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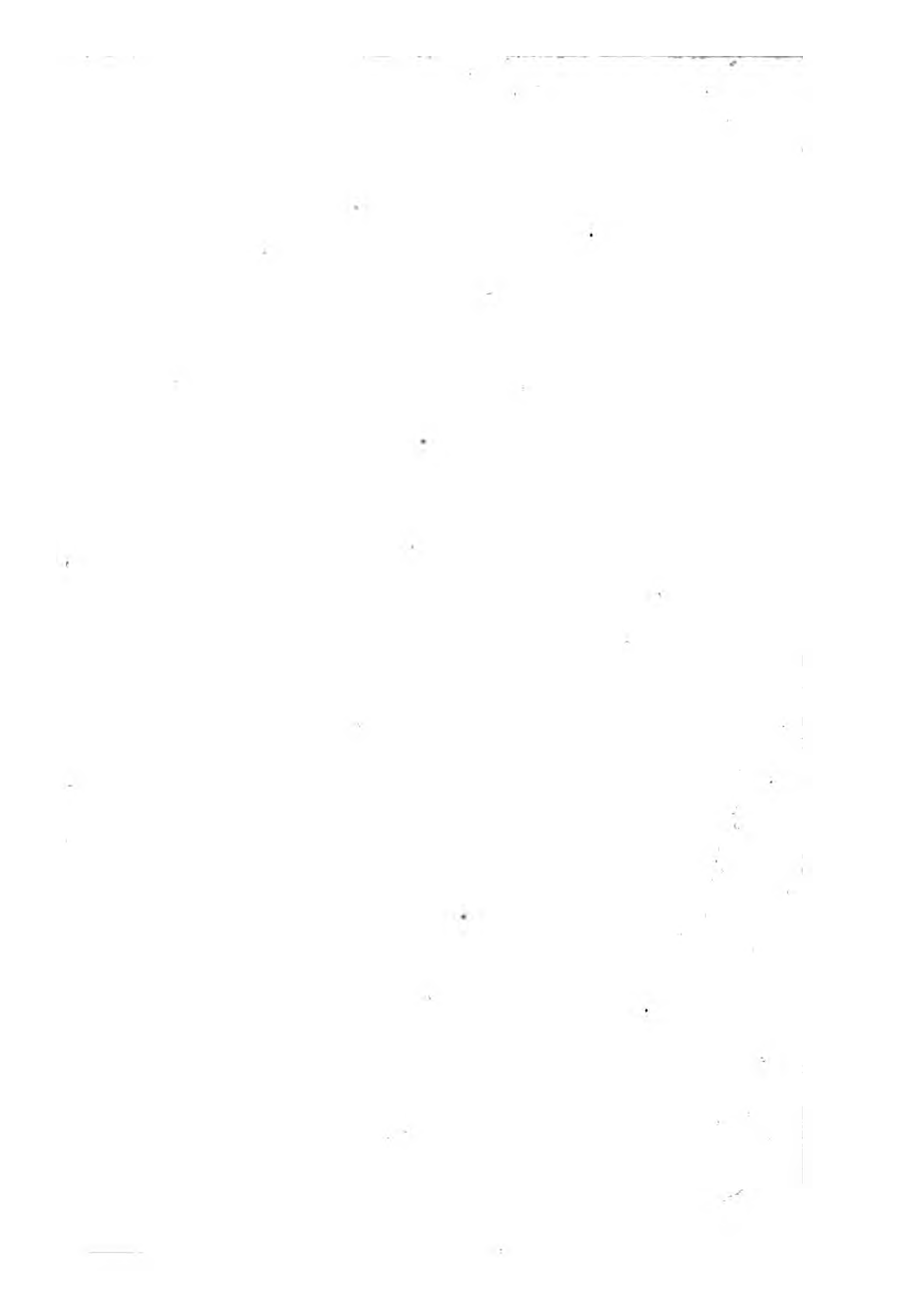


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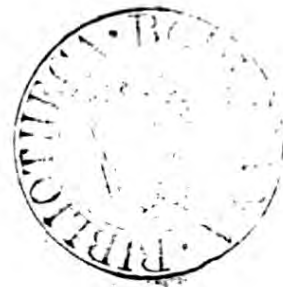
THE

GREEK PASTORAL POETS.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY JAMES MOYES, CASTLE STREET, LEICESTER SQUARE.

THE
GREEK PASTORAL POETS,
THEOCRITUS, BION,
AND
MOSCHUS.

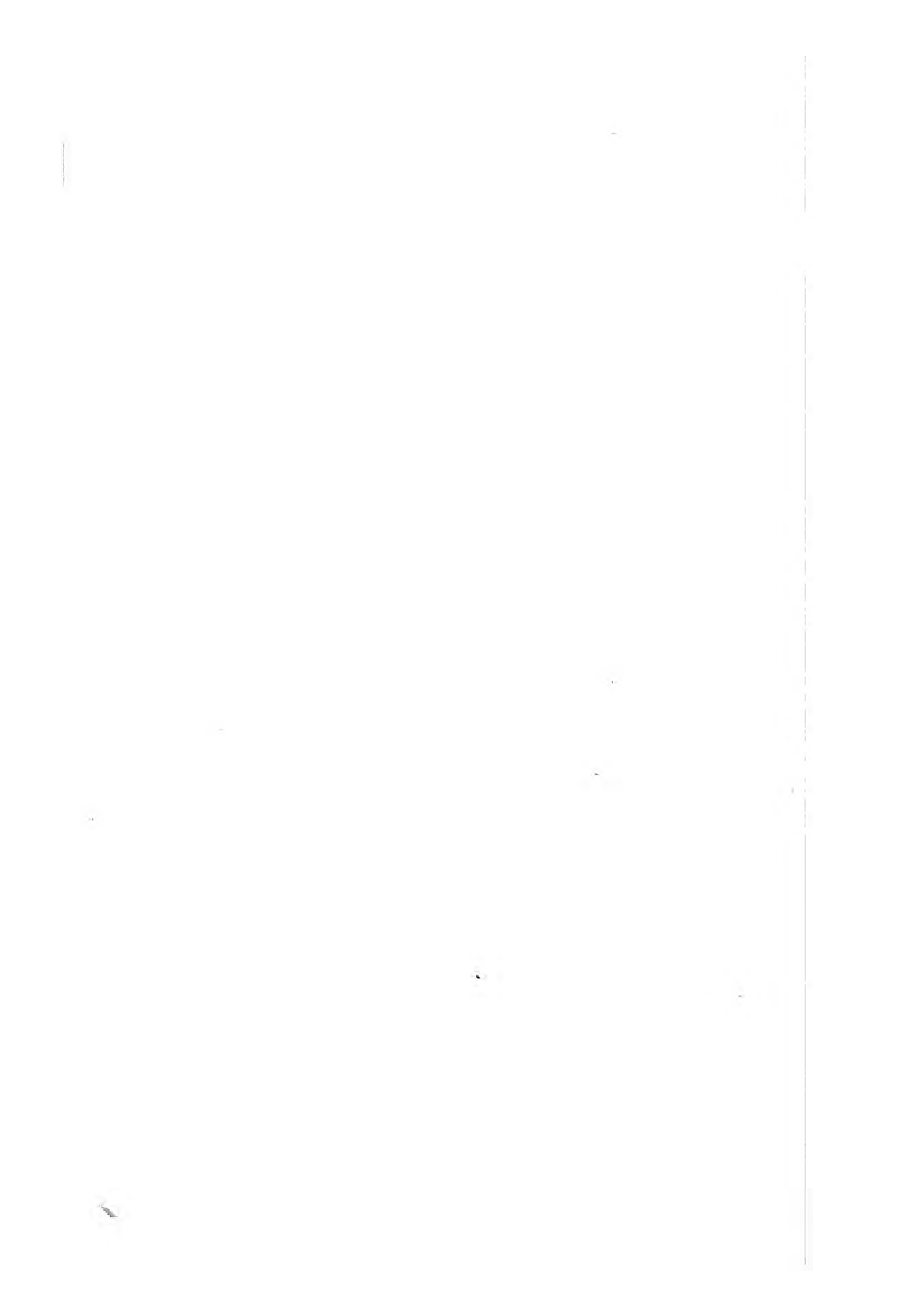


DONE INTO ENGLISH
By M. J. CHAPMAN, M.A.,
OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

LONDON :
JAMES FRASER, 215 REGENT STREET.

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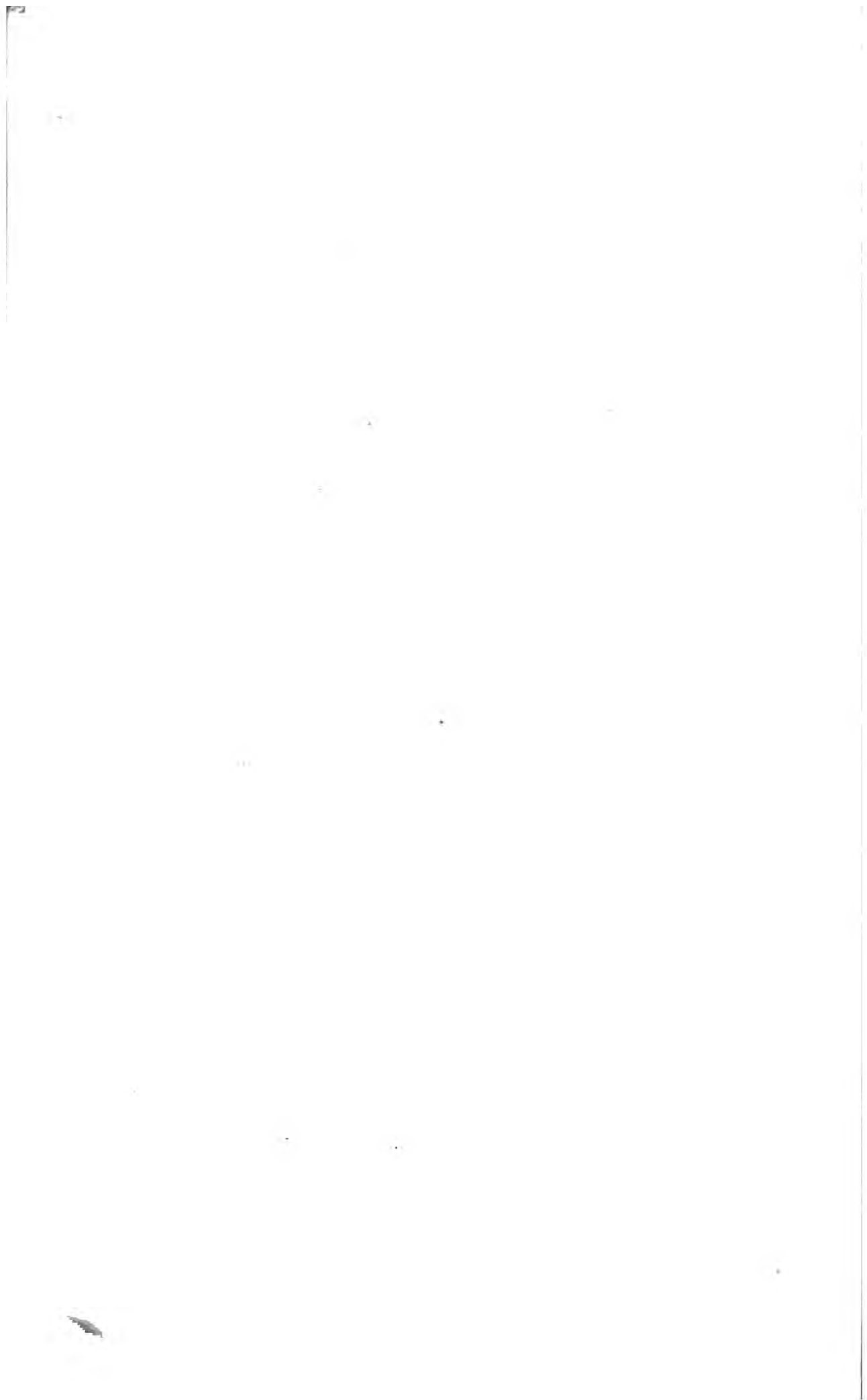
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THEOCRITUS.



IDYL I.



THYRSIS.

ARGUMENT.

The shepherd Thyrsis and a goatherd are introduced, praising each other. Thyrsis then entreats the goatherd to play on the pipe, which he declines doing from fear of Pan; but requests Thyrsis to sing for him the song on the death of Daphnis, promising to reward him with a milch-goat and a highly wrought cup, which is minutely described. Thyrsis invokes the nymphs, and proceeds with his song. Wild animals, and the herds, wail for Daphnis; Mercury and Priapus, the guardians of the country and of shepherds, visit him and endeavour to enliven him. He does not answer them, but when Venus taunts him with his incapacity to resist love, he breaks out into invectives against her. He finally bids farewell to life, which ceases with his words, Venus in vain endeavouring to resuscitate him.

IDYL I.

THYRSIS.

THYRSIS AND A GOATHERD.

THYRSIS.

SWEET is the music which the whispering pine
Makes to the murmuring fountains ; sweet is thine,
Breathed from the pipe : the second prize thy due —
To Pan, the horned ram ; to thee, the ewe ;
And thine the yearling, when the ewe he takes —
A savoury mess the tender yearling makes.

GOATHERD.

Sweeter thy song than yonder gliding down
Of water from the rock's o'erhanging crown ;

If a ewe-sheep for fee the muses gain,
 Thou, shepherd ! shalt a stall-fed lamb obtain ;
 But if it rather please the tuneful Nine
 To take the lamb, the ewe shall then be thine.

THYRSIS.

O wilt thou, for the nymph's sake, goatherd ! fill
 Thy pipe with music on this sloping hill,
 Where grow the tamarisks ? wilt sit, dear friend,
 And play for me, while I thy goats attend ?

GOATHERD.

We must not pipe at noon in any case ;
 For then Pan rests him, wearied from the chase.
 Him quick to wrath we fear, as us befits ;
 On his keen nostril sharp gall ever sits.
 But thou — to thee the griefs of Daphnis known,
 And the first skill in pastoral song thine own —
 Come to yon elm, into whose shelter deep
 Afront Priapus and the Naiads peep —
 Where the thick oaks stand round the shepherd's seat :
 There, sitting with me in that cool retreat,
 If thou wilt sing, as when thou didst contest
 With Libyan Chromis which could sing the best,

Thine, Thyrsis, this twin-bearing goat shall be,
That fills two milk-pails thrice a-day for me ;
And this deep ivy-cup with sweetest wax
Bedewed, twin-eared, that of the graver smacks.
Around its lips lush ivy twines on high,
Sprinkled with drops of bright cassidony ;
And as the curling ivy spreads around,
On every curl the saffron fruit is found.
With flowing robe and Lydian head-dress on,
Within a woman to the life is done—
An exquisite design ! on either side
Two men with flowing locks each other chide,
By turns contending for the woman's love,
But not a whit her mind their pleadings move.
One while she gives to this a glance and smile,
And turns and smiles on that another while.
But neither any certain favour gains—
Only their eyes are swollen for their pains.
Hard by, a rugged rock and fisher old,
Who drags a mighty net, and seems to hold
Preparing for the cast : he stands to sight,
A fisher putting forth his utmost might.
A youth's strength in the gray-head seems to dwell,
So much the sinews of his neck outswell.

And near that old man with his sea-tanned hue,
 With purple grapes a vineyard shines to view.
 A little boy sits by the thorn-hedge trim,
 To watch the grapes — two foxes watching him :
 One thro' the ranges of the vines proceeds,
 And on the hanging vintage slyly feeds ;
 The other plots and vows his scrip to search,
 And for his breakfast leave him — in the lurch.
 Meanwhile he twines and to a rush fits well
 A locust trap with stalks of asphodel ;
 And twines away with such absorbing glee,
 Of scrip or vines he never thinks — not he !
 The juicy curled acanthus hovers round
 Th' Æolian cup — when seen a marvel found.
 Hither a Calydonian skipper brought it,
 For a great cheese-cake and a goat I bought it ;
 Untouched by lip — this cup shall be thy hire,
 If thou wilt sing that song of sweet desire.
 I envy not : begin ! the strain outpour ;
 'Twill not be thine on dim Oblivion's shore.

THYRSIS.

Begin, dear Muses ! the bucolic strain :
 For Thyrsis sings, your own Ætneän swain.

Where were ye, Nymphs! when Daphnis pined away,
 Where thro' his Tempe Peneus loves to stray,
 Or Pindus lifts himself? Ye were not here—
 Where broad Anapus flows or Acis clear,
 Or where tall Ætna looks out on the main.

Begin, dear Muses! the bucolic strain.
 From out the mountain-lair the lions growled,
 Wailing his death—the wolves and jackals howled.

Begin, dear Muses! the bucolic strain:
 Around him in a long and mournful train,
 Sad-faced, a number of the horned kind,
 Heifers, bulls, cows, and calves lamenting pined.

First Hermes from the mountain came and said,
 “Daphnis, by whom art thou disquieted?
 For whom dost thou endure so fierce a flame?”

Then cowherds, goatherds, shepherds thronging came,
 And asked what ailed him. E'en Priapus went,
 And said: “Sad Daphnis, why this languishment?
 In every grove, by fountains, far and near,
 Thee the loved girl is seeking everywhere.

Ah, foolish lover! to thyself unkind,
Miscalled a cowherd, with a goatherd's mind!
The goatherd when he sees his goats at play,
Envies their wanton sport and pines away.
And thou at sight of virgins, when they smile,
Dost look with longing eyes and pine the while,
Because with them the dance thou dost not lead."

No word he answered, but his grief did feed,
And brought to end his love, that held him fast,
And only ended with his life at last.

Then Cypris came—the queen of soft desire,
Smiling in secret, but pretending ire,
And said: "To conquer love did Daphnis boast,
But, Daphnis! is not love now uppermost?"
Her answered he: "Thou cruel sorrow-feeder!
Curst Cypris! Mankind's hateful mischief-breeder!
'Tis plain my sun is set: but I shall show
The blight of love in Hades' house below.
'Where Cypris kiss'd a cowherd'—men will speak—
Hasten to Ida! thine Anchises seek.
Around their hives swarmed bees are humming here,
Here the low galingale—thick oaks are there.

Adonis, the fair youth, a shepherd too,
Wounds hares, and doth all savage beasts pursue.
Go ! challenge Diomedes to fight with thee —
' I tame the cowherd Daphnis, fight with me.'

“ Ye bears, who in the mountain hollows dwell,
Ye tawny jackals, bounding wolves, farewell !
The cowherd Daphnis never more shall rove
In quest of you thro' thicket, wood, and grove.
Farewell, ye rivers, that your streams profuse
From Thymbris pour ; farewell, sweet Arethuse !
I drove my kine—a cowherd whilom here—
To pleasant pasture, and to water clear.
Pan ! Pan ! if seated on a jagged peak
Of tall Lycæus now ; or thou dost seek
The heights of Mænalus—leave them awhile,
And hasten to thy own Sicilian isle.
The tomb, which e'en the gods admire, leave now —
Lycaon's tomb and Helice's tall brow.
Hasten, my king ! and take this pipe that clips,
Uttering its honey breath, the player's lips.
For even now, dragged downward, must I go,
By love dragged down to Hades' house below.

Now violets, ye thorns and brambles bear !
 Narcissus now on junipers appear !
 And on the pine-tree pears ! since Daphnis dies,
 To their own use all things be contraries !
 The stag trail hounds ; in rivalry their song
 The mountain owls with nightingales prolong !”

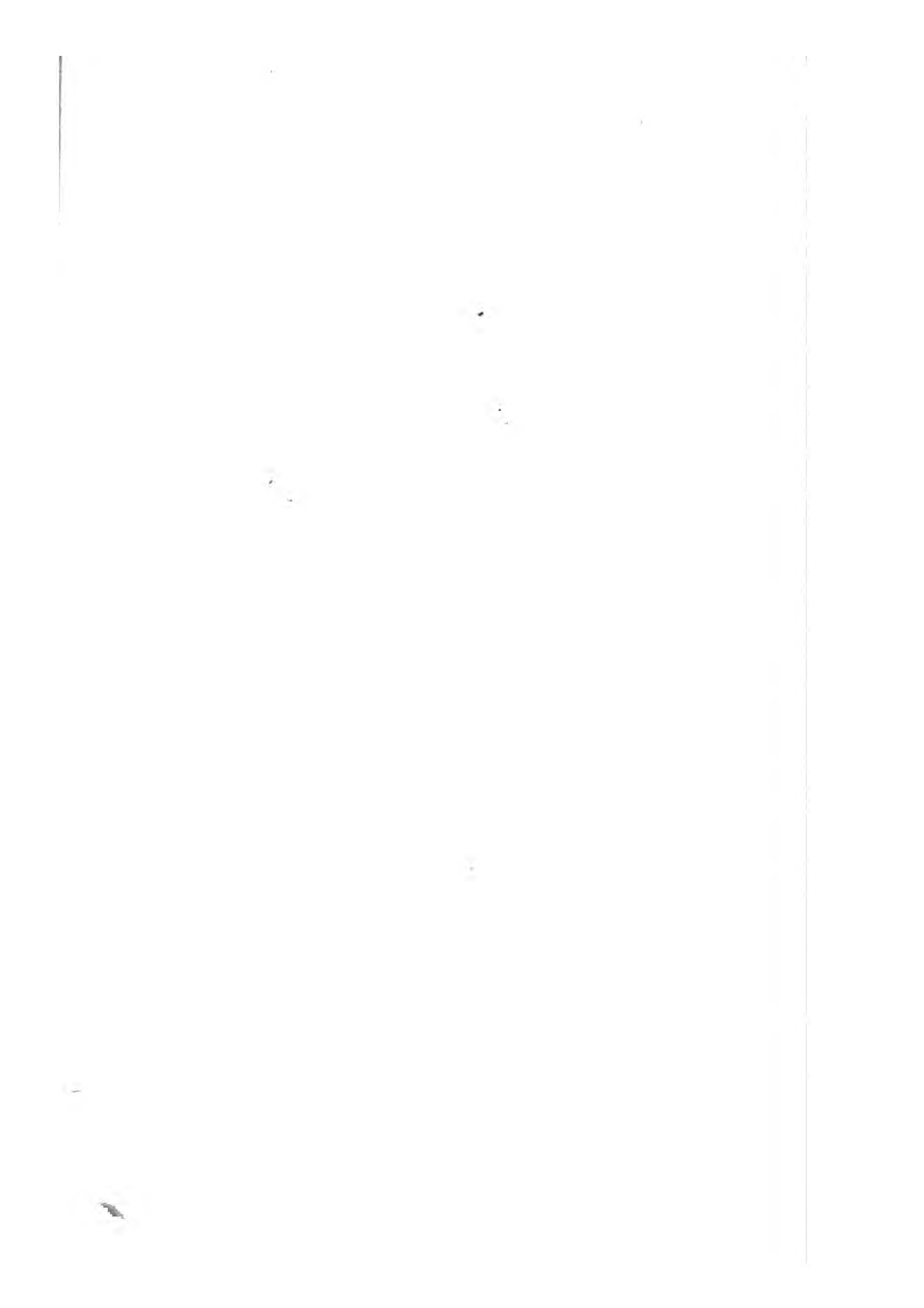
He said and ceased : and Cypris wished, indeed,
 To raise him up, but she could not succeed ;
 His fate-allotted threads of life were spent,
 And Daphnis to the doleful river went.
 The whirlpool gorged him—by the Nymphs not scorned,
 Dear to the Muses, and by them adorned.

Cease ! cease, ye Muses ! the bucolic strain.
 Give me the cup and goat that I may drain
 The pure milk from her ; and, for duty’s sake,
 A due libation to the Muses make.
 All hail, ye Muses ! hail, and favour me,
 And my hereafter song shall sweeter be.

GOATHERD.

Honey and honey-combs melt in thy mouth,
 And figs from Ægilus ! for thou, dear youth,

The musical cicada dost excel.
Behold the cup ! how sweetly doth it smell !
'Twill seem to thee as though the lovely Hours
Had newly dipt it in their fountain-showers.
Hither, Cissætha ! milk her : yearling friskers,
Forbear—behold the ram's huge beard and whiskers !



IDYL II.

PHARMACEUTRIA.

ARGUMENT.

Simætha, a young woman of Syracuse, endeavours to recall, by enchantments, her lover, Delphis, who had forsaken her. She performs her magic rites, which are minutely described, by moonlight. When her incantations are finished, being left alone, she describes the origin and progress of her passion. She addresses the Moon, as presiding over magical rites; and finally threatens the life of Delphis in the event of his not returning to her.

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IDYL II.

PHARMACEUTRIA.

WHERE are the laurels ? where the philtres ? roll
The finest purple wool around the bowl.
Quick ! Thestylis, that I with charms may bind
The man I love, but faithless and unkind.
This is the twelfth day he my sight hath fled,
And knows not whether I be quick or dead ;
The twelfth day since he crossed my threshold o'er,
Nor, cruel ! once hath knocked upon my door,
In all that time. His fancy, apt to change,
Cypris and Love have elsewhere made to range.
I'll go—to see and chide him for my sorrow—
To Timagetus' wrestling-school to-morrow.
Now will I charm him with the magic rite :
Come forth, thou Moon ! with thy propitious light ;

Cold, silent goddess ! at this witching hour
To thee I'll chant, and to th' Infernal Power,
Dread Hecate ; whom, coming through the mounds
Of blood-swoln corpses, flee the trembling hounds.
Hail, Hecate ! prodigious demon, hail !
Come at the last, and make the work prevail ;
That this strong brewage may perform its part
No worse than that was made by Circe's art,
By bold Medea, terrible as fair,
Or Perimeda of the golden hair.

Him hither, hither draw, my magic wheel !
First in the fire is burnt the barley meal ;
Quick ! Thestylis, quick ! sprinkle more — yet more ;
Wretch ! whither do thine idle fancies soar ?
Am I thy scorn and mock ? sprinkle and say —
“ The bones of Delphis thus I shred away.”

Him hither, hither draw, my magic wheel !
Delphis has made me fiercest tortures feel ;
I burn the laurel óver Delphis now :
As crackles loud the kindled laurel bough
Blazes, and e'en its dust we not discern —
So may the flesh of Delphis dropping burn !

Him hither, hither draw, my magic wheel !
As by the help divine, which I appeal,
I melt this wax, may Myndian Delphis melt !
As whirls this wheel, may he, love's impulse felt,
At my forsaken door be made to reel !

Him hither, hither draw, my magic wheel !
Bran now I offer : thou, Queen Artemis !
Canst move aught firm, e'en Adamantine Dis.
Hark ! the dogs howl ; the goddess now doth pass
The cross roads through ; ring, ring the sounding brass !

Him hither, hither draw, my magic wheel !
The sea is silent ; not a breath doth steal
Over the stillness ; but the troubled din
Of passion is not hushed my heart within ;
I burn for him, who hath defamed my life,
Undone a virgin, made me not his wife.

Him hither, hither draw, my magic wheel !
Thrice the libation poured, I thrice unseal
My lips, August One ! thrice these words I speak ;
Whoever lies with Delphis, cheek by cheek,

May he forget her so much as they say
Theseus forgot, and left in Dia's bay
The bright-haired Ariadne—fast away
Sailing from Dia with his rapid keel.

Him hither, hither draw, my magic wheel!
A little herb in Arcady there grows,
Which colts and mares doth strangely discompose,
(Hence called Hippomanes); for this they skurry
O'er mountain-ranges with a frantic hurry:
Thus from the wrestling-school, all bright with oil,
May Delphis madly rush—with thoughts that boil;
May he for me this maddening passion feel!

Him hither, hither draw, my magic wheel!
This fringe he dropt, that ran his cloak across,
I tear, and to the furious fire I toss.
Ah, love! ah, cruel love! why dost outsuck
All of my blood, like marsh-leech firmly stuck?

Him hither, hither draw, my magic wheel!
A draught whose ill none antidote can heal
From a bruised lizard I'll to-morrow make:
Now, Thestylis, this poisonous brewage take,

And smear his threshold — there my mind must be,
As thereto bound ; but he cares not for me :
And having smeared the door-way, spitting there,
Then say, “ the bones of Delphis thus I smear.”

Him hither, hither draw, my magic wheel !
How, left alone, shall I with sorrow deal ?
Or where begin with my grief-plighted thought ?
Who first on me this love—this mischief brought ?
Anaxo came, on whom it fell this year
The basket to Diana’s grove to bear :
She came for me and told me, in the show
’Mid many a beast a lioness would go.

Whence grew my love, divinest Moon ! attend :
Theucharila, whose life did lately end,
My Thracian nurse, now numbered with the blest,
Came also to me, prayed me, strongly prest
To go and look upon the splendid show.
At last I went—ah, doomed to bitter wo !
My linen tunic, never worn before,
And Clearista’s glistering robe I wore.

Whence grew my love, divinest Moon ! attend :
 Whilst I along the public road did wend,
 Midway by Lycon's house, I saw, alas !
 Delphis and youthful Eudamippus pass.
 The beards of both were of a yellower die
 Than the bright gold-bedropt cassidony.
 Twain wrestlers, lately breathed, their breasts, bright Queen !
 Outshone the sparkles of thy golden sheen.

Whence grew my love, divinest Moon ! attend :
 I saw, loved, maddened ! raging love did rend
 My very soul ; my bloom of beauty bright
 Withered at once as by a sudden blight :
 The pomp I saw not passing in my view,
 And how I reached my home I never knew ;
 A fiery torment on my vitals fed ;
 Ten days and nights I lay upon my bed.

Whence grew my love, divinest Moon ! attend :
 Such hues as juices of the thapsus lend
 Gloomed on my cheek ; off dropt my crown of hair ;
 I was but skin and bones ; in my despair
 Whom sought I not ? what magic-dealing crone
 Consulted not ? but I found help from none :

On hastened time, that brings all things to end.

Whence grew my love, divinest Moon ! attend :
Then to my hand-maid I revealed my mind ;
“ Some remedy for my sore sickness find ;
I pine for, dote upon the Myndian youth,
Am altogether his in very sooth ;
At Timagetus' school watch, bring him me,
For there he visits—there he loves to be.
And when you see him from the rest apart,
Then nod and softly whisper him, ‘ sweetheart !
Simætha calls you ’—guide him here, my friend.”

Whence grew my love, divinest Moon ! attend :
She went and found the remedy I sought,
And to my house the blooming Delphis brought.
But when I saw him o'er my threshold-sill
Pass with light foot, I sudden grew more chill
Than wintry snow ; and from my forehead burst
Sweat like the dew the melting South hath nursed ;
I could not utter—e'en the murmur fine
That sleeping infants to their mothers whine ;
Senseless I stiffened in my strange affright,
Like a wax-doll, the girl-child's dear delight.

Whence grew my love, divinest Moon ! attend :
The heartless minion first on me did bend
His eager eyes, then sitting on the bed
He turned them on the ground, and softly said :—
“ In calling me before I came self-moved,
Thou hast as much outpast me, my beloved,
As I did lately with swift foot out-pace
The beautiful Philinus in the race.”—

(Whence grew my love, divinest Moon ! attend :)
“ For, by sweet Eros ! with a second friend,
Or with a third, I should have come to-night,
Bringing sweet apples, crowned with poplar white,
Careful the wreath with purple stripes to blend :”

(Whence grew my love, divinest Moon ! attend :)
“ Had you received me — well ; for me, 'mid all,
The handsome, active bachelor they call ;
A kiss from those rich lips, that sweetly pout,
Had been enough ; but had you shut me out,
And your barred doors had interposed delay,
Axes and torches then had forced a way.”

(Whence grew my love, divinest Moon ! attend :)
“ To Cypris first in gratitude I bend,
Thou, next to her, hast snatched me from the fire,
In calling me half burnt with fierce desire ;
For Eros oft a fiercer flame awakes
Than those Sicilian fires Hephæstus makes.”

(Whence grew my love, divinest Moon ! attend :)
“ He from her bed the virgin oft doth send,
Stung by his furies ; and the new-made bride
Scares from the warm couch and her husband’s side.”

These words he spoke ; but I with credulous mind,
Held his dear hand, and on the bed reclined :
Our bodies did by touching warmer grow,
And on our cheeks there came a hotter glow :
Sweetly we whispered ; and, in short, dear Moon !
By Eros fired, we gained Cythera’s boon.
Nor any blame on me could Delphis lay,
Nor haply I on him — ’till yesterday.
I only learned to-day his yester ill :
While yet up-prancing the high eastern hill,
Her fiery-footed steeds from ocean’s dew
With rosy-armed Aurora upward flew,

There came the mother of the festive pair,
Sweet-voiced Philista and Melixo fair,
And told me : — “ Delphis loves elsewhere, I know,
But whom I know not ; yet enamoured so,
That from the banquet suddenly he fled,
To hang his lady’s house with flowers, he said.”
My old friend told me this, and told me truth :
For twice or thrice a day once came my youth,
And often left his Dorian pyx with me ;
This the twelfth day since him I last did see.
Has he forgot me for another love ?
With philtres will I try his soul to move ;
But if he still will grieve, betray me, mock,
He shall, by fate ! the door of Hades knock,
That chest has drugs shall make him feel my rage ;
The art I learned from an Assyrian sage.
Thy steeds to ocean now, bright Queen, direct ;
What I have sworn to do I will effect.
Farewell, clear Moon ! and skyey cressets bright,
That follow the soft-gliding wheels of Night.

IDYL III.



AMYRILLIS.

ARGUMENT.

A goatherd, enamoured of Amaryllis, having given his flock in charge to Tityrus, goes to her cave, and, after complaining of her changed disposition towards him, attempts to revive her former attention to his suit with gifts, and entreaties, and finally with threats of self-destruction. At last, in the hope of attracting her notice, he sings a song recalling the memory of some happy mortals, whom Venus had favoured. Finding her inflexible, he ceases despondingly. The scene is changed from the place where his flock is at pasture, to the cavern-home of Amaryllis.

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· IDYL III.

AMARYLLIS.

I go to serenade my charming fair,
Sweet Amaryllis ; Tityrus, to your care
I leave my goats, that on the mountain feed ;
But of yon Libyan tawny ram take heed,
Lest with his horn he butt you ; careful tend,
And to the fountain drive them, heart-dear friend !

Sweet Amaryllis ! why dost thou no more,
Peeping from out thy cavern as before,
Espy and call to thee thy little lover ?
Dost hate me ? or do I myself discover
Flat-nosed, or with a length of chin, when near ?
Thy scorn will make me hang myself, I swear.
Behold, ten apples, nymph ! I bring for thee,
Plucked from the place where thou didst order me

To pluck them ; others will I bring to-morrow.
Consider now my heart-devouring sorrow :
O ! that I were a little humming bee,
To pass thro' fern and ivy in to thee,
Where in thy cave thou dost thyself conceal !
I now know love — a grievous god to feel ;
He surely sucked a savage lioness,
Reared in the wild, who works me such distress,
Eating into the marrow of the bone.
O sweet in aspect ! altogether stone !
Nymph ! with thine eye-brows of a raven hue,
Clasp me, that I may suck the honey-dew
From off thy lip : mere kisses yield some joy.
Now wilt thou make me the sweet crown destroy,
This wreath of ivy which for thee I brought,
With rose-buds and with parsley sweet inwrought.
Ah me ! what shall I do ? I plead in vain —
Thou hearest not : I'll plunge into the main,
My jerkin stript, where Olpis sits on high,
Watching the tunnies. Should I even die,
'Twill please thee. This the sign I lately found,
For the struck pop-bell gave me back no sound,
(When by that proof thy doubtful love I tried)
But withering on my elbow shrunk and dried.

Agræo, the diviner by the sieve,
Forewarned me also what I now believe,
(Binding the sheaves, the reapers followed she,)
That I loved wholly one who loved not me.
A white twin-bearing goat, which the brunette,
Old Memnon's child, Erithacis would get
By wheedling from me, I have kept as thine ;
But since thou scornest me with airs so fine,
It shall be hers. A throbbing, I declare,
In my right eye — shall I behold my fair ?
My ditty, leaning on this pine, I'll chant ;
She'll haply look, since she's not adamant.

When in the race, mistrustful of his knees,
To win the virgin ran Hippomenes ;
Three golden apples in his hand he took,
And Atalanta could not help but look —
She saw, and maddened instant at the sight,
And rushed into the gulf of love outright.
The seer Melampus from Mount Othrys drove
The stolen herd to Pylos. Thence did Love
His brother Bias crown — for in his arms
Alphesibæa's mother lodged her charms.

Did not Adonis, the fair shepherd youth,
So madden Cypris that for very ruth,
E'en when she had received his dying gasp,
She could not bear to loose him from her clasp?
Thrice blest, methinks, was that Endymion,
Now laid asleep; thrice blest Iasion,
Who in his life did those sweet joys obtain,
Of which ye must not, shall not hear, profane!

How my head aches! my anguish doth not move thee;
I'll sing no more, and since in vain I love thee,
Here will I lie — me here the wolves shall eat;
'Twill be to thee like melting honey sweet.

IDYL IV.



THE SWAINS.

ARGUMENT.

Corydon tends the herd of one Ægon, who had gone as an athlete to the Olympian games. His companion, Battus, tries to provoke him with coarse jests. Corydon answers him gently. Battus, while driving off the calves, which are eating the olive branches, is wounded near the ankle by a thorn, which Corydon extracts for him.



IDYL IV.

THE SWAINS.

BATTUS AND CORYDON.

BATTUS.

WHOSE are these kine ? Philondases, my friend ?

CORYDON.

No — Ægon's, and he gave them me to tend.

BATTUS.

Do you not milk them privily at eve ?

CORYDON.

I could not the old man's quick eyes deceive ;
And her own calf he puts to every one.

BATTUS.

But whither has the master cowherd gone ?

CORYDON.

Have you not heard? with Ægon by his side,
Milon has gone where Alpheus loves to glide.

BATTUS.

When did e'er Ægon see th' Olympian oil?

CORYDON.

In strength for every feat of manly toil,
They say he is a match for Hercules.

BATTUS.

My mother said, believe her if you please,
That I surpassed e'en Pollux.

CORYDON.

Hence he hied,
Taking a spade, and twenty sheep beside.

BATTUS.

Nor needed much persuasion, I engage,
Ægon to wrestle — and the wolf to rage.

CORYDON.

His lowing heifers for their master pine.

BATTUS.

They have a worthless keeper—wretched kine !

CORYDON.

Poor creatures ! they no longer wish to feed.

BATTUS.

Here is a calf but skin and bones indeed —
Like a cicada does she feed on dew ?

CORYDON.

Not she, by Earth ! but whiles the fodder new
Eats from my hand ; or else with us she goes,
Cropping the verdant bank, where Æsar flows ;
Or up Latymnus bounds away at will,
Frisking along the thickly wooded hill.

BATTUS.

How lean that red bull is ! just such another
May Lampra have to offer to the mother
Of Mars ! it is a tribe compact of ill.

CORYDON.

Yet at the lake-mouth he doth take his fill,
Browses on Physcus, or at times doth go
Where the sweet waters of Neæthus flow ;
There the best herbs are freshened by the shower,
Wild thyme, and fleabane, and the honey-flower.

BATTUS.

Ah, wretched Ægon ! thy poor kine will die,
Whilst thou dost aim at evil victory.
Even the pipe, which thou didst whilom make,
Lying neglected, doth defilement take.

CORYDON.

No ! by the Nymphs ! he gave it me the day
When he to glorious Pisa went away.
The songs of Pyrrhus and dear Glauca's lays
I know to sing, and Croton love to praise.
Fair is Zacynthus ; lovely ever shone
To the bright east up-heaved Lacinion,
Where the bold boxer Ægon at a meal
Ate eighty cakes ; where from the mountain's heel
He seized and dragged a proud bull by the hoof,
And gave it Amaryllis ; then aloof

Shouted the women, and the cowherd smiled.

BATTUS.

Sweet Amaryllis! though by death defiled,
Thee shall I ne'er forget: dear to my heart
As are my frisking goats, thou didst depart.
To what a lot was I, unhappy, born!

CORYDON.

Take heart; there will be yet a brighter morn.
While there is life there's hope; the dead, I ween,
Are hopeless. One while Zeus shines out serene,
Another while is hid in mist and shower.

BATTUS.

I do take heart. But see! yon calves devour
The olive branches: pelt them off, I pray;
Confound the calves! you white-skin thief, away!

CORYDON.

Hist! to the hill, Cymætha! don't you hear?
If you don't get away, by Pan! I swear
I will so give it you! now only look!
She comes again—I wish I had my crook!

BATTUS.

Here, Corydon! a thorn has wounded me—
How long and sharp these distaff-thistles be!
Confound the calf! gaping at her I got
The wound: under the ankle—see you not?

CORYDON.

Aye! I have hold of it; see! here it is!

BATTUS.

How small a wound tames man so tall as this!

CORYDON.

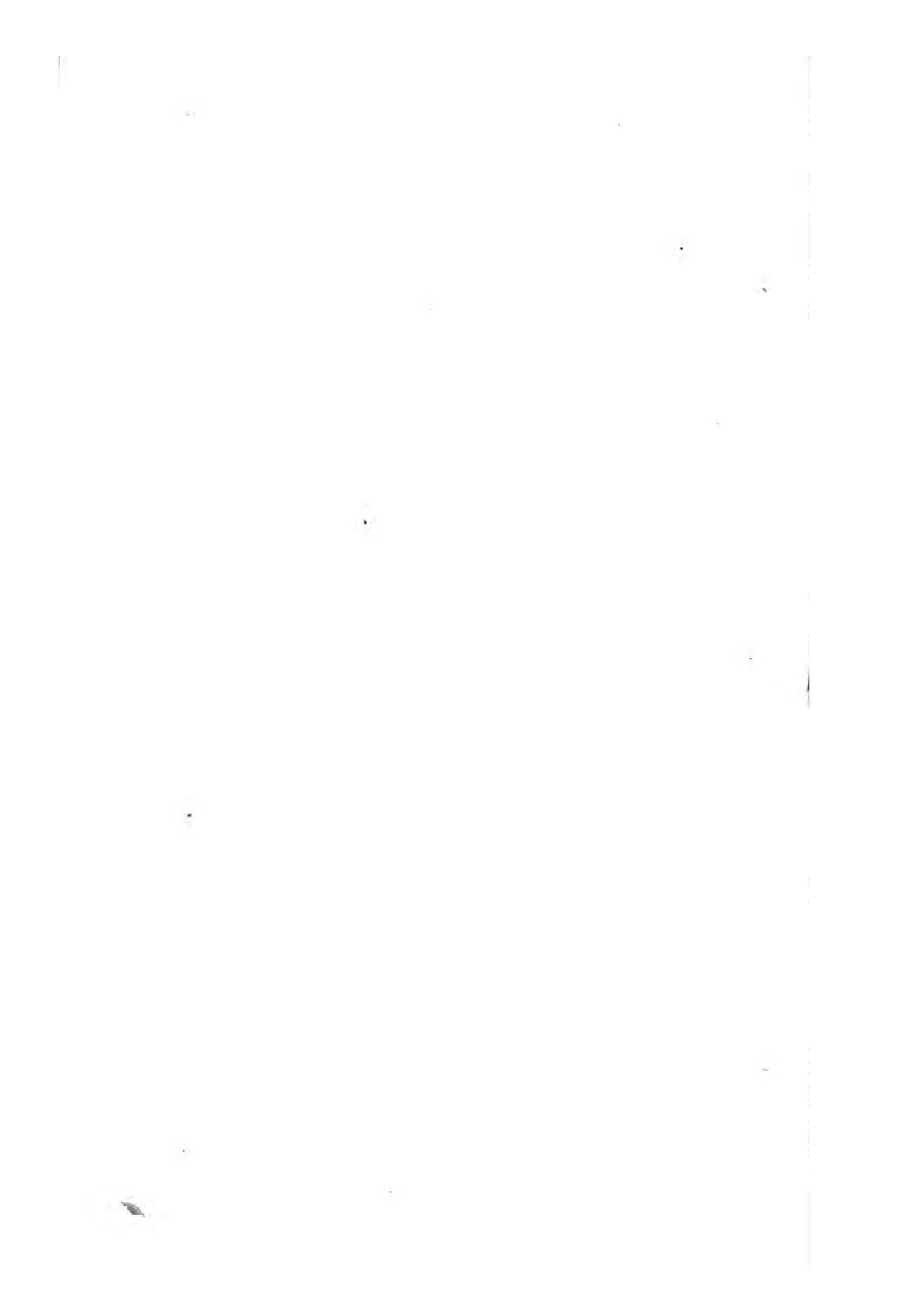
Unshod you must not on the mountain go;
For on the mountain thorns and prickles grow.

