whom the Lady Galate in
 keming of her hair
 Said thus with sighs: 'But they that
 sought to thee, O lady, were
 None other than of human kind, to
 whom without all fear
 Of harm thou mightest, as thou
 dost, give nay. But as for
 me,
 Although that I of Nereus and grey
 Doris daughter be
 And of my sisters have with me
 continually a guard,
 I could not scape the Cyclops' love,
 but to my grief full hard.'
 With that her tears did stop her
 speech. As soon as that the
 maid
 Had dried them with her marble
 thumb and moaned the
 nymph, she said,
 'Dear goddess, tell me all your
 grief and hide it not from
 me.
 For, trust me, I will unto you both
 true and secret be.'
 Then unto Cratey's daughter thus
 the nymph her plaint did
 frame:

Acis and Galatea

'Of Faun and nymph Symaethis
 born was Acis, who became
 A joy to both his parents, but
 to me the greater joy.

890

For, being but a sixteen years of
age, this fair sweet boy
Did take me to his love what time
about his childish chin
The tender hair like mossy down
to sprout did first begin.
I lovèd him beyond all God's
forbode, and likewise me
The giant Cyclops. Neither, if
demanded it should be,
I well were able for to tell you
whether that the love
Of Acis or the Cyclops' hate did
more my stomach move.
There was no odds between them.
O dear goddess Venus, what
A power hast thou! Behold how
even this ugly giant that
No spark of meekness in him hath,
who is a terror to
The very woods, whom never
guest nor stranger came
unto
Without displeasure, who the
heavens and all the gods
despiseth,
Doth feel what thing is love. The
love of me him so
surpriseth
That Polypheme, regarding not his
sheep and hollow cave
And having care to please, doth go
about to make him brave.

900

His stour stiff hair he kembeth
now with strong and sturdy
rakes

And with a scythe doth
marquisotte his bristled
beard and takes

Delight to look upon himself in
waters and to frame

His count'nance. Of his murderous
heart the wildness waxeth
tame.

His unastaunchèd thirst of blood is
quenched. Ships may pass

And repass safely. In the while
that he in love thus was

One Telemus, Eurymed's son, a
man of passing skill

In birdflight, taking land that time
in Sicil, went until

The orpèd giant Polypheme and
said, "This one round eye

That now amid thy forehead
stands shall one day ere
thou die

By sly Ulysses blinded be." The
giant laughed thereat

And said, "O foolish soothsayer,
thou deceived art in that.

For why another, even a wench,
already hath it blinded."

Thus scorning him that told him
truth because he was high-
minded,

He either made the ground to
shake in walking on the
shore

Or roused him in his shady cave.
With wedgèd point before

There shoots a hill into the sea,
whereof the sea doth beat

On either side. The one-eyed fiend
came up and made his seat

Thereon, and after came his sheep
undriven. As soon as he

Had at his foot laid down his staff,
which was a whole pine-
tree

Well able for to be a mast to any
ship, he takes

His pipe compact of five-score
reeds, and therewithal he
makes

So loud a noise that all the hills
and waters thereabout

Might easily hear the shirlness of
the shepherd's whistling
out.

I, lying underneath the rock and
leaning in the lap

Of Acis, marked these words of his
which far I heard by hap:

‘ “More white thou art than
primrose leaf, my lady
Galate,

More fresh than mead, more
tall and straight than lofty

alder-tree;
More bright than glass, more
wanton than the tender kid,
forsooth;
Than cockleshells continually with
water worn more smooth;
More cheerful than the winter's
sun or summer's shadow
cold;
More seemly and more comely
than the plane-tree to
behold;
Of value more than apples be,
although they were of gold;
More clear than frozen ice, more
sweet than grape through
ripe, iwis;
More soft than butter newly made
or down of cygnet is;
And much more fair and beautiful
than garden to mine eye,
But that thou from my. company
continually dost fly.
And thou, the selfsame Galat, art
more tettish for to frame
Than oxen of the wilderness whom
never wight did tame;
More fleeting than the waves,
more hard than warned oak
to twine
More tough than willow twigs,
more lithe than is the wild
white vine;

More than this rock unmovable,
more violent than a stream;
More proud than peacock praised,
more fierce than fire and
more extreme;
More rough than briars, more
cruel than the new-
delivered bear;
More merciless than trodden
snake, than sea more deaf
of ear;
And – which (and if it lay in me) I
chiefly would restrain –
Not only swifter paced than the
stag in chase on plain,
But also swifter than the wind and
flightful air. But if
Thou knew me well, it would thee
irk to fly and be a grief
To tarry from me. Yea, thou
would'st endeavour all thy
power
To keep me wholly to thyself. The
quarry is my bower
Hewn out of whole main stone. No
sun in summer there can
swelt;
No nipping cold in wintertime
within the same is felt.
Gay apples weighing down the
boughs have I and grapes
like gold,

And purple grapes on spreaded
vines as many as can hold.

Both which I do reserve for thee.

Thyself shalt with thy hand

The soft sweet strawberries gather
which in woody shadow
stand.

The cornel berries also from the
tree thyself shalt pull,

And pleasant plums, some yellow
like new wax, some blue,
some full

Of ruddy juice. Of chestnuts eke, if
my wife thou wilt be,

Thou shalt have store and fruits all
sorts. All trees shall serve
for thee.

This cattle here is all mine own.
And many mo beside

Do either in the bottoms feed or in
the woods them hide,

And many standing at their stalls
do in my cave abide.

The number of them (if a man
should ask) I cannot show.

Tush, beggars of their cattle use
the number for to know.

And for the goodness of the same
no whit believe thou me,

But come thyself, and if thou wilt,
the truth thereof to see.

See how their udders full do make
them straddle. Lesser ware

Shut up at home in close warm
 pends are lambs. There also
 are

In other pinfolds kids of selfsame
 yeanning-time. Thus have

I always milk as white as snow;
 whereof I some do save

To drink, and of the rest is made
 good cheese. And,
 furthermore,

Not only stale and common gifts
 and pleasures whereof store

Is to be had at each man's hand (as
 leverets, kids and does,

A pair of pigeons or a nest of birds
 new found or roes)

Shall unto thee presented be; I
 found this t'other day

A pair of bearwhelps, each so like
 the other as they lay

Upon a hill, that scarce ye each
 discern from other may.

And when that I did find them, I
 did take them up and say,

'These will I for my lady keep for
 her therewith to play.'

Now put thou up thy fair bright
 head, good Galat, I thee
 pray,

Above the greenish waves; now
 come, my Galat, come away

And of my present take no scorn. I
 know myself to be

990

A jolly fellow. For even now I did
behold and see

Mine image in the water sheer,
and sure methought I took

Delight to see my goodly shape
and favour in the brook.

Behold how big I am. Not Jove in
heaven (for so, you men

Report one Jove to reign, of whom
I pass not for to ken)

Is huger than this doughty corse of
mine. A bush of hair

Doth overdreep my visage grim
and shadows, as it were,

A grove upon my shoulders twain.
And think it not to be

A shame for that with bristled hair
my body rough ye see.

A foul ill-favoured sight it is to see
a leafless tree;

A loathly thing it is a horse
without a mane to keep.

As feathers do become the birds
and wool becometh sheep,

Even so a beard and bristled skin
becometh also men.

1000

I have but one eye which doth
stand amid my front. What
then?

This one round eye of mine is like
a mighty target. Why,

Views not the sun all things from
heaven? Yet but one only

eye
 Hath he. Moreover in your seas
 my father bears the sway.
 Him will I make thy father-in-law.
 Have mercy, I thee pray,
 And hearken to mine humble suit.
 For only unto thee
 Yield I. Even I, of whom both
 heaven and Jove despised
 be
 And eke the piercing thunderbolt,
 do stand in awe and fear
 Of thee, O Nerey. Thine ill will is
 grievouser to bear
 Than is the deadly thunderclap.
 Yet could I better find
 In heart to suffer this contempt of
 thine with patient mind
 If thou did'st shun all other folk as
 well as me. But why,
 Rejecting Cyclops, dost thou love
 dwarf Acis? Why, say I,
 Prefer'st thou Acis unto me? Well,
 let him likèd be
 Both of himself and also (which I
 would be loath) of thee.
 And if I catch him he shall feel
 that in my body is
 The force that should be. I shall
 paunch him quick. Those
 limbs of his
 I will in pieces tear and strew
 them in the fields and in

1020

Thy waters if he do thee haunt.
For I do swelt within,
And, being chafed, the flame doth
burn more fierce to my
unrest.

Methinks Mount Etna with his
force is closed in my breast.
And yet it nothing moveth thee.”

As soon as he had talked
Thus much in vain (I saw well all),
he rose and, fuming, stalked
Among his woods and wonted
lawns, as doth a bulchin
when

The cow is from him ta'en. He
could him nowhere rest as
then.

Anon the fiend espièd me and Acis
where we lay

Before we wist or fearèd it and,
crying out, gan say,

“I see ye, and confounded might I
be with endless shame

But if I make this day the last
agreement of your game.”

These words were spoke with such
a rere as very well became

1030

An angry giant. Etna shook with
loudness of the same.

I, scared therewith, dopped
underneath the water, and
the knight

Simethus, turning straight his
back, did give himself to
flight

And crièd, "Help me, Galate, help,
parents, I you pray,

And in your kingdom me receive,
who perish must
straightway."

The round-eyed devil made
pursuit and, rending up a
fleece

Of Etna rock, threw after him; of
which a little piece

Did Acis overtake. And yet as little
as it was,

It overwhelmèd Acis whole. I,
wretched wight, alas,

Did that which Destinies would
permit. Forthwith I brought
to pass

That Acis should receive the force
his father had before.

His scarlet blood did issue from
the lump, and more and
more

Within a while the redness gan to
vanish; and the hue

Resembled at the first a brook
with rain distroubled new

Which waxeth clear by length of
time. Anon the lump did
cleave,

And from the hollow cliff thereof
high reeds sprang up alive;
And at the hollow issue of the
stone the bubbling water
Came trickling out. And by and by
(which is a wondrous
matter)

The stripling with a wreath of reed
about his horned head

Ávaunced his body to the waist.

Who, save he was that stead

1050

Much bigger than he erst had been
and altogether grey,

Was Acis still. And, being turned
to water, at this day

In shape of river still he bears his
former name away.'

Scylla and Glaucus

The Lady Galat ceased her talk,
and straight the company
brake.

And Nerey's daughters, parting
thence, swam in the gentle
lake.

Dame Scylla home again returned.
She durst not her betake

To open sea, and either roamed
upon the sandy shore

Stark nak'd or, when for weariness
she could not walk no
more,

She then withdrew her out of sight
and gat her to a pool

1060

And in the water of the same her
heated limbs did cool.

Behold the fortune. Glaucus, who,
then being late before

Transformed in Euboea Isle upon
Anthedon shore,

Was new become a dweller in the
sea, as he did swim

Along the coast was ta'en in love
at sight of Scylla trim

And spake such words as he did
think might make her tarry
still.

Yet fled she still, and swift for fear
she gat her to a hill

That butted on the sea. Right steep
and upward sharp did shoot

A lofty top with trees; beneath was
hollow at the foot.

Here Scylla stayed and, being safe
by strongness of the place

(Not knowing if he monster were
or god, that did her chase),

1070

She looked back. And, wondering
at his colour and his hair

With which his shoulders and his
back all wholly covered
were,

She saw his nether parts were like
a fish with tail writhed
round,

Who, leaning to the nearest rock,
said thus with loud clear

sound:

‘Fair maid, I neither monster
am nor cruel savage beast,
But of the sea a god, whose
power and favour is not
least.

For neither Proteu in the sea nor
Triton have more might
Nor yet the son of Athamas that
now Palaemon hight.

Yet once I was a mortal man. But
you must know that I
Was given to seaworks and in
them me only did apply.

For sometime I did draw the drag
in which the fishes were,
And sometime, sitting on the cliffs,
I angled here and there.

There butteth on a fair green mead
a bank whereof t'one half
Is closed with sea, the rest is clad
with herbs which never calf
Nor hornèd ox nor silly sheep nor
shag-haired goat did feed.

The busy bee did never there of
flowers sweet smelling
speed;

No gladsome garlands ever there
were gathered for the head.

No hand those flowers ever yet
with hooked scythe did
shred;

1090

I was the first that ever set my foot
upon that plot.

Now as I dried my dropping nets
and laid abroad my lot

To tell how many fishes had by
chance to net been sent

Or through their own too light
belief on baited hook been
hent

(The matter seemeth like a lie, but
what avails to lie?),

As soon as that my prey had
touched the grass, it by and
by

Began to move and flask their fins
and swim upon the dry

As in the sea. And as I paused and
wondered at the sight,

My draught of fishes everych one
to seaward took their flight

And, leaping from the shore,
forsook their newfound
master quite.

I was amazed at the thing and,
standing long in doubt,

I sought the cause, if any god had
brought this same about

1100

Or else some juice of herb. And as
I so did musing stand,

“What herb”, quoth I, “hath such a
power?” And, gathering
with my hand

The grass, I bit it with my tooth.
My throat had scarcely yet
Well swallowed down the uncouth
juice, when like an ague fit
I felt mine inwards suddenly to
shake, and with the same
A love of other nature in my
breast with violence came.
And long I could it not resist, but
said, "Dear land, adieu;
For never shall I haunt thee more."
And with that word I threw
My body in the sea. The gods
thereof, receiving me,
Vouchsafed in their order me
installèd for to be,
Desiring old Oceanus and Tethys
for their sake
The rest of my mortality away
from me to take.
They hallowed me and, having
said nine times the holy
rhyme
That purgeth all profanèdness,
they chargèd me that time
To put my breastbulk underneath
a hundred streams. Anon
The brooks from sundry coasts and
all the seas did ride upon
My head. From whence as soon as
I returnèd, by and by
I felt myself far otherwise through
all my limbs than I

1120

Had been before; and in my mind I
was another man.

Thus far of all that me befell make
just report I can.

Thus far I bear in mind. The rest
my mind perceivèd not.

Then first of all this hoary green-
grey grisled beard I got

And this same bush of hair, which
all along the seas I sweep,

And these same mighty shoulders
and these greyish arms and
feet

Confounded into finned fish. But
what availeth me

This goodly shape and of the gods
of sea to lovèd be

Or for to be a god myself, if they
delight not thee?’

As he was speaking this and
still about to utter more,

Dame Scylla him forsook;
whereat he waxing angry
sore

And being quickened with repulse,
in rage he took his way

1130

To Circe's, Titan's daughter's,
court, which full of
monsters lay.

FINIS LIBRI DECIMI TERTII.

The Fourteenth Book of Ovid's Metamorphoses

*The
transformation
of Scylla*

Now had th'Euboean fisherman, who lately was
become

A god of sea to dwell in sea for aye, already
swum

Past Etna, which upon the face of Giant Typho
lies,

Together with the pasture of the Cyclops, which
defies

Both plough and harrow and by teams of oxen
sets no store,

And Zancle and cracked Rhegion, which stands
at other shore,

And eke the rough and shipwreck sea which,
being hemmèd in

With two main lands on either side, is as a bound
between

The fruitful realms of Italy and Sicil. From that
place

10

He, cutting through the Tyrrhene sea with both
his arms apace,

Arrivèd at the grassy hills and at the palace high
Of Circe, Phoebus' imp, which full of sundry
beasts did lie.