IDYL V.

COMATAS AND LACON.

ARGUMENT.

A goatherd and a shepherd, both hirelings, assail each other with vile reproaches. They challenge one another to sing for a wager ; and a wood-gatherer is called to decide between them. Comatas obtains the prize.



IDYL V.

COMATAS AND LACON.

COMATAS.

LACON my goat-skin filched ; by timely flight
Avoid, my goats ! the thievish Sybarite.

LACON.

Lambs ! from the fountain, do you not perceive
Comatas, who my pipe did lately thiefe ?

COMATAS.

What sort of pipe ? when, slave of Sybaris !
Didst own a pipe ? are you not fain to hiss
Still through a pipe of straw with Corydon ?

LACON.

'Twas Lycon's gift, good freeman ! worthy one !

From you ! when and what sort of skin stole I ?
Your master has not one whereon to lie.

COMATAS.

The gift of Crocylus, when late he gave
The Nymphs a goat in sacrifice : you, slave !
Did steal my spotted skin from envy sheer.

LACON.

No ! no ! by the shore-guarding Pan I swear—
Or from that rock into the waters deep
Of rapid Crathis may I madly leap !

COMATAS.

Nor, by the Nymphs, the guardians of the lake,
Did ever I the pipe of Lacon take—
So may the Nymphs look kindly to my weal.

LACON.

If I believe you, be it mine to feel
The griefs of Daphnis ! will you stake a kid
(It is none enterprise to men forbid),
And I'll out-sing you, till you cry " enough !"

COMATAS.

Athene challenged by a sow of scruff!
Here is my kid, which, when you beat me, take;
A lamb, fat from the pasture, be your stake.

LACON.

How is this fair? in this you are no fool;
Who ever thought of shearing hair for wool,
Or passed a goat to milk a sorry bitch?

COMATAS.

Who has for conquest a prevailing itch,
Like you conceited, is a wasp that rings
His buzzing horn when the cicada sings.
But since my kid seems insufficient stake,
Behold this ram! at once the song awake.

LACON.

Softly! you are not walking over fire:
Here you may sing whate'er your muse inspire
More sweetly in this grove, beneath the shade
Of the wild olive; here a couch is laid
Of softest herbage; locusts babble here;
Cool water flows a little onward there.

COMATAS.

I'm cool — but feel annoyance at your daring
 To look at me, yourself with me comparing,
 Who taught you when a boy. What thanks one gains!
 Rear a wolf-whelp — to rend you for your pains!

LACON.

Envious and shameless babbler! any thing
 Learnt, heard I from you worth remembering?
 Come hither, now, and learn from your defeat
 No more with pastoral singers to compete.

COMATAS.

Not thither — here are oaks and galingale;
 And round their hives the bees, soft-humming, sail;
 Two springs of coolest water murmur near;
 A deeper shade and singing birds are here;
 And from aloft her nuts the pine-tree throws.

LACON.

On fleece and lambskins here you may repose,
 Softer than sleep! your goat-skins smell more ill —
 E'en than yourself. I for the nymphs will fill

A bowl of white milk, of sweet oil an urn.

COMATAS.

On flowering pennyroyal, and soft fern
 You here may tread ; on skins of kids lie down
 Softer than lambskins. I to Pan will crown
 Eight jars of white milk, and as many more
 Of honeycombs with honey running o'er.

LACON.

Each from his place pour out his rival strain ;
 Keep to your oaks, and I will here remain.
 But who shall judge between us? How I wish
 The herdsman, good Lycopas with us —

COMATAS.

Pish !

I want him not : but, if you please, we'll cry,
 And summon to us yonder man doth tie
 The broom in bundles near you. What dost say ?
 'Tis Morson.

LACON.

I'm agreed.

COMATAS.

Then bawl away.

LACON.

Ho! Morson! hasten hither, and decide
Which sings the best — a wager to be tried
With you for judge: only impartial be!

COMATAS.

Now, by the nymphs! nor favour him nor me.
Thurian Sybartas owns the sheep in sight;
The goats Eumaras claims — the Sybarite.

LACON.

You good-for-nothing babbler! answer this,
Who asked you whose the sheep were, mine or his?

COMATAS.

I vaunt not, and I speak the simple truth;
But you are very scurrilous, in sooth.

LACON.

Sing — if you have a song: don't kill with babble
Our friend here; by Apollo! how you gabble!

COMATAS.

Me more than Daphnis love the Muses true :
Two yearling kids to them I lately slew.

LACON.

Apollo loves me much ; for him I rear
A goodly ram — his festival is near.

COMATAS.

I milk my goats, twin-bearing all but twain :
A sweet girl cries, “ Why milk alone, fond swain ? ”

LACON.

Some twenty baskets Lacon fills with cheese,
And gets him kisses wheresoe'er he please.

COMATAS.

Me with sweet apples Clearista pelts,
While round her lips a honey-murmur melts.

LACON.

On me a blooming beauty fondly dotes,
Round whose white neck the hair bright-shining floats.

COMATAS.

With the screened garden-roses cannot vie
The common dog-rose, nor anemony.

LACON.

The mountain-apples most delicious are —
Who crabbed beech-nuts would with them compare ?

COMATAS.

I for my love will snare, and give to her
A ring-dove brooding on a juniper.

LACON.

Wool for a mantle will I give my dear,
Soon as my sober-suited sheep I shear.

COMATAS.

From the wild olive, bleaters ! feed at will,
Where grow the tamarisks, on this sloping hill.

LACON.

Off from that oak Cynætha and Conarus !
Feed eastward — yonder where you see Phalarus.

COMATAS.

A cypress milk-pail for my girl I have,
And bowl — which old Praxiteles did grave.

LACON.

A hound, wolf-strangling keeper of the sheep,
A faithful guardian, for my love I keep.

COMATAS.

Locusts, that overleap my fences, spare
My vines — their shoots yet weak and tender are.

LACON.

Cicadæ! see this goatherd I provoke:
So to their toil ye wake the reaping folk.

COMATAS.

I hate the bush-tailed foxes — nightly troop,
That Mycon's vine-yard, grape-devouring, swoop.

LACON.

I hate the scarabs — air-borne host, that mow
Philonda's fig-trees, fig-devouring foe.

COMATAS.

Do you remember when I smote you, fellow,
How you did wriggle round the oak, and bellow ?

LACON.

No ! but I do remember when with scourge
Eumaras did your peccant humours purge.

COMATAS.

Some one, my Morson, into rage is dashing ;
Go ! from the tomb pluck gray squills—for a lashing.

LACON.

I too prick some one, Morson ; do you take ?
Hasten to Hales ; and for sowbread rake.

COMATAS.

Flow Himera with milk, and Crathis flow
Purple with wine ! and fruit on cresses grow !

LACON.

Fountain of Sybaris, to honey turn,
And fill with honeycombs the maiden's urn !

COMATAS.

On goat's-rue feed, my goats, and cytissus ;
On lentisk tread, and lie on arbutus !

LACON.

Of the rose-eglantine there blooms a heap,
And eke the honey-flower—to feed my sheep.

COMATAS.

Alcippe for my ring-dove gave no kiss,
Holding my ears—I love her not for this.

LACON.

I love my love because a sweet lip paid
With kisses for my pipe—the gift I made.

COMATAS.

Nor whoop the swan, nor jay the nightingale
May rival ; still you challenge, still to fail.

MORSON.

Cease, shepherd ! Morson gives the lamb to thee,
Comatas ; fail not to remember me,

And let my portion of the flesh be nice,
When to the Nymphs you make your sacrifice.

COMATAS.

By Pan ! I'll send it. Snort and gambol round,
My buck-goats all ! hark ! what a mighty sound
I peal of ringing laughter at the cost
Of Lacon, who to me his lamb has lost !
I too will skip. My horned goats, good cheer !
To-morrow in the fountain, cool and clear,
Of Sybaris I'll bathe you. Hark ! I say,
White butting ram ! be modest, till I pay
The Nymphs my offering. Ha ! then blows I'll try—
Or may I like the curst Melanthius die.

IDYL VI.



THE HERDSMEN.

ARGUMENT.

Damœtas and Daphnis beguile the time by singing alternately.

Daphnis, acting the part of a spectator, describes Polyphemus sitting on a rock that overlooks the sea, and Galatea, the sea-nymph beloved by the Cyclops, sporting on the waves near the shore. Damœtas represents Polyphemus, professing that he has acted with apparent harshness and indifference in order to attract the nymph, and compel her to live ashore with him. When they have done singing, they exchange presents.



IDYL VI.

THE HERDSMEN.

DAMCETAS AND DAPHNIS.

To the same field, Aratus, bard divine !
Once Daphnis and Damcœtas drove their kine.
This on the chin a yellow beard did show :
On that the down had just begun to grow.
During the noontide of the summer heat,
They by a fountain sung their ditties sweet.
But Daphnis first (to whom it did belong
As challenger) began the pastoral song.

DAPHNIS.

“ With apples Galatea pelts thy sheep,
Inviting one, whose pulses never leap
To love, whilst thou, cold Polypheme ! dost pipe,
Regardless of the sea-born beauty ripe.

And lo ! she pelts the watch-dog — with a bound
 He barking starts, and angry looks around —
 Then bays the sea ; the waves soft-murmuring show
 An angry dog fast running to and fro.
 Take heed he leap not on her, coming fresh
 From the sea-wave, and tear her dainty flesh.
 But like the thistle-down, when summer glows,
 The sportive nymph, soft moving, comes and goes ;
 Pursues who flies her, her pursuer flies,
 And moves the landmark of love's boundaries.
 What is not lovely, lovely oft doth seem
 To the bewildered lover, Polypheme."

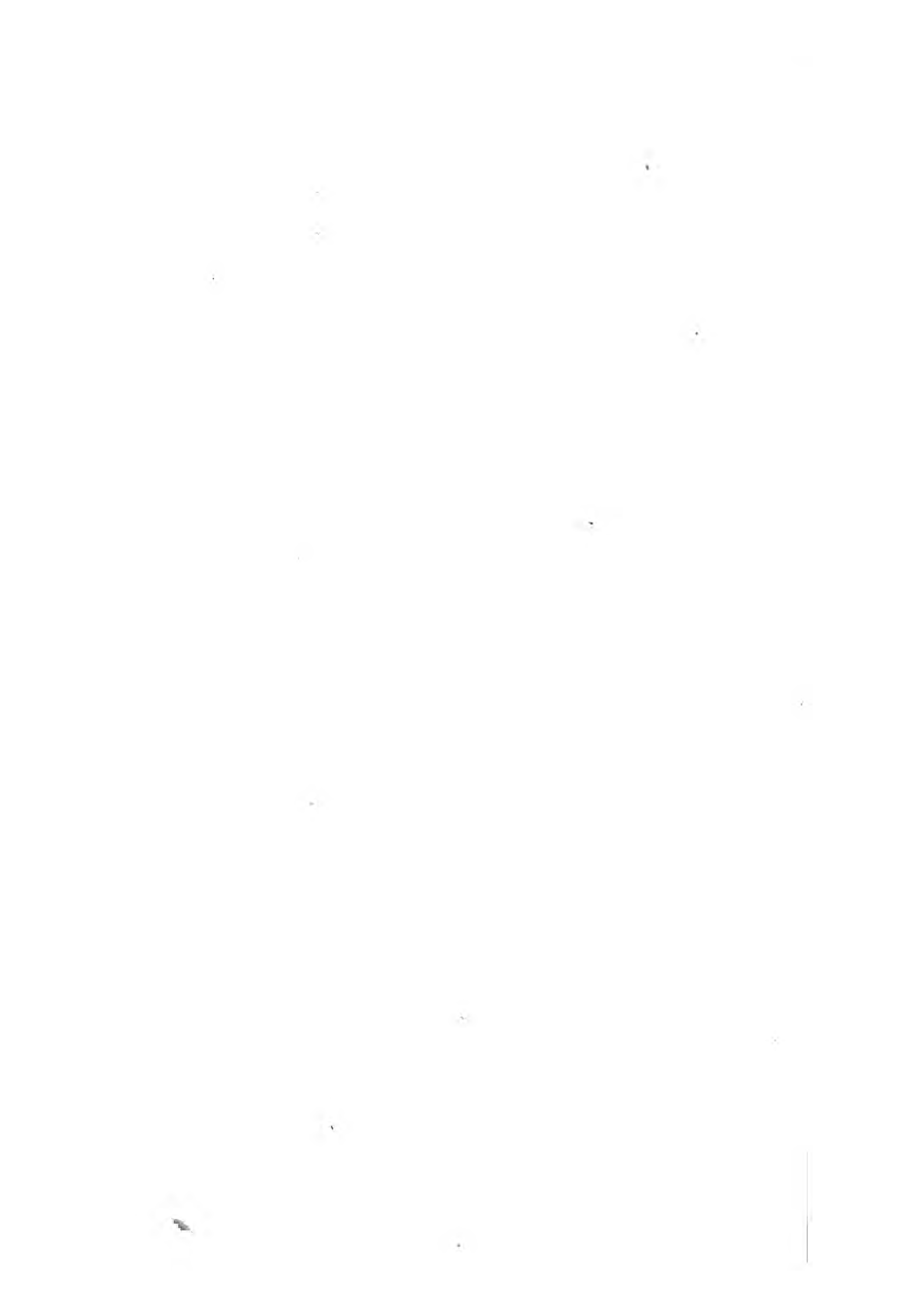
Preluding then, Damœtas began.

DAMCETAS.

" I saw her pelt my flock, by mighty Pan !
 Not unobserved by my dear single eye,
 Thro' which I see, and shall see till I die.
 Prophet of ill ! let Telemus at home
 Keep for his own sons all his woes to come.
 I, to provoke her, look not in return,
 And say that for another girl I burn.

At hearing which with envy, by Apollo !
The sea-nymph pines ; and her eye-quest doth follow,
Leaping from out the sea like one that raves,
Amid my flocks, and peeps into the caves.
I make the dog bark just to discompose her ;
He, when I loved her, whining used to nose her.
Noting my action, she perchance will find
Some messenger to let me know her mind.
I'll shut my door, till she on oath agree
To make her sweet bed on this isle with me.
Nor am I that unsightly one they say :
For in the calm, smooth wave the other day
I saw myself : and handsome was my beard,
And bright, methought, my single eye appeared.
And from the beautiful sea-mirror shone
My white teeth, brighter than the Parian stone.
To screen myself from influence malign,
Thrice on my breast I spat. This lesson fine
I learned from that wise crone Cotyttaris."

This sung, Damcetas gave his friend a kiss.
Of pipe and flute their mutual gifts they made—
Daphnis the pipe, the flute Damcetas played.
Thereto the heifers frisked in gambols rude :
And neither conquered ; both were unsubdued.



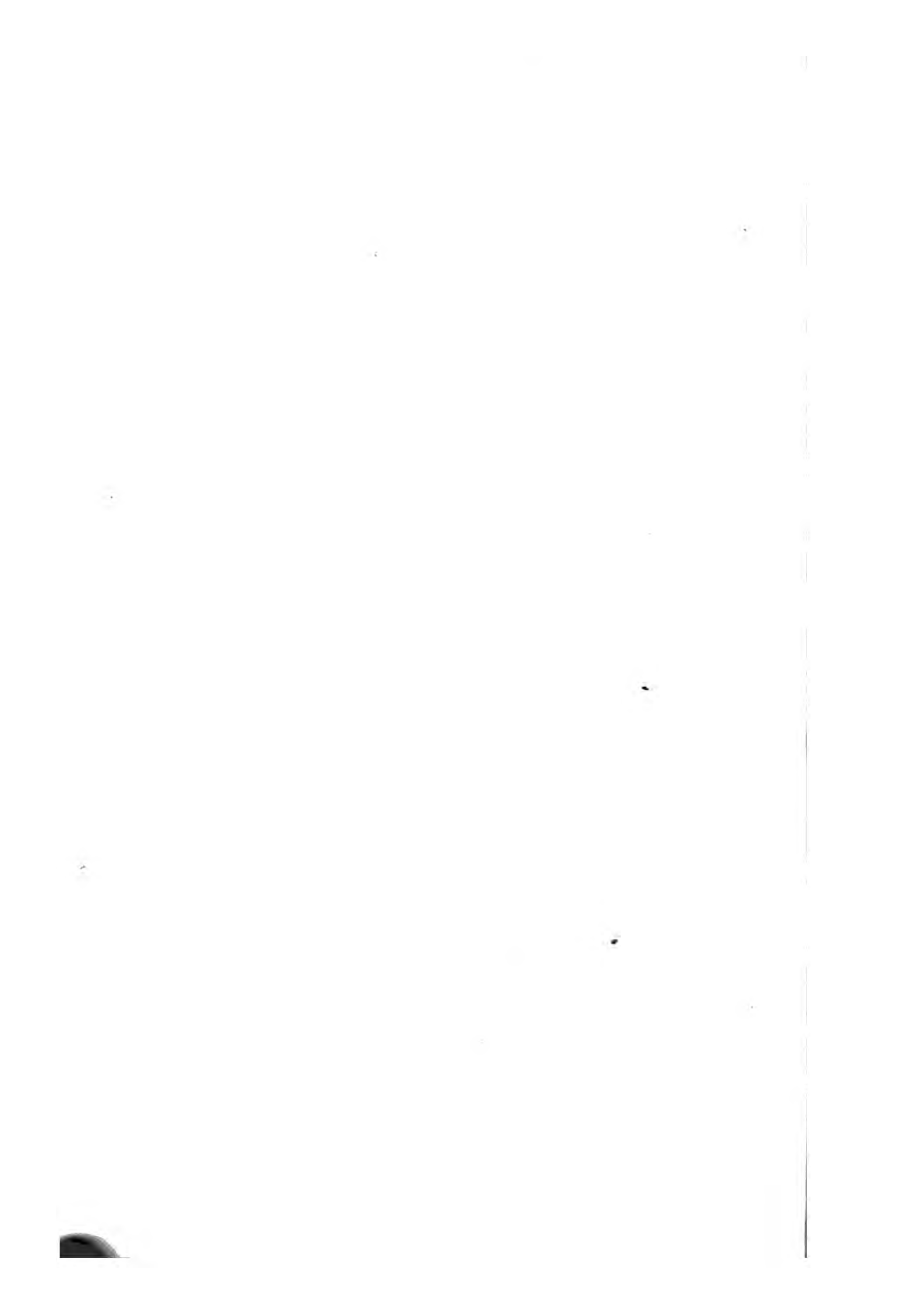
IDYL VII.



THALYSIA.

ARGUMENT.

Simichidas and two others are travelling to a harvest-home ; on their way they fall in with Lycidas, who sings for them at the request of Simichidas. The latter also favours his companions with a song. Lycidas gives a crook to Simichidas, and then pursues his journey, while the others turn off to the harvest-feast ; the scene and the entertainment are described.



IDYL VII.



THALYSIA.

'Twas when Amyntas, Eucritus, and I,
Did from the city to sweet Haleus hie ;
The harvest-feast by that abounding river
Was kept, in honour of the harvest-giver,
By Phrasidamus and Antigenes,
Sons of Lycopeus both, and good men these,
If good there is from old and high descent,
From Clytia and from Calchon, who, knee-bent
Firmly against the rock, did make outflow
The spring Burinna with a foot-struck blow,
Near which a thickly wooded grove is seen,
Poplars and elms, high overarching green.
Midway not reached, nor tomb of Brasilas,
We chanced upon Cydonian Lycidas,

By favour of the muses : who not knew
 That famous goatherd as he came in view ?
 A tawny, shaggy goat-skin on his back,
 That of the suppling pickle yet did smack ;
 Bound by a belt of straw the traveller wore
 An aged jerkin ; in his hand he bore
 A crook of the wild olive ; coming nigh,
 With widely parted lips, and smiling eye —
 The laughter on his lip was plain to see —
 He quietly addressed himself to me :

“ Whither so fast at noon-tide, when no more
 The crested larks their sunny paths explore,
 And in the thorn-hedge lizards lie asleep ?
 To feast or to a wine-press do you leap ?
 The stones ring to your buskins as you pass.”

To him I made reply—“ Dear Lycidas !
 All say you are the piper—far the best
 'Mid shepherds and the reapers ; this confest
 Gladdens my heart ; and yet (to put in speech
 My fancy), I expect your skill to reach.
 Our way is to a harvest-feast, which cater
 Dear friends of ours for richly robed Damater,

Offering their first fruits — since their garner-floor
 Her bounteous love hath filled to running o'er.
 Let us with pastoral song beguile the way ;
 Common the path, and common is the day.
 We shall each other, it may be, content ;
 For I, too, am a mouth-piece eloquent
 Of the dear Muses ; and all men esteem,
 And call me minstrel good — not that I deem,
 Not I by Earth ! Philetas I surpass,
 Nor the famed Samian bard, Sicelidas,
 A frog compared with locusts I beguile
 The time with song." He answered with a smile :—

“ This crook I give thee—for thou art all over
 An imp of Zeus, a genuine truth-lover.
 Who strives to build, the lowly plain upon,
 A mansion high as is Oromedon,
 I hate exceedingly ; and for that matter
 The muse-birds, who like cuckoos, idly chatter
 Against the Chian minstrel, toil in vain :
 Let us at once begin the pastoral strain ;
 Here is a little song, which I did late,
 Musing along the highlands, meditate :

“ To Mitylene sails my heart-dear love :
Safe be the way, and fair the voyage prove,
E'en when the south the moist wave dashes high on
The setting Kids, and tempest-veiled Orion
Places his feet on ocean ; and, returned,
My love be kind to me by Cypris burned ;
For hot love burns me : may the Halcyons smooth
The swell o' the sea, the south and east winds soothe,
That from the lowest deep the sea-weed stir —
Best Halcyons ! whom of all the birds that skir
The waves for prey, the Nereids love the most.
Safe may my loved one reach the Lesbian coast,
And on the way be wind and weather fair !
With dill or roses will I twine my hair,
Or on my head will put a coronet,
Wreathed with the fragrance of the violet.
I by the fire will quaff the Ptelean wine,
And one shall roast me beans, while I recline
Luxurious, lying on a fragrant heap
Of asphodel and parsley, elbow-deep ;
And mindful of my love the goblet clip,
Until the last lees trickle to my lip.
Two swains shall play the flute ; and Tityrus sing
How love for Xenea did our Daphnis sting,

How on the mountain he was wont to stray,
How wailed for him the oaks of Himera,
When he, dissolving, passed away from us,
Like snow on Hæmus, or far Caucasus,
Athos or Rhodope : or in his song
Recite, how by his master's cruel wrong
The Swain was in a cedar ark shut up,
While quick—and how from many a flower-cup
The flat-nosed bees to his sweet prison flew,
And there sustained him with the honey-dew,
For that the Muse into his lip distilled
Sweet nectar : blest Comatas ! that fulfilled
A whole spring, feeding on the bag o' the bee,
Shut in an ark ! How had it gladdened me,
(Would only thou wert of the living now !)
To tend thy goats along the mountain's brow,
And hear thee sweetly sing, O bard divine !
Lying at leisure under oak or pine !”

He ceased : I in my turn : “ Dear Lycidas !
Whilst on the highlands with my herd I pass,
The Nymphs have taught me precious ditties oft,
Which haply Fame has borne to Zeus aloft.

I choose for you the very best I know ;
Now listen, since the Muses love you so :

The Loves, ill omen ! sneezed on me, who dote
On lovely Myrtis, as on spring the goat.
Aratus, whom of men I love the best,
Loves a sweet girl. Aristis, minstrel blest,
And worthiest man, whom his own tripod near
Phœbus himself would not disdain to hear
Sing to the harp, knows that Aratus feels
This scorching flame. Pan ! whose rich music peals
On Homolus, place in his longing arms
Of her own will the blushing bloom of charms.
So may the youth of Arcady forbear
With squills thy shoulders and thy side to tear,
When fails the chase. If thou wilt not, then weep,
By nails all mangled, and on nettles sleep !
Where Hebrus flows, in frost-time of the year
Dwell on the mountains 'neath the polar bear ;
In summer with swart Æthiop, at the pile
Of Blemyan rocks, beyond the springs of Nile !
Ye loves ! from Hyetis and Byblis flown,
Who make Dione's lofty seat your own ;

Ye loves ! that are to blushing apples like,
The blooming Phyllis with your arrows strike—
Strike her, because she pities not my friend ;
Though softer than a pear, her bloom shall end :
Ah, Phyllis ! Phyllis ! now the bachelors say,
Behold thy flower of beauty drops away !
Let us, my friend Aratus ! pace no more,
Nor keep our painful watch beside her door ;
Let Chanticleer, that crows at dawn, behold
Some other lover there benumbed with cold :
Such watch be Molon's, and be his alone ;
But rest be ours—and eke a friendly crone,
Who may by spitting and by magic skill
Quick disenchant us from fore-shadowed ill.”

Ended my song, he smiling as before
The friendly muse-gift gave—the crook he bore ;
Then turning to the left pursued the way
To Pyxa ; speeding, presently we lay,
Where Phrasidamus dwelt, on loosened sheaves
Of lentisk, and the vine's new-gathered leaves.
Near by, a fountain murmured from its bed,
A cavern of the Nymphs : elms overhead,

And poplars rustled ; and the summer-keen
Cicadaë sung aloft amid the green ;
Afar the tree-frog in the thorn-bush cried ;
Nor larks nor goldfinches their song denied ;
The yellow bees around the fountains flew ;
And the lone turtle-dove was heard to coo :
Of golden summer all was redolent,
And of brown autumn ; boughs with damsons bent,
We had ; and pears were scattered at our feet,
And by our side a heap of apples sweet.
A four-year cask was broached. Ye Nymphs excelling
Of Castaly, on high Parnassus dwelling,
Did ever Chiron in the Centaur's cave
Give draught so rich to Hercules the brave ?
Thro' Polypheme did such sweet nectar glance,
That made the shepherd of Anapus dance,
The huge rock-hurler—as the generous foam,
Which, Nymphs, ye tempered at that harvest-home ?
O be it mine again her feast to keep,
And fix the fan in good Damater's heap ;
And may she sweetly smile, while spikes of corn
And up-torn poppies either hand adorn !

IDYL VIII.



THE BUCOLIC SINGERS.

ARGUMENT.

The cowherd Daphnis and the shepherd Menalcas sing alternately.
A goatherd is the judge between them ; he awards the prize
to Daphnis.



IDYL VIII.

THE BUCOLIC SINGERS.

DAPHNIS AND MENALCAS.

MENALCAS met, while pasturing his sheep,
The cowherd Daphnis on the highland steep ;
Both yellow-tressed, and in their life's fresh spring,—
Both skilled to play the pipe, and both to sing.

Menalcas, with demeanour frank and free,
Spoke first : “ Good Daphnis, will you sing with me ?
I can out-sing you, whensoever I try,
Just as I please.” Then Daphnis made reply :

DAPHNIS.

Shepherd and piper ! that may never be,
Happen what will, as you on proof will see.

MENALCAS.

Ah, will you see it, and a wager make ?

DAPHNIS.

I will to see this, and to pledge a stake.

MENALCAS.

And what the wager, worthy fame like ours ?

DAPHNIS.

A calf my pledge, a full-grown lamb be yours.

MENALCAS.

At night my cross-grained sire and mother use
To count the sheep — that pledge I must refuse.

DAPHNIS.

What shall it be then ? What the victor's prize ?

MENALCAS.

I'll pledge a nine-toned pipe, that even lies
In the joined reeds, with whitest wax inlaid,
The musical sweet pipe I lately made ;

This will I pledge — and not my father's things.

DAPHNIS.

I, too, have got a pipe that nine-toned rings,
Compact with white wax, even-jointed, new,—
Made by myself: a split reed sudden flew,
And gashed this finger — it is painful still.
But who shall judge which has the better skill?

MENALCAS.

Suppose we call that goatherd hither — see !
Yon white dog at his kids barks lustily.

He came when called ; and, hearing their request,
Was willing to decide which sung the best.
Clearly their rival tones responsive rung,
Each in his turn, but first Menalcas sung.

MENALCAS.

Ye mountain-vales and rivers ! race divine !
If aught Menalcas ever sung was sweet,
Feed ye these lambs ; and feed no less his kiné,
When Daphnis drives them to this dear retreat.

DAPHNIS.

Fountains and herbs, growth of the lively year !
If Daphnis sings like any nightingale,
Fatten this herd ; and if Menalcas here
Conduct his flock, let not their pasture fail.

MENALCAS.

Pastures and spring, and milkful udders swelling,
And fatness for the lambs, is everywhere
At her approach : but if the girl excelling
Departs, both herbs and shepherd wither there.

DAPHNIS.

The sheep and goats bear twins ; the bees up-lay
Full honey-stores, the spreading oaks are higher,
Where Milto walks : but if she goes away,
The cowherd and his cows themselves are drier

MENALCAS.

Uxorious ram, and flat-nosed kids, away
For water to that wilderness of wood :
There, ram without a horn ! to Milto say,
Proteus, a god too, fed the sea-calf brood.

DAPHNIS.

Nor Pelops' realm be mine, nor piles of gold,
Nor speed fleet as the wind ; but at this rock
To sing, and clasp my darling, and behold
The seas blue reach, and many a pasturing flock.

MENALCAS.

To forest-beast the net, to bird the noose,
Winter to trees, and drought to springs is bad ;
To man the sting of beauty. Mighty Zeus !
Not only I — thou, too, art woman-mad.

Their sweet notes thus, in turn, they did prolong ;
Menalcas then took up the closing song.

MENALCAS.

Spare, wolf ! my sheep and lambs ; nor injure me,
Because I many tend, though small I be.
Sleepest, Lampurus ? up ! no dog should sleep
That with the shepherd-boy attends his sheep.
Be not to crop the tender herbage slow,
Feed on, my sheep ! the grass again will grow.

Fill ye your udders, that your lambs may have
Their share of milk,—I some for cheese may save.

Then Daphnis next his tones preluding rung,
Gave to the music voice, and sweetly sung.

DAPHNIS.

As yesterday I drove my heifers by,
A girl, me spying from a cavern nigh,
Exclaimed “how handsome!” I my way pursued
With down-cast eyes, nor made her answer rude.
Sweet is the breath of cows and calves —and sweet
To bask by running stream in summer heat.
Acorn the oak ; and apples on the bough
Adorn the apple tree ; her calf the cow ;
His drove of kine, depasturing the field,
His proper honour to the cowherd yield.

Th’ admiring goatherd then his judgment spake ;
Sweet is thy mouth, and sweetest tones awake
From thy lips, Daphnis ! I would rather hear
Thee sing, than suck the honey-comb, I swear.
Take thou the pipe, for thine the winning song.
If thou wilt teach me here my goats among

Some song, I will that hornless goat bestow,
That ever fills the pail to overflow.

Glad Daphnis clapped his hands, and on the lawn
He leaped, as round her mother leaps the fawn.
But sad Menalcas fed a smouldering gloom,
As grieves a girl betrothed to unknown groom.
And first in song was Daphnis from that time,
And wived a Naiad in his blooming prime.



IDYL IX.



THE SHEPHERD.

ARGUMENT.

The herdsman Daphnis and the shepherd Menalcas are invited by a shepherd to sing for his gratification. After they have complied with his request, he rewards Daphnis with a crook, and Menalcas with a conch. He then favours them with a stave of his own, in honour of the Muses.



IDYL IX.

THE SHEPHERD.

SHEPHERD.

DAPHNIS ! begin the pastoral song for me ;
Begin, and let Menalcas follow thee.
Meanwhile the calves the mother-cows put under,
Let the bulls feed — but not roam far asunder,
Scorning the herd — and crop the leafy spray ;
And leave the heifers to their frolic play.
Begin for me the sweet bucolic strain,
And let Menalcas take it up again.

DAPHNIS.

“ Sweet low the cow and calf — the tones are sweet,
The pipe, the cowherd and myself repeat.
My couch is by cool water, and is strown
With skins of milk-white heifers ; them threw down,

While they cropt arbutus, the south-west wind
 From the bluff crag. There stretched, no more I mind
 The scorching summer than a loving pair
 Their parents sage, who bid them each ‘beware!’”

Thus Daphnis sweetly sung at my request ;
 Menalcas next his dulcet tones exprest.

MENALCAS.

“Ætna ! my mother ! in the hollow rock
 My pleasant mansion is ; I own a flock
 Of many yearlings and of many sheep,
 Numerous as those the dreamer sees in sleep.
 Fleeces are lying at my head and feet ;
 On an oak-fire are boiling entrails sweet ;
 And on my hearth in winter-time I burn
 Fagots of beech. I have no more concern
 For winter—than the toothless elder cares
 For walnuts, whose old dame his pap prepares.”

SHEPHERD.

Both I applauded, and made gifts to both,
 A crook to Daphnis—the spontaneous growth

Of my own father's field, yet turned so well,
None could find fault with it ; a sounding shell
I gave Menalcas ; four besides myself
Fed on its flesh—I snared it from a shelf
Amid th' Icarian rocks. The conch he blew,
And far abroad the blast resounding flew.

Hail, pastoral Muses ! and the song declare,
Which then I chaunted for that friendly pair.
“ On your tongue's tip may pustules never grow,
For speaking falsely what for false you know !
Cicale the cicale loves ; and ant loves ant ;
Hawk, hawk ; and me the muse and song enchant.
Of this my house be full ! nor sudden spring,
Nor sleep is sweeter ; nor to bees on wing
The bloom of flowers more dear delight diffuses,
Than to myself the presence of the Muses.
On whomso'er they look and sweetly smile,
Him Circe may not harm with cup or wile.”



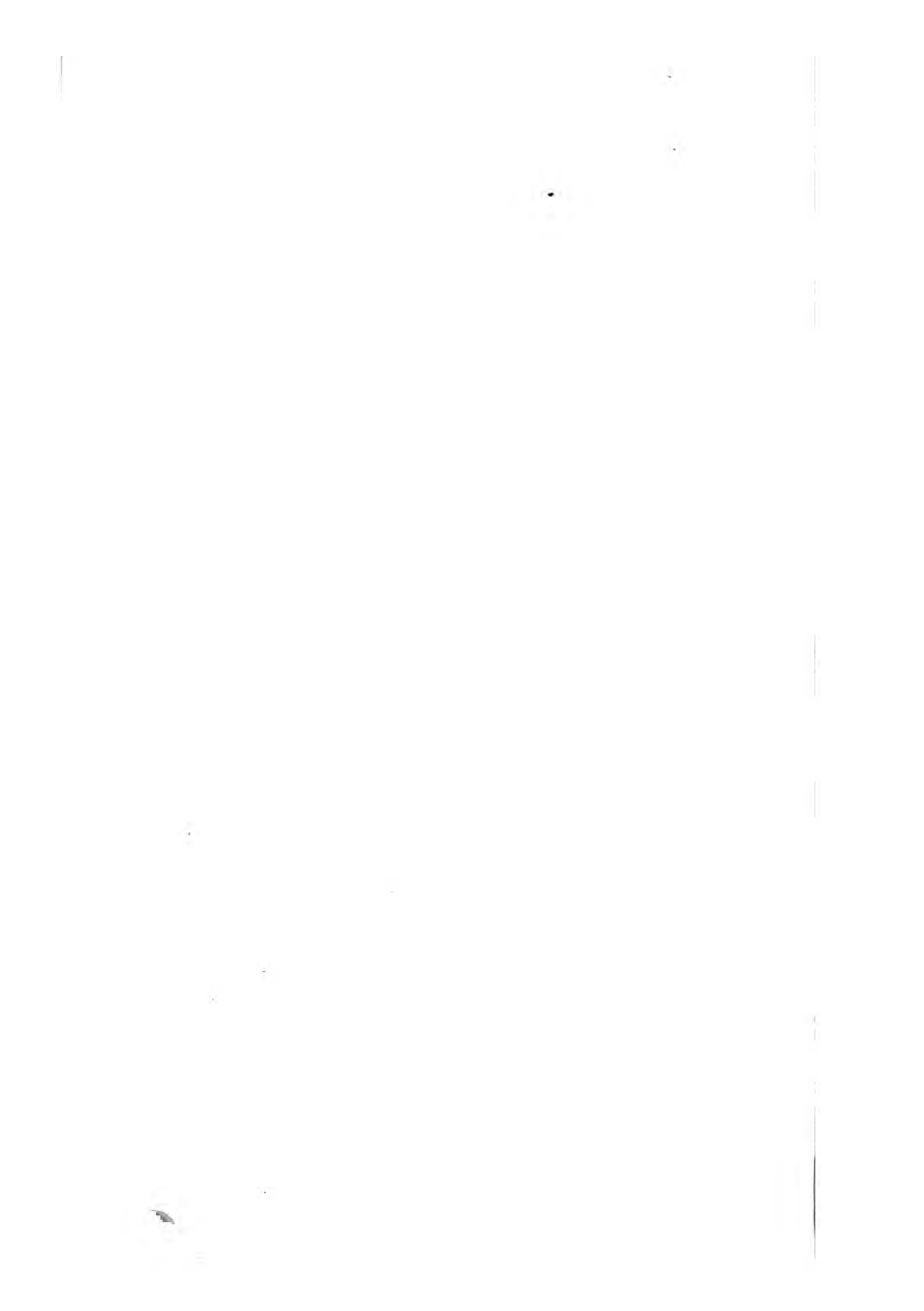
IDYL X.



THE REAPERS.

ARGUMENT.

Two reapers are the speakers in this Idyl. Battus is reproved by Milon for his sluggishness in his work ; whereupon he confesses that he is enamoured of a certain singing-girl. Milon jeers him, and invites him to sing that he may forget his love. Battus complies, and praises his beloved ; at the conclusion of his song, the other rustic repeats some matter-of-fact proverbial sentences ; and concludes with a taunt on the romantic folly of the love-sick Battus.



IDYL X.

THE REAPERS.

BATTUS AND MILON.

MILON.

Ploughman, what is the matter with you, pray ?
You cannot draw the furrow straight to-day,
Nor with your neighbour even do you keep,
But lag behind like a thorn-wounded sheep.
If you cannot the furrow now devour,
What will you be, my friend, at evening hour ?

BATTUS.

You rock-chip, reaping till the sun's descent,
Did you some absent darling ne'er lament ?

MILON.

Never. A labourer's heart with love-grief ache !

BATTUS.

Did you ne'er chance for love to lie awake ?

MILON.

No—never may I ! When a dog has eaten
Meat for his master, the poor dog is beaten.

BATTUS.

I'm deep in love—almost eleven days.

MILON.

From a full wine-cask you your fancies raise ;
I have not even vinegar enough.

BATTUS.

Thence lie the sweepings of all sort of stuff
Before my door.

MILON.

Who is your mischief-bringer ?

BATTUS.

The child of Polybotas—the sweet singer,
Who for the mowers at Hippocoon's chaunted.

MILON.

Sinners heaven pricks—you have what long you wanted ;
A dry tree-frog will hug you close in bed.

BATTUS.

None of your jibes : care-breeding Love is said,
And not old Plutus only, to be blind.
Don't talk too big.

MILON.

I do not—only mind
To cut the corn down, and some love-song try
About your girl ; you'll work more pleasantly :
And Battus once, at least, was musical.

BATTUS.

To sing my charmer, slender, straight, and tall,
Best Muses ! aid me ; for, with skill divine,
Ye, whatsoe'er ye please to touch, refine.

Lovely Bombyce ! tho' all men beside
Call you a Syrian sun-embrowned, and dried,
I call you a transparent sweet brunette.
The lettered hyacinth and violet
Are dark ; yet these are chosen first of all
For the sweet wreath and festive coronal.
The goat the cytisus, the wolf the goat,
And cranes pursue the plough — on thee I dote.
Would that I had the wealth report hath told
Belonged to Cræsus ! wrought in purest gold,
Statutes of both of us should then be seen,
Due dedications to the Cyprian Queen :
Thou with a flute, an apple, and a rose ;
I sandalled, in a robe that proudly flows.
Lovely Bombyce ! beautiful your feet,
Twinkling like the quick dice ; your voice is sweet ;
But your sweet nature language cannot tell.

MILON.

He privily hath learned to sing — how well !
But my poor chin in vain this great beard nurses ;
List to a snatch or two of Lytierses.

Damater ! fruit-abounding ! grant this field
Be duly wrought, and rich abundance yield.

Bind without waste, sheaf-binder ! lest one say,
These men of fig-wood are not worth their pay.

Let the sheaf-hillock look to north or west ;
The corn, so lying, fills and ripens best.

Ye threshers ! let not sleep steal on your eyes
At noon — for then the chaff most freely flies.

Up with the lark to reap, and cease as soon
As the lark sleeps — but rest yourself at noon.

Happy the frog's life ! none, his drink to pour,
He looks for — he has plenty evermore.

Boil, niggard steward ! the lentil ; and take heed,
Don't cut your hand — to split a cumin-seed.

Men toiling in the sun such songs befit ;
Your puling love, poor rustic little-wit !
Is only fit — to whisper in her ears,
When your old mother wakes as dawn appears.



IDYL XI.

THE CYCLOPS.

ARGUMENT.

The poet addresses the poem to his friend Nicias, the physician, and asserts that there is no remedy for love but the Muses. He then introduces Polypheme, sitting on a rock that overlooks the sea, and beguiling his care with song. The Cyclops reproaches Galatea with her pride and indifference; states that he is aware she rejects his love because his features are not such as feminine delight to look on, but mentions his wealth, which he invites her to partake. He breaks into an expression of his passionate longing for her presence; and blames his mother for not pleading his cause with the fair sea-nymph. He at last checks himself, and prudently resolves to desist from a vain pursuit; solacing himself with the conviction that other maidens look on him more favourably.



IDYL XI.



THE CYCLOPS.

NICIAS ! there is no remedy for love,
Except the Muses ; this alone doth prove
A sweet and gentle solace for the mind
Of love-sick man—not easy though to find.
Full knowledge of this truth I deem is thine,
Physician, and beloved of all the Nine !