When Glaucus in her presence came and had her
greeted and

Received friendly welcoming and greeting at her
hand,

He said, 'O goddess, pity me, a god, I thee desire.
Thou only (if at least thou think me worthy so
great hire)

Canst ease this love of mine. No wight doth
better know than I

The power of herbs, who late ago transformèd
was thereby.

And now to open unto thee of this my grief the
ground,

Upon th'Italian shore against Messene walls I
found

Fair Scylla. Shame it is to tell how scornful she
did take

The gentle words and promises and suit that I
did make.

But if that any power at all consist in charms,
then let

That sacred mouth of thine cast charms; or if
more force be set

In herbs to compass things withal, then use the
herbs that have

Most strength in working. Neither think I hither
come to crave

A medicine for to heal myself and cure my
wounded heart.

I force no end. I would have her be partner of my
smart.'

But Circe – for no natures are more lightly set
on fire

Than such as she is, whether that the cause of
this desire

Were only in herself or that Dame Venus, bearing
aye
In mind her father's deed in once disclosing of
her play,
Did stir her hereunto – said thus: 'It were a better
way
For thee to fancy such a one whose will and
whole desire
Is bent to thine and who is singed with selfsame
kind of fire.
Thou worthy art of suit to thee and, credit me,
thou should'st
Be wooed indeed, if any hope of speeding give
thou would'st.
And therefore doubt not. Only of thy beauty
liking have.
Lo, I, who am a goddess and the imp of Phoebus
brave,
Who can so much by charms, who can so much
by herbs, do vow
Myself to thee. If I disdain, disdain me also thou.
And if I yield, yield thou likewise. And in one
only deed
Avenge thyself of twain.' To her entreating thus
to speed,
'First trees shall grow', quoth Glaucus, 'in the sea
and reek shall thrive
On tops of hills ere I, as long as Scylla is alive,
Do change my love.' The goddess waxed right
wroth; and sith she could
Not hurt his person, being fallen in love with
him, ne would,

50

She spited her that was preferred before her. And
upon

Displeasure ta'en of this repulse, she went her
way anon.

And wicked weeds of grisly juice together she
did bray;

And in the braying, witching charms she over
them did say.

And, putting on a russet cloak, she passed
through the rout

Of savage beasts that in her court came fawning
round about

And, going unto Rhegion cliff which stands
against the shore

Of Zancle, entered by and by the waters that do
roar

With violent tides, upon the which she stood as
on firm land

And ran and never wet her feet a whit. There
was at hand

A little plash that bowed like a bow that standeth
bent

Where Scylla wonted was to rest herself and
thither went

60

From rage of sea and air what time the sun amid
the sky

Is hottest, making shadows short by mounting up
on high.

This plash did Circe then infect against that
Scylla came

And with her poisons, which had power most
monstrous shapes to frame,

Defiled it. She sprinkled there the juice of
 venomed weeds,
 And thrice nine times with witching mouth she,
 softly mumbling, reads
 A charm right dark of uncouth words. No sooner
 Scylla came
 Within this splash and to the waist had waded in
 the same
 But that she saw her hinderloins with barking
 bugs attaint.
 And at the first, not thinking with her body they
 were ment
 As parts thereof, she started back and rated
 them. And sore
 She was afraid the eager curs should bite her.
 But the more
 She shunnèd them, the surer still she was to have
 them there.
 In seeking where her loins and thighs and feet
 and ankles were,
 Chaps like the chaps of Cerberus instead of them
 she found.
 Nought else was there than cruel curs from belly
 down to ground.
 So underneath misshappen loins and womb
 remaining sound
 Her mannish masties' backs were aye within the
 water drowned.
 Her lover Glaucus wept thereat and Circe's
 bed refused
 That had so passing cruelly her herbs on
 Scylla used.

Aeneas'
voyaging

But Scylla in that place abode. And for the hate
she bore

To Circeward, as soon as meet occasion served
therefore,

She spoiled Ulysses of his mates. And shortly
after she

Had also drowned the Trojan fleet, but that (as
yet we see)

She was transformed to rock of stone which
shipmen warily shun.

When from this rock the Trojan fleet by force of
oars had won

And from Charybdis' greedy gulf and were in
manner ready

To have arrived in Italy, the wind did rise so
heady

As that it drave them back upon the coast of
Afric. There

The Tyrian queen, who afterward unpatiently
should bear

The going of this Trojan prince away, did
entertain

Aeneas in her house and was right glad of him
and fain.

Upon a pile made underneath pretence of
sacrifice

She gored herself upon a sword and in most
woeful wise,

As she herself had been beguiled, so she beguiled
all.

Eftsoon Aeneas, flying from the newly reared
wall

100

Of Carthage in that sandy land, retirèd back
again
To Sicil, where his faithful friend Acestes
reigned. And when
He there had done his sacrifice and kept an obit
at
Hid father's tomb, he out of hand did mend his
galleys that
Dame Iris, Juno's messenger, had burnèd up
almost.
And, sailing thence, he kept his course aloof
along the coast
Of Aeoly and of Vulcan's isles, the which of
brimstone smoke.
And, passing by the mermaids' rocks (his pilot by
a stroke
Of tempest being drowned in sea), he sailed by
Prochyte and
Inarime and, which upon a barren hill doth
stand,
The land of Ape Isle, which doth take that name
of people sly
There dwelling. For the sire of gods, abhorring
utterly
The lewdness of the Cercops and their wilful
perjury
And eke their guileful dealing, did transform
them everych one
Into an evil-favoured kind of beast, that, being
none,
They might yet still resemble men. He knit in
lesser space

110

Their members, and he beat me flat their noses
to their face,
The which he fillèd furrow-like with wrinkles
everywhere.
He clad their bodies over all with fallow-
coloured hair
And put them into this same isle to dwell forever
there.
But first he did bereave them of the use of
speech and tongue
Which they to cursèd perjury did use, both old
and young.
To chatter hoarsely and to shriek, to jabber and
to squeak
He hath them left, and for to mop and mow, but
not to speak.

Aeneas visits Aeneas, having passed this isle and on his
the right hand left
underworld

The town of Naples and the tomb of Misene
on his left
Together with the fenny grounds, at Cumey
landed and
Went unto long-lived Sibyl's house, with whom
he went in hand
That he to see his father's ghost might go by
Averne deep.
She long upon the earth in stound her eyes did
fixèd keep.
And at the length, as soon as that the sprite of
prophecy

Was entered her, she, raising them, did thus
again reply:

‘O most renownèd wight, of whom the godliness
by fire

And valiantness is tried by sword, great things
thou dost require.

130

But fear not, Trojan. For thou shalt be lord of thy
desire

To see the reverend image of thy dear-belovèd
sire.

Among the fair Elysian fields, where godly folk
abide,

And all the lowest kingdoms of the world I will
thee guide.

No way to virtue is restrained.’ This spoken, she
did show

A golden bough that in the wood of Proserpine
did grow

And willèd him to pull it from the tree. He did
obey

And saw the power of dreadful hell and where
his grandsires lay

And eke the agèd ghost of stout Anchises.
Furthermore,

He learned the customs of the land arrived at
late before

140

And what adventures should by war betide him
in that place.

From thence retiring up again a slow and weary
pace,

He did assuage the tediousness by talking with
his guide.

For as he in the twilight dim this dreadful way
did ride,
He said, 'Whether present thou thyself a goddess
be
Or such a one as God doth love most dearly, I
will thee
For ever as a goddess take and will acknowledge
me
Thy servant for safe guiding me the place of
death to see
And for thou from the place of death hast
brought me safe and free.
For which desert, what time I shall attain to open
air,
I will a temple to thee build right sumptuous,
large and fair
And honour thee with frankincense.' The
prophetess did cast
Her eye upon Aeneas back and, sighing, said at
last,
'I am no goddess. Neither think thou canst with
conscience right
With holy incense honour give to any mortal
wight.
But to th'intent through ignorance thou err not, I
had been
Eternal and of worldly life I should none end
have seen
If that I would my maidenhood on Phoebus have
bestowed.
Howbeit while he stood in hope to have the same
and trowed

To overcome me with his gifts, "Thou maid of
Cumes," quoth he,

"Choose what thou wilt, and of thy wish the
owner thou shalt be."

I, taking full my hand of dust and showing it him
there,

Desirèd like a fool to live as many years as were
Small grains of cinder in that heap; I quite forgot
to crave

Immediately the race of all those years in youth
to have.

Yet did he grant me also that, upon condition I
Would let him have my maidenhood, which
thing I did deny.

And so, rejecting Phoebus' gift, a single life I led.
But now the blissful time of youth is altogether
fled,

And irksome age with trembling pace is stolen
upon my head,

Which long I must endure. For now already, as
you see,

Seven hundred years are come and gone and,
that the number be

Full matchèd of the grains of dust, three hundred
harvests mo

I must, three hundred vintages, see more before I
go.

The day will come that length of time shall make
my body small

And little of my withered limbs shall leave or
nought at all.

And none shall think that ever god was ta'en in
love with me.

Even out of Phoebus' knowledge then, perchance,
 I grown shall be,
 Or, at the least, that ever he me loved he shall
 deny,
 So sore I shall be alterèd. And then shall no
 man's eye
 180 Discern me. Only by my voice I shall be known,
 for why
 The Fates shall leave me still my voice for folk to
 know me by.'

Achaemenides' As Sibyl in the vaulted way such talk as this
story did frame,

 The Trojan knight Aeneas up at Cumes fro
 Limbo came.
 And, having done the sacrifice accustomed for
 the same,
 He took his journey to the coast which had not
 yet the name
 Receivèd of his nurse. In this same place he
 found a mate
 Of wise Ulysses, Marcare of Neritos, who late
 Before had after all his long and tedious toils
 there stayed.
 He, spying Achaemenides (whom late ago,
 afraid,
 190 They had among Mount Etna's cliffs abandoned
 when they fled
 From Polypheme) and wondering for to see he
 was not dead,
 Said thus: 'O Achaemenides, what chance or
 rather what

Good god hath saved the life of thee? What is the
reason that

A barbarous ship bears thee, a Greek? Or whither
sailest thou?’

To him thus Achaemenides, his own man
freely now

And not forgrown as one forlorn nor clad in
bristled hide,

Made answer: ‘Yet again I would I should in peril
hide

Of Polypheme and that I might those chaps of his
behold

Besmearèd with the blood of men, but if that I do
hold

This ship more dear than all the realm of wise
Ulysses or

If lesser of Aeneas I do make account than for
My father. Neither (though I did as much as done
might be)

I could enough be thankful for his goodness
towards me.

That I still speak and breathe, that I the sun and
heaven do see,

Is his gift. Can I thankless, then, or mindless of
him be,

That down the round-eyed giant's throat this soul
of mine went not

And that from henceforth, when to die it ever be
my lot,

I may be laid in grave or, sure, not in the giant's
maw?

What heart had I that time (at least if fear did
not withdraw

Both heart and sense) when, left behind, you
taking ship I saw?

I would have callèd after you, but that I was
afraid

By making outcry to my foe myself to have
bewrayed.

For even the noise that you did make did put
Ulysses' ship

In danger. I did see him from a cragged
mountain strip

A mighty rock and into sea it throw midway and
more.

Again, I saw his giant's paw throw huge big
stones great store

As if it were a sling. And sore I feared lest your
ship

Should drownèd by the water be that from the
stones did skip

Or by the stones themselves, as if myself had
been therein.

But when that flight had saved you from death,
he did begin

On Etna, sighing, up and down to walk, and with
his paws

Went groping of the trees among the woods. And
for because

He could not see, he knocked his shins against
the rocks each where.

And, stretching out his grisly arms (which all
begrimed were

With baken blood) to seaward, he the Greekish
nation banned

230

And said, 'O, if that some good chance might
bring unto my hand
Ulysses or some mate of his on whom to wreak
mine ire,
Upon whose bowels with my teeth I like a hawk
might tire,
Whose living members might with these my
talons tearèd been,
Whose blood might bubble down my throat,
whose flesh might pant between
My jaws, how light or none at all this losing of
mine eye
Would seem!' These words and many mo the
cruel fiend did cry.
A shuddering horror pierced me to see his
smudged face
And cruel hands and in his front the foul round
eyeless place
And monstrous members and his beard,
beslubbered with the blood
Of man. Before mine eyes then death the
smallest sorrow stood.
I lookèd every minute to be seized in his paw;
I lookèd ever when he should have crammed me
in his maw.
And in my mind I of that time, methought, the
image saw
When, having dinged a dozen of our fellows to
the ground
And lying like a lion fierce or hunger-starvèd
hound
Upon them, very eagerly he down his greedy gut

240

Their bowels and their limbs yet more than half-
alive did put
And with their flesh together crashed the bones
and marrow white.
I, trembling like an aspen leaf, stood sad and
bloodless quite
And, in beholding how he fed and belkèd up
again
His bloody victuals at his mouth and uttered out
amain
The clotted gobbets mixed with wine, I thus
surmised: like lot
Hangs over my head now, and I must also go to
pot.
And, hiding me for many days and quaking
horribly
At every noise and dreading death and wishing
for to die,
Appeasing hunger with the leaves of trees and
herbs and mast,
Alone and poor and footless and to death and
penance cast,
A long time after I espied this ship afar at last
And, running downward to the sea, by signs did
succour seek.
Where finding grace, this Trojan ship receivèd
me, a Greek.
But now, I pray thee, gentle friend, declare thou
unto me
Thy captain's and thy fellows' luck that took the
sea with thee.'

Macareus'
story

He told him how that Aeolus, the son of
Hippot, he

That keeps the winds in prison close, did
reign in Tuscan sea

And how Ulysses, having at his hand a noble gift,
The wind enclosed in leather bags, did sail with
prosperous drift

Nine days together, in so much they came within
the sight

Of home; but on the tenth day, when the
morning gan give light,

His fellows, being somewhat touched with
covetousness and spite,

Supposing that it had been gold, did let the
winds out quite.

The which, returning whence they came, did
drive them back amain,

That in the realm of Aeolus they went a-land
again.

From thence, quoth he, we came unto the
ancient Lamy's town,

270

Of which the fierce Antiphates that season ware
the crown.

A couple of my mates and I were sent unto him;
and

A mate of mine and I could scarce by flight
escape his hand.