Thus, Polypheme of yore, our Cyclops, found
The power of song on love's uneasy wound ;
With the first down that budding youth discloses
On cheek and chin, he doted—not with roses
And apples for his love, and the trim curl
To please her eye, but with delirious whirl,
Neglecting all things else. Oft to the stall
His sheep from pasture came without his call,
While he from dawn mid sea-weeds and the spray
Of Galatea sung, and pined away,

By mighty Cypris wounded at the heart,
Who in his liver fixed her cruel dart.
He found the cure while from the cliff he flung
His glances seaward, and his ditty sung :—

“ Why, Galatea, scorn for love dost render ?
Whiter than fresh curds, than the lamb more tender ;
More skittish than the calf, more clearly bright
Than unripe grape transparent in the light !
Here dost thou show thyself when sleeps thy lover,
Still flying ever as my sleep is over,
E'en as the sheep, the gray wolf seeing, flees.
I loved when with my mother from the seas
Thou first didst come, and seek the mountain-side
To gather hyacinths—and I thy guide.
Since then I never yet have ceased to love thee,
Although my passion never yet did move thee.
I know the reason why the beauty flies—
One shaggy eye-brow on my forehead lies
Over one eye, stretched out from tip to tip
Of either ear, and overhangs my lip
A nostril broad. Such as I am, I keep,
Drinking their best of milk, a thousand sheep ;
My cheeses fail not in their hurdled row
In depth of winter nor in summer's glow.

No Cyclops here can breathe the pipe like me,
Who sing, when I should sleep, myself and thee,
Sweet-apple ! I for thee four bear-whelps rear,
And eke eleven fawns that collars wear.
Come live (thou shalt not fare the worse) with me,
And to its murmurs leave that azure sea.
Thy nights will sweeter pass within my cave,
Where the tall cypress and the laurel wave ;
The sweet-fruit vine and ivy dark are there ;
From the white snow its waters cool and clear
Thick-wooded Ætna sends : whom would it please
In sea to dwell, when land has joys like these ?
Though rough I seem in Galatea's eyes,
My wealth of oak a constant fire supplies ;
O fire of love ! I could be well content
That life and precious eye at once were brent.
Had I but fins ! then would I dive and kiss
Thy dainty hand, though daintier lip I miss ;
In different seasons take thee different flowers,
The summer lily white in summer hours,
And while it winter was, what winter bred,
The tender poppy with its pop-bells red.
From some sea-ranger I will learn to swim,
To see what charms you in your ocean dim.

Come, Galatea ! sparkling from the foam,
And then, like me, forget to turn thee home.
Would that the shepherd and his life could please—
To milk my ewes, with runnet fix the cheese.
My mother is in fault, and only she—
She never spake a friendly word for me ;
Although she sees me pining fast away,
Thinner and thinner still from day to day.
I'll tell her that my feet and temples throb,
That she, as I have done, with grief may sob.
O Cyclops ! Cyclops ! whither dost thou hover ?
To weave thy baskets would more wit discover,
And get thy lambs green leaves. Milk the near ewe ;
Why one that faster flies in vain pursue ?
A fairer Galatea you may find ;
Others are fair, and all are not unkind :
For many a damsel, when eve's shadow falls,
Me to sport with her fondly, sweetly calls ;
And all of them, with eyes that brightly glisten,
Giggle most merrily, whene'er I listen :
That I am somebody on earth is plain."

Thus Polypheme with song relieved love's pain ;
And from his ails himself did safer free,
Than had he given a leech a golden fee.

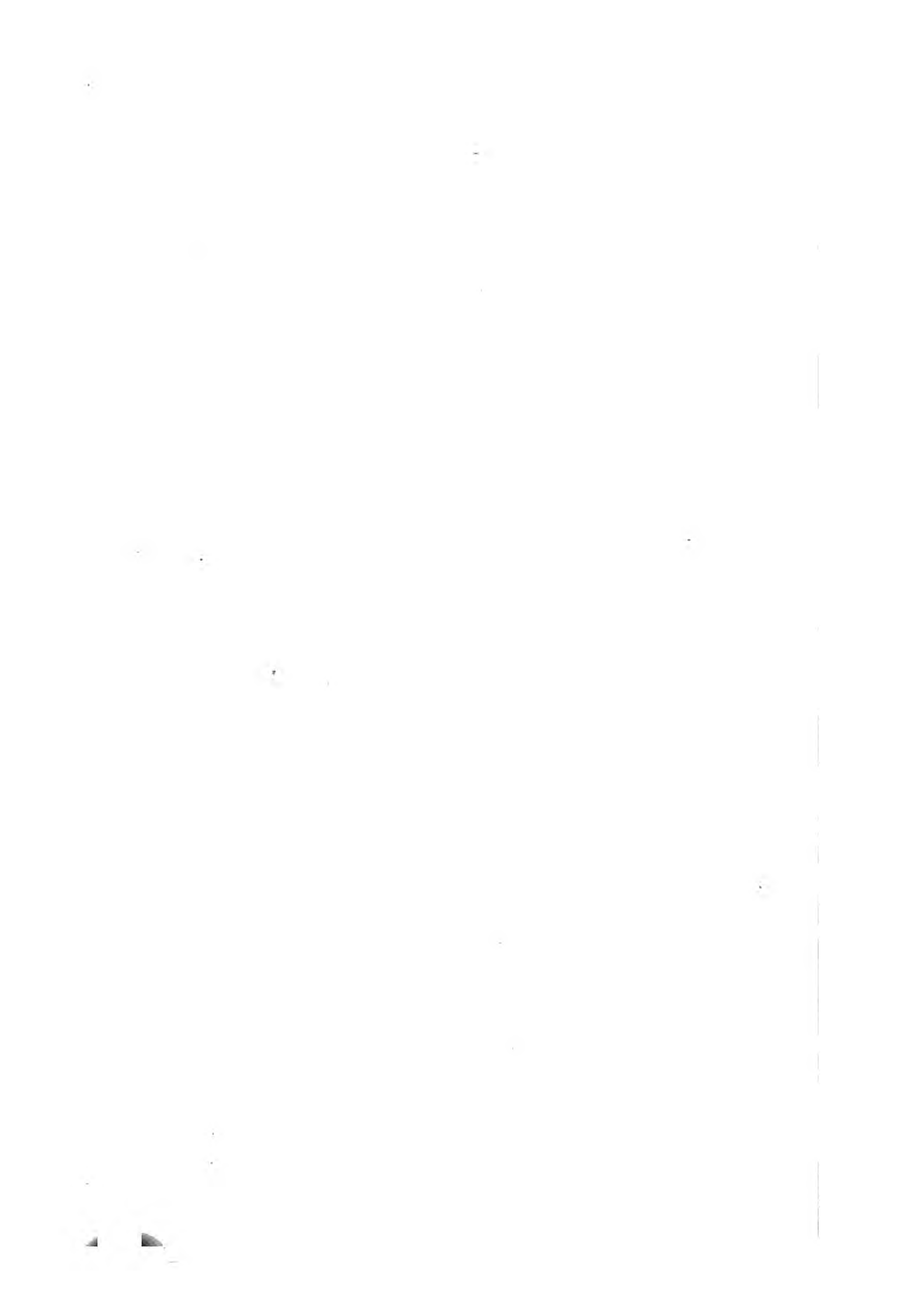
IDYL XII.



THE FRIEND.

ARGUMENT.

In this piece one of two youthful friends addresses the other. He expresses a hope that their mutual friendship may last through their lives, and that the memory of it may survive them, and make them famous to late posterity. He then passes to the praise of the Megarians for the divine honours paid by them to Diocles, who lost his life in the defence of his friend.



IDYL XII.

THE FRIEND.

ART come, dear youth? Two days and nights away!
For love who passion, wax old—in a day.
As much as apples sweet the damson crude
Excel; the bloomy spring the winter rude;
In fleece the sheep her lamb; the maid in sweetness
The thrice-wed dame; the fawn the calf in fleetness;
The nightingale in song all feathered kind—
So much thy longed-for presence cheers my mind.
To thee I hasten, as to shady beech
The traveller, when from the heaven's reach
The sun fierce blazes. May our love be strong,
To all hereafter times the theme of song!
“ Two men each other loved to that degree,
That either friend did in the other see

A dearer than himself. They lived of old,
Both golden natures in an age of gold."

O father Zeus! ageless Immortals all!
Two hundred ages hence may one recall,
Down-coming to the irremeable river,
This to my mind, and this good news deliver:
"E'en now from east to west, from north to south,
Your mutual friendship lives in every mouth."
This, as they please, the Olympians will decide:
Of thee, by blooming virtue beautified,
My glowing song shall only truth disclose;
With falsehood's pustules I'll not shame my nose.
If thou dost sometime grieve me, sweet the pleasure
Of reconcilment, joy in double measure
To find thou never didst intend the pain,
And feel myself from all doubt free again.

And, ye Megarians, at Nisæa dwelling,
Expert at rowing, mariners excelling,
Be happy ever! for with honours due
Th' Athenian Diocles, to friendship true,
Ye celebrate. With the first blush of spring
The youth surround his tomb: there who shall bring

The sweetest kiss, whose lip is purest found,
Back to his mother goes with garlands crowned.
Nice touch the arbiter must have, indeed,
And must, methinks, the blue-eyed Ganymede
Invoke with many prayers—a mouth to own
True to the touch of lips, as Lydian stone
To proof of gold,—which test will instant show
The pure or base, as money-changers know.

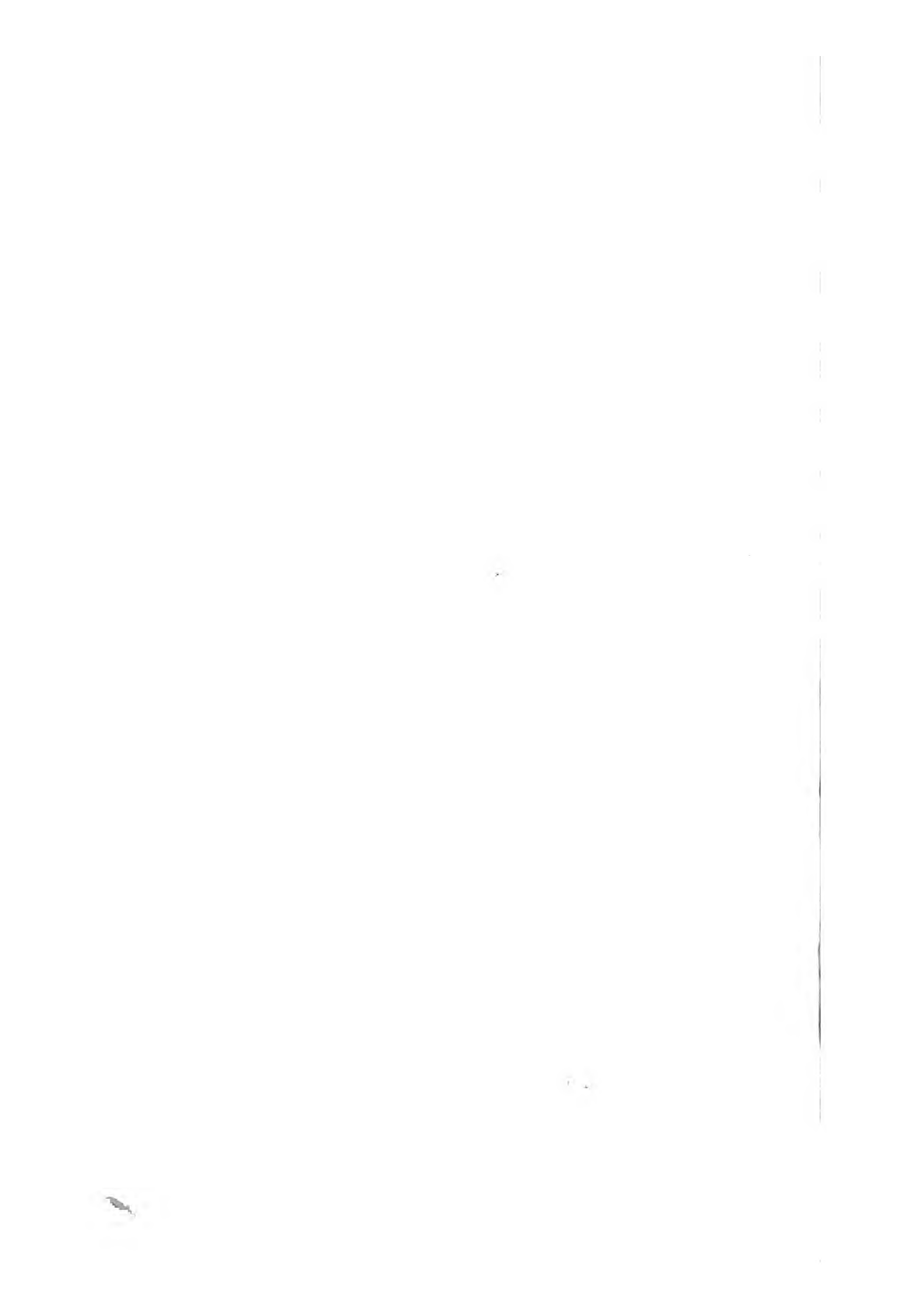


IDYL XIII.

HYLAS.

ARGUMENT.

The poet describes the abduction of Hylas by the fountain-nymphs. The youth attended Hercules, who was one of the worthies that accompanied Jason, when he sailed in the good ship Argo in quest of the golden fleece. When the vessel arrived at the territory of the Cianians, who dwelt on the shore of the Propontis; the band of heroes went ashore, and are described as messing there in pairs. Hylas was sent to bring water from a neighbouring fountain for Hercules and his messmate Telamon; but the nymphs of the fountain, becoming enamoured of him, drew him into it. The distraction of Hercules at his loss is described; and the other heroes at last sail away without him, stigmatising him as a ship-deserter.



IDYL XIII.

HYLAS.

FRIEND ! not for us alone was love designed,
Whoe'er his parent of immortal kind ;
Nor first to us fair seemeth fair to be,
Who mortal are, nor can the morrow see.
But e'en Amphitryon's brazen-hearted son,
Who stood the lion's rage, did dote upon
The curled and lovely Hylas — made his joy
To train him as a father would his boy,
And taught him all whereby himself became
A minstrel-praised inheritor of fame ;
Nor left him when the sun was in mid-air,
Or Morn to Jove's court drove her milk-white pair ;
Or when the twittering chickens were betaking
Themselves to rest, her wings their mother shaking,

Perched on the smoky beam ; that, trained to go
In the right track, he might a true man grow.

When Jason sailed to find the golden fleece,
And in his train the choicest youth of Greece ;
Then with the worthies from the cities round,
Came Hercules, for patient toil renowned,
And Hylas with him : from Iölcös they,
In the good Argo ploughed the watery way.
Touched not the ship the dark Cyanean rocks,
That jostled evermore with crashing shocks,
But bounded through, and shot the swell o' the flood,
Like to an eagle, and in Phasis stood :
Thence either ridgy rock in station lies.

But at what times the Pleiades arise :
When to the lamb the borders of the field
(The spring to summer turning) herbage yield ;
The flower of heroes minded then their sailing ;
And the third day, a steady south prevailing,
They reached the Hellespont ; and in the bay
Of long Propontis hollow Argo lay :
Their oxen for Cianians dwelling there
The ploughshare in the broadening furrow wear.

They land at eve ; in pairs their mess they keep ;
And many strow a high and rushy heap :
A meadow broad convenient lay thereby,
With various rushes prankt abundantly.
And gold-tressed Hylas is for water gone
For Hercules and sturdy Telamon,
Who messmates were : a brazen urn he bore,
And soon perceived a fountain straight before.
It was a gentle slope, round which was seen
A multitude of rushes, parsley green,
And the close couch-grass, creeping to entwine
Green maiden-hair, and pale-blue celandine.
Their choir the wakeful nymphs, the rustics dread,
In the mid sparkle of the fountain led ;
Malis, and young Nachæa looking spring,
And fresh Eunica. There the youth did bring,
And o'er the water hold his goodly urn,
Eager at once to dip it and return.
The nymphs all clasped his hand ; for love seized all,
Love for the Argive boy ; and he did fall
Plumping at once into the water dark,
As when a meteor glides with many a spark
Plumping from out the heavens into the seas —

And then some sailor cries : “ a jolly breeze,
Up with the sail, boys ! ” Him upon their knees
The nymphs soft held ; him dropping many a tear
With soft enticing words they tried to cheer.

Anxious Alcides lingered not to go,
Armed like a Scythian with his curved bow.
He grasped his club ; and thrice he threw around
His deep, deep voice at highest pitch of sound ;
Thrice called on Hylas ; thrice did Hylas hear,
And from the fount a thin voice murmured near ;
Though very near, it very far appeared :
As when a lion, awful with his beard,
Hearing afar the whining of a fawn,
Speeds to his banquet from the mountain-lawn ;
In suchwise, Hercules the boy regretting,
Off at full speed through pathless brakes was setting.
Who love, much suffer : what fatigue he bore !
What thickets pierced ! what mountains clambered o'er !
What then to him was Jason's enterprise ?

With sails aloft the ship all-ready lies ;
Midnight they sweep the decks and oft repeat,
“ Where, where is Hercules ? ” Where'er his feet

Convey him, there the frantic mourner hurries,
For a fierce god his liver tears and worries.
Fair Hylas thus is numbered with the blest :
Their friend, as ship-deserter, all the rest
Reproach ; while trudges he (and sad his case is)
To Colchos and inhospitable Phasis.



IDYL XIV.

CYNISCA.

ARGUMENT.

One Æschines recounts to his friend, Thyonicus, the circumstances which caused his paramour, Cynisca, to leave him. He had invited a few friends to a jollification at his farm : he entertained them right hospitably ; and they were all mirthfully engaged with their cups, when it was proposed that they should each drink to the health of his favourite lass, giving her name. Æschines gives Cynisca, who is present, but she takes no notice of him, and does not even say " thank you." He is nettled at this ; and one of the company speaks a proverb, which has a special meaning to her conscience. She reddens with vexation ; and, when the jest is repeated, bursts into tears. Æschines then boxes both of her cheeks ; she quietly tucks up her dress and bolts. Poor Æschines still loves the jade, but though he has whistled for her, she would not return to him. He says that he knows no other remedy for unhappy love, but going across the seas. His friend Thyonicus, who is a sort of Job's comforter, recommends him, if he should go abroad, to take service with Ptolemy ; on whom he pronounces a splendid eulogy.



IDYL XIV.

CYNISCA.



ÆSCHINES AND THYONICUS.

ÆSCHINES.

Health to Thyonichus!

THYONICHUS.

The same to you.

ÆSCHINES.

How late you are!

THYONICHUS.

Late? what concernment new?

ÆSCHINES.

It is not well with me.

THYONICHUS.

And therefore lean,
 With beard untrimmed, and dry straight hair you're seen.
 But lately one, in seeming much the same,
 Who called himself Athenian, hither came,
 A barefoot, pale Pythagorean oaf,
 In love, methought, and longing—for a loaf.

ÆSCHINES.

You'll have your jest : Cynisca flouts me so,
 That I shall madden unawares, I know —
 There's but a hair's-breadth now 'twixt me and madness.

THYONICHUS.

Extreme in changes ever — brooding sadness,
 Or moody violence — as the whim makes you
 Sport of the time : but what new care o'ertakes you ?

ÆSCHINES.

The Argive, I, and the Thessalian knight
 Good Apis, and Cleunicus, brave in fight,
 Were drinking at my farm. We had for fare
 Two pullets and a sucking pig ; and rare

Rich Biblian wine (near four years old), I drew,
And fragrant still, as from the wine-press new.
A Colchian onion gave the brewage zest ;
As mirth with drink advanced, we thought it best
To quaff the wine's pure juice, each to his flame,
And every one was bound to tell her name.
So said, so done : we drank to them we loved :
But she, my she ! by all my love unmoved,
Said nothing, though I then and there named *her*.
Think what a tempest did my temper stir !
“ Won't speak ? ” I said : “ or, as the wise man spoke,
“ Hast seen a wolf ? ” another said in joke.
From her red burning face (it kindled so)
You might have lit a lamp. Lycus, you know,
Is name for wolf ; and there is such an one,
Tall, delicate, my neighbour Laba's son ;
And many think him handsome : for this youth,
And his fine love my damsel pined in sooth.
I heard a whisper, nor I sifted it,
Having a man's beard without manly wit.
But Apis—we were at our cups again—
Sang out “ My Lycus ! ” a Thessalian strain.
Then sudden into tears Cynisca burst—
The girl of six years for the breast, that nurst

Her tender infancy, not so much weeps.
You know me, how no bound my temper keeps ;
With doubled fist once and again I struck
Both of her cheeks. She thereat did up-tuck
Her skirts and quickly bolted through the door.
“ Do I not please thee ? hast a paramour
Nearer thy heart ! plague o’ my life ! go, go !
Hug him for whom your tears, like beads, thick flow.
As for her callow brood, that nested lies
Under the roof, the swallow swiftly flies
To bring them food, and flies for more again :
From her soft couch more swift she fled amain,
Through hall, court, gate, as fast as she was able :
“ The bull into the wood,” as runs the fable.
Add two to this, the eight and fiftieth day,
’Twill be two full months since she went away ;
And since we parted, as a sign of wo
My hair has, Thracian-like, been left to grow.
But only Lycus is her sole delight ;
For him her door is open e’en at night.
But hapless I, with the Megarian lot,
Am held in none account, and quite forgot.
All would be well, could I my love restrain ;
But mice, they say, the taste of pitch retain.

I cannot cure myself, howe'er I try ;
 For hapless love I know no remedy ;
 Except that Simus sailed across the water,
 When smitten with old Epichalcus' daughter,
 And came back whole. I too will cross the wave,
 Nor best nor worst of soldiers, but a brave.

THYONICHUS.

May all be as you wish, my Æschines !
 But if you will depart beyond the seas,
 Gladly king Ptolemy brave hearts engages,
 Best man of all that gives the soldier wages.

ÆSCHINES.

What sort of man is he in other things ?

THYONICHUS.

To brave and noble souls the best of kings ;
 Has a discerning spirit ; takes delight
 In all the Muses ; courteous to the height ;
 Who loves him and who loves him not, he knows ;
 And many gifts on many men bestows.
 When asked a boon, he king-like not denies ;
 But oft to ask is neither right nor wise.

Then if you wish a martial cloak to fold
Around your shoulders, and in station bold,
Firm on both feet, abide the shielded foe
On-rushing—instantly to Ægypt go.
Soon we grow old, and Time steals on apace,
Whitening the hair, and withering the face.
We ought to do what us behoves, I ween,
While yet our knee is firm, our strength is green.

IDYL XV.



A D O N I A Z U S Æ.

ARGUMENT.

The poet describes the festival of Adonis, celebrated by Arsinoe, the wife of Philadelphus. He takes the opportunity of praising the Queen, and all the family of Ptolemy. He introduces two women born and bred at Syracuse, but married and settled at Alexandria; these dames, accompanied each by a handmaid, go to see the spectacle. The scene changes from a house in the suburbs to the streets crowded with citizens and soldiery; thence to the gates of the palace; and lastly to the royal hall, in which the images of Aphrodite and Adonis, with the usual accompaniments, are exhibited. A singing girl is introduced, who sings in honour of Adonis. This piece is remarkable for its variety. The drollery of the gossips is admirably hit off; and the whole is described as circumstantially and vividly, as though the writer had been by the side of the women the whole time, hearing and seeing all that passed.

PERSONS.

GORGO.

PRAXINOA.

EUNOA, (*her Servant*).

OLD WOMAN.

STRANGERS.

THE SINGING GIRL.

IDYL XV.



ADONIAZUSÆ.

GORG0.

Is Praxinoa at home ?

PRAXINOA.

Dear Gorgo, yes !

How late you are ! I wonder, I confess,
That you are come e'en now. Quick, brazen-front !

[*To* EUNOA.

A chair there—stupid ! lay a cushion on't.

GORG0.

Thank you, 'tis very well.

PRAXINOA.

Be seated, pray.

GORG0.

My untamed soul ! what dangers on the way !
 I scarce could get alive here : such a crowd !
 So many soldiers with their trappings proud !
 A weary way it is—you live so far.

PRAXINOA.

The man, whose wits with sense are aye at war,
 Bought at the world's end but to vex my soul
 This dwelling—no ! this serpent's lurking-hole,
 That we might not be neighbours : plague o' my life,
 His only joy is quarrelling and strife.

GORG0.

Talk not of Dinon so before the boy ;
 See ! how he looks at you !

PRAXINOA.

My honey-joy !

My pretty dear ! 'tis not papa I mean.

GORG0.

Handsome papa ! the urchin, by the Queen,
 Knows every word you say.

PRAXINOA.

The other day —

For this in sooth of every thing we say —
The mighty man of inches went and brought me
Salt — which for nitre and ceruse he bought me.

GORGÓ.

And so my Diocleide — a brother wit,
A money-waster, lately thought it fit
To give seven goodly drachms for fleeces five —
Mere rottenness, but dog's hair, as I live,
The plucking of old scrips — a work to make.
But come, your cloak and gold-claspt kirtle take,
And let us speed to Ptolemy's rich hall,
To see the fine Adonian festival.
The queen will make the show most grand, I hear.

PRAXINOA.

All things most rich in rich men's halls appear.
To those who have not seen it, one can tell
What one has seen.

GORGÓ.

Tis time to go — tis well

For those who all the year have holidays.

PRAXINOA.

Eunoa! my cloak — you wanton! quickly raise,
 And place it near me — cats would softly sleep;
 And haste for water — how the jade does creep!
 The water first — now, did you ever see?
 She brings the cloak first: well, then, give it me.
 You wasteful slut, not too much — pour the water!
 What! have you wet my kirtle! sorrow's daughter?
 Stop, now: I'm washed—gods love me: where's the key
 Of the great chest? be quick, and bring it me.

GORGO.

The gold-claspt and full-skirted gown you wear
 Becomes you vastly. May I ask, my dear,
 How much in all it cost you from the loom?

PRAXINOA.

Don't mention it: I'm sure I did consume
 More than two minæ on it: and I held on
 The work with heart and soul.

GORGO.

But when done, well done!

PRAXINOA.

Truly — you're right. My parasol and cloak —
Arrange it nicely. Cry until you choke,
I will not take you, child; horse bites, you know—
Boo! Boo! no use to have you lame. Let's go.
Play with the little man, my Phrygian! call
The hound in; lock the street-door of the hall.

Gods, what a crowd: they swarm like ants, how ever
Shall we work though them with our best endeavour?
From when thy sire was numbered with the blest,
Many fine things, and this among the rest,
Hast thou done, Ptolemy! No villain walks
The street, and picks your pocket, as he talks
On some pretence with you, in Egypt's fashion:
As once complete in every style, mood, passion,
Resembling one another, rogues in grain,
Would mock and pilfer, and then — mock again.
What will become of us, dear Gorgo? see!
The king's war-horses! Pray, don't trample me,
Good sir! the bay-horse rears! how fierce a one!
Eunoa, stand from him: dog-heart! won't you run?
He'll kill his leader! what a thought of joy,
That safe at home remains my precious boy!

GORGO.

Courage ! they're as they were —and we behind them.

PRAXINOA.

I nearly lost my senses ; now I find them,
And am myself again. Two things I hold
In mortal dread — a horse and serpent cold,
And have done from a child. Let us keep moving ;
O ! what a crowd is on us, bustling, shoving.

GORGO.

(To an old woman.)

Good mother, from the palace ?

OLD WOMAN.

Yes, my dear.

GORGO.

Is it an easy thing to get in there ?

OLD WOMAN.

Th' Achæans got to Troy, there's no denying ;
All things are done, as they did that — by trying.

GORGÓ.

The old dame spoke oracles.

PRAXINOA.

Our sex, as you know,
Know all things — e'en how Zeus espoused his Juno.

GORGÓ.

Praxinoa! what a crowd about the gates!

PRAXINOA.

Immense! your hand; and, Eunoa, hold your mate's ;
Do you keep close, I say, to Eutythis,
And close to us, for fear the way you miss.
Let us, together all, the entrance gain :
Ah me! my summer-cloak is rent in twain.
Pray, spare my cloak, heaven bless you, gentleman!

STRANGER.

'Tis not with me — I will do what I can.

PRAXINOA.

The crowd, like pigs, are thrusting.

STRANGER.

Cheer thy heart,
'Tis well with us.

PRAXINOA.

And for your friendly part,
This year and ever be it well with you !
A kind and tender man as e'er I knew.
See ! how our Eunoa is prest — push thro'—
Well done ! all in — as the gay bridegroom cried,
And turned the key upon himself and bride.

GORGO.

What rich, rare tapestry ! Look, and you'll swear
The fingers of the goddesses were here.

PRAXINOA.

August Athene ! who such work could do ?
Who spun the tissue, who the figures drew ?
How life-like are they, and they seem to move !
True living shapes they are, and not inwove !
How wise is man ! and there he lies outspread
In all his beauty on his silver bed,

Thrice-loved Adonis ! in his youth's fresh glow,
Loved even where the rueful stream doth flow.

A STRANGER.

Cease ye like turtles idly thus to babble :
They'll torture all of us with brogue and gabble.

GORGO.

Who's you ? what's it to you our tongues we use ?
Rule your own roost, not dames of Syracuse.
And this too know we were in times foregone
Corinthians, sir, as was Bellerophon.
We speak the good old Greek of Pelop's isle :
Dorians, I guess, may Dorian talk the while.

PRAXINOA.

Nymph ! grant we be at none but one man's pleasure ;
A rush for you — don't wipe my empty measure.

GORGO.

Praxinoa, hush ! behold the Argive's daughter,
The girl who sings as tho' the Muses taught her,
That won the prize for singing Sperchis' ditty,
Prepares to chaunt Adonis ; something pretty

I'm sure she'll sing : with motion, voice, and eye,
She now preludes — how sweetly, gracefully !

SINGING GIRL.

Of Eryx, Golgos, and Idalia, Queen !
My mistress, sporting in thy golden sheen,
Bright Aphrodite ! as the month comes on
Of every year, from dureful Acheron
What an Adonis — from the gloomy shore
The tender-footed hours to thee restore !
Hours, slowest of the Blest ! yet ever dear,
That wished-for come, and still some blessing bear.
Cypris ! Dione's daughter ! thou thro' portal
Of death, 'tis said, hast mortal made immortal,
Sweet Berenice, dropping, ever blest !
Ambrosial dew into her lovely breast.
Wherefore her daughter, Helen-like in beauty,
Areinöe thy love repays with duty ;
For thine Adonis fairest show ordains,
Bright Queen, of many names and many fanes !
All seasonable fruits ; in silver cases
His gardens sweet ; and alabaster vases
Of Syrian perfumes near his couch are laid ;
Cakes, which with flowers and wheat the women made ;

The shapes of all that creep, or take the wing,
With oil or honey wrought, they hither bring ;
Here are green shades, with anise shaded more ;
And the young Loves him ever hover o'er,
As the young nightingales, from branch to branch,
Hover and try their wings, before they launch
Themselves in the broad Air. But, O ! the sight
Of gold and ebony ! of ivory white
Behold the pair of eagles ! up they move
With his cup-bearer for Saturnian Jove.
And see yon couch with softest purple spread,
Softer than sleep, the Samian born and bred
Will own, and e'en Miletus : that pavilion
Queen Cypris has — the nearer one her minion,
The rosy-armed Adonis ; whose youth bears
The bloom of eighteen, or of nineteen years ;
Nor pricks the kiss — the red lip of the boy ;
Having her spouse, let Cypris now enjoy.
Him will we, ere the dew of dawn is o'er,
Bear to the waves that foam upon the shore ;
Then with bare bosoms and dishevelled hair,
Begin to chaunt the wild and mournful air.
Of all the demigods, they say, but one
Duly revisits Earth and Acheron —

Thou, dear Adonis ! Agamemnon's might,
 Nor Aias, raging like one mad in fight ;
 Nor true Patroclus ; nor his mother's boast,
 Hector, of twenty sons famed, honoured most ;
 Nor Pyrrhus, victor from the Trojan siege —
 Not one of them enjoyed this privilege ;
 Nor the Deucalions ; nor Lapithæ ;
 Argive Pelasgi ; nor Pelopidæ.
 Now, dear Adonis, fill thyself with glee,
 And still returning, still propitious be.

GORGON.

Praxinoa, did ever mortal ear
 A sweeter song from sweeter minstrel hear ?
 O happy girl ! to know so many things —
 Thrice happy girl, that so divinely sings !
 But now 'tis time for home : let us be hasting ;
 My man's mere vinegar, and most when fasting :
 Nor has he broken yet his fast to-day ;
 When he's a-hungred, come not in his way.
 Farewell, beloved Adonis ! joy to see !
 When come, well come to those who welcome thee.

IDYL XVI.



THE GRACES.

ARGUMENT.

This piece was written in honour of Hiero, a prince illustrious for the moderation with which he governed, and for his military exploits. The poet inveighs against the avarice of the wealthy men of rank, who neither cultivated in themselves the qualities that deserve glory, nor showed any favour to the poets, by whom a worthy fame is best perpetuated. He then passes to a consideration of the admirable qualities of Hiero, and praises him for his munificence. He prays for the prosperity of Syracuse, and predicts that the fame of Hiero will be known in the remotest regions. At the end of the poem, he invokes the Graces to be ever with him, that he may conciliate the favour of men.



IDYL XVI.



THE GRACES.

Jove's daughters hymn the gods ; and bards rehearse
The deeds of worthies in their glowing verse.
The heaven-born Muses hymn the heavenly ring ;
Of mortals, then, let mortal poets sing.
Yet who—as many as there be that live
Under the grey dawn, will a welcome give
To our sweet Graces, or the door-latch lift,
Or will not send them off without a gift ?
Barefoot, with wrinkled brows, and mien deject,
They chide me for the way of chill neglect ;
Tho' loath, into their empty chest they drop,
And on cold knees their heavy heads they prop ;
And dry their seat is, when no good they earn,
But from a fruitless journey back return.

What living man the poet will repay
With generous love for his ennobling lay ?
I know not : men no longer, as before,
Would live for good deeds in poetic lore ;
But are o'ercome by detestable gain ;
Close-fisted, every one doth fast retain
His money, thinking how to make it grow,
Nor freely would the smallest mite bestow,
But says : " the knee is nearer than the shin ;
Some good be mine ! from gods bards honour win.
But who will hear another ? one will do —
Homer, best poet, and the cheapest too —
He costs me nothing." Fools ! what boots the gold
Hid within doors in heaps cannot be told ?
Not so the truly wise their wealth employ :
With some 'tis fit one's natural man to joy ;
Some to the bard should freely be assigned,
To kin —and many others of mankind.
The gods their offerings ; guests should have their dues,
Welcome to come and go whene'er they choose.
But most of all the generous mind prefers
The Muses' consecrate interpreters.
So may you live to fame, when life is done,
Nor mourn inglorious at cold Acheron,

Like one from birth to poverty betrayed,
Whose palms are horny from the painful spade.
To many a serf Antiochus the great,
To many king Aleuas in his state,
Measured the monthly dole. Much kine to see
Low'd at the full stalls of the Scopadæ.
Innumeros flocks to some cool green retreat
The shepherds drove, to screen them from the heat,
O'er Cranon's plain — choice flocks in choicest place,
The wealth of Creon's hospitable race.
No pleasure had been theirs these things about,
When once their sweet souls they had emptied out
Into the broad raft of drear Acheron ;
But they, sad with the thoughts of life foregone,
Had lain — their treasures left and memory hid —
Long ages lain the wretched dead amid,
Had not the glorious Ceian breathed the fire
Of his quick spirit to the stringed lyre,
And would not let them altogether die,
But made them famous to posterity :
And e'en their swift-foot steeds obtained renown,
Which in the sacred race-course won the crown.
Who would have known the noble Lycian pair —
The sons of Priam with their pomp of hair —

Or Cycnus, as a woman fair to ken,
Had no bard sung the wars of former men ?
Nor that Odysseus, who went wandering round,
Twice sixty moons, wherever man is found,
And, while alive, to farthest Hades sped,
And from the cavern of the Cyclops fled,
Had been aye famed ; the keeper of the swine,
Eumæus, and the man the herded kine
Had in his watchful care, Philœtius,
And e'en Laertes the magnanimous,
Had been in a perpetual silence pent,
But for that old Ionian eloquent.

The Muses best renown on men bestow :
The living waste the wealth of those below.
It were all one the waves to number o'er,
As many as wind and blue sea drive ashore,
Or wash with water from the spring's dark urn
The clay of unbaked brick, as try to turn
The money-lover from his wretched pelf—
But let us leave the miser to himself.
May countless pieces swell his silver store !
And let him ever have a wish for more !

But may I still prefer bright honour's meed,
And man's good will, to many a mule and steed !

I am in quest of one whose willing mind
I may, by favour of the Muses, find.
Without the Jove-born sisters, harsh and hard
Are all approaches found by every bard.
Not weary yet revolving heaven appears
Of bringing round the months and circling years.
The car shall yet be moved by many a steed ;
And me shall some one as a minstrel need ;
Than him more deeds heroic never wrought
Achilles, or stout Aias when they fought,
Where in his tomb the Phrygian Ilus lies,
On the broad plain of mournful Simoeis.
Who, where the sun sets, dwell — on Libya's heel,
The bold Phœnicians shuddering terror feel ;
For Syracuse against them takes the field,
Each with his ready spear and willow shield.
Amidst them arms heroic Hieron,
Equal to heroes of the times foregone ;
Floats o'er his helm, in wavy darkness loose,
His horse-hair crest — Athene ! mightiest Zeus !

And thou, who with thy mother reignest queen
O'er Ephyra the wealthy, where is seen
Lysimeleia's water, may the blow
Of harsh Necessity rebuke the foe,
And scatter them from our sweet island back
O'er the Sardonian ocean's yesty track ;
And out of many few return to tell
Their wives and children how the perished fell !
In the foe-ruined cities of the plain
Soon may their former dwellers live again,
And till the fruitful fields ! unnumbered sheep,
And fat bleat cheerily ! the cattle creep
Herded in safety to the wonted stalls,
Warning the traveller that evening falls !
For sowing-time be wrought the fallow lea,
When the cicada, sitting on his tree,
Watches the shepherds in the open day,
And blithely sings, perched on the topmost spray ;
Oe'r martial arms may spiders draw their train,
And of fierce war not e'en the name remain ;
And famous Hieron, illustrious be,
By poets hymned, beyond the Scythian sea,
Or where Semiramis her station chose,
And her huge walls, asphaltos-built, arose !

I am but one : but many others are
Dear to the Muses—may it be their care
To praise the warrior-king (as poets use),
And people, and Sicilian Arethuse !
Ye goddesses ! whose loving favours wait
On that Orchomenos, the Thebans' hate,
No where unbidden, but to court or hall,
Bidden, with you will I attend the call,
Through your dear presence confident to please,
Enchanting daughters of Eteocles !
What good, what fair can men without you see ?
O ! may I ever with the Graces be !



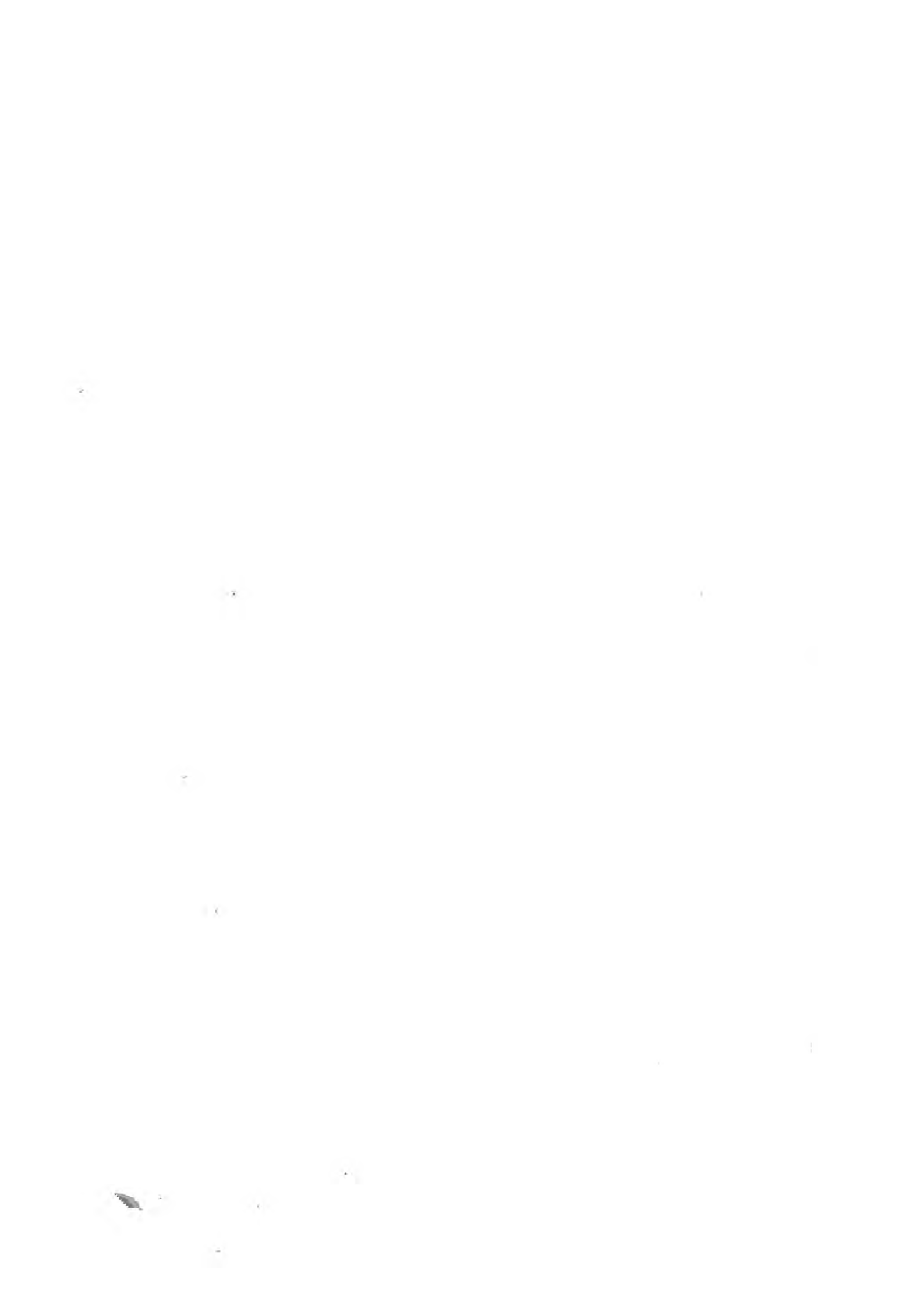
IDYL XVII.

PTOLEMY.

ARGUMENT.

In this encomiastic address to Ptolemy Philadelphus, the poet begins with the praise of his father the first Ptolemy, and of his mother Berenice, translated by Venus to her temple, and made her Assessor ; whence he passes to the happiness and excellence of Philadelphus himself, who was born with the most auspicious signs of being a favourite of Zeus. He speaks of his riches, amassed by means of an undisturbed peace, his munificence, and patriotic watchfulness to secure the well-being of his people, and of his piety to his parents and to the gods. He includes in his praise Arsinoe, the king's consort.

This idyl has been attributed by Warton and others to Callimachus, for no other reason than that it does not savour of the style of Theocritus. " Don Juan" and the " Hebrew Melodies," which are generally attributed to the same Lord Byron, by parity of reasoning, could not possibly have been written by the same person.



IDYL XVII.

PTOLEMY.