The third of us did with his blood imbrue the
wicked face

Of lewd Antiphate, who with sword us, flying
thence, did chase

And, following after with a rout, threw stones
 and logs which drowned
 Both men and ships. Howbeit, one by chance
 escaped sound
 Which bare Ulysses and myself. So having lost
 most part
 Of all our dear companions, we with sad and
 sorry heart
 And much complaining did arrive at yonder
 coast which you
 May ken far hence. A great way hence, I say, we
 see it now;
 But, trust me truly, overnear I saw it once. And
 thou,
 Aeneas, goddess Venus' son, the justest knight of
 all
 The Trojan race (for sith the war is done, I
 cannot call
 Thee foe), I warn thee, get thee far from Circe's
 dwelling-place.
 For when our ships arrivèd there, remembering
 eft the case
 Of cruel King Antiphates and of that hellish
 wight
 The round-eyed giant Polypheme, we had so
 small delight
 To visit uncouth places that we said we would
 not go.
 Then cast we lots. The lot fell out upon myself as
 tho

And Polite and Eurylochus and on Elpenor, who

Delighted too too much in wine, and eighteen
other mo.
All we did go to Circe's house. As soon as we
came thither
And in the portal of the hall had set our feet
together,
A thousand lions, wolves and bears did put us in
a fear
By meeting us. But none of them was to be
fearèd there.
For none of them could do us harm; but with a
gentle look
And following us with fawning feet their wanton
tails they shook.
Anon did damsels welcome us and led us
through the hall,
The which was made of marble stone, floor,
arches, roof and wall,
To Circe. She sat underneath a traverse in a chair
Aloft right rich and stately in a chamber large
and fair.
She ware a goodly long-trained gown, and all her
rest attire
Was every whit of goldsmith's work. There sat
me also by her
The seanympths and her ladies, whose fine
fingers never knew
What tozing wool did mean nor thread from
whirlèd spindle drew.
They sorted herbs and, picking out the flowers
that were mixed,

Did put them into maunds and with indifferent
space betwixt

Did lay the leaves and stalks on heaps according
to their hue.

And she herself the work of them did oversee
and view.

The virtue and the use of them right perfectly
she knew,

And in what leaf it lay and which in mixture
would agree.

And so, perusing every herb by good advisement,
she

Did weigh them out. As soon as she us entering
in did see

And greeting had both given and ta'en, she
looked cheerfully

And, granting all that we desired, commanded by
and by

A certain potion to be made of barley parched
dry

And wine and honey mixed with cheese. And
with the same she sly

Had ment the juice of certain herbs, which
unespied did lie

By reason of the sweetness of the drink. We took
the cup

Delivered by her wicked hand and quaffed it
clearly up

With thirsty throats. Which done and that the
cursed witch had smit

Our highest hair tips with her wand (it is a
shame, but yet

I will declare the truth), I waxed all rough with
bristled hair
And could not make complaint with words.
Instead of speech I there
Did make a raughtish grunting and with
grovelling face gan bear
My visage downward to the ground. I felt a
hookèd groin
To waxen hard upon my mouth and brawnèd
neck to join
My head and shoulders. And the hands with
which I late ago
Had taken up the charmed cup were turned to
feet as tho.
Such force there is in sorcery. In fine, with other
mo
That tasted of the selfsame sauce they shut me in
a sty.
From this mishap Eurylochus alonely scaped, for
why
He only would not taste the cup. Which had he
not fled fro,
He should have been a bristled beast as well as
we; and so
Should none have borne Ulysses word of our
mischance, nor he
Have come to Circe to revenge our harms and set
us free.
The peace-procurer, Mercury, had given to him a
white
Fair flower whose root is black, and of the gods
it moly hight.

340

Assured by this and heavenly hests, he entered
Circe's bower.

And, being bidden for to drink the cup of baleful
power,

As Circe was about to stroke her wand upon his
hair,

He thrust her back and put her with his naked
sword in fear.

Then fell they to agreement straight, and faith in
hand was plight.

And, being made her bedfellow, he claimed as in
right

Of dowry for to have his men again in perfect
plight.

She sprinkled us with better juice of uncouth
herbs and strake

The awk end of her charmed rod upon our heads
and spake

Words to the former contrary. The more she
charmed, the more

Arose we upward from the ground on which we
dared before.

350

Our bristles fell away; the cleft our cloven clees
forsook.

Our shoulders did return again, and next our
elbows took

Our arms and hands their former place. Then,
weeping, we embrace

Our lord and hing about his neck, who also wept
apace.

And not a word we rather spake than such as
might appear

From hearts most thankful to proceed. We
tarried there a year.

‘I in that while saw many things and many
things did hear.

I markèd also this one thing with store of
other gear

Which one of Circe's four chief maids (whose
office was alway

Upon such hallows to attend) did secretly
bewray

360

To me. For in the while my lord with Circe kept
alone,

This maid a young man's image showed of fair
white marble stone

Within a chancel. On the head thereof were
garlands store

And eke a woodspeck. And as I demanded her
wherefore

And who it was they honoured so in holy church
and why

He bare that bird upon his head, she, answering
by and by,

Said, “Learn hereby, Sir Macare, to understand
the power

My lady hath, and mark thou well what I shall
say this hour.

*The story of
Picus*

‘ “There reigned erewhile in Italy one Picus,
Saturn's son,

Who lovèd warlike horse and had delight to
see them run.

370

He was of feature as ye see. And by this image
here

The very beauty of the man doth livelily appear.
His courage matched his personage, and scarcely
 had he well
Seen twenty years. His count'nance did allure the
 nymphs that dwell
Among the Latian hills. The nymphs of fountains
 and of brooks,
As those that haunted Albula*, were ravished
 with his looks;
And so were they that Numic bears and Anio,
 too, and Alme
That runneth short, and heady Nar and Farfar
 cool and calm;
And all the nymphs that used to haunt Diana's
 shady pool
Or any lakes or meres near hand or other waters
 cool.
But he, disdainning all the rest, did set his love
 upon
A lady whom Venilia bare (so fame reporteth) on
The stately Mountain Palatine by Janus, that
 doth bear
The double face. As soon as that her years for
 marriage were
Thought able, she, preferring him before all
 other men,
Was wedded to this Picus, who was king of
 Laurents then.
She was in beauty excellent, but yet in singing
 much
More excellent; and thereupon they named her
 Singer. Such

390

The sweetness of her music was that she
therewith delights

The savage beasts and caused birds to cease their
wandering flights

And moved stones and trees and made the
running streams to stay.

Now while that she in woman's tune records her
pleasant lay

At home, her husband rode abroad upon a lusty
horse

To hunt the boar and bare in hand two hunting
staves of force.

His cloak was crimson, buttoned with a golden
button fast.

Into the selfsame forest eke was Phoebus'
daughter passed

From those same fields that of herself the name
of Circe bear

To gather uncouth herbs among the fruitful
hillocks there.

As soon as, lurking in the shrubs, she did the
king espy,

She was astraught. Down fell her herbs to
ground. And by and by

400

Through all her bones the flame of love the
marrow gan to fry.

And when she from this forced heat had called
her wits again,

She purposed to bewray her mind. But unto him
as then

She could not come for swiftness of his horse and
for his men

That guarded him on every side. 'Yet shalt thou
not', quoth she,

'So shift thee fro my hands, although the wind
should carry thee,

If I do know myself, if all the strength of herbs
fail not

Or if I have not quite and clean my charms and
spells forgot.'

In saying of these words she made the likeness of
a boar

410 Without a body, causing it to swiftly pass before
King Picus' eyes and for to seem to get him to the
wood

Where for the thickness of the trees a horse
might do no good.

Immediately the king, unwares, a hot pursuit did
make

Upon the shadow of his prey and quickly did
forsake

His foaming horse's sweating back and, following
vain wan hope,

Did run a-foot among the woods and through the
bushes' crop.

Then Circe fell a-mumbling spells and, praying
like a witch,

Did honour strange and uncouth gods with
uncouth charms, by which

She used to make the moon look dark and wrap
her father's head

In watery clouds. And then likewise the heaven
was overspread

420 With darkness, and a foggy mist steamed upward
from the ground.

And ne'er a man about the king to guard him
could be found,
But every man in blind by-ways ran scattering in
the chase
Through her enchantments. At the length she,
getting time and place,
Said, 'By those lightsome eyes of thine which late
have ravished mine
And by that goodly personage and lovely face of
thine,
The which compelleth me, that am a goddess, to
incline
To make this humble suit to thee that art a
mortal wight,
Assuage my flame and make this sun, who by his
heavenly sight
Foresees all things, thy father-in-law; and hardly
hold not scorn
Of Circe, who by long descent of Titan's stock am
born.'
Thus much said Circe. He, right fierce rejecting
her request
And her, said, 'Whosoe'er thou art, go, set thy
heart at rest.
I am not thine nor will not be. Another holds my
heart.
And long God grant she may it hold, that I may
never start
To lewdness of a foreign lust from bond of lawful
bed
As long as Janus' daughter, my sweet Singer, is
not dead.'

Dame Circe, having oft renewed her suit in vain
before,

Said, 'Dearly shalt thou buy thy scorn. For never
shalt thou more

Return to Singer. Thou shalt learn by proof what
one can do

That is provoked and in love, yea, and a woman
too.

But Circe is both stirred to wrath and also ta'en
in love,

Yea, and a woman.' Twice her face to westward
she did move

And twice to eastward. Thrice she laid her rod
upon his head

And therewithal three charms she cast. Away
King Picus fled

And, wondering that he fled more swift than erst
he had been wont,

He saw the feathers on his skin and at the
sudden brunt

Became a bird that haunts the woods. Whereat
he taking spite,

With angry bill did job upon hard oaks with all
his might

And in his mood made hollow holes upon their
boughs. The hue

Of crimson which was in his cloak upon his
feathers grew;

The gold that was a clasp and did his cloak
together hold

Is feathers, and about his neck goes circlewise
like gold.

His servants, luring in that while oft over all the
ground
In vain and finding nowhere of their king no
inkling, found
Dame Circe (for by that time she had made the
air sheer
And suffered both the sun and winds the misty
steams to clear)
And, charging her with matter true, demanded
for their king
And, offering force, began their darts and
javelins for to fling.
She, sprinkling noisome venom straight and juice
of poisoning might,
Did call together Erebus and Chaos and the night
And all the fiends of darkness and, with howling
out along,
Made prayers unto Hecate. Scarce ended was her
song
But that (a wondrous thing to tell) the woods
leapt from their place,
The ground did groan, the trees near hand
looked pale in all the chase;
The grass, besprent with drops of blood, looked
red, the stones did seem
To roar and bellow hoarse and dogs to howl and
raise extreme
And all the ground to crawl with snakes black-
scaled, and ghastly sprites
Fly whisking up and down. The folk were
flighted at these sights.

470

And as they, wondering, stood amazed, she
stroked her witching wand

Upon their faces, at the touch whereof there out
of hand

Came wondrous shapes of savage beasts upon
them all. Not one

Retainèd still his native shape. The setting sun
was gone

Beyond the utmost coast of Spain, and Singer
longed in vain

To see her husband. Both her folk and people ran
again

Through all the woods. And ever as they went,
they sent their eyes

Before them for to find him out; but no man him
espies.

Then Singer thought it not enough to weep and
tear her hair

And beat herself (all which she did); she gat
abroad and there

Ranged over all the broad wild fields like one
besides her wits.

480

Six nights and full as many days, as fortune led
by fits,

She strayed me over hills and dales, and never
tasted rest

Nor meat nor drink of all the while. The seventh
day, sore oppressed

And tirèd both with travel and with sorrow,
down she sat

Upon cold Tiber's bank and there with tears in
mourning rate

She, warbling on her grief in tune nor shirl nor
over high,
Did make her moan as doth the swan who, ready
for to die,
Doth sing his burial song before. Her marrow
molt at last
With mourning, and she pined away. And finally
she passed
To lithier air. But yet her fame remainèd in the
place;
For why the ancient husbandmen according to
the case
Did name it Singer of the nymph that dièd in the
same.”
Of such as these are, many things that year by
fortune came
Both to my hearing and my sight. We, waxing
resty then
And slugs by discontinuance, were commanded
yet again
To go aboard and hoise up sails. And Circe told
us all
That long and doubtful passage and rough seas
should us befall.
I promise thee, those words of hers me thoroughly
made afraid;
And therefore hither I me gat, and here I have
me stayed.’

War in Latium

This was the end of Macar's tale. And ere long
time was gone,

500

Aeneas' nurse was buried in a tomb of marble
stone

And this short verse was set thereon: *In this same
very place*

*My nursechild, whom the world doth know to be a
child of grace,*

*Delivering me, Caieta, quick from burning by the
Grays,*

*Hath burnt me, dead, with such afire as justly wins
him praise.*

Their cables from the grassy strand were loosed,
and by and by

From Circe's slanderous house and from her
treasons far they fly.

And, making to the thick-grown groves, where
through the yellow dust

The shady Tiber into sea his gushing stream doth
thrust,

Aeneas got the realm of King Latinus, Faunus'
son,

510

And eke his daughter, whom in fight by force of
arms he won.

He enterprisèd war against a nation fierce and
strong,

And Turn was wrath for holding of his wife away
by wrong.

Against the shire of Latium met all Tyrrhene, and
long

With busy care haught victory by force of arms
was sought.

Each party to augment their force by foreign
succour wrought;

And many sent the Rutils help, and many came
to aid

The Trojans. Neither was the good Aeneas ill
apaid

Of going to Euander's town. But Venulus in vain
To outcast Diomed's city went his succour to
obtain.

Diomed's story This Diomed under Daunus, king of Calabry,
did found

A mighty town and with his wife in dowry
held the ground.

Now when from Turnus Venulus his message had
declared

Desiring help, th'Aetolian knight said none could
well be spared.

And in excuse he told him how he neither durst
be bold

To prest his father's folk to war of whom he had
no hold,

Nor any of his countrymen had left as then alive
To arm. 'And lest ye think', quoth he, 'I do a shift
contrive,

Although by opening of the thing my bitter grief
revive,

I will abide to make a new rehearsal. After that

530

The Greeks had burnèd Troy and on the ground
had laid it flat

And that the Prince of Naryx by his ravishing the
maid

In Pallas' temple on us all the penance had
displayed

Which he himself deserved alone, then, scattered
here and there

And harried over all the seas, we Greeks were
fain to bear

Night, thunder, tempest, wrath of heaven and
sea, and, last of all,

Sore shipwreck at Mount Capharey to mend our
harms withal.

And lest that me to make too long a process ye
might deem

In setting forth our heavy haps, the Greeks might
that time seem

Right rueful even to Priamus. Howbeit Minerva,
she

540

That weareth armour, took me from the waves
and savèd me.

But from my father's realm again by violence I
was driven;

For Venus, bearing still in mind the wound I had
her given

Long time before, did work revenge. By means
whereof such toil

Did toss me on the sea and on the land I found
such broil

By wars, that in my heart I thought them blest of
God whom erst

The violence of the raging sea and hideous winds
had pierced

And whom the wrathful Capharey by shipwreck
did confound,

Oft wishing also I had there among the rest been
drowned.

My company, now having felt the worst that sea
or war

550

Could work, did faint and wished an end of
straying out so far.

But Acmon, hot of nature and too fierce through
slaughters made,
Said, "What remaineth, sirs, through which our
patience cannot wade?
What further spite hath Venus yet to work
against us more?
When worse misfortunes may be feared than
have been felt before,
Then prayer may advantage men and vowing
may them boot.
But when the worst is passed of things, then fear
is under foot.
And when that bale is highest grown, then boot
must next ensue.
Although she hear me and do hate us all (which
thing is true)
That serve here under Diomed, yet set we light
her hate;
And dearly it should stand us on to purchase
high estate."
With such stout words did Acmon stir Dame
Venus unto ire
And raised again her settled grudge. Not many
had desire
To hear him talk thus out of square; the most of
us that are
His friends rebuked him for his words. And as he
did prepare
To answer, both his voice and throat by which
his voice should go
Were small; his hair to feathers turned. His neck
was clad as tho

570

With feathers; so was breast and back. The
greater feathers stack

Upon his arms, and into wings his elbows bowèd
back.

The greatest portion of his feet was turnèd into
toes;

A hardened bill of horn did grow upon his mouth
and nose

And sharpened at the nether end. His fellows,
Lycus, Ide,

Rethenor, Nyct and Abas, all stood wondering by
his side.

And as they wondered, they received the
selfsame shape and hue.

And finally, the greater part of all my band up
flew

And, clapping with their new-made wings, about
the oars did gird.

And if ye do demand the shape of this same
doubtful bird*,

Even as they be not very swans, so draw they
very near

The shape of cygnets white. With much ado I
settled here

And with a little remnant of my people do obtain

580

The dry grounds of my father-in-law, King
Daunus, who did reign

In Calabry.' Thus much the son of Oeney said.
Anon

Sir Venulus, returning from the king of Calydon,
Forsook the coast of Puteol and the fields of
Messapy,

In which he saw a darksome den forgrown with
bushes high
And watered with a little spring. The half-goat
Pan that hour
Possessèd it; but heretofore it was the fairies'
bower.
A shepherd of Apulia from that country scared
them first.
But afterward, recovering heart and hardness,
they durst
Despise him when he chased them and with their
nimble feet
Continued on their dancing still in time and
measure meet.
The shepherd found me fault with them and with
his lout-like leaps
Did counterfeit their minion dance and rapped
out by heaps
A rabble of unsavoury taunts even like a country
clown,
To which most lewd and filthy terms of purpose
he did join.
And after he had once begun, he could not hold
his tongue,
Until that in the timber of a tree his throat was
clung.
For now he is a tree, and by his juice discern ye
may
His manners. For the olive wild doth sensibly
bewray
By berries full of bitterness his railing tongue.
For aye

600 The harshness of his bitter words the berries bear
 away.

Turnus attacks Now when the king's ambassador returned
the Trojan home without
ships

 The succour of th'Aetolian prince, the Rutils,
 being stout,
 Made luckless war without their help. And much
 on either side
 Was shed of blood. Behold, King Turn made
 burning brands to glide
 Upon their ships, and they that had escapèd
 water stood
 In fear of fire. The flame had singed the pitch,
 the wax and wood
 And other things that nourish fire and, roaming
 up the mast,
 Caught hold upon the sails, and all the tackling
 gan to waste.
 The rowers' seats did almost smoke when, calling
 to her mind

610 That these same ships were pine-trees erst and
 shaken with the wind
 On Ida Mount, the mother of the gods, Dame
 Cybel, filled
 The air with sound of bells and noise of shawms.
 And as she held
 The reins that ruled the lions tame which drew
 her chariot, she
 Said thus: 'O Turnus, all in vain these wicked
 hands of thee

Do cast this fire. For by myself disappointed it shall
be.

I will not let the wasting fire consume these ships
which are

A parcel of my forest Ide, of which I am most
chare.'

It thundered as the goddess spake, and with the
thunder came

A storm of rain and skipping hail. And sudden
with the same

620

The sons of Astrey, meeting fierce and fighting
very sore,

Did trouble both the sea and air and set them on
a roar.

Dame Cybel, using one of them to serve her turn
that tide,

Did break the cables at the which the Trojan
ships did ride

And bare them prone and underneath the water
did them drive.

The timber of them, softening, turned to bodies
straight alive.

The stems were turned to heads, the oars to
swimming feet and toes,

The sides to ribs; the keel that through the
middle galley goes

Became the ridgebone of the back, the sails and
tackling hair;

And into arms on either side the sailyards turned
were.

630

Their hue is dusky as before, and now in shape
of maid

They play among the waves of which even now
they were afraid.

And, being seanympths, whereas they were bred
in mountains hard,

They haunt for aye the water soft and never
afterward

Had mind to see their native soil. But yet,
forgetting not

How many perils they had felt on sea by luckless
lot,

They often put their helping hand to ships
distressed by wind

Unless that any carried Greeks. For, bearing still
in mind

The burning of the town of Troy, they hate the
Greeks by kind.

And therefore of Ulysses' ships right glad they
were to see

640

The shivers; and as glad they were as any glad
might be

To see Alcinous' ships wax hard and turnèd into
stone.

These ships thus having gotten life and being
turned each one

To nymphs, a body would have thought the
miracle so great

Should into Turnus' wicked heart some godly
fear have beat

And made him cease his wilful war. But he did
still persist.

And either party had their gods their quarrel to
assist,

And courage also, which as good as gods might
well be thought.

In fine they neither for the realm nor for the
sceptre sought

Nor for the Lady Lavine, but for conquest. And
for shame

650

To seem to shrink in leaving war, they still
prolonged the same.

At length Dame Venus saw her son obtain the
upper hand.

King Turnus fell and eke the town of Ardea,
which did stand

Right strong in high estate as long as Turnus
livèd. But

As soon as that Aeneas' sword to death had
Turnus put,

The town was set on fire; and from amid the
embers flew

A fowl which till that present time no person
ever knew

And beat the ashes fiercely up with flapping of
his wing.

The leanness, paleness, doleful sound and every
other thing

That may express a city sacked, yea, and the
city's name

660

Remained still unto the bird. And now the very
same

With hernsew's feathers doth bewail the town
whereof it came.

Aeneas

becomes a god

And now Aeneas' prowess had compellèd all
the gods

And Juno also (who with him was most of all
at odds)
To cease their old displeasure quite. And now he,
having laid
Good ground whereon the growing wealth of
July might be stayed,
Was ripe for heaven. And Venus had great suit
already made
To all the gods and, clipping Jove, did thus with
him persuade:
'Dear father, who hast never been uncourteous
unto me,
Now show the greatest courtesy, I pray thee, that
may be.
And on my son Aeneas, who a grandchild unto
thee
Hath got of my blood, if thou wilt vouchsafe him
aught at all,
Vouchsafe some godhead to bestow, although it
be but small.
It is enough that once he hath already seen the
realm
Of Pluto utter pleasureless and passed Styx's
stream.'
The gods assented; neither did Queen Juno then
appear
In count'nance strange, but did consent with glad
and merry cheer.
Then Jove: 'Aeneas worthy is a saint in heaven to
be.
Thy wish for whom thou dost it wish I grant thee
frank and free.'

680

This grant of his made Venus glad. She thanked
him for the same

And, gliding through the air upon her yoked
doves, she came

To Laurent shore where, clad with reed, the
River Numic deep

To seaward (which is near at hand) with stealing
pace doth creep.

She bade this river wash away whatever mortal
were

In good Aeneas' body and them under sea to
bear.

The horned brook fulfilled her hest and with his
water sheer

Did purge and cleanse Aeneas from his mortal
body clear.

The better portion of him did remain unto him
sound.

His mother, having hallowed him, did noint his
body round

With heavenly odours and did touch his mouth
with ambrosy,

690

The which was mixed with nectar sweet, and
made him by and by

A god to whom the Romans give the name of
Indiges,

Endeavouring with their temples and their altars
him to please.

Aeneas'
successors

Ascanius with the double name from thence
began to reign,

In whom the rule of Alba and of Latium did
remain.

Next him succeeded Silvius, whose son Latinus
held

The ancient name and sceptre which his
grandsire erst did wield.

The famous Epyt after this Latinus did succeed,
Then Capys and King Capetus. But Capys was
indeed

The foremost of the two. From this the sceptre of
the realm

Descended unto Tiberine, who, drowning in the
stream

Of Tiber, left that name thereto. This Tiberine
begat

Fierce Remulus and Acrota. By chance it
happened that

The elder brother, Remulus, for counterfeiting
oft

The thunder with a thunderbolt was killed from
aloft.

From Acrota, whose staïdness did pass his
brother's skill,

The crown did come to Aventine, who in the
selfsame hill

In which he reigned buried lies and left thereto
his name.

The rule of nation Palatine at length to Proca
came.

*Pomona and
Vertumnus*

In this king's reign Pomona* lived. There was
not to be found

Among the woodnymphs anyone in all the
Latian ground

That was so cunning for to keep an orchard as
was she,
Nor none so painful to preserve the fruit of every
tree.
And thereupon she had her name. She passed not
for the woods
Nor rivers, but the villages and boughs that bear
both buds
And plenteous fruit. Instead of dart a shredding
hook she bare,
With which the overlusty boughs she eft away
did pare
That spreaded out too far and eft did make
therewith a rift
To griffe another imp upon the stock within the
cleft.
And lest her trees should die through drought,
with water of the springs
She moisteth of their sucking roots the little
crumpled strings.
This was her love and whole delight. And as for
Venus' deeds,
She had no mind at all of them. And for because
she dreads
Enforcement by the countryfolk, she walled her
yards about,
Not suffering any man at all to enter in or out.
What have not those same nimble lads so apt to
frisk and dance,
The satyrs, done, or what the Pans that wantonly
do prance
With hornèd foreheads, and the old Silenus, who
is aye

730

More youthful than his years, and eke the fiend
that scares away
The thieves and robbers with his hook or with
his privy part,
To win her love? But yet than these a far more
constant heart
Had sly Vertumnus*, though he sped no better
than the rest.
O Lord, how often, being in a mower's garment
dressed,
Bare he in bundles sheaves of corn! And when he
was so dight
He was the very pattern of a harvest mower
right.
Oft binding new-made hay about his temples he
might seem
A haymaker. Oft times in hand made hard with
work extreme
He bare a goad, that men would swear he had
but newly then
Unyoked his weary oxen. Had he ta'en in hand
again
A shredding hook, ye would have thought he had
a gardener been
Or pruner of some vines. Or had you him with
ladder seen
Upon his neck, a gatherer of fruit ye would him
deem.
With sword a soldier, with his rod an angler he
did seem.
And finally in many shapes he sought to find
access

740

To joy the beauty but by sight that did his heart
oppress.
Moreover, putting on his head a woman's wimple
gay
And staying by a staff, grey hairs he forth to
sight did lay
Upon his forehead and did feign a beldame for to
be;
By means whereof he came within her goodly
orchards free
And, wondering at the fruit, said, 'Much more
skill hast thou, I see,
Than all the nymphs of Albula. Hail, lady mine,
the flower
Unspotted of pure maidenhood in all the world
this hour!'
And with that word he kissed her a little; but his
kiss
Was such as true old women would have never
given, iwis.
Then, sitting down upon a bank, he looked
upward at
The branches bent with harvest's weight. Against
him where he sat
A goodly elm with glistering grapes did grow;
which after he
Had praised and the vine likewise that ran upon
the tree,
'But if', quoth he, 'this elm without the vine
did single stand,
It should have nothing (saving leaves) to be
desired; and

760

Again, if that the vine which runs upon the elm
had nat

The tree to lean unto, it should upon the ground
lie flat.

Yet art thou not admonished by example of this
tree

To take a husband, neither dost thou pass to
married be.

But would to God thou wouldest. Sure, Queen
Helen never had

Mo suitors, nor the lady that did cause the battle
mad

Between the half-brute Centaurs and the Lapiths,
nor the wife

Of bold Ulysses who was eke aye fearful of his
life

Than thou should'st have. For thousands now
(even now most chiefly when

Thou seemest suitors to abhor) desire thee, both
of men

770

And gods and half-gods, yea, and all the fairies
that do dwell

In Alban hills. But if thou wilt be wise and
mindest well

To match thyself and wilt give ear to this old
woman here

(To whom thou more than to them all art, trust
me, lief and dear

And more than thou thyself believ'st), the
common matches flee

And choose Vertumnus to thy make. And take
thou me to be

His pledge. For more he to himself not known is
than to me.

He roves not like a runagate through all the
world abroad;

This country hereabout (the which is large) is his
abode.

He doth not, like a number of these common
wooers, cast

780

His love to everyone he sees. Thou art the first
and last

That ever he set mind upon. Alonely unto thee

He vows himself as long as life doth last.
Moreover he

Is youthful and with beauty sheen endued by
nature's gift,

And aptly into any shape his person he can shift.

Thou canst not bid him be the thing, though all
things thou should'st name,

But that he fitly and with ease will straight
become the same.

Besides all this, in all one thing both twain of
you delight,

And of the fruits that you love best the firstlings
are his right,

And gladly he receives thy gifts. But neither
covets he

790

Thy apples, plums, nor other fruits new gathered
from the tree,

Nor yet the herbs of pleasant scent that in thy
gardens be,

Nor any other kind of thing in all the world, but
thee.

Have mercy on his fervent love and think himself
to crave

Here present by the mouth of me the thing that
he would have.

And fear the god that may revenge, as Venus,
who doth hate

Hard-hearted folks, and Rhamnuse, who doth
either soon or late

Express her wrath with mindful wreak. And to
th'intent thou may

The more beware, of many things which time by
long delay

Hath taught me I will show thee one which over
all the land

800 Of Cyprus blazed is abroad, which, being rightly
scanned,

May easily bow thy hardened heart and make it
for to yield.

Iphis and 'One Iphis, born of low degree, by fortune
Anaxarete had beheld

The Lady Anaxarete, descended of the race
Of Teucer; and in viewing her the fire of love
apace

Did spread itself through all his bones. With
which he striving long,

When reason could not conquer rage because it
was so strong,

Came humbly to the lady's house and, one while
laying ope

His wretched love before her nurse, besought her
by the hope

Of Lady Anaxarete her nursechild's good success

She would not be against him in that case of his
distress.

Another while entreating fair some friend of
hers, he prayed

Him earnestly with careful voice of furtherance
and of aid.

Ofttimes he did prefer his suit by gentle letters
sent.

Oft garlands moisted with the dew of tears that
from him went

He hangèd on her posts. Ofttimes his tender sides
he laid

Against the threshold hard and oft in sadness did
upbraid

The lock with much ungentleness. The lady,
crueller

Than are the rising narrow seas or falling Kids
and far

More hard than steel of Noricum and than the
stony rock

That in the quarry hath his root, did him despise
and mock.

Beside her doings merciless of stateliness and
spite,

She, adding proud and scornful words, defrauds
the wretched wight

Of very hope. But Iphis now, unable anymore

To bear the torment of his grief, still standing
there before

Her gate, spake these his latest words: "Well,
Anaxarete,

Thou hast the upper hand. Henceforth thou shalt
not need to be

Aggrieved any more with me. Go, triumph
hardily;

Go, vaunt thyself with joy; go, sing the song of
victory;

Go, put a crown of glittering bay upon thy cruel
head.

830

For why thou hast the upper hand, and I am
gladly dead.

Well, steely-hearted, well, rejoice! Compelled yet
shalt thou be

Of somewhat in me for to have a liking. Thou
shalt see

A point wherein thou may'st me deem most
thankful unto thee,

And in the end thou shalt confess the great
desert of me.

But yet remember that, as long as life in me doth
last,

The care of thee shall never from this heart of
mine be cast.

For both the life that I do live in hope of thee
and t'other

Which nature giveth shall have end and pass
away together.

The tidings neither of my death shall come to
thee by fame.

840

Myself, I do assure thee, will be bringer of the
same.

Myself, I say, will present be, that those same
cruel eyen

Of thine may feed themselves upon this lifeless
corse of mine.