Muses ! begin and end the song with Zeus,
When of immortals we the chief extol :
Of men the name of Ptolemy produce
First, last, and midst—for he is chief of all.
For their exploits the seed heroical
Of demigods life-giving minstrels found :
I, skilled to sing, will Ptolemy install
Theme of my song—and glowing hymns redound
E'en to their praise, who dwell th' Olympian heights around.

In Ida's thick of wood, perplex'd with choice,
Which to begin with, the wood-cutter flings
His glance around : to what shall I give voice
First out of all the many blessed things,

With which the gods have graced the best of kings?
How great the son of Lagus from his birth!
Born for what deeds! what great imaginings
His mind conceived beyond the sons of earth!
Up to the gods by Zeus exalted for his worth!

In Jove's own house his golden couch is spread,
And by him sits his friend in royal pride,
Great Alexander, the portentous dread
Of Persians glittering with the turban pied:
And Hercules, the vast Centauricide,
Sits opposite on adamantine throne;
There with the gods he banquets gratified,
In his sons' sons rejoicing as his own,
Made free of age by Zeus, and as immortals known.

For from heroic Hercules the twain
Descended: therefore when he goes content
From the gods' banquet to his wife again,
Sated with nectar of a fragrant scent,
To one his quiver and his bow unbent
Ever he hands, and to that other blest
His iron-shotted club, with knobs besprent;
And so they marshal him unto his rest
In his ambrosial home, white-ankled Hebe's nest.

How excellent of dames was Berenice !
To her dear parents what a wealth of pleasure !
Dionis wiped her fingers on the spicy
Swell of her bosom. No man in such measure
E'er loved his wife, as Ptolemy's best leisure
Doted on her ; and she with him contended
In love—yea ! loved him more : his house and treasure
Thus to his sons he with full trust commended,
Since, loving, he the couch of loving wife ascended.

Some stranger draws the wanton's fancy flighty —
Her children many, like the father none !
Loveliest of goddesses ! bright Aphrodite !
Through thee, the way of wailful Acheron
Was ne'er by lovely Berenice gone :
Her, thy sweet care, from the Cyanean river,
And death's grim ferryman, the gloomy one !
Thou didst, soft-placing in thy fane, deliver,
And a conceded share of thine own honours give her.

Soft loves on mortal kind she breathes benign,
And makes his love-care light to every lover.
Thou, who in Argos didst with Tydeus twine,
Dark brows thy gentle eye-lids arching over,

Didst Diomede to light of day discover ;
To Peleus the full-bosomed Thetis bore
Achilles ; thee (for there the birth-pang drove her
The aid of Eileithuia to implore),
Bright Berenice brought forth on the Coan shore :

The Woman-helper stood benignant by,
Her limbs from pain composing, till she smiled
On thee new-born to warrior Ptolemy —
And like his father was the lovely child.
Exulting Cos, with jubilant rapture wild,
Fondled the babe, loud-hymning at the sight :—
“ Boy ! be thou blest ; for me be honours piled
On thy account, such as the Delian bright
Hung round the blue-crowned isle, on which he sprung
to light.

From thee to Triop's hill such honour follow,
And no less to the Dorians dwelling nigh,
As his Rhenæa had from King Apollo !”
Thus Cos : the bird of Zeus, up-poised on high,
Under the clouds, well-omened thrice did cry :
From king-protecting Zeus the sign was sent ;
But when from birth he marks a royalty,

That king surpassingly is excellent
For wealth, wide rule by sea and o'er much continent.

In many a region many a tribe doth till
The fields, made fruitful by the shower of Zeus :
None like low-lying Ægypt doth fulfil
Hope of increase, when Nile the clod doth loose,
O'er-bubbling the wet soil : no land doth use
So many workmen of all sorts, enrolled
In cities of such multitude profuse,
More than three myriads, as a single fold
Under the watchful sway of Ptolemy the bold.

Part of Phœnicia ; some Arabian lands ;
Some Syrian ; tribes of swart Æthiopes ;
All the Pamphylians, Lycians he commands,
And warlike Carians : o'er the Cyclades
His empire spreads ; his navies sweep the seas ;
Ocean and rivers, earth within her bounds
Obeys him : and a host of chivalries,
And shielded infantry with martial sounds
Of their far-glittering brass the warrior-king surrounds.

His wealth, that daily flows from every side,

The treasure of all other kings outweighs ;
His busy people's days in quiet glide :
The monster-breeding Nile no hostile blaze
Doth overpass, the war-shout there to raise.
Nor hath armed foeman from swift ship outleapt
To seize the kine Ægyptian pastures graze ;
For o'er the broad lands of that happy sept
The bright-haired Ptolemy strict ward hath ever kept.

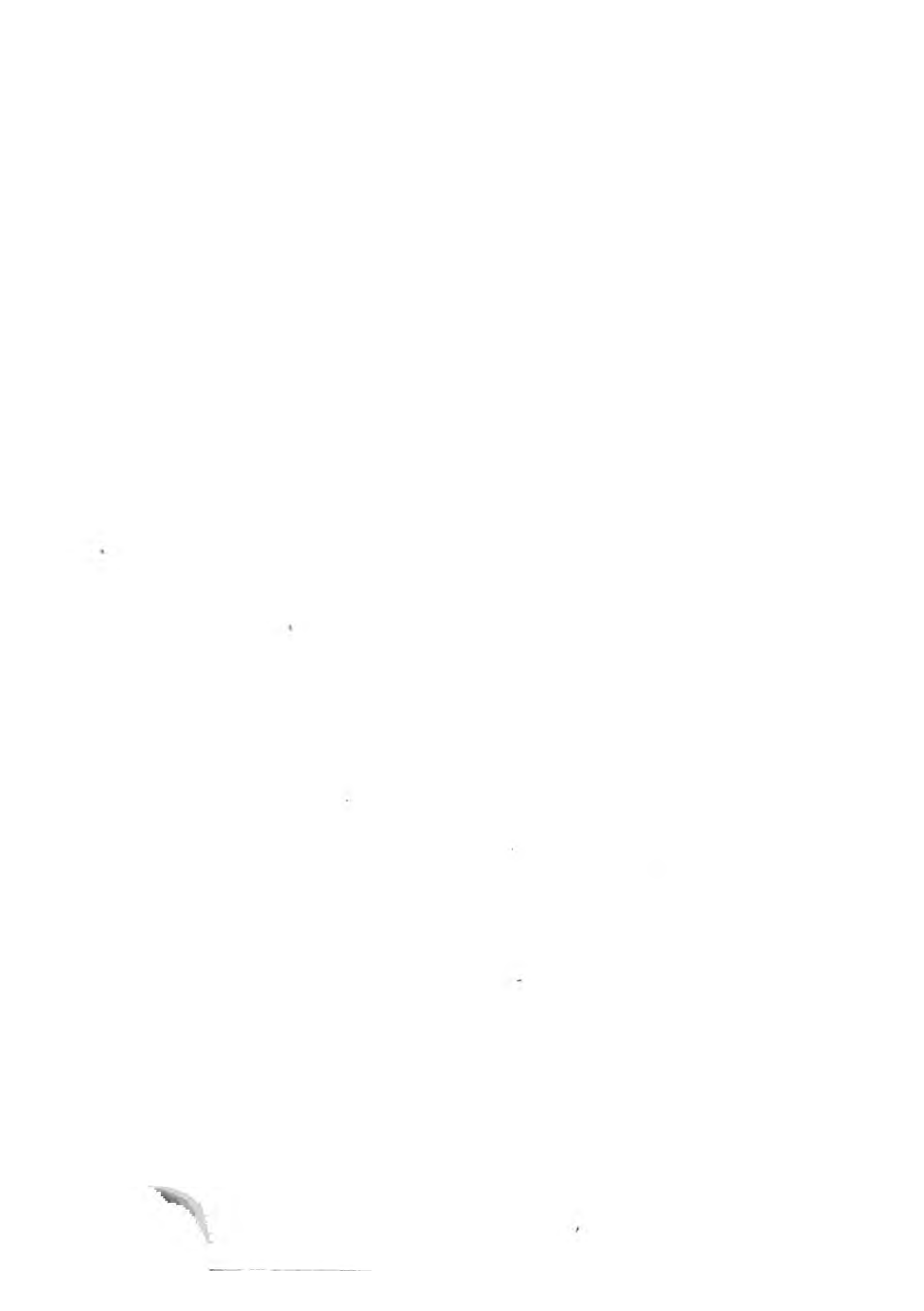
His whole inheritance he cares to keep,
As a good king : himself hath garnered more :
Nor useless in his house the golden heap,
Increased like that of ants ; for of his store
The gods have much, since them he doth adore
Ever with first-fruits, and his love commends
With other gifts ; his bounty ne'er is poor ;
To noble-minded princes much he sends,
And gives to cities much, and much to worthy friends.

None in the sacred games e'er took a part,
Skilled the melodious song to modulate,
Without a royal recompense of art :
Whence Ptolemy the muse-priests celebrate
For his munificence. What need more great

Than good renown can wealthy man befall ?
This meed doth on the dead Atridæ wait ;
Their infinite spoil from Priam's ravaged hall
In the thick gloom lies hid, from whence is no recall.

Only this prince hath in his fathers' ways
Exactly walked, and doth their stamp retain ;
Whence he to both his parents loved to raise
Temples, and placed their statues in each fane,
Of gold and ivory — never sought in vain
By prayer of mortals ; on their altars red
Fat thighs of oxen burn the royal twain,
Himself and consort — one more furnished
With love and excellence ne'er clasped her spouse in bed.

Such were the nuptials of the royal pair,
Whom Rhea bore, the royalties divine
Of blest Olympus : Iris spread with care,
Iris the virgin yet, whose fingers shine
With fragrant brightness, when they would recline
The marriage couch. Hail, Ptolemy ! to thee
And other demigods I will assign
Due praise. One word for after-men ; to me
It seems, whatever good there is, from Zeus must be.



IDYL XVIII.



EPITHALAMIUM.

ARGUMENT.

A chorus of Spartan virgins of the highest rank chaunt the spousal song before the bridal chamber of Menelaus and Helen. The bridegroom is congratulated for his extraordinary happiness in obtaining such a wife. The singular beauty and exquisite graces and accomplishments of Helen are commemorated ; and the song concludes with a prayer for the happiness of the bridal pair.

This exquisite poem has been adjudicated from Theocritus, because, forsooth, it differs from his general style ; as though the same poet could not possibly excel in different styles.



IDYL XVIII.

EPITHALAMIUM.

TWELVE Spartan virgins, the Laconian bloom,
Chaired before their Helen's bridal room,
New-hung with tapestry : entwined the fair
With hyacinths their hyacinthine hair ;
When Menelaus, Atreus' younger pride,
Locked in sweet Tyndaris, his lovely bride ;
To the same time with cadence true they beat
The rapid round of intertwinning feet ;
One measure tript, one song together sung—
Their hymenæan all the palace rung.

“ So early, bridegroom ! fix'd in slumber deep ?
So heavy-limbed, with such a love for sleep ?
Thyself, wine-heavy, on the bed hast thrown
For only rest ? thou shouldst have slept alone,

And with her mother left the girl to play
With only girls until the break of day.
She's thine from day to day, and year to year—
Thrice-happy bridegroom! on thy way 'tis clear
Good demon sneezed, that only thou shouldst gain
The prize so many princes would obtain,
Only of demigods, whose bosomed love
Her husband makes the son-in-law of Jove!
Jove's daughter, peerless beauty-bud of Greece,
Now lies with thee beneath one broidered fleece.
What offspring to thy hopes will she prefer—
Could her dear offspring but resemble her!
Where flows Eurotas in his pleasant place,
Thrice eighty virgins we pursued the race,
Like men, anointed with the glistening oil,
A bloom of maiden buds—love's blushing spoil:
Of equal years; but seen by Helen's side
Not one, in whom some blemish was not spied.
As rising Morn, oh, venerable Night!
Shows from thy bosom dark her face of light;
As the clear spring, when winter's gloom is gone,
So mid our throng the golden Helen shone.
As of a field or garden ornament,
The lofty cypress shoots up eminent;

As of the chariot the Thessalian steed,
So rosy Helen of the Spartan breed
Is ornament and grace. Like Helen none
Draws the fine thread around the spindle spun,
And in the ready basket piles so much ;
None interlaces with so quick a touch
The woof and warp ; for other never came
A web so perfect from the broidering frame.
Like Helen none the cithern knows to ring,
Of Artemis or tall Athene sing,
Like Helen, in whose liquid-shining eyes
Desire, the light of love, dissolving lies.
O fair and lovely girl ! a matron now—
Where meadow-flowers in dewy brightness grow,
We'll hie with early dawn, and fondly pull
Sweets to twine garlands for our beautiful ;
Remembering Helen with our fond regrets,
As for the absent ewe her suckling frets.
Of lotuses we'll hang thee many a wreath
Upon the shady plane, and drop beneath
Oil from the silver pyx ; and on the bark,
In Doric, shall be graved for all to mark,
“ To me pay honour—I am Helen's tree.”
Hail, bride ! high-wedded bridegroom, hail to thee !

Fruitful Latona fruit of marriage give ;
Cypris in bonds of mutual love to live ;
And Zeus the wealth that shall without an end
From high-born sire to high-born son descend !
Sleep, happy pair ! in love enjoy your rest,
Breathing desire into each other's breast.
But wake at dawn ; for we'll present us here
At the first call of crested chanticleer.
Hymen, O Hymenæan ! joyful spread
With love's contentment sweet this marriage-bed.

IDYL XIX.



THE HONEY-COMB STEALER.

As from a hive the thieving Eros drew
A honey-comb, a bee his finger stung ;
Then in his anguish on his hand he blew,
Stamped, jumped—and then to Cytherea sprung ;

Shewed her the wound, and cried : “ A thing how wee,
How great a wound makes with its little sting ! ”
His mother smiled : “ Art thou not like a bee,
Such great wounds making—such a little thing ? ”



IDYL XX.



EUNICA.

ARGUMENT.

The poet introduces a cowherd heavily complaining of the contempt with which a damsel of the city had repelled his addresses. He inveighs against her pride, and comforts himself with the reflection that her scorn proceeded not from his own unworthiness, or want of personal recommendations, but from his belonging to a class, some individuals of which had been beloved even by goddesses. He prays that, since she is so difficult to please, she may ever sleep alone.



IDYL XX.



EUNICA.

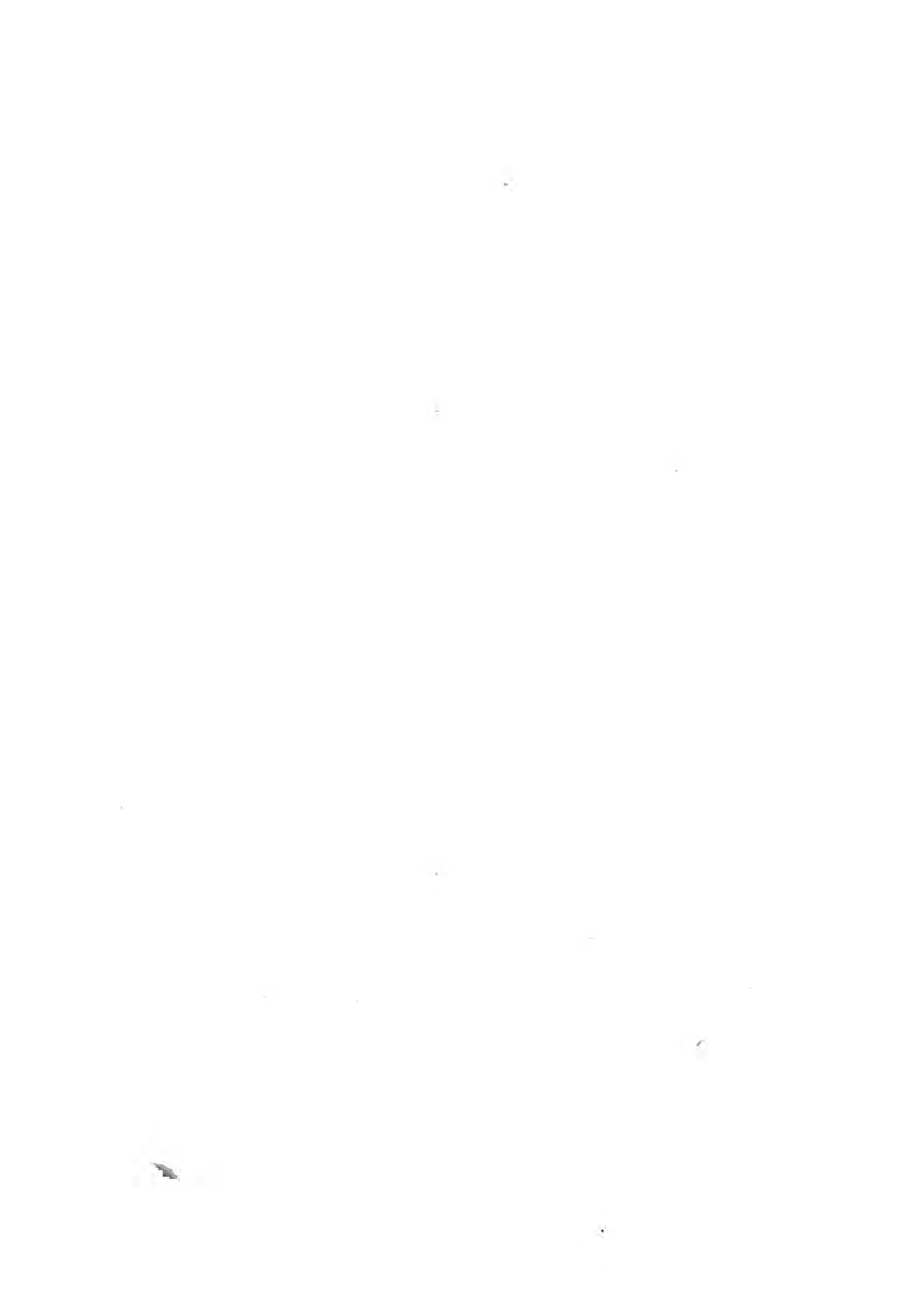
EUNICA, smiling with a bitter scoff,
When I would sweetly kiss her, bade me " off !
Fool cowherd ! would you kiss me ? not to kiss
Rude clowns, but city lips, I've learnt, I wis.
You never, man ! shall kiss my lovely mouth—
Not in a dream. You are—O how uncouth !
Your look offends me, and your speech provokes ;
Your play is horse-play ; vulgar-are your jokes.
How smooth in speech ! how delicate an air !
How soft your beard ! how odorous your hair !
Your lips are sickly ; and your hands are black,
And you smell rank : don't foul me ; back, clown, back !"

Thrice on her breast she spat, these hard words saying,
Me scornfully from head to foot surveying ;

Pouting and muttering proudly looked askant,
Before mine eyes did plume her form and flaunt,
And mocking smiled with lips drawn far apart.
My blood boiled fiercely from my grief of heart,
And red my cheeks from passionate anguish grew,
As vernal roses from the morning dew.
She left me then : but angry feelings glow
Within my heart, because she used me so.

Am I not handsome, shepherds ? tell me truly ;
Or has some god transformed my person newly ?
For as lush ivy clips the stem o' the tree,
The bloom of beauty lately covered me.
My curls, like parsley, round my temples clung ;
A shining forehead my dark brows o'erhung ;
Mine eyes were bluer than Athene's own ;
My mouth than new cheese sweeter ; every tone
Sweeter than honeycombs : and sweet I take
My song to be ; the sweetest sounds I wake
From all wind instruments, in very deed—
Straight pipe or transverse, flute or vocal reed.
The girls upon the hills me handsome call ;
They kiss me lovingly — they love me all.

But ah ! my city-madam never kist me ;
And for I am a cowherd she dismiss me.
That Dionysus in the valleys green
Once tended kine, she never heard, I ween ;
Nor knows that Cypris on a cowherd doted,
And on the Phrygian hills herself devoted
To tend his herd ; nor how the same Dionis
In thickets kist, in thickets wept Adonis.
Who was Endymion ? him tending kine
Stooped down to kiss Selena the divine,
Who from Olympus to the Latmian grove
Glided to slumber with her mortal love.
Didst thou not, Rhea, for a cowherd weep ?
And didst thou not, high Zeus ! the heaven sweep,
In form of winged bird, and watch indeed
To carry off the cowherd Ganymede ?
Only Eunica (daintier she must be
Than were Selena, Cypris, Cybele,)
Won't kiss a cowherd. May'st thou ne'er uncover
Thyself, self-worshipt Beauty ! to a lover
In town or country ; but, vain poppet ! ever
Sleep by thyself — despite thy best endeavour.



IDYL XXI.

THE FISHERMEN.

ARGUMENT.

This Idyl represents the conversation of two fishermen. The poet makes, by way of preface, some observations on poverty. He describes the fishermen's hut. One of them requests the other to interpret a dream for him. He dreamed that he had caught a golden fish, and that he had vowed he would no longer pursue the business of a fisherman. His golden vision has vanished, but he has a superstitious fear of breaking his oath. His companion exhorts him not to think himself bound by an oath, which was no more real than the golden vision that occasioned it. This is the only piscatory eclogue remaining from antiquity.



IDYL XXI.

THE FISHERMEN.

THE nurse of industry and arts is want ;
Care breaks the labourer's sleep, my Diophant !
And should sweet slumber o'er his eyelids creep,
Dark cares stand over him, and startle sleep.

Two fishers old lay in their wattled shed,
Close to the wicker on one sea-moss bed ;
Near them the tools wherewith they plied their craft,
The basket, rush-trap, line, and reedy shaft,
Weed-tangled baits, a drag-net with its drops,
Hooks, cord, two oars, an old boat fixt on props.
Their rush-mat, clothes, and caps, propt either head ;
These were their implements by which they fed,
And this was all their wealth. They were not richer
By so much as a pipkin or a pitcher.

All else seemed vanity : they could not mend
 Their poverty — which was their only friend.
 They had no neighbours ; but upon the shore
 The sea soft murmured at their cottage door.
 The chariot of the moon was midway only,
 When thoughts of toil awoke those fishers lonely :
 And shaking sleep off they began to sing.

ASPHALION.

The summer-nights are short, when Zeus the king
 Makes the days long, some say — and lie. This night
 I've seen a world of dreams, nor yet 'tis light.
 What's all this ? am I wrong ? or say I truly ?
 And can we have a long, long night in July ?

FRIEND.

Do you the summer blame ? The seasons change,
 Nor willingly transgress their wonted range.
 From care, that frightens sleep, much longer seems
 The weary night.

ASPHALION.

Can you interpret dreams ?
 I've seen a bright one, which I will declare,
 That you my visions, as my toil may share.

To whom should you in mother-wit defer?
And quick wit is best dream-interpreter.
We've leisure, and to spare: what can one do,
Lying awake on leaves, as I and you,
Without a lamp? they say the town-hall ever
Has burning lights — its booty fails it never.

FRIEND.

Well: let us have your vision of the night.

ASPHALION.

When yester-eve I slept, outwearied quite
With the sea-toil, not over-fed, for our
Commons, you know, were short at feeding hour,
I saw myself upon a rock, where I
Sat watching for the fish — so eagerly!
And from the reed the tripping bait did shake,
Till a fat fellow took it — no mistake:
('Twas natural-like that I should dream of fish,
As hounds of meat upon a greasy dish):
He hugged the hook, and then his blood did flow;
His plunges bent my reed like any bow;
I stretched both arms, and had a pretty bout,
To take with hook so weak a fish so stout.

I gently warned him of the wound he bore ;
“ Ha ! will you prick me ? you'll be pricked much more.”
But when he struggled not, I drew him in ;
The contest then I saw myself did win.
I landed him, a fish compact of gold !
But then a sudden fear my mind did hold,
Lest king Poseidon made it his delight,
Or it was Amphitrite's favourite.
I loosed him gently from the hook, for fear
It from his mouth some precious gold might tear,
And with my line I safely towed him home,
And swore that I on sea no more would roam,
But ever after would remain on land,
And there my gold, like any king, command.
At this I woke ; your wits, good friend, awaken,
For much I fear to break the oath I've taken.

FRIEND.

Fear not : you swore not, saw not with your eyes
The fish you saw ; for visions all are lies.
But now no longer slumber : up, awake !
And for a false a real vision take.
Hunt for the foodful fish that is, not seems,
For fear you starve amid your golden dreams.

IDYL XXII.

CASTOR AND POLLUX.

ARGUMENT.

This hymn is divided into two parts, in the first of which Pollux, and in the second Castor is celebrated. The pugilistic contest of Pollux with Amycus is described. When the good ship Argo arrived at the Bebrycian shores, Castor and Pollux went to a spring for water, and found Amycus there guarding it, like a giant in the romances. He allows no one to draw water without first doing battle with him. On this occasion poetical justice is duly observed, and Amycus is beaten within an inch of his life.

In the second part the battle of Castor with Lynceus is described. The daughters of Leucippus, already betrothed to the two brothers Lynceus and Idas, are carried off by Castor and Pollux. The injured brothers pursue the ravishers, and overtake them at the tomb of Aphareus. Lynceus first tries to persuade the Dioscuri to restore their captives; but failing in this attempt, he challenges Castor to decide the question of right by a trial of might in single combat with himself. Contrary to all justice, might is here right; Lynceus is slain by Castor, and his brother Idas is smitten with a thunderbolt by Zeus.



IDYL XXII.



CASTOR AND POLLUX.

'THE twins of Leda, child of Thestius,
Twice and again we celebrate in song,
The Spartan pair, stamped by Ægiochus,
Castor and Pollux, arming with the thong
His dreadful hands ; both merciful as strong,
Saviours of men on danger's extreme edge,
And steeds tost in the battle's bloody throng,
And star-defying ships on ruin's ledge,
Swept with their crews by blasts into the cruel dredge.

The winds, where'er they list, the huge wave drive,
Dashing from prow or stern into the hold ;
Both sides, sail, tackle, yard, and mast, they rive,
Snapping at random : from Night's sudden fold

Rushes a flood ; hither and thither rolled,
 Broad ocean's heaving volumes roar and hiss,
 Smitten by blasts and the hail-volley cold :
 The lost ship and her crew your task it is,
 Bright pair ! to rescue from the terrible abyss.

They think to die — but lo ! a sudden lull
 O' the winds ; the clouds disperse ; and the hush'd sheen
 Of the calmed ocean sparkles beautiful :
 The Bears, and Asses with the Stall between,
 Foreshow a voyage safe and skies serene.
 Blest Brothers ! who to mortals safety bring,
 Both harpers, minstrels, knights, and warriors keen :
 Since both I hymn, with which immortal king
 Shall I commence my song ? of Pollux first I'll sing.

The justling rocks, the dangerous Euxine's mouth,
 Snow-veiled, when Argo safely passed, and ended
 Her course at the Bebrycian shore, the youth
 Born of the gods from both her sides descended,
 And on the deep shore, from rude winds defended,
 Their couches spread ; and strook the seeds of fire
 From the pyreion. Forthwith unattended
 Did Pollux, of the red-brown hue, retire
 With Castor, whose renown for horsemanship was higher.

On a high hill a forest did appear :
The brothers found there a perennial spring,
Under a smooth rock, filled with water clear,
With pebbles paved, which from below did fling
A crystal sheen like silver glistening :
The poplar, plane, tall pine, and cypress, grew
Hard by : and odorous flowers did thither bring
Thick swarm of bees, their sweet toil to pursue,
As many as in the meads, when spring ends, bloom to view.

There lay at ease a bulky insolent,
Grim-looking : his ears by gauntlets scored and marred ;
His vast chest, like a ball, was prominent ;
His back was broad with flesh like iron hard,
Like anvil-wrought Colossus to regard ;
And under either shoulder thews were seen
On his strong arms, like round stones which, oft jarred
In the quick rush with many a bound between,
A winter torrent rolls down through the cleft ravine.

A lion's hide suspended by the feet
Hung from his neck and o'er his shoulders fell :
Him the prize-winner Pollux first did greet :
" Hail, stranger ! in these parts what people dwell ?"

“ The hail of utter stranger sounds not well,
 At least to me.” “ We’re not malevolent,
 Nor sons of such, take heart.” “ You need not tell
 Me that — I in myself am confident.”

“ You are a savage, quick to wrath and insolent.”

“ You see me as I am ; upon your land
 I do not walk.” “ Come thither, and return
 With hospitable gifts.” “ I’ve none at hand,
 Nor want I yours.” “ Pray, let me learn,
 Wilt let me drink from out this fountain urn ?”

“ You’ll know, if your thirst-hanging lips are dry.”

“ How may we coax you from your humour stern,
 With silver or what else ?” “ The combat try—”

“ How, pray, with gauntlets, foot to foot and eye to eye ?”

“ In pugilistic fight, nor spare your skill.”

“ Who is my gauntlet-armed antagonist ?”

“ At hand ! he’s here ; you see him if you will,

“ I, Amycus, the famous pugilist.”

“ And what the prize of the victorious fist ?”

“ The vanquished shall become the victor’s thrall.”

“ Red-crested cocks so fight, and so desist.”

“ Cock-like, or lion-like the combat call ;

This is the prize for which we fight, or none at all.”

Then on a conch he blew a mighty blast :
The long-haired Bebryces, hearing the sound,
Under the shady planes assembled fast ;
And likewise Castor, in the fight renowned,
Hastened and called his comrades to the ground
From the Magnesian ship. With gauntlets both
Armed their strong hands ; their wrists and arms
they bound
With the long thongs ; with one another wroth,
Each breathing blood and death, they stood up nothing
loth.

First each contended which should get the sun
Of his antagonist ; but much in sleight
That huge man, Pollux ! was by thee outdone ;
And Amycus was dazzled with the light ;
But raging rushed straight forward to the fight,
Aiming fierce blows ; but wary Pollux met him,
Striking the chin of his vast opposite,
Who fiercer battled, for the blow did fret him,
And leaning forward tried unto the ground to get him.

Shouted the Bebryces ; and, for they feared
The man like Tityus might their friend down-weigh

In the scant place, the heroes Pollux cheered :
But shifting here and there Jove's son made play,
And struck out right and left, but kept away
From the fierce rush of Neptune's son uncouth,
Who, drunk with blows, reeled in the hot affray,
Out-spitting purple blood ; the princely youth
Shouted, when they beheld his battered jaws and mouth.

His eyes were nearly closed from the contusion
Of his swoln face ; the prince amazed him more
With many feints, and seeing his confusion
Mid-front he struck a heavy blow and sore,
And to the bone his forehead gashing tore ;
Instant he fell, and at his length he lay
On the green leaves ; but fiercely as before,
On his uprising, they renewed the fray,
Aiming terrific blows, as with intent to slay.

But the Bebrycian champion strove to place
His blows upon the broad breast of his foe,
Who ceaselessly disfigured all his face :
His flesh with sweating shrunk, that he did shew,
From huge, but small ; but larger seemed to grow

The limbs of Pollux, and of fresher hue
The more he toiled ; Muse ! for tis thine to know,
And mine to give interpretation true,
Tell how the son of Zeus that mighty bulk o'erthrew.

Aiming at something great, the big Bebrycian
The left of Pollux with his left hand caught,
Obliquely leaning out from his position,
And from his flank his huge right hand he brought,
And had he hit him would have surely wrought
Pollux much damage ; but escape he found,
Stooping his head, and smote him, quick as thought,
On the left temple ; from the gaping wound
A bubbling gush of gore out-spurred on the ground.

Right on his mouth his left hand then he dashed ;
Rattled his teeth ; and with a quicker hail
Of blows he smote him, till his cheeks he smashed :
Stretched out he lay ; his senses all did fail,
Save that he owned the other did prevail
By holding up his hands : nor thou didst claim
The forfeit, Pollux, taking of him bail
Of a great oath in his own father's name,
Strangers to harm no more with word or deed of shame.

To Castor now belongs my votive strain,
 The brass-mailed, shake-spear knight. The twins of
 Zeus,
 It chanced, had carried off the daughters twain
 Of old Leucippus; wroth for which abuse,
 The two bold brothers, sons of Aphareus,
 Pursued the ravishers incontinent —
 Their plighted bridegrooms, Idas and Lynceus.
 They overtook them at the monument
 Of the dead Aphareus, as on their way they went.

With shields and spears all from their chariots leapt,
 And Lynceus through his helmet loudly spoke:
 “Why not let brides be by their bridegrooms kept?
 Why with your drawn swords, ready for the stroke,
 Do you so eagerly the fight provoke?
 To us their sire betrothed them, and did swear
 An oath thereto — which oath he only broke
 Persuaded by your gifts, (foul shame to hear
 In case of others’ brides,) kine, mules, and divers gear.

“Oft have I said, although no speechifier,
 Before you both; my friends! it is not right

Princes for wives those maidens should desire,
Whose bridegrooms wait them and the nuptial night :
Sparta, sweet Arcady with fleeces white,
Equestrian Elis, famous Argolis,
The Achæan towns, Messenia's ample site,
And all the shore-reach of rich Sisyphis,
Are all of great extent with choice of maids, I wis.

“ And you may pick and choose at will of these,
Who are in mind, form, feature, excellent ;
Good men for sons-in-law most fathers please,
And you 'mid heroes are pre-eminent,
On either side ennobled by descent.
Come, let our nuptials to their end proceed ;
We'll find brides for you to your heart's content :
The wind to wave swept off my useless rede ;
I might as well have preached unto the winds indeed.

“ You are ungentle in your wilful mood ;
Be now persuaded for your own behoof ;
Though we are cousins — if it seems you good
This strife to finish by the battle-proof,
Let Idas and brave Pollux stand aloof,

While Castor and myself, the younger, try
The battle ; thus to the parental roof
We shall not leave an utter misery —
One death is quite enough for one sad family.

“ Those who survive shall gladden all their friends,
(Bridegrooms, not corpses,) and these virgins wed :
Good is small ill that great contention ends.”
And Providence fulfilled the words he said.
That elder pair their arms deposited ;
But Lynceus shook, under his shield's broad rest,
His quivering lance, and Castor likewise sped
To meet him : to the conflict fierce they prest ;
On either martial head nodded the horse-hair crest.

First with their spears they aimed full many a blow,
Where'er an exposed part came into sight,
But ere they injured one another so,
The spear-heads broke in either broad shield pight :
Then from the sheaths they drew their swords outright,
And fiercely on the other either prest,
Nor paused a moment in the furious fight ;
And each at shield or helm their blows address,
But quick-eyed Lynceus maimed—only the purple crest.

At Castor's left knee then he fiercely strook,
Who, 'scaping, smote the threatning hand away ;
He, running, to his father's tomb betook
Himself, dropping the hand : there Idas lay
Watching the cousins ply the bloody fray ;
But eager Castor drove his thirsty sword
Through flank and navel ; out-gushed to the day
His bowels, where out-spread he lay begored ;
And down his eyelids dim the heavy sleep was poured.

Nor was it fated that his mother dear
Should see the other wed to her content ;
For Idas at that hapless sight did tear
A pillar from his father's monument,
To slay his brother's slayer ; but Zeus sent,
In aid of Castor, his devouring fire,
Made drop the marble, and himself up-brent.
So they did to none easy task aspire,
Who fought those mighty ones—the sons of mighty sire.

Hail, sons of Leda ! give my hymns renown :
To you and Helen, dear the minstrel's claim,
And dear to all who threw proud Ilion down.
The Chian minstrel, princes ! gave you fame,

Of Troy, th' Achæan ships that thither came,
The war, and the war's tower, Achilles brave,
Hymning the song : may mine be free from blame !
I give you what to me the muses gave ;
And gods prefer the song to all the gifts they have !

IDYL XXIII.



THE DESPAIRING LOVER.

ARGUMENT.

A youth, enamoured of a cruel one, having given himself up to despair, went and presented himself at the gate of his beloved, where, after uttering such expostulations and complaints as suited his melancholy case, he put himself out of fortune's power by hanging himself. The person he loved is represented as passing by his corse with indifference, and spitting on it in contempt and abhorrence ; but going to the bath is killed by the fall of a marble statue of the god of love.



IDYL XXIII.

THE DESPAIRING LOVER.

A YOUTH was love-sick for a maid unkind,
Whose form was blameless, but not so her mind.
She scorned her lover and his suit disdained ;
One gentle thought she never entertained.
She knew not Love—what sort of god, what darts
From what a bow he shoots at youthful hearts !
Her lips were strangers to soft gentleness,
And she was difficult of all access.
She had no word to soothe his scorching fire,
No sparkle of the lip ; no moist desire
To her bright eyes a dewy lustre lent ;
Blushed on her cheek no crimson of consent ;
She breathed no word of sighing born — no kiss
That lightens love, and turns its pain to bliss.

But as the wild game from his thicket spies
The train of hunters with suspicious eyes,
So she her lover ; ever did she turn
Toward him scornful lip, and eye-glance stern.
She was his fate : and on her glooming face,
The scorn that burned within her left its trace.
Her colour fled ; and every feature shewed
Pale from the rage that in her bosom glowed.
Yet even so she was — how fair to see !
The more she scorned him, still the more loved he.
At last by Cypris scorched without her cure,
He could no more the raging flame endure.
He went and kist her door, and tears he shed,
And 'midst his tears and kisses sadly said :—

“ Harsh, cruel girl ! stone-heart and pitiless !
The nurseling of some savage lioness,
Unworthy love ! my latest gift I bring,
This noose—no more will I thine anger sting.
But now I go where thou hast sentenced me—
The common road which all reports agree
Must at some time by all that live be gone,
And where love's cure is found—Oblivion.
Ah ! could I drink it all, I should not slake
My passionate longing : at thy gates I take

My last farewell, thereto commit indeed
My latest sigh. The future I can read —
The rose is beautiful, the rose of prime,
But soon it withers at the touch of time ;
And beautiful in spring-time to behold
The violet, but ah ! it soon grows old ;
White are the lilies, but they soon decay ;
White is the snow, but soon it melts away ;
And beautiful the bloom of virgin youth,
But lives a very little time in sooth.
Thy time will come — thou too at last shalt prove,
And weep most bitterly, the flames of love.
But grant, I pray thee, grant my latest prayer ;
When thou shalt see me hanging high in air,
E'en at thy door — O pass not heedless by !
But drop a few tears to my memory.
From the harsh thong unloose thy hapless lover,
And from thy limbs a garment take, and cover
The lifeless body, and the last kiss give ;
Fear not that haply I may come alive
At thy lip's touch — I cannot live again ;
Thy kiss, if given in love, were given in vain !
Hollow a mound to hide my love's sad end,
And thrice on leaving cry, ' here lie, my friend ! '

And, if thou wilt, by thee this word be said,
'Here lies my love, my beautiful is dead.'
And let this epitaph mine end recall,
Just at the last I scratch it on thy wall :
'Love slew him : stop and say, — who here is laid
Well but not wisely loved a cruel maid.'"
Then in the doorway for its cruel use
He set a stone ; he fitted next the noose ;
Put in his neck, and eagerly he sped,
Spurning the stone away — and swung there dead.
But when she saw the corpse her doorway kept,
She was not moved in spirit, nor she wept :
She felt no ruth, but, scornful to the last,
She spat upon the body, as she past ;
And careless went to bathe her and adorn,
Where stood a statue of the god, her scorn.
From the bath's marble edge whereon it stood,
The statue leapt and slew her : with her blood
The water was impurpled, and the sound
Of the girl's dying accent swam around : —
" Ah lovers ! she that scorned true love is slain ;
Love is revengeful : when loved, love again."

IDYL XXIV.



THE INFANT HERCULES.

ARGUMENT.

In this Idyl the first contest and victory of Hercules is described. While yet an infant he strangles two dragons sent by Hera to destroy him. Alcmena, alarmed at this prodigy, consults the famous seer, Tiresias, who informs her that Hercules is fated in his life-time to obtain the highest renown for extraordinary exploits, and after his death to be numbered among the gods. He desires her to have the dragons burned, and the house purified in the accustomed manner. The poem ends abruptly, and it is thought that the conclusion has been lost.



IDYL XXIV.

THE INFANT HERCULES.

ALCMENA having washed her twin delight,
Her Hercules, who then was ten months old,
And her Iphicles, younger by a night,
Gave them the breast, then laid them in the hold
Of a brass-shield won by Amphitryon bold —
The spoil of Pterelas in battle slain ;
And, touching either head, her blessing told :
“ Sleep, healthful sleep enjoy my blessed twain ;
Sleep happy ! happy wake at coming dawn again.”

And with these words she rocked the mighty shield,
And sleep came over them : in the midnight,
What time the Bear, watching Orion's field,
(Who then his shoulder shews uprising bright,)

To setting turns, vex'd Hera's wily spite,
With many threats of her revengeful ire,
To eat the infant Hercules outright,
Sent to the chamber-door two monsters dire,
Each bristling horribly with his dark-gleaming spire.

They their blood-gorging bellies on the ground
Uncoiling rolled ; their eyes shot baleful flame,
And evermore they spat their poison round ;
But when, quick brandishing with evil aim
Their forked tongues, they to the children came,
They both awoke : (what can escape Jove's eye ?)
Light in the chamber shone ; and who can blame
Or wonder that Iphicles did outcry,
Screaming, when he did their remorseless teeth espy ?

He kicked aside the woollen coverlet,
Struggling to flee ; but Hercules comprest,
Relaxing not the gripe his hand did get,
With a firm grasp the throat of either pest,
Where is their poison, which e'en gods detest.
The boy, that in the birth was long confined,
Who ne'er was known to cry, though at the breast
A suckling yet, they with their coils entwined :
Infolding him they strained their own release to find,

Till wearied in their spines they loosed their fold.
Alcmena heard the noise and woke in fear :—
“ Amphitryon, up ! for me strange fear doth hold—
Up ! up ! don't wait for sandals ; don't you hear
Iphicles screaming ? see ! the walls appear
Distinctly shining in the dead of night,
As though 'twere dawn. There is some danger near ;
I'm sure there is, dear man ! ” He then outright
Did leap from off the bed to hush his wife's affright.

And hastily his costly sword he sought ;
Suspended near his cedar-bed it hung ;
With one hand raised the sheath of lotus wrought,
While with the other he the belt unswung.
The room was filled with night again : he sprung,
And for his household, breathing slumber deep,
He loudly called ; his voice loud echoing rung :
“ Ho ! from the hearth bring lights ! quick ! do not
creep !
Fling wide the doors — awake ! this is no time for sleep.”

They hastened all with lights at his command ;
But when they saw (their eyes they well might doubt)
A serpent clutched in either tender hand
Of suckling Hercules, they gave a shout,

And clapped their hands : he instantly held out
The serpents to Amphitryon, and wild
With child-like exultation leaped about,
And laid them at his father's feet and smiled —
Laid down those monsters grim, in sleep of death now mild.

Alcmena to her fragrant bosom drew
Iphicles screaming and with fear half-dead ;
The lamb-wool coverlet Amphitryon threw
O'er Hercules and went again to bed.
The cocks, the third time crowing, heralded
The day-dawn : then Alcmena sent to call
Tiresias the seer, who truly said
Whate'er he said would be ; and told him all,
And bade him answer her what thing would thence befall :

“ Hide not, I pray, from reverence for me
If aught of ill the gods design : 'tis clear
What fate has spun for him no man can flee ;
But saying this I teach the wise, good seer ! ”
He answered : “ Woman ! privileged to bear
The noblest offspring, princess of the blood
Of Perseus, by my own sweet light I swear,
Which once was in these eyes, as name for good
Shall be remembered long Alcmena's womanhood.