But yet, O gods, if you behold men's deeds,
remember me –
My tongue will serve to pray no more – and
cause that I may be
Longtime hereafter spoken of; and length the life
by fame
The which ye have abridged in years.” In saying
of this same,
He lifted up his watery eyes and arms that waxèd
wan
To those same stoops which oft he had with
garlands decked ere then
And, fastening on the top thereof a halter, thus
did say:
“Thou cruel and ungodly wight, these are the
wreaths that may
Most pleasure thee.” And with that word he,
thrusting in his head,
Even then did turn him towards her, as good as
being dead,
And wretchedly did totter on the post with
strangled throat.
The wicket, which his fearful feet in sprawling
mainly smote,
Did make a noise and, flying ope, bewrayed his
doing plain.
The servants shrieked and, lifting up his body
(but in vain)
Conveyed him to his mother's house (his father
erst was slain).
His mother laid him in her lap and, clipping in
her arms

860

Her son's cold body, after that she had bewailed
her harms

With words and doings mother-like, the corse
with mourning cheer

To burial sadly through the town was borne
upon a bier.

The house of Anaxarete by chance was near the
way

By which this piteous pomp did pass, and of the
doleful lay

The sound came to the ears of her whom God
already gan

To strike. "Yet let us see", quoth she, "the burial
of this man."

And up the high wide-windowed house in saying
so she ran.

Scarce had she well on Iphis looked that on the
bier did lie

But that her eyes waxed stark and from her limbs
the blood gan fly.

Instead thereof came paleness in. And as she
backward was

870

In mind to go, her feet stick fast and could not
stir. And as

She would have cast her count'nance back, she
could not do it. And

The stony hardness which alate did in her
stomach stand

Within a while did overgrow her whole from sole
to crown.

And lest you think this gear surmised, even yet
in Salamin town

Of Lady Anaxarete the image standeth plain.

The temple also in the which the image doth
remain

Is unto Venus consecrate by name of Looker-Out.
And therefore, weighing well these things, I pray
thee, look about,

Good lady, and away with pride; and be content
to frame

880

Thyself to him that loveth thee and cannot
quench his flame.

So neither may the Lenten's cold thy budding
fruit trees kill

Nor yet the sharp and boisterous winds thy
flowering gardens spill.'

*Pomona and
Vertumnus*

The god that can upon him take what kind of
shape he list

(conclusion)

Now, having said thus much in vain, omitted
to persist

In beldame's shape and showed himself a lusty
gentleman,

Appearing to her cheerfully, even like as
Phoebus when

He, having overcome the clouds that did
withstand his might,

Doth blaze his brightsome beams again with
fuller heat and light.

He offered force; but now no force was needed in
the case,

890

For why she, being caught in love with beauty of
his face,

Was wounded then as well as he and gan to yield
apace.

Aeneas'
successors
(continued)

Next Proca reigned Amulius in Ausony by
wrong

Till Numitor, the rightful heir deposèd very
long,
Was by his daughters' sons restored. And on the
feastful day
Of Pale foundation of the walls of Rome they gan
to lay.
Soon after Tacy and the lords of Sabine stirred
debate,
And Tarpey for her traitorous deed in opening of
the gate
Of Tarpey tower was pressed to death, according
to desert,
With armour heaped upon her head. Then, fierce
and stout of heart,
The Sabines, like to tongueless wolves, without
all noise of talk
Assailed the Romans in their sleep and to the
gates gan stalk
Which Ilia's son had closèd fast with locks and
bars. But yet
Dame Juno had set open one and, as she opened
it,
Had made no noise of craking with the hinges, so
that none
Perceived the opening of the gate but Venus all
alone.
And she had shut it up, but that it is not lawful
to
One god to undo anything another god hath do.

910

The waternymphs of Ausony held all the grounds
about

The church of Janus, where was store of springs
fresh flowing out.

Dame Venus prayed these nymphs of help; and
they, considering that

The goddess did request no more but right,
denied it nat.

They opened all their fountain veins and made
them flow apace.

Howbeit, the passage was not yet to Janus' open
face

Foreclosed; neither had as yet the water stopped
the way.

They put rank brimstone underneath the flowing
spring that day

And eke with smoky rosin set their veins on fire
for aye.

Through force of these and other things the
vapour pierced low,

Even down unto the very roots on which the
springs did grow,

So that the waters which alate in coldness might
compare

920

Even with the frozen Alps now hot as burning
furnace are.

The two gateposts with sprinkling of the fiery
water smoked,

Whereby the gate behighted to the Sabines quite
was choked

With rising of this fountain strange until that
Mars's knight

Had armèd him. Then Romulus did boldly offer
fight.

The Roman ground with Sabines and with
Romans both were spread,

And with the blood of father-in-laws which
wicked sword had shed

Flowed mixed the blood of son-in-laws. Howbeit,
it seemed best

To both the parties at the length from battle for
to rest

And not to fight to utterance, and that Tacy
should become

930

Co-partner with King Romulus of sovereignty in
Rome.

Within a while King Tacy died, and both the
Sabines and

The Romans under Romulus in equal right did
stand.

The god of battle, putting off his glittering
helmet then,

With suchlike words as these bespake the sire of
gods and men:

Romulus is 'The time, O father (in as much as now the
made a god Roman state

Is waxen strong upon the good foundation
laid alate

Depending on the stay of one) is come for thee to
make

Thy promise good which thou of me and of thy
grandchild spake,

Which was to take him from the earth and in the
heaven him stay.

940

Thou once (I marked thy gracious words and
bare them well away)

Before a great assembly of the gods did'st to me
say,

“There shall be one whom thou shalt raise above
the starry sky.”

Now let thy saying take effect.’ Jove granting by
and by,

The air was hid with darksome clouds and
thunder forth did fly

And lightning made the world aghast. Which
Mars perceiving to

Be lucky tokens for himself his enterprise to do,
Did take his rist upon his spear and boldly leapt
into

His bloody chariot. And he lent his horses with
his whip

A yerking lash and through the air full smoothly
down did slip.

950

And, staying on the woody top of mountain
Palatine,

He took away King Romulus, who there did then
define

The private cases of his folk, unseemly for a king.
And as a leaden pellet broad enforced from a
sling

Is wont to die amid the sky, even so his mortal
flesh

Sank from him down the subtle air. Instead
whereof a fresh

And goodly shape more stately and more meet
for sacred shrine

Succeeded, like our Quirin that in stately robe
doth shine.

Hersilia for her fere, as lost, of mourning
made none end

Until Queen Juno did command Dame Iris to
descend

960

Upon the rainbow down and thus her message
for to do:

‘O of the Latian country and the Sabine nation
too

Thou peerless pearl of womanhood, most worthy
for to be

The wife of such a noble prince as heretofore
was he

And still to be the wife of him canonized by
name

Of Quirin, cease thy tears. And if thou have
desire the same

Thy holy husband for to see, ensue me to the
queach

That groweth green on Quirin's hill, whose
shadows overreach

The temple of the Roman king.’ Dame Iris did
obey

And, sliding by her painted bow, in former words
did say

970

Her errand to Hersilia. She, scarce lifting up her
eyes,

With sober count'nance answered, ‘O thou
goddess (for surmise

I cannot who thou art, but yet I well may
understand

Thou art a goddess), lead me, O dear goddess,
lead me and
My husband to me show. Whom if the fatal
sisters three
Will of their gracious goodness grant me leave
but once to see,
I shall account me into heaven received for to
be.'
Immediately with Thaumant's imp to Quirin's hill
she went.
There, gliding from the sky, a star straight down
to ground was sent,
The sparks of whose bright blazing beams did
burn Hersila's hair;
And with the star the air did up her hair to
heavenward bear.
The builder of the town of Rome, receiving
straight the same
Between his old acquainted hands, did alter both
her name
And eke her body, calling her Dame Ora. And by
this
She jointly with her husband for a goddess
worshipped is.

FINIS LIBRI DECIMI QUARTI.

The Fifteenth Book of Ovid's Metamorphoses

A person in the while was sought sufficient to
sustain
The burden of so great a charge and worthy for
to reign
Instead of such a mighty prince. The noble Nume
by Fame
(Who harped then upon the truth before to pass
it came)
Appointed to the empire was. This Numa
thought it not
Enough that he the knowledge of the Sabine rites
had got.
The deepness of his noble wit to greater things
was bent:
To search of things the natures out. The care of
this intent
Did cause that he from Curey and his native
country went
With painful travel to the town where Hercules
did host.
And, asking who it was of Greece that in
th'Italian coast
Had built that town, an aged man well seen in
stories old
To satisfy his mind therein the process thus him
told:

*The story of
Myscelus*

‘As Hercules, enrichèd with the Spanish kine,
did hold

His voyage from the ocean sea, men say, with
lucky cut

He came a-land on Lacine coast; and while he
there did put

His beasts to grazing, he himself in Croton's
house did rest,

The greatest man in all those parts and unto
strangers best;

And that he there refreshed him of his tedious
travel; and

20 That when he should depart, he said, “Where
now thy house doth stand

Shall in thy childer's children's time a city
buildèd be.”

Which words of his have proved true, as plainly
now we see.

For why there was one Myscelus, a Greek,
Alemon's son,

A person more in favour of the gods than anyone
In those days was. The god that bears the
boisterous club* did stay

Upon him, being fast asleep, and said, “Go, seek
straightway

The stony streams of Aesary. Thy native soil for
aye

Forsake.” And sore he threatened him unless he
did obey.

The god and sleep departed both together. Up
did rise

30 Alemon's son and in himself did secretly devise

Upon this vision. Long his mind strove doubtful
to and fro.
The god bade go; his country laws did say he
should not go,
And death was made the penalty for him that
would do so.
Clear Titan in the ocean sea had hid his
lightsome head,
And dusky night had put up hers most thick with
stars bespread.
The selfsame god by Myscelus did seem to stand
eftsoon,
Commanding him the selfsame thing that he
before had done
And threatening mo and greater plagues unless
he did obey.
Then, being stricken sore in fear, he went about
straightway
His household from his native land to foreign to
convey.
A rumour hereupon did rise through all the town
of Arge,
And disobedience of the law was laid to his
charge.
As soon as that the case had first been pleaded
and the deed
Apparently perceivèd so that witness did not
need,
Arraignèd and forlorn, to heaven he cast his
hands and eyes
And said, "O god whose labours twelve have
purchased thee the skies,

Assist me, I thee pray. For thou art author of my
crime.”

When judgement should be given it was the
guise in ancient time

With white stones to acquit the clear and eke
with black to cast

50

The guilty. That time also so the heavy sentence
passed;

The stones were cast unmerciful all black into
the pot.

But when the stones were pourèd out to number,
there was not

A black among them. All were white. And so
through Herc'les' power

A gentle judgement did proceed, and he was quit
that hour.

Then gave he thanks to Hercules and, having
prosperous blast,

Cut over the Ionian Sea and so by Tarent passed,
Which Spartans built, and Sybaris and Neaeth
Salentine

And Thurine bay and Emese and eke the pastures
fine

Of Calabry. And, having scarce well sought the
coasts that lie

60

Upon the sea, he found the mouth of fatal
Aesary.

Not far from thence he also found the tomb in
which the ground

Did cover Croton's holy bones and in that place
did found

The city that was willèd him and gave thereto
the name

Of him that there lay burièd.' Such original as
this same

This city in th'Italian coast is said to have by
fame.

*The teachings
of Pythagoras*

Here dwelt a man of Samos Isle, who, for the
hate he had

To lordliness and tyranny, though
unconstrained, was glad

To make himself a banished man. And though
this person were

Far distant from the gods by site of heaven, yet
came he near

70

To them in mind. And he by sight of soul and
reason clear

Beheld the things which nature doth to fleshly
eyes deny.

And when with care most vigilant he had
assuredly

Imprinted all things in his heart, he set them
openly

Abroad for other folk to learn. He taught his
silent sort

(Which wondered at the heavenly words their
master did report)

The first foundation of the world; the cause of
everything;

What nature was and what was God; whence
snow and lightning spring;

And whether Jove or else the winds in breaking
clouds do thunder;

What shakes the earth; what law the stars do
keep their courses under;

And whatsoever other thing is hid from common
sense.

He also is the first that did enjoin an abstinence
To feed of any living thing. He also first of all
Spake thus, although right learnedly, yet to
effect but small:

‘Ye mortal men, forbear to frank your flesh
with wicked food.

Ye have both corn and fruits of trees and
grapes and herbs right good;
And though that some be harsh and hard, yet fire
may make them well
Both soft and sweet. Ye may have milk and
honey which doth smell
Of flowers of thyme. The lavish earth doth yield
you plenteously
Most gentle food and riches to content both mind
and eye.

There needs no slaughter nor no blood to get
your living by.

The beasts do break their fast with flesh; and yet
not all beasts neither,

For horses, sheep and rother-beasts to live by
grass had liefer.

The nature of the beast that doth delight in
bloody food

Is cruel and unmerciful, as lions fierce of mood,
Armenian tigers, bears and wolves. O, what a
wickedness

It is to cram the maw with maw and frank up
flesh with flesh

And for one living thing to live by killing of
another,

As who should say that of so great abundance,
which our mother
The earth doth yield most bounteously, none
other might delight
100 Thy cruel teeth to chew upon than grisly wounds
that might
Express the Cyclops' guise! Or else as if thou
could not staunch
The hunger of thy greedy gut and evil-mannered
paunch
Unless thou stroyed some other wight! But that
same ancient age
Which we have named the golden world, clean
void of all such rage,
Lived blessedly by fruit of trees and herbs that
grow on ground
And stained not their mouths with blood. Then
birds might safe and sound
Fly where they listed in the air. The hare,
unscared of hound,
Went pricking over all the fields. No angling
hook with bait
Did hang the silly fish that bote, mistrusting no
deceit.
110 All things were void of guilefulness; no treason
was in trust,
But all was friendship, love and peace. But after
that the lust
Of one (what god so e'er he was), disdaining
former fare,
To cram that cruel crop of his with fleshmeat did
not spare,

He made a way for wickedness. And first of all
the knife

Was stained with blood of savage beasts in
ridding them of life.

And that had nothing been amiss if there had
been the stay;

For why we grant without the breach of
godliness we may

By death confound the things that seek to take
our lives away.

But as to kill them reason was, even so again
there was

120

No reason why to eat their flesh. This lewdness
thence did pass

On further still. Whereas there was no sacrifice
beforn,

The swine (because with hooked groin he rooted
up the corn

And did deceive the tillmen of their hope next
year thereby)

Was deemed worthy by desert in sacrifice to die.

The goat for biting vines was slain at Bacchus'
altar, who

Wreaks such misdeeds. Their own offence was
hurtful to these two.

But what have you, poor sheep, misdone, a cattle
meek and mild

Created for to maintain man, whose fulsome
dugs do yield

Sweet nectar, who doth clothe us with your wool
in soft array,

130

Whose life doth more us benefit than doth your
death far way?