“ The Achæan women, while they spin, I wis,
Alcmena’s name to latest eve shall sing ;
And famous shalt thou be in Argolis ;
For this thy son to star-paved heaven shall spring :
All that contend with the broad-breasted king,
Or man or beast, shall yield the victory.
Twelve labours wrought, him Destiny shall bring
To Jove’s own house, but all of him can die
On the Trachinian pyre shall perish utterly.

“ And he the son-in-law of her shall be,
Who sent these dragons to destroy the child ;
Then in his lair the sharp-toothed wolf shall see
The fawn, nor harm it, wonderfully mild.
In the hearth-ashes let there now be piled
All sorts of thorn, bramble, and prickly pear,
And dry, wind-shaken twigs of buck-thorn wild ;
And at the midnight burn these dragons here,
Since they to slay the child at midnight did appear.

“ A maid must cast these ashes with the wind
At morn from yon rock to the rushing tide,
Then hasten home and never look behind.
With sulphur let the house be purified ;

Pure water, mixed with salt, from side to side
Then from a full urn sprinkle on the floor :
For so the holy custom doth provide ;
And sacrifice to Zeus supreme a boar,
'That o'er your foes you may be victors evermore.'

Then, rising from the ivory chair, withdrew
Tiresias, and bent with years was he.
But Hercules with his fond mother grew,
As grows a young plant in a fruitful lea,
And still Amphitryon's boy was thought to be :
Linus, Apollo's son, heroic name !
Instructed him in letters carefully.
And Eurytus, who from rich parents came,
Taught him to bend the bow and take unerring aim

To move his fingers on the harp with ease,
And to the music minstrelsy to sing,
Him taught Eumolpus Philammonides :
And with what sleights the men of Argos fling
Each other, wrestling fiercely in the ring,
And every sort of pugilistic sleight,
Him taught the son of the Cyllenian king,
Harpalicus, whose dreadful brow did fright
Men from afar, that few would dare with him to fight.

To drive the chariot, and impel, control
The rapid-bounding steeds, and how to shun
Dashing his axle-nave against the goal,
He was instructed by Amphitryon,
Who willingly did teach his hopeful son :
In Argos oft, whose praises are far-spoken
For generous steeds, himself had prizes won ;
And of his skill there was this certain token,
Tho' time had marred the reins his chariot was unbroken.

In stationary fight to aim the lance,
Shielding himself; to bide swords flashing round ;
To draw his battle out, and bid advance
The cavalry ; to scan the foeman's ground,
While to the charge the troops impetuous bound,—
He learned from Castor, who, till he was old,
Of demigods was warrior most renowned,
Exiled from Argos then, which Tydeus bold
With all the vine-land broad did from Adrastus hold,

Alcmena thus had taught her Hercules.
His sleeping-place was near his father's bed ;
And, what did most of all his fancy please,
For the bold boy a lion's hide was spread.

His morning meal, roast meat and Dorian bread —
No ploughman would a larger loaf desire ;
His evening meal (the day already sped),
Was very light, nor such as needed fire.
He always wore, bare to his knees, a plain attire.

IDYL XXV.



HERCULES, THE LION-SLAYER.

ARGUMENT.

Hercules, in quest of Augeias, falls in with one of the dependants of that personage. He is amazed at the sight of his herds, having no notion that even ten kings together possessed such wealth. He accompanies Augeias and his son while they inspect the stalls and the business going on there. In the morning he accompanies Phyleus to the city, and communicates to him, on the road, the particulars of his adventure with the Nemean lion, whose hide is hanging from his shoulders. The beginning, and some think the conclusion also, of this Idyl is wanting in the original.



IDYL XXV.

HERCULES, THE LION-SLAYER.

WHEN to perform his fated lord's behest,
Amphitryon's son, with toils and perils tried,
Hero with the prodigious breadth of breast,—
In his right hand his club, the lion's hide
Hung from his shoulders by the fore feet tied,—
To the rich vale of fruitful Elis came,
Where the sweet waters of Alphæus glide,
Seeing herds, flocks, and pastures, none might claim,
But only wealthiest lord, some prince well known to fame,

He asked a countryman, whose watchful care
O'erlooked the grounds (his task was his delight),
“ Good friend ! wilt tell a traveller, whose are
These herds, and flocks, and pastures infinite ?

He is, I well may guess, the favourite
Of the Olympian gods. Here should abide
Those I am come to seek." The man, at sight
And claim of stranger, quickly laid aside
The work he had in hand, and courteously replied :

" What thou dost ask I willingly will tell,
Good stranger ! for I fear the heavy wrath
Of Hermes, the way-god ; of all who dwell
Above us, most is he provoked, when scath
Or scorn is done to him who asks his path.
Not in one pasture all the flocks appear,
Nor in one region, King Augeias hath :
Some pasture where Elisson glides ; some, where
Alphæus ; at vine-clad Buprasion some ; some, here :

" And every flock has its particular fold.
Their pasture never fails his numerous kine
In the green lowlands that receiving hold
The gush of Peneus, and the dew divine :
As in the genial moisture they recline,
The meads throw up soft herbage, which supplies
The strength of the horned kind. Beyond the shine
Of the far-gliding river — turn your eyes
A little to the left — their stalled inclosure lies ;

“ Yonder, where the perennial planes elate
Stand lordly, and the green wild-olives grow,—
A grove to King Apollo dedicate,
The pastoral god, most perfect god we know.
Hard by, our dwellings in a lengthened row ;
Our labour an immense revenue yields
To our good lord, as often as we sow,
When thrice or four times ploughed, the fallow fields :
Each of his husbandmen the spade or hoe that wields,

“ Earthing the vine-roots, or at vintage-tide
Toils at the wine-press, knows where the domain
Of rich Augeias ends on every side.
For his is all the far-extended plain,
Orchards thick-set with trees, and fields with grain,
E'en to the fount-full hill-tops far away ;
All which we work at (as behoves the swain,
Whose life is spent a-field) through all the day.
Why thou art come — to tell may be thy profit — say.

“ Dost seek Augeias, or some one of those
Who serve him? I will give an answer clear,
And to the point, as one that fully knows.
Not mean art thou, nor of mean sires, I'd swear,

So grand thy form. The sons of gods appear
 Such among men." To him Jove's son replied :
 " In truth, old man ! for that did bring me here,
 Augeias I would see : if it betide
 Th' Epeän chief doth in the city now abide,

" And, caring for the folk, as judge fulfils
 True judgment ; bid his trusty steward me speed,
 With whom as guide I may converse. God wills
 That mortal men should one another need."
 To him the husbandman : " It seems, indeed,
 Thy way was heaven-appointed : in thine aim,
 E'en to thy wish, thou dost at once succeed ;
 For yesterday Augeias hither came,
 With his illustrious son, Phyleüs hight by name.

" After long time, his rural wealth to see,
 He came : to this e'en princes are not blind,
 The master there, his house will safer be.
 But let us to the stall ; there shall we find
 Augeias." Led the way that old man kind :
 Seeing the great hand-filling club, and spoil
 Of the wild beast, he puzzled much his mind,
 Who he could be, come from what natal soil ;
 And with desire to ask him this did inward boil,

But caught the word just to his lips proceeding,
For fear he might with question indiscreet,
Or out of place, annoy the stranger speeding :
'Tis a hard thing another's thought to weet.
The hounds both ways, by scent and fall of feet,
Perceived them from afar. At Hercules
They flew, loud barking at him, but did greet
The old man, whining gently as you please,
And round him wagged their tails, and fawnig licked
his knees.

But he with stones — to lift them was enough —
Scared back the hounds, their barking did restrain,
And scolded them ; but, though his voice was rough,
His heart was glad they did such guard maintain,
When he was absent. Then he spoke again :
“ Gods ! what an animal ! what faithful suit
He does to man ! if he where to abstain,
Where rage, but knew, none other might dispute
With him in excellence ; but 'tis too fierce a brute.”

And soon they reached the stall. The sun his steeds
Turned to the west, bringing the close of day.
The herds and flocks, returning from the meads,

Came to the stables where they nightly lay.
The kine in long succession trod the way,
Innumerable ; as watery clouds on high,
By south or west wind driven in dense array,
One on another press, and forward fly,
Numberless, without end, along the thickened sky ;

So many upon so many impels the wind ;
Others on others drive their crests to twine :
So many herds so many pressed behind ;
The plain, the ways, were filled in breadth and line ;
The fields were straitened with the lowing kine.
The sheep were folded soon ; the cattle, too,
That inward, as they walk, their knees incline,
Were all installed, a multitude to view :
No man stood idle by for want of work to do.

Some to the kine their wooden shoes applied,
And bound with thongs ; while some in station near
To milk them took their proper place beside :
One to the dams let go their younglings dear,
Mad for the warm milk ; while another there
The milk-pail held, the curds to cheese one turned :
Meanwhile Augeias went by every where,

And with his own eyes for himself he learned
What revenue for him his cattle-keepers earned.

With him his son and mighty Hercules
Through his exceeding show of riches went.
And though his mind Amphitryonides
Was wont to keep on balance and unbent,
At sight thereof he was in wonderment :
Had he not seen it, he'd have thought it fable
That any one, however eminent
For wealth, or any ten, in fold, stall, stable,
The richest of all kings, to show such wealth were able.

Hyperion gave unto his son most dear,
That he should all in flocks and herds excel.
His care increased them more from year to year ;
For on his herds no sort of ailment fell,
Such as destroys the cattle : his grew well,
In pith improving still. None cast their young,
Which almost all were female. He could tell
Three hundred white-skinned bulls his kine among,
And eke two hundred red, that to their pastime sprung.

Twelve swan-white bulls were sacred to the sun,
All inknee'd bulls excelling ; these apart

Cropped the green pasture, and were never done
Exulting ; when from thicket shag did dart
Wild beasts, among the herds to play their part,
These twelve first rushed, death-looking, to the war,
Roaring most terribly. In pride of heart
And strength great Phaethon (men to a star
Did liken him) was first, mid many seen afar.

When this bull saw the tawny lion's hide,
He rushed on watchful Hercules, intent
To plunge his armed forehead in his side :
But then the hero grasped incontinent
The bull's left horn, and to the ground back-bent
His heavy neck ; then backward pressed his might.
The bull, more struggling as more backward sent,
At last stood, stretching every nerve, upright.
The king, and prince, and swains, all marvelled at the
sight.

But to the city, on the following day,
Bold Hercules and prince Phyleüs sped.
At first their path through a thick vineyard lay,
Narrow, and 'mid the green, through which it led,
Half-hid. This past, Phyleüs turned his head

O'er his right shoulder, soon as they did reach
The public road, and to the hero said,
Who walked behind him. " Friend, I did impeach
Myself as having lost, concerning thee, some speech

I long since heard : now I remember me,
A young Achæan hither on a day
From Argos came, from sea-shore Helice,
Who, many Epeans present, then did say
He saw an Argive man a monster slay,
A lion, dread of all the country round,
Whose lair in grove of Zeus the Nemean lay :
I am not sure if on Tirynthian ground,
Or else in Argos born, or in Mycenian bound ;

But said, if I remember rightly now,
The hero sprung from Perseus : I confess
Methinks none other Argive man but thou
Dared that adventure : yea ! that piece of dress,
The lion's hide avows that hardiness.
Then, hero, first of all explain to me,
That I may know if right or wrong my guess,
Whether thou art in truth that very he,
Whose deed was told us by the man of Helice.

Next, tell how thou didst slay the dreadful beast,
And how his way to Nemean haunt he found :
One, if he searched in Apian land at least,
Such monster could not find, though bears abound,
Boars and destructive wolves, the country round :
Wherefore all marvelled at the man's recital,
And thought the traveller, with idle sound
Of his invented wonders, in requital
Of hospitable rites, was striving to delight all."

Then from the mid-path to the road-side near
Phyleüs kept, that both abreast might find
Sufficient room, and he might better hear
What Hercules should say, who still behind
To him replied : " Not from the truth declined,
But with just balance thou hast judged it well ;
Since thou would's't hear, I with a willing mind
Will tell, Phyleüs, how the monster fell,
But whence he came nor I, nor Argive else can tell.

Only we think that some Immortal sent,
For holy rites profaned or left undone,
That ill on the Phoronians ; forth he went,
And the Piseäns, like a flood, o'errun :

The Bembinæans least of all could shun
His fateful wrath; they, nearest, fared the worst:
To slay that terrible redoubted one
Was task enjoined me by Eurystheus erst;
His wish I undertook, of my set toils the first.

My flexile bow I took, and quiver full
Of arrows, and my club, the bark still on,
The stem of a wild olive I did pull
Up by the roots, when thither I was gone,
Under the brow of holy Helicon.
But when I came to the huge lion's lair,
I to the tip the string did straightway don,
And fix'd one of the arrows which I bare:
To see, ere I was seen, I looked around with care.

It was the mid-day, and not yet I found
His traces: nor could hear his mighty roar.
I saw no herdsman, ploughman on the ground,
To point me where I should his haunt explore:
Green fear kept every man within his door.
Nor till I saw him and his vigour tried,
Ceased I to search the sylvan mountain o'er;
And ere came on the cool of eventide,
Back to his cavern, gorged with flesh and blood he hied.

His dew-lap, savage face, and mane, were gory ;
He licked his beard, while I, yet unespied,
Lurked in a thicket of the promontory ;
But as he nearer came, at his left side
I shot an arrow, but it did not glide,
Though sharp, into his flesh, but with rebound
Fell on the grass. The thick he closely eyed,
His bloody head up-lifting from the ground,
And ghastly grinned, showing his teeth's terrific round.

Then on the string another shaft I placed,
And shot — vext that the former idly flew :
Mid-breast I hit him, where the lungs are placed :
His hide the sharp, sharp arrow pierced not through,
But at his feet fell ineffectual too :
Again a third I was in act to shoot,
Enraged to think in vain my bow I drew,
When I was seen by the blood-thirsty brute,
Who to the battle-thought his angry signs did suit.

With his long tail he lashed himself ; and all
His neck was filled with wrath : the fiery glow
Of his vext mane up-bristled ; in a ball
He gathered up himself, till like a bow

His spine was arched : as when one, who doth know
Chariots to build, excelling in his art,
Having first heated in a fire-heat slow
Bends for his wheel a fig-branch ; with a start
The fissile wild-fig flies far from his hands apart.

Collected for the spring, and mad to rend me,
So leapt the lion from afar : I strove
With skin-cloak, bow and quiver to defend me
With one hand ; with the other I up-hove
My weighty club, and on his temple drove,
But broke in pieces the rough olive wood
On his hard shaggy head : he from above
Fell ere he reached me, by the stroke subdued,
And nodding with his head on trembling feet he stood.

Darkness came over both his eyes : his brain
Was skaken in the bone ; but when I spied
The monster stunned and reeling from his pain,
I cast my quiver and my bow aside,
And to his neck my throttling hands applied,
Before he could recover. I did bear me
With vigour in the death-clutch, and astride

His body from behind from scath did clear me,
So that he could not or with jaw or talons tear me.

His hind feet with my heels I pressed aground ;
Of his pernicious throat my hands took care ;
His sides were for my thighs a safe-guard found
From his fore-feet : till breathless high in air
I lifted him new sped to hell's dark lair.
Then many projects did my thoughts divide,
How best I might the monster's carcass bare,
And from his dead limbs strip the shaggy hide :
Hard task it was indeed, and much my patience tried.

I tried and failed with iron, wood, and flint ;
For none of these his skin could penetrate ;
Then some immortal gave to me a hint
With his own talons I might separate
The carcass and the hide : success did wait
The trial of this thought ; he soon was flayed.
I wear his hide, that serves me to rebate
Sharp-cutting war. The Nemean beast was laid
Thus low, which had of men and flocks much havoc made.

IDYL XXVI.



THE BACCHÆ.

ARGUMENT.

Pentheus, who was an unbeliever in the divinity of Dionysus, from curiosity became a spectator of the orgies of the women who were possessed with frenzy by the influence of that god. The women, and among them his own mother and aunts, on discovering hunted him as huntsmen the hare, and mercilessly tore him in pieces. This is the subject of one of the finest plays of Euripides.



IDYL XXVI.



THE BACCHÆ.

THREE troops three sisters to the mountain led ;
Agavé with her cheeks that blossomed red
The bloom of apple ; and in wildest mood
Autonöa and Ino. From the wood
They stript oak-leaves and ivy green as well,
And from the ground the lowly asphodel ;
In a pure lawn with these twelve altars placed ;
Nine Dionysus, three his mother graced ;
Then from the chest the sacred symbols moved,
And, as their god had taught them and approved,
Upon the leafy altars reverent laid.
Hid in a native mastic's sheltering shade,
Them from a steep rock Pentheus then surveyed.

Him perched aloft Autonöa first discerned,
And dreadful shrieked, and spurning overturned
The sacred orgies of the frenzied one,
Which none profane may ever look upon.
She maddened, maddened all : scared Pentheus fled.
And they, with robes drawn up, pursued : He said :
“What want ye, dames ?” Autonöa then : “Thou, fellow !
Shalt know, not hear”—and mightily did bellow,
Loud as a lioness her brood defending ;
His mother clutched his head, whilst Ino rending
Tore off his shoulder, trod and trampled o'er him ;
Autonöa likewise : limb from limb they tore him.
Then all returned to Thebes ; defiled with gore,
They of their Pentheus only fragments bore,
Their after grief. This troubles not my mind :
Nor let another, impotent and blind,
Name Dionysus as hereby defiled,—
Nor though he harsher used some curious child.
May I my life to holy courses give,
Dear to the holy who reproachless live !
This omen, sent from ægis-bearing Jove,
Shows what he hates, and what his thoughts approve ;
Blest are the children of the godly—ever ;
Blest are the children of the godless—never.

Hail, Blessed! whom Jove's thigh enclosed for us,
Till thou wert born on snowy Dracanus.

Hail, Semele! Cadmean sisters, hail!

Whose names in songs of heroines prevail.

By Dionysus this (no deed of shame)

Possest ye did. The gods let no man blame.



IDYL XXVII.

DAPHNIS AND CHLOE.

CHLOE.

A COWHERD with chaste Helen ran away.

DAPHNIS.

This Helen here was kist by one to-day.

CHLOE.

Boast not : they say there's nothing in a kiss.

DAPHNIS.

But in mere kissing is some touch of bliss.

CHLOE.

I wipe my mouth —and off thy kiss is ta'en.

DAPHNIS.

Wipe you your mouth ? then let me kiss again.

CHLOE.

Calves, not a maid, to kiss doth you beseem

DAPHNIS.

Boast not : thy youth is flying like a dream.

CHLOE.

Ripe grapes are raisins, and dry roses sweet.

DAPHNIS.

Come to yon olives : I would fain repeat —

CHLOE.

I will not : you deceived me once indeed.

DAPHNIS.

Come to yon elms, and hear me play my reed.

CHLOE.

Play to yourself : naught wretched pleases me.

DAPHNIS.

Take heed : the Paphian will be wroth with thee.

CHLOE.

A fig for her, if Artemis be kind.

DAPHNIS.

Hush ! lest she smite you and for ever bind.

CHLOE.

Not me — my guard is Artemis the wise.

DAPHNIS.

Canst thou fly Love — none other virgin flies ?

CHLOE.

By Pan I fly him : he doth ever drive you.

DAPHNIS.

I fear that Love to some worse man may give you.

CHLOE.

Many have woo'd me, but have pleased me — none.

DAPHNIS.

And I am come — of many wooers one.

CHLOE.

What can I do? marriage brings only care.

DAPHNIS.

Not pain, nor grief, but joys which sweetest are.

CHLOE.

They say that women fear their wedded dears.

DAPHNIS.

They rule them rather: show me one that fears.

CHLOE.

Lucina's bolt—the child-bed pang I dread.

DAPHNIS.

Thy sovran, Artemis, puts wives to bed.

CHLOE.

Child-bearing will my fine complexion blight.

DAPHNIS.

Thy children will become thy bloom and light.

CHLOE.

If I consent, what spouse-gifts shall be mine ?

DAPHNIS.

My pastures, groves, and herd, shall all be thine.

CHLOE.

Swear, when 'tis done, thou never wilt forsake me.

DAPHNIS.

By Pan ! not even shouldst thou try to make me.

CHLOE.

Chamber and hall will you for me provide ?

DAPHNIS.

Chamber and hall, and fleeces fine beside.

CHLOE.

What ? what shall I my aged father tell ?

DAPHNIS.

Hearing my name, he'll like thy marriage well.

CHLOE.

Repeat it : oft a name sweet influence has.

DAPHNIS.

Daphnis, Nomæa's son by Lycidas.

CHLOE.

A good descent, but than mine own not higher.

DAPHNIS.

I know it well— Menalcas is thy sire.

CHLOE.

Show me thy grove, where stands thy wealthy stall.

DAPHNIS.

See where for me flowers many a cypress tall.

CHLOE.

Feed, goats ! while I my lover's wealth inspect.

DAPHNIS.

Feed, bulls ! while I the virgin's way direct.

CHLOE.

Hands off! what business have they in my dress!

DAPHNIS.

First these love-apples will I gently press.

CHLOE.

By Pan! I shudder — take your hand away.

DAPHNIS.

Dear little trembler! your alarm allay.

CHLOE.

The ditch is dirty: would you throw me down?

DAPHNIS.

I spread a soft white fleece beneath your gown.

CHLOE.

Why do you loose my zone? what do you mean?

DAPHNIS.

This first I offer to the Paphian queen.

CHLOE.

Some one will see us : hist ! I hear a sound.

DAPHNIS.

The cypresses thy marriage whisper round.

CHLOE.

My dress is spoiled : ah me ! what shall I do ?

DAPHNIS.

I'll give thee, love, a better one and new.

CHLOE.

Perhaps e'en salt you will not give to me.

DAPHNIS.

Would I could give my very soul to thee !

CHLOE.

Pardon, Queen Artemis ! my broken vow.

DAPHNIS.

Eros a calf, Cypris shall have a cow.

CHLOE.

I go a woman, who a virgin came.

DAPHNIS.

For virgin thine a wife's and mother's name.

Thus whispered they, their youthful prime enjoying,
With their fresh limbs in furtive marriage toying.
She rose and to her flock went, seeming sad,
Blushing and shamefaced, but at heart was glad ;
And to his herd the happy Daphnis sped,
Rejoicing greatly in his marriage-bed.

IDYL XXVIII.

THE DISTAFF.

DISTAFF ! quick implement of busy thrift,
Which housewives ply, blue-eyed Athene's gift !
We go to rich Miletus, where is seen
The fane of Cypris 'mid the rushes green :
Praying to mighty Zeus for voyage fair,
Thither to Nicias would I now repair,
Delighting and delighted by my host,
Whom the sweet-speaking Graces love the most
Of all their favourites ; thee, distaff bright !
Of ivory wrought with art most exquisite,
A present for his lovely wife I take.
With her thou many various works shalt make ;
Garments for men, and such as women wear
Of silk, whose colour is the sea-blue clear.

And she so diligent a housewife is,
That ever for well-ankled Theugenis
Thrice in a year are shorn the willing sheep
Of the fine fleeces which for her they keep.
She loves what love right-minded women all ;
For never should a thriftless prodigal
Own thee with my consent : 'twere shame and pity !
Since thou art of that most renowned city,
Built by Corinthian Archias erewhile,
The marrow of the whole Sicilian isle.
But in the house of that physician wise,
Instructed how by wholesome remedies
From human kind diseases to repel,
Thou shalt in future with Ionians dwell,
In beautiful Miletus ; that the fame
For the best distaff Theugenis may claim,
And thou may'st ever to her mind suggest
The memory of her song-loving guest.
The worth of offering from friend we prize
Not in the gift but in the giver lies.

IDYL XXIX.



THE CAPRICIOUS FAIR.

THEY say, my dear, that wine and truth agree :
To speak truth in my cups beseemeth me.
And I will tell you all my secret thought ;
You do not wholly love me as you ought.
All of my life—the half that is not fled,
Lives only in your form—the rest is dead.
Just as you will, my life is one delight,
Like that of gods,— or glooms in thickest night.
How is it right to vex one loves you so ?
Take my advice ; you will hereafter know,
That I your elder taught you for the best,
And, to believe me, was your interest.
In one tree build one nest ; so shall not creep
Some crawling mischief to disturb your sleep.

See ! how you change about for ever now,
Never two days together on one bough.
And if one chance to praise your lovely face,
Him more than friend of three years proof you grace ;
To him that loved you first you are as cold,
As to a mere acquaintance three days old.
But now you breathe of wantonness and pride ;
Like should love like ; in love be this your guide ;
So do, and good renown you shall obtain,
And Love will never visit you with pain,
Who mortal hearts can easily subdue,
And made me, heart of iron, dote on you.
In all the changes of your fitful will,
Unchanged I live but in your kisses still.
Remember that you were last year, last week,
Younger than now : we grow old while we speak.
Wrinkles soon come ; and Youth speeds on amain,
Wings on her shoulders, ne'er to come again :
We, slow-foot mortals, cannot overtake
Birds, or what else a winged passage make.
'Take thought, and be more mild : to me, who burn
In love for you, a guileless love return,
That when your bloom of youthful beauty ends,
We may be time-enduring faithful friends.

•

But if you cast my words unto the wind,
Or piqued to anger murmur in your mind,
“ Why dost thou trouble me ? ” I for thy sake,
And thy much scorn, myself will straight betake,
Where the gold apples their sweet fragrance spread,
To Cerberus, the keeper of the dead.
Then freed from love, and all its anxious pain,
E'en at thy call, I could not come again.



IDYL XXX.

THE DEATH OF ADONIS.

CYPRIS, when she saw Adonis
Cold and dead as any stone is,
All his dark hair out of trim,
And his fair cheek deadly dim,
Thither charged the Loves to lead
The cruel boar that did the deed.
And they, swiftly overflying
All the wood where he was lying,
Soon the hapless creature found,
And with cords securely bound.
One the captive dragged along,
Holding at its end the thong ;
While another with his bow
Struck behind and made him go.

Path of fear they made him tread—
Aphrodite was his dread.

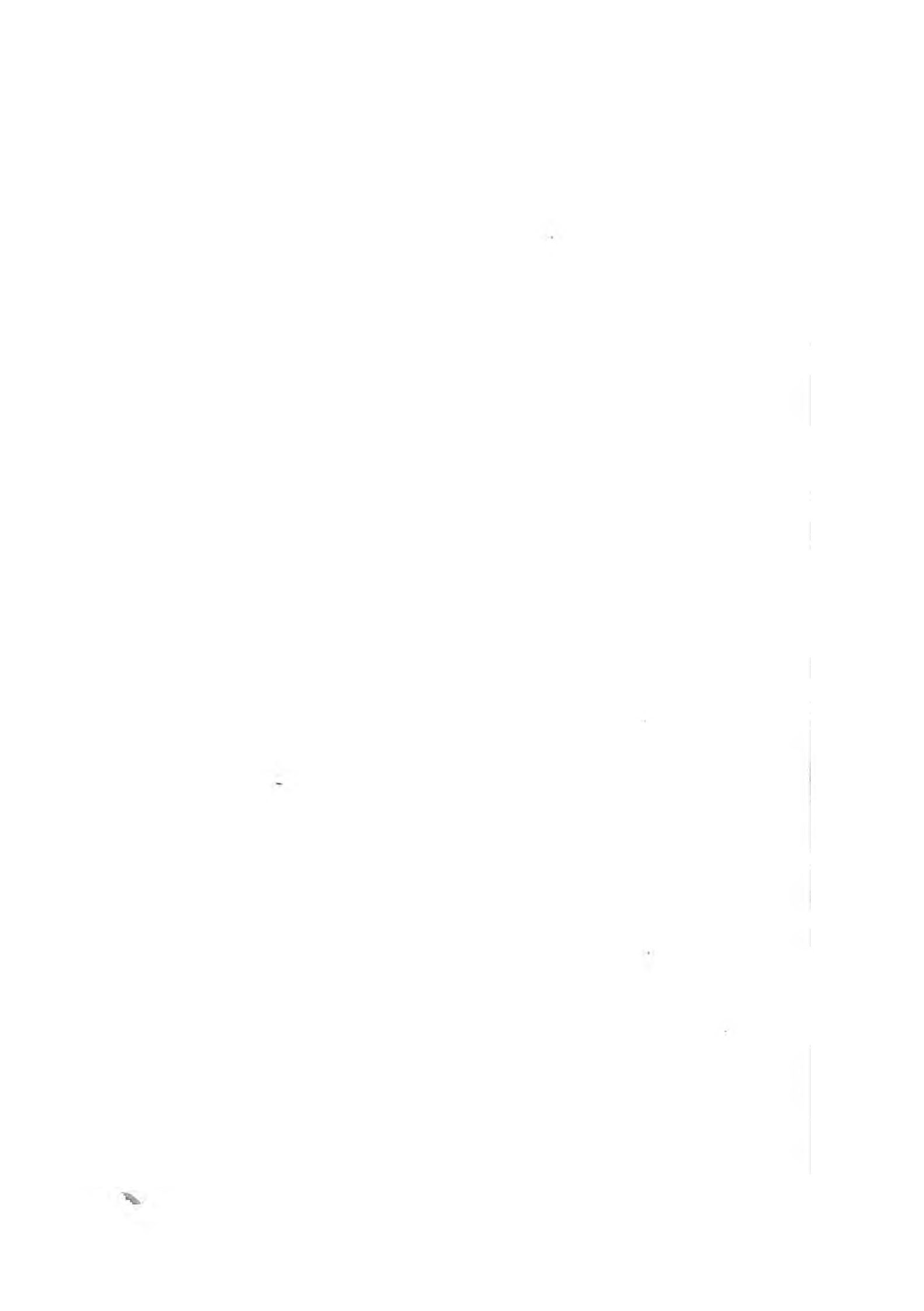
Him the goddess thus addrest :
“ Of all beasts thou wickedest !
Thou ! didst thou this white thigh tear ?
Didst thou smite my husband dear ? ”
Fearfully, then, answered he :
“ Cypris ! I do swear to thee
By thyself and husband dear,
By the very bonds I wear,
By these huntsmen, never I
Meant to tear thy husband's thigh ;
Thinking there a statue stood,
In the fever of my blood,
I was mad a kiss to press
On the naked loveliness :
But my long tusk pierced the boy :
Punish these, and these destroy,
Tusks that worse than useless prove—
What had they to do with love ?
And if this suffice not, pray,
Cypris ! cut my lips away—

What had they to do with kissing ?”
Cypris, then, her wrath dismissing,
Pitied him that knew no better ;
And she bade them loose his fetter.
The boar, from that time of her train,
Went not to the wood again ;
But, approaching to the fire,
Fairly burned out his desire.



FRAGMENT FROM BERENICE.

If for good sport one prays and lucky gains,
Who from the sea his livelihood obtains,
His nets his plough : let him at evening-fall,
Offering a "white fish," on this goddess call —
The fish called "white" as brightest that doth swim ;
Nor shall his prayer be without fruit for him :
For let him throw his nets into the sea,
And he shall draw them full as they can be.



EPIGRAMS.

I.

THICK-GROWING thyme, and roses wet with dew
Are sacred to the sisterhood divine
Of Helicon : the laurel, dark of hue,
The Delphian laurel, Pythian Pæan, thine !
For thee shall bleed the white ram which doth chew
The downward hanging branch of turpentine.

II.

To Pan the fair-cheeked Daphnis, whose red lip
To his sweet pipe the pastoral wild notes married,
Offered his pipe, crook, fawn-skin, spear, and scrip,
Wherein he formerly his apples carried.

III.

Daphnis ! thou sleepest on the leaf-strown ground—
Thy hunting-nets are on the mountain pight :
Thee Pan is hunting—thee Priapus crowned
With ivy and its golden berries bright :
Into the cavern both together bound :
Up ! shake off sleep, and safety find in flight.

IV.

Where yon oak-thicket by the lane appears,
A statue newly made of fig is seen,
Three-legged, the bark on still, but without ears,
Witness of many a prank upon the green.

A sacred grove runs round ; soft-bubbling near,
A spring perennial from its pebbly seat
Makes many a tree to shoot and flourish there,
The laurel, myrtle, and the cypress sweet ;

And the curled vine with clusters there doth float :
Their sharp shrill tones the vernal blackbirds ring,
And yellow nightingales take up the note,
And warbling to the others sweetly sing.

There, goatherd ! sit, and offer up for me
 Prayer to the rural god : if from my love
 He only will consent to set me free,
 A kid shall bleed in honour of his grove.

If I must love, then should my love succeed
 By his good grace, the fattest lamb I rear,
 A heifer, and a ram, for him shall bleed :
 Freely I offer, may he kindly hear !

V.

For the Nymphs' sake thy double flute provoke
 To breathe some sweetness : I the harp will take,
 And make it vocal to the quill's quick stroke ;
 And Daphnis from the pipe sweet sounds will shake.
 Come ! let us stand beside the thick-leaved oak,
 Behind the cave, and goat-foot Pan awake.

VI.

What boots it thee to weep away both eyes,
 Sad Thyrsis ! of thy pretty kid bereft :
 The wild wolf seizes it, and bounding flies,
 And the dog barks—at his successful theft.

What profit now from weeping can arise?
 For of the kid nor bone nor dust is left.

VII.

ON A STATUE OF ASCLEPIUS.

The son of Pæan to Miletus came,
 And with the best physician Nicias staid,
 Who, daily kindling sacrificial flame,
 From fragrant cedar had this statue made.
 The highest price was paid Eëtion's fame,
 Who all his skill upon the work outlaid.

VIII.

Stranger! the Syracusian Orthon gives thee charge:
 Walk not o' winter nights, with many a cup
 Reeling: from this, instead of country large,
 I have a foreign mound—that shuts me up.

IX.

Man! spare thy life, nor out of season be
 A voyager: man's term of life soon flies.
 For Thasus Cleonicus put to sea
 From Cœlesyria with his merchandise:

What time the Pleiad hastes to set, went he,
And, with the Pleiad, sunk—no more to rise.

X.

To you this marble statue, Muses nine !
Xenocles placed ; the harmonist, whose skill
No man denies : owning your aid divine,
He by your aid is unforgotten still.

XI.

This is the monument of Eusthenes,
Who from one's face his mind and temper knew.
In a strange land all rites the dead can please
He had—and he was dear to poets too.
Nothing was wanting to his obsequies :
Homeless, he had dear friends and mourners true.

XII.

Sweet Dionysus ! sweetest god of all !
To thee this tripod and thy statue placed
The leader of the choir, Damoteles.
Only small praise did on his boyhood fall,
But now his manhood is with victory graced,
And more, that him virtue and honour please.

XIII.

The heavenly Cypris, not the popular this :
 So call her bending lowly on thy knees.
 The chaste Chrysogona, for nuptial bliss,
 Had it set in the house of Amphicles,

Her life-long spouse — his home, heart, children, hers :
 Their life, begun with thee, from year to year
 Was happier, goddess ! They are ministers
 Of their own blessings, who the gods revere.

XIV.

Leaving a little son, Eurymedon !
 Dead in thy prime, thou in this tomb dost lie ;
 Thou dwellest with the blest : thy little son
 The state will prize for thy dear memory.

XV.

Traveller ! by this it will be understood,
 If thou dost equal hold the bad and good :
 If not, then say : “ light lie this mound upon
 The sacred head of good Eurymedon.”

XVI.

Stranger ! this statue view with care,
 And say, when homeward you repair :
 “ In Teos lately saw these eyes
 The statue of Anacreon wise.
 If ever bard in bower or hall
 Sang sweetly, sweetest he of all.
 Most of all things he loved in sooth
 The unblown loveliness of youth.”
 Thus will you, stranger, in a little
 Express the whole man to a tittle.

XVII.

We Dorian Epicharmus praise in Dorian,
 Who first wrote comedy, but now, alas !
 Instead of the true man, the race Pelorian,
 Bacchus ! to thee present him wrought in brass.

Here stands he in their wealthy Syracuse,
 Known for his wealth and other service true :
 To all he many a saw of practic use
 Declared : and mighty honour is his due.

XVIII.

Medeius to his Thracian nurse had made

This way-side monument, scored with her name :
Her nursing cares are to the woman paid :
Why not? her usefulness shall live to fame.

XIX.

Stay, and behold the old Iambic poet,

Archilochus, of infinite renown —

That he is known to east and west doth shew it :

The Muses and Apollo him did crown
With choicest gifts : his was the poet's fire,
And he could sing his verses to the lyre.

XX.

The poet of Camirus, first to sing
The labours of the lion-slaying king,
The quick-hand son of Zeus omnipotent,
Was our Pisander : this his monument.
They suffered many months and years to pass
After his death — but now 'tis done in brass.

XXI.

The bard Hipponax, traveller ! lies here :
If wicked, keep aloof ; if in the number
Of good men thou, of good men born, draw near,
Sit down, and, if thou wilt, in safety slumber.

XXII.

I am Theocritus, not he that was
Of Chios, but a man of Syracuse.
Philina bore me to Praxagoras :
I never flirted with another's muse.

XXIII.

With stranger and with citizen the same
I deal : your own deposit take away,
Paying the charge : excuse let others frame ;
His debts Caïcus e'en at night will pay.



B I O N.



IDYL I.

LAMENT FOR ADONIS.

I AND and the Loves Adonis dead deplore :
The beautiful Adonis is indeed
Departed, parted from us. Sleep no more
In purple, Cypris ! but in watchet weed,
All-wretched ! beat thy breast and all aread —
“ Adonis is no more.” The loves and I
Lament him. Oh ! her grief to see him bleed,
Smitten by white tooth on his whiter thigh,
Out-breathing life's faint sigh upon the mountain high!

A down his snowy flesh drops the black gore ;
Stiffen beneath his brow his sightless eyes ;
The rose is off his lip ; with him no more
Lives Cytherea's kiss — but with him dies.

He knows not that her lip his cold lip tries,
 But she finds pleasure still in kissing him.
 Deep is his thigh-wound ; her's yet deeper lies,
 E'en in her heart. The Oreads' eyes are dim ;
 His hounds whine piteously ; in most disordered trim

Distraught, unkempt, unsandalled, Cypris rushes
 Madly along the tangled thicket-steep ;
 Her sacred blood is drawn by bramble-bushes ;
 Her skin is torn ; with wailings wild and deep
 She wanders through the valley's weary sweep,
 Calling her boy-spouse, her Assyrian fere.
 But from his thigh the purple jet doth leap
 Up to his snowy navel ; on the clear
 Whiteness beneath his paps the deep-red streaks appear.

" Alas for Cypris !" sigh the Loves, " deprived
 Of her fair spouse, she lost her beauty's pride ;
 Cypris was lovely whilst Adonis lived,
 But with Adonis all her beauty died."
 Mountains, and oaks, and streams, that broadly glide,
 Or wail or weep for her ; in tearful rills
 For her gush fountains from the mountain-side ;
 Redden the flowers from grief ; city and hills
 With ditties sadly wild lorn Cytherea fills.

Alas for Cypris! dead is her Adonis,
And Echo "dead Adonis" doth resound.
Who would not grieve for her whose love so lone is?
But when she saw his cruel, cruel wound,
The purple gore that ran his wan thigh round,
She spread her arms, and lowly murmured: "stay thee,
That I may find thee as before I found,
My hapless own Adonis! and embay thee,
And mingle lips with lips, whilst in my arms I lay thee.

"Up for a little! kiss me back again
The latest kiss — brief as itself that dies
In being breathed, until I fondly drain
The last breath of thy soul, and greedywise
Drink it into my core. I will devise
To guard it as Adonis — since from me
To Acheron my own Adonis flies,
And to the drear dread king; but I must be
A goddess still and live, nor can I follow thee.

"But thou, Persephona! my spouse receive,
Mightier than I, since to thy chamber drear
All bloom of beauty falls: but I must grieve
Unceasingly. I have a jealous fear

Of thee, and weep for him. My dearest dear !
Art dead, indeed ? away my love did fly,
E'en as a dream. At home my widowed cheer
Keeps the loves idle ; with thy latest sigh
My cestus perished too ; thou rash one ! why, oh why

“ Did'st hunt ? so fair, contend with monsters grim ? ”
Thus Cypris wailed ; but dead Adonis lies ;
For every gout of blood that fell from him,
She drops a tear ; sweet flowers each dew supplies—
Roses his blood, her tears anemonies.
Cypris ! no longer in the thickets weep ;
The couch is furnished ! there in loving guise
Upon thy proper bed, that odorous heap,
The lovely body lies — how lovely ! as in sleep.

Come ! in those vestments now array him,
In which he slept the live-long night with thee ;
And in the golden settle gently lay him —
A sad yet lovely sight ; and let him be
High heaped with flowers ; tho' withered all when he
Surceased. With essences him sprinkle o'er
And ointments ; let them perish utterly,
Since he, who was thy sweetest, is no more.
He lies in purple ; him the weeping loves deplore.

Their curls are shorn : one breaks his bow ; another
His arrows and the quiver ; this unstrings,
And takes Adonis' sandal off ; his brother
In golden urn the fountain water brings ;
This bathes his thighs ; that fans him with his wings.
The Loves, " Alas for Cypris !" weeping say :
Hymen hath quenched his torches ; shreds and flings
The marriage wreath away ; and for the lay
Of love is only heard the doleful " weal-away."

Yet more than Hymen for Adonis weep
The Graces ; shriller than Dione vent
Their shrieks ; for him the Muses wail and keep
Singing the songs he hears not, with intent
To call him back : and would the nymph relent,
How willingly would he the Muses hear !
Hush ! hush ! to-day, sad Cypris ! and consent
To spare thyself — no more thy bosom tear —
For thou must wail again, and weep another year.

IDYL II.

EROS AND THE FOWLER.

HUNTING the birds within a bosky grove,
A birder, yet a boy, saw winged Love
Perched on a box-tree branch ; rejoicing saw
What seemed a large bird, and began to draw
His rods together, and he thought to snare
Love, that kept ever hopping here and there.
Then fretting that he could not gain his end,
Casting his rods down, sought his aged friend,
Who taught him bird-catching—his story told,
And shewed Love perching. Smiled the ploughman old,
And shook his head, replying to the boy :
“ Against this bird do not your rods employ ;
It is an evil creature ; shun him—flee ;
Until you take him, happy will you be.

But if you ever come to manhood's day,
He that now flies you and still bounds away,
Will of himself, by no persuasion led,
Come suddenly and sit upon your head."

IDYL III.

THE TEACHER TAUGHT.

By me in my fresh prime did Cypris stand,
Leading the child Love in her lovely hand ;
He kept his eyes fixt, downcast on the ground,
While in mine ears his mother's words did sound :—
“ Dear herdsman, take and teach for me, I pray,
Eros to sing ;” she said, and went her way.
Him, as one fain to learn, without ado
I then began to teach whate'er I knew —
Fool that I was ! how first great Pan did suit
With numerous tones his new-invented flute ;
Athene wise the straight pipe's reedy hollow ;
Hermes his shell ; his cithern sweet Apollo.
I taught him this ; he heeded not my lore,
But sang me his love-ditties evermore —

His mother's doings—how Immortals yearn
With fond desires, and how poor mortals burn.
All I taught Eros I have quite forgot ;
But his love-ditties — I forget them not.

IDYL IV.

THE POWER OF LOVE.

THE Muses fear not, but with heart-love true
Affect wild Eros, and his steps pursue.
And if one sings, with cold and loveless heart,
They shun him, and will never teach their art.
But if one sings, Love's agitated thrall,
To him in flowing stream they hasten all.
Of this myself am proof ; for whensoever
For some Immortal else, or mortal here
I would the glowing path of song explore,
Stammers my tongue, and sings not as before ;
But glad and gushing flows the strain from me,
Whene'er I sing of Love or Clymene.

IDYL V.

LIFE TO BE ENJOYED.

IF sweet my songs, or these sufficient be
Which I have sung to give renown to me,
I know not : but it misbeseems to strain
At things we have not learned, and toil in vain.
If sweet these songs are not, what profit more
Have I to labour at them o'er and o'er ?
If Saturn's son, and changeful Fate, assigned
A double life-time to our mortal kind,
That one in joys and one in woes be past,
Who had his woes first would have joys at last.
But since Heaven wills one life to man should fall,
And this is very brief — too brief for all
We think to do, why should we fret and moil,
And vex ourselves with never-ending toil ?

To what end waste we life, exhaust our health
On gainful arts and sigh for greater wealth ?
We surely all forget our mortal state —
How brief the life allotted us by Fate !

IDYL VI.

CLEODAMUS AND MYRSON.

CLEODAMUS.

WHAT sweet for you has Summer or the Spring,
What joy does Autumn or the Winter bring?
Which season do you hail with most delight?
Summer whose fulness doth our toils requite?
Or the sweet Autumn when but slight distress
From hunger falls on mortal wretchedness?
Or lazy winter—since but few are loath
To cheer themselves with fire-side ease and sloth?
Or the spring blushing with its bloom of flowers?
Tell me your choice, since leisure-time is ours,

MYRSON.

For man to judge things heavenly is unmeet,
And all these seasons holy are and sweet.

But I to please you will indulge your ear,
And tell my favourite season of the year.
Not summer — then I feel the scorching sun ;
Nor autumn — then their course diseases run ;
And hard I find to bear the winter frore,
The chilling snow I fear, and crystal hoar.
Of all the year the spring delights me most,
Free from the scorching sun, and bitter frost.
All life-containing shapes conceive in spring,
And all sweet things are sweetly blossoming ;
And in that season of the year's delight
There is for men an equal day and night.

IDYL VII.

ACHILLES AND DEIDAMIA.

MYRSON.

WILL you, my Lycidas, now sing for me
A soothing sweet Sicilian melody —
A love-song, such as once the Cyclops young
On the sea-shore to Galatea sung ?

LYCIDAS.

I'll pipe or sing for you : what shall it be ?

MYRSON.

The song of Scyros dearly pleases me,
Sweet love — the pleasant life Pelides led —
His furtive kisses, and the furtive bed.
How he, a boy, put on a virgin's dress,
Assumed a virgin's mien, and seemed no less ;

B B

And how Deïdamia, maiden coy,
Found her girl bedmate was a wicked boy.

LYCIDAS.

The herdsman, Paris, on an evil day,
To Ida bore the lovely Helena.
Cenone grieved ; and Lacedemon raged,
And all th' Achæans in the feud engaged :
Hellenes, Elians, and Mycenians, came,
And brave Laconians, to retake the Dame.
When Greece her battle led across the deep,
Himself at home no warrior then might keep.
Achilles only went not then, indeed,
Hid with the daughters of king Lycomede.
A seeming virgin with a virgin's bloom,
Instead of arms his white hand plied the loom.
No virgin of them all had airs more fine,
A rosier cheek, or step more feminine :
He veiled his hair ; but Mars and fiery Love,
That stings young manhood, all his thoughts did move.
He lingered by Deïdamia's side,
Close as he could, from morn till eventide :
Often he kissed her hand, and often raised
Her broidered work : her work and fingers praised.

Of all the maids his only messmate she ;
And he would fain his bedmate have her be.
And thus he sued with furtive meaning deep :—
“ With one another other sisters sleep ;
In station, love, and age, we twain are one,
Why should we, maidens both, each sleep alone ?
Since we together are all day, I wonder
Why we are made at night to sleep asunder ? ”

IDYL VIII.

TO THE EVENING STAR.

HESPER! sweet Aphrodite's golden light!
Hesper! bright ornament of swarthy Night,
Inferior to the Moon's clear sheen as far,
As thou outshinest every other star;
Dear Hesper, hail! and give thy light to me,
Leading the festive shepherd company.
For her new course to-day began the moon,
And is already set—O much too soon!
'Tis not for impious theft abroad I stir,
Nor to way-lay the nightly traveller:
I love; and thou, bright star of love! shouldst lend
The lover light—his helper and his friend.

IDYL IX.

LOVE RESISTLESS.

BRIGHT Cypris ! goddess ever meek and mild,
Of mightiest Zeus and loveliest sea-nymph child,
Why with Immortals and our mortal kind
Art thou so wroth ? what stung thy gentle mind
To bring forth Love ? who wills at all to strike,
His cruel heart his person how unlike !
Winged and far-darter why didst make him, why,
That we the cruel one can never fly ?

IDYL X.



FRIENDSHIP.

HAPPY is love or friendship when returned—
The lovers whose pure flames have equal burned.
Happy was Theseus, e'en in Tartarus,
With his true heart-friend, good Pirithous.
His Pylades Orestes lorn did bless
Amid th' inhospitable Chalybes.
Blest was Achilles in a friend long tried ;
Him living loved, for his sake gladly died !

FRAGMENTS OF BION.

I.

ON HYACINTHUS.

PHŒBUS tried all his means, and thought of new,
Scarce knowing what he did in his distress ;
With nectar bathed him, with ambrosial dew ;
But Fate made remedies remediless.

II.

Yourself to artists always to betake,
And on yourself in nothing to rely
Is misbeseeming : friend ! your own pipe make —
The work is easy, if you will but try.

III.

May Love the Muses evermore invite,
The Muses bring me Love ! and to requite

My passion may they give sweet song to me,
Than which no sweeter remedy can be.

IV.

When drop on drop, they say, doth ever follow,
'Twill wear the stone at last into a hollow.

V.

I to the sandy shore and seaward slope
Will go, and try with murmured song to bend
The cruel Galatea : my sweet hope
I'll cast away—when life itself doth end.

VI.

Oh, leave me not unhonoured ! Artists aim
And reach at excellence, provoked by Fame.

VII.

Woman's strength is in her beauty ;—
Man's—to bear and dare for duty.

MOSCHUS.



IDYL I.

THE RUNAWAY LOVE.

HER Eros thus proclaimed the Cyprian Queen :—

“ If any one has in the highway seen
My straying Eros, and reports to me
His whereabouts, he shall rewarded be ;
A kiss for him ; but if it shall betide
One bring him me, a kiss—and more beside.
Midst twenty he is notable to view ;
Not fair, but flamy, is his dazzling hue ;
Sharp are his eyes, and flame their glances fleet ;
His mind is wicked, but his speech is sweet.
His word and meaning are not like at all ;
His word is honey, and his meaning gall.
He is a mischievous, deceitful child ;
Beguiles with falsehood, laughs at the beguiled.

He has a lovely head of curling hair,
But saucy features, with a reckless stare.
His hands are tiny, but afar they throw
E'en down to Dis and Acheron below.
Naked his form, his mind in covert lies ;
Winged as a feathered bird, he careless flies ;
From girls to boys, from men to women flits,
Sports with their heart-strings, on their vitals sits.
Small is his bow, his arrow small to sight,
But to Jove's court it wings its ready flight.
Upon his back a golden quiver sounds,
Full of sharp darts, with which e'en me he wounds.
All cruel things by cruel Love are done ;
His torch is small, yet scorches e'en the sun.
But should you take him — fast and safely bind him,
And bring him to me with his hands behind him.
If he should weep, take heed — he weeps at will ;
But should he smile — then drag him faster still ;
And should he offer you a kiss, beware !
Evil his kiss, his red lips poisoned are !
And should he say, with seeming friendship hot,
' Accept my bow and arrows,' touch them not !
Tears, smiles, words, gifts, deceitful wiles inspire,
And every thing he has is dipt in fire.

IDYL II.



EUROPA.

CYPRIS, when all but shone the dawn's glad beam,
To fair Europa sent a pleasant dream ;
When sleep, upon the close-shut eyelids sitting,
Sweeter than honey, is eye-fetters knitting,
The limb-dissolving sleep ! when to and fro
True dreams, like sheep at pasture, come and go.
Europa, sleeping in her upper room,
The child of Phœnix, in her virgin bloom,
Thought that she saw a contest fierce arise
Betwixt two continents, herself the prize ;
They to the dreamer seemed like women quite,
Asia, and Asia's unknown opposite.
This was a stranger, that a native seemed,
And closer hugged her — so Europa dreamed ;

And called herself Europa's nurse and mother,
Said that she bore and reared her ; but that other
Spared not her hands, and still the sleeper drew,
With her good will, and claimed her as her due,
And said that Zeus Ægiochus gave her,
By Fate's appointment, that sweet prisoner.

Up-started from her couch the maiden waking,
And felt her heart within her bosom quaking ;
She thought it true, and sat in hushed surprise—
Still saw those women with her open eyes ;
Then to her timid voice at last gave vent :—
“ Which of the gods to me this vision sent ?
What kind of dream is this that startled me,
And sudden made my pleasant slumber flee ?
Who was the stranger that I saw in sleep ?
What love for her did to my bosom creep !
And how she hailed me, as her daughter even !
But only turn to good my vision, Heaven !”

So said, and bounded up, and sought her train
Of dear companions, all of noble strain,
Of equal years and stature ; gentle, kind,
Sweet to the sight, and pleasant to the mind ;

With whom she sported, when she led the choir,
Or in the river's urn-like reservoir
She bathed her limbs, or in the meadow stopt,
And from its bosom odorous lilies cropt.
And soon around her shone the lovely band,
Her flower-basket in each maiden's hand ;
And to the meadows near the pleasant shore
They sped, where they had often sped before,
Pleased with the roses growing in their reach,
And with the waves that murmured on the beach.

A basket by Hephæstus wrought of gold,
Europa bore—a marvel to behold ;
He gave it Libya, when a blooming bride
She went to grace the great Earth-shaker's side ;
She gave it Telephassa fair and mild,
Who now had given it to her virgin child.
Therein were many sparkling wonders wrought—
The hapless Iö to the sight was brought ;
A heifer's for a virgin's form she wore ;
The briny paths she frantic wandered o'er,
And was a swimming heifer to the view,
While the sea round her darkened into blue.

Two men upon a promontory stood,
And watched the heifer traversing the flood.
Again where seven-mouthed Nile divides his strand,
Zeus stood and gently stroked her with his hand,
And from her horned figure and imbruted
To her original form again transmuted.
In brass the heifer—Zeus was wrought in gold ;
Nile softly in a silver current rolled.
And to the life was watchful Hermes shown
Under the rounded basket's golden crown ;
And Argus near him with unsleeping eyes
Lay stretched at length ; then from his blood did rise
The bird, exulting in the brilliant pride
Of his rich plumes and hues diversified,
And like a swift ship with her out-spread sail,
Expanding proudly his resplendent tail,
The basket's golden rim he shadowed o'er :
Such was the basket fair Europa bore.

They reached the mead wth vernal blossoms full,
And each began her favourite flowers to pull.
Narcissus one ; another thyme did get ;
This hyacinth, and that the violet

And of the spring-sweets in the meadow found
Much scented bloom was scattered on the ground.
Some of the troop in rivalry chose rather
The sweet and yellow crocuses to gather ;
Shining, as mid the graces Cypris glows,
The Princess in the midst preferred the rose :
Nor long with flowers her gentle fancy charmed,
Nor long she kept her virgin flower unharmed.
With love for her was Saturn's son inflamed,
By unexpected darts of Cypris tamed,
Who only tames e'en Zeus. To shun the rage
Of Heré, and the virgin's mind engage,
To draw her eyes and her attention claim,
He hid his godhead and a bull became ;
Not such as feeds at stall, or then or now,
The furrow cuts and draws the crooked plough ;
Not such as feeds the lowing kine among,
Or trails in yoke the heavy wain along ;
His body all a yellow hue did own,
But a white circle in his forehead shone ;
His sparkling eyes with love's soft lustre gleamed ;
His arched horns like Dian's crescent seemed.
He came into the meadow, nor the sight
Fluttered the virgins into sudden flight.

But they desired to touch and see him near ;
His breath surpassed the meadow sweetness there.
Before Europa's feet he halted meek,
Licked her fair neck and eke her rosy cheek ;
Threw round his neck her arms the Beautiful,
Wiped from his lips the foam and kissed the bull ;
Softly he lowed ; no lowing of a brute
It seemed, but murmur of Mygdonian flute ;
Down on his knees he slunk ; and first her eyed,
And then his back, as asking her to ride.
The long-haired maidens she began to call :—
“ Come let us ride, his back will hold us all,
E'en as a ship ; a bull unlike the rest,
As if a human heart were in his breast,
He gentle is and tractable and meek,
And wants but voice his gentleness to speak.”

She said and mounted smiling, but before
Another did, he bounded for the shore.
The royal virgin struck with instant fear,
Stretched out her hands and called her playmates dear ;
But how could they the ravished princess reach ?
He, like a dolphin, pushed out from the beach.

From their sea-hollows swift the Nereids rose,
Seated on seals, and did his train compose ;
Poseidon went before, and smooth did make
The path of waters for his brother's sake ;
Around their king in close array did keep
The loud-voiced Tritons, minstrels of the deep,
And with their conchs proclaimed the nuptial song.
But on Jove's bull-back as she rode along,
The maid with one hand grasped his branching horn,
The flowing robe, that did her form adorn,
Raised with the other hand, and tried to save
From the salt moisture of the saucy wave ;
Her robe, inflated by the wanton breeze,
Seemed like a ship's sail hovering o'er the seas.
But when, her father-land no longer nigh,
Nor sea-dashed shore was seen, nor mountain high,
But only sky above, and sea below —
She said, and round her anxious glance did throw :—

“ Whither with me, portentous bull? discover
This and thyself: and how canst thou pass over
The path of waters, walking on the wave,
And dost not fear the dangerous path to brave ?

Along this tract swift ships their courses keep,
 But bulls are wont to fear the mighty deep.
 What pasture here? what sweet drink in the brine?
 Art thou a god? thy doings seem divine.
 Nor sea-born dolphins roam the flowery mead,
 Nor earth-born bulls thro' Ocean's realm proceed;
 Fearless on land, and plunging from the shores
 Thou roamest ocean, and thy hoofs are oars.
 Perchance anon, up-borne into the sky,
 Thou without wings like winged birds wilt fly!
 Ah me unhappy! who my father's home
 Have left and with a bull o'er ocean roam,
 A lonely voyager! my helper be,
 Earth-shaking Regent of the hoary sea!
 I hope to see this voyage's cause and guide,
 For not without a god these things betide."

To her the horned bull with accent clear:—
 "Take courage, virgin! nor the billow fear;
 The seeming bull is Zeus; for I with ease
 Can take at will whatever form I please;
 My fond desire for thy sweet beauty gave
 To me this shape—my footstep to the wave.

Dear Crete, that nursed me, now shall welcome thee ;
In Crete Europa's nuptial rites shall be ;
From our embrace illustrious sons shall spring,
And every one of them a sceptred king."—

And instantly they were in Crete : his own
Form Zeus put on — and off her virgin zone.
Strowed the glad bed the Hours, of joy profuse ;
The whilom virgin was the bride of Zeus.

IDYL III.

LAMENT FOR BION.

YE mountain valleys, pitifully groan !
Rivers and Dorian springs for Bion weep !
Ye plants drop tears ! ye groves lamenting moan !
Exhale your life, wan flowers ; your blushes deep
In grief, anemonies and roses, steep !
In softest murmurs, Hyacinth ! prolong
The sad, sad woe thy lettered petals keep ;
Our minstrel sings no more his friends among —
Sicilian Muses ! now begin the doleful song.

Ye nightingales, that 'mid thick leaves let loose
The gushing gurgle of your sorrow, tell
The fountains of Sicilian Arethuse
That Bion is no more — with Bion fell

The song, the music of the Dorian shell.
Ye swans of Strymon now your banks along
Your plaintive throats with melting dirges swell
For him who sang like you the mournful song :
Discourse of Bion's death the Thracian nymphs among ;

The Dorian Orpheus, tell them all, is dead.
His herds the song and darling herdsman miss,
And oaks, beneath whose shade he propt his head :
Oblivion's ditty now he sings for Dis :
The melancholy mountain silent is ;
His pining cows no longer wish to feed,
But mourn for him : Apollo wept, I wis,
For thee, sweet Bion ! and in mourning weed
The brotherhood of Fauns, and all the Satyr breed.

The tears by Naiads shed are brimful bourns ;
Afflicted Pan thy stifled music rues ;
Lorn Echo mid her rocks thy silence mourns,
Nor with her mimic tones thy voice renews ;
The flowers their bloom, the trees their fruitage lose ;
No more their milk the drooping ewes supply ;
The bees to press their honey now refuse ;
What need to gather it and lay it by,
When thy own honey-lip, my Bion ! thine is dry ?

Sicilian muses ! lead the doleful chaunt :
 Not so much near the shore the dolphin moans ;
 Nor so much wails within her rocky haunt
 The nightingale ; nor on their mountain thrones
 The swallows utter such lugubrious tones ;
 Nor so much Cēyx wailed for Halcyon,
 Whose song the blue wave, where he perished, owns ;
 Nor in the valley, neighbour to the sun,
 The funeral birds so wail their Memnon's tomb upon—

As these moan, wail, and weep, their Bion dead.
 The nightingales and swallows, whom he taught,
 For him their elegiac sadness shed ;
 And all the birds contagious sorrow caught ;
 The sylvan realm was all with grief distraught.
 Who bold of heart will play on Bion's reed,
 Fresh from his lip, yet with his breathing fraught ?
 For still among the reeds does Echo feed
 On Bion's minstrelsy. Pan only may succeed

To Bion's pipe ; to him I make the gift :
 But lest he second seem, e'en Pan may fear
 The pipe of Bion to his mouth to lift.
 For thee sweet Galatea drops the tear,

And thy dear song regrets, which sitting near
She fondly listed ; ever did she flee
The Cyclops and his song ; but far more dear
Thy song and sight than her own native sea :
On the deserted sands the nymph without her fee

Now sits and weeps, or weeping tends thy herd.
Away with Bion all the muse-gifts flew —
The chirping kisses breathed at every word :
Around thy tomb the Loves their playmate rue ;
Thee Cypris loved more than the kiss she drew
And breathed upon her dying paramour.
Most musical of rivers ! now renew
Thy plaintive murmurs : Meles ! now deplore
Another son of song, as thou didst wail of yore

That sweet, sweet mouth of dear Calliope :
The threne, 'tis said, thy waves for Homer spun
With saddest music filled the reflux sea ;
Now melting wail and weep another son !
Both loved of fountains — that of Helicon
Gave Melesigenes his pleasant draught ;
To this sweet Arethuse did Bion run,
And from her urn the glowing rapture quaft :
Blest was the bard who sang how Helen bloomed and laught :

On Thetis' mighty son his descant ran,
 And Menelaus ; but our Bion chose
 Not arms and tears to sing, but Love and Pan ;
 While browsed his herd, his gushing music rose ;
 He milked his kine ; did pipes of reeds compose ;
 Taught how to kiss ; and fondled in his breast
 Young Love and Cypris pleased. For Bion flows
 In every glorious land a grief confest :
 Ascra for her own bard, wise Hesiod, less exprest :

Bœotian Hylæ mourned for Pindar less ;
 Teos regretted less her minstrel hoar,
 And Mytelene her sweet poetess ;
 Nor for Alcæus Lesbos suffered more ;
 Nor lovely Paros did so much deplore
 Her own Archilochus. Breathing her fire
 Into her sons of song, from shore to shore
 For thee the Pastoral Muse attunes her lyre
 To woeful utterance of passionate desire.

Sicelidas, the famous Samian star,
 And he with smiling eye and radiant face,
 Cydonian Lycidas, renowned afar,
 Lament thee ; where quick Hales runs his race,

Philetus wails ; Theocritus, the grace
Of Syracuse, thee mourns ; nor these among
Am I remiss Ausonian wreaths to place
Around thy tomb : to me doth it belong
To chaunt for thee from whom I learnt the Dorian song.

Me with thy minstrel skill as proper heir,
Others thou didst endow with thine estate.
Alas ! Alas ! when in a garden fair
Mallows, crisp dill, or parsley yields to fate,
These with another year regerminate ;
But when of mortal life the bloom and crown,
The wise, the good, the valiant and the great
Succumb to death, in hollow earth shut down
We sleep — for ever sleep — for ever lie unknown.

Thus art thou pent, while frogs may croak at will ;
I envy not their croak. Thee poison slew —
How kept it in thy mouth its nature ill ?
If thou didst speak, what cruel wretch could brew
The draught ? He did, of course, thy song eschew.
But justice all o'ertakes. My tears fast flow
For thee, my friend ! Could I, like Orpheus true,
Odysseus, or Alcides, pass below
To gloomy Tartarus, how quickly would I go !

To see and haply hear thee sing for Dis !
But in the Nymph's ear warble evermore,
My dearest friend ! thy sweetest harmonies :
For whilom, on her own Etnëan shore,
She sang wild snatches of the Dorian lore.
Nor will thy singing unrewarded be ;
Thee to thy mountrain haunts she will restore,
As she gave Orpheus his Eurydice.
Could I charm Dis with songs, I too would sing for thee.

IDYL IV.

MEGARA.

“ WHY dost thou vex thy spirit, mother mine ?
Why fades thy cheek ? at what dost thou repine ?
Because thy son must serve a popinjay,
As though a lion did a fawn obey ?
Why have the gods so much dishonoured me ?
Why was I born to such a destiny ?
Spouse of a man I cherished as mine eyes,
For whom heart-deep my vowed affection lies,
Yet must I see him crossed by adverse fate,
Of mortal men the most misfortunate !
Who with the arrows, which Apollo — no !
Some Fate or Fury did on him bestow,
In his own house his own sons raging slew —
Where in the house was not the purple dew ?

Mine eyes are fountains, which I cannot close ;
I seldom see him, and but brief repose
My hapless husband is allowed at home ;
By sea or land he must for ever roam ;
None but a heart of iron, or of stone,
Could bear the labours he has undergone.
Thou, too, like water, meltest still away,
For ever weeping every night and day.
None of my kin is here to comfort me,
For they beyond the piny isthmus be ;
There's none, to whom I may pour out my woes,
And like a woman all my heart disclose,
But sister Pyrrha ;—but she too forlorn
For her Iphicles, thine and her's doth mourn ;
Unhappiest mother thou ! in either son—
Twin stamps of Zeus, and of Amphitryon."

And while she spoke, from either tearful well
The large drops faster on her bosom fell,
While she her slaughtered children called to mind,
And parents in her country left behind.
With tear-stained cheek, and many a groan and sigh,
Alcmena to her son's wife made reply—

“ Why, hapless mother ! with this train of thought
Dost thou provoke the grief that comes unsought ?
Why dost thou talk these dreadful sorrows o’er,
Now wept by us — as we have wept before ?
Are not the new griefs that we look to see
From day to day, enough for you and me ?
Lover of dole were he, who would recount
Our tale of woes, and find their whole amount !
Take heart, and bear those ills we cannot cure,
But by the will of heaven we must endure.
And yet I cannot bid thee cease to grieve;
For even joy to spend itself has leave.
For thee I wail, why wert thou doomed, oh why,
To be a partner in our misery ?
I mourn that fate with ours thy fortune blends
Under the woe that over us impends.
Ye ! by whose names unpunished none forswear,
Persephona and dread Demeter, hear !
Not less on thee has my true love reposed,
Than if my womb thy body had enclosed ;
I love thee, sweetest ! as an old-age child,
That has, beyond hope, on its mother smiled ;
Thou knowest this ; then say not, I implore,
I love thee not, or foster sorrow more,

Or in my grief I careless am of thee,
Though I weep more than e'er wept Niobe.
No blame is due to her with anguish wild,
Who hapless weeps for her unhappy child.
Ten weary months within my womb he lay—
What pains I suffered ere he came to day!
What pangs! I all but said farewell to earth,
While yet my unborn lingered in the birth.
New toils now task him in a foreign plain—
Oh shall I ever see my son again?
Besides an awful vision of the night,
Scaring my sleep, hath filled me with affright,
And much I fear, when I my dream recall,
Lest some untoward thing my sons befall.
Methought, aside his cloak and tunic laid,
My Hercules with both hands grasped a spade,
And round a cultured field a mighty dyke
He delved, as one that toils for hire belike.
But when the dyke around the vineyard run,
And he was just about (his task now done,
The shovel thrown on the projecting rim,)
With his attire again to cover him;
Sudden above the bank a fire burst out,
Whose greedy flames enclosed him round about:

He to the flames with rapid flight did yield,
Holding the spade before him as a shield,
And here and there he turned his anxious eye,
If he might shun his scorching enemy.
High-souled Iphicles, I remember well
As it me-seemed, rushing to help him, fell ;
Nor could he raise himself from where he rolled,
But helpless lay there like some weak man old,
Tript up by joyless age against his will ;
Stretched on the ground he was, and seeming still
Hopless of rising, till a passer-by
In pity raised the hoar infirmity.
Thus helpless lay the warrior brave in fight ;
And I did weep to see that sorry sight —
This son stretched feeble, that engirt with flame,
Till sleep forsook me and the day-dawn came.
Such frightful visions on my sleep did fall ;
Ye gods ! on curst Eurystheus turn them all !
Oh be this presage true my wish supplies,
And may no god ordain it otherwise !”

IDYL V.

THE CHOICE.

WHEN on the wave the breeze soft kisses flings,
I rouse my fearful heart and long to be
Floating at leisure on the tranquil sea ;
But when the hoary ocean loudly rings,
Arches his foamy back and spooming swings
Wave upon wave, his angry swell I flee :
Then welcome land and sylvan shade to me,
Where, if a gale blows, still the pine-tree sings.

Hard is his life whose nets the ocean sweep,
A bark his house—shy fish his slippery prey ;
But sweet to me the unsuspecting sleep
Beneath a leafy plane — the fountain's play,
That babbles idly, or whose tones if deep
Delight the rural ear and not affray.

IDYL VI.

LOVE THOSE WHO LOVE YOU.

PAN Echo loved ; she loved the frisky Faun ;
The Faun to Lyda by strong love was drawn ;
As Echo Pan, the Faun did Echo burn,
And Lyda him : all fell in love in turn.
And with what scorn the loved the lover grieved
Was that one scorned, and like for like received.
Hear, heart-free ! let who love you love obtain,
That if you love, you may be loved again.

IDYL VII.

ALPHEUS.

ALPHEUS, gliding by old Pisa's towers,
Deep in the sea his eager way pursues
With sacred dust, and olive-leaves, and flowers,
With which he hastens to his Arethuse.

Smoothly he runs ; the sea not feels the river
With soft unmingled stream its water rive ;
Eros it was, that subtle counsel-giver,
Who taught a river how for love to dive.

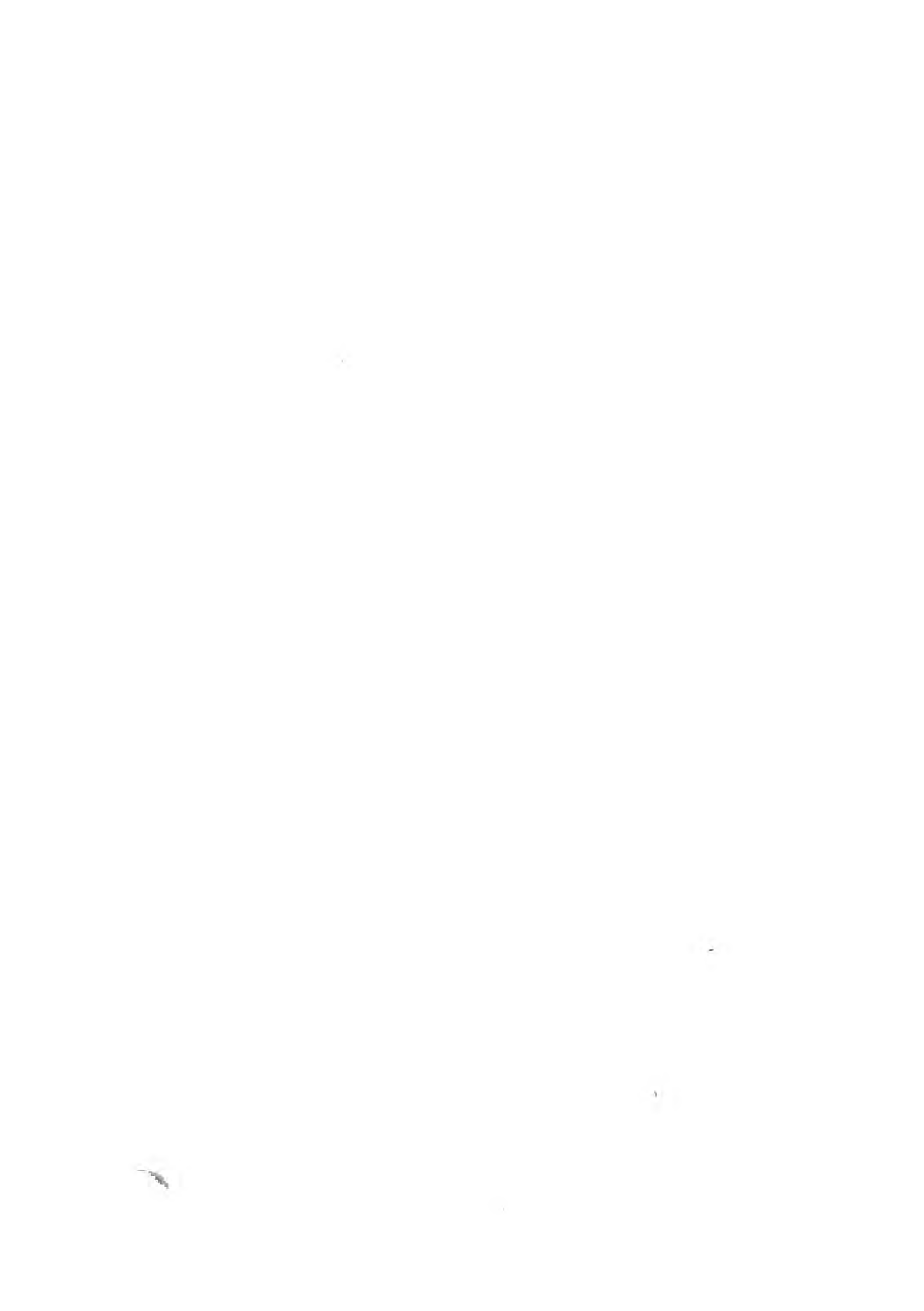
EPIGRAM.

His torch and quiver down sly Eros flung,
An ox-goad took in hand, a wallet slung,
Then yoked strong bulls and made the plough to train,
And as he went the furrow sowed with grain.
And looking up he said to Zeus : “ make full
The harvest, or I'll yoke Europa's bull.”

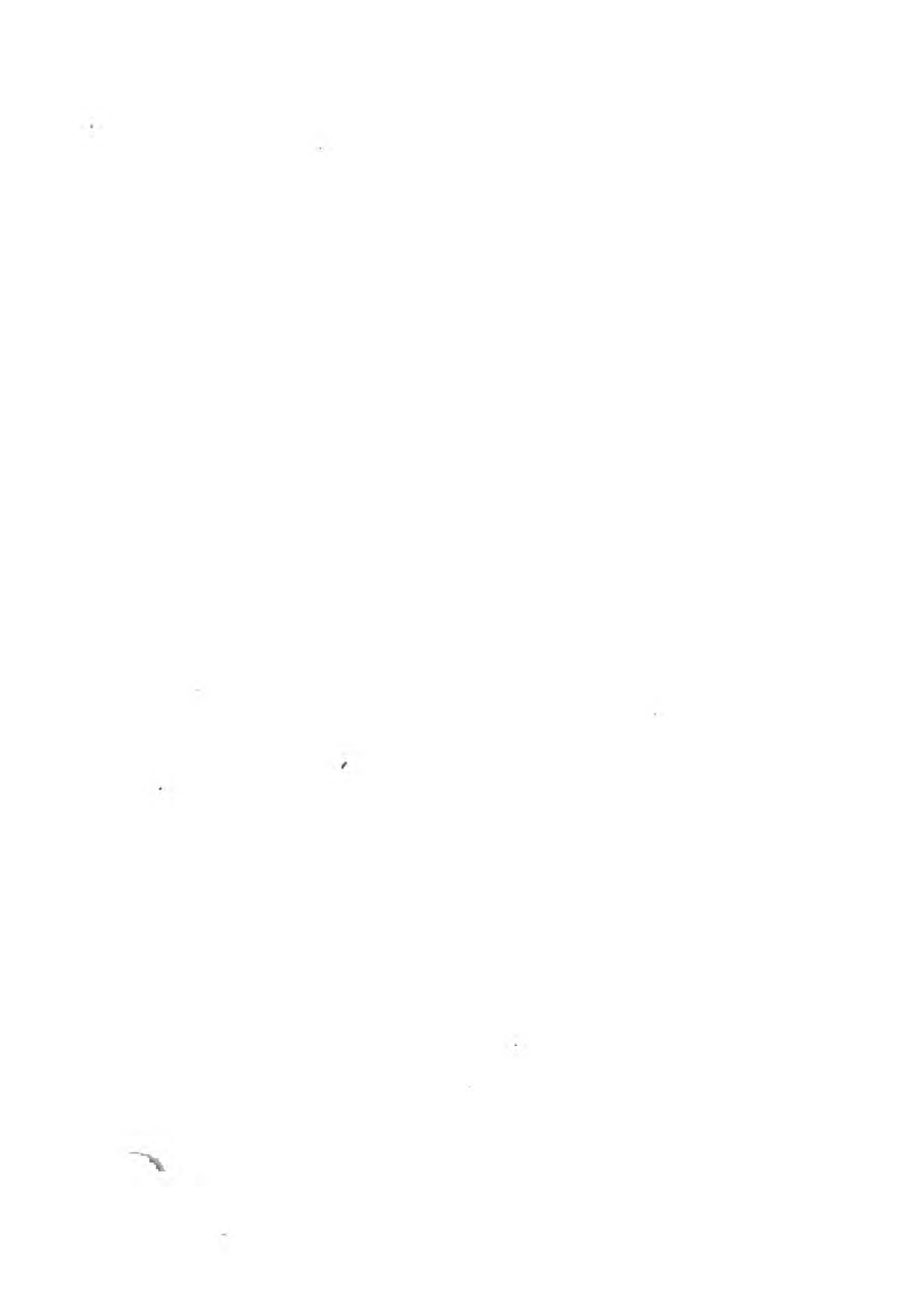
FRAGMENT.

WOULD that my sire had brought me up to feed
The happy bleaters of the fleecy flocks !
'Twould sooth my sorrow then to breathe the reed
Beneath the shade of elms or hanging rocks.

Now let us fly ; and other city seek
To be our country, dear Pierides :
But I my mind to all will plainly speak —
Injurious drones have harmed the honey-bees.



NOTICE OF THEOCRITUS.



NOTICE OF THEOCRITUS.

SCARCELY any other circumstances of this Poet's life are known than the few recorded in his own writings. He was born at Syracuse, and was the son of Praxagoras and Philina. He flourished during the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus. There is good reason to suppose, from an expression which Moschus makes use of in his epitaph on Bion, that the three pastoral poets lived at the same time, and that Theocritus survived Bion.

Sicelidas, the famous Samian star,
And he with smiling eye and radiant face,
Cydonian Lycidas, renowned afar,
Lament thee ; where quick Hales runs his race
Philetas wails ; Theocritus, the grace
Of Syracuse, thee mourns ; nor these among
Am I remiss Ausonian wreaths to place
Around thy tomb : to me doth it belong
To chaunt for thee, from whom I learnt the Dorian song.

Philetas, who is frequently mentioned by the poets, was a native of Cos, in which island Philadelphus was born. It is said that Theocritus was a fellow-pupil of Philadelphus, whose education was intrusted to Philetas. If this was so, it would account for the partiality of the Sicilian poet to the king of

Egypt, as originating in a personal attachment to the friend of his youth and the sharer of his studies, as well as in gratitude to the munificent patron of letters and the fine arts.

The pedantic Propertius, who, as Dryden says, makes love like a schoolmaster, associates Callimachus and Philetas.

“ Callimachi manes et Coi sacra Philetæ,
In vestrum, quæso, me sinite ire nemus.”

Sicelidas, or Asclepiades, as he is generally called, was for some time the preceptor of Theocritus. Some of his epigrams are extant in the Anthology.

Theocritus was a traveller, as appears from his writings. The scene of his *Thalysia* is in Cos. He seems to have been a frequent guest of his friend Nicias, at Miletus; and there can be little doubt that he went to Alexandria, the seat of Ptolemy's government.

His Sixteenth Idyl is addressed to Hiero, whose splendid actions are described in the first book of Polybius. This prince is said to have begun his reign about 275 B.C. It is thought, from the poet's address to him, that however admirable Hiero was as a “shepherd of his people,” he had a very king-like indifference to letters and the arts; and it is further inferred, that it was from royal neglect at home that our Sicilian went to the Egyptian court. Whether the poet's courtly intimation that he wanted a royal patron was attended to or not, we have no means of determining.

Various other names, besides that of Theocritus, have been assigned to our poet; some have asserted that Moschus was his real name; not content with ascribing his poems to Theocritus, they would even deprive Moschus of the privilege of having lived. Such persons could never have read his epitaph on Bion.

It is supposed by others, that the poet in his *Thalysia* speaks

of himself under the name of Simichidas; and it has been thought that he was so called by way of nickname, because he had a snub nose. Theocritus, it is said, was a name given him on account of his admirable skill and judgment in bucolic poetry.

But the most unfortunate mistake was that of confounding him with Theocritus, a scurrilous author, who was put to an ignominious death by order of the first Antigonus. This, by the way, was a mistake our poet was particularly anxious posterity should not make, as appears from his epigram.

“ I am Theocritus, not he that was
Of Chios, but a man of Syracuse :
Philina bore me to Praxagoras ;
I never flirted with another’s muse.”

Ptolemy Philadelphus, of whom he makes such honourable mention, founded, in the beginning of his reign, the celebrated library, which he enriched with the version of the Hebrew Scriptures made by the seventy, who were employed by him for that purpose. He was associated in the kingdom with his father, 285 B.C.; and, two years after, on the death of his father, the entire sovereignty devolved on him. There is little doubt that Theocritus was acquainted with the Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures. His imitations in some of his idyls are obvious.

So far as we know, Theocritus was the first who applied the word “ idyl ” to signify a small poem, in which some single action or passion is represented in narrative or dramatically, or by a mixture of both ways. The legendary Spanish ballads, so admirably translated by Lockhart, and very many of the old English, and most of the old and some of the modern Scottish ballads are, according to this definition, idyls. In fact the ballad includes as many varieties as the idyl.

If Theocritus did not invent, he, at least, has the merit of having been the first to complete and bring to perfection the bucolic idyl. Hence, as Homer was called "the poet," to point him out as the originator among the Greeks of every kind of poetic excellence, Theocritus was styled "the bucolic poet." In this kind of composition he was the first to acquire fame, and has never since been equalled. But his character as a poet must not be confined to his excellence in this species; for he shews, in my judgment at least, much greater poetical powers in some of his idyls, which are not bucolic.

The exquisite gentleman and scholar, Thomas Warton, satisfactorily shewed, I think, that bucolic poetry owed its origin to the old rude comedy, and was a part or species of the same. He quotes sufficient authorities for his opinion, and among them that of Horace, in the well-known passage:—

" The honest, sturdy husbandmen of yore,
 Content with little, never did repine,
 But looking to the end their hardship bore:
 Their harvest stored, they freely did resign
 Themselves to jollity, in which benign
 They joined their children, swains, and faithful wife.
 Sylvan had milk, and mother Earth a swine,
 And the good Genius, mindful of the life
 Soon ending, flowers and wine. Hence grew the comic strife,

Rustics enacting, with alternate verse,
 The coarse jokes of the license Fescennine.

Lib. ii. Epist. i.

Epicharmus, the Sicilian, was the first who invented and exhibited comedy; and among the Sicilians bucolic poetry is said to have originated. As the two kinds of poetry began at the same place, it is natural that there should be some connexion between

them. From this connexion, probably, originated the dramatic form of the bucolic idyl. In the first comedy rustics were introduced on the scene, reproaching each other coarsely, and exhibiting the indecencies, as well as the simplicity, of that sort of people. In progress of time these persons were expelled from the scene, and those of a better class were introduced instead. The dialogues of shepherds, however, were retained; but when comedy became more regular, and was extended to other kinds of life, bucolic poetry assumed a distinct form. The delights of the country, acting on the feelings and the senses of the poet, he devised a poem consisting of agreeable images and descriptions. Thus originated the bucolic idyl, a poem imitating and representing the actions and manners of a country life.

Vitruvius states that there were three kinds of scene.

1. The tragic, with columns and splendid drapery, representing the pomp, show, and circumstance of royalty.
2. The comic, with the buildings, &c. of persons in private life.
3. The satiric, with trees, caverns, mountains, &c.

The last kind of scene evidently includes the first rude comedy, and the pastoral interludes, which were originally *acted*.

The bucolic, like all other species of poetry, is imitative, and describes real scenes and persons, not altogether such as they are, but as poetry would have them be. Thus, in the advancement of civilisation, the Pastoral Muse would become more refined; and in this refinement of the pastoral, and nowhere else, can we find that happiest Arcady—the Golden Age of the poets, of which so many fables have been told, and in the existence of which not believing we yet believe, surrendering ourselves for the time to the magical wand of the enchanter, and seeing things not as they are, but as he would have us see them. In this respect Poetry itself, of whatever kind or time, is a Golden Age, investing with its own colours and adornments the stern realities of life; with a

delicate propriety covering the nakedness of the objects of its affection, and not, like accursed Ham, exposing and rejoicing in it.

Herdsmen, shepherds, and goatherds, are the proper persons of the pastoral; from the first, as the highest in rank, these poems are called bucolics. The delicacy and propriety with which Theocritus preserves the distinction between these persons is remarkable. But this nice discrimination soon disappeared, and the general name of shepherd was substituted; even in Bion and Moschus this distinction of persons does not occur; so that Theocritus is at once the first and last genuine bucolic poet. Virgil, that elegant translator of Greek, and transplanter of old Latin, and the moderns pay no attention to those nice distinctions which Theocritus observed; and, it must be confessed, that nothing can be more insipid than most of what are called pastorals.

Thus far I have followed Warton in the consideration of the Greek bucolic Idyl, properly so called. That pastoral poetry, in the more liberal sense, was of much higher antiquity than the first rude comedy of the Sicilians, no reader of the Bible can doubt; in the oldest books of which the most delightful glances at rural imagery not unfrequently occur. It is natural to men to love all pleasant sights and sounds; and it is not probable that when Jubal, the father of all such as handle the harp and organ, made his musical instruments, the accompaniment of song was wanting. All kinds of poetry, and poetry itself, must necessarily advance from small beginnings and imperfect attempts. Materials for the song, rude, brief, and extemporaneous, were never wanting in any age. The stirring emotions of men and the varied scenery around them would be probably coæval with the poetry of man.