What trespass have the oxen done – a beast
without all guile
Or craft, unhurtful, simple, born to labour every
while?
In faith, he is unmindful and unworthy of
increase
Of corn that in his heart can find his tillman to
release
From plough to cut his throat; that in his heart
can find, I say,
Those necks with hatchets off to strike, whose
skin is worn away
With labouring aye for him, who turned so oft
his land most tough,
Who brought so many harvests home. Yet is it
not enough
That such a great outrageousness committed is.
They father
Their wickedness upon the gods, and falsely they
do gather
That in the death of painful ox the highest doth
delight.
A sacrifice unblemishèd and fairest unto sight
(For beauty worketh them their bane), adorned
with garlands and
With glittering gold, is sited at the altar for to
stand.
There hears he words (he wots not what) the
which the priest doth pray
And on his forehead suffereth him between his
horns to lay
The ears of corn that he himself hath wrought for
in the clay

150

And staineth with his blood the knife that he
himself, perchance,

Hath in the water sheer ere then beheld by
sudden glance.

Immediately they, haling out his heartstrings still
alive

And poring on them, seek therein God's secrets to
retrieve.

Whence comes so greedy appetite in men of
wicked meat?

And dare ye, O ye mortal men, adventure thus to
eat?

Nay, do not, I beseech you, so. But give good ear
and heed

To that that I shall warn you of, and trust it as
your creed

That, whensoever you do eat your oxen, you
devour

Your husbandmen. And for as much as God this
instant hour

Doth move my tongue to speak, I will obey his
heavenly power.

My god Apollo's temple I will set you open and

160

Disclose the wondrous heavens themselves and
make you understand

The oracles and secrets of the godly majesty.

Great things and such as wit of man could never
yet espy

And such as have been hidden long, I purpose to
descry.

I mind to leave the earth and up among the stars
to sty;

I mind to leave this grosser place and in the
clouds to fly

And on stout Atlas' shoulders strong to rest
myself on high

And, looking down from heaven on men that
wander here and there

In dreadful fear of death as though they void of
reason were,

To give them exhortation thus and plainly to
unwind

The whole discourse of destiny as nature hath
assigned.

O men amazed with dread of death, why fear ye
Limbo, Styx

And other names of vanity, which are but poets'
tricks,

And perils of another world, all false surmised
gear?

For whether fire or length of time consume the
bodies here,

Ye well may think that further harms they
cannot suffer more.

For souls are free from death. Howbeit they,
living evermore,

Their former dwellings are received and live
again in new.

For I myself (right well in mind I bear it to be
true)

Was in the time of Trojan War Euphorbus,
Pantheu's son,

Quite through whose heart the deathful spear of
Menelay did run.

I late ago in Juno's church at Argos did behold

And knew the target which I in my left hand
there did hold.

All things do change. But nothing, sure, doth
perish. This same sprite

Doth fleet and, fisking here and there, doth
swiftly take his flight

From one place to another place and entereth
every wight,

Removing out of man to beast and out of beast to
man.

But yet it never perisheth nor never perish can.

And even as supple wax with ease receiveth
figures strange

And keeps not aye one shape ne bides assured
aye from change

And yet continueth always wax in substance, so,
I say,

The soul is aye the selfsame thing it was, and yet
astray

It fleeteth into sundry shapes. Therefore, lest
godliness

Be vanquished by outrageous lust of belly
beastliness,

Forbear (I speak by prophecy) your kinsfolk's
ghosts to chase

By slaughter; neither nourish blood with blood in
any case.

And sith on open sea the winds do blow my sails
apace,

In all the world there is not that that standeth at
a stay.

Things ebb and flow, and every shape is made to
pass away.

200

The time itself continually is fleeting like a
brook,

For neither brook nor lightsome time can tarry
still. But look

As every wave drives other forth, and that that
comes behind

Both thrusteth and is thrust itself; even so the
times by kind

Do fly and follow both at once and evermore
renew.

For that that was before is left, and straight there
doth ensue

Another that was never erst. Each twinkling of
an eye

Doth change. We see that after day comes night
and darks the sky,

And after night the lightsome sun succeedeth
orderly.

Like colour is not in the heaven when all things
weary lie

At midnight sound asleep as when the daystar
clear and bright

210

Comes forth upon his milk-white steed. Again in
other plight

The morning, Pallant's daughter fair, the
messenger of light,

Delivereth into Phoebus' hands the world of
clearer hue.

The circle also of the sun, what time it riseth
new

And when it setteth, looketh red; but when it
mounts most high,

Then looks it white because that there the nature
of the sky

Is better and from filthy dross of earth doth
further fly.

The image also of the moon that shineth aye by
night

Is never of one quantity. For that that giveth
light

Today is lesser than the next that followeth till
the full,

220

And then contrariwise each day her light away
doth pull.

What! See'st thou not how that the year, as
representing plain

The age of man, departs itself in quarters four?
First bain

And tender in the spring it is, even like a sucking
babe.

Then green and void of strength and lush and
foggy is the blade

And cheers the husbandman with hope; then all
things flourish gay.

The earth with flowers of sundry hue then
seemeth for to play,

And virtue small or none to herbs there doth as
yet belong.

The year, from springtide passing forth to
summer, waxeth strong,

Becometh like a lusty youth. For in our life
throughout

230

There is no time more plentiful, more lusty, hot
and stout.

Then followeth harvest, when the heat of youth
grows somewhat cold,
Ripe, mild, disposèd mean betwixt a young man
and an old
And somewhat spent with greyish hair. Then
ugly winter, last,
Like age steals on with trembling steps, all bald
or overcast
With shirl thin hair as white as snow. Our bodies
also aye
Do alter still from time to time and never stand
at stay.
We shall not be the same we were today or
yesterday.
The day hath been we were but seed and only
hope of men,
And in our mother's womb we had our dwelling-
place as then.
Dame Nature put to cunning hand and suffered
not that we
Within our mother's strained womb should aye
distressed be,
But brought us out to air and from our prison set
us free.
The child, newborn, lies void of strength. Within
a season tho
He, waxing four-footed, learns like savage beasts
to go.
Then, somewhat faltering and as yet not firm of
foot, he stands
By getting somewhat for to help his sinews in his
hands.

From that time, growing strong and swift, he
passeth forth the space
Of youth and also, wearing out his middle age
apace,
Through droopy age's steepy path he runneth out
his race.

250

This age doth undermine the strength of former
years and throws
It down; which thing old Milo by example
plainly shows.

For when he saw those arms of his (which
heretofore had been
As strong as ever Hercules in working deadly
teen

Of biggest beasts) hang flapping down and
nought but empty skin,

He wept. And Helen, when she saw her aged
wrinkles in

A glass, wept also, musing in herself what men
had seen

That by two noble princes' sons she twice had
ravished been.

Thou Time, the eater up of things, and Age of
spiteful teen

Destroy all things. And when that long
continuance hath them bit,

260

You leisurely by lingering death consume them
every whit.

And these that we call elements do never stand
at stay.

The interchanging course of them I will before ye
lay.

Give heed thereto. This endless world contains
therein, I say,
Four substances of which all things are gendered.
Of these four
The earth and water for their mass and weight
are sunken lower;
The other couple, air and fire, the purer of the
twain,
Mount up, and nought can keep them down. And
though there do remain
A space between each one of them, yet
everything is made
Of them same four and into them at length again
do fade.
The earth, resolving leisurely, doth melt to water
sheer;
The water, finèd, turns to air; the air eke, purgèd
clear
From grossness, spireth up aloft and there
becometh fire.
From thence in order contrary they back again
retire.
Fire, thickening, passeth into air; and air, waxing
gross,
Returns to water; water eke, congealing into
dross,
Becometh earth. No kind of thing keeps aye his
shape and hue.
For nature, loving ever change, repairs one shape
anew
Upon another. Neither doth there perish aught
(trust me)

In all the world but, altering, takes new shape.
 For that which we

Do term by name of being born is for to gin to be
 Another thing than that it was; and likewise for
 to die

To cease to be the thing it was. And though that
 variably

Things pass perchance from place to place, yet
 all, from whence they came

Returning, do unperishèd continue still the same.
 But as for in one shape, be sure that nothing long
 can last.

Even so the ages of the world from gold to iron
 passed.

Even so have places oftentimes exchanged their
 estate.

For I have seen it sea which was substantial
 ground alate;

Again, where sea was I have seen the same
 become dry land.

And shells and scales of seafish far have lain
 from any strand,

And in the tops of mountains high old anchors
 have been found.

Deep valleys have by watershot been made of
 level ground,

And hills by force of gulling oft have into sea
 been worn.

Hard gravel ground is sometime seen where
 marish was befor,

And that that erst did suffer drought becometh
 standing lakes.

Here nature sendeth new springs out, and there
the old in takes.

Full many rivers in the world through
earthquakes heretofore

Have either changed their former course or dried
and run no more.

So Lycus, being swallowed up by gaping of the
ground,

300

A great way off fro thence is in another channel
found.

Even so the River Erasine among the fields of
Arge

Sinks one while and another while runs great
again at large.

Caïcus also of the land of Mysia (as men say),
Misliking of his former head, runs now another
way.

In Sicil, also, Amasene runs sometime full and
high,

And sometime, stopping up his spring, he makes
his channel dry.

Men drank the waters of the brook Anigrus
heretofore

Which now is such that men abhor to touch them
anymore;

Which comes to pass (unless we will discredit
poets quite)

310

Because the Centaurs, vanquishèd by Hercules in
fight,

Did wash their wounds in that same brook. But
doth not Hypanis

That springeth in the Scythian hills, which at his
fountain is

Right pleasant, afterward become of brackish
bitter taste?

Antissa and Phoenician Tyre and Pharos in time
past

Were compassed all about with waves; but none
of all these three

Is now an isle. Again the town of Leucas once
was free

From sea and in the ancient time was joinèd to
the land;

But now environed round about with water it
doth stand.

Men say that Sicil also hath been joined to Italy
Until the sea consumed the bounds between and
did supply

The room with water. If ye go to seek for Helice
And Bury, which were cities of Achaia, you shall
see

Them hidden under water; and the shipmen yet
do show

The walls and steeples of the towns drowned
under as they row.

Not far from Pitthey Troezen is a certain high
ground found

All void of trees, which heretofore was plain and
level ground

But now a mountain. For the winds (a wondrous
thing to say),

Enclosèd in the hollow caves of ground and
seeking way

To pass therefro, in struggling long to get the
open sky

330

In vain (because in all the cave there was no vent
whereby

To issue out), did stretch the ground and make it
swell on high

As doth a bladder that is blown by mouth or as
the skin

Of hornèd goat in bottlewise when wind is
gotten in.

The swelling of the foresaid place remains at this
day still

And, by continuance waxing hard, is grown a
pretty hill.

Of many things that come to mind by hearsay
and by skill

Of good experience, I a few will utter to you mo.

What! Doth not water in his shapes change
strangely to and fro?

The well of hornèd Hammon is at noontide
passing cold;

340

At morn and even it waxeth warm; at midnight
none can hold

His hand therein for passing heat. The well of
Athamane

Is said to kindle wood what time the moon is in
the wane.

The Cicones have a certain stream which, being
drunk, doth bring

Men's bowels into marble hard; and whatsoever
thing

Is touched therewith it turns to stone. And by
your bounds, behold,

The rivers Crathe and Sybaris make yellow hair
like gold

And amber. There are also springs (which thing
is far more strange)

Which not the body only but the mind do also
change.

Who hath not heard of Salmacis, that foul and
filthy sink?

Or of the lake of Ethiope, which if a man do
drink,

He either runneth mad or else with wondrous
drowsiness

Forgoeth quite his memory? Whoever doth
repress

His thirst with draught of Clitor well hates wine
and doth delight

In only water, either for because there is a might
Contrary unto warming wine by nature in the
well

Or else because (for so the folk of Arcady do tell)
Melampus, Amythaon's son, when he delivered
had

King Proetus' daughters by his charms and herbs
from being mad,

Cast into that same water all the baggage
wherewithal

He purged the madness of their minds; and so it
did befall

That loathsomeness of wine did in those waters
aye remain.

Again, in Lyncest contrary effect to this doth
reign.

For whoso drinks too much thereof, he reeleth
here and there

As if by quaffing wine no whit allayed he
drunken were.

There is a lake in Arcady which Pheney men did
name

In ancient time, whose doubtfulness deserveth
justly blame.

A'night-times take thou heed of it, for if thou
taste the same

A'night-times, it will hurt. But if thou drink it in
the day

It hurteth not. Thus lakes and streams, as well
perceive ye may,

Have divers powers and diversely. Even so the
time hath been

That Delos, which stands steadfast now, on
waves was floating seen.

And galleys have been sore afraid of frushing by
the isles

Symplegads, which together dashed upon the sea
erewhiles

But now do stand unmovable against both wind
and tide.

Mount Etna with his burning ovens of brimstone
shall not bide

Aye fire; neither was it so for ever erst. For
whether

The earth a living creature be and that to breathe
out hither

And thither flame great store of vents it have in
sundry places

And that it have the power to shift those vents in
divers cases,

Now damming these, now opening those, in
moving to and fro;

Or that the whisking winds, restrained within the
earth below,

Do beat the stones against the stones and other
kind of stuff

Of fiery nature which do fall on fire with every
puff;

As soon as those same winds do cease, the caves
shall straight be cold.

Or if it be a rosin mould that soon of fire takes
hold,

Or brimstone mixed with clayish soil on fire doth
lightly fall,

Undoubtedly, as soon as that same soil consumed
shall

No longer yield the fatty food to feed the fire
withal.

And ravening nature shall forgo her wonted
nourishment,

Then, being able to abide no longer famishment,

For want of sustenance it shall cease his burning.
I do find

By fame that under Charles's wain in Pallene are
a kind

Of people which by diving thrice three times in
Triton lake

Become all feathered and the shape of birds upon
them take.

The Scythian witches also are reported for to do

The selfsame thing (but hardly I give credit
thereunto)

By smearing poison over all their bodies. But
(and if

A man to matters tried by proof may safely give
belief)

We see how flesh by lying still a while and
catching heat

Doth turn to little living beasts. And yet a further
feat:

Go, kill an ox and bury him (the thing by proof
man sees),

And of his rotten flesh will breed the flower-
gathering bees

Which, as their father did before, love fields
exceedingly

And unto work in hope of gain their busy limbs
apply.

The hornet is engendered of a lusty buried steed.

Go, pull away the clees from crabs that in the sea
do breed

And bury all the rest in mould, and of the same
will spring

A scorpion which with writhen tail will threaten
for to sting.

The caterpillars of the field, the which are wont
to weave

Hoar films upon the leaves of trees, their former
nature leave

(Which thing is known to husbandmen) and turn
to butterflies.

The mud hath in it certain seed whereof green
froshes rise.

And first it brings them footless forth; then, after,
it doth frame

Legs apt to swim; and furthermore, of purpose
that the same
May serve them for to leap afar, their hinder part
is much
More longer than their forepart is. The
bearwhelp also, which
The bear hath newly littered, is no whelp
immediately,
But like an evil-favoured lump of flesh alive doth
lie.
The dam by licking shapeth out his members
orderly
Of such a size as such a piece is able to conceive.
Or mark ye not the bees of whom our honey we
receive,
How that their young ones, which do lie within
the six-square wax,
Are limbless bodies at the first and after, as they
wax,
In process take both feet and wings? What man
would think it true
That Lady Venus' simple birds, the doves of silver
hue,
Or Juno's bird that in his tail bears stars, or
Jove's stout knight,
The erne, and every other fowl of whatsoever
flight
Could all be hatchèd out of eggs, unless he did it
know?
Some folk do hold opinion, when the backbone
which doth grow

In man is rotten in the grave, the pith becomes a
snake.

Howbeit of other things all these their first
beginning take.

One bird there is that doth renew itself and, as it
were,

Beget itself continually. The Syrians name it
there

A phoenix. Neither corn nor herbs this phoenix
liveth by

But by the juice of frankincense and gum of
amomy.

And when that of his life well full five hundred
years are past,

Upon a holm-tree or upon a date-tree at the last
He makes him with his talons and his hardened
bill a nest.

Which when that he with casia sweet and nardus
soft hath dressed

And strowèd it with cinnamon and myrrha of the
best,

He rucketh down upon the same and in the
spices dies.

Soon after of the father's corse, men say, there
doth arise

Another little phoenix, which as many years
must live

As did his father. He, as soon as age doth
strength him give

To bear the burden, from the tree the weighty
nest doth lift

And godlily his cradle thence and father's hearse
doth shift;

And, flying through the subtle air, he gets to
Phoebus' town

And there before the temple door doth lay his
burden down.

But if that any novelty worth wondering be in
these,

Much rather may we wonder at the hyen, if we
please:

To see how interchangeably it one while doth
remain

A female, and another while becometh male
again.

The creature also which doth live by only air and
wind

All colours that it leaneth to doth counterfeit by
kind.

The grapegod Bacchus, when he had subdued the
land of Inde,

Did find a spotted beast called lynx whose urine
(by report),

By touching of the open air, congealeth in such
sort

As that it doth become a stone. So coral, which
as long

As water hides it is a shrub and soft, becometh
strong

And hard as soon as it doth touch the air. The
day would end

And Phoebus' panting steeds should in the ocean
deep descend

Before all alterations I in words could
comprehend.

. So see we all things changeable. One nation
gathereth strength;
Another waxeth weak; and both do make
exchange at length.
So Troy, which once was great and strong as well
in wealth as men
And able ten years' space to spare such store of
blood as then,
Now, being base, hath nothing left of all her
wealth to show
Save ruins of the ancient works which grass doth
overgrow
And tombs wherein their ancestors lie buried on
a row.
Once Sparta was a famous town; great Mycene
flourished trim;
Both Athens and Amphion's towers in honour
once did swim.
A pelting plot is Sparta now; great Mycene lies
on ground.
Of Thebe, the town of Oedipus, what have we
more than sound?
Of Athens, King Pandion's town, what resteth
more than name?
Now also of the race of Troy is rising (so saith
Fame)
The city Rome, which at the bank of Tiber, that
doth run
Down from the hill of Apennine, already hath
begun
With great advisement for to lay foundation of
her state.

This town then changeth by increase the form it
had alate

And of the universal world in time to come shall
hold

The sovereignty, so prophecies and lots (men
say) have told.

And, as I do remember me, what time that Troy
decayed,

The prophet Helen, Priam's son, these words
ensuing said

Before Aeneas, doubting of his life in weeping
plight:

“O goddess' son, believe me, if thou think I have
foresight

Of things to come, Troy shall not quite decay
while thou dost live.

Both fire and sword shall unto thee thy passage
freely give.

Thou must from hence and Troy with thee
convey away in haste,

Until that both thyself and Troy in foreign land
be placed

More friendly than thy native soil. Moreover, I
foresee

A city by the offspring of the Trojans built shall
be,

So great as never in the world the like was seen
before,

Nor is this present, neither shall be seen for
evermore.

A number of most noble peers for many years
afore

Shall make it strong and puissant; but he that
shall it make

The sovereign lady of the world by right descent
shall take

His first beginning from thy son, the little Jule.
And when

The earth hath had her time of him, the sky and
welkin then

Shall have him up for evermore, and heaven
shall be his end.”

500

Thus far, I well remember me, did Helen's words
extend

To good Aeneas. And it is a pleasure unto me

The city of my countrymen increasing thus to
see,

And that the Grecians' victory becomes the
Trojans' weal.

But lest, forgetting quite themselves, our horses
hap to steal

Beyond the mark: the heaven and all that under
heaven is found

Doth alter shape. So doth the ground and all that
is in ground.

And we that of the world are part (considering
how we be

Not only flesh but also souls, which may with
passage free

Remove them into every kind of beast both tame
and wild),

510

Let live in safety honestly with slaughter
undefiled

The bodies which perchance may have the spirits
of our brothers,

Our sisters or our parents or the spirits of some
others
Allièd to us, either by some friendship or some
kin,
Or at the least the souls of men abiding them
within.
And let us not Thyestes-like thus furnish up our
boards
With bloody bowels. Oh, how lewd example he
affords!
How wickedly prepareth he himself to murder
man
That with a cruel knife doth cut the throat of calf
and can
Unmovably give hearing to the lowing of the
dam,
Or stick the kid that wailleth like the little babe,
or eat
The fowl that he himself before had often fed
with meat!
What wants of utter wickedness in working such
a feat?
What may he after pass to do? Well, either let
your steers
Wear out themselves with work or else impute
their death to years.
Against the wind and weather cold let wethers
yield ye coats,
And udders full of battling milk receive ye of the
goats.
Away with springes, snares and grins; away with
risp and net.

Away with guileful feats; for fowls no limetwigs
see ye set.

No fearèd feathers pitch ye up to keep the red
deer in,

530

Ne with deceitful baited hook seek fishes for to
win.

If aught do harm, destroy it. But destroy't, and
do no more.

Forbear the flesh, and feed your mouths with
fitter food therefore.'

*The death of
Numa*

Men say that Numa, furnishèd with such
philosophy

As this and like returnèd to his native soil and
by

Entreatance was content of Rome to take the
sovereignty.

Right happy in his wife which was a nymph,
right happy in

His guides which were the Muses nine, this
Numa did begin

To teach religion. By the means whereof he
shortly drew

That people unto peace, who erst of nought but
battle knew.

540

, And when through age he ended had his reign
and eke his life,

Through Latium he was mournèd for of man and
child and wife

As well of high as low degree. His wife, forsaking
quite

The city, in Vale Aricine did hide her out of sight

Among the thickest groves and there with sighs
and plaints did let

The sacrifice of Dian, whom Orestes erst had set
From Taurica in Chersonese and in that place
had fet.

How oft, ah, did the woodnymphs and the
waternymphs persuade

Egeria for to cease her moan! What means of
comfort made

Hippolytus'
story

They! Ah, how often Theseus' son her, weeping,
thus bespake:

550 ‘O nymph, thy mourning moderate; thy
sorrow somewhat slake.

Not only thou hast cause to heart thy fortune
for to take.

Behold like haps of other folks, and this
mischance of thine

Shall grieve thee less. Would God examples (so
they were not mine)

Might comfort thee. But mine, perchance, may
comfort thee. If thou

In talk by hap hast heard of one Hippolytus ere
now

That through his father's light belief and
stepdame's craft was slain,

It will a wonder seem to thee, and I shall have
much pain

To make thee to believe the thing. But I am very
he.

The daughter of Pasiphaë, in vain oft tempting
me

560

My father's chamber to defile, surmised me to
have sought

The thing that she with all her heart would fain I
should have wrought.

And whether it were for fear I should her
wickedness bewray,

Or else for spite because I had so often said her
nay,

She charged me with her own offence. My father,
by and by

Condemning me, did banish me his realm
without cause why

And at my going like a foe did ban me bitterly.

To Pitthey Troezen outlaw-like my chariot
straight took I.

My way lay hard upon the shore of Corinth.
Suddenly

The sea did rise, and like a mount the wave did
swell on high

570

And seemed huger for to grow in drawing ever
nigh

And, roaring, cleavèd in the top. Up starts
immediately

A hornèd bullock from amid the broken wave
and by

The breast did raise him in the air and at his
nostrils and

His platter-mouth did puff out part of sea upon
the land.

My servants' hearts were sore afraid. But my
heart, musing aye

Upon my wrongful banishment, did nought at all
dismay.

My horses, setting up their ears and snorting,
 waxed shy
 And, being greatly flighted with the monster in
 their eye,
 Turned down to sea and on the rocks my waggon
 drew. In vain
 I, striving for to hold them back, laid hand upon
 the rein
 All white with foam and, haling back, lay almost
 bolt upright.
 And sure the fierceness of the steeds had yielded
 to my might,
 But that the wheel that runneth aye about the
 ax-tree round
 Did break by dashing on a stub and overthrew to
 ground.
 Then from the chariot I was snatched, the bridles
 being cast
 About my limbs. Ye might have seen my sinews
 sticking fast
 Upon the stub; my guts drawn out alive; my
 members part.
 Still left upon the stump and part forth harried
 with the cart;
 The crashing of my broken bones; and with what
 passing pain
 I breathèd out my weary ghost. There did not
 whole remain
 One piece of all my corse by which ye might
 discern as tho
 What lump or part it was. For all was wound
 from top to toe.

Now canst thou, nymph, or darest thou compare
thy harms with mine?
Moreover, I the lightless realm beheld with these
same eyen
And bathed my tattered body in the River
Phlegeton.
And had not bright Apollo's son his cunning
showed upon
My body by his surgery, my life had quite be
gone.
Which after I by force of herbs and leechcraft
had again
Received by Aesculapius' means, though Pluto
did disdain,
Then Cynthia (lest this gift of hers might work
me greater spite)
Thick clouds did round about me cast. And to
th'intent I might
Be safe myself and harmlessly appear to others'
sight,
She made me old. And for my face, she left it in
such plight
That none can know me by my look. And long
she doubted whether
To give me Dele or Crete. At length, refusing
both together,
She placed me here. And therewithal she bade
me give up quite
The name that of my horses in remembrance put
me might.
“For whereas erst Hippolytus* hath been thy
name,” quoth she,

“I will that Virby† afterward thy name forever
be.”

610

From that time forth within this wood I keep my
residence

As of the meaner gods a god of small
magnificence;

And here I hide me underneath my sovereign
lady's wing,

Obeying humbly to her hest in every kind of
thing.'

*The
transformation
of Egeria*

But yet the harms of other folk could nothing
help nor boot

Egeria's sorrows to assuage. Down at the
mountain's foot

She, lying, melted into tears till Phoebus' sister
sheen,

For pity of her great distress in which she had
her seen,

Did turn her to a fountain clear and melted quite
away

Her members into water thin that never should
decay.

620

The strangeness of the thing did make the
nymphs astonished, and

The lady of Amazon's son amazed thereat did
stand.

As when the Tyrrhene tillman saw, in earing of
his land,

The fatal clod first stir alone without the help of
hand

And by and by, forgoing quite the earthly shape
of clod,
To take the seemly shape of man and shortly like
a god
To tell of things as then to come. The Tyrrhenes
did him call
By name of Tages. He did teach the Tuscans first
of all
To guess by searching bulks of beasts what after
should befall.
Or like as did King Romulus, when suddenly he
found
His lance on mountain Palatine fast rooted in the
ground .
And bearing leaves, no longer now a weapon but
a tree
Which shadowed such as wonderingly came
thither for to see.

630

The story of Or else as Cipus, when he in the running brook
Cipus had seen

His horns; for why he saw them and, supposing
there had been
No credit to be given unto the glancing image,
he
Put oft his fingers to his head and felt it so to be.
And, blaming now no more his eyes, in coming
from the chase
With conquests of his foes he stayed and, lifting
up his face
(And with his face, his horns) to heaven, he said,
'Whatever thing

640

Is by this wonder meant, O gods, if joyful news it
bring,

I pray ye, let it joyful to my folk and country be;
But if it threaten 'evil, let the evil light on me.'

In saying so, an altar green of clowres he did
frame

And offered fuming frankincense in fire upon the
same

And pourèd bowls of wine thereon and searchèd
therewithal

The quivering inwards of a sheep to know what
should befall.

A Tyrrhene wizard, having sought the bowels,
saw therein

Great changes and attempts of things then ready
to begin

Which were not plainly manifest. But when that
he at last

650

His eyes from inwards of the beast on Cipus'
horns had cast,

'Hail, king!' he said. 'For unto thee, O Cipus,
unto thee

And to thy horns shall this same place and Rome
obedient be.

Abridge delay and make thou haste to enter at
the gates

Which tarry open for thee. So command the
soothfast Fates.

Thou shalt be king as soon as thou hast entered
once the town,

And thou and thine for evermore shalt wear the
royal crown.'

With that he, stepping back his foot, did turn his
frowning face

From Romeward, saying, 'Far, Oh far, the gods
such handsel chase.

More right it were I all my life a banished man
should be

Than that the holy Capitol me reigning there
should see.'

Thus much he said. And by and by together he
did call

The people and the senators. But yet he first of
all

Did hide his horns with laurel leaves. And then
without the wall

He, standing on a mount the which his men had
made of sods

And having after ancient guise made prayer to
the gods,

Said, 'Here is one that shall, unless ye banish him
your town

Immediately, be king of Rome and wear a royal
crown.

What man it is I will by sign but not by name
bewray.

He hath upon his brow two horns. The wizard
here doth say

That if he enter Rome you shall like servants him
obey.

He might have entered at your gates which open
for him lay,

But I did stay him thence. And yet there is not
unto me

A nearer friend in all the world. Howbeit, forbid
him ye,
O Romans, that he come not once within your
walls. Or if
He have deservèd, bind him fast in fetters like a
thief.
Or in this fatal tyrant's death of fear dispatch
your mind.'
Such noise as pine-trees make what time the
heady eastern wind
Doth whizz amongst them or as from the sea
doth far rebound,
Even such among the folk of Rome that present
was the sound.
Howbeit, in that confusèd roar of fearful folk did
fall
Out one voice asking, 'Who is he?' And staring
therewithal
Upon their foreheads, they did seek the foresaid
horns. Again
Quoth Cipus, 'Lo, ye have the man for whom ye
seek.' And then
He pulled (against his people's will) his garland
from his head
And showèd them the two fair horns that on his
brows were spread.
At that the people dasheth down their looks and,
sighing, is
Right sorry (who would think it true?) to see that
head of his
Most famous for his good deserts. Yet did they
not forget

690

The honour of his personage, but willingly did
set

The laurel garland on his head again. And by and
by

The senate said, 'Well, Cipus, sith until the time
thou die.

Thou may'st not come within these walls, we
give thee as much ground

In honour of thee as a team of steers can plough
thee round

Between the dawning of the day and shutting in
of night.'

Moreover, on the brazen gate at which this Cipus
might

Have entered Rome, a pair of horns were graved
to represent

His wondrous shape, as of his deed an endless
monument.

How

Aesculapius

came to Rome

Ye Muses, who to poets are the present
springs of grace,

Now show (for you know, neither are you
dulled by time or space)

700

How Aesculapius in the isle that is in Tiber deep

Among the sacred saints of Rome had fortune for
to creep.

A cruel plague did heretofore infect the Latian
air,

And people's bodies, pining pale, the murrain did
appair.

When, tirèd with the burial of their friends, they
did perceive

Themselves no help at man's hand nor by physic
to receive,

Then, seeking help from heaven, they sent to
Delphos (which doth stand

Amid the world) for counsel to be had at
Phoebus' hand,

Beseeching him with healthful aid to succour
their distress

And of the mighty city Rome the mischief to
redress.