Beauty, and love, and song, and the dance, were never confined to any single tract:—

“ Where, gliding through his daughter’s honoured shade,
 The smooth Penéus from his glassy flood
 Reflects purpureal Tempe’s pleasant scene :
 Fair Tempe ! haunt beloved of sylvan powers,
 Of Nymphs and Fauns ; where, in the golden age,
 They played in secret on the shady brink
 With ancient Pan, while round their choral steps
 Young Hours and genial gales, with constant hand,
 Showered blossoms, odours, showered ambrosial dews,
 And Spring’s elysian bloom.”—*Pleasures of Imagination.*

Nor is pastoral poetry to be confined to eclogues, or the things called pastorals. There is no language more full than our own of exquisite descriptions of rural objects. I need only instance Shakespear, and his immediate successors in the drama. Ben Jonson and Fletcher, especially, have exhibited the pastoral muse to great advantage in the “ Sad Shepherd,” and “ Faithful Shepherdess.” But the professed writers of pastorals, from Spenser down, have utterly failed. Browne, no mean poet, was seduced from the simplicity of nature, or he might have succeeded as a genuine bucolic poet. The poet suffers from other Dalilahs besides those of the stage. The vices of the age, whatever they may be, will always exert a baneful influence on the poet, who only writes to please the age. Browne was exceedingly popular in his day, and is now all but unknown.

The reputation of Theocritus has long been established ; he is not only unrivalled as a bucolic poet, but he sometimes reaches the elegance of Euripides, as has been observed, and is sometimes no unsuccessful pretender to the simple majesty of Homer. The exquisite language in which he wrote was of great advantage to him as a poet. What may appear rude in an English version, is simple in him ; however insignificant the thought, his dactylic verse, and his beautiful Doric, give it a

seeming significance and importance. His bucolic poems are pictures of characters and manners. His persons always speak in character, and have no ideal refinement such as other bucolic writers have chosen to encumber their shepherds with. His simplicity and irony are, in this species of composition, peculiar to him. It was from his extraordinary reputation as a bucolic poet, that all compositions of this sort of any merit in his own language were once attributed to him.

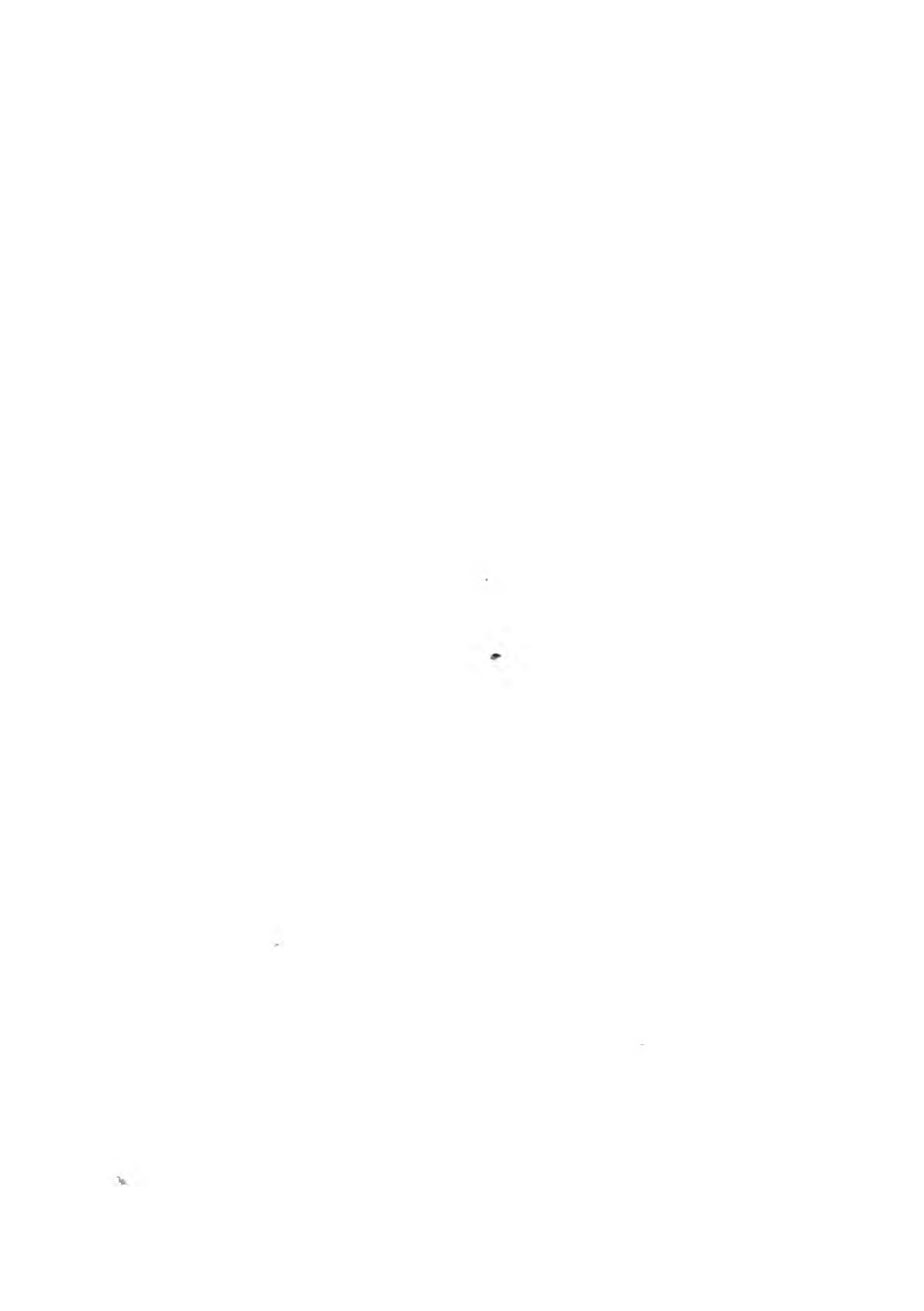
“ The pastoral Muses whilom used to roam ;
But now, one flock, they only have one home.”

The praise given him by Manilius will be still accorded to him by all those who read him in the original.

“ *Quinetiam ritus pastorum, et Pana sonantem
In calamos, Siculâ memorat tellure creatus :
Nec sylvis sylvestre canit ; perque horrida motus
Rura ferit dulces ; musamque inducit in auras.*”

But, as I have before observed, it is great injustice to him to consider him only as a bucolic poet. I have already, however, extended this notice much further than I intended, and I leave it to the reader to prefer him as a writer of the bucolic, or as a poet by anticipation, of the romantic school, as his prejudices or his taste may incline him.

NOTES ON THEOCRITUS.



NOTES.

IDYL I.

THIS idyl is generally esteemed a model for compositions of this kind, and abounds, as Warton observes, with the peculiar graces of the pastoral muse.

“ We must not pipe at noon in any case,
For then Pan rests him, wearied from the chase.”—P. 6.

Pan was the god of the pastures, and was especially honoured in Arcadia. He was not one of the Homeric gods. He was said to have invented the pipe; and hence the goatherd refuses to play on that instrument, as sacred to the god, who would be exceedingly irritated at being unseasonably disturbed by its tones: but he invites the shepherd to sing, as the modulated tones of the human voice would be less likely to disturb and provoke him. Keats, one of the most imaginative of our poets, has a fine hymn to Pan in his *Endymion*. The following is from Ben Jonson's masque,—“Pan's Anniversary.”

“ Pan is our All; by him we breathe, we live,
We move, we are; 'tis he our lambs doth rear,
Our flocks doth bless, and from the store doth give
The warm and finer fleeces that we wear.

He keeps away all heats and colds,
 Drives all diseases from our folds ;
 Makes every where the spring to dwell,
 The ewes to feed, their udders swell ;
 But if he frown, the sheep, alas !
 The shepherds wither and the grass."

The ancients supposed that their demons slumbered at noon. Warton quotes the indignant irony of the prophet. — " And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, cry aloud ; for he is a god ; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked." — (*Kings*, ch. xviii.)

The general reader will find a sufficient account of this god, and of all particulars connected with the popular fables of Greece, in Keightley's excellent " Mythology of Ancient Greece and Italy," of which I have made free use in the legendary matter of these notes.

" Come to yon elm, into whose shelter deep,
 Afront Priapus and the Naiads peep." — P. 6.

Priapus was one of the rural gods, who was held in especial honour at Lampsacus. " This god," says Pausanias, " is honoured elsewhere by those who keep goats and sheep, and stocks of bees ; but the Lampsacenes regard him more than any of the gods, calling him the son of Dionysus and Aphrodite."

The Naiads were water-nymphs, presiding over rivers, brooks, and springs.

" And this deep ivy-cup, with sweetest wax
 Bedewed, twin-eared, that of the graver smacks." — P. 7.

This was an immense cup. Some persons have objected to

the woman, that no skill of the artist could represent her as looking from one to the other of her lovers. Theocritus described an image that was before his mind's eye, and for so doing he needs no defence; but the matter-of-fact critic may be able, perhaps, to obtain an approximation to the idea, by considering attentively the print of "Garrick divided between Tragedy and Comedy."

"If thou wilt sing that song of sweet desire."—P. 8.

Thus the 45th Psalm is called "a song of loves."

"Begin, dear Muses! the bucolic strain."—P. 9.

This line often repeated, corresponds to the chorus of modern songs. I have not preserved it throughout, because in some passages it obstructs the sense.

"Where were ye, Nymphs! when Daphnis pined away?
Where thro' his Tempe Peneus loves to stray,
Or Pindus lifts himself?"—P. 9.

This passage, translated by Virgil, was much more honoured by Milton's imitation of it in his *Lycidas*.

"Where were ye, Nymphs! when the remorseless deep
Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?
For neither were ye playing on the steep,
Where your old bards, the famous Druids lie;
Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high;
Nor yet where Deva spreads her wizard stream."

Pindus is a mount of Thessaly, on the borders of Macedonia and Epirus. Tempe, a delicious tract of the same country, through which the Peneus flows. Anapis, a river of Sicily, near

Syracuse; Acis, a river running from Ætna into the sea; it was from the banks of this stream, according to the tradition, that Polypheme pelted Odysseus with rocks. It is now called Chiaci.

The personal beauty and lamentable fate of Daphnis, formed a favourite theme of the bucolic poets. There was a legend that a Naias loved and was beloved by him; and that it was agreed between them that he should be strictly faithful to her; the nymph, threatening him with loss of sight, if he should break his vow. He successfully resisted for a long time the blandishments of the fairest girls of Sicily; but at length a princess contrived to intoxicate him, and then he broke his vow: the threatened penalty was inflicted accordingly.

Theocritus, however, has not followed this legend. He describes Daphnis as perishing from love; but from his own wilful determination not to yield to it. His beloved loved him in return, and is described as going every where in quest of him; but the wilful man would have his way, and that was rather to perish in his attempt to disenthral himself than to yield to his passion, and make himself as well as her happy. He had been inspired with this passion by Aphrodite, in revenge for his having boasted that he could successfully resist the influences of love. The goddess would willingly have restored him at the last, but his time was come.

“ From out the mountain-lair the lions growled,
Wailing his death—the wolves and jackals howled.”—P. 9.

The poet probably availed himself of a tradition that the “lion and his hound” were ancient inhabitants of Sicily, to introduce them for effect as mourners for Daphnis.

Just before his death Hermes, Priapus, and Aphrodite, severally visited him.

Hermes was not only numbered among the pastoral deities,

and in that character fitly introduced here; but, according to some, Daphnis was his son.

“ Then Cypris came — the queen of soft desire,
Smiling in secret, but pretending ire.”—P. 10.

Aphrodite, whose office was to preside over love and marriage, was the Astarte of the Phœnicians; — “Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians.”

She was wounded by Diomedes, as Homer relates, when she went to a place where she certainly had no business — a battle-field.

“ Farewell, ye rivers! that your streams profuse
From Thymbris pour; farewell, sweet Arethuse!”—P. 11.

The poet places the death-scene of Daphnis near Syracuse, as appears from this address to Thymbris and Arethuse. He calls on Pan to come and receive his pipe, and wishes that all things may be at odds with their own nature, since himself must die.

“ ’Twill seem to thee as though the lovely Hours
Had newly dipped it in their fountain-showers.”—P. 13.

The Hours were the goddesses of the seasons, and were supposed to preside over all seasonable delights. The different epithets applied to them shew the sense of enjoyment with which their names were associated—rosy-bosomed, gold-filleted, flower-full, odoriferous, &c.

“ Hither, Cissætha!”—P. 13.

This was the name of the goat. Some persons suppose that Thyrsis only received the ivy-cup as his reward, and three milkings of this goat; but, as I understand the passage, he had both the cup and the goat — and he deserved both.

IDYL II.

THIS idyl is very interesting from the minute description which is given of the method of regaining a lover by witchcraft. The reader will find in Ben Jonson's "Masque of Queens," a very animated and poetical description of witches and their craft.

"Where are the laurels? where the philtres? roll
The finest purple wool around the bowl."—P. 17.

A philtre was, properly, any incitement whatever to love; but especially a love-potion. The text is, I think, sufficiently expressive throughout of the meaning of the different parts of this magical incantation.

"Come forth, thou Moon! with thy propitious light."—P. 17.

Selena, the sister of Helios, was the patroness of magic; in this office she was afterwards confounded with Hecate; and in this very piece she is called Artemis. The legend of her love-adventure with Endymion is well known, or ought to be, as, notwithstanding its many faults, the *Endymion* of Keats is a work of genius.

"Dread Hecate, whom coming thro' the mounds
Of blood-swoln corsees flee the trembling hounds."—P. 18.

Hecate, Trivia, and Triformis. She was thought to be all powerful in magical rites, and is, therefore, always invoked on such occasions. She was called Trivia, and her statues were set up at cross ways, perhaps from a superstition that the communi-

cation between the upper and under worlds was more easy and direct at such places than elsewhere ; thence, I suppose, the absurd practice of burying suicides there. At the new moon, offerings of mean food were made to her that she might prevent the souls of the dead from appearing. She was also called Tri-formis, because she was supposed to rule on earth as Artemis, in the sky as Selena, and in the under world as Persephone.

“ And thou, three-formed star, that on these nights
Art only powerful, to whose triple name
Thus we incline once, twice, and thrice the same.”

Masque of Queens.

Jonson again speaks of her thus in the “ Sad Shepherd.”

“ When our dame Hecate
Made it her gaing night over the kirk-yard,
With all the barking parish-tikes set at her,
While I sat whirling of my brazen spindle.”

In the following hymn the same poet speaks of her as Selena, the regent of the night, and as Artemis.

“ Queen and huntress, chaste and fair,
Now the sun is laid to sleep,
Seated in thy silver-chair,
State in wonted manner keep :
Hesperus entreats thy light,
Goddess, excellently bright.

Earth, let not thy envious shade
Dare itself to interpose :
Cynthia's shining orb was made
Heaven to clear, when day did close :
Bless us then with wished sight,
Goddess, excellently bright.

Lay thy bow of pearl apart,
 And thy crystal shining quiver ;
 Give unto the flying hart
 Space to breathe, how short soever :
 Thou that mak'st a day of night,
 Goddess, excellently bright."

Cynthia's Revels.

" By bold Medea, terrible as fair,
 Or Perimeda of the golden hair."—P. 18.

Medea, the famous princess, who by her art enabled Jason to obtain the golden fleece, was a celebrated sorceress. The Medea of Euripides, and the Argonautics of Apollonius, forcibly exhibit her traditional character. Perimede is mentioned by Propertius.

" Non hic herba valet, non hic nocturna Cytæis,
 Non Perimedææ gramina cocta manus."

" Him hither, hither draw, my magic wheel."—P. 18.

Iynx, properly a bird, the wry-neck, which was used by witches in the composition of their love-potions. It was also fastened to the wheel which they turned round during their incantations ; and thence the name was given, as here, to the wheel itself.

" Theseus forgot, and left in Dia's bay
 The bright-haired Ariadne."

Dia, the island afterwards called Naxos, was the place where Theseus treacherously left the forsaken Ariadne. The legend is beautifully told by Catullus in the " Nuptials of Peleus."

" A little herb in Arcady there grows,
 Which colts and mares doth strangely discompose."—P. 20.

This herb was said to have the property of maddening the horses, which had eaten it, so that they were impelled by a sort of fury to gallop to the mountains in quest of it.

“ Anaxo came, on whom it fell this year
The basket to Diana’s grove to bear.”—P. 21.

Xenophon, the Ephesian, has left a description of the procession in honour of the great Diana of the Ephesians. It was made annually to her temple, which was near the city; and always occasioned a great concourse of people, foreigners as well as citizens. This celebration, in honour of the goddess of chastity, was the period of match-making; and all the unmarried girls who were about, nothing loth, to exchange their state of single-blessedness for the married life, deprecated on this occasion the wrath of the goddess. Torches, baskets of flowers, and pans of incense, were carried; and animals were led in the procession.

“ Such hues as juices of the thapsus lend.”—P. 22.

The juice of the thapsus is said to have been a dye of a yellow hue. Her’s was a “green and yellow melancholy.”

“ Bringing sweet apples, crowned with poplar white,
Careful the wreath with purple stripes to blend.”—P. 24.

This alludes to the custom of the lover making a public declaration of his love, and going the day after in set form to crown her with a wreath of flowers and ribands. The apples of Dionysus were not any particular kind of apple, but apples in general; for Dionysus was believed to have taught the use of every kind of fruit.

The doors were done violence to by the lover to save the modesty of the beloved, who, wishing to consent, would be saved the appearance of consenting.

“ And often left his Dorian pyx with me.”—P. 26.

The vessel in which he kept the oil with which he anointed himself at the wrestling-school. The word *pyx* is now applied to the vessel in which the Romanists keep the *host*.

IDYL III.

“ O ! that I were a little humming bee,
To pass thro’ fern and ivy in to thee.”—P. 30.

“ Oh that I had wings like a dove ! for then would I fly
away and be at rest. Then would I wander far off, and remain
in the wilderness. I would hasten my escape from the windy
storm and tempest.”—*Psalm* lv. 6.

“ Nymph ! with thine eye-brows of a raven hue.”—P. 30.

The Greek poets were fond of describing the eye-brows ; but
our own Spenser has outdone them all.

“ A thousand graces on her eye-lids sat,
Under the shadow of her even brows.”

“ I’ll plunge into the main,
My jerkin stript, where Olpis sits on high,
Watching the tunnies.”—P. 30.

“ Upon a lofty and o’erhanging steep
The tunny-watcher doth his station keep ;
And with his practised eye fixt on the sea,
Observes the herd, how many and what they be,
And gives the signal : all the town outpours ;
With all their nets from the indented shores
They rush into the waves.”

Oppian Halieutics. iii. 637.

The tunny-fishery was formerly, as now, very frequent and abundant among the Sicilians.

“ For the struck pop-bell gave me back no sound.”— P. 30.

The poppy and anemony were used by lovers for this purpose.

“ Agræo, the diviner by the sieve.”— P. 31.

This species of divination, by the sieve and shears, was practised in this country during the prevalence of witchcraft. It is alluded to by Ben Jonson in his “ Alchemist : ”

“ Searching for things lost with a sieve and shears.”

“ A throbbing, I declare,
In my right eye—shall I behold my fair? ”—P. 31.

This was a favourable omen among the Greeks and Romans.

“ When in the race, mistrustful of his knees,
To win the virgin ran Hippomenes.”—P. 31.

The fair Atalanta, terrified by a response of the oracle, declined marriage; but her extreme beauty attracted numerous suitors; to avoid whose importunity she proposed, that whosoever sought her in marriage, should contend with her in the race, on condition of being put to death if defeated, but obtaining her hand if victorious. Many had suffered the penalty of defeat, when Hippomenes, a son of Poseidon, was smitten with this cruel beauty, and immediately offered himself for the dangerous trial; though warned by Atalanta, and requested to abandon his rash purpose, he persisted, and offered up his prayers to Aphrodite, who gave him three golden apples from her garden in Cyprus, or, as others say, from the garden of the

Hesperides. These he threw, as he ran; the maiden, attracted by their lustre, went out of the course to pick them up, and so lost the race. Joy at his success made Hippomenes forgetful of Aphrodite, and of the sacrifice he should have offered to her in gratitude for her kindness. The goddess, indignant at his neglect, inspired him with ungovernable passion, as he and his bride were passing a place sacred to Cybele, which they entered, and "the fairest damsel then and there became a woman;" but the mother of the gods, for their profanation, changed the unhappy lovers into lions.

"The seer Melampus from Mount Othrys drove
The stolen herd to Pylos."—P. 31.

Bias, the brother of Melampus the seer, fell in love with Pero, the daughter of Neleus. The hand of this lovely princess was eagerly sought by the neighbouring princes, but her father declared that he would give her in marriage to him alone who should recover the herd of his mother Tyro, which Iphicles of Phylace (in Thessaly) detained. The kine were guarded by a dog, which neither man nor beast would venture to approach. Melampus undertook the adventure on his brother's account, and accomplished it in a very singular manner. By his skill he made Iphicles, who had been previously childless, happy in the indulgence of the parental instinct; and having beforehand stipulated that he should have the aforesaid herd as his fee, he accordingly drove them to Pylos; and Pero, the mother of Alphasibæa, was given in marriage to his brother.

"Thrice blest Iasion."—P. 32.

Ceres, who was chaste for a goddess, was enamoured of Iasion, the prince of Crete and son of Minos. She had by him Pluton, the god of mines.

IDYL IV.

“ When did e'er Ægon see the Olympian oil.”—P. 36.

The oil with which the wrestlers anointed themselves. Batus wonders that a novice like Ægon should aim at victory in the Olympic games.

“ Hence he hied,
Taking a spade, and twenty sheep beside.”—P. 36.

Those who were candidates for the prize at the Olympic games, were obliged to be there thirty days before they commenced, during which they were put into severe training by the masters of the ring. The games lasted five days, so that the party must be there thirty-five days at least. The spade, the badge of the wrestler, was used by him to turn up the sand, which was part of his exercise. Ægon took with him twenty sheep as food for five weeks. The wrestlers of antiquity were famous for their prodigious capacity of stomach.

“ Nor needed much persuasion, I engage,
Ægon to wrestle—and the wolf to rage.”—P. 36.

That is, Milon would have no difficulty in persuading Ægon to accompany him, who was as ready to wrestle, as the wolf to fall with frantic fury on his prey.

“ Or up Latymnus bounds away at will,
Frisking along the thickly wooded hill.”—P. 37.

Latymnus and Physcus are mountains, and Neæthus a river in the neighbourhood of Croton. The river Æsar, at present called Necete, flows through it.

“ Just such another
May Lampra have to offer to the mother
Of Mars ! ” — P. 37.

Lampra was an Attic ward. The Sicilians reproached the Athenians for their spare diet, and were by them reproached for their luxury and intemperance. Theocritus, as a Sicilian, took pleasure in any joke at the expense of the Athenians.

“ The songs of Pyrrhus and dear Glauca’s lays
I know to sing, and Croton love to praise. ” — P. 38.

Glauca was of Chios, and Pyrrhus of Lesbos.

Croton was once an illustrious Italian city ; for size, splendour, and population, scarcely inferior to any. The salubrity of the climate was proverbial. It was famous for its wrestlers, many of whom obtained the Olympic prize ; and for its school, founded by Pythagoras.

“ Fair is Zacynthus ; lovely ever shone
To the bright east up-heaved Lacinion. ” — P. 38.

Zacynthus, now called Zante. Lacinion, Capo delle Colonne, where

“ At the dead of night by Lonna’s steep,
The seaman’s cry was heard along the deep. ”

IDYL V.

“ When, slave of Sybaris,
 Didst ever own a pipe ? are you not fain to hiss
 Still through a pipe of straw with Corydon ? ” — P. 43.

Sybaris was once a powerful city near Croton, in the bay of Tarentum ; the luxury and effeminacy of its inhabitants were proverbial.

“ And when they list, their lean and flashy songs
 Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw.”

Lycidas.

Crathis is a river near Sybaris.

“ It is none enterprise to men forbid.” — P. 44.

οὐδὲν ἱερόν was a proverb. “ It is what one may do ; ” or, as the English express it, “ a cat may look at a king.” The scholiast gives the following account of the origin of this proverb. Hercules, on arriving at Dios, a city of Macedonia, saw several persons coming out of a temple ; and being himself disposed to enter and worship, he asked to whom it was dedicated ; but on being told that it was sacred to Adonis, he turned on his heel and contemptuously said, *οὐδὲν ἱερόν*, “ it is nothing sacred,” implying that Adonis was no god. The expression became thereafter proverbial as an expression of complacent contempt.

“ Here are oaks and galingale ;
And round their hives the bees, soft-humming, sail.” — P. 46.

The description of the two banks on which these rivals are stationed, has been much admired. The following descriptions may be compared with that of Theocritus : —

“ Here be woods as green
As any, air likewise as fresh and sweet
As where smooth Zephyrus plays on the fleet
Face of the curled streams, with flowers as many
As the young spring gives, and choice as any ;
Here be all new delights, cool streams and wells,
Arbours o’ergrown with woodbines ; caves and dells ;
Choose where thou wilt, whilst I sit by and sing,
Or gather rushes to make many a ring
For thy long fingers ; tell thee tales of love,
How the pale Phœbe, hunting in a grove,
First saw the boy Endymion, from whose eyes
She took eternal fire that never dies :
How she conveyed him softly in a sleep,
His temples bound with poppy, to the steep
Head of old Latmos, where she stoops each night,
Gilding the mountain with her brother’s light,
To kiss her sweetest.”—*Faithful Shepherdess*..

Again the same poet, in the same play : —

“ Here shalt thou rest
Upon this holy bank. No deadly snake
Upon this turf herself in folds doth make :
Here is no poison for the toad to feed ;
Here boldly spread thy hands ; no venom’d weed

Dares blister them : no slimy snail dare creep
 Over thy face when thou art fast asleep ;
 Here never durst the babbling cuckoo sit ;
 No slough of falling star did ever hit
 Upon this bank ; let this thy cabin be,
 This other, set with violets, for me."

And thus " the poet : "—

" I know a bank whereon the wild thyme blows,
 Wild ox-lips and the nodding violet grows ;
 Quite over-canopied with lush woodbine,
 With sweet musk-roses, and with eglantine."

Midsummer Night's Dream.

The opening of the first scene in the fifth act in the " Merchant of Venice," where Lorenzo and Jessica so prettily bandy verses, is in the best style of the dramatic Idyl. I mention it to quote the passage where, though the bank is not described, the poet has contrived to make it holy to our apprehension :—

" How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank !
 Here will we sit, and let the sound of music
 Creep in our ears ; soft stillness, and the night,
 Become the touches of sweet harmony.
 Sit, Jessica : look, how the floor of heaven
 Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold ;
 There's not the smallest orb, which thou behold'st,
 But in his motion like an angel sings,
 Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins.
 Such harmony is in immortal souls ;
 But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
 Doth grossly close us in, we cannot hear it."

" Cedite, Romani scriptores, cedite Graii ! "

“ Apollo loves me much ; for him I rear
A goodly ram — his festival is near.”—P. 49.

In Homer Phœbus Apollo was the god of archery, prophecy, and music. There was a festival observed by the Greeks in honour of this god, called the Carnean, from Carnus, an Acarnanian, who was instructed by him in the art of divination, but was afterwards murdered by the Dorians. Apollo inflicted on them in revenge thereof, a dreadful plague, to avert which they instituted this festival.

Hales was a river in Lucania, and Himera one in Sicily,

“ Alcippe for my ring-dove gave no kiss,
Holding my ears.”—P. 53.

This sort of kiss was in after-times called the Florentine. Warton quotes an old gentleman, who says that when he was disposed to kiss his wife with unusual tenderness, he always gave her the Florentine kiss.

“ Or may I like the curst Melantius die.”—P. 54.

The goatherd of Odysseus, who took the part of the suitors against his liege lord, and was put to death in a manner as barbarous as ignominious.—*Odyssey*, xxii. 474.

IDYL VI.

“ To the same field, Aratus, bard divine! ”— P. 57.

Aratus, the contemporary and intimate friend of Theocritus, the celebrated author of the *Phænomena*.

“ But like the thistle-down, when summer glows,
The sportive nymph, soft-moving, comes and goes.”— P. 58.

When the down is detached and floats, without falling, in the air, impelled by the slightest breath of air this way or that.

“ Pursues who flies her, her pursuer flies,
And moves the land-mark of love’s boundaries.”— P. 58.

“ Follow a shadow, it still flies you,
Seem to fly it, it will pursue ;
So court a mistress, she denies you,
Let her alone, she will court you.
Say are not women truly, then,
Styled but the shadows of us men.”— *Jonson*.

“ She moves the stone from the line ” literally ; that is, she confounds the law of love, that those who are loved should love in return.

“ Prophet of ill ! let Telemus at home
Keep for his own sons all his woes to come.”— P. 58.

Telemus predicted the misfortune that afterwards befell the Cyclops, that he should be deprived of sight by Odysseus.—*Odys.* ix. 509.

“ To screen myself from influence malign
Thrice on my breast I spat.”— P. 59.

This alludes to the custom of spitting on the bosom to avert the fascination of the evil eye.

IDYL VII.

“ The spring Burinna.”—P. 63.

That is, he dug a spring, and planted it round with trees.

“ We chanced upon Cydonian Lycidas.”—P. 63.

Cydonia was a city of Crete. Oromedon, a lofty mountain in Cos. The Chian minstrel is Homer.

“ E'en when the south the moist waves dashes high on
The setting Kids, and tempest-veiled Orion
Places his feet on ocean.”—P. 66.

At the end of autumn, when the equinoctial gales occur, which are so fatal to mariners.

“ May the halcyons smooth
The swell o' the sea !”—P. 66.

The scholiast says that the sea is calm in winter for fourteen days, seven before the halcyon produces her eggs, and seven more while she sits on them floating in the nest on the surface of the sea. These are called halcyon days.

The Nereids, or sea-nymphs, were fifty in number, of a dazzling beauty, and having long flowing hair ; it was the wretched taste of bad painters, sculptors, and poets, that gave them green hair and the tails of fish, making them out to be such creatures as an after-superstition imagined the mermaids to be.

“ And mindful of my love, the goblet clip.”—P. 66.

Remembering his love in his cups, that is, drinking her health.

“ The Loves, ill omen ! sneezed on me, who dote
On lovely Myrtis, as on spring the goat.”—P. 68.

Sneezing was sometimes a good, and sometimes an ill omen. It was considered a mark of infirmity, and when one sneezed, his friends said, “ may you live,” or he said, “ Zeus, save me.” Thus the Christian, no less superstitious in that particular, says on sneezing, “ God bless me,” and the by-standers say, “ God bless you, don’t fret,” and the like.

“ Pan ! whose rich music peals
On Homolus.”—P. 68.

This was a mountain of Thessaly.

There was a festival in Arcady and Chios, when it was customary to flog the statue of Pan, if the “ masters of the ceremony” had not provided sufficient entertainment for the company. It is also related that the Arcadians were wont to flog his statue with squills, when they were unsuccessful in the chase. The Indians scourge their idols, and the Africans treat theirs with every kind of indignity, on any disappointment ; nor do some of the saints of the Romanists in some Christian countries fare better — as St. Urbain and St. Januarius.

“ Ye Loves ! from Hyetis and Byblis flown,
Who make Dione’s lofty seat your own :
Ye Loves ! that are to blushing apples like.”—P. 68.

Hyetis and Byblis were fountains of Miletus, where a brother and a sister became improperly attached to each other ;

the brother, to avoid the actual sin, fled from the place, whereon the sister hanged herself. The Loves are said, on account of this unhappy affair, to have fled from those fountains to Cyprus, the seat of Dione. This name, generally applied to the mother of Cypris, is here and in other passages of other poets given to the goddess of beauty herself.

Warton quotes a beautiful epigram from the Anthology, attributed to Plato the younger.

“ We saw, on entering a thick-leaved grove,
 Glowing like purple apples, youthful Love.
 Nor bow nor quiver in his hand he kept,
 But, smiling sweetly, on soft rose-buds slept.
 Round his half-open lips some light bees hovered,
 Whiles tasting of the sweets they there discovered.”

“ Did ever Chiron in the Centaur's cave
 Give draught so rich to Hercules the brave ?”—P. 70.

The Centaurs were a rude mountain-tribe dwelling about Mount Pelion. Homer and Hesiod do not seem to have spoken of them as having the mingled form which was afterwards attributed to them. Homer, it is true, calls them wild beasts; but this was probably to mark their savage nature. Pindar (*Pyth.* ii.) gives the legend of Ixion. He was admitted to the society of the Olympians; but, on becoming enamoured of Hera, and attempting to gratify his passion, Zeus interposed a cloud in the likeness of the goddess, which he embraced instead. The cloud conceived and bore him a son called Centaurus, who wandered about Pelion, and, mingling with the Magnesian mares, became by them the father of the Centaurs, a race in the upper parts human, and in the lower of the horse kind. Ixion himself was precipitated to the infernal regions, and bound to an ever-revolving wheel.

Hercules, on his way to hunt the Erymanthian boar, was entertained by the Centaur Pholus.

Chiron, "the most upright of the Centaurs," brought up Hercules, Asclepius, and Achilles.

“ Oh! be it mine again her feast to keep,
And fix the fan in good Damater's heap.”—P. 70.

Damater, the Harvest-giver, the goddess of the earth, Mother-Earth. The spikes of corn and poppies are her symbols. Mr. Leigh Hunt, in his Indicator, has given very beautifully the legend of Ceres and Triptolemus, in an article called the "Nurture of Triptolemus."

IDYL VIII.

“ Proteus, a god too, fed the sea-calf brood.”—P. 76.

This old sea-god, whose skill in prophecy and whose marvellous powers of transformation are recorded by Homer (*Odyss. iv.*), and his imitator Virgil (*Georg. iv.*), was employed in keeping the seals or sea-calves. Jonson makes Neptune give Albion

“ Divine Proteus, father of disguise,
To wait upon him with his counsels wise,
In all extremes.”—*Neptune's Triumph.*

“ Nor Pelops' realm be mine, nor piles of gold.”—P. 77.

Pelops, who gave his name to Peloponnesus, passed into a proverb for wealth and authority.

“ Sleepest, Lampurus ?”—P. 77.

The name of the shepherd's dog.

“ Sweet is the breath of cows and calves — and sweet.”—P. 78.

Warton says that Milton, in the following passage, imitated this of Theocritus. Though I cannot see the imitation, I give the passage entire, as one of the most exquisite in Milton.

“ Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet,
With charm of earliest birds; pleasant the sun,
When first on this delightful land he spreads

His orient beams, on herb, tree, fruit, and flower,
Glist'ring with dew ; fragrant the fertile earth
After soft showers, and sweet the coming on
Of grateful evening mild ; then silent night,
With this her solemn bird, and this fair moon,
And these the gems of heaven, her starry train :
But neither breath of morn, when she ascends
With charm of earliest birds ; nor rising sun
On this delightful land ; nor herb, fruit, flower,
Glist'ring with dew ; nor fragrance after showers ;
Nor grateful evening mild ; nor silent night
With this her solemn bird, nor walk by moon,
Or glittering star-light, without thee is sweet."

Paradise Lost, book iv.

IDYL IX.

It was a superstitious opinion that those, on whose noses or tongues pustules appeared, had been false in thought, word, or deed. All who committed any fraud or breach of trust, of whatever kind, were supposed to incur this penalty.

“ On whomsoe'er they look and sweetly smile,
Him Circe may not harm with cup or wile.”— P. 85.

This enchantress was the daughter of Helius and Persa, one of the daughters of Oceanus. She turned all those who approached her abode into swine.—(*Odys.* x).

“ Who knows not Circe,
The daughter of the Sun? whose charmed cup
Whoever tasted, lost his upright shape,
And downward fell into a grovelling swine.”

Comus.

The poet makes Comus the son of Circe and Bacchus, and represents him as excelling his mother at her mighty art:

“ Offering to every weary traveller
His orient liquor in a crystal glass,
To quench the drouth of Phœbus, which as they taste
(For most do taste thro' fond intemperate thirst),
Soon as the potion works, their human count'nance,
Th' express resemblance of the gods, is chang'd

Into some brutish form of wolf, or bear,
Or ounce, or tiger, hog, or bearded goat,
All other parts remaining as they were ;
And they, so perfect is their misery,
Not once perceive their foul disfigurement,
But boast themselves more comely than before,
And all their friends and native home forget,
To roll with pleasure in a sensual sty."

Comus.

IDYL X.

“ You rock-chip ! — P. 89.

This corresponds to our expression, “ heart of oak ; ” and we say, when a son resembles his father in his mien, habits, and character, that he is “ a chip of the old block.”

“ From a full wine-cask you your fancies raise ;
I have not even vinegar enough.— P. 90.

That is, “ you abound with wine and jollity, while I, poor fellow that I am, have to work hard, and can get no time and spirits to think of love.” Battus answers, that he is so much occupied with his love, that he does not even remove the sweepings, &c., from the yard of his house.

“ A dry tree-frog will hug you close in bed.”— P. 91.

The Greek word *μάντις* means a person endued with prophetic powers, and also means a tree-frog. Milon means to say that the other will have a dry, withered, chattering old maid for his spouse.

“ Lovely Bombyce ! beautiful your feet,
Twinkling like the quick dice.”— P. 92.

I am tempted to quote a few stanzas from the witty Sir John Suckling’s excellent ballad “ On a wedding.”

“ Her feet beneath her petticoat,
 Like little mice, stole in and out,
 As if they feared the light.
 But, oh ! she dances such a way !
 No sun upon an Easter-day
 Is half so fine a sight.

“ Her cheeks so rare a white was on,
 No daisy makes comparison ;
 (Who sees them is undone) ;
 For streaks of red are mingled there,
 Such as are on a Cath’rine pear
 (The side that’s next the sun).

“ Her lips were red ; and one was thin,
 Compared to that was next her chin
 (Some bee had stung it newly) :
 But, ah ! her eyes so guard her face,
 I durst no more upon them gaze
 Than on the sun in July.”

“ List to a snatch or two of Lytierses.”— P. 92.

This person was a son of Midas, remarkable for his devotion to agriculture, and for his cruelty. But the Phrygians bore his memory in great reverence ; and they called a song, consisting of maxims or “ points of good husbandry,” by his name.

“ Up with the lark to reap, and cease as soon
 As the lark sleeps — but rest yourself at noon.— P. 93.

“ See, the day begins to break,
 And the light shoots like a streak

Of subtle fire ; the wind blows cold,
 While the morning doth unfold ;
 Now the birds begin to rouse,
 And the squirrel from the boughs
 Leaps, to get him nuts and fruit ;
 The early lark that erst was mute,
 Carols to the rising day
 Many a note, and many a lay."

Faithful Shepherdess.

" To hear the lark begin his flight,
 And singing startle the dull night,
 From his watch-tower in the skies,
 Till the dappled dawn doth rise."

L' Allegro.

" Don't cut your hand — to split a cumin-seed." — P. 93.

The Greeks said of a miser that he was a bean-splitter. The cumin-seed, from its smallness, could scarcely be split. Our Lord (*Matt. xxiii. 23*) reproaches the Pharisees for their obedience in minute matters, while they were in truth disobedient to the spirit of the Law.— " Wo unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye pay tithes of mint, and anise, and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the Law— judgment, mercy, and faith."

IDYL XI.

“ Thus, Polypheme of yore, our Cyclops found
The power of song on love's uneasy wound.”— P. 97.

Polyphemus is thus described by Homer :—

“ There dwelt a monstrous man, whose wont it was
To tend his fleecy flocks, apart from all ;
None other men, but only evil thoughts
Were his companions ; for the monster huge
Was like to none that feeds on flour of grain,
But to a promontory, shagged with wood,
Which stands aloft and evermore aloof,
And lonely, mid the mountain tops around.”

He was the son of Poseidon and the nymph Thoösa, the daughter of Phorcys. His love for Galatea is the subject of this beautiful idyl ; and his destroying Acis from jealousy is prettily described by Ovid. His adventure with Odysseus, in which he lost his single eye, is told by Homer (*Odyss. ix*), and is the subject of the only satyric drama remaining from antiquity, the exquisite “ Cyclops ” of Euripides, which has been excellently translated by Shelley.

“ By mighty Cypris wounded at the heart,
Who in his liver fixed her cruel dart.”— P. 98.

“ I wish you had a window in your bosom,
 Or in your back, I might look through you,
 And see your in-parts, Karol, liver, heart ;
 For there the seat of love is.”—*Sad Shepherd.*

Archilochus, and others, made the liver the seat of wrath.

“ Why, Galatea, scorn for love dost render ?”—P. 98.

Jonson thus imitates Theocritus. The witch's son, whose presents to the object of his affection are as much in character as the bear-whelps of Theocritus, is the speaker :—

“ Deft mistress ! whiter than the cheese new prest,
 Smoother than cream, and softer than the curds ;
 Why start you from me ere you hear me tell
 My wooing errand, and what rents I have ?
 Large herds and pastures ! swine and kie mine own !
 And though my nose be camused,* my lips thick,
 And my chin bristled, Pan, great Pan, was such,
 Who was the chief of herdsmen, and our sire.
 An hundred udders for the pail I have,
 That give me milk and curds, that make me cheese
 To cloy the markets ! twenty swarms of bees,
 Whilk all the summer swarm about the hives,
 And bring me wax and honey.
 An aged oak, the king of all the field,
 With a broad beech that grows before my door ;
 A chestnut which hath larded many a swine ;
 poplar green and with a carved seat,
 Under whose shade I solace in the heat,

* Camused ; broad and flat.

And thence can see gang out and in my neat.*
 Twa trillin' brooks, each from his spring do meet,
 And make a river to refresh my feet ;
 In which each morning, ere the sun doth rise,
 I look myself, and clear my pleasant eyes
 Before I pipe ; for therein I have skill
 'Bove other swineherds. Bid me, and I will
 Straight play to you, and make you melody.

Sad Shepherd.

“ E'en as the sheep, the gray wolf seeing, flees.”—P. 98.

The reader will find in the Saxon Chronicle (edited by the Rev. J. Ingram, B.D.), under the date A.D. 938, a choice piece of Anglo-Saxon poetry, on the occasion of the victory gained by that fine fellow Athelstan, King of Mercia, over the Northmen and the Erse, under their king, Anlaf. The “ battle-smiths,” after their rough “ hand-play,” when they quit the field of battle, which lasted from the time the sun, “ glad over the grounds, the bright candle of the eternal lord, gigantic light ! was up in morning tide, till the noble creature set in the western main,” leave behind them to devour the carcasses,

“ The sallow kite,
 the swarthy raven
 with horny nib,
 and the hoarse vultur,
 with the eagle swift
 to consume his prey ;
 the greedy gos-hawk,
 and that gray beast
 the wolf of the weald.”

* Neat; kine, whence neatherd.

“ And to its murmurs leave that azure sea.”—P. 99.

Compare this invitation with that of the Shepherd in the “ smooth song which was made by Kit Marlow,” as good old Isaac Walton called it:—

“ Come, live with me and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove,
That grove or valley, hill or field,
Or wood and steepy mountain yield.

“ Where we will sit on rising rocks,
And see the shepherds feed their flocks
By shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

“ Pleased will I make thee beds of roses,
And twine a thousand fragrant posies ;
A cap of flowers, and rural kirtle,
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle.

“ A jaunty gown of finest wool,
Which from our pretty lambs we pull ;
And shoes lined choicely for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold.

“ A belt of straw and ivy buds,
With coral clasps and amber studs ;
If these, these pleasures can thee move—
Come, live with me, and be my love.”

IDYL XII.

“ For love who passion, wax old—in a day.”—P. 103.

“ ’Twas Ariadne passioning
For Theseus’ perjury and unjust flight.”

Shakespear.

“ And ye, Megarians, at Nisæa dwelling.”—P. 104.

A festival was held in the spring at Megara, in memory of the Athenian hero Diocles, who died in the defence of his youthful friend. On that occasion a garland was given to the youth who gave the sweetest kiss.

IDYL XIII.

“Touched not the ship the dark Cyanean rocks.”—P. 110.

Milton says of Satan, springing up “like a pyramid of fire through the shock of fighting elements,” that he was

“Harder beset
And more indanger’d, than when Argo pass’d
Through Bosphorus betwixt the justling rocks.”

“When to the lamb the borders of the field
(The spring to summer turning) herbage yield.”—P. 110.

That is, when the lambs are old enough to feed themselves on the herbage.

“It was a gentle slope, round which was seen
A multitude of rushes, parsley green.”—P. 111.

The following beautiful description is from “Kit Marlowe :”—

“I walked along a stream for pureness rare,
Brighter than sunshine ; for it did acquaint
The dullest sight with all the glorious prey,
That in the pebble-paved channel lay.
No molten crystal, but a richer mine,
E’en Nature’s richest alchymy ran there,
Diamonds resolved, and substance more divine,
Through whose bright gliding current might appear

A thousand naked nymphs, whose ivory shine
 Enamelling the banks, made them more dear
 Than ever was that glorious palace gate,
 Where the day-shining sun in triumph sat.
 Upon this brim grew rose and eglantine ;
 The tamarisk, olive, and the almond-tree,
 As kind companions, in one union twine,
 Folding their pleached arms, as oft we see
 Turtle-taught lovers, either other close,
 Lending to dullness feeling sympathy :
 And as a costly vallance o'er a bed,
 So did their garland tops the brook outspread :
 Their leaves, that differed both in shape and show
 (Though all were green, yet difference such in green),
 Like to the chequered bent of Iris' bow,
 Prided the running main as it had been."

I suppose he meant, in the last line, that the objects he describes made the running stream "prideful as the main."

"As when a meteor glides with many a spark."—P. 111.

"Swift as the sparkle of a glancing star."—*Comus*.

And Homer, speaking of Athene's descent (Il. iv.),—

"As when the sun of Saturn makes to glide,
 Portent to sailors, or an empire wide,
 A glistering star, that shoots sparks from its crown,
 Like to such star Athene bounded down."

"What then to him was Jason's enterprise?"—P. 112.

Keightley gives the particulars of the voyage of the *Argo*. Jason is famous from having his name connected with that

of Medea, by whose aid he obtained the Golden Fleece, and revenge on Pelias, the enemy of himself and his family. He lived with her ten years at Corinth, then deserted her for Creusa, the daughter of Creon, king of that place. The outraged princess sent the bride a poisoned garment, killed the children she had by Jason, then mounted a chariot drawn by dragons, and fled to Athens, where she married Ægeus. Pindar (*Pyth.* iv.), gives the legend of Jason.

IDYL XIV.

“ A barefoot, pale Pythagorean oaf.”—P. 118.

The Sicilians loved not the Athenians ; and had, from their luxurious habits, a great distaste to the severe discipline and frugal diet of the Pythagorists. The poet, in making this wretched-looking wight at once Pythagorist and Athenian, shot two birds with one stone.

“ ‘ Won’t speak ? ’ I said : ‘ or, as the wise man spoke, Hast seen a wolf ? ’ ”—P. 119.

The ancients imagined that, if a wolf happened to see a man before he was seen, the person he looked on was immediately deprived of his voice. Lycus, the Greek word for wolf, was also the name of a man.

“ ‘ The bull into the wood.’ ”—P. 120.

The bull is gone into the wood ; that is, is gone and never will return. Theocritus puts proverbs very frequently into the speeches, especially of his rustics.

“ But hapless I, with the Megarian lot,
Am held in none account, and quite forgot.”—P. 120.

The Megarians, puffed up with a notion that they were the best and bravest of the Greeks, consulted the oracle anent the

matter, and were thus answered by the priestess of the Pythian Apollo :—

“ Pelasgian Argos is of lands the first ;
The steeds are best in Thracian pastures nurst ;
Of women Lacedæmon’s peerless daughters ;
Of men, who drink sweet Arethusa’s waters,
Are only second to the Argives bold,
Who, spurs of war ! their safe possessions hold
’Twixt Tiryns and Arcadia white with sheep :
The third rank ye, Megarians, do not keep :
Neither the fourth, nor twelfth, to you doth fall ;
Not classed, ye are of none account at all.”

IDYL XV.

“ Salt— which for nitre and ceruse he bought me.”—P. 127.

The fair dames of antiquity were as solicitous as those of the present day to shew themselves to advantage on all “ high days and holidays.” The ceruse was wanted by the speaker for her cheeks.

“ The plucking of old scrips.”—P. 127.

I prefer the reading I have adopted to that which a traditional interpretation has sanctioned, namely, “ fleeces of old mutilated sheep, whose wool, instead of being fine, was coarse and like dog’s hair.”

“ Cats would softly sleep.”—P. 128.

The handmaiden had laid the cloak carelessly down on a chair, and the cat had taken the opportunity to settle itself down on it.

“ But when done, well done!”—P. 128.

The reader will remember the strange quibble with which Macbeth begins his soliloquy, which then runs on to the end in such language as only Shakespear was capable of pouring out :—

“ If it were done, when ’tis done, then ’twere well
It were done quickly.”

“ August Athene ! ”—P. 132.

Pallas Athene was the goddess of wisdom. She inspired all excelling artists with their skill. She was expert in embroidery, and all other female accomplishments, and taught these arts to those mortal females who were her favourites. She was the patroness of the prudent in all affairs of life; and in war was opposed to the furious, frantic Ares. She lived in perpetual virginity.

“ A rush for you—don't wipe my empty measure.”—P. 133.

“ Don't measure my corn by your bushel.” I suppose some such thing is meant.

“ Now, dear Adonis, fill thyself with glee,
And still returning, still propitious be.”—P. 136.

The Adonia were celebrated in most of the Greek cities in honour of Aphrodite and her paramour Adonis. The solemnity lasted two days; the first of which was devoted to the expression of grief, the second of merriment and joy. On the first day the statues of Aphrodite and Adonis were brought forth with great pomp: the women tore their hair, beat their breasts, and went through all the show of violent grief. Small vases filled with earth, containing herbs, and especially lettuces, were carried in the pomp: these were called “ the gardens of Adonis,” and as they were presently cast out into the water, the “ gardens of Adonis” came to signify any thing unfruitful, fading, and transitory. On the second day the demonstrations of joy were made in memory of Adonis, who returned to life, and dwelt with his beloved one half of every year.

Adonis was the son of Cinyras; he was killed by a wild boar, while hunting. As Aphrodite was the “ Ashtoreth of the Sidonians,” Adonis, we find, was the Thammuz worshipped

in Syria. The worship of this pair made at one time great progress in Palestine; and the prophet Ezekiel says, that he saw in the vision in which the various kinds of idolatry practised at Jerusalem were shewn to him, "women sitting and weeping for Tammuz."

The legend of Venus and Adonis was done into English verse by Shakespear, but with no great success. Milton has introduced the pair with striking effect in a fine passage in "Paradise Lost," (book i.):—

" With these in troop
 Came Astoreth, whom the Phœnicians called
 Astarte, queen of heaven, with crescent horns ;
 To whose bright image nightly, by the moon,
 Sidonian virgins paid their vows and songs ;
 In Sion also not unsung, where stood
 Her temple on th' offensive mountain, built
 By that uxorious king, whose heart, though large,
 Beguiled by fair idolatresses, fell
 To idols foul. Thammuz came next behind,
 Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured
 The Syrian damsels to lament his fate
 In amorous ditties all a summer's day,
 While smooth Adonis from his native rock
 Ran purple to the sea, supposed with blood
 Of Thammuz yearly wounded : the love-tale
 Infected Sion's daughters with like heat,
 Whose wanton passions in the sacred porch
 Ezekiel saw, when, by the vision led,
 His eye surveyed the dark idolatries
 Of alienated Judah."

IDYL XVI.

“ To many King Aleuas, in his state,
Measured the monthly dole.”—P. 141.

Aleuas was king of Thessaly. Antiochus was king of Syria. The Scopadæ were an illustrious family of Thessaly; Cranon was a city of that country. The Ceian minstrel is Simonides; and “ the old Ionian eloquent,” mentioned soon after, is Homer.

This poem seems to have been written towards the latter end of the life of Hieron. The Carthaginians, who were at war with the Romans, made an irruption into Sicily. They are called Phœnicians here; as Carthage was founded by Phœnician settlers.

Ephyra was the old name for Corinth.

“ Or where Semiramis her station chose.”—P. 144.

Herodotus gives an account of the building of Babylon, in which he states that the walls were cemented with asphaltos.

“ Enchanting daughters of Eteocles!”—P. 145.

The Graces were called the daughters of Eteocles, because he was said to have been the first who established the worship of the three Graces in Greece.

They presided over social enjoyments, the banquet, the dance, and all that promoted cheerfulness. They are represented as three beautiful sisters dancing together.

Theocritus is said to have imitated, in some passages of this piece, Isaiah, and the 66th, 72d, and 144th Psalms.

IDYL XVII.

“ First, last, and midst — for he is chief of all.”—P. 149.

Milton, in the glorious Morning Hymn (*Paradise Lost*, book v.), calls on all creatures to extol the Maker —

“ Him first, him last, him midst, and without end.”

“ How great the son of Lagus from his birth !”—P. 150.

This was the father of Ptolemy Philadelphus. The poet makes him and Alexander descendants from Hercules ; and represents the twain, Alexander and Ptolemy Lagides, as shewing filial respect to their great progenitor in the Olympian abodes of the blessed. Berenice, the mother of Philadelphus, he also celebrates as having become immortal, and made by Aphrodite a partner in her honours.

“ Thou, who in Argos didst with Tydeus twine.”—P. 151.

Deipyle, the mother of Diomede.

“ The woman-helper stood benignant by.”—P. 152.

There were, at first, three of these woman-helpers, who assisted women in travail ; there was afterwards only one goddess, Eileithyia, whose office it was to minister on such interesting occasions. She was confounded by the Romans with Juno, and called Lucina.

Triops, a king of Cos, gave his name to a promontory of that island. Rhenea was at so short a distance from Delos that Polycrates, the Samian tyrant, connected the two by a chain, and dedicated Rhenea to Apollo.—(*Thucyd.* iii. 104.)

Ptolemy is said to have reigned over 33,339 cities.

“ Such were the nuptials of the royal pair,
Whom Rhea bore.”—P. 155.

Arsinoe was the sister as well as the wife of Ptolemy; as Hera was the sister and wife of Zeus.

“ Iris the virgin yet, whose fingers shine
With fragrant brightness.”—P. 155.

This goddess is stated by Hesiod to have been the daughter of Wonder (Thaumas) by Brightness (Electra), the daughter of Oceanus. She is represented by Homer as the messenger of the Royalties of Olympus. This office was afterwards given to Hermes. Iris then became a personification of the rainbow; which was considered as a sign sent by Zeus to man.

IDYL XVIII.

“ To the same time with cadence true they beat
The rapid round of intertwining feet.”—P. 159.

“ Now pursuing, now retreating,
Now in circling troops they meet ;
To brisk notes in cadence beating,
Glance their many-twinkling feet.”—*Gray*.

“ Good demon sneezed that only thou shouldst gain
The prize so many princes would obtain.”—P. 160.

I have already observed that sneezing was sometimes a good omen, as here, and sometimes an ill one.

“ As rising Morn, O venerable Night !
Shews from thy bosom dark her face of light.”—P. 160.

An exquisite image of this sort is expressed in the last line of the following stanza from “ Gertrude of Wyoming.”

“ And summer was the tide, and sweet the hour,
When sire and daughter saw, with fleet descent,
An Indian from his bark approach their bower,
Of buskin'd limb and swarthy lineament ;
The red wild feathers on his brow were blent,
And bracelets bound the arms that helped to light
A boy, who seemed, as he beside him went,
Of Christian vesture and complexion bright,
Led by his dusky guide, like morning brought by night.”

Some parts of the description of Helen bear a striking resemblance to passages in the Canticles of Solomon.

“ Hymen ! oh, Hymenæan ! joyful spread
With Love's contentment sweet this marriage-bed.”

Hymen is said to have been a young man of Athens, obscurely born, but of singular beauty. Being enamoured of a young woman of high birth, he disguised himself in female attire, in order to get access to her. On one occasion while the company of damsels, with whom he associated in this disguise, were on the sea-shore, some pirates surprised them, and carried them all off to a distant island, where they got drunk for joy, and fell asleep. Hymen contrived to make away with them, as pirates should be made away with ; and then hastened to Athens, where he demanded and obtained the hand of his beloved, as a reward for his good service done to her and her companions. His marriage was so happy, that his name was ever after invoked on occasion of any nuptial celebration ; and in time Hymen was numbered among the gods.

Milton, after his description of the nuptial bower of Adam and Eve (book iv.), says,

“ Heavenly quires the hymenæan sung.”

I prefer quoting the passage from the eighth book.

“ To the nuptial bower
I led her blushing like the morn : all Heaven
And happy constellations on that hour
Shed their selectest influence ; the earth
Gave sign of gratulation, and each hill ;
Joyous the birds ; fresh gales and gentle airs
Whispered it to the woods, and from their wings

Flung rose, flung odours from the spicy shrub,
Disporting, till the amorous bird of night
Sung spousal, and bid haste the evening star
On his hill-top, to light the bridal lamp."

IDYL XIX.

The fortieth poem in the collection, that bears the name of Anacreon, is on the same subject as this idyl. It is the thirty-fifth in Anacreon Moore's translation: the reader may like to see the version of that renowned amourist.

“ Cupid once upon a bed
Of roses laid his weary head ;
Luckless urchin ! not to see
Within the leaves a slumbering bee.
The bee awak'd, with anger wild
The bee awak'd, and stung the child.
Loud and piteous are his cries ;
To Venus quick he runs — he flies :
' O mother ! I am wounded through,
I die with pain, in sooth I do.
Stung by some little angry thing,
Some serpent on a tiny wing :
A bee it was — for once, I know
I heard a rustic call it so.'
Thus he spoke, and she the while
Heard him with a soothing smile ;
Then said : ' My infant, if so much
Thou feel the little wild-bee's touch,
How must the heart, ah Cupid ! be,
The hapless heart that's stung by thee ?' ”

IDYL XX.

“ Thrice on her breast she spat.”—P. 167.

It was a custom among the Greeks to spit thrice into their bosoms at the sight of a madman, or of one troubled with epilepsy. Spitting was a sign of the greatest abhorrence.

“ Didst thou not, Rhea, for a cowherd weep ?
And didst thou not, high Zeus ! the heaven sweep,
In form of winged bird, and watch indeed
To carry off the cowherd Ganymede ?”—P. 169.

Rhea or Cybele, the Great Mother, was in love with a princely youth named Atys. His story is the subject of a poem by Catullus, that bears his name ; and which, so far as I know, is the only specimen of dithyrambic poetry in the Latin language.

Ganymede was carried up to Olympus to be the cup-bearer of the King of the Olympians. I should have preferred Hebe, but perhaps Hercules did not like his wife to see him feasting. The eagle was the bird of Zeus, and in the fifteenth idyl two eagles of ivory are represented bearing off Ganymede.

IDYL XXI.

“ They say the town-hall ever
Has burning lights — its booty fails it never.”— P. 175.

I fancy that these fishermen were very much of the mind of honest radicals of all times and places. They drew a comparison between those who lorded it in any town-hall and themselves. They had no light to burn ; the altar of Vesta — the hearth of the town-hall, was never without a light ; their prey did often fail them, for the night before their commons were short ; the booty of those in authority never failed. So at least I understand the passage.

“ But then a sudden fear my mind did hold,
Lest King Poseidon made it his delight,
Or it was Amphitrite’s favourite.”— P. 176.

Poseidon, Neptune, was the god of the sea. Amphitrite was his queen.

IDYL XXII.

“ The Spartan pair, stamped by Ægiochus.”— P. 179.

Zeus, the king and the father of gods and men, was called Ægiochus from that terrible Ægis from which went forth thunder and lightning and thick darkness, that struck terror into mortal hearts.

“ And star-defying ships.”— P. 179.

That is, which make their voyage at an unseasonable time of the year.

“ The Bears, and Asses with the Stall between.”— P. 180.

The Asses are two stars of the fourth magnitude in the breast of Cancer. The nebulous space between them has been called the stall.

“ And strook the seeds of fire
From the pyreion.”— P. 180.

This was a piece of hollow wood in which another was rapidly turned till sparks were obtained sufficient to kindle dry leaves or tinder.

“ Then on a conch he blew a mighty blast.”— P. 133.

The conch, before the trumpet was introduced, was used both in peace and war to communicate the notice of any thing important, and to “ give the word ” to large or distant parties.

The reader will remember the magical effect produced by that extraordinary wizard, Sir Walter Scott, in his *Lady of the Lake*, where the followers of Roderick Dhu appear, at a signal, and disappear, leaving the two champions to their deadly encounter.

“ Who, drunk with blows, reeled in the hot affray.”— P. 184.

The word “groggy” is, I believe, used in the English ring to express the same condition.

“ The wind to wave swept off my useless rede.”— P. 187.

Rede, advice. Thus Ophelia says in the play :

“ But, good my brother,
Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
Shew me the steep and thorny path to heaven ;
Whilst, like a puffed and reckless libertine,
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
And recks not his own rede.”

IDYL XXIII.

“ Yet even so she was — how fair to see.”— P. 194.

“ O, what a deal of scorn looks beautiful
In the contempt and anger of his lip ! ”

Twelfth Night.

“ Ah ! could I drink it all, I should not slake
My passionate longing.”— P. 194.

“ Love is strong as death ; jealousy is cruel as the grave ; the
coals thereof are coals of fire, a most vehement flame. Many
waters cannot quench love, nor can the floods drown it.”— *Song
of Solomon*, ch. viii.

“ And the last kiss give.”— P. 195.

This was one of the most essential duties to the dying.

“ She spat upon the body, as she past.”— P. 196.

She spat on the garments of the dead, as I understand the
passage ; though some take it that she defiled her own garments
by touching the dead body.

IDYL XXIV.

“ Sent to the chamber-door two monsters dire.— P. 200.

The dragon is sometimes “ the fiery flying serpent.” This first battle and victory of Hercules is described by Pindar, (Nem. i.)

“ Tiresias the seer.”— P. 202.

Chariclo, the mother of this celebrated soothsayer, was much beloved by Athene, who frequently made her her companion. On one of these occasions, the goddess stopped her horses at Helicon, and she and Chariclo stripped to bathe themselves. It chanced that, while they were in the water, Tiresias, then a lad, being out on the hills with his dogs, drew near to the fountain to drink, and saw—what he should not have seen ;* and instantly “ night struck his eyes.” It was an immutable law, that whatever mortal unpermitted beheld a naked god should never see any other object. Chariclo, in her grief for the calamity of her son, reproached the goddess, who explained that she could not restore him to sight, but promised to do all that was in her power to alleviate his misfortune ; and assured her, that he should have the gift of unerring prophecy, a staff to guide his steps securely, an extended age with the full possession of his mental faculties to the last, and the favour of Hades in the next world. The prophet, in his address to Alcmena, swears by “ the sweet light which once was in his eyes.” Milton, in one of the affecting passages in which he refers to his own blindness, mentions —

“ Those other two equall'd with me in fate,
So were I equall'd with them in renown,
Blind Thamyris and blind Mæonides,
And Tiresias and Phineus, prophets old.”

Paradise Lost, Book iii.

“ Then in his lair the sharp-toothed wolf shall see
The fawn, nor harm it, wonderfully mild.”—P. 203.

“ The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid ; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them ; and the cow and the bear shall feed, and their young ones shall lie down together ; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox ; and the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den.”—*Isaiah*, ch. xi.

The same prophet says in another place : “ The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock ; and dust shall be the serpent's meat.”

IDYL XXV.

THE translator has ventured to supply a "beginning" to this idyl. The translation begins with "The man at sight and claim of stranger," in the second stanza.

IDYL XXVI.

“ Hail, Blessed ! whom Jove’s thigh enclosed for us,
Till thou wert born on snowy Dracanus.”— P. 227.

Semele, the aunt of Pentheus, when she was far advanced in pregnancy, at the instigation of Hera, requested Zeus to visit her in the full pomp of his deity. He had promised to grant her any request she made, whatever it might be ; and, on hearing it, in vain attempted to persuade her to recall it. He accordingly came to her with his thunder and lightning, and she was consumed by the flames ; but he snatched the unborn Dionysus from the perishing mother, and enclosed him till the full time of birth in his own thigh. When the time was come, Dionysus was born on Dracanus, a promontory of Samos.

IDYL XXVII.

THE log-scene in the *Tempest*, the finest scene that was ever written — even by Shakespear, may be advantageously read by those who require a corrective to this poem. The fastidious reader should remember

“ What different things
The cotes of clowns are from the courts of kings.”

IDYL XXVIII.

“ Since thou art of that most renowned city,
Built by Corinthian Archias.”—P. 240.

Syracuse, the boast of Sicily, and the wealthiest and finest city, with the exception of Athens, possessed by the Greeks.

Warton quotes an elegant epigram on Erinna, the poetess.

“ See, how the maid her distaff plies,
And at the web her task pursues,
Fearing her mother’s watchful eyes,
But all her thoughts are on the Muse.”

IDYL XXX.

“ I was mad a kiss to press
On the naked loveliness.”—P. 246.

Shakespear, in his *Venus and Adonis*, makes the same excuse for the boar.

“ But, approaching to the fire,
Fairly burnt out his desire.”—P. 247.

This is a literal translation; what else it means than that the boar burnt himself, I do not pretend to know; unless, indeed, as we say, “out of the frying pan into the fire.” He became one of *Aphrodite’s* train, and his contemplation of the charms of Beauty might burn out his recollection of Beauty’s paramour.

EPIGRAMS.

THE Epigrams of Theocritus are remarkable for their extreme simplicity ; most of them were inscriptions for statues or monuments. The sepulchral epigrams of the Greeks are for the most part exquisitely graceful and tender.

From Ben Jonson, in his short lyrics the most exact imitator of the Greek epigrammatists, the following specimens have been taken, as the translator is desirous of doing honour to the memory of that great man, which, in these latter times, has been almost entirely eclipsed by the prodigious glory of Shakespear : —

I.

- “ Drink to me only with thine eyes,
 And I will pledge with mine :
 Or leave a kiss but in the cup,
 And I'll not look for wine.
 The thirst, that from the soul doth rise,
 Doth ask a drink divine :
 But might I of Jove's nectar sup,
 I would not change for thine.
- “ I sent thee late a rosy wreath,
 Not so much honouring thee,
 As giving it a hope that there
 It could not withered be.
 But thou thereon didst only breathe,
 And sent'st it back to me :
 Since when, it grows and smells, I swear,
 Not of itself, but thee.”

II.

“ O do not wanton with those eyes,
 Lest I be sick with seeing ;
 Nor cast them down, but let them rise,
 Lest shame destroy their being.

“ O be not angry with those fires,
 For then their threats will kill me ;
 Nor look too kind on my desires,
 For then my hopes will spill me.

“ O do not steep them in thy tears,
 For so will sorrow slay me ;
 Nor spread them as distract with fears,
 Mine own enough betray me.”

III.

“ Wouldst thou hear what man can say
 In a little ? reader, stay : —

“ Underneath this stone doth lie
 As much beauty as could die ;
 Which in life did harbour give
 To more virtue than doth live.

“ If at all she had a fault,
 Leave it buried in this vault.
 One name was Elizabeth ;
 The other, let it sleep with death :
 Fitter, where it died, to tell,
 Than that it lived at all. Farewell !”

IV.

EPITAPH

ON THE COUNTESS OF PEMBROKE.

“ Underneath this simple hearse
Lies the subject of all verse,
Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother :
Death ! ere thou hast slain another,
Learned and fair, and good as she,
Time shall throw a dart at thee.”

NOTICE OF BION.

BION was of Smyrna, the famous city, which shewed the fairest claim to the honour of having been the birth-place of Homer, since he was called Melesigenes, from the river Meles, which flowed by its walls. Thus Moschus, in his epitaph :—

“ Most musical of rivers ! now renew
Thy plaintive murmurs : Meles now deplore
Another son of song, as thou didst wail of yore

“ That sweet, sweet mouth of dear Calliope :
The threne, 'tis said, thy waves for Homer spun,
With saddest music filled the reflux sea :
Now melting, wail and weep another son !
Both loved of fountains ; that of Helicon
Gave Melesigenes his pleasant draught ;
To this sweet Arethuse did Bion run,
And from her urn the glowing rapture quaff.”

Bion, like his friend Moschus, was called a pastoral poet, not so much on account of his subjects, as of the manner in which he treated them. The simplicity and irony of Theocritus are not to be found in these poets ; nor had they his variety of powers ; but they may certainly be allowed to have more elegance and refinement. They were fond of showing themselves off to

the best advantage: but this is as pardonable in a poet as in a beauty. Much fault has been found with Bion's beautiful "Lament for Adonis," because some of its images are fanciful and unnatural. But it is simplicity itself, if compared with Shakspear's "Venus and Adonis." The matter-of-fact reader must remember, that many of these "conceits" originated in popular opinion; and there is poetry not only in flowers, but even in the names of flowers:—

"For every gout of blood that fell from him,
She drops a tear; sweet flowers each dew supplies—
Roses his blood, her tears anemones."

Now, "by the simplicity of Venus' doves," this, instead of being worthy of censure, appears to me to be very beautiful, and as little to be sullied by an austere criticism, as the similar "conceit" in the following glorious passage:—

OBERON.

"My gentle Puck, come hither: thou remember'st
Since once I sat upon a promontory,
And heard a mermaid, on a dolphin's back,
Uttering such dialect and harmonious breath,
That the rude sea grew civil at her song;
And certain stars shot, madly from their spheres,
To hear the sea-maid's music.

PUCK.

"I remember.

OBERON.

"That very time I saw (but thou couldst not),
Flying between the cold moon and the earth,

M M

Cupid all armed. A certain aim he took
At a fair vestal throned by the west;
And loos'd his love-shaft smartly from his bow,
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts :
But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
Quench'd in the chaste beams of the wat'ry moon ;
And the imperial vot'ress passed on,
In maiden meditation, fancy-free.
Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell :
It fell upon a little western flower,
Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,
And maidens call it, love-in-idleness."

Midsummer Night's Dream.

NOTES ON BION.

“ Sleep no more
In purple, Cypris ! but in watchet weed,
All-wretched ! beat thy breast.”—P. 263.

Watchet, *κυάνιος*, dark-coloured, especially blue. Drayton applies the word to describe the colour of Neptune’s robe:—

“ Who, like a mighty king, doth cast his watchet robe,
Far wider than the land, quite round about the globe.”

“ Calling her boy-spouse, her Assyrian fere.”—P. 264.

Fere, a companion, mate. This word was formerly used either for husband or wife.

“ But fair Clarissa to a lovely fere
Was linked, and by him had many pledges dear.”
Fairy Queen, I. x.

“ And let him be
High heaped with flowers ; tho’ withered all when he
Surceased.”—P. 266.

“ Did not the whole earth sicken when she died !
As if there since did fall one drop of dew,
But what was wept for her ! or any stalk
Did bear a flower, or any branch a bloom
After her wreath was made !

“ Earine!

Who had her very being and her name,
With the first knots or buddings of the spring,
Born with the primrose or the violet,
Or earliest roses blown ; when Cupid smiled,
And Venus led the Graces out to dance,
And all the flowers and sweets in Nature’s lap
Leap’d out, and made their solemn conjuration
To last but while she lived !” — *Sad Shepherd.*

IDYL VI.

“ Of all the year the spring delights me most,
Free from the scorching sun, and bitter frost.”—P. 276.

The following beautiful idyl of the delightful poet, Meleager, to whom we are indebted for the Greek Anthology, is not out of place in a volume of translations from the Greek Pastoral Poets :—

“ ON THE SPRING.

“ When blustering Winter quits us, smiles serene
The purple Spring, the parent of the flowers ;
Then the dark Earth is garlanded with green,
And the new foliage decks the groves and bowers.

“ The meadows laugh, and drink the morning-dew
That all the plants with growing vigour fills ;
The roses open ; and, his flock in view,
Blithely the shepherd pipes upon the hills.

“ In their white kids rejoice the mirthful goats :
The sailor fears not now the boisterous gales ;
On the broad wave the ship securely floats,
And Zephyr's harmless breathing fills the sails.

- “ Gay troops, with wreaths of budding ivy crowned,
The orgies of the glad grape-giver keep :
Now at their work the busy bees are found,
And store their many-channelled garnerers deep.
- “ The birds sing everywhere : the halcyons follow
The wave and sing ; and where the river cleaves
Its banks, the swan ; round the smoked roof the swallow ;
The nightingale, hid in a thick of leaves.
- “ Earth blooms ; the shepherd pipes ; flocks, flowers, plants, meads,
Rejoice ; the bees produce, and birdies sing ;
Ships sail ; the blithe dance Dionysus leads :
Must not the bard sing sweetly, then, in spring ? ”

IDYL VII.

“ A seeming virgin with a virgin’s bloom,
Instead of arms, his white hand plied the loom.”—P. 278.

His mother, the silver-footed Thetis, foreknowing that Achilles would perish if he went to the siege of Troy, contrived that he should be concealed at the court of Lycomedes, King of Scyros, in woman’s apparel. He there became familiar with the king’s daughter, Deïdamia ; and Pyrrhus was the fruit of that familiarity. This idyl, like the preceding, is only a fragment.

IDYL X.

The ancients, heathen though they were, had a much finer sense of friendship than the moderns, Christians though they be. Akenside must have been thinking of the instances of friendship which his classical recollections, and not his actual experience, supplied (though, indeed, he had himself good grounds for believing in its existence), when he wrote:—

“ Is aught so fair
 In all the dewy landscapes of the spring,
 In the bright eye of Hesper, or the morn,
 In nature’s fairest form, is aught so fair
 As virtuous friendship ?”

Orestes and Pylades figure as fast friends in the Greek dramatists; Achilles and Patroclus in the Iliad.

Theseus and Peirithous from being foes became devoted friends. Peirithous assisted Theseus in carrying off Helen, who was then about ten years of age; and whom he placed under the care of his mother Æthra, at Aphidnæ, with the intention of keeping her there till she was of a marriageable age. In the mean time he prepared to assist Peirithous in a similar but somewhat more dangerous attempt; for that hero, it seems, having lost his wife Hippodamia, and feeling the solitude of his chamber irksome, resolved to relieve it by bringing up from the under-world the lovely queen of the infernal monarch. Theseus accompanied him on this desperate adventure; but

Hades knowing their design, seized them, and placed them on an enchanted rock at the entrance of his domain ; where they sat, unable to move, till Hercules, when he was going down to the realm of shadows for the dog Cerberus, recognised them, and released Theseus. He would have done the same good turn for Peirithous, but was checked by a divine intimation. Theseus re-ascended to the upper world ; but there, on that enchanted rock, sits Peirithous to this day — according to the legend.

NOTICE OF MOSCHUS.

THIS poet was born at Syracuse. In his epitaph on Bion he acknowledges that he had been instructed in song by that bard. His style resembles his master's. These poets, it must be confessed, like the courtly Ovid, even when he is most poetical, were rather fanciful than imaginative; but nothing can exceed their exquisite elegance. Their verse is music. They have been often imitated; but, excepting "Lycidas" and "Adonais," none of the imitations have equalled the "Epitaph on Adonis," and the "Epitaph on Bion." The "Runaway Love," and the "Choice," by Moschus, are exquisite poems; and there are some passages of great beauty in the rest of his few "Remains." His poems were translated into elegant Latin verse by Politian.

NOTES ON MOSCHUS.

IDYL I.

“ If any one has in the highway seen
My straying Eros, and reports to me
His whereabouts, he shall rewarded be.”—P. 287.

“ Thou sure and firm-set earth,
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
Thy very stones prate of my whereabouts.”—*Macbeth*.

Ben Jonson, in his *Masque*, the “ Hue and Cry after Cupid,” has imitated Moschus. The proclamation, however, is addressed by the Graces to the softer sex, with one of whom Aphrodite supposed young Love to be concealed.

FIRST GRACE.

“ Beauties, have ye seen this toy,
Called Love, a little boy,
Almost naked, wanton, blind,
Cruel now, and then as kind?
If he be amongst you, say,
He is Venus’ runaway.

SECOND GRACE.

“ She that will but now discover
 Where the winged wag doth hover,
 Shall to-night receive a kiss,
 How, and where herself would wish :
 But who brings him to his mother,
 Shall have that kiss, and another.

THIRD GRACE.

“ He hath marks about him, plenty ;
 You shall know him among twenty.
 All his body is a fire,
 And his breath a flame entire,
 That being shot, like lightning, in,
 Wounds the heart, but not the skin.

FIRST GRACE.

“ At his sight, the sun hath turned ;
 Neptune in the waters burned ;
 Hell hath felt a greater heat ;
 Jove himself forsook his seat :
 From the centre to the sky
 Are his trophies reared high.

SECOND GRACE.

“ Wings he hath, which though ye clip,
 He will leap from lip to lip,
 O'er the liver and the heart,
 But not stay in any part ;
 And, if chance his arrow misses,
 He will shoot himself, in kisses.

THIRD GRACE.

“ He doth bear a golden bow,
 And a quiver, hanging low,
 Full of arrows, that out-brave
 Dian’s shafts ; where, if he have
 Any head more sharp than other,
 With that first he strikes his mother.

FIRST GRACE.

“ Still the fairest are his fuel.
 When his days are to be cruel,
 Lovers’ hearts are all his food,
 And his baths their warmest blood :
 Naught but wounds his hand doth season,
 And he hates none like to reason.

SECOND GRACE.

“ Trust him not ; his words, tho’ sweet,
 Seldom with his heart do meet.
 All his practice is deceit ;
 Every gift it is a bait ;
 Not a kiss but poison bears ;
 And most treason in his tears.

THIRD GRACE.

“ Idle minutes are his reign :
 Then the straggler makes his gain,
 By presenting maids with toys,
 And would have you think them joys :
 ’Tis the ambition of the elf,
 To have all childish as himself.

FIRST GRACE.

“ If by these ye please to know him,
Beauties, be not nice, but show him.

SECOND GRACE.

“ Tho’ ye had a will to hide him,
Now, we hope, ye’ll not abide him.

THIRD GRACE.

“ Since ye hear his falser play,
And that he ’s Venus runaway.”

IDYL II.

“ A basket by Hephæstus wrought in gold,
Europa bore — a marvel to behold.”—P. 291.

Even Warton censured the ornaments on this basket as extravagant. I can, however, as readily believe the wonders of Hephæstus' workmanship in this instance, as those of the shield of Hercules, or those of the shield of Achilles. The story of Iö is introduced with good effect.

“ He hid his godhead, and a bull became.”—P. 293.

Zeus was much addicted to these transformations, changing himself at one time into a swan, at another into a shower of gold, which was a very sensible mode of introducing himself into the chamber of a beauty; and here, as we read, into a bull.

The disguised god landed with his lovely prize in Crete, not far from Gortyna. Here he re-assumed his own form, and, beneath a plane-tree, embraced the maiden. Minos, Rhadamanthus, and Sarpedon, were the fruit of his dalliance. Europa was afterwards espoused by Asterion, the King of Crete, who brought up her sons with as much tenderness as though they were his own; and Minos was king after him.

“ Around their king in close array did keep
The loud-voiced Tritons, minstrels of the deep.”—P. 295.

Triton was a son of Poseidon and Amphitrite. He was the

trumpeter of his father, and his trumpet was a conch-shell.
This god in later times was multiplied into many.

“ As Venus, when she stood
Effulgent on the pearly car, and smiled,
Fresh from the deep, and conscious of her form,
To see the Tritons tune their vocal shells,
And cærulean sisters of the flood
With loud acclaim attend her o’er the waves
To seek the Idalian bower.”—*Pleasures of Imagination.*

There are two beautiful passages in Ovid, taken from this poem.

“ Mæonis elusam designat imagine tauri
Europen : verum taurum, freta vera putares.
Ipsa videbatur terras spectare relictas,
Et comites clamare suas : tactumque vereri
Assilientis aquæ ; timidæque reducere plantas.”
Met. vi. 103.

“ Præbuit, ut taurus, Tyriæ sua terga puellæ
Jupiter, et falsa cornua fronte tulit :
Illa jubam dextra, læva retinebat amictus ;
Et timor ipse novi causa decoris erat.
Aura sinus implet, flavos movet aura capillos :
Sidoni sic fueras accipienda Jovi.
Sæpe puellares subduxit ab æquore plantas,
Et metuit tactus assilientis aquæ.— *Fast. v. 605.*

IDYL III.

“ In softest murmurs, Hyacinth! prolong
The sad, sad woe thy lettered petals keep.”— P. 298.

Hyacinthus, a Spartan youth, the son of Clio, was in great favour with Apollo. Zephyrus, being enraged that he preferred Apollo to him, blew the discus when flung by Apollo, on a day that Hyacinthus was playing at discus-throwing with that god, against the head of the youth, and so killed him. Apollo, being unable to save his life, changed him into the flower which was named after him, and on whose petals the Greeks fancied they could trace the notes of grief, *αἶ, αἶ*.

A festival called the Hyacinthia was celebrated for three days in each year at Sparta, in honour of the god and his unhappy favourite.

“ The tears by Naiads shed are brimful bourns.”— P. 299.

Bourn, a stream of water. The word “burn” is yet in use in Scotland in this sense. Browne uses it in the following passage from his *Britannia’s Pastorals* :—

“ By this had Chanticleer, the village-clock,
Bidden the good wife for her maids to knock :
And the swart ploughman for his breakfast staid,
That he might till those lands were fallow laid :

The hills and valleys here and there resound
 With the re-echoes of the deep-mouthed hound :
 Each shepherd's daughter with her cleanly peal, (pail)
 Was come abroad to milk the morning's meal ;
 And ere the sun had climb'd the eastern hills,
 To gild the mutt'ring bourns, and petty rills ;
 Before the lab'ring bee had left the hive,
 And nimble fishes, which in rivers dive,
 Began to leap and catch the drowned fly,
 I rose from rest."

" Lorn Echo mid her rocks thy silence mourns,
 Nor with her mimic tones thy voice renews."— P 299.

The Nymph Echo was of a very kind disposition, and among other lovers had favoured Zeus. She was so complaisant as to keep watch for him when he was toying with any other of the Nymphs. On such occasions she used to engage Hera in conversation ; and as she was very fluent in speech, and entertaining withal, she generally succeeded to admiration in detaining the jealous goddess, while her vagrant lord was indulging his taste for variety. But Hera at last discovered the trick, and declared that Echo should in future have little use of her tongue ; and immediately she lost all power of expressing any thing else than the sounds which she heard.

" Nor so much Cëyx wailed for Halcyon."— P. 300.

Cëyx perished by shipwreck ; and his wife, on finding his lifeless body on the strand, cast herself into the sea. The gods, out of compassion, changed them both into the birds called Halcyons.

“ Nor in the valley, neighbour to the sun,
The funeral birds so wail their Memnon’s tomb upon.”—P. 300.

Aurora was so much enamoured of Tithonus that she besought Zeus to make him immortal; but she forgot to ask immortal youth for him; so that while she was in her fresh and imperishable youth, her paramour became infirm and old, whereupon she forsook his bed, but was still kind to him, although it was said by some, that, vexed at the squeaking treble of the old immortal, she turned him into a grasshopper: but by this Tithonus, when he was yet young, she had two sons, of whom Memnon was one. He was slain before Troy by Achilles. Aurora was so disconsolate at his death, that she entreated Zeus to confer on him such honours as should distinguish his memory from that of all other mortals. He consented to do this, and immediately a numerous flight of birds issued from the funeral pyre on which the body was laid, and after they had thrice flown round the flames, they divided themselves into two bodies, and fought so fiercely that above half of them fell into the fire. These birds were called Memnonides, and were said to return annually to the tomb of Memnon, at Troas, and repeat the same bloody engagement.

“ When in a garden fair,
Mallows, crisp dill, or parsley, yields to fate,
These with another year regerminate.”—P. 303.

“ There is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof wax old in the ground, and the stock thereof die in the ground; yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant; but man dieth and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?”—*Job*, ch. xiv.

“ Could I, like Orpheus true,
Odysseus, or Alcides, pass below.”— P. 303.

Alcides went, while quick, to Tartarus by command ; Odysseus, to obtain information which was necessary for him ; but Orpheus went down to recover his wife. His story is beautifully told in the fourth *Georgic*.

“ For whilom on her own Etnëan shore,
She sang wild snatches of the Dorian lore.”— P. 304.

Persephone, the daughter of Demeter, was carried off by Hades. This beautiful legend is told in one of the Homeric hymns, by Ovid, and by Claudian. Milton thus alludes to it—

“ Not that fair field
Of Enna, where Proserpine gathering flowers,
Herself a fairer flower by gloomy Dis
Was gather'd, which cost Ceres all that pain
To seek her thro' the world ; nor that sweet grove
Of Daphne by Orontes, and th' inspir'd
Castalian spring, might with this Paradise
Of Eden strive.”— *Paradise Lost*, book iv.

IDYL IV.

“ As when a bird bewails her callow young.”— P. 306.

Virgil imitated this passage in these beautiful lines :—

“ Qualis populea mœrens Philomela sub umbra
Amisos queritur fœtus ; quos durus arator
Observans nido implumes detraxit ; at illa
Flet noctem, ramoque sedens miserabile carmen
Integrat, et mœstis late loca questibus implet.— *Geor.* iv.

IDYL VI.

Shelley, as a poet equal to the best after Shakspear, and as a scholar second to none, left the following translation of this idyl.

“ Pan loved his neighbour Echo— but that child
Of Earth and Air pined for the Satyr leaping ;
The Satyr loved with wasting madness wild
The bright nymph Lyda, and so three went weeping.

As Pan loved Echo, Echo loved the Satyr ;
The Satyr, Lyda — and thus love consumed them :
And thus to each — which was a woful matter —
To bear what they inflicted, justice doomed them.

For inasmuch as each might hate the lover,
Each loving, so was hated. Ye that love not
Be warned — in thought turn this example over,
That when ye love, the like return ye prove not.”

IDYL VII.

Arethusa was one day returning from the chase, and being much heated and fatigued, she stripped and went into the Alpheus to refresh herself. While she was bathing she heard a strange murmur in the stream, and, being much alarmed, she sprang instantly to land. The river-god rose, and she fled, naked as she was. He pursued her. She ran through all Arcady, till she felt her strength failing at the approach of evening: she then prayed to Artemis to save her from the ravisher, and was immediately dissolved into a fountain. Alpheus resumed his watery form, and sought to mingle his stream with hers. She fled under the earth, and through the sea till she rose in Ortygia, still followed by Alpheus. The Greeks believed that the offerings thrown into the Alpheus at Elis rose again at Ortygia near Syracuse.

THE END.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY JAMES MOYES, CASTLE STREET, LEICESTER SQUARE.