710

The quivers which Apollo bright himself was
wont to bear,

The bay-trees and the place itself together
shaken were.

And by and by the table from the furthest part of
all

The chancel spake these words, which did their
hearts with fear appal:

'The thing ye Romans seek for here ye should
have sought more nigh

Your country. Yea, and nearer home go seek it
now. Not I,

Apollo, but Apollo's son is he that must redress

Your sorrows. Take your journey with good
handsel of success

And fetch my son among you.' When Apollo's
hest was told

Among the prudent senators, they searched what
town did hold

720

His son, and unto Epidaur a galley for him sent.

As soon as that th'ambassador arrivèd there, they
went
Unto the council and the lords of Greekland,
whom they pray
To have the god, the present plagues of Romans
for to stay,
And for themselves the oracle of Phoebus forth
they lay.
The council were of sundry minds and could not
well agree.
Some thought that succour in such need denièd
should not be;
And divers did persuade to keep their help and
not to send
Their gods away, sith they themselves might
need them in the end.
While doubtfully they off and on debate this
curious case,
The evening twilight utterly the day away did
chase
And on the world the shadow of the earth had
darkness brought.
That night the lord ambassador, as sleep upon
him wrought,
Did dream he saw before him stand the god
whose help he sought
In shape as in his chapel he was wonted for to
stand,
With right hand stroking down his beard and
staff in t'other hand
And meekly saying, 'Fear not, I will come and
leave my shrine.

This serpent which doth wreathe with knots
about this staff of mine

Mark well and take good heed thereof, that when
thou shalt it see

Thou may'st it know. For into it transformèd will
I be.

740

But bigger I will be, for I will seem of such a size

As may celestial bodies well to turn into suffice.'

Straight with the voice the god and, with the
voice and god, away

Went sleep. And after sleep was gone ensued
cheerful day.

Next morning having clearly put the fiery stars to
flight,

The lords, not knowing what to do, assembled all
forthright

Within the sumptuous temple of the god that was
required,

And of his mind by heavenly sign some
knowledge they desired.

They scarce had done their prayers, when the
god in shape of snake

With lofty crest of gold began a hissing for to
make

750

Which was a warning given. And with his
presence he did shake

The altar, shrine, doors, marble floor and roof all
laid with gold;

And, vauncing up his breast, he stayed right
stately to behold

Amid the church, and round about his fiery eyes
he rolled.

The sight did fray the people. But the wifeless
priest (whose hair
Was trussèd in a fair white caul) did know the
god was there
And said, 'Behold, 'tiz God, 'tiz God! As many as
be here,
Pray both with mouth and mind! O thou our
glorious God, appear
To our behoof and help thy folk that keep thy
hallows right!'
The people present worshippèd his godhead
there in sight,
Repeating double that the priest did say. The
Romans eke
Devoutly did with godly voice and heart his
favour seek.
The god by nodding did consent and gave
assured sign
By shaking of his golden crest that on his head
did shine
And hissed twice with spurting tongue. Then
trailed he down the fine
And glistening greces of his church. And, turning
back his eyen,
He looked to his altarward and to his former
shrine
And temple, as to take his leave and bid them all
farewell.
From thence right huge upon the ground (which
sweet of flowers did smell
That people strewed in his way) he passed
stately down

770

And, bending into boughs, went through the
heart of all the town

Until that he the bowing wharf beside the haven
took;

Where staying, when he had (as seemed)
dismissed with gentle look

His train of chaplains and the folk that waited on
him thither,

He laid him in the Roman ship to sail away
together.

The ship did feel the burden of his godhead to
the full

And for the heavy weight of him did after pass
more dull.

The Romans, being glad of him and having killed
a steer

Upon the shore, untied their ropes and cables
from the pier.

The lightsome wind did drive the ship. The
god, avauncing high

780

And leaning with his neck upon the galley's
side, did lie

And look upon the greenish waves; and, cutting
easily through

Th'Ionian sea with little gales of western wind
not rough,

The sixth day morning came upon the coast of
Italy.

And, passing forth by Juno's church that must'rth
to the eye

Upon the head of Lacine, he was carried also by
The rock of Scyly. Then he left the land of
Calabry

And, rowing softly by the rock Zephirion, he did
draw

To Celen cliffs, the which upon the right side
have a flaw.

By Romech and by Caulon and by Narice thence
he passed

And from the straits of Sicily gat quite and clear
at last.

Then ran he by th'Aeolian Isles and by the metal
mine

Of Tempsa and by Leucosy and temperate Paest,
where fine

And pleasant roses flourish aye. From thence by
Capreas

And Atheny, the headland of Minerva, he did
pass

To Surrent, where with gentle vines the hills be
overclad,

And by the town of Hercules and Stabey ill
bested

And Naples, born to idleness, and Cumes, where
Sibyl had

Her temples, and the scalding baths and Lintern,
where grows store

Of mastic trees, and Volturn, which bears sand
apace from shore,

And Sinuess, whereas adders are as white as any
snow,

And Minturn, of infected air because it stands so
low,

And Caiety, where Aeneas did his nurse in tomb
bestow,

And Formy, where Antiphates the Lestrigon did
keep,
And Trache, environed with a fen, and Circe's
mountain steep,
To Ancon with the boistrous shore. As soon as
that the ship
Arrivèd here (for now the sea was rough), the
god let slip
His circles and in bending boughts and
wallowing waves did glide
Into his father's temple which was builded there
beside
Upon the shore. And when the sea was calm and
pacified,
The foresaid god of Epidaur his father's church
forsook
(The lodging of his nearest friend which for a
time he took)
And with his crackling scales did in the sand a
furrow cut
And, taking hold upon the stern, did in the galley
put
His head and rested till he came past Camp and
Lavine sands
And entered Tiber's mouth, at which the city
Ostia stands.
The folk of Rome came hither all by heaps, both
men and wives
And eke the nuns that keep the fire of Vesta as
their lives,
To meet the god and welcomed him with joyful
noise. And as

820

The galley rowèd up the stream, great store of
incense was

On altars burnt on both the banks, so that on
either side

The fuming of the frankincense the very air did
hide;

And also slain in sacrifice full many cattle died.

Anon he came to Rome, the head of all the
world; and there

The serpent, lifting up himself, began his head to
bear

Right up along the mast, upon the top whereof
on high

He lookèd round about, a meet abiding-place to
spy.

The Tiber doth divide itself in twain and doth
embrace

A little pretty island (so the people term the
place)

From either side whereof the banks are distant
equal space.

830

Apollo's snake, descending from the mast,
conveyed him thither

And, taking eft his heavenly shape, as one
repairing hither

To bring our city healthfulness, did end our
sorrows quite.

*Caesar is
made a god*

Although to be a god with us admitted were
this wight,

Yet was he born a foreigner. But Caesar hath
obtained

His godhead in his native soil and city where he
reigned.

Whom, peerless both in peace and war, not more
his wars up knit

With triumph nor his great exploits achievèd by
his wit

Nor yet the great renown that he obtained so
speedily

Have turned to a blazing star than did his
progeny.

840

For of the acts of Caesar, none is greater than
that he

Left such a son behind him as Augustus is, to be
His heir. For are they things more hard, to
overcome the realm

Of Britain standing in the sea, or up the
sevenfold stream

Of Nile that beareth paper reed victorious ships
torrow,

Or to rebellious Numidy to give an overthrow,
Or Juba, king of Moors, and Pons (which proudly
did it bear

Upon the name of Mithridate) to force by sword
and spear

To yield them subjects unto Rome, or by his just
desert

To merit many triumphs and of some to have his
part,

850

Than such an heir to leave behind in whom the
gods do show

Exceeding favour unto men for that they do
bestow

So great a prince upon the world? Now to
th'intent that he
Should not be born of mortal seed, the other was
to be
Canonized for a god. Which thing when golden
Venus see
(She also saw how dreadful death was for the
bishop then
Prepared and how conspiracy was wrought by
wicked men),
She lookèd pale. And as the gods came any in
her way,
She said unto them one by one, 'Behold and see,
I pray,
With how exceeding eagerness they seek me to
betray
And with what wondrous craft they strive to take
my life away;
I mean the thing that only now remaineth unto
me
Of Jule, the Trojans' race. Must I then only ever
be
Thus vexed with undeservèd cares? How seemeth
now the pain
Of Diomed's spear of Calydon to wound my hand
again!
How seems it me that Troy again is lost through
ill defence!
How seems my son Aeneas like a banished man
from thence
To wander far again and on the sea to tossèd be
And war with Turnus for to make – or rather
(truth to say)

With Juno! What mean I about harms passed
many a day

Against mine offspring thus to stand? This
present fear and woe

Permit me not to think on things now passed so
long ago.

Ye see how wicked swords against my head are
whetted. I

Beseech ye, keep them from my throat and set
the traitors by

Their purpose. Neither suffer you Dame Vesta's
fire to die

By murdering of her bishop.' Thus went Venus
woefully

Complaining over all the heaven and moved the
gods thereby.

And for they could not break the strong decrees
of destiny,

They showed signs most manifest of sorrow to
ensue.

For battles fighting in the clouds with crashing
armour flew,

And dreadful trumpets sounded in the air and
horns eke blew,

As warning men beforehand of the mischief that
did brew.

And Phoebus also, looking dim, did cast a
drowsy light

Upon the earth, which seemed likewise to be in
sorry plight.

From underneath amid the stars brands oft
seemed burning bright.

It often rained drops of blood. The morning star
looked blue

And was bespotted here and there with specks of
rusty hue.

The moon also had spots of blood. The screech
owl sent from hell

Did with her tune unfortunate in every corner
yell.

Salt tears from ivory images in sundry places fell.

And in the chapels of the gods was singing heard
and words

Of threatening. Not a sacrifice one sign of good
affords,

But great turmoil to be at hand their heartstrings
do declare,

And when the beast is ripped up, the inwards
headless are.

About the court and every house and churches in
the nights

The dogs did howl, and everywhere appeared
ghastly sprites,

And with an earthquake shaken was the town.
Yet could not all

These warnings of the gods disappoint the treason
that should fall

Nor overcome the Destinies. The naked swords
were brought

Into the temple; for no place in all the town was
thought

So meet to work the mischief in or for them to
commit

The heinous murder as the court in which they
used to sit

In council. Venus then with both her hands her
stomach smit
And was about to hide him with the cloud in
which she hid
Aeneas, when she from the sword of Diomed did
him rid,
Or Paris, when from Menelay she did him safe
convey.
But Jove, her father, staying her, did thus unto
her say:
‘Why, daughter mine, wilt thou alone be striving
to prevent
Unvanquishable destiny? In faith, and if thou
went
Thyself into the house in which the fatal sisters
three
Do dwell, thou shouldest there of brass and steel
substantial see
The registers of things so strong and massy made
to be
That safe and everlasting they do neither stand
in fear
Of thunder nor of lightning nor of any ruin there.
The destinies of thine offspring thou shalt there
find graven deep
In adamant. I read them and in mind I do them
keep.
And for because thou shalt not be quite ignorant
of all,
I will declare what things I marked hereafter to
befall.
The man for whom thou makest suit hath lived
full his time

And, having run his race on earth, must now to
heaven up climb,

Where thou shalt make a god of him aye
honoured for to be

With temples and with altars on the earth.
Moreover, he

That is his heir and bears his name shall all alone
sustain

The burden laid upon his back and shall our help
obtain

His father's murder to revenge. The town of
Mutiny,

Besieged by his power, shall yield. The fields of
Pharsaly

Shall feel him, and Philippos in the realm of
Macedon

Shall once again be stained with blood. The great
Pompeius' son

Shall vanquished be by him upon the sea of
Sicily.

The Roman captain's wife, the Queen of Egypt,
through her high

Presumption trusting to her match too much,
shall threat in vain

To make her canop over our high Capitol to
reign.

What should I tell thee of the wild and barbarous
nations that

At both the oceans dwelling be? The universal
plat

Of all the earth inhabited shall all be his. The sea
Shall unto him obedient be likewise. And when
that he

Hath stablished peace in all the world, then shall
he set his mind

To civil matters, upright laws by justice for to
find,

And by example of himself all others he shall
bind.

Then, having care of time to come and of
posterity,

940 A holy wife shall bear to him a son that may
supply

His careful charge and bear his name. And lastly,
in the end

He shall to heaven among the stars, his
ancestors, ascend,

But not before his life by length to drooping age
do tend.

And therefore from the murdered corse of Julius
Caesar take

His soul with speed and of the same a burning
cresset make,

That from our heavenly palace he may evermore
look down

Upon our royal Capitol and court within Rome
town.'

He scarcely ended had these words but Venus
out of hand

Amid the senate-house of Rome invisible did
stand

950 And from her Caesar's body took his new
expulsèd sprite,

The which she not permitting to resolve to air
quite,

Did place it in the sky among the stars that
glister bright.

And as she bare it, she did feel it gather heavenly
might

And for to waxen fiery. She no sooner let it fly
But that, a goodly shining star, it up aloft did sty
And drew a great way after it bright beams like
burning hair.

The destiny of Who, looking on his son's good deeds, confessèd
Augustus that they were

Far greater than his own; and glad he was to see
that he

Excellèd him. Although his son in no wise would
agree

960

To have his deeds preferred before his father's,
yet doth Fame

(Who aye is free and bound to no command)
withstand the same

And, striving in that one behalf against his hest
and will,

Proceedeth to prefer his deeds before his father's
still.

Even so to Agamemnon's great renown gives
Atreus place;

Even so Achilles' deeds the deeds of Peleus do
abase;

Even so beyond Aegeus far doth Thesey's
prowess go;

And (that I may examples use full matching
these) even so

Is Saturn less in fame than Jove. Jove rules the
heavenly spheres

970

And all the triple-shapèd world; and our
Augustus bears
Dominion over all the earth. They both are
fathers; they
Are rulers both. Ye gods to whom both fire and
sword gave way
What time ye with Aeneas came from Troy; ye
gods that were
Of mortal men canonizèd; thou Quirin, who
did'st rear
The walls of Rome; and Mars, who wert the
valiant Quirin's sire;
And Vesta, of the household gods of Caesar with
thy fire
Most holy; and thou, Phoebus, who with Vesta
also art
Of household; and thou, Jupiter, who in the
highest part
Of mountain Tarpey hast thy church; and all ye
gods that may
With conscience safe by poets be appealèd to: I
pray,
Let that same day be slow to come and after I am
dead
In which Augustus (who as now of all the world
is head),
Quite giving up the care thereof, ascend to
heaven for aye,
There, absent hence, to favour such as unto him
shall pray.

980

*The poet's
conclusion*

Now have I brought a work to end which
neither Jove's fierce wrath

Nor sword, nor fire, nor fretting age with all
the force it hath
Are able to abolish quite. Let come that fatal
hour
Which, saving of this brittle flesh, hath over me
no power
And at his pleasure make an end of mine
uncertain time.
Yet shall the better part of me assurèd be to
climb
Aloft above the starry sky; and all the world shall
never
Be able for to quench my name. For look how far
so ever
The Roman empire by the right of conquest shall
extend,
So far shall all folk read this work. And time
without all end
(If poets as by prophecy about the truth may
aim)
My life shall everlastingly be lengthened still by
fame.

FINIS LIBRI DECIMI QUINTI.

Laus & honor soli Deo.